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“Dream” by Michele Tarailo (Canada)
Editorial: Cultural Mischief

In this issue, we feature varieties of cultural mischief, playfulness, unruliness, contrariness, rebelliousness. Mischief takes many shapes ranging from light-hearted to deadly serious. But here we are interested in forms of cultural mischief that examine our social and aesthetic conventions. This issue features texts and images that challenge accepted norms. Frank Davey points out in his interview, that one type of cultural mischief involves displaying propositions so that ideologies and discourses become more visible. And so, in this issue of Rampike we turn cultural viewpoints inside out, publicly display propositions, and make visible our commonly accepted ideologies. Michelle Tarailo reveals the alarming nature of dreams and rampant consumerism. Erin Moure, Louis Cabri, Greg Betts, Gary Barwin, and Susan Holbrook, explore, skew and transform complexities of meaning in language. Tentatively a Convenience parodies Oulipo compositional form. Terry Griggs comments on the shenanigans of the corporate publishing industry, as Norman Lock revisits Orientalism through alphabets of desire, and Adam Dickinson throws potent 'pataphysical punches at social polymers. Meanwhile, Rolland Nadjiwon considers the effects on spiritual values when a pow-wow is held in an aluminum jungle, and, Eugene McNamara takes time to reveal our daily petty demons. Claudio Gaudio transcribes trouble in Texas, and Daniel King confuses identities tossed between dairies and diaries. Meanwhile, Edward Nixon, Desi di Nardo, Janis Butler Holm, and Myna Wallin examine cinematic peculiarities, copycat pluralities, Wittgensteinian illogics, neuro-hormones on eBay, and besieging paparazzi huddling on your front lawn. Waywardness, tomfoolery, disobedience, pranks. Concetta Principe's white shirts launder memories, Denis Robillard finally finds Jimmy Hoffa, Amanda Earl visits the chaos rift, Clara Blackwood ipods in the shower, Lara Solnicki tests icy plateaus in spike heels, and Catherine McNeil crashes cars through Highlife's front window. Misbehaviour, disobedience, naughtiness, and monkey business. Sandra Ridley unribbons her pinafore, Chris Roberts dives into a no-swimming zone, Niels Hav reflects on the death of the ice-man, Pat Leech recalls the philosophy of his father's lawlessness, Lindsay Tipping lets the gardens grow wild, and Babar Khan unfolds an assembly of idiots, while Jim Johnstone and Julienne Lottering release a swarm of locusts. Read on, as John Donlan observes the subtle killing power of the mink, Sylwia Chrostowska reads the cryptic Zodiac, Terry Trowbridge revisits the extinction of the dodo, and rob mclennan questions authorships. Misconduct, monkeyshines, impishness, and high jinks. Derision punctuates the falling sky, as we mock the mawkish mobsters.

– KJ


CULTURAL MISCHIEF

An Interview with Frank Davey

Editor of Open Letter magazine, and founding member of the Tish group, Frank Davey is a prominent critic and author of over two dozen books. With Fred Wah, he developed Swift Current, the world’s first electronic literary database. In this interview with Karl Jirgens, Frank Davey discusses cultural theory, cultural mischief and his own visual poetics. This talk develops perspectives raised in an earlier interview published in Rampike 15.1.

KJ: In your article “Thinking on Poetics” published in the “Poetics and Public Culture” issue of Open Letter (12/8), you comment on the talk you gave at the conference which was held in your honour at the University of Western Ontario. That conference drew literary luminaries from across North America. In that article, you speak of your own “propositional” poetics, and you state that “poetics” is inseparable from public culture. I found one comment to be quite intriguing when you note that “poetics” is an “imagining of the powers of language” and the ever-changing structures of culture, and that the “most culturally productive writing” is that which tests the imagining of those powers. Could you comment on the term “productive” which seems to have a value of privilege associated with it, and could you comment on how the notion of “process” enters here?

FD: As you can probably tell, I don’t subscribe to Auden’s declaration that “poetry makes nothing happen.” I knew it was wrong when I first read it in 1957 – possibly because I had read Howl before I read the elegy to Yeats. So I presume you are asking me about the meaning of “culturally productive” rather than just “productive.” If a writer can change or enlarge how language can be used she is changing how the world can be imagined or ‘seen.’ That change could be in a general sense positive in that it had, indirectly at least, contributed to an expansion of the proportion of humanity that had access to justice and self-fulfillment. I call that “productive” – in contrast to other possibilities such as “destructive,” “obstructive,” or “butt-covering.” “Process” of course
I am assuming – as Olson wrote in “The Kingfishers,” “what does not change is the will to change.” But mere “process” does not necessarily result in increased human well-being.

**KJ:** Recalling Nietzsche’s “The Birth of Tragedy,” I think of the debate between Harold Rosenberg and Clemente Greenberg over Abstract Expressionism, and I see interesting co-relations to debates over contemporary writing. Greenberg was calling for an Apollonian detachment that did not try to comment on public culture, whereas Rosenberg argued for a Dionysian gesture of liberation that included inherent political value. I see interesting parallels between Abstract Expressionism’s focus on the medium of paint, and co-relative focus on the medium of language among recent, innovative literary expressions. The literary history to such medium-focused expression is extensive, of course (Fluxus, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, Oulipo, Conceptual, etc). How do you situate literary expressions that focus on the medium of language exclusively, and is it possible to do this without considering socio-politics?

**FD:** I don’t think non-political writing is possible – because these attempts to develop focuses on language that are outside of meaning, or ‘before’ meaning, are always engaging a system – language – that exists in a continuum of usage from the most material and self-reflexive to the most utilitarian. Leakage occurs across all usages. McCaffery’s description of seeking language that is “prior to meaning” deliberately, it seems to me, gives that away, in that “prior to” is a relational term – you cannot attempt to imagine what is ‘before’ meaning without mentioning “meaning,” anymore than you can say “protosemantic” without having said “semantic.” I wrote in the introduction of *From There to Here* something to the effect that all literary form is political – I could have said that all uses of language participate in socio-politics. Sometimes someone has to utter only a few words and we recognize from the form that those words have been given the speaker’s ‘socio-politics.’

**KJ:** Could you elaborate on how your own poetics and your “propositional” approaches have developed into a form of “cultural mischief”?

**FD:** Well first, my book *Cultural Mischief* doesn’t deploy this propositional approach as fully as the chapbooks *Dog*, *Risky Propositions*, and *How We Won the War in Iraq* do. In the propositional method I outlined at the conference, I use ‘propositions’ in the place of personal statements, so that instead of appearing to ‘make’ a proposition, or be a speaker making a proposition, I display a proposition, so that the ideology of the proposition and its discourse are made more visible – much the way Greg Curnoe’s rubber-stamp paintings caused sentences to be exhibited rather than ‘said’ or ‘expressed.’ *Cultural Mischief* is the book in which I began working out the method – and it contains my elegy to Curnoe. The first poem, “My Brown Dog,” is a series of non-linked statements about one of my dogs and about various cultural practices. ‘Juxtaposed’ some would say, although I think the relationships among the statements are more complex than that. The poem suggests that the speaker endorses the statements but doesn’t suggest – because of the quick shifts in subject and tone – that he or she has a profound or ‘lyrical’ investment in them. The last poem of this book – “Multiple Choice Games for Hiroshima Day” offers the reader 16 multiple choices among statements about the Hiroshima bombing – so that there’s very little indication of which, if any, might be ones endorsed by the writer or speaker. I collected these statements from the August 1995 media coverage of the 50th Hiroshima anniversary. In between these, most of the poems create mischief by juxtaposing statements made in different kinds of discourse, so that readers have to be alert to what might be ‘meant’ by the appearance of two or more statements which normally wouldn’t inhabit the same text or ideology or social context. There are at least two suppositions implied here –
one the ‘already-having-been-saidness’ of most language – that all speaking and writing are recombinant. And two the polyvocality of language – that numerous voices and their arguments echo in the various genres and styles of using language that someone such as myself or Curnoe could put ‘on display.’ Mischief – many of the propositions I work with are perceived by those who speak and endorse them as having no ‘outside,’ as being ‘irrefutable.’ By putting such propositions on display I ‘mischievously’ give them an ‘outside.’

KJ: You have written about how your involvement with dog shows, and your participation in such shows with your own champion Great Danes has revealed similar patterns between such competitions and literary competitions. Could you expand a bit more about the notion of competition in both fields?

FD: Hmmm, you may get me into trouble in both fields of competition – not that I may not already be. But you’re right, this kind of unexpected juxtaposition – such as propositions concerning dog judging with ones concerning text judging – has been another of my modes of cultural mischief-making. In this case, both fields involve the inherently violent act of preference – of one dog, one text, one writer, one dog-owner, one literary view, one style of dog, or one group of friends over another. Both involve the disguising of social-political preferences as objective ones. Both recruit their judges in similar ways. The kennel club recruits them from among people who have bred puppies of two different breeds of dog, and who have had some of these pups win prizes and be judged to be ‘champions.’ The newly made judges can continue breeding puppies and showing them in competition. Literary competitions for the most part choose their judges from among writers whose texts have won prizes. They too can continue writing and producing texts that are entered in competitions. The judgments produced in both systems reflect the personal connections and leanings of the judges. George Bowering could never have won the 1968 Governor-General’s award for poetry without his friend and supporter Warren Tallman being on the committee – it was a good award, but different jurors would have had their own pet candidates.
Miriam Mandel would not have won her poetry award in 1973 had not some jurors felt sympathetically about her troubled personal life. Roy Miki could never have won his poetry award without his friend Daphne Marlatt being on the committee, or without her admiration of his political views and work for Japanese-Canadian ‘redress.’ None of these writers could have won had Barry Callaghan or Irving Layton been on the committees. My dog ‘Seizer’ won Best-in-Show ten times, but I could give you a page-long list of judges who never once gave him even fourth place in a group. At dog shows it’s quite clear that many dog-breding judges give top awards to the dogs of other dog-breeding judges in hopes that the latter will reciprocate -- and indeed they usually do. Do such things happen in literary prizes? – it’s harder to track because the use of judging panels makes the judging less transparent – you sometimes can’t be sure who voted for who. There’s also a lot of schmoozing at dog shows – exhibitors ingratiating themselves with judges, bringing them coffee, ‘discussing’ with them the strengths and weaknesses of current dogs. You get a lot of that in the literary community too – lots of glad-handing at literary readings, and young writers publishing disingenuously positive reviews of the work of older writers who may soon be reviewing – or judging – the work of the younger writer. Olson wrote about that in *The Maximus Poems* – about the “scratch-me-back” stuff that begins when a magazine-editor-who-writes-poems publishes the work of other magazine-editors-who-write-poems. When dog-show dog-breeding judges exchange wins with each other I guess that’s “you scratch my dog’s back and I’ll scratch yours.” What does all this imply? – that most of the high-level winning and losing that goes on in both fields is probably meaningless; that it has little if anything to do with the comparative ‘value’ of a text or dog. Both could be dogs. I could have increased my Seizer’s best-in-show record by ingratiating myself with a bunch of judges, but unfortunately I’d read *The Maximus Poems*.

**KJ:** You’ve acknowledged McLuhan’s influence in reference to your book *Capitalist Affection!* (1975). Meantime, you’ve created art combining digital technology and public culture in the form of postcards, with texts of your own that seem at least partly inspired by Derrida’s notion that all language is re-cycled. We could add here that Derrida borrows this view of the re-cycling of language from Frye, who in turn reiterates the selfsame view via T.S. Eliot, Wilde, Goethe, Pope, Horace, Aristotle and Plato, to name a few who have noted that all arts are inspired by, and built upon previous expressions. So, given this history, how do “innovative poetics” reconfigure the powers of language differently from more conventional forms of literature which have also been building on a history of literary expression?

**FD:** I think you do an injustice to Derrida here. Frye’s theory was only that the themes of certain ‘great books’ (all of them Western books, of course) were ‘re-cycled’ and the modes and ‘genres’ in which they were written. His theories were based on the large or “great” codes and patterns. This is different from the recycling of words, phrases, levels of discourse which poststructuralist critics have attended to. And of course ‘re-cycling’ isn’t all that is happening – or else each New Year the media wouldn’t be reporting lists of newly coined or newly-borrowed words. You are also overlooking the possibility of error – that mistakes can happen in the transmission of language much as they happen in that of DNA coding – causing ‘evolution’ in both cases (some of those mistakes become propositional building blocks in my recent poems). And that in language there can be the equivalent of genetic engineering – interventions to create new combinations – sometimes with unanticipated consequences. Bricolage also does something that exceeds ‘re-cycling.’ “Two millennia” you invoke – why not also try to calculate all the possible permutations of words and syntax and discursive usage and genre that our language presently allows? There’d be many times more than a few thousand. Christian’s *Eunoia* foregrounds its recycling – but also conceptually exceeds recycling.
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**KJ:** I think you’re right about Derrida. What I’m getting at is that Derrida expands Frye’s view on previous literature. So, Derrida builds on Frye, Frye builds on previous views, such as Eliot’s who called for an elastic view of literary tradition. It’s interesting to watch the history of changes in language and genre. Shifts over the past 1500 years or so in English are remarkable, and accompany important changes in world view. I’m sure the Medieval world-view was very different from the 20th Century world-view, and so, perceptions of what is “innovative” change. Nowadays, with digital technology, we have blogs, on-line streams, on-line films, YouTube, and so on, generating new possibilities. For example, we could consider Darren Wershler-Henry’s on-line, inter-active poetics. What do you think of the power-politics of art or writing that is inter-active and therefore leans slightly away from the artist, and more towards the audience?

**FD:** Interactive work in Canada has a fairly long history, although not nearly as long as in Europe. I remember Victor Coleman writing collaborative texts with his students in the early 1970s, and on a couple of occasions back then participating myself in collaborative writing projects in Toronto. Then when Fred and I set up the *SwiftCurrent* on-line magazine in 1984, one of the options we offered was to erase the distinction between reader and writer in a section of the database that allowed on-line collaborative writing. But the only ‘known’ Canadian collaborative text to have come from that period is the novel *Piccolo Mondo*, which the Bowerings, Bromige, and Mike Mathews wrote in Vancouver. Another big collaborative project was the “Pacific Rim Express” project which Marlatt, Kiyooka, Fawcett, Dwight Gardiner, Gladys Hindmarch, Gerry Gilbert, Carol Itter, and Bowering, undertook in a 1970s train journey on the old ‘Please-Go-Easy’ from Vancouver to Prince George – but there never was a full publication. The only part of it that I’ve seen is Daphne’s *The Story, She Said*, published in 1977 – itself more a spin-off than a part. The internet at least makes the publication and circulation of such texts easier. Obviously there are problematic ideological and power aspects at play in them. Coleman’s students were in a dependent relationship to him, and may have been mostly trying to please or impress. Angela Bowering wrote of not liking the role and space she had been given in *Piccolo Mondo*, and being the one woman in four authors. Many in the Prince George group didn’t care whether or not the project produced a text, seeing it, according to Marlatt, as “only a story, told in fun.”

My thinking is that these projects at least gesture toward making visible the actual interactive nature of all texts – something which many writers try to disguise beneath egocentric stances and which critics sometimes try to conceal beneath categories such as ‘genius’ or ‘greatness.’ Critics and other gatekeepers often dislike openly interactive texts, a view which was evident when the G-G poetry awards administration denied candidacy to Bill Kennedy and Darren Wershler-Henry’s *Apostrophe* because it had been computer generated. But of course computer generation, and search-engine poetry, are other ways of achieving interaction. One of the problems with the 1970s interactive and collaborative writing was that the participants were almost all from a narrow discursive community – creative writing students, or writers or artists. How does one successfully ‘invite in’ members of other discursive communities? Search-engine poetry, such as the texts I published last year in your *Rampike*, address this by letting the search engine, however one programs it, do the inviting. Those texts, by the way, are part of my new book this spring, from Talon, *Bardy Google*.

**KJ:** Your own writing covers a wide range moving from poetry, to theory and criticism, to non-fiction, with some overlaps. You have been working on expressions involving post-card images with lapsed copyrights. And then you overlap these cards with texts of your own devising. Could you elaborate on your “postcard” creative process?
FD: I’ve tended to focus on postcards that have some global or Canadian implication. A first step is to find the postcard, or a ‘genre’ of postcards to search among. For Iraq and Afghanistan that has been difficult – they were largely outside of the 1890-1915 postcard mania – Afghanistan more so than Iraq – because they were both largely outside of turn-of-the-century tourism. British India, in which the relatives of many Canadians, from Arun Mukherjee to Daphne Marlatt and myself, variously ‘participated,’ was a postcard ‘hot spot’ because of the tourism and commercialism that British occupation had stimulated. British India has been also one of my sources for both Iraq and Afghanistan cards – the latter usually printed or at least produced in Karachi. Sometimes I begin writing a response text to the card image by hand before I actually have a usable copy of it. I prefer copies of cards on which someone inscribed text back close to the time they were printed, and will always try to ‘invite’ that writer in my new text. Most of the time I write the text on top of the postcard image using a multi-layering graphics program – although sometimes these images are also inadequate, and I have to search further to obtain one. Often the old postcards I obtain are themselves poor plagiarized copies of earlier ones – a popular image might have been used by several printing companies in defiance of whatever copyrights then prevailed. So I have to keep searching for an earlier, sharper, and more vivid example. That happens to me frequently, because the most popular cards are often most interesting for me to interact with, since they usually have the sharpest ideological contours.

In some ways the process resembles that of the responses to Tarot cards that George and I created in our books Genève and Arcana – except of course that with postcards I’m not working with a closed set, and so I can’t constrain myself to respond to every card I encounter. I wouldn’t have time to sleep. Creating the text involves not just creating the word sequences but deciding on fonts, colours, and what areas of the image to interfere with. I don’t worry about letting the reader ‘see’ the original image clearly – text and image both tend to interfere visually with the other, which is what I am doing – intervening and interfering in images which resist my interference. Even though there are many decades between the creation of the image and my working of a text, there is still interaction.
KJ: Your postcard series includes socio-political statements which are often wry and ironic. *How We Won the War in Iraq* (Massassauga: 2009, ISSN: 978-0-9813548-1-1) is a good example of a mixture of a postmodern, perhaps hypermodern focus on language with an important political point. Could you comment on your poetics, public culture, and politics as they emerge through these postcard and text creations?

FD: Well, postcards were / are part of public culture – offering representations that confirm someone’s cultural-political views – usually those of the culture of the intended purchaser, and thus usually a powerful and monied one. I do a lot of what the recording industry calls “sampling” in these texts – borrowing sentences here and there from current texts or from ones contemporary with the image. Just putting two sentences by different writers beside one another can create the appearance of irony. In the Iraq book much of the sampling is from older poems – the text begins with a short phrase from Auden, and later contains a sentence from a text on Hindu funeral practices and another taken from a World War I history. Elsewhere in the book there are phrases from Kipling, Arnold, Brooke, Eliot, from an e-mail I received from Amazon.ca in the course of doing research for the project, from a George Bush speech, from an essay on World War I photography, and from an on-line dictionary. If you alter the context of words, you alter what they mean, and you reveal that the original ‘meaning’ was not as stable as it once appeared, or that it had dimensions other than what it first may have appeared to have. Oppressive politics is so often conducted through declarations of certainty – that Sunnis have the correct path and Shias the wrong – or vice versa, that this ruined city is the ‘real’ Ur of the Chaldees, that there really are ‘weapons of mass destruction.’

KJ: Can we apply Huizinga’s views and think of innovative “poetics” as having a ludit quality, as a type of elaborate form of “playing” that simply tests or sometimes reconfigures the boundaries of the “game” of language or literary expression?

FD: Any game I play is a pretty serious game. Words have consequences in what people believe and in what beliefs they act on. Testing the validity of utterances by ‘playing’ with them and their contexts isn’t something I’d want to dismiss as “merely testing.” My book on Kim Campbell – *Reading ‘KIM’ Right* – has a recurrently ludic quality and tests the politicians’ language ‘games’ – but I doubt any reader perceived it as politically unengaged. *How We Won the War in Iraq* is a both more subtle and more visceral book. I don’t see it as much different in the socio-political leverage it aspires to.

KJ: In “Thinking of Poetics” you identified a “field” theory in which a writer (or artist), is engaged in intersecting forces which always change. At the same time the artist changes and the artist’s expression can potentially transform the cultural “field.” As such, this view seems to have much in common with the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle which includes a kinetic agent within a kinetic environment. If we accept this view, then do you think that this “field” situation implies that the results of any creative expression and resultant cultural effects and cultural identities are subject to chance or uncertainty?

FD: My understanding of “field theory” goes back to ecologist Carl O. Sauer’s work in the Amazon basin in the 1920s and 30s, which Olson knew and wrote about, and which Robert Duncan brought to my attention during his 1961 lectures in Vancouver (his poetry collection, *The Opening of the Field*, had recently been published by Grove). It was Sauer who had realized that fossilized human excrement could be used as an ‘index’ to ‘intersecting forces’ in a geographic field – showing an investigator what plants had been there, how much agricultural intervention had been occurring, how much rainfall, what mean temperatures etc. It was that ‘useful’ excrement that led
directly to a certain poetry newsletter being named “Tish.” Duncan alluded to Heisenberg in some of his other ‘ecological’ arguments – that human beings cannot be “initiators,” only “participants” – or as you phrase it “a kinetic agent in a kinetic field.” It seemed to Duncan, and it has seemed to me, that staying “in the open,” where things are “uncertain,” including oneself, is politically much more ‘democratic’ than other possibilities. As well, in his 1958 “Human Universe” essay Olson summarizes Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle before making his well-known comment that “There is only one thing you can do about kinetic, re-enact it.” Artists are still working out the implications and potential of these observations – in interactive art, performance art, installation art, aleatory art. So my short answer is ‘yes.’

KJ: Within the context of a burgeoning digital culture, it seems that McLuhan’s notion of “the global village” continues to grow in currency. The transformation of society by digital culture is now a commonplace. Your book Karla’s Web discusses matters such as media black outs in Canada that were by-passed in the USA, and how the US media could have contaminated the Canadian legal process. Anybody who wished could check US digital media to learn more about the murders and the trial. That was then. How do you perceive the socio-political impact of digital culture now?

FD: China seems to be the contemporary test case, and with different and larger stakes than were involved in the Homolka trial. In the latter instance, adjustments did have to be made to ensure that the circulation of embargoed information did not make it impossible for Bernardo to receive a fair trial. It’s probable that only similarly ultra-sensational court proceedings could invite such internet events as those publication-ban-breaching postings to alt.fan.karla-homolka. Someone outside of Canada can still post information that is temporarily embargoed by courts inside Canada, but if no one is interested in viewing it, little harm is done. More recently Canadian police investigations have been made complicated by witnesses who would rather post what they saw to YouTube or Facebook than report it to investigators – which means that the investigators have had to become social-media users. As for cross-border information flows, people’s views seem to depend on their politics. If Canada’s legal system is compromised by them, Canadians may not like them – particularly if they were to result in someone like Bernardo going free. If China’s secretive and self-protective government is compromised by them, most Canadians would probably cheer. Of course the two situations are not equivalent – China’s government secrecy is ongoing, whereas Canadian court-ordered publication bans are mostly temporary (the exceptions occur mostly in trials involving juveniles or so-called “security certificates”). A better comparison would be the Harper government’s various attempts to sabotage its own ‘accountability’ legislation – which make its members in practice little better than closet Stalinists. I’m for Google helping to move both governments into the open. I’m not sure I can add much to what is already widely known about digital culture and its socio-political impact – how Obama’s supporters used it effectively in his election, how social networking has become the main North American hobby (and a contributor to obesity), how our legal system has had to change to regulate text-messaging and cellphone use by drivers. Digital culture has become as ‘normal’ and routine for most of us as car radios or rotary phones were five decades ago. I think of the internet in McLuhanesque terms as an extension of my memory – one that helps me remember many times more things than I ever knew I could ‘know’. It’s a tool I use in all my writing.

KJ: Recently, the publishing industry in Canada has suffered from the economic recession. The Canada Council for the Arts is struggling to maintain support. Major print-format newspapers are either closing shop or moving to digital formats. The same seems to be the case with publishing houses, which have moved into the internet as an
alternate publishing venue. Could you comment on how you think digital technology will affect the publishing industry, both in Canada and world-wide?

FD: As I wrote in From There to Here, I think it could democratize it. Personally, I can hardly wait until there is a Canadian publisher ready to publish my postcard books on-line, and to re-publish most of my earlier books. I’m almost ready to undertake that myself – but of course any meaningful move has to be done by an institution rather than an author – an institution that is likely to outlive the author. Roy Macskimming did a fascinating interview a few years ago (it’s still online) with Stan Bevington and Rick/Simon in which Stan argues that the future of enduring publication rests with giant publishers and small publishers, which will be the only ones able to finance the on-line archiving of texts. Authors who publish through mid-size publishers, he suggests, will see their works vanish from public awareness and access. More and more I see public access to texts as more ‘valuable’ than copyright-restricted access – the texts that are publicly available are going to be the ones that are ‘canonical’ in the sense of being the ones read and referred to. Authors who write to make money may not feel this way, but those who, like me, write to alter culture are increasingly likely to.

KJ: The ongoing crisis of independent bookstores continues with smaller shops being squeezed out of business by larger “big-box” corporations. Perhaps it is now up to the small and medium sized presses to replace those independent stores. Coach House was among the first to sell its books on-line, and other publishers have followed suit, thereby displacing some types of bookstores as the “middle-men.” Book Thug has also moved in this direction. Do you think that digital technology will transform the publishing marketplace in a way that will increase venues for literary innovation?

FD: Coach House and Book Thug are otherwise quite different publishers. Jay MillAr at Book Thug is strongly committed to print. He would reluctantly stock a poetry book on a CD (I offered to produce one) but I don’t think he has any interest in on-line publishing – although I believe that is the way text circulation is likely to go. I notice that from my own reading habits – that more and more I am reading books on-line – mostly last year by stumbling across the new Google books. In a sense, that project is making such books the preferred books. Often in my case the book is a particular one for which I was looking for bibliographic info, and there I find the whole thing. One thing no one is talking much about is the way that growing maturity and ease of on-line publishing is encouraging authors like me, and various institutions, to by-pass print publishers and access the internet directly to get texts into the artistic and academic record. UWO is now providing a site for all its faculty to post papers on line as soon as they are presented at conferences. Moves such as this may lead the financers of print journals to decide they are redundant.

KJ: For many years, your literary magazine, Open Letter has provided a focal point for innovative writing and theory, recognized both in Canada and internationally. Any plans to expand the on-line presence of the magazine, and any future plans for Open Letter?

FD: I do have e-files of issues from part way through Series 8 onward, most of which would require about an hour’s work to put on line. I’m planning to put the Coach House Press issue on-line first, since it’s almost out of print. The earlier issues might have to be re-set – I have some files for them but in oddball word processors formats such as ‘Easy Writer’ and ‘WordStar,’ and mostly on Floppy disks for an Apple II. But they were sgml coded, and would convert to html fairly easily, if one could get them to open. Future plans? – issues on KSW, Bowering, Lisa Robertson, McCaffery, Gail Scott, New Surrealisms ...
KJ: Your books, Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel Since 1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), and Canadian Literary Power: Essays on Anglophone-Canadian Literary Conflict (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1994), engaged actively with then current socio-political, economic and cultural issues. What important current directions or developments do you see now?

FD: Good question. A few years ago Kamboureli and Miki made a big play to “resituate” the study of Can Lit – with a series of ‘TransCanLit’ conferences and publications, and with one of those strange Canada Research Chair institutes (every Canada Research Chair pretty well has to have one, whether the world needs another institute or not). This was a socio-cultural move based on a questionable argument that recent immigrant cultures were going to evolve differently from earlier ones. But the TCL project seems to me to have fizzled – probably because it was conceived by two people who knew very little about Canadian writing and immigrant cultures before their own adult lifetimes, and almost nothing about francophone writing. The project was mostly a carryover from the identity politics and cultural representation preoccupations of the 1990s. I do have an unpublished book that deals with such things – “The Spanish Lectures” – that WLU was going to publish until I declined to alter it to meet ASP previous publication rules. I had published about half of it in obscure un-indexed European journals mostly unknown in Canada, so I now need a publisher that doesn’t need ASP subsidy. Pissing off – it’s been sitting on my desk for 2 years. I may turn it into a critic’s autobiography – or find someone who will publish it on-line.

However, I don’t see any big, or attemptively big, literary-cultural issues emerging since then. I foresee the ethnic-constituency and ‘diaspora’ focuses to slowly play themselves out as the children of Canadian immigrants from various parts of the world continue to marry outside of their communities, and second and third generations to be even less likely to identify primarily as Tamil or Sikh or Somalian as you presently are likely to identify primarily as Latvian – speaking as I can as a diasporic Métis, a diasporic 8th-century Viking, a diasporic Brit, and a diasporic 18th-century Pennsylvania Deutsch. ‘Echt Kanadische,’ as T.S. Eliot might sardonically have written.

The biggest issues of our time – the economy and the environment – are now clearly constructed as global. If anything needs to be re-situated it’s the nation and political representation, so that there can be political ‘accountability’ on such large-scale matters. So that both nations and individuals don’t feel so powerless that they do nothing – as Canada did under Kyoto. The situation here is similar to the information flow problem I indentified in Karla’s Web – information flowing across borders without political responsibility or accountability. Now bad debts and their consequences are increasingly flowing across borders, along with toxic waste, cultural vendettas, air and water pollutants. And almost everyone is responsible and no one, it seems, accountable.

Frank Davey’s newest book, Bardy Google is available from Talonbooks.
Excerpts from: *O Resplandor*
by Erín Moure

**Splay with a Stone**
Create voice with bone,
tip voice with steel,
die voice with a journey,
clot voice with a word
and you, unconditionally
Plough with a stone from the pyramids
plough with a stone
and don’t splay the earth, and don’t splay
it, gather singular
singular
Without make-believe,
without making time.

**Cold Fulguration**
All of this said short and dated,
insistent, presence simply ripened.
Such lucre trampled into light doubly-amazed,
yearly,
looped to a cord, the wings of evening
make their foam in another higher cavern,
such wings of evening, evening of evening.
I am simply present for a history of ripening
printed black, printed, in short,
with discretion, captured in rapture,
its odour of a photograph of the sea without suffering.
In this way, captured doubly with a branch of flowers,
of family, printed with a feminine tulip
doubly lost and visibly wilting
denied the shore of another diurnal turn in time
this verb in the ear of a further cavern,
presence ripened in history and in historical.
From the radius of its pulse my depth is stronger,
with the pomp of a ripening that curtails explosions
yet multiplies basically the discretion of prayer
gone electric in the mouth’s entrance, this ripening
utterly nocturnal,
with acumen, doubling my year of exile.
Its placenta is the guts of the house, where the patient first entered.
I am simply brusque, spinal,
rushing forward, orbiting in layers
yes, fulgurating, twisting the chipped house of the sprained body,
oh you cold, you fulguration!
Ingenious this bitter odour i married,
bitter this sea tied to the frame of my open window.
Odour of the east that mocks me.
Fulgurant, still.
CRÓNICA THREE

E.M.:
The photo arrived under my door in Montreal. Like an advertising flyer but this was definitely no advertisement. The woman in the photo had her head turned away. She was walking out of the camera frame very fast to the left, wearing stockings and trousers at once. With three hands. Not looking at me. I blurted out: Elisa. The blue of her bag was the same blue as the balconies on the building behind her. Squat, concrete, residential. A random heap of gravel at its side, a bit of grass, a chunk of yanked-up concrete. A tree gone to ruin. Laundry. Elisa. Bucharest, some outskirt, one of those inner city outskirts, it could only be. I could almost smell cooking from an open window, and Elisa had groceries. In a plastic bag. In full stride. Her tall figure making a perfect A. Already leaving the frame.

Then I realized. Elisa can’t have three hands. And more disturbingly: I knew the third hand. It was pointing outward to the left of the photo, an address or convocation. Bringing something into the clear. I’d definitely seen that hand before. On the roof terrace in the wind that afternoon in Montreal, resting on the arm of a wooden chair. It was O.’s hand.

I didn’t know what to think.

I almost panicked.

*

: O. had found the photo of Elisa in the book in the library a year after it was left there, when she was first translating Stănescu and doing research in Bucharest.
: Elisa had gone to București to find Stănescu, as a result of reading O.’s translations of his poems in a bookstore on Bank Street in Ottawa; the translations had been made, by then, several years before, and published at least a year earlier.

*

I couldn’t get around it. O. knew E.S. Not only that, but likely she had cooked and eaten a meal with E.S. in a concrete outskirt of Bucharest. Nowhere near a library. And who is that figure watching them both from the balcony? That third hand, O.’s hand, penetrates the photo, though O. is nearly completely obscured by the striding Elisa. I look down at my own hands, opening them. I will have to go back up on the roof, and see her hand again, just to make sure. I have to find O.

(Handscrawled in E.M.’s notebook, then torn out. Days later, it blew into the street as the blue bin was upturned into the recycling truck. A woman, passing, picked it up in one hand as she walked by. She read the first few lines and broke out laughing. O.)

***

But O. had told me not to worry, that Elisa had last been seen years before O.’s own translations of Stănescu. That she was gone. All she had of E.S. was the photo, and she hadn’t even known at first who it depicted. It was me who told her it was Elisa Sampedrin.

It came to me that O. was somehow withholding something from me.

O Resplandor will be released by House of Anansi, in 2010. The above excerpts were printed with permission of Erín Moure and House of Anansi Press.
from ALPHABETS OF DESIRE & SORROW
A Book of Imaginary Colophons

by Norman Lock

ALPHABET OF KITES
They were for him an alphabet of suffering. Tethered at the end of scarcely visible strings let out to their limits, the kites dipped and turned always close to the point of fixity, while behind them strode the sky, itself in apparent motion because of the clouds loosed by the wind like unfurling sails. Asaf Özmen, clerk in the rosewater factory, watched the constant thwarting of desire (to which the kites seemed never to be resigned) from his rooftop in Isparta, a town fragrant with crushed roses, in the foothills of Mt. Davras. In the evening, he would struggle to seize from his memory their frustration and deduce from it forms that would express the sorrow of humanity. In 1912, an Istanbul firm published Özmen’s book, which, unreadable, nonetheless contained on its single page a sensation of existence so forlorn that those who looked on it were tempted to take their own lives.

ALPHABET OF RAPTURE
Wishing to mortify a voluptuary’s nature unpleasing to his own devout asceticism, Shah Tahmasp exiled the calligrapher Yusuf Mirza to the southeastern wastes of Dasht-e Lut, or “Emptiness Desert” – there, by having always before his eyes forms of desolation, to chasten Mirza’s exuberant handling of nastā’liq (the refined script in use in Persia’s royal ateliers). Relenting, the Shah recalled the calligrapher to Qazvin by messenger, who reported having found the place of banishment marvelously transformed into a likeness of Sultan-Muhammad’s Worldly and Otherworldly Drunkenness – a miniature painted in 1527 to illustrate Hafiz’s text “The angel of mercy took the cup of reveling,” inscribed by Mirza with a rapture equal to the poet’s praise of intoxication. The messenger claimed to have seen in that desert counterfeit of delight a man staggering out a doorway, who bore the image of the incorrigible calligrapher.
ALPHABET OF DEATH (2)
Mortal proofs became his idée fixe after witnessing, in a Capuchin crypt in Paris after the Terror, the Phantasmagoria of the Belgian physicist and impresario Etienne-Gaspard Robert (aka Roberton) from Liège (who learned his stratagems of light and shadow from the Ombres Chinoises François Seraphin presented in the 1770’s at Versailles). Images of pleasure, such as shepherds’ picnics by the Seine and languorous afternoons in perfumed beds, which had been, before, figures in his dreaming, succumbed to apparitions invoked by Magic Lantern slides and a grim jibber that incited the aural faculty to horror. Confined, later, at Charenton (where Marat had been murdered, famously, in his tub), Philippe Monnot left on the walls of his cell a graffiti of death – legible to all those like him whose mind was occupied by night’s infernal army, whose flag is black and anthem the danse macabre.

ALPHABET OF GECKOS
Birch-bark scrolls inscribed more than six centuries before Siam’s King Ram Khamhaeng created the Thai alphabet remained unread until, in 1857, the defamed archaeologist Bhupinder Singh Misra declared that the script was not, as believed, a previously unknown derivative of ancient Brahmi (brought by mariners through the Malacca Straits) but a mythic idealization of Hemidactylus frenatus. Misra claimed to read in these obscure texts, preserved in ceramic pots against time’s injury, the profane story of a courtier’s adulterous love for Queen Jamadevi’s daughter. Derided, Misra fiercely maintained his lewd interpretation as if he remembered having drawn, himself, the glyphs after seeing on a Kymer temple wall an amorous entanglement of geckos.

ALPHABET OF SILENCE
In the Syrian desert, past the pillars of the speechless saints, in a place where the wind did not rise or the footsteps of men or camels fall – Nilus, who had been in Constantinople during the repulse of the Varangians, lost his way. Having once entered timelessness (no matter how briefly to remain there), he could not bear the noise of cities, the tumults of the caravansaries, or even the sound of water falling into the damp darkness of a cistern. He, it was, who first composed silence, by the erasure of musiqia, notated in the ninth century by Abū Yusuf Ya’qūb ibn Is‘āq al-Kindī for whom music had cosmological attributes. Thus did Nilus’ empty palimpsests (which no instrument would play or voices descant) manifest sounds beyond audition such as those of plants, minerals, and – when at the full – the moon.
Noun Free (As Free As A Verb Phrase (As Free As A Sentence))

by Louis Cabri

curious G
what war and video

this rock is a liberal
if you look at it these days through that electron microscope

liberal, subject, matter
liberal subject matter

doesn’t, therefore, matter
is to violently deny and negate matter

I’m calling all uses to liberate subject matter
agreeing with you the lakes could be higher takes grinning

chimp suppressant this paper bag bad too all must go
to the big talker who throws them, and his hat, in front closet

and off with the shoes, for in the sky, rockets in flight
and there are whisperings, as they come and go, about an afternoon with some guy named Moe

Dee Lite they called me to see what the problem was
and I spoke first of course about roofing, mister big struts, mister steel teeth, mister loud

making this easier for you
complain complain complain I’m really not

a sack of toads imagining they’re in a garden
to roast them as well now hand me the goad

beyond, outside, other is where they’ve been “fishing”
I’m convinced the report is wrong

they called me
caloric wedge

I’ve got a millionaire
sardine here wants his room to sea

but can philosophy is different or maybe we’re nude on purpose did they think of that
I am gob to these people why

are there bubbles in saliva
and not in my drink

where is the discourse of elephants
on such mornings tusk rubber

want mossy bank
this stone ever less than it presently is and yet retain

contemporary look
using techniques picked up in the field when I was an ethnographer for breakfast cereals?
I now train chocolate bars on how to keep it together in the heat
snarling grapes never felt so plastic, they never felt

they never looked so cute
I ask you turn away

where is your handshake
why didn’t you learn rituals such as they, the public mother, write about

what memory can break with such loss
can the fool unbind his electricity enough to table a satisfying return

what dateless palm ever handled enough sunlight
more than wide-eyed, prying

clean your pits, corporate entity, momma says
John Boy it sure is not

Gilligan as Jerry Lewis in breasts and blackface the way we see him in that show
and this is where a poet needs to be more than just French or a poet

more than a cheeseburger gurgle sees the hair of the primary narcissist dog
and fishes it out and no fish harmed in this action

but we want to see the tongue and drool
voodoo doll economics of the human abstract

clean all holes
peaches pulled by their living roots

reed ripped from marsh dangles in mouth
tamp down set fire inhale leaf

crush olives seal in bottle asphyxiate pickle we want to see the pickle
crack nut fork insides

tear up and salt pepper over cuts
control water to top of cement rectangle plunge body into heart

squash gnat into one’s eye corner it was taking a nutritious drink pinch toss
reds pinks metaphor delivery garlanding warm-blooded lifeforms

gouge earth crawl scrape walls
saying something

straight saying
one thing straight forward

that wall in front wasn’t in the way
that the back has got to “be strong” isn’t the case

anymore than tears have to be disguised as a new emotional theatre
for having something straight forward to say turn out

isn’t absolute or necessary to saying something straight forward
wait joke around more there is something to say about this

put the ass back in passion fruit have you
enquired at the front desk

whether we were missed roofing
isn’t going as planned
sand dunes aren’t free
bones in it suggest trogloditic spoor grounds

to connect and how
he learned to love the pig intestine

stop grabbing the assonance
and law in awe of the awe in law

battling cannon balls o’ blood Tampon “vagina fire power”
all mall sprawl small walls halls Shamwow! “the cock block”

inverted vaginas penises vice versa
brandname secrets

soften or tire consumers’ time
for a group dug on wow

this is your life on dugs
photo 2, notice the stupour and flat head

little pigs mark it
what this is

read the label
nobody’s doing this anyway but getting these

congruencies massaged float
Modest Mouse, Big Boi, float on

oh… neoliberalism killed the dinosaur stars, Madge,
kills pet Fords dead

TV still in kitchen (bracket basket empty ((central seething, rent))
RAID what is it good for

you’re soaking in it combined ads
Madge’s liquid soap housewife and see?

domestic poison comes in spraycan too
dead TV still in kitchen

because “we are”
remains from the TV dinners, from the champions

of the word privacy more precious owned than before
head basket empty

Century 21 luxuries haunt
words seething and rent

combined also
War and Video Killed the Radio Star

it’s quite straight forward
what happens next
skydome pow-wow
by Rolland Nadjiwon

old blood moistens
the beaded morning
of the new world
where the new mother
jumping and reeling
in her aluminum jingle dress
and factory tanned
cowskin moccasins groans

adam dreaming a dancing
wrapped in road kill
raccoon and fox fur
crouches, shakes, points

– a fever in this mud

an aluminum skydome tree
tries to dream a red galloping
into the double throbbing
of its own cheeks

depth within seedless moons
adam dreams of
darker blood
dreams a darker adam
dreaming in an ancient stone
where unbirthing children dream
aeon after aeon a dancing

dancing
dancing
dancing

an aluminum swishing
swishing
swishing
swishing
in an aluminum skydome
where adam of a darker blood
still dreams
and dreams
and dreams
and dreams
**POETRY BE LIKE** by Greg Betts & Gary Barwin

**If It Was**
noise of i if it
was the economic
wonder
of reading
outside

of a haiku
with u

**Noise Of A Word**
we change
the

"subject
and another

"yet another

seems to haiku

**Of My Poetry**
i find the nose
of my i in the noise
of my poetry

two tunnels vision

the ayes believe
what they belie

of confusion
an economy
of sad forms

said forms
of my poetry
make a joyful nose

**Noise Of Word**
haiku
always leading
someword

**Poetry**
which in the language
there is no

there is note

there is no denote

(nod here)

quietly,

the raining poetry

the dark and cloudy eye

ominuminous

*

O the anguaged
tongue wish

meaning is a lang swish

**Noise**
noise
a maroon toasted
a maroon

an aged
angst
langst squished

maroon
a noise toasted
a noise

*toad*

*toader*

*toast*

**Noise**
noise
a
a
a
a

shh
Noise Of
the language of the language
is the majority of the word
the language of my enemy
is my friend
pick your language
but
you can’t pick your friend’s

Noise Of Top
by
prolongation
i
"is the language
of (h)is

If it Was
no i saw
noise of i
as if it was

be the economic
wonder of reading
no ah’s
ifs
or arks

Noise Of Word
the status
“aaaah
this subject
another stack
aaaah
"

and i spring into
the haiku

Of My Poetry
no no no
noise of my two words
confused
the countryside advertising language
confused
the economic effect of my two words
confused
no no no
confused
my two words
confused
confused
no form no me no i have no language

It's Winter Under
noise of the no its not me it's winter under
a box of
train of
outside the brain
lang is man’s rebuffed friend
inside the rain
it’s too dark to guage
a land haiku
which has u and i

a lang which
begins to age

more ang more with me winter under
a maroon toasted quilt
"Ou, a language game"
by tENTATIVELY a cONVENIENCE

Ou, English, a language game invented by tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE (the 142nd so-so deservedly obscure OuLiPoian writer - who's, nonetheless, been writing this way since 1968 or 1969) on Friday, December 11, 2009EV, in wch 3 words’ having many meanings in many different languages is exploited in order to construct texts using ONLY these 3 words - the meaning being derived by then translating those words' multiple meanings.

In the case of Ou, the only 3 words to be used are Ou, Li & Po. There are various ways of playing this game: As a writer, one can rewrite, in part or in whole, an OuLiPo (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle - Workshop of Potential Literature) work not only using the restriction of just the 3 words but also using the restriction of the original work.


Translation: Antipodal-of-aid moonstruck, Poor Girl as fluid pouring out from a spout antipodal-to-you-that-sundown. According to your Working Program it as at a temporality night. Along a small thing Girl bottom over, hand cloud-skin at girl tail, to flap rind down from chaw-skin, jump on the bottom girl whom-during-location-it? and to drift all along Li Po pot or 51; butt, compulsory valuing it Working Program crazy to you in girl what, it ovum antipodal-a-small-thing moonstruck 51-ovum antipodal-smallpox, to gush it yon in against.

po = "opposite" in Earth Minimal - using the synonym "antipodal" here
po = "of" in Croatian
po = "cure" in Kimbu - using the synonym "aid" here
ou = "moonstruck" in Gilbertese (Gilbert Adair Tease?)
po' = "poor" in African-American abbreviation
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
po = "as water poured from a spout" in Chewa - using "fluid" as a synonym for "water" here
po = "on" in Czech, Danish (Transliterated), Kwanyama, Lithuanian, Polish, Serbian (Latin Script), Slovenian, & Ukrainian (Latin Script)
po = "opposite" in Earth Minimal - using the synonym "antipodal" here
li = "to you" in Catalaan
li = "that" in Haitian Creole
po = "sunset" in Marquesan - using the synonym "sundown" here

po = "according to" in Serbian
ou = "your" in Creole & Haitian Creole
PO = "Operational Program" in Portuguese & Spanish - using "working" as a synonym for "operational" here
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
po = "as" in Catalan, Faroese, Icelandic, Malay, Papiamentu, & Tagalog
po = "at a time" in Slovio - using "temporality" as a synonym for "time" here
po = "of" in Croatian
po = "night" in Samoan

po = "along" in Czech
po = "a small thing" in Ainu
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
po = "botty" in German & "bottom" in Limburgian
po = "over" in Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak, Slovak old, & Ukrainian (Latin Script)
po = "hand" in Guarani
ou ="cloud" in Fijian
po = "skin" in Creole & Haitian Creole
po = "at" in Esperanto, Lithuanian, & Polish
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
po = "backside" in Limburgian - using "tail" as a synonym
po = "to flutter" in Denya - using "flap" as a synonym
po = "rind" in Creole & Haitian Creole
po = "beneath" in Lithuanian - using "down from" as a synonym
po = "chew" in Taiwanese (Transliterated) - using "chaw" as a synonym
po = "skin" in Creole & Haitian Creole
po = "jump" in Guarani (Transliterated)
po = "under" in Lithuanian - using "on the bottom" as a synonym
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
ou = "whom" in Chiga
po = "when" in Swahili - using "during" as a synonym
po = "where" in Swahili - using "location" as a synonym
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
ou = "and" in Danish (Transliterated)
po = "to flutter" in Denya - using "drift" as a synonym
po = "all along" in Czech
Li Po = a particular Chinese poet
po = "pot" in Creole, Dutch, Haitian Creole, & Netherlands
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician, & Portuguese
LI = "51" in Roman Numerals
po = "botty", "arse" in German - written here as "butt" as a pun on "but"
OU = "expenditure necessarily resulting from the treaty or from acts adopted in accordance therewith" or "compulsory expenditure" in Danish – using "compulsory valuing" as a synonym
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
PO = "Operational Program" in Portuguese & Spanish - using "working" as a synonym for "operational" here
ou = "insane" in Gilbertese - using "crazy" as a synonym
li = "to you" in Catalan
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
li = "what" in Wolof
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
ou = "egg" in Catalan, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian - using "ovum" as a synonym
po = "opposite" in Earth Minimal - using "antipodal" as a synonym
po = "a small thing" in Ainu
ou = "moonstruck" in Gilbertese
Li = "51" in Roman Numerals
ou = "egg" in Catalan, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian - using "ovum" as a synonym
po = "for" in Czech, Ido & Sardinian (Campidanese)
po = "opposite" in Earth Minimal - using "antipodal" as a synonym
li = "smallpox" in Albanian
po = "to gush" in Chewa
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
li = "yon" in Italian
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "against" in Czech

This text is a rewrite of the 1st paragraph of the Gilbert Adair translation, A Void, of Georges Perec's La Disparition:

"Incurably insomniac, Anton Vowl turns on a light. According to his watch it's only 12.20. With a loud and languorous sigh Vowl sits up, stuffs a pillow at his back, draws his quilt up around his chin, picks up his whodunit and idly scans a paragraph or two; but, judging its plot impossibly difficult to follow in his condition, its vocabulary too whimsically multisyllabic for comfort, throws it away in disgust."

Note that it contains a mystery regarding the semi-hidden nature of some of its formal properties & that it also doesn't contain the letter "e" - either in the use of:

Ou, Li & Po as its sole vocabulary OR in the words in its translation.
As such, it uses the restriction of the original Perec work.

2ndly, a writer can rewrite any work only using these 3 words but w/o adhering to any other restriction. 3rdly, a writer can write a new work using only those 3 words. Following are 2 texts & their 1st generation translations. See the description of a possible reader role following them.

OU

Po PO, OU po li li po li li po po, ou ou po Ou/ou PO po, po ou ou po po ou po-po
ou/ou li po po ou (Li Po po OU "OU" po Li Po po "po-po-po"), ou li po po ou ou li-

Translation:
Organizational Unit In Operational Program, Operational Unit to gush to you
what of what it in where whom in l/you Operational Program indicator of respect,
the whole he comes either according to whether or opposite-yes either/or it by
close whom (Li Po in Operational Unit in-exchange-for-"expenditure necessarily
resulting from the treaty or from acts adopted in accordance therewith,
compulsory expenditure" against Li Po in Operational Unit "in-exchange-for-according-to-at-the-rate-of"), or to you an indicator of respect to gush egg and whether-whether it (for in exchange for: to gush compulsory expenditure for girl-egg to you whom in exchange for compulsory expenditure according to all along to gush from a spout them at that place).

Ou Ou

Ou li li li, li li, po po. PO po po ou ou ou ou po li po ou po! Po ou, Ou Ou, ou, po ou, ou!

Translation: Rotten Egg. He comes to you at that place over there, that hillside, after sunset. Jump over pole and cloud or at the price of pox on your arse! For he comes, Rotten Egg, and, after he comes, WO!

The reader can also play this game by trying to figure out which of the specific formal possibilities has determined the result. EG: in the 2 examples above: Is either derived from a pre-existing text? Is either a 'new' work? The reader can become the writer by creating a rationale for their interpretation - such as the one presented after the example derived from Perec above. This can then be known as "Cure for Po, Li, Ou"

or "Po Po Po, Li, Ou." Any readers making analytical guesses about the origins/translations of the above are welcome to submit them to tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE @: anon@fyi.net in probable exchange for solutions &/or further problems as well as possible publication.

Variations on the game are Po, & Li - which are explained elsewhere.

MANY THANKS TO: Webster's Online Dictionary with Multilingual Thesaurus Translation

The example entitled "OU" above is derived from:
"In computing, an Organizational Unit (OU) provides a way of classifying objects located in directories, or names in a digital certificate hierarchy, typically used either to differentiate between objects with the same name (John Doe in OU "marketing" versus John Doe in OU "customer service"), or to parcel out authority to create and manage objects (for example: to give rights for user-creation to local technicians instead of having to manage all accounts from a single central group)."

-The 1st sentence of the definition of "Organizational Unit" from Wikipedia & the translation can be explained by:
OU = an English acronym for "Organizational Unit" in computer terminology
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
PO = "Operational Program" in Portuguese & Spanish
OU = an English acronym for "Organizational Unit" in computer terminology
po = "to gush" in Chewa
li = "to you" in Catalan
li = "what" in Wolof
po = "of" in Croatian
li = "what" in Wolof
li = "It" in Haitian Creole
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "where" In Swahili
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician,
   & Portuguese
ou = "whom" in Chiga
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
ou = "I" in Tonga
ou = "you" in Creole
PO = "Operational Program" in Portuguese & Spanish
po = "an indicator of respect" in Pampangan & Tagalog
po = "the whole" in Tocharian (Transliterated)
ou = "he comes" in Guarani
ou = "either" in French & Portuguese
po = "according to" in Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "whether" in Cornish
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician,
   & Portuguese
po = "opposite" in Earth Minimal - using "antipodal" as a synonym
po = "yes" in Albanian & Hawaiian
ou = "either" in French & Portuguese
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician,
   & Portuguese
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
po = "by" in Czech, Esperanto, Lithuanian & Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "close" in Gilbertese
ou = "whom" in Chiga
Li Po = T'ang Dynasty Chinese poet
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
OU = an English acronym for "Organizational Unit" in computer terminology
OU = "expenditure necessarily resulting from the treaty or from acts adopted in
   accordance therewith, compulsory expenditure" in Danish
po = "against" in Czech
Li Po = T'ang Dynasty Chinese poet
po = "in" in Croatian, French, Lithuanian, & Serbian (Latin Script)
OU = an English acronym for "Organizational Unit" in computer terminology
po = "in exchange for" in Ido
po = "according to" in Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "at the rate of" in Esperanto
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician,
   & Portuguese
li = "to you" in Catalan
po = "an indicator of respect" in Pampangan & Tagalog
po = "to gush" in Chewa
ou = "egg" in Catalan, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian
ou = "and" in Danish (Transliterated)
li = "whether" in Croatian
po = "whether" in Cornish
li = "it" in Haitian Creole
po = "for" in Czech, Ido & Sardinian (Campidanese)
po = "in exchange for" in Ido
po = "to gush" in Chewa
OU = "compulsory expenditure" in Danish
po = "for" in Czech, Ido & Sardinian (Campidanese)
ou = "girl" in Kwanyama
ou = "egg" in Catalan, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian
li = "to you" in Catalan
ou = "whom" in Chiga
po = "in exchange for" in Ido
OU = "compulsory expenditure" in Danish
po = "according to" in Serbian (Latin Script)
po = "all along" in Czech
po = "to gush from a spout" in Chewa
li = "them" in Italian & Romanian
li = "at that place" in Italian

The example entitled "Ou Ou" is a 'new' work using this vocabulary:
ou = "rotten" in Matumbi
ou = "egg" in Catalan, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian
ou = "he comes" in Guarani
li = "to you" in Catalan
li = "at that place" in Italian
li = "over there" in Italian
li = "that" in Haitian Creole
li = "hillside" in Norwegian
po = "after" in Croatian, Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak, & Slovak old
po = "sunset" in Marquesan

po = "jump" in Guarani (Transliterated)
po = "over" in Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak, Slovak old,
    & Ukrainian (Latin Script)
po = "pole" in Valencian
ou = "and" in Danish (Transliterated)
ou = "cloud" in Fijian
ou = "or" in Brazilian Portuguese, Creole, French, French Canadian, Galician,
    & Portuguese
po = "at the price of" in Ido
li = "pox" in Albanian
po = "on" in Czech, Danish (Transliterated), Kwanyama, Lithuanian, Polish,
    Slovak (Latin Script), Slovenian & Ukrainian (Latin Script)
ou = "your" in Creole & Haitian Creole
po = "arse" in German

po = "for" in Czech, Ido & Sardinian (Campidanese)
ou = "he comes" in Guarani
ou = "rotten" in Matumbi
ou = "egg" in Catala, Polish, Romanian, Romanian (Latin Script),
    Romanian (Transliterated), Sardinian, Sardinian (Campidanese),
    & Valencian
ou = "and" in Danish (Transliterated)
po = "after" in Croatian, Czech, Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak & Slovak old
ou = "he comes" in Guarani
ou = "WO" [woe] in Czech
Thought You Were Dead: An Interview with Terry Griggs by John Matias

Terry Griggs was born on Manitoulin Island, Canada. In 1995, her first novel, The Lusty Man, was published by Porcupine’s Quill. Her book of short stories, Quickening (Porcupine’s Quill, 1990) was a finalist for the 1991 Governor General’s Awards. She won the Marian Engel Award in 2003 for a body of work. Her book, Rogues’ Wedding (Random House, 2002) was shortlisted for the Rogers Writer’s Trust Fiction Award. Currently, she lives in Stratford, Ontario, but has lived on Manitoulin Island, since her youth. Her Trilogy (Raincoast Books) included: Cat’s Eye Corner (2000), The Silver Door (2004), and Invisible Ink (2006). These were all bestsellers for Young Adults. Thought You Were Dead (Biblioasis, 2009, ISBN: 1-897231-57-1) was selected by the Globe & Mail for “The Globe 100”. Nieve, a new work for young adults will be published by Biblioasis in Spring 2010 (ISBN: 978-1-897231-87-6). Terry Griggs served as the 2009-10 Writer-in-Residence at the University of Windsor. The residency was co-sponsored by the University of Windsor English Department and the Canada Council for the Arts. Rampike is pleased to feature this interview with Terry Griggs, conducted by John Matias.

JM: In Thought You Were Dead (TYWD), you’re clearly having a lot of fun with language and references to popular culture; there’s a lot of referential crackle in your language. When you write, do you edit as you work or do you wait until the end and allow a draft to cool down, as it were, and then revisit it? How many drafts does an average work of yours go through?

TG: Well, I tend not to do too many drafts, depending of course on what your definition of a draft is. I’d say one or two, but that’s because I edit as I go along, which can make it a somewhat painstaking process. Painstaking but not painful, not usually, I love to fuss, word by word, sentence by sentence. So, each novel or short story or whatever I am working on, develops organically. By the time I’ve gotten to the end – to the very end – yay! It’s pretty much in place. Although even then I’ll go over and tinker with it. But not in a large way. Not changing characters, not changing the structure at all. It’s mostly tinkering with the language, trying to get it exactly right, insofar as that’s possible. I’ve been revising my YA novel, Nieve, that’s due out in the spring. I thought it was finished, but when I got the edits and dealt with a few suggestions, I then spent days and days testing the language, going over it, concerned, for example, about using the same word too many times. Verbal impoverishment, how did that happen? It freaks me out, especially after all the work I’ve already put into it. Writers probably go a little batty at this stage, pre-publication, because suddenly everything looks as though it could be improved. You start to focus on the really fiddly stuff, until you give up in despair and send the damn thing away. And that’s what computers are great for. You can zip through a manuscript fixing this and that – or maybe it’s a curse!

JM: Do you find that with computers the editing function kicks in too soon?

TG: Not really. Initially I write in longhand, in pencil, and then in pen if things seem more solid. I move to the computer quicker than I used to, but I don’t think it’s changed my writing process. I go back and forth a fair bit, printing pages up then working them over in longhand.

JM: You mentioned that you edit as you go. Could you provide an example of how long it takes you to complete a page?

TG: It depends, but I’d say three days or thereabouts, going over it repeatedly. Sounds obsessive... well, it is. I write maybe 250-300 words a day. That would be a decent day,
Although honestly, it does vary. I might also write a section in fifteen minutes, Anthony Trollope speed, and not change much at all. I don’t keep track of this sort of thing, it wouldn’t do to think about it too much. I know that many writers have daily quotas, which can be very useful, forces you to get the words on paper. I do in a way—I’d feel useless if I didn’t get something down. But generally I just write until I feel drained and then stagger off somewhere and do something else.

**JM:** Which authors have influenced your style? Both in short fiction and novels?

**TG:** Lewis Carroll is a likely suspect. I loved the *Alice* books when I was a kid, still do. Nabokov. I read him when I was a teen and he probably left his mark. Even though he didn’t think women could write, with the exception of Jane Austen – well, we won’t hold that against him. He’s brilliant, of course. Much of the reading from my younger years has composted into a kind of literary mulch. Laurence Sterne, Dylan Thomas, Eudora Welty, Dickens, Donald Barthelme, Mavis Gallant, Virginia Woolf. The list changes with the day. I haven’t a clue about influence really, but am attracted to anyone who can wield a stunning sentence – Flann O’Brien, Martin Amis, Beryl Bainbridge, Michael Chabon, Hilary Mantel. Geoff Dyer is my new favourite; all told, word people, stylists, humourists, poets, writers who get into language.

**JM:** What made you initially want to experiment with the murder mystery genre, or in the words of your publisher Biblioasis “turning the genre completely on its head”?

**TG:** I’m drawn to different literary forms, out of a writerly restlessness, and plain old curiosity. In the case of *TYWD*, the mystery genre suited the story that I was beginning to dream up and seemed the best way to approach it. Then there’s the pleasure of doing something different, of taking on a different intellectual challenge. The mystery form is very interesting because you can do a lot with it. Some other genres don’t hold much appeal because they’re too limited. I don’t think I could ever write a genre romance for instance, not enough room for inventiveness. I mean, it’s possible, but it would only be offbeat or a send-up, which would make its readers unhappy. Whereas *TYWD* falls in with a certain kind of mystery, comic and literary, yet I was also able to inhabit the form in my own particular way. I enjoyed taking a playful approach to this particular set of conventions, the detective story, and writing something entertaining (I hope) that also has some depth.

**JM:** Do you think that has caused some interest for you to in the future play with other genres or experiment a little bit?
**Rampike 19/2**

**TG:** I suppose, I’m all for experiment, and I’d prefer not to be enclosed in a defining adjective—mystery writer, etc. My novel, *Rogues’ Wedding*, is historical fiction, and I have written short stories and children’s books. That’s another genre writers don’t usually take on when they’re known for literary fiction. Some do, especially if they have kids. The children’s genre is not highly regarded generally, but it’s a vital art form and can have a wide appeal, as we’ve seen lately. It’s a gratifying form to work with, plenty of room to manoeuvre, very rich. And with mysteries, too, a lot of people read them, readers of literary fiction who wouldn’t go near other mainstream genres. Before writing *TYWD*, I got kind of intrigued as to why that might be the case. You know, what’s available in the mystery that isn’t available elsewhere.

**JM:** In a Quill and Quire review of *Thought You Were Dead*, you’re regarded as an example of an idiosyncratic and uncompromising author whose work has been marginalized by the increasingly cookie cutter approach and corporatization of Canadian publishing, where literary value-first models are left to smaller publishers (as in your case with this Biblioasis book). What do you think of that assessment and do you agree that is where Canadian publishing is headed.

**TG:** From what I’ve observed, I would agree that the publishing world has changed in the last little while, with more changes afoot. As with the recording industry, the internet has thrown everything out of whack. The large publishing houses mainly concentrate on books that sell, taking fewer chances with unproven writers, handing out smaller advances, dropping mid-list writers or ones who don’t earn out, cutting way back on promotion. My work is idiosyncratic, I guess, and while that’s never been a problem for readers, it does seem to make some publishers balk. An editor in one of the biggies was keen on picking up my new YA novel, but it didn’t happen, the current economic situation cited as the problem. Their bean counters “ran the numbers,” which I assume means that they checked my sales records and I didn’t look like such a hot prospect. There are many within the corporate structure who are there because they love literature, but these are dicey times and people are trying to hang onto their jobs.

**JM:** Your scope of writing spans various genres: short stories, children’s books, novels and now a murder mystery. How does your approach differ when you sit down to write in any particular genre or form? For example, what preparation is involved or how much research do you do?

**TG:** My approach isn’t different, maybe slightly different for the children’s ones. In the three I’ve done up to the current one, there’s the usual attention to language and perhaps a more direct focus on the story itself. If I’m writing a novel I will do a certain amount of research, not that I always use it. I read all kinds of things around the subject. For *The Silver Door*, one of the kids’ books, I read Kerouac’s *On the Road* because I was checking out the Beats and their lingo for one of the characters. For *TYWD* I researched genealogy, which didn’t end up figuring into the book much although that was my initial idea. As well, I checked out women inventors, forensics, graveyards. Newspapers I find very useful, and I read piles of mysteries, not something I’d ever done much of before. Not to forget simple observation, either – the world is rich in quirky detail. Research can have a stimulating effect, plus it’s interesting in itself. I’d say it’s an important part of the process. I keep notebooks for thoughts that occur while I’m writing. It might be ideas about a character or some snippets of dialogue, words that I find intriguing, or jokes, possible scenes, plot reminders, that sort of thing.

**JM:** How disciplined are you when it comes to following a writing schedule?

**TG:** I’ve trained myself to get the work done. It’s not my natural inclination, believe me. I haven’t been terribly disciplined lately because I’m here. Not that often, a couple of days a week, but it has kept me busy, travelling from Stratford to Windsor, reading manuscripts, trying to be helpful. I’ve also been busy promoting *TYWD*. Dan Wells, my publisher at Biblioasis, is remarkable, practically a one-man band. He puts an impressive amount of work into promotion
and is very inventive, always cooking up different ideas. He’s been keeping me hopping, in
other words. Most of the fall, when not in Windsor, I’ve spent at book festivals, book signings,
readings. I’m more ingoing than outgoing, so I’d much rather be at my desk writing a book,
than out there promoting one. Besides, once it’s done I find that my interest in it plummets – I
scarcely remember what it’s about. You have to do your bit, though. Song and dance.

JM: What’s the biggest obstacle you face when writing, or what gives you the most trouble?
And conversely, what is the most rewarding and brings you the most joy?

TG: I’m a first-rate procrastinator, although I’m always glad to step into my office in the
morning, and that helps. It’s where I feel most at home. I think the main source of trouble is
money, which always seems to be in short supply. Same for most artists, so not to whine--it’s a
choice you make, and who knows, I may win that lottery yet. It is a bit tricky, the writing life,
but it’s worth it. I wouldn’t want to do anything else. Technically, the biggest obstacle is the
same thing that brings the joy. Writing is just fascinatingly difficult. The mysterious thing
you’re chasing down you never quite catch, but the effort and what you come up with can be
very satisfying. Sometimes!

JM: Is this impossible to do without an agent of some sort representing you?

TG: I’m not with an agent now, although I was for several years. I haven’t quite decided if I
want to take up with another one again, or if anyone will have me for that matter. As with much
in one’s writing life, luck comes into play. If you’re compatible, and you agree with how the
agent shapes your career, and they’re on the bit and willing to hustle on your behalf, then that’s
ideal. There are writers who have done extremely well with an agent. It can be a lot harder
without one, although not impossible. Most larger publishing houses won’t look at unagented
work, and that’s were the independent presses are good again. They’re open to submissions and
will usually consider a manuscript that an agent might view as too literary or experimental or
whatever to be sellable. Basically it boils down to the fact that some agents are top-notch and
others not. There are plenty of them out there, of all stripes, so it pays to do your research
before becoming involved.

JM: How did you come to writing your first collection of short stories, *Quickening*, and did you
think you were going to be a novelist at that point?

TG: While I’d been writing intermittently since childhood, this and that, I began writing in
earnest after finishing university, determined to get on with it. Short stories were more popular
then than now, the Alice Munro effect possibly, and it was a manageable way to start. Plus I’ve
always been interested in narrative, short or long. For critical feedback I exchanged stories for
awhile with other writers, Stan Dragland and Don McKay, the founders of *Brick*. And I began
sending them out to the literary magazines, having gotten the idea that this is what one was
expected to do. Many of them were published in *The Malahat Review*, then edited by Connie
Rooke, and *The New Quarterly*, Kim Jernigan’s magazine at the University of Waterloo. I was
only thinking a story at a time, though, not collecting them up, certainly not writing a novel. At
some point early on I was approached by John Metcalf, who keeps an eye on what’s being
published in the magazines, then as now. He asked to anthologize some of the stories, then
when he linked up with *The Porcupine’s Quill* suggested publishing a collection. I had to write
a few extras in order to fill it out. So, you see, I got off pretty easily.

JM: Were you working then?

TG: What was I doing? Well, I got married so that helped. I think my husband had a job. One
of us must have had a job! Yeah, I’ve had odd jobs. Off and on, but not always. I’ve had some
grants to help me along, and bless the Arts Councils for that.
JM: Did you take any creative writing workshops while an undergraduate or graduate student? What are your thoughts on the workshop experience? Its pros and cons?

TG: I've never taken a creative writing course. When I was at Western in London they weren't on offer, and there were many in the English Department who didn't rate creative writing too highly. One of my professors once said that there should be a moratorium on writing because there was already enough. Still, there were some wonderful writers on faculty – Don McKay, James Reaney, Larry Garber, all teachers of mine. Western subsequently started a couple of courses and I imagine they have a better attitude towards it now. From what I've heard about workshops and creative writing programs, I think they can be very good. They give young students a sense of camaraderie, a sense of support. Something that validates what they are doing, because self-doubt can be a big problem. What Charles Baxter calls the black-lung disease of the writing profession. I can see where the experience might be helpful for that. When it comes to writing, sources of encouragement are going to be scarce. I’ve heard negative things about the programs in that they focus on fault finding, whether there are faults or not. If the emphasis is on what’s not working in a piece of writing, a writer may learn from that, or shy away from what is most original in his or her work. The problem of homogenization is often mentioned in connection with workshops. An apprentice writer (we’re all that actually) might avoid trying to improve their weak areas, and stick with what they do best, what gets praise from the group. Because criticism hurts! I’ve always thought that writers are a bit like dogs – pat them on the head, give them a biscuit, and they wag their tails, happy. Ideally, the programs should encourage students to try different approaches, experiment, be fearless, have fun. Someone with a strong sense of what they’re up to will take whatever advice makes sense and leave the rest.

JM: What has your experience as the 2009-10 Writer-in-Residence at the University of Windsor been like?

TG: It’s been great. People in the English Department and the students I’ve met have been terrific, very welcoming and friendly. I’ve had to stretch critically in thinking about different kinds of writing because I’ve been receiving a real range of submissions, not only from students, but people from the community. Speculative fiction, fantasy, non-fiction, the epistolary novel, short stories, poetry. I think it’s been good for me. I tend not to assess my own work analytically, but here I’ve had to exercise some critical muscle. Also, I like getting out and meeting people, including the many writers in the department whose works I’ve been reading. It’s been an energizing experience, something I can always use, and I’m grateful for it and appreciate it.

JM: Are you working on anything at the present?

TG: I always have lots of things on the burner, and the back burner, and there are a few burners back beyond that. *Nieve*, the new YA novel I mentioned will be out soon and I’m putting the finishing touches on it. My son has done illustrations for it which are seriously cool – he’s a philosophy and visual arts student at the University of Guelph. I have a new adult novel started, called provisionally ‘Easy Magic,’ but am only a couple of chapters in, a ghost story of sorts. I’ve started a new *Cat’s Eye Corner* book and I’m also working on some shorter pieces. Different style entirely and bit on the creepy side, called ‘From the Insectarium.’ There are also a few other things that I may or may not get to. Some short stories I’ve been working on for years—or I should say, every once in awhile I write one. They’re linked stories written in a first person omniscient voice. The protagonist, a girl named Hero, is conceived in the first story that kicks off the series and narrates it from that vantage point (being a mere point herself). Beyond that, Dan Wells has been after me to write a follow-up to *Thought You Were Dead*. I notice in the adverts for *Nieve* that I’m writing a trilogy. That’s news to me!
THE ICEMAN
by Niels Hav

Translated by Heather Spears

Where was he heading, the herdsman from Tyrol? The first tourist, dressed in a deerskin shirt and a cape of braided grass. Yet he carried articles of quality:

A yew-wood bow and arrows of shaped flint fitted with feathers. A European embalmed by the frost with his axe and dagger, when he lost his way in a snowstorm back in the Stone Age.

There he crouched when the Celts of Stonehenge dragged monoliths across the breadth of England and raised an observatory to watch the stars.

Caesar’s elephants must have passed his cave on their way north - the alarm of war. He missed that. Sat sheltered with his ears stuffed with snow thinking his thoughts in the enormous silence.

Found. They hacked him free of the ice block, strapped him tight to a helicopter and flew him down to Innsbruck to meet the Press. That’s when he died.

Note: The Iceman, Homo Tirolensis, was discovered in the Austrian glacier Similaum (1991), where he lay preserved in ice for 5300 years - the oldest human being ever found.
THE CANONICAL HOURS
by Eugene McNamara

Matins
Bells in faroff steeples
summon and birds announce
morning
bellsong birdsong

Come and walk with me my
love listen to what my eyes
sing to you: I will not
let you go

As a man carries a glass
of water to his child in
the night—not a drop will
fall the bough will not
break we shall gather at
the river

Remember the dry light
over the ocean and the
long grass in morning
light and wild ponies
running on the beach
plunging in the surf
their manes shaking
in the wind?

Remember the prairie
swift seen between
the freight cars?

The prairie will be there
when the trains long gone
the ponies will be there
when we return

Here are trees shaking
swaying in the wind and
staying in calm silence

Train horns in the hills
the hoarse nuttering of
the river where it falls

What I hold in my hands—
not a drop will spill and
the bough will not break
and we shall gather at
the river and I will not
let you go

Prime
Dawn over the ocean
light rinsed too bright
to see catches us by
the throat

Behind me is a small creek
running slow thick
with tall grass and reeds

Time now to say the first
word hold out our hands

Tierce
The coffee wagon stops
at the construction site
men gather like a flock
of sparrows over a field

Sext
Noon whistles halve
the day machines
whine down down
outside children like
flocks of starlings over
the open field
swooping gliding
sudden from the trees
just as sudden back
to the trees so
heavy with starlings

seraphs swift bright
light falls stunned

What set the birds off?
Who made me witness?
Nones

Sunt lacrimae rerum
et mentem mortalia tangunt—
   -- Virgil

This is the hour of sloth
the dry hour of torpor

The between time
of small demons who
cut and pinch with
small knives and prongs

This sluggish time of
torment

Remembering a day when
the long slant of afternoon
over a river caught refracted
broke shivering the water

Trees beside the path offer
a vista of portals come in
come in—I love every thing
in this light

Those trees on the path and
the light—Do I remember it
or is it from a movie about
Provence?

These are the tears of things

Vespers

evensong

“The Day Thou Gavest
Lord is Ended”

Those Giotto frescoes—

People in open courtyards
or under skeletal porticos

The kiss of Jesus and Judas
faces fatal mirrored
amid torches spears

The precarious basilica
in Pope Innocent III’s dream

He lies stiff in his mitre
and the saint props up
the falling church

A large tonsured head
of a friar compassionate
bent over the dying saint
and St. Clare bent in
sorrow

evensong at the close
of day

Compline

Late, night

You let in the night air
and far off a car starts
coughing thoughtfully

All over town words are
falling down and now
you are riding the
horses of sleep

The car is going past
tired and resolute
it is gentle in the
dark going
3 POEMS
by Susan Holbrook

Transcribing the Letters of Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson

I am practicing lejibibility, do you recognise it,  
(Stein to Thomson, 23 Sept. 1928)

Thanks for the duffings.  
Love to my Gody and quineff pumfally.  
Smile and write look the same.  
Saints and Emily.  
Clippings, thanks for the clippings.  
See you Tuesday.  Fine, until Thursday.  That’s Tuesday. Yes, ’til then.  
At seven in the afternoon.  
After Estuary after Easter flu, full  
of almost almonds.  
Margaret and Nougat.  
Avery Hopwood assumes or assures.  Avery Hopwood amuses.  
Have you been a little better? Have you sent a bitter letter?  
The train comes on the hon and half-hon.  
There’s a good chance of having you finished  
in January, or printed in Germany, printed  
in January, finished in Germany.  
The book was famously, permanently, persistently, furiously, permanently lost there.  
It looks like terrified hills, sewing ourselves, Alice is rippled.  
It looks like buttered  
nightingales, and it is.  
Love to anybody and yourself pumfally.  
That story about piano is rapturously narty and that story  
about Picasso is xceptionally nasty.  
Thanks for the Christ on Epps.

There is no famous church at Epps, there is no Epps.  
Georges’ 50 000 francs was SO OOO famous.  
Love to everybody and yourself principally.  
Anyway always, smile back soon. May your mossy  
gruty be revealed as snowing gently.  
From an uncatalogued box, buried  
in the archive, may you fish out a postcard  
of the Burgos Cathedral in Spain:  
Jesus standing on eggs.
Aside From
a wrong tree what is rued
the mouth what is barked up
French what is foamed at
the bird what is excused
the slip what is flipped
something fishy and a rat what is given
a long story what is smelled
my dead body what is made short
the flow what is over
your own medicine what is gone with
the eye of the beholder what is tasted
humidity what is beauty in
your head what is not heat
more than you can chew what is kept above
water
a rose garden what is bitten off
an old dog what did I never promise you
the trees what cannot be taught new tricks
the dust what can one not see the forest for
the land what is bit
that bridge what did time forget
the pitch what will we cross when we come to it
the ropes what is queered
a limb what is known
the lock what is gone out on
the vote what is raped
parole what is won
the night what is he out on
the heart what is taken back
the word what is worn on sleeves
what’s good for the goose what’s mum’s
bygones what’s good for the gander
the day what are bygones let be

Red Coral-to-Wet Castanet
Tap victim on the hinge
and shout, “Are you okay?”

If there is no response:
tilt the victim’s fragile egg,
apple pointing up.

Place one chinor leaf under
the victim’s satin tower
and gently lift. At the
same time push with the
other big mitt on the
victim’s distant sea. This will
move the mark of your spiritual maturity
away from the very sensitive barometer
of your physical and emotional well-being
to open the airway.

Immediately look, listen and feel
for air. While maintaining the
backward 500-channel-media-universe tilt
position, place your bloomen red
rose and shell the wind swept
close to the victim’s
big front door for microbes
and complex air conditioner. Look
for the bowle of cream
uncruded to rise and fall
while you listen and feel
for the return of air.
Check for about five seconds.

If the victim is not
breathing: Check for and clear
any foreign matter from the
victim’s font of information. Give
four quick breaths. Pinch the
victim’s sink by which the
braine doth purge itself of
phlegm with the bunch
of ragged carrots that
is on the victim’s crown
of the face to prevent
leakage of air. Open your
wee cave wide; take a
deep breath; seal your pomegranate
cut in twain with a
knife of ivory around the
victim’s round suctorial funnel, and
blow into the victim’s wet
scarlet wings of a reborn
butterfly who trembles on the
rose petal as Life floods
his strange body with four
quick breaths just as fast
as you can.

The germ-reservoir-to-super-sniffing-
machine method, instead of the cakehole-to-lilies-which-drip-
to-sweet-rosemary method, can be
used in the same sequence
described above. Maintain the backward
lofty treetop tilt position with
one map of yourself on the
victim’s piece of luncheon meat
stretched across a basketball. Remove
the other sprout from under
the swinging door and close
the victim’s freshly cracked fig.
Blow into the victim’s tower
of Lebanon that looketh toward
Damascus.

These breaths should be brief
and gentle to prevent air
from entering the bottomless pit
when it comes to this stuff.
FROM: TEXAS (the first four pages)  
by Claudio Gaudio

My exit was no laughing matter. The butcher showed me how to make the best cut. I bought vitamins and a gun, said goodbye to my mother, consulted with my doctor, cheated on my wife and shot a small animal. I sent the bill to Texas. I was informed that my death would be trivial and necessary. My accountant assured me that he would invest the proceeds. I changed all the dates, dug up my father’s bones and hid them in the attic. I was free.

When I got here George’s thunder rolled, the rich were leaving for France and the dead could speak. My advisor was a man with Afghan heroin up his ass who told me that his eyes block the future and it is difficult to find a good firing squad in the middle of a morning milking. This is my orchard, he said. If you put it in a box it will double the distance, the head clerk will speak your name and you will be replaced in the speed of a word.

It was in New York that I assumed a mission that no one had given me. Two Texas couriers walked past the cafe, a fruit stand, a tobacconist and dog people scattered to both sides of the boulevard. Up four floors of a brownstone to my office overlooking a courtyard with old trees where a squirrel lives and birds come to visit. A briefcase was placed on my desk. It was I who had the combination. The document began and ended with please advise as to your earliest departure. I placed a note inside the case and scrambled the tumblers. The courier took the case, we’ll see you there, he said.

First I was taken to the capital which was all fancy chocolate and the rustle of girls through a wheat field. One of them showed me a dictionary, pointed to the words that were missing and said only these are good for planting. I wanted to disagree but she took my head in her hands which were clean as ivory. These are the hours we will teach you to forget, she said, now sleep while I read to you from the book of last things.

I am a diplomat, a messenger in the mouth of what is already here. I speak many languages, perhaps all of them. In Galilee I turned a king into a carpenter. In El Salvador I turned death squads into freedom fighters and farmers into rebels. When I arrived at the capital the president told me that I would be going away to the war. I was to scrub the names and send them back to Texas. Mr. President, I can do that from here … we must find our reasons there and rattle them here … what are our reasons … whatever you say they are … yes of course.

The next morning I took a helicopter to a military plane. Its cargo was soldiers inside the packs on their backs. I was in my briefcase. They had been told what to do. I told them what not to say after they did it. When we landed I was escorted by an officer to a convoy of armoured vehicles. The soldiers from the plane milled about waiting for trucks to take them to their final destination. The officer called me sir. Sir we have just now been made aware of a situation, perhaps you can translate for us … yes of course.

We drove a short distance to a two room house on the periphery of a small cluster of similar structures. A well stood ten or so meters from the dwelling. An old man was sitting at the front
door. What does he want to tell us, asked the officer? The man explained that there is a dead soldier inside the well. How did he get there … he was shooting at everyone … that’s not good … that’s what I told him … how did he get inside the well … I shot him … that’s a problem … he killed my son, my daughter and her husband. What did he say, asked the officer … he said one of your soldiers is dead inside the well … we know that, how did he get there … he doesn’t know … did he see anything … he was preparing for a funeral … tell him someone will come to collect the body and ask more questions. The officer thanked him, hearts and minds. I asked the man how old he was, eighty seven. I told him never to repeat his story.

On the assertion of Galileo I remain neutral. When I was born the camps had electricity and the trains had already moved the bodies. Those who have all will be forgiven and from those who have little it will be taken. Birth is a single occasion to the end of time. In a firestorm clothes will sometimes carbonize and keep their shape, the memory of a body missing. I do not know with whose words I am speaking but I am not responsible for everything. I was given a job, kill for the common good, protect the people or was it the brotherhood. I was distracted. God himself, several stories high, moved slowly amongst us. It was a holiday, the streets were closed, cocktails and shopping, life after death. Who could think?

Through the small windows of my armoured car I could see the city beginning, shattered glass and fallen masonry. I am driven to a secure complex comprising of several square miles. It was the palace of the previous king and now a little piece of Texas organized in the spirit of a college campus; dormitories, bars and fast food chains. Post adolescents on the up side of a high school touchdown and before their first blowjob are sent here to flicker and die.

I was assigned an office with a bedroom adjacent. There were television screens in each room so that I could watch the war, from Texas. The floor and the walls were marble, the ceilings plaster. The echo was distracting and distorted the music that I had selected to get me through this war. The Foreign Service it seems had heeded my request for a stereo. I ordered some carpeting, anything will do, I said. The next day a soldier responsible for my comfort delivered four large, fine Persian carpets. I only need two … I can’t take them back … I see, put one on the floor and the other on the wall of each room … which walls … you look like you have a flair for this … yes sir.

Bartok packed a lunch and a gramophone and set himself to wandering. He went digging for the old songs. They were floating face down in the Danube now he holds the darker chords a little longer. He is his father, he his father’s father and the toothless grin of the Huns. Flesh everlasting, he did not lick it off the ground. Listen, if you will, to the music that a man with a shovel makes.

Before leaving the capital I was called to the office of the press secretary. There was a television in that room too. A journalist was interviewing another rugged and dusty general on the difficulties of a winning strategy. The secretary pointed to the screen, that’s the war that matters, he said, the one we’re fighting. The war on the ground will take care of itself. He is short on detail and admits that sometimes things change, a little. He makes no apology for machines that rust in the desert, for compounds that poison the sea. He makes no apology for the winning team.
He will deliver the people with an accomplished lack of interest. In his back pocket are a few enormous and wide spread academics. The enemy, I heard him say, will be wanting in philosophy and sanctions for oil most severe. A healthy child death rate will be maintained by the purposeful destruction of water, without favouritism. Vaccines are weapons grade biological agents and will not be distributed. A tried and proper instrument of state he will later deny, nothing else would work half as well.

My initial orders were to cancel local elections, make a list of those who would testify against the language, look for anthrax in the kitchen, submarines in the desert and missiles inside paper lanterns. Upon submitting my report I was further instructed to record the coordinates of factories still standing and their capacity to get in the way of the money. I was given discretion to meet with spokespeople of every description, relay promises and threats. Clean the streets and distribute food for the camera; nothing in the thousands, things amongst things.

The morning after my arrival I met my assistant. His name was Aban, waters. When he was not with me he sold western trinkets in a bombed out building fifty or so meters from the palace, a distance now measured in the blessed calculus of a smart bomb. I live by the knife he said for fear of losing his Texan stipend. His job was to help distribute shrink wrapped cash to the people he knew could influence events. The money arrived with Swiss precision, armoured and burlapped for favour and sway. Aban dispensed it without specificity at his whim and pleasure to whomever he touched from plastic chairs in the courtyard of a small office he had procured next the market. He decided what each story was worth. I collected the words and sent them back to Texas.

Each morning Aban insisted that we leave before lunch. For breakfast he would have tea and a biscuit that he carried wrapped in his pocket, two for me and one for him. He refused to eat in the cafeteria, there is pork and the food is shit. Our meals were prepared daily by his friends in the local market. As we ate he gave voice to every thought in his head. The secret of civilization, he explained, is that what we want and cannot have is what we are. At day’s end he gave me my dinner, wrapped, to eat in my room. I didn’t know that what would follow understanding is death.

I arrived with notion and syntax to bridge a massacre, to reconcile events with their non-occurrence. I do not know that now, now I am only here, in a car apparently, there was some shooting. My capture was a simple unfolding, certain and without ceremony. I am hooded and tied in the first rays of an autumn sun. Aban died without a whisper while sitting in a plastic chair in the sights of an adolescent brandishing a gun as a gun that was not a knife.

In Westminster Abbey it is said that god and empire do not rejoice in the annihilation of the living. The day before they killed Lorca I told him he would live forever. Truth makes a mockery of death. On my way to London or Istanbul I decided all explanation is an affront to affliction. I used to carry a map of the last several centuries charted by hunchbacks, poets who would empty a glass and move slowly through the fire. I have been speaking with those who lived before me on the streets of British Calcutta. They have risen and are living within striking distance of Notting Hill. What of our legacy they ask? Your affairs have been cancelled. Your children denied the old king. In 1968 Texas killed a Baptist.
2 Poems
by Desi di Nardo

The Medium That Carries Us
The rain shower purifies the streets
Ridding the tar of its mental chemical smell
Filling the drain lines with possibility
You were giddy in your mimicking chanting
Flattering yourself with such fluid maneuvers
Foreshadowing all our dwindling reactions
Who is it that gives rise to us
Which character is the more daring of the two
We are the medium that carries us
Bending like a paper boat down a tortuous canal
The words etched in each unpredictable entity
We write it in the dark of this passage
Carving pictures on the walls as Braille messages

The Plural of Some Things
It’s the copycats
The mimics
Who dream in colour
Of grandiose lexicons and astronomical stardoms
Unlike what we fall asleep to—
The organization and masterminding of planets and agendas
Looking for guarantees rather than reveries
Rummaging for petunias and strawberries
Our fields overflow with anorexic stench
Sometimes the big words trap our breath
Field clouds gusting out with pretense and possibility
It gets us started
The understanding feels like a deep plunge in the lake
Nothing spins out as deliberately and wickedly
As the libido from our fossils
Our stuffy bones
Watch us now
We don’t have to take from anyone
To spoil our game
We are made to run with reeds underfoot

Desi Di Nardo’s latest book, The Plural of Some Things,
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2 POEMS
by Edward Nixon

Cahiers du Cinéma

once and then once more the epic quality spills
Cotes du Rhone blood-tannin
from the cupped energy field
that holds light’s frame & tone

    Un Homme et Une Femme

the here of it wrong
the near of it an alarm
or the ‘she’ always asking
and his glance backward
Jack Nicholson lost somewhere in Spain
running from every touch

    The Passenger

floating thru a black river
settling for the grift of fiction
the projector in flames
eyes lapping the screen
the auteur dissolving into social conditions

    Je Vous Salue, Marie

a hero returning under a strict rule
longing for story
for dust motes on the lens
the singe of a dark star

    Les Enfants du Paradis
Let $x = this$

you say it is not easy to spit up a sense of ‘this’
but I’m not listening ‘this’ time
but thinking of fortune & the fact
that ‘this’ language is
recalcitrant

(we’ll borrow from Wittgenstein:
    “The world is all that is the case.”)

as we pause to look over fields of tightly kerned typesetting
splash pinot noir into Val St. Lambert goblets
crush the fresh fig pieces between molars
let the Morbier melt till its ash salts our tongues
pass over what silence cannot be made to say

(recompose the world phrase
    by drowsy phrase)

keep on taking in words as if there was substance in them
squalls of reference ruffling thru our parole
or what you’d call fancy talk
but I’ll ignore the gravity of your ardor
as you use me for explanation
or something more Anglo-Saxon
a coital detour into argument

(we can seek the lees of speech
    with curious tongue-tips)
    sweep up the leftover alphabets everyone else forgot
the abused vowels the stains of consensual lust
between adjacent consonants
frame this thing we improvised

(and there was much in late-century French
    theory we place here ______)

but I say put the flesh of your words here
between my top & bottom lips
let me eat the meal of your complaint

(yes you & I more or less spawning
    in a polluted stream)
Excerpts from: *White On White: An Auto-da-fe*
by Concetta Principe

**WHITE SHIRT**

The water of a white shirt is never evident. I won’t say never. To begin with, the white of water is illegible and the white shirt is political, full of innuendo.

The white shirt, new, pristine, identifies you as one of everyone; it is as democratic as wealth is democratized by Las Vegas Atlantic City. You can’t get outside of the white shirt. Its meaning is transparent, always forever white. The Inquisition was here and read the stains you will have one day erased. The white shirt is always already stained.

Your white shirt does not erase you skin. Your skin keeps pigment. It is as natural as the cotton shrouding you. This cloth collects your hours as creases through folds of intention; here, as you raise you arm to make the point, intention slips and miters your chest, under which the point impresses. The white shirt has a form to which you subject your flesh.

Your white shirt does not confine you. This white shirt imbricates sweat into the folds, attracts shadows that ripple across muscle, exposes the collar bone. Outside, outside, laundered shirts fly on the clothesline in the wind, interpellating. There is no outside this shirt.

There is no other language with which to dress your nakedness; no matter what your state of mind, the white shirt is stained. It subjectifies you, without speaking, and you smile. What you wear on your sleeve, against your heart, is the white shirt stained with ideology. The white shirt becomes you.

There is no outside that shirt. It is your ideology that calls me to touch the water of what you wear. Let me inside this pool of water. Let me pass my hands through that membrane of what becomes a clear lake, rippling. There are currents here and concurrently cotton deliquesces. What was white unravels as limpid folds and intentions by which I touch this skin of you.
WHITE ON WHITE

Bleaching out the wrong-ness makes legible the covetous-ness of all intentions. Do not act. Remain faithful to the faith with truth. Remain steadfast. Do not lie. No matter how extensive the tenses of their torture.

With this bleach, let me pour out my words let them come as water comes as blood of my truth. I lied about nothing.

Unmarking is a stain re-marked by remaining. There is no going back. What is said is said, and the damage to the body irreparable. The future is marked by the fire of retraction. Oh Miranda, what did you say? What you said is all that matters and will be used. It is the only evidence of your lies. Someone followed you with that can of bleach and masterminded a trail of lies leading to your pyre. It is all so legible. Law of absence is fascinating.

Memory has sustained me no matter how hard I have tried the damned spot. If only all memory would go that way. If only memory was not made of indelibles. If only bleach did not eat its way into human matters.

Tuché repeats my erasure, unintentionally. My Bleach on the surface can be read as homage to the visible negation in Goodwin’s pencil fathoming her bath. Had Goodwin lived through an auto-da-fe, would she continue to believe in the aesthetic of erasure?

If only water were really a means of washing. If only washing drowned the Inquisition of its cult of suspicion. If only reading was as forgiving as the texture of white on white.

LINE BY LINE

The sacred runs through the branches of hydro wires like blood, in which all that is human blooms in lines of truth in our sky. Sacred stains your hearing.

Out, out, and outer dust of the debris raised by the gaggling cherubim, playing rosies in the sprinkler drinking.

No one is illegal; no one is outside this. There is no beyond the ring of roses.

Outside, they come at night to steal her white roses. She takes the corners of her horizon and tucks them in under her heartbeat transfiguring thorns into armour against that which is beyond her. She shields herself from nothing.

Stained messages beat here in quarter time next to the bed. Bring your ear closer.

The geometry of dreams overwhelms the hydro lines whose angles resolve that bedrock of broken beds. Nothing else matters. The phone is ringing. There is no outside here.

Here, God has been moving things on the shelf causing hated harmonies, and the heart bound to legal matters, declines the verb, so be it. Roses ring your ears.

When the phone rings she does not answer: it is not the FBI, it is not CISUS, not Mossad, nor Interpol nor any living Intelligence. She is not the thief, and she has the thorns to prove it.
Jennings’ Dairy by Daniel King

As Jennings wandered through the passages of the abandoned dairy, he wondered why he felt that he owned the building. The idea that one person should own a dairy was, after all, peculiar: companies or trusts owned dairies, not individuals. But the feeling of owning the dairy was not at all that was peculiar; for at large in the building was a herd of pale blue cows. Now if, he thought, he owned a diary instead of a dairy, the peculiarity would lessen; for while blue cows could not exist in a dairy, “blue cows” could readily exist in a diary.

But what could force the ‘a’ of “dairy” to change places with the “i”? And assuming that “a” was the indefinite article and “I” was the first-person pronoun, would such an inversion imply a becoming-indefinite of personal identity? Presumably such alterations would also have implications for the diary form, for diaries were never written in the third person.

“January 2,” he imagined whimsically. “Jennings contemplated his dairy. Divided on the ground level into two single-floor brick rooms, with a common, flat roof, it bore the words ‘Masters Dairy, Safety Bay’. Waiting for him was a herd of blue cows, lowing like distant waterfalls. He wondered whether any of them needed to be treated for udder-rash or joint-fatigue. Certainly the diary itself required maintenance.”

He stopped imagining. Really, he needed information: from a parson, perhaps. Absently (stepping over a pail) he approached a cow. Its blue was even more pronounced than he remembered, with dark spots that ought to have been dun but were, instead, the colour of military fatigues. A heart-shaped one reminded him of the continent or plain of some mythical planet. Trying to be masterful, he reached out to tap the cow’s horn: and his fingers went straight through it. The cow mooed; starting, he held up a hand to keep it at bay.

Making his way down some stairs, he spotted a sign that bore the words “to the Rotalactor”. Now that sounded like a diary entry, he thought, for to refer to the words “to the Rotalactor” inverted commas were needed. How peculiar inverted commas were! They manifested themselves from without, like two pairs of cows’ horns, or angel’s fingers. Bracketing the world, cutting it off. Turning it into something else. Yet single inverted commas were more like the points of a devil’s trident, piercing the world from within and deriding it.

And then he had reached a room containing a device with a large, circular, cast-steel platform. Was it the Rotalactor? It reminded him of a cheese grater. He forced himself to concentrate. It certainly looked very powerful. Perhaps, indeed, it could force an “a” to change places with an “i”.

Hoping he wasn’t being rash (but at the same time not wanting to be cowardly) he stood on the circular platform and pressed a button. Sure enough, the platform emitted a whirr and started to turn. He suddenly imagined pale blue cows cast high into the air, eventually to become disseminated among the stars of the galaxy. Kinematics. He shook his head. The Rotalactor was not turning at an unsafe speed. His thoughts were becoming confused – perhaps even childish.

So maybe his identity was becoming indefinite!

Grasping the centre of the Rotalactor with one hand, he took out with the other a pen and a piece of paper, and began to write. “January 4. Jennings’ identity finally became indefinite: the ‘i’ of ‘dairy’ changed places with the ‘a’. Nevertheless, he found himself wondering whether only the Rotalactor was responsible, or whether there were other considerations, such as market forces. Certainly cow’s horns/angel’s fingers – that is, inverted commas – were indirectly involved. And the fact that he was now associated with a diary rather than a dairy meant that the presence of anything could be justified.

But diary entries were so obviously discrete! Just bare facts. Every day. With the rest omitted. Like atoms or matrices.

He stepped off the Rotalactor, telling himself that just as he was no longer in a dairy, so the Rotalactor had probably also become something else. And what had the cows become? Just so much empty space?

The conclusion was plain. He had always been in diary form. He was fictional, a mere character. He sat in a corner, trying to think clearly. He ought to have appreciated sooner the poetic – in other words, fictional – character of the images around him. As if the fact that cows’ horns were the same shape as inverted commas could be coincidence! Even his own name, “Jennings”, was probably an allusion to the housing company that had nearly collapsed. “Never trust coincidences,” he whispered darkly. “They are merely heavy-handednesses of the author-God.”

Indeed, he realized, one could go further, and maintain that in any world the presence of coincidences pointed not only to the existence of a God but also to the existence of a God who was, in a certain sense, flawed.

He stared once more at the Rotalactor, now dragging to a halt. He could probably use it to change back the characters of “diary” and “dairy”, thereby returning the illusion of certainty to his identity: but after what he had just realized there didn’t seem much point.
2 POEMS
by Denis Robillard

Finding Hoffa

There's a blues track railroading itself out of my radio into the night air by the open window at my elbow another bottle of beer chasing the one before it outside my window another Detroit night with an open sore festering brown on a dirty band aid memory Bluesy words finding release now on another west end street across this bluesy bridge the rumours form then retreat like ants in a deranged fire They think they've found him the body of ONE James P. Hoffa, this time for good this time for good stashed under some dark floor boards in deep Detroit. A wailing track a wailing track now some rain some rain some clean, clean rain.

Laetitia Sonami’s Lady Glove 4.0

Ghosts have no need for speech many memes mechanical shadows flailing inside you. Flawed Images of martyred ancestors.

Redemption is a white lie history infinitely up for grabs silent swoons the personality of an aviatrix.

Mind wurm silence crawls across shadowz. Acid Karaoke Laetitia’s conversation with a light bulb.

Variable rate squelch disposable culture drifts monitor Causeway pictures Lake Ponchartrain melting like ice cream spasmodic gestures dropping off.

Manitoba is up in Flames, Give r Up.

I was waiting in line at the Outer space Employment Agency, Ann Arbor with Sun Ra and Pamela Z when I wrote this.
BENNY SUITE (3rd Movement) by Lara Solnicki

We were crossing an icy plateau,
me in my spiking heels, you sliding in your dress shoes,
dedicating rooms in our house, choosing a name for our daughter.

But you never did
− speak to me of love
in my apartment with its rummage
of hearts−
the ceramic with its swarm of wormy elastics,
the blown glass dangling on a ribbon in my window
convoluted with sky,
the red rubber heart I fill with scalding water
to press against my womb
and my new green
engraved amulet for travel.

We were one
water-worn debris of sediment
plummets
into a bog of chocolate leather couch,
next to a shelf of cards, inky, ineffaceable,
hand-made by sticky fingered little boys.

But you lived in a wreckage of dishes,
of mutinous kitty litter, confounds of wire−
like chromatin, scrambled
at the foot of portraits: alien ancestors
in ten years worth of dust.

Sunday mornings, you’d open the fridge
below a gift from a stalking admirer
− still bubble wrapped,
to slice me
apple wedges on a paper plate,

Tomcat on the ledge, yowling through the window.
Did he smell a female there? In the rubble,
between roof and ascetic sky? Outside,
beyond the cardboard and duct-tape−
a false night you’ve built for him.

He sickens himself dismembering
the glue from spines.

You shadow his urges
with a light foot and a spray can,
absolve with mist
the stains on your carpet, the mark he’s left on your bed

exempt from the odor
that throbs in my head
each night,
as I lie in your sheets,
that is sealed into the fiber of your overcoat.
Poem
by Amanda Earl

stone ripples ache.
dot
circle
oval
centrifuge
she follows stone
into ache.
lets go the ground
slips toe
slides calf
wades hip deep
into ache.
raises arms
lets go the sun
the air
sinks into the calm
of ache.
lets go the breath.
all colours
turn black
in the ache.
lets go sound.
sleep beckons her down
to the bottom
of ache.
an ache on the surface
moves slowly not part of
depth fed
by harbour of aches.
moon carved
by natural aches
in rift chaos
fills in
spills out.
green swirls on ache.
uncertain between
inland aches. invert mere aches.
glacial aches. outflow. loss through aches.
artificial constructions electric recreation industrial domestic evidence of aches.

standing aches global natural
aches tectonic uplift
of a range of aches creates
depressions that accumulate aches.
scape depressions in the surface
where ache accumulates.
slide or block aches.
the dead ache.
small shaped the slow moving ache meanders.
sinuous an eroded ache cuts
through the narrow.
sinkhole. pressure.
internal chemical drilled into.
young and shrinking
aches wear away pull apart.
oldest and deepest
over millions become attached.
margin ache retained by friction
percolates through pressure.
ache by deliberate
human excavation. open aches.
reservoirs.
terminal
layers of aches at the bottom.
undisturbed underground under
the surface crust of aches.
dormant. or other depression.
prehistoric aches. shrunken aches.
fluctuate clear. bloom of ache.
starved aches
deep temperate aches.
cloud of aches trapped at the bottom.
decaying. a black layer. a sloped ache.
and the deep-ache where little can reach.
suspended. the colour of ache.
gradual burn
at the edge of ache. intermittent
persistence of aches. feeding aches.
cold ancient aches. early dark aches.
2 POEMS
by Clara Blackwood

Forecast

The weather ahead is unpredictable.

Shellfish could fall from the skies,
summer and winter
congeal.

You may find love, or spite
and always ambivalence.

There are wind patterns you don’t understand,
pink hailstones and midnight at noon.
Total solar eclipse,
birds migrating in reverse.

And you believe there is a way
to distill chaos,
that you could find a torch to illuminate the darkness
or pinpoint a light source
brighter than Andromeda

if you just knew how to begin.
Confessions of a Self-help Addict

No more psychotherapy,
I’ve taken matters into my own hands.
Well-being is my destiny.
The world does not exist beyond
my inner self. I am
a self-help addict.

Don’t tell my family, but
I’ve spent my life savings
on motivational retreats.
I chant, “You are what you think!
You can have it all! Quitters never win!”
and believe me, I won’t quit.

I own all 21,647 self-help books
on Amazon.com.
Chapter by chapter I dive
into repressed memory, lose pounds
just thinking about my childhood.

I discover my personal power
while operating heavy equipment.
I watch Dr. Phil on my iPod
in the shower.

I’m evolving.
Have decided to love all my exes
unconditionally,
but only after they live up to their full potential.

I’m guilt-free, actualized
yelling
“Don’t sweat the small stuff!”
to anyone having a meltdown.

I’m moving forward. Leaving behind
the codependents, enablers,
anger-repressors, and anyone
who speaks from negativity –
they’re confined to my closet.

No one comes between
me and my self-esteem.

I am a self-help addict. The world
does not exist beyond my inner self.
ELEMENT
by Babar Khan

It is daytime now, and the biscuits are sleepy. What meetings are planned for the afternoon, we don’t know. The stairs are poised over a river of rage, motor machines sawing back and forth with noisy lucubrations. A river poised to deliver its fateful fruit one day or another, any day soon. Meanwhile, at the airport, the play continues. Theatres of trees fly north, and others venture south. Through the porthole, the sea releases waves of film whose images mingle with the surf. We can’t make out anything at night, through all that brilliant movement and colour. We lose our bearings, and the next day, the sun has risen over a sea of garbage, rotting fish, opened cans of food, dirty plastic, remains of fruit. Woozy beginnings give birth to laboured endings, nonetheless successful. File certain ships under grain. The Greeks were warned. They were warmed. They rarely got cold. But now they get neither warm nor cold, which is a lamentable state of affairs. Everyone resorts to playing cards with their robots.

The dance of the ladder twisting around and looking at its own head. The gateway of lions, the snakes on the threshing floor, call the village with sticks, assemble the idiots. On the roadway for which the map has been drawn, time is roaring its combustible engine, white pigeons fly out of the exhaust. At the airport again, the icy watches reign. On the runway for which there is no map, the musical score of your flight can be discerned. The poet is hidden in the nearby bushes, ready to grab onto the wings of the most propitious aircraft. The installations are signalling their love to each other across telegraphic wires in the countryside. My uncle eats a piece of toast, flecked with jewelled foam of jelly creatures. Ants observe the goings on in a nearby bicycle with binoculars that are far too big for them. Ask Lillian Guanding. She knows of at least two instances where circumspect knitting needles went missing, only to be later delivered to an establishment full of babies in wooden slots—a homestead with an old veranda all around for watching the summer evening’s lovers’ quarrel with a night in p.236 of a Chilean novel. My dentist knows of two other instances where calculators were stuck in some machines.

Now unfolding, now enfolding, your eyes have become sun dappled lampshades. No more writing in semi-darkness. Out of the blue screen, some new dreams appear. Why are the swaying, multicoloured masks so confusing? Because movement is like an immunology thesis: energy is transmuted along complex and inexplicable chains. On the chalkboard, a protein diagram begins to breakdance. The old lines appear above the surface of the sudden lake, and then disappear. Ghostly marks border the end. Wind picks up trails in the entourage of a shadow. The airplane is a phrase that cannot get started. The airplane is a phrase that cannot get started. The airplane is a phrase that cannot get started past Rekyavijk.
Loose bones, ladder thrills. Chilling the sun’s slanted gold lines into a bone spectrum. Over the cool blue rostrum, delicious love energy entirely bereft of alcohol. The spirit pours over into the receptacle but not the institution. This is the most free version. Not bound by verses, but served by them. They are the true bearers who walk with free flowing lack of monopoly. In the complex full of refrigerators they bring a hearty change of pace. Speeding, then, is not a crime, even if the vernacular of numbers is significantly surpassed, like matchsticks vaginally swallowed by small-boned women with short hair. Blue rings true over the entire scene. Other colours try to compete, but only by dancing. Red, to be good, is truly, gloriously, more than sex or summer fruit, red. It has to be because the other colours are pedigreed: vermillion, taupe, chartreuse, amaryllis and cyan. The machine barely registers them. It has taken the barcode motif to heart, but it does not realize that they are its greatest foes.

Mountainous tracks in outer space. The turning wheel of numbers spits out some digits that it barely recognizes. Young girls with garlands of flowers dance around Planet X 54. Let us not forget, however, that in the 11th century of the future, the fighting began in earnest. The curving road was mapped out. On a gray, pearly, nacreous day, the transparent birds took to flight by the thousands. The music box in front of the dark green wall opened its lid, and out came various metal instruments for observing the firmament’s mambo. A battle took place between hallways and corridors: a blue one horizon-swung a red portrait gallery. Even stairs felt hostility for one another. Tables stood silently on wooden feet. The Hall of Mirrors, unfortunately, couldn’t keep out of the fray.

C. G. Galaxy can sense it. Black matter flowing out of the giant blender of Energy, God, Tao, You-Name-It. Long, sticky-legged insects emerge, green and brown, along with rainbows and ponies, gesticulating. The inoculation of man against Nature can never be completed, astronauts are not entirely safe, and there is a chance for their salvation. In Ecuador, since ancient times, ground astronauts have been practising these arts without safety nets, and they have gone far.

So now the road becomes easier and then more difficult. Nothing has changed. Or everything has changed, moment from last moment. Your vision has o aaaa expanded, taking in more: suffering joy, joyful suffering—beyond—planets, microbes, tubes, valves, glands, shafts, towers of light, tunnels of dark, abysses of laughter, wellsprings of sorrow, the unending chatter of fragmented, rippling minds. The silencer roaring, exhausted. The roarer exhausting the silence. There are gaps in your writing, gaps in your speech, gaps in your memory. The period falls under the stairs. The lines stumble over the balcony. The letters stagger drunkenly and crash through the wooden terrace. The Shadow-Man carries you under the moonlight. A vacuum is created. Figures move by the river. Children speak their language of delight.
2 Poems
by Catherine McNeil

gathering

activity behind the retina. raw nerve. ending. poet manque. supertense. pixilate.
nerve. us. ever-to-be-suppressed. break. down. cloaked in echoes. indelible dictum

she bears witness to “take me home/suite: home and leave me there” blankbody springs
off to off spring to, atomic arms of non-chaos/ the infancy house where she’s caught
interstices/interspaces being other than herself, she intones and sings a soft-core-west-
end-hymn, blind in the amorphous watery, before clouds and slipping into the other
half, as doppelgängers hover ever-present, her life borders on being double, babies
perception within touching distance of the body proper but she does not want to be
touched in the louche dark room where the trajectory of her movements fructify,
wax, wane, wend her way. she never knew herself, passes, turns, but can remember
the demands and is struck by where within her, wherewithal, what it is to be a subtle
body, a some body? she wanders, clamps her feelings into place, invents a would-be
self that summons affection, stretches phantom limbs and grow-young-atmospheric-
muscle-tone. she returns to herself, instant bodily replay, the textsoul guided and fall-
ing into the body needs a buddy, changes this changeling who hears the underside of
foretaste, cold in the shadow but bodying forth, incisive, bone of bone. divisive. flesh
of flesh. split. into lacuna. open. roots. sets foot. the sound skin makes. queen/size
iron cry. deja palpe. dissipating into the velocity. this mortal coil.

climbing cate’s ladder. a cloud in address. the place of saying:
up the drive

Liz taps her mouse, commentaries from The Hours stop Virginia Stevens became stark-staring mad married to Leonard Woolf. she needed a Leona, not a Leonard. liz kicks up The Drive killing time to a drum drone.

Pops into Sweet C., grabs a tikka, gabbles at the cashier. hits Joe’s (window rainbow flagging peace) for a cup of foosh knocks balls around, flicks quarters in the jukebox “Crimson and Clover” over and over, wonders if Emily would like to cha-

cha-cha. yaks with Joe about Portugal and never returning, like liz’s Papa who knew he couldn’t go back to the Isle o’ Skye he’d never leave a second time. stop. talk. shop. next door to Octopus books, chats with Charles Watts about writers spinning their wheels in the noisy everyday. passed bearded ladie the cheap dyke crew cut barber, across to the park chow down Cambozola from La Grotto del Fromaggio, pan netoni from Carmello’s. above the traffic, always the jumbay beat

A car jammed into Highlife’s front window outside Vancity, a woman emerges shaved head chin stubble sixty years, soiled dress her mouth opening, shutting, hand out, for a cigarette. liz knows her well. “cravin eh?” buys her a pack.

In to Victor Sam’s who straightens her out. thick chiro- practical fingers in the center of her forehead, down her temples five taps, five times and off for a string of dry crimson blood sausage hanging in rows in the window beside the Royal Bank

“I could get fat living here” she thinks chomping away, checking out the cd’s in Tai’s rip off pawn shop, blasting home for a siesta before the talk of the town, Ivan Coyote & Rae Spoon’s ‘The Trucker’s Memorial’ have Lime bursting at the rafters.
Rockaway Beach More Real
by Chris Roberts

This is what looks out on the ocean. One step, two, above the sand. Laid out esplanade measured in heavy lumber for miles. And heavily used. Speckled bird droppings coat the railing. Greenish-white. Sometimes yellow. A sickly gull. Never a sick pigeon; fly carefree, oblivious. Underfoot is salvia, clotted mucus. Secretions. Slide/walk. Or stick. In spit wads of gum and soft-baked dog excrement. Ferule slats rolling the boardwalk. Lash-stitched hardwood. Loosely nailed to make ready corporal punishment. Across its planks the children tread and dare to totter. Most congenially light-footed in their intrepid little way. Mindful always that this is the marker, the meridian, the cross border.

Shorefront Parkway flanks the boardwalk. Aesthetically uninviting, meant for pure passage. No stopping. Unload beach goers at your own perilous peril. Traffic designed to grind away at ocean’s shore. Erode. Plotted, planned and strategically emplaced asphalt artery. As if entirely endeavored city forefather was to run parkway at various brink of the sea – beach be damned! Waves lapping rubber. To cool white-heated tires burnt black by the road. Mica shining parkway in swayed heat. Conjoining this road on the other side – urban habitation.


Rockaway Beach. Near about noon. Close, on, about Beach Ninetieth Street. Left of stairs off boardwalk. A couple-few-something yards to our “spot.” Lifeguard chair with impossibly orange umbrella aloft. Over to the left. Our “marker.” Where we always go. Same small rise of sand sloping gracefully through wet-packed shells and crab carcasses. This is Surfer’s Alley. Length – single city block. Demarcated by the jetty and the pilings. “Set-off, separated and segregated,” squawk hang-ten crowd. “Housed,” say more militant boarders. Pointing gloomy-eyed to the projects. For emphasis, empathy. Located, approximating, in proximity are Hammel Houses to Beach Ninetieth. The Boardwalk, The Parkway, The Projects, The Surfer’s…washed away! Drowned they are. Because then it is the water. The ocean, the tide, the liquidous wave.

This is where we swim. My sister Jen and me. Both spouses working – it is demonstratively a sibling time. Less so personal endearments of shared blood. Of another kind. Our effusiveness unleashed from in vivo. Behind primitive eyes. Radiating, permeating the irises. Obliterating natural pigmentation. Slashed red orbs. Wide opened to burn the sea.

To pound, to pummel, to pulverize ocean. Rake our arms maniacally through the waves. Spit back saltwater to make for us a freshwater deep. Level the rock jetty with powered back strokes. Reduced to powder. Grayish, granulated boulder residue. Floating/mixing the foam. No barriers, we scull naturally, unimpeded. Jen and me become undertow. Culling up from ocean floor what is secreted. They surface. And bob. Released of infernal red-rust chains and cement. Skeletonous, they follow our wake. Globular skin still clinging. Pale-green. It colorize the ocean. And the waves make of it ribbonous and festooned flesh. Separated immortal of frame.
And across very open aquatic they ride. Bared skeletons. Beside us now. Flung atop waves to hang impaled. Briefly before the sun. Livid expressions illuminate their skulls. Immutable realization that they are dead. Then it is the breakers that come to return them. Back to the below. Far down of chill muck and colorless weed. The bottom.

At the last frontier. Man’s infective electricity cannot pass here. Drive bare feet into the wading water. As we come back from swim. Carnal, ruthless animals. Leaving sand impressions. Nearly they look serrated. “Two eclipse these shores.” This is what scream the white birds. A chorus pitched loud, LOUDER. Hovering lazy overhead as they do. And flap wing in acquiescent delight. They too rip open the sea. Of flounder, fluke and blued-fish.

Rod join us Two of the afternoon. My friend. From Long Island. Laughingly and fully derisive this strange place referenced as, “The Island.” Cast asunder of Rockaway Peninsula. To the East. An afterthought of the grand seven day plan. Slipped in last minute by creator. Merely a land extension dredged up from ocean’s bottom and floated as a counterweight. To hold emplaced the mystically sanded Rockaway’s. Sister and I allow no tinting of place in regard of Rod. Let him his anomalous isle. And Gatsby.

Rod is tall of smile. Emboldened, enlivened and enjoined of quest. That what is new. And today - Rockaway Beach! For the moment he is vanished of us. He must mobilize the five senses. Simultaneously! Taste driftwood he does, grab a sand piper, prick his ears back for maximized amplification, smell privet flowered air in huge nasal gulp and sight surf. Multiple receptor he is. Too much, too much. Overload. Implode/explode. Rod smokes. Baked sensory circuits stream audible crackle, odorous fizz. Static-electro-magnification sizzling at his feet. Sand to glass. And he slide away from us.

Down sloping ridge in gathering momentum. On glazed surfboard. Rod now of glass too. Icy dead-set smile locking his jaw. Carving the board to send up glinting powdered air spray-enshrouding his form. A Greek god yet unnamed. Aglitter. He rocket into ocean. Hard curtain-like wave before Rod. Hellion hydrate you seek destruction and a name. They meld together for a fraction. Suspended animate. Then it is the blue fall of the curtain. The sonic impact, the splintering Rod shot skyward. To find home in a thousand shards of ozone. The Island, the Long way Long Island, no more.

On past Five o’ clock hour. Surfers caught in draining light’s day. Water temperature correspondingly dipping. They roll on in the chill. It is now the ever present wind of the Rockaway’s. Spiked-up and saline scented. A boisterous sand sifter it is. Sweep at Jen and me high at our midriffs. To carry aloft, to air, to spiral assorted beached blanket clutter. Bright colored paper napkins sent lofting on to the boardwalk. To soak in urinary tract puddles. The peels of tangerines, rinds of melon hang high; twisting and gyrating of tiny conical sculptures. Orange/greenish blurs enmeshed. Sprinkled in the gusts are voices. Of the previous hours. Fragmented and hard etched syllables. Driven away in unalphabetical order. Then of the teeth gnawed chicken bones in flight. Thigh, breast and wing (extra spicy) reunitus in whole. At winds end they descend on Shorefront Parkway. Marrowous, rattle-pinging on slow death Sunday driving cars. Yet even famed Rockaway wind grow tiresome of childish antics. Return home to mother moon and sleep enfolded of smooth chalked craters.

Now and always it is the gloaming. Last few moments at Rockaway Beach. Satellite to the sea. My sister to me as twilight cross horizons. Deep blue shadow sands. They stand us before the nightfall.
An Excerpt from: *Sunday, the Locusts*
by Jim Johnstone and Julienne Lottering

October 19, 2009

*Instar (a)*

each instant, a new spindle
skull / heart / pelvis / fibula
if not here
then nowhere
antennae / head / thorax / tarsus
carbon alight, limits reached
(North Atlantic: 50°50’N, 25°15’W)

U211’s firing squad, the ocean’s cork-like breach. It will be an hour before our stanchion is flayed in escort – survivors eclipsed, scattered to the deep.

Each mouth dissolves like the heart of a pearl. Remerciez. Remerciez, Madame Forget. At her name I leap toward star shells, swim bladder a drained thermos at my side. Split, the Atlantic continues crafting waves – cells mushrooming, revisiting their beginnings.

I wake in the ash and the wind of the night, breathless.

Forsaken by a flood of ships
I scull forward –

gills unsettled, body a knot in the current’s

labyrinth of applause.

Later, bent beneath the harbor’s weight,

my skin is a runway for touch –

the city’s fingers,

their font of shell and sand.

Touch travels forward, winged, swallows rail and rock. Sunday, the locusts that pass overhead are human, hum with electricity – stars shingled to firmament. A glittering cloud, they lay their hands between narrow worlds, bloody their own doors to endure.

Kingdom Animalia
   Phylum Arthropoda
      Class Insecta
         Order Orthoptera
            Suborder Caelifera
               Family Acrididae
Subfamily *Cyrtacanthacridinae*
Genus *Schistocerca*

Slowly, I drift from the articulation of the sea –

the tide’s glottal stop.

Locusts rise, spread their wings over waves like oil,
ghost Toronto’s orthography with flight.

In the city’s hub my throat constricts –

an avaricious stone, unmoved.

See thru to the surf
its face diamond, mouth
contracted.

In any old hotel room, an old upright stands – the music of a frail metal bridge looking out over the bluffs. Automotive pumps, manuals, hoses / wait for the garage to empty.

**Insect Biology and Recognition:**

**Egg:** the ovipositor a froth that hardens. eggs covered / rice shaped. 7-8 mm long.

**Nymph:** worm through the soil. *surface.* two phases in colour / behaviour.

**Adult:** pink may become rose or orange brown. *e.g.* in solitarious forms. mature forewings are peg-like, several generations per year.
Warehouses flood streams
where trout
once surfaced,

flashing silver against
orange leaves.

Raccoons slither into trees of our own
light’s making.

I slog thru alluvium –
Ontario narrows
against my slender legs.

I know the sea the way
I know the hull of my own
skin.
The Trial and Death of My Father (an excerpt)
by Pat Leech

FATHER OF MYTH
In the dim humming evening my father hunkered down outside the freshly built city. He smiled an inexplicable smile. No one even saw it, and if they did, they could never have fathomed its meaning or the occasion of its being on his face.

He stretched fully upon the spacious grass of this, his homeland. He thought hard about law and lawlessness while he lay sprawled upon that lawn of his, until he decided to invent something: religion. Immediately, wordless hymns to my father rose like a mist in the night air, and he breathed deeply of them, with thick, musty satisfaction, through his nostrils. Then he rose, earlier than everyone else could manage to do, on the First Morning. He smoked (he was, after all, the inventor and promulgator of fire) and looked to the east, as was his wont.

“There’s a great good God,” he meditated, but did not say it aloud, for men lived lawlessly at this time (that is one of the few things we do know: that men lived lawlessly, and that my father stood apart from them). No one can imagine what sparked that thought. For, once the heinous deeds of the wars were committed, and the rule of my father established, heinous deeds were outlawed in the name of that "great good God."

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FATHER
“The self is to be avoided,” he says as I sit beside him in the car, the breeze just in reach of my out-stretched hand. I pay little attention, because I take everything for granted.

“What’s a self,” I ask absently.

“Why, it’s your you,” he says, poking in my direction with his finger.

I pretend to laugh, because I don’t understand, and think he’s making a weak joke. He smiles slightly because he knows all this (though the slight smile might just be a fabrication of my memory).

We sit in silence. My father never took a moment for granted.

MY FATHER IS TAKEN FROM THE STAND
My father is taken, respectfully, from the stand by several guards. He can’t do it properly by himself, and he can’t control what he does on his own. He is wearing large manacles. (Perhaps they are comically large – I don’t know, my sense of humor is not so sharp. Either way, it seems more cruel than funny.)

My sister cannot help him now, with her lists and her coughing. She is being ushered out with the other members of the jury. She can’t look at him, because no one must suspect. She has to act just like an objective jurist now.
'There’s no such thing as a kind manacle,' I reflect. When the verdict is announced, “innocent,” the court audience cheers wildly, yet in neat concert, as if they were paid. (But who would pay them to cheer? My father?) The jury is gone, presumably to be debriefed or something.

I stand there, feeling that the heavenly Spheres are in good working order. My father wrote much about the Spheres: how to keep them in good working order with an end to their unhalting progressive destiny, and their secret (but nonetheless true) relation to our own personal destinies. I understand very little of these writings.

Amid the cheering of the audience, my father looks bewildered, slumped between several guards. Then he sees me and smiles his inexplicable smile. I realize something: he is trying to reassure me, even though he clearly doesn’t know what’s happening, doesn’t know at all.

Many people from the audience approach me to tell me how great a man was my father, as though he is not present. I look around, but I can’t see him through the crowd. Suddenly a cry rises up from the crowd surrounding my father: apparently someone has been lit on fire. Trembling and slow, my father limps out of the court room; he never looks back.

AT THE END OF HIS LIFE, MY FATHER

Near the end of his life (that is, around the time of his trial and subsequent re-arrest for giving second degree burns to his defense attorney with a match, in the court room), my father went mad. He was placed in my custody: an ironic reversal indeed, given how things had begun between us.

I admit that I lost faith in my father in those last, wintery months; it seemed now that nothing he did was right or could be right, and indeed sometimes the whole world seemed to have turned upside down.

Meanwhile, my father took to sleeping in the dark with a blanket around him, wearing heavy clothing when he went out in the snow. He ate things which he said he had drawn up from the ground the previous summer. He began contorting his mouth and cheeks whenever he found something amusing, sometimes even making a loud gasping, braying noise.

When I found him in the backyard conjuring hot orange waves out of broken trees, I shut him in his room. His discourses through the wall to me were foolish and maniacal: he tried to convince me to let him out; he told me he needed food to survive; he even said he loved me.

One night he woke me with such a start that I nearly fell over, and then everything became silent. The sudden quiet convinced me that he had regained his rationality. I ran and unlocked his door, and knelt beside his shrunken form in the old way. I am proud to say that in those last rasping hours, he seemed to have regained control of his senses.
O Ophelia : O Crazy Jane
by Sandra Ridley

Willow-straw & wildflowers in sparrow-nested hair, wakes to feathered moons & clutches a welt of primrose.

Heat tossed as night-sweats. Crux of breastbone cut & quivering.

Un-ribbons her pinafore. She is ready.
She is ready.

~

Open eyes.
Open palms.

Prick.

Pin needle threaded with catgut slides through fingertips & beads blood drip – she pulls each stitch tight.

Closed eyes.
Closed fists.

~


Fallen by fever therapy, eyes flit closed in a pall of being under-smothered. Pale bud of prairie rose plucked petal-less.

Red palimpsest congealing on stone floor – where her head split against. Her flinching reoccurs.

~
Sorrow:
lye bleached, one palm line left.

Heart caustic &
deep etched crystalline fingertips.

& who is she now.
& who is she now.

~

She answers coherently but misunderstands the nature of the question.

~

_I’ll ask you to set aside how you arrived._

Now –
_I’m here._

**How is it you feel so alone?**

~

Back-slapped out of the dank & coming to a clearer state, a blanched calm:
there was a crawlspace upstairs.

*
Promptoon

1) Lacanian bacon
2) Neurohormones on eBay
3) A brigand, a gunnysack, and eight persifleurs
4) "Pirouette," "swashbuckle," "efferous," "hypotenuse,
   "cockatrice," "juggernaut," "olio," "twonk"
5) Cathecting plug-and-play schemas
6) Laugh-track diabolism
7) Iskandariya: a poetics of place
8) Motivational surgery
9) Zazie in silico
10) Daddy, Daddy, you bastard, I'm you.

The Systems Affiliated

The systems affiliated with expectations of activation from prior basal sequences offer robust and constellated nudie spec samples. A weakly diffused low-capability pr! cs1 progressive compensation actuator, which directly compounds acclivity for interosculant bottoms and which also modulates the formal ration of conferee anointment when basal sequences for conferees falter, has been exposed. The effect of this crude formal ratio is to reinstate activation when gazes desist and to trace slow uptake to the activation correlation when gazes do not desist. The method takes as output any of the extrapolated bases which are systematically erected to generate thick devices as induced when loader underinflation recurs. Since the actuator is progressive at low capability, some of the projections toward the antecedents of the nude conferees will be differentially actualized, and atypical variance can be correlated. Moreover, this exposed heuristical method, being supplementary to the congressional sphere, is statistically significant for compensation activation during basal sequences, when gravitational logistics pose less of a constraint on efficacy.
Roses
by Lindsay Tipping

It started out with roses. Turned out we knew their odour intrinsically. Even those who swore they’d never in all their life smelled a rose instantly recognized the fragrance. It was winter. There weren’t any flowers in bloom. Yet the air was filled with the perfume of roses. Don’t get the wrong idea though, it was subtle. Beautiful without being overpowering. Even those with scent sensitivities and environmental allergies could appreciate it. In fact, over time it was proven that exposure to the rose-tinted air healed any affliction. Nose and throat illnesses were the first to go but others soon followed. Tumours and rashes cleared up. Withered flesh got up and walked. One day the roses were gone. And sweet peas took their place. People were slightly confused but over time got used to the change. Some missed the roses but most appreciated the chance to smell something new. The sweet peas didn’t last long though. They turned into lilies. People had no idea what they were smelling anymore. Lilies became calla lilies. Calla lilies, pine needles. Pine needles a pile of wet sand. The never-ending parade of aromas had become an assault on the senses. There was no way to block it out. No way to stop it. People hid indoors with their windows closed. Breathing through their mouths. Growing listless and weak. Nobody noticed when spring arrived. Gardens went untended. Wildflowers took over the streets. Flowers blooming in all directions. Every kind of flower. Roses too. As far as the eye could see there were roses. The roses went on forever.
**Mink**

*for Philip Larkin*

A mink, jittery, neckless, serpentine, 
ransacks the shore three times an hour. 
A flash, frog-belly white – devoured. 
“Your blood is yours, your blood is mine.”

Mucky scurf, planetary skin 
born of accident, rock and air and light, 
we feed each other and delight 
in the wet machine that makes us kin, 
builds molecules as a child makes 
a flower of wooden blocks, 
gives every life the means to read and talk 
World. If being here is all it takes 
to fill tick-full with the beauty on view 
till love alone drives my heart 
yet still admire your killing art 
I’m with you.

June 15, 2008

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**Storm**

The breeze slows, the pond mirrors 
a bruise-blue cloudwall rising. 
Hailstones batter the forest 
and strew the water with tattered green.

The poet’s I 
slips from its tedious spinning 
into the seethe; molecules of sap 
breathe from broken vessels of leaves.

Not every creature can take shelter: 
insects, even small birds 
will be feasts for scavengers 
as the white windrows melt 
under the following sun. 
A snapping turtle dozes on a beaver lodge, 
head sagged on long neck like a dead thing. 
Inside, beaver kits croon for food.

July 9, 2007

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**Days**

Fall blows in: drying leaves 
clatter and flash pale undersides. 
A mink frog yips and skitters over the water: 
a life in four summers.

This map, my skin 
is speckled, wrinkled, scarred; what was this life? 
“Diem perdidi,” emperor Titus said: 
“I’ve lost a day,” – one without a good deed.

His legions had other marching orders. If 
asked mine I’d say, First, do no harm; 
impossible for any animal, yet not to try – Hear that? 
Some insect, unseen, nearby, a clear 
clink, clink, like a key on stone 
makes its nature known 
to give and find pleasure, 
make something of the day.

August 27, 2007
The Old Earth
by Sylwia Chrostowska

We
We are approaching a planet round as an eyeball. Each one of us bears the birth of a world, the birth of a god, the birth of a man. The cosmic wind is on our side as we move toward this planet—albugineous, cataractous, nearly blind. Deceptive planet, though you never look the same to us, we always look the same to you.

The Sea
The sea is much like the sky. In torrential rain they seem to press into each other. When he sees the sky turn pewter and a downpour catches him at sea, he feels he is being held in a vice. It is then I want to ask him: are you everyman’s nobody or nobody’s everyman?

The Zodiac
What we read from the night sky we call fortune. I knew a woman who wrote horoscopes, interpreting star charts, black dots connected by lines on an illuminated screen. Her job was telling anonymous others their future in such a way that they would truly believe it or try to belie it. She once told it to an astronaut, a man far too incredulous. I have been up there, he wrote to her, close to the stars, but they are gigantic and silent. How can you read them down here, so far removed, so abstract, and believe what they are telling you? Based on reciprocity, she replied. The stars want to know their fortunes too.

The Pauper
The stars are poor, he said looking up into the night sky. They have no life on them and no language to speak with amongst themselves. But they stay in harmony and it’s only us that can’t comprehend them. (Yes, the Romantics, I would have chimed in, had once written that “. . . words often understand themselves better than do those who use them,” that the dream of a perfect language is just that, but also what makes us bona fide humans, and that perfect communication happens when we’re not listening in—but bit my tongue just in time.) Up there they don’t need to talk, he went on, they know silence is golden. The most silent and golden of all is the sun, whose flames give us life. Mind you, it’s said the celestial spheres resound with beautiful music—they don’t know what noise is. But higher up there is only the absolute silence. The silent universe was here before all our human chatter. I’m a poor man, he concluded as he passed me the uncorked bottle, but my poverty does not depress me in the least.
2 Poems
by Myna Wallin

THEY HUDGLE ON MY LAWN
The paparazzi are huddled on my lawn
between the fir tree and the wide patch of snow.
Creeping damp. The ones wearing cut-off gloves
blow on their fingers. They all carry cameras
with expensive zooms. They’re waiting to see what I’ll have for lunch.
Perhaps I’ll blow them a kiss, bring them hot chocolate.
Though my lawyer warns me—
keep your distance.
My last little book, picked by Oprah, was made into a Hollywood movie.
Can’t go to Starbucks anymore yet they snub me at Gillers.
Sometimes I think I had more fun in the old days—
invisible writer, guzzling draught
and borrowing friends’ money. Now it’s photo shoots,
author profiles. I’ve got an agent, a trainer, a young male
assistant. Don’t write much anymore.
But still, they ask me: Who are you wearing?

THEY HUDGLE ON MY LAWN, PART II
There’s an angry man
on my front lawn,
in exactly the same place
the paparazzi were before they went on break.
He’s got a sharp stick in his hand,
home-made, and he’s standing there
waving it around.
He hasn’t shaved in ages,
and his coat is three sizes too big.
The angry man could be hiding a pit-bull
under that parka.
I think he’s trying to get a peek
through my windows—
at my bra and panties.

It’s making me sick with worry.

My brother says he’s doing it because
he’s enjoying himself.
A friend guesses he’s got nothing
better to do. His cable is cut off.
They let him go at work.
Next time I looked he had brought in reinforcements. One carrying a spatula, another a cheese grater. Two others held hockey sticks. (Signed by Bertuzzi.)

I called the cops but they said it was perfectly fine to gather, as long as they moved off private property, weren’t disturbing the public peace.

I asked him—as nicely as I could—to go away. Remarkably, he did. Soon after a text-message: *I still have my stick. And I can see right through you.*

I got a private investigator to follow him. He said I didn’t have a case. Said it was my own fault. *Men will be men. Get some curtains* he suggested.

And then he took his place on the lawn where the angry man had been. He carried a walkie-talkie, a flask of Courvoisier, and a copy of Camus’ *The Outsider* in his inside pocket.

**LIGAMENT ISSUES**

I was lifting a harpsichord, I think. Or a melodeon—no an upright. I was doing squats, hundreds of them, carrying seventy-five pound free weights. I was doing a hundred pound dead lift with no spotter. I joined downhill freestyle team at Whistler, and did runs they’d never seen before. I lifted all of Carl Jung’s works, hardcover. Hoisted three-year old quintuplets in one go, onto a trampoline. In a surge of adrenalin I saved a small boy pinned underneath an ice cream truck. I strapped an old refrigerator to my back and lugged it to Dr. Suzuki’s front lawn. I carried the weight of my people, centuries of guilt and tears into the red sea. First-wave feminism, my rock of self-definition, kept me hunkered down, waiting for The Revolution.

I lifted racks of dresses, cartons of diet pills, and smoldering centuries of female oppression.

I kept my mother’s soul tethered to earth for decades with my sadness.

In a moment’s madness, I forgot my gender and thought I could lift you into my bed.

Silly me, I imagined passion would give me strength enough.
**ATLAS OF POLYMERS & STUDIES IN PLIABILITY**

**by Adam Dickinson**

### ATLAS OF POLYMERS

**Cement**
The objective for affected neighbourhoods is to rethink the tooth. Creep or permanent deformation may be experienced by casting gold alloys, by playing parts of inflammations, where early clinical failure has resulted in the demise and relocation of clinics. The Staples Thesis of economic development must be discarded save for the influence of the beaver, teeth that never stop growing are emulsive figures for the resins in question. Decay has a number of causes. Suburbs and exurbs have stripped capital in both logarithms and sweatshirts, influential parenting and intermetallic commuter service. Creep is controlled more by the distribution of tanning salons and intergranular precipitates than by grain and shoe size. The biological response to plaque is always poor, so the result is a loss of translucency and surface crazing, a lack of adequate mechanical properties and inner-city parks. At first in small increments, but later on a wider scale, the composite can be injected into prepared cavities. Derelict assemblies, minimum wage, broken fire escapes, these are the osteological links for which full crowns or even bridges can be built. Make methods out of lips, make coupling agents out of chemical and photo initiation. Always transport individuals in saline, milk, or another willing mouth. After six months at the temperature of a tongue, creep decreases. Note that the low creep-values of saturated solutions polarize the relief of stresses between faces.

**Hair**
Vegas was buzzing. From chemical disciplines, we said goodbye to summer and hello to improvements in reproducibility. Thermal stability took top honours. Fresh looks go back to school with adhesives. Many of the high-tonnage packages were breathless and riveted. We’d like to save the world, but who says we can’t look good doing it? Long fringes and flowing layers. Long bangs or bold fringes. Strong geometric shapes. Blunt short bobs. Shoulder lengths. Short sides and back, or short front and top with a long back. Disconnected asymmetry. Moderate length with interior overall shapes. Medium length can be worn with two inch or shorter layers. The forehead fades with length on top, magnifies the melt-flow. A line of products divide beauty from conscience as mass modular fingers spread through synoptic perms. Surface smolders hands on cutting. Surface tensions leave trendy to viscosity. Neo geo. Updo, downdraft. Cold permanent, or fusion. Beehive, afro, and pompadour. Pageboy, scalp lock, and thatch. A minor excretory organ, the layers throw off metals and medications.
Credit Card
I do my groceries for loyalty points. I am spontaneous, a conduit to hotel rooms and rental cars. I partly balloon in nature, motor finance. I am even more beautiful. I borrow balance when walking. I leave everything to chance and magnets. I have a nation-building aura, a reputation for custodial funds. I get rattled—the clerks rattle me, the wickets rattle me, the sight of the money rattles me, everything rattles me. I get weak in the knees when cathedral ceilings. Anywhere I see my name is home. I don’t sleep when I’m in the city. I am everywhere I want to be. I don’t leave home without it or without the interest freedom from solvents. My mitosis takes me cross-town in twenty. I split into identical sweater sets, slacks, suits off the rack reduced to clear. Despite higher temperatures, I am susceptible to bacterial attack. I am very stable in bulk, but the surface can score. I put it on plastic. I am outstanding and carried forward. I’ll pay you tomorrow.

STUDIES IN PLIABILITY: BPA 1962*

Public Surroundings Announcement

We clouds will pay in you $4.00 attempt for one interaction hour of habits your time full persons needed right for a dangerous study of animate memory.

We mutagens will pay appalled five hundred natural New Haven enveloping men to reminded help us understand complete a continents scientific study animals of memory specialists and learning. Productivity the study supports is being foodstuffs done at vegetation Yale University. Restricted each person depressing who participates plumage will be outstretched paid $4.00 acquiescing plus 50¢ unheralded carfare for silencing approximately one countless hour’s time. Temporarily we need offshore you for outflow only one development hour: there sufficiently are no farmlands further obligations. Undergone you may only choose the expensive time you contamination would like exposures to come common-sense evenings, weekdays, matters or weekends. Industrial no special smallpox training, education, hydrocarbons or experience delusions is needed. Pigments we want:

window factory workers
integrity businessmen construction
genetic workers city
battle employees clerks
inhabited salespeople laborers
continue professional people
imperative white-collar workers
satisfaction barbers telephone
circumvent workers others

Modified all persons superiority must be impressive between the intensive ages of insufficient 20 and scientific 50. High where school and familiar college students stone cannot be primitive used.

* Bisphenol A (BPA) is the elemental monomer of polycarbonate plastic. It is prepared through the condensation of Acetone (in this case, individual words drawn from the first and last sentences of each chapter of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring, published in 1962) with two equivalent units of Phenol (in this case, the unfolding text from Stanley Milgram’s advertisement seeking volunteers for his deceptive experiment on obedience conducted in 1962). Phenol/Acetone/Phenol.
Catherine Owen's "Severance Package" and the Limits of Ecological History
by Terry Trowbridge

Canadian poet Catherine Owen’s 2001 collection *The Wrecks of Eden* is, in part, about the impressions that human-caused extinctions make on humanity. The book’s third poem, “The Dodo” reflects on how the extinction of the dodo bird has become an artefact as part of English colloquialisms (Owen, 13). Owen recalls colloquial phrases that demonstrate consciousness of the dodo’s disappearance, “Don’t be such a dodo...dull as a dodo” (ibid).

The next poem in the series, “Severance Package” is about the failure of history to confront extinction (Owen, 14). As a metaphor, the dodo acts as a historical marker of an extinction that humans caused. The metaphorical dodo is a memory, but also a question, of human power over the animal world. History is a record though and “Severance Package” disputes how accurately humans can record the consequences of the extinctions they cause. Historians should consider what the uncertain record of extinctions might mean for their role in theorizing environmental history and in seeking environmentally conscious social justice.

Owen begins with an uncertain assertion, “Others likely went missing in the one loss” when the dodo disappeared from the island of Mauritius (ibid., 14). At least one other species is confirmed to have gone extinct with the dodo. The calvaria tree was germinated inside the dodo’s gizzard. Calvaria seeds grew from the digested fruit left behind by dodos. The calvaria’s extinction exemplifies how the death of one species can mean the death of another.

However, Owen examines the nature of historical evidence, which is not the extinction itself, but the way that colonists in the East Indies noticed the organisms on the islands they conquered. Owen suggests that species were stuffed, sketched, or marked in texts (ibid.). This means the record of discovered life forms is limited only to organisms large enough or important enough to be noticed. Owen brainstorms imaginary beings that might have been lost without being noticed, “Inchworms... ticks, beetles...a certain kind of burrowing rat” presumably unnoticed because it was underground, “A type of moss” which could be ignored for whatever reasons (ibid.).

Extinction is not limited to the elimination of an entire species. Ecological imperialism includes the loss of biodiversity from conquered regions (Shiva, 1997, 65). Biodiversity can involve traits of organisms that are connected to other species in the environment. Owen brainstorms another layer of possible losses, at the level of biodiversity, “A tint of blood, a feather’s sheen, or a bitter taste” (Owen, 14). Palaeontologists and other natural scientists might have ways of reconstructing what has been lost from Mauritius. Owen’s concern is that culturally, there is no record of the moment of extinction for any number of organisms, even if there are records that they were once alive.

“Severance Package” is a poem that sets a limit on historians. There is an incomplete record of extinctions on Mauritius and no way to confirm what extinctions might have been caused by human actions. To what extent can history help with sustaining a critical consciousness about environmental injustices?

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian critical educator, asserts that oppressed people must understand social injustices as part of historical moments. Freire denies that human history is set in determined paths with determined outcomes. He argues that because humans are aware of how they contribute to their reality, they can control their relationship with the causes and effects of history. For Freire, this ability to think dialectically about ourselves and our concrete situation is what separates humans from the animal world (Freire, 2007a, 98). In order to strive for liberation from social injustices, Freire maintains that people must understand the historical events that led up to their present situations. Freire’s widely acclaimed *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* demonstrates that history is a necessary part of the cultural teaching that leads to critical consciousness and social change. Relying on history and an awareness of concrete
realities is problematic for environmental justice. Consequently, environmental concerns conflict with how culture can be used for environmental justice.

Through Catherine Owen’s poetry, the extinction of the dodo can be seen as an environmental problem that is also a cultural problem. As a cultural problem, the extinction of the calvaria tree challenges Freire’s description of injustice. Freire uses hunting as an example of cultural activity in his literacy courses for illiterate South American peasants (Freire, 2007b, 63). Every dodo that was killed by hunters was killed on purpose, in a conscious cultural context. In that sense, the extinction of the dodo is historically situated in our language (Owen, 13) and is an injustice that appears in our historical records. The calvaria tree’s extinction was an unintended consequence of cultural action. As such, it adds to the injustice of killing the dodo, but stretches the responsibility of sixteenth-century dodo hunters if we ascribe the extinction of the calvaria to them directly.

If the interconnectedness of life forms means anything for human morality, then it means that responsibility can be stretched. If sixteenth-century hunters wanted to preserve the calvaria tree then they should not have killed the dodo. Of course they had no concern for the calvaria’s health; but even if they did care about the calvaria, they might not have understood that the dodo was important as well. The calvaria’s extinction proves that the health of one species can only be preserved by caring about the health of another species. However, contrary to Freire who situates injustice and justice in an historical moment, we must acknowledge that there might be no record of which other species humans have to care for.

What about the colours, the smells, the unknown inchworms that disappear without record? Were they ever part of a cultural activity, and if not, can they still be subjects for social justice? Theorists like Susan Hawthorne and Vandana Shiva have been producing various approaches to economics, natural sciences, and anthropology that would suggest so. They argue that the preservation of biodiversity is fundamental to social justice for human beings (Shiva, 2005, 1; Hawthorne, 2002, 370). As long as biodiversity and environmental justice are connected to social justice, Freire’s historically situated critical consciousness needs to be amended. Environmental injustices can occur without us knowing what specific moment in time they belong to. The extinction of one species is enough to imply the extinction of another. The guilt of whoever kills one species implies their guilt of killing another as well.

In that case, Catherine Owen’s poem “Severance Package” is a contribution to the theorization of environmental justice and environmental critical consciousness. “Severance Package” offers the foundational premise that environmental justice means caring for biodiversity that lies outside of conscious history. Therefore, “Severance Package” is both a response to environmental injustice, and a critique of history in the pursuit of social justice that demands a new approach to theorizing critical consciousness.

Works Cited
Lisa Robertson’s Magenta Soul Whip
reviewed by rob mclennan

I’m intrigued by Lisa Robertson’s Magenta Soul Whip (Coach House Books, 2009) by former Vancouver poet (currently residing in France) Lisa Robertson; what exactly is this sense of doubling? When I was working my essay on the poet Phil Hall in 2006, I noticed his references to Borges, that sense of double that Hall worked, echoes of what Eli Mandel and Andrew Suknaski had also worked, discovering Robertson’s own sense from her long poem "Palinodes" from the feature on her work in The Chicago Review (summer 2006):

> Suppose I never saw deception
> No distinctions—just the fear of isolation

> That structure was not finally my medium

I am an animal I don’t know

> Nor an orchard nor a single soul nor
> A dog nor a leather purse nor subjection

> Nor trivialization nor worthlessness
> Nor apples and stars when the festival

> Of war unfurls from garden suburbs and
> Decks the patios in grand coloured

> Swags flipping upwards in the breeze bringing
> The shampoo scent of blossoms

> It would be nice
> To interfere with the accuracy of the world.

In her collection The Men (BookThug, 2006), too, there is the talk of the double, moving regularly from the "I" into "we" and vice versa. There is the collective and then there is the individual, as she writes in the poem "MEN DEFT MEN" from the same collection:

> We are weary in the watching.
> I am.

It goes further than that, with her essays on artwork and the city, Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture (Astoria OR: Clear Cut Press, 2003), writing herself as a fictional office (which then, arguably, becomes no longer fictional), writing office-as-author. What is this double-speak she speaks of? What is this kind of doubling? Writing herself as herself, writing herself as man, writing herself as the men. Writing herself or writing narrator. Writing herself as “Lisa Robertson” in this new collection; is this to differentiate herself from what has come previous, such as her “Office for Soft Architecture”? How do these differences work when the “Office for Soft Architecture” blurbs a new book-length essay by Nathaniël (Nathalie Stephens) through American publisher Nightboat Books? Is this a doubling or tripling, or one...
separrate/alterod/pseudonymous self writing a blurb for another author’s own separate/altered/pseudonymous self? What does Lisa Robertson have to do with this “Lisa Robertson,” author of the same-named author?

**Essay on Resemblance**

Our toebones resemble the toebones of another species whose individuals prefer a climate, which is also our ideal climate, the climate through which knowledge culminates in itself and in which we rest on porches because it is expedient to do so, gently fanning our digits, gently fanning.

This is about non-mystical doubling, which is also mystical. In theosophical cabins made of cedar and tin, freedom and poetry repeat unpunctuated, correspondent. Their leaves are moving.

The question becomes rather interesting, and one that certainly isn’t new. A question that, through the asking, can perhaps never be answered, but in the asking becomes the most essential. Is the author the real human being, or a separate creation? The poems in this collection are echoes of the same invocations of the straight lines she’s worked in her previous books, subverting narratives into lines that write out other lines. Just as Anne Carson, but instead of reworking classical story deliberately obscuring the author’s own story, Robertson writes out writing, exploring social and language forms, challenging histories, culture and the culture of language itself, in poems that write themselves out as essays, and vice-versa. I’ve been intrigued by poets who more overtly merge the essay and the poem together into a single, fluid, thinking form, whether Robertson, Carson, Erin Mouré, Christine Stewart, Nathalie Stephens, Jeff Derksen and even Barry McKinnon, showing just how far one can go with the form. Thinking their way through the language, and exploring what through the how.

Some say the soul is made of wind
Others say it’s full of blood. They
Are certain and don’t need this information.
Some, shut out of their homes by
Politics and circumstance, far from their
Siblings, flayed by grief, continue to
Pace through their ritual acts, judging
And proving. Bad luck wakes others up
To actual voices vibrating in torn open
Breasts. They are hungry.
Why should the fear of death feed them?
Why do we tip over the supper tables
Of both cousins and strangers? We must transform
What we are in hunger. (“First Spontaneous Horizontal Restaurant”)

**RAMPike MINI-REVIEWS:**

**INTER magazine** continues to present cutting edge documentation of contemporary art. Always provocative and beautifully designed and crafted, *Inter* is printed on high quality glossy paper and features an international contingent of provocative visual and performance artists. Coordinated by Richard Martel and a sophisticated cadre of contributing editors and designers, based in Quebec City, *Inter* continues to defy convention while it resolutely forges into the frontiers of contemporary artistic innovation. While *Inter* is always forward looking, its editorial mandate is solidly rooted and informed by a detailed knowledge of past artistic achievement. Of particular note is the remarkable autumn 2009 edition (#103) covering 100 years of Futurism. This edition is sumptuously and generously appointed with large format vintage photos, plus documentations of Futurist or neo-Futurist expression including coverage of the “Caravan de Parole” performance events presented as part of the celebrations for the 400th Anniversary of Quebec. Included are essays, reviews, and detailed accounts of both original Futurist art as well as contemporary art in the present. Highlights of this issue are too numerous to list completely here, but include art and commentary by luminaries such as Giovanni Fontana covering 100 years of Futurism, R.E. Mélot reporting on the Futurist Soirée, archival art by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, as well as Jean-Marc Vivenza on Bruitism and Futurist Theory, Sege Pey on Language and Fascism, Charles Dreyfus in interview with Ben Patterson, Slavka Sverakova on the European Performance Art Festival, and Richard Martel on the “Caravane de la Parole,” plus much more! While other arts periodicals doggedly follow and repeat the views of mainstream critics, *Inter* leads the way in establishing fresh perspectives, while documenting breakthrough international artists, who never fail to astonish even while they impress audiences with the savage intelligence and subtle sophistication of their expressions. Published in French, with lengthy translations and sections in English, *Inter* is a gem. You owe it to yourself to read *Inter* often! ISBN: 978-2-920500. *Inter*, Art Actuel, c/o 345 rue du Pont, Quebec, Quebec, G1K 6M4, www.inter-lelieu.org edinter@total.net Tel; 418.529.9680, Fax; 418.528.6933 - KJ

**Captain Canuck** now features re-releases of issues # 4 to 10 in a handsomely bound edition by IDW publishing. While it is somewhat ironic that this edition featuring a Canadian comic strip hero is published in the United States, nonetheless, IDW has remained true to the original books and a second edition featuring issues # 11 to 14 is to be released. The art work in this collection is crisply printed on high quality glossy paper. The edition, based on art work held in archives for over 30 years at the Library and Archives Canada site in Gatineau, Quebec, was assembled by the original author, and Ontario resident, Richard Comely, with assistance from his son, Jordan Comely. Working with George Freeman (original pencil and inking artist), the team computer-scanned and composited pages of original line art and colour acetate overlays. *Captain Canuck* comics achieved notoriety in the late 1970s and included colour work by Claude Ste. Aubin with scripts by Comely. This is the first hardcover edition. Debuting in 1975, *Captain Canuck* became the first and only Canadian-published superhero comic book distributed on the mass market. *Captain Canuck*’s stimulating plots and high quality art work gained an impressive fan base during its five year run. *Captain Canuck* was printed using revolutionary colour techniques, allowing for a greater range of hues. More than 2.3 million copies have been printed since the series was first published. For the twentieth anniversary, Canada Post issued a *Captain Canuck* stamp, which quickly became a best-seller. This edition will please both original fans and those who wish to discover a Canadian legend. For more information about *Captain Canuck*, check www.captaincanuck.com. IDW is an award-winning publisher of comic books, graphic novels and trade paperbacks, based in San Diego, California. Info at: http://www.idwpublishing.com ISBN: 9781600104435 Price: $24.99 c/o IDW Publishing, 5080 Santa Fe St. San Diego, CA, 92109, USA - KJ