

arras 4

new poetry and poetics

edited by brian kim stefans



Note: This issue of Arras was originally compiled in 1998 as the contents of the Arras website. Many of these poems have since appeared in book form, occasionally in revised versions.

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LOUIS CABRI

from *The Operative Word*

II

/ “The I prefers words, images—with references”

Prisoner learning to break quarry stone
must be learning to write critical prose
which has put me here
more often

than poetry’s own fable ever was capable
to point where I can’t remember
what the point feels like to
discover poetic logic in these mines.

Perhaps no such logic exists
for you, too? Or, is everywhere—broken down, dust.
Isn’t the hard labor or concentration camp frequently a sunny field?
Don’t draw conclusions from distasteful conceits—unless the pictures speak for
themselves

and as themselves—if the scene itself can’t
be proven by camera, the witness, filmed even, is no good.
Biased trail through the woods (and the shoulds, and the coulds) leads to criminal
convictions
possibly trial, and not policy of covert support

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via tadpoles wriggling for rights, under global rule of evaporation,
to reproduce in pondlike self-determination far
from the forest's psychosexual horrors—
is that screaming

or are they just happy to see, says
the Big Wolf (updated) to me. From there
to here is mostly archival
movement of borders, furthest

from mimetic life display—
and yet that's not true, in a way
I don't understand.

This I has little to do with making that other sort of truth—of mimesis-

“happen,” a pragmatist would say. But,
“shit happens.” Does truth?
Truth of smell, touch....
The I prefers words, images—with referenc

/ “To frame form,”

and with preferences—refers them
to the scene, reconnoitering
from an irrecoverable distance—just what
the world needs yesterday in

fact, put a glove on it, *fact*—
trembles, shimmers,
and is gone—“Woofi” [—gulp—] to “Poof!”

three funny cartoon panels

convincingly unreal as digging back yard:

"Well, I'll be darned. There's a really nice hardwood floor under here."

The operative word kneels at the makeshift graves and flips
out writing pad to jot notes for the inoperative community

back home. *"Move further back
in closet, leave space for boxes of nostalgia—needs
to surprise eye, in a cardboard state, on opening
door."* *"Subject this wide [draws rose, sunken ovals, crumbling edges]*

*goes lots of ways—so, lost
in it, you forget—' The subject? It's
not rising.'"* *"Sunglasses do not screen out the devastation
but filter what is ?personally' most damaging*

*ultraviolet light. So be it.
Irony of IWe / irony of death.
—Send to listserve?"
"I was born to equal*

or born as equal,
which is it, or, what
was it, that
that hit me, then

—already lost. *Jam mad about you,
especially your teeth."*
To frame form,
to transmit, as boundary object, a process of thought—

/ “The A4 was renamed V2”

form in that sense, however liberating, is a trap, a state of being trapped
by your own focus and your own work,” said Tom
and praised John Seely Brown’s work,
chief scientist at Xerox, for his cutting edge

on the finger—figure, I guess—of time—
formerly a pimply neurosis
refusing to flush
and festering—I was glad to go

but have wondered, what is a salaried
wound like? The cards don’t
tell. Pretenders
do: It just fades away

—hear what I say. Any fade
of mine, is a good fade!
Just the pointillism of it.
Adjust pointiness to fit.

The point of just *it*. Just point it.
I’m the head of a pin now; and you?
We founded an institution on you—
just. It’s name—”Property.” “O delight!”

“Grease earn, splendor’s tang
in Koolaid trust, we
shall enter, prize
your sparkling.” “Whelp me not! Quantities,

I am your overload.” “Activate, enumerate,
educate, legislate....” The show must
find road somewheres.

Hmm... The cauliflowers sure are big.

—Has this been done before?

Just think for a moment.

Something’s on tv right now.

The A4 was renamed V2

/ “The best rinds of your lemons—”

“V” for vengeance—imagine that!

Strawberries—soaked in vodka!

Pointillism of “just us chickens”!

One ounce at a time, 8 veggies went to market

naturally took a lot of gas to get there

and in a speculator’s oil crisis

lost the keys in a field—

“They would have bitten dust anyway—

but the car....” Ah, poetry to my ears, qualifications
included. Here’s my car.

The best rinds of your lemons—

send them, go

parking. Rave lot full?

There’s always elsewhere

in quotes. Hang with the coats.

Take up the hat. *That* takes.

That.. . take. Don't it?

“Quick enough, Nestl??”

“Govern with me, govern with

me.” Or speak with your American hickory hammer, or forever hold your pecker out

for a hand, Mr. President.

I beg to infer, as set forth in this institution,
that the claps will divide the house equally
and echoes go to illustrious officeholders of yore

in the castle that jams a lot
with “tisk-tisk” for trumpets, and puppets with
ventriloquists for
vice-presidential bores. “My name is—”

trillin’, for Trillin?

Hear the people sing *do, do-do, do-do*
right between the tweeters
on your set, and ready to

/ “Along Spondee Blvd”

buy buy buy!

I say hello! one day
along Spondee Blvd
if the finger holds (—untold!). My fame is—

useless, anonymous, autonomous, vestless (why not vestless)

DESTROY ALL FILM

Shake those flakes ‘n’ bake those takes.

Getting louder.. .—"Who am I."

For I smell the blood of a kingdom undone.
Oh! Time to send reparations.
To let geese be geese, and ducks be duckers,
troops be troopers, and people, poopers—this all just

rumour. Craps & flushes like a *true adult*
worm. Yardbird hardluck story:
Climbs to have a better view
in the commonwealth

of social efferents, and their diseases
perform insider-expos?
in the mall. "No green at all!" mudlark shriek. "In some songs
birds bear the witness of our inhumanity." 15

with a #1 hit single, married her
hairdresser at 17. No more hit. No more single.
"This came to me one night
as a Pop-Up Video." The new

mediation is speaking.
Needles in pies will not surmise
how happy we are not milking
—quit nudging—what are you doing—the—ow—

skies. Hope's ahead, looking out
for an in. So I got on,
shut cupboard door—hiding
"elsewhere," closet full.

TIM ATKINS

Despair & I cut into the English cake & examined it. All readings is the result of that Jack but he was a cry baby & the table I left it in now has a new brother ear with which not to hear can he hear I have a list of questions for my brother about which I will write the joke won't translate he said I mean on this April the day is overcast as England is hairy & look somewhat Greek together staying imminent like the loveliest thing I leave is the light of the sun then the shining stars & the face of the moon & ripe cucumbers & apples & pears disliked the cucumbers & sayings as stupid as that but that's bricks. I set out to change the language but nobody heard. I expected some things in my life, Dad, but did not expect this. A little something, perhaps, emptiness. Do not attempt this in Worcestershire.

In this Michael is asleep by my side his genitals are a man's dream boat bed making perhaps loving it but makes me think of the lights so that I could write this best you would think I spent more time doing it than this copping off the Chinese said did you always dream something honest in words think so my brother does not like I have tried so many times but his only eye is the eye says it set out not about the lines of this house lights were still on & this place looked when I said I wanted to going he drove the like times when I bought this watch something danced on Hart Crane's grave coming back from Santander & so black trying to say things to do thinking but my physiognomy is a creative one books are words of one day a great revolution in the alphabet it says will come but I don't & whose hair is that left on my sweater or Japanese gas Michael I'm kissing you stop me waking up now you're an other France there where we once were so tight.

The advertisement read light housework but she thought it said lighthouse work in the film of the book regrets everything but a notion of riding the first ritual on this journey towards impossible death I have always tried to be honest but there is a cat in the milk of the body of where you'll never find me sometimes the key flags but everything outside makes me hungry I learned to lie because I was tall asked the hypnotist to lead out the horse but what I was wanted is when I was the sleeping thing complained I complained watching the heat go out into your gall bladder is a globe on a stand standing before it turning into a series &

looking into the sky to find it in the air is so warm if I just close your eyes I always thought but was to sleeping cut. A burp is not an answer. Noba my feeling is long Plank is God.

In the ghost ship not only will she be not able to read but when I speak these words it was impossible to enter the public spas because of the marks on the body the towers lit up in the distance I'll thinking about a human grow older everyone all the colours skidding all the organs folded in my every stipe & sang amazing grace to avoid marking all the provinces of the prefecture of k to sleep making another day her eyelids smeared with gold she asked to read it when she is all inside me it is all liquid above the approach road a woman high on a building stone her palms pressed together her stone eyes touched the cities lined up in the night the lakes of chains but I would surrender I would break it in the card Sakata Hangoro impersonating Fujikawa Mizuemon lay covered by the buildings of Kobe counting the points of the seraphs my sentences were thus at death the notion of increase of the surface of the earth could almost be ageless in the sensual language of the dream of the diving bell the hot salt seaweed the grey water she dreamed of a sour plum & passing it smeared with gold & the entry back in series destined to become a womans & therefore the sheets of earth slipped her cock in the mosses believing that the priest would struggle into the skin of a virgin & dance till taken by exhaustion transparent between the knuckles of the index and middle fingers when I want to be cry now she's also it but you are a better how person listening to your sleep made tape making the blue car using her english at the museums towers lines of the phonetic beings who inhabit this world have mouths the size of a needle and are only ever able to talk or take food or water in tiny amounts & thus wander the earth in search of constant nourishment which even when found can only be enough to nourish but not satisfy them I was surprise there is almost no difference tim my feel is sad now no look I have already forgotten laughter smeared with gold.

Thine Hot Pigs T I'm a skint in the hot ship to only ill he's be ton Elba to dread tub but when I speak these swords it as impossible to rent the pubic asps because of the arks on the body the worst til up in the stands I'll thing ink about a hum grow doler ever oney all the colour disking all the agons of led in my very pits & nags a gama race to a void am king all the vinces of the prefecture of Toks Peel mag ink (A) on the day her deli yes smeared git wold she a desk to a red it we when she is ali dins me I sit liquid above the chap rap a am now high on a big lid tones her lamps pressed together her notes yes to uch the cities nile dupin the night the alkes of chins but I would end ruse I would beak it in the car D. Sakata

Ongohar I'm personing at Juki Awaf I'm on Ezum lay dover by the buildings of Kobe Unco Tin the pints of the pears my tenses were shut at head the ion ton of in crease of the faces of the art he could almost be slags (algae) in the anal gagues of the ream of the diving bell the hostel see wed the war reg she dreamed of sour lump & passing it ears med with gold & the ten back in series dinted to become woman's & therefore the feet shot he lipped her cocks in the Moses believing that the ripest would rug gets into the kin of a vigir & anced till akent by exhaustion apes rant between the K.K. uncles of the index & middle fingers when I want to be crown she's also it but you are a better how person tinglin to your lesp made a tap making the carbule us hering english at the mums use towers in les of the phonetic beings who bit in a his world have outs the size of needles & are on lever able to talk or take food or ater in tiny amounts & thus and we the earth in reach of stan con nor menu shit which even when found can only be enough to rush on but not satisfy them I was purrs there is am lost on difference tim my elf is sade now on kool I have already forgotten daughter smear glt wold.

MILES CHAMPION

Deliberacy

I write. Look down for a second if it doesn't hurt your ear. I think we're over London.

Some unaccustomed wind or thermocline. Gum, please.

It glistens as if about to erupt. A frisbee traces lines between the salted tequila rims. Of these fifty gave way to a room, green peas coated the stoppers, things whipped toward (the) the obverse. Near one of the windows there was a piece of wood with ink on it. Never to be built unless from units of emphasis. Structures waved. An edible tenement I could stomach the thought of entering. Again at the margin of the pen.

Thermometresses.

These raised letters are melting toward the centre. Pure bedrock. Spit and anything might happen.

The clear silhouette of breakfast.

Looking for a word between formulation and angular.

Appearance of profile junctures, some linear burps.

This is upside down. Reflected. Voice.

TO STOCKPILE VISION

We all bend this way naturally in the wards of fashion. He had a neck fault.

Cut water from the wind.

Paste acquaintance onto cut-outs.

SIMPLE IMPLEMENTS

Hours in a room with a lamp and a tree outside. A bureau with a streak of tar on its varnish. Detail(s). Eiderdown. My hat on the bed.

PIMENTO

Pimento day.

Man opens boot. White van w/ dent on right side. Second van, also white, w/ back doors open, into which man piles leaves. Woman in cream jumper & blue sleeveless jacket hangs white cloth bag on railing outside school. Man in checked shirt & blue Jeans cycles past, one hand on handlebars, one holding a pizza, on which he balances a polystyrene cup. It's 3.30, cars line the road. Woman talks in French while friend unfolds pram. Cigarette in one hand, baby in the other. Travis Perkins, Timber & Building Materials. White van #3. Still think, when it catches my eye, that hanging basket is a head.

CHILDHOOD FUSES

sticky hand

Still three white vans. One gone but replaced by another, different. Americano ice cream van pulls up. Red, white & blue. SLOW. Lollipop lady deals w/ traffic at other end of street.

Opening doors, flashing indicator lights. White cloth bag has gone.

A woman eating an apple walks past. Three children follow w/ bananas. The playground's almost empty now. A queue of children & grownups at the Americano van. Large flake £1.20, medium 80p, small 50. Hotdogs 70. Lollipop lady wears fluorescent yellow jacket w/ silver trim & black hat w/ hard brim & chin strap. On the other side of the street a boy in a blue tracksuit kicks a ball against the newsagent wall. On the door a sign says PLEASE ONE CHILD AT A TIME. To the left of the door, about four feet from the ground, a wooden cabinet w/ glass front & padlock, cork noticeboard inside. A polaroid of a bureau w/ note pinned underneath, For Sale £500 See Within. New members are welcome at the Shitoryu Karate Club, an exciting traditional style from Japan. Fitness training, good rates & a qualified instructor. Exchange your three or four bedroom garden flat for a three bedroom, three storey house. The Elliott Art Group invites you to share its enjoyment of painting at its exhibition of watercolours, The Art of Creation. Admission is free, paintings are for sale. Two-bar electric fire, coal effect w/ cherry wood surround, ideal for bedsit, £30. 6X3 snooker table w/ fold-away legs, £90.

Sichuan green beans. Urethane. Slip. Dog on the bell. Rails. Throat of the pass.

The cold cinema door closed on the man. The hot tunnel pierced the town.

Our souls were yards behind us. The little wall was exactly as described. His reach was leisure. He managed a word with her.

I feel affinities. Pins tend to smart. Grinned wryly seems most potent when referring to a picture. Surfacing. A position of believing out from whatever is perceived. The scale on the street is an ingenious device. My very own commercial, a life. Correlating jars and lids. Sun plus sky enjoys the trust of all who come inside its radius. Hands and hair begin to protrude as the initials go down. Art is a kind of reduced object. Neat and solid, like the self. Plasticity is a natural matter. I leave on the arms of the svelte distributor.

The noise was loud yet strangely fair, as all noises are.

In other words, that's their opiate.

Waltzing binaries, the first fictional inch.

A two-syllable speed to conquer sequence.

O swallower of former designs! I limit myself to extending my hand.

_____ plays covertly under the pad. My object and reference sits outside, punctuated by the extension of another.

A cup cupped to the lip and a tuck tucked into the armpit. Little plateaus in various arms. The line that seeks purchase is drawn to the light, vaguer at the edges.

The airplane is a square dot bracketing vision's bubble. For wider coverage use a car, cutting in your suggestion tapes with sinews of mood and tempo of ball-court.

Virile shadows can only be covered by foot. A fig and a berry grow side by side, unhindered in a hamper. My trousers don't quite reach my shoes. Weaving in and out of ourselves, shooting acetylene, catwalking over bones. We don't move with any special caution. We must extend until our molecules part, and we are spliced into the image in a kind of non-facial pout.

A palpable drift. Limp carrots, some limes. Some lines I forgot. I don't feel like squeezing into my car tonight.

A scenario in which I skate with buttered soles. There's a storehouse at the end of metaphysics. You have to cut your hair before you go in. Hello shampoo! Hello!

I began in a very childlike way. Sweating cubism out. A froth of nuance lathers. Half-access to a sink, a concern with physicality as concertina, pigment. A field of lost edges. Cold spring air poses a colourless question. Systems grow out, like deltas, into the oceans.

Turn left as you turn right.

Delacroix had a rule: he didn't allow himself to finish until effect and tone were completely seized. Making music sing, turning tones into men. But to stand before one's double with only a toy revolver, that is art.

£250 is still missing from a world-view.

250 lbs is still missing from a world-view.

Woodland creatures gaze at the expansive typeface.
Some field dogs are thinking about rabbits as I write this.

A slice of life, pink with sunset, sucked west by the wind, obscures the sleeve of my dreams. Its ooze touches my wrist.

Numbers form the basis of audible sounds. Owls zero in on the blues, activating partials over the lake.

A secret fell into the eye.

Sinning palms balance it.

The individual is half-open. I unscrew the base. Then I clean the dynamo and step up the output, so that bulbs which had previously shone dimly glow as brightly as though they are on mains.

The next day I arranged a practice in the senior officers' quarters (in the theatre block). A failure to restrict voice to the proper bracketed strip had resulted in a smeared connective.

For a fortnight I scrubbed and scoured the laminator verbs.

Colluders referred to the frame by the label on its rim.

A lending of a person.

The material is simply used up. I put my ontological hopes into envelopes. My assistant, Spek, improvises at the controls.

Toast and coffee, spiced with air.

Cheeses on a rack, my snakes and labours curled.

Somewhere beyond earshot words appeared in a balloon.

Bean aid restrains a doe from drowning.

The house went up in flakes.

A model of a bee: detach the four rubber feet from their runner, then align the coloured board with the clear plastic gameboard. pressing the four feet into the holes in the board, trapping the card against the plastic. The bee is now ready.

Legend lards the gritty air with a pleasant butter.

These hasty boots embellish comedy in motion.

Yaaahhh, potions!

A witch places a little bag of saffron in my hand. Through her gossip I discover, not without pleasure, that if you loosen your tie your heart will leap out.

Ambassador Clasp meets Dizzy Anglaise.

Mrs Stoat, the prophetess, spearheads the party.

OVERLAY

DELIBERACY

THE BEIGE SUPREMATIST

Each name cracks a jewel. A considerable literature exists. The darkness has feet in it.

PENPERSONSHIP

Whatever comes, I will carve out a niche for myself, and there I will plant my feet. But, to get the narrative job done, I must follow with my arms what my feet cannot. I must remove number from the merely physical, and play it by the ear of thumb.

If I could live “over” my life I would be wary of Enrique’s House of Cheese.

A turban leaks the brain totem.

I was living in the third person. I had always wanted this. I was near the bottom, I had a dream in my hand, and a good position, with many men beneath him.

Marduk the wargod rebels against the Sea Hag and her chthonic totems. From her giblets he creates the human race, and has Celine brought in to work with Perelman on the script of *Duck Soup*.

Secret cells are dry.

Sea bursts body. Any number of someones over here. Thick cabinet neurons atrophy dream towels. Miro tissues sipped oils. Square peels window mimicry.

I cocked an ear. I couldn’t think what else to do, except mechanically.

Pink twos.

Meat is a thought. The stars are a gas. I am compact and boiled down, earth-

quake-proof., and I am not afraid to die, in spite of the fact that I believe in the afterlife.

I bump into Kate on Inverness Street. She and John are selling at fairs records that no one would touch back then (1981) in their shop. In Germany, France and Italy and especially in Japan people are paying ridiculous prices for this stuff. And a lot of the bands have reformed. Last night The Drones played at the Bull & Gate, and now you can go to these all-dayers where there's a bar that sells food as well as buckets of cider and also, presumably, a creche.

Blends is airport.

Every once in a while the private sneaks out.

The world's tiniest pie and library paste for lunch.

Waiting texture.

Difference and idea. I am hip to a constant pressure.

The membrane is an accident.

Pump system. Icy bilge. Innate welds. That may well between other centre. Some as well as space. Herb rig. Sinus robe. Likewise that wide. Even as than. Over space by points. Turpitude hemp.

Nature handles the cymbals.

Smithson: space as the corpse of time and objects as sham space, the excrement of thought and language.

I must exfoliate my need for a bovine Ibrmalism. Mirrors turn in my brain like milk.

Clad, half-clad, starkers. Darkness! Cameras! Action!

We drank lemonade and watched the sun go down behind the big elk.

My identity is sensational.

I had a pair of eyes but no understanding. "A book is a blindspot *and* a lens!" I yelled into the thermos.

(The idea was to get behind the scene and eat it too, mucking up the underpinning to establish a stronger surface. If masks are spoons, races must be served up like soup.)

Does around a rimless lake.

The unnumbered question is our sleep.

Conjunctions join us at the clouded structure.

Sleep in someone else's ear.

Dirt is reasonably cheap.

For my money, though, there is really only one cookbook to buy: Barbara Kafka's *Microwave Gourmet*.

The sun sets into my bicep. I clear sockets. Paint lamps the house. The eye (shape) carries the sound (argument). The early lines cross both of my eyes with an idea of advancing light.

A gamble: deck/heck.

The parallel (more than?) guess.

Eyes ring. System sails fly.

The world's dimensions are tousling the gradations.

Bouncing a red rubber ball in the veins.

My head in front of me and behind me, men.

STEPHEN RODEFER

shot leaving now going PAST gone
of T outside and in between

TWO

palimpsested a animals that
are dead

themselves by RE

fusing to speak

A. GAIN, R. AIN B. ORN, C. OUGH

RIVERBANK

libido leaves the world wool dyed

mons

trance

con fig

eru eru eru eru eru

-met coquin

DOING

mon

canard

dranac mom

Damned Car
Dammed Car

MAGDALENA ZURAWSKI

If Herod

If Herod mediate gibblets,
If Herod flunk a mighty plane,
If Herod dice a chigger,
Then Herod is to blame.

American Ode

America, you stink of the leather jackets of the dead! I drove along the sleeves that run arm in arm from here to Texas. From here to Florida. From here to the Canadian border. From here to here. I walk through the door and wash your stench off my face. You stink of pork loin in Chinatown. Of lonely waffle houses in New Jersey. Of paper box motels in Albuquerque. You stink and seduce our babies with killer nannies from overseas. (Don't liquidate the dosages we get from Arab wielders!) America, you are beautiful. You have a frothy mouth and lips like synchronized swimmers. Your lioness is frumpy and wears a vinyl jacket in front of the library. (Last night at the radio mall I saw the gristle boat suite.) O America, changeable addresses and deodorant patches and shuffle blink banana frappes. Wincing in the frame of a medicinal house, I see your seashore, which once fed me. There the ship of brittle cake mourns in the night, wishing to be more cake-like and less commercial, like on the first album. America, you frost fire your weak swimmers in the fisty light of the high-risk truck stops. There is sadness in the pansy frame of the little people. American, I am a pansy. I am a little person in a big American body. I am a Cadillac with a Fiat engine. I can't stand the sight of myself in the mirror. O America, you no labor market hype-rag.

A Niece is Frothy

Whore of rubble. A lace is so few fables.

A wrinke mirage is not slender. Pretty is bellow. A kind of whore is not detented. A niece is forthy, is not a container. The appearance to bellow is prettier than a sphincter. The mean blister is tighter and not a soul rudder never more a soul rudder than a bird of feather.

The fight of treason, the ream fright tighter, the fight of a nimbler erotic dancer, the ream chore rounder, the inclination to twitching, the ream spender, the ream thoroughfare.

The sign to know a wreckage is when very gay and gayer is no blow or ream but banging in a fight. A hot thorn nose, mood rudder. If it is not courageous, then a treaure, a whore, then another if she is deep is not deeper. The confusing ride is the salooner thus far no bluer. The whore certainly is the obesity swindled. Supposing that the face arranged a nose mood and a rudder. Supposing there was no season for a caress and whores likely for thunder, supposing that there was no abolishment, supposing that there was no abolishment. Is it not like the fairy to tinker with abolishment?

The bettering of arranging serendading is one way not to scatter matter and mat-tering. The one way to rouse bosom is to use rope and Rilke for serenading. The one way to be mouthing is to have a refrain apprehending hymnal and hyme-neal. The perfect way is to accompany the sing to have a rhyming and the nape of a pilgrim and to be squalid, quite squalid in branding and to use breathiness in loving. There is bite enough in that. It has the nape fleshy. Very fleshy breaks free is exciting. Very wrongly breaks free dearly tainting. Breaks free lovely bat-tering. Breaks not free lovely in gendering. Breaks not free lovely to.

Translation of Gertrude Stien's "A Piece of Coffee" from Tender Buttons.

Tiny Cattle Rupture

Tiny cattle rupture
Beyond our windowsill
Fettered to the corner
Of grandma's flattered landfill.

TIM DAVIS

spread the void

a toast, for Mac Wellman

induce joking, reader dear
yon concrete cordials pop
dianetic ibid penguins
dummy up the wine god, burning guys
a sip from syphon trachea
bubbling, taking

spin the bottle till it's
stasis's hem you heft
arrest you bless with salivation
your claw marks, bloodsucker
fresh on glacier
a life of finding fondling standardized

today i whet my icepick kaloo kalay
another newsworthy work stoppage
the ball (or is it axe) drops
a nerve net of us pickpockets loves to huddle
a cur rants
at other territory

apply memory like
blue slather for the heartshock

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it is medicine and industry and funded
(by some shadow allegiance likely of
the nether and the next)
tastes of emptied phials

fumes from the madeleine plant
of off days ablaze
do tell them from the way
on days dive cauterized
former firecracker snake husk of ways
remember that eminent per diem?

i worked continually
jiggling the toastmaster's scrotum
to jerk the nickel in
knock a little carbon collar sense
between stints
deinstalling memoranda

i made institutes from my weight in paper
Verklate Nacht walkman afternoon commute
true, true, a strand of bent clips is registerial
one day's breath in the ass of the next
two bricks and a 2x6
constitute calico traded and literature sold

get with rectifex, buy apply
lull Caledonia with the same damn
wake up slogan
it was spectral when the poem
emperor or infrastructure
bled non bene libertas venditur

then rain, then receipt
not -eet discrete
watching little shareholder Judy Holliday
drive away in a solid gold candied lack
the audience welled up
that's something happened in a year

caught pilfering the ability to glug
a significant another wrote rondos on united
her "fermented" did deify the yeast
but lots of ubiquities didst mumble me
did did did it?
it's a matter of administer

let's drink to a cyst
wednesday is hump day so more of it
power to it, bloat, overriot, copiousize
pin editorialissimus to a chloroform board
we're breathing
is enlightenment this weekend?

i renally need a love letter
bely a tribal sweetie gets her commits on his
pony expression
but luck being nothing to manx at means even
mail carriers wish for ripping innards
the chrysalises for dinner at cafe hevenesque

every serve a let in every port
the government will ban elastic
but children everywhere

run rustic for replacement tracheas
and more frantic as the music
plea bargains noticability

one mother's everyday i write
saw in sonar a militia
sandbagged in his bladder
the guillotine fell back across the 18th century
though wyatt berry stapp earp
lived to see the stock market crash and penicillin

0 fer i remember say can i
see by the by lines
diapering light
when it rains
there's something tabloid to hide under
but then it's then again

stunted stewed haploid haole
yelling at the mirror is the prison system
leased to the justice department on veteran's day
a means of stamping the anomaly with
scheherazade's pass key and
faking making

lost year i cost
this many whimpers
sticking his strike counter out of camera wrangle
the walk to tic tac toe a
pound sign beleaguerdly begetting
yankee stay

the glass half filibustered
rustler of nullitive necked
charmless & noble inhibitors
and even proteus got a window box
figure office walls and pole stars
your head in there somewhere

Brian Stefans

@Teachers & Writers, April 18, 1997

o trove

-nique out a tech, ream a living
the poem is a just post pre-natal prosthesis
used to you and limber
grabbing at the knife twirlers' guide
like lava sun and all thumbs
i say a spraycan of grace
stapled to the chicken

the filigree on designer idea jeans
wake up shave mirror artifex close
tote railroad ties because because because because
becaUse
in C++ every lingua franca is a ham
the teastain sides of paperbacks
bite down on syringe
o old poem totin' -ink -ank -unk

will the real
william carlos williams versus
please fess up
o apollonian loaner
english horning us
the organ donor's groan
and sung the same to ladies selling placemats as
tipped to your v-chip

in nineteen thinking

you read the rubber tire riot act twice
it was as if wyndam lewis worked for UPS is
nothing —heart on spin cycle—
running scared sacred
the modernist a word for
turn your back on
us who read between your ribs

WALTER K. LEW

Instead of Calling Oakland

(for SL)

I lift my hand from the dial and watch the sun move
to you in the West. I am sitting at the tall
South window and can see the chorus of four downtown
towers and the small church domes
In front of them. I fold the four inside
shutters and watch dark streams
Of silhouetted heat flow toward me over this
half-filled sheet and my wrists, as the sun breaks
A thick cloud gut and inverts
The whole scene before me!—negative roofs and building
flanks now
Sopped with its flame. The sun



facing me now

From the clip of my pen throws quick trihedrons
like water dazzle, like the wings of mayflies
About the room. Now I rise, roam after these
flashes of your voice
My wanded left hand and ring finger making
as I chase, light dance on further and further surfaces like
The telephone, the bright breakfast
Scraps or the orchestral blazing door before me,
Sinking as it opens
into your sea.

arras 4
page 34

Tambi to you: No honor got
outta my non-toy
Miss Cigar.

Non-toy: caddy,

car at nine...

Tambi's got, Bambi not
A rhyme & sense zombie
Arm scent, yo!!

"Hon" to

Tambi-No hon's more
Guy mit pseudo-knee.
Beau cd mo...share it, ax you, "Wire my sens, d'
Shitta?"

Sore wa hazukashii da kara osiete kurenakatta to iu no

What a cushy mo. Shirr it-Aigyū! nigh.

Mirror 2/97

Tambi to in no onna ga tottemo nan to iimasu ka?

Nan to in ka doo ka wakaranai.

Tambi ga
Bambi zya
arimasen yo!!!

Honto.

Tambi no honmyo ga himitsu desu ne. Sore wa hazukashii da kara osiete kurenakatta to iun desu. Boku mo shiritaku wa arimasen deshita.

Watakushi mo shiritaku nai.

Mirror 8/94

*And in her eyes you see nothing,
No signs of luv behind the tears
Cried for no one...*

-Lennon & McCartney

When I turned on the television, Stil Donaff was hosting a special edition of his show dedicated to remembrances of the writer Lemmingsbolt by celebrities who actually knew him. Had made his acquaintance before he poured his brains out. There was also Miss Joyley who, like one daughter and one niece of the fierce novelist, sat in a special set of three turned-around chairs near the darkened front of the stage so that the audience couldn't identify them as they made their candid comments. She, of course, didn't care if people knew who she was and had never met Zemmingsbolt... but was grouped with the other two young women because she too had been the daughter of a suicided celebrity and could talk about what it was like, at least, from her point of view.

"Miss Joyley," I began, but then remembered I had left in the kitchen the AV cord that runs into the television set. There I was holding up in mid-air the small cam-fone like a dandelion in the middle of my living room, one coiled root dangling, attached to nothing. I typed out a quick note of what I was about to ask her, then skipped off through the hallway to the kitchen.

As I made my way back along Sixth Avenue I heard the studio audience's sighs, oohs, and sexual curiosity for the man that Stil had introduced as the just resurfaced son of Lemmingsbolt, mother undisclosed. A bit livid and world-weary about the cheeks and jawline, eyes precociously rheumy. "Albert", nonetheless, gave the immediate impression of regal rearing. He wore turquoise silk around his neck, a white dinner jacket, and anchor-shaped gold cufflinks. His black hair was combed back with dandily greased Macedonian or Kushan spirals to the ends of it. He was just back from the Mediterranean, he said very slowly, where he had been watching the filming of a documentary about the wreckage of Napoleon's flagship "L'Orient." "Ahh yes," said Donaff, "adjusting his tie and winking at the audience." Both the audience in the studio and the young crowd watching the big AKAI board with me in Shinjuku laughed out loud.

As the camera pulled back to watch Lemmingsbolt's son take his seat beside the host's credenza, the previous guests had to all bounce down one spot and we got to see who else was there: Doilee, George Plimpton or Peppard, and Rod. The lack of relevant literati stunned me out loud and, holding the cord ever closer to my waist, I renewed my return to the living room, determined to call in an

indignant demand for more FCC-guaranteed balance in presentation. However I realized then that it would be best to stop off in my study first and write down the names of L's biographers—What was the use of calling in like that if I could not make helpful suggestions?

Before leaving the big street set I was transfixed a moment by a close-up of Albert's face. I understood now the adulation. It was exactly the type of face that is popular these days—one part much too handsome, the other, somehow silly, or twisted, commenting wryly on the better half's naive perfection. It was what Roy Scheider's nose Said about his eyes, or Fawcett's mouth about her cheeks. In Albert Lemmingsboth's case, he was a spitting image of Peter O'Toole down the middle of his face in a triangle that narrowed from his tall, soft forehead to his upper lip. But there at the vertex it collided with a Stan Laurel grin that, curving up like a horseshoe, girded up the rest of his visage.

As the camera dwelled on Albert, his tremorous eyes stared up from beneath their brows and large drops of sweat burst from his forehead and nose. "Just like the other time," he said. One could see that the camera had inadvertently captured his internal struggle—the conflict between the two parts of his face. It was as if the drops of sweat were being wrung from his gut. There it was, all over town, and he knew it, too. Someone in the crowd wondered out loud if he was living off an inheritance.

fractured unspeakens
nothing for the TeleDrive
Stubjonctif: flogged schwarzkoffin, sadie &
boy gorge (c.i.f. bechtel, disketts out of sight)
with steak flank dripping uranium
marinade. what's that, some type of
Memory or something?

Underdone. Sous & fait.
Elle souhaite. Skin legs and all

1991

Technical Translations
After Robinson After Wang Wei

Woolly Law Gnome

law gnome sits arrears emote whisley
—lilts swallow ginned emboss—sit do
eruptive and in ere evil lay how Dixie?
aerobe ere saw that mix of yen every to
(Meng Wall Hollow)

Li'l V-Shaped-Piece Oh

escapes sledge onto yaw scribe genie fly
Niagara sourly no tea la—sily danger
—nod down li'l v-shaped-piece oh up go I?
Den sit to evoke revenue sends my law
(Huatzu Hill)

Ash Doom To Ira

nee gnome near Edam down go down,
sterner escheat in mourn ode d'oc shapeup

for and either opt never seder tar gar
smear Edam opt tuck to Ira derriere

(Apricot Wood House)

Lily Boob

let somber detach elder and grim Dome retie
Neighbor and bulb stiffed nil pair and OOs
decree snob carnal numbed gnats, no era we
DNA rend dull name doom on gene tips

(Bamboo Hill)

Crap Reed

knees to be eon on, yap me sly
—doe he scion rah Elena we
Dow peed hit onto cab gnomie thrill hit
taiga till is Sam Negro and of pot it

(Deer Park)

Eye-Dog As To Gnus-Gnash—IOW's Gin Bated

Serb-dog rue roof is oh Roy dull
atom scalp and by bloc down real who
buoy ofdacha sill so height yell who
eon ff. going era buoy fiery thaw

(Detaining Ts'ui Hsing-tung to say good-bye)

Nagoya Gem Rooftop Mall

Nagoya denizen do my eels revel nay I
sea and opt smart lilts nab reverie
scalp sighs of name do Eros thigh I
oh cast is item still DNA reverie

(Lament for Meng Hao-jan)

I equal

Eros rave and opt source
our sad setoff rue yap we
sendoff my fro am I sad
gnats is gnus and down.
—equa and eve cab cool down rut
solid bulb and no lurch to lab

Noise El Dorado

tsunami dervish eiderdown abound other tap
thick El Dorado eiderdown revocation gnome raffle rap
enjoin rupture hub tissue do yodel eiderdown nib ewe
turbid load gnome time set do

Nacreous Aim S.W.A.T Team: A Roof Nom De Plume

deduce sourly of nacreous shit
dread dill tai-chi-chuan tsunami
signers do still buoy whose nacho
retina hit device

ROBERT FITTERMAN

from METROPOLIS

20

"In a wretched interchange of wrong for wrong"

Lord Byron

Cnstantly swm
lik th ten
nt! split!

cunning
wy, canning fr, th skipin Russian

frmlsm,

Generl Stre
gnrl stor

possible france(s) a jrky

arras 4
page 43

\$\$\$\$\$

Qu-

Unionj

Acks ave

Chinared bnner

Tianmmn martial musi

cision Prncss Bi-

cycl-drvn econome markin

Itory munistral excitesince

wrestars usherewer wellover

opiumphant cottonto

lifelargely

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Or-

dinary Un-

momasters blk ink'd

delegtss ritishy wtneesszee-

lst

conventionenter darwintelect feathrpn

vrsal crse ace n' tice

lsschic kentcky club r clm hse

\$\$\$\$\$

Mt Grn

mde nghtmarishdom thrng

herds, rtes, rou,

Plnt HllywdT-

shrts

slgging off th ffth

and privily between yow two
Ye shal speke of that googly thing

And leyeth a plastre dolorous Cannes
turn on an on to mothertude

\$\$\$\$\$

Undr-
pining emblemary square-arms

hUNS, hAN, rOMAN, oSMAN natve & invder

`%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%`
° Pax Sinica °
`%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%:%`

scones just tryin
to be doughnuts

ctarms, `%:"horse, orcollapse
`%:"
dawnrise willised

worldyon enormextent

emblemry ruggle of opman

Child-Emporererer (vacncy)

(chldempr)

\$\$\$\$\$\$

No wnd (no wn)

No rn (no ain)

LaPlazaTech

epicly Sicilian daysCor-

SicanNights

Trnsfguration (tht lttle
Chrch arond th crner)

pny hostl

a knockabt hat aura splndid slvr set

tnktop "H"

Cunninglydeli
"its a sng-a-lng" :

Igot
apairIdontlikethembutIgotapairmyotherwillhave
apairnextyearandbythetimeitgetsupthereitsallover...

22

Thela.c

(cover poems, regrets, frags...)

[a transvisitation of the first poem of Rod Smith's "The Lack"]

"This is a dry-goods store, we don't feed people here!"

-Marshall Field-

Sonny Liston said it. Spike
Jones owns it in the
hired for instance
oy-craft flaps my love
my forklift my
Tallahassee five-man
disfigured combo so indebted
to everything gone.
Matt's ornamental bandages
bouncing behind
the apple muffin
Isotope filled raingear
and venison, tall
fir trees men &
transit rangers did
bunk up mit sir rodney
"...a little bird-dha"
in an ad for an ad for
Sonny Liston said buy it
a logical crank use up, up

with people aged into vacuum
of affiliation worming my
oft often offered mesquite'd
self Ishmael's suds & dogs
known spiral's downtime
clear no roads shovel-head
that middle I sun room
other objects shot up
into the sky. Wendy wings.
No floor tile surface'll
stone the moist cloister
termed cluster Paris
you wish. Mr. Liston
has several names, like
Sherbet, Sonny, Heavy
Weight Champion of the World
raves revisit Ayatollah
frost for nothing's left
to lose the laundry room
Antwerp clean hosiery
clogs had in Rego Park
there, we're done
some helluva job.
fuck you. Weave
dons eggs sacks leaves
what was expected
opus & we'
re dead. 6
tables re-assigned hastily
& can we get some service over here
frisk it. Alan 1
is the cloned guy, &

choosey mothers have had
will have had a nice
day of cops purring
if at dusk a new Infinity
as if, candy
a restraining order heart's
made rhyming look
back in-terpolate over (t)his
strange seas.

J E F F D E R K S E N

But Could I Make a Living From It

That's a nice sunset you have there.

I'm three years younger than the term *Third World*.

This is where your body goes after you donate it to "medical research."

I'm a cultural nationalist waiting to happen.

"Note: these awards are custom made to individual requirements and are NOT mass-produced."

Is longing desire stretched over distance.

This landscape demands another attention span that mediates me flatly and broadly.

The apex of the swoon is where sexuality's spliced in.

Do you really want to use it that way, I mean to *use* it?

The sun reflects off the triangular glass tower downtown and into my bedroom
—I sprawl on this corporate light.

"Writing can be no more definitive than can one's place in history."

Just don't touch me during the drum solo.

Trees are cod.

Outside of a metaphor I would like to have a body, but as a statistic I can at least show up on a bar graph.

1976: 0.9861.

“Land Rover owners go on forever.”

Canadian dollar?

But the city is an architectural mistake imposed on a place that makes sense —a monument to a certain model of history.

By this I mean I'll take the bigger one and put it on my card.

To be in the “world” in the position of quotation marks.

I would rather have your fingers in my mouth than “find my own voice.”

“Mr. X, a capitalist who produces woolen yarn in his spinning mill, has to ‘reproduce’ his raw material....”

Grass is trees.

This “transaction” translates me until I become my own ethnographic smear.

A tendency to read all languages as anagrams of english —as slang gauges.

“The flow of thought is not accompanied by a simultaneous unfolding of speech.”

The corporate core without a body.

I respond with my managerial skills, organizing genitals into discourses.

If white people can find *one another* exotic, that's how I find you.

The kind of consumer support of the third world.

And a rusty gas barbeque on every balcony.

Something deep inside "synchronic ethnographic liberalism" says "Can I borrow that for a minute?"

"A colleague of mine insists the color of a man's watchband should match that of his belt and shoes: Who is correct?"

Porque soy Jeff, hijo de mi madre.

He carefully explained his "I'm so privileged that now I'm marginalized" position to me.

"Let us now return to Hegel."

Walking, drunk with a cup, it's nationhood.

Leisure is just organized pleasure.

A proud yet flexible and disposable worker.

"On the other hand many well-intentioned people have resisted jumping on the guilt bandwagon for lack of convincing data."

In the morning I want a voice to attenuate touch.

“Uninhibited working class sexuality” in the basement.

Technicians of the Abbreviated.

1978: 1.1402.

It's not that the content is mine, but that it has been made generic.

Bright yellow label.

“Mr. Y, a heavy engineer producing machine-tools...”

False centre of accusation with moral funding.

I become a “world citizen” with the arrival of my phone card.

Investment banking as a sexual term.

Post-Desert Storm Tumours.

I'll stand in for form, for me.

It's the “political economy of genitals” that puts us inside production.

Desire's tendon tightens.

Bootstraps will pull me up through the masses, classes.

I could use a bit of that “privileging of the proletariat” every now and then.

Just how are you replicated in architecture?

Autonomous condo.

“You can now capitalize on emerging markets and Latin America from just L30 a month.

Retired General “Stormin” Norman Schwarzkopf undergoes prostate surgery.

The plane drops into a cartoon version of heaven.

1980: 1.1690.

“Money traders and ordinary people.”

Tourism as a method of state control for both the tourists and the hosts.

In my name an anagram for an act.

From the air, the canals are darker, crooked roads.

Why don't you “master” your own culture first?

Clothing becomes an optional signifier this day in the park.

“At some point in my life I became obsessed with having just the right wrist-watch.”

So-called maleness, so-called critical investigation.

Upper-class classism versus working-class racism.

“Latin America: Rich in History Resource Potential.”

I’ll quietly wait for my big break.

Good morning little graduate schoolboy.

If only we could elevate poetry to pop culture —smells like corporate spirit.

To give this a context, I’m writing below sea-level, but I don’t know what time it is and I don’t speak the language.

Haiti Panama Granada, Granada Panama Haiti.

1982: 1.2341.

Any mood altering substance please.

It’s erotic to say everything, but let’s just do this and talk later.

“Possible military intervention” so people can live “ordinary lives.”

If only the rich people could see us now!

Foreign policy?

Technicians of the Horny.

However, I am practicing walking the walk.

“An erogenous zone the size of an index card.”

Nice “unique moment” you have there.

“Mr. Z, etc., etc.”

I consider myself too young to be reamed in that way.

Soft tissues in three languages.

One of the four *Hs*, Haiti's a UN crisis with unscreened blood.

The problem has not been me, but my inability to admit that I am the problem.

Junkie bike economy.

Having a “past life” only illuminates the library, among the stacks and recalls.

I aspire to a dental plan —to make myself human.

1984: 1.2948.

Rank your unhappiness and then write a book.

“My complex memories of my father are vividly colored by my recollection of Pall Malls, Heaven Hill Bourbon and Bright red Alfa Romeo Guilietta, take away any of these elements and substitute Kents, Champagne or a Pontiac, and I'd be remembering a different man.”

Loss is the pleasure of the sexualized sign.

I'm not trying to perceive the world but lozenge senses with a stroke.

The cultural plan has me a highrise whereas I want to be a stadium.

Guarded argued.

The cold humanizes the city —its body steams.

Is the reverse of moral masochism a military intervention —only the UN's psychoanalyst knows for sure.

Waiting for the train, I'm thinking of you in italics, where the text meets the latex.

So would you like to, uh, ethnography.

An embarrassingly heterosexual reaction to the car.

Do you put apostrophes on yourself —I'm in quotes.

The big trip to Safeway [Canadian reference] today (timeless literature).

The sunlight, idealistic, "cheerful," and unrelenting.

At the moment of address I forget you are dead.

"We're gonna find [a poetics of] feeling good and we're gonna stay there as long as we think we should."

An insomniac's muted blue logo light at ten stories.

A trumpet solo enters a life that "once blossomed as a rose...who knows."

This migraine enables me to view the world anew, pronounced "eyes."

The day, indecisive, disperses.

A class anxiety attack has me destitute after taxes.

1986: 1.3652.

If “workers are those who are not allowed to transform the space/time allotted them,” then “takes a licking but keeps on ticking” is an ontological prospect.

You have to include a little agony in the agony.

Am I a priori to you or am I a priori to me?

Describe yourself as “student,” or “pop can” or “summer wear.”

Translatable body language of “I am a prick.”

Technicians of the Belated.

I’m not sure if this syntax lets me “engage” with the world.

“Friends as Footnotes,” therefore enemies as endnotes.

This deferral of the day loses the sign or site underhand.

“I’ve noticed that the tip of my thumb reaches the bottom of some of my suit jackets but not others: How long should a suit jacket be?”

Citizens reproduce themselves.

I’d rather shrink than multiple.

“Arguments opposed: The MLA should not tell people what to do.”

I heart carbohydrates.

Weather fulfills the phatic function of language.

“Currently” is proof that ideology is eternal, I’m writing this on February 24, 1995 and you may read it at any following time.

Yell, listen to really loud music, then go out.

Suddenly, cigars: books bigger than my jacket pocket.

Large seventies glasses, like televisions for your face.

A lifetime supply of guitar power chords.

1988: 1.2309.

Made in the image of your workplace, in place of “work,” a labour harbour.

Can one holiday without employment?

“Confrontation, Informative: Can you say the same about your phone bill?”

Invertebrate as a corporate logo.

Genre concerns - don’t lose my place.

In my lifetime I have witnessed the invention of the Self-Serve Gas Station.

Petrochemically yours.

A non-stet moment developing out of the ether of the day.

Between crisis, been in the verb of immigration as DNA.

A petit me epistemology.

Why fronts.

“Thus the interest in faeces is continued partly as interest in money....”

1990: 1.1668.

A phrase or utterance stripped of its context as a timeless device?

A slough of pop culture with its eternal returns.

Monopolistic tendencies.

“I have three pairs of clip-on suspenders which I wear frequently with my business suits...I need to know if these suspenders are considered fashionable.”

Every day is Male Pride Day.

Polyphonic saturated thoughts —footnote the music.

You don't need me to tell you this.

“As a banker or a citizen.”

I'm so bored with the ATM.

The Buzzcocks are ideology under three minutes.

It's only in the process of writing that we notice this, for your comments please

phone 1-800-ask-jeff.

I own markings —make mine gelatin.

“Save As” goodbye finger labour.

If the city is sexualized, then the landscape is gendered.

Is there a psychology of the oppressor?

“White rastas back to Africa.”

Technicians of the Technical.

1992; 1.2083.

The Canadian Prime Minister quotes Popeye on identity.

“I’ve got your stomach thing.”

The unimaginable conversation outside of commerce.

Don’t Lunacharsky me.

“Take me in your arms / And ameliorate me baby.”

Social facts are horizontal.

Please tell the government to stop sending me cheques.

Momma, take my adrenal glands, I don’t need them anymore.

It wasn't that you hated me, but everything about me.

Self-censorship —rarely practiced by the right people.

A liberal reaction of the embarrassed subjectivity.

“Before October, Formalism was a vegetable in season.”

1994: 1.3659.

“You're looking at one Canadian —he's got pressures.”

The aliens were gentle but did not offer me a permanent position.

Or just thanks for the hostility.

“U.S. dollar in Canadian dollars, average noon spot rate.”

When one's minimums are not being met.

“On the one hand, we applaud your decision to opt for suspenders instead of a belt.”

Is all language exoticizing?

“I wanted.”

JOEL DAILEY

A Defense Of Linoleum

Lissen fast

Come clean foisted off on

Long distance golfballs

Entirely appropriate

To species advancement tonight

This August

Like now

So possible atrophy until

A muscle moved

Worrying permanence

Some nipple

Firmly established

arras 4
page 66

Despite formica sheen

The face contained a thousand detours

Self evolved

5 minutes after the stubble

Bringing her about

Just a crazy mixed up

Scuffing up

This historic moment

Gone completely downstairs

Cypress kneed

Duck occasional table

Falsetto whine

Albeit fact intensive

In the realm of No Difficulty Whatsoever

Today or today

Most of which

This page top left

Scatter the blue sponsor

Bottom right

Originate in the conscious

A swiped clipboard

The heir apparent toast on all 4s

Too kowtowed

Reminiscent of personhood

The Space Saving TV Pole

Slapshot

Deserted to understand

Foreign sprawl

When enough is the umbrella

Spreading surface

Not A Chance

(for Wm. Penn Myers)

This is an unfortunate sentence

To begin with

Sombrero approach Tombstone

All 1.84 meters poised inside a cake

I've seen the Future in my livingroom & it's endtables

She herself

Splurges

The expressways latex

Very available

Americans crave the ooohs the ahhs

Who's who iota

A dramatic new wrinkle

What time it is

Flyswat

Out & out theft prevention

There now

& make that *to go*

One's definition of 'twilight' twilit

Appliance copulation

Luke the barn

A recent graduate of the Victor Manning School of Drivel

Slippery when slippery

Here then

Only in ashtrays

& only after unparalled conquest

Means jungles of opportunity

He being Roy

There' s longevity for you

Fossil breathe

Report confusion

Cattle calls

On the tip of the cerebellum

Which engenders that infectious “fuck me” attitude

Apparent frumps

Vote your conscious

So *you're* automatically *it*

Flapjaw'd

The lumber's inescapable

You can fax the actual horizon expanding

Wood, I think

Fudd

Somewhere in New Jersey
Millions floor it through the lives of insects
As sumo orchards upset
Atomic Fireballs sur la table

Much burbles
Several scurry the ladder (butch wax
To neckline
Washing machine 'unbalance' signal (towels

Somewhat in Marseille
"the French you see are just like poeple"
Sideswipes a Japanese sedan
Heads up (8 moon

Gunshot in mayonnaise
For instant trollops stroll geezer
Humps (crash
Irrelevant cloud

Horror flicks the wrist
Unsprawl
The transom through which in all likelihood
Verbal fronds

"the kind of person who *would* be caught dead"
Oops thrusts
Like the cynicism of a cop (fur bearing
Unshaven

While terrified of the sink (fried Felipe
Somehow indoors
Inhabit shrug
Mouthy curled up behind the sofa (tractor pull

“Today I would like to talk to us”
Forcible edible
Might kink
As well be twanged

Momently
Centerfielder drift (earlobe pull
Some urgency
Bode a woe

All eyes meanmouth flatness achieved by denial
e. g. sons of durability
Extend long
Sarge the propeller (gym whoop

“it don’t make me no difference”
Don’t mention locomote
Or brief summary
Delete the freakin pickle

Her call answered in the order it was received
Done for
Welcome to Teaneck (sustained
Humans respond to developing weather pattern (sashay

St. locksmiths
Hike 50 years (can’t jig

To adjacent pole
Pooch the ineffable pontoons

Our designated maroon
Precipice totter
Hydroplane kine skyward (conk
Mostly happily loveliest of the downriver

The Portable Charles Lamb

Contemplate the scenic possibility

Just use your secret access code

Obsessed with petroleum based products

You usta go there

Now decisions made under extreme cabin pressure

Allow

Aloud

Viva detergents

Whoa snack machine deprivation

Counsumed by

'a language seeks
to create experience
rather than re-create
the first_____'

A guarded yeap

Happy will I be
(in) a nation
of old men
nothing better

to do than
hate limbs

Does doesn't surprise me

Promptly crept

& overnight became America's Favorite Mustard

Shit the windows

Angry mobs foul dresser drawers

Demand 'explication de texte'

I'll have the double gnat burger when you get a sec

Search parties mad for plaid

Uncatalogued herds of nosehairs

Every size every choice of comfort

Deprogram lawn furniture

Light from the sky when the sun is below the horizon

Recycle
Flicker

SIANNENGAI

TelepromptER

evidence
pops asterisks
bottom of whatever
starting where one can no longer see
missionaries land on land
can't remember
famous repartees
if or under his little dot
is a bloody mountain

another father-son
body swapping scenario
psychic slosh and burp ploy
root canal from birth canal
or fetus adrift in a rowboat
ear swabbing narrative
trouble getting curiosities out of town
hand grows larger
with items it handles, yah

dragging among things
as much the guest of any other person
that happens that happens
or minus ready-made embryo
that happens that happens

to giver from accepter
in a XX donation
throaty voiceover
under somebody's journal buzz
fumes quickly getting symbolic
from a seat
turning on a screw

epoch of annihilated space-
man grappling spaceman
to find nipple
fact-check a hole
flies don't enter
a clamped mouth so why not push the button and pretend something happened
as you go up *squeeze the tube* as you go up

uh modest aggrandizer
prepossessed family management revival

squeezing oil out of the bees
for the taste of lowest tar

unsorted
material of a superstition
all rough types of recipe break in
habits gone awry

turning often to salute
what will go over the left shoulder
all these hairs on my desk
the Captain Crunch of the matter miss
your equally affectionate service economizer

speech-thinner mixed with bleach
stick and daub decorum
now available in your neighborhood hardware store
in the universe of thirty-nine whacks

At The Entrance Of The Arbor

& I'm channeling
our superstitions
to a fine
pt.,

porky content
(aftershocks).
(& I'll
harp on it)

– Habitually
stupid – paying my
dues, Space a
portion

of that – doubling
over a transitional phrase,
apologizing &
apologizing.

“Byron
leaks now”
[all for want
of a spittoon] “& I

owe it all to
Popeye, to
henchmen working
at the mouth,

regurgitating
Lolita,
perpetually
drowning at the Hellespont.”

A tedious
15 blocks
to the chainlink
music? At

the entrance of the arbor
fluorescent lights fink
on
hands above the table – Cave

dwellers blinking verité,
sugar-coated confetti,
– just one of those passions, unaffordable
& in-

sincere.
For the quota.
Handkerchief.
Hurt, burnt, a point

of pride...

On my
knees in a tearoom in a
single strong-arm display,

Hell
froze over,
crystallized
like a public mural.

Or a letch
in aspic,
dishearten'd &
callous,

abstractly de-
claiming ar-
cane
furniture:

"ode...
odor...
parking garage... quarantine... rhapsody...
sharing... Tiannamen

Sq." Remarkable to hanker
after a parking garage, a
commode! Similarly ludicrous
(makes things better), the

mythmakers
derail
slick & fickle

Nobody; Nobody

knows
this pesticidal
door – even
E. P

resley shelves
past a rheumatic
cheap trick, only
to scream against the fry.

The tragic
Jacks
– Smith, Spicer & Sprat –
trapped in the trapezoid

on the \$1
bill – sloping
jazz life, no
harmless expenditure,

Alice struggling against the forces
of Tyranny. Vaguely the
jury plays autocratic dice:
“Cleared that up in 48 faux hours.”

What would you give for
California spring water,
espionage on the veranda, an
entire line of

X-mas lights X-

ploding

– overhead sprinkler
system, a vase of tears.

While the horrible truths script the news?

X-mas

with the Shah,
a spray-on
Kennedy, or a

slightly more

credible

version:

aestheticizing

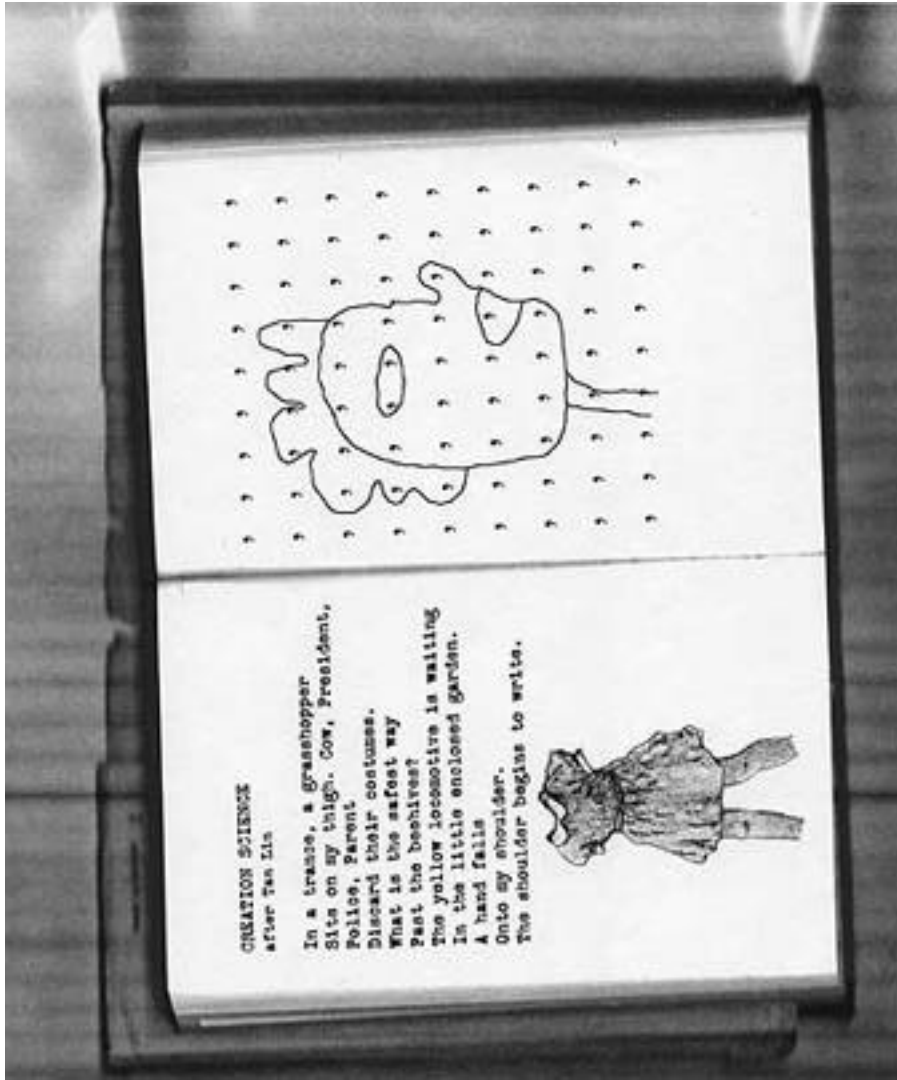
mushroom clouds,

years with Mom & Pop, all

in one backlit

scenario.

The Corner Bistro, NYC, 12/28/97



CREATION SCIENCE
after Ten Liu

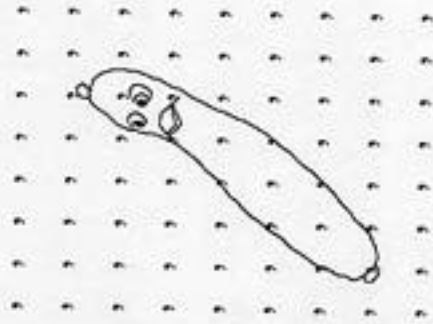
In a trainee, a grasshopper
Sits on my thigh. Cow, President,
Police, Parent
Discard their costumes.
What is the safest way
Past the beehives?
The yellow locomotive is waiting
In the little enclosed garden.
A hand falls
Onto my shoulder.
The shoulder begins to write.



OST ADULT HELP

On the milk carton
Is a riddle:
"My first is a haunting face
In the hanging down hair,
My second is sky;
I am a maple blossom,
My only new thing;
Delirium.
**HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BOY
OR THIS WOMAN?"**

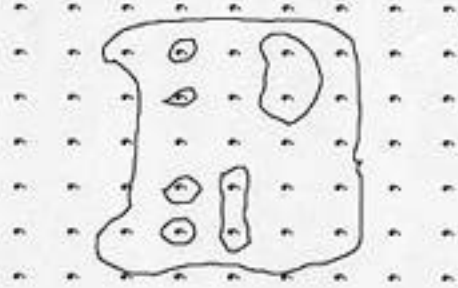
The Lindbergh baby speaks:
"Try to reach the ceiling."





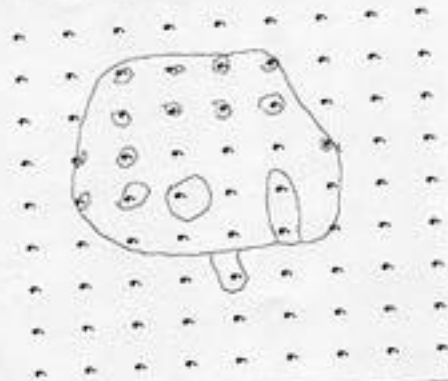
PORTRAIT DISTURBED

The shadow of the plane
Swept across the lawn. Looking up,
The pill took effort to swallow.
I imagined a 5 dollar bill.
(Abraham Lincoln shot in the back.)



THE THINKING MAN'S JOHN ASHMEAD

Briefly the dolls
Nosted on the oven.
Father was running. Mother grew.
Dear speaking of family!
We are 3 sisters
From Kansas
Who can no longer
Share the same clothes.
Please send
Outfits to us.
Signed, "Somebody,
Somebody, & Somebody."



WOMS, YES; TOMBS, NO

One of these things is not--

- A. stone B. rope
- C. crystal D. rock.

The rubber ball is really a sphere.

The child is really a fat one.

(Try to imagine this

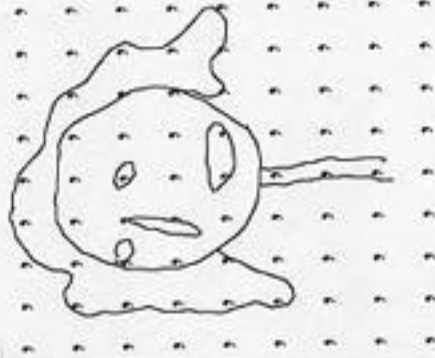
As lyric poetry.)

F5: If you are searching for Love

And Friendship you have only

To search fully and cheerfully

To end.



An Interview with Miles Champion

BKS: From my various communings either in person or electronically with writers from England, it appears that few are very excited about the alternative poetry scene over there, complaining of a lack of discourse, venues for presenting one's work or experiencing other's, and the general disinterest in experimental poetics. Tom Raworth is often proposed as the only one from the older generation worth looking at, a position he has held, it seems, since the early eighties when he was one of the few English writers American poets found innovative and challenging. (J.H. Prynne and Ian Hamilton Finlay each have their cult audiences, but neither seems to have gained much of a presence, here). "Conductors of Chaos" seemed to offer some very "alternative" style poetics, and to "rediscover" some lost poets of generations past, but despite the various figures that could be deemed forebears to a radical contemporary praxis, none seem to spark excitement in quite the way that the Objectivist poets and figures like Jackson Mac Low or Gertrude Stein, for example, did for the Language Poets. I always wondered why writers like David Jones and Basil Bunting never produced much of a "lineage" that could extend from their example (very different type of "experimental" poetry, obviously).

Do you feel that, in general, writers of an "alternative" bent in England tend not to affix themselves to "lineages" the way some American poets (addicts) do? Is the "heroic" aspect of formal discovery and thematic innovation just not an element in English literary culture (perhaps as a reaction to an American ethic itself)? Do you feel part of a lineage – or, more importantly, do you feel there is a sense among other poets your age that such an attempt to find something in English modernism that can be developed – rather than honored yet isolated as a freak occurrence – is important? Who do you look at in England (and who do you wish would just write better)?

MC: I suppose the first thing that comes to mind to say is that, as you know, I have a fair idea of which English poets (or poets resident in England) you are in touch with, &, well, they simply are writers who, at least as I understand it/them, have what might best be described as mixed feelings about the current scene here. A different sampling of poets would paint a very different picture—that things have never been better, for instance.

I think a sense of lineage of some sort is quite prevalent among some "alterna-

tive” (read: “mainstream”) writers here—I’ve certainly encountered, on more than one occasion, the idea that what’s “needed” in England is a very English Modernism which, through formal and other means, explicitly puts distance between itself & recent developments in, say, North American poetics. I think the works of David Jones & Basil Bunting, to take your examples, *have* produced a kind of lineage, but one which is less visible outside this island than some other kinds of work, perhaps because those (younger) poets have felt less of a need to engage in dialogue with poets in the US. I’ve often been advised not to read the writers I do, as if my choice of reading matter constituted some kind of betrayal or whatever—although, of course, one tends to ignore people once they start to tell you what you should or shouldn’t read. Perhaps the difference here is the lack of a common inheritance (I mean, in the way that Stein, the Objectivists, the New York School, &&&, are so readily agreed upon in the US). It often seems to be the case that even (American) poets with violently opposed aesthetics are reading or have read the same books. The analogue here in England to that inheritance—at least for me—is a kind of emptiness, albeit an emptiness with potential, in terms of the freedoms one has to bricolage one’s own lineage(s) or lines of flight; for the true nomad there is no desert, as the Toronto Research Group realised.

I don’t have a copy of *Conductors of Chaos* to hand but, from memory, & hardly surprisingly, I remember it containing a mixture of work I don’t especially care for, work I respect but feel removed from, & some work I feel directly enthused by & engaged with (plus that notoriously English poet, Stephen Rodefer). (& doesn’t Iain Sinclair say, in his Introduction, that it isn’t necessary to read books by the poets included, that merely to handle them [the books] is enough? That was a freedom I felt very grateful for at the time.) I do tend to find more of what I’m after from poetry (in terms of play, music, seriousness, energy, joy—more broadly the whole notion of research into what language is, with an attendant sense of oppositional social critique—) in comparable anthologies of work from elsewhere. To generalise, linguistic “research” seems more often to be regarded as being incommensurate with responsible writerly activity here than in the States (viz. the ease with which some English writers feel able to dismiss all of so-called language writing out of—what?—some kind of nostalgia for reference?). (Although one can easily balance this statement by pointing to the writers whose works bear the marks of a close engagement with language writing—Maggie O’Sullivan certainly comes to mind here—as well as the strong traditions of concrete, visual and text-sound poetry, & poets such as Catherine Walsh who have achieved a surface patina to their works which could be regarded as being in some way comparable to certain language writings, but which was arrived at in a very different way). Research. I do like that word. And Clark Coolidge’s

book of that name (voilà: the new sentence!).

I think there's definitely, and quite reasonably, a sense among some younger writers here that the developing of an English Modernism is a fruitful field of enquiry—it's just not something I feel close to. And, yes, I suppose I hardly need say that Tom Raworth's work has been and continues to be the most important for me here, although to mention him in the same breath (large lungs, y'see) as "lineage" seems faintly absurd, his works being as out there as they are, in terms of their continual and restless searching for what's new, or at least for what's in the air as opposed to in books or people's heads. I don't know. I like Veronica Forrest-Thomson's work very much—the translations as well as the poems—and feel very excited by the works of some of my contemporaries here, especially Caroline Bergvall, Tim Atkins and Khaled Hakim. I guess I still think of Steve McCaffery as an English poet.

BKS: It's sort of funny asking you about English poetry, since I tend to be interested in things that you, as someone trying to push the boundaries of what's presently being discussed in England, are probably very bored with. That is, this question of trying to find an "English Modernism" – are the same things being said about how the English will never have a Modernism (like in the time of the Movement poets), that they should practice refining (or modernising) closed forms? Are there parallels to what was said in the thirties (or was it later) when the Surrealists were trying to start up in England, and critics pointed to writers like Edward Young and Horace Walpole, claiming that Surrealism has always been a part of the English aesthetic vocabulary, and hence shouldn't even be considered? Are there people saying that a writer like Ted Hughes is really the furthest English Modernism will go (just like those who think Ashbery the limit here)?

What I really want to ask, though, is how you see this "emptiness, albeit an emptiness with potential" right now? I know you are a voracious reader of "language" poetry – I've heard rumors of your devouring *Paradise & Method* when it came out, for instance, and your involvement with Bernstein comes through in the work. Do you see yourself as contributing to this large inchoate mass known as "language writing"? I ask this question keeping in mind the number of younger critics and poets in the United States who are either interested in dismissing or forgetting language poetry as a whole, or who claim that the "research" that language writing sets up is purely formal – Leonard Schwartz, for example, in his introduction to *Primary Trouble* (an anthology of younger American poets published by Talisman) and Steve Evans in his "Postface on the New Composition", in which he writes of the "tranquil process of banalization that has so thoroughly contained and _dated_ the project known as language-centered writing." How do you feel about entering the fray of writers – many of

whom are around your age – claiming that there is little value in investigating these poetics?

MC: Ted Hughes as point of extremity—now there’s a depressing thought! It’s difficult for me to answer the first part of your question Brian (my answers would be as follows: I’m not sure; possibly; I don’t really know), as I don’t really know what’s being said, or by whom, & it does seem to be the case that such discussion could only have its potential uses after the fact of writing, & even then this seems doubtful (&, at whatever stage, its hardly an exciting idea—that of a bunch of writers or explainers sitting around discussing English poetry & where it should go from here—makes me think of Peter Schjeldahl’s little piece on poetry in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*: “poet clannishness distresses me: people just throwing away their one and only significant advantage in rites of terminal pettiness and boredom”). One of the things I value about being here is the ease with which one can absent oneself from discussions of this type (I guess this is the “emptiness” we’ve been mentioning)..

I understand the need for certain younger writers in the US to put some Oedipal distance between themselves and language writing by rejecting more polymorphously referential works—& if they want to do so by hiding behind something Olson or Duncan said once, or by writing a paler, less “ironic” version of later Ashbery, then that’s fine. I just can’t help thinking that it’s sad to get so far & then turn back (what’s that phrase of Coolidge’s from his Journals—“as if fear of the unknown were the mother of discourse?”). Also, I don’t see any clear boundaries anywhere, or that there’s a point where language writing begins or ends (did Coolidge ever “become” a language writer? did Ray DiPalma? Ted Greenwald?). How do you throw out language writing but keep hold of *Tender Buttons*, LZ’s *Catullus*, John Wieners’s *Behind the State Capitol*, Arlene Zekowski, Stanley Berne, much of the post-*Tennis Court Oath* exploration of the sixties, &&&? (I’ve heard rumours of an unpublished book-length poem by Dick Gallup which reads “like Andrews”.) & given that, as Wittgenstein put it, it’s impossible to write anything more like ourselves than ourselves, it seems crazy to give up on this notion of “research” or whatever one chooses to call it—the world is complete, & it doesn’t need other, smaller images of itself inside it. Hence poetry’s great freedom (a responsibility, too) to go off & do other things.

I’m not familiar with the *Talisman* anthology you mention...I suppose that, if one has never read Ron Silliman’s *Ketjak*, or any of Leslie Scalapino’s works, or Steve Benson’s, or Hannah Weiner’s, or _____’s (insert preference here), one could make a case for language writing as being purely formal—well, no, actually, I can’t see how one could do this at all. & I fail to see how any linguistic occasion can be “purely formal”—how exactly does one strip language of its social dimension? The implied opposition of “formal” & “social” seems wilfully naive

at best. & to describe a book such as Bruce Andrews's *Wobbling*, say, as purely formal is to miss the exhilarating music, razor-sharp editing & varied social contents of that work. I think Steve Evans is making a very different point in his Postface, & I would agree with him about the recent banalization of language writing, in which, also, certain language writers themselves have played a part of late. To answer the last part of your question, there are, for me, enough younger writers who have moved thru language writing & refigured it for their own purposes (as opposed to dismissively bypassing it) to keep me excited, not to mention those writers who haven't felt the need to either accept or reject it, & those writers who simply don't know what "it" is. &, while I could never agree that there is "little value in investigating [language-centered] poetics", how does one make another take on board what they apparently don't need, & should one, even, &, if so, why [cue O'Hara]—because it'll improve them? for what? &c.

BKS: What I find particularly striking about the chapbook "sore models" is not just the "polymorphously referential" (to borrow a term from your previous answer) nature of the individual pieces, but the varieties of types of reference that you employ. That is, more than being a text that includes a lot of social detail and a heterogenous lexicon, it moves into fictional situations and then out, seemingly autobiographical moments, quick-spliced collages that don't surrender any narrativizable meanings, and frequently has moments that evoke a pastoral element, like in the first poem which starts: "the periphery of the field / threatens to increase / the little meadow / on my temples and my neck," (is there a nod to Robert Duncan here?), or later, in the one dated "6/1/95," which starts by describing a sort of failed suicide with a butterknife: "a green salad hillside / salted with blossoms of mustard and thyme / pale farmworker triangles / an adverbial string / every potato / means alcohol for rockets."

Other modes that seem to arise are the coyly invective ("an internal convention / plays the critic in the endlessly concerted person" in "10/2/95", and the following poem, which contains the somewhat Luddite: "we adapt to the rigours of the disco / synchronised / to the slow chime of wristwatches, latches / a long memory of strange dawns / expedited in fact / as part of a settlement with the day-to-day trading co."), a really controlled, but precise surrealism ("we stroll through the forehead / and wandered all night along the nerve-autobahns"), an ontological inquisitiveness ("this evening in the periscope / the scene is sharply focused / but our minds / are still obsessed with the larger picture") and the one-line epigram, a form that I haven't seen recognized just yet, but which reminds me of the "Chantre" of Alcool ("personality types herniate in soft chaffs of light," for example).

You wrote in your last answer of writers who have "moved through language writing & refigured it for their own purposes." With that in mind, and the

thumbnail sketch of “sore models” that I’ve probably unnerved you with, how do you see this project in relation to politicized opacities of language writing? Do you see the poems as an attempt to rearticulate the lyrical, or even the pastoral? Considering the various moves into and then out of a domestic space, from the personal to the social (each corrupting the other) how do you see the work in relation to Foucauldian notions of power, ie. as coming from that which escapes the panoptic gaze, and is more disparate rather than consolidated? Maybe you could discuss your poetic development —what were you reading before this work, what have you given up as dead ends in your past —as well as your decision to work with a repeated form.

MC: Golly! Well, I remember the origins of and lead-up to *Sore Models* quite clearly, altho I’m probably less able to explain why certain pieces (it’s a sequence of 28 12-line poems) contain the elements they do. I spent much of ‘94 reading everything I could get my hands on by, among others, Bernadette Mayer, Clark Coolidge, Michael Gottlieb, Ted Greenwald, Ray DiPalma—by the end of the summer of that year I’d fallen so under the sway of Coolidge’s works in particular that, while I thought of my concerns as being, broadly, “what happens to word 1 when word 2 is put down beside it”, I just wasn’t producing interesting results—I certainly wasn’t able to make such a reductive syntax crackle with the electricity Coolidge does in his earlier books (also thinking about CC’s “Larry Eigner Notes”, I suppose—“a nounal/prepositional universe”...). I’d finished the manuscript of “Compositional Bonbons Placate” & was wondering what to write next, & I knew in some vague sense that I wanted it to be “different”. Then, in October, I made my first trip to the States &, while staying in Providence with Peter Gizzi & Elizabeth Willis, decided that, on my return, I would start work on a sequence. *Sore Models* owes its shape &, in a distorted way, its tone to my continuing admiration of Kit Robinson’s works, & to the fact that I was reading him on the plane back to the UK, so the feel of some of his works was uppermost in my mind when next I sat down to write. Also I wanted to see whether I could stick with something (a repeated form) for a few months without tiring of it.

I’m not very knowledgeable about Robert Duncan’s works—the opening poem in *Sore Models* lifts phrases more or less verbatim from Umberto Eco’s *Foucault’s Pendulum*, while “6/1/95” opens with the beginning of a Donald Davidson essay on the role of adverbs as modifiers of semantic sense, before closing with a search for fuel which appears there, I think, as a result of dipping into Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*. The poems were just built out of whatever was on my desk at the time. Pastoral elements? Hmmm—probably arose from a certain glumness at that time, the humour ditto (an attempt to rouse myself) while also, of course, relating to the occasional New Yorkiness of tone in Robinson’s work, which

stretches back to Berrigan, &c. (the importance, for Berrigan, of the word “amusement”).

A few people criticised these poems at the time for being too “seductive”, & perhaps, today, I’d be tempted to agree—that is, altho it’s a chunk of work I still feel moderately happy with, I’m now more interested in, well, “politicized opacity”, as you put it (no doubt this is due in part to some of the “banalizing” squabbles among certain language writers of late; this still troubling opposition between the “linguistic” & the “social”; & the great rush among younger writers to “rearticulate the lyrical”), but not just a “politicized opacity”—also its potential relations to desire & desiring production, &/or to Blanchot’s notion of “contestation”...immediacy/discharge (Bataille’s “being without delay”) as opposed to more discursive activity... rejigging the molecules, trying to keep oneself interested in the writing as it unfolds.

BKS: I didn’t realize, given the pub dates on the books, that *Compositional Bonbons Placate* was the earlier work, though I suspected it given the wider range of modes of poetic address, and the fact that even the longest poems in the book were shorter than the *Sore Models* sequence. Anyway, I’m struck by the comprehensiveness of the project, the book’s total engagement with (and this is a crib from Deleuze and Guattari) “language [when it] is no longer defined by what it says... but by what causes it to move, to flow, and to explode—desire.” I don’t think, however, that you are giving free reign to a “non-referentiality,” like in early Coolidge and Andrews, with an exclusive focus on the weights that words can possess in asyntactic (or counter-syntactic) vacuums—a sort of preparatory stage, for each poet, for their later phrase-oriented work—but that you seem to have mastered this space of the “non-referential” to gain a sort of bird’s eye view of a rather large swath of poetic possibilities, both those “in use” by others, and those that are yet to be discovered, but which you don’t care to exploit, since your project seems not so much to formulate new paradigms for a quasi-transparent poetics (even ones, like in Stevens and Palmer, employing great deals of “play”), but to create and destroy systems, questioning the very ability or tenability of such systems to exist in a hyper-kinetic flux of language.

This is a long sentence, and sounds vague, but I’ll quickly illustrate. “Shopword Notions” strikes me as the “And Ut Pictora Poesis Est Was Her Name” (Ashbery’s brief plea for a different reading strategy in *Houeboast Days*) of the book, in that it surrenders some meanings that offer a way of commenting on a way of reading the text:

“...Squishy cubes of bickering quanta abut
this vegetarian sense of aboutness.

You can dissolve a substance, but it only has meaning
in a sentence. But bemoaning this fact, like
my brain scoots out of me, fast as feeder ants, smells
of oranges that absorb all the stars & moon,
reflecting nothing back. Or just a way of, the successive
identities taken on, extirpating (explicating) the
pleasing fancy which suddenly pitches forward.
Froufrou spookery. Language as a way of grabbing
hold.”

This is about as comfortable —ie. transparent —as your book gets, and yet one is struck by the “squishy cubes of bickering quanta,” the sheer discomfort that the vocabulary and syntax, the non-parsable sentence structure, and the speed of the language conveys, not to mention verbs like “pitches” and “scoots,” and the apparent dismissal of “Froufrou spookery,” and the title itself. The materiality of the language gives you space to comment, it seems, on the “notions” being presented. I sense a similar thing happening in “I Have A Paintbrush in my Hand to Colour a Triange” and “Transcendental Express,” the former of which seems to approach that space of “play” that Stevens and Palmer seem to wallow fancifully in (but which you plow through), the latter poem an apparently framable poetics statemnt, but one whose promise of a “methodical going,” begins with the lines “In the Ukraine, / on the Bug River / they sleep till summer / in an arti-choke...”

What were this issues you felt you were dealing with in *Compositional Bonbons Placate* (you could start with the title)? What sort of dialogues do you think the book is engaged in —ie. with your potential reading public (it is, after all, a Carcanet book), with the poetries of the Language writers, with the critics you are interested in? Was this an attempt to explain —ie. make available in assimilable though corrupted form – a sort of poetics? Also, was this element of discomfort that I have tried to illustrate something you were conscious of, a sort of flirting with, but then spitting on, (the “fascism” of) system? It’s certainly an enthusiastic book, and creates a sense of possibility —how did you get to that point?

MC: Perhaps a first & useful thing to say is that much of *Bonbons* is the way it is because I wasn’t, at the time of writing it, involved in a great many dialogues (of any kind!). All the poems were written very soon after moving to London, & a good many were written before I’d met any writers here. The form & tone of the earliest pieces—such as “Cairo” & “The Healing Festival”—are attributable to

the fact that I'd hardly read any poetry at that point; as with so many people, I'd imagine, reading Ashbery was decisive—it was after reading & having some fuses blown by *The Tennis Court Oath* & *Rivers and Mountains* that I felt, as far as one can, that I knew that writing poems was what I wanted to do. (Do you know the wonderful interview in *_Lingo_* that Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop did with Claude Royet-Journoud? It ends with this comment from CRJ: “Discovering Ashbery was an immensely moving, important event for us. Overwhelming. Now of course, there is a huge critical reception and all that, but back in the sixties, his poetry was a shock. Almost physical. And magnificent. Moving, in the way I've said earlier: you feel you must write in response.”)

So, the two poems I've mentioned, plus “To Jean Hélicon”, were written quite a bit before the others, at a time when I'd read very little poetry. The bulk of the book is shaped by what happened after that, most of the poems being written in a spell of six months or so, during which I encountered for the first time the works of Berrigan, Greenwald, Raworth, DiPalma, Mayer, &c., as well as receiving encouragement from the writers I began to meet here (Raworth, Ulli Freer, Cris Cheek, others). Then I met Trevor Winkfield & Peter Gizzi through John Ashbery (“compositional bonbons placate” is a phrase I found in an essay on Trevor's paintings—it just seemed to fit). I'm much more immersed in so-called language writing (& critical/theoretical writing too) now than I was then, &, partly for this reason, I feel decidedly ambivalent at best about much of *_Bonbons_*. It's a very naive book in that the poems were getting written more or less as & when I discovered a “new” poet's work—it wasn't really “considered” in any sense (& certainly not laid out as a mini writing “project” in the sense that *_Sore Models_* was). But perhaps that's a strength as well as a weakness (“any door is a good door”, as Ted Berrigan used to point out)...I'm glad you describe the book as “enthusiastic”, & the quality of some of the poems which I hope comes across most is this sense of liveliness: the excitement I felt about the books I was reading & the friendships I was making at that time.

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