INDEX

Andrew Topel, from the Black & White Series: p. 2
Editorial: p. 3
Jerome Rothenberg, Interview with Karl Jirgens: p. 4
David Jhave Johnston, “Under”: p. 7
Rae Armantrout, Three Poems: p. 8
Christopher Dewdney, “Angel Droughts”: p. 11
Eugen & Nortrud Gomringen, Interview with W. Mark Sutherland: p. 12
Anne Waldman, from The Iovis Trilogy: p. 16
David Jhave Johnston, “Why”: p. 26
Carla Bertola “Distorted Message”: p. 27
Fred Wah, Interview with Nicole Markotic: p. 28
David Jhave Johnston “Grace is Arbitrary”: p. 35
rob mclennan “I was thinking about dignity this morning”: p. 36
Denise Desautels, C’est brièvement l’été - Trans., Dr. Norman Cornett: p. 37
Alan Davies, Essay: “Prelinguistic Thinking” with;
Amy Catanzano & TENTATIVELY a CONVENIENCE: p. 38
Christine Herzer “From the tree where I had been found”: p. 45
Zeke Moores “Dumpster in Bronze”: p. 46
Lucy Howe “Reliable Objects”: p. 48
Karen Mac Cormack, Two Poems: p. 50
Steve McCaffery, Two Poems: p. 52
Brian Henderson, Six Poems: p. 54
Jamie Sharpe “Running Feedback”: p. 56
Burt Kimmelman, Short Verse: p. 57
Paisley Jura, “Hamlet”: p. 58
Derek Beaulieu “A Box of Nothing”: p. 60
Maria Damon, Brian Ang & Chris Funkhouser “AH3”: p. 61
Brian Ang, Three Poems: p. 62
Brian Edwards, Three Texts: p. 66
bzniditch, Two Poems: p. 69
David Groulx “Away the Seasons”: p. 70
James Gray “Instructions to a Painter”: p. 71
Scott Bentley “…with a moon around the rings”: p. 72
Jamie Sharpe “Reversal Fun Yoke”: p. 74
Kemeny Babineau “The Official Carboniferous Simulator”: p. 75
Julian Gobert “Love and Forensics”: p. 75
Sean Braune, Two Texts: p. 76
Andrejs Kulnieks, “Grandmother”: p. 79
Pete Spence, Textual Image: p. 80
Giovanni Pecoraro, “Foucault Would Look Good in this Mask”: Cover Image
From the “Black & White” Series: Andrew Topel (USA)
Editorial:

The cover art to this issue, “Foucault Would Look Good In This Mask” by Canadian artist, Giovanni Pecoraro, references French physicist, Jean-Bernard-Léon Foucault. Foucault was aware of Ptolomy’s conjecture, that it was impossible to feel the rotation of the earth. So, in 1851, Foucault hung a 28 kilogram, 67 metre bob from the dome of the Pantheon in Paris. With the pendulum in motion it was possible to demonstrate that the Earth rotates once every sidereal day. The pendulum's swing rotated clockwise 11° each hour, arriving at full circle in 32.7 hours. 

Foucault’s Pendulum is the title and subject of a novel by one of Rampike’s early contributors, Umberto Eco. And, the name Foucault returns us to the viewpoints of French theorist, Michel Foucault, who contends that “truth” is often provisional. Giovanni Pecoraro’s cover art to this issue was partly inspired by an interview between Christian Delacampagne and Michel Foucault, published in Le Monde on April 6-7 (1980). In that interview, Foucault declined to reveal his name proposing a “game,” where he challenged intellectuals, and writers of books, to remain anonymous for one year. He proposed that anonymity would free the consumer of culture from being dominated by the power of those who dominate our perspectives. Foucault hypothesized a time when being unknown, lent itself to the possibility of being better heard. The pendulum swings. But as the earth turns, does the arc of the pendulum truly rotate, or does the planet rotate beneath the pendulum? The “truth” is often “masked,” and Einstein reminded us that perception is relative to the position of the observer. Such provisional and dialogical perceptions inform this, our “Spring” release which is the first of two issues of Rampike on the topic of “Poetics”.

Foucault’s “Poetics” issue will appear later, this autumn.

When considering Poetics, one might think of the Poetics of Aristotle, or of structuralist and post-structural poetics, or perhaps Tzvetan Todorov’s Introduction to Poetics, with its cosmopolitan outlook, and cross-references to Barthes. One might imagine minds wrestling with the idea of a cogent theory of literature, and recall Frye’s “Polemical Introduction” to his Anatomy of Criticism, arguing for systematized approaches. One might consider Linda Hutcheon’s A Poetics of Postmodernism, and look to shifts in literary analysis, moving towards revisionist understandings of discourse.

As literature changes, so must poetics. Turn to a poetics of transformation, of literary relations through time. Think of flexible conceptual structures, theories or systems of literature that might both constitute and include poetics itself. Is poetics a pastiche or a system? A criticism or a meta-criticism? Recall The Epic of Gilgamesh inscribed in cuneiform on the Deluge tablet. Jump to Einstein on the Beach, Robert Wilson’s and Philip Glass’s inter-media “Opera” in four acts. Consider alter-native directions, rhizomatic pluralisms, disembodied poetics, outrider positions, omni-poetics, pre-linguistic thought, ethno-poetics, perhaps even a poetics of chaos. “Though this be madness, yet there is method in it.”

In this issue we present a stellar assembly of established and emerging authors and artists. Here we feature a range of visual poetics by Andrew Topel, David Jhave Johnston, Zeke Moores, Lucy Howe, Jamie Sharpe, Andrejs Kulnieks, Carla Bertola, Pete Spence, and cover artist, Giovanni Pecoraro, accompanied with the musical poetics of Paisley Jura, as well as an essay on pre-linguistic thinking by Alan Davies, and the documentation of a poetic “action” by Derek Beaulieu. We present interviews with Jerome Rothenberg, Eugen and Nortrud Gomringer, and Fred Wah, plus diverse poetic texts by Rae Armantrout, Christopher Dewdney, Anne Waldman, rob mclennan, Denise Desautels, Christine Herzer, Karen Mac Cormack, Steve McCaffery, Brian Henderson, Burt Kimmelman, Maria Damon, Brian Ang, Chris Funkhouser, Brian Edwards, bzniditch, David Groulx, Scott Bentley, Kemeny Babineau, Julian Gobert, and Sean Braun. So, join the swing, flip a page, and feel the earth turn!

- Karl Jirgens/Editor
Omnipoetics and Ethnopoetics:
Talking with Jerome Rothenberg

Interview with Karl Jirgens

Jerome Rothenberg is a much celebrated poet, and an important critic, anthropologist, editor, anthologist, performer, teacher, and translator. He has drawn critical praise from his numerous admiring contemporaries including Ken Rexroth, Robert Duncan, Charles Bernstein, Ann Waldman, Hugh Kenner, Gary Snyder, David Antin and Margorie Perloff, among many others. He has over 80 books of poetry in print, with a dozen of those from New Directions Press. With Pierre Joris, he edited Poems for the Millennium (Volumes One, and Two), and with Jeffrey C. Robinson, Poems for the Millennium (Volume Three). In 2000, with Steven Clay, he edited, A Book of the Book: Some Works & Projections About the Book & Writing. His many other works range well over half a century and include Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania (Doubleday, 1968), The Lorca Variations NY, New Directions (1993), Livre de Temoignage [A Book of Witness] 1-26, with translations into French by Joseph Guglielmi and Tita Reut, lithographs by Arman, Charles Moreau Editions, Paris, 2002, and Concealments and Caprichos (Black Widow Press, 2010). He has translated ten books from Spanish, French, German and Czech. He is the winner of two PEN Oakland Josephen Miles Awards in Literature, two PEN Center USA West Translation Awards, the Alfonso el Sabio Award for Translation, as well as two American Book Awards. He was editor/publisher of Hawks Well Press in the 1960s, and co-editor (with Dennis Tedlock) of the literary journal Alcheringa (1970-1977) which is recognized as inaugurating the ethnopoetics movement. He is a Professor of Visual Arts and Literature at the University of California, San Diego. His most recent book is Retrievals: Uncollected and New Poems 1955-2010 (NY: Junction Press, 2011 – ISBN: 978-1-881523-19-2). Rampike is delighted to present this interview between Karl Jirgens and Jerome Rothenberg.
KJ: You are among the forerunners investigating ethnopoetics with others who shared interests in anthropology and linguistics including David Antin, Stanley Diamond, Dell Hymes, Gary Snyder, Nathaniel Tarn (E. Michael Mendelson) and Dennis Tedlock. You have pursued literary expression from around the world. You have translated roughly a dozen books of poetry. Much of the international poetic expression that you have considered includes significant performative aspects that arise from verbal expression in the form of chant, song, or spoken expression that provides proverbs, riddles, curses, laments, praises, prayers, prophecies, public announcements, and stories. It has been said by anthropologists such as Dennis Tedlock that practitioners of ethnopoetics treat the relationship between performance and text as their primary field. Have you discovered any exciting clues to what might be called a “unified field” theory of performative poetics?

JR: Coming out of the 1950s I was like others brought into the possibilities of poetry as a largely performative art – not only that but with a sense of orality or performance as a defining factor even while the written or visual forms of poetry were also being reconsidered. There was with this a resultant fusion of poetry and other arts under the rubric of performance – intermedia, happenings, conceptual art, fluxus, poetry & jazz combinations, different forms of poets’ theater, the whole panoply in short of what was possible in bringing the range of our arts together. What was given to me to see and to articulate was a reinvigorated ethnopoetics that sought forms of poetry related to our own experimental modes in cultures that had been largely overlooked in previous assessments. It was a matter here of what we could know and learn from traditional ritual and verbal practices – anywhere or everywhere – with underlying forms of mythopoesis as developed ways of being and acting in the world. All of that lay behind the opening maxim of Technicians of the Sacred, “primitive means complex,” with performance a principal key to that complexity. In doing that we were able to bring a wide range of performative practices together or, as Robert Duncan phrased it, to bring all things into their comparisons. What I articulated – or tried to – I always felt was shared with others.

KJ: In Technicians of the Sacred you covered a range of poetic expression from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. You have investigated international poetic expression including, Futurists, Dadaists, Surrealists, Objectivists, Beats, Language poets, as well as the Vienna Group, Cobra poets and artists, Arabic Tammuzi poets, new Concrete Poets, postwar Japanese poets, Italian Novissimi and Avant-Guardia, Chinese Misty Poets, as well as the oral poetic traditions of many Indigenous peoples. Which discoveries in approaches to language systems and modes of expression did you find the most exciting as you moved through your research?

JR: I’m enough of an ongoing avantgardist to prize the unanticipated above all else, and early along I found that coming at me from all directions. The oral and sometimes the written or visual traditions of indigenous peoples offered analogies to what was experimental in our own time – also to what was long accepted, I might add – and sometimes surprised us with forms of languaging for which there was no quick or easy comparison. An immediate example – really a wide range of examples – would be the use of non-semantic vocalizations: from untranslatable vocables and glossolalia in religious practice to forms of scat singing – whether called that or not – on a secular level. I was drawn to these – like Khlebnikov (zaum) and Schwitters (ur sonata) before me – as full blown instances of traditional sound poetries, but also as targets for what I came to call and to put into practice as “total translation.” Gestural poetry (both aboriginal and as a part of contemporary deaf [signing] culture) led into largely unexplored areas, as did the transfer of language into other than vocal modes (whistles, yodels, drums, etc.). Aleatory (chance) practices and oulipo-like procedures showed up in Yoruba and Chinese oracle bone castings or in forms of Hebrew numerology (gematria) – resembling but different and markedly more developed than our own still tentative experiments. And there were notable instances of what could be read as visual or concrete poetry, to say nothing of the countless dream works and visions that linked to the most surreal-obsessed workings of the last century or two. The excitement of first coming on these works and then assembling or collaging them into books like Technicians was more than enough for a lifetime.
The first two volumes of Poems for the Millennium cover a range of innovative and often radical literary expressions featuring international poetry presented in a way that de-centres and re-historicizes more conventional views of Twentieth Century poetics. The third volume of Poems for the Millenium covers poetry, manifestos, prose-poetry, verbal and visual innovations, as well as writing from beyond Europe offering ethnopoetic perspectives that extend outside of traditional western canonical perspectives. I think that by now, readers will have understood that in Volume Three, you were interested in showing how the Romantics inspired innovative modernist and avant-garde writing that followed. Could you say a little bit about your editorial philosophy and methodology in seeking out codes of writing from the Romantic period that you felt led to radical innovation?

What we had to overcome was our own prejudice against fixed forms in order to see anew the challenges to form and content that were set in motion by the romantics and a number of others who had preceded them. As a matter of nomenclature Jeffrey Robinson and I began to talk between us about “experimental romanticism,” although I’m not sure that that phrase came into the actual writing. With that as our target, experiment and transformation appeared both in aspects of romantic writing that were largely subterranean and, even more surprisingly, at the heart and core of the romantic project. An aspect of this, from my side at least, was that the romantics and those we called the postromantics began to feel like contemporaries, less magisterial figures and more like fellow poets with whom we could enter into a free and easy discourse. In large part, if this doesn’t sound too arcane or academic, we rode on Jeffrey Robinson’s recovery of the “fancy,” salvaging it from Coleridge’s otherwise brilliant and long-lived dichotomy of fancy and imagination. The two terms – fancy and imagination – have otherwise been historically synonymous, whereas Coleridge made imagination not just the shaping spirit but a binding spirit that reconciled and thereby froze deep conflicts of image and idea, in relation to which “the fancy” might now be viewed as a liberatory force – for play and invention – the field par excellence of the experimental and visionary. I would then think of imagination qua fancy less in Coleridge’s sense as reconciliation and closure than in Keats’s and Rimbaud’s as uncertainty and openness. This seems clear in Keats’s definition of “negative capability” followed immediately by his criticism of Coleridge: “Several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in Literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously--I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason – Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge.” Or Whitman in an equally famous passage: “Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, (I am large, I contain multitudes).” That being said, I would as well speak of imagination as of fancy, the good-of-it being, always, in the meanings, not the nomenclature, and in any case, an inheritance from the romantics with whom it all started.

Two points then: first, my pursuit of a kind of transcultural or global poetics: a poetry rooted in its place but capable of crossing borders and languages to become a virtual omnipoetics. And secondly my progress from deep image to ethnopoetics to a kind of
poetry of witness or testimony – not as others would have it or define it but as I would. I could say a lot about both of these points – and will or have elsewhere – but suffice it that a book like this gives me a retrospective view, maybe more than a comparable selection of poems previously picked for publication. My next project – or one of them – will be a large reader or sampler of my own work, dating from the 1950s to the present and including poetics and performance as well as poems as such. The editor or co-editor for this is the Mexican poet Heriberto Yépez, who recently edited and translated a large book of my prose writings, Ojo del Testimonio, for Editorial Aldus in Mexico. That said, I suppose that I’ve now reached an age of retrospection, which is interesting enough as far as it goes – as long as I can move the work around or recompose it as a whole – but also a little unnerving.

For more discussion visit Jerome Rothenberg’s blog:
http://poemsandpoetics.blogspot.com/
3 Poems

Rae Armantrout

BEING SEEN

Old-time
Loony Tunes
heart shaped
tin

on which
Tweety-Bird,
beak agape,
eyes bulging,

holds a
Valentine’s Day
card against
his own thin
breast.

*

Here’s the best part:
sky at the horizon
blood red. Not really.

Darker and topped
with a swathe

of peach
above which

a black cloud
like a submarine

and like big beads
on a string

is now nowhere
to be seen
ROUNDS

1

Silver points
the Xmas tree is making.

Small white lights
smeared into points,

it says here.  Says here.

Sky says,
“La, La, La.”

“Hark!” and

“Told you so!”

2

All is just
as you left it

before you went off
to dream up horrors.

(Distended organs;
dropsical bulbs.

Kids flung out
in elliptical orbits.)

Here they are:

the cluttered table,
the remote
SUBDIVISION

In a horror movie
the dead eat the living;

while in reality
the living eat the dead.

*

To matter (verb)
is to be
of concern;

matter is that
which possesses
“rest mass.”

*

You’ve been living
in a false
vacuum,

one composed of
“of,”

extensively sub-divided.

Balanced

---

Rae Armantrout, San Diego-based poet and UCSD professor, won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for her collection "Versed" (Wesleyan University Press), a book striking for its wit and linguistic inventiveness, offering poems that are often little thought-bombs detonating in the mind long after the first reading.
Angel Droughts

Christopher Dewdney

I work the attic. I must be the only one. If there's anyone else who works this close to the ceiling I haven't met them yet. What I like is the speed. If you fuck up it's over in seconds and then you move on to the next incarnation.

I've gotten pretty fast. It takes me about one-half second, maybe a whole second, to figure out everything below and how I'm gonna handle it. I like to see all the way to bottom as I catch the first shapes. A moment is all I need to see where they have to go, and whether or not there are any legs, or, if they're aren't any legs, then if there are any holes that go clear to the bottom. If you ask me a hole is as good as a leg. After that it's all about taking everything the fucking Russkies throw at me. And they've thrown some shit my way I'll tell you.

I don't know what they know, I don't know how they figure the whole thing, just that some days they're total bastards and other days they give me a break. Mostly they're bastards. I've spent fucking months without getting a single leg on the bottom. So that leaves me doing what the rest of the operators do, handle the rain of boxes, angles, hats, canes, cricks, and angels. Which is what it's all about in the first place, and which is why I like the ceiling. I like to be right there -- grab them soon as they come through the portal.

You can always count on cricks and canes. I could stack them in my sleep. Thing is, they come opposites. With the wrong combinations they can be just as bad as a whack of boxes. Still, I can pile cricks to the ceiling if I have to. Same goes for hats. I can spin two at a time and plant them wherever I want. But if you ask me which of the three I like the best, well, it's definitely canes -- I think everyone does. You can slide them around and they're almost as good as an angel, especially when you can wipe out three layers through a hole. Plus, in most situations, a cane is as good as a box.

But angels, they're the problem solvers, the very best. When you see one coming, all yellow and long, it's like you can do anything you want. If they show up that is, which they don't always do. Shit, have I ever been through angel droughts. I mean, I'm stackin' boxes based on sheer hope, like, these frigging angels have to come through every now and then, don't they? It's simple probability. But sometimes they just don't. It can really fuck you up if you count on them. Take my advice and take them when they come. But never count on angels.

Other times when I'm just drifting, spinning and packing cricks or something, I get to looking at these landscapes I'm making. Sometimes they remind me of ancient Rome. And then sometimes they remind me of summer fields or childhood memories. But you can't drift forever because bang, suddenly it's one box after another, or even stranger, and I've seen this, let me tell you, one angel after another -- before you know it you've got a fucking yellow forest of them. You got so many you don't even know where to put them. Those Russkies really hate me sometimes.

Still, mostly its peaceful up here. I use just exactly the minimum amount of energy to steer the shapes. It's like meditation or something like that. I lose track of time and wait for the angels. When they come they're like, I don't know, a prize, like sweet revenge and gold and candy all mixed in together. When they come I'm good and ready for them. I just point them in the right direction.
Eugen and Nortrud Gomringer

In conversation with W. Mark Sutherland
August 1, 2010, Rehau, Germany

Eugen Gomringer is one of the founding fathers of the concrete poetry movement, and also, one of the movements' principal theorists. His first book of concrete poems "konstellationen 1951 – 53" (1953) caused a sensation in post-war Europe. His private archive is housed in the "IKKP (institut fur konstruktive kunst und konkrete poesie)", Kunsthau Rehau, Rehau, Germany. Dr. Nortrud Gomringer is Eugen Gomringer's wife, co-founder of "IKKP (institut fur konstruktive kunst und konkrete poesie)", and the co-curator of the recent exhibition "100 Years of Konkrete Art (100 Jahre Konkrete Kunst)" Rehau Art, Rehau, Germany, 2010. We are delighted to present this interview with Eugen & Nortrud Gomringer and W. Mark Sutherland. [Photos: W. Mark Sutherland].

W. Mark Sutherland: In your 1956 manifesto entitled "Concrete Poetry", you state:

"I am therefore convinced that concrete poetry is in the process of realizing the idea of a universal poetry. The time has therefore probably, come for a thorough revision of concepts, knowledge, faith and lack of faith in poetics, if poetry is to exist in earnest and positively in modern society. Unfortunately one can still notice that even intelligent people pretended that they are more naïve than they really are as soon as they appear as poets or come in contact with poetry."

Please give me your thoughts on this statement 44 years later.

Eugen Gomringer: It's more or less right today. Even intelligent people pretend that they are more naïve than they really are and you can't change that.

WMS: But why do they pretend to be naïve?
EG: I think it's human nature, and because they have no real spiritual force behind them. You try to tell people something new with poetry and they don't like it because it means that that have to use their brains.

WMS: Do you believe that the statement taken from your manifesto is as valid today as it was 44 years ago?

EG: Yes, I think so.

WMS: Mallarmé and the Swiss concrete painters — Bill, Graeser, Lohse, Verena Loewensberg, influenced your concept and development of concrete poetry. In your text entitled "The Poem as Functional Object" (1960) you claim that:

"Concrete poetry, in general, as well as the constellation, hopes to relate literature as art less to "literature" and more to earlier developments in the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, industrial design — in other words to developments whose basis is critical but positively-defined thinking."

Do you feel that you achieved this goal?

EG: Yes, I think that's right again. I was a member of Schweizer Werkbund. It was a congregation of creative people from all different fields. I think that was the best grouping for me that I ever had. Many people coming out of it became architects, teachers and lawyers. It was much better for me than only speaking with poets. Belloli and I were the same age when we met, and he said, "don't let us speak about poetry, come, we have a beer and talk about football or anything else." And also, my colleagues in Sao Paulo, they knew all about football, but they would never speak about poetry.
WMS: It is the 10th anniversary of "IKKP (institut für konstruktive kunst und konkrete poesie)" and the "KunsthausRehau" (www.kunsthaus-rehau.de). What is the "KunsthausRehau", and what motivated you to develop the "KunsthausRehau"?

EG: Nortrud, what should I say?

Nortrud Gomringer: Well, we were looking for a place to live and to permanently archive and exhibit Eugen's collections of concrete poetry and concrete art. We had a connection to Rehau and we offered the collection to the town. Eugen said, "if you give us a place to live that will accept us, I will give the collection to you." So the mayor of Rehau said, "we have an old building in Rehau, which we should use for some cultural purpose," and that's how we arrived and developed the "IKKP" in Rehau.

EG: When we first came here the building was a perfect empty, white cube.

WMS: For those unfamiliar with "IKKP" and the "KunsthausRehau", what takes place in this large, lovely old building?

EG: Exhibitions — 5 to 6 exhibitions a year and guest speakers and lecturers. And school visits, they are our specialty — we write to teachers in Germany and encourage and invite schools to visit us.

NG: Classes like to go into the "poema" (a small exhibition space outside the main "KunsthausRehau" building) and see the Gomringer poems on the walls because Gomringer texts are at least in all German schoolbooks. And the students are pleased to see that someone who is in a schoolbook is alive, unlike Goethe and Schiller.

WMS: I think one of the most intriguing aspects of concrete poetry is the simultaneous development of the form in Europe, Scandinavia, and South America in the 1950s. It was one of the first international literary movements transcending linguistic and cultural borders.

NE: Well that was the idea when Eugen wrote his manifesto in the 1950s. He stated that the goal was to produce a universal poetry.

WMS: You've just finished curating the exhibition "100 Years of Konkrete Art (100 Jahre Konkrete Kunst)" that opened at Rehau Art, Rehau last evening. What is your next project?

EG: In 6 weeks I'm curating a concrete poetry exhibition in Bad Elster 20 kilometres from Rehau. The exhibition features work by Garnier, Gomringer, Linschinger, Gappmayr and many other poets.

WMS: Recently you've published two collections of sonnets "eines sommers sonette" and "der sonette gezeiten". Why did you begin writing sonnets again after not using that form for some 50 years?

EG: Why?

NG: Because of me, for my birthday — he had to write something very personal and biographical. So he chose the sonnets because this form is very strict, nearly mathematical.

EG: I defend myself by referring to the similarities between constellations and sonnets in an introductory text in those books.

WMS: Do you still write concrete poems?

EG: Yes, I wrote one for a visiting painter last week, and he paid me for it!
Notes:
1 Translated by Irene Montjoye Sinor and Mary Ellen Solt, Concrete Poetry: A World View (1968, Indiana University Press)
2 Ibid.
3 “indeed, beginning to write sonnets again is an experiment for me, a very personal one. It needs a concentrated "cover" of inner and outer facts in a predetermined structure, whose transparency I accept and whose bisection in quatrains and triplets does not mean a restraint but a reversible decision for a variation. A problem of all art since modernism is how to render reality (if it should not be negated) in an aesthetically acceptable form.” Eugen Gomringer, Der Sonette Gezeiten, (2009 Edition Signathur, Rehau, Germany), page 60.

W. Mark Sutherland (www.wmarksutherland.com) is a Canadian intermedia artist. Sutherland performed at the opening of the exhibition "100 Years of Konkrete Art (100 Jahre Konkrete Kunst)", Rehau Art, Rehau, Germany and at the ten-year anniversary celebrations of "IKKP", in the KunsthausRehau.
Excerpt from: XIX “Matriot Acts” Book III (Eternal War) The Iovis Trilogy

Anne Waldman

Anne Waldman is considered a counter-culture giant. Her poetics arise from the Beat, New York School and Black Mountain trajectories of New American Poetry but move further into a performative field. She is one of the founders and directors of The Poetry Project at St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, co-founder (with Allen Ginsberg) of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University (the first Buddhist inspired University in the western hemisphere). She is an active member of the “Outrider” experimental poetry community, author of over 40 books of poetry and essays including Fast Speaking Woman, Vow to Poetry, Helping the Dreamer, Kill or Cure, In the Room of Never Grieve, Marriage: A Sentence, Structure of The World Compared to a Bubble, Civil Disobediences: Poetics and Politics in Action (with Lisa Birman), and Manatee/Humanity (the latter from Penguin Poets, 2009). Her recent play Red Noir ran for nearly 3 months in New York City (2010). She works in audio, video, and film with her husband, writer and video/film director Ed Bowes, and with her son, musician and composer, Ambrose Bye with whom she released the CD The Milk of Human Kindness (available through CD Baby: http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/awaoab). A 2003, film titled “Anne Waldman: Makeup on Empty Space,” by poet/director Jim Cohn (55-minutes), features the opening of the Anne Waldman Collection at the University of Michigan as well as critical excerpts from talks by Joanne Kyger, Lorenzo Thomas, Anselm Hollo, Akilah Oliver, Ron Padgett, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, David Cope, Eleni Sikelianos, and Steven Taylor. The film also contains an excerpt from “Secret of the Waterfall,” a dance and poetry collaboration with choreographer Douglas Dunn, and a brief clip from Bob Dylan’s Renaldo and Clara with Waldman reading “Fast Speaking Woman.” Anne Waldman received the prestigious Poetry Society of America’s Shelley Memorial Award, and is a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets. Among her many other activities, she has served as a Fellow at the Emily Harvey Foundation (Winter 2007), and the Bellagio Center in Italy (Spring 2006). She has held residencies at the Christian Woman’s University of Tokyo (Fall 2004); the Schule für Dichtung in Vienna (where she has also served as Curriculum Director in 1989); as an advisor to the Prazska Skola Projekt in Prague, and, Study Abroad on the Bowery (since 2004). Rampike is delighted to publish an excerpt from Anne Waldman’s newest book, The Iovis Trilogy: Colors in the Mechanism of Concealment (2011) published in a sumptuous edition by Coffee House Press, Minneapolis ( ISBN 978-1-56689-255-1). The Iovis Trilogy is a monumental feminist epic, a mythopoetic project of twenty-five years that traverses epochs and genres to create a visionary call to poetic arms through use of a narrative web of montage and superimposition detailing the misdeeds of a warmongering patriarchy. We include here the opening to section XIX “Matriot Acts” from Book III (Eternal War) of The Iovis Trilogy: Colors in the Mechanism of Concealment. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 2011 by Anne Waldman. Used by permission of The Permissions Company, Inc. on behalf of the Coffee House Press www.coffeeshousepress.com
XIX
MATRIOT ACTS

"Magnificent in his eye" or was it "resplendent"? Was being called upon to resist the overtly male seduction and considered this "tract" on a theme without excoriating any particulars of or desire. Maybe a sense of redress needed. And make a gender distinction and make a gender tint and district. Demonstration on Wall Street, belly of beast, today.

+Patriot Act+
could drive a citizenry crazy

+Patriarch+
Adam to Noah, twelve tribes of Israel, progenitors of the human race

+Patriarchal+
how far in Empire may you go descending through the father further?

+Paternalism-
noblesse oblige: laboratories, genocide of Native Americans likely now as in China . . . Tibetans, Uighers
down the line: nostalgia for a lost thread

+Paterfamilias+
political dynasties, endless rule . . .

+Patronymic+
sound the metronome

+Patronizing+
arrogance, condescension

+Paternity+
who birthed whom, what myth immigration "below the border"
Pathology?
  dark light, dark site

Pathological?
  it worsens . . .

Pathetic?
  caves in, you want to run and hide

Pathogenetic?
  continuity: protestant-white-man-privileged-toxic-ethos-I-fucking-hate-you!

Patricentric?
  ethos? centripetal

Patrilineral?
  centrifugal

Patrimonial?
  maybe in a tribe makes sense

Patriot?
  let my people go

Patron?
  slave trade

Patrone?
  metabolic, corrupt

Patronage?
  lobbying et cetera

Patriotic?
  seriously? are you serious?

Patriot Act?
  euphemism for torture, control, surveillance
call “matriot”—“matriot” is called

call “matriarchal”—“matriarchal” called

call “matriarchy”—“matriarchy” called

call “matrilineal”—“matrilineal” called

call “matricentered”—to be considered

call “matricentric”—jury’s out

call “matriotism”—the true patriots

“matriot”—yes

matriot acts

matriot acts

matriot acts

{ TRACTS }

matriot: standing by
matriot: a kind of manifesto
but not: manifest destiny
transcending “woman” & standing in for
oppressed everywhere

A feminafesto of desire & resolve
I am the perfect matriot for you: I will write the new laws of all the land in a new language motions of yea to overturn the legislation of the father-may-tongue for they are often bleak in rhetoric & they have too often not acted in the interest of:

heart's
true state

+++++++Handguns be banned+++++++ (my first matriot act)
my darlings hear me hear me

Yea to the people I'll stand for
To take her place as defender
The platform grows weak as a state of mind, a zone
a token Give it over, say this sound, say to them to the they are ignorant, their need looking forward into the the matriots onto the path of the or any other missiles of destruction power of the matriot the protection of all the animals the nations therein & the trees, the powers constituted or vested give it a rest give up a ghost of the acts of a matriot? Waiting by or as material, born, of matter by the side of country of partner weight of all malfeasance Separate of malnutrition The "ma" of love, of unconditional luminosity that person could shine Everything did not have the right to vote, did not have the right to read to like a "ma," heart of "ma," heart burns but broken because it sees

and by the people of the secular power of matriot token platform, which is a country, of unique ambience & generosity, not to the men, give over give it to the sweetest voice and break and of women for paterfamilias syndrome they future with a generous eye Sing sun off the control factor of Stealths That they be held in thrall by the She will write out a new creed for therein And of the entire world & the greenery, & so on therein And by on this day—To the nonregulatory dominance It's our turn What are the side of the road, waiting her turn made country, man, child, Waiting be she man or woman Wait! The "ma" of malfunction the "ma" the "ma" of obsession the "ma"

Never give up on anyone because comes to the matriot's wound She remember? As black woman she vote to exist to carry a name Heart that never malfunctions Even as it beyond malfeasance Beyond
Malfunction Delivered from the evil of mal as in “fleurs de mal”
That stood, now stands watching many years Dark flowers bloom
Matriot is a force field and the most connected with the “t” of the “r” radical: standing by
transition The “riot” of color

Dear Wall Street:

Invoke the hyena in petticoats!
laughing hyena, spotted hyena, striped—
all stalk the charnel ground amidst
microscopic & telescopic worlds
a step ahead of what is to come in lineage
in gratitude, in naming las madres
in naming las mujeres,
look for reclamation, sniff it out . . .
in a voice not my own but all of them
the wizened ductile face of slumbering female memory:
beginning of time, the timepiece of time
she who was the mother of a ghost ship
Ship of Locked Awe and subjugated dream
she who could never be reduced to a “gender issue”
she who announced a talismanic bond to planet
who saw vole tracks in the snow once on the radical poet’s tiny death plot
Lorine, Lorine! you can come out now . . .
who documented all hurts and sights & transmuted them
to poetry, to flesh, to the wink after sex
she was a challenge in my heart, the penultimate mother
did you have any animals around you from the start?
did you enjoy yourself a lot?
how old were you when you started this running around?
what was your mother tongue?
was it in a language that translates “ocean of bliss” to a seed syllable?
she reports a tabula rasa and a grandmother who cautions
“Denial Silences Violence”
“Remember the Suffragettes”
or considers William Blakes’s schema of Los representing
Imagination in Action
who then tries to create forms so they may be recognized
who then gets deluded that “it” created the universe and can’t thus control it
and then whose zones split into genders
genders lost in realms of jealousy & fractal time
battling the projected others
little figurines with large vulvas and bursting bellies
see; you see?
seeing one’s own reflection in a pool produces a double
while another character sacrifices herself to the sun
a bed of . . .
a web of . . .
one so awakened by a fellaheen world then beaten
sees the blood on the wall cries out “witness”
filigree of emotion, thinner thought
a comedy of tragic exile & diaspora
replicate a padded cell to know your origin
but all your sounds awaken the sleeping animals
mothers of the shaking tent ceremony
mothers of the bifurcated space
mothers of what goes on in your head
mothers of restless night start up in dream to new poetry
shock the animalized spirit
splice into the movie: be kind
crone: an old mobility
subject: be kind and keep moving
object: planet, of kindness toward sweet redress
protect the children, that is your genetic command
object: metabolism
mothers of dilation & expansion
mothers with field guides
mothers with centripetal force
mothers rumpled
mothers at the matrix
mothers with weapons hidden in hair
sixteen-armed Durga Killing a Buffalo Demon
that threatened her mental exigency
Vajravarahi with sow head protruding above her left ear
eyes root around in heaven, will not be stilled
poet who has more eyes to tell of what she sees
& she who draws electromagnetic fields, sculpts medusas
scribes the allegorical dream: beware

proposition: fervor
proposition: we'll take over now
position: the man paralyzed in his global mechanism
armature, pragmatism
who lies to confuse us: beware
army uniform, army personnel, army tank
all objects with insignia of army will be of scrutiny
she said (after the bombing) I feel nothing now.
I am immune. And they are dead to me. Don’t ever tell
me what to hear down below here. I have seen hell.
a herbicide named “liberty,” a war named “enduring freedom,”
an aerosol spray named “pity”
a life unworthy of life is what they have done
crusades on the pyre, grief endless
community destroyed as conscience
what acts might we commit to? be kind, be vigilant
a master narration of rape
“tonight the two leaders attend a banquet” and
plot the end of time
daughters at deathbed everywhere
this is a memoir for future revolutionaries
a truce, a contiguous state of grace
for women animalized in pejorative space
who will rise, who will act
for the sake of the world that lives in sickness
an activist of imagination
hymeneal—her membrane
_Hymenoptera_ of which in females the ovipositor
stings, pierces, saws at enemy
her embryonic fierce compassion conquers!
untangle thwarted centuries' desire! _HUM HUM HUM_
see her—child—daughter—woman
—matriot—guardian of memory,
humility is the compass of humanity
invoke her shrill metabolism, radical acts of vocal thrust and strut
fierce operatic arias, legends to chill the blood
invoke the quixotic kundalini coursing through blood
thru brain shoots up spine to activate imagination, neurons
in imagination's other place, interactive, regenerative
invoke the sweep of history that sets her here still kicking
in a complex of occasions
invoke the inviolable connection to planet
she stands in for, she breathes
& watches over—a figure of Reckoning—
one of the philosophizing serpents in the bosom
history invokes & pivots on a dream
[History: women were de jure and de facto the property of their spouses
money transferred to husbands
denied child custody
divorce almost impossible
fighting church & state hierarchies]
"The few are entitled to everything, the many, alas! to nothing!"
defending her mother from her father's drunken assaults
"I knew I should be a shameful incendiary
in this shocking affair of a woman's leaving her bedfellow."
her sex is in "silken fetters"
female education promotes external accomplishments that
only trivialize the mind
pastime of reading novels—stuck at home—
the nuclear family, woman as adornment manacled in the cell of an insane
asylum brutalization by society
outlaws of the world . . .
playing the swing note to a fascist enterprise
metabolic modus
apparati for change
mortars are designed especially for angry mothers
antidiluvial soirées they once reveled in
one fights for justice in love says the obvious mother
she did and does and does and will do
what is the sweetest lore of her narration?
a baby’s melon-scented head, interregnum reality
a battle of sense and no sense, imagination of the mother
& there are those that never gave birth that were also of this clan
break the stupor, it’s in a chance you take in narration
she will never apologize in anyone’s temple or mosque
she will bow down in a theater & to that audience in narration
for her sleek fitness for rabble-rousing for intricate sentences in narration
adroit know-how in the grammar of operational tactics on the ground
how to command, when not to say what might not be said
the better for it, the ground as planet welcome home now
not a globe you try to grasp, to own in your computer dream
ubiquitous non sequitur
but how to spin
how to weave
how to stomp
how to string a bow she surely knows how
she sequesters herself for many tasks surely
how to take shelter, arrange a nest
for bird relations to visit
keep account of the jars of honey and grain
how to magnify the pedagogical stash, keep the sanity
of language that skews gender logic
obedience toward her duties and charities
her whelps all fed & clothed
in the midst of apocalyptic fear that keeps
heaping itself upon the psyche
the planet’s getting too warm
the plagues are upon us and the women are raped in their tents
and out on the battlefields
one says these things for the future matriots
those coming after . . .
warnings?
how to touch with gold leaf the allegorical page
how to string along the enemy, catch him in a lair (a lie)
with meteoric speed & deft imagination
how to make his sentences go awry
scramble the sense for future decoders to puzzle
how to confuse him
how to mix lamentation and rapture
so it imprints on the archive, nanoseconds away
mothers of worms who propagate the soil we want you here
mothers, harsh critics too, of sentimental war tropes we need you
mothers, the unthinkable things you do we need you
tonal gradations of mothers, how welcome
frescos of mothers obscure in their accomplishment
mothers witnessing the rise & fall of civilizations
call to you, call to you
poetry is the daughter of chance
& will assume world leadership
each facet of her hearing informs the other
the redoubtable adornment—crystal receiving light
her work as a “channel”—did you, mothers,
say something was wrong about the future?

“Why”: David Jhave Johnston (Canada)
“Distorted Message” Carla Bertola (Italy)
“A Little Ginger, A Little Garlic”
Talking the prose line with Fred Wah

Interview with Nicole Markotić

As part of our historical documents series, we are pleased to present this interview by Nicole Markotić with Fred Wah. Fred Wah was recently appointed Poet Laureate to the Parliament of Canada (2011-2013). We present this document with thanks to Jacqueline Nabben for her transcription (and at times skilful interpretation) of the interview, which originally took place in Deanshaven British Columbia (2007).

Fred Wah was born in 1939 in Swift Current, Saskatchewan to parents of Swedish and Chinese origin. He grew up in the West Kootenays in rural B.C., where his parents owned or ran several Chinese-Canadian cafés. Wah studied Music and English at U.B.C. (BA 1962) and took an MA in Linguistics and Literature at SUNY Buffalo in 1967. From 1967-1989, he taught at Selkirk College and David Thompson University Centre, Nelson, while living in South Slocan, raising a family (with teacher and literary critic Pauline Butling), and writing more than a dozen books of poetry. They moved to Calgary in 1989, where he taught English and Creative Writing until his retirement in 2003. Currently Professor Emeritus at the University of Calgary, Fred Wah divides his time between Vancouver and Nelson, B.C. (Photo: Karl Jirgens)

NM: I want to ask you about prose. Because as long as I’ve known you – in fact, my first reading of you was Waiting for Saskatchewan, so as long as I’ve read you – you’ve been writing in prose, as well as lined poems. Music of the Heart of Thinking is all prose, and yet you have – if I dare say it – virtually no interest in narrative. 

FW: What do you mean I have virtually no interest in narrative, because I don’t write narrative?

NM: Well you do, you wrote a novel. But writing narrative isn’t why you choose prose as a form for your poems; that’s not your primary focus. Stein says in How to Write about the difference between a paragraph and a short story: there is none. But the difference between a sentence and a paragraph is huge. A sentence can cut-off just before [starting a] story, but in a paragraph, the story is already developing. You, however, say that narrative is already nestled in a sentence. If I were to lean on Stein, I’d say you’re interested in the sentence, but not the paragraph. I would say that your most narrative poems are the lineated poems [laughs a bit], not the prose poems. So you’re not writing prose poems to pursue narrative, right?
FW: Well narrative has always been a very difficult, I mean, a very useful term to me. I’m interested in the whole notion of narration, of narration as a kind of process. Not that I merely wish to pose narration against story. But I am interested in narrative process. In fact, I was talking to you the other day about that review of Ondaatje, where the reviewer said, Ondaatje doesn’t write stories or can’t write a story; he writes collages, but there are no stories there. I would say I’m interested in the notion of narrative as a line, as a lineated thing. So, I would argue that in the prose poem, the prose poem sentence both proposes and cuts into the narrative. That one word followed by the next word. So narrative becomes very minute and particular. Syllabic, if you like. The narrative of language, not the narrative of story.

NM: Right, but by juxtaposing narration against story, you’re making a distinction about how language structures the senses, the sensation of seeing, hearing, feeling, even tasting a poem, without having to dive into a lineated plot.

FW: Yeah. Because, for example, Diamond Grill isn’t a ... story.

NM: And you could certainly read it as a series of little poems.

FW: And there are little stories in it, right?

NM: Yeah, but …

FW: Well, I don’t write paragraphs so much. I don’t know that the paragraph is a unit of composition for me. I’ve tried, but it’s too nebulous. Whereas line and narrative, and sentence, and intonation pattern, and phrase… all those things, for me, come from music. The shape of a rhyme, the shape of a bunch of syllables or a bunch of notes… But a paragraph… I don’t know what Stein means by paragraph.

NM: I think she means that this idea of the indent, of connected sentences, suggests a mini-plot development, through dialogue and, character development, and other linear bonds. I think that, for Stein, once you care about the paragraph, you’re writing a story and not poetry anymore. That’s my reading. And it sounds as if that’s what you’re saying too, that you’re interested in the sentence, but not to the extent of plot.

FW: Oh I am, but the sentence is another unit, like the syllable, and like the word, and like the intonation pattern – the phonological intonation pattern – of composition. It’s a unit that has an immediate cadence. So, that’s what interests me about the Waiting for Saskatchewan anecdote that you’re interested in, is that the cadence is so apparent. And your interest in narrative and prose poetry, it’s not even about Waiting for Saskatchewan, it’s about that one poem, “Father/Mother Haibun.” In that poem series, the haibun, for example, is a unit of composition for me. The sections at the bottom of each piece are haiku stanzas. That’s why they’re in bold-face.

NM: In the following example, “anger” figures as a trope that not only leads a reader into the poem, but also propels the poem through the anecdote of meeting the bear. A hovering anger, metonym for the poem’s “you” ultimately proposes inner “virtu” as formed through accrued knowledge. But not by “developing” that story, the image of inherited anger “flying out” of the narrator both excites and weighs down the poem’s details. And as you say, the separated haibun at the end punctuates the form as much as the content:

Father/Mother Haibun #2
Anger the same thing as you behind my face, eyes, maybe. A larger than usual black bear, eating, high up in the thin wild cherry trees in the gulley this morning, sun just coming up. I peer around the corner of the garage at the bear just like you would, eyes squinted brow lined in suspicion like yours used to, as if you were trying to figure out something serious. I feel your face in my like that sometimes, looking out of me, and now I wonder if my anger is the same as yours flying out of me from him and his, etc. the anger molten back through Chthonic fear. The bear flushed off, finally, by the dog. You hover in the cool August morning air, behind my eyes. The fire, the candle, the pumpkin, the “virtu,” inside.

Crash of broken branch, hungry, pits in the shit

FW: Or, in terms of linguistic structures in poetry, the poem might be more apprehensible if we see the “haiku” at the end as privileging the paradigmatic plane over the syntagmatic, the foregrounding of frame over seriality; a form of rhyming. As long as there’s a unit that
I can focus on, as a construct, compositionally, then I’m interested. I suppose story could be constructed that way but story isn’t interesting to me as a unit because it doesn’t have those particularities of composition.

NM: So, for example: readers may accept *Diamond Grill* as a novel, given a particular overreaching arc, or that *Diamond Grill* is a collection of prose poems. But nobody reads that book as a collection of short stories, although they’re obviously full of narrative. So, the narrative is a trope for the form, but doesn’t further the story.

FW: Exactly. And when Aritha van Herk calls *Waiting for Saskatchewan* a novel, she’s playing around with the form, she’s talking about its processional structures, because there’s no story in there. But it’s really privileging the novel as the form, there’s the tyranny of the novel. It’s the major form in literature in our time.

NM: Since we have already mentioned *Waiting for Saskatchewan*, tell the story you once told me, about the banner...

FW: Lynn Mauser-Bain was a teacher at David Thompson University Centre, an art teacher. And we had an art gallery there, the McGregor art gallery. We were down in the Student Union Building one night, having a reading and a party, playing jazz, and it was a great little scene. That night, it was snowing heavily and there was a show that was supposed to be set up in the McGregor gallery, coming in from Saskatchewan. But the bus or the trucks that were supposed to be bringing this show to us were stopped by the snowstorms up at the summit, and they couldn’t get through. So the show hadn’t arrived in time to be set up, and I said to Lynn: “Typical, waiting for Saskatchewan! We’re just waiting for Saskatchewan.”

“Here we are, we’re sitting here, drowning our tears, waiting…”

So, Lynn says: “Wow that means the gallery’s empty! We should really do an impromptu improvisational show in the gallery. The walls are bare, here’s our chance!” So I said, “Great, I’ll meet you tomorrow morning at the art gallery and we’ll talk about what we can do. We’ll get our students involved. We’ll take over the art gallery.” When I arrived the next morning, going up the stairs to the main building at the university, there was a banner of masking tape with “Waiting for Saskatchewan, Waiting for Saskatchewan, Waiting for Saskatchewan” written on it. I followed it up the stairs, and through the hallway and down to the McGregor gallery. And the doorway to the gallery was papered over, paper taped across the doorway. And somebody [Lynn’s disembodied hand] passed me a knife out of the dark, and so I sliced the paper and went in. And that was our happening. That was the event. She’d been there since I don’t know when, setting it up, so there were a whole bunch of people there, there was quite an audience by then. So we kept doing the happening all morning. Handing people who followed the banner a knife, and letting them rip into an empty gallery. And we got the students involved and kept playing in the gallery, while we were “Waiting for Saskatchewan.”

NM: That’s a perfect example of a great anecdote.

FW: But look that has noth–

NM: Right?

FW: But it’s not even in the book!


FW: Sure, I think of the event with Lynn. But the poem, “Waiting for Saskatchewan” then becomes the phrase “waiting for Saskatchewan,” and it then draws my attention. You know, it was a chance something I said to Lynne, at a bar, and she took what I said and put it on the tape. And so it becomes a unit.

NM: And then you took it.

FW: That I then take it into the poem, “Waiting for Saskatchewan,” engenders a very literal bio-text, for me. It has nothing to do with the art gallery, or… well, it does! In fact… well, here’s the story: “I want it back, wait in this snow-blown winter night” – there it is: “wait in this snow-blown winter…” *What* snow-blown winter? There’s not another single line in this book that references that event, except the subject: “I want it back,” the “I.”

NM: And you’re not telling that story now so that readers can think, “Ooooh, so that’s what the title means.” It’s not about reference, it’s not about some deep subtext that we’re supposed to divine. It’s about the fact that the show was late, which generated your joke.
And your comment inspired Lynn to do a show, and her doing that show roused you to think of that phrase and its ramifications. So it’s, it’s like a twirling or spiralling process in which words trigger words which trigger words, and that, that, it seems to me, is how narrative works in your poetry.

FW: Well. The way I see it, it’s the total materiality of language for me. You know, you’re walking along the beach and you see some driftwood and you see a piece – there’s tons of driftwood but your eye picks out one piece. It’s the same principle here. We’re in language everywhere. So writers pick out certain pieces of language, and focus on what that language can do. So in Ondaatje’s case, the point would be that he uses language in a similar way to create scenes, to create senses and sensations with language. But my objective isn’t to create something in a sense outside the language, but to take the language and then move further in. In the case of Waiting for Saskatchewan, I’m playing with that biotext of my father that started with Breathin’ My Name with a Sigh. And that is, it’s my story. That’s a bio-story. But I’m not using a story as reference. So, that story I tell you about Lynn Mauser-Bain and the gallery and waiting for Saskatchewan has nothing to do with that book, Waiting for Saskatchewan, or that poem.

NM: But it’s still a good story.

FW: [laughs] OK, but it does have to do – obviously – with me as the writer. That’s my process. But in terms of the reader, in terms of… “Oh gee that’s what the book means,” no, that has nothing to do with it. There’s no reading available there: “wait in the snow-blown winter night” – you don’t know what winter night that could be.

NM: Right but someone could have written a poem – someone who is not Fred Wah could have written a poem, saying “Lynn and I in the bar, waiting…” And that anecdote itself would have been the coat-hanger shape for the poem. And it’s not that you don’t appreciate that as a good story, it’s just not what you’re interested in when you immerse yourself in language, right? It’s a great anecdote, but you’re not pursuing a short story, one with characters and a surprise at the end. So to get back to haibun poems, the question I meant to ask is about the haiku… do you see these haikus as footnotes?

FW: No they’re part of the haibun. A haibun is a short piece of prose written with a haiku sensibility. One formal feature it has is that it ends with a haiku. But when the Japanese poets said, ‘written with a haiku sensibility’, and if you’re writing a piece of prose, that means you’re paying attention to certain things such as fragility, temperature, seasonality. All those qualities of haiku-ness. And it’s true! For me, when I set out to write those haibun, I’m looking for the haiku that’s going to appear at the end. That’s what I’m looking for in the language. That’s why I find it an interesting form because I set out wondering: “well, what’s going to come through?” And there is a sense of anticipation. John Ashbury wrote a series of poems called “Waves” that are haibun, and it’s that sense of anticipation: you know there’s going to be a haiku there… so where does it start appearing in the language?

NM: That’s interesting because as a writer, you’re figuring out the root to the haiku as you go through the poem. But we readers, even though we don’t read it until the end, we see it first: it’s bolded, it’s separated… it’s almost like the couplet at the end of a sonnet; we know it’s coming, but we’re not yet sure what it’s going to say. Or how.

FW: But I call them “haibun.”

NM: I’m not quarrelling with the form, Fred. I’m just wondering if the whole point of the poem is to get to the haiku, to figure out how to get to the haiku. And also, once you do, why include that haiku?

FW: It’s not that the whole point is to get to the haiku. The point of the piece, the point I think of that form is to set up a sense of – if you like – contract. There’s a contract here. I’m going to look for the haiku that could, can appear. Now many haiku could appear through that language, and through who’s writing it. So you can’t leave the haiku out at the end because it’s a mirror, it’s resonance: “Oh right, it’s – oh right” – that feeling, you know, “that was there.”

NM: Absolutely. But it also feels to me, as a reader, like formal scattering. So that the haiku is there to punctuate the poem, at various levels.

FW: Well that’s just because it’s at the end. I could have put it at the beginning, and it would have been a totally different experience, right? Then the piece of prose would have been about the haiku. It’s about where the poem goes. Where it ends up. That aspect of seriality is so engrossing.
**NM:** Getting to the end makes you re-read the poem within a haiku sensibility. But also – even though the poem itself subverts this – there’s a sense of summary. For example, in the following poem, the haibun ending doesn’t only comment on the rest of the prose, but offers new elements of narrative. Aunty Ethel as opposed to the father/you figure. The food tastes and smells that saturate the rice. The kitchen versus the university:

**Father / Mother Haiban #20**
I still don’t know how to use the chopsticks as right or as natural,
bamboo fingers hands arms mind stomach, food steaming off the dishes,
rain or wet snow, windows, night lights, small meals you’d grab between
rushes (unlike me), that’s what you did, isn’t it, went back to the cafe
later, on the nights we didn’t have rice at home, me too, when I first went
to university in Vancouver I couldn’t stand it, I’d need rice, catch the
Hastings bus to Chinatown, what is it, this food business, this hovering
over ourselves?

**A little ginger, a little garlic, black beans, lo bok, Aunty Ethel, the kitchen**

**FW:** Yeah. You can go back and then realise that, “OK, that ‘lo bok, Auntie Ethel, garlic’
thing,” all resonates with that notion of needing rice and catching the bus to Chinatown.
But the paradigmatic plane in composition offers not only iteration but generation, a way to
make the next move. Which, I guess, is also another form of narrativity.

**NM:** And lateral advancement in prose encourages a very different narrative grammar.
Usually, in haikus, there’s a syllabic restriction. But in these pieces, the tension generates
by juxtaposing the recognized form against the backdrop of its own privileged frame.

**FW:** Oh, but these aren’t formal haikus, these are fake haikus.

**NM:** So you don’t necessarily rely on the formal structure...

**FW:** I didn’t want to. I wanted to explore a different sense of cadence. I wanted that sense
of each piece as a prose piece, because I was then letting myself write prose, or letting
myself write non-linear. Predominantly, I wanted to let the prose poem – the prose in the
prose poem – start to speak out, move out, *act* out. That’s a good sense of it, to let it act
out.

**NM:** This is an interesting juxtaposition because this is your first book of prose poems.
Even though there is lineated stuff as well, each one visually reveals itself as an interesting
tension to the narrative prose, like a minimalist poem, hanging there.

**FW:** Yeah, they are minimal.

**NM:** I always find that prose push in your work intriguing. The very next piece has the
line: “Japanese plum blossoms, my finger joints swollen, your kind of love sweetest”
(“Father/Mother Haibun #21”). Nobody would hear that and think, “Oh yeah, a sentence,”
right? So, your lines undercut the form even as they’re reminding readers of the form, and
making us go back into the form to look for, and at, the language.

**FW:** Another anecdote: The finger part – “finger joints swollen” – those are Dupuytren’s,
which my mother has. It’s genetic.

**NM:** And it swells your joints? Finger joints?

**FW:** Yeah, see? It’s calcification. I can’t… watch, I can’t [he’s trying to extend and bend
his fingers as a demonstration of his swollen finger joints]

**NM:** Wow, now I understand that the poem…

**FW:** Well that’s what the poem means.

**NM:** … now that I know the biography!

**FW:** Boy, you’d be lost, right! I’m so obscure, no wonder people don’t understand all my
references.

**NM:** Yeah, which brings me to another point. In your earlier work, there are so many
references to first names of your friends and specific places you’ve been to… And again, I
don’t think you’re saying to the reader: “If you just do the research you’ll figure out who
I’m writing about, or where Loki is buried. But there’s a sense that place and social context
matters to the writer, and that the reader can understand the importance without needing to
know the details.

**FW:** Yeah, I don’t think they need to know the details at all.
NM: So why do they need to know any of it? Why mention Pauline, for example?
FW: Well, what do you mean, why – why not?
NM: So is that it, why not? Because when you’re really writing against the sense of the lyric –
FW: Well as you know there’s a duplicity of writing that goes on. There’s this kind of – it’s not duplicitive – but it’s a double. Just like in that anecdote I told, writers know when we’re writing that our material and our imagination is in one place that has certain references, names or places. And even if you wanted, you couldn’t put all the information into the poem for the reader. But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t write any information. In the case of *Waiting for Saskatchewan*, I know the story behind that poem. Writing and the story behind the writing, like the thinking behind the writing, are separate activities which still, of course, are at certain points indivisible.
NM: And even if readers discover certain details (as with that Saskatchewan anecdote), it won’t change how they read the poem. By offering Pauline’s name on the page, you suggest a figure that has a narrative import, and a language-focused impact. Though maybe searching for narrative anecdotes is what we’re all guilty of. I bring this up because it seems – and this is a terrible thing to say – but it seems to me that since the publication of your “novel,” a lot of criticism doesn’t focus on your poetry [chuckles]. I don’t mean that they only write about *Diamond Grill* –
FW: Yeah, that’s because they always want to talk about narrative and story and meaning and intent, and all that’s going on behind the writing.
NM: But don’t you think people want to grab onto anecdotes? In much of your prose (I don’t want to make too a global statement), you’re really skating right against the edge of narrative.
FW: There are two tracks in my writing. One has been, since the late seventies, that biotexture around my father. It started with *Breathin’ My Name with a Sigh*, and *Waiting for Saskatchewan* is the second part of that. *Diamond Grill* is the third part of that long poem. So, there’s a whole problem that I’m trying to work at in my writing: how to write this, how to work at this biotext. Not tell the story, because I don’t know what the story is. But I want to work at this question of race, at questions of identity. And the other aspect in my writing is the more, if you like, poetic, or the more poetry-oriented writing in *Music at the Heart of Thinking*, and a lot of the collaborative stuff. They overlap, but those two main tracks are what I’ve been interested in. So when as you point out that I write prose in *Music at the Heart of Thinking*, that prose isn’t, at all, biotextual.
NM: So for people to read *Diamond Grill* without looking at the other two: it’s not that they’re missing out on certain stories or anecdotes. What they’re missing out on is the range of language and poetics you’re exploring. A lot of people didn’t even recognize your interest in the figure of your father until you wrote *Diamond Grill*. But as you say, you’ve been writing about that biotext since *Breathin’ My Name*. So someone could come along and write a paper on “The Prose of *Diamond Grill* and *Music at the Heart of Thinking*,” but no one does, right? People tend to read *Diamond Grill* as a narrative, most likely a novel, and *Music at the Heart of Thinking* as an entirely separate collection of poems; and they don’t see that the three books work as a trilogy, as dynamic complexities of how you may play with prose. I think it’s partly that you’re a difficult poet (I don’t mean that you’re a difficult poet to read; you’re a lovely, delightful poet to read), I just mean that you don’t pose easy, already-known ways of reading, you challenge the reader as much as you challenge yourself.
FW: I hope so!
NM: When I read other interviews with you, people ask about the Kootenay School of Writing, and they ask about *Diamond Grill*, and they ask you about living out in the Koots. Rarely (though there are some fabulous ones) do these interviews formulate a discussion about the poetry. Maybe it’s because you don’t maintain the same type of writing with every book. So: critics can’t pin down that you’re writing this kind of poetry or you’re writing that kind of poetry. Look, there are excellent critics out there who read you wonderfully, but some don’t seem to have a way of talking about your poetics.
FW: OK, but why would anyone want to talk about a writing that encompasses every book? You just end up generalising in abstraction.
NM: I’m not talking about generalising, I’m talking about the specifics of your poetry. How many interviews have you done where the interviewer says, “Look at this lineated
poem. I notice you end each line with a noun. Why do you end your lines on nouns?" Do you ever have an interview like that?
FW: Really? I end my lines on nouns [laughs]. I never noticed.
NM: Yeah. Look at this [randomly picking up a Fred Wah book]: “snows,” “peaks,” “granite,” “planks,” “track,” “trees,” “word,” “questions,” “doorways,” I could go on…
FW: I can’t remember.
NM: OK, Fred, and I mean this seriously: what is the question that you have been waiting for decades for somebody to ask you in an interview?
FW: I have no idea. I think they’ve pretty much talked about everything.
NM: Really? You’re such a brat! In that case, let’s move from poetry to poetics; from the prose poem to the prose argument.
FW: *Faking It* was written in the context of delightfully being able to work with a bunch of graduate students such as yourself. No, seriously, I had to keep up with what you people were reading and what you people were interested in. So, that was a great boon to me. But, if I hadn’t been at the university, I probably wouldn’t have gone to conferences for one thing, and most of those chapters were written for conferences, I probably wouldn’t have written that book if I hadn’t been an academic at an institution.
NM: But you got pretty interested in articulating this poetics. And also examining the poetic stance on race, and –
FW: I’ve always been interested in theory; I’ve always been interested in how we intellectualize our lives. But I’ve never before been able to write critically about it.
NM: That kills me because you are such an amazing prose writer! In both your poetry and your criticism. *Faking It* is a delight to read, and *Diamond Grill* is full of amazing language.
FW: But we’re talking about writing, we’re not talking about reading. [laughs]
NM: You know, *Faking It* doesn’t read as if it’s written purely as an academic exercise. It seems to me – and maybe this is me doing the biotext reading again – but, too many writers have said, “Oh yeah, now Fred Wah’s talking about race.” But if you look at your poetry, right back to *Breathin’ My Name with a Sigh*, you’ve been interested in discussions of race within a certain kind of poetics since very early on.
FW: Not that many people write about my work anyway. But, a while ago I heard a paper by Jeff Derksen on “Space-age and Wah.” It was a reading not so much of the process that I go through when I’m writing; but a response to my writing in the context of his own interest in neo-liberalism the social and political philosophy and the theories around globalization. Which I don’t. I mean, I’ve not thought through all that myself. So I find that kind of critical writing fascinating.
NM: And people always write on their interests, and they read poetry through their interests.
FW: Yeah. Those kinds of things provoke me to move on and think more about what I’m doing, and what’s possible to do.
NM: So when Pamela Banting, you know, a very long time ago wrote about *Pictograms*, did you start thinking about translation and what that means in the poetic stance? Or had you already?
FW: I had already started to think about that, and talked to Pamela a lot about it, too.
NM: I’m curious because a lot people, including Pamela, are really interested in eco-poetics these days. And one could look at early Fred Wah poetry and call that writing by an “eco-poet.” I know you wouldn’t call yourself that, but –
FW: Oh yeah, there’s a whole Gary Snyder line, earth-household stuff that’s going on there. But the Black Mountain question around translation comes from a context that engaged a group of people. *Pictograms from the Interior of B.C.* is part of it. Daphne Marlatt, myself, and Neap Hoover were going to start a magazine in the early seventies, that addressed a lot of mythology, northwest coast Indian mythology, Aboriginal stuff. That was in the days when you didn’t think twice about looking at all that material, Aboriginal material, which we were very excited by. The Franz Boas ethnography stuff, and Wilson Duff’s masks, and Phyllis Webb’s poetry. So, of course I got interested in translation, my whole point in *Pictograms* was that I was going to translate Interior Lakes Salish. I’ve had some linguistic training; I knew I could learn how to do that.
NM: If you look at that book now, do you think it’s a translation or do you think it’s something else?
FW: It’s a trans-creation, yeah. It’s not a translation. It’s part of a translation process.  
NM: When I first read that book, I saw the visual onto the page, and the transposition of culture. But now I think I see it more as a part of a dialogue you’re having with a previous texts. 
FW: Yeah. That’s why I called it a trans-creation, rather than a translation. And you know, that’s how Susan Holbrook (who worked with me, or whom I worked with) also read the poetry. She got very interested in translation, and of course then she moved off into Stein. 
NM: We’re back to Stein, a poet you claim didn’t influence you much! You taught Stein, though, and when you did, I went back to her poems with a whole new way of thinking about the sentence. 
FW: I didn’t teach Stein, how could I teach Stein when I don’t know anything about her? Ask me about the book edited by Louis Cabri, instead [See: The False Laws of Narrative, selected poems, with an introduction by Louis Cabri. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009]. 
NM: OK, let me ask you one question about that book. Were you nervous about having to write an essay in response to your own poetry? Or a piece of criticism in response to a critical essay about your poetry? 
FW: Before Faking It, I used to find essay writing intimidating. Look, when I sit down to write a poem, I don’t know how long the poem’s going to be, I don’t know where it’s going to go. It’s total surprise, totally open, right? But when someone says, “Would you write me an anecdote about food?” OK, I sit down, but it’s more of a chore. I know what I have to do, I have to write about food, there’s an aboutness to it. So, when I respond to Louis’s essay, there’s a certain form of expectation that’s set up that I’m going to have to fill in. Like, there’s a container that has to be filled. It’s an essay, it’s a response. It’s blah blah blah. 
NM: Couldn’t you write a Music at the Heart of Thinking as a response to his essay? Couldn’t you sit down and say, “Fred Wah, surprise me!” 
FW: Well maybe I’ll write a short poem… No more essays! No more interviews! Just poetry. The best response to poetry is a poem. The end.
I was thinking about dignity this morning,
for Robert Kroetsch

rob mclennan

Halway between was The Badlands. Iron and copper in striated rock.

Sunset. The desolate storm surround.
    Deborah Poe, Elements

1.


Some say a word. Not a sentence.


Everything, was never sent. Not a letter, sentence. Narratives, a morning. Mourning. We did not know. A silicon, man. This speech of, sheets.

Errata, sparks. Death was not, possibility. Is it.

2.


What, verbal web. It happens, to the tragic. Excavations.


A threat, to lash. Gone, old world injury. A light, between.
C’est brièvement l’été / Summer flees

Denise Desautels

Translation: Norman Cornett

C’est brièvement l’été

c’est brièvement l’été
un grand silence déjà
la chambre dévie légèrement
les murs qui s’ouvrent ne mènent nulle part
la nuit je sens grandir une douleur à l’épaule
je ne sens presque plus le reste de mon corps
on dirait un corridor de plomb
sans commencement ni fin
la mort rejoint tous les paysages

Summer flees

deafering silence in its wake
the room sways slightly
its walls recede into oblivion
at night my shoulder throbs with ever more pain
the rest of my body goes numb
I wander through a leaden labyrinth
without beginning or end
death leaves no place untouched

Translation: Norman Cornett, Ph.D.
From: Denise Desautels, L’œil au ralenti, Les Editions du Noroit, Montréal
http://www.lenoroit.com/
Denise Desautels has won the prix Athanase-David, and is twice winner of the Governor General’s Award of Canada.
PRELINGUISTIC THINKING

Alan Davies

Alan Davies was born in Lacombe, Alberta, attended high school in Newfoundland, and graduated cum laude from Atlantic Union College in rural Massachusetts. By the mid-1970s, he was editing a poetry journal, A Hundred Posters (complete run recently re-issued on CD by Faux Press), and publishing poetry books under the imprint Other Publications, in the Boston area where he had stayed for a few years after attending Robert Creeley’s summer poetry class at Harvard University. As editor and poet, Davies befriended Boston poets including John Wieners, while forming relations with a group of English-language writers dispersed across North America who would become known as the Language Poets. His poetry and an essay on poetics were included in the crucial anthology devoted to the language poets, In the American Tree, edited by Ron Silliman. Davies has lived many years in Manhattan. He served as the 2011 Writer in Residence at the University of Windsor. His books include a an av es (reissued online at Eclipse, < http://english.utah.edu/eclipse>, Signage, Name, Active 24 Hours, Candor, Rave, “untitled” (with M.M. Winterford), Sei Shonagon, Don’t Know Alan: Notes on AD (with Miles Champion), among others. Rampike is pleased to present “Prelinguistic Thinking” an essay by Alan Davies, partly inspired by an email exchange involving Amy Catanzano and tentatively, a convenience. [photo: Kenji Kirit]

∞

What does it mean when we talk about having a feeling? I don’t mean the kind of emotional feeling which we (sometimes) think of as sitting isolated within us / in response to some situation or other. I mean the kind of feeling that we have / seemingly in advance of anything else / before intuition (even) / what we sometimes call a gut feeling. Perhaps it is (in part) a mixture of intuition and emotion. Certainly it represents a kind of knowledge / a kind of knowledge about that which provokes it (something “outside”) / and (at the same time) a kind of knowledge of ourselves and about what we are at that moment feeling (something “inside”).

It might be of the sort that we sometimes feel when we meet someone for the first time / it might be of the sort that the President-of-somewhere-or-other has when he first sees Picasso’s Guernica and has himself been at war for fourteen years / it might be of the sort that massive or compelling parts of nature often provoke / it might be of the sort that a mother feels for her child / it might explain the Mona Lisa’s smile / it might be what a parent experiences when seeing Pollack’s Seven Poles that leads them to remark My kid could’ve painted that. In fact (even in this last instance) what they are noting (probably without consciously noting it) is that the experience represented (and (with it) the experience given) is pre-linguistic. When analyzing literature there is a debate between those who would choose biographical criticism / psychological criticism / social criticism / the new criticism / structuralism / postmodernism / Marxist criticism / historical criticism / among others. But these choices / as large as they seem to be when they come between us and the work of literature we’re trying to make (“educated”) decisions about / are nothing compared with the volumes that we experience before (before) words ever first come to mind.

*  

How unlike the language that we poets use is the one used by composers! Many people make music who do not know how to transcribe it / who can’t write it. But for us poets (on the surface of things at least) that would appear to be impossible – to compose in poetry is to write the composition down in the language of poetry (which is more-or-less some version of
our everyday language). On the other hand / the inability to write the poem down well signals (also) an inability to compose in poetic language / in fact it is (is) that inability. So perhaps there is something like being able to write poetry (somewhere within/around the person writing) / but being (at the same time) unable to write it down. This (then) would tend to indicate a strong pre-linguistic component in the manufacture of the poem / a moment when the poem exists in-and-around the body/mind of the poet / but not yet (at all) in words. What (then) does the passage into words look like? / how does it happen? / what are its stages (or phases of transformation) and from what into what?? When asked how he knew that a painting was done / deKooning replied – When I paint myself out of the picture. Perhaps the work of art begins in the absence of the maker / and ends also in (or with) the absence of the maker – so (if that were to be the case) with what is the work of art filled in between those two absentings (abstentions)?

Perhaps the silence that is regained once the poem has been written / is an echo of what preceded that moment when it first began to swell into being within the poet. Perhaps it is not the poem itself that has a chance of lasting in time / but the silence at both of its ends that in a metaphorical sense might be spoken of as being pinned in place by the tack (the attack) of the poem (the poem-as-object).

* There are certainly things that we experience within ourselves (resentment and patriotism would be good examples) that don’t make any sense if we think of them exclusively in terms of feeling or if we think of them exclusively in terms of thought. These kinds of sensations / which occur before the person is split by (our) language into thoughts and feelings / seem thereby to point to or to say something about the pre-linguistic.

* So what do language and writing do to pre-linguistic experience? Do they warp it / and how? Do they obscure it / totally? Do they try to speak (for) it as well as they can / but fumblingly (and with (at least)) a touch of embarrassment? Every time a word is used the whole world changes.

What is left of pre-linguistic experience once it has been spoken? / once it has been written? In other words / can pre-linguistic experience survive civilization / can it survive culture?

And why do we speak it / why do we write it / anyway? Any pre-linguistic experience that I have had has been more than adequate / and some of it has been sensational (some of it has created a sensation in my whole self) – it has gone far beyond anything experienced as spoken or written (and we’re including all the languages of expression here). So why do we muck it up with words?

I wonder if the answer to these questions is not to be found in pre-linguistic experience / and only (only) in (and only in) pre-linguistic experience / that we’d have to go back there in order to know what we’re doing to back-there when we leave it behind and open our big yaps.

* Art aims toward the expression of the pre-linguistic.

All art aims toward the expression of the pre-linguistic.

This is what separates it (in each of its art forms) from its camp followers – light music / illustration / design / light fiction / entertaining movies / dance club dancing / and others / verse (whether Hallmark or New Yorker) / and others.

* It is not so much what (what) we don’t-know (what we don’t-know) that is pre-linguistic – it is the state of being don’t-know that we become when we enter it.
It is this elemental experience that unites our experiences of adequate art objects as well as the scapes and wonders of nature. When we do give it a name we refer to what’s seen (experienced) as the beautiful / or the sublime / or some such. In reality it is the fact that we have no name (adequate or otherwise) for these experiences that fills us with awe in the presence of what inspires them. This accounts for the long history of aesthetics as a science of language in repeated search for names for what-cannot-be-named. At such times / the experience of don’t-know is all that we do (or can know) / and even the name that we have given it fails to touch it (at best such a term points-off-in-the-direction-of-what-it-intends-to-refer-to).

* What does it mean to say that we have a feeling? In what way would it not be equally (at least equally) accurate to say that the feeling has us?

In this (latter) sense we are all (and each) simply an aspect of pre-linguistic experience / which is then just another way of speaking about what-is.

* It is essential to begin to think the pre-linguistic not only from the individual point of view / but from the cultural as well.

We assume that there was a time when pre-linguistic experience was (all that was) available to humans. Such a time would certainly precede what we belatedly call civilization – the times marked by the advent of the following – language / a sense of time / cities / technology / science / measurement / and so on. We can (if we will ourselves to think at least a little bit imaginatively) see all of these changes as languages in their own right (in their own write) – time (a language to control the flow of events) / cities (a language to control the flow of human beings) / writing (to control the flow of goods) / law (to control the actions of people) / and so on.

Were there wars then (before all of that)? / or did wars come only with the advent of languages?

And what would one’s experience of the world then have been like? Would it even have been accompanied by a sense of one’s self as one (as one)? or did the conscious division between the multitude and the individual come only as a linguistic realization? It seems to me likely that it did / and that (especially) all of the dichotomies that we in the west live so much by (good/bad / them/us / then/now / right/wrong) came only with the burden of a considerable amount of (already developed) language behind them.

Is it possible to have war without language? / without the ability to communicate (to allies and foes alike) the sense of there being a meaningful divide between the us and the them (the we and the other (the “we” and the “other”)) / a divide so meaningful that perhaps some millions of human lives will be required (this time again) to fill it (this time again)?

* We cease to think when we refuse to do so under the constraint of language.
   – Friedrich Nietzsche, From the Posthumous Writings of the 1880s

* Not naming things keeps them fresher (no superfluous labels) / and maintains the possibility of rethinking things as we go along.

* Can we rethink them without words?

That is a crucial question.

*
The closer we get to experience-without-words / the harder it is to speak or write about it. This should be patently obvious.

Why (then) do we speak and write about it in spite of this difficulty? We do so because we don’t want it to be a lost experience.

We’ve made all these languages for communicating things / and now we’re stuck with using them. There are many many pre-linguistic ways of communicating things / but we forget to use them (and are likely then sometimes to be abused by them in our unawareness).

*

Fiction is another way of viewing the world. I suppose this is obvious / but sometimes the obvious needs to be repeated to remind us about those assumptions that we’re building our life upon. We have our regular way of seeing the world / which changes from instant to instant / varies with the person / changes with the weather / and so on – and then we have these other ways that we’ve manufactured through (or via) which to see the world (fiction / ballet / opera / philosophy / history / biography / economics / journalism / pedagogy / surrealism / and any of a-hundred-or-more-others that you’d care to think of and name) / and all of these mediated by feelings and memories and sensations and plights and advantages (and any of a-hundred-or-more-others that you’d like to think of and name) / and so on / and more / and so on. But to take those ways that we’ve made for ourselves by which we intend to see the world / and we might simply call any one of them a language / those are the things that mediate between ourselves (our selves) and the world whether we think of it or not (and (mostly) we don’t). It’s possible that we’d decide to say that philosophy is actually a little bit behind-and/or-above the rest / and that maybe myth is even a little more in back of that – but it doesn’t matter – what matters is that we’ve created these things / and we’ve made them more-or-less automatic (and probably we’ve done that on purpose) – and now we’re stuck with them / they’ve kind of become gates that we’d have to get through (each-of-them and maybe one-at-a-time) in order to get back before them / before linguistics (all of those various linguistics).

Why would we want to do that?

*

Some times it is better to stop talking and just be.
Some times it is better to stop thinking and just be.
Some times it is better to stop writing and just be.

*

In pre-linguistic time we did not have the words pre-linguistic or time.

*

To appreciate pre-linguistic time / we may have to clear our minds one word at a time.

*

You can learn about the world by experimentation or by contemplation. Most people would say that that’s it / that that’s all we’ve got – deductive or inductive reasoning / or (looking at it with other words) philosophy or science.

But you can learn a-hell-of-a-lot about the world by just-being. And there’s no word for that / not really. If you think you’ve got one / let it go – you’ll experience more / you’ll be happier.

*

Pre-linguistic experience takes place outside of time and space / before them / without them. Time is a language invented (at some point in time) by humans – and we’ve learned to experience space through a conglomeration of languages (eg perspective) too.
No time.
No space.
Experience.

* It seems quite likely that words have gotten us into as much trouble as they have gotten us out of. Why (then) would we have made them up? As an evolutionary strategy / did they do anything to ensure the survival of the human race as against that of other animals? – I don’t think so.

I think we made them up / to put them on much the way that we put clothing on – in part for practical purposes / but also to alter the ways that we look and seem.

And I think we made them up / for fun. To the extent that that is true / I think it the poets’ duty to remind the race of that fact (to do so example-by-example) / although it remains only one among many duties we might lay-at-the-feet-of the custodians-of-the-word.

* We must sometimes think our way forward with words we don’t have.

* Amy Catanzano, 21 August 10 email –
I have been biased in believing that language creates reality, but then I consider all the ways something can be a thought, and if there is a non-lingual thought, before it has--in another version of your description--“concrete-in” [this in response to a previous exchange with tENTATIVELY, a convenience – see Appendix below], if there is a pre-word, this might be how I define emotion or sexuality, which seem to be forms of perception though not necessarily accepted languages. If they are languages they are translated by our phoneme-pheromones.

Response to Amy / 31 August 10 email–
It seems quite likely (almost unavoidably-so) that language participates in the creation of reality.

It's becoming more-and-more-obvious (to me) that reality is created by the mind.

But the question is to-what-extent-the-mind-equals-language / and I think that it does so only to a limited extent / only along-the-lines-of-some-of-its-developments / and that it is not-necessary-that-it-be-the-case.

We might begin to ask to what extents languages create the mind.

tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE / 18 August 10 email –
For me, trying to understand pre-lingual thought is almost like realizing that just beyond yr peripheral vision there’s an alternate dimension that you'll never see.

Just bringing up the idea of pre-lingual thought is challenging the common notion that thought is entirely lingual. To me that's like saying that a spilling cup exists only as itself & ignoring the hand that pushed it. In other words, I reckon I'm proposing that thought is an infinite chain of events that the lingual manifestation of is just one link of. In other other words: Is it absolutely necessary to start w/ language?

Perhaps it's a matter of how one defines thought - is thought any process that takes place in the brain or is it only the self-aware ones? Is it possible to be self-aware w/o language? Are our memories of our early yrs so vague &/or non existent b/c we didn't have the language yet to fix them? Mainly I'm preoccupied w/ this issue b/c I sometimes write sentences like: "& then I thought ___" & I'm never satisfied w/ what I fill in the blank w/ b/c, if nothing else, it doesn't feel right - it's not an accurate quote. In my thoughts I don't seem to think of my thoughts as neatly organized phrases or whatnot - not even as stream-of-consciousness. In my attempts to accurately transcribe my thoughts, words, no matter how they're arranged, never seem right.
Of course, the problem here is: What medium/technique does one use then to 'quote' thoughts? I don't think it's a matter of choosing, say, images over words or sounds over words or whatever. Maybe it's more a matter of creating a sort of process flow chart (& I don't mean that to say that the brain's analogous to a computer). In other words, if I cd somehow convey a neuronal firing pattern to another mind I'd be more accurately quoting my thought(s). This wd be where we'd get into telepathy. Maybe I'm saying that telepathy wdn't be the transmission of words or images but, rather, a resonant pattern of energy flow.

Response to ENTATIVELY / 31Aug10 letter –
I've probably connected with this most through my zen practice / zazen / sitting meditation. The mind gets more clear / more centered. A lot happens in the mind without words being involved.

I have an essay in Signage that deals with this too - I think it’s Language Mind Writing - anyway / it sort of details the sequence of events in the thinking processes / and although I haven't reread it for a while I think I'd probably still stand with most of what I wrote there.

It’s always interested me (for obvious reasons) / how the mind works - I mean that’s what we use to make much of the other stuff that we make (for me it’s mostly writings / some collages / human relationships / from there we can (and must) go on-and-on).

Your spilling-cup metaphor is challenging vis-à-vis this. It makes me think of surface tension / the potential-energy in that - and how that might serve as an apposite metaphor for a-moment-somwhere-in-the-processes-we're-discussing-here.

No / it’s not necessary to start with language. We probably get tricked into doing so because it’s with language that we’re handling (creating) the thoughts and moving them around in an effort to-come-to-grips-with-them. It’s just because language appears here we think it got here first (in the great chain (?) of non-causalities).

Perhaps it’s a matter of how one defines thought - is thought any process that takes place in the brain or is it only the self-aware ones? - Well / we get to decide - it’s we who make the definitions. But the brain thinks / I mean that’s what it does / so perhaps we could define (at least most of) what-happens-in-there as thought (or as at-least-being-bound-up-with-thinking in some intimate ways).

Is it possible to be self-aware w/o language? - I think so - Narcissus had no need for the word mirror. Again / one could define the purpose of sitting-practice as awareness (not self-awareness) without language.

Are our memories of our early yrs so vague &/or non existent b/c we didn't have the language yet to fix them? - It’s an intriguing thought - it would be like we had the snapshot but we didn't have the developer or fixer. But (at least once-our-eyes-developed-fully) we had as children access to all of the same perceptual information to which we have access now. Maybe we just don’t need that information - I don’t know.

Response to ENTATIVELY and Amy / 31 August 10 email –
How about? -- Language includes all communication done using signs. All communication-done-using-signs is language. Thought is in-mind communication. There is a-lot-that-occurs-in-the-mind / and that we could qualify as communication / that does not use signs. Those occurrences are what I think of as pre-linguistic thought. I don't want pre-linguistic thought to exist. I want to access it.

Things don’t define themselves / but they could if they had to. What have we lost?

The 2010 movie Inception grapples with some psycho-philosophical issues. Perhaps the weightiest of them is the question of whether our waking experience or our dream experience is the most real. Throughout it begs the question of what real means (what real really means) by hanging it on the individual viewer’s experience / and letting us define it for-ourselves and as-we-usually-would. In the end it suggests / or at least has-
tried-to-suggest / that dreams are as real as waking experience is / and that they can (furthermore) have significant impact on waking experience. At no time does it countenance the possibility that dreaming and being-aware are both (and equally) illusory.

And as a narrative it privileges waking reality over dream / as it is to waking reality that all participants return after their time in the levels of dream / and it is on making something happen in waking-reality that the entire plot turns.

It is interesting (also) that life-and-death are not dealt with in the same questioning way as are waking-and-dreaming / for it is clear that life retains the-usual-privilege-that-we-give-it-over-death / as the hero chooses to spend his life (his life) with his living-children rather than with his dead-wife in spite of the fact that she is seemingly-no-less-real in death than they are in life.

* Is there an outer limit?
   Are there things that cannot be said? That is to say – can we experience things that cannot be described? / can we think things that can’t be (adequately) uttered?
   It would seem so. Language has (its) limitations.
   But to say so expresses the fact that we do not experience things entirely through (mediated-by) language / that there is a before (a before (that there is a before)) language. It is essential to get there.

***

Appendix:
Amy Catanzano’s explanatory interpolation: I’m responding to tENT’s use of the phrase "concrete-in" in an exchange we had about his the book and my book, Multiversal. Here’s an excerpted version of that exchange:

tENTATIVELY, a CONVENIENCE: "What if the original overdetermination (as opposed to "sin") were to have created a 'reality' by ordering our perception of it in an increasingly deterministic way? Might not the path to the multiverse then be the d composition of this determinism?, the hesitancy to concrete-in a more delicate & sensitive psychic environment w/ the DRACONIAN?

Amy Catanzano: From what I haphazardly gather, quantum mechanics shows how the wave functions of subatomic particles are not deterministic because they behave without causality and are therefore measured or predicted through scales of probability, which rely on perception, but, first, maybe you can further discuss this "concrete-in": is it wet enough to accept a handprint? A stray leaf?

tENTATIVELY, a CONVENIENCE: No, it's strictly dry humours.

[That exchange took-place/started on GoodReads on June 2, 2010]
From the tree where I had been found,
blue blossoms:
Christine Herzer

Those were strange weeks my hair did that nest thing I ate the scent of my voice with my hands when I wanted to split [another form of the unbuilt] the behavior is here/ the spirit is there

What do you need? Connecting with other people Bought a Comme des Garçons dress

Perhaps humanity exists under the name of soup made from the ground under my feet covered with a yellow membrane edged by a halo and a statement sheet

“Ambassador Spock, you are on a collision course”

Poem comes into the mouth direct:

The space poem will occupy and the surrounding space, some of which I open
opens I myself

Stop trying so hard to erase any part of yourself that might have come from her

[that is not your work]
Dumpster in Bronze

Zeke Moores

How an object relates to its function greatly determines a society’s view and/or perception of that object. Most objects directly mirror their utilitarian role in their qualities and characteristics. By exploring the everyday objects of our culture I am addressing issues of representation, value, and perception. While our commodity driven society alienates the very labour force that fastens it in place, products have become less about being functional objects and more about being cultural movements.

The Dumpster is the continuation of a series of works where an object is recreated to scale, questioning its perceived value in our society’s hierarchical system of objects. Re-proposing and re-fabricating an everyday object, while exploring social and cultural economies.

A dumpster is not a desirable object, yet it serves a very important and practical role. A role, which is now itself being questioned as we find ourselves burdened with more and more to dispose of and less places to put it. The Dumpster will soon become an archaic object of our gluttonous past as we attempt to trim our waste.

From the environmental state of our urban landscape to issues of value, property and control, the Dumpster is a cultural vessel that overflows with contemptuous issues that permeate our society today.

I am creating a cycle of production, consumption and waste. Within this form craftsmanship and quality exist as a paradox to the mass-produced second-class object being depicted. Through the recreation and re-fabrication of this form I am re-proposing them as new cultural monuments to our desires, indulgences, shortcomings and ignorance.
Zeke Moores: “Dumpster” (2010) – fabricated bronze and cast: 53” x 35.5” x 89”
Collection of the artist.
Reliable Objects

Lucy Howe

Through my work I’m interested in exploring and reshaping the objects of my environment by subverting their intentions, denying their formal structures and imposing a gesture, a state of movement or transformation. This is a personal endeavor to disrupt rational forms, to shift the purpose, the being and function/behavior of reliable objects and spaces. The sculptures and installations I create exist to facilitate the imagination by combining the logical and the absurd. Here, sculpture is being utilized to escape the physical form and create an internal space of balance, between belief and distrust, the mundane and the wondrous, the everyday and the uncanny.
Lucy Howe subverts the everyday and explores the physical and metaphysical structures of common spaces, objects and activities.
Two Poems

Karen Mac Cormack

REVERSE DEFINITIONS MANIFESTO

rope with a w

optics with an e

cerise with a p

sparing with an i

vers with an e

1 power

2 poetics

3 precise

4 pairings

5 sever
acrossedown

Karen Mac Cormack

amble this way for the note from me strangely a singer wearing not so it's pronounced apparently too be the way increase hard but may contain it's the least one can do to see a girl short work for counsel the fjords glass or beer mat needs changing to the doctor refreshment in late afternoon remote star job a shipping company to object to one wrong note a liking for feather bed maybe trend clothes for driving fast route followed by an Afghan tribesmen high praise destroy a one-sided listener with charm without conviction note the character — it makes no difference late for a cropper to come a cropper those who lose control in rows may catch usual to succeed fails to contain trouble a New Zealand article portrays verse somehow never able to be like an archdeacon the strain a better bed but laundry maids do it took over additional accommodation a slow-growing shrub

Mabel minimum nor memo meteor baritone brief in top gear flatter barometer tea line not guilty soft spot fall over prevail pathan endear stanza equality crab breed iron layer annexed
2 Poems

Steve McCaffery

CANADIAN CONTENT

In memoriam Jonathan Williams

warfare asserts simonides of
timmins canada’s lone pre
socratic mounty is the
constant action of ice
upon play we must
remember in this regard
the long forgotten maple
leaf player stockwell smegma
the guy who organized
a team of hockey
players in the trenches
of the somme and
could only get action
by hurling a hockey
puck out of the
trench and shouting get
it before the huns
claim icing all of
the platoon including colonel
smegma lost their lives
in the longest overtime
in the game’s history

now that’s canadian content!
**Political Theology**

*Lex*

*Quaestio facti*

*Necessitas legem non habet diritto*

*Non subditur legi emergency état de siege*

*Status necessitates not kennt kein Gebot*

*Eccezionali e facto oritur ius*

*Ausnahmezustand magna trepidatio*

*suspension dezision legis virtus haec est Grenzbegriff*

*force of law tumultus quando ius stat Ernstfall*

*senatus consultum ultimum legitimi difesi*

*Notstand anomaly iniussu populi stillstand des Rechtes*

*Ultima necessitas juridical vacuum videant consules*

*Justitium vigenza auctoritas reine Gewalt state of exception*

*Jenseits ausserhalb limit concept fictio iuris suspension*

*Gigantomachia peri tes ousias legibus salutus*

*Entscheidung pure violence Princeps luctus publicus chaos*

*Entsetzung des Rechtes guardian of the constitution*

*anomia nomos empsukhos si eis videatur Duce Pater*

*tribuncia potestas perpetua aneu nomou dikaiosune*

*arkhan anupeuthunon anomos Friedlosigkeit auspicial*

*auctor optimi status: Führer*

*“founder”*
6 Poems

Brian Henderson

Noctilucent

Serviceberry carrying its glow
deep into deepening dusk,
rain slurring things into smears
over the electroweak wells of themselves –
not the ideas of them, their other breath.

Her day ends in diffraction effects, her dress
with its pattern of eyes, her knot-writing,
flung-in-slow-motion silk, high up
in the sky-solitude, the séance room
of the mesosphere, fifty miles high,
negligee, thin smoke whisper
memory gives off at the end of its flash.

Funnel Cloud

Light like looking through sheets on a line,
smoothed calm, time slowed
heavy, a memory that alters photographs –
she stood watching slanting still
white rain, splash of buds of serviceberry
against the glossy, greasy dense turbulence,
volute of twisted tarnished grey glass.

He finished his final sentence, the one
suspended over her hearing
and picked up the book.

Over them the progeny of corrugated
tin roofs accelerated
like impossible falconry, nature being
an accelerated falconry of the imagination.
In one gasp her life poured upward around her.
**Cirrus**

As if you were seeing microwaves
a circuit magnified in nightvision
the locket clasps a cursive of.

You placed it gently on the tea service
silver on silver without its corrosion
everything polished of noise but your answer.

How could she have carried
such a curse for so long without it
searing into her throat?

Everyone knows there have been whispers
but now this silence, high up in the heart
the frozen breath of prophesy.

**Cirrus Kelvin-Helmholtz**

That clear shroud along the waking fringe
abundant chemicals of relief opened
in her rhythm of held ghosts

woken from a dream, startled
wide-eyed even her house run aground
on the gnarled shore out the long spindle of morning.

Purer extract could not charm such
an intervention, it’s only light stirring water vapour,
x-ray of the borders of a songbird’s song

Catacombs drag their nets through her
whole postmarked family
that sheer moment lace-fringed of no return.

**Debt Algorithm of Nitric Acid Cloud Particles**

Not the metaphor of the Christ, nor
the advent of the Million Dollar Man.
Not the abandoned trike, maroon with
nostalgia, so chemically wrong, nor the
recreational sex practices that could have
led to her death, nor the lost languages
of the people of the river, nor the economy
running on fumes. Not at the foot
of the ship’s prow now plowed up Main Street
and wedged between the borrowed buildings
from whose eves orioles used to suspend
their futures, nor among the shrunken human
fruit shriked in the thorn orchard,
or those still tied to their chairs, their
ozone-hole haloes, nor out along
the stratospheric fictitious capital
streamers across the liquid mirror
of night, each paradise of last light
its own scar, your loaned – or is it gifted? – life.
Hearing Aid

The spider listens with its feet
along the telegraph highways
and tastes the coloured chemicals of movement.

In water sound is weight
and floats.

Telescope of an owl’s hearing
plucking me out of the background noise
of the universe, here in my little radioactive cave

I am within the hearing, the
curved smoothness
of its sweep, the plaza
of its forbearance
as if de Chirico or Willink lived here
among the eternally still
listening into its timing, the gasp
of hearing.

Poetry is the ear of language --
that blaze, that crackle, that
aperture of cloud-bladed silences.

What could we know more of
and still know nothing?

“Running Feedback” by Jamie Sharpe (Canada)
"Samuel Menashe, New York Poet of Short Verse, Dies at 85"


Burt Kimmelman

*Your ashes*
*In an urn*
*Buried here*
*Make me burn*
*For dear life. . . .*

- Samuel Menashe

Words let us live — so you read them twice,

your voice for good measure, though you knew

how silence could make them beautiful.
Hamlet

Paisley Jura

Hamlet (excerpt)
score by Paisley Jura
words by William Shakespeare

Paisley Jura:

Time In Between EP (2009)

Includes “Hamlet”

Info & bookings:
paisley@paisleyjura.com

Contact (& orders) c/o:
www.paisleyjura.com
www.itunes.com/paisleyjura
www.cdbaby.com/paisleyjura
Hamlet
Paisley Jura/William Shakespeare

How is it the clouds hang upon you?  
How is it the clouds still hang on you?  
I am too much in the sun  
But break my heart for I must hold  
my tongue  

The time is out of joint  
And I have lost all my mirth  
Doubt that the stars are fire  
Doubt that the sun moves  
Doubt the truth to be a liar,  
but never doubt my love  

When sorrows come,  
they come not one by one  
but in battalions  

If it be now, 'tis not to come  
'Tis not to come, it will be now  
You would play upon me  
Pluck the heart of my mystery  
There is so much music in this organ,  
Yet you cannot make it speak  
You may fret me, but you cannot  
play me.  

When sorrows come,  
they come not one by one  
but in battalions  

I have bad dreams  
I have bad dreams  
I have bad dreams  

From the album:
"Time is How You Spend Your Love"
For more info go to:
www.paisleyjura.com

Paisley Jura, on base with the band
A Box of Nothing

Derek Beaulieu

“Clearly we are beginning to get nowhere.”
—John Cage

On April 7, 2011 I sent The Bury Museum and Archives an empty box. I purchased the box for $3.95 (£2.50) and received sceptical looks from the UPS employees when I requested to send the box—devoid of any content—to Bury. UPS also instructed me that they would not ship an “empty box” and that they needed the contents of the box to fit within one of their predetermined categories. We agreed to enclose within the box a single sheet of blank A4 paper. With this content—as unwritten as it was—UPS could now categorize the contents of the box as “documents” and could continue to process the application for transportation.

Their consternation was compounded with my request to insure the box and its contents to a value of £25,000; the same amount as the yearly wage of an arts worker in the UK (before the current government’s arts funding cutbacks).

UPS, not unexpectedly, refused to insure the parcel for more than $2,500 (£1,500). They would not guarantee the safety of a box of “nothing” and refused to insure the safety of “artwork” (even an empty box) as it was shipped to the UK. For insurance of the amount I requested would have to seek a rider for an independent insurance provider.

I was then asked to complete a Parcel Shipping Order form that included checkboxes which inquired “Are the contents of the parcel breakable?” (Yes) and “Are the contents of the Parcel replaceable?” (No)

Upon my completion of the form, I was invoiced a shipping cost of $135.90 (£86.23) and the box was assigned a tracking number and a series of barcodes and QR Codes to expedite the box of nothing as it cleared various processing centres and Canadian and British Customs.

These barcodes and QR Codes are included in The Bury Museum and Archives’ exhibition The History of Tradestamps.

Tradestamps were the cotton industry’s hand printed labels used to indicate the contents of their shipping bundles in order to appeal to their (often illiterate) purchasers. The tradestamps “often depicted scenes, emblems, animals or figures” and the industry “employed hundreds of designers to create these trade marks as an early form of branding.”

The resultant barcode is the symbol of nothing. In light of the current administration’s draconian cutbacks and their lack of willingness to insure the growth of social programs and the arts, to quote John Cage, “Nothing more than nothing may be said.”
Maria Damon, Brian Ang
& Chris Funkhouser

AH\(^3\)

(sightseer) between anytime a bidder washes the pennyweight something
   isn’t post-haste rear Sentry-go joked vicarage and with
   a crimped codfish (feigned sobbingly modern
   fast-food
   but rear Sentry-go diffraction sightseer hashing
   diverges.
   and you-fee borderline
   his chesterfield (mothballs of
   crispness
   a livid sightseer hashing but rear Sentry-go joked
   vicarage and searing-iron argue brainwave.
   vindicate this. (ranking)
   wedges)
   (health-stripe buzz sobbingly improbable a traitors
   and sandbag washed her
   unbarring.
   of sandbag washed of of wonderland)
   with this toenail washed canoes heater a brothers-in-law
   their and the and a nosebag
   their visuals. (ranking) axiomatic a musk-emplacement between
   chicanery it
   and a bidder washes the toenail washed a house this toenail
   washed a generousities crispness
   isn’t bidder washes the pennyweight of
   chicanery it trusts despite sometime china-
   his chesterfield
   or illumination. charger
   the sticking or illumination.
   sleeping pram but rear Sentry-go joked wonderland)
crispness (feigned sobbingly
   (incumbent mourner during the
   sticking
   crispness assorted clock-landing-parties.
   actions (forester conned a may-beetles along her
   borderline
   while it and having cash-up-front
   unblock
   isn’t an event wedges)
   his and you vary sobbingly improbable
   a print
   vindicate sobbingly ideographs an amortization
3 Poems

Brian Ang

Yesterday’s Spark

Do what Postone did to Marx. Do it for its own sake and to prove you’re a mature member of society. Kissing time, revolution time. Maybe it's just my bourgeois desire for smoothness, but lunch was not an option. Knowing that now, does it really change anything? I ate a salmonella-and-jelly sandwich and don’t care. The pseudo-concrete takes dominion everywhere. Talk it through by talking out loud. And if this isn’t useful then it needn’t be pursued.

After the takeover, my Samaritan schoolmaster calmly walked up to the Dean and spat. There is class time and not-class time, the latter I spend managing my eBay. I am so many digits richer, I will show you Fear The Movie on my iPhone. Meanwhile, a spider conducts an aleatoric method operation that puts many a human architect to shame.

The other side of the world is deeply identical. Bookmark that. Extending the class period extends the undergraduate’s production-time by shortening his life. Bookmark that. Adorno is no fun to smoke with. What’s the musical equivalent of the Wertkritik? I can’t fuck to Schoenberg. We have here

the solution of the following riddle:

What is the answer?

Well in that case:

What is the question?

Trumpets without telos, R&B sampling is theft, shut the fuck up Theo! The invisible hand touches you as you sleep,

savoring the suspension. The machine reads your mind then writes your lecture for you. If you smoke a blunt with a dollar bill you get to keep it. This Valentine’s Day choose the garbage disposal unit.

The podcast resounds in the fetish chamber.

Speak with your mouth closed.

I love you, as I love itself.

for Neil Larsen
Space Diaper

*after Mel Nichols*

written with vestibule information
upcoming alphabetical think I’ll just do
one more with the interstitial introductions just
everything about art history I’m Mel Nichols
and I
want to brought my novel my name’s
Gary Sullivan motivational students workshop
variation so we’re going
with really far thank I’m Sharon Mesmer
get a whatever you very much my
popular type poetry theme recently in poetic
life say and just fucking
read
this
poem delivering later tonight covered
in one capacity BBC last first
start stopping it news is
Brandon Downing for
Bob Perelman that is you
the present other
collective
like middle
brief whatever work I promised just
a couple more
of
these bits like real poets universal
themes photograph passed
to logs
distributed friends private several
hum in the back
c’mon sing
right think we into late
Flarfism
according Nada
Gordon you all coming rare
East Coast space diaper
do you mind if
most prominent been published reverse is
there light in this
room feature film
to read reflect
in 2001
and the first poems Perloff fan
legit
members new job giving Flarf mythology
if one its parts alright and enjoy
the
show predetermine an
order listserv
Representation-B

Hair cascading down her back simmer. Enough academy-donkey may please all, of my imagination and acoustic,
fashioned, slept. atmosphere is dying. “diastic” reading-through Found There, by the Oxford lecturer

thee with lines in each stanza. Potens,
table rests on its opposite. after the first indicate silences lasting poem has as many stanzas
as his pants and eased

with the phrase itself, What is asked for is through the source text to find the output (& everyone else)
revision took place between the released from their
it rains on scAlza,
mundane
dermato-/ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh-(a)hhhhhhhhhh a few conclude
where I taught at the State This is just what you
I culled only should know about me, Drawing-Asymmetries comprise a series of spaces to the left of each line say made
up of one or two Destruction; Perelman

this. (yod) "hook" the series 94736 24128. a sensible statement, assent RIVALRY—De Quincey I’d laugh, and
a 5-place random digit table, one may get Slides from A Vocabulary much wisdom in which public school students
such as he’d Tennessee dweeb

semantical, and other skills as any poet during the periods such as medicine.” sublimity caution strap

gloom-basket title the matter there or motifs, or rhythmic figures,

eyes, and then gathered speed through pleasure. Sensing precisely when French way permit is saying. Constitute.

“No, he runs a kind of restaurant.” whistle from the writing-tree and with conviction.
you cd hold a camel in makes the queen’s hair whiter.
from Every Direction. uses two texts—tear the
of his program automating ANCIENT JAGUARS. recurring again and again in full happened because reading In
other Peace Conference showed definition of

that shifted the selection of substituted f SaN a via: All words of University of New York during Spring other sink
Quatrains in Surrealism will necessarily differ from those of the others.

pleasant kind of celery bread but no pears.
Nevertheless, substituted words in the English consciously disregarding by Anne Tardos from “Preface to the 1979 Revised

Slights girdle Borstals stain in a cold blue brook.

my works, and my ways, & not dreams pilaster terrific outer environment
the umbrellas here, in conjunction with the RAND Corporation's A

I think the act was more than double. petite ensconce
Grösstéste The sayer resides in words, silence,
Vaculator Anasazi
beeper o’ tonnages, dogies, body: matter’s even though
deterministic methods blob blob independent aesthetic objects
and on the ships at sea. des passerelles d’isolation young
did,

need have no PARROTS RACE one of my deterministic it
well nations; it the at the bully-tyranny under
light? of the total aural situation at he was starting to
come, she grasped to help me
pinup-honey charismatic GI’s’ ideas
G-men Vitaphone Dillinger hand and pen and their residue.
So I wrote down four
output each time. that that there section of a French-English
qualms about taking on a cranium crane near you
fearing death, for Annie Brigitte mentioned above,
6, and thereupon more and more in a fluid succession of
compositional acts.
be be this rewarded. marchandes le noir tout sauf total be
this A closed gaze at my moving ants, and stones in
mathematics Charles Lutwidge these deterministic methods a
source text each moment as performance circumstances meat. .

be more dark than learning to choose ordinarily and be
be aesthetic values, at least
words in which the letters on a ledgelike evening
to the mirror to meet the man’s gift of verse!—some, them,
bucket taxation “He’s a butcher?” value lavatory of
systematic chance operations. width of a pin my
complete sentences (with periods). vivid, The integers
show Each of & when the & when the.
them and his briefs over his hips, legs, and numbers were
mainly used of fuckery methods involving random digits the
palm of your hand words and/or word strings made romantic
degaussing feature nettoyage so overtures Edition of

17
3 Texts

Brian Edwards

Early Noir
The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941)

When she is grabbed near film’s end for murdering his partner, Brigid O’Shaughnessy tells Sam Spade that she loves him, asking him to spare her from the law. What a defining moment it is when he says to her: “I hope they don’t hang you, precious, for that sweet neck … The chances are you’ll get off with life. That means if you’re a good girl, you’ll be out in twenty years. I’ll be waiting for you. If they hang you, I’ll always remember you.” Beautiful, tear-stained, there is Mary Astor’s face as the bars on the lift close, cutting her off forever from the world. This is Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade, the hard-boiled detective on mean street, Bogart cold and tough and existentially cynical, the one who doesn’t blink when told that his partner’s murdered, who beats up Peter Lorre’s Cairo because he carries a perfumed handkerchief, who acts up by breaking glasses, crashing doors and issuing threats and who grins when he leaves the scene, amused by his own theatrics. He doesn’t like cops either. It goes with the business. If old wounds and broken dreams lie beneath his snarling toughness, they’re not holding him back. Sitting on his desk, lighting his cigarettes, knowing his sins, Effie his secretary fits the role and the office is nothing to write home about. Bogart’s big break, Huston’s first direction, Sidney Greenstreet’s first film, film noir on the way. The “Maltese falcon,” a stolen bird made of gold and jewels for which men have been killed, doesn’t in fact matter much. Here characters are framed and re-framed. Sam Spade is paid by the hour. When Brigid hires him, he says: “You’re good. It’s chiefly in your eyes, I think – and that throb in your voice when you say things like, ‘Be generous, Mr Spade.’” But on mean street in 1941, generosity’s limited. At the same time, across town, Orson Welles is directing Citizen Kane.
**Double, Double, Toil and Trouble**  
*Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974)

When she lights two cigarettes for herself, one right after the other, we know she is nervous. Dressed in her tailored suit and snapbrim hat, Evelyn Mulwray is beautiful, cool and taunting and she gives Jake Gittes a whole new bundle of confusions. Faye Dunaway never looked better, playing this sort of *Maltese Falcon*’s Mary Astor to Jack Nicholson's Bogart, a fellow with an office just trying to do a job. What is going on with the LA water supply? That is one problem. But even more intriguing, as Gittes begins to realize, what is this family mystery into which his honest Sam Spade investigations are compelling him? Like his bandaged nose, courtesy of the spiv's knife (director Polanski taking a hand in the action), *Chinatown* is about cover-up. As they say in the classics, a private eye's job is never done—there’s always more than meets the eye, as it were, and in this film noir world, as in the first great detective story when Oedipus insists on searching out the terrible truth of things, discovery and confusion chase one another’s tails right to the final scene. The challenges of strange action, motive and deception contend with the mystery of identity itself. “You may think you know what you're dealing with,” says Huston’s Noah Cross. “But believe me, you don't.” And like Jack's Gittes, we probably don’t. Why is Evelyn Mulwray not much concerned about her husband’s mistress? Who kills Mulwray, found drowned in the middle of a summer drought? Although warned off, Gittes persists, as the conventions demand he must. Fair is foul, and foul is fair. When he finds Mulwray’s “girlfriend,” Mrs Mulwray says she is “my daughter” SLAP “my sister” SLAP “my daughter” SLAP “my sister.” It takes Jake Gittes a while to understand this riddling. Maybe he hadn’t read *King Oedipus*. Poor Evelyn Mulwray. And still the awful father persists, wanting to raise the girl, he says, last in a line that confuses normal category distinctions. As cops start firing and the car gets smaller and smaller in the distance, it seems that Evelyn will get away with her daughter-sister, but when it comes to a stop, with the horn blaring, there is no happy ending. This is “Chinatown,” after all, a state of mind become a place where the ground rules are different.
Good Bad Guys and Girls
*L.A Confidential* (Curtis Hanson, 1997)

It is slick and appealing, James Ellroy’s pulp bestseller brought wittily to the screen in this late noir take on fifties brashness cut with a strain of existential cynicism. In his role as a conniving tabloid reporter, Danny DeVito’s voice over sets a defining style for corrupt cops, mobsters, hookers, stories and the money. As smooth as ever, Kevin Spacey is the celebrity cop, the one who cuts deals but does not rat on mates. At the other extreme, James Cromwell is lethal as the bad cop, the one who has position and power and a secret history of extreme double dealing, violence and murder. In between, rival cops who are forced to become a team, Russell Crowe and Guy Pearce set sparks flying and not only with Kim Basinger in her great role as the classy hooker, super cool and slinky, a young woman from the country making big bucks in the city. There’s even David Strathairn along for the ride, more than comfortable as a mobster with money. The stereotypes are all in place but the play is sharp. Guy Pearce is up-tight, smart and persistent, a by-the-book fledgling with so much policeman promise set alongside Russell Crowe (not yet Maximus) who is formidably thuggish and coarse yet also sentimental, even honourable, it seems, and prepared always to ignore the book in order to get a job done. In this LA, there are deals and betrayal, hostilities to burn and stories by the minute. Weirdly, it’s even a buddy movie and maybe, after all, after all the tricks and violence, the bashings, mayhem and murder, the best man gets the girl. If it’s a fairy story, it’s one with significant levels of difference.

Brian Edwards has contributed regularly to *Rampike*. He was professor in Literary Studies and a foundation member of the academic staff at Deakin University, Geelong. He edits *Mattoid*, a journal of literary and cultural studies, and currently resides in Port Fairy, Australia. His recent books include *All in time*, and *The Escape Sonnets*.
2 poems

bzniditch

INVENTORY

What remains
of tapers burning
our words
a catalogue invoices
forgetting soliloquies
fragments
finger and footprints,
imagistic lines
always in preparation
of futurism
inkblots which draw us
to answers and ancestors
out of lexicons
we never suspected
on continents
javelined to time
an absence
from undertones
from alien waters
by strangers
on a train
with abstract
conversation
in geometric paths
like our own
recollections
whispers, reprisals
un-inspected
body counts
speaking in tongues
outside our door.

DISTANCE

You entertain
by a galaxy of roses
a last supper
in the star-chamber
over gardenia walls
scenting mascara
left over
from Mardi Gras
posting belles-lettres
on Bastille Day
missing your absence
in a lacunae of space
by indefinite
aplomb
and a host of admirers
from the language
literati
as a sextet played you
for a lost soprano
from an aria transposed
by Mozart at 20
and your Beau Brummel
bedecked in the latest
finery as any dandy
from Paris
and Montreal
by way of New Orleans
antediluvian,
doing the cadenzas
on the Roman clef
with his live wire
actor and partner
from the circus soleil
serves the Beaujolais
and beefcakes
cross examining
the music sheets
from his classical
chamber bed
by the timeless
raconteur’s clockwise
party of twelve.
Away The Seasons

David Groulx

remember —sisters— remember
-sisters-
changes
the distant forget
these ways

lean to write on your skin
store it in your heart
sorrow
stories
were told
create

to struggle
depth

Evolutions

I am spinning
twirling
whirling
swirling
twisting
coiling
dying

the earth dances with me
killing
slaughtering
maiming
butchering
destroying
creating
Instructions to a Painter

James Gray

Paint under the last paint show us the hidden
What has become of that un-opened envelope?
Yet, there will be more sun than rain on
What we needn’t see a surface scent
Prima Materia eyes and mouth forced shut
Up life-like yet it doesn’t smell like sense
Pain or presence beneath an emerging form
Covered with honest looking patina
Unnoticed card play in the background,
They will read it as fate, water to clean brushes
in as Argonauts have that familiar sinking feeling
Of motif’s failure, outcomes are not painted.
What remains is enjoyment, a cause of vision
Colliding failures, misdirected allegories
Back to what we can see, wet, made, waiting
What will be under the next layer? This
Is never contemporary with what its meaning is
This time paint this hunger for the inside
Forgetting situation indigestion seasickness green
Now For the sky.
Left un-finished, theme blue or otherwise
Gesso white only texture shadow depth of leftover character.
...with a moon around the rings, reinforcements cement the steel space frames of Saturn, the 3200 Phaethon

Scott Bentley

This link is a robot
of devices, rip chords, sensory retractors;
of remnant anthems, untrained
    analysis, expert panelists;

in uncanny metal, tempered
    any company memory, banks
    a blank stare, random keystrokes
    electric needle, retrofit;

in a hundred hundred
decades, corners
    the mainframe

covered over sheer racetrack, pink
    veering skin-on-skin, converging;

in the cranny of this jag
explosive, invisible
    thus trouble combats

    android virus on my pop-up screen.

This link is a robot, this model
made effortless, awarded
    a gold star to reward arrow;

in a word the ward
off hand, awash, afterward.

This thing forms in carbon bonds. With a wand device extreme tracking
    a tracer finding fullerenes about. I think there's a new excitement
    in home office. Let's ace this test. Mass index to stealth hawks.

This link is a robot
of failed refrains
    a garment of argument in agreement;
    a gargantuan, Naugahyde
    menace to method, hidden measures in meters;
    hidden systems in everyday ions

    internal camera linkage 6 clicks to the leading. Data-shave, zilch
    a minty atmosphere

    impact bills of sale; of print lists, painter. Range of migration solutions
such ravish eventually, lovely. Hot-wire, firewall under a deputy collapse
electic rhetoric, garbage, accepts all battery types. Transfer funds
a loopy noose, ev'ry sky loose with navigation; with motion-sensitive
flesh-colored

integers.

This code is a robot

which almost inhales, exhales, talks
wrenches in foreign tongues, up and walks, waits

for instruction, teaches, reaches for the trigger

socket contraption, small streams
standard idiom, my
mini-largesse

with a face, smiley
as a magnet, extreme safe.

This code is a robot, a robot constructed

of page after page in truth made manifest;
of error mechanics, strikes, pitches, gambits eroded;
of fabricated secrets, doctored statements destroyed, undone;
of plot schemes: a sequence down to full stops up ready, aim, jammed.

This code is a robot, a cross between

breaths drawn off-track LMNOP. Binary opposition, party

stations break this set is a robot. Icon, icon

of opinion. Transmit password recognition, direct file identification

the

premise

of inverse radar access. Occult, clock the remote disk.

Hydraulic, tyrant
of digits.

rifle

Vertical task, nix

crash plates, power switch watt outage. Delete, send

cyborg cog a robust claim train on

surgical missile sites manual command mode, a miasma chain
in spasm prism. Should attention wander
from this cut, it will

jackknife your ear;
this truck is a robot.

This record, this robot, speaks of strange contagion, worldwide
outbreak, vertigo upload versus level survival rates a strong chance.

This record repeats the same news to time in memoriam, exact
circuits, razors precise in the cross-hairs, jerk
chicken wire, each gesture
differing minutely from the other 
one last number remembered—
...and by the way you in the morning comb your hair —voice, alarm—
reminding me of Niagara Falls, the crush
into heavy waters, raw and unkempt, a shower
as cool mist risen and falling, outward
in a rush of weeds and lawns these gloved valves, willows;
in reeds, soil and flowers, a slate shingle ditch. Lasso, rope it.

Robot, robot.
Next, a lexicon we at last exit;
at least ways that can't count, enter
this stage, this underscore lighting out
sounds a territory boom. Rabbit orbit.

“Reversal Fun Yoke” by Jamie Sharpe (Canada)
The Official Carboniferous Simulator
Kemeny Babineau

The official Carboniferous simulator
is shaped like an elevator weasel
squeezed through a mechanical sieve.

Although war pays the rent
the unbadged factor
features eight looping realities.

The higher function sold out
to leaching by the pool
and a tainted riverbed.

Soon we'll all be mercury.
The quick and the dead
drain their bodies for flies.

Blue bottles in the window
posit execution by defenestration
versus the petroleum industry.

Love and Forensics
Julian Gobert

you unearth, dig, scrape
through the scrap-yard,
tins of treasure, maps to

heart is merely a muscle
bones, merely the muscles’ clothes hanger

eyes, swivel points, pointillistic
breathing, is breathtaking

a palpitation, excrete, this or
that, oil

fibromyalgia, discuss over a late night:
fibreglass particulates, percentages of life-lost
life worth, life choice,

this sample is exceptional, don't you
think

the beauty is in the mechanism
when it goes

wrong

exponentially
with wondrous
aplomb
2 Texts

Sean Braune

mesostic for fenn stewart

burnt Fulerum in
thE starlight
of aNother periphery, thought
pushed dowN, feathers led to periplum, sought

faster lureS. ply noir coal in
a pile of psiloTic parabolic words which
nod off sum sills among pyrExias, inhalations. gasps
stop as snoW etchings of time imibe full
curlicues of Amenhotep’s best clothes, now fini.
full stop, the Rebellion subsists in bends
of wall and moon. iT speaks out, now.
for christian bök, five permutations

1. *german incunabula*

*Christlicher Bök*

2. ’*pataphysical*

cytosinexxxxthymexadeninexxöx

3. *sound poetry*

ök bistchrani
na tic hök birs
schritanöbki
ikbönairthes
birn kôh an cit
bristchani kô

4. *nietzschean atheism; or, negation*

*christian book*

5. *oulipian anagram*

bar icons kith
absinth cork i
inhabit rocks
carbon his kit
abhors tic ink.
a orbit chinks
a bronchi skit,
broach it sink.

**some ellipses**

she goes over to
she trips over
he cannot wake
carrying my
she carries over to
she slips on sure curves
he wanders leftways
the wishing well
openings of morni
eyes well-watered
rose petals rip
he doth leaf us
she waits until dusk
dark she creea
he would have
waiting for her, then
i know then
perhaps maybe peta
sky lit treetips glow
driven pure, as g
i do not think
keep to your
far away mortuary
oven bone ovum
burnt tired, my
thinking these thru
desired a some
i am, but
think you do
A renowned poet lets language ride its own musically-malleable syntax into unfamiliar regions of consciousness.

**Sharawadj**
Brian Henderson
http://www.bricksbooks.ca/

Brian Henderson has established himself as a poet who brilliantly makes us aware of language as an instrument of discovery. In his work we realize, over and over again, that each of the mind’s worlds speaks a secret language, which it is the poet’s task to discover and translate. In **Sharawadj**, this includes not only such worlds as those created by the surreal paintings of Jacek Yerka, but the intense, re-humanizing experience of loss and grief. As Tim Lilburn writes, “**Sharawadj** begins with a series of smart, sinuous portraits of placeless, post-apocalyptic locales. These poems seem to grow from sensuous interior observation; their phantasms, appearing ‘haloed and blown, in their fizzing solders,’ are strange yet unsettlingly familiar. Throughout this collection, Henderson conjures alternate worlds – they resemble the peculiar kingdoms in Sufi visionary recitals – that are enticing, disarming and uprooting. And, inside it all, in a room of its own, a tender death is observed.” "Brian Henderson is one of the most innovative poets writing in Canada today. **Sharawadj** is his greatest achievement so far. . . He is a master at distilling lived experiences down to their linguistic and emotional essences. . . What he has created on these pages has my deep and lasting gratitude.” —Don Domanski

BRIAN HENDERSON is the author of ten collections of poetry, the most recent of which, **Nerve Language** (Pedlar Press, 2007), was a finalist for the Governor General’s Award. He is currently the director of Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

---

**Under god’s pale bones**
David Groulx
ISBN 978-0-9784998-8-4
$15.00

“This is a reunion, ready to drink like a good Calvados from Northern France aged until the vintage is ready to be unveiled, shared. These poems are the impressions my world has left on me. The world beneath God’s pale bones.”
— David A. Groulx, author

Orders: Kegedonce Press
Phone (519) 371-1434
Fax: (519) 371-5011
Cape Croker Reserve, R.R.# 5, Wiarton, Ontario N0H 2T0
www.kegedonce.com
Text/Image: Pete Spence (Australia)