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Editorial:

Poesis, poetics. Lingo-logos. The non-literary and literary applications of the alphabet can be seen with reference to a sliding scale. At one end of this scale or spectrum is a utilitarian function. At the other end is an appreciation of the alphabet as an expressive medium, with attention devoted to letter-forms as visual and conceptual constructions. In this, our “Poetics II” issue of *Rampike* we expand the spectrum of poetics that we began with in our previous “Poetics One” issue (Vol. 21, #1). Here, we are delighted to include internationally celebrated authors alongside inspiring emerging writers. This issue begins with a poem co-authored by Judith Fitzgerald and Leonard Cohen providing a tribute to the late Robert Kroetsch. *Rampike* has had the great pleasure of featuring interviews and talks with Robert Kroetsch in past issues (recently, see: Vol. 20, #1). This “Poetics Two” issue features internationally renowned writers, Charles Bernstein, George Bowering, Frank Davey and Richard Kostelanetz demonstrating the ranging possibilities of language rendered within poetic form. Throughout this issue we offer a diversity of photo-works, visuals and visual poetics by globally recognized innovators such as Susan Gold working with Mike Dyer, Katie Solbeck, Jesse Ferguson, Brenda Francis Pelkey, Christian Burgaud, Justin Langlois, Tray Drumhann, Britt-Marie Lindgren, as well as the notorious Michael Basinki who provides us with a fresh new Vizpo Toon. Our cover images are created by celebrated visual poetics artists, Reed Altemus (front cover) and Andrew Topel (back cover). We are extremely pleased to include a cluster of U.K. poets introduced to us by our Canadian corresponding editor abroad, Peter Jaeger, who brings us new works by Cathy Wagner, Tim Atkins, Amy De’ath, Richard Parker, and Marcus Slease. We are equally pleased to include coverage of the “Bird is the Word” poetics conference at the Niagara Centre for the Arts, assembled by our roving editor, Gregory Betts, featuring a range of innovative Canadian authors along with conference notes and commentary by Eric Schmaltz as well as documentation of their Round Table discussion. Included are perspectives on and by poets, notably, Kevin McPherson Eckoff, Stephen Remus, Travis Kirton, bill bissett, Steve McCaffery, Karen MacCormack, Judith Copithorne, a.rawlings, Kelly Mark, Hallie Siegel, Matt Donovan, Laurel Woodcock, Marinko Jareb, Kurtis Lesick, and Gary Barwin. In this Poetics Two issue, we feature ground-breaking poetic expressions by Susan Holbrook, Brian Ang, Louis Cabri, Cyril Dabydeen, George Elliott Clarke (a.k.a. Karl Marx), Denise Desautels (translation by Dr. Norman Cornett), and Robert Dassonowsky. Offering radically different perspectives on what is possible with language, we present unconventional departures by Michael Winkler, Babar Khan, Norman Lock, and TENTATIVELY, a CONVENIENCE. In addition we offer new poetic expressions by Edward Nixon, Amanda Earl, Nick Power, Lindsey Bannister, Paul Lisson, Raquel Torres Camille Martin, Stephanie McKenzie, Robert Anderson, and Andre Narbonne. This issue poses contentious questions and commentary, theoretical positions, as well as reviews and reports on poetics by Harvey L. Hix, Eric Zboya, Mat Laport, rob mclennan, and Derek Beaulieu. These linguistic energies move both centripetally and centrifugally.

Reaching back in time, one may recall Hyginus’ explanation that the Fates invented the seven letters: *Alpha, Omicron, Upsilon, Eta, Iota, Beta,* and *Tau*. In another version, Hermes invented these letters after watching the flight of cranes whose wing-angles seemed to form letters as they flew. Alternately, the alphabet is linked to the creative and procreative process symbolized by the phases of the moon, the changes of the seasons, the Earth Mother, and the Three Muses (representing music, visual art, and literature). Innovations in this issue of *Rampike* offer collocations of sound (music), visuals (graphics), and linguistic features. Julia Kristeva’s well-known comments in *Desire in Language* note that, against knowing thought, poetic language pursues an effect that challenges the ascendance of theoretical reason (147). And in *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, Espen J. Aarseth reminds us, that “The ergodic work of art is one that in a material sense includes the rules for its own use, a work that has certain requirements built in automatically” (179). This issue of *Rampike* features manifestations of writing that challenge thetism and commodification, while establishing their own rules.
We ingest language from early youth and through it, our cultural habits, predispositions, and preconceptions shape us. Our own biologies are integrated in discourse. Some of the “horizons” of discourse that we engage with include our own brain functions and meta-consciousness. We are affected by the homeostatic epiphenomena of our neural synapses. The passage from noetic consciousness to meta-consciousness forms a Möbius loop between self and other, even as we engage our expanding discursive heritage. We are. We speak. Yet, the cogito is (re-)shaped by our bio-electric wet-wiring. Consider our perception of what might be considered the epi-phenomenon of time. Recently, physicists have challenged whether time exists at all. And bio-physicists have discovered that quantum theory is active in biological cellular functions. Neurochemicals and neurotransmitters, constitute an integral part of discourse. Risk is part of the gambit, and only those who risk going too far, can possibly find out how far one can go. So, in this issue of Rampike we offer a cadre of risk takers, who re-envision old habits, leap conventional conceptual frameworks, and tilt the paradigm. The next challenge to consider is can we do this in a way that will be in accord with our perceptions of the ineffability of time itself? And if so, can we write meaningfully to those who will follow, to eyes as yet unborn? - Karl Jirgens/Editor
BLOOD CULTURE:
*In Memoriam Robert Kroetsch*
(26 June 1927 — 21 June 2011)

Leonard Cohen & Judith Fitzgerald

Night comes quietly when you discover the simplest
of light lifting its wings to block the carnage.

How do you manage these broken days?
Can you believe what happened with the riot kiss?

You knew something got lost in the translation
so you stole that language, that lexicon, the only life

Capable of proving none exists except as converts
to some thing or other, lists magnificent or mundane,

Knew what lay in waiting for those western stars fading
against the unforgiving intrusion of what happens

When comets or catastrophes somersault across the screen
— Or, do we mean roaring? — All nor nothing, just like that.

Amen.

- 26 June 2011
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mike dyar (EAT ART) sent a box of small bones and several sheets of cotton to susan gold (NOBEL PEACE PROJECT) who drew all the bones on one cotton sheet and sent it to mike dyar who re-presented the drawing on five sheets of cotton watercolor paper and sent them to susan gold.

“Eat Art / Nobel Peace Project - B”: Susan Gold (Canada) & Mike Dyer (USA)
Bumpy Ocean
George Bowering

Can he live up to his rep,
this seasick poet on the couch?

—Well, she isn’t a crime,
his Oread, she’s a dream.

It’s in a thin old forest
she reclines,
losing sight of the grove—
and her bumpy ocean
is bereft of power now.

She doesn’t need anything else,
she won’t do anything else,
she is in her given environs.
She fits right in.

- after Guillewiec
View Frank Davey’s Poetics
Frank Davey

My name is Frank Davey. I am pleased to say I am running for councillor in Ward 1

Frank Davey summary with 7 pages of lesson plans, quotes, chapter summaries, analysis, encyclopedia entries, essays, research information, and more

Perhaps Frank Davey's most accessible and memorable book will be his most atypically direct and personal

View the profiles of professionals named Frank Davey

View archival description. Fonds MsC 3 - Frank Davey fonds. Title and statement of responsibility area. Title proper

Visit Dr Frank Davey in Mayo County. See contact details, check prices, read reviews, look at pictures, and get directions

Frank Davey is on Facebook. Join Facebook to connect with Frank Davey and others you may know. Facebook gives people the power

Frank Davey began his journal of Linda's illness in March, 1999

We have found 89 people in the UK with the name Frank Davey. Click here to find personal data about Frank Davey including phone numbers, addresses

Frank Davey first hit the national radar in 1961

3 Jul 2006 – John Harris skewers Canadian academic literary critic Frank Davey

Frank Davey - Boxer. ... Frank Davey. Global ID, 271827. sex, male. division, welterweight

Frank Davey 1982 graduate of Smithfield High School

I think Frank [Davey] and George may have already taken the class

This is our Frank Davey & Co page

Frank Davey. Advertisement

The candidates are Frank Davey, Howard Phee and Tom Vegh

Query for «frank, davey», found 15 post(s)

Watch Frank Davey Videos. Free Streaming Frank Davey Video Clips

Frank Davey Books. Frank Davey bibliography includes all books by Frank Davey. Book list may include collections, novellas

Full contact details for Frank Davey Pty Ltd including phone number, map and reviews - TrueLocal

View Frank Davey's profile and historical records at Ancestry.com

Find Frank Davey and other long lost friends at MyLife™. Find Everyone from Your Past

Visit Amazon.co.uk's Frank Davey Page and shop for all Frank Davey books. Check out pictures, bibliography, biography and community discussions about Frank Davey
Frank Davey was born Abt. 1870 in England, and died date unknown in Massachusetts.

Get directions to local business, Frank Davey.

Frank Davey and the Firing Squad. Poetics

But “Frank Davey” (and I now mark this entity as a subject distinct from the Frank Davey so much an accepted part of Canadian literary history)

Frank Davey ... below the excitement of youth, sex, and poetic manifestos

Dr Frank Davey worked as a Methodist Medical Missionary, at Uzuakoli, from 1936

Free credit status for FRANK DAVEY LTD (03564645) at IP22 1EA DISS NORFOLK

Frank Davey's Page on French Language. ... Norman Frank Davey is now a member of French Language 3

Posts related to the Tag: Frank Davey

Find Frank Davey of Cedar Rapids, IA

1880's Charlotte E. Davey, newspaper proprietor and son Frank Davey printer

Be the first to comment on payment promptness FRANK DAVEY LTD ...

Frank Davey, partner. Position: I have worked in residential property since I qualified in 1981

Frank Davey was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, but raised

Frank Davey talks about the effect on properties of the death watch beetle

Frank Davey Bricklaying Pty Ltd in Pambula Beach

The person who was to become the writer Frank Sargeson was born as Norris Frank Davey

Find more about Frank Davey's biography, profile, cedar rapids, iowa, funeral, ...

Contact details for Frank Davey & Co in Hassocks BN6 9PU from 192.com Business Directory, the best resource for finding Funeral Directors listings

View a full list of dealers selling art by Frank Davey. Search for galleries that sell Frank Davey art on artnet

Compare When Tish Happens by Frank Davey

Which authors share a birthday with Frank Davey? - True Knowledge

About Frank Davey. Honest guy seeking the best life has to offer. ...

Frank Davey (Ontario, Universities) Rate and read about public employees. Find out where and how Canadian tax money is being spent

Frank Davey was Tish, and that Tish was and is Frank Davey

Frank Davey Bricklaying Pty Ltd. (02) 6495 6509. Report this Listing as incorrect

Stay tuned for a review of Frank Davey's When Tish Happens

Frank Davey & Co Funeral Directors in Hassocks, BN6. Contact them today for more information on their services

But to this the amount of land Frank Davey owned is still in question.
Frank Davey belongs to the following categories:

Frank Davey writes nasty, vicious lies about me and my dog Boomer

Watercolor I & II with Frank Davey

Norris Frank Davey was a homosexual prostitute. Initially he was a hopelessly unsuccessful gay and the first man he hit on (1924) married his sister

Everything you need to know about Frank Davey

Who's Dated Who feature on Frank Davey including trivia, quotes, pictures, biography, photos, videos, pics, news, vital stats, fans and facts

Over thirty years in the making, Frank Davey's careful archaeology of the catalogue of innocence

Latest News and Information on Frank Davey. Frank Davey, 60, and Daniel Berinson, 41, died when their light plane crashed east of Perth in March last year. The men had been on a joy flight

Looking for Frank Davey?

Discover Frank Davey

Frank Davey, a Chartered Surveyor, and his wife Johanne have a passion for houses

More About the Author. Frank Davey. Discover books, learn about writers, read author blogs, and more

Free search for Frank Davey - check phone, address, background, criminal records, people finder, public records and ... 

DAVEY, Frank. Fondest memories of a dear Dad and Grandad, now at rest. Love from Son Clive

We provide the latest news and info on Frank Davey

Everything you need to know about Frank Davey

Welcome to the Frank Davey & Co Funeral Home

At a general election held on the 8th day of November, 1887, GW Wilkinson and Frank Davey each received 697 votes for the office of the treasurer

Do not forget to check the lastest products and auctions related to Frank Davey as well as our free videos and podcasts

Frank Davey provides the foundation of Dudek's poetic

Plaxo helps members like Frank Davey keep in touch with the people who really matter

Francis John George (Frank) Davey grave monument details. All the legible names shown on the Francis John George (Frank) Davey grave monument

Fellow co-chairman Frank Davey said Kimberley cultural leaders had said from the start that if the gas project went ahead there would have to be large areas

Frank Davey has long been a cultural force to be reckoned with

Frank Davey is associated with Township of Worcester with the role of Chairman. Frank Davey has 4 known relationships

Frank Davey workin on gas AGAIN. Get qualified or * off to jail
Hey didn't last up there long as first it was Stan Coe taking the lead, followed by past-champion Frank Davey taking it over

Frank DAVEY married Unknown GILL

Frank Davey located at 2203 Princeton Way Colorado Springs, CO. Read customer reviews and browse products and services that Frank Davey offers

What is the summary on poem 'The Piano' by Frank Davey?

Frank Davey : Obituary. Published in the Sunderland Echo on 3rd August 2010 (Distributed in Sunderland). This notice has had 111 visitors

Purchase our Frank Davey Biography Order our Frank Davey Biography ... Ask any question on Frank Davey and get it answered FAST!

Frank Davey 1979 graduate of Jesuit High School in Carmichael, CA is on Memory Lane. Get caught up with Frank and other high school alumni from Jesuit High

Frank Davey is a leading authority on contemporary Canadian literature and culture

The practice congratulates Frank Davey FRICS, Consultant Building Surveyor

Buy Back To The War by Frank Davey in India

View FRANK DAVEY and DONNA ROMBOUSEK event profile on WeddingChannel.com

Defending track champion Flyin' Frank Davey

What is the nationality of Frank Davey, the Canadian writer?

F.A. "Frank" Davey operated the Garnet General Store for 45 years

To my true friend Frank Davey, in commiseration (if so he will!)

After the Wells Hotel closed in the 1930s, Frank Davey moved into the kitchen

Last season, Frank Davey finished third in points, which is off of his normal mark

Buy FRANK DAVEY's books, best sellers, collection. great prices + Free Shipping

Frank Davey, from New Costessey, pleaded guilty at Norwich Magistrates' Court to breaching health and safety law

Herbert procured a mini tape recorder from America and gave it to Constable Frank Davey with instructions to secretly tape his co-arresting officers

Wah says that while attending UBC as a music and English literature major, he met George Bowering and Frank Davey
Now Frank Davey is a driver to keep your eye on

Find Frank Davey and other long lost friends at MyLife™

Report on the Japanese situation in Oregon: investigated for Governor Ben W. Olcott, August, 1920 by Frank Davey

Frank Davey was a dedicated and aggressive chairman of the Home's board

Dr. Frank Davey has written: Jesus reversed the social priorities of his day by demonstrating and teaching a special concern for the poor

One side of the business was a farm machinery dealership run by Mr Rex Davey and the other a successful dairy farm run by Mr Frank Davey OBE
Frank Davey and Michael Smith. Small right arrow pointing to:

Download: Frank Davey, Dying, Fiction, Autobiography

Members who intend going to the Branch AGM should contact Frank Davey

Buy or sell Popular Narratives by Frank Davey

In the case of Frank Davey's sheaf of notes for poems, one responds

Fact 1: 69 years, 11 months and 24 days old is the age of Frank Davey

Frank DAVEY founded Tish (1961-65) at UBC, stressing the poem as a developing experience, rather than as a finished product

Frank Davey. Where is Frank these days? I wonder

Frank Davey treats Anne and shifts in reading of the novel as indices

Frank Davey: vocal, keyboard, guitar;

Definitions of frank davey, synonyms, antonyms, derivatives of frank davey,

Along with mine, there'll be titles by Frank Davey,

Davey always idolizes other people instead of his own family like gloria and it used to be uncle Frank Davey

Frank Davey overview and Frank Davey descriptions with footnotes images commentary

Receive a record of every available piece of public records for Frank Davey - available now from Radaris!

If you like, you can repeat the search with the omitted results included.

“Trans-verse Stanza”: Katie Solbeck (Canada)
SIXTEEN LILYPADS: An After Action Report
Terry Trowbridge (Brock University)
& Joseph Alexander Brown (University of Guelph)

This essay is a product of our presentation “Finding the Punchline: On Applications of Graph Theory and Combinatorics in Canadian ‘Pataphysical Poetry” at the 2011 IEEE Canadian Conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering (Brown and Trowbridge 38-41). Our focus here is on graph theory in bpNichol’s poem “Sixteen Lilypads” as it appears in Meanwhile: The Critical Writings of bpNichol (377) and The Alphabet Game: A bpNichol Reader (307). Our objective was to prove a very simple claim about “Sixteen Lilypads.” that the poem is constructed so that it works as an example of a formal graphing technique called Hamiltonian paths. By making this simple point, we were able to more deeply explore three areas of interdisciplinary academic interest. We were able to better outline bpNichol’s probable understanding of formal mathematical concepts, hopefully in order to inform literary critics of his contributions to ‘pataphysical poetry. We also were able to confirm that there is an audience for bpNichol’s poetry among mathematically literate readers in science and engineering, who might approach the poems specifically because of their own sympathies for melding mathematics and poetics. We were also able to encourage academic collaboration between literary criticism and computer science, sowing the seeds for future interdisciplinary criticism and, hopefully, poetry.

bpNichol (1944-1988) was a prolific Canadian writer who added to the nation’s canon in several media: he wrote episodes of the Jim Henson television program Fraggle Rock; he invented a hagiography for his life’s poetic work The Martyrology; and he produced psychedelic comic books, examples of which are now collected in BpNichol Comics and The Captain poetry Poems Complete. He also collaborated with various poets to produce a rich literary criticism. Examples of his criticism are collected in Art Facts: a book of contexts and most recently sampled in Meanwhile: The Critical Writings of bpNichol edited by Roy Miki. His poetry is often considered experimental and was typically anthologized in honour of its unusual graphic qualities. The most popular collections of his poems are An H in the Heart: A Reader edited by George Bowering and Michael Ondaatje, and The Alphabet Game: A bpNichol Reader edited by Darren Werschler-Henry and Lori Emerson. In the early nineteen eighties, he programmed poems using Apple computers, which he distributed to subscribers and encouraged them to change the poems at the level of the code, in 1984 on floppy discs titled First Screening.

GRAPHING AND ‘PATAPHYSICS
Our examinations of bpNichol’s writing so far (see also: Brown, Trowbridge and Szabó “The Poetic Metrics of bpNichol” 933-938), are geared toward mathematical applications because his writing includes major areas for interdisciplinary interest. At first glance, various experimental poems look like they are examples of cryptography or constructed so that they can be interacted with if the reader has the right mathematical tools. bpNichol’s literary criticism makes the suggestion even more plausible.

bpNichol wrote an essay, which appeared in a 1986 issue of Rampike focusing on the literary school called ‘pataphysics, about his own “Probable Systems” series of poems. That essay, entitled “Probable Systems 22: Translation (a continuation of PS 11)” (4-7), is directly related to cryptography. In it, bpNichol details how he assigned letters of the alphabet numerical values and alphabetic bases. Then he explains ways that he would translate words into their numerical values. He then examines how to translate those numerical values into new words based on alphabetic bases. His example is to take the word “GREAT” and assign number values to each letter. Then he translates those numbers into a new word in “base J.” As a result, he can translate GREAT into the number 4078073, and then 4078073 into base J, “DVGHVGC” (4). He stretches the limits of applying encryption to literary work by suggesting that we “reconsider the nature of the sentence or, in this case, line” (5). For bpNichol, one consequence of using alphabetic bases is that number theory implies an infinite series of numbers from which to select a base.
translating letters into numbers and bases, he is implying letters beyond the letter z (4). He wrote that the result can be enormously complex encryption systems:

By extension, then, we could...generate even more difficult-to-conceive letters, arriving at...a point where, for instance, a novel like Proust’s _Remembrance of Things Past_ could be considered as simply the complex expression of a single letter an unimaginable distance beyond A. (5)

bpNichol’s essay “Probable Systems 22” is only three pages long, but it is evidence of mathematical work throughout his poetry. In the same issue of _Rampike_, he included another essay titled “From Translating Translating Apollinaire” that offered examples from his poems; “TT 4,” “TTA 23,” and “TTA 25/Probable Systems 22a” (6-7).

His other essays on writing, reading, and collaboration tend to ambiguously use terminology from formal mathematics, as if he was fluent in their mathematical applications. We suggest that interested readers refer to his essay “statement” for a strong example of this ambiguous, but convincing application of cryptographic principles in poetics (see: _Meanwhile: The Critical Writings of bpNichol_ 142). Regarding “Sixteen Lilypads” and graphing theory we point readers to a tantalizing quote from an interview titled “Syntax Equals the Body Structure:” “I always liked what Philip Whalen wrote years ago in _The New American Poetry_:

That his work was a ‘graph of his mind moving’” (Meantime: The Critical Writings of bpNichol 273).

bpNichol considered some of his poetry to be part of the literary school called ‘pataphysics, pioneered in the late nineteenth century by the French dramatist by Alfred Jarry (Meantime: The Critical Writings of bpNichol 353). The 1986 ‘pataphysics issue of _Rampike_ includes an essay by Karl Jirgens, “A Short History of ‘Pataphysics” (8-11) that offers a comprehensive overview of ‘pataphysical poetry in bpNichol’s Canadian literary circles. According to Jirgens, ‘pataphysics was addressed at the time in an issue of _Open Letter_ magazine from 1980 edited by Frank Davey, bpNichol, and Steve McCaffery (Jirgens 10). _Open Letter_ has published a subsequent themed issue about ‘pataphysics, “Millennial ‘Pataphysics” in 1997; and also themed issues about bpNichol, most recently: “bpNichol + 21” in 2009 and “The Martyrology: Survivors’ Retrospective” in 2009. We also would like to direct readers to the most recent comprehensive treatment of ‘pataphysics by a Canadian author, Christian Bök’s 2002 book _Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science_.

In its broadest sense, ‘pataphysics is imaginary science that imagines a new universe or mocks scientific discourses (Meantime: The Critical Writings of bpNichol 353). Given his use of language, and the calculated structures that appear to underlie some of his poems, we are treating bpNichol’s writing as opportunities for applied math. This will inform us, qualitatively, of the skills and attitudes behind bpNichol’s ‘pataphysical work, and potentially those appropriate for his literary critics. Basically, we want to know whether his ambiguous appearance of mathematical literacy actually indicates mathematical literacy so that an interdisciplinary approach between literary criticism and computer science might be fruitful. Or, alternatively, if the mocking imaginary science in his ‘pataphysics is well-wrought bullshit (in the sense that Harry Frankfurt conceptualized the term in his 2005 essay _On Bullshit_).

Our broad claim is that bpNichol was in fact mathematically literate and produced poems as applications of mathematics. Because bpNichol’s poems are so diverse, and because each poem usually requires a different formal concept (such as alphametics, cryptrythms, graphing, combinatorics), we need to analyze his work on a poem-by-poem, methodical basis. This is especially important if we are talking about applied science, since we need to subject our analysis to critiques by peers. While our Hamiltonian paths were agreed upon by our audience at the IEEE conference, our combinatoric analysis of the poem “Probable Systems 15” was rejected and corrected by Dr. Marc Bender of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. He concluded that while our analysis was fun and interesting, there was a bug in our code that needed to be corrected, and the outcome of our proposed analysis needs to be reevaluated.
In addition, we should analyze each of bpNichol’s poems independently because they apply different formal mathematical concepts. Therefore, the poems could potentially have different critical significance (and so could the math). Furthermore, if we can spot a formal mathematical application behind a poem then we can use it as an avenue to respond with more ‘pataphysical poetry.

**HAMILTONIAN PATHS**

We found that “Sixteen Lilypads” contains Hamiltonian paths on an undirected graph. That means that if each square can be treated as a point that can be connected by a line, all the letter f’s can be connected by a single unbroken path, all the letters r’s can be connected by another single path, and so the o’s and g’s. We think there is evidence that bpNichol meant for this to only apply to the letters, since the question marks do not work the same. The “?” that replaces the “g” in “fro?” has no way to connect to the “?” in “f?o?” (and so forth). Only the letters have Hamiltonian paths (“Finding the Punchline” 38-41).

Graph theory is a way to state the elegant aesthetics of the poem. The subject of the poem is a thing that moves (a frog) paired with a field it moves through (lilypads). The word “frog” contains the right number of letters for a perfect square, making a symmetrical, small graph aesthetically recognizable. For example, the word “frogs” would result in 32 arrangements of question marks and letters, which could not result in a square field. At a critical level, bpNichol references Matsuo Basho in his poems and criticism often. Basho’s most famous poem is a haiku about a frog (“Untitled” 15). “Sixteen Lilypads” is like an answer to Basho’s poem with a graph being, like haiku, symmetrically and numerically strict. “Sixteen Lilypads” and graphing theory are appropriate ways to introduce our interdisciplinary criticism to engineers and computer scientists. Graphing is simple to explain and to use, and ubiquitous in engineering. Graphing is used in engineering to illustrate large-scale communication networks, small-scale circuitry, switches, and many other common concepts. Paired with bpNichol’s literary criticism, which has presented a straightforward mystery of how applicable applied science is to his ‘pataphysical poetry, graph theory is the right tool for interdisciplinary introductions to criticism and science.

**COLLABORATION**

Since the graph is simple to produce and the concepts behind it are commonplace, the conference audience generally agreed that “Sixteen Lilypads” could be used as teaching tools with undergraduate students in computer science. Our own experience with undergraduate students at Brock University is that they are interested in bpNichol’s poetry as examples of concepts from their class work.

Our own collaboration has been intermittent, because of our independent projects and other work in graduate programs. Joseph Alexander Brown is a doctoral candidate in Computer Science at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario. Terry Trowbridge has his Master’s degree in Social Justice and Equity Studies from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, and is a local poet and activist in the Niagara region (Slimy Bugs, That’s Why They Shit So Much). “Sixteen Lilypads” is the first poem by bpNichol that we attempted to analyze with multidisciplinary methods.

So far, the analysis has been surprisingly challenging. Of all the poems we have analyzed formally, “Sixteen Lilypads” is both the simplest to visualize but the most difficult to translate from one artistic or academic domain to another. We have encountered problems with formally defining graphing in ways that can be added to the toolbox of a literary critic; and in translating critical essays from journals like Open Letter into a basis for applied computing. We have found surprisingly encouraging parallels to bpNichol’s literary criticism in computer science literature explored in Donald Knuth’s series *The Art of Computer Programming*, and in essays that make a tentative approach, like M. Faloutsos’ “You must be joking…: The poetry of science” (Faloutsos 60-61). bpNichol’s collaborative projects with other poets (such as Steve McCaffery) appear to have parallels in the history of software and computer engineering, as it appears in Stephen Levy’s populist book about the development of digital networks, *Hackers.*
We should also note that, in 1986, Dick Higgins produced an essay “Book bells, slowly moving (for bpNichol)” that appeared in a special issue of *Open Letter: Read the Way He Writes: A Festschrift for bpNichol* (83-99). In “Book bells,” Higgins overlaps literary criticism and the history of science by using text by Giordano Bruno to create graphs and tables reminiscent of Renaissance alchemical texts, and of “Sixteen Lilypads.” It seems that Canadian literary criticism already includes attempts at graphing texts, inspired by bpNichol.

Artistically, we propose that our analysis of “Sixteen Lilypads” is a reasonable entry point for collaborations between scientists and poets. One possible future project might include a chapbook of poems/graphs inspired by “Sixteen Lilypads” accompanied by a volume of essays that explain their artistic and formal mathematical merits. A project of that sort could use the 'pataphysical, collaborative, and experimental ethos of bpNichol, to help plant seeds for inspired poetry in the emerging age of digital humanities.

**Works Cited**


**BASSACKSENGLISH MONOPOEMS**

**Coming(s) Together**

*For John Ashbery*

**Richard Kostelanetz**

A principal difference between poetry and fiction, even at the avant-garde extremes, is that the latter implies narrative and thus movement from one place to another, even if the fiction is only one word long, while poetry strives for concentration of image and effect. These poems, unlike my stories, should be published, without full stops (aka “periods”). All realize poetic quality and thus esthetic weight wholly within themselves. One recurring theme of my poetry has been the discovery of mysteries within words—within English language.

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2 POEMS
Judith Fitzgerald

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI:
In Memoriam Robin Blaser
(18 May 1925 - 7 May 2009)

A crumpled flag flutters at half-mast today
In the recesses of my sadly shattered heart;
For one of our original's gone his own quiet way;
Canada's irreplaceable one's a soaring world apart.

The jittery robin on my lawn skip-tentatively sings;
The soon-to-be lilacs on my trees promise-speak joy;
But, let us recall life's fertile forest and fecund things —
So much more than ideas for Robin Blaser,
our gloriously ageless boy . .

SYLLABLE AIR
To Nicholas & Karl Jirgens

If radiantly sonic tongues number approximately
eighty-eight then, when the translator of this
body of work at work holds sway — embarks
upon the familiar journey along articulated spine
of poem, its lost yet beloved faint-sighed crucifixion
of endless longing, O — Tell me, find me wanting
among glittering open broken firmament clusters,
 craving ingrained, delicately scarred and arcing just so —
in the mist of seer madness comprising desperation's
howl trussed up with mouth-wracked sadness —
If each dissolves into those most holy, most elegantly
endless rudimentary voyages — either towards
or perhaps away — from willed heart thoroughly
misbegotten in the aesthetic beglamourment,
its beckoning moon's brittle blue inlaid, overlaid
among arteries — in that other place, that mazed still
beloved harmonic river syntax slaughtered — makar
broken — spoken so close you swear you hear
loose translations of striations under the influence
of divine interventions encarved — history so stalled,
so impossibly close to nothing at all — If you struggle
to identify sweet combustions de la sintaxis sacrificado,
depth signals, constellations exploding along the horizon
limned with either shattered necessities or — Tune up!
Fiat Lux! Dream vivid! — If you hear time's eye closing
in the harsh legato, in the slurred bravado, long-gone
withdrawing roar caressing the planet's tattered seams,
gleam battered beyond reparations, separations, song
merely another option available in the list-and-found
accidental excavation of civilisation's celebrations
of the flame, the deluge, the indescribable tenderness
you swear you will never again challenge to exist
in those odd serrations of inner stations, las reliquias
enscribed upon mist-marred gestures, intersections
adduced from one black blueprint — If you can reveal
the proper names for those sacred yet utterly capricious
manifestations, bring six of one, half-dozen of forever.

- 10 March 2012
From A Guide to Cities and Towns

Peter Jaeger

Berlin
What I want to know is this: if there is a question, what is that question?

Buffalo
The drive was perfect, with the leaves starting to turn, the air crisp and fresh, and the directions easy to follow. She parked in front of a stunning, modern house, full of jutting angles and massive windows. She looked up to see him sitting on the high deck, surrounded by potted plants.

Calgary
May no squirming round a spruce abandoned by lakes come your way, and may you never see no rats this time of year. May you be a kind of sputtering, perched on branches and sagging with powder. May you laminate the rink. May you chart how lengthened sideburns turn and lift.

Istanbul
Roads to watch your step, lemon soup with lentils, the Beckett light bulb, four people and a dog riding a scooter to work, various beards, a hole in a flag, turn with the stars that wheel above, a broken speaker crackles, “leftist” disco jeans, horn when fog is warm and when it’s not, blue waves / blue tiles / what’s the use of candy, you may take pictures here, smell the fumes of morning cats, ships from Nassau ships from Spain, El Kitabi, uphill down and left and lost, a forgotten password, a particle applauding, a brick is a warning, commission will be charged, hues of twilight and refusal, the cancelled boat trip, the un-attended party, the phantom limb, the glowing palace, the engine’s first shiver, the call to prayer, prayer.

Kyoto
Everything hears through my ears. Nothing hears.

Livorno
Like a cloud of fire, like a corpse within its grave, like a dome of many-coloured glass, like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished, like a wayward girl, like an atmosphere, like an infant’s smile, like an un-bodied joy whose race has just begun, like aught that for its grace may be, like autumnal night, like clouds in starlight widely spread, like clouds which have outwept their rain, like darkness to a dying flame, like deer, like dew upon a sleeping flower, like earth’s decaying leaves, like flame transformed to marble, like flocks, like flowers that mock the corpse beneath, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, like Heaven, like hues and harmonies of evening, like incarnations of the stars, like its own, like life and fear, like memory of music fled, like mist over mountains driven, like moonbeams behind some piny mountain shower, like music from his tongue, like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream, like raging hounds, like shattered mountains, like slow fire upon a hoary brand, like stars of Heaven, like stars to their appointed height they climb, like things reproved, like winds of light on dark and stormy air, like withered leaves to quicken a new birth.

London
First I fill a porcelain bowl with fresh water. Then I wash my hands and face. I break the bowl over a pile of books. I let the water soak through all of the pages until they become wet bricks of pulp. I position them around my head so that I am unable to see, smell or hear.

Mumbai
His soft, peaceful voice echoed deep in her mind and, surprisingly, her soul. She had not given her soul much consideration. Cheerful parakeets now chirped optimistically. Warm sunshine flowed all around and the tender moans of the doves aroused sweet dreams of true
love. She felt capable of understanding and forgiving everybody, and it was a deep, real happiness. She looked at the man. She never felt happier. He listened to and understood her and it seemed that he had answers to all her questions. She felt free as a bird. He radiated hope and trust in a boundless ocean of love, and she felt herself melting into unlimited happiness.

Manhattan
It’s 1959 so I have chop suey on Dolores Street and pound cake at Bickfords and buy an ugly Mayan Codex to dig what the ladies of Mexico are doing these days, then on to the school for delinquent boys of Latin American origin where Senorita La Chatta (first name Lola I once heard) doesn’t even stop breathing for once in her life and in the MILITARY SERVICE I get a little coffin for Joselito and Paco and Pepe with publicity by the Dean of Lush Workers although I do think of Old Faithful, trans. Enrique El Culito or The Dream Police or My Chicken Blood Ruby by Gertie Le Sing Sing, but I don’t. I stick with the coffin though it is cold and somewhat warms my neck.

Paris
Marie Antoinette's whorish, greedy and air-headed reputation is based on a seam of vicious lies. And in the English-speaking world, Napoleon is chiefly remembered for two things.

Rajpur
Concentrate on this, as before.

Ruckle Park (for Silas)
“Slippy” rocks and un-named shells: “stomp stomp roar roar / mucky muckster” pee in shoes, robins nest in cliffs. Waves arrive, arriving waves again and also currents come in waves, welling up a sea called “sea.” Crabs are “dead” he says: “more crabs coming.”

Seattle
Once the aliens had realized that Earth was unwilling to fight, our vast resources no longer scared them—we were only a rich plum, ripe for the plucking. And when they finally arrived, they walked woodenly across the field, skirting away from the Earth ships toward the collection of tents and tin huts that had swallowed the other veterans.

Tokyo
I am estranged from you, even in the midst of my love (commentary: he speaks in parable to a girl with many hearts) at the Kokusai Hotel (sixties stylie) 0806 422 5141.

Toronto
He was not a graceful young man for in the next moment he succeeded in toppling into her and they both fell onto the dance floor. People around them chuckled. She’d never seen a clumsier person in her entire life. Whatever was he doing working in an ice-skate factory? He’d be best suited staying away from anything sharp.

“Vispo 36”: Jesse Ferguson (Canada)
Ferment Into Visitor
Cathy Wagner

Regarding the use-value
And exchange-value of orgasms, with a list
Of orgasm analogues, viz.:

Wind breach
Dark lemon
Fold wholly
Dead servant
Smell garnet
Axiom
Smell rage
Cog railway
Ibid, ibid
Root/leave
Citation local
All hallway
Drain gone down drain

I let him stay with me
Two years past patience
Because he could conjure
Black silk dragged through
blood brain barrier
Use value or exchange value?
He traded orgasms
I traded love-stance.
We lost our shirts.

Come, normative anomaly,
Repeatable difference, costly
And prized, normative wedge
In conscious norm, come
Oddity, trade you for memory.

Honey I love you for this fine minute
Honey your eyes have gone really buggy
I’m frightened, anticipant, oh hell, that’s
Polaroid ripped back before it’s developed
Sticky firework chemical
Gel burnt electrodes
Suffer the, suffer the, jailed
Axolotl, terminate its head,
I’m through with you
: pleasure.

When the coagulant future returns,
Which is instant, even as happiness
Roams past the edges of nerve into room—
The feeling’s unsellable.
Never gets into poem.
I left my topography
Map on the picnic table
Rained and the mountains
Exposed their maché
Push tetons flat with a
“Be little girl again”
Sentiment gaze.
Rotica’s nasty and rotica works.
Crush labile suitors
Crush labile rotica
I see I’m aggressive, weirdly violent,
Cold-fingered
Won’t mind being otherwise
Tell warm to me.

Goddamn these dactyls.
Kneejerk dactylic, see?
Needing to pee but I’m
Pushing this longer—

List of orgasm-metaphors
Commodity catalog
Right at the outset  Tried to turn
Time to material  Re-experienceable
Come back and see me some time.

If this poem is not desirable
But you’ve made yourself read it
You’ve been assigned it
You have a sane reason
Dear friend, that’s a condom, you’ve
Inoculated your cock against insanity
(I’m figuring reader as male, why’d
I do that)—friend, there’s a reason
(Really have to pee now)
To let pleasure be.
TRANSLATIONS from:
The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse
Tim Atkins

Princess Nukada
Poem written on the Occasion of Emperor Tenji’s Ordering
Bloch countered
Something’s missing
What is this “something”? Keanu Reeves
Supergas in Tijuana
Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels
My hands upon the shoulders of my daughter
Here we are upon the Purley Way
Autumn & Spring / Spring & Autumn
Her T-shirt says
All People Be Happy
All People Be Happy

*

Princess Niu
Upon Her Divan in the Capitol—Imagine!—Thinks About Gloucestershire
The best place to fuck up the library
Is the communist corner or the shelf about sailors where it was impossible
To become bored about being
A boy because of the facility and smoothness of male levers
With the poets of Belgium and then Cambridge or Oxford even far closer than
Fur death exists only in Beatles
All four of them swimming up to where I lifted and looked beneath the waters of the Avon
for the first time
And saw a girl for the first time
In three dimensions for the first time
Without hooves a tag & and black & white patches

*

KakinomotoHitomarO.I.M.Stacy D. 5.II.2012
In The Frozen Planet
    I do not think of penguins
        Gathering to protect their young
Toss Frisbee or measure the length of Golden Gate Park
    By stretching
        But in it
Where once
    I was an apartment in Manhattan
            & you too & this man
& the golden grains in yr ovaries had not yet descended too
    Becoming yr children
            Who are here now
Who is ever really
    Here now for as long as they’d like
Stacy
In the way that they’d like it
In Case of SLEEP
Amy De’Ath

Sitting on a retro toilet that once belonged to Geena Davis
I stand for what I pee. A mighty maze speaks Olivia

through its annals & look! Her apology implodes.
I came to see you to tell you that the weather is finally listening

when your chest bleats into the cul-de-sac, but dining into the human
species and their revolving loopholes all I hear is your blood

and see it flooding out on a doubly romantic dream of mine which
the poets say is beautiful but is really glamorous and tiring.

Sleeping with my childhood wardrobe in a garden centre
responsibly and respectfully sharing my angst with the lobelia

I might recline like a cat but I wouldn’t sell my wares openly
I wouldn’t want to be that memory-cat with the power to die the power
to be put back on my feet I came to see you’d been eaten by tar sands

and cat didn’t exist what kind of a country is this
what did you say I missed that

I miss that cat

“Haphazard landscape 05”: Brenda Francis Pelkey (Canada)
From R.T.A. Parker’s 99 Short Sonnets about Evil
Richard Parker

iv. Dear things

DEAR things! | Ah we’re | lonely,
Lonely | In th’hands | of each
Other.| As the | sun sets

He’s dry, | paler. | Seen the
Sun as | it slow | ly flips?
Sun sees |you blind | from sun-

Staring, |our hides | fiery
With life | lost dreams, | while each
Explo |sion’s term | inal.

lx. Dialogue of chair and table

&so | what if | it’s a
Little | pleasure | purely
To see | your face | one time;

I’m no | longer | into
Language | for its | vi’lence,
We can | jaw all | about

The cut, | right, or | agree
On the | vice jea | lousy:
? ’S always | love each | other.

lxii.

Asyou | become
You are | like mem | ory.
My father has written a poem on the death of The Monkeys. The universe is a toad mother. The fop the birth the hasting after the physician. No husband no wife no friend. Bat-eyed materialistic priests here is the test of wisdom. Power! Liberty! Earth! The elements! The earth expanding pennants of joy. The fluid the herbs of the morning sprout. I do not want these constellations any nearer.

* 

My father has written a poem on the death of The Monkeys. Its spring fold your dress on the chair. We crash come together multiply solidify and occasionally meet. The Gazelle wandered in a gorge. Irregular hollows by the roadsides. We have: holiday parts, gold sheets on the streets, illusions of emotions and thoughts, bobbing atoms of Democritus. Eyes lopped and shiny with perfect teeth. We used to live there. This doesn’t explain anything. I think I should stop here and do miracles. I’d rather go to bed early.

* 

My father has written a poem on the death of The Monkeys. In the afternoon let me down easier in the bark of a cinnamon tree. Cuz something smells funny. Keep the yolk coming. A live animal. You must not believe anything. It’s science. Fiddle around the sweet nape. A moon gulf in the cribbage cart. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich. The latent unrealized baby days. They’re very good. Howard De Siliva they are the greatest women.

* 

My father has written a poem on the death of The Monkeys. Earth mother calling earth father. NA noo NA noo. Sewn with a glitter of moon. This is a Sound Eye. To be a spot-headed cat on a forked tree. Or a hot world on a bed of olives. A greasy hammer hammers the road. As the road goes. Over £2 for loaf. Tonight at 9.25 light comes off the sea and cools my behind. But the other world. This mouth. Obscene patterns on a cave wall. A hot wind blows across the angle of this coast. The sea is structural. Miss Wiggs and her cabbage patch that’s crap. A train is held to even out the gaps.

* 

FILM THEORY or I miss the way you kiss
Edward Nixon

“The magical power that is attributed to taboo
is based on the capacity for arousing temptation ...”

- Freud

we killed a lot of gutter
took hectares of blank space
chopped up the I and you

there wasn’t much between x and y
just a lucky line that waggled through
crisp points on a reasoned grid
like poison’s cure

a ready-made story arc,
as if garlands of rose petals,
redecorated the script
devolving from a set of probable causes
to a lazy mise-en-scene
razor wire fencing a glade

where lutes play, the prince reclines

as IEDs pop, blood-splatter browns
the long grass,

and she says
“the days tasted of almonds”
[ or sub in “meaty, breaking between molars”]

or he says
“like smoked trout on a salted cracker”

jump-cut from our parole
to credits writ in jerky white
“the gun” “ma blonde”
“the car” “mon chum”
TWO POEMS
Susan Holbrook

I Thought You Were Different
Like begins as a liquid
but closes to a quick
stop, voiceless. A
lick withdrawn. A lake
drained dry.

A red red rose is
like whoa is like
we too could come
and go and talk of
like, dammit, snow,
I wanted just one
space, this white
white wall, something
I couldn’t compare
to anything.

I didn’t say I liked it
I said I, like, liked it.
I wasn’t all like, I liked it.

The Parker Street mansion
wheezed and moulted
but we liked
to show prospective
roommates the view from
the third-floor shared kitchen,
downtown glistering to the left
and straight ahead the dark heaps
of Grouse mountain, furring
into night and one, who informed
us her regimen included two
hours of grooming and who
dickered about price, just
glanced at the window
and said I don’t like
views.

I don’t like vistas.
Hold the pie.
Can’t stand amicability.
Don’t care to look a deer in the eye.
I don’t like the nightlife or to boogie
or piña coladas.
I don’t like how that feels.

Like many Canadians, I am
like a bird on a wire. Like
many Americans I am like
a rhinestone cowboy. Like
many dual citizens I am like
a two-timing, fence-sitting,
fusion cuisine-eating flip
flopier, entertaining two like,
or even unlike, ideas at once
according to the fellow in
that rock crystal hat I like.

Please take a moment to Like
my page. Like many Canadians,
I am likeable. Take a moment to
Like me. Like many citizens of
the world I find the thumbs up
an obscene gesture. Be careful
whom you Like.

Earn the respect of native speakers
by using English fillers such as uh,
like, and um. You will come across
as more authentic, and like earn the
respect of um.

And metaphor was all like,
you reflect similarities but
I actually like create them
and I was all like you just
bash stuff together and don’t
come clean about it and
metaphor was like if you hate
metaphor so much why did you
just use one and I was like
you’re a pain in the ass and
metaphor was like Ah! and
I said the ‘like’ was implied there
and metaphor was like why do
you have to be so explicit
it’s like you have to explain
the joke all the time and I was like
Ah! Really? Is it like that? and
metaphor was all like
Touché and we crossed
imaginary swords.

Do you mind being
shown the silk-like
lining of her trench
coat, row upon row
of items that could be
paired for shape, use,
the way the feathers fall?

Do you like
comparison
shopping?

Things are not really
the same. It’s always
just as if
they were the same.
It’s in the almost
that we ride. It’s
why everything’s moving
all the time, like
Placenta

Out of the oven
with the bun yet
it didn’t occur to me
to eat either of them

Not an afterthought but
not a twin either

Does the placenta have a heartbeat?

So I was so totally not
going to eat it but knowing
it prevents ppd
I’m thinking why not

I’m so freaked out
about delivering

The Latin word for cake

If only the permanent organs
worked as hard as the temps

My placenta or yours

For a festive look, stuff Vol-au-vent shells
my husband carefully removed the membranes

A strawberry smoothie is good
so you don’t know which red

0 entries. Try Polenta.

Plated with crumpled gauze
on the stainless steel hospital cart

It fed her and could
now feed me, really
having my cake and

As with any uncontrolled meat

Isn’t it cannibalism, also
I don’t like kale?
None of the Below [non sequitur]
Louis Cabri

Can you hear me now? – Verizon Wireless

1
under here, pipes,“underpipes”
lead pipes?
no, lead pipes . . . lead under here . . . no sir . . . cut
board . . . circuit board, see? . . . no, under here . . . no sea numbs
how sand flies . . . serial number under here? . . . no . . . granite, pattern-free
grain no, under here, garbage around a light pole (and rain) . . . some thing dead
pledge (mortgage) in the head here – missed rest
no, Pledge mist wood . . . Draino and under
here, Australia of course, this flap . . . PUSH under HERE . . .
no, return . . . under returns . . . under no . . . formulaic No Turn . . . the rerun, pause that
Bowser refreshes, “better with coal,” under here, dog silence
devotion of machines
slogans? 1929! no . . . “Possibility . . .” under here a bout
“pre-existence” – do you want your pre-existing ideas
confirmed with that? no,
brown sauce, paper . . . no, poem . . . procedural
protocol
ism under balletic
 crane operators
no, carbon ghost, no . . . under here

2
no, under here, no? Tommy!
Cooper’s unfz’d, or under grassy paint patch, mystery Van Gogh
no, cold chewing-gum,
no, words
“up on”
words, under here, “stallionesque,” no, ate in, waiting search,
no, room, hats, under here
hide a tatt? no, Chilver Rd Thrift
map 1974 here, under secrets (on sects),
o, insects – between toes?
between trees, fence
here tomatoes in print, signature “stopping through,”
only materialize
hear it, says here, no,
under here, fall, in the fall?
lines, loins, no, rolls
in the black, old mole, no, Discovery
no, over, the under
covers, no, “cowry”? under here
Bakery Supervisor, Ballistics Examiner, Bank Manager, no
B
Can You Hear Me Now? [sequitur]

Salary $369,231  
Bonus $350,000  
Option Awards $4,359,858

Appears [non sequitur]

pears

Jeffrey A. Citron

melons

Grain Framers [sequitur]

Tiresome adjectives  
Tiresome  
Canadian Tiresome  
Winter  
Wealfree

Expletives  

“ConAgra”
The Dowel & the Towel [non sequitur]

owl row
aisle row
oh wow

ah woe
I’ll row
owl row

aisle row
oh wow
ah woe

I’ll row
owl row
aisle row

oh wow
ah woe
I’ll row

aisle row
oh wow
ah woe

Huron Church Road [sequitur]

in sequence like that

Pears [non sequitur]

ears

George gush [sequitur]

entrails

tsloppy endtrails

speller, decider

What isn’t the matter [non sequitur]

mining under
mining under
mining under
standing under
mining standing
From: **FREE SETS**

Brian Ang  
*for Barrett Watten*

I  
an insulated minority has lost its function  
love a threat to order unconditionally  
freedom precondition scientific intervention  
time space according mode of production  
transcendental within experimentum linguae  

II  
Gesamtkunstwerk community two are one  
must enter the field of political history  
of totality negative without subjective  
awaits form to unify virtù liberator hound  
cultural interchangeable social syntax  

III  
profit grudge bounty management security  
one-sided equality exclusion timocracy  
manufacture extreme operations abilities  
conditions representations established real  
to be simultaneously liberal and socialist  

IV  
temporal sequence objective moral criterion  
sheath interior island hidden exposure field  
blank inertia liberated fresh correspondences  

V  
proletariat art to make abstraction possible  
dialectical intelligibility of singular history  
space existence as nothing or distinct  
idealism sublimity by rank source confusions  

VI  
ideological knowledge mirror philosophy  
psychoanalytical violent tape-recorder  
first-class cataleptic recumbent awaiting  
a priori communication from production  

VII  
spatial empirical heroic historical Jetztzeit  
to invoke the people is to invoke class  
bourgeoisie ruling working class coalition  
commodity wine forms speculative theory  
formal compromise reality principle allows  

VIII  
ochlos prohibiting political philosophy  
commodity referential tautology exchange  
for ancients distribution for moderns private  
seduction in symbolic mastery of forms  

IX  
truth smack of sexist rape by author chef  
compulsive remembrance without a name  
identical premises conclusions contradict  
no view in cells lodge perfectly distinct  
enemies there is no enemy avows inverts  

X  
friend-enemy homogeneity of pluralism  
fundamentalism target for free-market  
desire of activity to overcome passivity  
world system of states bourgeoisie  
rigid illusory class-membership mobility  

XI  
structural aprioristic limitation critique  
empiricism science epiphenomenon  
spatialization of time in uncharacteristic  
democracy formal and substantial history  
this difference for the raw work diagram  

XII  
morality of method neo-Kantianism  
cadres non-commanding bureaucrats  
democracy in America in utilitarianism  
fragmented within impossible phallus  
publicity dissolves Dasein reactionary  

XIII  
truly new founding Jetztzeit everyday  
non-Western gains with rage against  
threat system of ordered procedures  
to cover already dominated logistics  
advancing reign of freedom of desire  

XIV  
anti-libertine political no use nostalgia  
propriertorial remorse clarity-fetishist  
critic of letters authority popularizer  
majority of slips in general causes  
speech naturalness signata passage  

XV  
didn’t generate desire because lyrical  
start with the enemy possibility of war  
strip the master’s presence of terrors  
cultural assault on social moral order  
cinema automation of war machine  

XVI  
state authority rooted psychological  
the big Other doesn’t exist leave guilt  
re-present inverted actuality meaning  
politicians bankers oil media mafia  
beyond true and false art knowledge  

XVII  
epic as poem that includes economics  
modernism breaking embrace against  
psychic identity non-oedipal pre-history  
dissociation to association of sociation  
critical realism our anti-colonialism  

XVIII  
always-already impurity mobilized political  
potentiality/act of virtue pleasure philia  
methodologism validity historical critique  
deconstruction mourning neo-liberalist right  
democracy of capital dissipates difference  

XIX  
everyday to unmask as formalistic realistic  
finite deprives psychological time ecology  
post-Fordist eternal and ephemeral no longer  
eliminated Aufhebung in ever-pre-givenness  
liberal inclusion exclusion globalization  

XX  
eminence association difficult to distinguish  
must turn out torn up in virtù to found a state  
after modernity liberation the orgy is over  
praxis from person authority justification  
challenged art itself overthrow of society
radical democracy universalized difference unreflective loneliness historically social uncertainty excess of positivity simulation state detached private apolitical modernity women permanent autonomous organization

XXII

root to liberal humanism radical and scientific community of masters or slaves equivalent general strike balance attacking global obliged to detail necessary not precipitous slips interference half-suppressed outside

XXIII

primitive accumulation formation relations conflict to retain credibility fait accompli authority freedom foundation application estrangement construction subject bécance intellectual freedom illusion into barbarism

XXIV

cinema disavowal perfects image instability war geography for political ambitions dreamlike protects from total vigilance conspiracy schemes to police knowledge labor cuts ethnic sexual universality

XXV

historical rationality cumulative modernity nation literate nor illiterate aporia of critic phenomena isolated to material struggles extremist art excellence in little there is asocial migration indivisible emancipation

XXVI

sign value fleeting frittered into show language futurity discloses allopraxes violence chance never sepulture known truth of honor is false produces truth desire against complete satisfaction

XXVII

admired strategically primal architecture free action catechism state apparatus signifier signified differential to flux multicolored polyphonic revolution metamorphosis refilled with images

XXVIII

hegemony foundationalism disintegrating constitutive outside power relations develop problematic politics theoretical moral ethical missing decision hegemonic no ideology except by for subject category

XXIX

supranational surveillance private meaning immediate to memory expectation not here epistemic fallacy being in knowledge dissolution direction by class struggle social scientific prohibitions malignance

XXX

hypostatization-bashing metaphysical logos paradigmatically global atop local tomorrow contradictory logical society not to be cinematic reproduction of sexual difference ruling state representation ruled mediation

XXXI

all cultural political overtly stigmatized non narrative suspense consent unconscious manipulation contempt conceals to deter photographic solitude silence of desire truth borne in struggle effectivity concrete

XXXII

material error memory cross-checked large-scale motifs lack of detail repetition spiritual corporeality fetishism of money rights that can be added which will destroy normative abstract plurality universality

XXXIII

authority dialectic of servant’s insight consciousness illusions to real but by other asymmetrical for other without for one class mobility racism confusion inversion interpenetrating artistic social relations

XXXIV

patrimony of humanity truths from time to capture strange perfect strange attractor relaxed social promiscuity obscenity gaze philosophical epistemological break possible machine modernity itself new relationships

XXXV

gaming symbolic rule superior to law a priori rules for possibility of objective ontology of social sedimented power blurred logic in conflict with psycho-logic be bent technical humanist mutually complementary

XXXVI

home environmental control insularity particular and universal diverge in authentic fatal same sign advent demise immanent practice and science experimental objective luxury penury tolerated by chronological

XXXVII

swelling military humanitarian globalization party to lead revolution becoming educated random minimal causes prodigious effects fixed pseudo-localization situation harbor object singularity arises possessed projection

XXXVIII

rapprochements with non-identical nature false dialectic of popular consciousness corrupt slaves masters negotiation with evil parties first political ideological power καὶ Νικίαν unconsciously

XXXIX

general meeting co-operative construction periodization particular to old problematic modern democracy to impede final fixation truth triangle of thought object notion hole satellite observation of society sovereignty

XL

essence of artistic concept in action atomic deterrence strong by strong by weak natural necessity causal kinds definitions historical geographical materialism debate break in representation remain within sexual
XL I
no silence prior representational undermines halting problem into solution productive war in contention necessities imposed living presence material revolution doomed anti-essentialist radical plural democracy

XL II
rich poor factuality substance just useful historical emotions and interests progress no more illusion hyperreality destiny triumphant bourgeois drowned mendacious liberal conflict conceived as emancipation

XL III
unexchangeable world has no price damage by relativity to places and time unities edification ἀπόλιον misericordia articulation non-psychological bricolage contemporary abeyance without indifference

XL IV
interesting not sensationalism indispensable creative linguistic reversion to innatism workers’ anti-government to civil war nuclear filters contaminate in moderation subjective to objective certainty life-form

XL V
mathematical nature to arise theology open problems new scientific problematic secrecy domination spectacle universality robots taught more than all astronomers modern music producer consumer minimal

XL VI
fused unlimited to collective catechism historical critical imagination by praxis funeral transformation of threatening image deneutralization of media new world state serial modernity model sloughing opposing

XL VII
reconciliation sheer lie to overcome idealism after revolution depended upon big capital computerism mastery inhuman interpassive salvation nihilism to annihilate bourgeois cannot describe in ideas but real relations

XL VIII
performative simulation non-integration as if skepticism to humanism absurdity alienated tragic vengeance reversibility destiny intrication with alterity aidez-moi an-arthic ontological bourgeois waits for realization

XL IX
anachronisms dialectical beauty high-tech answer in solitude by extreme opposition parallels quantum beneath language raised technological unions corporate or working monarch pure irrational signifier ex-sistence

L
form content quasi-transcendental historical accident daily transformed into delectionation irrational unconscious deeper intentionality science not ready-made rid of prehistory M-C-M’ centrality of physical to realistic
ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS ABOUT POETRY,
Each Tendentious  Harvey L. Hix

Why so many poets at work rehearsing personal experience as anecdote, so few documenting corporate injustice to private citizens? Is my safety, my not having to face danger or death for my work, merely evidence of my prior erasure? Is “poet,” like “martyr,” a condition one can evade but not elect, a condition conferred (imposed) rather than chosen?

We have something like a common sense of how events follow one another. Such concepts as cause and effect, purpose, luck, and fate offer us ways to rationalize events. So in fiction there is a consensus to work from (in genre fiction or “realist” fiction) or against (in “experimental” fiction). But is there anything like such a common sense about how words follow one another? What consensus is available to poetry? Does “grammar” function analogously to “cause and effect”?

If corporate globalization can displace the sustenance economy, why can’t I disrupt poetically the pervasive corruption of discourse?

What does it imply, that we have a more extensive and exact vocabulary for physical discomfort than for moral discomfort? What does it mean, that the terms “physical discomfort” and “moral discomfort” seem parallel, but “physical pain” and “moral pain” do not? Of which, physical discomfort or moral discomfort, am I responsible to give account in poetry? Do I account for one by means of the other?

What if the poem has no intention of edifying, and no obligation to edify? What if it exists in order to release me from the moral? Just what does this “in order to” imply?

Imagination that codifies, or imagination that splashes?

Are my two poetic charges — to enter without reserve into the life and understanding of the other, and to see the other’s life and understanding as bearing on my own — mutually exclusive as conditions, and thus paradoxical as obligations?

Need one have been present in or at events in order to witness? to testify?

In scholarly texts, cross-referencing validates and verifies assertions made; does poetry undertake a more dynamic cross-referencing, one that de-stabilizes the “assertions” of the poem?

If Gerald Bruns is right that “rationality consists before everything else in the ability to make lists and tell stories,” does it corroborate genre, such that novels tell stories and lyrics make lists? Or is the making of a list also the telling of a story? And if so, what story does a list tell?

Can one distinguish a poem written before 9/11 from a poem written after? Should one be able to?

If one element of Elizabethan “wit” is its exploration of unlikely similitudes, then what might one learn about poetry by thinking of it as analogous to the “refresh” button on a web browser?

Is distaste for didacticism in poetry, at least in contemporary “academic” poetry in the U.S., a luxury of privilege? It assumes that the transaction consists of one educated colonizer (one already given access to relevant information) speaking to another educated colonizer, in a context in which justice for both parties is structured into politics. But what if either the speaker or the recipient of the poem comes from among the colonized, from those who have been systematically deprived of relevant information, those for whom injustice is structured into their political circumstances? What if a poetry wants to include the colonized, and even the colonized who have little or no formal education, among its audience? Doesn’t didacticism have ongoing pertinence in any conversation other than the privileged chatting among themselves?

What if word association is a form of thinking, a logic capable, like other logics — math or metaphor — of revealing to us aspects of the world? Is poetry inherently imperial? Does a voice’s mattering mean its mattering to the colonizers?

Imagination that builds, or that sows?

Is recognition of one’s already playing a role in the drama of war the first element of a counternarrative, as the Socratic recognition of ignorance is the first element of wisdom? Is it a necessary element of counternarrative, the defining difference from “the war story”?

What are the conditions, for any of us, of valid critique of a language we are using to critique things other than the language itself? As per Socrates in the Crito, do we have obligations, limits to objection, in virtue of “living there”?

Absent Socrates’ hope that the examined life is worth living, his faith in the redemptiveness — the wisdom — of recognizing one’s ignorance cannot stand. Can poetry sustain such hope? Or does poetry necessarily undercut such hope?
To resist, wouldn’t one have to bracket the moment of resistance, suspend one’s complicity? Is this possible? Or does it just make resistance a mode of self-deception more subtle than most?

What if we hold the mirror up to something besides nature? What if mirroring is a property of the aural as well as the visual, the linguistic as well as the “real”? A history could be anonymous, but how could the history be anonymous? What will be entailed for the poems by their being thus supervised by paradox? Does orphic-ness release one from self-expression, or confine one within it?

Which came first, the lamentation or the loss?

How do we know hired mourners’ grief is less deeply felt?

Is counternarrative “counter” because it tells a different story, or because it tells the story differently?

Are there not alternatives to the episode as the unit of understanding?

Imagination that labors, or that dreams?

Does poetry unsettle its readers when and because the poet is unsettled? Or does poetry affect poet and reader in the same way (i.e. are poet and reader both unsettled by the poetry)?

Does poetry possess the property of uncertainty, or communicate it? In other words, is poetry itself uncertain, or does it make other things uncertain?

How many forms of alienation are there? How many can one person endure? Which ones impose themselves, and which do we elect?

It may be that agency is not only altered for me by my alienation, but is itself alienated. Does my alienation call into being the alienation potential in others? Or call into action the alienation dormant in others?

And what if poetry in the new regime is not forbidden but impossible?

Insofar as vigilance and reason contrast rather than concur, to risk reason for vigilance seems to risk what might found internal orientation for what could only found perceptual orientation. Ought such vigilance extend beyond perception to conceptual claims?

Is this one power of poetry, to reveal a correspondence between internal and external worlds by revealing a correspondence between subjectivities? To solve, in other words, two philosophical problems, skepticism and other minds, by posing each as the solution to the other?

Is the most effective and most valid counternarrative to the dominant ideology told by replacing affect with reason, or by replacing one affect with another?

The external world becomes the internal with what inevitability?

Is this the paradigmatic perspective of lyric, that the external world does not act on us but becomes us? Is identification of common elements always fundamental to understanding a collection of lyric poems? Does the very fact of collecting in a poetry collection invite the reader into the process of thinking by metaphor, seeking the relationship between two entities?

Is there an innocence/experience distinction to be made, a relevant difference yet to be identified between a naïve lyricism that is pre-political, and a sapient lyricism that is post-political?

We take for granted that poetry is cathartic. But is it? Really? What if poetry is perplexing and disgusting? Not a savoring and digesting of one’s experience, but an anorexia?

Textual signs, material signs. Textual objects, material objects. But are there textual signs for material objects?

Can a poem close with an opening?

Is locating oneself exactly the same act as, or a distinct act from, describing the features of the world around oneself?

Can one think what one is repressing? Or is the belief that one is repressing something proof that one is not repressing it? What if the real grounding of the poem is not so much the inscription per se or even the fact of documenting and remarking on it, but the flight of the present moment into the infinite and irrecoverable past?
Rampike 21 / 2

What is the relation between pathos and identification? Does one condition the other, or are they reciprocal? Or equivalent? Is one a corruption/diminution of the other? Or are both (potentially) valuable and beneficial?

Why not more slash-separated twins/contrasts in poetry? Why not doubling/opposition as a more frequent poetic device?

Does anonymity alter temporality? Does anonymity make any inquiry diachronic, transform taxonomy into history?

Is the quality of reality that would make experience “real” the same quality that would make a poem “real”? Is it the possibility that the two qualities are not identical that necessitates the poem?

What about the fable gives it such force? What about us gives the fable such force?

Hieroglyph, or shadow? It makes a difference.

The complexity of the process of identification. What exactly do we see when we read, say, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”? Not ourselves, not a real horse. Do I look down on the scene when I read? Not really. Do I see from the eyes of a character within the poem? Not exactly. Who am I when I read the poem?

How large a gap in scale can a comparison cross? Can a child’s suffering an asthma attack be aptly compared to the suffering of a thousand prisoners? And does the answer to that question depend on whether the speaker has known those prisoners and been one of them?

Is it the combination of linearity and circularity that distinguishes the poetic sequence from “pure” lyric or story? Or is it the ironic relation between physiognomy and purpose (outside and inside, body and soul)?

Still a progress, but toward what?

Which is on its way? A state of grace, or winter?

How many rules (and which ones) are suspended in a poem that interrogates poetry? What can be said in a poem by a speaker who is acutely aware of the structural insincerity of poetry, that would be cliché coming from a less aware speaker?

Is the enemy political or spiritual? Without or within? Shouldn’t we ask those questions first, before we act?

Might the truth of the true consist in its susceptibility to self-critique and resistance to reduction?

What does the engagement of form with content have to do with activism? Are they inherently connected, and the task is to see the connection? Or is it that they ought to be connected but are not, and the task is to connect them?

Perhaps there are circumstances in which bland observation is what is called for? And perhaps poetry is capable of bland observation, no less than of epiphany? And perhaps some bland observations, in some circumstances, may be worthy of poetry?

How become conversant with the other in such a way that the other both is and is not the other, that one both is and is not oneself?

Is the point to integrate oneself with strangers, to make a polis of the cosmos? Or to disintegrate oneself from those nearest one, to make a cosmos of the polis? Is poetry’s obligation in this regard a constant one, or is it context-dependant? I.e. is poetry’s charge to bring the world to the city when the city is too small and the city to the world when the world is too large?

Should I be depicting the world as it is, without justice, or as it would be if there were justice?

Are poetry’s limits set by language, by myth, by the spirit?

From what past can voices not be channeled?

Against the broad expectation that poetry be simple and uniform, should not the poetic imagination seek to be (and is it not possible that it be) both sympathetic and analytic?

Ought poetry present what we can imagine, or what we cannot?

If naming can confer identity and immortality, how much does it matter that it cannot confer life?

Can one take x seriously — any x — without reducing it to absurdity?

Can a portrait be anything but grim, if it is set in (or part of) a grim landscape?
Complex and ambiguous grammar invites a complex mental operation that involves recognizing multiple possibilities, comparing these possibilities, considering the implications of each, maintaining contradictory possibilities, selecting between possibilities, and so on. When a “normal person” encounters a math problem he or she is not able to solve, he or she defers to it: I would need to be better at math to solve this problem. The default assumption is that the math problem is complex, above my (current) capacities. But the same person, confronted with a poem he or she is not able to “do,” likely will regard the poem as nonsense: i.e. will assure that the poem is beneath her/his capacities. What limitations does that impose on a poem’s manner of challenging, or ability to challenge, a reader into complex mental operations?

“We” (American poets of the early twenty-first century) tend to assume that a poem seeks specificity and particularity (through image and concrete detail, for instance), and attains universality by being representative of other particularities. But one might assume instead that a poem seeks oracularity, a generality that is universality. These reflect different premises about humanity. Are humans unique individuals who reflect one another through likenesses? Or does humanity precede, and simply manifest itself in, individuals? Are we many or are we one?

Is any progression a “natural” progression? an inevitable one?

Why not suspicion of the world as one’s pivotal attitude?

Why do we valorize identity (attainment of oneness) over duplicity (with its connotations of deception), when clearly society enforces duplicity on some persons by withholding sanction for the identities they would claim?

Even if we are between two worlds, they need not resemble Matthew Arnold’s. Arnold’s are inevitable, the birth of one inevitably following the inevitable death of the other; what prevents them from being inscrutable, each refusing communication with the other, or disclosure to its own inhabitants?

For there to be place at all, there must be places, plural, at least two. Does here and there entail us and them? Or is the leap from here and there to us and them simply a common default gesture?

Is it possible to cross over, to give here and there a chiasmic rather than a parallel relationship with us and them?

What makes wariness and reverence the right combination of postures to adopt in a holy place?

Does the spatial sense of “before” exclude the temporal sense, if what one is before is the secret of the world?

History can have meaning only if it can have effect, if we can learn from it and avoid repeating it. What is poetry, if we have not learned, and do repeat?

What is the poet to do with words she doesn’t have control over? Does she have control over any words?

The ideal of unmediated seeing aligns with the pastoral impulse, and the intuition on which it is based, that the primordial — and the ideal — condition of humanity is one person alone, in communion with nature. Thus, moments of poetic renewal are moments of realignment with that condition, as in Wordsworthian romanticism, and have their corollary view of language as subject to an ideal of transparency, an ideal of simplicity in language accompanies the ideal of simplicity embodied in a return to nature). But what if mediated seeing is just as good as, or even better than, unmediated seeing? What if seeing with simultaneous awareness of the means of seeing is as good as or better than “transparent” seeing (or from Strickland’s position, naive seeing)?

What if the “literary” depiction of humans as manifest in the Shakespearean corrupt court vs. pure countryside or the Thoreauvian idyll is just bullshit? What if Hobbes and Darwin are right that “nature” is not an welcoming haven of solace and safety but a plethora of forces arrayed against us in life-and-death struggle, in which human society is one of our means of self-protection, and thus itself the haven?

Much contemporary poetry takes for granted a premise parallel to the biological premise that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny: the intimate and personal recapitulates the social and historical. So just as one can draw certain inferences about the history of the species from close observation of the history of an individual if ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, so one can draw certain inferences about the social and historical from the intimate and personal. But is the premise valid? How would one decide?

Perhaps one historicizes oneself in part by the insistence with which one contextualizes and recontextualizes historical flotsam, things that have floated away from their original context?

If decay is pervasive, if human society in the world is entropic, will not my likeness to a beast prove more relevant than my likeness to a god?
Who has the right to speak about war? Its perpetrators? Its victims? Even if it is in fact limited, ought anyone willingly abide by the limitation? I.e. that it is limited does not entail that it ought to be. Does anyone not have the right to speak about war?

Why not “inscrutable” as a favorable, positive attribute of language use? Is inscrutability self-evidently bad?

In the middle of “telling it slant,” can a poet also, simultaneously, “tell it straight”?

Between ratio and substance. Are relationships being identified, or is an essence?

If poetry can reconcile us with the past, but has no predictive capacity, is everything in (and about) it anachronistic?

If poetry helps us choose the path to enlightenment (in preference to other paths) is it because seeing the past clearly enables one to see the future clearly enough to see at the end of which road enlightenment awaits?

What if we don’t assume that a poem, whatever else it is, is really a song? What if song-ness is among poetry’s least needful qualities?

To mistrust and contest my own convictions, to regard poetry as the site of multiple convictions, not subject to colonization by any one conviction or set of convictions. Easier said than done: how does one, how might one, fulfill a decision to be at strife with one’s own convictions?

What fear must be cast out to enter this poem? What fear will this poem cast out?

How articulate the urgency of an alternative vision, when the vehicles of communication are part of, and sustain, that to which we need an alternative?

Instructions for: WORDING THE BIRDS
Kevin McPherson Eckoff

1. Move your palms up + down your arms to find a feather.
2. DO NOT pluck it.
3. Cover your foveae with your eyelids + imagine flying in the sky like!
4. Conjure up your most impossible, most beautiful hope for yourself or a loved one or the world.
5. Touch the beak of your nose with one finger + your eyelid with another.
6. Imagine a bird in flight, coming or going or coming or leaving or sidewayising.
7. Materialize a sharpened pencil into your wing-hands a draw this bird in the above squareness.
8. Pretend the pencil is a quill + the bird is a kite.
9. Write your most impossible, most beautifully unlikely dream but make every letter a bird.
10. Return your hands to their normal, boring positions at your side + open your eyes.
11. Make the pencil gently fly back into its nest.
12. Repeat indefinitely.
as well as,

“Some Thoughts on Visual Art and Poetry”: Stephen Remus, Minister of Energy Minds and Resources (Canada)
Friday 11 March 2011 marked a high point of literary activity in recent history for the Niagara Region. It was only 6 months before that Stephen Remus, Director of the Niagara Artists Centre (NAC), came to me with an idea for an exhibit that became known as The Bird is the Word; a playful title for an exhibit that explores the territory where language and visual art collide. Together we began to plan a multimedia exhibition that would feature poets and artists from across Canada whose practices interrogate and expand our conceptualization of linguistic expression by deconstructing, reconceptualizing, and (de/re)mystifying the presence of the written word in contemporary culture. The Bird is the Word featured the work of bill bissett, Steve McCaffery, kevin mcpherson eckoff, Judith Copithorne, a.rawlings, Kelly Mark, Gregory Betts & Hallie Siegel & Matt Donovan, Laurel Woodcock, Marinko Jareb, and Travis Kirton & Kurtis Lesick. Their work was presented in a variety of mediums including video projection, onsite installation, collage, sculpture, and large format print.
My responsibility for *The Bird...* was to build a roster of poets that I thought best reflected Canada’s linguistic investigators. I wasn’t seeking to curate a show that simply showcased Canada’s linguistic provocateurs. Instead we wanted to provide as many entrances/exits into the intellectual and aesthetic territories that poetry and text-art inhabit. I wanted to stimulate discussions on literacy, the transference of meanings through (non)language, issues of materiality and representation, and beyond. In no way was *The Bird is the Word* a representational survey of Canadian visual and concrete poetry. There are many poets I regret to have not included: jwcurry, Maxine Gadd, Helen Hanoczky, Donato Mancini, Paul Dutton and so on, all of whom are doing tremendous work and easily could have fit the roster.

“I Don’t Need a Therapist”: Kelly Mark (Canada)

I will not discuss every contributor of the exhibit, but I will speak to my experience as co-curator and rationalize some of my decisions. bill bissett’s work was the starting point of my vision for the show. bissett is one of the earliest and most influential practitioners of concrete and visual poetry in Canada. bissett’s work represents one of the first organic collisions of forces that created Canadian concrete and visual poetry: tribal mysticism, primal graphism, dada anarchism, linguistic philosophy, radical postmodern play and more. bissett’s work has always reacted against restrictive systems of writing as seen in his body of work which McCaffery aptly refers to as being composed of “forces oppositionally related to the signifying graphism of writing” (94). bissett’s work consistently rejects conventions of grammar, syntax, and spelling. I suggest that bissett’s early work set the standard for radical writing in Canada. It is important to note that bissett’s contribution to *The Bird is the Word*, “the embrace booth,” was not necessarily reflective of his earlier work. “the embrace booth” represents his artistic growth. In this case, he has collaborated on a multimedia project that incorporates sound, video, poetry, and painting.

“scape scope”: bill bissett (Canada)
To more adequately represent Canada’s radical postmodern heritage, I decided to also invite Steve McCaffery and Judith Copithorne. McCaffery’s clinametic career has consistently received recognition for pushing the boundaries of linguistic (in)expression to its extremes. The first decades of his career (and especially his work with bpNichol) represent a poetics based on “the play of value and the value of play” (227), a playful poetic that advocates for radical political and social change. Copithorne’s work, on the other hand, has been undervalued for the last several decades. Despite this lack of recognition, Copithorne has been responsible for producing stunning work that has evolved from early hand drawn poems into the digitally created work we see today. I find her work especially poignant because at the early stages of her career, she was one of the few female poets in Canada to be experimenting with the visual elements of language in public forums. I hope The Bird is the Word is a step in reinvigorating discussion around Copithorne’s engaging and worthwhile poetry.

“Fleur”: Judith Copithorne (Canada)

This early generation of radical visual and concrete poets was placed in conversation with a new generation, here represented by derek beaulieu, a.rawlings, kevin mcherson eckoff, and Gregory Betts. Each of these poets have produced work with traces of influence from McCaffery, bissett, and Copithorne, but press the boundaries of language in ways unlike their predecessors. beaulieu’s work often exploits capitalist machines, ie photocopieters, letaset and other devices, to examine the politics of linguistic expression. beaulieu’s “an afterward after words: notes toward a concrete poetic” was an inspiration for me when co-curating this show. In the essay beaulieu develops a perspective on concrete poetry as an “inarticulate mark” (90) and a “formulation of a poetics of excess; an excess which is not one of desire, but of revulsion and rejection (90). beaulieu’s focus has shifted since this essay was published, but he remains to be one of the most influential voices of Canadian concrete poetry today. In addition, I invited poet and interdisciplinary artist, a.rawlings, to join the fold. a.rawlings’s work has investigated language in a wide range of experimental varieties including aural, visual and performance based practices. Next, I invited kevin mcherson eckoff whose second full length collection Rhapsodomancy explores code writing and shorthand as visual and abstract representations of language. Finally, Gregory Betts was invited because he collaborated with Siegel & Donovan on the haikube. Though Betts is not a visual poet (though an outstanding poet in his own right), the haikube is an ideal representation of poets and visual artists working together on text based projects.
Significant differences became visible when we placed the work and careers of these generations in conversation. In terms of presentation, the work of beaulieu, a.rawlings, and Betts was much cleaner than their predecessors. a.rawlings’s contribution was a tidy deck of tarot cards entitled Rule of Three, and the haikube created by Betts, Siegel & Donovan is a pristine artifact sculpted from ebony. beaulieu has admitted that his work has grown “increasingly clean over the last few years” as was seen in his tremendous contribution “prose of the trans-canada.” Though it is an astonishing piece, it does not reflect the same “dirty” approach that can be seen in fractal economies or with wax. The odd one out here is mcpherson, whose piece for The Bird... “The Words are the Birds” relied on the participation of exhibit goers. Though the end result was “dirty,” that outcome was determined by the exhibit participants. His own visual work does not align itself with a “dirty” aesthetic.

These observations demonstrate that there has been a shift from a “dirty” aesthetic which Lori Emerson describes as a “messy, typed-over aesthetic” and “a deliberate attempt to move away from the clean lines and graphically neutral appearance.” This shift in aesthetic may be an attempt to make poetry, a barely marketable product, more appealing to its audience. Or, if not a concern for the market, perhaps it is an attempt to institutionalize this work; to find a place for it in the gallery setting. These are the same struggles faced by McCaffery’s, bissett’s and Copithorne’s generation. For example, bissett began to standardize his work when he began publishing with Talonbooks who has almost annually published a conventional looking volume of his unconventional poetry since the 1980s. More recently, beaulieu suggests that “Poets should compose with an eye for both the page and the gallery, for both the reader and the viewer,” an argument I have trouble disagreeing with considering the marginal position poetry already holds.

In some ways I lament this shift from dirty to clean. In no way are my comments meant to devalue the work of poets working with a cleaner aesthetic. Emerson points out that this cleanliness “can also be construed to indicate a lack of political engagement with language and representation,” but surely this is not always the case. I believe that beaulieu, rawlings, Betts, and eckoff are in no way shying away from social or political issues. However, based on this representation of their work I would refer to them as cultural mischief makers, as opposed to the preceding generation of fiery radicals. Perhaps, the new generation has become dissuaded from pursuing an overtly radical poetic by the failure of preceding avant-gardisms. I, however, long for a reprisal of truly radical poetics in Canada.

On another note, The Bird is the Word highlights a crucial moment for contemporary literary arts. Appropriating visual art theory in service of literary experiment has become a recently popularized phenomena: poets who claim (or imply) to be the cutting edge are borrowing theory from visual artists and applying those concepts to language. In a Q&A with derek beaulieu, prior to The Bird... I ask, “Do you find it problematic that writing needs to draw from theories of visual art to maintain relevance or to even be at least somewhat intriguing?” to which beaulieu astutely replies:

Poetry continues to suffer under the baggage of accessibility. While it was once one of the highest of forms, it has degraded into a series of banalities. Conceptual Writing does not actually do anything "new" to language, it is simply a discussion around accepted art practices (that are not without precedent in the literary community either, as Kenneth Goldsmith & Craig Dworkin's AGAINST EXPRESSION so deftly demonstrates) and how they challenge our understanding of writing and creativity. Writing IS 50 years behind art -- and is still coming to terms with basic artistic practices, most specifically with collage. Writers who continue to seek out "originality" and "uniqueness" seem to operate without an understanding of the import of collage, sampling, and that the entire our contemporary culture is formed around repetition, homage, "fakes" and sharing (from DJ-ing and fanflicks to fake Vuitton bags to P2P sharing) ... I don’t find it problematic that poetry needs to draw from artistic practice; I think it odd that it hasn’t earlier.
That excerpt from our conversation highlights one of the main concerns of *The Bird is the Word*: the border blurring of language based visual arts and visually based language arts. What defines these borders? How are they crossed? Who is a visual artist and who is a poet? *The Bird is the Word* provided a space in which both disciplines were put into dialogue to try to grapple with these questions. I worry that the application of art theory may become a crutch for poets: to maintain any semblance of relevance is to follow the vanguard of the visual art world. If poetry can eventually close the 50 year gap between itself and painting, will poets attempt to surpass painters?

**Works Cited**


Alternate Faces: Haikube: Gregory Betts, Hallie Siegel, & Matt Donovan (Canada)
You Boycott Me
Gregory Betts

Will you boycott me upon reading this? will you boycott the response after reading this? I don’t care if you boycott me, or curse me and cause me supreme amounts of pain. If you boycott me, you are only hurting me. I will be forced to suffer the consequences. You throw me in the middle of the ocean, force me to live with tigers.

Where is my rights to express my freedomness when you boycott me? An average guy on an average wage? How cartel of you.

Actually, I prefer it. But tell the truth: You hate Americans, period. Just be honest about it. If you boycott me, I will boycott isreal, and I am serious about this. think about that before you boycott me. Tit for tit. This is collectivism. I will not send you any electricity.

You boycott me. So at the end of it all. What really happens? Nothing.

Boycott Argentina
Boycott Argentina for their sinful ways

Boycott Armenia
Boycott Armenia??! Because of the genocide?!?

Boycott Australia
Boycott Australia in retaliation for the country playing host

Boycott Austria
Boycott Austria and their tourist industry and buy your guns somewhere else

Boycott Azerbaijan
There is no reason to boycott Azerbaijan (maybe just for growth of prices at least in 100%)

Boycott Bahamas
Boycott Bahamas signs were held by Cubans outside the ships where the tourist boarded and just like when Jeb Bush "visited"

Boycott Bahrain
Boycott Bahrain? Boycott Oman? Boycott Iraq? Boycott Indonesia? Dream on... these are American Client states. These are vital Customers

Boycott Bangladesh
We will boycott all Bangladeshi products and services - world-wide - until Bangladesh drops all charges against Salah Uddin Shoab Choudhury

Boycott Barbados
I say let's boycott Barbados altogether and all things Barbadian. And further more, in protest, I refuse to even mention this nation by name

Boycott Belarus
When the EU threatens to economically boycott Belarus for not submitting to jew pressure or when the EU asks to send "Human Rights" Fifth Column jew spies into Belarus, Lukashenko laughs and notches down the spigots on the critical oil and gas pipeline flowing through Belarus from Russia supplying all of Western Europe

Boycott Belgium
Boycott Belgium-owned Anheuser-Busch
Boycott Belize
Canadians Boycott Belize Tourism, Murder Capital of the World

Boycott Benin
The NBA to Boycott Benin

Boycott Bermuda
The father of an American visitor jailed for attacking a fellow cruise ship passenger will mount a campaign urging tourists to boycott Bermuda

Boycott Bhutan
Since the organization and its members refuse to boycott Bhutan government and indeed do not see the corruption, the only avenue left for me to protest is to boycott

Boycott Bolivia
You say boycott Bolivia? How about the rest of the world boycott you?

I Boycott You
I boycott you who boycott girls, without girls, you cannot exist
and I boycott you Canada!!!
Really, Pampers? Must I boycott you too?
I boycott you blog that is full of shit.
I boycott you because I hate ads that much.
I boycott you illiterate Facebook applications.
The reasons I boycott you? At first, it was simply because it was so hard.
Here’s my question: should I admire you for sticking to your unnecessary, overtly sexual guns or should I boycott you because of, um, the same reasons?
How can I boycott you when I never darken your doors to begin with?
I boycott you Naomi Klein. This comment has received too many negative votes to show.
Click hide.
I boycott you because you are so ignorant that you are mixing art and politics together.
Get a crash course on Art 101!

“Cube2”: Gregory Betts (Canada)
POST-POETRY: A Roundtable Discussion on Contemporary Poetics [12 March 2011]

Gregory Betts: Neither necessarily good nor bad, the first impact of a new technology is disruption. It interrupts the existing environment by realigning and reconditioning all activities in that environment. Nothing remains quite the same, as even the meaning of the old technologies alters with the sudden indignity of such a deflating adjective. Writing, one of our oldest technologies, has not been immune to the enormous displacement caused by the digitalization of contemporary life, but the response of writers to new technologies has been, predictably, diverse and often tepid. Do we protect the tradition or herald the emerging possibilities of the new epoch? Such a timeless and oft-repeated quandary led Benjamin to suggest that, in fact, the “dreaming collective knows no history [...] The sensation of the newest and most modern is, in fact, just as much a dream formation of events as ‘the eternal return of the same’” (The Arcades Project 546). A lack of engagement with new technological environments, in light of this eternal condition of technological upgrading, is an alien and alienating gesture. If the contemporary, as by Agamben, is the one who most opposes the age in which they live, the contemporary is also almost indistinguishable in this spirit from the Luddite who also recoils from it in the opposite direction. The categories of avant-garde and technophobe both occupy their position of resistance to the omniscient, dream-like present from which they scurry as from a nightmare. Both reject mere passivity in the spectre of the new.

The morning after The Bird is the Word event took place in St. Catharines, ON, the contemporary authors who had assembled in the city were invited to gather for a roundtable discussion on the problems and possibilities of contemporary poetics. The event was organized as an “unconference” whereby topics of discussion were determined by the discussants at the table. Questions were also fielded by audience members present and sent through email and via other social media. Participants raised a rich range of possible topics for discussion, including contemporary poetics and nationalism, gender, technology, performance, and, as you’ll see in bill bissett’s delightfully digressive narrative below, Suzanne Sommers. It is rather revealing, however, that most of the conversation ended up centred on technology, on computers in particular, and how these machines have reshaped literary practice in the second decade of the new millennium. The poets debated and investigated the possibilities of response and engagement to new technologies, software, and art practices, while keeping an eye on the history of similar engagements from their own experiences or otherwise.

The Post-Poetry poets in attendance included bill bissett, Steve McCaffery, Karen Mac Cormack, Honey Novick, Gary Barwin, derek beaulieu, Jeremy Lessard, kevin mepherson eckhoff, a.rawlings (via Skype from Reykjavik, Iceland), and myself. Approximately 25 people from St. Catharines, Buffalo, Hamilton, and surrounding regions gathered early in the morning over coffee and vegan croissants at the Niagara Artists Centre to attend and participate in a discussion that lasted for nearly three hours. It was a collective very much aware of a history of experimental literary activity in Canada as in North America, and particularly cognizant of their own relationships to the forces that create, feed, and mandate technological change. Ironically, or perhaps poignantly, the technology used to record the event faltered and only snippets of barely audible dialogue remain. The transcription was begun by Aiddan Greene, advanced by me, and, fittingly, opened to correction and light editing by the participants via the online social textual editing software offered by Google docs. As a result, it is not an identical reproduction of the conversation that took place on Saturday 12 March 2011 but an impression as a representation: voices, jokes, stories, questions, and tangled tangents have been lost to the dream, now outside of history.

bill bissett: Wow, that Suzanne Sommers/Rod McKuen book you wrote is very beautiful.
Gregory Betts: It was beautiful wasn’t it? It was written under my pseudonym, George Betts.
bissett: We had a whole afternoon at the Secret Handshake Art Gallery discussing the works of Suzanne Sommers and Rod McKuen. David Bateman led the discussion and he read poems of both of those excellent writers to us. And then the group assignment was for
each of us – oh, there was two parts, yes, it was a full day! Part one was we needed to upon hearing identify which was Rod McKuen and which was Suzanne Sommers and tell him who wrote it. And the second part, which was really excellent, was that we each had to write Suzanne Sommers or Rod McKuen poems.

Karen Mac Cormack: What did you write, bill?
Bissett: “I’m sitting here in Malibu / looking out at the pacific / with my pink angora sweater, / my favourite pink angora sweater...”
Tim Conley: So you decided on Rod McKuen? [laughter]
bissett: Yeah, but they each have a sweater poem. Hers was a pink angora. [laughter]
“...and it makes me think of you / so far away, / and my cat, / who was pink / and angora / whose hair is grey to stay…”
Bettis: So you went right between them.
bissett: Yes, [laughter] well between the cat of theirs that was walking among us.
[laughter] And then the Rob McKuen one was inspired too: “I was sitting home alone on the farm, / I was looking at / I was looking at my / Rough and tumble sweater / with pieces of chestnut and leaves inside it / where I remember before you were grey [laughter] / in the green pacific island / as we rolled and tumbled / together over the hills / behind the farms / we had found the time of our lives.” [laughter] He’s a little deeper than Suzanne but she’s found other happinesses. [laughter]
Karen Mac Cormack: Does this mean that contemporary poetics focuses on three people?
bissett: Oh yeah absolutely. Do you feel it focuses on Suzanne Sommers’ work less or more? [laughter]
Mac Cormack: I dispute that entirely. [laughter]
bissett: Oh yeah absolutely.
Steve McCaffery: Why were the cats green in Suzanne Sommers when the sweater was pink?
Mac Cormack: Well the island was green…
bissett: The island was green. And that was in my writing. It wasn’t Suzanne’s.
McCaffery: So the difference is your cat’s green and wears a pink angora.
bissett: Yes.
McCaffery: And Rob McKuen has nothing to do with the cats.
bissett: Umm…I haven’t read everything of his yet…[laughter]
[...]
Bettis: There were a number of questions that came in from the field and so we’ll be using those and turning to them over the course of this discussion. One of them came from Joseph Brown who asked, “What impact the computer has had on your writing?”
derek beauilieu: OK, if we’re going to address computers and writing we should start off with the computer representative and ask Angela. Did you hear that question?
a.rawlings [on Skype]: Ah yes, I did, thank you, and derek I appreciate you nominating me to start. [laughter] The first thing I would probably do is look at the word ‘writing’ in this context and see if that’s the word that we want to be working with here. Writing: how is it affecting our meeting? How is it affecting our engagement with text or language? I know for myself, as a person who likes to make things, sometimes I am away from a computer screen and sometimes I am with a computer screen. Obviously, traveling so much, engaging with the computer has been a valuable component to collaborations.

“Ideologies”: a.rawlings (Canada)
derek beaulieu: Jason Christie, and I did the bulk of our work on the *Shift & Switch Anthology* in 2003, 2004, 2005 by computer – which was great to enable us to be able do that. And certainly, as you saw last night, I’ve been doing a little bit of performing using this technology. To answer the question in purely the act-of-writing sense, I’d say that I do notice quite a big difference when I’m writing something down by hand or if I’m typing something into the computer. If I’m writing by hand, I may tend to play spatially a little bit more, placing things around the field, or I may tend to write for long periods non-stop. And I tend to pay more attention when I’m handwriting. Sometimes the work will start there, other times the work will start purely when I’m typing into the computer. But I also often will go through periods where I will pull out my journals or pieces of paper or whatnot and only later transcribe the work onto the computer. So maybe, in some ways, there’s an editing process that happens or a translation – an act of translation from the written-on-the-page version to the written-on-the-screen version. I do tend to do the bulk of my editing on the computer since it’s much easier to do Copy/Paste or Find/Replace activities with the computer than it is in a hand-written environment. One last thing I’d like to say about computers is that I’ve been fascinated with digital poetics in the last decade and also have been working in the last year or so to explore more sound editing and video editing technologies and they’re helping with things that I’m creating. So I’d say that’s all I have to say.

Gary Barwin: I was gonna say I was thinking about the medium of the monitor ‘page’ in a non-Cartesian way so that it is not two dimensional. This page now can incorporate more than our paradigm of the paper page can incorporate. Video can incorporate time and space so rather than thinking about writing as occurring on the flat page, writing occurs on the screen in some sense so it can be that writing or other literary activities can break out of that flat two dimensional model and it can incorporate both notation, and, in terms of reading, it can incorporate all of the rich interactivity of sound, movement, everything. So the field isn’t this flat plane, it’s this multi-dimensional time-space plane.
McCaffery: For me, in response to what Gary was saying, I think the importance is less the computer as a method of transcription. In many ways I feel the computer is equally as limited as a type-writer which has basically been the machine of transcription for a lot of my work. But a really key thing now is the way the computer informatics, using Donna Harraway’s term, it’s the amount of information and data and the speed of access to it that this is generating. I don’t think that Conceptual Writing would be conceivable without the internet, and without that information management, and that huge shift towards appropriation that we see in movements like Flarf. It seems to me that is the paradigm shift. I think what’s happening now: I would say it is a neo-future; it is not Marinetti’s fascist futurism. We know Marinetti was a pompous asshole, [laughter] but he was extremely prophetic when he said that the most new technology involves human consciousness. McLuhan said the same thing. I think that Language Writing is the last of a particular technology generation and we are moving into a new one.

Jeremy Lessard: The first thing that I think of is how the computer resists the palimpsest. It is very difficult to physically type something over something else where you have to sort of type them separately and then fix them together. Whereas, when you have a pen in hand you go straight for it. That’s been an a limited factor as far as trying to create some sort of concrete poetry on the computer cause that’s been very resistant to manipulation either axial or palimpsestial. This may sound weird, but I have never used a typewriter.

bissett: No I get that. I also get what you were saying about notation on the computer, because I was brought up within the typewriter epoch and with the typewriter you can actually type one letter on top of another and so that you could do palimpsesting as a kind of tapestry and variations of tapestry work on layer and layer of palimpsesting that I do and you do and so many others. But it is not possible on the computer. It absolutely will not put a bottom letter on top of another. But using frames and stuff, and there are ways around it, we can swing things over and place a bunch of stuff on top of another bunch of stuff. But it is an overlay that’s not “exactitude as kings”, as Gertrude Stein would say. And like a narrative enigma, I did a lot of computer concrete poetry. I was fine, and even quasi-happy doing it, but it didn’t have the tactility for me of one thing on top of another, the incredible visual appeal. But as you were saying the whole appeal comes from my early mentors who were Gertrude Stein and E.E. Cummings so that I was brought up to see the whole paper as where any part of where the poem could go. It didn’t always have to be rectangles and squares.

Mac Cormack: But surely the computer all comes down to how efficient you are, how much you learn. And there’s always that danger of taking something that’s really normative and doing fancy things to it -- with considerable ease, -- but you still have to think about it.

beaulieu: But even with that kind of ease and proficiency, it’s not about process, it’s about the results and the product. The entire structure of the computer is built upon efficiency. I found it interesting that the computer was pitched as a creative tool to be something that could lead you off the grid, well, really you can do anything. You swing in all these directions, but what in fact is done in what I’m writing is its reasserted a kind of ‘Olson great space’. I can only get away from it, like end posting, through writing everything by hand. Whenever I work with the computer, it falls right back.

Barwin: Why does it restrict you so? Is it an issue of your proficiency with the computer. You’re not at the point where the tools become invisible and you’re not be bound by its immediate paradigms? Or is it something else?

beaulieu: Well I think that for me getting off the 8.5” x 11” letter/legal side of the page is quite cool, certainly in the terms of seeing the composition field as as bigger than the screen so that you have to turn it all around. So that you can’t see it all at once. And it’s a tool base where you actually have a sort of proficiency within InDesign or Quark before. Now maybe that’s just an inherent laziness on my part that I would rather be able to create than just sit down and have to learn another tool, which kinda goes back to what I was saying last night. Poets are lazy and don’t want to have to learn stuff, but that is more an indictment of my own practice.

Barwin: I imagine, like I play instruments, I can be stuck on the saxophone playing just the notes that come from the factory or I could look for other things. As I advance with a tool, it expands the range of what’s possible for me. It does limit, it is designed for certain things, but on the other hand, with proficiency, you can then find other things you can do
and not be bound by the expected paradigm of what constitutes ‘saxophonality’, ‘clarineticity’, or whatever.

Betts: It requires thinking of the computer as an instrument.

Barwin: Yeah, there you go, proficiency provides opportunity, but with proficiency it also becomes more invisible. It does what you want. You make those happy accidents which happen with an instrument because you are gesturally involved or perceptually involved in terms of exploring how it thinks or how it wants you to think. You can either subvert that or you can go with and follow it into different areas so it becomes this dialogic interaction with this thing, with this instrument, what it is can be expanded as you explore and follow technique.

Beaulieu: It’s a good idea to remember that the writing that you do on the screen is just the surface. The actual writing that you’re doing is going on behind the scene. It’s a fascinating idea that the novels that are being written are not on the screen, they are happening between the interface and the CPU. That’s where the actual writing is taking place. That’s the actual text.

Rawlings: This social computer as a collaborator, it kind of makes me think of other artists who have worked with perhaps non-human collaborators. Computers as collaborators.

Honey Novik: Does this all mean that everybody assumes that what we have is poetry or conversation or needed to be communicated? I mean, I think each one of us have to redefine what poetry means to us and what it is and what we have to say to either ourselves or somebody else.

Betts: We’re going through a big shift at this point especially with the new technologies and new medium milieu that we are drenched with, such that the nature of writing is altered. Which is why we have this tongue-in-cheek title of the event, “Post Poetry”. But there is also a question of the extent to which writing today remains connected to the writing that was done before. Probably all of us around the table have a different relationship to the writing that came before, but we’ve been changed and the continuity has been disrupted.

Bissett: Barrie would say that, no matter what we’re doing, what tools we’re using, it’s still the language that’s doing it. It’s the language that’s collaborating with us.

McCaffery: I was going to mention something else about the situation with computers, but I mean really it’s mandatory to use a computer especially if you teach at a university. We’re getting all this stuff, but it really is a mandate that coming from post-industrial capitalism. We are dependent on them to make that software. We are dependant on things that become exclusive. We’re turning romantically back to the typewriter now, people much younger than me, and just seeing liberation as we are doing it. And to bring in the different sound poetry that is happening in France, which is much different from North American poetry, is the imperative that you have to invent your own, you have to build your own software. You cannot use corporate constructed software. You use it only once. That is the limit of the poem. I think that it involves taking software and turning it into a product industry that this is in fact an extension of creativity. Poetry is one prismatic manifestation of creativity, and it seems now that creativity has to shift away from corporate facility.

“Tyepstract: Babel”: Steve McCaffery
(U.K. / Canada / U.S.A.)
McCaffery: And, bill, you know this; in the sixties, it was the mimeo revolution. It was ‘Everybody print!’; you didn’t need a big publishing house. bp’s Ganglia and Gronk and blowoointment press are prime examples of this. And within this, there’s a history of creative misuse of technology or a subversion. It’s there within the typewriter. It’s there within the clerical commercialism. The artists were using it in a way that the secretaries weren’t. We did that with photocopying, and leterset, and Xerox copying. And in that previous use, we were actually appropriating the technology. I feel that its become increasingly more difficult.

Barwin: We turn to language as writers; the computer is another language and so we have a second writing relationship: to the technology. You interact with language as well as with the technologies between us and language. They’re related.

beaulieu: These technologies are only made available to artists once they are no longer needed in the workplace. We only receive a technology when it’s useless, basically, and so we’re not participating in a capitalist economy. We are in fact the refuse, we’re using the garbage of the capitalist economy. And that’s what really intrigues me. I’m increasingly using a mode of technology, not on the computer, letseters and typewriters, not in an nostalgic move. But this is the stuff that nobody else wants to use and it’s very intriguing to me to work within a medium of technology that is increasingly difficult to find.

Mac Cormack: And then you’ll find an alternative to the process, in charcoal. [laughter]

McCaffery: It’s connected to the built-in inherent contraction within the system. Althusser talks about it, and its getting increasingly relevant, how the news we’re getting from oppressive regimes like Burma are coming from cellphones. It’s the decentralization of access to information and this is the real revolution that is happening today. This is why I think wiki-leaks is so fascinating. It’s the utter vulnerability of a technology that is built for surveillance and security, and it touches the contradiction of a home land security to protect freedom in suspending rights.

bissett: Yes cause we knew from like the first batch that Hillary Clinton asked for her staff to get the D.N.A. of the head of the U.N. and all his close associates. So how Macbeth is that? [laughter].
TWO POEMS
Cyril Dabydeen

Shakira Meets Shiva:
Sweet Dreams
“Here be monsters”
for Robert Sauve

Not mere exploration,
but what lurks deep
within, instinct only

In days gone by, or
with demons now
entreating us more

Than the Ancients ever
did, like Socrates: what
he might have once

Considered or had in store
for us with caves, too:
Plato’s always

As we’re yet swayed
one way, or another,
memory also dogging us

With our being neanderthal
again, nothing less--
as friendships take us

To another place, or time,
beckoning us again--
with the likes of Shakira

Walking hand in hand,
as you, friend, with doubts
about being, or mortality

When the god Shiva now
appears, telling us about
finite reality, indeed

Or about Atman only--
as we look up at the stars,
Brahman being with us

In the heavenly bodies--
and hips swaying, indeed,
the more you can imagine

What occurs on the diurnal
stage: Shiva making a face
with a last lingering look

At his consort, Parvati--
women indeed, you see,
disclaiming selves, this

Timelessness being
everywhere because
of who we truly are

In this hour, what I want
you to know, to tell you--
you, most of all

With love, endearment,
solitude also...looking
far, far above.

After Cormac McCarthy
(The Road)

I am so hungry
I can eat a baby

In one gulp,
Whole--

But eat nothing
Bigger than your head

I’d been told,
By my mother

If post-cannibal,
Or it’s downright

Survival, apocalypse
Foretold--

Looking back,
With a turnaround

In a shroud--
It seems like,

A lasting memory,
o leave nothing out

In time’s reckoning,
A chain of being--

What’s neanderthal,
With consciousness--

Homo erectus, or
Homo sapiens--

I must contend with,
The stars outshining

Us, one too many,
Above all else.
Paradox Frittata (Macro-Galactic)
Babar Khan

Ingredients
1 wooden briefcase
1 forest green wall with a fold-out panel containing galactic astrolabe and other measuring instruments
1 galaxy (small)
3 black holes
1 infinite quantity helium extract
1 Ur-Objects
1 dimensional quantifier
3 Xlahuczjönrxfxööodq (ask for them by name at specialty spice-monitors)

In a large frying pan, already coated with helium extract, place galaxy centre up. Allow the temperature to reach $16 \times 10^{37.286}$ trillion Kelvin. Cook for approximately 5 eons, but take care that the galaxy does not become overheated—the black holes should be marginally runny, allowing some matter to escape. Prepare a 7th dimensional astral plane by coating it with a sufficient quantity of Ur-Objects. Slide the galaxy slowly onto the plane. Serve at once, galaxy should not be allowed to cool down and contract into a Singularity. Eat with Void-Fork.

Biscuit-Haikus

In the train
everybody talked about Pad Thai

Big breast Panzo what shirt was I wearing that day?
Ah, now I remember

Whenever I see a Zen master I want to
fuck the moon

A.E. Horst techniques the exhaust from the Porsche billows like fog in the rain
everywhere around me even the tiniest creatures are knitting

Observers everywhere I can even see my own self frame
AN INSTALLATION
Norman Lock

THE SEA CARESSED BY COLD LIGHT

Scene:
A dark space. Large ball-bearings completely cover the floor. A white spot slowly revolves from the ceiling, sweeping the floor.

Sound: The sea as heard far out from shore.

Installations:

THREE TABLES

1. Water Table
A space empty except for a table made of clear Plexiglas. The table’s top is a sealed rectangular chamber, one foot deep, filled with blue fluid. The fluid is lit from below. The room is otherwise in darkness.

Sound: Water as it might be heard standing by a stream or river.

2. Table Land
A space empty except for a scarred, wooden table. The table’s top is earthen. The earth is seeded so that grass will sprout and grow during the exhibition. The table is watered each day during the exhibition. The watering vessel is of clay or iron.

Sound: Wind as might be heard on a savannah or steppe.

3. Table of Elements
A dimly lit space, empty except for a table. The table is made of iron. The table’s top is inscribed by a grid. Engraved within the squares of the grid are symbols of the chemical elements.

Music: an interpretation of what might be a “mineral silence”
ON QUEEN VICTORIA
Karl Marx

She is not necessarily ugly—quite the contrary.
Her throne-sitting is violently placid.
She believes the throat-cutting done in her name
must be decorous.

In every portrait, spy her arms—annulled wings:
She is a black-decked hen
brooding in a nest of nettles,
given to shadowy feeding
of conspiratorial spirits,
all clucking to swallow more of Africa,
more of Asia,
more of th’Americas,
the two Indies,
and even more of Europa,
more and more.

Yet, behind her decorative patter,
there’s Terror, radiant as the sun
that bloodies her global realm,
each dawn and dusk.

When I see her, perennially amid
dull, chilly darkness,
her skull sloshing with tea and
sherry,
I see the odalisque of Tennyson,
the black widow of yellow-sheet
bards.
(Hear her um-ing and er-ing
her canon of limericks.)

Is she, perhaps, amiably ugly?
I see a blackened, pale carnation;
a lady as cadaverous as a raven.
(Her sex must be an agony of thorns.)

The lady is garbage.
She’s rotten, not wholesome.

Yet, she’s a woman less interesting
than the mature fly
that she resembles—a maggot come into its own.

She is, really, worse than ugly:
She is obsolete.

She credits she has a right to
sourness,
to be indiscriminately carnivorous,
to model a genealogy of hemophiliac
throwbacks,
to read telegrams whose dotted
ellipses
trace out snippets of corpses,
or to open volumes of verse
that leak sighs and moans
(the orgy of a séance).

Doesn’t she know,
vis-à-vis Albert,
that the dead stay dead,
if never quiet?

I spy her obsidian chastity.
(Her dead husband is a unique
eunuch,
unworthy of her solitary idolatry.)
Her face admits a vampire’s
bitterness.
Her empire is cannons barking
scripture
in Gothic lettering,
announcing Götterdämmerung!

Antigonish (Nova Scotia)
22 MARS MMXI
Composed by:
George Elliott Clarke
“J from A to Z”

The dear dipper in my mouth shout: “Ru------by!”

“Sh’bam”

So the baby ingin’ “Sh’bam” shout: “Skid-Dat!”

mel-lo----tone

What dat Carolina shout? “Blues!”

(What dat Carolina mel-lo----tone shout? “Blues!”)

So de Oo-Bop shout a “No!”

(So de OOH Oo-Bop shout a “No!”)

- tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE (2011-2012)
“J from A to Z” explained

I was listening to Miles Davis’ "So What" for the 1st time when I noticed a 2 note motif that corresponded melodically to the way I might imagine someone saying "So What?" for emphasis. It occurred to me that that was probably deliberate & that there must be other jazz songs that wd fit these criteria:

1. a relationship between the title & a motif in wch 1 is a translation of the other

2. this translation shdn’t be just a fitting of lyrics to a melody or vice-versa: the relationship shd be more strictly musical

I then listened to 2-13+ jazz songs trying to find as clear a correlation of the type I wanted as the one I’d found in "So What". That was harder than I’d expected. I also solicited suggestions from people connected to the "mm" group that I host every 2 wks at my house. Some of them are jazz musicians. Ben Opie suggested 3 & Kenny Haney suggested 1.

From this plethora I only picked 9 & even those were dubious fits:

"Carolina Shout" - James P. Johnson
"Dipper Mouth Blues" - King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band
"In a Mellotone" - Duke Ellington
"Ingin' the OOH" - Count Basie
"No Baby" - Steve Lacy
"Oo-Bop Sh’bam" - Dizzy Gillespie
"Ruby My Dear" - Thelonious Monk
"Skid-Dat De Dat" - Louis Armstrong
"So What" - Miles Davis

Ellington's "In a Mellotone" has lyrics by Milt Gabler. It’s also known as "In a Mellow Tone" wch is what the lyrics correspond to. The recording I heard is an instrumental under the 1st name. Given the possibility that the lyrics were added later, I admit the "Mellotone" version to the 'ranks'.

According to Opie, "In the case of "No Baby", I know that the words suggested the melody: it’s based on Lacy having heard Sidney Bechet repeatedly say "no baby" to his girlfriend."

I then took each of the words in the titles (treating "Oo-Bop" & "Sh’bam" as single words) & sought out fake bk scores & lead sheets for them so that I cd get as simple a motific correspondence as possible. In cases where I didn’t find scores, I ineptly transcribed the motifs myself - simply using "x"s to mark the pitches - w/o adding rhythmic info. I then graphically associated these w/ the words.

The ‘final’ step was to create sentences w/ the available vocabulary. The idea, as w/ other restricted-vocabulary-users before me, was to generate sentences that I wouldn’t otherwise write that’re deeply rooted in a specific milieu w/o otherwise conforming to conventions of that milieu.
une pensée inclinée vers le monde
laisse des traces
écrire est un paysage sonore
l’œil la bouche l’épaule la main
lient les mots et les choses
je suis absorbée par des intentions de lumière
par la vie comme un geste dressé
rouge vif dans le poème

une pensée inclinée vers le monde
laisse des traces
écrire est un paysage sonore
l’œil la bouche l’épaule la main
lient les mots et les choses
je suis absorbée par des intentions de lumière
par la vie comme un geste dressé
rouge vif dans le poème

a down-to-earth thought
makes its mark
writing echoes the soundscape
eyes mouths shoulders hands
connect words with objects
I marvel at the play of light
at life as a delicate balance
teetering on a poem

(moth to a) ... (flame)
Amanda Earl

(moth to a)
i. *because it is easy.*
there are no footprints.
lacuna has always sounded to me like this :
the lacuna moth.
to paint the death’s head moth, Vincent had to kill it.
(the eggs were buried singly beneath leaves)
they mimic the scent of bees
(the hive is molested)
heat can be carried in cupped hands.
like a small bud ignited.
it flares.
have you seen those blossoming teas?
swollen underwater brights & then you drink them.
ii. *beneath the Roman road.*
an excavation.
we uncovered the vase.
empty of everything.
but myth.
    (we are)
that is to say, cinnabar is poison.
I have a cracked amulet fractured in the shape of stars.
TWO POEMS
Nick Power

STRANGE PHONEMES
again and again and again
across the floor
maple key in free fall
tracing these loops and spirals
a dance stepping out from her notes
in a continuous path of singular motions

from
Travers Mountain
out to
Cape Clear

a breath
a beginning
a call
a clarity
a possibility
a phoneme
a sense
an entrance
a thought
a root
a route
a chance
a strand
a movement
a middle
a name
an exhalation
an expression
an exit
a line
a lilt
a landscape
a link
a lift

FOOT NOTES
for Fritjof Nansen

Nomgan
Aspiring
Back
Novaya Zemlya
La Réunion
Nouna
Amderma
Noonomah
Noranda
Nonburg

Antwerp
University Girl
Lindsey Bannister

(1)
I used to live here, but now I’m University Girl.
Used to pick ripe beans in this garden they were wormish and fat in child hands.
I handled them so gently careful not to bruise. It’s funny the things you remember, though
memory is delicate, I hear.

I lived with
grandfather
grandmother
Old Uncle

They were born
somewhere else better not to be
somewhere else clean your plate in memory of
somewhere else.

They’re gone now, in a Home.

I lived here for awhile
then was taken in by a benevolent Aunt. There was a scholarship
and now I’m a University Girl
in Toronto. Hate to say it, didn’t ride in by tractor, or pick-up,
but I was startled by city lights
heavy and constant.

I’m sure I circled street lamps like a hungry gnat.

(2)
No one lives here anymore.
Sunken veranda smiles smugly. Windows are rotten
no glass, only dull emptiness.
Yes, weathered frames hold darkness nicely.

This is the summer kitchen.

Old Uncle painted these walls blue
like an impossibly clean lake, the kind you see in insurance company calendars. Fumbling,
he didn’t sweep away careless drips and
they dried.
If you look closely, you can see them
slick globes, creeping snail-like.

This is Mary.
The Mary
nodding off gently Mother and child, sealed
in a gold frame [I knew her before I learned the word Byzantium].

This is the famous painting.
Seven storks
Onetwothreefourfivesixseven
in row.

Old Uncle didn’t remove it from the wall, instead
painted around it then
painted the frame to match the room [and then
some final touches
he struck their necks with his brush and now they are decapitated. Decapitated by
impossible blue.

(3)
You can see the neighbour’s place just there over
the hedge.

Helen, old epileptic, lived there forever. My grandmother made her out to be some shivering
recluse easily startled by needling neighbours or interfering light.
But Christ
no woman that would openly break an animal is worthy of my condolences

I saw Helen at sunrise, while waiting for the bus,
chickens gathered trustingly. She’d pluck one by the neck. Flick and twist. So casual, like snapping
a stem. And it hung from her hands, a feathered bouquet,

One afternoon there were cars, trucks parked in the drive
and she was gone. I didn’t know old Helen had family, and I can barely imagine her in a Home.
When I do, she is an angry dart
ready to stick nurses with the fury of her tongue.

I used to drive by,
and think, there’s Helen, the taken,
she’s inside, one of many

Onetwothreefourfivesixseven

(4)
And then there were draft dodgers, hippie-dippies from the States
run about half naked, no shirts no nothing
the grandfather rages.

They painted Helen’s place with the same carelessness of Old Uncle.
Have you seen a pink porch before? There it is fleshy
and useless like a dangling limb or broken neck

They aren’t there anymore.

(5)
I can’t show you the rest of the house because
the ceiling collapsed and masked bandits
may stray from hideaways. This sounds ridiculous, but
I fear raccoons, lumbering hunchbacks,
the way some fear squirrels,
which are guilty of little except petty thievery.

After all
everything freezes
under shattered plaster. Bedrooms look like winter, but
I’m wading in impossible blue.
I stand here in honour of my parents,
hippie-dippies seduced by the ocean. Can’t blame them
city lights stick to my skin like pebbles and sand.

(6)
Everyone needs a benevolent aunt. There she was. Pulling into the drive. There I was.
Holding a suitcase. It was like a movie. Cold sticks to our faces.
Fog collects around the edges of windows like a frame. Oh Mary

I like to play with fog take my finger smear an oily line. Aunt says I donnaftaworry I’m
almost University Girl. I press a finger against the glass, sever the tips of passing corn
stalks

(7)
There were no parents, only the old ones.

The Home contains stale undershirts, rusty fingernails
and them.

They are somewhere else
Onetwothree.
Awaiting the arrival of the butcher
Paul Lisson

O, But what shall I tell you? What is there worth being told?
The future will be luminous and reckless
This it was that the wives prophesied

When I showed up at your door You coaxed me with candy
Shook your bracelet charms and said
Let me wash away all that algebra
Let your punishment fit my crime

We wandered through your wardrobe We drank intemperance
The future was framed by your legs
This it was that the priests envied

O, But what's left to say? What is there that hasn't been sold?
Can you hear the gull's farewell?
The last of the boats has sailed

And church bells no longer chime

How long now, 'til our joined heritage leads to the gallows? You
smile and say: "I'll always pretend that I'm not smarter than you."

Paris, midi
Raquel Torres

We couldn’t see the roses stare at the sun
wishing for rain
or their leaves cupped upwards

Sitting in the café among cars
children and passersby
we heard the accordion’s sad tune
stirring our cells

You sat in front of me
and I recall wondering
why I hadn’t ordered a cappuccino

I called the waiter
I called the poet
who told me all about walls
and spiders

Hiding behind the newspaper you read
the world and all the learning
we drove by

The waiter returned with the check
and your cappuccino
sat on the table in front of me

At that moment
alone without news
the world didn’t matter anymore.
Blueshift Road  
Camille Martin

Recalling a slight breeze of little consequence
on an unremarkable cloudless morning except
for wearing blue plaid picking blackberries
along an ancient riverbank. And the breeze,
of course. Brimming with capture, time
inflates like the skin of a rampantly-
expanding balloon of a universe. Leaves block
the view, and notions of sequence twist in the wind.

When the membrane bursts, skeletal shreds flutter
to wherever home calls home, and beyond, streaks
of bats at dusk ripping open the pinkish-yellow
veil in my brain. Streaks also of raindrops
on a windshield imitating the slow melt of glass into
elongated pools. Wheels veer into a medieval hamlet minus
medieval thought bubbling just under the placid
surface of another kind of skin. Unsolved

riddle spreads bedlam on blank slate, reads tomorrow’s headline, hard to remember without the cold
taste of whatever’s weighing down asphalt stretching
from toes to horizon. I go it blind, ears kissed
by a slight breeze of little consequence. Above me, bats
fly out of hiding for their nightly hunt and boys in the park begin
their nocturnal basketball leaps. I lied about the bats
but study the sky nonetheless. Spotting them
won’t change the drama much, a hairline crack
on an eggshell. The story continues: alpha, null, data,
rift. Absence of bats, absence of river, motes of stars beyond
the mesh of twigs. On this side of the window, starbursts
of unspeakable colours detonate as I rub sleep
from my eyes. Not that it matters much
to the story, but hatching the egg depends on the sound
of a tree falling before, during, and after.
On Reading Walcott's Latest Book of Poetry
Stephanie McKenzie

"... Watch those egrets
... they are the bleached regrets
of an old man's memoirs" (Derek Walcott, "In the Village," White Egrets)

Picking up White Egrets, I read regrets. This I'm sure of.
What is meant by the white I don't know, though imagine
white lies, the little condemnations, not mortal,
but things pricking our skins.

I read and you grow old, your voice solid as the stones
the waves crash on beaches, some inhospitable here
like those on Newfoundland's rugged coast.
Not all is silt sand, tourists' imported dreams and dollars
and unreal worlds housed in magazines (the Caribbean's unrelenting
strength holds water tight against a nightmare or two).

Back in Canada now covered in snow freshly fallen
worlds away from the life lived the last few weeks
amongst the vibrant and keep-on-going of Kingston
(and three days taken in Treasure Beach)
I imagine for you old Church hymns that might
keep you happy in your new-found age of old
and thinking back (regrets of former times and acts
not thought of, then). For most do worship here.

I thank you.

You wrote Omeros.

THE BROKEN CITY LAB "Make This Better" is part of an on-going project that began in 2011. It features a series of temporary installations using retro-reflective hand-made cardboard letters set across particular sites in the city of Windsor aimed at generating dialogue, discussion and thinking about what needs to be done to make this post-industrial city, a better place. - Justin Langlois
Colour Blind
Robert Anderson

The white and whiteness 
will not go

Premonition of the Magenta Woman
serotonin seductress
sirens and vertigo
the venomous night
engorging black Ethiopian coffee
centuries half conscious
I offer you

Sequences of polar night
cold and divergent
the fiction is scandalous

Trapeze artists
linear and fabled
recalling the blue
night of resistance

Encounter with a cowboy
Andre Narbonne

My sister shows me an
e.e. Cummings poem:
buffalo bill’s defunct—
what can it mean?

Do you understand? she asks.
I shake my head.

It means that no one is better than
anyone else.
It means that when we’re dead, we’re all
the same.

All I know about poetry
I know from Golden Books—

all I know about death
I know from church, and
from the time my mother
furthered my education
by bringing me to a funeral
home to see a dead body.

The man in the casket had a green beard.
I remember saying that it was green.
I told my friends at school. I
remember saying it again
and again and again until
I could no longer remember the beard,
just my word for it—green.

That’s what I know about death.

Now do you understand?
We’re all the same.
"Manifold"

"Learning Curve": Tray Drumhann (USA)
XENOGENOUS LANGUAGE  Eric Zboya

In 1825, a blind French student from L’Institute Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris named Louis Braille engineered the braille alphabet to give sight, on a textual level, to those who lacked visual clarity. To explain briefly the functionality of the braille system, each letter of the alphabet consists of a series of raised dots within a 2 x 3 grid. Each dot placement within this grid can generate a total of sixty-three different patterns that can represent a letter of the alphabet, a number, or various marks of punctuation. The braille system has evolved to include capitalization, contractions, single-letter abbreviations, multi-letter abbreviations, music notations, and mathematics. In other words, braille illustrates a tool for the discerning of lattices and discourses that are otherwise nebulous to those who lack the ability of visual observation.

Even in our current scientific capacities, physicists are unable to discern visually the building blocks that make up all matter in the universe - atoms. On a scale beyond that of the angstrom (1.0 x 10^-10 metres), atoms are imperceptible to human senses, even through mechanized processes, such as scanning tunneling microscopy and atomic force microscopy (mechanized processes that can only provide inference). Yet, through the course of bonding, these single atomic units coalesce with other single atomic units to create the discourses that make up life’s observable compositions.

These element-based images illustrate the idea that, on a universal scale, the basic building blocks of language are atoms, and not necessarily the graphemes, phonemes, and morphemes that we have come to know through the creation of linguistics. Every single atom within these images have been rendered in braille and left unperforated to illustrate concealment from visual observation. Furthermore, these images create ideograms that attempt to capture not only those smaller units that compose the atom - the protons, the neutrons, and the electrons, which lie within that liminal vastitude between human comprehension and human imperviousness - but the inhumaneness of language - the idea that language is xenogenous in nature. Language has come to originate not through the creation and evolution of the human species, but through the creation and evolution of the universe. In other words, in order to say the word language, you must first create the Big Bang.

← Choline Asterism
Excerpts from *Chance Poetics: Walk Poem & Aleatory Essay* 
*Mat Laporte*

**Walk Poem**

Being in the sunlight makes my eyes feel like there’s vinegar in them. A man and his dog both have awkward black coats that are too big for their bodies, prompting me to think of the cliché that pets resemble their masters and vice versa. My eyes don’t have time to adjust to the sun before I’m going underground again. Most people are wearing some sort of toque. I get out of Christie station at 12:15 pm. A police siren snorts once before turning off again. Long shadows and gum stain the cobblestones. Ray Rasound Density 8-5937. Taking money from an outdoor ATM makes me aware of my back, shadows and poverty but it is just an idea, I remind myself. A Chinese guy is wearing goggles and two Chinese girls have their hands hidden in the arms of their coats. A sign with an arrow and the word dancing written vertically. A woman with very red lips drinks from a huge white cup and stares at me intensely from a Starbucks. A brown dog lies in the sun, tethered to a no parking sign and licks his paw. Someone says nice to meet you and a door squeals. A teak Buddha in the Indian style lays on its side with eyes closed, prompting me to think Infinite Repose and Luck. Maybe. I turn south on Major Street and I am alone except for an old lady with a shiny head approaching me from the south west side of the street. When I look up she has crossed to the east side of the street. To avoid me? I have a pen cap in my mouth. At the corner of Major and Sussex is a house with a gable and spire, four kayaks on the roof, and windows full of plants. I think that this is the kind of place I would like to live. Two old men are discussing Israel. They say, drop in on a Sunday night and I shall. At the intersection of Major and Ulster there are three do not enter signs and a graffiti tag that says fsw. The CN tower, a diagonal jet trail, and the sun connect at three points forming the schematic for a catapult. A yellow Nissan Echo is parked in front of a pink fence prompting me to think of Ovid’s Echo and Narcissus. A man yells in demonic sounding French at a sign that says we sell moving supplies.

**Aleatory Essay**

There is poetry as soon as we realize that we possess nothing.1 In one sense a special use of words and pictures can conduce silence. Words — at least in the way we use them — can stand in the way of what I call nonbody experience. It’s time we thought about leaving the body behind. 2 De Saussure suspected that classical verse contained the names of otherwise unmentioned dedicatory figures, whose monikers were disseminated through the text in disarticulated phonemes. Apollo for instance might appear distributed as “ad mea tempja portato.” With a chilling meticulousness de Saussure laboured to enumerate the intricate and unfailingly consistent rules he saw governing the paragrammes. But then he wasn’t so sure after all. Not only could a single couplet supply an almost endless number of names, but the paragrammes were not limited to classical verse – one might start reading them out of any text and seeing them everywhere. From this vantage, the material signifier thus comes to be seen as not simply an unfortunate precondition for communicating some intended linguistic meaning, but also as the matrix for the generation of multiple, uncontrollable, and unhierarchized meanings. Faced with la folie du langue, this “uncontrollable power of the letter as inscription,” de Saussure suppressed his work and backed away from the project with a caution that “supports the assumption of a terror glimpsed.” That terror was the inhumaness of language. 3

This is the philosophy behind the dérive poems—

If you talk you always end up with politics, it gets nowhere, I mean, it’s strictly from the soft typewriter. 4 And,
Silence is non-existent. There always are sounds. Something is always happening that makes a noise.

When an author uses an uncreative form of writing, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the text.

Chance is always at the margins of thought.

The CP (Computer Poem) because of its looping functions, introduces new elements of "non-meaning" in the form of repetitions that are not based on rhetorical strategies but are simply redundant information coughed up by the demon.

Cut-ups have a similar effect.

A blasphemous sect suggested that all searches be given up and that men everywhere shuffle letters and symbols until they succeeded in composing, by means of an improbable stroke of luck, the canonical books. The sect disappeared but in my childhood I saw old men who would hide out in the privies for long periods of time, and, with metal discs in a forbidden dicebox, feebly mimicking the divine disorder.

The subject does not belong to the world but is a limit of the world.

Sounds are non-existent. There always are silences. Something is always inert that will make it silent again. A text according to Bakhtin is a network of citations, an absorption and transformation of other texts. Within this network the word maintains the status not of a fixed point (of meaning), but of an interstice at the intersection of numerous textual and historical surfaces. Bakhtin proposes two types of discourse: Monologic and Dialogic. (Dialogic writing is writing that) "reads another writing" and constructs itself through a 12 "process of destructive genesis."

To work with a plan which is pre-set is one way of avoiding subjectivity.

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**Endnotes**


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TWO TEXTS
Nico Vassilakis

segue staring

Staring at language Staring at type and non serif
Staring at sound Staring at pictures written
Staring at water Staring at writing drawn
Staring at wood Staring at letter pattern
Staring at sequence Staring at pattern issuing pattern
Staring at light Staring at disruption
Staring at cellular activity Staring at disruptive shift
Staring at sky Staring at deterioration
Staring at words Staring at the post word
Staring at letters Staring at sweet eruption
Staring at pieces of letters Staring at sudden construction
Staring at pieces of pieces of letters Staring at simple shapes
Staring at ink Staring at alphabetic division
Staring at markings Staring at new logic
Staring at texture Staring at elegant contraption
Staring at molecular swing Staring at destruction
Staring at the middle of words Staring at evasive composition
Staring at the pre word Staring at annihilation of word
Staring at font and serif Staring at newer logic

8 problematic intersections
of alphabet and sound in
english

gb
fs
mn
dt
hx
jl
pk
zc
FOUR POEMS
Robert Dassanowsky

Remedia Amoris

Swooning the cloth
a gust shivers with determination
and slaps with joy

Several birds on the endangered
list soar and don't know

Please answer in two parts
with an implicit third
is will and fate intertwined?

Lance tips find a red star
on the horizon

the looting of the sky by those
that partition earth.

Cool Formal Balance
For H.v.H.

It is a crisis this scribble
which has found its own
poetry, own legend

worship nothing and lyric
will come as it hangs
in the branches or is collected

in a rain gutter on a sand pocked
cottage, the drive to words
ruptures them

the ripple of an air
the death of a flesh and
the spray of a life

a crisis covered in velvet
mantels, done up with oils
hung by a sink that rinses

the fates

the muse is death's drag act
the pen follows like a whore
it follows a vein

Did you know that ink throws
off its own steam?

Momentary Rococo

The metal of the ear
curves to aim at a street
and is carried aloft by the shadow
along the verge as it breaks and arches

Seeing the cord suspended, hold the slopes
beyond it, dissecting. Splitting and
growing like a vine to momentary
sight it has infinite fruit

The roof extends with the smoke
a Gloria
the antenna dish is a monstrance
of transmittal
electronic ether that opens the heavens

An ear
as cathedral of arabesques
into which
the brain leaks from the swirls
without

the waves of sight around and
across a curl of faith, the genome
 twist across and over the body.

An Offering to Mnemosyne
On the death of my mother

The human sea inside has shifted poles,
steamed off
I have found the bone of the soul

It can be polished until darkly shiny
and placed around the needy

How do you expect me to write to death?
To the slippage of a universe?

Ostinato, Ostinato, Ostinato

Forgive me that I cannot comment
on the place I am found in

Overheard is babble
Rising may be a narrative.
Some notes on: Sachiko Murakami's PROJECT REBUILD
rob mclennan

What is a poem but a rental unit of language?

In Summer, 2011, Vancouver ex-pat Sachiko Murakami (currently living in Toronto) launched Project Rebuild (http://www.projectrebuild.ca/index.php), an ongoing collaborative writing project open to anyone willing to participate in renovating any of the existing poems on the site, each one tracing back to the original poem, her own “Vancouver Special.”

VANCOUVER SPECIAL

Not failed attempts at beauty or stating.
Unique answers to specific questions.
How may I fit my family into the equation?
How will we make the mortgage?
How much land will be allotted,
and to whom? What can't I afford?
How may we state the look
of elsewhere? How can I make myself less
abstracted? In the house but not of it.
Grace of a front lawn, stucco sophisticate.
All that glitters stuck in the surface.
Sheet shocks sense into reflection.
Wood sliced into beam better becomes
the forest. Can't see the trees for the city.
Could you move to the east? A little further?

As she writes to introduce the site:

The Vancouver Special is a house particular to Vancouver, and particularly vexing to its residents. Its style is represented in nearly every neighbourhood in Vancouver. Built mostly throughout the 1970s, and designed to maximize usable lot space and to provide a legal and livable ground-floor secondary suite suitable for extended families or mortgage-helping tenants, the Specials are large, plain, and commonly considered ugly in comparison to their mock Tudor, Craftsman, and West Coast Modern neighbours.

By the 1980s, homeowners became so alarmed at the creeping advancement of the Specials into their neighbourhoods that bylaws were enacted to preserve the “authentic” character of neighbourhoods - notably in Shaughnessy, an affluent westside neighbourhood analogous to Toronto’s Forest Hill or Montreal’s Westmount. Design guidelines were drafted at City Hall under pressure from property owners to designate that new houses should “be relatively in proportion to its neighbour, be enriched with interesting detail, texture and colour, and be partially screened from the street in a manner that is characteristic of the area. The massing of the principal building should not overwhelm the site.”

According to Wikipedia: “Vancouver Special is a term used to refer to houses built in a particular architectural style in the period from roughly 1965 to 1985 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and its suburbs. They are characterised by their "box-like" structure, low-pitched roofs, balconies across the front of the house, and brick or stone finishes on the ground-floor level of the facade with stucco elsewhere. Vancouver Specials have similar floor plans with the main living quarters on the upper floor and secondary bedrooms on the bottom, making them ideal for secondary suites. These homes were favoured by new Canadians, often from Hong Kong, for their spaciousness and "tacky" design which have proven to appeal to many Chinese and were often a first house purchase.” Certainly, Vancouver isn't the only city that seems insistent on overwriting its own history and neighbourhoods; Toronto's waterfront comes to mind, written of in Michael Redhill's novel, Consolation (2006), or even Ottawa's
enormously frustrating Lebreton Flats project of the 1950s. Vancouver, much like Montreal, also shares a history of the Olympics spreading out over neighbourhoods, “improving” by replacing not only buildings, but in many instances, the people themselves as well. There are other histories too, of total erasure, such as Africville, and similar Black histories erased in Southwestern Ontario, as well as Vancouver's own Hogan's Alley. Without community, without history, sites lose their meaning, and Murakami has invited anyone to come into her project to rebuild, revamp and renovate. In an interview I conducted with her, “Invisible Participants” (posted February 8, 2009 at Agora), she ends with:

Is it surprising that poets feel friction in their environment? I'm not sure that writing preoccupied with place is unique to Vancouver. But it is a compelling environment, at least to me. Maybe it's because Vancouverites in general feel that friction too -- being Canadian without Winter, being in a city dwarfed by Nature... And maybe it's because Vancouver is still quite new, and the building of the city -- and the idea of the city, what Vancouver means -- is still happening all around us. Maybe it's that newness and the feeling that we are all participating in that project, that what Vancouver means/looks like/is isn't yet set in stone (or stucco, or glass, or cedar) is what compels us to write about it. I suppose that's what I'm writing about... that project, that negotiation. Maybe it's less emotional because the subject is a building rather than a person, but I've yet to see a building that wasn't meant for a person to inhabit it. I guess it's still a similar strategy I'm using, though. It started with the question: What can a person's reaction to a Vancouver Special (and Vancouverites have very strong reactions to Vancouver Specials) suggest about the person, and that process of city-building?

What kind of legacy does such a ubiquitous design leave, and how does it impact Vancouver's complicated relationship with home ownership? It's complicated even further, given the incredible costs associated with home and/or condo ownership, and the ongoing legacies of Japanese internment camps and aboriginal land claims. It's one thing for Murakami's poems to respond to such, but what does her invitation bring? Further on the Project Rebuild site, she describes the particulars of her collaborative project:

Project Rebuild began with a single poem about the Vancouver Special. That poem was renovated through mechanical means; I ran the poem through Google Translate and back again through four languages of people I have known who have lived in Vancouver Specials – Cantonese, Italian, Portuguese and Serbian – and back to English again. The result of these flash inhabitations was a sameness with subtle differences. These four poems appear in Rebuild, my upcoming book, which as a whole considers the possibilities for renovation in poetry, and the tendency of Vancouver, Rebuild’s site of inquiry, to tear down and rebuild itself every few decades.

The question of inhabiting a poem persisted.

I then sent the poems to poets in Vancouver, and invited them to move in as tenants of the poems, to paint the walls, change the faucets, knock down whatever walls didn’t fit their visions. These poems became the first houses in Project Rebuild’s neighbourhood.

The idea of extending the community persisted.

As Murakami writes, the site began with a single poem, taken from the manuscript of her second poetry collection, due in September, 2011, a collection originally titled Vancouver/Special, but appearing as the renamed REBUILD (Talonbooks, 2011), a collection she discusses in a recent interview with Jeff Latosik, “Make It New: An Interview with Sachiko Murakami,” posted at Open Book Toronto, where she discusses her complicated relationship with Vancouver housing:

If I could afford to own a condo in Vancouver, I'm not sure I would say no to one. I actually was trying to buy one at one point, but with the (what I thought was) substantial money I had for a down payment (after the death of my grandfather) and a relatively okay-paying job, I could afford about 400 square feet - if I spent nearly all my income on a mortgage. I don't really have any idea how people manage to own
property in Vancouver. I know there are ways to do it, involving flipping properties, and making grown-up money, and renting out basement suites, but if I had to do that it would likely take up most of my psychic energy.

Real estate takes enough of my psychic energy in Vancouver as a renter - you talk to anyone, really, any demographic, and eventually real estate comes up in the conversation in one form or another. It's an easy topic for Vancouverites - after the rain, real estate. It's a bit of an obsession, really. That's what interested me in writing about it.

Then there's my own family's relationship to real estate and homeowning. My father was born in 1944 in an internment camp for Japanese-Canadians in New Denver, BC - far from Salt Spring Island, the largest of the Gulf Islands between the mainland and Vancouver Island, where his family's farm had long been sold off by the government to pay for their internment. His family would eventually work their way back to the west coast and re-establish themselves as a prominent family on Salt Spring.

That treatment had a huge impact on my family, and one of the outcomes was a real drive to buy land on the island. (As an aside, my uncle and aunt just opened the first non-profit housing project on the island.) Yet my father did not own the home we grew up in. So I come to real estate with a bit of baggage, you see. And I like to work with my baggage as fruitfully as I can.

The resulting reconstructions, the resulting community of responses, has been impressive, with rewritten and reimagined works by poets from Vancouver and beyond, including Meredith Quartermain, Larissa Lai, David McGimpsey, Jacqueline Turner, Angela Hibbs, Pearl Pirie, Christine McNair, Justin Million, a. rawlings, Jake Mooney, Gary Barwin, Fred Wah, ryan fitzpatrick, Roger Farr, Soma Feldmar, Nikki Reimer, Jennica Harper, Jason Christie and Ray Hsu, as well as a growing number of others, all bringing in their own renovations. At least one author claims, in her subsequent bio, to not even have (yet) set foot in Vancouver. What does this mean for renovation, for Vancouver as a space? Is Murakami actually creating an abstract Vancouver, one that can be renovated, added to, rebuilt, by anyone, anywhere?

I Enjoy a Few Things About This Neighborhood
But, every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.
Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.

Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.
Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.

Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.
Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.

Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.
Every time I go there,
Relic steals my log.

Sha la la-la-la.
Sha la la-la-la. (David McGimpsey)

rob mclennan’s most recent titles are the poetry collections A (short) history of l. (BuschekBooks, 2011), grief notes: (BlazeVOX [books], 2011), Glengarry (Talonbooks, 2011. See also web-site: robmclennan.blogspot.com
ottarormstad’s *bokstavteppekatalogen* is a triumph. Ormstad’s style is quite traditional and would not be out of place in some of the classic anthologies of concrete poetry like Mary Ellen Solt’s 1968 volume *Concrete Poetry: A World View*. Working exclusively in the typeface *Helvetica Neue 75 Bold*, ormstadechoes classical visual poems by EugenGomringer, Décioand Franz Mon.

Where ormstad builds upon those important early practitioners of visual poetry is with the integration of op art stylistics. ormstad work uses InDesign to breathe fresh life into this clean form. *bokstavteppekatalogen*’s 24 pages vary from lyrical abstractions to beautifully rippling Op Art canvases that undulate in way reminiscent of Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley. In yet another example of BrionGysin’s dictum that “literature is 50 years behind art”, Solt’s anthology represented the most comprehensive sampling of international visual poetry at the time but few of the visual poets pushed the composition of poetry towards op art. There are a few minor examples of visual poets engaging directly with the artistic aims of op art, but it is until ormstad’s 2007 *bokstavteppekatalogen* that a poet works with the form so convincingly.

Charles Olson argued in his 1950 essay “Projective Verse” that the “advantage of the typewriter [is] that, due to its rigidity and its space precisions, it can, for a poet, indicate exactly the breath, the pauses, the suspensions even of syllables, the juxtapositions even of parts of phrases, which he intends,” arguing that “for the first time the poet has the stave and the bar a musician has had.”

Early visual poets like domsylvesterhouedard explored the possibilities of the typewriter as a compositional tool beyond the enforced grid,ormstad further extended that reconnoitering into digital typesetting.

By manipulating the kerning of blocks of text almost unnoticeably and highlighting the slight variations in a non fixed-point typeface, ormstadcreates the appearance of movement. ormstad’s work is difficult to locate, but is worth the effort.

"O to Δ":
Britt-Marie Lindgren
(Holland/Canada)
Monoprint on plexiglass & black oil printing ink
Panic & Possession: Michael Basinski (USA)