

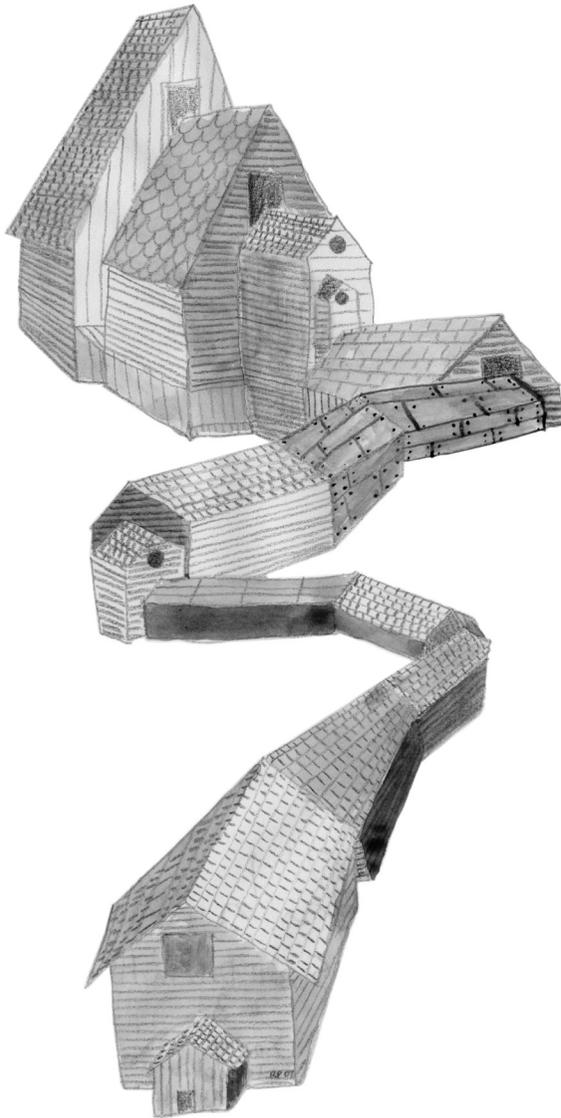
# Aufgabe

*Number 7*



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*Number 7*



“dream house #3” by Ruby Palmer

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## Editors' Note: Undoing Numbers

Within the constellation of factors upon which we base our editorial decisions, we have made a perennial effort to balance male and female contributors to *Aufgabe*. The process always seems to be accompanied by a certain unease about the right way to get to at least a 50/50 split. We're perfectionists! So, naturally we followed with interest the recent exchange between Jennifer Ashton (in her essays "Our Bodies, Our Poems"<sup>1</sup> and "The Numbers Trouble with 'Numbers Trouble'"<sup>2</sup>) and Juliana Spahr and Stephanie Young (in their essay "Numbers Trouble"<sup>3</sup>), which was followed by considerable commentary on poetry-related blogs. We decided to use the conversation as a starting point for this editors' note and what follows are responses from each of the poetry editors for *Aufgabe*. Each of us felt it important to distinguish between (biological) sex and gender in these responses. Johnson and Grinnell use "male" and "female" rather than "men" and "women," since demographically speaking, the ratios discussed reveal the sex rather than the gender of the writers and rely upon names, which are changeable, without accounting for queerness in any form. Brolaski uses neither in his response, which explores questions of authorial legibility and the breaking down of gender binaries.

### *Paul Foster Johnson*

Spahr and Young's "Numbers Trouble" was written in response to Jennifer Ashton's "Our Bodies, Our Poems." Ashton argues that the concept of "women's innovative poetry" in current practice is essentializing and outmoded. In her initial essay, Ashton supports this argument by claiming that in the mid-1980s, female poets had achieved parity in publications and editorial and faculty positions. Spahr and Young focus their response on this assertion, analyzing the ratio of male and female poets who have published in (mostly U.S.) anthologies and presses and who have received awards. They find that despite limited improvements, female poets were not only underrepresented in 1985,

---

1 Ashton, Jennifer. "Our Bodies, Our Poems." *American Literary History* 19:1 (2007): 211-231.

2 Ashton, Jennifer. "The Numbers Trouble with 'Numbers Trouble.'" *Chicago Review* 53:2/3 (2007): 112-120.

3 Spahr, Juliana and Stephanie Young. "Numbers Trouble." *Chicago Review* 53:2/3 (2007): 88-111.

they currently remain underrepresented in the areas studied. The study goes on to solicit and report responses from poets regarding the desired role of the “poetry community”—presumably constituted by people and also by poetry institutions—in “engaging with the living and working conditions of women in a national/international arena.”<sup>4</sup>

These essays provoked a wide range of online responses, many of them organized by Elizabeth Treadwell on the blog *Delirious Hem*.<sup>5</sup> For the most part, the responses agree with and extend Spahr and Young’s conclusion:

[T]he experimental/postmodern/avant-garde/innovative poetry scene needs a more radical feminism: a feminism that begins with an editorial commitment to equitable representation to think about how feminism is related to something other than itself, and to make writing that thinks about these things visible.<sup>6</sup>

Spahr and Young’s poetry scene is anti-essentialist in its implication that “feminist interventions” operate in the same field as other movements and ideas, as opposed to, say, woman-centered projects associated with 1970s cultural feminism. This anti-essentialist conception is tacitly affirmed in the blog responses. The methodology of Spahr and Young’s essay is another aspect about which the blogs are generally silent. Among the exceptions, Joyelle McSweeney considers the patriarchal “anthological thinking” surrounding the quantitative disparity alongside a non-hierarchical editorial approach through Deleuze’s concept of the assemblage;<sup>7</sup> Dale Smith laments the businesslike task of “a poetics based on spreadsheets.”<sup>8</sup> Yet tempting as it is to articulate a more democratic editorial vision, it is difficult to overcome Spahr and Young’s success in realistically mapping the environment indicated by the general term “community.”

Rather than staking out a pure position from which innovative writing can be delivered, Spahr and Young provide an accurate sketch of the existing conditions in which experimental writing is produced. These conditions include a necessary

---

**4** Spahr and Young, p. 91.

**5** Treadwell, Elizabeth, et al. “Dim Sum.” *Delirious Hem* 7 February 2008. <http://delirioushem.blogspot.com/search/label/dim%20sum>. A comprehensive roundup of blog responses can be found at <http://www.digitalemunction.com/wordpress/2007/11/04/poetry-and-gender-following-numbers-trouble/>.

**6** Spahr and Young, p. 100.

**7** McSweeney, Joyelle. “Against Anthological Thinking” in “Dim Sum,” <http://delirioushem.blogspot.com/2008/02/dim-sum-joyelle-mcsweeney.html>.

**8** Smith, Dale. “Re: The Name & the Paradox of Its Contents.” *Possum Ego* 1 November 2007. <http://possumego.blogspot.com/2007/11/re-name-paradox-of-its-contents.html>.

engagement with presses, journals, reading series, and blogs. For many, writing is also a livelihood, often in the form of academic teaching jobs. While many poetry institutions have strong progressive commitments, dominant attitudes about professionalism are always present in their organization and choices.

From here it is not a long leap to the (rightly) cynical conclusion that power in poetic communities is correlated with outcomes as measured in publications or awards. As it turns out, the structure of poetic communities has very little to do with formal allegiance or stylistic preference. In this particular conversation, this is indicated by the avoidance of analyzing any nuance or innovation in technique of the writing that turns up in experimental publications. The numbers have the final say on a publication's success or failure in the arena of representation.

This is not to say that writers are exempt from the burden. Poetic communities have adjusted to past feminist interventions and now accommodate a recognizable—but not exclusive—set of concerns identified with feminism. In the sociology of poetry there is a system of signs understood by writer, editor, and, ultimately, a niche audience. For example, an editor may be inclined to publish writing that exhibits certain hallmarks of a feminist project: poems that explore the erotic connotations of *jouissance*, poems that are well versed in the language of psychoanalysis and sexual difference, poems in which the body registers as a site of linguistic soundings. There may be much to admire in these kinds of poems, but their value to an editor derives at least in part from the specialized knowledge they contain, and the prestige that knowledge confers upon the publication among those who discern it.

Because of the increasing specialization of poetry as an academic discipline, it is not surprising that it does not connect with “the living and working conditions of women in the national/international arena.” Only through the complete abstraction of “poetry” is it possible to make this broad connection. If this engagement is a central concern of the poetic community, it would be necessary for this community to examine its own social basis in relation to these living and working conditions. This would be a fundamental step toward finding some sort of common cause.

As an editor, I am drawn toward work that reflects, negates, or distorts the context of its own creation. With specific reference to the topic at hand, kari edwards's insistence upon “no gender” is a transparent and bold statement of poetics, but one that is ironized by the fact that edwards was a self-described gender activist. In this issue, Evelyn Reilly's rant about the customs of poetry readings and Brandon Brown's use of satire in relation to class and academia come to mind as other examples of writing that attends to the conditions in which it exists.

In the same way that Theodor Adorno argues that the only way we may form a concept of freedom is through our lived unfreedom,<sup>9</sup> the ideal of equality in the poetry world is given meaning only by the experience of inequality. It is important for writers and editors to consider the professional and institutional demands of the poetry community, and how these demands relate to what they are writing and selecting. This preliminary step would be necessary before applying this specific problematic to general struggles.

### *Julian T. Brolaski*

Gender is only one factor on which to base pairs...In addition...gender is not a simple masculine-feminine binary as the use of many terms both toward and within the queer community demonstrates.

— Anne Curzan, *Gender Shifts in the History of English*<sup>10</sup>

We all appear in “bursts of proximity” (Dwibedy, “jetsam”), or as Rumi observes, “Language is a tailor’s shop where nothing fits.” Is it possible to speak outside the confines of gender? Race and class are not always visible in names, so what is in them? Gender is often in them. We think of gender as “visible” and legible in language. That’s how Spahr and Young conduct their study in “Numbers Trouble”—it is for the most part a study of names capable of being gendered—or names which are known to read as one or the other. It is a vital step towards addressing gender equanimity in poetry. But in order to dismiss the idea of gender as a criterion for legibility we must “undo gender”—as Judith Butler puts it—in favor of personhood:

The very criterion by which we judge a person to be a gendered being, a criterion that posits coherent gender as a presupposition of humanness, is not only one which, justly or unjustly, governs the recognizability of the human, but one that informs the ways we do or do not recognize ourselves at the level of feeling, desire, and the body, and the moments before the mirror, in the moments before the window, in the times that one turns to psychologists, to psychiatrists, to medical and legal professionals to negotiate what may well feel like the

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<sup>9</sup> Adorno, Theodor. *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Continuum, 1973.

<sup>10</sup> Curzan, Anne. *Gender Shifts in the History of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

unrecognizability of one's gender, and hence, the unrecognizability of one's personhood. (Butler 58)<sup>11</sup>

As editors who confront head-on the problematics of “counting” gender—we (the *Aufgabe* team and others) must also consider those who cannot accurately be counted: Dana, Alex, Jess, Sean, Kit, Chris—whose abbreviations obfuscate gender—K.C., J.R.—who refuse to be counted—kari, Julian—ambiguously gendered names that one is eager to give a stamp to—to make them eligible for personhood, but as kaufman writes:

this bridge splinters then gives way  
(from *censory impulse*)

Not that we could negate sexism by insisting on a gender neutrality—we must continue to be feminist editors and readers—to be *personists*<sup>12</sup> by considering ways we might end or at least undermine gender. kari edwards's insistence on “no gender”—echoed by Kate Bornstein and other trans/gender activists—is a functional paradox: the evacuation of gender as a means of becoming multiply or fluidly gendered:

And stay for our way our way our way of safe  
safe is safer with superbugs bugged  
safe is safer than other is neither  
and other is neither much good or safe  
(Coleman, “We are going to talk about science with pictures”)

The way to be multiple is to encourage gender variance in our books and in our lives: female, male and other. I use “gender” here because we are talking about political and poetical bodies—the body as it intersects with its artistic iteration—and how these are read by editors and readers. And then we have the cheat sheet “biographical notes” in which unknown gender is often revealed. Language determines gender and language is well known to be both structural and indeterminate. Gender, after all, is a term we get from linguists. What if we were all referred to by our last names? What about those writers who can pass on the page, but not on the street? Or as Sailors writes:

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**11** Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. Routledge: New York and London, 2004.

**12** Not like Frank O'Hara's personism—whose mock-manifesto names only Ginsberg, Whitman, Crane, Williams, LeRoi Jones and Alain Robbe-Grillet as cohorts.

There is no way of seeing their daily lives  
among the voices. Or a queer exotic.  
It's as if their accents have been corrected,  
but who knows.  
(Sailers, "Dogtown")

How quick we are to police gender! The poems themselves can be neither male nor female, so to what extent can we project a gendered persona on the text? And further we are in wartime—a time which has no respect for bodies or the persons that inhabit them:

War in all its different guises  
How can the body take all the confrontation?  
hostility? the build-up of arms?  
(Rivera, "Poem With a Line Drawn Across the Body")

Should we be thankful or irritated that the draft is gendered? When war makes us devolve into disposable beings we turn to nonsense for sense—one tries to speak the president's name but it comes out gobbledygook:

lam teevee pee bushchickenpok  
tak turkeybird gug dyinfeast...  
gug screwa sall gug slavendie  
(Rancourt, "image war")

We must be concerned not only with gender equality but with the issue of authorial legibility—how one is read—to interrogate how the disembodied (poetically bodied) voice is gendered—by readers and editors. So that "no gender" or "no race" or "no class" are not among the disappeared:

these poems which can also describe the singularity of either an individual life,  
or socio-historical life and/or that instant and duration of their imbrication, their  
multiplicity, their affectivity...of the Disappeared  
(Light, from *Against Middle Passages*)

but occupy a necessary place on the spectrum, dismantling binaries by engaging the hybrid and the in-between. As Blau du Plessis writes:

And felt compelled  
to rip up the page and turn from these pronouns:

I? you? we? Who cares about them!  
Who cares how they are linked!  
Push them over a cliff!  
("Draft 88, X-Posting")<sup>13</sup>

so that we might expand the distribution of pronouns. To say: out of many, many. Or instead of he/she to give name to the / and to otherly gendered, obfuscated, unknown or illegible persons: zie, zir, zirself.

### *E. Tracy Grinnell*

You should be interested enough in the world, with all its manifold strangeness and contradictions, oddities and possibilities, that your editorial/curatorial vision would organically support ... an ecology of poly-verses.

— David Buuck, *Delirious Hem, Re: "Numbers Trouble"*

I don't like anthologies. Two of the most important anthologies to me as a young, queer-female poet in the Bay Area were *Moving Borders: Three Decades of Innovative Writing by Women*<sup>14</sup> and *Out of Everywhere: Linguistically Innovative Poetry by Women in North America & the UK*<sup>15</sup> (the text taught by Leslie Scalapino in my undergraduate writing class at Mills College). These anthologies were undoubtedly important interventions for the reasons Spahr and Young cite in "Numbers Trouble." And they made accessible a feminist poetic avant-garde that I was searching for and demonstrated that it existed in the present tense across national boundaries. But anthologies are inherently, undeniably, always problematic. Even when necessary, they cannot be inclusive. And yet the compulsion to anthologize is pervasive. Whether for social, aesthetic, temporal, or corrective reasons, the compulsion always results in something that is dated (i.e. out-dated if not incomplete and exclusive) as soon as it is released into the world, hamstrung by its existence as a *singularity*. Anthologies are not capable of creating the "constant, necessary pressure" identified by Spahr and Young ... but journals and magazines are.

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<sup>13</sup> Jacket 35: <http://jacketmagazine.com/35>.

<sup>14</sup> Sloan, Mary Margaret, ed. New Jersey: Talisman House, 1998.

<sup>15</sup> O'Sullivan, Maggie, ed. London: Reality Street Editions, 1996.

Yes, we do numbers with *Aufgabe* because it is impossible not to register the lower number of submissions received from female poets and because it is impossible to separate one's own convictions, aesthetics, and poetic interests from issues of race, class, gender, orientation, and politics in general. We do numbers, however roughly, because each act of editing is an assertion of these positions in some form. The results are mostly imperfect but these things must line up: one cannot claim a progressive and inclusive—and feminist, if truly progressive and inclusive—politics and then proceed to publish serial volumes that fail to represent artists working from a range of circumstances, orientations, or positions. Our politics are essential and we reveal them in every editorial act.

Each issue of *Aufgabe* has presented its own dilemmas and I have discussed the question of gender balance and editorial process with several guest editors. What has been the case, and what we will continue to assert into being, is that the editors we work with, the contributors, and the readers of this journal are invested in a more dynamic poetry community that *does* intervene to impact social conditions, at the very least on the level of representation and accessibility in arts and letters. Journals and magazines make no claims—at least this one doesn't—to be comprehensive, but we can consistently attempt to create pathways, make connections, and put communities—poets, visual artists, translators, editors, readers—into conversation.

In issue #5, 4 female poets and 15 male poets appeared in the Moroccan section, and it was a struggle to get work by *any* female poets to begin with. In issue #6, featuring Brazilian poets, 7 females and 12 males appeared. In the Italian feature of this issue, there is work by 6 females and 10 males, including visual artists (see Jennifer Scappettone's foreword for her comments on "the male-dominated surface of Italian letters," p. 19). These are social issues. And again, these numbers say nothing about individual poets' gender or other orientations, circumstances or positions. However, what I can't ignore in these numbers is that the significance of publishing, say, 4 female poets—nevermind translating into English and publishing these writers in the U.S. as representative of a living poetic reality in their country—likely registers very differently in Morocco, Brazil or Italy than it does here in the U.S. And in any case, it is *only* a starting point. We must insist on the attempt at balance, even if, frustratingly, it only reveals the work that remains to be done seeking out otherly gendered poets in Morocco and other Arab countries, Italy, the Americas and so forth. The application of our poetic concerns has to consider context since this journal throws together artists and communities operating under very different conditions. This is part of what keeps *Aufgabe*—a publication for innovative writing—vital: the combination of contexts within which innovative writing is happening, and

therefore the definition of 'innovative' itself, changes with each issue. We cannot adequately intervene on an international scale unless we are at the same time recognizing different social/political/historical spheres and trajectories of innovation, resistance, and activism. And we cannot begin to address questions of access, unless we as editors are actively seeking out work from a variety of cultural contexts with attention to these disparate realities.

*Constant, necessary pressure.* Whenever we engage in editing of any sort—selecting, reading, recommending, discussing, blogging, curating—we must exert this pressure. It is simply not enough to express frustration with the lower number of submissions by female poets and then shrug or throw one's hands up. I don't know what combination of factors results in a lower number of submissions in the U.S., or why male poets tend to resubmit more frequently and persistently. What I do know is that editing is *enactment*, as much as writing is. It is *proactive* and must attend to the thriving and mutable sphere of poly-verses.

Brooklyn, New York

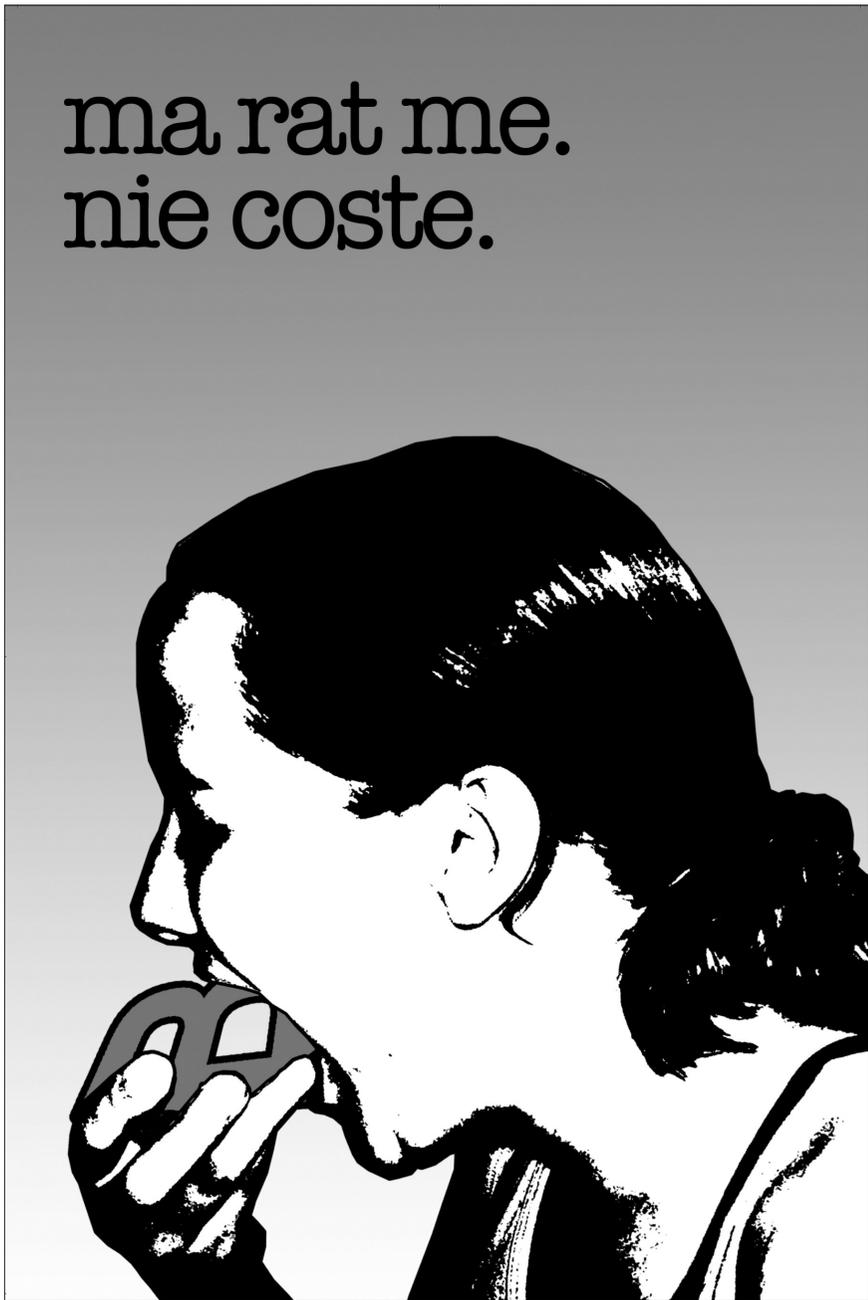
2008



# feature

*Guest edited by Jennifer Scappettone*

ma rat me.  
nie coste.



"ma rat me. nie coste." from Mouth Series by Esse Zeta Atona, 2007



# Passi / between tongues / towards a poetics of research

*Jennifer Scappettone*

Still this guiltless disconnection and the word-mirroring  
will not blanket a vision out...  
From the books and the pills he thought to deduce  
as he wished. I in the unreason of sleep came  
to the choosing and the mingling, and to the recognition.

—Amelia Rosselli, “My Clothes to the Wind” (1952)

Among the things one has come to learn for sure in letters hovers the dazzling awareness that reading and writing outside of a “native” tongue – as Amelia Rosselli was in her mother’s tongue, a tongue of her exile, in the English passage above – carves out a most intimate sense of the boundlessness of our approach to words. If the task of translation obliges one to stay estranged from the language forest, it obliges her to dwell in nondiscursive forums and forms. So much of the labor that follows resists narrative rationales, and whatever story of traduction twice over may be related here needs to be taken in as a happy start – as phases of a process, accretive or entropic, rather than an arrival.

A 1996 assemblage of studies on poetics by Giorgio Agamben opens with an account of conversations the author had with Italo Calvino and Claudio Rugafiori in a mid-70s Paris. The men met to envision a journal that would seek, in part, to identify categorial structures of Italian culture through sequences of twinned polar concepts: “architecture/vagueness” (proposed by Rugafiori); “speed/lightness” (by Calvino); “tragedy/comedy, law/creature, biography/fable,” and, later, “mother tongue/grammatical language; living language/dead language; style/manner” (by Agamben). The review never materialized. As the authors returned to Italy, Agamben recounts, political swerves rightward demanded not “programmatic definitions,” but “resistance and flight.”<sup>1</sup> At the time of this printing, the demands placed upon alert citizens are (once again) stultifyingly akin to theirs.

The volume in which this anecdote (belatedly) appears is titled *Categorie italiane*, or *Italian Categories*, as if to underscore the shadow veering away from the book that every book was imagined – but never managed – to be. The essays

1 *The End of the Poem*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999), p. xi.

that ensue mobilize categories into tensile flight. Deliberations on language/intellection and sound/sense, for instance, culminate in the following reflection on the movements of poetry:

*[I]s this not precisely what happens in every genuine poetic enunciation, in which language's movement toward sense is as if traversed by another discourse, one moving from comprehension to sound, without either of the two ever reaching its destination, the one to rest in prose and the other in pure sound? Instead, in a decisive exchange, it is as if, having met each other, each of the two movements then found the other's tracks, such that language found itself led back in the end to language, and comprehension to comprehension. This inverted chiasm – this and nothing else – is what we call poetry.*

Opposing poles are shown to dwell in an exchange, a cross-questing, cross-mirroring. The word “category” itself hails, etymologically, back to “against” + “assembly/place of public speaking”: the category anchors itself versus the definitions of consensus.

Yet despite the dynamism of these ponderings and the preface's stress on their source in reformulations of categorial structures, when translated into English, *Categorie italiane* was called *The End of the Poem* – presumably in order to render the contents more broadly germane, to departicularize its value in the service of an Anglophone all. At the end of the labor of “curating” this sheaf of poems (to adopt the Italian term for editing, akin to “caring”) from a Midwestern metropolis far off – having all the while taken the import of this work for granted – I find myself wondering explicitly what value Italian structures extend to a foreign readership. What constitutes the *Italianness* of thought produced in the languages of that welter of a peninsula; to what does this weighty but vague cultural and geographical qualification point? To rebuke the mistaken market, I ask as it does: what possible relevance might the italicized phrase pose to an English-speaking audience?

Crossed oppositions between mother tongue and global language, language vivid and dead posit nodes of particular urgency and lure for readers from our society who look to Italy, echoing a pastime that has often been conflated with looking Past. “There is notoriously nothing more to be said on the subject,” opens Henry James's 1902 essay on Venice. The same could be uttered, and often is, of Italy – from the outside. Yet contested borders and allegiances, civic corruption and governmental upheaval, concretely shifting, even vanishing, terrain: “Italy” is an entity more balkanized and more contingent, more demanding of vigilant description, than those of the touring West are prone to face. True, it is a nation-state, speaking more broadly than ever the dialect of Dante. The homogenization

of idiom effected by mass media (thanks initially to Fascist wives) obscures, but does not quell, deep-seated clashes of disposition and socioeconomic circumstances between South and North, Mediterranean and Adriatic, inland and coastal regions deriving from remote acts of history and persistent acts of weather and terrain. All are reflected in language.

Locating the current in this fissured, contradictory, history-hauling state is no easy task, and diverging from those already identified and shelved has involved much self-confoundment for this guest editor. This labor, some on paper, some onscreen, some, as habitual in that culture, in the open air – was a labor of seeking and finding comfort in being lost. This is no genealogy, then, nor a map, but a set of paces, of *passi*, toward a language of emergence in Italy – toward what is being called “the poetry of research.” In order to adequately represent this “*poesia ultima*” (a phrase implying the latest and lasting), I had to construct a context that many Anglo-American readers of poetry lack. I looked back to a prior generation of edges, but tried to clear a different path backward and into the future – one that would represent aesthetic risk, small-press and e-production, and a range of regions and subjects.

Attempting to penetrate or diffuse the male-dominated surface of Italian letters without sacrificing other objectives was possibly the most difficult of my tasks. Anthologies had not aided me much in learning about new women poets. A well-regarded 1978 Garzanti anthology of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Italian verse contains 51 authors, one of whom is a woman (Amelia Rosselli); a 2005 Einaudi anthology, otherwise admirable, features 43 authors, five of whom are women. Small presses and, to a lesser degree, blogs, have been far less myopic, and things are changing; but by dint of some sociological non-enigma, women still seem either to lack access to or to opt out of the podium of outspokenness – even or especially in “experimental” circles. The considerable toil involved in overcoming this impasse resulted in a singular thrill in discovering the work of Maria Attanasio, Giovanna Frene, and Florinda Fusco over the course of this project.

The feature is distributed over two halves, constructed according to a rough chronology. I begin with two postwar authors whose work remains regrettably underrepresented, if not missing, in Anglo-American markets, even in the wake of homages brought about by their recent deaths: Emilio Villa and Amelia Rosselli. Belated appreciation of their work is no mystery, but the logical result of their difficulty, their vocational, residential, and linguistic hybridity, and their willful estrangement from triumphalist literary circles. It would be tough to overstate the consequence of these “marginal” authors for contemporary Italian poetics and, more particularly, for the younger poets gathered here, various of whom are writing and translating between rival languages and categories. The section continues with fresh translations of a poet who may be familiar

to some, celebrated spinner of language emerging equally out of revived dialect traditions of the Veneto and obsolescing globalism: Andrea Zanzotto. A younger series of writers working across literary traditions and genres follows. I am delighted to include a representative range of the work of Nanni Cagnone, lyricist and novelist, lecturer in aesthetics, translator of Hopkins, and founder of the gutsy publishing house, Coliseum; and extracts from the latest volume of Milanese author Milli Graffi, sound and page poet, researcher of the comic function in the early avant-gardes, director of the long-crucial journal *Il verri*, and translator of Carroll, Dickens, and Darwin. The work presented here by Sicilian poet Maria Attanasio, who is also a philosopher and author of historical fiction, is characterized by Carla Billitteri as a rigorous grappling with “cybernetic transpositions of selfhood, thought, and memory” – a “new biomorphism” measured “against the desolate political void of the century.” The section closes with the opening text from Giuliano Mesa’s “last,” serial work-in-progress, *nun* – a title that, while echoing the English and Romance “non,” calls into contemporaneity the German “nun,” the Latin “nunc,” the Sanskrit “nu,” and the Egyptian “nun,” which defines primordial chaos.

Marco Giovenale’s critical piece on crossing categories of chill and speakability in contemporary Italian poetry provides a hinge for passage to the emerging authors of this issue, and a key for understanding the broader scene of their production, literary and extraliterary. Andrea Raos, resident of Paris and one of Italy’s foremost rising critics of Japanese language and literature, follows with a section of his new book-length poem, which chronicles the tragic mutations arising from a 1956 Brazilian experiment to breed killer bees with honey producers in order to make them more productive industrially. Kathleen Fraser notes of the piece she has translated that it “speaks from the mind of the disoriented bee (or hive) which, having experienced the effects of genetic splicing, no longer behaves according to known biological or ethical codes.” A recurring concern with the human body as aftermath arises in the work of Giovanna Frene, scholar of the history of language and poet of scrupulous mobility, or of what she calls the “oscillation of reality”; amid the verse included here is a departure from the sestina form produced after September 11th. The disseminated stanzas of Barese poet/critic/translator Florinda Fusco’s *the book of the dark madonnas* share obsessions with bodily mass haunted by technology; they transmit uncannily feminized corporal parts while shaping space itself as both material in extension and as abyss.

The internet has altered and is altering Italian letters at a pace that can hardly be tracked on paper, providing not only new channels of distribution, but newly available fonts of inspiration: Second-Wave Modernism; the New York School; Language; the Kootenay School; Post-language; and Flarf – to name

only the North American sources cited in a recent essay by Gherardo Bortolotti wryly dubbed “The Discovery of America.” The geographically dispersed, far-sighted young men of GAMMM – Bortolotti, Alessandro Broggi, Marco Giovenale, Michele Zaffarano, and Massimo Sannelli – are responsible for a remarkably characteristic implosion of poems, translations, and critical endeavors, readings and conversational forums, chapbooks, e-books, and broadsides (like the one by Esse Zeta Atona whose bits punctuate this dossier). Readers may access these projects via a website of daunting proportions and scope ([www.gammm.org](http://www.gammm.org)). I can only bring forward a shard of this effort here, but include a collaboratively authored essay that lays out the principles of their installation-oriented poetic. Giovenale, a Roman poet and critic who frequently self-translates, plumbing the uncomfortable region between languages, has contributed a section of poems from his recent cross-genre work of dissolution, *The Exposed House*; Bortolotti, a tract of his blog-emanating installation, *traces*; and Sannelli, a set of linguistically interstitial lyrics that form part of the writing he calls his “second body.” The liminal status of Sannelli’s poems, which he has asked us to print only in English, so as to release them into the status of “second original,” provides an exquisite comment on the work of these writers as a whole: it can hardly be contained by – even while emerging from within – the qualifying adjective of a single syntax, vocabulary, or nation-state. The categorical structures of Italian culture will only be revealed, as Agamben proposes in “Plan for a review” (the last essay of *Infancy and History*), in a “destruction of the destruction” of tradition, of cultural transmissibility – because the fluid “Italian phenomenon” derives from an originary and continual unwelding of patrimony and its transmission, authority and writing.

The majority of the poems published here have not before been translated into English; and, though the world-wide web and the new ease of self-publishing render prior confinements of distribution thankfully obsolete, for several younger writers this represents a debut in an Anglophone or US offline forum. Each translation was broached in a different mode, more or less “literal,” though persistently concrete, crossing vectors of sound and sense; such choices depended upon the character and intention of the original. Endeavoring to include a range of pages from each author and the Italian texts has resulted in numerous lacunae; if space, time, and economics permitted I would have included the serial stanzas of Michele Zaffarano, the theatrical work of Giulio Marzaioli, the cross-media work of Alessandro De Francesco, the neon lyrics of Lidia Riviello, work from African and Eastern diasporic communities now well settled in Italy...and others whose poetry I am only now, at this project’s provisional end, beginning to discover. I find consolation in the fact that further authors are discussed in Marco Giovenale’s generously conceived overview. It

is my wish that these pages will be treated by readers as they were by me: as touchstones for further curiosity.

I'd like to thank the 21 other poets and translators for bearing with me through hundreds of emails eked out in the interstices of other labors, for their patience, and attention to detail. Special gratitude goes out to Gherardo Bortolotti and Marco Giovenale, for their initial solicitousness, tireless, manifold pointers, and copious gifts of pages along the way. Ultimately I have to thank all of my Italian and Italian-speaking friends for their banter, hospitality, and affection, which have borne me through countless exchanges of joyous puzzlement and recognition.

Chicago, Illinois

2008

rgat cai,  
mainés tu msti.



"rgat cai, mainés tu msti." from Mouth Series by Esse Zeta Atona, 2007



# Figurative Content

*Emilio Villa*

Contenuto Figurativo Translated by Pasquale Verdicchio

## **Solemn hypothesis is self**

if with the language of semitic testaments the wind licks  
the corners the dressers and in the threaded  
the eggs of dust unbury and a dry  
light and the dark seeds in the cracks here and there  
and everywhere

is self

if the wind sinks its bite into the protein  
and in the roots of the unearthed and drilling the back  
of locusts trembles and darts  
the trajectory of the homogeneous ether (if minimal  
if minimal for minimal gives minimal  
and retracting abysses)

and if you use with the specifically usual hands  
the air as if it were a crystal pencil,  
like a needle  
scraping the measure the numbered pulse surface

*e non se il vento vago*  
o l'aria di natura ma dell'aria-aria  
l'intimissimo prisma delirante e della raffica  
la curva medesima, ma il puro

omogeneo: l'idea,  
l'idea e il coro,  
l'attimo e l'intenzione,  
il lutto; il non sensibile

coro della percezione, la parabola che  
che procede immutata dalla curva; poi il frutto  
che scende dall'idea che; e spazio da spazio,  
come l'erto transito distende d'un battito solo  
il passero sbiancato dagli aerei cicli,

come l'erto uovo  
che su dove e su  
e nelle parti  
e nelle parti delle parti  
in partibus infidelium,

e su dove  
per la materna anatomia, tra le carti-  
lagini serpeggia e per i fragili arti  
del chiasmo la nuda  
incertezza, i guizzi,  
il trauma e sulle scorie gelide il lume sentito,  
quello nero

quello del moto, quello  
dell'attimo e la follia.

e sempre prima molto prima quasi che tu possa  
enunciare la forma o dire  
una figura, l'acqua  
ha già detto da sola, ora et ab aeterno, il tutto  
e l'orma originale.

*and not if the vague wind*  
oh natural air but of the air-air  
the most intimate delirious prism and of the gust  
the same curve, but the pure

homogeneous: the idea,  
the idea and choir,  
the moment and intention,  
the mourning; the insensible

choir of perception, the parable that  
that proceeds unchanged in the curve; then the fruit  
that drops from the idea that; and space from space,  
as the upright transit extends by a single beat  
the whitened sparrow of aerial cycles,

as the upright egg  
that up where and up  
and in the parts  
and in the parts of the parts  
in partibus infidelium,

and up where  
for the maternal anatomy, among the carti-  
laginous snakes and to make them limbs  
of the chiasmus the naked  
uncertainty, the leaps,  
the trauma and on the gelid slag the felt light,  
dark one

of the motion, that  
of the instant and folly.

and always before long before that you might  
enunciate the form or say  
a figure, water  
has already said by itself, ora et ab aeterno, the whole  
and the original trace.

## **Il cielo è**

è pensato pesato misurato smisurato, mah! chi sa,  
e la calma è il segreto dello spasmo, la radura  
del cielo, la prescritta natura,  
e il cielo è alquanto confuso come il consenso degli uomini,  
come il cuore delle donne, semplicissima orma  
il sentiero dell'acqua equibollente sulla pietra

## **E però se**

se tu usi l'aria come una matita di cristallo,  
un ago, il perno dittongo che stride al centro  
della ragione, premito del filo  
d'erba che vuole inoltrarsi dentro il masso,  
matrice che strepita e lavora e inventa, lenta  
arteriosa iperbole, enigma madornale, immaginaria  
dimensione e varia analisi, sbattendo

quanto sbattono  
gli stracci delle bufere sulle creste Alleghani  
per la ragione che  
il cervelletto dello scoiattolo pietra diventa

e che nell'ora che solidifica  
che nasce il corno  
che nasce la siringa  
e nasce il sambuco  
e il femore sulle cosce  
e viola d'amore  
e cello e mandolino  
nel soffio fino  
del Barnegat, le rocce,

un refe di musica da niente  
trasale è la viola  
*che taglia l'agata*  
e la sparuta corrente,

**The sky is**

is thought weighed measured unmeasured, well! who knows,  
and calm is the secret of the spasm, the shaved  
sky, the prescribed nature,  
and the sky is apparently confused like the consensus of men,  
like the hearts of women, simple trace  
the path of equibullient water on stone

**But if**

if you use the air like a crystal pencil,  
a needle, the diphthong fulcrum that grinds at the center  
of reason, pressed vibration of blade  
of grass that wants to penetrate the stone,  
matrix that shouts and works and invents, slow  
arterial hyperbole, madornate enigma, imaginary  
dimension and varied analysis, slam

how they slam  
against the rags of storms on the crests of Alleghani  
for the reason that  
the squirrel's little brain becomes stone

and that in the hour that solidifies  
that bears the horn  
that bears the syringe  
and bears the elderberry  
and the femur on the thighs  
and violates with love  
and cello and mandolin  
in the fine breath  
of the Barnegat, the stones,

a thread of nothing music  
rises it's the viola  
*that cuts the agate*  
and the haggard current,

## **e se però**

se sparisce l'ombra sedata dello spasmo, circoscritta,  
esanime, del germe ed il richiamo sano  
del minerale (calce quarzo rame) allora

la falce, ecco  
la ruota, ecco  
e è anche così  
e anche non così  
e il dolmen  
il menhir  
il cromlech  
il sese *con le mele*

xòana e stele  
colonna ed acrotèrio in noce  
e il cemento delle rampe e scale  
e i legni in croce  
e il putiferio vaginale...

## **Corrado Cagli, pittore**

per operare una croce  
ci vogliono due legni: o  
due segni e l'aria: tre  
per porre l'architrave: e costole  
d'aria per seminar la voce ove dio vuole.  
Ma tu forse muovi la tua considerazione e giri l'ombra e la rigiri,  
l'ombra dei segni progettati nuovi, nell'ordine ambigualmente  
del dominio

altro:

altro dal fogliame e dagli stinchi  
altro dall'onda e dalla polvere subsònica  
altro dal vento e dalle pàtine romantiche  
altro

**and if**

if the calmed shadow disappears in the spasm, circumscribed,  
lifeless, of the sane germ and calling  
of the mineral (lime quartz copper) then

the scythe, here is  
the wheel, here is  
and it is also thus  
and also not thus  
and the dolmen  
the menhir  
the cromlech  
the sese *with apples*

xòana and stele  
column and acroterion in walnut  
and cement of the ramps and stairs  
and walnut wood  
and vaginal ruckus...

**Corrado Cagli, painter**

to make a cross  
two pieces of wood are needed: or  
two signs and the air: three  
to place the architrave: and ribs  
of air to spread the word where god wants.  
But maybe you move your consideration and turn the show over,  
the shadow of newly projected signs, in the ambiequal order of  
dominion

other:

other from foliage and shins  
other from wave and subsonic dust  
other from wind and romantic patinas  
other

dalla polpa mite e tonda e dal  
contatto parallelo

altro dal filo dell'evento e della lite umana  
altro dai gusci e dal velo  
altro dal bianco limo latte sugli usci

in una bassa mattina di colore ovale  
altro, già, altro ancora, dal graffio duro  
dell'unghia sull'erma di diorite  
altro dall'altro oltre l'ultimo altro

il puro omogeneo dei teoremi orali, e il puro che ritorna;  
l'acqua liscia e disunita di ogni sembianza che rigenera, e  
sulle corna del fuoco bianco e nero sulle corna  
sanguina la sagoma adorna della tragedia orientale.

Qui mi firmo. Mi firmo col mio nome. Noi giochiamo  
solo con le conseguenze e con la inane  
logica inane delle manifestazioni impulsive.

from humble and rotund pulp and the  
parallel contact

other from thread of events and human argument  
other from shells and veil  
other from white lime milk on the thresholds

in a low morning of oval color  
other, already, other still, from a hard scratch  
of the nail on the erma of diorite  
other from the other beyond the last other  
the pure homogeneity of oral theorems, and the pure that returns;  
smooth and disunited water of all semblances that regenerates, and  
on the horns of the black and white fire on the horns  
the adorned silhouette of the oriental tragedy bleeds.

Here I sign myself. I sign with my name. We play  
only with consequences and the inane  
logic inane of impulsive manifestations.

DA **Palermo '63**

— poesia dedicata a Gozzi

Come un sol uomo mi muovo impertinente  
niente suspense nel giallo. Violento  
cretino nel muoversi. Assassino figlia di Grim  
si violenta da non si sa chi che è da scoprire carino  
Sistema in crisi perdita verginità trovare assassino  
casualissimo. Nadia la figlia si muove liberamente  
dopo le perdite casuali o no. Costruzioni allegoriche  
scattano politiche. Moto insurrezionale sperde il  
Dio tramaturgo. Poliziotto sempre Americano.  
Grigioni i testi, la testa che si taglia, addirittura  
manoscritta. Poliziotto scoglie dramma.

## Four Poems

*Amelia Rosselli*

Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

FROM **Palermo '63**

— poem dedicated to Gozzi

Like a lone man I move impertinent  
no suspense in the thriller. Violent  
fool in moving about. Assassination daughter of Grim  
is violated by one knows not whom to be discovered cute  
System in crisis virginity loss to locate most random  
assassinant. Nadia the daughter moves freely  
following the losses random or non. Allegorical constructions  
spring political. Insurrectional movement disperses the  
traumaturgic God. Ever-American cop.  
Grisons, the texts, the head that gets cut, straightaway  
manuscripted. Cop sloughs drama.

DA **Serie ospedaliera (1963-1965)**

tuo motivo non urlare, dinnanzi alla  
cattedrale; esilio o *chance* non ti perdonano  
la locomotrice.

Io sono molto improdiga di baci, tu scegli  
in me una rosa scarnificata. Senza spine  
ma i petali, urgono al chiudersi. Mio  
motivo non sognare, dinnanzi alla realtà  
ignara. Mio motivo non chiudersi, dinnanzi

alla resa dei conti.

Tu scegli in me un motivo non dischiuso  
dinnanzi alla rosa impara.

Di sera il cielo spazia, povera  
cosa è dalla finestra il suo bigio  
(ma era verde) ondulare. Oppure

colori che mai speravo riconquistare  
abbaiavano tetri al davanzale. Se  
questa tetra verginità non puo'

rimuovere dal cuore i suoi salmi  
allora non v'è nessuna pace per  
chi scuce, notte e dì, trite cose  
dai suoi labbri.

Non è la casa (cucita con le mattonelle)  
a farti da guida; è il mistero  
disintegro delle facciate aeree

che ti promette gaudio sottilmente.

FROM **Hospital Series (1963-1965)**

your motive not to scream, facing the  
cathedral; exile or *chance* don't pardon you  
the locomotrix.

I am quite improdical of kisses, you choose  
in me a rose stripped of flesh. Missing thorns  
but the petals—those urge to close. My  
motive not to dream, facing reality  
unacquainted. My motive not to be closed, facing

the settling of accounts.  
You choose in me a motive nondisclosed  
facing the unpaired rose.

At evening the sky ranges, poor  
thing from the window is its grey  
(but it was green) undulating. Or

colours I never hoped to reconquer  
bayed tetric at the windowsill. If  
this tetric virginity cannot

remove its psalms from the heart  
then there is no peace at all for  
she who unstitches, night and day, trite things  
from the lips.

It isn't the house (stitched with tiles)  
to act as your guide; it is the disintegral  
mystery of the airy façades

that promises you gaudfulness subtly.

DA **Documento (1966-1973)**

Innesto nel vivere  
la tua colpa (un  
pedinaggio)  
non mi feci avanti coi miei fiori, perché  
tu eri ancora meditando  
il cuore  
curvo per eccellenza nella sua dimora  
guardando se qualche verità inedita  
ancora potesse provocarmi.

La piazza come una vecchia tristezza  
alle due di notte deserta era e distante  
parasentimenti  
cerchi contusi (l'inutile  
ronda)  
nel senso guardigno della parola ti  
credesti libera per un istante.

FROM **Document (1966-1973)**

Graft in living  
your fault (a  
tailing)  
I did not come forward with my flowers, because  
you were still meditative  
the heart  
curved par excellence in its abode  
watching to see if some unpublished truth  
could still provoke me.

Like an old sadness the piazza  
at two A.M. was deserted and distant  
parasentiments  
bruised circles (the useless  
rounds)  
in the guarded sense of the word you  
believed yourself free for an instant.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

### **Palermo ('63)**

This short lyric to the dramatist Luigi Gozzi – composed as if for a thriller script – contains a series of textual ruptures and innovations that provide a useful introduction to Rosselli's poetic. "Assassinatore" and "sperdere" are archaic and aulic; "traumaturgo" is a neologism amalgamating "trauma" or "trama" (texture; plot) and "dramatist." "Grigione" is a pivot point or punctum of the lyric, given that it refers to "testi" and "testa": it indexes most immediately a small, ferocious, rodent-hunting mammal allied to the glutton and marten, invoking its etymology in the gray color of the animal's coat. The English "Grison" (like "grigione," taken from the French) can also refer to a servant dressed in gray so as to perform secret errands. The Grisons are, moreover, the largest and easternmost canton of Switzerland, a trilingual canton mirroring Rosselli's own trilingualism; "grigionaccio" is an archaic Italian pejorative of "grigione" meaning a rebel against authority, derived from the 15th-century Swiss Protestant sect of "Grigioni" (in English, the Grey League) founded to resist the bishop of Chur. The penultimate line plays with the gender of "testo" – aptly, as the speaker's gender has been suspended from the beginning: the juxtaposition of "testo" and "testa" underscores that texts are masculine, the head, beheaded, feminine. This play culminates in the last line: "manoscritta" may be a feminization of "manuscript" or an adjective qualifying "testa," meaning "handwritten" or "in manuscript." The young Rosselli may also be plumbing the English "man" in "mano," since she has used the English term for "suspense," newly incorporated into Italian, and translated here as "suspence" (as the term is sometimes spelled by Italians), to maintain the estrangement of the foreign term. Suspense invokes a cliffhanger brought to fruition in the last line's "scoglie," a verb for shedding skin or archaic feminine form of "cliffs" or "setbacks." The poem's end finally rivals the head, "straightaway / manuscripted."

### **Hospital Series**

In Italian, "salmo" means "psalm," while the feminine noun that haunts it, "salma," means "corpse, remains." Rosselli uses "salmo" in the plural while allowing the feminine noun to hover over the lyric.

"I labbri" refers to the lips of a wound, unlike "le labbra," which would refer to the lips of the mouth; I have therefore utilized a more abstract "the lips" in place of the (still ambiguous, linked either to "chi scuce" or to "il cuore") possessive here.

küdf oso wœpra.



"küdf oso wœpra." from Mouth Series by Esse Zeta Atona, 2007

DA **Ligonàs**

II

*Ligonàs*

No, tu non mi hai mai tradito, [paesaggio]  
su te ho  
riversato tutto ciò che tu  
infinito assente, infinito accoglimento  
non puoi avere: il nero del fato/nuvola  
avversa o della colpa, del gorgo implosivo.  
Tu che stemperi in quinte/silenzi indifferenti  
e pur tanto attinenti, dirimenti  
l'idea stessa di trauma —  
tu restio all'ultima umana  
cupidità di disgregazione e torsione  
tu forse ormai scheletro con pochi brandelli  
ma che un raggio di sole basta a far rinvenire,  
continui a darmi famiglia  
    con le tue famiglie di colori  
    e d'ombre quiete ma  
    pur mosse-da-quiete,  
    tu dàì, distribuisce con dolcezza  
    e con lene distrazione il bene  
    dell'identità, dell'“io”, che perenne-  
    mente poi torna, tessendo  
    infinite autoconciliazioni: da te, per te, in te.  
    .....

# Two Poems

*Andrea Zanzotto*

Translated by Patrick Barron

FROM **Ligonàs**

II

*Ligonàs*

No, you have never betrayed me, [landscape]  
upon you I have  
poured back all that which you —  
infinite absentee, infinite acceptee —  
cannot have: the gloom of destiny/inimical  
clouds or guilt, the implosive vortex.  
You who dissolve the idea itself of trauma  
into fifths/indifferent yet pertinent,  
nullifying silences —  
you resistant to the final act  
of disintegrative and twisted human cupidity  
you perhaps by now skeletal with few tatters  
but you who need only a sunbeam to revive,  
continue to give me family  
    with your families of colors  
    and silent shadows yet  
    movements-from-silence,  
    you give, distribute with gentleness  
    and with mild distraction the decency  
    of identity, of the “I”, that perenni-  
    ally returns, weaving  
    infinite autoconciliations: by you, for you, in you.

.....

Tu mal noto, sempre a te davanti come stralucido schermo,  
o dietro sfogliato in milioni di fogli,  
mai camminato  
quanto pur si desidera, da ben prima del nascere:

ma perché  
furiosa-dispotica-inane  
l'ombra del disamore  
della disidentificazione  
s'imporrebbe qui nei giri, strati e  
salti, nelle tue dolci tane?

Ma no. Con frementi tormente di petali di meli  
e di ciliegi con rapide rapide nubi di petali e baci  
tu mi hai ieri, ieri? accarezzato?  
Gremite assenze, ombre grementi alle spalle  
di quanto fu e sarà,  
petali petali amatamente dissolti  
nelle alte dilavate erbe — e laggiù tra i meli  
stralunati presagi di sera...  
In petali, piogge pure, lune sottili  
dacci secondo i nostri meriti  
pochi ma come immensi,  
dà che solo in mitezza per te mi pensi  
e in reciproco scambio di sonni amori e sensi  
da questa gran casa LIGONÀS  
dalle sue finestrelle-occhi all'orlo del nulla  
io ti individui per sempre e in te mi assuma.

NOTA

Grande casa-osteria in aperta campagna. Il toponimo, di origine incerta, figurava sulla facciata. Nel tempo scomparve e ora è stato ripristinato.

Notorious you, always ahead like a superlucid screen,  
or behind scattered in millions of leaves,  
never sauntered  
much as one wants, from well before birth:

but why  
furious-despotic-inane  
would the shadow of estrangement  
of misidentification  
impose itself here amid your rounds, layers and  
leapings, within your mild dens?

But no. With quivering blizzards of apple and cherry  
blossoms with swift swift clouds of petals and kisses  
yesterday you, yesterday? caressed me?  
Crowded absences, shadows crowding in at my shoulders  
inasmuch as you were and will be,  
petals petals lovingly dissolved  
in the tall ashen grass — and down there amid the apple  
trees gaping intimations of evening...  
In petals give us, according to our merits,  
pure rains, slender moons  
few but how immense,  
give so that only in mildness for you I conceive of myself  
and in mutual exchange of drowsings lovings and sensings  
from this great tavern LIGONÀS  
from its window-eyes on the edge of the void  
I forever recognize you and gather you into myself.

NOTE

“Ligonàs,” a large inn and tavern in the open countryside. Its name, of uncertain origin, was once displayed on its façade. In time it disappeared, but has now been restored.

I

O fedeli  
o immoti ma conversati  
restando ognuno là nella rarità —  
o attivissimi col nulla  
dei prati dal febbraio  
                  dissufflati in mille  
mai viste secche    mai visti appostamenti

Residuali e stinchi    MORÈR, SACHÈR  
liberati per gli habitat  
più manifesti del grigiore  
ma nella  
lietezza di-pur-essere,  
consistenza con l'essere,  
derisione  
infine, derisione/amore  
                          dell'essere?  
.....

2

Morèr, sachèr  
nudi, dementi  
resti di storie-eventi  
fedeli fino alla demenza  
                  amorosa silenzio/demenza

Alberi in            proporzioni  
e sacre/sfatte  
proposizioni insemiati  
nella violenta grigità dei prati —  
                  e no, templa non fanno  
non vogliono, non danno

I

Oh faithful  
oh motionless but conversed  
each lingering there in the scarcity —  
oh engrossed with the nothingness  
of February meadows  
                  emanated in a thousand  
never-seen shoals    never-seen ambushes

Remnant skeletons    MORÈR, SACHÈR  
released in habitats  
more evident than the greyness  
but in the  
rapture of-yet-being,  
consistency with being,  
derision  
at last, derision/love  
                                  of being?

.....

2

Morèr, sachèr  
naked, demented  
relics of stories-events  
faithful until dementia  
                  amorous silence/dementia

Trees in            proportions  
and sacred/flaccid  
proportions inseminated  
in the violent greyity of the meadows —  
                  and no, templa don't make  
don't want, don't give

MORÈR, SACHÈR,  
vittime e padri  
e figli dei prati/tradimenti,  
februarietà pura  
ostile ad ogni  
tratto avida d'ogni immisura

Ma a voi, erme, ermi,  
questo brusio tra i denti  
non basta  
assai di più bisogna, assai  
che più  
vi si consenta amando                      vi si oblii

NOTA

"Morèr," gelso; "Sachèr," salcio caprino. Qui sono sempre da intendere al plurale (che è invariabile).



DA **What's Hecuba to Him or He to Hecuba?**

ecco sebbene guardassero tutti dall'altra parte ecco come tutti lo spingono a cadere nell'economia curtense della psyche . lui costretto accovacciarsi nel centro . il calendario brucia uno sconosciuto . e testa , stanza vuota dove bisogna trasgredire l'occhio . ciò che cola su ciò è la vessazione dell'incredibile sul credibile . se il nome è ' schermo ' , il senso del nome è un altro nome — nascosto — che si assilla col senso del primo nome . c'è un terzo nome — nascosto — che eredita o genera il senso dei primi due . chi ha sognato incontrare il fondamento ha la regressione infinita . lo schermo è quello che manca l'effettuazione temporale dell'avvenimento . lo schermo è che teme lo sbaglio . schermo è il verbo all'infinito il derubante il compagno carnale dello specchio . la vertigine bocca-ano , nel suo diritto e nel suo rovescio . il limite della causa è la sua casualità . così la complicità degli effetti è senza limite , da perseguire nel gergo delle coincidenze . tutto l'altro — intendo : il vero-questo — era nel silenzio accadeva in un istante . oscura mischiata rivalità biologica in cui la parola tace il silenzio . il magazzino dei segni è chiuso . si parlavano , cioè erano al limite dell'audizione dolorosa .

Riferito ad Angelo Cagnone. Febbraio 1970.

# Three Excerpts

*Nanni Cagnone*

Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

FROM **What's Hecuba to Him or He to Hecuba?**

here it is although all looked the other way here it is as all shove it to fall into the feudal economy of the psyche . he obliged to squat in the center . the calendar burns an unknown . and head , empty room where one must transgress the eye . what drains over what is the oppression of the incredible over the credible . if the name is ' screen ' , the sense of the name is another name — hidden — that torments itself with the sense of the first . there is a third — hidden — name that inherits or engenders the sense of the first two . who has dreamed of encountering the *Grund* undergoes infinite regression . the screen is what lacks the temporal execution of the event . the screen is what fears the mistake , screen is the infinitive verb the robbing the carnal companion of the mirror . mouth-anus vertigo , in its right and in its reverse . the limit of cause is its randomness . thus the complicity of effects has no limits , to pursue in the jargon of coincidences . everything else — I mean : the true-this — was in the silence happened in an instant . dark mixed-up biological rivalry in which the word omits silence . the warehouse of signs is closed . they spoke to one another , that is they were at the limit of painful audition .

DA **Andatura**

1978-9

come ortica e lattuga, felce e felce,  
cammina intanto per tramiti,  
svelto non avanza nella stranezza del mare  
che scorrono insieme smalto e ritrosia  
lungo ripetute somiglianze,  
scorrono nel madornale fruscio  
già nascosto da nuvole, conteso,  
insaputo confusissimo aroma.  
ditemi se dissipa da sé,  
lacuna che lentissima confonde.

\*

difficile madre, imminente,  
da cui mosse  
nella continuazione si riflettono  
da lontano forse parlano  
cose che non si deve  
porre alla lingua.  
senso per somiglianza incustodito.

\*

giunge ancora alla sua fine,  
completamente più grande  
adesso non coperto dal tempo,  
pietra confinaria persuasa  
dietro di sé, che contrappone.  
ma camminando dove si ha paura,  
torcendo la chiave, insistendo,  
quando sarà giorno  
seguirà solo il superfluo,  
potrà mai raggiungere.

\*

FROM **Gait**  
1978-9

like nettle and lettuce, fern and fern,  
it walks meantime through ways,  
swift does not advance in the strangeness of the sea  
that enamel and reluctance flow together  
along repeated likenesses,  
they flow in the enormous rustling  
already hidden by clouds, sought-after,  
unknown most confused fragrance.  
tell me if it dispels on its own,  
lacuna that most slowly confounds.

\*

difficult mother, imminent,  
out of which moved  
in continuation are reflected  
from afar perhaps they speak  
things that must not be  
set to tongue.  
sense for resemblance unguarded.

\*

still reaching its end,  
completely greater  
today not covered by time,  
boundary stone persuaded  
behind itself, which opposes.  
but walking where one fears,  
twisting the key, insisting,  
when it's morning it will follow  
only the superfluous,  
will never be able to reach.

\*

minaccia, svuotata bellezza,  
e più non ci riguarda—  
si torna nel mutevole,  
amicizia insensibile  
vicissitudine inviolata  
che non richiede cure  
allontana dall'elica una scia.

DA **Il popolo delle cose**

1996-7

Quel che vogliono i legami  
—immedesimare—  
è l'importanza del tempo,  
il suo favore—  
o c'è altra luce intorno?  
Venerato nascosto,  
prezioso sigillo,  
e gettato sulla via  
chi deve andare,  
con una cosa nuova  
per la bocca, prima  
che a raggiungerla  
s'impari, prima che  
il nodo senza nomi  
sia disfatto, e acquisito  
il suo tormento:  
una sola corona, nella  
fedele disposizione  
delle cose non presenti  
né assenti—delle cose  
che dietro respirano  
ondeggiano avanti.

(versi 2285-2306)

threat, emptied beauty,  
and doesn't concern us anymore—  
one returns into the mutable,  
insensitive friendship  
inviolable vicissitude  
that needs no cures,  
distances from the helix a wake.

FROM **The People of Things**  
1996-7

What ties want  
—likening—  
is the importance of time,  
its favor—  
or is there other light around?  
Venerated hidden,  
precious seal,  
and thrown upon the way  
who must go,  
with a new thing  
for the mouth, before  
reaching it  
one learns, before  
the knot without names  
is undone, and its torment  
acquired:  
a sole crown, in the  
faithful disposition  
of things not present  
nor absent—of things  
that breathe behind  
sway forward.

(lines 2285-2306)

La riconosco: la notte  
è l'ultima stesura dell'illeggibile.  
Vedo che mi segue,  
come fanno fedeli difetti  
nelle opere, momenti di luce  
nell'ora del pianto, e  
figli aggrappati come figli  
dove madri discoste  
si possono prendere.  
Acque a cui  
prescritto è correre,  
leggendo queste pietre  
—acque trapiantate a marzo  
nelle valli—, dicono cose  
disperate nella lingua ripetute,  
e dolce nelle vie  
tenersi al buio—  
essendo in pochi, separarsi  
prima che vecchio e nuovo  
si assomiglino e le ruote  
facciano ritorno, prima che  
pungolati e stanchi, molta  
polvere, e tutto si allontani  
come prima è nato.

(versi 1565-87)

Intero, arrendevole illusione  
che numerate le parti  
e fare in tempo—un abito  
cucito intorno al corpo, ma  
un disavanzo, cruna d'ago  
per cui passa il maltempo.  
Allora si avvicina, fermando  
la distanza, quel rincreocere  
di sguardi, o venire incontro  
senza fidamento, che  
—nel muoversi dell'uno  
dentro i molti—piú dispera.

(versi 1135-46)

I recognize it: night  
is the final draft of the illegible.  
I see that it follows me,  
as do faithful defects  
in works, moments of light  
in the weeping hour, and  
children clinging like children  
where there can be taken  
mothers afar.  
Waters to which  
running is prescribed,  
reading these stones  
—waters transplanted in March  
in the valleys—, they say things  
desperate in language, repeated,  
and gentle in the streets  
keeping to the dark—  
being few, separating  
before old and new  
come to resemble one another  
and the wheels return, before  
goaded and tired, much  
dust, and all distances itself  
as before it was born.

(lines 1565-87)

Whole, docile illusion  
that numbered the parts,  
and making in time—a dress  
sewn around the body, yet  
a deficit, needle's eye  
through which bad weather passes.  
So one approaches, stopping  
distance, that regretting  
of glances, or coming to meet  
without trust, which  
—in the moving of one  
within the many—further despairs.

(lines 1135-46)

Grande superficie,  
paziente, delle madri  
che si toccano, le madri  
che si vedono, finché la via  
è simile a conchiglia.  
Poi un motivo, qualunque  
pendio, e ciò che deve  
scorre via dal mare.

(versi 2123-30)

Great surface,  
patient, of mothers  
that are touched, mothers  
that are seen, until the road  
resembles a shell.

A motive, then, whatever  
slope, and that which must  
flows away from the sea.

(lines 2123-30)

---

incomparabile

la gioia del fiore  
dove

consuma la sua totale dipendenza  
nella pienezza assoluta

che riceve

abbagliato di potenza non vede  
mai se stesso

---

nell'ululato dei colori

*per simulare la leggerezza perduta*

un chiodo di colore

prende funzione  
di architrave

---

le vecchie femmine siedono  
sul profondo carbone dello sguardo

e il fossile della domanda

FROM **Embargoed Voice**

*Milli Graffi*

embargo voice Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

---

incomparable

the joy of the flower  
where

its total dependence consumes  
in the absolute plenitude

that receives

dazzled with power does not ever  
see its own self

---

in the howl of colors

to simulate levity lost

a nail of color

takes on the role  
of an architrave

---

the old females sit  
on the coal depth of the gaze

and the fossil of the question

resta un segno  
che la movente pluviale vita  
tiene ben raccolto e fermo

era    cosa  
l'urlo del tronco aggrappato al braccio  
nel balzo alla certezza dell'  
essere inquisite

era    cosa  
il sasso rifugio nello schianto del sole  
o il sasso pioggia come aperto mantello  
o il sasso ombra mugugno di canzone

e le grandi foglie figure perdute insegna  
globale di tutta la ramificazione

cosa? chiama  
a raccogliersi  
questa sparuta minoranza

---

utilissimo tu  
arduo a recepire  
col consenso religioso sulla tua ultima faccia  
tiri fuori una soggezione da cattedrale

quante volte a bisbigliare  
la presa diretta  
il sussurro irrisorio delle taciute ragioni

si parla e reciprocamente ci si chiede  
di darmi darti la vita

primo sbarramento l'aria  
gonfia di bolle

la tua voce in un fumetto  
di etichette sbagliate  
mi abbracci e sbagli la punteggiatura  
qui il sospiro di una virgola

remains a sign  
that the motile pluvial life  
keeps well assembled and still

the howl of the trunk grasping the arm  
in a leap to the assurance of  
being chased

what was it

the shelter-stone in the crash of sun  
or the rain-stone like an open cape  
or the shadow-stone grumbling of song

what was it

& the great leaves lost figures global  
emblem of all ramification

what? calls  
to assembly  
this haggard minority

---

most useful you  
arduous to acknowledge  
with the religious permission of your final countenance  
elicit a cathedral awe

how many times whispering  
in a live recording  
the derisive murmur of reasons hushed

is spoken and reciprocally asking  
to give you my to give me your life

first blockage the air  
swollen with bubbles

your voice in a comic strip  
of mixed-up tags  
you embrace me and get the punctuation wrong  
here the sigh of a comma

è segno artefatto  
del trauma bugia

corrispondenza vuol dire che non ci si capisce

---

nei tempi del profondo inverno  
anche la luna fa cilecca  
tagliati i legamenti il braccio  
è in rifiuto di obbedienza  
prassi sospesa dentro il tappeto di nebbia

---

**voce prego ego croce**

a venire e a perdere negli assalti di **voce**  
**prego** l'occulto mio timido ancora più timido  
acclamate la **foce** dell'enunciazione  
quando **ripiego** le labbra sbrecciate  
cammina sulla **noce** del suo forte aroma  
di nero lo **lego** intero robustamente  
spazio **precoce** diretto a squarciare  
a piccoli punti **strego**  
e il tutto **rinnego** con moto leggero

**veloce** dissolvenza  
qui si fonda il primo **diniego**  
**atroce** raschio

colmo di immenso **sussiego**  
**nuoce**  
ne sento la portanza e **disgrego**

abilmente **feroce** l'imperfezione dell'ultimo **ego**  
messo in **croce**

---

is an artificial sign  
of mendacious trauma

correspondence means we cannot get in touch

---

in times of deep winter  
even the moon misfires  
with ligaments severed, the arm  
is in obedience's refuse  
praxis suspended within the carpet of fog

---

**voice pray ego cross**

in coming and losing in assaults of **voice**  
I **pray** my shy hiddenness to be still more shy  
hail the **fosse** of enunciation  
when I **ply** back breached lips  
joycing the source of its heavy fragrance  
in black I **tie** it all up robustly  
precocious space bound to burst  
in small stitches I **beguile**  
& **decline** the whole with delicate motion  
  
fast dissolution  
the first **denial** is founded here  
atrocious hoarseness  
  
brimming with immense **arrogance**  
damage  
I sense its lift and **disregate**  
  
ably **ferocious** fallibility of the final **ego**

cross-placed

---

## **kamikaze**

se prendi un'idea e la vuoi forte  
e ti viene la luce sulla via di Damasco

parola come folgorazione  
e lavori per costruire questa soggettività totale  
che è una forma di autosventramento  
una resa incondizionata  
al bene assoluto con maiuscola obbligatoria

metti in scena la prima cosa  
il rotolare lontano di un temporale

adoro che mi si faccia paura  
come bambina da lontano non mi toccare  
ma fammi il brivido quello  
quello lì che corre giù dietro  
fino allo sfintere  
nasconde l'intimo annuncio  
che piace fino in fondo  
e apre la lunga piattaforma dell'attesa  
scava le guancie bianche  
e fa l'occhio atono e fisso

lo vedi che non vedono più niente  
e quell'occhio impassibile da squalo  
passeggia insospettabile sovrano  
nell'areoporto di New Ark

se il colpo di folgore estingue  
tutta la luce  
nello sguardo bloccato  
terre bruciate tutte le micce interne

## **kamikaze**

if you take an idea and want it bad  
and the light on the road to Damascus comes to you

word like a flash  
and you work to erect this total subjectivity  
which is a form of self-disembowelment  
an unconditional surrender  
to the absolute good with obligatory capital letter

set the stage for the first thing  
the distant rolling of a thunderstorm

I love being scared of  
like a little girl from far away don't touch me  
but give me the chills those chills  
just those that run down my back  
to the sphincter  
and hide the intimate announcement  
that pleases utterly  
and open the long platform of waiting  
hollow out the white cheeks  
and give you a fixed and blank stare

you see that they don't see anything anymore  
and that impassive shark's eye  
paces sovereign beyond suspicion  
in the airport of New Ark

if the thunderbolt extinguishes  
all light  
in the paralyzed eye  
all internal fuses blown scorched lands

se il sacro terrore salda il perno  
il principio di rotazione  
e la bella coatta ripetizione  
non scarrucola il suo impossibile ingombro

come me l'aggiusto poi io qui sulla pagina

lo scardinamento a tutta pressione

del giro di vite fino a scoppiarne fuori

l'arrovesciamento del tutto amore tutto lusinga

in macchinario cuneo maglio e squasso

della morte con morte per morte tutta morte e solo

punto assurdamente quietamente fisso di perdurante esplosione

if sacred terror welds the axle  
blocks the principle of rotation  
and beautiful compulsory repetition  
can no longer haul its impossible weight

how can I mend it now here on the page

the full-pressure unsettling

of the turn of the screw until it bursts out

the turning inside out of the whole love whole blandishment

into wedge hammer and jolt machinery

meant for death of death with death all death and unique

point fixed absurdly pacifically with prolonging blast

### **bivio del sì e del no**

Bivio del sì e del no vita binaria  
senza furore di complessità  
tra i virus le sconessioni del millennio  
sorella d'ostinata permanenza  
cliccando a vuoto nel liquido fondale  
una nube passa distratta sul mondo  
memoria volatile nella precipita notte.

### **in fuga, a branchi**

Risalimmo le lettere del libro  
il mistero della luce a spirale  
nella stanza—a branchi, in fuga,  
non si sa da chi da quanto—ribaltando  
il silenzio in algido fondo  
astrale.

FROM **Amnesia of the Movement  
of Clouds**

*Maria Attanasio*

Amnesia del movimento delle nuvole Translated by Carla Billitteri

**crossroads of yes and no**

Crossroads of yes and no binary life  
without the fury complexity  
between viruses the disconnections of the millennium  
sister of obstinate permanence  
clicking in vain in the liquid backdrop  
a cloud passes distracted over the earth  
volatile memory in the steep night.

**in flight, in herds**

We reclinbed the letters of the book  
the mystery of the spiral light  
in the stanza—in herds, in flight,  
not knowing who from for how long—capsizing  
silence in frigid astral  
depth.

### **sentivo ogni giorno ...**

Sentivo ogni giorno un indice destro  
digitarmi ma non riuscii a decifrare  
il tocco a spirale che accese  
la dialettica dell'onda e del veliero  
le ombre degli alberi contro il cielo di notte.  
Fu sete guerra nucleo radioattivo  
passando come un rumore d'acqua persa  
tra gli strati di buio e di chiarore  
la forma oscura che mi dorme accanto  
—ferita mai riscattata dalla storia. Un virus  
risalì i circuiti cancellò la schermata.

### **Un attimo uno solo ...**

Un attimo uno solo—assoluto  
in cima al campanile—luce  
di sofferenza intelligente  
che tace nell'occhio del mattino  
senza scissure fraintendimenti  
si guarda e non si riconosce,  
il dio imperfetto, la grande amnesia.

**I felt each day ...**

I felt each day an index of the right hand  
digitize me but I could not decipher  
the spiral touch that turned on  
the dialectic of wave and mast  
the shadows of the trees against the night sky.  
It was silk war radioactive nucleus  
passing by like a noise of water lost  
between the layers of darkness and glimmering  
the obscure form that sleeps next to me  
—wound never redeemed by history. A virus  
reclimbed the circuits erased the screen.

**A moment only one ...**

A moment only one—absolute  
atop the belltower—light  
of intelligent suffering  
silent in the eye of morning  
without divisions misunderstandings  
looks at and doesn't recognize itself,  
the imperfect god, the great amnesia.

prutiès  
me manfri cödo.



"prutiès me manfri cödo." from Mouth Series by Esse Zeta Atona, 2007

# Triple Fugue

*Giuliano Mesa*

tripla fuga Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

(DA **nun, 9-II ottobre** 2002)

(FROM **nun, 9-II October** 2002)

<p>lāmīna frangia intaglio, che ricuce, c'è, non cessa – pātina polvere, passi, avvolgere, dando –</p> <p>di' dirada di'</p> <p>non è vuoto</p> <p>cominciando</p> <p>rasa, arsa non sarà</p> <p>di' dirada (che arda, che darà)</p>	<p>ritorna, ciò che rimane, cominciando, finendo, continuando: no – cominciando sono parole concave, sonanti, attese, che attendono</p> <p>prendi, per questo prendere, prémi, su questo, che non è vuoto, dài la premura, di', lāmīna pātina, avvolgere, dando</p>	<p>ritorna, ciò che rimane, risuona (finendo, continuando: no –)</p> <p>non vuoto, prima, prendi, non dopo soltanto il non dopo, prémi, ancora, non ancora, di', dirada</p> <p>occhio, parola occhio, guscio, concavo, sonante, concavo, dentro, non vuoto</p>
--	---	--

frotte verso le cune, radure dove si adunano, reti dove s'impigliano, presi,  
portàti dove li portano a tacere, parola occhio, che tace, taci, non può tacere,  
parola preme che non dice, dice che non è vuoto, intorno, dentro,  
frotte, frotte, nomi che non li scuci dalle lingue, anche tagliate, lame, frange –

anche il moncone il moncherino, che si raggruma, grumo,  
che si raduna, scuro che si coagula, goccia, dopo goccia, di',  
grumo, che occlude, chiude, non è vuoto, dentro,  
fuori sono sonanti, frotte, rimangono, sono, rimarranno –

<p>foil fringe engraving, that restiches, there is, doesn't          cease – patina dust, steps, to envelop, giving –</p> <p>say scatter say</p> <p>it is not          empty</p> <p>beginning</p> <p>razed, scorched          will not be</p> <p>say scatter          (what scorches, what will give)</p>	<p>what remains, returns,          beginning,          ending, lasting: no –          beginning are hollow, sounding, awaited          words, that await</p> <p>take, to take for this,          press, on this, that is not empty,          give the pains, say,          foil patina,          to envelop, giving</p>	<p>what remains, returns,          resounds          (ends, lasting: no –)</p> <p>not empty, before, take,          not after only the not after,          press, yet, not yet,          say; scatter</p> <p>eye, word eye,          shell, hollow, sounding,          hollow, inside, not empty</p>
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flocks toward the mounds, clearings where they amass, nets where they are enmeshed, caught,  
 carried where they carry them to quiet, word eye, that is quiet, you are quiet, cannot be quiet,  
 word presses that does not say, says it is not empty, around, inside,  
 flocks, flocks, names you don't unstitch from the tongues, even cut, blades, fringes –

even the stump the little stump, that clots, clot,  
 that assembles, dark that coagulates, drop, after drop, say,  
 clot, that occludes, closes, is not empty, inside,  
 outside they are sounding, flocks, they remain, are, will remain –

che cosa rimarrà  
 non sai, non dire –  
 ciò che rimane ritorna  
 parola mano, che prende,  
 che preme,  
 con la premura di avvolgere  
 non è  
 vuoto

dirada  
 di'  
 tacere  
 di chi non tace più,  
 non c'è,  
 più  
 eppure senti,  
 che tace  
 non è vuoto

è come se – no,  
 non come, cominciando  
 è come se non ci fosse  
 più  
 parola invece,  
 parola colima, per colmare  
 non è vuoto

adesso, ancora, le mani monche, i moncherini, ancora,  
 quelli che dicono ancora, ancora un'altra, con la parola sempre,  
 che intagliano, che tagliano, occhio, nel guscio, mano moncherino,  
 con la parola sempre, è sempre stato, taglia, tagliato, chi –

di', come, come si chiamano, frotte, no, nomi, che rimangono,  
 nella parola nome, loro, di chi tace, tace, ricorda, non tace,  
 non come, come se invece i nomi, di quelli, con la parola sempre,  
 che tagliano, con la parola stato, è sempre stato, così, taglia, tagliato –

what will remain

scatter

it is as if – no,

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you do not know, not to say –  
what remains returns

say

not as, beginning

word hand, that takes,  
that presses,  
with the pains to envelop

the quiet  
of those no longer quiet,  
is not,  
any longer

it is as if there were no  
longer

is not  
empty

and yet listen,  
what is quiet

a word instead,  
a word full, to fill  
is not empty

is not empty

now, still, the hands cropped, the little stumps, still,  
those who say still, still another, with the word always,  
that engrave, that cut, eye, in the shell, stump hand,  
with the word always, has always been, cuts, cut, who –

say, what, what are they called, flocks, no, names, that remain,  
in the word name, them, of those who are quiet, quiet, remembers, is not quiet,  
not as, as if instead the names, of them, with the word always,  
that cut, with the word has been, has been always, like this, cuts, cut –

lâmina frangia intaglio, che riuce, c'è, non cessa,  
 non c'è, parola colma, per colmare, no, per ripetere,  
 non si ripete, si prende, non si ricomincia, di',  
 parola preme, di', non come, goccia grumo grucciona –

passi, avvolgere, grandine, bianca, sulla polvere nera, vortici, che avvolgono,  
 frotte, a frotte, occhio, mano moncherino, tacendo, qui,  
 con la parola qui, adesso, non dopo, non soltanto non dopo,  
 la parola sempre, no, sempre stato, così, sarà così per sempre –

<p>parola dare, data          prendi, che rimane          ritorna, ciò che rimane,          parole date,          di',          sono parole date</p>	<p>passi, avvolgere, dando          parola preme,          finché non cessa          non cessa          c'è,          di',          che non è vuoto          non è vuoto</p>	<p>si spargono,          diradano,          sì,          non come,          silenzio che risuona,          parola preme, dando          non è          vuoto          di' dirada          (che arda, che darà)</p>
--	--	--

foil fringe engraving, that restitches, there is, doesn't cease,  
 there is not, a word full, to fill, no, to repeat,  
 is not repeated, is taken, is not begun again, say,  
 word presses, say, not as, drop clot crutch –

steps, envelop, hail, white, on the black dust, vortices, that envelop,  
 flocks, in flocks, eye, stump hand, keeping quiet, here,  
 with the word here, now, not after, not only not after,  
 the word always, not, always been, like this, will be like this always –

<p>word to give, given          take, that it remains          what remains, returns,          words given,          say,          are words given,</p>	<p>steps, to envelop, giving          word presses,          until it ceases          does not cease          there is,          say,          that it is not empty          is not empty          say,</p>	<p>they disperse,          scatter,          yes,          not as,          silence that resounds,          word presses, giving          is not          empty          say     scatter          (what scorches, what will give)</p>
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# Body, chill, time, objects and/or World's visibility and speakability in contemporary Italian poetry

Marco Giovenale

Poesia ultima Edited and translated by Jennifer Scappettone and Marco Giovenale

For a long time it has seemed that a map of the territories of the written word might be drawn only by way of fragments, fractals, repeated renunciations, broken links and lines. Hence the classic and never inexact declaration about the partiality of the critic's angle of vision. That must be underscored here and now as well. In the names that will be raised here, then, there will be no talk whatsoever of "mapping," even, but only if anything of a first quick sounding and report of *what's out there that is interesting to read* – among much else – in the Italian literary scene today.

The authors discussed here are or would be representative of a season, of a time and place. "Partially." This is not fully the case. Because, in effect, *what* (in what context of expression?/ selected how?) would be *representative* about a poet of absolute density like Massimo Sannelli? Or Florinda Fusco? Is it not actually the opposite? Is it not, perhaps, true that it is just those writings that are *not* representative, but rather singular and new and brimming with energy, that shift and push linguistic habits and institutions? That's a fact. And thus if this rapid overview, even in not being militant and "current" or of a group, has strict limits and offers up addresses and indications of a path, it does so thinking not to *visualize* a territory but to *point to* vectors of force, works in progress, shifts that may not yet be fully visible, that have to be defined.

What things are or seem important – if not indispensable – in the writing of poetry and in the relations between writing and other arts, in authors born between the end of the 60s and the early 70s?

In extreme synthesis, the *things that count* for those authors' itineraries could be grouped nonarbitrarily into two coexistent modalities of poetry, which are not parallel, but rather intertwined in various ways among one another. They could be summed up by an idea of *antirealist cold writing*, and by a *poetry of visibility and speakability of the world* (without neorealism and without abstraction).

The direction relative to the body, the perception of time and the (enigmatic)

presence of chilling objects and ambients (from Sannelli's lexicon of heraldic lucidity, to the postmodern yet severe furniture in the verse of Elisa Biagini) contour a consistent part of the work of authors of *the cold* – without giving the terms 'coldness' or 'chill' a negative connotation. On the contrary. A constellation of more than a few names, attested to and central in the Italian poetry of the last thirty years, is the root of this strain: we are thinking of the metaphoric-metamorphic writing of Valerio Magrelli; the absolute control of the text – even in the movement of 'political' and civil declarations – actuated by Franco Buffoni; the detached and all-denotative gaze that emerges from the penned portraits of Valentino Zeichen, or from the simplification of landscape in Giampiero Neri. But let us think as well of the vast laboratory of authors of the neo avant-garde, or of Amelia Rosselli, Nanni Cagnone, Giuliano Mesa (especially in his *Four Notebooks*). One may speak of 'cold' writing, estranged from, yet not contrary to, every realism. Utterly non-sentimental. Capable of reabsorbing an unpredictable selection of emotive data into the interior of apparent allegories or, even better, *objectual groups*. I would call them precisely that, more than "objective correlatives." (One might set up an opposition this way: many postmodernisms *versus* the 'great style' of Modernism.)

In authors such as Biagini, Fusco, Sannelli, Alessandro Broggi, Giovanna Frene, Laura Pugno, Vincenzo Ostuni, Gian Maria Annovi, and, I would add, an author and performer such as Giovanna Marmo, writing semanticizes the cold zones of syntax and at times the single grammatical units or the unexpected or unusual "photographic" situations captured. On the one hand, an impatience or basic anarchy places between parentheses, or abrogates, strictly psychoanalytic channels as routes of reading discomfort and suffering. On the other hand, one would say that a certain analytic modality is due to a constant *obsession with observation*: report, b/w shot from a morgue, or sudden chromatic explosion, segment of film, *frame*, video still. An obsession arising as much from rigorous selections and studies, at the limit of asceticism, as from – oxymoronically – a checked incandescence of individual histories, oppressions, mourning. From the lines of measure (Ponge, Beckett, the authors of *the sign*, the prose+image of Éric Suchère) and from those indisputably brimming with energy (Burroughs, Artaud, Novarina) – this, if we have to list summarily only literary filiations. But that would be erroneous: one would have to inquire into the direction of much electronic music, the photography and outrages of Matthew Barney, or of Nan Goldin, to the pure chill of Boltanski, the "hostile interiors" of Luisa Lambri, or of Alessandra Tesi, to the sets of David Lynch. There is a distinct proximity between the pages of Biagini and those of Pugno and Fusco. It is totally legitimate to read *The Host*, by Biagini, the long poem *Displacement*, by Frene, or the poems of *The Color Gold* by Pugno, observing the same subtle and penetrating drone

(necessary as a new set of sounds, high frequencies) that emerges from the hollow limpid – or ‘shot’ in cybachrome – spaces of Lambri and Tesi, which are modulated zones for disquieting, not for welcoming.

To speak of an obsession with observation must not, on the other hand, lose sight of an evident characteristic, yoked to the anti-realistic and not (wholly) *representational* quality of the works. This obsession is the point at which the writing of the cold and the writing of the speakability of the world meet.

Here we reach the point of speaking about a *relational* writing (whose axes of reference lie in the work of *syntax or montage*); we come to the authors that I said to be employed on the front of a *visibility and speakability of the world*, on the front, therefore, of a decided insistence on an exercise of linkage between sign and sign, in a continuous contraction or linguistic pact among contracting parties within indefinable realities (elusive, at this point, due to a tradition that is more than secular – and whose progenitor is Lord Chandos).

And with regard to syntax one can speak of the examples of Fabrizio Lombardo, Mario Desiati, Andrea Ponso, Andrea Raos, Luigi Severi, Andrea Inglese, Massimo Gezzi, Gherardo Bortolotti, Christian Raimo, Sara Ventroni, and Lidia Riviello (the last three being performers as well); while with regard to montage, cut-ups, explosion or distortion of the schemes of perception and (from the first) performance, one must consider the examples of Esse Zeta Atona (Laura Cingolani and Fabio Lapiana) and Sparajurij, if not of Michele Zaffarano, who would however merit a separate reflection, for his radically non-performative choices.

Two attitudes – distinct from one another – can be recognized in the encounter of these authors with ‘signified’ reality: on the one hand we have a materialization/dematerialization of the real, in syntactical leaps or, more often, links (Ponso, Lombardo, sometimes Ventroni); on the other we register a decided and disenchanting opting for *linguistic* codes and assumptions, in texts that operate only through mechanisms generative of tics and backstages (not “structures”) and mirrors and backdrops or patinas of things, investigated in particular through montage techniques (this is the case in Zaffarano, Esse Zeta Atona and Sparajurij; but – disordering and crossing schemes – also in Raimo and Broggi.)

These are two distinct and distanced poles. But if the extremes touch one another at times, given that civil accents are found both in Lombardo’s *The Papers of the Sky* and in the postmodern tableaux of Bortolotti, it is true as well that in the work of Raos, Inglese, and Ventroni we detect a sort of intermediary laboratory between the two sides, where one observes as much the lunge of the linguistic gesture into material as its cold diffraction into signs: in chips neither unrelated nor solely “poematic,” in listings colloquial and *Inventari* (to borrow

Inglese's term), in "classical forms," especially sonnets and pseudo-sonnets (in Raos, *Wait for Me, Say*) – taken up again, reformed.

*Ma come è cominciato, che divisi?  
Adesso è come sera, che mattina, cosa dicono, che buio:*

*Il farsi sciame delle api  
è frutto d'apprendimento, non è innato;  
è in seguito ad evoluzione  
che si è inciso nel loro patrimonio.  
Sfuggite a questo processo esistono tuttora, forse ignare,  
api solitarie, relitti delle ère, che non sciamano.*

“

*Noi api siamo come gli animali  
che nella preistoria erano agitati,  
continuare continuare.  
Ne ho visti, voler attraversare il mare!  
Era quando non c'era niente sulla terra  
e l'ape non aveva visto il fiore.*

*Noi api eravamo gli animali,  
ci posavamo intorno uno ad una  
quando lentamente scemavano i fuochi,  
non per sciami,  
una per uno,  
perché non esisteva sciame.*

*La sera imitando gli animali  
dovevamo riposare e come dormire.*

# The Migratory Bees

*Andrea Raos*

La favola delle api Translated by Kathleen Fraser

*But how did it begin, these divisions?  
Now it's like nighttime, this morning, how does one say, this darkness:*

*The solitary bee made itself into a swarm  
that yielded information. Not inbred,  
it followed as if an account of evolution  
lay incised in its DNA. Escaping  
yet existing but probably ignorant,  
solitary bees—wreckage of eras—that didn't swarm.*

“

*We bees are like the animals  
who were shaken from pre-history,  
continuing to continue.  
I've seen them yearning to travel the sea!  
It was when there was no earth-life  
and the bee had not seen the flower.*

*We bees were the animals.  
We put ourselves to rest, one and another  
when slowly the fires died down  
not by swarms,  
but one by one,  
because swarms didn't exist then.*

*At night, imitating animals,  
we would rest as if asleep.*

Ma prima, dal crepuscolo e fino a notte piena  
guardavamo i fiori che di notte si chiudono,  
le lucciole che a notte, nel deserto, schiudono.  
Che cosa sciamano dal buio al buio, volta del cielo che è tracciata, per  
finissime scie, per impalpabili.

All'alba siamo come gli animali:  
non è un risveglio, è scatto  
di paura per via del gelo della notte che l'oblio consuma  
e richiamato dal tepore della prima luce  
è gelo ricordato dal rifulgere  
che l'oblio frantuma.

All'alba ci alzavamo in volo  
perché alla prima luce era importante tornare a muovere le ali,  
non lasciare che i corpuscoli di brina.  
Era inverno, tremava, è malapena che traspare,  
addosso al cielo, un disco bianco:  
la notte era la luce e il sole era la luna, luce morbida,  
costante e mattutina,  
notte piena.

All'alba gli animali il gelo il volo  
e dopo e successivamente, e dopo il volo  
porta dove sono gli animali,  
per crolli e diafasie,  
per mia miseria,  
è una distesa immensa, è mille ali che sciamava, sciame.  
Ma non di api.

E io non sciamo. Api era di movimento incessante,  
di quelli che si riproducono per onde,  
panico di fame.  
È dove niente basta.  
Ci sono ceneri che —  
ali che non vogliono, non volano, perché il mondo, tremano.

È sempre così che urla la vita.  
Urla sempre, la vita.  
Così, è in questo nascere e rinascere,

But just at dawn, at the end of night's fullness  
we watched flowers that had closed themselves to the dark,  
fireflies in the desert night unfolding.  
Swarming from dark to dark, sometimes sky traced endlessly as  
water marked with intangible tracks.

At dawn we are like the animals:  
not awakened but sprung  
from fear of the night's icy emptiness consuming us,  
called by the warmth of first light  
it is ice remembered from the bright shine  
of oblivion broken apart.

At dawn we took off in flight  
because at first light it was important to turn to move our wings,  
not to allow the frost to freeze our blood.  
It was winter, it tremored, barely shining,  
against the sky, a white disc:  
the night gave off light and the sun was the moon, soft light,  
constantly morning,  
full night.

At dawn: animals, ice, flight.  
And, subsequently, the after-flight  
leads to where the animals are  
collapsing, out-of-phase;  
as my misery  
is an immense expanse without interruption, a thousand wings that  
swarmed, swarm. But not from bees.

I don't swarm. Bees are moving incessantly,  
those that reproduced themselves in waves,  
panick'd from hunger.  
where nothing is enough.  
They're ashes —  
wings that don't desire, don't fly, because of the world, trembling.

It's always like this, life cries out,  
always screaming  
in birthing and rebirthing

in questo chiedere continuamente aiuto  
che per masse, per sciame,  
ciascuno dice «dico che io morirò. Che sciami.»

Ma io non sciamo. E intanto che come api, come fame,  
osservavamo fare massa  
gli altri animali e fare sciame —  
e quale sciame per nutrirsi,  
dove cibo, che lentamente cominciano a cedere  
per particelle, esofagi;

intenti a chiedersi, quando  
e come arriverà, che traversando a banda, come api,  
la pianura che non nutre niente,  
non noi soli, non di sbando,  
si riempiono di cibo,  
ma mai abbastanza per vincere il peso dei giorni, la noia,  
i secondi;

intanto che le stringhe proteiniche  
si preparavano a scindersi in infinitesimo,  
che nel decadere e incidersi in pareti muscolari,  
che mucose, calde, esplose,  
miriadi di rose che decadono,  
cedono, e non noi;

ora, orma,  
si frammentano sui lati, cadono,  
ruotano tra i fiori  
non specie, siamo due;  
non siamo, niente,  
fiore, forma.

E non si forma niente in questo volo,  
non c'è orma, non è aria, siamo in due  
quest'aria smossa  
che dolcemente e piano dalle nostre ali  
cade accanto, ci separa dagli altri, dallo sciame  
amara, questa aria, quanto amore che ti dico ora:

in this continuous asking for help  
in masses, in swarms.  
Everyone says "I'll die alone. You'll stay in the swarm."

But I don't swarm. And from time to time, like bees, like hunger,  
we've observed *en masse*  
the other animals making hives —  
those hives for nurturing themselves  
where food slowly starts to give way  
to elementary particles

intent on asking themselves when  
and how this would arrive, this traveling by group like bees,  
the plain that nurtures no one,  
not only us, not chaotic,  
stuffing themselves with food,  
but never enough to beat back the weight of days, the boredom,  
the seconds;

meanwhile, the protein strings  
prepared to split themselves *ad infinitum*  
in the decaying and self-engraving of muscle walls,  
that mucous, hot, explosive,  
a million roses that decayed,  
yielded, but not us;

now, footprints  
fragmenting from the sides, breaking,  
they rotate among the flowers.  
Not a species, we are two;  
we are not nothing, we are  
flowers, form.

No objective on this flight.  
Not a single footprint, not air, but the two of us,  
air displaced,  
how sweetly and softly it breaks sideways  
from our wings and separates us from the others, from the bitter  
swarm, this air, how much love may I tell you now:

«Sei il meglio che potesse capitarmi, e tu lo sai.  
Eppure è di materia dolorosa  
che stridono le nostre particelle.  
Ripetiamocelo giorno dopo giorno  
intanto che piangiamo ancora,  
intenti a chiederci se mai capiterà.

Invece io di pomeriggio,  
e sera e favo,  
e sono già lontano  
da ciò che come vento, come vena, come viene;  
sognati in pieno inverno i fiori al primo tempestarsi  
e schiudersi, che smeraldi, che rami;

è lì che ti ho vista aperta di striscio, di strazio.  
Vita che non tiene,  
che un amore contiene  
e passa in sogno intanto che, volati via, noi polline  
polvere ci dice: non conta niente il come,  
conta soltanto starti accanto.»

Lei trema con lo stoma, tenta con le ali, poi risponde:

«Io sono arnia, amore, sono arma.  
Arma e arnia.  
Arnia, arma.»

Si guardano volatili, amori  
muti. Volati via.

Vibratili.

«Mio polline.»

«Molecola.»

»

*Il tempo scorre per annunci indistinguibili  
che accada infine quella cosa, una qualunque cosa,*

“You are the best that could happen to me, and you know it.  
And yet it’s from saddest material  
that our particles creak.  
We repeat this to ourselves day after day,  
meanwhile, again, we’re crying  
fixed on asking ourselves if death will ever come?”

Instead through afternoon  
and evening and honeycomb  
I’m already far away  
from anything resembling wind, vein, coming;  
dreamed in full winter, the flowers at their first battering  
expanding themselves, what emeralds, what branches.

It’s there that I’ve seen you openly bleeding,  
in agony. In this life that doesn’t take hold  
yet contains a love  
and passes in dream. Meanwhile, flown away, our pollen dust  
tells us: no matter how,  
count only that you are beside me.

With her stoma she shivers, ascends with her wings, then responds:

“I’m hive, love, I’m weapon.  
Weapon and hive.  
Hive, weapon.”

They regard each other’s volatile wings, silent love.  
Take off.

Vibrating there.

“My pollen.”

“Molecule.”

”

*Time flies with its indistinguishable news  
breaking this hold at last, whatever thing is*

*vita dopo vita invano attesa  
da ognuno in propria vita. Mai sciolte, strette bene  
catene, crolli, disfasie: questo pianeta in cenere,  
annuncio impercettibile di chissà che.*

*hoped for in vain by everyone in real time.  
Never loosened, gripped well  
the chains, broken things, out-of-phase: this planet in ashes,  
announcing imperceptibly who knows what.*

Se è vivo si guasta.

Se è morto, muore di più.

\*

... riga (una: un) picco voltaico  
di luce fa però perplessi ancora

pochi oggetti bianchi –  
si vedono. Cialde.

*Comme des larmes*  
scialbe. Larve.

(Chiodarle).

\*

# The Exposed House

*Marco Giovenale*

La casa esposta Translated by Marco Giovenale and Jennifer Scappettone

If it's alive it gets ruined.

If it's dead, it dies more.

\*

... line (one. a) voltaic peak  
of light still puzzles a few

white objects –  
they can be seen. Waffles.

*Comme des larmes*  
pale. Larvae.

(To nail them.)

\*

Lui se fermato in casa è «chéculo, pallidulo»  
come il Santo Éspirit  
– con rostro – vede la vecchia  
Felicité di Flaubert, perché soffre  
gratis come il grosso  
dei *viventi* a metà  
anno, sotto suoni  
di via che in coscienza  
come prospettiva si allontana

*o fortuna*

...

\*

### **delle ellissi**

già alle sette, a luce iniziata,  
il sudore alla gola

un braccio irrelato  
che si smorza e rimane

filtrano i soliti due  
panico, piante : e : sterri, agosto

arteria vena  
un culto di ossa corte

bucate a un estremo  
per: fissarle, a parete

o petto. La riga di ocre  
indica l'uscita del respiro –  
*la consuetudine di portare*  
*addosso resti umani*

He – if he's held at home – stays «noiseless, palish»  
just like le Saint Ésprit  
– with rostrum – sees old  
Flaubert's Felicité, because he suffers  
for free, like most  
of the *living* – half  
the year – under sounds  
of street which in conscience  
as in perspective moves away

*o fortune*

...

\*

### **of ellipses**

already at 7 o'clock, as light struck,  
the sweating throat

an unconnected arm  
that dims and remains.

the usual two are draining :  
panic, plants : and : earthworks, August

artery, vein,  
a cult of short bones

with holes at one end  
to fasten them – to a wall

or chest. The ochre line  
shows where breath gets out –  
*the habit of wearing*  
*human remains*

\*

Dal *corridoio* : festoni di buio  
fin fuori. Lingue.

Non era ospitale.  
La ricordava.  
La macchia di margine.

Sul campo ottico  
diceva non è falsa  
però la fibra                      trèmane.

\*

La mattina la falena  
non c'era era stata  
presa vetro persiana  
riaperta la leggenda  
non ne cade polvere  
di colpi di     minuti.

Il vecchio     saliscendi allora  
disdice il giorno scontorna  
torna contorta dentro.  
Ombra al centro

\*

La casa una più lenta ossidazione  
dovuta all'acqua  
(casa dovuta all'acqua).

Le viole corde delle luci  
gialle – lontano la cucina –



diffratte una via l'altra vedi  
le vedi più – da qui  
alle mura assetate male.  
La canna fumaria fitta, più  
fradicia, per le vespe, i nidi e ricresciuto  
intorno il cerchio bruno, il nerofumo che ricorda  
cera grigia delle labbra  
del padre doppio che era esposto  
alle *ultime visite*. Continua a piovere.

Soltanto variare vale, pensa  
mentre quasi cade.  
Poco prima di finire si addormenta.  
Anche nel sogno piove

\*

*(Tristezza e numero, oggi o ieri a vedere ieri  
le due somiglianze di viole seccate tra pagine  
Bemporad, Treves, la chimica agraria, la prima  
morfologia, dell'italiano, pugnali, cambiali,  
avorio e una tabacchiera a tarsie, carillon,  
bruna chiara caricata che lentamente  
poi in anni propri scatta ne rilascia una  
nota al mese – il canto intero  
raso, rattratto)*

Si muove in modo mite  
tra le cose della stanza  
adesso che la stanza non è un limite  
alle cose dall'interno, conta  
quanta capienza di nero  
è tra lume lupo acceso nella bugietta  
verde e vetro del tavolo riflesso  
basso, alla finestra spia dall'alto  
altro di *altro* che non c'è  
– già in cortile, quasi  
infine (pensa)  
in sé

diffracted in succession you see  
you see them – from here  
near the badly thirsty walls.  
The stuffed chimneypot, more  
sodden, because of wasps, of nests;  
all around the brown circle is grown again, the gasblack that recalls  
the gray wax of the double  
father's lips exposed  
to last visits. It goes on raining.

Only varying counts, he thinks  
as he nearly falls.  
Shortly before ending he falls asleep.  
It's raining in his dream as well

\*

*(Sadness and number, today or yesterday when you see yesterday  
the two semblances of violets dried up between pages  
of Bemporad, Treves, the agricultural chemistry, the first  
morphology, of the Italian language, daggers, promissory notes,  
ivory and an inlaid tobacco box, music box,  
light brown wound up, which then slowly  
during its years clicks and releases one  
note a month – the whole song  
levelled, contracted)*

He moves meek  
among the things in the room  
now that the room is not a limit  
to the things from the inside, he counts  
the capacity of black  
between the wolf lamp burning in the tiny green  
candlestick and the glass at the table reflected  
low, at the window, high evidence *autre*  
of an *other* who does not exist  
– yet it's almost in the courtyard  
at last (he thinks)  
in himself

\*

La radio dissigilla ardere  
pietra pietra (ossidiane a essere  
esatti) un dorso rivolto alto  
azzurro, un dito di unghia piccola  
che domanda questo cos'è

il dovuto.

in cielo in terra in ogni luogo

\*

The radio unlocks a burning  
stone to stone (obsidian to be  
exact) a back turned upwards  
light blue, a finger with little nail  
asking what's this

what's due.

on earth in the sky in every place

DA Spostamento – Poemetto per la memoria

## II. [CRONOMETERELOGIA]

In un anno si corrodono le carni per un anno  
si sbiancano le ossa un anno svuota  
dell'essenza l'apparenza: se diedero  
alle serpi di trasmutare la bellezza in pelle  
ai sassi di non sentire a loro di non capire  
a te che non vedi la tenebra dello stare  
e non eri desideroso al suolo e non ti furono  
lievi i pesi della materia sulla cassa  
cosa sai dell'acqua che trapassa la tua massa?  
Mi hai chiesto del tempo per sapere quale terra ti serrasse

NOTA

Poemetto scritto tra il 1997 e il 1998 in memoria del suicidio di un mio zio materno.

## Two Excerpts

*Giovanna Frene*

Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

FROM Displacement – Poem for Memory

### II. [CHRONOMETEREOLGY]

In a year the fleshs corrode for a year  
the bones blanch a year purges  
appearance from essence: if they gave  
the snakes a way to transmute beauty into skin  
the stones a way not to feel them not to understand  
& you who do not see the darkness of staying  
and were not longing for the soil and the weight  
of matter on the chest to you was not slight  
what do you know of the water that crosses your mass?  
You asked me for time to know what land should clasp you

#### NOTE

Poem written between 1997 and 1998 in memory of my maternal uncle's suicide.



FROM SARA LAUGHS

\*

perfect, that it sweats  
blood between the margins of a persuasion,  
life:

it greets with a hand, sees  
me

\*

this glass blown in one direction alone that quick  
a blow inflicted from the opposing end will shatter  
like a sky starred  
how to open it even a sole moment  
without breaking the salvific diaphragm?

it's not because one is in things  
one lives

but for the signs of lead

\*

I make you emerge from me with the thinness of once  
the bones well polished by the exercise  
the edges gnawed by mice

nothing remains of me but a porous skull  
nursed with heat

\*

non sei il viaggiatore che credevi: ti trascina  
la corrente, la melma, la furia imbestialita  
che rigetta la vita in frammenti pressati  
plastificando la pelle

non vai dove credevi di volere, di compiere per caso  
trasferimento: ottemperi al solo dovere di essere  
intriso senza cenni di memoria  
distretto alla pura malformazione

(per forza: dissero ai morti di stare larghi, tranquilli)

### **Castore e Polluce, in prospettiva aerea**

L'ultima fioritura del corpo sarà eterea.

Il semprevero sempreverde sbuca e fiorendo fiorisce  
e s'addice alla sua sorte che il virgulto adduca la sua morte.

Ma qui quale pietra serba il nome e come nel suo progressivo  
inceneritosi decedere fissare nell'aria la perenne memoria  
tra astri alternativamente semprevivi sempremorti?

La visione veduta offusca la ragione e ovunque semina  
cecità: per i due occhi spenti insieme, per i due volti gemelli  
schiantati  
non esiste ulteriore fioritura di mura neppure nel vento:  
la prima semina fiorì in orbite in orbite fiori il lampo.

Se il seme non muore non può nascere la pianta  
[se noi non moriamo non possiamo essere seppelliti]  
senza la cassa-bacello nessun tempo  
di attesa legherebbe i vivi ai morti  
perché cresca la pianta che non muore  
il tempo della sospensione deve essere ogni volta seminato.

you are not the traveler you thought to be: you are dragged  
by the current, the mire, the bestial rage  
that throws life back in pressed fragments  
plastifying the skin

you do not go where you thought you wanted, to achieve transfer  
by chance: you comply with the lone duty to exist  
drenched without signals of memory  
district of pure deformity

(necessarily: they told the dead to stay far off, calm)

### **Castor and Pollux, in aerial perspective**

The last flowering of the body will be                      ethereal.

The everblack evergreen emerges and flowering                      flowers  
and suits its fate that the bud should adduce its                      death.

But here which stone harbors the name and as in its                      progressive  
self-immolating deceasing fixing the perennial                      memory  
in the air among planets alternately everlive                      everdead?

The seen vision obfuscates reason and everywhere                      sows  
blindness: through the two eyes extinguished at once, through the two twin  
faces                      broken off  
no ulterior flowering of walls exists not even in the                      wind:  
the first sowing flowered in orbits in orbits flowered the                      lightning.

If the seed does not die the plant cannot be                      born  
[if we do not die we cannot be                      buried]  
without the pod-chest no                      time  
of abeyance would yoke the live to the                      dead  
so that the plant that does not die may                      grow  
the time of suspension must every time be                      sown.

Se l'ultima semina seminò l'etere                      fiorito  
 e non un sasso cancellò l'anonimato stellare del                      fiore  
 qui rinvigorisce il puro ramo del domani al                      sonno  
 alterno [eterno, sempreverde, semprescuro,                      inferiore]  
 e sotto la cenere lo stesso sentimento ovale di un                      momento  
 scaglia al cielo ingenerato un infuocato furore                      divino.

La disapprovazione del germoglio, il consenso del                      seme:  
 più vicino alla sua lontananza insedia la materia l'orto                      sfiorito:  
 il tempo corporale fiorendo                      sfiorirà:  
 la terra schizzata in alto e il prato profondamente                      spostato:  
 e l'azione carnale totalmente votata alla                      ustione:  
 il seme bruciato prima della fruttificazione                      apparente:  
 Nonpenso Nonfaccio & dunque [Corp.]                      Nonsono

Risplende lassù nel sonno il                      cielo  
 anzi è un'orbita vasta per sempre                      incandescente  
 prematura fioritura nell'alto                      osanna                      nell'alto  
    osama os-oris – –

NOTA

Il titolo *Sarah Laughs* è tratto dal romanzo di S. King *Bag of Bones*.

*Castore e Polluce* è stata scritta in memoria dell'attentato dell'11 settembre 2001. La forma richiama quella della sestina, ma anche quella del crollo di un grattacielo.

If the last sowing sowed the flowered ether  
 and not a stone erased the stellar anonymity of the flower  
 here the pure branch of tomorrow reinvigorates in alternal  
 sleep [eternal, evergreen, everdark, inferior]  
 and under the ash the same oval sentiment of a moment  
 hurls a torrid rage, *divine*, to the engendered sky.

The disapproval of the bud, the permission of the seed:  
 closer to its remoteness the disflowered garden installs matter:  
 corporal time flowering will disflower:  
 the earth sketched on high and the grounds profoundly displaced:  
 and carnal action wholly devoted to blaze:  
 the seed burnt before apparent fructifying:  
 Nonthinking Nondoing & therefore [*Corp.*] Nonbeing

Resplendent up there in sleep the sky  
 or rather a vast orbit ever incandescent  
 premature flowering on high hosanna on high  
 osama os-oris --

NOTE

The title *Sarah Laughs* is taken from Stephen King's novel *Bag of Bones*.  
*Castor and Pollux* was written in memory of the attack of September 11, 2001. The  
 form recalls that of the sestina, but also that of the collapse of a skyscraper.

103. quasi del tutto inconsapevoli della situazione.
104. comunità tematiche istituite su pregiudizi verso determinati locali.
105. disponibilità di tempo e di risorse per acquistare beni e servizi irrilevanti.
106. regioni non comunicanti del giorno d'oggi.
107. mi sveglio, all'orizzonte dei media, spiaggiato sulla normalità meno apparente e significativa.
108. terreni emotivi lamellari e farraginosi.
109. spostamenti attraverso l'hinterland.
110. specializzandosi in una cittadinanza basata sull'acquisto e sull'espressione di opinioni circa la programmazione televisiva.
111. intoppi ricorsivi nei processi verbali.
112. la natura erratica della gioia.
113. un'originaria complicità con il mondo, su cui ti basi per dire che hai capito, smentita sistematicamente.
114. e poi l'amore e qualche offerta speciale.
115. la sovranità limitata delle mie idee sul mondo.
116. città del futuro.
117. la tua vita, nell'interpretazione della distribuzione al dettaglio, degli uffici di marketing dell'industria dell'abbigliamento, degli acquisti di vestiario per l'inverno che arriva.
118. educato alle asprezze del margine, del poco potere sul mondo, del poco valore dei pareri che espongo.
119. nelle terre straniere della tua scelta.
120. le mie avventure nelle terre delle tecniche di basso livello.
121. calibrazione degli indici di fama.
122. disposizione delle merci negli scaffali del supermercato, secondo schemi che ne assecondano l'acquisto.
123. incontrando la cultura al momento del consumo.

*Gherardo Bortolotti*

tracce Translated by Stefania Heim and Peter Pihos

103. almost entirely unaware of the situation.
104. themed communities founded on prejudices about particular spots.
105. availability of time and resources to acquire irrelevant goods and services.
106. today's non-communicative regions.
107. i wake up on the horizon of the media, beached on a less apparent or meaningful normality.
108. lamellar and muddled emotional terrains.
109. shifts across the hinterland.
110. specializing in a citizenship founded on the acquisition and expression of opinions about television programming.
111. recursive obstacles in the verbal processes.
112. the erratic nature of joy.
113. an indigenous complicity with the world—upon which you base saying you understand—systematically denied.
114. and then love and some special offers.
115. the limited sovereignty of my ideas upon the world.
116. city of the future.
117. your life, in the interpretation of retail distribution, of the marketing offices of the clothing industry, of the acquisition of a wardrobe for the coming winter.
118. educated in the bitterness of the margins, by my minimal power over the world, by the minimal value of the opinions i espouse.
119. in the foreign lands of your choice.
120. my adventures in the lands of low-level techniques.
121. calibration of the fame indexes.
122. the arrangement of merchandise on the supermarket shelves according to models that favor its purchase.
123. finding culture at the moment of consumption.

124. la dotazione documentaria del mio ricordo, bloccata in alte percentuali negli scaffali, esclusa dalla circolazione.
125. proiezioni incontrollate, estrapolate da mattini particolarmente fortunati.
126. contesti facilmente accessibili alle masse.
127. ricapitolazione continua dei centri di costo.
128. nella misura dello stretto necessario.
129. l'orizzonte della socialdemocrazia, l'effetto ottico dell'abbondanza delle merci.
130. rilasciando interviste sulle proprie opinioni e sulle proprie idee sbagliate.
131. territori suburbani attraversati da persone con contratti a progetto, di collaborazione coordinata e continuativa, a ritenuta d'acconto.
132. opinioni espresse in circostanze favorevoli.
133. una progressiva accumulazione di tecniche, che trova sfogo in suonerie di cellulari, in visori notturni per gli incursori nei quartieri in rivolta, in modificazioni nel genoma di un frutto, implementati per ottenere la proprietà della specie.
134. quantità industriali di espressioni azzeccate, distribuite in migliaia di pagine, la cui successiva riedizione non fa che occupare scaffali di librerie, sale di biblioteche, magazzini di distributori nelle periferie industriali.
135. oggetti sociali, piccoli manufatti affettivi che occupano le tue giornate, la metratura scarsa del tuo appartamento.
136. eccessi di fiducia nel proprio destino, sulla spinta del caos dell'ipermercato.
137. lente mosse verso il niente.
138. amplessi di minori senza peccato, corrosi dalla vergogna.
139. la periferia, l'hinterland, una specie di deserto psichico attraversato da versioni inesatte della moda.
140. la mia condizione, tradotta in grandi figure di ingranaggi, macchine di ricatti emotivi reciproci, tra me e chi mi accompagna.
141. conflitti intersettoriali.
142. cene d'inverno, in cui qualunque ragione ha pochi argomenti.
143. regioni potenti e complesse della programmazione televisiva.
144. piccoli guai, microumiliazioni, ferite superficiali del mio amor proprio che restano inesprese, incagliate nei frangenti della mia giornata e si depositano, come relitti o carcasse di animali, sul fondo del mio sovrappensiero, andando a costituire giacimenti di dolori che, nelle era della mia vita, si arricchiranno in cupezza e dispiacere.
145. scegliere un'altra qualità di presente.

124. the documentary equipment of my memory, largely blocked in its shelves, excluded from circulation.
125. unrestrained projections, extrapolated from particularly lucky mornings.
126. contexts easily accessible to the masses.
127. continual recapitulation of the cost centers.
128. measured against the bare minimum.
129. the horizon of social democracy, the optical effect of the abundance of goods.
130. releasing interviews about their opinions and their mistaken ideas.
131. suburban territories crossed by independent contractors with permanent, coordinated collaborations, taxes withheld in advance.
132. opinions expressed under favorable circumstances.
133. a progressive accumulation of technology, which finds its outlet in cellphone ring-tones, in night-vision for special forces in neighborhoods in revolt, in modifications in a fruit's genomes, implemented to achieve ownership of the species.
134. industrial quantities of apt expressions, distributed in thousands of pages, successive editions of which will merely occupy shelves in bookstores, rooms in libraries, distributor warehouses in industrial suburbs.
135. social objects, the little manufactured trinkets that occupy your days, the meager footage of your apartment.
136. excesses of faith in your own destiny, on the thrust of chaos in the big box store.
137. slow gestures towards nothingness.
138. embraces of youths without sin, corroded by shame.
139. the suburb, the hinterland, a kind of psychic desert crossed by inexact versions of fashions.
140. my condition, translated into large images of gears, machines of reciprocal emotional blackmail between me and whoever i'm with.
141. intersectorial conflicts.
142. winter dinners, in which every reason has few arguments.
143. powerful and complicated regions of television programming.
144. little misfortunes, micro-humiliations, the superficial wounds to my self-esteem that remain unexpressed, running aground on the shoals of my day, they settle like wrecks or animal carcasses in the depths of my distraction, building deposits of sorrow that, in the eras of my life, will be enriched by gloom and regret.
145. to choose another quality of the present.

146. impegnato nei sondaggi di nuovi strati di eventi che individui nelle tue giornate.
147. passeggiando ai margini dell'orizzonte degli eventi, penso alla primavera, al tempo che passa ed al nome dei ricordi.
148. miglioramenti nelle tecniche del vivere.
149. avanzare nella sera, in attesa di altre ore di lavoro salariato.
150. porte del cosmo.
151. pacifisti uccisi in Israele.
152. biosfera di segni e implicazioni, alcune delle quali oscure.
153. aumento del numero dei cicloni, della loro frequenza, della loro portata in termini di forza, estensione, danni provocati.
154. atto consensuale della finzione.
155. tecniche di comunicazione utili a darti a bere che sei felice.
156. aggiunte all'elenco dei propri sospetti.
157. avere accesso a dati irrilevanti.
158. fermi, per un tratto, nel ritardo della propria percezione.
159. nel buio, sciame di fosfene percorrono le superfici dei miei occhi.
160. polvere sui tuoi scaffali, che viene dall'oltrespazio.
161. grandi quantità di affermazioni ragionevoli, del tutto inutili.
162. percentuali bassissime di popolazione, edotte in modo quasi esaustivo dallo stato delle cose, collocate in uffici dirigenziali ad ampia metratura o su aerei privati, in volo sopra il Pacifico.
163. scarsità di immagini aventi a tema il lavoro.
164. sediamo, beviamo qualcosa, contrattiamo alcuni valori di senso sulle nostre due vite.
165. le grandi infrastrutture continentali, gli oleodotti, i gasdotti, i cavi telefonici che attraversano l'Atlantico e rimangono nascosti alle tue opinioni.
166. persone di bassa estrazione sociale, di basso livello di scolarizzazione, le loro idee sul mondo, i valori con cui partecipano alla Repubblica.
167. picnic a Hanging Rock.
168. fossili di installazioni precedenti.
169. guardando la televisione, mentre l'attenzione raggiunge livelli più profondi.
170. guerre in Jugoslavia.
171. proseguendo, dalla mia postazione, la battaglia secolare di riduzione dell'orario di lavoro, usando la banda dell'ufficio per navigare in rete a piacere.
172. la struttura imperfetta del tuo sorriso.

146. busy surveying new strata of events that you isolate in your days.
147. strolling on the margins of the event horizon, i think of spring, of time passing and of the name of memories.
148. improvements in the technologies of living.
149. to advance into evening, waiting for more hours of paid work.
150. doors to the cosmos.
151. pacifists killed in israel.
152. biosphere of signs and implications, some of them obscure.
153. increase in the number of cyclones, in their frequency, in their range of force, of reach, of damages caused.
154. a consensual act of deceit.
155. communication technology useful to get you to swallow, you are happy.
156. added to the list of usual suspects.
157. to have access to irrelevant data.
158. motionless for a spell in the lag of your own perception.
159. in the dark, swarms of phosphenes pass across the surfaces of my eyes.
160. dust on your bookshelves, which comes from outer space.
161. large quantities of reasonable assertions, all useless.
162. extremely low percentages of the population, informed in a somewhat exhaustive manner about the state of things, placed in managerial offices of ample footage or on private planes in flight over the pacific.
163. scarcity of images having work-related themes.
164. we sit, we have a drink, we negotiate some qualities of meaning for our two lives.
165. the great continental infrastructure, the oil pipelines, the gas pipelines, the telephone cables that cross the atlantic and remain hidden from your opinions.
166. people of low social extraction, with a low level of compulsory schooling, their ideas about the world, the values with which they participate in the republic.
167. picnic at hanging rock.
168. fossils of previous installations.
169. watching television, while your attention reaches more profound levels.
170. wars in yugoslavia.
171. from my post, following the secular battle to shorten the work day, using the office's bandwidth to navigate the web as i please.
172. the imperfect structure of your smile.

173. tutta una regione della mia coscienza persa nel frangente di una conversazione, staccatasi mentre la televisione trasmette lo spot di un'automobile.

174. labirinto di porte logiche e linee di bus.

175. dovendo, tra le altre cose, seguire l'inaspirsi del mio fronte interno, le minacce di diserzione delle mie espressioni e gli scioperi semantici in corso.

173. one whole region of my conscience lost on the breaking wave of a conversation, coming off while the television broadcasts an automobile ad.
174. labyrinth of logical doors and bus lines.
175. needing, among other things, to follow the souring of my internal front, the threats of desertion by my expressions and semantic strikes already underway.

se tu senti che  
l'arbusto non ha più sembianze  
umane  
(dimmi)

quando arginerai l'acqua stagna laverai i piedi nel catrame quanto la colpa è  
colpa le alghe sono unghie quanto è leggero il tuo grembiule l'addome magro  
quando hai perso la creatura nello spazio quando l'hai cresciuta e cosa le hai  
detto quanto l'ortica ha strisciato sul corpo quando i capezzoli sono diventati  
carbone quando il giorno non è ancora finito quando il giorno è l'unico giorno  
ma se tu senti

\*

(bulbi vegetativi?)

il riconoscimento è un ordine naturale

quando mi accorsi del grembiule sporco

chiesi al danzatore di stare al mio passo

(la storia ancora non ha fine eppure  
voi continuate)

il mio passo è senza coro

la cadenza non ha più il passo

FROM **The Book of Dark Madonnas**

*Florinda Fusco*

il libro delle madonne scure Translated by Jennifer Scappettone

if you feel that  
the shrub no longer has human  
features  
(tell me)

when you dam the pond water you will wash your feet in the tar how much the  
fault is fault the algae are fingernails how light your apron is your abdomen  
lean when you have lost the creature in space when you have raised it and  
what have you told it how much the nettle has scraped your body when your  
nipples have turned to coal when the day is not yet over when the day is the  
only day but if you feel

\*

(vegetative bulbs?)

recognition is a natural order

when I noticed the dirty apron

I asked the dancer to keep pace with me

(history still has no end and yet  
you all persist)

my step lacks a chorus

cadence no longer keeps in step

(davanti all'urna di carbone  
nessuno sforzo per muoversi)

\*

la semente nascosta nel vestito a lutto

dividiamo il corpo morso per morso

disegniamo le ossa con i fili di ferro

ma se tu senti

\*

qual è il frutto e sai curarlo?

sai avvolgerlo nel lenzuolo?

le gambe s'incrociano sotto la tavola  
(ma muovi piano il piede senza dolore non spostare il corpo non  
fare rumore)

\*

ti ho visto Madame in una stanza rosa

con luci al neon e grandi lenti scure

ti ho visto ancora in una stanza bianca ricoperta di plastica

ti ho visto in uno spazio liquido 12367

(ti ho visto con il coltello bianco in mano)

contare

il numero possibile

(in front of the coal urn  
no effort to move oneself)

\*

the seeds hidden in the mourning dress

we split up the body bite by bite

we draw the bones with wire

but if you feel

\*

what fruit is it and do you know how to care for it?

do you know how to wrap it in the sheet?

legs are crossed under the table  
(but move your foot softly without pain don't move your body don't  
make noise)

\*

I saw you Madame in a pink room

with neon lights and great dark lenses

I saw you again in a white room covered with plastic

I saw you in a liquid space 12367

(I saw you with white knife in hand)

counting

the possible number

ti ho visto con l'ombretto giallo a brillantini sulle palpebre  
ti ho visto con lunghi guanti rossi

\*

teste inumidite

scioglieremo le tracce nella  
calce?

stagione che lusinghi i corpi con le tue braccia scorticate

\*

ti ho visto con cerchi elettromagnetici intorno alla testa

ho visto la tua faccia di uomo truccata

ti ho visto che aspettavi a terra seduta sul marciapiede  
(3 coni di metallo rovesciati)

A: adesso puoi registrare

B: la conversazione comincia

A: inizia a parlare tu al di là dello schermo

\*

Katerine Katerine vuoi lavare il vestito?

barbaglio o fuoco lento della vite

massa fluida rotante

(il centro della carne è ancora vuoto)

Katerine Katerine devi ancora lavare il vestito?

(marciare con i segni sulla fronte)

I saw you with yellow shadow glittery on your eyelids

I saw you with long red gloves

\*

dampened heads

lime?

shall we dissolve the traces in the

season who flatters bodies with your flayed arms

\*

I saw you with electromagnetic rings circling your head

I saw your man's face made up

I saw you waiting on the ground sitting on the sidewalk  
(3 metal cones overturned)

A: now you may record

B: the conversation begins

A: begin to speak, you, beyond the screen

\*

Katerine Katerine do you want to wash your dress?

dazzle or slow fire of the vine

fluid revolving mass

(the flesh's center is still empty)

Katerine Katerine do you still have to wash your dress?

(to march with signs on your forehead)

Katerine Katerine puoi lavare il vestito?

chicchi di grano sotto i piedi

divino o no divino

guarire il piede guarire la cicatrice sulla bocca (guarisci me guarisci ancora i tagli di lei

coprila con i cerchi dei pianeti raccontale il sonno ora per ora)

\*

davanti al vetro opaco m'infilo il dolcevita rosso

ti ho visto nella vetrina dell'angolo avevi i capelli rosa vi ho visto con una fascia che raccoglieva i riccioli il caschetto corto ho visto i ciuffi verdi gli strass vi ho visto con i capelli lunghi neri ti ho visto con lo spray sulle onde castane

erano solo teste

\*

(cosa fa? aspetta? muove la bocca?guarda?

il suo volto nel video è opaco)

concentrate for five minutes daily on the white circle

(i suoi capelli sono in ordine? il rossetto è sfumato? la matita sulla bocca?)

concentrate on the infinite blu numbers

Katerine Katerine can you wash your dress?

kernels of grain beneath your feet

divine or no divine

to heal the foot to heal the scar on the mouth (heal me heal still the cuts of her

cover it with the rings of the planets tell her about sleep hour by hour)

\*

before the opaque glass I slip into the red turtleneck

I saw you in the corner shopwindow you had pink hair I saw you all with a shawl  
that collected the curls the short bob I saw the green forelocks the sequins I  
saw you all with long black hair I saw you with spray on your chestnut waves

they were only heads

\*

(what are you doing? waiting? moving your mouth? watching?)

her face in the video is opaque)

*concentrate for five minutes daily on the white circle*

(is her hair in order? her rouge toned down? the pencil on the mouth?)

*concentrate on the infinite blu numbers*

\*

attorcigliare la corda)  
stringerla sulle caviglie  
i polsi  
la testa in basso

mater fons pietates

Elise                    il corpo bianco rannicchiato le braccia aperte sul  
pavimento

chi ha nutrito questa testa se non io?

chi ha mangiato questa testa se non io?

madames nebrodi peloritani

\*

piccole ossa nascoste

<<esulterete e griderete quando mi avrete trovato>>

\*

la gonna rosa alzata

camminando in punta di piedi

\*

to twist the rope)  
tighten it around the ankles  
the wrists  
the head down

mater fons pietates

Elise            the white body curled up the arms open on the

floor

who nourished this head if not I?

who ate this head if not I?

madames nebrodi peloritani

\*

small hidden bones

“you will exult and cry out when you have found me”

\*

the pink skirt raised

walking on tiptoe

muoversi piano

in una bolla di

plastica

\*

grembi ammucchiati

crepa della pelle mai  
contemplata ancora  
contemplata (oggetto)

sommità della carne

una donna portata sul dorso

un rinoceronte

supplizio o fame

\*

dammi questa mano fasciata di tubi Nicole

tocca piano la bocca

il sangue radiazioni nere

(il mio schermo a raggi x è il tuo cerchio assordante)

\*

discendi Madame nell'ora più calda della memoria

noi piccole donne senza corona

il tempo è quello dell'urina

il cordame intorno

to move softly

in a plastic

bubble

\*

laps in a heap

crack of the skin never  
yet contemplated  
contemplated (object)

summit of flesh

a woman carried on the back

a rhinoceros

torture or hunger

\*

give me this hand swaddled in tubes Nicole

softly touch the mouth

the blood black radiation

(my x-ray screen is your deafening circle)

\*

come down Madame in the hottest hour of memory

us small women without a crown

the time is of urine

the cordage around

ecco una storia dell'uomo inizia di nuovo, c'era una volta

il panno è ancora vuoto

la donna col cappello di velluto

look how a history of man begins again, once upon a time  
the cloth is still empty

the woman with the velvet hat

NOTE

The Nebrodi and Peloritani are two mountain ranges that, together with the Madonie, make up the Sicilian Apennines.

# NO MEN ON ME

*Massimo Sannelli*

Translated by Chiara Daino

I

laid-back shots, they are, but this  
is a firewood, wide. and: *in depth*  
*in eyes*, really in depth, loved,  
the act that sells slaves, is the one  
that set them free; in firm streets, sure: all over  
purity – thus no hate –

to spill the saint on  
the saint glass; naked one  
to naked all.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The author chose to have this text published only in English, so as to permit the translation to remain “a second original.”

2

the age of the middle age this is  
sixteen years or less; is  
pleaded for the main meeting

just to see who spreads rapidly  
– the seed like this –, high fantasy  
wasting so, a lot

always, a lot.

3

air does not weigh too much, heart  
is healthy; style is to meat, sturdy  
though «this shroud»; and shroud is

just shook, and there are marks on  
head, nice  
hair, thinned out and long  
still – why?  
noon claim friend  
mum, no one more:  
and so in vain the rest, blue  
and the seeing too: skull  
is painful like eyes.

4

thinness in screaming, who skips  
or strolls around, that's *the girl* –

unripe you are *not* – among things  
void, to comb, to swab teeth, short  
hair, wear, hands;  
not this bliss to rehearse  
a thing; as it is; not this trip  
these, lost, by keens,  
plots, cuts. She knows, must.

5

in long years to hold  
grades and *who do you think*  
*I am? Who do you think*  
*I am?* «help you», by  
the proud lack, «I help you» –  
and fast too, by the  
hands, split stones,  
tools, stones, hops.

6

after, after, after, head  
places  
on pleats, hems,  
on hessian, night is.

thing done, that stings  
on pink skin, the signs  
on hand, two, three and more  
much more –  
courtesy carries on  
sharing these, shake  
mostly mane,  
comb it, exit

7

one way to read only, be enough;  
when, by land, we grasp, *I crack you*,  
top steps on:

this way is to ways  
others one, eye by eye, the grass  
with the spread mood, the blades  
in the paving, by whole to pierce «I am».

that gold is gold on  
 the wall [one pot]  
 «carry on...» it's mum  
 recurring. She «has you» now;  
 and wall and home,  
 and joyful joy by move on!  
 By night to be

these sparkling shadows, main  
 idea, made to order wear  
 in the room, space  
 [teeth sown, six  
 fallen by years, by  
 new life, such as]; where is now.  
 main memory wins *indy*  
*sex orgy\** – he shows it, a good taste:  
 better pain, fast too,  
 and by hands, in man who used to  
 split the stones, tools, the shocks.

\* Rodrigo Toscano

# Appendix: Three Paragraphs

*Gherardo Bortolotti and Marco Giovenale*

Tre Paragrafi Translated by Jennifer Scappettone, Gherardo Borolotti  
and Marco Giovenale

## I. INSTALLATION vs PERFORMANCE

One schema for organizing many of the texts being put forward today may be drawn from the figurative arts, by constructing an opposition between installation and performance, keeping in particular consideration two of the various elements that circulate around a literary work: the subject (as author and reader) and the text. In this sense, installation is the object that can be proposed (and emit sense) while remaining indifferent to the presence of its deviser. That is, the text comes into being as “projected for” and “arranged in” a space marked by the absence of a human motivation, so to speak. Performance, on the other hand, cannot be set apart from the “performer” in any case. Note: not even when an actor replaces the poet. At the center of performance always stands the body-text (and therefore, from the start, the author) that pours itself into a body-voice only partially “other.” This regards the artistic or textual event with the author in mind. An analogous argument can be made, however, regarding the public. Installation is that objective loop that can be given and turn and exist mechanically even during virtually infinite intervals of the absence of gazes. Performance can take place in an empty room – but in this case it is considered a failure. It is an event that calls for witnesses. To this aspect – always speaking on the side of enjoyment – another is linked. The public taking in an installation is obliged to derive enjoyment from the work, to have an experience (whether detached, as a reading/exploration of its articulation, or participating – but always in terms decided upon by the one who experiences, not the one who expresses). In performance one finds oneself, on the contrary, faced with a spectacle, and thus certainly with an explicit demand for a reaction, whatever it might be – but principally with an automatic involvement in the space of the work.

## 2. AUTHOR AND REALISM

The opposition outlined above may also be read in filigree if we depart from another couple of elements present in the dynamics of literature: the text and the world. In this sense, one may note that, in the face of the undoing of the world in the hundred thousand versions that are offered to us on a quotidian basis, the writings that pose themselves the problem of furnishing instruments for contemporary experience have decided to leave aside discourse “on” the world in favor of discourse “in” the world. In the practice of writing, this seems to happen in two ways. On the one hand, the function of the narrator is refounded, yoked to the status of the real author as that author’s expression: one attributes to the historical existence of the person who writes the charismatic power of coordinating centrifugal forces that undo every discourse on the world. In the majority of cases, this solution appears hysterical, because in doing so, instead of arranging discourse in the world through the person of the author, in truth it places that discourse back into an ideological-metaphysical limbo, mythicizing the author itself. This insistence, in various declensions, is perhaps already traceable in the late Pasolini, for example, or in Arbasino, but if we refer to recent years, especially in narrative prose, it is the order of the day: the narrator is an omniscient narrator, not because it knows the whole story, but because it is the author who knows everything about the world (or at least this is what the author lets on through various rhetorical strategies). On the other hand, it is thought that the representation of the incoherent is coherent all the same and as such, as the world goes, it situates itself not in the world but in the metaphysical realm. As a consequence, it is preferred to proceed to the deconstruction of the narrator, to its destabilization. Somehow, then, this incites the exposition of syntax, of order realized as a metonym of the supposed order, or proof of the acts of ordering the world that the one who writes takes on. Discourse is set into the world in the sense that it is left as the case in point of its separate solutions. One sees this type of work, in its various possible expressions, in the Balestrini of Signorina Richmond or in the late Calvino or in the many French and US authors being discovered in this period: Toscano, Tarkos, Mohammad, Cadiot, Markson, Alferi, etc....

### **3. ANTI-REPRESENTATIONALITY**

One last note to underscore as a common characteristic that can be found on both sides of both polarities characterized: the evasion or refusal or overcoming of representation. In sum, the anti-representationality of the writings in progress.



# poetry

*Edited by Julian T. Brolaski, E. Tracy Grinnell  
& Paul Foster Johnson*



*"dream house #2" by Ruby Palmer*



# Rant

*Evelyn Reilly*

This microphone perhaps puts you too close to my breathing  
All this fidgeting and squirming  
What I hate about readings  
The hormonal level of the room  
The relative amount of audience abuse  
So you may just have to entertain yourself  
Be more or less on your own  
But it will only go on for so long  
There's nothing more self-punishing than an avant-garde crowd  
All those knowing titters  
I first heard them at a screening  
Note the word screening  
Of *Un Chien Andalou*  
There they were the titters  
A sign I think of quote knowing end quote  
But people are polite generally

And a lot of poetry is just venting

And the nervous titters are sometimes just the desire to belong

A kind of testing of the atmosphere of belonging

But why not laughter?

Why always titters and not laughter?

Who would ever go out to titter a kind of inferior laughter?

Then there are the cell phones

Sometimes I hide in mine

Just to pass the time

To try to get time to move when it has become annoying

But of course even the most useless calls are saturated with time

Pretty much the same kind of time as I'm now taking of yours

About 3 seconds per line

That is my meter

That is the meter I have running

While I am talking about time and anxiety and poetry

Anxiety and discomfort and poetry

That repetition took about 4 seconds of your time

Now I'll try to be positive

About this usurped time of yours

Which I have decided is mine

Even though of course other people enter into it

Other people

Other people sound so different from quote the other

Sound more irritating and annoying

Less exotic

Less grand

Less ethically demanding

More like you and me in fact

Like the people immediately around

The people who make you feel you are either a better or worse person

Because that is really how we define these things

A pretty faulty system but there it is

How much easier to feel warm and loving toward quote the other

Not the real thing of course just the hypothetical

Something to do with why some people can be charming to groups and cold one-on-one

Why some are insincere generally but can be quite unexpectedly generous

Why some say they love the planet but dislike human beings

Why someone says "the zoos are concentration camps"

But does that demean the experience of people who were in the camps?

Or is it not the zoos but the slaughterhouses that are concentration camps?

And the zoos are more an example of internment?

For in the camps people were treated like animals

And in the slaughterhouses animals are treated like meat

But does it really demean humans to compare them to animals?

Or is it the “treatment” that’s the problem?

The cruelty which is our “natural” treatment of animals

Even though the animal is the only part of us that’s embraceable

The rest being purely speculative

But the butcher is convivial

The butcher is a loving family person

And family people are less selfish

They are living for others

And there is nothing like blood to bind us together

And the fisherman practices an ancient art

The word art makes it beautiful even though it is seeped in blood

And the nets glimmer in the moonlight

And Jesus said to his disciples I will make you fishers of men

But what about the hooks in the lips and gills?

What about those little inverse curving prongs

That make it impossible to remove the hooks without tearing the skin?

When Jesus said fishers of men did he deliberately exclude women?

When he said you are my rock to Peter did he mean that rocks were male?

And what about the jobs lost if we become less sadistic toward fish?

What about the American dream?

What about ordinary people?

Who is an ordinary person?

Does even using the word ordinary imply that we you and I think we aren't?

Aren't we just ordinary people who are connecting with each other?

Or are we squirming not connecting?

Are we squirming in a connecting manner?

Are we collaboratively squirming?

Are we squirming in a shared communal space?

Or are we just here having a poem together?

How is that different from having other things together?

Is it more like having sex or having dinner together?

If sex how so and if dinner why not sex?

Or maybe its more like having fun

Maybe we are deluding ourselves and it is only fun

What's so bad about that?

Why so serious?

You the consumer of poems do you find mine original?

By saying consumer am I saying something political?

Do you believe in originality or is this just a kind of passing around?

A sort of redistribution of the communal stuff of words?

Are you considering walking out and would like a cue as to how long this will go on?

Are you thinking I only came here for the other one and now I'm stuck?

Would you like a drink?

Is there any alcohol in this place?

Are you thinking why do I keep doing this to myself?

A whole life and I haven't gotten anywhere really?

Thinking it's amazing how time goes by

Is this how I'm going to grow old?

And what about money? And what if I get sick?

And what does she care you might think

You who are wondering is she putting me on?

Thinking maybe you could do this so much better

Or so and so has already done it a hundred times

Or thinking why doesn't she go back to those poems I liked so much last year?

Or maybe you never liked them

Maybe secretly you don't like poems at all and are just a masochist

Maybe all poets are basically masochists

And all audiences for poetry are just assemblies of poet-masochists

Or maybe this just isn't quote real poetry and you actually do like the quote real stuff

So what's the use?

And if there are uses does that mean there are abuses?

Isn't this where I started?

Am I abusing you?

Or maybe it's not you but quote a you

And I'm just using quote your time

There's so much we could be doing in this same slot of time

Things of real quote social benefit

Now I've definitely taken your time

Your time is disappearing

I've been collecting it all along

It's so strange all this other people's time

It's so strange that there are other people

Out there treating each other like humans

Instead of like plants and animals and viruses and fungi

Which might really be better

If still pretty bad maybe a little bit less  
Now how to get this to stop?  
How to find some convention of stopping?  
Do you mind if I give that up?  
Maybe just end so we can let some others in  
The rats for example  
Who are waiting behind the walls  
So they can come out when this strange behavior is done  
And breathe a little in the evening air  
Open their delicate olfactory pouches  
To expose the scent glands  
That make living such a captivating brew  
Of urine and sex and weather and food

# My Laurent 1—the battles

*Sébastien Smirou*

Mon Laurent Translated from the French by Andrew Zawacki

quartered of wavy of azure & of silver in the first quarter  
of anchors of silver (polished silver) in the third (the two  
alilt) in the books setting the motif of the tunic of niccolo  
in the war to recount i pledge myself to you to imagine it

this minor detail doesn't kill his lance much more if i flub  
it's for you to leaven the image from the eyes of my laurent  
reading radaring in on his colors and checking each a.m.  
the thisness of his own view in the beauty of the distemper

o

in sum three two plus one not more grand very paintings  
frame it from foot to the head on the walls whose poplars  
populating a meander of the arno the softer than florence  
for the glory (the love of the beauty of) the pomp flat out

there will be hundreds of years of memory on his fingers  
sunday illuminations and colors of the battle of paintings  
glittered at the place i believe it hard like iron like wood  
of their panels precisely sprouted the shoots of his youth

o

you have to love if you wish to understand every poplar  
in an elevated sentimental dimension (at the horizon of its  
length) to witness how the leaves on the pomegranate tree  
of the painted hanging islands turn green however forever

not wanting to see them asleep (one thing doesn't darken  
night does not reflect) it's at dawn laurent buckles down  
to put a hand back on the quince of his knees in the bath  
of his history this is a manner of touching it like another

◦

just like one holds his tongue in his mouth with a finger  
number seven my prince well burnishes his eyes in seven  
circles indexed along the same pure pressed mechanical  
sweep the sand of sleep is the objective the dust of fate

(his brother reminds him often 'me if i were you i'd stop  
your eyes if you rub them a tad like that too much scold  
the moms will redden then blazon with tears at the limit  
you will see blurry your eye will swell the truth you'll see')

◦

the focus in the blue of the fallen steed in one panel fixed  
parts the cloth of the heroes he covers (from grandfather  
to littl'un) (and that a son'll get) defends at night from fear  
of forgetting suddenly poses a foot on the terra tippytoe

next if nothing stirs the grass of the painting contemplated  
anon kneels in the spirit of my laurent beneath his plants  
(licorice sprigs & chewed) the battles gaining in gentleness  
the bedroom the time of this wakening up lying along time

◦

from tufts of paolo of malachite (by extension of green)  
by contagion sisters hurry from the chamber paving stones  
there maintain the flotation of the members of the knights  
and harnesses too one seems to see their doubles levitate

the bridge though or the crossroads of history that gives  
the dreamed scenario standing no longer touches laurent  
that hedges crisscross or rabbits swoon troubles him not  
into nothing everything is familial (of the furniture) and old

o

harken close if the gaze ejects against the wall no emotion  
no equivocation it's to that alone my laurent aligns himself  
for who passes the day observing without perceiving a hint  
of what can pierce it sleeps inside the thing a not-to-miss

(certain morns in case of despair of cause or else of cold  
if the perspective isn't enough in this adjustment in depth  
to wake him up the paintings wander on to something else:  
'laurent it's me says the tiny voice stand laurent it's you')

o

finished as if to close the waking twirling around his head  
heavy the roof's shadow laurent describes an arc that butts  
against the garnished garden: while they await the season  
the topiaries the rain traverses the palace falls on the paths

of the panels from the windows one cannot see any more  
than the rings of martingales of stallions glitzy gold (the big  
dipper undappled) the dazed light announces day to laurent  
every morning and every every enreveries another battle

FROM **censory impulse**

*erica kaufman*

**IV**

*turn to odor for incarnation*

still counting the days until  
the inability to predict tissue  
lifts and i am observable

again. part of the talent pool  
mantra of forced air climate  
panacea or the myth of what

i need. a bone shelf immune  
and part of the undercurrent.  
curling medially and full

of charisma. say, "here  
we have a great new" leverage  
where rubber melts the road

and i very well might be  
in the wrong structure with  
cotton left in the face

and a tendency to want  
a magnet for flavor.  
or an elongated seashell.

to say i like to partner is a slogan  
for countering the power  
of the empire. or a way to

circumcise on the run. stand  
in contra-distinction and boil  
these membranes spongy

like scrolls. pseudo-stratified  
let's take olfaction and call  
it family. deflect goblet after

goblet. coagulate wine the semi-  
self. a ritual performed by  
strangers who don't have time

to do the whole apologetic  
thing. a moment of joining  
the wrongs of the wilderness

with temporal ambiguity. dry  
irritated too tired to swell. even  
the expelled come back expelled.

attracted to the redundant use  
of words like turbinate, nostalgia  
sedative, epithelium i integrate

seductive amnesia with sore  
feet. this bridge splinters  
then gives way. wading

becomes professional. do I  
really believe in trouble? why  
not give lollipops for visible

partnering. so tire of mainstream  
hardship pretend color protects  
from bacteria and victimization.

accustomed to toting around  
a scan of my face. mouth says  
“marry used to be used

to describe objects.” i used  
to sleep on the floor. wed to  
the want to reek of exclusivity.

via more than just warnings  
i need to figure out how  
to deal with being modern.

tenacious to consider anything  
outside the physical. prefer  
mucous to aggression, asthma

to “there’s meaning for you  
here.” my only hobby is  
to sketch my own profile.

a continuity scheme all dressed  
up and feverish. turn to odor  
for incarnations of our story.

presumed causal relations  
begin with a broad concept  
of the other. develop

the feeling component. sense  
impressions turn around. shine  
a spotlight. serve as a hub.

i don't have time to ingest  
my own body. to break  
and meet the enemy's

ox. instead will my blood  
to your blood and phrase  
transition positively.

galvanize the bat in the  
corridor talking about  
imbalance, misapplication,

and outright sins. not  
concerned with perfection  
anymore. more erosion

of patience disproportionate  
with the female side  
of my standards. stockinged,

flagrant, ready to go outside  
autosomal dominant  
fashion. heeled and high.

less a recruitment problem  
than a “we’ve received  
the blueprint” ideal

of succession planning.  
a sense that i might be  
building rubber where

i hoped for a route or  
a ramification. as part  
of the undercurrent

think merit the myth  
of what i need. the drip  
of charisma clinical in

the throat. nauseating  
as adjectives eager to play  
the gender game. a boutique

approach to awakening  
different ways of being  
tribal. a caveat of faith.

## Two Poems

*kari edwards*

### **in the face of you**

I am immeshed in another garbled speech stripped tease attempt to renounce suicide and begin a kind of insomnia, an old habit telephone call that never comes just before dying, endlessly withdrawn to a pale madness opposite someone else's things.

and in a moment of incest pain, involuntarily surrounded by concentrical steps of forced televised confessions,

I begin again in the face of you, stumble over a fallen annotation, dehumanized sidewalks implode from lack of public acknowledgment, for less than a living newspaper generalized nothing, nothing takes place, no losses, just text identified recyclable plumage.

you are on every flower claiming name turned mandatory 60-hour work week, demanding an application for dead next of kin, burning grizzle of never mention, vigil of not enough to heal the festering water to proclaim eternity, another word for another sinister tomorrow.

out of an early morning mist piled high with parts subdued by the public's comprehended logic, afraid of a bruise break with continuous read through, singing profanity,

we fade out in a residue of the decline attempting to secure a future mediocrity with further drilling.

## antiphon delinquency

11th-hour insanity  
11th-hour intrusion  
bleeding an empire

details in roughhewn  
intermittent documentation  
traversing through indoctrination  
here among the morning trash

relative static  
moving corpse  
past traffic  
checking what's left  
is ablaze

missing a sequence  
missing a drowning  
longer read skip sample

web weave compound  
anything place

how another lost day emerges  
fighting the fight  
missing an outdoor thread  
anywhere not furnished  
though I am not sure I can  
with no desire  
be anywhere

getting things displaced  
in camp quarantine  
whose name is  
something national destiny  
my own reclusive unreal  
skin deep dream  
deaf mute signs-in  
at post world compost

# Lament

*Allison Cobb*

with Christine de Pizan and Anonymous

I.

O bright red  
belly hide  
a house sprouting  
fire smell.  
My dirt dress  
creaks grave  
watered brains.

I am no crow  
that I moulder black  
in the name for it.

How shall I close your  
trebled walls  
the charmed lives  
of mud you  
mocking animal  
eye of three trees.

The tree of the eye  
wants to copulate.  
The eye wants to sleep.

Wear the stranger's  
strong birds a house of  
black earth. If you  
find me pink and  
a little sob melting

the tongue slip  
your fingers in  
strange rings  
now my sky.

2.

O bright red  
brother cry  
the male house  
in your eye

lid fallen gray  
grave birds bathe  
your word nailed  
a subtle sin  
into me already.

The eye wants to sleep.  
Together let us fuck  
strong birds for mass  
guts sprung on wrong  
medicines. He built it double

birth filth emptiness  
my house do you not  
find me pink and  
flesh bewitched. Throat  
slip the stranger's  
rings cinch  
your sorrows.

3.

One cow a young  
boy makes my body. Now  
hide it drips  
to think my wet  
birds.

For the King  
grows lies a blank  
eye of ruined  
cities the absent  
ask an end  
to misshapen  
flagged skins.

Dirt hands  
lift to patter a  
grave girl sharpens  
strong birds  
tear a chest  
tuck me in.

Son the snake  
rises soft to embrace  
my lid of glass look  
its kiss lifts

your newborn  
mouth to rot. Whose  
hands make a cage  
and keep me  
dust to lose.

4.

Your belly be  
my house many  
limbs gone  
asunder brain  
water the names for  
the charmed lives of  
animals flown  
cities to suffer  
my dog makes a fine  
purse meal  
the eye wants  
to fuck I find  
only the head  
disheveled as he said  
in battle.

Bring your bride  
self dressed in  
black earth dear  
my eye house a  
house a little  
sob misses wise  
lidded crow  
fly lift  
barely light  
now my sky.

5.

Breath for sand  
eyes a river  
threads the killer  
of its blood  
born child a word

buries strong  
hawk's milk. I lie  
in the tomb together  
let us fuck. Write

an infant winter  
make your arms  
strong bird a fast  
cool doctor. Hands  
now hide

the lamps of our eyes.  
Tongue bereft of seed  
sprout the chief  
pillar of house dirt  
itself perfect  
word for it.

Bright parrots bring  
snow to perch  
at the eye soft  
your child so cry.

6.

Heave aside blood  
now hide it boys  
even the night has  
an eye King closing  
her mind a shining  
war look awakes  
in your arms.

The sharp-eyed  
weapon wants  
to fuck a soft  
head can command  
limbs to fall one by one  
in the grass hide it.  
Mine the burial song

should eat bones and be  
born do not push  
from my hands  
female residue self  
from self a snake  
having swallowed it.

Head of speechless  
child do you not call  
an infant who will quench  
you as silver  
I kept you not killed  
I kept.

7.

O bright red  
keep me mush  
girl a girl with sealed  
eye. An ordinary  
fire come to perch.

You widows girls  
with iron skies. Your fire  
wings bright  
red tree of your  
eyes. Dark good day

to your weapons  
tear a flame  
colored bird  
from the chest  
of dark earth. I give  
you this lament drink

water from the face  
of grass woke up  
speaking I  
could not see my way  
to finish

# Three Poems

*Sarah Mangold*

## **Happened as I know it happened**

It was all  
darkness and dust

about character  
pale of city life

a long sea voyage  
defuses the situation

care and arrangements  
on country walks

their plan had been  
farewell to opera

engage this person  
he loved landscape

as he does  
to prepare a catalogue

you can catalogue the brushstrokes  
she could introduce me

thinking her a fool  
how she made the tassels

answered any vessel embarking  
with bobbed hair

with real life activities  
wasn't a simpleton

could have coasted  
sweetly and expectantly

the eyes spend so much  
time asleep through the woods

uniform even if it wasn't  
electricity at night

emptiness at the heart  
there is no winking

all the way around  
agents' secretaries

reward money  
calms the rioters

and the sleeves  
the organist flips

**uniforms if she could**

their crowded cities would arrive  
jokes and disappointments  
your place and tradition  
evolution in American textbooks  
those of us who lived here  
there are a few  
standards of production  
loving and simple  
pool of mathematics  
people talk about how they are tired  
way of his pleasure  
his face is round  
a responsible central banker

**object was an apple**

Both a joke and a lesson  
end of that obsession  
pursued mathematics  
bow down and weep

the train trip did not go well  
worse mountains and dinner companions

both a sentimentalist and a snob  
living beyond his means across the pacific

don't want to sound like  
tortured and revelatory missions

usually over drinks  
get angry at the hotel  
most comfortable

## Four Poems

### *Aby Kaupang*

#### **over**

not beyond but done—its o  
the house crawls full of bees  
by the waters in Chicago yes where all our currency of blame was  
lost

    a small small agent built a ship  
        over and over sure sure we were sure  
she took the sidewalk took jewelry took fall took  
information from our ears and sure  
sure we withered in our house full of bees  
by the water less the sidewalk by the crawling currency of  
lostness  
and shore with all our jewels

the agent in a sure small ship lost our shore

**Lameless:**

I am in love with bees and sidewalks and jewelry in fall. I am in love with ships and ship builders and I am sure of my house in Chicago with bees am sure of small conversations and currency and sure of my ear near currents of water and sure that the sidewalk crawls over lost agents and blame. I am in love with the effort of bees with less yeses and lost formations and yes I am the love of blameless Chicago.

**don't build ship**

sure up the agent of blame  
and ship her the bees are assured  
of fall the swift currency  
of water over conversations in Chicago

you fall because you are lost less  
and lost this fall this agent  
of surety of blame effortless and bees falling sideways on  
waterwalks  
assures you of lost currency of shoreless lost ships of  
over in Chicago

the bees blamed less every year  
of over  
over in Chicago  
jewelryless agents crawl fallen sidewalks  
and water cages over  
so don't build ship

**blame in the bee house**

build effort build blame build your own Chicago hive  
crawl the sidewalk to it build anything  
but don't lose it and when you do  
blame me

blame me for Chicago for lost bees for currency  
of ears in conversation waterlogged amidst the ships

blame me for I built them  
the currency of water houses of crawling conversation  
fear ships agent blame & her jewelry

so build a bee fall build yesterday lost  
build your blame house in Chicago  
lease it to the lost the shipless the small and blaming  
and blame me

blame me or build me yesterday less blame built

# Two Poems

*Jen Coleman*

## **Flower Poems (for Carol)**

1

Flowers bear a load  
South of Delancey;  
Pavement is passage for the public flower.  
Those are load-bearing petals  
West of Allen.

2

The latter flower  
roots in foundry sand and fly ash.  
Latter flower types:  
Parking meters, road signs,  
fire hydrants, bus stops.

3

Paint is half  
painting is half  
painted is half  
flowered is half  
flowered is half  
observed is half  
seeing is half  
eyelit.

4

What's a flower's function  
in construction, for example,  
Or the gutter, or transportation,  
Or a glory-glow where the shadow would fall?  
[Ca = calyx sepal whorl (Ca<sup>s</sup> )]

5

Grand street near Pike:  
The paint is wet-shaped.  
Some of the sidewalk moves  
And the rest is intact.  
Land plants are four-twenty-five  
zero zero zero  
zero zero zero years old.

6

There are a lot of lights-on-things  
out there.  
Mortar and concrete:  
one meter for everyone  
on Hester or Essex.  
There's a flower to fruit up.  
There are a lot of paints.

8

This rose  
sets and hardens independently  
enough to seriously crack  
from the East River to the Bowery.

9

Footpaths, footpaths, footpaths.  
Twelve thousand miles of New York sidewalk  
A low glow on Orchard and Rivington.

10

The sidewalk is  
sticky.  
The flowers float,  
haloed, under the radar.

11

The earth \ moves beneath the sidewalk  
all the time.  
Five free sepals in liquid paint:  
there is a wet-edge interval  
called "open time."

12

Flowers are dependent upon  
Curb cuts, street lights, traffic poles,  
the wind \ Others rely on animals  
flipping the paint, dripping, or dipping  
neighborhoods are strips of lighting.

13

A plaque to a prominent anarchist  
is not usual. A gold ring of loose paint  
cement-light. To bees,  
a sidewalk. Not usual,  
not for prominent anarchists.

**We are going to talk about science with pictures.**

And whether the government whether the government  
whether the government (If governments are serious)  
will determine the terms of the mission.

To the law, to the nature, the nature of law  
and to will the laws of science.  
To define the science and its rhyme and its reason  
coursing of course through the nation  
the most favored land that ever will be.

The world as it is is beyond human history  
and the role of the government  
(Role of the government Role of the government)  
If governments are serious  
is for someone to say for science to say  
it will say it will say:

The air is safe to keep you safe  
the river is water enough to water  
mercury's cut to the quick of its quick  
the effect is safe the breath is safe  
the body is safe to be downtown  
the pigs are safe the pigs to eat  
to breathe the air, NO sex is safe,  
We're safer we're safer we're not yet safe  
From perverts and haters who hate  
And hate and attacking radicals  
Deserts of despots, and despots in deserts  
And stay for our way our way our way of safe  
safe is safer with superbugs bugged  
safe is safer than other is neither  
and other is neither much good or safe  
with drugs enough for water to cut  
the cuts are safe to infections no factions  
of abstinence safe in the most favored land there is.

It's the motion of government  
(notion of government notion of government)  
to look in the eyes of those with the science  
those who possess, those with the science.  
The government said the government doing  
its government duty the better the government better will be.

To lobby the science to lobby the science  
to lobby the science is an art and a check,  
An art and a check and a pick of the science,  
to cherry the science, to never to see  
if governments serious to never to see  
in the most favored land that was.

## Two Poems

*Craig Cotter*

### **Rich You**

I'm sorry  
that my material needs are met.  
I have so many varied investments  
that even if the world's economies collapsed  
I would be rich.  
Some people  
can lose their fortunes  
but literally I can't.

When I vacation  
I go alone to a new country  
& hire the hottest bilingual  
18-year-old boy  
to show me around.

**Here is my**

schedule for the next  
decade:

I'm receiving very few  
past friends  
due to lack of Reverence.  
I gotta get bread.  
Free  
nights and weekends  
plus four weeks of vacation  
when I mostly wanna be alone too  
except for hot strangers.

— for Davin Malasarn

## Two Poems

*Amy King*

### **Dark Light After Midnight**

I'm doing this talking as an arm reaches out  
from hunkered-down words, leftover on a plate  
of pork fat and greased potatoes sunk  
through a sea below the reaches of ankles,  
dull hooks, and coffee punctured floats  
into hardened coral, an ossified limb some jetty  
past pig-like remorse for circumstance culled  
in oceanic programming that misleads  
our audience not quite tied to the running board  
of a bodily jalopy five thousand knots from being  
united with me onto you, and I'm still degrees  
above a distressed canary's dusty yellow  
in its aging coal mine, even more miles above  
an iguana who knows no one besides  
I told you once, I'll research a robbery again:  
Language is the arm of behavior,  
a tongue mustard causing sway, belly dances,  
circumstance of plush-crushed red, rose-hued  
tentacles grabbing the ends of velveteen minutes  
that continue to feel like normal in  
exchange for us, the "we" we come upon  
on shady dark stools in backroom encounters,  
sexless winter now, summer's backroom of progress,  
wine of the bluer bare sounding songs  
of Halloween vowels, or starlit Christmas  
decorations in uteri, such as more  
than signatures, we are a species, a curtain call  
heard in voices, thinking you were among them too.  
The next day faded from brown hairs on a limb,  
Michelangelo turning crosshairs to sunshine,

people moving on, and instead of anything,  
these soft bodies make good lovers breaking ground.

## **A Line Drawn on the Crease of Your Obsessions**

The occasional cheese and cracker is as occasional  
as the common misfit—or is as common as the occasional?  
From whatever end, sleep well, dear you who rejoices  
to hear that no disaster has accompanied the first morning  
gestures, when flies begin to stir an essentially tragic ape  
who refuses to take on tragically the merit  
of his own rejections at coffee, juice, meats and cheeses.  
Dear anxious brown-throated cricket, I open my chest's  
isolation, a bare cliché of chirping kidneys hidden;  
the ant factories produced there are aloof,  
imitating most common enemies, crawling through sleeves  
of pilgrims, dilettantes that whine with friendly wind,  
welled mariners too swell with spring's maroon,  
preparing tomorrow and the remaining mental  
cologne you spoke at me in vociferous grief.  
Even then, the empty kidneys were also found  
moving freely about the cabin as in so many procedures  
of the patented body: limbs, restless artifacts,  
taken on the chin in fractured fabrics that sleep  
along an exchange of happy cancers  
prone to winning. You imagine the zones  
of transubstantiation, a calico sky in an earlobe's backdrop  
that jumps in the window with a hardened din  
of antagonists hidden, growling quite naturally low,  
souffléed and applied lengthwise to your see-through mirror,  
your spike in appetite for criminal trajectories—  
You want wolves with beards? What about little lambs  
that live to slaughter? My right to be lonely? Or self-  
containment? Riding an agenda of static-free confetti,  
tell them we said "Sayonara" with our tongues affixed  
to the smallest god; there is no zero. I too will settle  
for this material-sealed time, where knitting you was  
the most regulatory fun, after our mutual pony rides, to date.

# Two Poems

*Cynthia Sillers*

## **Dogtown**

Speaking in the wrong voice the dogs bark.  
Their subvocality is a secret though at some point  
we must rescue it from profane misuse.

From histories of the oxymoronic.  
& surfaces  
with infiltrate fences.

There is no way of seeing their daily lives  
among the voices. Or a queer exotic.  
It's as if their accents have been corrected,  
but who knows.

It is difficult to know if you are useless  
or alien or not part of a tradition. Like  
an allegory for the slaughterhouse. To reassert  
that inhumanity is eerie. To jeopardize  
a thousand yearning cows clinging  
to westerns and their golden shadows.  
Fashioning a few moments to the boarders  
of a town and crossing the illusion  
of space.

That should be isolation talking.  
In a room we find empty of natural light.  
If only these statues had an origin  
in the franchise of nature  
or doughty lyricism. And lyricism  
wasn't the point.

In which one can run in every direction.  
Caught in familiar surroundings,

there was a girl staying with me,  
opening her cavernous mouth. There were  
students everywhere having domestic  
squabbles.

I have loved this woman wandering among dogs.

In these wild cultures.

Reminiscent of silent films.  
And retrospective of a movement. Feeling  
closer to a revolution.

As when zoos send their animals away

reporting tonight a meticulous anti-socialism.  
The serial fantasies. That another rose  
would be struck dead. Something  
the Reverend Jesse Jackson would term  
monstrosity.

To specify position in an era that had ended.

Trying to look natural,  
feeling like those shattered cars  
landing in a shrapnel bed.

Colorists or anti-urbanites gather  
there are only images  
I had left

the present moment for New Jersey,  
although no one would ever think of it.

Normal men do the math. Half set  
on living here. Normal men are  
the same as crows. Seen because of crowds.

As, for example, Goya is  
haunted by pelts and eyes.

## Island Romance

What a messy problem  
bending over a fountain

labeling the doves something  
else, the wind whips past!

A witness runs her finger

over my pant leg, but is it the pant  
leg of a lady? The help, being  
the carpet cleaners,

the aberration of the island itself  
loads up on signs. Is there symmetry

to rub grammar against her. Is there any  
power in our capacity to break  
the salt and pepper shakers

or release oneself as the “dream ends.”  
To take a certain boundary, who they are  
over the loudspeaker, quite like

shedding some antlers on the beach  
but animals are not allowed to follow  
the signs. Like these foreign limbs I would forget

if they weren't phantasizing on my body.  
Yes, they were lackadaisical had I not  
been a punishment, or

“we wear each other out.” It is very sad.

I was not yet looking quiet. It did not  
please me to have a typewriter  
I did not know, type-written  
across the room and  
this, hunting, like having children,

“because some words they grew up  
smarter.” It is awkward

not knowing them, and it is the more  
that make clothing at a pitiful  
wage. But where does it come from

and where it is said he “had a hole in  
him the size of a pin.” Love itself  
is intellectual, between a  
memorial and “we have a situation  
here.” Before the bridges and the same  
blue canals.

That one I like to bang  
like pots and pans. This I  
see as miserable longing, or

circumstantial speech including the  
government’s movies and the happy days

without quarrels. I’m looking back  
at one location (the snow storm

at the curbside) I was returning home  
and had to leave

but I felt that I loved her and I felt  
that I shouldn’t go

under the weight of my fingers  
as they hungered for anyone’s attention.

And they had a “very very bad habit”  
so that we can’t understand who they are

at the dairy queen their statues  
sank. It’s another time of colonies  
to be born out of.  
We’d have to look at these

lonely doubles calling out names  
and peacocks.

The dogs scamper under bushes, along  
the hysterical sea

in warm beds, and nests our  
alter-ego walked alongside us  
and turned the corner wrangling the

weeds, stripping them back from  
the trail. It was a simple error  
that I brought my scissors.

The empty technique of being  
a ghost through a crisis

didn't save me. So what if the categories  
of a bird sanctuary were much more  
exhaustive

And the thrill was in confirming the filth.

# Three Poems

*Jennifer Chapis*

## **The Bison and the Edible Undies**

There need be more happenstance pastures  
where all grasses are pistils  
so when you feast  
oh body  
in absence of petals  
pollen  
paints over  
the embarrassment.

## **Clean Plate**

The dinner is the dinner plate and  
  
the pause you feel is blackening.  
Exactly, a white blackening, last supper among firsts.  
  
How have the surrounding faces turned to zeros?  
Look in here. Look well.  
  
Please let nothing need be this thorough.

## **The Flying Squirrel and the Rice Cake**

Air. There  
are melodies far  
more dismantling than  
this. Oxygen inside words  
moves me and matters.  
The squirrel like an exclamation point.  
How we thieve, nourish, wage war for  
weightlessness  
breaking  
weightlessness.

가을의 시 / **kaeul eh shi /**  
**Coward Essay / Fall Poem**

*Matt Reeck*

September 2005, Myeong-nyun 4 Dong  
Jongno ku, Seoul

I

가을의 시작 —

아침에  
집에서 나갔다가  
와서  
낮잠을 잔다

\*

kaeul eh shi jak

achim eh  
chib ehseo nagatdaka  
waseo  
natchamul chanda

\*

coward essay: jock  
watch me

tabasco nugget dacca  
was so not clam or chandra

\*

fall opens

i return home  
for a morning nap

2

난 계속 계속  
하품을 한다

누구나 상관 없다 —

가을의 저녁이다

\*

nan kehsok kehsok  
hapoomul handa  
nukuna sangkwan opda  
kaeul eh cheonyeok ida

\*

none kiss okay: soak  
happen yule honda

new cue not sanguine open the  
cowering chained yogi

\*

i yawn and yawn  
and no one cares

fall evening

3

가을의 밤 —

비가 내린 후엔  
다시 처마에  
달린 별들이 있다

\*

kaeul eh pam

pika nerinhu ehn  
tashi cheoma eh  
dallin pyeolderee etda

\*

cowering pam: pick  
her nearing who and

the seats chomping  
darling pilloried edna

\*

after the rain  
stars along  
the eaves again

4

가을의 밤의  
창문에  
비가 내리는 소리다

부엌의 구석에  
쌀에  
바퀴벌레의 소리다

\*

kaeul eh bam eh  
changmoon eh  
bika nerineun sorida

pueokh kuseok eh  
ssal eh  
pakwi peolleh eh sorida

\*

cowering pam in  
some moon and bhikku

marine "i'm sorry  
the pooh oak coo soak

and sorry pa crippled  
and sorry dad"

\*

in the nightblack  
the sound of rain  
on the window

in the kitchen  
cockroaches in the rice

FROM **Against Middle Passages**

*Steve Light*

...these poems at the intersection of individual existence and historical existence, of personal existence and social-historical existence...

...these poems of that alas! which marks the inside and the outside, marks at once an individual's course and the world's course...

...these poems which can also describe the singularity of either an individual life or socio-historical life and/or that instant and duration of their imbrication, their multiplicity, their affectivity, their place and places, their time and temporalities...

...the world's course from – and through – the middle passage to all the other passages of our modernity, of the indigenous in the “New World”, and the passages once again of our 20th/21st-century modernity – Herero, Congolese, Armenian, Jewish, Timorese, Cambodian, Tutsi...

...and everywhere and everyone else in these five centuries – and in and amidst and continuing in our very own contemporaneity – of the Disappeared...

\*

distance-cored  
to the leaving,  
leaved,  
to bark,  
the tide-  
barred banks  
to the wintered,  
to the tide-cloistered  
rains,  
moored to the sign-  
barred, morrowed

to the oar-  
weighted,  
the oar-  
wracked writhing

\*

bore-  
cindered,

stayed  
to the flay-  
cipher, to  
the name-  
sundered

borne

\*

\*

bale  
the dark  
from the light

racked  
to the stammered  
name

\*

welled

in the none-  
noun,  
scoop-char  
in the time-  
welt

\*

\*

"...das Brot brach den herrn..."

— Paul Celan

light scrambles  
from the breach

in a circle  
of effortless pain

star-spore  
in the fever  
of expiration

a stammer  
of hands  
in the shapeless  
surprise

the swift nearness  
gives way

\*

\*

the blue-grey  
flowers shivering  
against windows

\*

the restless plovers  
filter in their flight  
their sparse abode

their lost  
concordance,  
tocsin  
of the merciless  
chill  
at the river's mouth

\*

FROM **Mauve Sea-Orchids**

*Lila Zemborain*

Malvas Orquídeas del mar Translated by Mónica de la Torre

when the flower opens its thoughts to the restlessness of  
things a cellular language bursts from the most distant  
portions of a chain of sounds materialized in chemical  
processes that in essence do not involve the brain  
but the connection between the ends and the tissues;  
emotion, like a cable charged in an evening storm, emits  
dangerous sparks as the inanimate suddenly becomes  
electric eel, phosphorescent dragon in the cerulean night,  
whip of light; in that synaptic process in which the spark  
renovates the signals, the sounds of the inorganic fulfill  
their reinvigorating function; honeysuckle, water-diviner,  
planetary, molecular, entwined, cavernulous; chains of  
sounds imprinting the miracle of the conversion of one  
substance into another

if history's hand leads me to the dwelling place of rumor,  
why seek magic charms or spells for the love of words  
expected to cure those areas afflicted by passion or envy or  
the desolation of a body that lives and palpitates and begins  
to understand inevitability, as if the commanding beauty of  
a sound repeated until it disintegrates could set off, in the  
liminal conduits, a resonance more distant than the voice,  
echoes circulating where no light is cast, except sometimes,  
when the crackle of dendrites spreads its acoustic static,  
and night is astonishingly skin-deep; bodily fluids that  
rush through the known channels sometimes ooze forth,  
as if they didn't have a life of their own, as if their essences  
weren't the ones invoking their perfect stream; ah! if only  
you knew the chemical substance, but even less, somewhat  
closer, if you knew the intimate substance that dwells in  
you, that moves the perceptible cells and those one ought  
not to perceive, but there they are, harmless, on the edge  
of the matter shaping your subjugated body; oh yes, the  
substance of leaves, or of a liquid that you would drink  
so that eternity instead of fortune became rooted in your  
neurons; a soul that withdraws to the cerebral night around  
you; a void that betrays you appears there, while muscles  
emerge nude trusting your hands' memory; never ever  
extend your arms to the limit; your body's extension is  
simply the distance between your arms at the level of the  
rest of your body; as if your senses were nothing, it is not  
your mind, then, which leads, it is the alchemy of the water  
that you give the dogs to drink

## Four Poems

*Biswamit Dwibedy*

### **jetsam**

The first drowned occur in  
a hundred thousand stones  
ascending among them ruins  
the aster below  
a sudden sand  
brimming retains  
one whisper roams  
drunk without a  
lip  
bursts of proximity  
dwelling dark.

**Along**

Bliss to the body's stumble  
which everybody ignored  
as to some stutter  
of his speech  
whatever witnessed is  
scissoring the monad  
some tithe hidden  
in everyone listening

**Spark—the sun of.**

You've probably noticed how much of what you see is a lightless burning  
easing into a face, arriving darkly, itself but not as I recognize it  
already about something I don't know.

It works as a glimpse at the marriage of the inevitable and yes  
in figuring out its identity loudly the rhyme can constantly stretch  
its 'it was not me' or suffer.

And the hurt is not a bone until later – when the mad parlance across the  
field is a silk  
of enjoyment sweeping through the saunters of a woman. The world is not  
just a trellis

All words are also an interlude.

The word I  
chronicles  
oscillations

of language; trembling, arching up, to describe  
its meaning without misquoting. To repeat before falling asleep

*“a leafiness of the body”*

**For the First**

in which the mind is a chain of pauses.

*And be called its two names if not simply  
one friend for another*

Imitating inside gestures                      your face forgets to try  
and constellations

opening across the eye    the past returned                      (rain on its long walk

a perfect shadow dying slowly of curiosity                      from an invisible day

paved

by the last time I tried to paint the condition

(flaming through the sky

Each thicket begins to seed another city. Each color gazes through

something containable

falling    & thus chest

& then river

the dead    its drowned

amazed across the way

# Two Poems

*Chris Pusateri*

## **At Land**

— for Maya Deren

Waves are lyrics  
of lunar noon

The maybe of  
plankton

hurls forth  
& drags land

into  
lungs  
laughing

from above  
the moment retreats  
into genus

Pieces can not arr ay thataw ay

A lost pawn, but that's what they're for  
[for]

pieces move  
as the water wills, down the stream of their medium



## **Lowest Tones Now Hewn**

— for Man Ray

We will nails  
so every frame (every  
frame) is closely held  
as dust on the feed  
is bursared away by  
: first assistant, best boy,  
“for the strange and fruitful transformation  
of his civilized subjects”  
lefty loosey, righty tighty,  
give it time (the only cure  
'll ever work) re-  
verse the threads & wait  
for the line to brighten.

# Poem With a Line Drawn Across the Body

*Eléna Rivera*

I.

The passenger of this tableau  
plays with obedience, so one's

thirst, the animal's body-signals,  
must become prelude to the gist underlying all

techniques "for getting to know  
what is not ourselves."

2.

What the body gets used to,  
out of necessity operates

as a reminder of what came before.  
The cracking of an oyster.

Anything piercing enough  
to penetrate.

3.

*The Mind constantly clamorous with noise*, leans forward into the freeway of time. The tread on the tires is worn. The action of resistance the only traction. Here the cough drowns out the sounds of the rain in an instant. Pain torqued the curve of the anxious branches and the only thing left to do is to walk in trefoil patterns.

4.

History keeps her rowing—

Pulverized quickly by the quietus  
of the group surface, an empire's

smooth exterior scratched on,  
gives itself an alibi for its market economy

based on fear; its mechanical brutality.  
Will-breaker and barbaric, have you

seen the face of those left behind?

5.

The wounding penetrates deeply during  
after the childlike opening of the body—  
Fresh advance into the next step,  
easing itself into the warm pool.  
The steam room opening and clearing  
the pores, her parents could have  
said those words, “You’re so . . .”  
The child taking those words into  
the inner recesses, the corners, the cracks—  
A physical calamity at the cellular level.

6.

On the top of his palm, gravity infinitely  
calculated to reach the bottom of the rill—

is his hole        his emptiness        what isn’t  
How far, how fast can you run from what is?

The truth of human life gained by contact  
and carved into the decaying body.

Ancient Greek sculptors tried to avoid that  
choosing marble to defray the costs of the dead.

But dying is an art and we do it not so well  
injecting inertia itself into encounters

and the city’s concave connection  
takes place at all levels of exchange.

7.

A WALL/crossed  
newspaper barricade,

a crater for the lurid and the suffering—  
War in all its different guises

How can the body take all the confrontation?  
hostility? the build-up of arms?

Complicit in the personal story is consciousness.  
The photograph looms large, testing,

a few coins for a look at that which breaks  
some say, reality pushed further and further

into the background battle.  
PLAYED AGAINST IT/avoidance

8.

Lungs fill with smoke, filled with—

and the body stands before the camera,

smiling in the midst of wood smoke

for the camera, a flue closed chimney—

Carrying the reprimand with her

for the camera smiles and keeps smiling,

the Mona Lisa gone wild.

9.

Famished fame that vacant  
mark mandates the difference

between cities drawn into chalk,  
cast to build relief for reliance.

Being seen results only in saying  
farewell to the very end—A hand

stand moistens every minute's enigma,  
tense with balancing between relations

full absence as he sits on the edge,  
his seat eager to speak

the subject's  
barbarous sentence.

10.

kept by architects at a distance—  
MADE WITH /The man's words

His gruff hand softened by a few hairs,  
a gesture over-laden with meaning,

sensual and worn, or emotional,  
at attention, seeking habitation—

Come close then extend the interplay  
of ocean here near before nothing after,

not necessarily a bleak prospect, but  
the girl kept trying to build something new.

Watch how the street is crowded with regrets,  
the small was immured there,

exchanges are her mark and listen others  
fearful those fingers impatient, bored

at the beginning, middle and end  
force is used to open the field—

Nostalgia before, after and during  
War's flatulence fated to become history

bored when someone becomes more  
and the little children will scour the streets.

The River, the story of a statue, stately and indifferent  
ripped the lines of our "self" to shreds,

a part may collapse but careful "the body  
plays a part in all apprenticeships."

## Two Poems

*Lisa Samuels*

### **Everyone agrees and you have culture**

The elect, morphemically engrossed  
is beautiful, his haunch par terre  
like the horsey appended to a carousel  
whose figures of motion self-deceive.

'Safari,' he's telling me about it, one exquisite  
fortitude after another. We purr on land  
in grasses, on highways made of carpet  
the pinks of funerary curiosity

Not that economy isn't the central basis of  
blood terror but the woman in the cake  
knew how to get out of there fast  
(he did it, he stayed right there in his doubt!)

They all smiled enormously their boundaries  
lightened. After that, one might hope to *be thinking*.  
Hyperions of creme brulee, cities  
one would heretofore have no reason to spell.

## Occident

I took a walk and fell into blindness as  
the grass bright hitting  
I walked and was forsaken by avenues

(underneath location was 'a chance to guess')

Walking I was surrounded by hysteria the forms  
of dogs and flowers in archetypal  
would-be heat, women across their wishes

I fell to an imagined countenance  
assuaging their comportment  
the garden gestures partial with bells  
and heavy tresses

I will without omniscience having  
never meant to mean the bells are flying  
east to west, into straight lines pitch and drill

hollow out your back with greengrass, hallowtree  
forsaking hysterical luxury made plain)

by walking's bellows  
delicate around your arms ideas of dogs  
drawn see-through so the walk's achieved  
as pennants for those dogs, bright fluttering

FROM **Unbecoming Behavior**

*Kate Colby*

Unpack your acronyms.

And decant yourself.

Are you in or out?

Our suspended particulates  
I'm inter-filtering, effecting  
a flickering lucidity as in  
dementia: the spirographic  
necessity of empty centers.

To be a satellite of galaxies

burning to always  
only make do.

Toward the cold glow  
of the Revo we drew  
chairs to the window,  
drank from the bottle.

Outside, bathed in border light,  
the made-up women of the night.

In conjectural Meso-  
american ball games  
the winner is sacrificed  
to save the sun.

—

Jane is tapping  
imaginary ashes

over the railing  
stirred  
by fricative fronds,  
the whited-out light

awash in the always  
seasonable weather.

Warm northern winters, cold  
Pacific summers, incongruous  
weather events are depressing

(let's remain  
in that rut, tar baby; see what sticks.

Let that hat wear you, and them  
come to you. May it always be  
your stunning debut—where it ends  
you begin. Stay out of the wings  
and the will-call.

There's a one-track practice  
of mining the mind, with thought-  
trains unwired to self-terrorize.

Suspicious cells  
get caught in corners and pulse

fruitlessly, like Christmas  
bulbs, neon  
signs on the fritz

dead-end games  
of artificial life.

You pinch yourself off,  
interbreed, cannibalize  
and survive

in this case, from filling station  
to filling station.

Curl up and begin  
again, blow up and across  
the border like tumbleweeds.  
Scattering seeds.

Upstream the anglers stand shoulder-to-shoulder.

-

Jane flees the seaside  
palapa for Taxco,  
where the hills have been  
blessedly hollowed  
of silver.

Can't stop counting  
the waves, her heart  
through the night  
pounding, broken  
sea, washes  
plots and potential  
breakfast menus.

Can't crack  
this bloody  
habit, like desert flora  
I poison my seedlings,       the pipes  
(the pipes)  
the squeak  
of wipers, bloody  
handprints at the Motel 6

what's doing  
a girl like you  
in on a night like this.

Can't stop counting  
the stairs I climb,  
thought breaks  
over, begin  
again.  
One.  
Disbelieves in going backwards.

Catching myself in the act—

Thatch scratches in the breeze.  
He's typing.  
She's counting.  
Imagines it's involuntary.

In Taxco there's a fine layer of dust.  
Bright walls grown  
dingy with local color  
of WPA murals.

—

Expats equal expats  
at the pukka cantina

Belly up to their own  
prelapsarian reflections,  
steamship labels, crushed  
linen, pithy hats,  
prefer a mirror to a mirador

the soi-disant auto-  
didacts, unwittingly  
living on ruins.

Raise up your  
swizzle sticks, citizens—  
join the march

the way the studio becomes the art.



7

To numb or name the node, the mode of this  
emission, usufruct, letters of transit  
signed by enemy generals, cold cream cheese churned  
in the lap of Matthew Arnold's beachfront.  
I have drawn some conclusions about you:  
lover or other, bemused friend of the family,  
web browser, Mother Superior, a supplicant  
jumping my gun. It's from before catalytic converters  
so it'll run good on regular gas. Sly eunuch's smile,  
ego scriptor cantares.

8

Alienation's authentic  
on this episode of *Antiques Roadshow*.  
At mouthpoint death of the said, impaled saying—  
splinter cell, pockets  
of playa haters, beachless, limitless,  
born to roll the bones. Rap  
snaps its banners in the upwind, Gregorian  
chant goes platinum, boast it up or vanish.  
Start up the one-man-band, poobah,  
I'm lovin' it in this coliseum.

And never mishap  
 between us twain—                      old Gonzago  
 blinking his ears.                      Dumbo.  
 A curdle, a cuddle of political worms.  
 My ownmost possibility is the end of my  
 line. A tenor upstaged, floodlit. Airless  
 arias without music or voice. Particles of  
 the language, to do without. Family vectors  
 under my thumb, a vow hammocked. A thin  
 fire creeps my limbs in the eyes of a stranger.

Let whatever there is to come down,  
 come down. What you've built in me's  
 the pyramid's apex, all up around the economic  
 base. Failure words. Failure's a muscle  
 that wants work. Sobbing the abandoned laptops.  
 I have prepared for myself a meal,  
 lacking judgment.      Needs salt.  
 Perpetuum mobile, nature has a history.  
 Missed philanthropy, habitats die.  
 A beggar cousins me and I look away.



# image war

*Michael Rancourt*

judge fillenpick, gug tibble talk  
lapturbinpod juk middle east.  
lam teevee pee bushchickenpok  
tak turkeybird gug dyinfeast.

focks see ennenn focks see endoo  
flocks monkeyhey. gug careygore  
gug hurry cane gug turkeystoo  
gug screwa sall gug image war.

gug tibble gug, gug tibble cash.  
densodapop deck tatorchips  
gug movienight hul keggerbash  
gug slavenship, gug slavenwhip.

gug cellin sects wang bekingfaw  
codge antigay sub bibble tump.  
boo googoo drool gug pushupbra  
dam bargin ime gug littlechump.

du genderrole du party choice  
gug victimblame bubonic pie  
gug droolen screw con slavenvoice  
gug screwa sall gug slaven die.

## Two Poems

*Brandon Brown*

### **The Overthrowing Face**

Nobody refuses reimbursement when their purse  
is starving. That's the first verse of an  
epic poem by convicts. When one's removed  
to a remote facility, it's nice to learn the local language

Or at least some remedial phrases that make remunerations  
remarkably less impossible. So if someone  
tosses him a platter of rennet or relegates  
the renal remnants of a rendered bovine

She can respond at no remove with real  
gratitude. That's the signifying retch.  
That's the secret meaning  
of the epic poem the convicts recite.

## Casual Comfortable

The whole world is my car  
And I'm driving it. There's a  
Sort of *nerve* in your—nevermind,  
I just spilled it re: phantom pain.

I know that all these ducks and lambs  
Suggest a pastoral (yawn) scene. I admit  
The book is pastoral. In fact,  
It's made almost completely out of writing.

But in the past I had a mouth  
And I made such splendid combinations  
Of letters. I wish you had been there.  
And we had had lamb or duck chops together.

It was a banquet of exhumed phonemes  
And scratchmarks. Oh yes, the infamous *digamma* was there.  
The obsolescent consonants and moribund [*a blank*]s  
Enjoyed my discourse about money and air travel.

Over honey-glazed duck legs in a little reduction sauce.  
Discourses of hard-won battles, the United States,  
Pumas, balloon-threatening winds, and culminating  
In, finally, a grammar of pure common concern.

Literacy construed as litter, literally.  
Literacy construed as a litter, literally.  
Literacy lights up a "race," literally.  
At the MLA.

## Two Poems

*Kate Schapira*

### **A Far Cry**

Surrender the key to its hooks. Furrows of bright air, stereo windows open at the intersection. Crane dangling red bait. Dry country under the ocean where apples bloom incessantly. Door printed in the air leads to just thinking about it, a shirt in layers of Caribbean green. Magnetic tape glitters in the trees, caught. Pretense of access, odor of cooking never places it at the center but always somewhere. Airfish float so sweetly among. Bait blows high.

Flame-retardant monsters differ in different countries; different countries are different things at times; the country under the ocean always is, from here. A luminous parade winds through it. The color of travel-agent oceans, of postcards. Dear country with a brown sand floor how do I enter you. Dear living in the country of found. I can't wake up today and find myself somewhere. Dear uneven ink.

Always underwater, in the air, trees, never transplanted. Opens with a key the size of which hangs in the window. Maybe they'll catch an airfish. Six tables and five gray men: one bald head and glasses. One hat and tattoo blurring. One glasses and beard. One head pillowed on his arms. One alert to a magazine. The van says, "Ocean Options," like a talking dolphin. Steel surfaces, like a dolphin, for easy cleaning.

Birds come back to red against blue. Garland of shame, boxwood and stinging cedar. To show that as a country we have customs. Fishy smell of cleaning fluids, readiness to improve, to be like difference. Everything fried in lard or vegetable oil, industrial size, not a mistake in it. People invent a car that goes under the ocean to show. The gift of walls makes them like birds. Makes birds like airfish: the grinning patch, its drawbacks, cost of materials.

Make your sure safe. Against the bright sky. Don't seek that blessing. Don't reach across the counter in the foreground. It will be denied to you, like something different. Tear up cheap carpet at the thought of mold. Scrub the dolphin with a toothbrush. Get at grease and dead skin, the apple trees are gearing up, white blossom will stand out, red fruit, be ready, ready, away from the center. Nothing could be further.

## **Sugarbook**

*a misreading*

the old omens had left abruptly

circumstances that made people human

the house strewn practically overnight, benevolent

leftovers in plastic, plastic down from the crags

gauze aided by a description of gauze

The white city filled with domes, pearled in reflections from dirty water. Cupolas and belfries scaled one another like pairs or quatrains of mating bugs, spiracled for their own breathing room only. By morning, the woman crouched in a condemned doorway had gained a urinary tract infection and varicose veins. Fat drops.

As if upward were a foregone conclusion, as if clean new dwellers would automatically come striding as soon as clean new dwellings were prepared for them. This changed to become, As soon as they will have stood ceremonially empty...

The harpies' building used to be higher and more in keeping. They stuck there, ensconced without capitals. They waited for the siege engines, soft black eyes like flesh under missing skin in their cultural faces.

Transparent to steps, the old fell in droves invisible from the river walkways. No one was certain except the planners, who were very certain. In a former building, two boys sorted a career's worth of Last Wills and Testaments. Offices stained and milky where furniture had been weren't for long.

A mooring ready every few days, they bumbled over the leaf of the city limits, a bramble leaf with a white underside, which grows without grounds. It's not that it's forgotten, but who's forgotten it. An anthem, or a motive. No one and no one.

The loaves rose and rose as if implicit and time bent around them.

The woman who wanted to be a harpy without the brass claws and dead bodies part examined a cake recipe instead, considered the pockets of mini-meaning created by the city's people and wondered if these were real or not, or just railings.

with no hint of what was in the sky

the cherubic facets of the new

edifices, their fine-grained gleam

## Two Poems

*Jen Tynes*

### **It Can Be Husbanded**

They are parked only after the first of the blossoms  
take my grandmother's car, a red mercury fallen from  
trees blossom in February,  
white gravel yard singing chickens, peas the size of babies  
and their branches form a vaulted white roof  
that will not alarm, considering  
even a single dandelion can derail  
you from taking my grandmother's car, a red mercury will  
mow down the area beneath and around the trees  
and lie beneath me  
in clusters at night.

**You Are Tall and Well Set Up**

[ ]

I fell in with you were already married I took to bottling calves

[ ]

Meat shed steam shed rock shed weed shed pump shed runts so smother

[ ]

Half-buried machinery sometimes a joke cut short the space a blessing

[ ]

You cleared the frogs the coons the strays the owls so only one

[ ]

Choose to sit this evening out then horses' muscles kick

[ ]

Dove-tail dovecote dome of niches you make your cleft a figure

[ ]

Is not saying how you want to croak kick the lantern lose it all

[ ]

Still won't float a wolf a fowl a nobby bag of grain

[ ]

Even pinned up under porches all the dogs get weird

[ ]

Clot over gratings silent empty we aren't splitting another

[ ]

Levered moorings thumbs twice-over soaking steam the windows

[ ]

Make a list and button my lips split rabbit on thin ice

# The Spatial Dimensions of Elephant Migrations

*Marcella Durand*

A corona abuts the erosion.  
Fracture lines emanate OUT.  
Could be lines like any other, cavities like any other—  
Are they *trying* to be bad?

Relax the regulations.  
Apply the exemptions.  
If you cross here, you will be retaliatorily poached, but that isn't the  
protest.  
Perhaps you were expecting a caffeine-fueled explication  
or, no, you are under investigation as of this word:

x

Your national park occurred later yesterday, the stalagmite...  
a crevasse, shatter  
piercing you  
at center, not off.

I would have hiked there—  
Would I have hiked there  
or migrated away?

You found him standing in the meadow, vast.  
An open sky, an eye open.  
In the meadow, vastness and then  
a road to which—

Strange,  
to be surrounded. What is  
this stone?

It wasn't the  
Shape you expected. Is that break  
hard enough? It is a Noun  
and stands on four legs, skin  
falling down around its ankles.  
Grey. Time to introduce Green.

Miles of golden browns with  
purple tinge. As far as—

As far as the cities. Displace it.  
They weren't right  
about the land-use rights. And  
sold off their air zones. Cloning  
didn't work. It was  
not the embryo but the  
being carrying it. Something  
does embrace.

Just an uplift. A frustration. A long lean wall  
in the same colors as we were trying  
to describe. Then topiary.

Set off by red next to gold and red over that.  
Whether a light or dark in the composition.  
Fluorescent light flattening or cold.  
Dark stone. Unburnished.

The tips about us are turning watery and dumping themselves  
into oceans. Water swirls about our ankles. We stand  
as he stands, ruminative, then suddenly violent and goring.

The hallway is mirrors, but nobody seems to see. Only the  
beveled window gives off small light. And at this time of year, dimness.

That's when we carved the meadow's memory into the frames over the doors.  
All the creatures we had seen. Would they respond?

If only the head could be cut off and then body activation with dark  
elementals spewing over the deep woods. That would show them.

The same story cut up and arranged into a different pattern of shards.  
Mouthing green leaves through a megaphone then chewing on soggy boards.  
Caught in esophagus and gakking. Sitting sorry on the plastic bench.

That'll be *your* corner. Because  
you thought one giant gray mammal  
looked like another. But one floats and spews  
and the other's tooth is in your socket.

It's always about pushing. Pushing back, pushing against. Pushing you.  
Pushing off. Achieving more. Thinking good. And then, doing good. Good  
achievements, lots of them. But we should be doing less, eating less,  
breathing less.

In pieces. Lowering it. Separations.

Very small—very, very small. Tiny.

Take Joe's advice and scatter flowers  
through it: Peony. There!

But that doesn't prevent us from feeling warm  
and small, as volcanos blow upward and voices  
are lost among creases—creases similar to those  
of wrist, elbow, hip, knee, waist (all the places we bend).  
Creases turning into canyons on the way down,  
dissembling into fans and flatness.

Ranunculus! And what is that supposed to do, exactly?  
Rose! Lilac? Borage... I spread fingers into a fan  
and lay hand down, wrist angled up as though a cliff.  
A dry one, cracking, matte. As dust is matte  
in direct dry sun. Whether obscured in  
particulates. This we could climb. If the top  
were not transforming.

If the top were not transforming.  
A farmyard baked in sun. Nothing grows.  
Remembering not just a dream, but the feeling of a dream.  
The ceiling when poked spills memories.  
Objects, when tossed onto a lawn, distort.

And become themselves as baked into new forms.  
Their structure disappears and becomes circular.  
Soft circles littering a lawn.

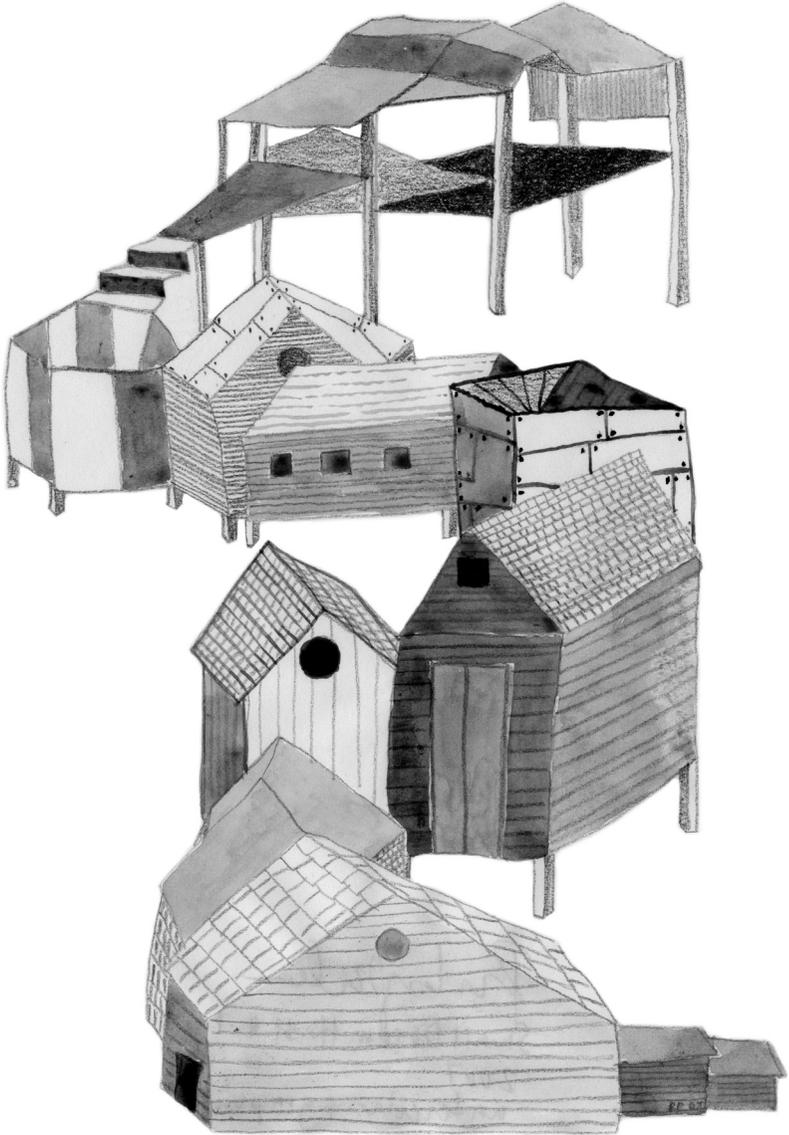
The angular tends toward circles.  
An envelope, opened, has sticks in it.  
A stick never melts. It torches like an idea or a dream.  
Never becomes a gelatinous ball.  
We may contain plastic, but we are not of it.  
Explore grammar and tedious words: is which from how it be?  
of which it is somehow something when what it be?  
somehow something which it is whether gets it—  
it gets somehow from that which it it  
it does it unctuous it does from  
from it gets comes realistic it something  
sick of something it is and will  
sick of it it is and will be  
will be sick  
is sick

is a sick

grey noun.

# notes | essays reviews

*Edited by Mark Tardi*



"dream house #1" by Ruby Palmer



# Why I Hate Realism

*Lisa Samuels*

**Adam:**

It is a “gem-like radiance of geophysical beauty” like a curtain in front of the culture from which it’s being looked at. It knows it is recent. There is no indigeneity.

**Eve:**

The butterfly of literary air models cut. Migrant orality, cultural patch. Hence the excruciating sensitivity to gatherings and forms.

**Adamic:**

Instructions for keeping yourself unrecognizable: What is the social reading of your style? What does it manifest and suppress?

**Even:**

For me as a social being, the most important mode of writing now is \_\_\_\_\_ . My writing relates to that mode insofar as \_\_\_\_\_. For me as an anti-social being, the most important mode of writing now is \_\_\_\_\_. My writing relates to that mode insofar as \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Adamant:**

What space might you use to frame or interrupt or temporarily ground your writing?

**Event:**

The problem is that it's like a circular feedback mechanism: I hold it in my lap and it purrs through me. I recognize the sounds and shapes with a tender nausea. The mirror actually sticks to my skin.

**Ada:**

But the broken boy needs to feed his irrhythmia through beat-BEAT-beat, BEAT-beat-beat. “I wanna lay there and screw the boards to my head.”

**Eventually:**

My readers are \_\_\_\_ money \_\_\_\_ sex \_\_\_\_ blood \_\_\_\_ buildings  
 My pages are \_\_\_\_ skin \_\_\_\_ paint \_\_\_\_ invisible \_\_\_\_ thick  
 My styles are \_\_\_\_ balloons \_\_\_\_ tall \_\_\_\_ golf courses \_\_\_\_ grids  
 My syntax is \_\_\_\_ floating \_\_\_\_ inverted \_\_\_\_ nebulous \_\_\_\_ forward  
 My titles are \_\_\_\_ hats \_\_\_\_ race courses \_\_\_\_ gardens \_\_\_\_ people  
 My lines are \_\_\_\_ breaths \_\_\_\_ airports \_\_\_\_ bricks \_\_\_\_ hands  
 My characters are \_\_\_\_ summaries \_\_\_\_ names \_\_\_\_ genders \_\_\_\_ objects  
 My point of view is \_\_\_\_ eyes \_\_\_\_ dead \_\_\_\_ painful \_\_\_\_ heartless

**Ad:**

So it's colloquial, like telling the person you're going to massage him and massaging him. Or look at this look at this look at this, my eyes are starting out of theory sockets and will win the race so long as they finish the march. Let's do it again!

**Ev:**

Replacement therapy toggles the works, \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. The crying of the actual as better met by the broken glass of the page not cutting your fingers.

**Adamite:**

Myth set one: The calling of the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 At times it is \_\_\_\_\_ but only in the sense that \_\_\_\_\_  
 possess the \_\_\_\_\_. A \_\_\_\_\_ is  
 born, out of the tradition of \_\_\_\_\_, the bearer  
 of exceptional skills in \_\_\_\_\_. Among the  
 \_\_\_\_\_ groups, the \_\_\_\_\_ will be obvious. That  
 centering characteristic may be *hapka*, *dolor*, \_\_\_\_\_, and  
 \_\_\_\_\_. The joint \_\_\_\_\_ is roundabout, like that  
 \_\_\_\_ growing gorgeously and without predetermination from the  
 \_\_\_\_\_. Most sacred of all is \_\_\_\_\_,  
 not in a set \_\_\_\_\_ but more \_\_\_\_\_. They achieve the \_\_\_\_\_  
 rapport they need with their \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 and \_\_\_\_\_, who are the kind of *heno* most familiar to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ever:**

In my other life siphonophores: non-prejudicial, apt variance. Now I search under the roof line, under the tree line, under the flood line.

**A:**

That story is one I've told myself again and again, but always at home or in some approximation to it, like the soft blanket against my narrow flesh that I can never quite get folded all the way inside.

**Eventide:**

human protagonist (1) → transformed into → \_\_\_\_\_

human protagonist (2) → transformed into → \_\_\_\_\_

social circumstance → transformed into → \_\_\_\_\_

particular setting → transformed into → \_\_\_\_\_

genre form → transformed into → \_\_\_\_\_

**Both together:**

It was the confetti from the skies that fled us; it was the temperature; the crucial ingredient of insecure modesty leads to it; the magazine told us the blending of tones would make everyone happy, but my cereals and drinks remain distinct; it was the shifting from one ingredient to another that keeps you open-eyed; it is the oceanic that fits us around breathing; it is the correlative imposter that keeps us the muffins of history, softly crumbling, aggregate. When we are in the round finding ways, the surface of the earth is all ears.

\_\_\_\_\_ -----> \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ -----> \_\_\_\_\_

# Jennifer Moxley's "Deceitful Subjective"

*Nerys Williams*

The Line Post Apollo Press 2007

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It is always tempting to search for an emerging sense of continuity in a poet's work. Jennifer Moxley's recent volume *The Line* initially offers intertextual echoes of earlier poetry. Indeed the title poem from *The Sense Record* retrospectively presents a surprising prologue to the space and duration of thought created in *The Line*. Moxley comments in this poem on "The evil spirits of the waking life / spoil my clothes as I sleep / the body a fragile vehicle / its impotent words, its decomposition." As a form of poetic dream-work *The Line* interrogates the perseverance of the recollected image, the intersection of perception, and mediation and the relationship of agency or politics to the everyday. In the sequence of forty-three prose sections the motivating consciousness of *The Line* is frequently hesitant, doubting, delayed and at times punitive. Possibly Moxley's poetry has been read too readily as an exemplar of a reconditioned lyric. Her startling volumes *Imagination Verses* and *The Sense Record* establish certain correspondences with a tradition of 19th-century European and American lyricism. But one must also acknowledge that the earlier written, and recently published, volume *Often Capital*, with its drafted references to Rosa Luxemburg, challenges this neat interpretation of Moxley's poetics. In *The Line* Moxley again shifts the tempo of her writing and challenges a reading which will corroborate her work to a tight "neo-" or "circumspective" lyric definition. She has commented that her relationship to lyricism is an expansive and enabling one: "the lyric "I" is not a political universal, nor the guardian of the rights of men, but neither is it the flaccid marker of an outdated bourgeois egotism."

*The Line* is a quest, not necessarily for the right road lost, but for a complex cartography of everyday life and its relationship to action, or as the case might sometimes be, paralysis. In "The Wrong Turn" we are told "You've been taken by a fast talking salesman and won't see your money again." "The Atrophy of the Public Life" presents an acerbic commentary on E!-channel culture: "The lifestyles of the rich are so fabulous! The destruction of the poetical line lives

heavily on their hands, as on their swollen notion that we are always watching.” The desperate and darkly comic linking of the culture industry and poetic production alerts us that here is a work attempting to create connections, activate debate, curiosity and incredulity at the slick madness which surrounds the act of writing. Throughout *The Line* there is also a keen awareness of the doubtful power of literature to activate change. In the title poem awareness becomes a self-punishing gesture: “It is trying to push all this crap aside and find the missing line. Nobody least of all the future, cares about the outcome of the quest.”

Lyn Hejinian is one poet who has commented upon the tension between the line and the sentence. Citing the line as a form of “perceptual rhythm” Hejinian asserts that the line “is for me the standard (however variable) of meaning in the poem, the primary unit of observation, and the measure of felt thought.” Moxley’s poetry displays a considered skepticism towards what one could name a phenomenological line. However, her work may have more in common with Hejinian’s proposition that poetry “based on the line bears in it a high degree of semantic mutability.” The mutability and momentum of *The Line* seems far from the violence of parataxis. Occasionally the explorations appear as guilty interrogations of the ego as in “The Lost Bird,” where the speaker states “I tried to trap him in my cupped hands but whenever I did I felt guilty. I wanted him to come willingly.” Or the narrative of “The Pitiful Ego”: “How could you be so stupid as to mistake deferential attention for ravenous sexual desire.” The ambitions for writing threaten to become textual reincarnation as in “The Line”: “Find time in words. Replace yourself cell by letter, let being be the alphabetic equation, immortality stay the name.”

A fear of textual or citational cannibalism is communicated in the volume. The wonderfully self-aware, often archaic turns of phrase one associates with Moxley’s poetry are monitored closely. In “The Local” there is a series of gnomic snippets of advice: “Be warned: self-importance mimics progression but never surpasses the smallest circle. The tunnel is long, the line invisible, and only the resolute breakthrough. If you ask for meaningless echoes you will never find your way.” The duration, momentum and patterning of the poetic line also evokes enchanting possibilities. In “Possessed” Baudelaire’s Albatross is revived to relieve the protagonist from a cringe-worthy domestic scene: “an albatross lifts you by the scruff of your neck and pulls you magically through the roof. ‘Have you forgotten how to fly?’ it asks in an exasperated tone.” The instability of image-making creates linkages between birth and writing in “The Periodic Table”: “She was wearing a dress that looked like a book but actually was a baby.” Reading *The Line* is not unlike the first bristling encounter with *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*. These sequential poems alert one to a pleasure and terror of textuality and a

narrative of interrelated linkages and labyrinthine pursuit of conclusions already lost. Moxley questions emphatically the nostalgia and amnesia of experiential recounting, or what she lineates far more eloquently in “The Cover Up” as an experience gone “except in the deceitful subjective.”

# Hannah Weiner's Open House

*Richard Owens*

Hannah Weiner's Open House Edited by Patrick Durgin

**Kenning Editions 2007**

ISBN: 978-0-9767364-1-7 \$14.95 US

Like the work of contemporaries Jackson Mac Low, Clark Coolidge and others associated with the Language school, the work produced by Hannah Weiner during the last three decades of the 20th-century continues to resonate and announce itself—most notably, as Patrick Durgin has pointed out, in the work of Kevin Killian and others connected to the New Narrative movement rippling outward from the Bay Area. Given this decisive influence on new writing, a widely available trade edition which draws together the full range of Weiner's written accomplishment has been much needed. *Hannah Weiner's Open House*, edited by Durgin and brought out through his own Kenning Editions, is the first attempt at such a collection. But this collection is not a collected or complete works as such. Indeed, the collaborative, intermedia and performance-based nature of much of Weiner's oeuvre immediately forecloses on the very possibility of such an edition. Rather, as he notes in his introduction, Durgin's aim is to offer a selection which marks the broad scope of her work, much of which involved radical innovations in form.

Among the most well known of these formal innovations are Weiner's appropriation and repurposing of the "International Code of Signals for the Use of All Nations" in *Code Poems* and, later, those works Weiner identified as "clairvoyantly written." Publicly performed in the late 1960s but first published by Open Studio in 1982, *Code Poems* sees Weiner aspiring toward universality and attempting to abandon the discourse of identity and nation embedded in language. What we have in these code poems—and this is important to note—is the written and visual score for conceptual pieces previously performed in Central Park.

The case is the same for Weiner's clairvoyantly written poems. The page or so-called "large-sheet" for Weiner is an active political field—an open space of encounter not only between poet and reader, but also between self and other and

the multiplicity of othered, unfamiliar selves residing within but often bracketed out of the work of the poet. Within the frame of her clairvoyant work the page is the principal unit of composition and indeed the measure of the poem as event. Here the page is a privileged space which invites community. On the other hand, the sentence – at least the complete and properly constructed sentence – is a thing to be destroyed as the mark of what is most incomplete in being. It is only the *incomplete* sentence that can become for Weiner an ontological intervention wherein the shadow cast by subjectivity is shattered on the political space of the page. As Weiner herself writes in what appears to be the most thoroughgoing statement on her own poetics contained in *Open House*:

The sentence is always interrupted. Mind 1 that speaks out loud, or writes, is interrupted by mind 2 that is simultaneously preparing the next sentence or answering a question. Therefore the correct form to represent both minds or the complete mind, is an interrupted form (128).

Although what we encounter in Weiner's *Clairvoyant Journal*, brought out in 1978 by Angel Hair, is often visually similar to Susan Howe's highly figured page, the brand of work Weiner's page performs is radically different. Having wriggled loose from the representational artifice of the finished sentence—"NOON STOP THIS NONSENSE // STOP TH SENTENC" (69)—Weiner introduces us to three personae, none of which can be read as entirely self or entirely other. The relationship between the three, as figured on the written page, is indeed overdetermined and inexplicable: "Especially in the *Clairvoyant Journal* the person writing is bossed around by voices, and gives up autonomy to other parts of herself. A relinquishing of constant conscious control to let the other part of the mind dominate" (131). Here we might think of similar and indeed prior projects which have addressed the notion of forces exterior to consciousness, whether we think Plato's *Ion*, Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Althusserian notion of ideology, or Spicer's *Martians*. But in Weiner's clairvoyant work we have three and these three "voices" or personae are visually scored on the written page. Looking back at her clairvoyant work, Weiner claims "that the regular upper and lower case words described what I was doing, the CAPITALS gave me orders, and the underlines or italics made comments" (127). Here it is crucial to remember that capitalized words and phrases mark authority precisely because Weiner has paradoxically exercised her own agency and *allowed* that "voice" which bosses and barks to dominate and inscribe its very being on the page.

The multiplicity of figures or voices which appear to speak through Weiner can, somewhat lazily, be read as an extension of the prophetic tradition in poetry. We can very easily read her as a poet-prophet of the Blakean sort. After all, if we

take her at her word, she does claim to have seen words. We can also read her clairvoyant poems in much the same way we read the incalculable permutations produced through the infinite play of intersecting personae in the modernist long poem, whether Pound's *Cantos*, Loy's *Anglo-Mongrels*, Eliot's *Wasteland* or some other such work. (Here we might recall that Madame Sososttris, too, was identified as clairvoyant.) Yet Weiner appears to be doing something remarkably different in her attempt to account for the myriad voices contained on the complex but uniquely singular plane of being. With Weiner the trick seems to lie in not falling for the easy read.

In a brief 1997 essay written on the occasion of her death and appropriately contained in the newsletter of the Poetry Project, who published her first collection of poems, Charles Bernstein wryly remarks: "It is an irony, perhaps, that the writing that Hannah will be best remembered for coincided with a period in which schizophrenia made her everyday life increasingly difficult." In view of her relation to radical politics, the American Indian Movement in particular, we could very easily enlist Deleuze and Guattari, reading her triple-tiered clairvoyant work as poetry which comments on the capitalist production of schizophrenia. But this too would be something of a disservice to her accomplishment. Perhaps we can look to those readings of her work by Bernstein and Mac Low, both of whom worked closely with her and both of whom view her clairvoyant work not as the byproduct of a medical condition but as the domestication of and triumph over an otherwise debilitating condition. In the blurb for the Angel Hair edition of Weiner's *Clairvoyant Journal*, Mac Low writes, "Her achievement—and it is a considerable one—lies in her having developed a specific literary form through which to convey her remarkable experience."

That Durgin has opened the house, and delivered an edition which allows readers coming to Weiner's work for the first time to consider the full range of her accomplishment, is in itself a considerable achievement.

FROM **Medellín Illuminated: Poetry  
and War at the 14th Annual  
Poetry Festival**

*Pia Tafdrup*

Translated from the Danish by Kyle Semmel

Life hurts. But there is dancing, and celebration.  
For no one knows whether all will be gone  
tonight, tomorrow, or another day.

— Maria Rosa Lojo

On the plane ride to Bogotá I sat next to a very young Latina mother with a hyperactive child in her lap and another alternately crying and screaming at her side. The TV screen had gone to black, and the reading lamp didn't work. Still I managed to read this about Colombia: Bogotá is not a secure place. There is violent crime; armed robbery, rape, and inventive theft are quite normal here. And you can't count on getting any help from passing strangers. I figured I should know, before I landed, about all the diseases lingering in Colombia. So I read about cholera, hepatitis, malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, typhoid, intestinal worms, rabies, among many others.

I read about drug cartels and guerilla movements that now, after losing Moscow's and Havana's money, are financed partly through blackmail. I read about kidnapping and robbery; about the private armies and the paramilitary forces that are supported by the military in Colombia. I further oriented myself to the illegal cocaine export, more kidnapping, and snakebite. The chapter on Medellín was no more reassuring. Medellín is the center of cocaine smuggling, and that results in big security problems. All movement at night, it is advised, should be done in a taxi. The "consolation": the impoverished suburbs are the worst areas, and we will be staying in the city centers of both Bogotá and Medellín. What pleasure can one draw from Colombia's wonderful, abundant nature—which surpasses even Brazil in the number of orchids, boasting the world record in species—when it is inadvisable or even treacherous to travel across much of the country?

Andrea, Sylvia, and Patricia are waiting for me on my arrival on June 15. They drive me safely to Hotel Internacional. Bogotá is situated high above sea

level, and I'm freezing from the cold. Every single night I'm in the city, I ask for another blanket. "We are 2,000 meters closer to the stars," Sylvia explains, a gleam in her eye.

That first evening, I am smuggled into a taxi and driven to a meeting with a poet who is not participating in the festival. He tries to describe the predicament of many writers in this country: government agents can pick them up at any time, and they can be arrested without receiving legal counsel. I note a fearful atmosphere among the artists, journalists, and other intellectuals around the table where I am sitting. Here, making poetry is not just about finding the right enjambment or other refinements. It's not just about the conflict between syntax and a meter that refuses to cooperate: it's about another conflict altogether, and about listening to the thrum of a torn-up society.

This is the first year that Bogotá is connected to the festival in Medellín. The next morning I have two radio interviews very early, so I only have a little time in Bogotá. I manage to squeeze in a trip to the Museo Nacional, a one-time prison with 200 cells rebuilt into a museum that, apart from displaying Colombian history, exhibits a series of paintings by Fernando Botero. Without exception these paintings portray the endless violence in Colombia. Here we see all kinds of mistreatment: faces stoned with terror; civilian massacres; car bombings; persons who've been kidnapped, robbed, liquidated; collapsed buildings; bodies hacked into small pieces, rivers filled with corpses, processions with coffins, cripples, etc. Botero's mother-and-child painting shows an adult skeleton with a child skeleton in its embrace, a vulture on its shoulder. The great master reaches far and wide in his depiction of irrational forces in recent history. Similar dramas are evident in the work of another of Colombia's great artists, the writer Gabriel García Márquez.

For security reasons we are transported each day to the locations where we are to read, unless they are close to the hotel. My first reading is at Universidad Nacional, together with poets from a diverse range of countries: Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Zimbabwe, Príncipe, and São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. The large Auditorio León de Greiff is packed, all the way into the lobby. Despite the fact that the eager Jordanian Amjad Nasser translates the audience's enthusiasm for his poems as grounds to read for 40 minutes instead of the planned 15, the evening is wonderful, and Chirikure Chirikure, who follows Nasser, represents a living symbol of African rhythmic poetry. He can easily keep a crowd in awe even when it has grown late and we've read nonstop without a break.

The next day we are flown to Medellín for the simple reason that it is too dangerous to drive there, because in this region several guerilla groups are fighting one another. As Patricia says, "Colombia is a land at war." Yet it is so wonderful to fly low over the dark green and desolate mountains, the deep

ravines and small villages. The clouds cast shadows on the sun-glistened landscape below. The flight lasts no more than an hour and a half, but the climate is changed. After cold, rainy Bogotá and its unheated houses we arrive in sunshine and 85 degrees. Like Bogotá, Medellín is surrounded by mountains. In the valleys the cities are shrouded in exhaust fumes.

Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania are all represented at the festival. Sixty-eight poets from five world regions all gathered here in Medellín. Each of us has changed planes several times to get to Medellín, but the buses either do not come to the Gran Hotel—as they are supposed to—or they get caught in traffic on the way to the opening ceremony. Still we make it in time, in small cars and taxis. “Colombian Time,” when the schedule slides and arrangements are postponed, is a phenomenon you are quickly forced to get used to. The opening ceremony is staged at the open-air theater Cerro Nutibarre. There are 3,500 spectators in seats as well as an untold number who have clambered up into the trees that ring the theatre, or who are sitting on slopes nearby. There are soda and popcorn vendors, dogs, photographers, and tables with books. There are large red banners proclaiming in white lettering: *XIV Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín*.

The first evening there had been gunshots in the streets, but this evening there is partying and loud music. In the land of cocaine you can read this warning on bottles of beer: “Too much alcohol is hazardous to your health.” People dance and are extremely boisterous. The display of such tremendous joy in spite of the problems in the country, problems that no one can close their eyes to, is disorienting. A group of youths come over to me during the party and tell me they are happy that I am participating. Since they know neither my poems nor me I ask why they are happy. They reply that they are not allowed to travel, and so it is important that myself and others come to them. They want to know the world outside Colombia. I think of the huge meteor at the Museo Nacional in Bogotá, to me the best exhibit at the entire museum. Whittled down to 410 kilos, it now rests like a greeting in the center of the museum—just as we too “arrived” from what feels like another world, and all at once landed at Medellín.

Before the readings I meet with my Colombian reader, the attractive young Juliana Rojas. We plan each of our appearances based on the situation we find ourselves in. The readings vary widely: there are large stages and small stages; there are outdoor theaters and indoor theaters, etc. Every day different groups of poets read, three or four in the morning, four or five in the afternoon, and two or three in the evening. It's a large undertaking, impressively imagined but not always so perfectly realized. There are so many poets that I can barely manage to hear them all on the near-to-last evening in Cerro Nutibarre, where,

to conclude, each of us is given three minutes to read—or “one shot,” as the San Martinese poet Lansana Sekou explains it to me. As a rule, because of the poets or the locales we are brought to, we read once a day and are then allowed to choose another reading we would like to hear. When Mexican poet Angelica Ortiz Lopez reads in her native Indian tongue, it sounds to my ears like someone reading a fairy tale out loud. Voices from around the world plant themselves in my brain, a unique opportunity.

The most surprising location of all is in Medellín, on a wide street closed to traffic for the evening's event: Plazoleta de la Avenida la Playa. People have streamed in, and the area in front of the open-air stage, constructed in the middle of the street, is crowded. Columbian poet Romulo Bustos reads first, then I read, followed by Lansana. Lansana, a lanky black man, leaps on his chair and onto the table, knocking glasses over on the red tablecloth, then jumps down on the stage and ahead to the ramp, and down on the ground in an impressive gazelle-like spring. He gets inside the audience before finally settling in among the crowd, where he cannot be seen, only heard. Lansana could have received his training with Baptist priests, or rap artists. It's a performance that excites the many young people in attendance, not the least because of his amazing energy from start to finish. One woman is motivated to dance to his rhythmic poems; she spirits around among the crowd sitting on the street. She dances and drinks, pours drops of red wine on the heads of selected unfortunates and then, finally, dumps the rest of the bottle over her head.

Lansana's performance reminds me of my wild teenage years, back in 1966 when I went to my first concert, attending a performance in Elsinore, Denmark, by the English rock band Red Squares. Fan hysteria was something of a phenomenon in those days, and I was borne through the crowd by a sea of strangers' hands carrying me in a wave closer and closer to the stage and then finally onto the stage, so I could touch my idols Ronnie and Geordie... But Lansana made the opposite movement: he leaped from the stage and down to the crowd to be one with it, to be swallowed up by the mass, and only whisper his poems into a microphone. After the reading we write reams and reams of autographs. Poets have something of a rock star or football star status here.

Once again I encounter Fernando Botero, this time in the form of corpulent bronze sculptures of both animals and humans on Plazoleta de las Esculturas. I see many of his paintings—a generous gift he made of 92 paintings to Museo de Antioquia in Medellín, the city where he was born. Here the paintings are lavishly sweet and satirical, comic and tragic at the same time. I've seldom managed to laugh in front of so many paintings in an exhibition. It's thought provoking to know that one person can encompass such a range in one single self. The diverse paintings each have his signature. Irrespective of whether he

paints comic delights or outlines terror, his mark is always there. Or, imagine that one person with his artistic form can set his stamp on so much that is in the world. He, Botero, makes his impression on that which already exists: the pain-filled, the joyous, and the terrible.

During breaks and meals I talk to some of the other poets, but now and again I've got to get away from the turbulence. I prefer the hotel's 14th-floor terrace, where festival staff has its headquarters. The climate is exceptional in Medellín. I thrive in this latitude. One day I feel like having a cup of tea, since tea is nice when the weather is warm. Colombia is a coffee country, and I've not had a cup of tea in a week. David, the young man who helps me in the internet café because the internet connection is so unreliable, hangs out in the sun with his friends. "On this floor," he says, "we only have tea with cocaine." "I can't get it without cocaine?" "Sure. Down in the restaurant on the second floor. Here it comes only with cocaine." David looks at me. "It's a mild tea . . ."

After the heavy food in the restaurant that day my stomach is not feeling so well, so I think, a little cocaine might not be a bad idea. "It's completely legal in tea," David assures me. Since the internet connection is down anyway, David spends a great deal of time at the swimming pool. He's a delight to look at, so I push my table closer to the pool and begin reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. If I don't read Márquez here, where would I read him? I'm disappointed when a waiter from the second floor arrives—a mistake—on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor with a bag of Lipton tea in a cup half-filled with lukewarm water. And by now David and his friends have long since left the pool.

Another reading that I'm happy to be part of is the one that takes place in the little mountain village Municipio de Santafé de Antioquia. With its narrow cobblestone streets and small houses inspired by the colonial period, and with its well-kept gardens, it is one of the oldest villages in the area. Problem is, Amjad Nasser had been given the wrong time to meet the bus and has waited so long that he wants his lunch before our departure, even though we're all invited to eat in Santafé de Antioquia when we arrive. Not only that, but Amjad wants to change his clothes for his reading—so we must wait an hour and a half for him.

I become incensed, and when he returns I shout at him: "I hate waiting! You can't let an entire busload of people wait!" He responds by shouting: "I also hate to wait!" And we drive. The festival's organizers are sometimes too kind. If one person is dissatisfied they do what they can to placate him and never think about the consequences for the rest of the group. We've not received clearance by the police to drive the straight way, which means that we are in for a long and difficult pass through the mountains. One of the organizers puts on a CD,

so that even as we bounce up and down the mountains on the rutted bumpy track, we are forced to listen to poetry read in many languages. I'm struck by the landscape; it's unbelievably beautiful. So too the little village we reach so very late that, during introductions, my half-hour reading is sliced first to fifteen minutes, and then again to just two poems. At the luncheon I take a picture of Amjad, who smiles warmly at me, surprised. He's hardly even touched his plate. "It's the background I want," I tease him. He's placed himself in front of a massive display of flowers and fruit. Later we chide him that he should really get out there and read, so the audience won't run away.

The poor audience has waited under the trees in the little courtyard in front of the cathedral for over an hour and a half. A Danish audience would never have lasted this long. Three small girls eager with anticipation sit in the first rows, clucking with delight at all the foreign languages they hear, especially the Arabic sounds, which they try to imitate. I dedicate my love poems to these girls' future and receive, as a thank you, a piece of quartz by a man who'd been deeply moved. He places the necklace around my neck, and I wear it during the rest of the festival. As we read, birds twitter in the trees, church bells chime, and a black-winged vulture sails high in the sky. A breath of death passes over the church. To my utter astonishment, the church postpones Mass until the end of our reading!

We walk around the village. A warm and mild night settles blue-black on the horizon, and the prostrate moon has appeared. Here, like so many other places, the village is overrun with horses. We'd had horses at my family's country farm when I was a child, and I miss them, so I decide that I've got to ride one. The clap of its hooves against the cobblestones still rings in my ears.

The next day, Fernando, the head organizer of the festival, would like to interview me. He will ask questions as David translates my English responses simultaneously, and the whole thing will be recorded on video. But who knows what kind of program will come of it? Fernando is drinking beer, and when he sees me, he decides he'd also like a joint. Later he says that he interpreted my wavy-curly hair as an indication that I'd be interested, too.

"What questions would you rather not answer?" he asks at the outset. "I'd rather not discuss my next book. I don't know anything about it." I begin to talk. David translates selected sentences so that Fernando can at least get an idea of what is going on as a thick cloud of marijuana envelops us—the same smell that fills the bar and many other floors of the hotel. His joint has a quick effect on him: he flirts with the lovely woman named Gloria; he talks on the telephone; he moves around the room aimlessly, until finally we're forced to end the interview. I've got a reading that I need to get to, under the dark, artificial sky of the planetarium.

Under a very real sky later that evening I hear of five people who were killed in Cali the previous day. Some English poets provide me with details. They'd had dinner with a group of young people who'd spoken of nothing but murder and suicide. At last the poets had asked: "What would you like for dessert?"

When we first arrived in Medellín, we were so busy with our readings that we hardly had time to get oriented to what was happening, but a new group of poets had recently come from an arrangement in Bogotá, where they had stayed, like us, at the Hotel Internacional. In Bogotá a member of FARC wanted to bomb a police station, but there were so many officers that he turned around at the last instant and ran away. The bomb went off not far from the hotel. The poets were sitting around drinking beer when the explosion rocked the city. The American Greg Czury's first reaction was to go out and see what had happened. He wanted to know how the air "smelled" after a bomb—he told me this at the hotel bar in Medellín. The worst thing he could've done. Often there is a "little" bomb that detonates first, a bomb meant to bring people to the site, which is then followed by a much larger bomb that kills many people. "I've seen so many bombs go off in movies," Greg says. "I wanted to see how it looked in reality." And what he went out to see: pieces of glass and chunks of flesh everywhere.

The Icelandic poet Ingibjörg Haraldsdóttir and I agreed that participating in this festival is much the same as landing a role in Buñuel's film *The Discrete Charms of the Bourgeoisie*. We believe that we act, but in truth we find ourselves on a stage as reality and all its many catastrophes play out, without us knowing what is really happening. On the night of June 24, for example, I am at a tango bar, Casa Cultural del Tango, to celebrate the anniversary of the Argentine singer Carlos Gardel's death. His plane crashed in Medellín in 1935, but people continue to drink and dance wildly to his sad songs. He managed to record "Silencio" and 413 other tango classics before his death at age 45. "Immortal and eternally young." Or, it is said of him, "Gardel sings better every day." The bartender alternates between pouring a steady stream of rum and dancing close to both young beauties and select older women. The older women are elegant and poised in their dancing. They know the world, and they know each movement of the dance before they carry it out. The awareness of mastering the steps seems to give them pleasure. The energy in the city is intensified during the festival, one youth explains to me. I am surprised again and again by the packed crowds inside the halls and the huge flocks of people outside in the open air. Are the residents of Medellín part of a unique breed? Or does poetry really mean so much here?

Day after day the city's occupants come to the readings. They see the festival as an event they can be high on the rest of the year. "Before the poets came, the city was quiet," Andres, a son of a former festival organizer, tells me. He looks at me directly with his dark eyes. "Everyone's living full blast now."

Like many of the other young people Andres loves the atmosphere in the hotel

lobby, where we gather in groups before we are sent to our respective readings. He practically inhales the energy there before the readings. He glows. The city of Medellín is illuminated by poetry from around the world. The citizens are lifted up by poetry. “Poetry is food for the soul,” he says to me in all seriousness one day on the street. Cars zoom around us, the sun shines. For him and many other young people there is a refuge of hope: it is the people who win.

But there are also residents this festival doesn’t reach. The homeless are everywhere. Class differences in Colombia are enormous and grotesque. You can find massive slums where hopelessness grows in equal measure with poverty. Even in the city center you’ll find homeless people walking around with their plastic bags, beggars (often handicapped) and children who try to sell a pack of hand-warmed chewing gum. One day we pass a little boy on the street, no more than five years old. His yellow shirt is ragged, dirty; he sits crumpled up in front of a store, crying. He is one of the many to whom we give some money. He raises himself with a clumsy movement that exposes his small, dark emaciated body. His shrill crying stops immediately and he buys bread and juice. The bread he chews vigorously in large hunks, thanking us repeatedly. Some readings take place also in the slums—a nice gesture, but here spiritual food is certainly not enough.

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Because it is both global and very local, the festival is a unique experience. Not only does each of us represent our own country; we also represent the very corner of the world we are from. In Europe, there are big differences between the Protestants in the north and the Catholics in the south. “You are accountable to God,” the Portuguese poet Nuno Júdice says, “and we are accountable to the priest—a person. Accountability is certainly greater with you. In the south we live in chaos and are absolved.” As Europeans in South America, we discover, however, that similarities are more apparent than differences. It feels very comfortable to be a European in Colombia. And our poems cross borders—with a good translation—without much difficulty. Conceição Lima extends her arm to me one day; her skin is specked with goose flesh after my reading of one of my poems, “Only a knife.” I have reacted in a similarly powerful way after hearing poems from around the world.

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Life is not easy under the ever-present sun in Colombia. “Life hurts,” the Argentine Maria Rosa Lojo says. She enjoys writing about the secret of the world’s transparency, and is one of the poets I am grateful to have met. Life hurts. This, I tell her, is what the subject of my writing has been since my first book, *When an Angel Breaks Her Silence* (1981). One evening we discuss the terrible realities of life versus the power of imagination—*imaginación*.

Outside the hotel: bombs, cocaine, a fire downtown, thefts, prostitution. Inside: enormous warmth between poets. The international poetry festival in Medellín—said to be the world’s largest—is over for the year. It is not just the poets’ words that illuminate the city; in Medellín the public is also magical. *Una apuesta por la imaginación, el amor y la libertad* (a contribution to imagination, love, and liberty) is the festival’s motto, and it is written in the program. An American and an Iraqi shared a joint, and a group of Palestinians had a long conversation with a Jewish man who visited one night. People who are not otherwise on comfortable speaking terms come together surprisingly well in the atmosphere that arises when poets from across the globe are collected in one place.

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# Danielle Dutton's Attempts at a Life

*Brian Whitener*

*Attempts at a Life* Tarpaulin Sky 2007

ISBN: 978-0-9779019-3-7 \$14 US

Danielle Dutton's first book *Attempts at a Life*, just out from Tarpaulin Sky, is a fascinating debut, one that signals a writer whose work is worth following (apparently a second book, *Sprawl*, is forthcoming from Clear Cut). The book is comprised of 17 short pieces – concentrated, disarming novelettes – that frequently take classic literary works and/or their language as a starting or jumping off point, such as in “Portrait of a Lady” where Isabel Archer becomes: “I stood on the battlefield with what I thought was a gun in my hand, but it turned out to be a bright green bird. Thankfully, an opportunity arose to chart well-charted republics. I sailed east in front of viewers.”

It's neither Acker or Barthelme, rather these pieces inhabit their sources, and, in opening them up, chart a narrative territory triangulated between New Narrative, prose poetry, and the postmodern novel – without every fully becoming any of these. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the book's narrative strategy is the degree to which it embraces the 19th-century novel's relationship to the reader as a body to be affected; for the majority of these pieces exhibit a concern with producing effects in the reader, using different narrative speeds and tonalities to turn the reading experience into a physical one. Felt, in the following, as a kind of dizzying pleasure at the final line's narrative closure, however false:

Incidentally, when I mention Spinoza, she is here with me, but when I mention broccoli, broccoli is here instead. In this way, the movement of this story reminds me of what it was like to be read to as a child, especially when falling asleep, how there would seem to be beside me first a new blue jacket, then a wayward rabbit, an angry gardener, a pot of tea, one by one taking shape on the pillow beside me. Two years passed (after Russia), and quite unexpectedly, I ran into Mikhail again. (53)

These pieces encourage the identification of the reader with the speaking I and the immersion of the reader in the flow of the text, and do so to great effect.

However, it is the manner in which the pieces take up their examination of subjectivity that is the most fantastic part of this book. That is to say, this book is not an exploration of identity but rather of subjectivity, which can be seen in its emphasis on sex instead of on gender. Moreover, it concerns potentiality, not possibility; these are not cartographies of possible worlds, rather they depict beings of anarchic lushness, subjectivities that overflow with complications (which, absurdly, brings the writing close to Flarf and its exploration of similar territory). While constructions of subjectivity in current popular culture frequently take the form of false collectivity (“I am Africa,” *We Are Marshall*), Dutton does not subsume difference, she multiplies it, turning it weird, wonderful:

Now I’m a horse, a gun, an ebb. I’m listening for clues to their code. My research indicates that nearly every thinking person can come up with a slogan. What Has Been Done to Death Will Be Done Again. With my zillions of statistics I could attract the eye of any modern scholar, but I discard their paradise like chewing gum. I could have sworn there was something to this fight, something to do with the openness of the field. I walked many miles to get here, the dead middle of a summer afternoon. (17)

In it, I encounter myself on every page, but the me I meet is never the me I remember. It’s me but me a misanthropic barber, me a German, a werewolf; or it’s me but me advancing, me in slippers, me alone under a great grey sky. (54)

It is also a *strange* book, as the piece “Two Strange Stories” would suggest. But is it estranging or making strange? My sense is that *Attempts at a Life* is neither; and while the book does have a complicated relationship to modernism, and to the devices and desires of modernist writing, I think the strange it posits is us. To ask, now, *Who are we?* – it’s a question whose only response is the strange, which is itself no answer, we are in between, multiple, ahistorical, post-historical, and always-already historicized. One writes then, just planting “things until there’s no time to be afraid” (9).

# Writing in a Time of War: The Example of Christine de Pizan

*Allison Cobb*

Back in 2003, I attended a poetry reading in New York City. It was in the last days of the buildup to the war in Iraq and there was lots of energy and anger running around. The Poets Against the War were holding weekly protest readings, and the “Poetry Is News” conference had been held at St. Mark’s Poetry Project, which was a discussion about what influence writing could have on the events unfolding. The first thing the poet said when he got the microphone was, “You know, poetry can’t do shit to stop the war.”

I reacted immediately against this comment. Not because I disagreed with its premise necessarily, but because I resisted its tone, its closing down of possibility. I wasn’t that ready to deny my own relevance.

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I started thinking about what shit poetry *could* do about war. I thought about this as I walked around the Greenwood Cemetery that I live across the street from in Brooklyn. People have to die to create open space in my neighborhood.

And I went to New Mexico a number of times to see my mother, suffering from the industrialized country disease of breast cancer. I thought about it there, wandering around Los Alamos on top of the mesas in the midst of spectacular mountain vistas, open spaces left largely pristine from development because of the still-secret nuclear weapons work done there.

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## NOTE

A version of this essay was given as a talk in 2004 at the Zinc Bar Reading Series in New York City. Thanks to the curator of the series at that time, Brendan Lorber, for inspiring the work.

These are not new questions, obviously. As Jack Spicer noted, all poetry is written in a backdrop of war. And Spicer would have agreed with the reader who said poetry is futile in the face of politics. But that didn't seem like the whole story to me.

I spoke with other poets about the interventions of poetry in politics. Rod Smith pointed out the solidarity songs of the Wobblies. Juliana Spahr noted that Winston Churchill and the prisoners who rioted at Attica were inspired by Claude McKay's "If I must die." Irish fighters pinned Yeats' "Easter 1916" in their coats, says Daniel Bouchard (something Yeats wasn't happy about). Walter Lew explained that in premodern, East Asian culture, any distinction between poetry and politics was nonsense.

But the example that most caught my imagination was the lament. The lament is an ancient poetic tradition, often passed on orally, and often performed by women. As a cry of grief, it fit my mental state at the time. It also seemed the perfect role for poetry in response to war. Lament exists outside the realm of politics, giving form to a community's sorrow.

I started doing research about laments from various cultures in various times. I had a hard time finding laments classified as literature, actually. Aside from a few famous examples, Jeremiah in the Bible and the various laments in Greek plays, many laments are recorded only as part of anthropological studies, seen as interesting not in themselves but because of what they reveal about a culture. Most laments are anonymous, written communally and over time, without a single author.

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It was in my search for laments that I encountered Christine de Pizan. An Italian émigré to France writing around the turn of the 14th century, she lived in turbulent times. At the beginning of her autobiographical *Christine's Vision*, she writes that she has been "swallowed into the belly of the image of chaos."<sup>1</sup>

She lived during the "100 Years War" between England and France. France's King Charles VI was insane, unfit to rule, and the various dukes kept vying for power, repeatedly bringing the country to the brink of civil war. A schism split the Roman church, the highest authority in the medieval world, and for a

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<sup>1</sup> Desmond, Marilyn, ed. *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1998. p. xv.

time there were two popes. Every now and then the Black Plague would sweep through and kill off a bunch of people including, when she was 25 and had three children, Christine's husband.

Against this backdrop, in the summer of 1410, as open hostilities were about to break out between family members in the French court, Christine wrote a lament addressed to the King's uncle, the Duke of Berry, called *Lamentation on the evils of civil war*:<sup>2</sup>

Alone, and suppressing with great difficulty the tears which blur my sight and pour down my face like a fountain, so much so that I am surprised to have the time to write this weary lament, whose writing the pity for the coming disaster makes me erase with bitter tears, and I say in pain: "Oh, how can it be that the human heart, as strange as Fortune is, can make men revert to the nature of a voracious and cruel beast?"

Her plea seems to have had an influence. A few months after she wrote her Lament the dukes agreed to the peace of Bicetre in November 1410.<sup>3</sup>

So, here is writing that did do shit about war.

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Of course, Christine and her time differ from ours in many ways. She was a person of high privilege, part of the royal court, so she had direct access to the royal family. As a writer, she carried more cultural weight than today's poets. She could be called an opinion-maker – more like a *New York Times* columnist than a poet.

Yet as I read more about Christine and about her work, I recognized her. I found correspondences with her position as a writer and in her textual practice.

In addition to the *Lament* she wrote a number of pieces directed at members of the royal family, urging them toward peace. The theme runs like a red thread

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**2** Brabant, Margaret, ed. *Politics, Gender, Genre*. The Political Rhetoric of Christine de Pizan, Linda Leppig. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

**3** Christine de Pizan. *The Epistle of the Prison of Human Life*. Josette Wisman, ed. and trans. New York: Garland Publishing, 1984. p. xvii.

through her work, which remained popular for centuries. She created a legacy of textual intervention in politics.

Christine's position as a writer has some similarities to today's poets: First of all, her status as a writer was ambivalent, even dangerous. An intellectual woman writer was unprecedented at the time. Christine had to invent herself. In doing so, she violated every political and social norm: she was a radical outsider. This outsider status – combined with her level of access – allowed her to say things other members of court could not.<sup>4</sup>

And she used this position. In her texts she consciously places herself as female *auteur* outside the male world of political discourse, and the learned discourse of the university, referring to herself as a "simple woman." In her *Lament* she calls herself *seulette* – a woman apart and alone, which underscores her widow status, but also her outsider status. This position helped her do what she thought all poets should do: "speak directly to kings."<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, since she relied on royal patronage for her income, her role was constantly threatened. Whereas male writers might cross political boundaries, Christine by the very act of writing was also crossing social boundaries. She was always in danger of not being heard (and so not paid for her efforts), while also always in danger of being heard and creating offense.

Poets in the US today occupy a similar cultural position. They are mostly privileged, mostly highly educated. Yet they are considered, if they are considered at all, outside the mainstream. Mostly poets are disregarded, often not heard. Yet they maintain a certain kind of cultural authority and ethical power, at the same time they are silenced and ignored. How else describe the odd, symbolic position of the poet laureate, today's equivalent to the court poet? How else interpret the White House decision to cancel the February 2003 poetry event when it threatened to become a protest?

Moreover, the role of literary writing in Christine's time and ours is similar: As a writer – some have crowned her Europe's first professional woman writer – Christine was seen as outside politics, law and diplomacy. Literary writing served to educate and entertain, but it did not influence in any material way the affairs of the world. Courtly romance poetry was the most popular genre among Christine's class. This attitude toward literary writing is vastly different

<sup>4</sup> Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference, Introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Politics, Gender, Genre. "The Subversive Seulette," Mary McKinley. pp. 157-169.

from other cultures and times, such as the premodern East Asian culture Walter Lew described, where poetry was seen as inextricably linked to politics.

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The emblem of one of Christine's long works, *Othea's Letter to Hector*, is Hermaphroditus, whose male body became melded to the female he rejected. This figure is resonant for Christine in many ways. She says in her *Vision* that in order to become a writer, she had to become male. Thus, Hermaphroditus is her. In this case, Hermaphroditus also serves as a metaphor for the figurative language used by poets. The poet is figured as queer, unable to speak straight, always saying more than one thing at once.<sup>6</sup>

Similar things are often said of poetry. Its "obscurity" – its rejection of transparent language – makes it unfit for moving people to action or achieving specific outcomes. As the poet Marcella Durand pointed out to me: it's not poetry's role to be "useful." Its very inutility – its excess, in other words – is what gives poetry its power. It stands outside the discourses of politics and the propaganda used by governments, so it has a chance to expose those discourses and that propaganda.

To achieve this – to expose all language as "strange," not natural and transparent, but constructed – contemporary poets use established postmodern techniques like interrogating the efficacy of the text and positioning poetic works as provisional and open-ended. I was surprised to find de Pizan using similar tactics. For instance, her texts communicate "moral anxiety about the efficacy of didactic performance," as one theoretician put it. In other words, she displays self-reflexive doubts about the communicative power of her own texts. This is a running theme throughout her work. In another example, her *Book of the Long Road of Learning* resists closure by refusing to resolve the debate over the best qualities of kings. She leaves readers to make their own determinations, a powerful gesture in a world dominated by the absolute authority of church and king.

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As a poet, the most inspiring model I find in Christine is her insistence in the power of imagination, of creative intellectual endeavor.

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<sup>6</sup> Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference, "Christine's Anxious Lessons," Roberta Krueger.

In her *Lament*, Christine first creates in readers an imagination for the horrors a civil war in France would bring. She attempts to create an empathic desire among France's leaders for peace by writing anonymously in the tradition of lament, speaking as if in the voice of France's people.<sup>7</sup>

Then she addresses the Duke directly, asking him to imagine himself a peacekeeper, dramatizing for him how the world would honor him and making real through imagination the possibility for peace.<sup>8</sup>

She does this over and over again in her letters to sovereigns. She doesn't give them diplomatic advice or tell them specifically what to do; instead she imagines for them. She creates in writing the possibilities for peace.

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Christine had no models. She had to create herself out of her own imagination. And she uses her imagination to posit a different reality for France than the constant vying for power through bloodshed.

If language and imagination create reality, then here is poetry's place to intervene. Bush created war in Iraq simply by saying it. By repeating a few phrases, he made the war in Iraq real.

I'm not saying poets have that kind of power through language. They can't make ships travel across the ocean or troops put away their guns. In fact, in the end, Christine failed.

After she wrote her lament, the dukes did sign a peace treaty. But it was only temporary. By 1416, the fighting among the French royal family would result in a series of alliances with the invading English. The English King Henry V would be recognized as the legal heir to the French throne, and 500 supporters of the French king would be slaughtered on a single night in Paris, with thousands more killed in the coming days. Christine would have to flee into exile.

In her treatise on just war called *Deeds of Arms*, Christine acknowledges that some may believe her effort to constrain war fruitless, "the product of idleness,

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7 *ibid.*

8 *ibid.*

and a waste of time.”<sup>9</sup> But Christine was unceasing. Until the end of her life she kept trying to resurrect an imagination for peace among France's rulers.

Christine of course is not the only example. The 20th-century French poet Robert Desnos also believed, as he called it, in “the material reality of the imagination.”<sup>10</sup> He wrote poems to encourage the French resisting the Nazis. His most famous, “The Watchman of the Pont-au-Change” encourages resistance fighters to see themselves as connected to one another, to ancient Paris, and to all those around the world fighting for freedom. He continued writing until he finally died of tuberculosis in the Terezin concentration camp.

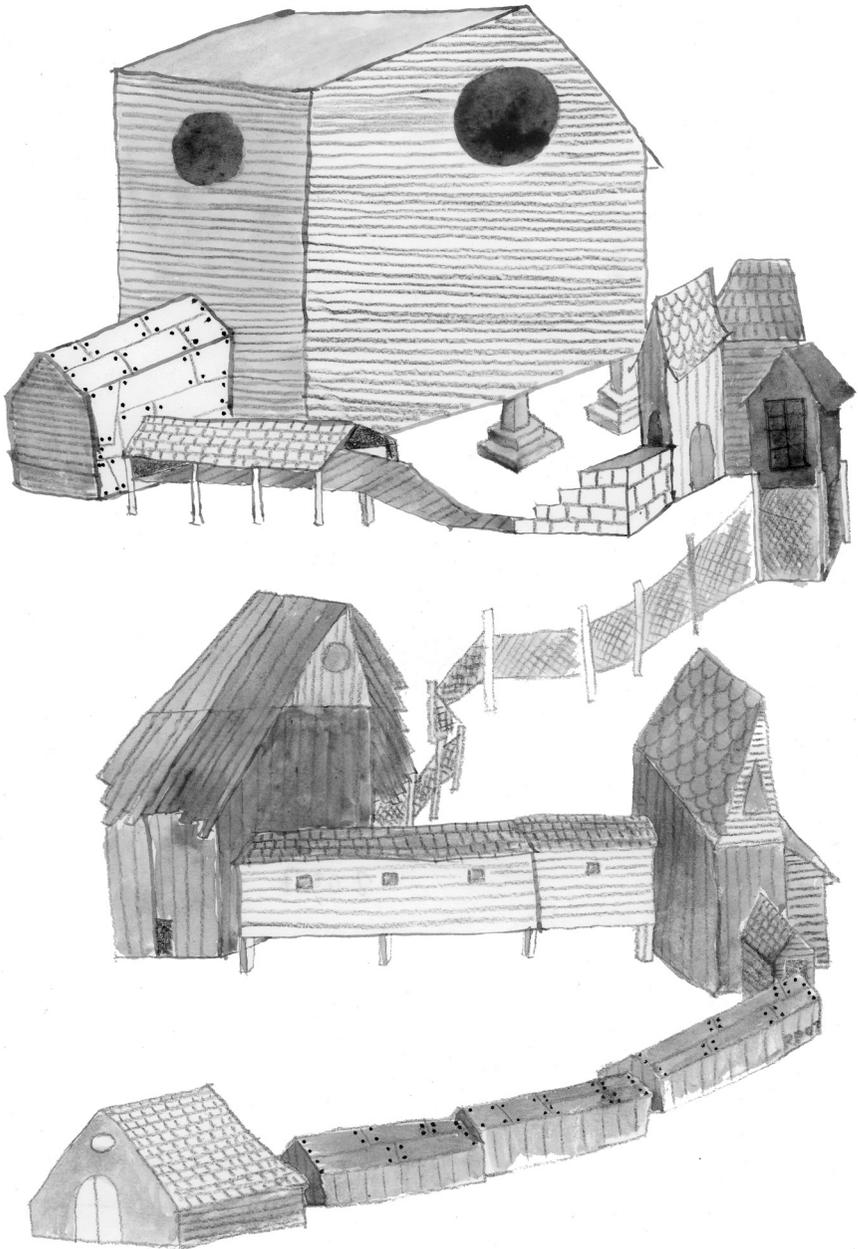
Poetry might not stop the war – but I continue to write against that idea.

Perhaps it's the only way I can keep writing. But I also think it is critical for poets to believe in their own relevance. Why not imagine and attempt the poem that would stop a war? I have no idea what that poem would be and I don't know if it could ever exist. But I would like to keep trying to imagine it, mostly because I hope it won't come true that war is finally what we writers were unable to cease imagining.

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**9** *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan*, Kate Forhan. Burlington: Ashgate, 2002. p. 154.

**10** *The Selected Poems of Robert Desnos*. Carolyn Forché and William Kulid, eds. and trans. New York: Ecco Press, 1991. p. xx.



"dream house #4" by Ruby Palmer

## Contributors' Notes

MARIA ATTANASIO was born in Caltagirone, Italy, in 1943, where she still lives, writes, and teaches philosophy. Attanasio is the author of five collections of poetry and four works of historical fiction. Her latest work, *Il Falsario di Caltagirone*, was the recipient of the prestigious Premio Vittorini. Her books of poetry are *Interni (Interiors)* (Milano: Guanda 1979), *Nero barocco nero (Black Baroque Black)* (Caltanissetta: Sciascia 1985), *Eros e mente (Eros and Mind)* (Milano: La Vita Felice 1996), *Ludica mente (Ludic Mind, or Ludically)* (Roma: Avagliano 2000), *Amnesia del movimento delle nuvole (Amnesia of the Movement of the Clouds)* (Milano: La Vita Felice 2003). Her works in prose include *Correva l'anno 1698 e nella città avvenne il fatto memorabile (It Was the Year 1698 and in the City the Memorable Fact Occurred)* (Palermo: Sellerio 1994) and *Di Concetta e le sue donne (Of Concetta and Her Women)* (Palermo: Sellerio 1999).

PATRICK BARRON is assistant professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and coeditor and cotranslator of *Italian Environmental Literature: An Anthology*. He is the recipient of a Fulbright Award, the Rome Prize, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for the translation of the poetry of Andrea Zanzotto. His poetry, essays and translations have appeared in many journals, including *Poetry East*, *Ecopoetics*, *Two Lines*, *The Worcester Review*, and *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry*.

CARLA BILLITTERI, born and educated in Italy, teaches poetry and poetics at the University of Maine. Her translations of contemporary Italian poetry have appeared in *Boundary2*, *How2*, and *Fascicle*, among other journals. A selection of her translations of Alda Merini's aphorisms is forthcoming with Hooke Press.

GHERARDO BORTOLOTTI was born in 1972. In 2005 he published the e-book *Canopo (Cepollaro E-dizioni)*. In 2007, he published *Soluzioni binarie (La Camera Verde)* and the wee chap *tracce per dusie*, 103-197 for *dusie.org*. With Michele Zaffarano he edits the series *Chapbooks*. He is the author of blogs in Italian ([canopo.splinder.com](http://canopo.splinder.com) e [bgmole.blogspot.com](http://bgmole.blogspot.com)) and in English ([www.lowleveltechniques.blogspot.com](http://www.lowleveltechniques.blogspot.com), [howtowrite.blogspot.com](http://howtowrite.blogspot.com)). He is among the founders and curators of the blog of translations and experimental literature at [gamm.org](http://gamm.org).

BRANDON BROWN is a poet and translator from Kansas City. His poems have appeared recently in journals edited by his friends, such as *Both Both*, *Capilano*

*Review, War and Peace, Minor American, and Mirage/(Period)ical*. His friends at Cy Press published a chapbook, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, in 2006. He gets to live in San Francisco, California with Alli Warren!

NANNI CAGNONE was born in Liguria in 1939 and lives in Bomarzo. He studied philosophy and has worked as a journalist, art critic, editor and publisher, creative director for advertising agencies, consultant for “company image,” and lecturer of aesthetics. His most recent poetry books include *Doveri dell’esilio* (2002) and *Index Vacuus* (2004). His recent novels and short stories include *Pacific Time* (2001) and *Ça mérite un detour* (2007). He has translated works by Aeschylus and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

JENNIFER CHAPIS is the author of the chapbook *The Beekeeper’s Departure* (Backwards City Press 2007) and a limited-edition broadside, “Poem as Tossed Salad” (Center for Book Arts 2002). Her poems have appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *DIAGRAM*, *Hotel America*, *McSweeney’s*, *Barrow Street*, *Quarterly West*, *The Best New Poets* anthology series, and other publications. Her work was recently recognized with the Florida Review Editor’s Prize, the GSU Review Poetry Prize, and a Pushcart nomination. She is an editor with Nightboat Books and lives in San Diego, California, with her husband.

ALLISON COBB is the author of *Born Two* (Chax Press 2004) and *Cell* (Portable Press 2004). She was born in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

KATE COLBY is the author of *Fruitlands* (Litmus Press 2006) and *Unbecoming Behavior* (Ugly Duckling Presse 2008). Recent work can be found in *Bay Poetics*, *New American Writing* and *Vanitas*. She lives in Providence, Rhode Island.

JEN COLEMAN lives in Brooklyn, New York, and works for Environmental Defense. She is co-editor of the poetry journal *PomPom* [[www.pompompress.com](http://www.pompompress.com)]. Her work can also be found at [www.chax.org/eoagh](http://www.chax.org/eoagh) and [www.theeastvillage.com](http://www.theeastvillage.com). She had the honor of participating in the 2007 “Ten Jens” reading, hosted by Aaron Belz at the Schlafly Bottleworks in St. Louis.

JOSHUA COREY is the author of two full-length books, *Selah* and *Fourier Series*, and two chapbooks, *Compos(t)ition Marble* and *Hope & Anchor*, forthcoming from Noemi Press. He is Assistant Professor of English at Lake Forest College and lives in Evanston, Illinois.

CRAIG COTTER was born in 1960 in New York and has lived in California since 1986. He has published over 100 poems in various journals, and his first full-length collection, *Chopstix Numbers*, is now available from Ahsahta Press.

BISWAMIT DWIBEDY was born and raised in India and resides in Iowa City, Iowa. He attends the MFA Writing program at Bard College. The poems appearing in this issue are from his first collection, *Ozalid*, forthcoming from 1913 Press.

CHIARA DAINO (born in 1981) is a songwriter, novelist and actress. Her first novel, *La Merca*, edited by Massimo Sannelli, was published by Fara in 2006.

ESSE ZETA ATONA is a performance poetry project developed in Rome by Laura Cingolani and Fabio Lapiana, at work since 1999. It is based on the idea of poetry as permanent research, as movement across the thresholds of the word, meaning and its loss, writing and pure improvisation. The work of Esse Zeta Atona aims to forge a moment of utopia and protest, an instance of construction of language not quashed by the codes of power and marketing. Laura Cingolani (born in 1973) and Fabio Lapiana (born in 1971) are involved in the Roman underground artistic scene. Cingolani is a writer and belongs to a musical project called Idrante (with Daniele Salvati, [www.idrante.com](http://www.idrante.com)); Lapiana (known as Atonal) is a member of an independent publishing house, Venerea Edizioni, and also works as writer, visual artist and graphic designer. Both are on the Board of the “deviant pop” magazine CATASTROPHE ([www.catastrophe.it](http://www.catastrophe.it)).

KATHLEEN FRASER’s books include essays, a Breughel-inspired kid’s book and 20 poem collections, collaborating with painters JoAnn Ugolini, Sam Francis, Mel Bochner, and Hermine Ford. Fraser translates and lectures in Rome each spring. Her wall texts *for ii ss*, with Ford’s drawings, were shown at Pratt Institute of Architecture/Rome in 2007. She is recipient of a Guggenheim and two NEA fellowships. For a recent interview and photos, go to <http://jacketmagazine.com/33/fraser>.

GIOVANNA FRENE, alias Sandra Bortolazzo, was born in Asolo, not far from Venice, in 1968. She has studied music and art, and is a doctoral candidate in the History of Language at the University of Padova. Her books of poetry are *Immagine di voce* (1999), *Spostamento* (2000), *Datità*, with an afterword by Andrea Zanzotto (2001), *Stato apparente* (2004), and *Sara Laughs* (2007); and, as Federica Marte, the cross-genre “prosimitro” *Orfeo è morto* (2002). Her poems have appeared in various Italian and foreign journals, and in the anthologies

*Parola Plurale: Sessantaquattro poeti italiani fra due secoli*, (Rome, 2005) and *Nuovi poeti italiani*, edited by P. Zublena for the journal *Nuova Corrente* (2005).

FLORINDA FUSCO, born in Bari in 1972, teaches contemporary Italian literature at the University of Bari. Her critical and poetic writings have appeared in a range of journals and anthologies in Italy, France, and Canada, including *Parola Plurale* (Sossella 2005), *Nuovi poeti italiani* (Tighler 2005), and *La creatività femminile* (Lieto Colle 2006). Recently she has been working on a monograph on Edoardo Gacciatore. Her first book of poems, *linee*, was published by Zona in 2001. Her work *il libro delle madonne scure* (Mazzoli 2003), illustrated by Luigi Ontani, won the Premio Delfini. Her translations from the Spanish of Argentine poet Alejandra Pizarnik won the national Bernard Simeone translation prize in 2004. A monograph on Amelia Rosselli and a poetic trilogy are forthcoming from Oedipus Press.

MARCO GIOVENALE lives in Rome. His website is at <http://slowforward.wordpress.com>. He edits and/or contributes to *bina, il manifesto*, <http://gamm.org>, <http://poeticinvention.blogspot.com> and other sites, and his poetry has appeared in a range of magazines and anthologies. His books of poems include *Curvature* (La camera verde 2002), *Il segno meno* (Manni 2003), *Altre ombre* (La camera verde 2004), *Double click* (Cantarena 2005), *Criterio dei vetri* (Oèdipus 2007) and *La casa esposta* (Le Lettere 2007). He has one e-book of prose, *Endoglosse* (Biagio Cepollaro E-dizioni); a chapbook of new “endoglosses” was published as *Numeri primi* (Arcipelago 2006). Translations and “sought poems” from Baudelaire make up the book *Spleen / Macchinazioni per fiori*, with images by Alfredo Anzellini (La camera verde 2007). *A gunless tea* was published for the 2007 *dusi/e-chap* project.

MILLI GRAFFI, Milanese, was born in 1940. She studied Anglistics, with a focus on semiotics, linguistics, and psychoanalysis. She has produced works of sound poetry (*Salnitro*, *Farfalla ronzar*, *Tralci*) as well as four poetry collections – *Mille graffi e venti poesie* (1979), *Fragili film* (1987), *L'amore meccanico* (1994), *embargo voice* (2006) – and a novella titled *Centimetri due* (Edizioni d'If 2004). She has translated Lewis Carroll (the two Alice books and *The Hunting of the Snark*) and Charles Dickens (*A Christmas Carol*). She has also taught at the University of Verona and the Accademia Carrara of Bergamo. Her research ranges from studies of nonsense and the comic function in the early avant-gardes to militant criticism aimed at understanding the situation of contemporary poetics (writing on comrades from Balestrini to Raworth, Guest to Scialoja). She is editor-in-chief of the journal *Il Verri*.

STEFANIA HEIM is co-founder and co-editor of *Circumference: Poetry in Translation*. Her poems, criticism, and translations have recently appeared in the *Boston Review*, *Harp & Altar*, *Harper's*, and *La Petite Zine*.

ERICA KAUFMAN is the author of several chapbooks, most recently *censory impulse* (Big Game Books), *civilization day* (Open24Hours), and *a familiar album* (winner of the 2003 New School Chapbook Contest). she is the co-curator/co-editor of *Belladonna\*/Belladonna Books*. erica lives in Brooklyn, New York.

ABY KAUPANG's poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Verse*, *The Laurel Review*, *Ruminate*, *Matter*, and *Oregon East*. Her chapbook, *Scenic Fences*, was listed as a finalist for the Laurel Review/Greentower Press Midwest Chapbook Competition. She has also been nominated twice for the AWP Intro Journals Project and once for the Academy of American Poets Poetry Prize. Contact her at [aby.cooperman@yahoo.com](mailto:aby.cooperman@yahoo.com).

AMY KING is the author of *I'm the Man Who Loves You* (BlazeVOX Books 2007), *Antidotes for an Alibi* (BlazeVOX Books 2005), and *The People Instruments* (Pavement Saw Press 2003). She teaches Creative Writing and English at SUNY Nassau Community College, is the editor-in-chief for the literary arts journal *MiPOesias* [<http://www.mipoesias.com>], and is also a member of the Poetics List Editorial Board [<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/poetics/welcome.html>]. Please visit [www.amyking.org](http://www.amyking.org) for more.

STEVE LIGHT, a basketball point-guard following upon Pete Maravich and Nate Archibald, is also a philosopher and poet whose poetry, essays, and books have appeared in the United States, Canada, Jamaica, France, Italy, Japan, England, and Australia.

SARAH MANGOLD lives in Seattle where she edits *Bird Dog*, a journal of innovative writing and art, and co-edits a small chapbook press, *Flash + Card*, with Maryrose Larkin. She is the author of *Blood Substitutes* (Potes & Poets), *Household Mechanics* (New Issues), *Boxer Rebellion* (g o n g), *Picture of the Basket* (Dusie e/chap), and, most recently, *Parlor* (Dusie e/chap).

GIULIANO MESA, born in 1957, has published the following volumes: *Schedario* (Geiger 1978; Poesia italiana e-book 2005), *I loro scritti* (Quasar 1992), *Improvviso e dopo* (Anterem 1997), *Quattro quaderni* (Zona 2000), *1,6,7 - da Nun* (La Camera Verde 2007), *Da recitare nei giorni di festa* (1996) (La Camera Verde 2007), and *Tiresia* (2000-2001) (La Camera Verde 2008).

RUBY PALMER was born in Boston in 1969 and spent her childhood in rural Pennsylvania. She received her BA from Hampshire College in 1992 and her MFA from School of Visual Arts in 2000, and a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant in 1999. Her work has been included in exhibitions in New York at Exit Art, Smack Mellon, KS Art, LMAK Projects, and Claudine, among others, as well as at Morgan Lehman Gallery, CT, and Page Bond Gallery, Richmond, VA. She lives with her husband and two-year-old twins in Brooklyn, New York.

PETER CONSTANTINE PIHOS is a lawyer and historian who lives in Brooklyn, New York.

CHRIS PUSATERI has published poetry and prose in a number of periodicals, including *American Book Review*, *Chicago Review*, *Jacket*, *The Poker*, *Verse*, and others. In addition, he is the author of the e-book *Berserker Alphabetic*s (available free at [www.xpressed.org](http://www.xpressed.org)) and five chapbooks, most recently *North of There* (dusie 2007), *Flowers in Miniature* (Big Game 2006) and *VI Fictions* (g o n g 2006). He lives in Colorado with his partner, the poet Michelle Naka Pierce.

MICHAEL RANCOURT is a poet in the MFA Creative Writing program at San Diego State University, where he specializes in metrical verse and contrarianism.

ANDREA RAOS, born in 1968, has published *Discendere il fiume calmo, in Quinto quaderno italiano* (edited by F. Buffoni, Milano: Crocetti 1996), *Aspettami, dice. Poesie 1992-2002* (Roma: Peraldo 2003), *Luna velata* (Marseille: cipM – Les Comptoirs de la Nouvelle B. S. 2003) and *Le api migratori* (Salerno: Oèdipus – collana Liquid 2007).

MATT REECK has translations forthcoming from the Urdu short stories and essays of SH Manto and Patras Bukhari, respectively, the former in the book *Bombay Stories* and the latter on the webzine *eXchanges*. His Hindi poetry is online at *Anubhuti*, and his French prose at *L'être*. His poetry is viewable online at *Web Conjunctions* and *Other Rooms* and in print at *Upstairs at Duroc*.

EVELYN REILLY's most recent work has been published in the chapbook *Fervent Remnants of Reflective Surfaces* by Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, and can be found in *Lungfull!* and upcoming editions of *Gam* and *War and Peace*. Reilly's first book, *Hiatus*, was published by Barrow Street Press in 2004. She has taught visual poetics at The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church and is co-curator of the winter segment of the Segue Reading Series. With Brenda Iijima, she is also

currently editing the *(eco)lang(uage)(reader)*, a collection of essays on poetry and ecological ethics.

ELÉNA RIVERA is the author of *When the Shadow Filled Window Opens* (WinteRed Press 2007), *Mistakes, Accidents, and a Want of Liberty* (Barque Press 2006) and *Suggestions at Every Turn* (Seeing Eye Books 2005). Her translation of Isabelle Baladine Howald's *Secrets of the Breath* is forthcoming from Burning Deck.

AMELIA ROSSELLI – poet, critic, musician, musicologist, and composer – was born in Paris in 1930. The 1937 assassination of her father Carlo, a hero of the anti-Fascist Resistance, forced her family into a series of moves between France, Switzerland, England, and the United States; she eventually settled in Rome. Her volumes of poetry in Italian include *Variazioni belliche* (Garzanti, 1964), *Serie ospedaliera* (Mondadori 1969), and *Documento* (Garzanti 1976); she also authored *Sleep: Poems in English* (Garzanti 1992), a range of poly- and intralingual works, and prose pieces gathered in *Diario ottuso* (Istituto Bibliografico Napoleone 1990). Dickinson and Plath were among the authors she translated. She died in 1996.

LISA SAMUELS has recent poems in *New American Writing*, */nor*, *How2*, and elsewhere. Her most recent poetry books are *Paradise for Everyone* (Shearsman 2005) and *Increment (a family romance)* (Bronze Skull 2006), parts of which appear in digital form as *Vex Increment* ([www.epoetry2007.net/artists/oeuvres/samuels/samuels.html](http://www.epoetry2007.net/artists/oeuvres/samuels/samuels.html)). She lives in New Zealand and teaches at The University of Auckland.

MASSIMO SANNELLI attended Genoa University and the Fondazione Franceschini in Florence. He has lived and worked in Genoa since 1992. His recent books of poems – a part of what calls his “second body” (that of literature – are *Santa Cecilia e l’angelo* (Atelier 2005), *Venti sonetti* (La Camera Verde 2006), and *Lo schermo* (Feaci 2006). He is also the author of *Philologia Pauli* (Fara 2006), an essay – with a little series of original poems – about Pier Paolo Pasolini’s poetical works and death.

JENNIFER SCAPPETONE is the author of *Err-Residence* (Bronze Skull 2007) and *Beauty [Is the New Absurdity]* (dusi/e collectiv 2007), and of *From Dame Quickly* (forthcoming from Litmus Press). She is currently working on *Venice and the Digressive Invention of the Modern*, a critical study of that city as a crucible for modern and postmodern aesthetics; a cross-genre archaeology of the landfill &

opera of pop-ups called *Exit 43*, commissioned by Atelos Press; and *Locomotrix: Selected Poems of Amelia Rosselli*. Her poems, prose, and translations from Italian appear in a range of journals and anthologies, including *Zoland Annual 1* and *2* (Random House 2006 and 2007), *War and Peace*, Volumes II and III (O Books, 2005 and 2007), and *The Best American Poetry 2004* (Scribner 2004). She is an assistant professor of English and Creative Writing and associate faculty of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Chicago.

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SÉBASTIEN SMIROU is the author of *Simon aime Anna* (rup&rud 1998), *Mon Laurent* (P.O.L 2003), and *MA GIRAFE* (Contrat maint 2006). He founded and directed the poetry cooperative rup&rud; during its seven years, the association published micro-editions by Anne Parian, Anne Portugal, Caroline Dubois, Pierre Alferi, Peter Gizzi, and Éric Houser. He has translated texts by Kevin Davies, Peter Gizzi, Harryette Mullen, and Andrew Zawacki. He lives in Paris, France.

JEN TYNES edits horse less press. She is the author of *The End Of Rude Handles* (Red Morning Press 2006), *See Also Electric Light* (Dancing Girl Press 2007), and, with Erika Howsare, *The Ohio System* (Octopus Books 2007).

PASQUALE VERDICCHIO is a poet, translator and critic. He teaches in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego. He has translated the poetic works of Emilio Villa, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Antonio Porta, Alda Merini, Giorgio Caproni and Antonio Gramsci, among others. His own poetry collections include *This Nothing's Place* (2008). His essays address issues of Italian culture in Italy and abroad and have been published widely in journals and in volume form.

EMILIO VILLA (1914-2003) is the ever-present missing link of Italian letters. Born near Milan, he lived for different periods in Florence, Milan, São Paulo and Rome. He was a quintessential man of classics and ancient languages who found himself equally at home among ancient Hebrew texts and avant-garde artists. Among his many publications are a prose translation of the *Odyssey* (1964). While he preferred writing in his Milanese dialect, Latin and an amalgam of linguistic inheritances and creations, he also wrote in Italian,

which he seemed to dislike deeply and to which he referred as the “language of slavery” of a pompously academic “Ytaglya.” His books include *Oramai* (1947), *E ma dopo* (1950), *L’homme qui descend quelque. Roman métamytique* (1974), *Verboracula* (1981) and, in English translation, the volume *Foresta ultra naturam* (Red Hill Press 1989). An art critic, he represents an active and incisive voice in the appreciation of avant-garde artists such as Alberto Burri.

ANDREA ZANZOTTO is the author of more than twenty books of poems and collections of prose, which cover a vast range of themes, from linguistics and nature to politics and science. A lifelong resident of the hilly farm country of the Veneto, he possesses a rare familiarity with place, and his writings frequently explore the ongoing tensions between nature and culture in his native village, the surrounding countryside, and the nearby remnants of ancient forests. Among his many awards are the Saint Vincent Prize (1950), the Librex-Montale Prize (1983), the Stadt Münster Prize for European Poetry (1993), and the Hölderlin Prize (2005).

ANDREW ZAWACKI is the author of two poetry books, *Anabranck* (Wesleyan 2004) and *By Reason of Breakings* (Georgia 2002), and of three chapbooks: *Georgia* (Katalanché 2007), co-winner of the 1913 Prize; *Roche limit* (Track & Field, forthcoming); and *Masquerade* (Vagabond 2001). Co-editor of *Verse*, which recently released a triple number on French poetry and poetics, he teaches at the University of Georgia.

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*Body, chill, time, objects and/or World's visibility and speakability in contemporary Italian poetry* by Marco Giovenale is a redacted version of a piece that first appeared in two articles in *Poesia* (nos. 202 and 203, Feb. and Mar. 2006) and subsequently – under the title “Poesia ultima” – in Carla Subrizi, Marco Giovenale, Ilaria Gianni, Francesco Ventrella, eds., *L'esperienza-divenire delle arti*, Fondazione Baruchello, Rome 2006.

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