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“Art Needs a New Direction” by Reed Altemus (USA)
EDITORIAL

In this issue of *Rampike* we offer a range of fresh artistic concepts and formal innovations. Over the ages, writers have developed the distinctive features of literature while addressing languages, structures, genres, as well as emerging modes of composition, and critics have provided discourse in response to these developments. Many literary innovators have been discussed and/or documented by author/critics such as Brossard, Joris, and Rothenberg. Departures and alternate paths have generated commentary by theorists such as Blanchot, Hutcheon, Jameson, Easthope or Perloff. The question of whether postmodernism is just a period within a succession of periods, or a larger historical challenge set against the ground of artistic creation is still under debate. Meanwhile, we have documented these progressions in periodicals such as *Postmodern Culture* (ed. Amiran), *Open Letter* (ed. Davey), INTER (ed. Martel), and *Rampike* where language as expression is considered both on and off the page, as text and/or performance. Bakhtin was right when he wrote that the novel can be thought of as an ever-expanding form, but the same can be said for all types of literary expression. Symbolist, ‘Pataphysical, Futurist, Vorticist, Formalist, Surrealist, Objectivist, Expressionist, Concrete, Sound, Visual, Oulipist, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, Conceptual, and Inter-media performance, at a cursory glance are all infinitely expandable. Our modes of linguistic creation are flourishing in a mad garden of delights, a rhapsody of expression, and, *Rampike* has a long history of documenting many of these artists and thinkers. In this special issue on conceptualisms, we are pleased to present texts that challenge conventional norms and forms, while crossing borders of genre and conventions of thought.

*Karl E. Jirgens (Publisher/Editor)*
“The Letter O, No. 53” by Christian Burgaud (France)
PAYS MAYA by Fred Wah

The sun falling into the sea at the shadow of muscle written into the setting concrete after a day’s work.

The door or the floor, the hill or the heaven, the writing on the wall or the reading then remembering.

A door in a word an’ a hand or a wand or a tan or some flan maybe planned to be grand how ‘bout dance in your pants fancy Nancy an’ Stan twenty chances a game not outside the frame.

The architecture of shade, the pathology of statues, the linguistics of pink.

Là. The debris of the detour bristles with its records of writing. Alto. The bridge between the one and the many sours with discarded sleeping bags. Here, then. Stay right there!

Light leaks local dailyness left ceiling whole subaltern lantern low celestial then brio over number placer resurfaced scrim your hours braided under her transom some namers.

Then. My name is was. Last year was good to us. You remember, news travels fast nowadays. So, here’s to good luck in the future, instead of asking!

Morning is broken. Spider has spoken. Floor rhymes with heaven. Road’s always a promise.

Trip through the Book of the Dead all night and into the next day guided to the light by another light, no numbers, no arithmetic.

Shudder to think stomach this stone wall turned me in an’ buck up me chin wag under the jungle floor lie the truths.

Tell me, does this photograph prove to him that, without telling any lies, this is the cave where Fred works?

So much beauty changing, a red wall signing its material language, so much we don’t know is temporally intact, lily frond, absent frog.

Polyp or plop, number or namer, lotto or logo, before breakfast or after dinner, picture or aperture, word or door.
TRAVELS WITH MY FRIEND
by Brian Edwards

My friend is back from Australia, Bolivia, Spain, the vast expanses of the American heartland, and the irresistible perils of human imaginings. He has sailed the Great Lakes and the Atlantic seabord, voyaged with Conrad in the South Pacific. In Spain, with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza for company, he traversed the old landscape, drinking wine, eating paella, tilting at windmills and anticipating the Latin American connection. He conversed with Borges in Argentina, scribbling on a table napkin in Buenos Aires one night where they fashioned more and still more labyrinths, looking back to Cervantes and to the artifice of every new connection, marveling at the slipperiness of concepts, the entrancement of ideas and the play of language. So many games, he said, and no end to the play. Where else but Latin America for such mixing of modes with its tropical lushness beside mountains and the arid waste of deserts. If it's magical, it's real. The writers know this because they read the classics as well as their neighbours in Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Mexico …; they've been to Paris; in Mississippi they chatted with Faulkner, the old man, about how the local is mythical; they know river systems, civil war, political madness, the terrible realities of intimacy, the heat of passion and midnight loneliness of solitude. My friend took me to Macondo where he introduced Colonel Aureliano Buendía, Melquiades the gypsy, Ursula Iguaran, Petra Cotes and Remedios the Beauty, Amaranta, Rebecca and a wise Catalanian bookseller who said “The world must be all fucked up when man travels first class and literature goes as freight.” There we discovered that ice is the most wonderful invention in the world and that time too could stumble, slip, dissemble and leave a fragment in a room. An old man makes and remakes little gold fishes. Another is tied to a tree. The last Aureliano cracks the code and interprets the fabulous manuscript as time implodes. At sea with Conrad, he sailed the South Pacific and learned, again, the challenges of temptation and the difficulty of getting things right when the time comes … There may be a Marlow for every Kurtz, but what does fate hold for those who take to sea dreaming of oceans?
In winter they charted the southern Australian coast with gales off the Antarctic, the water turning blue to deep green. Whales breached in their wake and behind low dunes, fishing villages huddled down with old stories, waiting for the wind to change. They walked long windswept beaches where strange noises rang in the air and black headlands were spread with foam. In Port Fairy where the Moyne empties out through Belfast Loch and into the sea, the bars filled with laughter and longing. Just the place, he said, for reimagining beaches of the world from Vancouver Island to Cape Horn, Nantucket to Spain, and the intractable impulses that drive people out to sea. Have you sold your soul to the devil? What, not yet?

He punched a motorcycle through America, through the flatlands and canyons, the Rockies, the Sierra, where great stretches of road are measured by filling stations, desert lights, passing towns and chance encounters. Out there in madness with Kerouac and Kesey: scouting the edges of inspiration, unable to distinguish markers of value in the crazy tumult of images, the dream both tawdry and splendid, not yet run its course, signs of promise so enchanting still, despite everything, still whispering their sweet come-hitherings even as the sky darkens and attendants grasp at the curtains. Remember Toledo, old city by the Tagus, city of twists and turns, narrowing stone walls, Goya’s city, the heart of Toledo with red geraniums in old clay pots. At Jávea, we swam at morning in the glittering sea. We climbed the mountain, the one described in his story, the fiction making it real. We drank in backstreet bars in Granada, Madrid, in San Sebastian … He goes back to the Rockies and the vast stretches of the Canadian prairies where each step carries others, where the landscape is plotted and pieced and there is no silence. For this is also Paris, New York, Sydney, London, Buenos Aires … where the signs and messages tumble one upon another.
IN THE TERRITORY
by Brian Edwards

I The Landscape of Play
In summer with the foliage thick and treasures scrounged from the local tip, we were the Swiss family Robinson. If we numbered three, we fashioned swords, bucklers, and daring. I thought of myself as D’Artagnan. Any season did for Robin Hood – we had our own Sherwood Forest, no matter it was mottled Australian bush beside a river. Even a log for Robin’s scrap with Little John and an island, doubling as Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn’s island, that we escaped to when enemy forces threatened to overrun our camp, the game and the whole damn thing. We did Biggles for a while and Tarzan with a long rope over the river. Superman was too super for us and the Phantom was my more solitary pleasure for moments in the jungle with the Bandar people and Dianna Palmer flown in from New York. Because we lived near bushranger territory, we heard of Ben Hall and Captain Moonlight and a hoard of gold waiting in the Grampians. No Ned Kelly in our armour but we did know about cowboys and Indians, the cavalry, cattle ranchers, sheep herders, clapboard towns, railroaders - and Jesse James …

II The Kitchen Table
The wind is in the chimney and a loose sheet of iron bangs in the darkness. Listen to the rain, to the dull rumble of thunder along the mountains. ‘Not fit for man or beast,’ he said, the old man hunched into his captain’s chair, a cigarette hanging from his bottom lip. The wonder is he noticed the night at all; he’s away in the Wild West, peering intently through pages of a dog-eared western at dusty streets, railroads, bank buildings and men with guns. He rides the splendid horses of his imagining, pushing them hard in desert ways and river valleys to places where men gather and fall apart. The mantelpiece clock ticks on. He doesn’t hear the kettle.
Ill Riding with Jesse James
Northfield, Minnesota, September the seventh, 1876.
They were puffed after the Missouri Pacific Railroad job, one that netted them fifteen thousand dollars and with not much fuss. “Like taking candy from kids,” said Cole Younger, flush with bravado and banknotes. Bill Chadwell boasted the ease of larceny in Minnesota; so there they are. Dressed in cattlemen’s linen dusters, Jesse, Bob Younger and Charlie Pitts rode across the iron bridge over the Cannon River and into Mill Square. They hitched their splendid horses and ordered breakfast at J.G. Jeff’s restaurant - bacon and eggs and apple pie washed down with two pots of coffee. They talked about rifles and loafed in the sunlight until two o’clock when Cole Younger and Clell Miller rode into Division Street from the south. These two watched the street; the others entered the bank. Inside the bank, Jesse had trouble with the acting cashier and two clerks who claimed the safe was on a time lock and couldn’t be opened. No-one checked. Bob Younger rifled the till drawers. He found rolls of pennies and nickels, missed three thousand dollars tucked in another drawer. When Bunker the clerk ran for the alley, Charlie Pitts shot him through the right shoulder and chaos exploded in the street. Not cowering at all, alarmed citizens grabbed shotguns, desk pistols and derringers. They fired at will while boys pitched rocks and bottles at the startled, dancing horses. Clell Miller was blown off his horse, Bill Chadwell was shot dead, Cole Younger lost part of his shoulder, and Jim Younger took a bullet in the mouth. Bob Younger’s bay horse was shot out from under him and he was hit in the elbow and right leg. Frank James took a shot in the thigh that hit like an iron stake. Then Cole Younger scooped up his brother in a hail of gunfire and five horsemen raced towards the Cannon River bridge, behind them the dead and dying left lying in the street. Back in Missouri, Zee James waited with Jesse Junior not yet two. She had long ago decided not to question her husband about his times away or the odd presents he brought to her—a candelabra, a copy of Shakespeare, an envelope of diamonds. As a girl, she had stitched initials onto handkerchiefs and read Robert Browning by candlelight.

Grunting, the old man stopped reading, got up to stoke the stove. He’d heard about that coward, Robert Ford.
IV April 3, 1882
It was a hot April morning with clouds the colour of nails coming in. Jesse wore his black Prince Albert coat and a white linen shirt he’d stolen from a hotel highboy. He read newspapers wherever he was, checking what was going on, particularly stories about the gang - plenty of those and most of them not true!
In the Kansas City *Times*, he saw straight away the report of Dick Liddil’s arrest and confession. Yet Bob and Charley Ford had said nuthin about it. Surely they knew. Zee called them for breakfast: Jesse, the kids and Bob and Charley. “It says here Dick surrendered three weeks ago,” said Jesse. “You must have been in the neighbourhood.”
“They musta kept it secret,” said Bob, standing. He left the dining room, his right hand on his gun. The men gathered in the sitting room. “It’s awful hot,” said Jesse, removing his coat. He unbuckled his holsters and placed his revolvers on a table. Taking some rag, he stood on a chair to dust the picture of a racehorse named Skyrocket. It was then Robert Ford shot him in the back of the head with a Smith and Wesson .44, the explosion and smell of gunpowder filling the room as Jesse sagged and fell, hitting the floor with a crash that shook the timber building to its rafters. Zee James was tidying up after breakfast. Outside by the verandah, their two children drew patterns in the dusty ground.
“Arte in Gamba” by Ruggero Maggi (Italy)
Eels on the Road
In northeast Italy light rain has been falling since midnight. A couple returning from a late night at Harry's Bar in Venice have stopped their car by the side of the road just outside Padua to watch an extraordinary spectacle. The glistening surface of the asphalt is covered with hundreds of eels, slithering uphill, towards a forest. "This is not a good sign." says the young man. "Nonsense," replies his lovely companion, a biology student at the University of Padua, "I've seen this before, eels sometimes crawl out of the ocean on rainy nights and wander over the land. They can stay out of the water for several hours." "It is still a bad sign," he says, crossing himself automatically, "we should not have taken this road.". "Basta! This is nothing!" she replies, "One summer, when I was eight, we were camping and the same thing happened, only worse. We woke up in the middle of the night and our tent was full of eels." "Dio mio!" he replies, "What a nightmare!" "It was unsettling," she says, "but, you know, I still don't mind eels." He shakes his head and then gives her an exasperated look. Then they both turn and stare in silence as the last of the eels slithers off the wet road and into the the wind-restless acanthus bushes at the side of the highway.

Crocodiles and Leopards
Twilight has just fallen in the dry-season forest of Sri Lanka. In a small clearing three leopards are sharing a recent kill. They stop feeding and prick up their ears, staring intently at something approaching noisily through the undergrowth. A lone crocodile, already a fair distance from the river, emerges from the forest. It easily outweighs the three big cats combined. One of the leopards, less fearless than its companions, snarls and strikes at the crocodile, though the mouth of the huge reptile is as big as the cat's body. The other leopards continue feeding until two more crocodiles join the first. The uneasy standoff is broken. Reluctantly, the leopards give up the kill and slink off into the dark forest, each pausing once to look behind as the crocodiles converge on the abandoned carcass. In a few minutes the bone-crushing saurians consume what would have fed the leopards for days.
Summer Night in a Cottage Bathroom
Alone in the bathroom at night. She is applying eyeshadow in front of the mirror. The screenless bathroom window is open. She hears a soft thud and then a shape flutters into the room, circling the hollywood lights above the vanity. She is startled, it looks like a bat, but then it alights on the wall just beside the mirror. It is a large moth, bigger than a butterfly - with trembling wings. Then they open. Astonishing. Its wings are chocolate brown and amethyst, a living diptych patterned in art nouveau abstractions. The wings are edged with vermillion accents, orange meanders and in the centre of each is an eye spot, like a mysterious symbol on a Japanese paper lantern.

Night Train Through Summer Mountains
In the mountains she lies awake in her bed. A warm night breeze blows the perfumed scent of high, alpine meadows through her open bedroom window. The distant rolling steel of the 3 AM freight train signals its nightly traverse of the railway line that winds along the river at the bottom of the valley. To her ears the train sounds to be gliding on oil and steel. The measured rumble and humming diesel throbs across the river flats to her room under the stars, dew already dripping from the eaves. The night wind carrying the sound sometimes nearer, then farther.

The engineer, sitting alone inside the engine, sounds the train whistle as he approaches a railway-crossing and the sound echoes through the canyons of the range. The stone mountains ring for minutes, blending into his repeated sounding of the whistle, playing and replaying the lonely note. Then, gradually, the noise of the train fades into the night as it rolls out of the valley. The transition so gradual that the woman in her room cannot be sure that she hears the final, distant whistle.

Lake Huron Nocturne
Summer night at the cottage. After making love you both go out onto the porch overlooking the lake. The night breeze against your skin is cool but not uncomfortable - you feel it swish over your waist like a warm, thrilling liquid. A waning moon hangs over the lake. You can both hear the waves from the beach and some moths flutter around the light on the porch. It is about 2 A.M. and your bodies are quick and warm in the night air and you make love again, outside on the porch. Above you the Milky Way, her sweet hair blowing in wind, her hands fragrant with lust.
“Fish” by Reed Altemus (USA)
MID: A Diptych for Two Roys: Roy Biv & Roy Kiyooka
by Steven Ross Smith

(with a deep bow to Roy Kiyooka, whose “Road to Yase” I discovered after writing this)

i. Mid-spectrum Meditation

Green tea – good for thee.
Green-needled pine tree.
Green need.
Green cannot be the colour of envy.
A green book cover will not sell it.

*How Green Was My Valley* means more than it says.

Green eyes dazzle.
Greening.

Blood should be green.
In winter’s grey and white seek refuge in greenhouse greenness.

That green is simply photosynthesis. Simply is misleading.

Always wanting more greenbacks. Or just the green?

Evergreen conifers of the genus Thuja includes eastern white and western red cedars — also known as arborvitae. Life living green!

Greenly – sounds like queenly.
Greening, grinning.

Grass is not always greener.
ii. *Mid-spectrum Manifesto*

Green tea – good for thee

Green-needled pine tree

Need Green

The colour of envy cannot be Green

A Green book cover will not sell it

*How Green Was My Valley* means more than it says. It sold.

Made Greenbacks

Green eyes dazzle

Greening

Blood should be Green

In winter grey and white seek Greenness

in a Greenhouse

That Green is simply photosynthesis. Simply is misleading.

Always wanting more Greenbacks

Or just the Green?

EverGreen conifers of the genus *Thuja* include eastern white and western red cedars - also known as arborvitae. Life tree living Green!

Greenly – sounds like queenly

Greening, Grinning

Grass is not always Greener

A Green screed
No Poems
by Steven Ross Smith

There were no poems in the news today.
No poems in the news today. There were no poems.
No poems, no poems, no poems.
In the news today there were no poems.

There were pom-poms in the news today.
Yes, pom-poms, cheerleaders shaking pom-poms.
There were pom-poms sh-sh-shushing in the news today.

No poems. There were no poems, no poems in the news.
No poems today. In the news today there were no poems.

Palms were in the news today. Yes palms.
There were palms in the news today. Storm-lashed palms.
Frenzied palms. Palms thrashing right there in the news today.

In the news today there were no poems. No poems.
There were not any poems, no poems in the news.
No poems today.

Psalms were in the news today. The twenty-third psalm in the news.
A psalm in the news today.
Psalms, almost a poem, but a psalm in the end.
In the news, a psalm was intoned today.

No, there weren't any poems in the news.
No poems today, no poems, no poems in the news.
No poems today.

There were apples and potatoes in the news today,
Especially in Quebec and Provence
Yes pommes, pommes, pommes, dans Le Devoir, Paris Match.
Pommes, pommes de terre, dans les journaux, aujourd'hui.
Oui, les pommes, les pommes, dans les actualités, today.

No poems were in the news today. No poems, no poems, no poems.
Not one. No poem.
No poems in the news today.

Bombs were in the news today. There were bombs in the news today.
Bombs, bombs, bombs, bombs
Bombs, bombs, bombs
Yes, bombs were dropped and popped in the news today.

There were no poems today in the news. None
No. Not any poems in the news today. Not one.
No poem. No poems sh-shush-ing, storming, intoned, grown, or dropped in the news. None.
When I get nervous I’m narrative *
by Steven Ross Smith

Window, now, sight sought to another sight, through, green
hell’s bells, it (the said) ought to, across the railing
emerge (the porch is empty)
nameless, nervous

Invite it, how to? Open the ‘right’ channel; direction? No! right/true. Blue-bell nod, hints
gotcha! The blue-bell’s conjured. A circus damsel turning on a rope, high overhead
elevates your eyes, your chin
tickles your equilibrium, butterflies your stomach

Now, the jump
enervate or alienate, T I T Q
risking a quotation
veering away from understanding
out there in the codified
universe
switching back and forth, synaptic lurch and chance

Innocent, in the air it
‘s a feint, she catches, holds, twirls and smiles
miraculous, incomprehensible

no, don’t be fooled by the echo’s
arrival, it’s (the said) a
ruse to give false comfort, to
raise your expectations, your
attendance to a plan that’s
told, but no
it’s the storied words’
vibration, the tailwind spin, as they rapidly
escape

~
Los Angeles, 1994. p.117
SOME HEROES
by Steven Ross Smith

i.

Her favourite artist is Magritte
grit and greeny apple face or floating hat
amoeba split attention
fluidified spill into walls that plume, twin
lump feather-flesh or peek-a-boo
a rain of neatsuited men
nothing meagre
in magic's same degree
bite on a fruit-stem
a bitter stick
tight and tart reveal
but oh how tide repeals, renews
oh how tires squeal in retreat
up a dove
or crag a rocky egg
impregnate the gawk in a beat-skip-beat
a feat of Magritte
~
A blitz of Schwitters’ wit
bitten (bitte) on the rewound clock of memory’s hedge
teeth marks in the bark-stripped trunk
beaver logic accumulation and assemblage of chunks plunked against sense
Ur murmur, in a manner of speaking
Rummed mumble and sharp chatter of consonants
Beetle shell clatters in a crystal dish
Gives instruction –
  Ditch desire’s bondage
  De-ration loving compassion
  Scatter sand and dance
  Have a blast until the last ambulance siren lances air!

His life a whacky construction of slopes and slats
Addresses bedlam and carbon deficit
In the land of nod with the lamb and lambs of god
Limbs posture, dangle as ballast, hang around
in the land of gnawed
His sonorous sonata
~
iii.

In piney air
Accordion tremolo winds among trunks
Perks an ear, peals over a pixillated face of Apollinaire
Pulls at an eye that earlier watched a river shatter over laddering rocks
An ear that heard the voices of a billion billion water drops
Choiring down from spring-melt snow peaks in flush sun
Pushed key presses a tremulous song to warble from the pleated fluttering squeeze box
Like a rush of air in silk-flaps, or the ruby-throated hummer’s wingbeats
A trembling skin that falls according to the purity of snow (who can test?)
Or is the snow defiled, a stabbed dove?
The stream a water jet
Jostling rock for power
A shrapnel piercing skullbone
Jamming constellations call, collapse toward the density of rock
A charge escapes, flies to her nimble hands that dance the keys

~

Steve Smith, Jenny Sampirisi, and Gerry Shikatani performing at the D.H. in Windsor
Sponsored by the University of Windsor English Dept., and Canada Council for the Arts.
Photo: Karl Jirgens
iv.

A coat to shun; adopt an ounce of caution
shamble a chatty bilingual cat gab
An eight-sided hat-grab, Raoul Hausmann’s flipsy syllables

P’erioum, perrnounnurn

Pernod perhaps? Aromatic anise
A paranoid noodle or needle or wheedle
Anoints a pointy-angled tango’s inextinguishable fire with passionfruit
The way desire snaps-turns in the dance
The way Hausmann’s word-flip opto-mirror re-articulates
Seta lucitra-er rorrim-ot po pilf-drow s’nna msua HyawehT
The language of the future ; erutuf eht fo egaunignal ehT
He’s an eye for spice
A staccato tongue for love
~

Afterword

Cha-cha with a cup of chai – don’t spill the peppery tongue-tang
Don’t monkey around, you’ll be an orangutangtangle
With a con’s poker face, ochre seams for eyelids
~
I am currently working on a page-by-page response to E.A. Abbott’s *Flatland*, a Victorian science-fiction satirical novel which posits a two-dimensional universe inhabited by entirely by polygons.

For each page of Abbott’s novel I am tracing, by hand, a representation of each letter’s occurrence across every page of text. The generated result is a series of superimposed seismographic images which reduce the text in question into a two-dimensional schematic reminiscent of EKG results or stock reports.

This project builds upon my previous work in concrete poetry, and a theorizing of a briefly non-signifying poetic, where the graphic mark of text becomes fore-grounded both as a rhizomatic map of possibility, and as a record of authorial movement.

Much as the Victorian novel *A Human Document* gave rise to Tom Phillips’ ongoing graphic interpretation *A Humument*, *Flatland* has resulted in a book-length interpretation of the graphic possibilities of a *text without text*.

Derrida, writing on Blanchot, asked “How can one text, assuming its unity, give or present another to be read, without touching it, without saying anything about it, practically without referring to it?” Each page of my graphically-realized *Flatland* is a completely unique, diagrammatic representation of the occurrences of letters. By reducing reading and language into a paragrammatical statistical analysis, content is subsumed into graphical representation of how language covers a page.

Superimposed seismographic image based on *Flatland* by Derek Beaulieu
THE HONEY TRAP
by Stan Rogal

The Madison Pub. It’s Tuesday, late afternoon, overcast. The place is relatively quiet, threat of a summer shower closing out the patio crowd. Two women sit at a table inside, a nearly empty carafe of red wine parked between them. One woman, a fleshy, full-mouthed blonde, does most of the talking. In fact, the second woman, a slim brunette with pinched cheeks and aquiline nose, mainly nods, goes yeah-yeah, sure and so on. The blonde drains her glass, sparks a smoke with the skilled flick of a thumb-polished silver Zippo.

“You ever going to quit?” asks the brunette.

“What? This? Never. I like smoking. It relaxes me. If it takes a few years off my life, so what? Who wants to live to ninety anyway? Besides, it’s all about genes. My mom and dad are both still healthy in their seventies and they’ve smoked forever. I was born with good genes.”

“Uh-huh.” The brunette taps the ashtray further away. “Listen, Diane, when you called to say you wanted to talk to me I said I could meet after work for a quick drink. That was over thirty minutes ago and I still don’t know what’s on your mind. Did you just want to catch up on old times or shoot the breeze or what?”

Diane picks an imaginary tobacco flake from her tongue and smiles. “You want more wine?” she says. “I’m gonna have more wine.”

“Not for me. I’ve gotta go. I’ve got plans. For dinner.”

“Plans? That’s nice. A date?”

“If you call ordering in Chinese with my kids and ex-husband a date…”

“At least you have kids.” Diane catches the waiter’s eye and shakes the carafe. “And you and David can talk civilly together.”

The brunette sighs. “C’mon Diane, we haven’t talked to or seen each other in – what? Over two years? You called for a reason, what is it?”

“Yeah, over two years. Just after you and David split.”

“Yeah.”

“He was screwing around, right?”

“Who?”

“David. You told me he was screwing around. Some twenty-four year old bimbo.”

“I guess, yeah.”

“That’s what you told me.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Uh-huh.” The waiter pours from a fresh carafe. “Why is that, do you think?”

“What? Why did he start seeing a twenty-four year old bimbo?”

“Not that. That’s easy – men are sleaze bags. They can’t keep it in their pants. No, I mean, why didn’t we keep in touch?”

The brunette sips her wine and shrugs. “A million reasons. I moved, I started up my own business, I had the kids to take care of…”

“What else?”

“What else?”

“The real reason.”

“Diane – I haven’t got a clue what you’re talking about.”

“Sure you do. You’re just afraid to say it.”

“Maybe I better go.” The brunette grabs her stuff and starts to slide from the bench. Diane stops her with a wave.

“It’s OK, I’ll say it.” The brunette freezes. “We were never really friends in the first place, right? I mean, before Brian, sort of, but even then, not really. We worked together, we hung out, but that’s different. We never really had much in common. I was the loud, brash one and you were the quiet, polite one. Stereotypical, like in the movies. Then Brian came along. He was our one and only true common bond. We were both attracted to him. You dated him first, but in the end, he married me. You stayed around me to be near him.”

“I married David.”

“On the rebound.”
“Diane…is this going somewhere?”

“Don’t worry, I’m not accusing you of anything. You weren’t fucking Brian, I know that. You’re not the type. You simply wanted to be near him so you put up with me. When he split to be with the boss’s daughter, there went the common bond – poof! You didn’t need me anymore.”

“You’re not painting a very pretty picture of our relationship.”

“Do you deny it?”

“It’s not a matter of denying…”

“It’s OK. You can’t deny it and that’s fine. In fact, it’s better.”

“Better? In what way?”

Diane rolls her shoulders and grins. “I have a proposition for you.”

“What kind of proposition?”

“Ah, now you’re curious. That’s good. I like that. You see, maybe we can really become friends after all.”

“Diane…?”

“Drink your wine. Go on.” The brunette takes a long swallow. “There’s one or two things I have to do first. Meet me here Thursday around the same time. We’ll check out the University crowd. It’ll be like a girl’s night out.”

“And you’ll tell me?”

“If you’re here, otherwise…”

“OK.” The brunette takes a step away and Diane grabs her wrist.

“Look!” she says. “Look at that guy over there. He’s got a hard-on for the waitress. Keeps getting her to bend over so he can get a shot of her tits, maybe catch a flash of nipple. What a fucking loser, eh?”

“Yeah,” says the brunette, and attempts to remove Diane’s grip. “I guess.”

Diane draws the brunette’s hand to her nose and sniffs. “Mm. Still wearing the same perfume, I see. Opium, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” says the brunette. The two stare at each other.

Diane poses in the full-length mirror, admiring her body. She’s buck naked and cups her breasts with her hands. Reflected alongside is a man with a short-cropped beard, sitting up in bed, smoking a cigarette. He is also naked. She speaks to him in the mirror.

“What do you say? Do you like my tits, or what?”

“Yeah,” says the man. “Great tits.”

“Great tits. Right. Thirty-eight years old and still great tits. Full, round, firm. I couldn’t pass the pencil test, but then, I never could.” She laughs as she hikes her breasts up. “Face it, there’s nothing waif-ish about me, I’m all woman.”

“You are that and then some,” says the man, blowing smoke rings into the air.

“And the nipples.”

“Like a pair of ripe cherries.”

She twists her torso and places her hands on her hips. “A bit of a pot belly…not too bad, though. Maybe gained some weight on my hips and ass, but…”


“Legs are good. Solid, not flabby”

“They’ll get you where you want to go, that’s for sure.”

“Mm.” She saunters toward the man, dancing her fingernails across her belly; into her pubic hair. “Most women have to work hard to have a body like this. Exercise, diet, surgery…” The man nods. “You know what I do? Nothing. Not a goddamn thing. I eat what I want, I drink what I want. It’s in the genes.”

“You’re a lucky girl. Most women would kill.”

“I am. A very lucky girl.” She takes the cigarette from his mouth and has a drag. “How was dinner?”

“Told you – fine.”

“You ate out.”

“Yeah.”

“Alone.”

“Yeah, why?”

“No reason. Couldn’t have been much fun, that’s all.”
“Uh-huh. You gonna stay, or what?”
“No. I’ve got to get my beauty sleep and I can’t do that in a strange bed.”
“You must be getting a little used to it.”
Diane crouches, kisses the man on the lips. “A little. The beard’s growing in nicely.”
“You like?”
She gives it a rub. “Yeah. Nice of you to humour me.” She grabs her clothes off the floor and heads for the bathroom.

The pub’s packed shoulder to shoulder with the University crowd when the brunette arrives. It takes her awhile to track Diane at the patio bar, her jacket draped over a second stool, two glasses of wine poured.
“You made it,” says Diane. “I was beginning to wonder.”
“Yeah, last minute phone call. You know how it is when you’re working freelance.”
“No. I’ve always preferred working for someone else. Do my job, collect my paycheque, go home. Less hassles.”
“You’re right about that.” She sits and has a drink.
“Besides, you need money to start your own business. I don’t know how you did it, what with going through the divorce and all, but, hey – good on you.”
“I’m sorry, but I really don’t have long, Diane. One of the kids isn’t feeling well…”
“That’s OK. I understand. You don’t have to make excuses.”
“It’s not an excuse…”
“What? How was your date the other night?”
“Date?”
“Yeah, you said David was coming over.”
“Oh that. It was fine.”
“Uh-huh. Anything else?”
“No. Well, he’s growing a beard, if you can believe it. Looks ridiculous on him.”
“That’s right, you never liked beards, did you?”
The brunette sighs, as if in defeat. “Please, Diane, can we move this along?”
Diane finishes her drink and pours another. “All right, here’s the deal – though I thought we could have a bit more fun together… You’ve gone into business as a photographer and I need the services of a photographer.”
“That’s it?”
“In a nutshell.”
“But, why me? There’s a ton of photographers listed in the yellow pages.”
“The job I need done is along the lines of a personal nature, and…as it also concerns you, I thought you might want to be involved.”
“What do you mean, “personal”? What sort of job?”
“I plan to set up a honey trap and I want you to shoot it.”
“Honey trap? What’s that.”
“You don’t know what a honey trap is?” The brunette shakes her head. “It’s where a woman is used as bait to either bust some guy or blackmail him or gather information or… That sort of thing.”
“Oh. It’s not really what I do, Diane. I mean, I take portraits, I do weddings…”
“I want to nail Brian’s ass to the ground.”
“Brian? Why?”
“Because of what he did to me.”
“What? Left you for another woman? It happens. It happened to me.”
“David left you for a younger woman. I can buy that. Brian left me for a woman five years older than me who’s a fat, ugly rich bitch and who he must have been fucking while we were still together and I didn’t see it.”
“Still. That was four years ago.”
“Yeah, and in that four years he’s given her two kids. We were married six years and it was always: not yet, let’s wait awhile longer… Bastard!”
“You wanted kids? I never knew that about you.” Diane shrugs. “You’ve been angry at him all this time?”
“Angry? Huh! That’s the understatement of the century. Fucking furious is more like it. Hateful. Then, a few weeks ago, I see a picture of the two of them in the paper, smiling away
like a couple of idiot monkeys.” Diane chugs her wine. “Turns out, she’s pregnant again. Can you believe it? I can’t fucking believe it! I mean, I don’t know how he can even touch her, especially after…” She indicates her own body. “Never mind fuck her, but…no accounting for some people’s taste, right? Anyway, I decided, enough’s enough, Brian. This can’t go on; it can’t be allowed to go on. Your turn to suffer, asshole. Time for the shoe to be on the other fucking foot.”

“What do you plan to do?”

“I told you, trap him in a compromising situation, then go to his wife and show him up for the asshole he really is. See him stripped of everything.”

“How do you know he’ll take the bait?”

“He’ll take it all right. If he screwed around on me, he’ll definitely screw around on her. If he isn’t already screwing around, which is likely.”

“And who’s the bait?”

“That’s the real beauty part of it. I am.”

“You?”

“Yeah.”

“But, why would he…? I mean… He left you.”

“That’s exactly why he will. It’s in a man’s nature to always want to have that *one last time* in the sack. It’s like a male fantasy. Besides, even if he doesn’t love me now or never loved me before, he’s always loved these.” Diane thrusts out her chest and points with her cigarette pack. “Don’t worry, I know him. I know how he thinks.” She lights up and makes like Marlon Brando. “I’ll make him an offer he can’t refuse.”

“Maybe, though I don’t see where I fit in.”

“Are you kidding me? He led you on the same way he led me on, right? I mean, you were with him first, but he didn’t break up with you then start seeing me. It happened practically right away.”

“What?”

“Sure. You never knew, but then, you weren’t supposed to. It’s like I said – the same old, same old. He used you to get to me, the fucking snake.” Diane calls the bartender for another carafe. “You’ve got as much to hate Brian for as I do. Maybe more.” Diane waits for an answer that isn’t forthcoming. “You want me to get someone else?”

The brunette toys with a cuticle on her thumb and nods her head. “No. It’s OK. What do you want me to do?”

“Simple. I set up Brian and me with a room, get him into bed, you come busting in with a camera – *snap, snap, snap…* It’s all over but the tears. Yeah?”

“Yeah. Listen, I have to make a call to the sitter about the kids.”

“One of them still sick?”

“Um, yeah. Cold going around the school. Nothing serious.”

“You want my cel?” Diane digs into her purse and extends a phone.

“No. No thanks. I’d rather use a pay phone.” Diane continues to hold out the cel. “It’s so noisy in here.”

“Suit yourself,” says Diane, putting the cel away as the waitress stops by. “You want me to order another? I’m buying.” The brunette shakes her head.

“What about you?” asks the waitress. “You want another glass?”

“Make it another half-litre. The night’s still young, right?” Diane sizes up the waitress, who’s maybe in her twenties, and laughs. “Even if I’m not.”

The waitress grins, nods, grabs the empties. “Oh, go on! You’re not so old. You could probably give some of them a run for their money.” She fingers the students crushed up to the bar.

Diane butts her cigarette and checks out the action. “Your right about that, sweetie,” she mumbles. “I probably could.”
It’s a hot July afternoon in Yorkville and Diane’s dressed for it: heels, short skirt, no bra, tight fitting cotton T-shirt with a scooped neck revealing ample cleavage and piercing nipples. She sits on a bench smoking a cigarette and fiddling with her Zippo. As men walk by she notices they make backward glances and speak under their breath. 

*Suckers*, she grins. She gives her watch a glance and checks out Sasparilla’s restaurant across the street.

“Where are you Brian?” she mumbles. “Where are you? You’re always on time.” As she repeats this, Brian rounds the corner and strolls into the restaurant.

She gives him a minute or two to settle, then enters the restaurant, has a few words with the maitre d’ and, next thing you know, she’s bumped into Brian and the usual chit-chat occurs, like: Hey, Brian, long time no see. Yeah, Diane, you too. What’s up, what are you doing here? Oh, you know, same old thing. Slumming, haha. Yeah, sure, me too. But really, sit down and so on and so forth, not wanting to impose, but, hey, don’t be silly, no imposition at all, honest, Diane resting her arms on the table, her breasts on her arms, leaning in so as to give Brian an unobstructed view and reminiscing on the old days and the good times and the small talk moving like gangbusters through the Martinis to you’re looking good and you’re looking great and some wine and some more wine and no, I mean it, you haven’t aged and really terrific and you too, fabulous, sexy, have you done something to your hair? are you working out and, no, silly, it’s the genes, the genes, I’ve always said and you must be the same way and you may be right and into brandies and, remember? we used to joke: the fastest hands in pro football and: lips that could suck the chrome off a bumper, haha, and wouldn’t it be a lark and wild and crazy, but, no, impossible, and yet, hey, why not? both adults and life to live and things not bad with the wife, but you know how it is, haha, sure I do, “the water’s of love” and all that, and pictures in the paper can be deceiving, I guess, and Diane sort of seeing someone but no real serious prospects and not exactly like they’re strangers and having a history and no one needs to know, why should they? and no one hurt and perhaps and why not? a little get together, a tryst for old times’ sake, a bit of naughtiness before they croak, *one last time, eh*! and Diane saying I’ve never been to a place like the Four Seasons Hotel and no point waiting ‘til you’re too old to enjoy and wouldn’t it be absolutely too fucking far out and let’s do it (more brandies) for chrissakes, let’s pretend we’re young and wild and free again and cel numbers exchanged and a time and date set and I’ll have the Champagne chilled and ready says Diane, for when you come (and they chuckle at the double entendre) and your motor hot and running quips Brian, his hand slipped up her leg and no underwear to impede the progress of fingertips greeted by the touch of warm honey and that’s it, they’re off to the races and Diane saying you’re not going to back out on me now, are you? and Brian with tongue lolling and zipper bulging going are you kidding? no way, I’ll be there, I’ll be there with fucking bells.

And so it goes. And so it goes.

The kids watching a video in the living room and the two of them sitting in the kitchen drinking Scotch and water. He uses a Bic to light a cigarette.

“Are you ever going to quit?”

“Oh, sorry,” he says, and crushes it out against the bottom of his shoe. “Dirty habit, I know, but it relaxes me.” There’s no ashtray so he sticks the butt in his shirt pocket.

“It’s more for the kids than me.”

“Yeah. It’s OK. I just forgot. Getting used to living in my own place.”

“Uh-huh. Can I ask you something?” He nods. “When two people break up, is it always the man’s fantasy to have *one last time*?”

“You mean…?”

“Yeah.”

“I don’t know. I guess. Maybe.”

“Did you?”

“Um, yeah. Sure.”

“Huh!” She sips her drink. “How long are you going to keep the beard?”

“You don’t like it?”

“I’m not sure.”

“So…?” he poses.

“So…?”
Diane switches off the mini-cam play button and hits rewind. “You wanna see yourself, mister porno star?”
“Sure.” He bounces out of bed and the two stare into the viewer.
“Not too shabby.” They laugh. “Oh my God…! Whose arm is that? Is that an arm?”
“I think it must be a leg. Your leg”
“Up there? Oh my God…!”
“And look at that!”
“How did we manage that?”
“Pretty flexible, I’d say. That’s something you can be proud of. Maybe show your kids one day when they’re older.”
“My kids? Yeah, right.”

The phone rings and the brunette answers.
“It’s Diane.”
“Yes.”
“It’s all set for Wednesday night. Brian’s coming by around eight. Let’s say you meet me in the lobby of the Four Seasons at seven-thirty, OK?”
“OK.”
“This is going to be a riot.”
“Uh-huh.”
The two hang up. The brunette hits the speed dial.

David rolls off of Lisa and lets out a long, pleasurable sigh. “Mm,” he says. “That was fantastic. Maybe there’s some truth to that one last time thing.”
“Yeah, you’re right. It did seem different somehow.” Lisa notices the time. “It’s six-thirty. You’ve got to pick up the kids and I’ve got a job to get to.” She hustles out of the sheets and into the bathroom.

“Maybe we can do this again,” he says. “Sometime.”
“Maybe,” she says, bending into the mirror. “You gave me beard-burn,” she smiles.

Lisa rushes through the hotel doors and into the lobby.
“You’re late,” says Diana.
“I was beginning to think you lost your nerve.”
“I’m here. Let’s go.”
They take the elevator up. Diane points to a corner where Lisa can conceal herself. “I checked the place out earlier, see? It’s perfect. You can shoot him going into the room, then…” She hands Lisa a passkey.

“One thing, Diane,” says Lisa. “I’d like to get this over with as quick as possible, y’know? Just get a couple of good shots and get out.”
“Yeah, so?”
“So… I think it’d be good to skip the preliminaries, just in case. Maybe you should be, like, standing in the room naked when he arrives. That way, whatever happens, when I bust in, we’ve got something.”
“That’s a good idea, much as I’d like to draw it out. Give me about ten minutes alone with him, so I at least have a chance to drop his pants and have his pecker standing at attention, right?” Lisa nods and Diane strokes her cheek with the side of her hand. “You’re all flushed.”
Lisa turns away. “I guess I’m a bit nervous.”
“Uh-huh. No need to be. It’ll be a cakewalk.”
Diane lets herself into the room, pops the Champagne, pours a glass, glances over to the window alcove. She sips the bubbly, walks over and makes a minor adjustment to the drape. She kicks off her shoes, slips out of her dress and underwear, allows everything to land where it may on the floor. Naked, she preens before the dressing table mirror, teasing her hair, pursing her lips. At the sound of a knock, she sashays to the door, opens it a crack and steps away. A camera flashes in her face. The champagne sloshes.
“What?” she says.
Lisa and Brian barge in. They laugh as the camera flashes. Brian shoves Diane backward. She trips and falls, her legs spread awkwardly beneath her. She attempts to crawl to her
clothes, but is blocked by Lisa who continues to snap pictures. Diane covers her face with her arms.


“You thought you could pull this off?” says Brian. “You thought you could ruin me? “Strip me of everything”? You and your floppy tits? Look at you – you’re pathetic!”

“Why…?” cries Diane, peeking out at Lisa through a gap in her arms.

“Why do you think, you stupid cow? Do you think I’d help you? After you lied to Brian and stole him from me?” Lisa goes to Brian. They embrace and kiss.

“The two of you?” says Diane. “What about your wife?”

“My wife? Get serious. My wife’s a fucking joke.”

“A fucking joke with lots of money,” says Lisa.

“Exactly. You never had a clue, did you? Not a clue.” Brian takes Diane’s glass, fills it plus a second glass, hands one to Lisa and they toast. Lisa uses a toe to push Diane’s clothes to her.

“Put your clothes on. You look silly sitting there with your legs spread and your tits hanging out. In fact, you look downright disgusting.”

Diane tugs into her clothes and struggles to her feet. She collects the rest of her belongings as Lisa and David get comfortable on the bed.

“Thanks for the Champagne, Diane,” says Lisa.

“And the room. No point in wasting it.” The two laugh as Diane shuts the door behind her.

Close to midnight and a clutch of folks drinking at the bar. A woman approaches Diane. She’s rather plain looking, with round features, bad skin and built like a teapot: short, stout and noticeably pregnant. Diane taps a cigarette from her pack, flips her Zippo and lights up.

“You get everything you need?” says Diane.

“Yes. Thank you.”

“You weren’t too uncomfortable?”

“If you mean sitting in the alcove, no.”

“Hm. They must have been pretty surprised when you popped out from behind the curtain. Wish I had been there.” Diane grins and blows smoke in the woman’s direction.

“Actually, I didn’t pop out.”

“No?”

“No. I waited until they were done. Until they left.”

“Wow! Kinky. So, what are you going to do?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing? He treats you like shit and you’re going to do nothing?”

“I can’t help it. There’s the children to think about.” She looks down to her belly. “Besides, I love him.” She offers Diane an envelope. “As we agreed.”

“You’re a piece of work lady.” Diane tucks the envelope into her purse.

“I’d prefer not seeing you again. Ever.”

“Suits me. You only called in the first place ‘cause you figured it was me he was fooling around with.” Diane blows a smoke ring. The woman turns her back and walks slowly toward the stairs. “There’s just one other thing I think you should know…” The woman stops and cocks her head. “Last night, when you were at home alone playing with the kiddies, Brian was fucking me at the Ramada.”

“What?”

“Sure. Smartass bastard figured he could have his cake and eat it too, so to speak. I mean, after his performance tonight in front of Lisa, he must’ve thought there’d be no way she’d ever believe me over him.”

“I don’t think I believe you.”

“Yeah. That’s why I made sure I caught it on tape. The quality’s not the best, but it’s clear enough.”

“What do you plan on doing with it?”

“For starters, I dropped a copy off at Lisa’s photo studio. You know – the studio Brian’s using your money to pay for so they can screw each other in the darkroom anytime they want? Otherwise, I haven’t decided.”

“You’re vicious.”
“I’m vicious? That’s a good one. Didn’t anything sink in tonight? I’m surprised you didn’t hop into bed with them. Hey, maybe you did. I wouldn’t doubt it.”

“Bitch.”

“Bite me.”

The woman storms off and Diane returns to her wine. David walks in and sidles up next to her.

“What’s shaking?” he says.

“Nothing much.”

“You wanted to see me?”

“Mm. You have a pleasant evening?”

“Babysat. Lisa was doing a shoot.”

“So… Pleasant, then. With the kids.” Diane shoves out her chin and gives David’s neck a sniff. “New aftershave?”

“What?”

“I didn’t know they made Opium for men.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Of course you don’t.”

“Listen, you called and said you wanted to see me. I’m here. What’s up?”

“I thought you liked being with me?”

David fidgets on the stool. He pokes at the Zippo. “Yeah, well… something’s happened. Between me and Lisa. I don’t know yet, but I think there’s a chance we might try to get back together.”

“How nice for you.”

“Yeah, so…”

“How are the kids?”


“One of them isn’t sick?” David gives her a quizzical look and shakes his head, no. “I was in Wal-Mart and picked up a couple of cartoon videos. Disney. I thought they might like them.”

She lifts a plastic bag up from off the floor.

“Thanks.” He peeks inside the bag.

“Do you ever see that young woman?”

“What young woman?”

“She said that?”

“Lisa told me you left her for a twenty-four year old bimbo.”

“She said that?”

Diane nods. “Huh! I wish.” He gives a short laugh, catches his image in the bar mirror and rubs his beard. “It’s itchy. I’m thinking of shaving it.”

“Lisa said that? Why would she say that?” Diane shrugs. There’s an awkward silence between them. Diane offers him a cigarette and he refuses. She strikes a light for her own.

“Maybe you’d be interested in one last time, eh? What do you say?”

“One last time…”

“I’m just kidding. You want to make things work with Lisa. I’m cool with that.”

“Yeah, but I mean… We haven’t really…”

“Go home David.”

“You’re sure?”

“I’m sure. And don’t call me.”

Diane motions to the bartender for another glass of wine. She takes the mini-cam from her pocket, opens the viewer and hits play. She smiles as she watches the images flicker before her. Her drink arrives.

“Anything interesting?” asks the bartender.

Diane tilts her head and regards the man. He’s younger than she is and wears a wedding ring. She knows he’s been ogling her since she walked in. She also knows this is not the question he wants to ask, but he has no choice. It’s in the genes.

“Oh, just a little something I’m putting together for a few friends to give to their kids when they get older.”

“That’s nice,” says the bartender.

“Yeah,” says Diane, watching the man’s eyes follow as she licks her lips, takes a deep breath and adjusts her breasts on the counter. “It is nice. Very nice.”
THREE POEMS
by Beatriz Hausner

The Heart Interviewed
Who are you? — asked the heart carefully threading the needle holding its round eye vertically as it stabbed deep into these constructions piercing the multiple layers of my fabrics.

Touching my soul the heart basted my edges with embroidery floss.

These knots are not simple— I answered — they are stitched by the nimble fingers of the Invisible One the One who anchors his threads with my limbs until they reach you:

Thus are we sewn to each other with permanent stitching.
Cow Head
For my father, Joseph, and in memory of István and Arthur Hausner

The ancestors have reached their destination. Invisible threads brought them to the sun drenched beach at Cow Head.

Ash turned to bone molded by the hands of the Silent One whose hymns dampen the wind with omens stirring bitter servings of darkness and weeping.

A thread of blood pushes the pale train which never stops crossing the night: Howling deep inside the gears of the engine tearing the tongue apart.

Their story is the story of all prey caught in the jaws of the automated dog its mantra of death systematically repeated year after year inside the proverbial whale.

Beached in the western shores of Newfoundland its eye silently watches us mourners who shout our prayers to the north of that other season for answers:

Only their muted suffering remains ticking silently in the frozen water crossed by ice floes out at sea.

These are my dearly departed prisoners of the machine the digital precision of their warm tattoos now turned inward alive in this heart beating at the gates of pain: A single glass of water illuminates the world.
Sew Him Up

The heart goes looking for the man-doll searches him out in the seams of garments with the needle up the backless dress languishing inside a wardrobe made of skin.

Hiding behind built-up necklines her ghosts begin to pine for older darts those used to greet him concealed in clusters of pleats sometimes gussets.

*I seamstress of your dream present you with my little people. They are gathering threads pinning you to these diagonal cords the better to lace you to my love moods feel elastics piercing inward matching rhythms made basic patterns for you for me love of my heart.*

The doll’s limbs begin to issue from the machine. Casement and bobbin secure his head as the mistress and her fingers begin to feel the depth of emerging man. Trusted flatbed and slide plate work as she stitches his lines straight.

Once positioned regularity of needle feeds controller as electric surges push yarn into fabric without stopping: The muscles of heart’s leg come to a rest and the dressmaker breathes in. Summer air fills the room humidity urges her on as she lengthens strips of fur carefully laying a backdrop for the beloved’s teeth now greeting the mistress from enameled surface of mechanical garment maker.

*My buttonholes are as yet unmade mistress of the wardrobe. We come alive for one another inside these constructions. Raise your head above plaid: I will be delivered to the starched petticoats you’ve kept hidden from me since the mother of your mother wove the sewline to my centre. I have your mouth caught in mine. May we love one another inside the sewing kit with our sexes and a fingerless glove.*

The rattle begins to drive those trembling columns of sound pushing extremities into extended sleeves: prong-tongued noise crowds the senses of the ideal dressmaker always breathless always waiting for the eye and hook of her older skin to come undone.

Rising powerful and sinewy the doll pulls his new extremities into place searches out his maker inside silk lined pockets the ones she keeps for her ghosts further in from the zipper that draws coils and eyes into deep tissue.

*Lust is slowly seeping into these fabrics beloved of the stitched heart. I feel the pull of your mechanical threads bearing on tongue as I follow the long seam down your back splitting you in half entering you as stitching gives way to pleasure I who am sewn to you by an invisible hand am renewed: nests of lace and hoardings of silk gather in my armpits for your breath.*

The needles begin to turn dull from sweet talk as machine goes to work one last time: Blood now flows inside man doll his capillaries feed the heart entirely releasing him impelling him to his seamstress and the continuum of their nuptials love’s baroque mutterings on the shop floor.
GOLDILOCKS
AND THE THREE BEARS,
BY TS ELIOT

by Daniel King

The pine forest, the cottage, the bears, Goldilocks.
Characters and writing.

The key: the gold hair. Guilt.

You in the gilt locks. An integral part. Pining for the role you stole, baring your soul.
   The broken chair of Being. The bed. The porridge.
Who’s been eating my
Who’s been
Who
THE ORTHOSCENDANT YODEL OF THE MEGASCULE
by Gary Barwin

A saxophone has an octave key. It allows you to play in two octaves. Once I borrowed an electronic saxophone. It had five octave keys. There was the exhilaration of jumping up an octave, and then another and another. As if I could leap through the clouds and find new worlds, and then new worlds, and then new worlds. Cerulean. Sur-rulean. More real than real. Beyond duality. Notes beyond the fanfares of imaginary trumpets, their names spelled with letters more capital than capital.

Nouns so proper they enter philosophy. The ascension and then the ascension again of the capital.

I write words with these letters and the tax department trembles. My sixth grade teacher weeps and then runs through the school reciting last week’s spelling list.

Trees moves away from me when I write return addresses on envelopes. I make basements and rain with this alphabet of letters past letters.

Beyond lower case, beyond upper middle case, beyond the lost little roads of our country. Letters only angels could spell. Hovering over our alphabet, yodeling songs above hearing, writing a cursive of clouds, a greater than of poems.
SELF PORTRAIT by Andrej Dudek-Dürer

“...We are immaterial beings, despite the pretence of materiality. A human being is a sort of ENERGY CONCENTRATION, which for the duration of one’s life serves in this dimension, in this time-space.” -- A. Dudek-Dürer, [untitled text], Andrzej Dudek-Dürer. Meta... Przestrzenie X, April- May 1995, Galeria 526, Poleski Ośrodek Sztuki, Łódź s. nlb, (Xerox print). Translated into English.

Autoportret Miejski I, fragment 1 / City Selfportrait I, fragment 1, 2004 43 fotografia, druk cyfrowy / photography, digital print 80 cm x 55 cm [See: catalogue & tour for the Andrej Dudek-Dürer retrospective, ed.].
Three Poem Cells
by John Gilmore

1.
I know she’s there. I know where she sits. How she sits. The wall she sits against. The bench is hard. The hardness is a small pleasure. The ache of her ankle, a small pleasure. (Sometimes it starts like this.) I know her need, sudden, to move. I hear her limping, the boards creaking. I hear her crossing the room. I know when she crosses back, and when she goes into the room beside mine. I hear her lie on the bed. (I hear creaking). It’s then I rise and take my cup and open the door and cross quickly. My turn to move. When I return, I see her cup on the table, and sometimes a peel and a knife. Her door is open. I cross quickly, glancing quickly. I see her leg, part of it, raised on a pillow.

2.
One haunting pitch, a long note. The time of one half breath. A slow period, then silence. Then it starts again. I don’t know it’s name, but I have heard it before. I can’t say when. Enough times to remember it, when I do hear it, and to know I haven’t heard it in a long time. Not here. It wasn’t here. It was another room, outside another window. Always, I think of going out to look for it, but I know I will not find it. It will hear me clumsily coming and fly away.

3.
We could go on forever like this. Figures at the end of a room. I keep seeing her there, waiting. The patience in her waiting. Her ability to wait, to not move. Hours in her place, the warm heavy bench, stained and rubbed smooth. I keep seeing her there, sitting, outside her room, the light falling across her, and across the table before her, her thighs warmed. (Saplings. Green.) I keep seeing her there, thigh over thigh, dark wale. (Blood red.) Waiting to begin. The story. The repetitions. Taking all of this up in her arms. (Hyacinths. The dew.) The room spread before her in the warm arched light. (Shafts on her flaring skin.)
Four Visual Poems by Jesse Ferguson

“Conception.com”
“Internal medicine”
"Lead Birds"
Figure 13.2: Many small words are needed to support a single large, compound word.

Figure 13.3: Though it may seem harsh, the hunter and his family need to harvest at least three stanzas per season. The semantic chain from letter to poem is hardly efficient, but it is no less necessary.

“Semantic Chains”
On first looking into Adorno’s Jazz
by Edward Nixon

the man lived through the passage of phrases
monastic intensity coupled with mindful pleasures
aesthetic concerns triumphant as a whip crack
it’s crucial to make certain playback is accurate
vital to know that one’s own concerns are met
impossible to write

    poetry after death camps
the world

    yes the mélange of real and symbol and whim
the ‘world’

    is surely – his world – surely dead
so no there is no system that permits
one to accept
two dirty notes as the new
and no fair trade
pan flute for a snare drum

    smudge chords as you play
    and welcome barbarism
music is too important to be left and far too imperative to be right

who was this hoodoo man
this voodoo princeling
this old bourgeois Marxian
this brilliant inheritor of German

    musical economy
    political psychology

but Teddy
    there was tone
    and melody
    and structure
    and time that would not submit

to 12-toned angels
incommensurate
your knowledge and that jazz

Coltrane
Davis
Ellington
Basie
Parker
Dizzy

you should have let the Angel play her game with history

    in the mood for love

after kulture got gang raped and gunned down

    April in Paris

shaved heads and complicity

    my melancholy . . .

so blown and squeezed into soft atonal slaps

Herr Doctor all is forgiven in the text
and wrong on one score old sir
we can let that page blaze
and listen still in sore and torn amaze
From: “ARABY” by Tom Dilworth

(Based on a university examination answer, where the Irish boy in Joyce’s ‘Araby’ gives up city life for the Lady of Shalott).

Already exhausted from penetrating 412 pages of tough, onion-skin anthology paper, I swim through water lilies, fight through thick willows, scale a steep tower.

‘Here’ gasp, gasp, ‘I am, darling,’ gasp. ‘I’ve had enough of bazaars,’ gasp. ‘My gift is me.’

Regarding me in a dark mirror, she casually asks in a toff accent, ‘Who are you?’ ‘I’m anonymous.’ ‘Not a knight, I notice.’ ‘No, but I’d like to stay the night.’

Sigh. ‘If you wish, but I dislike the direct approach.’

A few evenings later, I manage to kiss her, but she refuses further intimacies, murmuring, if I hear right, about ‘having the curse.’

She weaves at her loom.

I look on or out the window, stroll round the room, look out the window some more, play with the yarn (‘Please put that down.’)

put it down.

Still she won’t look at me straight, so, after a few days, I say goodbye. She sneezes.

Eventually, I come to a garden. A bird takes off just overhead—flap, flap. Gives me quite a start.

But a nice place, this, with lovely language all round, till, out of the blue, somebody calls me a ‘sod’ and a, get this, ‘deceiving elf’. Declining further abuse, I slip away.

On my left I pass a nice-looking couple, she moaning and speaking language strange—Gaelic, I think—to him obviously smitten with her. He’s in armour, a knight. Don’t they have all the luck. Maybe he’s the one the lady in the tower is saving herself for, though I’d say this one’s taken.

Too much like watching couples spooning in Phoenix Park—time to go. I’d like to get knighted, though.

It’s a real leg up, romantically.

I break into a long ballad, not far from the end of it, and manage to get a job rowing, something I’ve never done before, but you learn fast.

The harbour pilot and I are ferrying a too-jolly priest—you know the type, one who doesn’t get out much.

1 ‘Adieu’
As we draw near a ship,
it sinks, just like that,
leaving a solitary man floating.
We help him into our boat,
and the pilot faints. Dripping and scraggy,
the man takes the oars.
You’re welcome to them, I think.

He looks like the devil himself,
as I’m compelled to announce.
This surprises me.
Not that I’m so polite,
but I’ve seen as bad in the streets of Dublin.
Then, get this, I find myself obliged to go crazy
for the rest of my life.
Wanting no part of that,
I move again through paper.

Quite near is a walled park with a river. It’s really lovely. I especially like the
sinuous rills and a dome, very cool inside and echoey.
‘Hello hellohellohellohello’
There’s nobody but me, so I slip into a simile and attempt to strike up a conversation
with a wailing woman jilted by a demon lover. I think I know who. Of course, she’s better
off without him, but you can’t tell her that. I ask, ‘Does he enjoy rowing?’
Bulls eye!—the volume goes way up. And I thought I felt bad about Mangan’s sister!
You don’t like leaving a woman in such a state, but I can’t get a word in edgewise and
my being here is not, you know, consoling. So, maintaining a sympathetic expression, I
back away, right into the memory of a vision.
A nice girl is playing an odd looking ukulele on her lap and singing. I’m about to ask her
if she knows a place we can go for tea—I still have some of my uncle’s money—when
I’m suddenly swallowed by a hypothesis and someone is reciting a recipe involving
honey, dew, and milk while a very odd lad is going right off his head, his eyes flashing
and his hair floating in the windless air.
I get the hell out of there.

Close by, I come to a bunch of poems with lots of kids in them, mostly younger
than me, and I make friends with some: a chimney sweeper, a black boy, and a simple
lad, very religious, with a pet lamb. There are lovely pictures, too. And I enjoy standing
in the groups. It’s like having your photograph taken, but goes on, you know, too long.
There are complainers in the vicinity, among them some nut raving on and on about a
‘t-y-g-e-r’, which I believe is misspelled.

After saying goodbye to the lads, I make a very big push through a thousand or
so pages—it nearly kills me—but I come to a place I like, so I stop here. It’s a room
rented by a fellow named Kit who tells me he’s smart, which is odd because he’s not
otherwise snooty. He’s had mental trouble and prays a lot. We play with his cat. You’re
welcome to visit, too, he says to say. If you do, you won’t notice me. I yammer on here, I
know, but in someone else’s poem I’m quiet—as I am too, come to think of it, in my own
story, when I was there. I say was because, of course, it’s written in the past tense.

Note: A reader having difficulty tracing the boy’s journey may (re)read, in addition to Tennyson’s
“The Lady of Shalott,” Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” and “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,”
Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Kubla Khan,” Blake’s Songs of Innocence and
Experience, and Christopher Smart’s “For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry” in his long poem,
Jubilate Agno. All of these are on the internet, where he could have travelled much more easily.
Wing-beat
(homage to Georg Trakl)
by Jacqui Smyth

I
Overhead crows cackle and caw
in a pale blue sky he wants not to notice;
a cat scratches and someone sighs.

Off and on he works the White Angel Pharmacy
measures liquids, weighs powders, dips in
until day to day distractions drive him away.

In childhood, he walked with his sister
his purple felt hat afloat on the pond
tracks leave a pattern of scars and stars.

II
We live as we must under opal shadows
their weight immense, packed and unpacked.
I will die in a city
on a snowing twilight
in a hotel room off Main.
The room will have hosted
important guests, steady bachelors,
women exiled from home
and rural girls who left too soon.
It will have warmed derelicts
and drunks and those who retire
before their time. It will have
seen the pain, the blue moments
of soul and I will die, not in sleep,
but sitting, in the purple light
of twilight, when darkness forces
against breakwater your heart.
No, that’s wrong, I will die certainly
but in a car, it will be a raining dusk, locked
doors and the white meridian will merge . . . no
I’ve lost it now, it’s gone
that bloody cat’s paw, scratch scratch
all the live long night.
The Smell of a Dying Dog
by Will Reid

Well Katz, my dog is not doing well;
He exudes a dreadful smell.
His bleary eyes are filled with pain;
He limps to kibble and back again.

Uncle, my Bob’s so very sick;
In fact, my hound is fading quick.
And though I know, deep down inside,
Inverting clichés won’t stem the tide,

Word’s the Mom where Bob’s concerned;
He left his mother feeling spurned.
Embraced a logo-centric world
And her matriarchal strings unfurled.

Dispersing inverted cliché fog
Might cure my logo centric dog,
But it has only made him worse
So I’ve stopped it in this final verse.
TWO POEMS
by Mike Freeman

Genealogy
Bluebottle begat Astronaut.
Astronaut begat Foolscap.
Foolscap begat Arrowhead.
Arrowhead begat Fireman.
Fireman begat Chicken.
Chicken begat Continental Drift.
Continental Drift begat Cornflower.
Cornflower begat Fountain Pen.
Fountain Pen begat Kitten.
Kitten begat Super Nova.
Super Nova begat Bicycle.
Bicycle begat Anger.
Anger begat Sugar Plum.
Sugar Plum begat Armadillo.
Armadillo begat Hammock.
Hammock begat Skyscraper.
Skyscraper begat Armada.
Armada begat Sunny Side Up.
Sunny Side Up begat Coat Hanger.
Coat Hanger begat Leopard.
Leopard begat Hurricane.
Hurricane begat Paper Clip.
Paper Clip begat Spaghetti Bolognaise.
Spaghetti Bolognaise begat Apoplexy.
Apoplexy begat November.
November begat Stop Sign.
Stop Sign begat Candle.
Candle begat Spider Eggs.
Spider Eggs begat Telephone.
Telephone begat Crab.
Crab begat Glass Of Milk.
Glass Of Milk begat Radar.
Radar begat Cocker Spaniel.
Cocker Spaniel begat Infamy.
Infamy begat Toast.
Toast begat Postal Worker.
Postal Worker begat Grain of Sand.
Grain Of Sand begat Gravy.
Gravy begat Leap Year.
Leap Year begat Ocean.
Ocean begat Typewriter.
Typewriter begat Eel.
Eel begat Apple Cider.
Apple Cider begat Plutonium.
Plutonium begat Chewing Gum.
Chewing Gum begat Adultery.
Adultery begat Cheese Grater.
Cheese Grater begat Global Warming.
Global Warming begat Tick Tack Toe.
Tick Tack Toe begat Horse Hair.
Horse Hair begat Fudge.
Fudge begat Oasis.
Oasis begat Shag Carpet.
Shag Carpet begat Transubstantiation.
Transubstantiation begat Mouse Trap.
Mouse Trap begat Pickle.
Pickle begat Communism.
Communism begat Light Switch.
Light Switch begat Narwhale.
Narwhale begat Nail Bomb.
Nail Bomb begat Tulip.

My Threadbare Black Armband

“Never that which is shall die.”—Euripides

is is
& always will be is
is will never be was
even when is is was

when is is was
is is is!
& always will be will be
when will be is is
& is was
FOUR POEMS
by Jenny Sampirisi

1.

h,w d, y,u st,p water cup it shhh ,r slip beneath it t,
   make the b,dy still

this b,dy m,uthing water s, the ,ther can
   swell ah ah the air

c,mmas seeping w,rds shush shush

h,w d, y,u speak n,w when everything is shutting

2.

between pitch and heave. hwa eve. modulate the thrust. the wait. ing. ing. shed of the
b,dy. lateral ushh. thrust or. drag. we move a slip. wait. hushhlip the wake. breathe
forward. moment us or um. and swall. over. throat shear still water. over again. oval.
again. thrust. ushh ushving. sip the wake. tongue the wait. heave. huhhhh.
3. slip the ratio. the tail beat. hushlings rest or move. move. thick-lipped undula. shhh. quiet stones between words. fin lines. to become a word wording. and eat our b,dies. teethe the meat of other shushing. always perpendicular to light. and study the flow field. we reach maximum heave. huhhhh. mean the path of motion. wait. the mean path of motion. wake decays on either side of the b,dy. skin through water or language pools. shush. quick silent stones between. shush. the wait. the b,dy waiting.

4. who says shushing th what th water th space of suh wallow is a whole note moved over move over or th air that lap that lacks th splint or recombine of shallow who said this leaves us throated labial fin sucking our glottis to pull a limb tongue from gill a hush water pace of swall o o or we never moved we never said if we never said it was silent stones it was just a were a word it was just sink or suhwim wording th hook to pull us up up to pull us greasy a tongue and hole and hold ush up lip popping th air
From Global Mail Art Documentation project (fragment) by Ryosuke Cohen (Japan)
Ode to *A. proteus*
by Paul Vermeersch

Little one, you have mastered the arts of taking and giving. When you take even the tiniest crumb, you take the whole of it with the whole of yourself, enveloping it, creating a hollow place inside of you to keep it hidden, to keep yours, until that place is empty again, and it collapses in upon itself, and the need to fill it returns, and you take.

But when you give, little one, there is no saint or saviour who can match your generosity. Only you give yourself so perfectly you give yourself twice, each to a different future, each from a single past. Only you, *Amoeba proteus*. I believed it was possible, once, to give and take the way you do, when the world seemed made of knives, and all I wanted was flesh, and all I felt was want.
The Denatured Poem
by Ryan Fitzpatrick

The most ambitious tipping bottle is status and power based.

That Archimedes could lift position in a love poem slavery, trade unions, at all.

The poor, yet educated, structurally sound, watch very big people get paid.

A couple of bottles and the city relaxes, forgets public reports and meetings.

After a star fuses, will it tolerate ambiguity, make realities concrete?

A totemic court crafts small holes in hominid static complexity.

That Euclid is a denatured denizen; geometric sounds left heartbreaking.

To recollect a life – swooning photographs – boil off photographs.

In propriety, a warm dish, ceiling repairs holes blink in dignity or rain.

A useful window on the state building trusts, or consumer model makes good.

That a poet may wish to play at memorabilia stirred by explosions.

If mathematically true, truth creaking wheels move statutes in clear relationships.
Galaxy Trading
by Kim Goldberg

Kandahar
the Monarch undergoes dramatic migrations and
a division of Galaxy Trading

Shebergen Airbase
forms large overwintering
major combat
colonies numbering in the millions

One half inch
of butterflies
equals 150 kilometres

During the summer
on your Play Army map
males patrol open fields
training camp, transport, airport, base
or similar areas

Shock and awe your friends
in search of females

Warning!
The adults store cardiac glycosides

Choking hazard
derived from the milkweed they ate as caterpillars

Not suitable for children under 3 years old
making them poisonous to other animals
– a product of Toy Galaxy

(Assembled from toy packaging and Peterson’s Field Guide to Western Butterflies)
Our house, cuboid
   of roundnesses - apple,
clock, thumb-piano

   Half-moon
   of peach, staining a page
   of geometry homework

Four phones in the house
   yet when ringing starts
we run, search, shout

   Season of blackouts -
   flashlights in a row:
   mother, father, daughter, son

Ancestral photos -
spider's strand linking
grandparents to grandparents

   On my son's mobbed desk
   green rubber T-Rex,
   fallen on its side

Door slams: a time-out.
   In minutes, she's heard talking,
buoyant-voiced

   Bright light saved them
   from basement fears. Now
   they want the dark, with candles.

Rows of books hidden
   behind rows of books -
secret life of the house
On the Philosophy shelf
   an owl’s feather,
   great talons curved

Older cat looks up
   at the Celtic carving
of two dogs intertwined

   So tempting to pull,
   the chain suspended
   from the Brazilian monk’s bell

Between potted plants,
   two dead cats’ tags,
tarnished, in a jar

   One silverfish
   circles poetry mags
   stacked on the bathroom floor

How did the King
   lost from the chess set
end up in the compost bin?

   Amidst homework sheets,
cards to mail to another
dead uncle’s family

Out of its case,
   propped on its stand, the guitar
stays more in tune these days
From: *Thumbscrews*
excerpt of “a short campaign”
by Natalie Zina Walschots

**disarm**
- vinyl curtail
- beads milky
- sullen pinscher
- plucks sleeker
- torrent frolic
- buzz licks her
- squealer lippy
- damp razor
- flick her faucet
- thrums opal
- squelch steamer
- dorsum gage
- pout apricot
- succour skin
- keratin sucker
- throaty gleam
- croon waterlogged
- vapour liable
- scratch undone
- reluctant curl
- stem runoff
- inverted bare
- loopy aloe
- baby powder
- epithelial
- epi cure

**unarmed**
- cleft unpeel
- halter clutch
- sour prickle
- curtly bend
- taut languish
- slattern lift
- laud curdle
- shin girder
- coddle nerve
- bit pearly
- nudge lustre
- ply leather

**armament**
- glass clinks mint
- rose tints
- wink crass sins
- blank tarts
- ice blinks risk
- mics hiss
- blank hits glib
- harsh bliss
- tanks swarm grit
- crisp shanks
- sharp arcs tisk
- mire ink
- gripper
**armature**
- hush clay surety
- flannel altar
- neck pools receptive
- clavicle pine
- blush coy piety
- lino falter
- thumbs press trachea
- cervical spine

**armoury**
- studded tongue drawls
- sudden ululation
- appeased moray eel
- mouths plead
- lubricious houri
- loses the blouse
- roils gold gutted
- wrecked lordly wallow
- huff loaded galleons
Image by bill bissett (Canada)
Excerpt from *Wonderfull*  
by Neil Scott

When Emma Brodie, local prophet and mother of three, steals a boat and exiles herself to the middle of the bay for seven days and seven nights, she sets about a chain of strange and wonderful events in the sleepy village of Garfax—a village no longer listed on any official government document. Radios begin to speak secrets and unintended confessions, a rainstorm occurs that lasts for months, a young boy dies mysteriously in the surrounding woods after following the dictates of his heart, and Caleb Anson, the village's prodigal son, returns after a long absence with a grand design to bring Garfax into "the future." This magic realist tale, where dead relatives play dominoes in the houses of their loved ones, is told by Emma's youngest son, Oswald, a shy, observant boy living in the shadow of his charismatic family. *Wonderfull* tells the stories of Garfax—which has become the stuff of legends to outsiders—and reveals how this village's unlikely past catches up to its inevitable future.

The next morning the radios changed. The first person who noticed, the first person who listened long enough to realize that the radio was saying something different than it had for all the years before, was Aunt Connie.

She was doing her crosswords. She was sitting at the kitchen table.

Laid out in front of her she spread the week's worth of crosswords produced by Barton Hen's newspaper. Each puzzle had been cut out and sat in chronological order next to its cousins. Dressed in her bathrobe, munching on a bowl of cereal, Aunt Connie pulled her legs up onto the chair and sat cross-legged.

Aunt Connie had never been anyone's wife. She had never been anyone's girlfriend. She had never had any children or any real friends with which she could spend much time. When she came home, she came home alone, and for the first thirty years of her life this bothered her immensely. She felt the lack, the emptiness, that others supposed she should feel.

"You poor thing," they'd say, looking at the solitariness of her life.

And Connie would look at her own life and wonder what was so terrible that everyone around her saw. So many people said it, however, that she started to believe it herself. Until one day, in her mid-thirties, when she crawled out of bed on a Saturday morning and ate breakfast stark naked on her living room couch, curtains drawn wide with a good view of the bay.

It was the most liberating moment of her life. Instead of a series of empty, interconnecting rooms, which was how most people described her home, the house filled up with her own personal quirks and eccentricities.

"I have enough life in me," she said. "To fill up all these rooms. I don't need anyone else to do it for me." So resolved, Aunt Connie settled blissfully into an old maid hood of her own delirious and joyful choosing.

A husband would have ruined all that. A husband wouldn't have understood how much pleasure it gave her to sit cross-legged in a natty old robe in the early hours of the morning and meditate on the crosswords of the last week. A husband would wonder why she didn’t ever use a dictionary. Why she didn’t stop if a question plagued her. Why she didn’t just pick up a respectable and *useful* pastime. It was for all of these reasons
that Aunt Connie frequently said, “Husbands are bullshit,” whenever she listened to one of her friends talk about their married woes.

She was acutely attuned to the rooms of her house. So much so that when the radio stopped playing music she noticed almost immediately. She placed her pen down on the table. She listened.

Sometimes the reception dipped in Garfax. It went hand in hand with having a jerry rigged system of metal trees stealing the lingering signals from civilization. Weather played havoc with the signals, often times leaving empty days of mindless static while storms raged along the coast.

This wasn’t static though. This was groaning.

Aunt Connie frowned.

Adjusting her robe tighter across her chest, she stood up and went over to the kitchen counter where the radio sat. She bent down, leaned closer. She listened. Through the gargle and hiss of ambient radio noise she heard the sound again. The huffing and grunting.

“Oh God,” the radio said. “Oh my Jesus.”

Aunt Connie’s eyebrows raised.

It was a man’s voice, but whose voice she couldn’t tell. The ambient noise distorted the tenor and depth of the sound, making it deeper in places, higher in others. Stretching the voice out so it sounded distant, strained. But it was most certainly a man’s voice. He grunted again. Cursed some more. His breathing came hard.

“That’s it,” the radio said, this time in a woman’s voice. “That’s it, that’s it, that’s it. Come on, come on, come on.”

Aunt Connie looked around the kitchen, suddenly aware that she was listening to something very private, something she shouldn’t be able to hear. Her face flushed red, but she reached over and turned up the dial.

The groaning and moaning of the radio, the staccato exclamations, continued for several minutes. She heard the crush of leather seats. The banging of feet against a dashboard. The moment-to-moment repositioning of bodies in a cramped space.

“Here it comes,” the male voice said.


“Sorry.”

“No. Wait, you bastard. I’m not there yet.”

“Sorry.”

“Wait!”

“Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.”

“Don’t you fucking dare.”

“Fuck!”

There was a moment of silence, of settling leather and relaxing limbs. Then a smack of skin on skin, of bones colliding. “I told you to wait,” the woman said.

“Sorry,” the other voice replied. “I couldn’t help it.”

“That’s bullshit.”

“Sorry,” the voice repeated, suddenly farther away, falling away. “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry my ass.”

And then the radio died altogether, only to return to a different brand of music entirely from what she was listening to before. It was piano music now. Classical. One of Franz Emerick’s more famous compositions, the Calling of Wings.

Aunt Connie exhaled. Her heart raced. Her face burned. She didn’t realize that she had been holding her breath.
From “Mappaemundi” by Carol Stetser (USA)
From “Mappaemundi” by Carol Stetser (USA)
Why Are You So Sad? Selected Poems of David W. McFadden reviewed by rob mclennan

For years now, my favourite poetry collection by Toronto writer, editor and troublemaker David W. McFadden has been his book *The Art of Darkness* (Toronto ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1984), with striking blue cover and a detail of a painting by Puvis de Chavannes, "The Beheading of John the Baptist." After reading a number of his collections before this, the poems in *The Art of Darkness* were the ones that made me finally understand, the poems that convinced me of the strength and force of the writing of David W. McFadden (well before he added the "W." in the middle of his name), with two of the finest poems there being "Frank O'Hara" and "New York."

NEW YORK

Frank O'Hara used to say he couldn't enjoy a blade of grass unless there was a subway handy; he spent a month in Boston and when he returned complained about how provincial they were up there. This year five people already have been killed by pieces of masonry falling from tall buildings and eleven people have been killed by demonic comics who sneak up behind people in subway stations when the moon is full and push them in front of trains but there is no fear in New York for I am here walking with friends down Fifth Avenue on Easter Sunday. There is a De Chirico exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art but it is so warm and sunny outside and the streets are so full of happy people gawking at the fire eaters and the trumpet trios in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and here is a religious argument, an old guy with bad teeth is holding a Bible and yelling at this young ordinary-looking guy and telling him to wipe that smile off his face because the Bible is serious business and the young guy says Christ put that smile on my face and I'm not taking it off, and the old guy tells the young guy he's a coward, too cowardly to get down on his knees and pray, and the young guy is a little embarrassed, a crowd is forming, and I yell out yeah, get down, get down, and the young guy gets down on his knees with a sigh and he and the old guy pray and Valerie and I walk on, we seem to have lost Sarah and Kenny and Jim but we know they'll show up.

In an Indian restaurant
I overhear a man saying to a woman I know what you're going to say and I agree with you, and I think God that could have been me. And I overhear a stockbroker ask his friend is that Copper Lake any good? And as Frank O'Hara lay on his death bed in Bayview General Hospital in Mastic Beach dying of abdominal injuries
after being hit by the left fender of a dune buggy at Fire Island
he joked with the nurse who was French
and insisted on speaking French with her
and Valerie bought a canvas bag marked MoMA
at the Museum of Modern Art where O'Hara used to work
and now I am heading west into British Columbia
where everything is beautiful
and the air is pure
and the water is pure
and there is a general lack of urban blight
and in a moment I will board the plane for Vancouver
and there will be a small delicate sophisticated woman in her thirties
sitting next to me and reading French newspapers
and she will order Tia Marias and milk
and I will order Bloody Marys
and we will taste each other's breakfasts
and we will talk about Bonnard and Matisse
and I will tell her about Frank O'Hara
and she will tell me about Mayakovsky
how he was always striking up wonderful conversations
with strange and beautiful women in public places
and we will confess to each other
that we are primarily interested
in the quiet life.

After the poetry of New York School poet Frank O'Hara, there were many admirers (including another Canadian poet, Ken Norris) and even further imitators, but none managed to extend the idea of the "I did this, I did that" sort of poem in any way close to that of David McFadden. The self-proclaimed master of the coincidence, Toronto's David McFadden (originally from Hamilton, Ontario) somehow manages to write poems that exist as part of the world around him, instead of simply being about him. His poems aren't *about* the world, his poems *are* the world. The author of a great many poetry collections, books of fiction and even some recent travel books [see my review of his most recent one here], David W. McFadden was, throughout the late 1960s and well into the 70s, the ying to George Bowering's yang; McFadden was to Toronto and Coach House Press what Bowering seemed to be to Vancouver and Talonbooks. Both close with the late London, Ontario visual artist Greg Curnoe as friends and collaborators, Bowering even edited McFadden's first and only previous selected poems, *My Body Was Eaten By Dogs* (Toronto ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1982). This new collection, *Why Are You So Sad? Selected Poems of David W. McFadden* (Toronto ON: Insomniac Press, 2007), at some 328 pages, is an appropriate homage to his poetic output over the past few decades, working with poems from *Letters from the Earth to the Earth* (Toronto ON: Coach House Press, 1968) and *Poems Worth Knowing* (Toronto ON: Coach House Press, 1971) to the more recent *Five Star Planet* (Vancouver BC: Talonbooks, 2002) and chapbook *A Little Kindness* (Ottawa ON: above/ground press, 2002). Who else could write a poem about a cow swimming Lake Ontario, or wry sentimental observational poems about Hamilton, Ontario's steeltown?

SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE

You're waiting for a bus at Ward and Baker
and a woman comes up to you
and asks for a dance.

You tell her you don't want to dance
for there is too much snow
and not enough music
and she says you didn’t mind
dancing with me last night.

And when you tell her she's mistaken
you didn’t dance with her or anyone last night
she says oh yes you did
and when you ask where
she says up there
on the roof
and she points to the roof of Hiperson Hardware.

In fact, she says, as her voice drops
and a shy look comes into her eyes
I've even danced with you on other planets
Venus and Mars for instance
and then she walks away

leaving you to wonder about the part of your life
that is secret even from you.

Thirty or more trade titles published since the late 1960s is quite a lot of work by someone who hasn’t really had a lot of critical attention over the past few years. Hopefully, a collection of this sort will help change some of that. The editor of the current project, Toronto writer and editor Stuart Ross, is even considered by many to be influenced by the strange humour and often surreal turns of McFadden's poetry, and an entirely appropriate fit to go through the decades of Uncle Dave's work for such a collection. As Ross writes in his introduction:

If Frank O'Hara was the poet of "Personism" — recording the minute details of a life lived in New York City among writers and artists — then David W. McFadden might be the poet of "Otherpersonism," recording his fascination with everyone around him: writers, artists, the guy working the convenience store, the woman on the bus, in Toronto, Hamilton, Havana, or wherever the poet happens to be.

That's not to say the chameleon-like narrators of David's poems don't play a pivotal role in the works, whether they are McFadden himself, an innocent observer, or a plain-spoken killer. But David's poetry, like David, is social. It's interested in people, and in trees, squirrels, dogs and oceans. It's also social in that it wants to be read, and it makes itself readable — not just to academics and to other poets, but to the convenience-store guy and the woman on the bus.

The socialness seems to arise from a deep humanistic impulse in David's work, an interest in and compassion for others that exists contemporaneously with an imbued despair. When David read through the final selection for this volume, he remarked on how sad it is. But when I read his work, I feel that he acknowledges sadness — the sadness of mortality, missed opportunity, war — but then revels in a delight and wonder, in even the most ordinary things, and in the privilege of being alive and getting to look at clouds, watch movies, listen to Ella Fitzgerald, walk through a neighbourhood and talk to strangers in bars. Even as a mopey teenage poet, I saw this love-energy in those fantastic McFadden books I stumbled across in the public library. Of course, what also attracted me was how god-damn funny these poems so often are.
He is *Writing out from the social*, as Ross suggests. George Bowering said much the same thing over twenty years ago in his piece "Proofing the World: The Poems of David McFadden" from his book of essays *A Way With Words* (Ottawa ON: Oberon Press, 1982), writing:

One Saturday night I sat with David McFadden in Maple Leaf Gardens, watching Toronto beat Detroit 6-0. At game's end, when sixteen thousand people began to rise and file out, McFadden opened his book bag and shouted, "Wait, wait, I have some poems to read to you!"

He was joking but he was not kidding. All his writing life he has acted as if the poet had a real function in the social life of his country and world, as if poems were composed by a human being intent on taking part in the building of a place to live in. The poet is perhaps not the unacknowledged legislator of the world, but if the citizens could have their ears unstopped they would at least recognize him as a functionary.

McFadden does not want to replace the famous athletes in the workaday dream machine; he simply wants to take his turn with them.

One of the strengths of the plain-speaking poetry of David W. McFadden, as referenced by both Ross and Bowering, is the strange humour and humanity that he brings to the table, without falling into sentimentality. McFadden is a poet who wants the odd thoughts that flutter inside his skull to reach out to a wider audience, whether he be writing a poem or walking down the street. In an interview conducted by David Collins in the first issue of the late lamented *Missing Jacket* (Ottawa ON: above/ground press, January 1996), McFadden talked about the effect he wanted his poems to have on readers, saying:

They'll have a different effect on different readers. We always want what we can't have and as for me I want to write poems that can be read over and over and over again. Somebody can read my poems with such immense delight they will want to do it again next week or next year and they'll want to buy copies of my books for all their friends. I consciously try to design my stuff in such a way that it will become more interesting the older it gets, like photography in general. I think it's perfectly okay to do that. But to *strive* for the kind of effect that will cause a reader to want to read the piece over and over again (or even just remember it fondly) for the rest of his or her life, well that just isn't in me. It just seems so damned fake and so damned egocentric and so damned pretentious. It's not craft, it's self-regard. I'd like to be able to do it but something in my genetic spiritual makeup forbids me. Great if it comes naturally but I forbid myself from striving for it or even twitching a muscle in that direction. Call me perverse, but that's the way I am.

There are many popular songs, even some cheesy sentimental ones, that I'd truly love to have written. Like "I'm My Own Grandpaw" or "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" or "Stardust" or "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" or "Louis Louis" or "Bad to the Bone" — or (my fave) "The Marseillaise."

Heaven forbid I'm not trying to affect any behavioral or psychological changes in my readers, like make them better people or anything like that. Improve my readers, *moi*? I'm not one of those people who practice what the poet Victor Coleman calls "American Fascist Buddhism." But the individual artist does have something vital to say about the fate of humanity. The harder the individual artist works the more wondrous the human race becomes... We're involved in a very political process, and this won't be realized for a few decades yet just exactly what it is we're doing, but dammit it's important. As the Tibetan
Buddhists say when they sit down to visualize the cosmos wheeling in their minds: "I do this for others." If large numbers of readers decided my work was seriously worthwhile, that would be nice. After all, I've over the years found it largely worthwhile in spite of all that anguish and despair that tend to go hand in hand with life as an artist, and poverty.

Too many times the appearance of a Selected Poems reads like a tombstone to a particular author, or a reminder that someone still exists, after not publishing for a few years; at least McFadden's last trade poetry collection was published as recent as 2002, and even the introduction by Stuart Ross talks about McFadden recently putting the finishing touches on a sequence of one hundred sonnets, putting David W. McFadden still in the midst of creating. It helps, too, that a number of his books are still in print, including his last few poetry collections published by Vancouver's Talonbooks, as well as his three Coach House Press novels *A Trip Around Lake Erie* (1981), *A Trip Around Lake Huron* (1981) and *A Trip Around Lake Ontario* (1988) rewritten to become the single volume *Great Lakes Suite* (Vancouver BC: Talonbooks, 1997), his Curnoe-McFadden collaboration two-volume reissued as *The Great Canadian Sonnet* (Coach House Books), and his more recent travel books published by McClelland & Stewart—*An Innocent in Ireland* (1995), *An Innocent in Scotland* (1999) and *An Innocent in Newfoundland* (2003). One of the interesting touches to *Why Are You So Sad? Selected Poems of David W. McFadden* is in how the book is structured (as Ross says in his introduction), less a matter of a thematic or chronological flow to the poems than a collaborative selection of what both editor and author thought most interesting throughout McFadden's poetry, existing in the order that made sense for the selected as a whole (although a list at the back of the book gives a sense of what poems are from what previous books). Interesting, too, are the notes written in the back by the author, giving little bits of extra information about particular poems, whether writing

**On the Road Again:** An attempt to describe a momentary experience of unconditional love of country. Sir Walter Scott does it more memorably in his "Lay of the Last Minstrel." At a press conference a few years ago, journalist Helen Thomas told President George W. Bush that "to understand the Iraqi resistance, I suggest reading the Scottish poet Sir Walter Scott. He wrote: 'Breathes there a man with soul so dead who never to himself has said this is mine own my native land.'"

or

**A Moment in the Life of the Members of the Graduating Class of Arnprior High School, 1976:** The Ottawa Valley is very beautiful during spring thaw.

A particularly interesting one was for the poem "SEX WITH A SIXTEEN YEAR OLD," a poem that apparently got him into more than a bit of trouble when it appeared in his poetry collection *There'll Be Another* (Vancouver BC: Talonbooks, 1995), writing:

**Sex with a Sixteen Year Old:** Maybe I should have replaced "Sex" with "Flirtation," but it's too late now. One wouldn't change a word in a poem after the poem had been published, just as a painter wouldn't be allowed to mess with a work he had signed and sold.

It's an interesting theory, especially after Ross in his introduction talks about McFadden working through the poems in this collection, "correcting" various mistakes from previous editions, and even tinkering with a few of them; I wouldn't have wanted this poem changed if he had.
SEX WITH A SIXTEEN YEAR OLD

What I hate is being in a bar and a beautiful woman squeezes in next to you and you strike up a wonderful conversation with a lot of vertiginous eye contact and just when you think you might be falling in love some big tough-looking guy shows up with a nasty scowl on his face and the woman sighs and gives you a sad look and whispers adios mi amigo

Also I hate it that you are flying off to Vancouver this afternoon just as I am getting interested in you which is unusual for me because I never get interested in anyone under forty and you're only sixteen. Sixteen! I know I refused to go for Chinese food with you last night because I figured there was a danger of us ending up in the sack and you only sixteen how could I have ever forgiven myself and what if my daughters ever found out

And today on the phone you give me a few more tantalizing details about your seemingly extensive and far-ranging sex life and you happen to mention you're a big noisemaker when you get going you wake up neighbours dogs cats birds for blocks around

And all of a sudden I realize I should have gone with you last night for Chinese food I love noisemakers they're my favourite people but it's too late and the next time I see you you won't be sixteen anymore

Sixteen come to think of it isn't all that young the little woman Charles Dickens left his wife and eight kids for was not much older and Lauren Bacall (when she put her lips together and blew in To Have and Have Not) was only sixteen and Bogie who took one look at her and decided to devote the rest of his life to her was three times her age four times would be scandalous but three times is okay
Part of my thinking on geography lately led me to the book the late Birk Sproxton [see my note on him here] did through Prairie Fire Magazine out of Winnipeg, the collection *The Winnipeg Connection: Writing Lives at Mid-Century* (Winnipeg MB: Prairie Fire Press, Inc., 2006). What is it about all this geography lately? Why do I feel, almost, that once you look for something, it's just about everywhere? As well as a recent poetry anthology for Chicago [see my review of it here] or what I've been doing recently for Ottawa poetry and fiction through Chaudiere Books, apparently there's even a new anthology of Saskatchewan poets I have yet to get my hands on. So much history, if it doesn't get collected or talked about, somehow manages to completely fall by the wayside, as so many of these histories do. For Winnipeg and Montreal, like any centre, they might be the centre of essential activity, but they are the ones that have to keep presenting that argument out into the world (a joke from the 1980s suggests that if it weren’t for Winnipeg, Toronto would have no arts scene…). If not for Laurence Ferlinghetti as publisher and Allen Ginsberg as promoter, would any of us have heard of the Beat writers? Without Ken Norris spending much of the 1980s doing the same for the Vehicule Poets of the 1970s, would they still even be close to any sort of equal conversation? Any community needs its promoters and cheerleaders as much as it needs those directly active in the production of new writing; without the next logical step, audience a few years down the road could easily suffer the same kinds of forgetfulness. Editor, Sproxton begins his introduction to *The Winnipeg Connection* by telling us:

> *The Winnipeg Connection* began in the afterglow of the special issue of *Prairie Fire* published in 1999 to coincide with the Pan-American Summer Games. We called the issue "Winnipeg in Fiction," a collection designed to celebrate Winnipeg's history as a place of writing. That summer Winnipeg was alive and bristling with good feeling about herself as she welcomed visitors from across the Americas. The special issue sold out quickly, and we realized we had tapped into a widely shared interest in the city's writing life as it emerges in English-language fiction. With fifty contributors in all, including striking art work and an intriguing batch of archival images selected by Louise Jonasson, the book-size magazine offered a visual as well as verbal feast. For visitors and Winnipeggers alike, "Winnipeg in Fiction" served as a healthy introduction to Winnipeg's literary and artistic life.

Some time later, the idea for *The Winnipeg Connection* began to brew. Then I approached the *Prairie Fire* people with a proposal to focus on Winnipeg at mid-century, especially the 1940s and 1950s. These were crucial years, I argued, for the emergence of an internationally acclaimed contingent of writers—Margaret Lawrence, Adele Wiseman, Patricia Blondal, Jack Ludwig and John Marlyn among them, a group aided and abetted by Malcolm Ross, James Reaney and many other. This was a time when Winnipeg once more remade herself as a vital hub of the literary arts. She had reached pre-eminent status through her many newspapers and the early-twentieth-century writing of Ralph Connor and Nellie McClung. In the World War II era Winnipeg's output and influence reached new heights, as the list above suggests.

A celebration of any sort along these lines is worth noting, and worth paying attention to. I just hope that someone continues the thread that Sproxton started, pushing further into the second half of the twentieth century and beyond with, perhaps, a further volume or two? It becomes interesting to see
the community that developed that would end up inventing such writers as Dennis Cooley, Rob Budde, Jon Paul Fiorentino, Di Brandt and Meeka Walsh, and so many others. The collection also includes a previously unpublished Margaret Laurence poem, "North Main Car" written in Winnipeg in 1948, that begins:

morning, and the city's steel hulk
heaves, stirs itself, who has been
a lovely giant held by enticing night,
un-gilding daylight, exploring now
her savagery and blemishes.

out of the north the streetcar crawls,
an outsize wood-and-iron worm.
people clamber aboard, still yawning,
an uneasiness in their faces
that the harsh day has not yet
pulled into tensions.

people have come from far off to this town,
from europe's handkerchief-sized farms,
from the winding streets of the world,
exchanging the known devil, the overseer's whip,
for another, sight unseen.

Somewhat closer to home (both geographically and temporally) is the critical collection Language Acts: Anglo-Quebec Poetry, 1976 to the 21st Century, edited by Jason Camlot and Todd Swift (Montreal QC: Vehicule Press, 2007), collecting new essays dealing with various aspects of Montreal poetry over the past few decades alongside a few older pieces by the late poet/teacher Louis Dudek, Peter Van Toorn and Geoff Hancock. The collection includes newer essays on works by Robert Allen, David McGimpsey, Van Toorn, Erin Mourè, Robyn Sarah and Anne Carson. One of the finest of the collection has to be Dean Irvine's piece "Fugitive Places: Anne Carson and the Unlost," that writes:

Carson's rise to literary celebrity coincided with her tenure as a professor of Classics at McGill University from 1988 to 2003. Although an English-language author living in Quebec, she had little reason to be concerned with Montreal's limited Anglophone audience. If she ever shared David Solway's anxieties about being a "double exile"—at once exiled from Francophone Quebec, and exiled from the rest of Anglophone Canada—her early critical success in the United States and concomitant penetration of international markets must have helped to assuage any concerns by enabling her to transcend limitations imposed by locality and nationality. After the London, Ontario small press Brick Books brought out her first poetry collection Short Talks in 1992, she rapidly secured an international following through publication by major American presses (New Directions and Alfred A. Knopf). To say that Carson has achieved a kind of literary celebrity unbounded by civic, provincial, or national boundaries is to state the obvious. As accruals of symbolic capital, neither her celebrity nor the status of her work derives from local or national recognition; this is the cultural logic of literary values transacted in an era of late capitalism. Carson trades her capital on a transnational English-language market, where the materiality of civic and national markets is liquidated under the pressure of late capitalism's push toward globalization.
Working to represent some of the threads of English-language poetry over the past few decades, alongside a bibliography of poetry magazines throughout the period, English-language (or, "Anglo") poetry publishers, poetry prize winners and Concordia University M.A. Poetry Theses, I have to admit I was disappointed to not even see a single reference to the Montreal anthology that Andy Brown and I put together a few years ago for the same publisher; was it simply because YOU & YOUR BRIGHT IDEAS: NEW MONTREAL WRITING (Montreal QC: Vehicule Press, 2001) wasn’t a poetry anthology, and instead an anthology of poetry and fiction? As Andre (later, Endre) Farkas and Ken Norris wrote at the beginning of their introduction to Montreal: English Poetry of the Seventies (1978):

English poetry in Montreal has always been written under the most unique conditions. Being a member of a minority culture within the bounds of a dominant Francophone community has made the English poet in Montreal intensely aware of his own language as well as informing him of the problem inherent in the use of language as an agent of communication. When he writes, the Montreal poet knows that the vast majority of people living in his city have no interest whatsoever in what he has to say because what he is saying is in a language that has no relevance to their cultural life. He also recognizes that, because he is Québécois, he is isolated from English Canada. The third disadvantage he experiences is that the isolated Anglophone community, unlike the Francophone, does not consider its arts as necessary for survival; rather, the modus operandi has been economic dominance. Yet, despite these somewhat sobering facts, or perhaps because of them, Montreal has been one of the important centers of English poetry in Canada for most of this century and is now, once again, after the lull of the sixties, beginning to assert itself.

An interesting product of the collection is seeing how Ottawa poet, Karen Massey (see my note on her here) finished her M.A. Poetry Thesis, "Soundings / 74 leaves" in 1992 (the only one that year, according to this book), making her a contemporary of 1990-1 students April Bulmer, David McGimpsey, Mark Cochrane, Richard Harrison and Ruth Taylor [see my note on her here]; is it any wonder I think she should have a book out? With a book working to encompass a space this large, it could only, in the end, be as large as the submissions will allow, showing but a fraction of the activity that has occurred in the city of Montreal over the past few decades (two essays that didn’t fit in the collection were actually included in a recent issue of Poetics.ca). Montreal is a complex town, and its poetry could never be encapsulated in a single bound collection of anything; perhaps the editors, or someone else, will see fit to continue the work they’ve started, perhaps as a subsequent volume, or through some other medium to continue the conversation?

Born in Ottawa, rob mclennan currently lives in the nation’s capital. The author of over a dozen trade collections of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, most recently the novel white (The Mercury Press) and subverting the lyric essays (ECW Press), he is spending the 2007-8 academic year in Edmonton as writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta. His online home is www.robmclennan.blogspot.com
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Visual Poem by Fernando Aguiar (Portugal)