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Gil Ott

I make plans.* If the past possesses me, I can at least lay hold of the future. A coach has many collars. I will refute the pull proposed from each succeeding statement. My leather-soled foot steps out upon the boards. Deliberate speed, fast nor slow, a man stumbles in his own mind. I will not stumble. I will inhabit the low bush, expect less. Random struts the ambient hubbub once intrudes upon the dream, or twice. I am more worthy than my portion. This certainly descends toward me from the distant heights. The horse has no rider, the car is empty. A voice issues from inside the tiny room. I must make myself small. I have embraced my deformity. I and I will not by the din the spectators unfurl be deterred. I stand at the lectern bluish-white in a light which dilutes all features, my eyes turned up, my forearms crossed below my neck. Isolated catcalls. Doubts. Spur me on. It is a matter of rhythm and alignment. In short, of grace, which cannot be acquired. Seek at all points the thinnest crevice for my denouement. Confidence and deceit ripping off another bit of flesh and chewing. Coin ye rosebuds at vespers. A ring of fire descends into the general gloom. I am chosen, but I refuse the assignment. The end of the world is no concern of mine. Whose world? An echo knows no master. In this way so much thought flows like a skirt about the hips of – what? What I cannot avoid I will avoid. The hammer, repeatedly, respectfully. Faith and discipline at odds, rise in my throat. Mundane panic where my senses rove. Stem attention to husk, seed, feces, the prayer once it has been uttered. Standing mute before the tower the highest window opens while the door before me stays shut. I will meet a shadow. Ignorant of my blemish, I force myself on the acquaintance. My friend excess and belly up the smoke. Blame follows loss. To say nothing crushed opportunity, however cyclical. I take notes, calculate, stay up late and alone. I wait my turn, maintain calm and dignity. Through the open window the anti-musical surf subverts attention. I will walk, I am walking the wreck that is the strand. Think it, and it is used up.

* Franz Kafka, 5/29/14.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis

Draft 39: Split

“The confusion and aimlessness
of thoughts”
hurl cross-hatched
dark-wood directions,
diffuse dark
tanglewords
void dreams, dark ticks-of
nah for nicht,
not for note,
selva for selveggia.

There
was a smudged midge
(this the past)’s
small death--
such a little nothing bug. There is
invisible (now present) continual
emptying, blank, through maximal
damage.
There will be no point
(a future tense)
to all this.

Eyes glaze; pen
loose, inattentive

limp hand
falls, adaze,

and, from
nothing, an

“It” mark dots
down on the page.

.

One day lose him her
One day lose them
Inky weeds all unrevealing
Hidden and without extension

As if, like referenced persons, they'd not been.

.

but speak of how that "it" emerged

it's "there" it's "where" it's never what

you think Might be

small bugs hit against a light, hard surface, might be

"blurs, lens flares, intruding shadows, amputated compositions"

to me like little momentos

places I

or meadows where they

.

might do what puncted by claves
might hear dizziness in rushes,
watery tintinnabulating pebbles shaken down a chute

Any "settled" circumstance of the ordinary
vibrating strangeness,
any hypnogogic changes,

the dark silhouette

of an event horizon

any two shadows blown -it and its after-

math (defined as harvest: mead, mown grass)

any windless, starless deep

will Verb; will Verb verb.

Eyes wrapped dark as any thing
No word strong as this intensity.
Take it all as a loss.

No way seeing is-ness
no way saying it-ness
except resistance.

Black arrow shot in blacker, blanker sleep.

.

No verbs. No words.

No writing. Nothing there but
---lessness and angry, back and front

but also look around thee.

At undecipherable Graffiti
sloppy scribble over the Focus

Group poster's high-end dewy-eyed design,

dark vandal slash marks on the photograph of Things
whose gem-like research Codes are not thereby undone.

.

Is that the only "Yes"? from demographics snaked around the mall?

the only "No"? in rips of undercounted rage?

Once there were nine miles of women circling the missile base
once singing down a country road were women “no more
war” no military destruction think the Peace conversion
cardinal rosettas talking, webs and ribbons tied to fencing
now here preemptive arrest Entrapment activists before the demo
police info sucked up Right-wing hit list
Arrest the puppetistas, wreck their stuff, their art.

Where and how can we speak of
this moment or method,
infiltration, blackout, provocation, disenfranchisement--

It is this:

You made a dot because you are a dot.

.

of difficulty getting to work foreign in a foreign country vorrei girare could manage to say but
not explaining wheel stuck axle looking fucked we wanted to move but couldn't could only
say I want, would like, to turn. This is the place where hopes had left their traces type trances
before realizing girare and jeer away so the dream wakes revolutionary melancholia here's
another day.

.

A student sound-spells
“social morays”
which calls up sting rays
scudding through oceans.
Not an accurate metaphor

for fulsome power--
such underwater hot-wired show
concealing actual cui bono.
Just open my heart and there you'll see
graven inside, ideology.
Suppose the convictions
chanted One Two Three Four
would that still be
viable?
would it make an intelligible way
that she acts, she reveals
a muted claxon of insider deals?
To Act-right. And then be written off.
When you are powerless
you say the same things
over again
and over it seems
the opposite of poetry,
no plumping sumptuous brocade
with self-
fashioning diction.
So writing is impossible,
my dog eats and is
vaccinated, unlike some people,
and I am helpless—can this be?--
hardened from the concrete
infrastructure rigid through me.
What would it take
to articulate it?
Is writing this way
legit?
Why is this entitled
split?
It's like I jolt my former hopes
with a rhymed bit.

.

Suppose
again or against

where I had been

suppose “inferior conjunction,”
defined--that things in the sky cross
each nineteen and a half months

roughing up the nap or smoothing down--dialectical contrarian vernaculars--
to show some patterns of what
gapped inference

to point out what “images”--
outright sight? words sheltered in lees? humming in the bushes?
moans of waste? and to describe--what? wash of the day? bitterness?

Suppose “things by the wayside in their irrelevance”:
splits, flinders, splinters, flint sparks,
stranger flares and spliced strings

in a foreign place the very place to traipse a foreign road a road for trying out a few key ever-
memorable nouns Notte, Nacht, Night, Nuit where will I come to sleep Windstille substan----
toll how to reach the pinhole. Foreign country in my own.

.

(nights of Hollywood fascism) (days of military realism)
(And the chiasmic variants, Hollywood realism, military fascism, and so on, nights and days crossed.
Hollywood militarism and fascist realism. Hollywood days. Realistic nights. And so on.)

.

But if the dot (subjunctive)
had a thread, it can, “helping verb,”

(tense, mood affirmative)

have a thread
swirled in it, smudged from it

a physics of hope?

invisible strings that fling through air:

the filaments situated but unfixed

a political ethics?

and exiled in a simple walk,
going to, going fro one brushes

vectors

webbings, they cross-hatch
your motion, quipu measures

of watchfulness.

This is the necessary no and yes
weighing power and justice

Without recompense:

This is one
recording

“Angel”

that hardly anticipates choirs
of multiple redemptive angels

(there’s not a lot of maneuvering space
in this poetics)

(and there never was)

while the famine industry
its overhead like any charity
always eats well.

Incorporate the staring
faces the supermarket checkout
be sure you check the boxes
indicating degree, consanguinity
of facts
of benefits

that first it would
have been “documentary”

but then, tissue and fissure,

it began to attempt witness

situated complexity, spidery filaments—
line by line the underspeech diasporic
to construct work, to try a little something on the other side
of Poetry.

Need to begin,
realized “with a start”

start to startle
startled to start
chortle star

.

It’s a writing into the dark

light--it’s

the “third move,

singing

singing

singing

after a fast drive..”

But it’s a split, in glee from glee.
I wander sidewalkless suburbs
a white reality

“where I lived and what”
are the other words to that

nothing specific
class race and money

Good luck with

the rest of your
interfaces.

•

So I threw the books on the floor. “no sandpoems”

Now what? “Would you persist?”

Would. If only to

begin. (Again.) “Reading `it’

by the endless invention of `it.”

Where “it”

splits and doubles between the little (unspoken) and the looming

(unspeakable). Where it is hook of bone,

loop and waywardness, its strategy

(precise) (precarious),

to cast a dot of matter forth

and, farther, farther, troll it out

through cusps of darkling antecedent sea.

May 1999-August 2001
to Beverly Dahlen

Notes, Draft 39: Split. “Confusion and aimlessness” somewhere in Wallace Stevens. “Blurs, lens flares...”: Michael Kimmelman, “Past their Targets to a Wry Truth,” on “Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection,” New York Times, 9 June 2000. “Event horizon,” article about the X-ray telescope in the New York Times, 11 Jan. 2000. “Windstille, sternlose Nacht” is the last line of “Sommer” by Georg Trakl (“windless, starless night” approximates). Peace Camps and Demonstrations: Greenham Common (England, 1981-1987, from Jil Cuthberg), Seneca Falls (New York State, USA, I was there, but not sure when), Arrests before the Republican National Convention, Philadelphia, Summer 2000. “Revolutionary melancholia,” said by film theorist Tim Murray, in a lecture, October 2000. “Inferior conjunction” from “Star Date” radio spot, 12 March 2001. “Things by the wayside,” Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.151. An unmarked citation from Alan Golding-situated complexity. To write “on the other side of poetry,” modified from Rokel Korn, trans. Irena Klepfisz (“Oyf yener sayt lid”). “Third move,” Robin Blaser, “Thinking about Irreparables, a talk,” in *Raddle Moon* 18, p. 101, with extra words. “No sandpoems” as in Draft 1, from Paul Celan. “Would you persist” is Louis Zukofsky, “A” 6: 32. “Reading ‘it’” is my comment on Beverly Dahlen’s *A Reading*, back cover, also *The Pink Guitar*, p.116. The word “precarious” is simultaneously borrowed from Cecilia Vicuna and George Oppen. Donor drafts are Draft 1: It and Draft 20: Incipit.

Laurie Price
White Noise

About ten minutes goes by in the hunting frame. By the arrows rising from the grass I see the main stem. Flotilla of shadows. Then a cloud rolls over to reveal the sun. To be lifted at such an angle from the city's rough ledges balances a lull in the discussion. I begin with a retraction. I begin the same way I have for the past who-knows-how-many years. I grab my beer off the sidewalk and take a swig. The need for type O blood is constant, broadcast over all available airwaves. Hold my breath as the liquid warms threading down. The engines turn slowly at first, their movements barely perceptible. But let me go back and explain: my sense of 'the' truth is 'my' own. For this reason I begin having become as it were.

Smoke from a cigarette left in an ashtray rolls and unwinds in slow motion. As quickly as the smoke overtakes the room the sheer silence is faster. Point of entrance for nerve fibers and cells to dissolve. This numbing pulse of loss is sensate and octagonal climbing along thin strands of nerve release to collect in the nuclei. A pale blue verging on gray petals through the room unmoored. The fresh damp aroma sparks recognition, palpable as earth. Ah sweet sweet September. The warning and the reprimands; the smoke wavers in a thick column not settling for days until the rains come. You chase it to there: your grief darkens in flames of boxed conclusions. Where steam rises from the frame the long thoughts bubble. Durations of octaves grounded by middle C.

The next frame holds a pattern of circulars.

Into the irregular patterns of rectangles and squares I walk a cobblestone path to search for the Plaza of the Inquisition. The ground is uneven or falling rising slanted at various degrees. Torqued. Feel the tension rise from cement patches and the voices of others passing. “We live in trailer wipe. We live in ashen stage ashram noise.” The whispered solace of solitude joined to dead voices echoes. Never in negation was the thing more than. Lines of sunlight vibrate between buildings.

(Once late at night I saw white owls fly from one bell tower to the next to the next to the next. But this afternoon there are only groups of men and women inking old metal presses to spool out invitations or business cards, examples of which hang from the sides of their machines.) I am cheated of your tomorrow says the poster'd plea for mercy. “. . . wearing a red T-shirt, a large silver cross . . . has a raised mole above left eyebrow.”

Whenever we could we came there to delay the disappearing. She said if it wasn't one thing it was two. Hedged all our bets to defray the tumble of torn edges from forming any kind of line. A beseechment to startle the revelers from their broken bits of talk and salutations. The revised revise, the risen rise. We mourn the dead. We speak of them fondly that we might occasion them. Them as yours as if your own. The borders I drew on that pane of glass propped against the windowframe were just an amusement. What I meant was that there could be more than one way to address an infiltration. It would be a tight squeeze to fit the location structure to the place point and without directions the best I could do was improvise. (To look inside the grief: the little waves and tendered manias.)

The constants are the flux and drone of car alarms when a bus rushes past. Music yells through big speakers into autumn rooms, which, lush as leaves swept into piles, star brittle textures anointing. Then the proteinacious drugs kick in. A muse of sucks. Brittle elements shift to tactics sometimes. Sometimes sleeping reasons are enemies. Who polishes their cross, their knife, its blade.

Trails and tangents are set and reset by footsteps wading through sagebrush and pine needles, leaves and clumps of hair. Girl with big feet nestles cornered in a camphor smell rising from a coat closet stuffed with notes. Fur drips slithering out from the cracks in arpeggios. The patter of tropical rain lingers while two strangers stop midstep in the street below to check their notes. Two sets of wet hands carefully unfold the papers. Clouds drift overhead uncertainly, clearing and boxing together to drift like smoke. Treetops appear blackened in the wet, slice through thick mist in waves. From here I see an open door weathered green in places, moss-hung drapings.

Strings that reverberate against a cherry wood backboard lend an air of solemnity to the occasion. Piano and slow. Controvoglia. That music could be tamed this way in trills or rising gestures

to complete the narratives inside
was nourishment enough.

That what was expected would come to pass, that what could be hoped for would follow. The notes droned sinuous to deepen the paved distributions of the flattening tones. There was a restless fumbling around for keys that might have seemed human considering the divisions but the molting structures worked against it and the tuneful hollows assumed their positions.

An infinite approach to an infinitive will always begin with “I.” Then I could stand back and watch as the day folded into quadrants of multiples, assume my position at the head of the line.

I bound cords around papers trying to separate those that had been read from those that hadn't. A slipknot seemed the logical approach. Heaving line, clove hitch. The stacked edges threaten to topple away from assembling.

If you study any part of a sequence too long the connections fall away and gravity seems to cease. The sky becomes a dense blue smudge drawn across the top of a window and hung there instead of glass. But if you turn around quickly and let the image fall into place by itself its attention to logic resumes as if no separation of belief had taken place. At the laundromat when the dryer won't respond to the coin drop or button push: You're there again it says. You've never been closer. That was what I strove for. Whirling helped to diagram the steps this dancer might take to lose the static equations.

Hank Lazer
from Portions

Stillness

into perfect stillness
what else to
say to say

somehow on behalf
of silence our
exact excited way

cacophonous particulars click
along circuits &
circulate gigabyte mesmerism

hailstorm against tender
window & then
what deep negation

pools back inward
& under what
is he spoke

& I forgot
mute galaxy what /// words to ask

Shift

for Allen Iverson

particular curricula shift
from this to
that begin to

sing the wings
no words happen
to liftoff this

is the blessing
that saying by
early daylight rises

into quick light
stopped as he
drives to his

right jitters steps
back shakes the
defender & fires

up a perfect
three image instant
one rhythmic petition

Track

lose track of
it every day
no matter what

you do one
day more time
than a body

can focus on
so fuck us
we're fucked we've

fucked up quick
back track to
where it was

proximate & steady
as she goes
study what won't

stay put no
how no where
what to say

Pattie McCarthy

from alibi (this is : elsewhere)

10

this is the miraculousness of caulk. the difference between a physic & physics. unstable
quantitativeness. a gin & tonic with lime & quinine— I've seen you play the saint with
your bitten fingernails, your sermon-cooked mouth, your iodized preservative. dear, since
I left your city I bruise easily & sleep too much. butterfly bushes & the flutter cross
the Atlantic, your lessons in chaos. such a day may require six hours of wittiness, forgoing
responsibility for long walks, a comedy of manners, or a commentary on social errors.
I am tidy & grateful & as earnest as all the backyards in Philadelphia.
made a sheep from wax, a few parallel lines there scratched. happy birthday, Judas Iscariot.

the legal definition of *obligation*—
heir to your father's enemies. perhaps I am
curious for this place.
elsewhere is still
somewhere— but perhaps not
where the compass is— your
compass has fallen to earth & so.
a bird killed in the yard— feathers (white,
unusual) hither & thither.
evidence of a struggle. questions of proof & ethics.

laziness gave us *ampersand* & I am happier with it.
were we to wake early to observe
staccato in the music of spheres or a prowler.
were we to discover therein the lack— all
the indignity, advances, & indifference one
must muster. you start
the day at odd angles & predestination
selects the coffeemugs. more spontaneous & less
superstitious, please. if not lazy, then a slur— in several
senses. a great unending existential schwa.

Eleni Sikelianos
from **The California Poem**

Removing the heart of the turtle to a jar
of salt water, it will beat when prodded twenty-
four hours later

the mermaid's purse is a sandshark unhatched & now the tiny fish is pickled in alcohol
a turtle's flesh will continue to respond even
when you place the white cubes of
meat
in a pot

moving pictures of the color & patterns
change in the bonito during death
as they beat their tails against the deck, colors pulse & fade, pulse & fade and then they are dead

animals have one color when they are alive
another when dead

“This smooth blue water runs out of time,...and a kind of dream” sits in it

the “playing porpoises” do not “play opposites,” “turtles, the great schools of fish” under
the ruffled waters

all the thing was alive and alive when
you saw it the teeming surface of the watery
earth barnacle & hydroid riding the turtle’s
back pelagic rock-lobsters in his gut a crab
inhabits his ass the waters stuffed
with living plankton through which the big fish
swim

moving pictures of langustina littering
the water’s currents & soon put them in a white porcelain pan

now the film is
“immersed ... in alcohol which promptly removed
their brilliant color”

“the heat of a great furnace” (Cortés), *Callida fornax*
not the denomination of New Mexico, Apaches’ land
but of shorespeople, Mon Mon Iki, a small sea cave and arch, sexy *cala-y-fornix*, rooted
in primitive magics, names
will stick or fall away, a list

of disappearances

what disappeared, has
disappeared, is
disappearing, will disappear. I can't tell for they are
disappearing. It is happening
around us in forests, on highways. What
is appearing? This remains to be
named and seen.

With soft foots & mean teeth

bite I mean

bite Holyfield's ear

twice

between the world

destroyed & the world

restored walk blithe

smooth gay

yield up fame & flame

in a house of dust / persimmons, native

home to Chicken Little, Please do remember Chicken Little

and the sky

must fall in pieces of blue

all over this place

dream: all the wild beaches had been built upon

Fancy hotels with eyeless, edgeless pools and all
rotting piers ripped out They built hundreds
of hotels a night on Haskells' wild shores for Tom Hanks' weekends

To the south, my beaches have been given over
to oil-
drilling companies, cargo
wharves, factory-built
blackness by the sea, squatting
buildings, black smoke
up to the edge of the water, concrete
haunches jumbled up to the next
and even have built blackness right into the water
so that a huge city lurking in absence of light lies
under the waves
as they roll — as they say, roll *evil*.

I have found one patch left—lucent creatures drift
along the coral under a
clean sea — an electrically-purple Elegant Nudibranch (*Flabellinopsis iodinea*) with neon orange
fringe, Hopkins' Rosy Nudibranch, red crabs, turning with the movement of the water in an easy
metropolis of sea—

but sooted lands lie at the Southern right, and I know
soon it will slip up in the night, with
the will of the people, & engulf this last bright
animal ditch.

In the dream I was hunting for dinner—razorback clams, any
soft-bodied animal that oozes at the edges
of symmetry, anything delicious, wearable,
lovely

I pay money for the boats to dredge up shrimp—whole
ecosystems wiped out in an instant

Edwin Torres

Migration

Animals migrate in peripheral inversion—avoiding each other
without looking, arriving at their place
in a maturity of motion—an understanding of stoppage

In a yard of many humans
animals will gravitate towards similar patterns
what allows similarity—a similar human

The littlest one will appear through legs
through longer limbs the little ones swim—inna courtyard
of little boys, little girls will wait for a few years

Before smacking who allows to be smacked—sea gulls
will wait for the rise of tides and sleep, floating on what waves
allow themselves to be crashed—babies will run

As fast as the can, away from what allows them
freedom—in ancient courtyards freedom is as fast
as little boys can travel, in a field of sunflowers

The arc of the sun is where their faces follow—in a migration
of children, the ones who run outnumber
the ones who watch—seeing, being what animals

Grow into—children being
what adults grow into—boys being
as animal as boys

**The Terrible Polite Smile of Not-Gettingness
Is a Poulitice Weaver Charmless for All Onstage Who Walk Past a Desert of Bald
Men in Boily Fatigues Fatwah Chambers Ripped Rapster Embroided in Ego**

the jaded the proud the brave the jest the cockerelle the boiled the winster the smiled

horrible this politeness of being
zombies in the bodies of my friends
people who know me and haven't a clue
to the what of the day in my hour

awful this smile of forgiveness
enlightening confusion with eternity
the balls to say I don't
the will to say you're nuts
the nuts to say you won't
the don't that says you will

BOILING FATWAH IPANEMA CHAMBER

terrible the passing comment
meant to pass before the jury
opinion
a sheep gathered in the herd
boil the bolster
ravage the dreamer
take this egg
throw it against everyone who doesn't feel
the unformed chick running down the hide
this is sensitivity
the smile that runs politely wet

*magnificent
the helloquent famished
informed
the carved bald
swinched
the smiled*

Who Sleeps for Sand : Who Gives an Echo

I would bury your eyeballs deep on the shore
I would walk against a hurricane to dig up your crystal sandman
I would rule a kingdom of sand for a crescendo with the sun

I would wear the sky as a scarf around these eyes ears protection
My hand the water your shade the sky
Has marvelous clothing a waterfall of sand

I would bury your shoes for camel feet
For girls who bag the always of their day
The day has light for rising, light for roses, things for brightness, only all

*spirit mates my light, electron mates my neutron
snake mates my wind bomb, because the night
no one was calling & no one stayed, until
& only until, & only all night*

I am a crescendo spinning tales down your neck
Selling cookies of gazelle, spelling macaroons with fiesta mandibles

*& if now no water washes
& if now time comes for silent now...*

Let your neck be my shade as our backs hold tight
Let's walk a mile on a perfect beach
With sand so flat it shifts our skin, razor slips by wind of sound

Let's walk against a hurricane on a shore so flat soon
My water will be light, soon your shade my neck
Let's crazy with, let's off watch, let's horn, was stay, was grown, was giant

*let's bow this jewel, let's free of, let's pass,
was floor, was say, says head, says ever, let's
bring was, let's cook is, with off, our
with, is when, let's walk... let's when*

Scrambled id

I have chosen to watch—the pixelated nudist
instead of reading—it is in my best interest
at this time—my mind needs
pixelated nudist—an unformed idea
of what I am—under my clothing
there is no need—for advancement
no schooling necessary—at this mind
learning—would pack in too much
to what is barely there—no
now is the time—for unformed men
to gaze—in the pixelated nudist
cavorting freely—in the small tiny world
of a television set—this idea will be continued

Having exhausted my mirth during an illicit, solitary
cocktail hour, having manufactured synthetic mirth with self-
deprecation, having gone through that
faster than the first bottle, I now needed
the big cry.

An acre into my own pity, a pillow of moss
presented itself, and I spoke, as if
to someone:

O! Grass stain on satin!
—verdant melodrama—
and... Slipper of dew!

And then fell (with more éclat—I can say this—this being
mine—than Uta Hagen) into a deep slumber of the woods.

I was, yes, in a star-fed clearing. I was, yes,
ringed by toadstools: amanita of some no doubt
dire variety (o malicious fey). Notwithstanding this perfection
of experience—no, I was unbeautiful. Hence—

my despondency.
Do not arch an eyebrow.
Beautiful, assumed, never was a stipulation.

I slept. Waking was a sudden hurt: my head had been crushed
and reassembled. And the burden in my lap—obscene, and

and mocking—
 crisp as white sheets missed
 white as I was driven
 to make it cold.

The Unicorn Killer in Gethsemane

I am thirty. I am their hangman.

The beasts are content to puddle their skulls into the tender shifting of my iridescent gown, so I bludgeon them. Or, I slip a sweet zero of bullet into dormant ear. And watch it settle.

I'd like to blame this on someone else, say it was a schizophrenia, a vacant tuxedo, an authorial voice each time calling for just one more parable felled, the headache if I demur—irrevocable.

I live at night. I rest like a monk on stones, or like children trailing breadcrumbs from a home that doesn't want children.

All victims are casualties of faith. After my first,
the second was coarse experimentation. A third, the blade
edge of compulsion. My fourth—skill.

I will not abjure the unattainable. It is mine
to watch dawn blanch over the staggering hush of these bodies.

Others are not so composed.

Eric Keenaghan

Lesson 10: Of Cherry Trees on Gethsemane

A poet's words are of things that do not exist without the words. — Wallace Stevens

1

The eidetic sense
presupposes a thisness, a thinginess
that Billy'd call "No Ideas"
by moving it *into things* ...
rather discovered *on*, not moved *into*.

But my possessive, not
prepositional, *of*
is a generic seizure
in diction. Arrest
and trembling.

Words aren't descriptive of
but are the things of things.

Mark this:

A teardrop necklace delicately pendant
over a thicket of upturned radicals
leaves behind a lone atom
of quartz, a miniature
to refract light and establish
correspondence
between the proteinaceous
shrub and the thicker deposit
left behind it.

Words are poets' things.

In its retreat, the hammerswollen
thumbnail collects another glassy
particle; the stardust trail draws
together the thumb and the nipple

into one extensive entity,
a crystalline tendon of sputum.

A poet's words are — of — things
shared between

a poet
and
things.

Each at an end
of
a steel string.

2

Things that do not exist.

Not the fabled unicorn, Ms. Moore,
but a ne'er-do-well
dancing around mirrorwise,
flashing about his silly mancock.
But the unicorn is. It is
neither of land nor sea,
just of the poem.

These words, this thread belong
to those things that do not exist
without the words.

Again, I hinge
on a preposition or a proposition
masquerading as some
unit I delicately mouth
or properly place
either on this side or that.

But it is *without*, so it may have
lack and its throbbadob
tautology since words
don't exist lacking words.

Neither do unicorns.

Perhaps the words are
of unicorns.
A tricky business, this.

3

Is this of the genus *of*?
Does a text exist

as nothing but a poem?
And what does it

have to do
with unicorns? or

Christ! When she read the Bible,
the one with plates by Blake, the fat baby

sitter was stuck on a passage
and unbroken moisture

an *of*

connected her thumb, her mouth, and the robe
that slipped off the Redeemer's shoulder

behind his back. He sweats
and he speaks, emissions

of oxidized platelets on his brow.
Each encapsulates a homunculus

who swims in a self-contained ocean
like a pimento in a verdigris flesh bead.

The rest — a cock, Judas' red face,
soldiers in tunics baring smoothness —
all a flurry unillustrative and failing

to capture a crimson pearl
and its marvel twice revealed:

Once, in a garden green.
Again, upon a dusty hill.

But what stuck my fabulous prince?
Of an olive branch? Of an ungulate horn?

Or of the sickle moon?

None of this can exist without words.
Nothing, if not words. And since poetry is

it is some thing.
Of words.

Yet things cannot exist outside
(*without*) words. Adam's scripture,
Mr. Stevens' proposition,
is: situation,
 body,
 tenor,
 force.

Nobility. Imagination. Major. Virility.

The situation's fiction — whether
cherries or pink bottoms
lined up in a bowl,
or olives' greyfuzz
coated with yogart —

such manchild games never have
lack "there" exists only. *There* exists.

And so, with that, a contact,
the possibility of a grand frottage

(i.e., to let something burst
in the space of making
like cherry trees on Gethsemane.)

5

The thorn in my side's but
a suffusion
of
force over my body.

The thisness of my things
are tokens of a virility changed.

It has to
change.

The other space I know must extend
in slowly redoubled
reps, held for 10 seconds;
recur, with contractions, not
without or inside,
but *just*, and on the *side*.
Genius rests in
volumetric capacity —
either dimensional or decibel,
a cry of pain in your experiment
to see how many fingers
you can stuff in
my fleshy nonsense wrapping
around you, a reddening,
fattening ourouborous
that blooms to signal
a communiqué).

Speech draws a close.
A line draws us close.

Pink lotus blossoms edge the ring
of the fingerbowl that's now
borne up by waiting hands, once
dangling limp, now slowly turning
as one digit, another, wags,
leaves ribbon traces that dance
and catch the empurpled night's light

this far over the horizon.

While you swish your nails about
and sketch an outline of your sermon,
the petals stirred on the bottom
spell out tortured prepositions.

Brenda Iijima

Sight Seen

Hooded specimens and the rain
of brittle sands. No hearing
seems hats over the ears. Salt
corrosive burns down. Feverish
bus driver, exhausted passerbys.
Left with the atmosphere of green
for *go* and false red peering out.
Coffee in a thick white paper cup,
Greek's Acropolis silk-screened in gold,
Took it out *on the road*.

The nurse was made of iron and her skirt
was scratched, lilt of white cap, her black
cropped hair. I picked her up along the way
along with a handful of smashed motorcycle
glass so aquamarine. Alliance circular with hands
clasped. Properties resembling chief
expressions, "BLISS" clouds the cars with their
breaths of humidity and desire's heat. Shrouded
cars, hooded white, placed bets. Successor sight unseen.

Edgy fading light in a giant square. Tubes of liquid
white encasing concrete station and then the pinks
of strength in streetlight mentality under the overpasses.
Pearly lonely waterscape. A thin air blows below my
knees on this train. A church, Federalist buildings of brick,
mangled trees. Her damp hair flattened to her forehead.
Pissaro impression. Morbidly, Moribund. On the F a ride
might be endless.

Channels of traffic interminable. From this window (high
elevation) it becomes the nervous system. Signified fight or
flight mechanism jammed. Jugs of glaze congealed. His aura
of smile peeled or popped like a plate glass snapped. Pipes
begin to dominate the studio in twos and fours. Boots leave
stains in the chalk /// dusting.

Little Red

The wolfishness of , *you're*
so beautiful, I'm so hungry stuns
vehicles. I offer utmost outer epidermal.
shed on spot. Give off one shredded
feather, tattered and purple,
strike a vein to the heart.
So it disturbs the peace
of angular
amber light
with musculature for upper
torso maidenform. Park bench
slivers, pavers thick with weed.
The boulevard stinks of nuts
fallen from the golden paleness of the
Ginko trees.

Albumen Silver

Former invisible struggle: goal unfolding, for this was the WORLD.

A bright replaced set of impulses

Emerges in telling portrait drawn of interconnections. RARE EVENT.

Lineage of 100 plus days.

Dispersions of birds, words. INDENTED PILLOW.

Stingiest bits. Bulky contemporary epistles and vast librariums.

Preponderance of opinion and sculptural archaeology.

Clemente's oasis.

Madonna's hardy lace.

Taken by surprise on the terrace. Look up
to see items flying. Each spell of moment thinner, harkening back,

intertwined, then emptied out. A missive of trees born at night.

Timeless matters falling through brackish water. Piled rocks.

Dilated speech. Blurred stuttered curse. Beasts,
birds and flower.

Animal frenzy to frighten swerving emotion.

Splashed obscure corner

lacerates decorum. Sumptuous

Nonsense, couple

of bits reserved for passionate insiders'

story unwelcome in the park, the theater

the page. Incarnate flame. *She burns her monument,*

fire is her passion, her patience.

Circular Ruins

An eyelash. Disturbed
proximity and
mention shimmer on the road
some fifty yards off, always
at this perceived distance. Been
devoured by fire before, the temple.

Rabbit eyed. The man in the chair
was well into his nineties and you came along to
return some miss-ticking clock,
realigning it to *the new time*
with a funny stab gesture which didn't
hurt as call exceeding attention.

Days later:

Borges makes tea.
Me, I'm quietly going about my chores.
Some notes scribbled down.
Waiting.

*This has happened and will happen
again, said Euphorbus. You are not
lighting a pyre, you are lighting a labyrinth of flames.*

Then:

MELANCHOLIC (reserved)
Symbolized by wolf

SANGUINE (buoyant)
Represented by leopard

PHLEGMATIC (sluggish)
Associated by bear

CHOLERIC (quick-tempered)

Lions, lions

*Fetch mantle. Pale stanza
unspeakable. Choir reveres
the names of white wing fresh
canticle revolving in
the serpent leaves.*

Matt Hart

Of Obligation, Hesitation

To my surprise I am in love with something of obligation. Towards March four pieces of paper, a cartoon anvil shaped like a wolfhead, writing on both of them. We survive the fall but not the anvil. Don't say you haven't seen this too—Yes, we were all warned.

Watching cartoons is a relief from loving paper by hesitation. We do it and don't we just know it. Hands pass through hands, sighing unreturnable gift, the very utopia thing. A word about one thing or its other.

Airbag Eschatology

—after Radiohead

>there will never be another
make up you want to vomit
American cArcras
>in the war my head is ringing
i am born again
..!!auto stellar burst i am damn back there to say
the dead dream of somEOne innocent/~~god help me~~
~~American carcrash~~
>i am fAAst gerRman CAR
i am amazed that i survived

Buck Downs

New Personal Problem XL // holstein

David Allan Coe called it rockaroll fever
and that's close enough for me --

just get you to break out
that custom-size

**INTERNAT'L GROOVING AND GRINDING ASS'N
SLURRY SEAL SURFACING COUNCIL
SOC. FOR PAINT AND PROTECTIVE COVERINGS**

& let your eyes pop out
on your own fucking-time

-- does it hurt to be this hard?
I don't know. I hope
so. I can't tell.

New Personal Problem XLII // kewpie-doll

wasted spring
on sobriety,
spring is always wasted
on the sprung

at.the.drive-
by.shoe-
fits unlimited weekend nights
to shave every star
in the fall catalogue

*ANAMNESIS
UPGRADED
BUKKAKE*

sunfed fat as aloe
vera in a pot
corn of plenty going down
urban steak-ums
Chicken,
my country
sure could use a lickin

New Personal Problem XLIII//ziploc bag

how did it become
this set of cultural
templates from w^{ch}
to choose --

 crazy catlady
 town bum
 cranky loser,
 also-ran
the shit that people think up
that is just wild to me

 The patient refused an
 autopsy.*
-- vaut mieux que ciel --

 ASPARTAME
 GLUCOPHAGE

and then we begin
to take credit
for our recovery,
and we drown.

*365 Stupidest Things Ever Said, Ross and Kathryn Petras, quote for November 1, 2000

Garrett Caples
Light Sleeper
(Elegy for George Harrison)

"O! Who could glide noiselessly?" — Camillo Pessanha

orange ganges! receive these grains:

i don't like nan I like cobra it sent me burning
down the river
They combed the ghats for me but there were too
many there
a quiet epitaph approached the circle circling
as the glob of globe begat the grid that girdles earth

i seek its internal gurgle
the plaid fucking pajamas of a resort to form takes
refuge in the river's sunken quilt
when the boat I never said I was on passes singing
you'll know
my sweet defenestration

bios

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Garrett Caples is currently contributing to a massive, multivolume study, *The Influence of Harvard Poets on Harvard Poets* (New Haven, CT: forthcoming). He is writing on Trumbull Stickney.

Buck Downs lives and works in Washington, DC.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis is Professor of English at Temple University and author of numerous books of poetry and criticism, including: *Drafts 1-38*, *Toll*, *Genders, Races and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934*; and *The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice*.

Matt Hart lives in Philadelphia where he is completing his PhD in English at Penn. Recent publications include poems in *The Portable Boog Reader: Philadelphia*, *Lipstick 11* and various poems and essays at <www.phillytalks.org>.

Brenda Iijima's work has appeared in *Tool A Magazine*, *Skeanky Possum*, *Cello Entry*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, etc. She is the author of the chapbook *In a Glass Box*, and her photographs recently appeared alongside the poetry of Elliza McGrand in *Shadow Dragging Like A Photographer's Cloth*.

Kirsten Kaschock is currently pursuing an MFA in poetry from Syracuse University. She has a BA in English Literature from Yale University and an MFA in choreography from the University of Iowa. Her work is forthcoming in *How2*, *Pleiades*, and *Quarter After Eight* and has been published in *The Indiana Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Insurance*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Kalliope*, and *VeRT*. *The Indiana Review* nominated her poem "Autobiography: Inkblot Edition" for a Pushcart in 2000.

Eric Keenaghan lives in Philadelphia and teaches at Temple University. Current projects include *Making Flesh Word* (a critical study of gender and sexuality in Cuban and U.S. modernist poetry and poetic fiction); two poetic series (*Lessons* and *Finding Ears*); and translations of Luis Cernuda and Jose Lezama Lima. He's published poems in such fine venues as *Boog* and *ixnay*, and critical publications include essays on Wallace Stevens, the Cuban *origenistas*, Jack Spicer, and Ronald Johnson.

Hank Lazer's most recent book of poems is *Days* (Lavender Ink, 2002). For more information about *Days*, go to www.lavenderink.org. With Charles Bernstein, Lazer edits the Modern and Contemporary Poetics Series for the University of Alabama Press. Lazer lives in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Pattie McCarthy's *bk of (h)rs* was recently published by Apogee Press. She co-founded & edits BeautifulSwimmer Press and currently lives & teaches in Baltimore.

Gil Ott is the editor of Singing Horse Press and is the author of numerous books, including *Pact*, *The Whole Note*, *Public Domain*, and *within range*. *The Form of Our Uncertainty*, a tribute to Ott, was recently published by Chax Press in collaboration with Handwritten Press.

Laurie Price has an e-chap, *Minim*, forthcoming from Faux Press, and work in the current *canwehaveourballback*. A recent chapbook, *The Assets*, came out from Situations, and she has had work included in such places as *Arshile*, *Big Allis*, *readme*, *theeastvillage*, *How2*, *The World*, & *New American Writing*, among others. She also makes visual work (see *How2* 2001 vol. 4 for glass book images).

Eleni Sikelianos's most recent book is *Earliest Worlds* (Coffee House Press, 2001). She currently makes her home in New York City, where she teaches for Bard's Clemente Program and Teachers & Writers Collaborative.

Edwin Torres is the author of *Fractured Humorous* and *The All-Union Day of the Shock Worker*. His writing has appeared in many journals and anthologies including *Role Call*, *Heights of the Marvelous*, *Poetry Nation*, and *ALoud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*. He has received fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art and has collaborated with a wide range of artists.

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