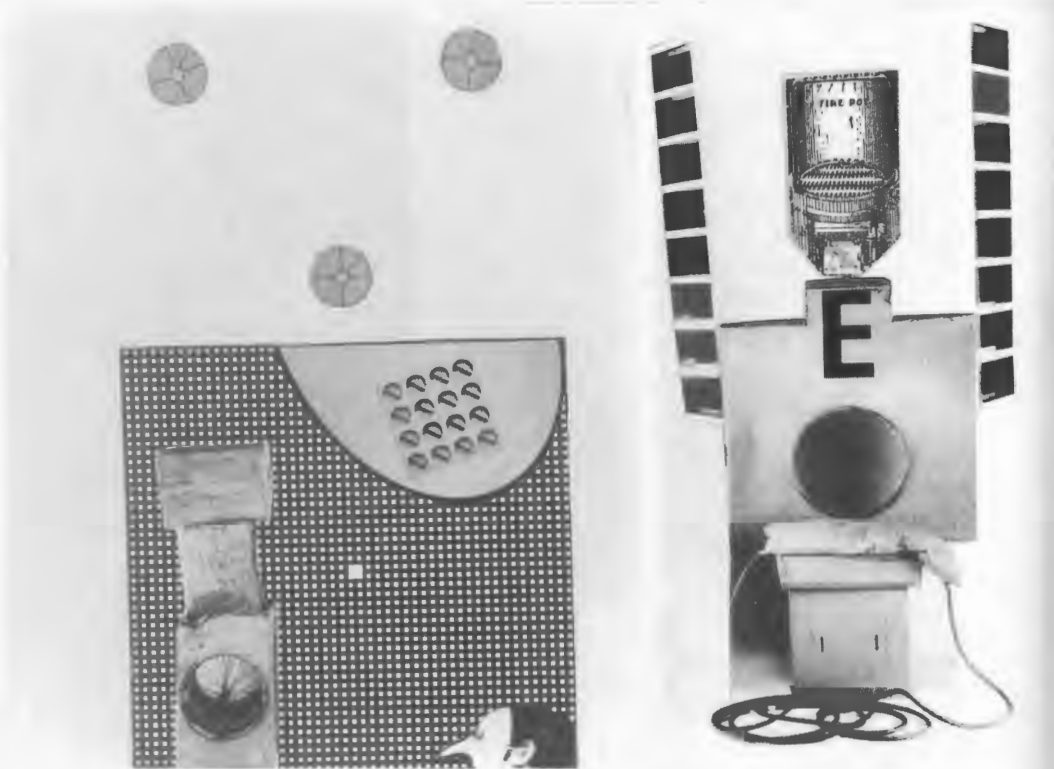


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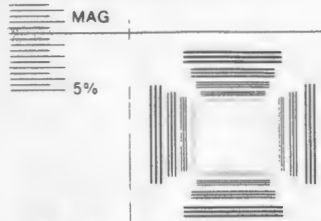
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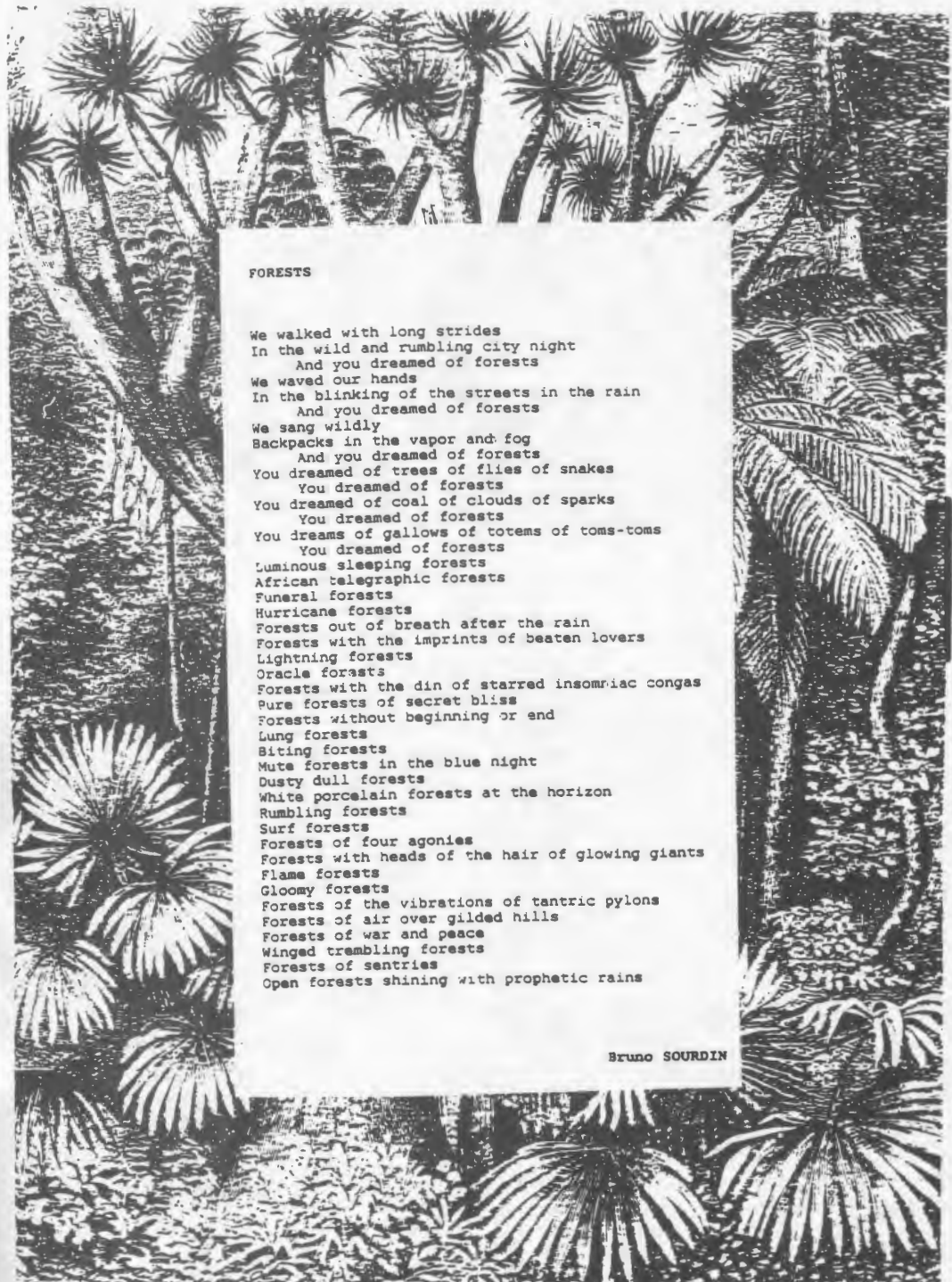
Editorial

This issue of *Rampike* addresses the interface between technology and the natural environment. Science and culture meet in the border-blur between artistic expression and technological achievement. The twentieth century has seen rapid advances in tele-communications and other electronic forms of expression, and artists have been quick to seize upon these new modes. In this issue, we consider the impact of technology and the role of the artist. Our techno-culture has provided us with desirable, even life-saving advantages in medicine, transportation, tele-communications, memory storage, and so on. Some authors and visual artists have adopted these new technologies, while others have responded but have chosen not to take advantage of them. In some cases, the outcome of an event depends upon a quotidian feature of contemporary technology; a radio report, a telegram, or a simple telephone call. These artists are engaged with an ambivalent techno-culture that can either serve or hinder human development. Artists are uniquely positioned to address the manner in which our scientific advances affect our minds, bodies and spirits.

The next issue of *Rampike* will continue to investigate the inter-connections between culture and science. Following that, we will present our special issue on Epistemology which will address the question of knowledge itself within a cultural sphere. We trust that you will enjoy the polyphony of voices responding to these questions in *Rampike*!



K. Lin '98.



FORESTS

We walked with long strides
 In the wild and rumbling city night
 And you dreamed of forests
 We waved our hands
 In the blinking of the streets in the rain
 And you dreamed of forests
 We sang wildly
 Backpacks in the vapor and fog
 And you dreamed of forests
 You dreamed of trees of flies of snakes
 You dreamed of forests
 You dreamed of coal of clouds of sparks
 You dreamed of forests
 You dreamed of galleys of totems of toms-toms
 You dreamed of forests
 Luminous sleeping forests
 African telegraphic forests
 Funeral forests
 Hurricane forests
 Forests out of breath after the rain
 Forests with the imprints of beaten lovers
 Lightning forests
 Oracle forests
 Forests with the din of starred insomniac congas
 Pure forests of secret bliss
 Forests without beginning or end
 Lung forests
 Biting forests
 Mute forests in the blue night
 Dusty dull forests
 White porcelain forests at the horizon
 Rumbling forests
 Surf forests
 Forests of four agonies
 Forests with heads of the hair of glowing giants
 Flame forests
 Gloomy forests
 Forests of the vibrations of tantric pylons
 Forests of air over gilded hills
 Forests of war and peace
 Winged trembling forests
 Forests of sentries
 Open forests shining with prophetic rains

Bruno SOURDIN

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: LIMITS, BENEFITS, AND COSTS

An excerpt from *Earth Time*:
Essays by Dr. David Suzuki
(Stoddart Publishing, Toronto, Canada)

Dr. David Suzuki is legendary as an environmentalist and an activist. He began his career in biology and is known for his research in genetics. Now, a columnist and a broadcaster, he has presented his views on the popular television program "The Nature of Things" where he often addresses the inter-relationship between human beings, technology and the natural world. Suzuki's world view perceives life in a delicate balance in which all things form a great inter-connected unity. To disrupt one part of this unity is to disrupt all of being. *Earth Time*, Dr. Suzuki's new collection of essays published by Stoddart, addresses concerns such as exponential growth of the population, the information revolution, global economics, human consumption patterns, and patterns in politics ranging from reactionary to green. Among other things, this important book is dedicated to finding solutions and taking action. In this special issue of *Rampike* dedicated to the interactions of technology, environment, and culture, we are honoured to present an excerpt from *Earth Time*. The publication of *Earth Time* (ISBN: 0-7737-6009-1), will co-incide with the appearance of this issue of *Rampike*.

* For info contact: Stoddart Publishing, 34 Lesmill Rd., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3B 2T6. TEL: (416)445-3333, FAX: (416)445-5967, Email: customer.service@ccmailgw.genpub.com



The most powerful force shaping our world today is science as applied by the military, industry, and medicine. Consider the impact of nuclear power, DDT, and antibiotics, just three of dozens of powerful technologies that science has unleashed in the past half-century.

Until fairly recently, in most areas of research, a scientist could not make a lot of money. Science was a leisurely, curiosity-driven activity. But after the Second World War, discoveries in chemistry, physics, and more recently, biology, became the generating force for ideas that attracted investors and speculators. Money changed the nature of the scientific enterprise. The time frame was suddenly shortened; there was greater emphasis on competition, secrecy, and patents.

As science exploded, especially after Sputnik was launched in 1957, prospective science students were put under increased pressure to take more courses in specialized subjects. Courses like history, philosophy, literature, and religion were jettisoned so students could become more highly specialized and focused. As a consequence, scientists today are less prone to question their own area, to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses, and to consider the ramifications of discoveries on society and the environment.

Even as some scientists try to point out the level of ignorance about the world around us, governments everywhere are cutting back on basic research in the guise of fiscal responsibility. Yet basic knowledge, especially in biology, is most desperately needed. For without an understanding about how the world functions, we will have no idea how new technologies might affect us.

SCIENCE'S REAL LESSON IS HUMILITY ABOUT HOW LITTLE WE KNOW

The Nobel prizewinning scientist François Jacob once wrote that the human brain has an innate need for order. If we perceived the world "out there" as our senses register it, the world would seem totally chaotic. With out in-built curiosity and ability to observe and learn, we can make sense of our milieu by recognizing patterns and regularities and fitting them into a framework invented by the mind. Those rhythms and cycles of nature give a comforting context that human beings have been able to exploit.

Throughout history, that need and ability to create order has generated what anthropologists call a world-view. A world-view contains all of a society's accumulated insights, speculation, beliefs, and wisdom. It is all-inclusive. In such a construct, nothing exists in isolation. Everything -- past, present, and future -- is part of an uninterrupted continuum. Each rock, stream, and tree, the stars, clouds and birds, is of a single interacting and interdependent whole. World-views are profoundly rooted to a locale on the planet and suffused with an understanding of the human place within it.

Science has shattered world-views with a fundamentally different way of viewing one's surroundings. By focusing on a single aspect of nature -- isolating it and controlling everything impinging on it -- scientists acquire knowledge about that fragment. But in searching for principles that are universal and timeless, scientists disconnect the object of study in time and space, yielding a fractured picture of our environs.

Today, science's value is perceived to be the revelation of insights that permit the domination and control of nature. It is a dangerously mistaken notion. Early in this century, physicists recognized that individual components of nature interact with each other to create properties that cannot be anticipated from their behaviour in isolation. Thus, information gained from studying each part of the natural world does not add up to a complete picture. So in biology, baboons studied in a zoo, for example, provide little insight into their normal behaviour in the wild.

Even if acquired scientific knowledge could be pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle, our database is so minuscule that only a liar or fool would claim to possess enough information to "manage" nature or natural resources.

The most important and intriguing part of science is to ask questions. Scientists try to organize the bits and pieces of knowledge they have into a framework that allows the formulation of a question that can then be tested experimentally. That's how science progresses, and most of the time, the answers obtained cause models and hypotheses to be radically altered or even discarded. Most of what scientists do reveals that our current ideas are naive or incorrect. That is not a denigration of science, it is the very way that science advances.

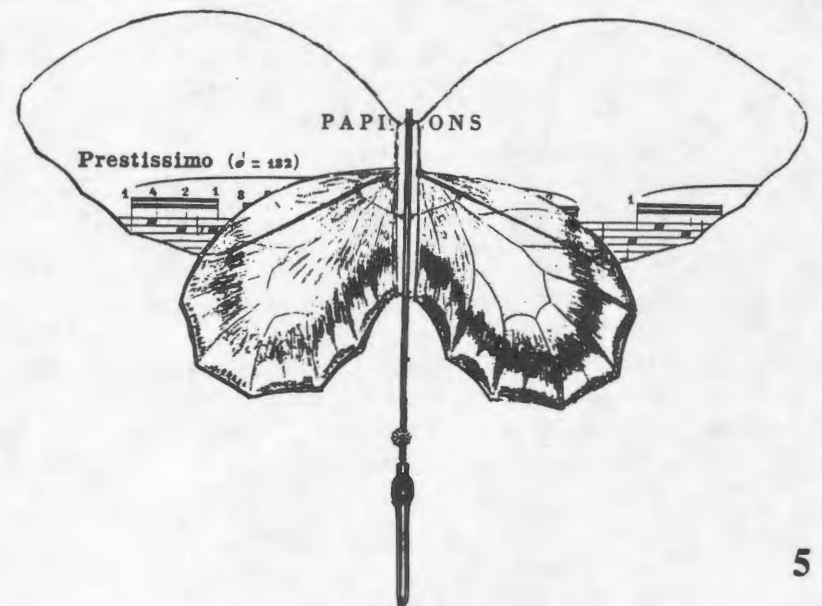
But it also means that scientific models of the world are so simplified they bear little resemblance to reality. The models are merely a means of focusing the thrust of experiments or the collection of data. It is a grotesque misapplication of research when these simplifications of complex ecosystems are used as the basis and justification for their "scientific management."

This is the heart of the absurdity of claims that old-growth forests, wild fish like salmon and northern cod, and populations of caribou and moose can be managed. It is also the reason that claims that one species or another is to blame for a natural disaster are ridiculous. Such a deflection of attention from the central role our species plays in creating ecological problems results in killing wolves in the Yukon to increase ungulate populations and slaughtering seals on the East and West coasts to expand fish stocks.

By extirpating a major predator in a food chain, populations of prey can be affected. But it is an ephemeral effect, an illusion that the population change reflects understanding and control. In the same way, it is a mockery to equate a tree plantation that grows after massive clear-cutting with a "forest." A forest is a community of micro-organisms, plants, and animals, most of which are not even identified, and air, water, and soil that support them.

Science is one of our species' great achievements. But the tiny windows it opens into our surroundings merely serve to emphasize the scale of our ignorance. We can celebrate the breathtaking insights we acquire while recognizing that this fractured image of the world does not encompass the complexity and interconnectedness of the real thing.

"Papillons of Schumann" Fernando Andolcetti (Italy)



TALKING AUTOBIOGRAPHY

An Interview With Marilyn Bowering

by Karl Jirgens

Marilyn Bowering is an accomplished writer of poetry and fiction. She has won the Pat Lowther Award, and was Nominated for the Dorothy Livesay Award for Poetry. In 1997, she was nominated for the Governor General's Award for *Autobiography*, her recent collection of poems. In this (November, 1997) interview, Bowering talks about her writing and comments on concepts such as unified field theory, the unconscious and the inter-relationships between science, technology, culture and spiritual matters. Bowering also writes radio dramas for the CBC and the BBC. Her radio plays have been nominated for the Prix Italia and the Sony Award. Bowering teaches creative writing at the University of Victoria and has served as writer in Residence at numerous Universities in Canada and abroad. Earlier books of poetry by Marilyn Bowering include *Love As It Is* (Beach Holme, 1993), and *The Killing Room* (Beach Holme, 1990). Her novels include *To All Appearances A Lady* (Random House, 1989), and *Visible Worlds* (Harper Collins, 1996). *Autobiography* (1996), is a Press Porcépic Book and was published by Beach Holme Publishers (4252 Commerce Circle, Victoria, B.C., V8Z 4M2, Canada -- ISBN 0-88878-369-8).

KJ: Well, you've been nominated for a Governor General's Award. And this is the second time. The first was for *The Sunday Before Winter New and Selected Poems* (1984). So, I wanted to talk with you about your book of poetry *Autobiography* which has now been nominated for this prize.

MB: Actually, it also won the Pat Lowther Award for poetry this year. And its been nominated for a B.C. book prize. For a book of poems it's received quite a bit of attention.

KJ: That's great! I wanted to talk to you about the book as a long-poem form.

MB: Yes, it's definitely a long-poem. If I look back at some of the books I've done over the past few years, they've been edging towards the long-poem. I wrote a book called *My Grandfather Was A Soldier* (1987), which is a combination of narrative and lyrics concerned with the second world war. And I wrote a book called *Anyone Can See I Love You* (1987), and that has a very strong narrative, almost a long poem. But with *Autobiography*, I did not have any idea I was going to be writing a long-poem. It simply arrived. The first part of the book is titled "The Mind's Road to Love." And I didn't know it when I was writing it, but when I had written it, I saw that I had written a twenty page poem, and I was quite astounded, and not only that, it was in couplets, which I had never written before either. And so I continued to write long poems, and I began to wonder if I could ever again write a poem under six pages.

KJ: I notice that there is a journey-motif in a lot of the poems in this collection. I guess, you could call it a collection, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it's just one long poem, because it is called *Autobiography* so there is that long thread that runs all the way through it. In the first section, the one you just referred to, "The Mind's Road to Love," I noticed that there was an interesting mixture of secular and spiritual elements, spaceships, and DNA, and God and so on. Were you after anything in particular in terms of technology and material things as part of the environment, as opposed to spiritual matters?

MB: Well, I think that they inter-relate. It doesn't make sense to me to have them in separate compartments, particularly when your talking about things like DNA which is, as you know, a genetic code, which is also a communication system. All of these elements have to do with communication. Communication with God. Communication with the universe through prayer or through electronic means. I think that these things connect. And they do go back to some fundamental elements including how matter works, through its electrical or chemical nature. And I suppose it's just a way of putting out there how I think about the inter-relationship of these various things.

KJ: That makes sense to me. I've heard Stephen Hawking say, for example, that if he could fully grasp unified field theory, and if he could understand the physical nature of the universe, then, in effect, he would be looking at the face of God.

MB: Yeah, I'm sure that he's right.

KJ: I noticed that the section that follows in the book titled "Nature's Children" involves a kind of submarine and subterranean journey, after being dismembered, shades of Orpheus, and there is this voyage to the past, and to the site of an Other that is both physical and sexual, and in that section I noticed a connection between the womb and the psyche, and I wonder if there was any connection in your mind, with say the later writing of someone like Hilda Doolittle who would mix Christian and pagan myth to create a hieratic or hermetic Goddess poem series?

MB: I read H.D. years and years ago, and I would not have made that connection. I think, for me, it's a personal book and in a sense an "autobiography" although it's not the story of the incidents of my life. But, I think that my background, my upbringing, was very religious and fundamentalist, and so my mind is in a way permeated with that kind of imagery. But, my temperament is absolutely pagan. My work as a poet has been very much concerned with understanding the link between oral poetry and modern written poetry, and the power poetry which comes out of naming things. All of that goes into that mix. And that poem is certainly a journey to the origins of the psyche, and the things of

life. And it goes back to the fundamental union that is there once you take things apart, once you've spent the ones you go through, a ritual perhaps, or a sacrifice, but it's going back linking what's inside. So certainly, that combination of things is there, but not because of H.D.

KJ: Yes, that makes sense. Speaking of naming things, in the title canto "Autobiography" there is a Sibyl-like character, or a medium, and there are some lines in that section that read: "I can feel the strain of watching nothing. 'Should we do something?' I ask the medium. She shrugs and tucks herself into the blanket. I fall asleep..." [p. 35]. And later on, she's gone. I was wondering if this is a kind of identification with a psychic other self, with the "medium" here as someone is in touch with a psychic dimension, but also the "medium" in terms of the text, perhaps the spirit of the text in that the whole idea of naming comes out of it.

MB: It's a poem which deals with the self as a myth, and the myth is about a child who is born in a "caul" and has elements of the miraculous. And it's also a story about finding the self, and identifying the self, and naming the self, through those experiences. And in the section that you talk about where the medium is there, there is an attempt to contact someone which is not successful, an attempt to name someone, to make a connection which doesn't work. It's a reaching towards. And then the character goes back again to the world of ritual and accepts the identity she was born with. And there are complications in it, tragedies and so on, but she accepts that and finds what she wants. So, she finds her identity, accepts her identity.

KJ: I see this journey as a linking of words as a type of landscape, or maybe a mind-scape or a psychic-scape. Where you thinking of that at all when you writing this?

MB: Oh yeah, it was very much so. It's territory I've always been interested in, but in this book particularly, I was very much exploring an interior landscape, a landscape of the mind, a landscape of the psyche. The encounters with the characters of the psyche that seem to me to be ancient in their sources. So, I think that the whole book is about travelling through that particular kind of landscape.

KJ: I noticed a lot of archetypal figures here. The King-figure of course is a good example, and there are images of birth and death and rainbows, and elemental images such as water which is of considerable importance, and so on. And, from my point of view, I could see a kind of Jungian aspect to all of this. The section about the journey to the interior castle, the heart of the idea, and I think Jung talks about the interior of the castle as a representation of the self.

MB: Well, of course Saint Theresa did it first. And she has a book which is actually called *Interior Castle*, and she discusses it in terms of what she calls the seven chambers of the heart, and for me that was the entry point into the poem, where I could think of the heart as a place, with these rooms. And then you go into these room and see what's there. It's an exploration of the human heart. No doubt because of the kinds of things I'm interested in, it would connect you with Jung who had many interesting and sensible things to say about psychic landscape and interior processes. In a way, Jung can help you connect. But, I owe much, much more to Saint Theresa.

KJ: I see. So, a Jungian reading wouldn't be off-line, but...

MB: It wouldn't be off-line, but I wasn't making direct connections there. I think what happens when you do that kind of interior exploration, you just tend to bump against the same things that Jung did, because he did that kind of exploration. And I think that I would agree with him, that there are these things that keep emerging through our culture, and from our selves, and we're back to the beginning where all of these things are inter-connected in various ways. Perhaps not, in this case, electrically, but they are inter-connected, but they're connected through images, they're connected through character, they're connected through story. I would imagine that anyone who did that kind of exploration would come across very similar sorts of things.

KJ: With reference to the blend of the Christian and the pagan in your writing, I noticed that you say that we are "hell" and "heaven" in the same body, and elsewhere on the same page you talk about gold quite a bit [p. 37]. And that had a kind of alchemical connection in my mind. Is this a reference to an awaiting of transformation or about transformation in some way?

MB: Well, I think that this is very much like what I mentioned with connection to Jung, and Jung of course was interested in alchemy. What I'm saying is that you can come at this from the inside-out, and that when you do that sort of exploration, you'll find that that is the sort of imagery that is there to be found. And Jung described it. And the alchemist were aware of it and trying to work with it, because of its fundamental connection to the nature of matter. It's science, it's experience, it is belief. And gold is alchemical and has to do with transformation and value. The myth that has been important to me is the Manichean myth, which goes way back for me in terms of things I was interested in long ago, but which are there as a sort of residue, I suppose; the idea being that, we are light enclosed by matter and that the promise of life involves being able to perceive that light. And, of course, that light, or that energy, connects to every other form of energy. And there is a process in which that light becomes imprisoned, or encased in matter and then is released, and then goes round and round again, in that type of cycle. But, I think that alchemical connection is there, but that the poetry finds its way there, rather than the other way around.

KJ: So, I'm looking at it from outside in, and you're looking at it from inside out.

MB: And this is what you would do as a reader, and what I do as a poet. And of course over the years, I've read in these areas and have been interested in these areas. So, they're there along with everything else I've done and thought and discovered.

KJ: In the section "How Were the People Made" it seems that the whole matter of the interconnection between light and being is addressed. In that section, there is a short history of how people have been shaped, violated, and how they have affected each other in different ways. And the notion of inter-connectedness seems to be conveyed through that recurring idea of the Other as definition of the self. Or, the way that the self interacts with others becomes a form of definition. So, were you conscious of saying that it is in, or through others that we are identified?

MB: Um, no, I don't think so. I remember writing the poem. I was walking a favourite walk of mine, on a trail that runs not far from my house. I love walking along the trail, thinking and writing as I do. And the poem came to me in the form of a question, which was that all through life you are told how things are, how things began, why things are, and so on, and the question that came to me had to do with the notion of how people were made, and I had an answer, I just didn't know what it was, but I thought that when I'd wrote the poem, I'd find out what it is. So, it's a way of saying, this is what I know. This is how people were made. This is my knowledge of that. So, in that way it's defining the self. But I hadn't noticed that about the Other, it's interesting, what you have to say.

KJ: Well, for example, I've spoken to some native people about their sense of community, and they usually tell me that there is a very intimate connection there, and that because you are linked to the community, what you do to or with the community ultimately defines you, or reflects on yourself, and what the community does to, or with you, also, in a way, helps to define you. And so, it's your inter-action with others, that, to some extent defines you.

MB: So, its not so much about the individual, its about society, or "the people." Yes, I see what you mean.

KJ: Yes, and so, by saying how people are made, you are in a way identifying the narrator, because the narrator's identifying herself in terms of her relationship to others. Their situation in reference to others, helps to define herself. So the narrator indirectly reveals herself by saying what she thinks other people are, or how they "were made" as the poem goes. It's a kind of backwards definition, I suppose.

MB: Well, in some ways it is a kind of inside-out book. It's a look at things from a different angle. It's like looking in through the back window at a view that you don't normally get. And I guess that's just how my mind works. And I think that I wanted to put down that view, and articulate what that view was.

KJ: Well that makes sense to me, because even the book's back cover design includes a mirror reverse image of the front cover, and I also see lots of mirror imagery in the book, particularly in the second last section titled "Mirror Gazing." So, there is this recurring idea of doubleness and self in the world. Was there a conscious awareness of the use or meaning of mirrors in this book?

MB: Mirror gazing is a technique that has been used since ancient times predominantly as a way of inducing visions, and the vision-gazing usually had a purpose, sometimes to solve a problem, usually for resolving an emotion and often an emotion of grief. So, if you had lost someone, then you would think about that person, and have an object that belonged to that person around you, and then, in a darkened underground chamber or room you would put yourself into a receptive state of mind and think of that person as you looked into the mirror. And very often, in the mirror would appear the image of that person, and then you would have an opportunity to talk to that person and resolve whatever was unresolved. So, that's the kind of thing I was thinking of in the use of the mirror. And there are also other things that can appear and be addressed. So, the mirror is a way to make invisible things, visible.

KJ: Nostradamus worked that way too. Speaking of visible and invisible worlds, your novel from Harper Collins (*Visible Worlds*) is doing quite well.

MB: It seems that it is being read, which is lovely. There have been good things said about it, and more importantly, understanding things being said about it, by people who know what the book is about and what it is trying to achieve, which is very encouraging. And also, interestingly enough, it's doing very well in terms of foreign sales. It's coming out in U.S. and it's coming out in the U.K., and Germany and so on, and it's a very Canadian book in it's setting and it's point of view, which is an observer's point of view of culture from around the period of the Korean war and the Cold War. But it seems to have a resonance for people.

KJ: It certainly is a wide-ranging book going from the past, to Siberia, Korea, war-zones, and the base in Winnipeg, and then all of that inter-twined with these mystic dimensions, invisible worlds, ghosts, psychic experiences. It's quite a journey. The idea of personal magnetism is right near the beginning of that book, is that kind of an entry point into the novel?

MB: For the character in the book who uses it, it's a way of making sense of the world, because through personal magnetism you can increase power, or your own control over your life. And then there's that idea that if you can keep your magnetic orientation to your place of birth, then, your life tends to go well. It's when you mess that up in some way that things go wrong, when you become dis-oriented. And that magnetic orientation becomes part of how you relate to the universe as a whole, what your place is in it, what part you play in it. And there's a character in the second story in the book, the woman who crosses the polar ice-cap, who is entirely dependent upon magnetic orientation, she relies heavily on her compass, which in the far north is very much deflected in it's orientation. So these invisible things work metaphorically and definitely are meant to be a sort of guide in the book.

"AMONG THE BEES": AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BLAIR by Darren Wershler-Henry

Encountering David Blair's *WAX or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees* for the first time is not unlike the experience of a character in an SF film who stumbles across the ruins of some highly advanced but long vanished civilization. As an artifact, *WAX* imbues its viewer with the sense that no matter how complex and sophisticated its own structure may appear, there is an alien cosmology behind its conception. Though *WAX* begins as a more-or-less linear story about Jacob Maker, a designer of cybernetic gunsights for the U. S. military, and the rare Mesopotamian bees he inherited from his spiritualist grandfather, who believed the bees to be the vengeful avatars of the dead, the storyline rapidly becomes rhizomatic, bifurcating again and again with the addition of new narrative elements. The sense of vertigo that this ruthlessly iterative meditation on high technology and the nature of death creates in its audience is as close to a contemporary manifestation of the sublime as one could hope to encounter.

In its initial form as an 85-minute long video released in 1991, *WAX* was revolutionary in both technical and aesthetic terms. The first long-form independent video project to be cut on a non-linear editing system, it garnered rave reviews from cultural luminaries such as William Gibson, who labelled it "Authentically peculiar. Like something from the network vaults of an alternate universe."

WAX made history once again on May 23 of 1993, when it became the first full-length film to be broadcast over the Internet. Shortly thereafter, the film was reincarnated as the *WAXWEB*, a web site of massive proportions at <http://bug.village.virginia.edu>. The site, currently in its third revision, contains over 25,000 links, including stills and (currently disabled) video clips from the film, text in several languages, extensive notes, and a vast VRML environment, based on the 3-D models in the film designed by artist Florence Ormezzano (who also happens to be Blair's wife). The VRML facet of the project becomes even more impressive when one realizes that it is only with the most recent generation of Web browsers (Netscape 4.04 etc.) that VRML plug-ins have begun to come into use; many people still don't have the resources to make them run properly. In the meantime, The Opto-Plasmic Void, the *WAXWEB*'s VRML environment -- which I've spent almost three hours exploring over the last week or so, with no sense of its end in sight -- has been hanging there in cyberspace for over four years, its matte silver surfaces gleaming dully, waiting patiently to be rediscovered.

The following is a short interview with Blair, mainly on the topic of the wide variety of literary and filmic texts that intersect with *WAX*. If I'd seen the VRML portion of the *WAXWEB* before this interview had been conducted, I'd have also raised the subject of the future of concrete and visual poetry, a subject that is of considerable concern to me. As cyberpunk author Richard Kadrey points out in his *Mondo 2000* piece on *WAX*, Ormezzano's computer graphics, "from the bat-winged and multi-skulled spirit guide to the biomorphic squiggles that are the alphabet of the dead [. . .] are the dream images from a lost digital tribe, pixelated runes and hieroglyphs -- what the Mayans might have left behind if they had vanished into a virtual world." One of the many things Blair has achieved with the *WAXWEB* is a realization in VR of the kind of three-dimensional typespaces that exist in two-dimensional form in the cartooning and visual poetry of John Riddell, Steve McCaffery and bp Nichol. I'm sure that artists engaged in other fields will also find odd moments of congruence with their own interests in *WAX*, because it resonates with the hum of the hive-mind that constitutes contemporary culture.

Q: Many critics have described *WAX* as a dreamlike or psychedelic experience, but it reminds me of a schizophrenic narrative (in terms of its self-referential, iterative and recombinative qualities, its paranoia and hermeticism). What can you tell me about both your initial aims and the actual process of assembling the narrative?

A: I used a different name, a grotesque narrative. But if I found any of those qualities in a book or film, it would become interesting to me; so when I turned around and started making my own fictions, those were the structures I tried to recreate. However, I disagree (to some extent) with the hermetic idea... it is the iteration down to some terrible level that gives it the apparent shape of being airtight. However, in all grotesque fiction (or, in your term, schizophrenic literature by the sane), the question of what's inside and what's outside is blurred. Also about hermetic: I've got to say that I didn't want it to be difficult to enter the story... everything was up front (though the fact that the story takes place in a time-based medium does at time disguise its' path). About the process (here's something I wrote for Larry McCaffery):

WAX is an image-processed narrative... meaning both the images and narrative are processed. Years ago, when we went to the moon, processing meant turning knobs (here we think about pi: 3.141526, the mysterious dog-shaped number that helps describe the space of the turning knob) to alter an analog(ue) signal. . . though during the period between the hard and soft landings on the moon, this altered to become image-processing, a new timespace regime where the picture was divided up into little cells... the simple little grammars rewrote that pic bit by bit, using the machine of machines, a.k.a. nowadays your watch, or Larry McCaffery's Powerbook 100... the result being that we could better see what had been in those photos all along. Soft Moon was followed by the time of the game of LIFE, a.k.a. the Zone

cellular automata, where again local little grammars, displayed on either paper or from the inside of air-evacuated tubes, created self-reproducing flatland squiggles that might or might not be alive... today, apparently, image processing and LIFE have combined to give us image processed synthesis, where one plays pi to create synthetic images of a timeless zone (a voxel of monads... pixels trying to live in 3-D space), source of a world embedded in our own.

Anyway the narrative is processed also. That's just something I've been thinking about recently: how self-referentiality, iteration, and recombination are so strangely echoed in all the talk about a-life. I know that doesn't answer directly the question of how "WAX" was constructed...

Q: As someone who works with words, I find your interest with written language (the language of the dead, anagrams, the artificial language known as Volapuk, the mark of Cain, and the many other linguistic elements of the film), really fascinating and quite unusual for a filmmaker. Comments?

A: Well, I guess I wanted to be a writer and a "film"maker at the same time. When most other video artists were in school, I was reading novels. One of my major models (should be obvious) was *Gravity's Rainbow*. Part of making fiction (film) was figuring out that book (and others, as in the first question).

Q: As long as we're on the subject of writing and writers, how did William S. Burroughs (who has a cameo as James' "Hive Maker") become involved in your project?

A: Well, Mark Kaplan, the cameraman for WAX, lives in Lawrence [Kansas -- the home of Burroughs in his last days]; back in '87, after our first shoot in New Mexico, I went out there to do camera on a documentary he was shooting about the River City Reunion, a gathering of all the beat figures who used to stop in Lawrence on the way from coast to coast. After the doc, we went out and shot at the Garden of Eden, for WAX; then I had the idea that Burroughs was just the sort of person who might have built that place... having him available was too good an opportunity to pass up.

Q: Having Burroughs involved is really appropriate, considering the importance of the cut-up to WAX's composition -- his image serves as kind of metonymy for your narrative technique. But there are a lot of other things going on in WAX that propel the film's narrative away from the authorial intent, one of which is actually removing the production of portions of it from human influence... I'm thinking of the wax sculptures that the bees fashion in order to enter our world. Could you explain exactly what apisculpture is?

A: Garnett Puett made those statues... a different sort of process-work. He makes the bases for the statues, then puts them in an open "hive", actually a screened or plexiglassed container connected to the outside world... and lets his bees finish them. When I met him, he had a room in his Williamsburg, Brooklyn loft screened off... the bees ate waste sugar at the waterfront Domino factory.

Q: How did you come across Samuel Dinsmoor's "Garden of Eden" [a bizarre folk-art cement sculpture park in Kansas which figures prominently in the film version of WAX]?

A: ...which raises the question of the selection of sites. Many of them seem to be areas to which access would be difficult or restricted in some way... I know about the Garden of Eden because Mark (above) had already tried to make a doc there. It is true that the New Mexico sites appealed to me because they were distant from New York, and it was difficult to imagine how to get access (at least for an inexperienced filmmaker). Producing the film, getting all the permissions, was a lot of fun. In very important ways, since this is a-process oriented work, it's part of the backstory of WAX.

Q: I'd like to ask you some questions about the connection between your film and cyberpunk, if only because so much has been made of it in the press. I like your contention that WAX bears a "morphological" connection to cyberpunk -- it's a question of texture and form more than a specific subject matter, isn't it? Or is WAX closer to Bruce Sterling's notion of Slipstream [the liminal zone between science fiction and experimental and avant-garde literature]?

A: Remember that Sterling lists *Gravity's Rainbow* as one of the most important unconscious parents of cyberpunk, so that makes me a lost cousin. When I read Larry McCaffery's intro essay in *Storming the Reality Studio*, the link became pretty clear. I read a bunch of p-modern crit early in WAX, and was happy to do so, since a lot of it seemed to be explaining *Gravity's Rainbow*... at the time I thought, this is exactly the sort of critical description of *Gravity's Rainbow* that I was looking for in '78. I buy Larry's pomo-cyberpunk connection... if it's a matter of texture and form, that's enough. I didn't read any sci-fi during the making of WAX... some people told me to read Gibson, but I skipped it. When I came to the end, and actually did read his books, I realized that "flight simulation" had become cyberspace in the culture... but that's just how things happened with this piece.

Q: So then WAX seems to share a common influential intertext with cyberpunk -- Ballard, Burroughs, Pynchon... who/what else would you cite as influential (both written and filmic), and why?

A: Well, let's see... The Firesign Theatre... early National Lampoon... E.T.A. Hoffman. *It Conquered the World/Zontar the Thing from Venus... Ten Million Years to Earth... Suite 212... Mothlight...*

Q: Another link to cyberpunk seems to be the DIY ethic explicit in your phrase

"independent electronic cinema" -- putting the means of production into the hands of the wrong people, as it were. What's your version of this developing new paradigm of film production? Do you see anyone else doing similar things to your project?

A: Well, first off, electronic media is here... when WAX played at the Public in NYC, there were 2 other video-originated films (whole or major part) playing in commercial theatres. I don't think resolution is the definition. Here's something from a recent panel talk I gave:

Feature-form electronic cinema is a system that directly links huge masses of production data with post-production, and just as importantly, has the potential to integrate disparate post-processes to the point where they can all be operated, in any sequence, at a single node. These processes being image-processing, image synthesis, non-linear editing, and anything sound-wise you might wish for. [main body deleted here, and now the ending] Obviously, one or two years from now I'm not going to find a system that integrates geometry, processing and editing spaces (let's also not forget sound), that lets me use that functionality in any sequence I desire, from a single chair, preferably one that I own. But there will be fewer chairs to leap between... even for me, way down at the bottom of the market... a place where independent electronic cinema is already practical, and will be become increasingly so. There's going to be a whole lot of emergent behaviour. The moving image industry talks about scalability nowadays... how all moving pictures will be digital... the main difference being resolution. My intuition is that with everyone using essentially the same tools at the top and bottom of the market, the lower res' will be the top of the market; a.k.a. moving picture information will be a lot freer.

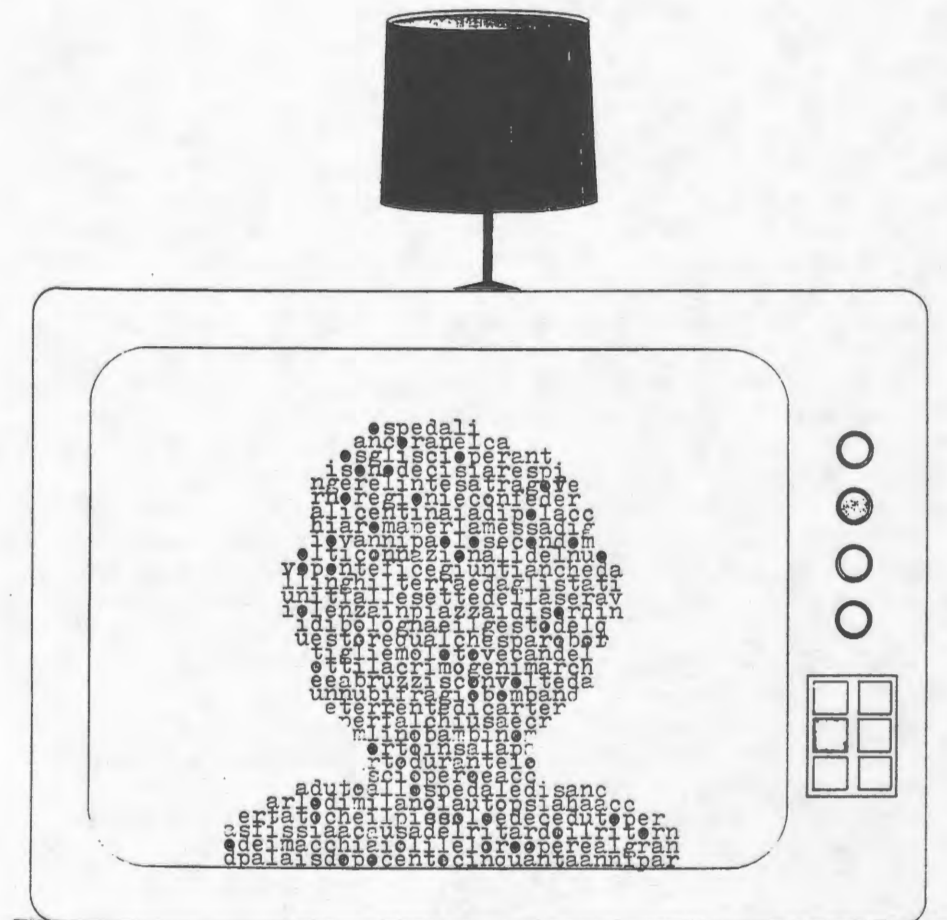
Q: What is your current aesthetic direction?

A: Brooks Landon's point that WAX is not "post" anything but "pre" something currently barely imaginable is well taken, I think. Oh well, anything helps when talking about a very strange, video originated movie to small theatre owners. I'm admiring sci-fi more and more, but the same goes with the slipstream. Landon's new book (*Aesthetics of Ambivalence*) has a very interesting take on the current situation of sci-fi film...now that electronic cinema can visualize what we've read about in strange and fantastic books for years, I like being there... I've got to say that there are probably a lot of pulp cyberpunks who wouldn't like WAX.

Q: What can you tell me about your next project, *Israel In Manchuria*?

A: Actually, it's called *Jews in Space*, now that I've gotten over shyness with that title. It's a remake of *Flatland* (we'll see how it develops). Hopefully a bigger budget, so I can have on-camera dialogue, image layering, and more "processed synthesis."

Note: Though WAX is now available in a widely distributed, commercial form, there is also a signed, numbered edition of 500 VHS copies of the film that may still be available. At one point, there was also a plan to produce a CD-ROM version of the WAXWEB, which may also be available. For these and other potential virtual goodies, write: David Blair, POB 174, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276 USA.



AN EXCERPT FROM *H*

by Philippe Sollers

Translated by Elaine L. Cortis

blue red green yellow a magnificent black crow an immortal priest what trees what tubular reeds i understand now why with my eyes open to the page saw a drawn pupil what nothing saw what nothing nothing some paper color in the pupil fibrous irises dared to eye there they are now unwinding flat out in the halls of the british imperialists the more there are who die the more there are who expose the graves of others but who is more alive when the sun passes through the window panes depressing the contours the incisions of vowels the whistling vases the sudden turnabout of mortal agony bulging columnar the plasma of the stelas the calendars who has the best breath mr and mrs smith dupont the mummies' greenish bag the brain snubbed by a bullet-riddled forehead under their vault the blue Nile echoes whispered from inside nihil close your eyes for two seconds tell me if you smell the wood blazing into a spire say if you seize the escalation the swarming of the stages with an elliptical leap for the good helmsmen all happens as if the episode of the cross had signified closed due to repairs under new ownership and then we have forgotten the reopening as if the new subject was not first the risen one that is to say the one who definitely doesn't give a damn about anything through the ages emerging from a common grave with his little red flag and that is why christianity is a courtesan's tragedy or comedy it depends on the mood of those dying close by at last detour after detour who can maintain that progress in painting still passes for buried artifacts banquets or bathrooms still pass for sexual lapping regaining its rights after the flood with its dove oh slow slow rapid but slow so slow rapid and slow light we are in 2400 or 2200 before i stood exactly in the main niche she looked like she was meant for me which made me shiver in a peculiar way half-superstition half-sincere suddenly for me the scene appeared to turn into superbly rotten half-masticated vomit depicted again in the stomach opened up for the duration in the shadows because there is also the suppressed vomit choked down that no one will ever see the chewing bit by bit entrails upon entrails a tiny bit of the liver on top of a tiny bit of liver and all the broken puppets not to mention the worker shaping the fetishes destined to forge mystery with his sweat basically the master didn't know very much he believed in it maybe the damned fool but who will reveal the short mediations to us and moreover the techniques of those who inflame the territory the powerless yet articulating the power of the powerful of priests today for someone's old lady the priest speaks nasally into his mike beneath the golden dome of saint mark's i'd love to see the peacocks again on the flagstones the incense cascading from the ceiling byzantium byzantium the alabaster of galla placida it seems that dante caught a chill upon returning from an enquiry concerning irrigation coupled with a political mission for many whom he passed along the way he was already the one who had returned the profit having seen and met mothers who showed him to their children like a scarecrow always the mania of only speaking about hell becoming aroused by repression quietly damned dante librum gustavit populis ventura notavit what a sense of the whole in the parts of a whole three three three and from three into three first winged harnessing a long course for the soloist choir with curves i will gladly go and recite a little on a vaporetto on a guidecca or on the grass of the forum in the roman whore's super markets it is told as well that heraclites had set his book down in the temple of artemis a legend since only a logical fire the sum of negation does not leave any remainder by itself without appearing it moves absence within variety so then intelligence seizes intersecting intentions while determining each thing by its negation ad hoc so particularity arises from an annihilation more real than the one whose smoke is a portent so then love's regrets only last a few moments love's pleasure lasts a lifetime minds vanishing within it never cease becoming intelligent mankind attains the light in the dark when he is dead for him vision is extinguished alive he attains death when he sleeps vision is extinguished but he comes in contact with the sleeper when he remains awake the link to turning back is like that of the rocket and the typewriter but they do not understand how he says in agreement what dixit professor of the self differs shit who is it that they all have this style of a marquise your eyes of love it is simple they have not internalized pidgin french hence these manners a kind of latent racism they think they are the greek envoys miracle while myself i say that the link that we see without seeing it is much stronger than the one that we would not know how to see yet as a result off not seeing it leads us to think that there is a link that we do not see which is even the reason why each one is two so that one can sleep who sinks to the bottom you've seen this smile the other with his revolver or his walkie-talkie under his ear immortals mortals living the life of other dead people from the life of others we rise in order to become the guardians of the living of the awakening of the dead yes it is with this intention that i have taken you on this walk you're sorry of course not a bet is a bet let's see then we call that a bet by night okay but why does he say that the most beautiful of monkeys is ugly why did he not say that the ugliest of monkeys was beautiful better still that the monkiest of monkeys would not know how to be either beautiful or ugly objection accepted why he says transforming himself does he rest and not immediately resting he transforms himself there it is you have the method the same one is then living and dead living dying waking and sleeping being young and old for

those are these in tilting backwards and these those voila there she is the sibyl with passionate lips screwing up her face as she speaks overcomes a thousand years with her voice listen the lips of the hysteric are our radar you can observe them the slightest variation of temperature a pout the indication of a bloody meal inevitably she impressed the ancients immediately you bind the accomplice in chains the master to whom the oracle belongs doesn't say doesn't hide he indicates and in this way keeps his job which shows much more cunning than to say definitely and to hide definitely without indicating anything an attitude that his contemporaries rarely appreciate and that the future suppresses okay these old whatits are a little overrated eh and the commentaries are not easily twisted in different directions it would seem that they restore the atoms at home it has a whiff of the fumes of a fireplace the feel of a slipper the look of a rare edition or a scholarly catalogue i have nothing against it but the reverse isn't true to think that even stalin cited heraclites by way of lenin of course himself by way of lasalle die philosophie heraklitos des dunklen von ephesos berlin 1858 it was he by way of hegel he again decidedly we will never budge because we have not sufficiently drummed it into our heads well enough this joke you don't rush for it except oulianov in his little swiss library during the first world war we can't say that anyone became very weary try to imagine the moment when he wrote down with heaven in the margin hear his laughter ha ha when it is a matter of our lord look at him to release self-movement to resolve the matter of the subject positioned outside above an intense moment complete solitude the expectations of the masses and basically the more vast the more accelerated the closer it is to the life-size the more tightly-packed it is in short you'd think history would end up being at the same time infinity and a billionth of a grain of rice a mustard seed the chinese have fantastic titles the dense forest of brushwork the book of the asian court a snare of red jade pearls of the three depths springs and autumns it seemed that houei che leaned on a small table made from a plane tree before starting to speak color is not form form is not color in speaking about color we should not mingle it with form in speaking about form we should not mingle it with color it is not permitted to call the linked by the not-linked white which is already destined for something is no longer white and other propositions all more obvious than the previous ones what is miraculous is more precisely what is not miraculous lourdes is not a chinese town the adoration of the crutch is not part of their daily diet whereas for us when will the season of the cherries return what should we do the wine is ready in the wine cellar we should drink it like all kinds of processes free delicatessen warmed shameful anus extraction of teeth of the reddened gutters canines under the bolsters mama mama call me your roast pig of course you are my roast pig in short we try to advance within it as if in a thunderstorm we pilot with two hands while flying a kite supple string i am the dna i am the ma of transference i aim at myself my target aims at me i target my aim curious how an animal can have an erection in his sleep while he is being carved up how he feels at the same time a compressed gaseous unity arranged within this apparently insolvable contradiction he awakens his brain grumbles the facts are stubborn it is public knowledge that artificial insemination is a current practice today for cattle the sperm of bulls is preserved at very low temperature for several years and is often used only after its death why then not set up banks of human sperm resembling banks of fighting bulls this step was taken by the cow corporation with a price of admittance of 80 dollars about 400 francs it is enough to pay 18 dollars a year or 90 francs so that the corporation preserves at the temperature of liquid nitrogen three test tubes containing the semen a child was born recently from sperm preserved for ten years we sense the urgent need for legislation some women could be tempted in effect to seek semen of eminent men from the local branch it would be a new form of eugenism in other cases an impregnation could be directed and even imposed by political leaders based on a scientific plan consanguine cross-breedings would become likely then that is why we are already induced to register the pedigree of cows on computers the new christian household incarnates in a way the holy trinity or else the most geometrical truth of the triangle we keep our eye on this eternal symbol since in the end could you demonstrate the contrary if triangles had a god wouldn't it not have three sides strange enough as well that in the regressus infinitum of the hen and the egg we keep the moment of the cock the intrinsic meaning of the cock-a-doodle-do the bird reveals all its varied feathers when mating and after shlick gray nest in a brooder well we could suppose that since time immemorial it has seemed tedious to them not at all clinging to a raft like medusas flies in honey enraptured wasps even a fire engine could not separate them by chance they start again or rather the only solution is to hand over solemnly to the female her ancient right the absolute weapon whenever she likes she will not need to anticipate she will be able to choose when to give out effusively within the taught diagonal of an orgy consequently i suggest planning right now a central region of reproduction composed right to the bones of exposed female interests international assemblies of smooth-talking fathers a stock exchange of proper nouns sale purchase indexing of the finance commission simultaneously with the development of unsettled peripheral zones and the normalization of diverse



SPUR

"THE DAY BEFORE YOU LOOKED THROUGH ME"

by Cathy de Monchaux

"The Day Before You Looked Through Me" incorporates the use of photography on a monumental scale. A digitally manipulated image, 3.8m high x 6.3m wide, shows a deserted railway station after an important ceremony. An abandoned red carpet on the platform, folded by the winds and sodden from the rain, spirals onto the tracks; the lights of a train can just be seen, arriving over the horizon. This stark, melancholic image reminds the viewer that the activity of travel involves expectation, disappointment and celebration. The perspex placed over the image reflects gazing viewers who can see themselves inserted into the tableaux, standing on a red carpet, awaiting a journey of their own.

Cathy de Monchaux, born in 1960, studied at Camberwell School of Art and Goldsmiths College in London. She is particularly well known as a sculptor who produces objects that create an air of disquiet in the viewer through an elegant combination of materials balanced in opposition; velvet and leather gripped in bronze talons, glass and paper balanced against steel.

She has shown extensively in this country and abroad including recent one person exhibitions in Milan, Vienna, Paris, Zurich, New York and last year's successful exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London.

Her work is widely collected and is in many private and public collections including the Tate Gallery, Sculpture at Goodwood, British Council, Arts Council of England and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo.



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"The Day Before You Looked Through Me" is supported by Nexus, ABSA, North Tyneside Arts, Northern Arts, Arts Council of England and the Henry Moore Foundation. Locus + directors: Jon Bewley & Simon Herbert.

4 POEMS BY by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

LOSS

Russia has lost
Russia
in Russia
Russia searches for itself,
like a cut finger in the snow,
like a needle in a haystack,
like an old blind woman
madly searching for her hands in fog
searching with hopeless incantation
for her lost milk cow.
We burned up our icons.
We didn't believe
in our great books.
We fight only with alien grievances.
Is it true
that we didn't survive
under our own yoke,
becoming for ourselves
worse than all foreign enemies?
Is it true
that we are doomed to live
only in the silk nightgown of dreams,
eaten by flattering-chattering moths?
or in numbered prison robes?
Is it true that epilepsy
is our national character?
or convulsions of pride?
or convulsions of self-humiliation?
Ancient rebellions against new copper
kopeks,
against such foreign fruits
as potatoes --
now only a harmless dream.
Today rebellion
swamps the entire Kremlin,
like a mortal tide.
Is it true that we Russians
have only one unhappy choice --
The ghost of Tzar Ivan the Terrible?
Or the ghost of Tzar Chaos?
So many impostors.
Such imposterity.
Everyone is a leader,
but no one leads.
We are confused as to which banners
and slogans to carry.
And there is such fog in our heads
that everyone is wrong
and everyone is guilty
in everything.
We have already walked enough
in such fog,
in blood up to our knees.
Lord, we've been punished enough.
Forgive us,
pity us.
Is it true that we no longer
exist?
Or are we not yet born?
We are birthing now.
But it's so painful
to be born again.

Translated by James Ragan
with the author

PATCHWORK QUILT

Scrap
by scrap
Granny put the quilt together for us
and to this day I remember the kindness
with which the quilt was endowed.
Patches gleamed red,
like glowing coals,
and radiated gold,
like the honeyed eyes of bears,
exhaled blue,
as do corn flowers in a field,
and darkened black,
like the tatters of night.
I didn't come to Siberia like the
meteorite,
and was myself, in Zima's chimney
corners,
sheltered from blizzards by a rainbow of
patch-work,
and was myself, like a small patch-work,
all in tiny flowers.
Scrap
by scrap
we somehow gathered Russia together,
sewing into her mighty scraps of
melancholy
and into her strength
scraps of impotence.
False ideals ripped us asunder,
and without mercy,
senselessly mocking our homeland,
like a quilt,
we tear our ideals into shreds,
And above the again ravished land,
as if once more at the beginning,
once more at a crossroads,
nothing but ashes of unending
holocaust --
miserable scraps of banners and
destinies.
Salvation will not come down from
Moscow --
it will rise in the heartland
together with wheat, potatoes and rye.
Salvation will be slow,
made of scraps
but the scraps will grow onto each other.
Farewell empire!
Long live, Russia!
Rule Russia,
but only over yourself.
Amidst our clashes, shelter the children
with a destiny,
like Granny's quilt, made from
patchwork.
To the gentle singing of the stove pipe,
I so want
to press myself into Granny's
patchwork,
so that she can sew Russia together anew
scrap
by scrap...

Written and read for the
bicentennial of Zima Junction
Translated by Albert C. Todd

MONOLOGUE OF AN EFFIGY

When my charitable fellow-writers
were burning my effigy
and not poking my guts with their
pocket-knives -- thank God!
They wasted on me
their bottle of gasoline in vain,
because I had already
burnt myself down to ashes.
Inhaling the charming aroma of human
shit
near the wooden outhouse,
I was minding
radishes, garlic and onions.
I had stuck up too long as a romantic
scarecrow,
clumsily trying to embrace the world
with my stiff pine hands.
I was stuffed with straw,
I never noticed
how life was changing,
and how arrogantly sparrows were
behaving.
I was burnt as punishment
because of my dangerous talent
for being so readily inflammable
in politics and love.
Only my charred framework was saved
in the clouds of smoke,
but the fire couldn't altogether destroy
my hands.
In the cinders of myself I was slowly
dying,
But my black stumps
desperately wanted
to embrace, to embrace, to embrace.
And when one of my brother-writers
struck another match,
I heard his envious whisper:
"Scarecrow, you wanted too much, my
dear!
A great role in history
is not for you.
Trying to tower over the turnips and
cabbages,
you pretended to be a genius."
And with my last, almost dead blue
flame,
I sputtered like a torched fireman,
who couldn't save himself from the fire.
All my medals of honor
were melted like buttons.
If the Soviet Union were burnt down,
why couldn't they burn me?
And when so-called patriots
splashed the rest of the gas on my
effigy,
and one nightingale from Army
headquarters
sang sadistically through his nostrils,
one unembraceably humongous woman
street cleaner
was sweeping up my ashes with her
tender broom.
And all the saccharine ladies
and sleazy, vaselined intellectuals
were coolly observing
my last convulsions,
and some of my comrades-in-arms,
the noblest of my generation,
threw the finest oil onto the fire --
their greasy goodbye.
My beloved, what are you searching for
in the field of ashes?
My heart if it survived after all,
was probably not empty, but still able to
love,
not forgetting it too was loved.
1992
Translated by Geoffrey Dutton and
Albert Todd with the author

EMPTY SWINGS

In Zima Junction
houses somehow sleep unquietly,
shutters fidget,
the gates as well,
and to the mumbling of the chaff,
and the groaning of a wattle fence,
as though somewhere someone's head
is heavy from sleeplessness,
there is heard:
*creak--creak--creak...
The history of our age has been written
and we turned up in the postscript,
grasping at the clumps of Russian land
that slip out of our hands.
In Zima Junction
the night creaking is more frightening
than the creaking
frozen well-winches of my childhood.
Above our former selves,
above our former great state,
above the trains,
which ran off the tracks,
for some reason a kind of vibration
from rusty friction
whines and squeals,
almost like a puppy.
And a fired cleaning-woman
watches with pity
how the wind mops over
the iron rings, rusted with hurt,
and the ropes, worn right through,
on the swings of my boarded-up
kindergarten.
This abyss of oblivion
is my peak.
Creak--creak--creak...
As though the river was without fish,
the heavens without birds,
kindergarten without children.
How will we,
Zima Junction,
survive this misfortune?
We are opening orphanages
and closing kindergartens.
This endangered tribe --
Russian Mohicans
pours rot-gut into its glass.
Brains leak,
hearts leak.
Creak--creak--creak...
There is a key,
(only it's hidden now,) to a Resurrected Russia,
where the swings are not empty,
where a tiny little sandle,
slipping off,
flies to infinity,
longing for children.
Childless people
turn up unnoticed at death,
and its terrible to see
how above the cemetery of dead ideals
the desperate wind pushes only the
ghosts
of Russian children,
who died before birth.
My people, are you dead or mortally
sick?
Creak--
creak--
creak...

Translated by Victor Peppard
with the author

AFTER IMAGES

A Poem Sequence by Nigel Spencer

FLOURISH

The bewildered
bull --not
caring to

charge
the cape,

scarcely flinching
as the darts
and spears

sprouted
in him--

twitched
his ears,
soon to be

manhandled
ornaments.

Their assault so
listless and petulant,
he at last

obliged them--
knee by
bended
knee-- as
though bored

to death
(Barcelona, 1950)

CONAKRY, 4 JULY 1985.

I.
Lazing casually away
to second-choice
trees for now,
ragged vultures

leave littered
cemetery to pigs
and snipers,
barely aware of

herding each other
in tightening circles
around the transmitter,
Kalashnikovs ripping

and snapping, nothing
like the movies.
Maybe a stray bullet:
if not a rebel,

then a pig to sell
to Christians whose
ancestors it's been
grazing anyway.

Remote-controlled chaos
by sniggering
French who've splashed
posters of their

designated dictator
in the coup that
still has
not happened.

II.

At home, the colonel,
still humiliated
as Minister of
Education, chokes

on the pili-pili,
caught short by the
broadcast of his own
victory cassette.

Condemned he is
to catch up, and
when the shelling's
stopped (smoking

black hole in the
T.V. library, tapes
spewed like
ribboned guts)

only the old
lunatic asylum
is intact,
smiling hazily
on the thousand
street-picnics
that last see him
alive, grovelling

and whining
in underpants
and chains

on national T.V.

CONAKRY, 11 NOVEMBER, 1986

Sun-blind
behind the
Hotel Kaloum

is a bleached
plaster slab
dusted red

FROM THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO ALL HER MARTYRS OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM

but as
Mitterand's
glittering

Concordes
touch down
with his

canopy bed
and gilt
escritoire,

beach-sandalled
black soldiers
(having sanitized

the dictators villa)
get white-wash
and new orders

**FROM THE REPUBLIC OF
GUINEA TO ALL HER MARTYRS**

to make a
fresh
start

SHERBROOKE, 1989

In the next-
to-pro league,
the players
drew blood,
hoping to be
noticed.

The game was gone,
and when the
visiting captain
-- a Japanese
skated out,
the organ-player
taunted him with
Chinese ditties,

forgetting the
"Yamaha"
printed
on his
own back.

PRAGUE, 1990

Our secretariat
reported a small,
greying man
about fifty

who'd been
badgering them
timidly,
persistently

for anything in
English: a
crash-course
preferably.

"you see, I used to
teach Marxism-
Leninism: please, for
God's sake, hurry!"

DEAD-END, 1996

The union
president
left
by
the back,

climbed
into his
four-wheel
drive and

drove twenty-
five meters,
then parked,
climbed down

and (looking
first left,
then right)
sneaked

into the next
building to
moon-lite.

**"MAHMAUNDAH ASIN"
(COMING TOGETHER STONE)**

From *The Story Teller's Lodge*

by Rolland Nadjiwon

Are we not always what we appear to be when we look into a 'good-morning' or 'bad-morning' mirror? Are there other conditions of being far beyond the horizons of our limited perceptions? Is our mirror an illusion or an allusion to some 'other' into which mathematics and physics cannot venture. An 'other' where dialectics are disqualified by their own reduction to tautological redundancies and the spirits of the primitive, as in times before, become again our guides?

Werner Heisenberg, in 1926, showed that one can never be exactly certain of the position and velocity of a particle; the more accurately one knows the one, the less accurately one can know the other. Thus, there can be no predictable state of the universe if its present state cannot be determined or measured. Theoretical physicists agreed, instead, that there existed a 'quantum state'--a combination of both position and velocity (Hawking 54-56). Science has thus left us in a position (if I might use that word) of indeterminacy in an indeterminable universe. We remain as we have always been; in a variable world in which matter can be matter; matter can be non-matter; matter which is both, and non-matter which can behave in the same manner as matter. Primitive peoples have always lived in, and described in their respective traditions, a sacred transmutable world--a limitless universe of shape-shifters, tricksters, transmigrations, and spirits. It is science which has nailed us solidly to the burden of its own cross.

Now I will tell my story. It is a story about what one might call a dream world. But it must be remembered that, to our people who are called Indians, there is no difference--no barrier, no 'this world that world' no 'dreaming' and 'non-dreaming'. We simply move around in our lives with all of its parts together--a quantum state, as per Heisenberg. In this so called 'dream' I am about to tell, there is no time. Its linearity is imparted only as a by-product of narrative language which will give it the sensation of time as a constant stream. That, too, is illusion.

In this time and place of which I tell, I was both outside and inside a rectangular glass box rotating and careening through a deep navy blue space. The me inside the box appeared in human form. The me outside the box was an awareness in which there were suns, galaxies, nebulae, swirling clouds of space gases and dust gyrating in a cosmic fireworks. The glass box was a part of it. From outside the box I could see my physical presence postured with my left foot drawn up under my right knee. My left arm and hand were placed close against my left side. My right arm was drawn up with my right hand pillowing my head. My eyes were closed and I was very still. I could have been sleeping.

That glass box, with me inside and outside, was gyrating through space, moving endlessly toward a deep, dark, navy blue nowhere. From without the glass box, I could feel the tiredness of my inside posture. It was a so long tiredness. I wanted it to stop. I wanted to move--to be where things could begin and, right now, most of all end.

Abruptly, the box stopped in an upright position. Consciousness coalesced out of the deep, dark, navy blue space into the form inside the box like small flashes of electricity. Familiarity moved consciously inside me like a warm. My body trembled. I felt movement. My eyes opened. Moving, seeing felt good--very familiar. I knew this had all happened again at another time.

Motionless but still suspended in deep, dark, navy blue space, the cosmos continued its gyrations around and past me. Because I was now constant all else moved at blinding speed. What had been synchronous was a blur of exploding lights flashing and streaking through the half dark. I had the sensation of separating, disengaging. I became intuition, perception, emotional uncertainty. The feeling carried with it a brief sadness perhaps innate to the wisdom of fleeting epiphanies.

Slowly, silently, the glass wall in front of me opened slowly outward disclosing a grey-blue not-yet-morning light. It contained no cosmos, only a not-yet morning light. The other three sides still enclosed outside the glass box suns, galaxies, nebulae, spinning clouds of gasses and cosmic dust in sheets of cosmic lightning toward an endless endless.

I moved, then, not knowing why, I hesitated before I stepped out into the grey-blue of the not-yet-morning light. Like a soft I began to drift gently in a downward. After a time my awareness extended and spread around me and I felt another something beside me drifting downward also.

With the sensation of another life, I thought "Who are you?"... "I opened the door for you." was matter-of-factly conveyed to me. "You were tired."

We drifted down for a timeless. Out of the not-yet-morning light we touched onto a large rock in the middle of a river. Downward we continued drifting until we

"Sound Leaves" Fernando Andolcetti (Italy)



were inside the rock. There were no boundaries, no definitions. There was no rock, just another floating.

Years later we often spoke of the time of the dreaming, of time with its own memory, and always with our own good laughter.

Now, today, in the middle of a river far up in northern Ontario there is a rock that is ancient, mysterious and sacred--mahmaundah asin--'together stone' it is named by our anishnabe people. It is told that a long time ago, two spirits, both male, came down from the clouds and lay on a certain rock. Where they lay they made sleeping places; then they went inside the rock. The old people say the spirits in this rock have no names. The old people say those two spirits are still there.

With the many influences from outside the people, some now believe that rock to contain spirits that are evil. The old people say the young people are starting to forget. They don't respect the old ways anymore. One time a young man, when he was out hunting, stopped at that rock. The water was pretty low. That young man, he walked out onto that rock and pissed on it. He pissed all over where the two spirit beings had lain. The old people shake their heads about such stories. That was a sacred place and both mushkeego inninihwug and anishnabe inninihwug used that rock as a place for visions. The people used to put gunpowder, tobacco, or food on that rock for the spirits, sometimes, even candy.

There are other stories also--different stories about that same rock. Some of the old people say that two or three spirits came down the river in a canoe. Their canoe bumped into that rock knocking a notch into it. The spirits got out of their canoe and walked up that rock leaving marks where their feet touched down on it. Two of the spirits lay down on the rock and where they lay their bodies left impressions; then they went inside the rock and stayed there.

There must be some truth to these Indian stories since it is mentioned by white explorers who discovered us back around 1766, that there is a strange stone the Indians call 'mahmaundah asin'. Most often they, the explorers, called it 'the Indian stone.'

Physically, the rock, according to George Thorman's article in The Beaver, Summer 1969, is:

...roughly 17 feet long, 11 feet broad, and 5 1/2 feet high. At the upriver end is a notch. There are six depressions which resemble foot-prints on the north side and on the south side two large depressions resembling sleeping places which are quite comfortable to lie in. The notch, the footprint-like depressions and the two sleeping places are natural formations in the rock.

Our people say, "kegit, of course they are natural--nothing in nature happens that is not natural." Of course, that is hard to explain to someone who is not natural.... kegit na?

A Double-hulled Waka by Robert Sullivan

Which begins as they do telling stories-
from heavenly Moeraki where, parked,
I gazed at a big wall of sea and sky,
earth a ledge beneath a bright veil crossing
Paradise. A Western Paradise true
to its own logic, boulders parked like stops
across the text. My head filled with heaven,
I drove and drove, wheel in my hands bouncing.
The image bounced round inside me for years
like a prayer-wheel powered by water
coming out of the ground through me - spring
filled with eels nibbling my insides. Maui's
tuna of the meiosis, wrestling his
descent, his own meiosis, the people.

And the next story beginning a line
dangling from glow worms on lime formations,
points of light fishing for winged insects
on hope - for moon, sun, stars - not devouring
worms. They live in darkness, manufacture
their own light. They possess beauty their fans
die like lovers for. I know these lovers,
felt the breeze raise a veil from a sunset
internalised. Lime spears caverns. Worm mouths.
Each bit a wriggle along existence.
Grandiose. A stretch across plates for salt.
Dissembled in the gut, shared out to senses,
tissue, organic stuff, all contribute
to each chemical and animal light.

Scales of light vary, measuring speed, lux,
changes: physicists think we are stardust.
Down to a person. Massive and modest
stars recycled in the cosmos - we are
reassembled versions of long dead stars.

Now science imitates art. Once artists
were scientists too. Today vice versa.

Da Vinci, for example, observed candles,
designed helicopters. Today, the Beeb
ran a story about a scientist
exhibiting pictures of molecules:

a silk molecule next to a silk dress;
chlorophyll next to a plant. Everything
a collection of tiny connections.

For beauty has delightful components.

The molecule of water sliding by
molecules of waka, powered by breeze
molecules in muscles, on sails - its scales
notes on the firmament, melodious
oration, song, rhythm of pahu, flute,
feet braced on boards swinging torso, elbow,
thought. This thought passed down lengths of men
through earth -

we came by waka, we leave by waka,
pass it on. The influences of wind
on waves can be immense, high walls scraping
valleys in the heart, constricting throats. Crews
scraped themselves, bled prayers, so holiness
remained - a caravan on dry seabed.

ii.

Contents of waka huia, treasure chest,
are highly prized. "Waka huia" on tv,
a Maorie language show, has just broadcast
its 400th episode - preserving
eloquence, movement, airs, graces, noblesse
of our leaders, finest men and women,
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To understand one's culture one must speak
the language of its poetry, world
philosophy, reach untranslated
ambiguities. For language deals out
meaning. Meaning is the star above our
species. Specifically, our waka

follows this. Meaning is food for chiefs.

Succulent hearts steaming in hot ovens
of earth. The land fortified a thousand
years with our blood. We grew tall here. We must
reclaim gifts of mouth, example. Faces
must drink in faces, lap up, ripple, splash
each other. Make moko in the wrinkles,
warriors for our selves, for our people,
leaping from pits into bright daylight
defying the culture of the death
of our culture. Spray out its narrative
with whakairo. In many places
we share ancestry, jokes, communities
of spirit grown up over settlement -

and so this 90 line waka has in it
my thousandth line, Maori and Pakeha,
stars, knowledge of places passed in a breath -

but only lines glide here on salt water,
come out in commanding the stroke - again,
stroke again, stroke, stroke, stroke again, again...

SALAMANDER DREAMS

by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm

salamander dreams
cream
manitougeezis
fish head soup
sanctity
hummingbird song
hummingbirds
zenith
luminous
some memories are like words spoken
after the summer rains
succulence
a sweet taste of plum
more than skindeep

wilderness
love letter, not sent
your thoughts, i imagined, as you were
leaving me
winter desert
silence
oasis
forgiveness
songs to my wild horses
maybe my love
movements
delirious
spring
one year
spring equinox
owl song
love healing
rainbows

rain into me
calm, the storm
partridge song
mukwa
spring fever
daughter of Pele
rainstorm in volcano
red sky
sanctuary

loon song



"Chiapas" by Clemente Padin



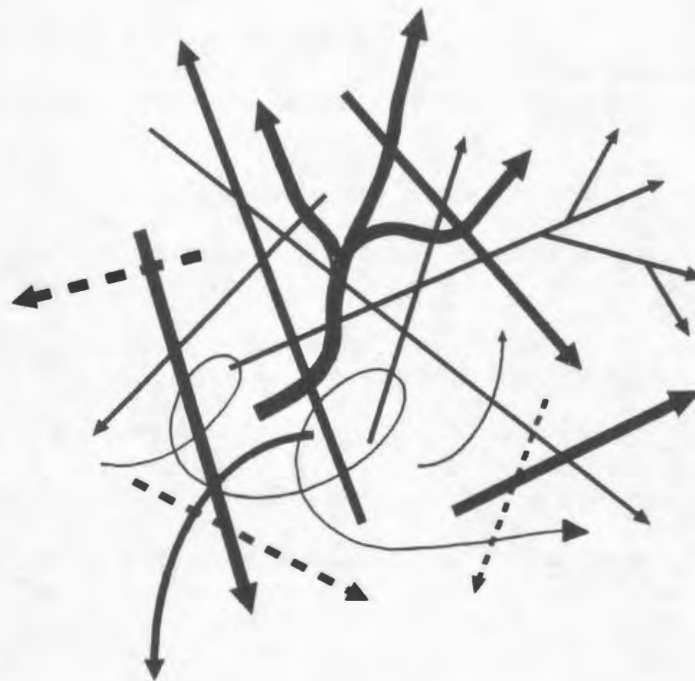
YEARS OF RESISTANCE Padin

PARA-GARDIST PICTO-MANIFESTO

Suggesting an Inclusionary Milieu
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The Avant-Garde



The Para-Garde

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CLASSICAL DISUNITIES: DIS/P(A)LACE

by Mel Freilicher

Between the kitchen and the destroyed chapel a door led into an oval-shaped library. The space inside seemed safe except for a large hole at portrait level in the far wall, caused by mortar-shell attack on the villa two months earlier. The rest of the room had adapted itself to this wound, accepting the habits of weather, evening stars, the sounds of birds. There was a sofa, a piano covered in a grey sheet, the head of a stuffed bear and a high wall of books. The shelves nearest the torn wall bowed with the rain, which had doubled the weight of the books. Lightning came into the room too, again and again, falling across the covered piano and carpet.

Alice sat in the window alcove in the English patient's room, the painted walls on one side of her, the valley on the other. She opened the book. The pages were joined together in a stiff wave. She felt like Crusoe finding a drowned book that had washed up and dried itself on the shore. *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje. As in all the best books, there was the important page with the list of illustrations, a line of text for each of them.

She entered the story knowing she would emerge from it feeling she had been immersed in the lives of others, in plots that stretched back twenty years, her body full of sentences and moments, as if awaking from sleep with a heaviness caused by unremembered dreams.

A frieze comes to life, unbeknownst to all the audience. In it, ancient lewd goings-on: different yet the same as today. Playing with red dildoes, smack dab into the hands of preordained questions with no answers.

Still, both then and now to anyone with vision, which excludes the inherently myopic rich naturally, it was painfully obvious that basically there's no winning. At best, there's doing the right thing (though luck helps)--making the most of historical circumstance.

As the play opens, Agamemnon is returning to the etched second city, after a decade of continual war. With appropriately vacuous praise, cunning Clytemnestra lures her husband to his netted extinction. Drawing rutted and bloodied veils, nevertheless Clytemnestra is unprepared for the untempered sharpness of her own mournful cry. Suddenly, the future stretches before a stupefied Alice like so many fixed shoe sizes (that fit like a glove).

Why tumble down that old rabbit hole anyway? Everything was lost so long ago. On a faraway, bleak island, where a scared deer was felled and the winds stopped.

This is not to suggest the absence of prolonged tragedy, heartfelt and grievous. Only that once the sacrosanct animal was slain, nothing further was avoidable: a predictable, multi-generational cycle of merciless yet entirely justifiable revenge murders.

Early on, Agamemnon was advised (perhaps maliciously, as the film suggests) that to stir the winds and send his fleets to crimson theatres of war, he must sacrifice his budding, virginal daughter. Wistful in white; utterly resolute to obey. Holy Iphigeneia moves, flutters up the mountainside, to the enormous pyre which her father had erected.

Iphigeneia's mother, Clytemnestra, is rendered helpless in the darkest, loudest of frenzies: Irene Pappas in the superb Cacoyannis film shreds all life into ribbons of consummating fire. The rationalist dispassionately remarks upon the archetypal alignment of victims: women and gay man--Achilles was falsely named as fiance, to lure mother and daughter to this desolate sea-rock.

Much later, the same rationalist offhandedly reveals that he spent long months at age 3 quarantined, not expected to live. Lying in a hospital bed, staring through foggy windows at the once-in-a-lifetime snow in April. So he also became a poet; a heterosexual poet of reason. (Some, affectionately, say to a fault.)

Clytemnestra fervently wished to believe it would all end with her slaying the ogre-man who took her daughter's life. However, this canny queen realized that while it might be a snap to get away with slaughtering the mistress whom Agamemnon had been tacky enough to schlep along from Troy, surely nothing in the world could prevent their son Orestes from seeking to avenge his father's death, with her own. Treacherous father; perfidious mother; murderous son.

The mistress, Cassandra, flatly foresaw all doom. Certainly, the chorus has been madly concurring, for what seems like light years now:

The citizens speak: their voice is dulled with hatred.

The curse of the people must be paid for.

There lurks for me in the hooded night

terror of what may be told me.

The gods fail not to mark

those who have killed many.

The black Furies stalking the man

fortunate beyond all right

wrench back again the set of his life

and drop him into darkness. There among

the ciphers there is no more comfort
in power. And the vaunt of high glory
is bitterness; for God's thunderbolts
crash on the towering mountains.
Let me attain no envied wealth,
let me not plunder cities,
neither be taken in turn, and face
life in the power of another.

Nor does our benighted rationalist hold much hope for mankind. None to reluctantly, and only mildly dyspeptically, he comments how it really all began and ended before the play did: when Agamemnon's father fucked his brother's wife and kicked him off the throne. Also undocumented in this particular trilogy is Agamemnon's illustrious sire murdering tender nieces and nephews. Then serving them in a concealing dish: their own father unknowingly nibbles seasoned finger-food baby flesh.

So what's with people's out-of-control Oedipal hungers anyway? Baffled scholars over the ages and pan-globally drily continue inquiries. (But as you might imagine, only a handful of them ever "get wet.") Alice and this reporter, too, are all ears!

Wherever you pinpoint the initial, arguably unavoidable, transgression, it clearly takes generations to rectify it, and endlessly subsequent violent disruptions of the delicate balance of power: agreed-upon conditions for coexistence with the gods. Further, our bloated rationalist reminds us, these characters do not create their own fates, but are merely its executors: thankfully, Aeschylus existed prior to "tragic flaw."

Finally, speculation arises as to why rationalist has saucily swooped into centre stage. Which important agent or editor did he blow and/or bribe? That dude's a real gone networker. Alice half expects to see allegedly rational one as jester: flying around tragically punning, waving red dildo. Just like good old days!

Meanwhile, you can catch us literary children in county jail. Or voiceless ragamuffins, furious in the streets. More likely, admittedly trying not to (not) notice ourselves keeping a slightly bemused eye just a mite too long on one of the several Shopping Channels "Chatty Mop" shows, from way deep inside a comfy home tucked away somewhere vaguely respectable.

Luckily, Alice could still chuckle at the very thought of tv, and even at the melancholic yearning for the spontaneous which it continues to provoke. She soon grew tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do but indulge in dire predictions. Once or twice she peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it no longer had any pictures or conversations in it at all, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or conversation?'

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and "picking the daisies," when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

Now, there was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way when momentarily the rabbit closely resembled a wholly redundant Bob Dole repulsively emitting, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late to witness the execution!"

But when the randy rabbit drew a pocket watch out of his lightly checkered waistcoat, the earth exploded for a long literary while. (However, it seemed rather pointless, cruel even, for the rabbit to ostentatiously set it by Big Ben, which happened to be dominating the imperial shipwreck woodcut.)

"The utopian dream is the beginning and end of my prayers--and I am not a praying man," declares Poppa Bear. "Nor do I believe in progress," he adds snootily. Then Poppa futilely tries to blow down the door of the oval shaped library, or take some other kind of action in it.

Momma coyly gestures to her erstwhile and extra harsh husband that actually the library has no door. "Cannibalism, poppies, lovely Georgian settees. It's all the same to me," she roundly asserts. "I'm the lucky one," Momma Bear insists, "I disappear into books."

At being decisively beaten (to the punch) like that, a parched rationalist sinks back to contemplate the Millennial drizzle. ("Different yet the same as today," is murmured.)

Damn! Don't you think Alice enlarges her prospects? Right there, along with that holy hole in old chapel wall. Swingin' her hips like a supple pickaxe. Singing bloody blue murder, before another consumptive costume drama comes crashing in.

Currently cogitating on hunky Henry James, Momma Bear practically devours selective parts of his magnificent oeuvre. "Yum!...He's my God," she lazily declaims.

Doing a series of backwards adverbial flips, tipsy and oblivious, at least one main character is seriously considering ("becoming") someone else's hot and fashionably abusive daddy.

My advice? Keep sniffin' round the 19th century, squirtin' young rut. Have you tried the fantastic *Villette* yet? Why? Because... I saw the harbor lights. And, believe me, they're weeping.



The irregular aspect of Nature and her discontinuous side, which have been real monstrosities to science for a number of years at a mathematical level, come at last outdoors and are studied through the geometry of fractals. Now that it's been looked for, CHAOS seems to be everywhere, from the spirals of smoke of a cigarette which break into irregular spires to the dripping faucet passing from a regular rhythm to a chaotic one. These and other aperiodic and now linear movements are clear examples of turbulence, which is at the basis of the study and the revealing visual representation of the strange attractors. Strange not because unusual (in reality they are incredible incomprehensible).
-- Ruggero Maggi

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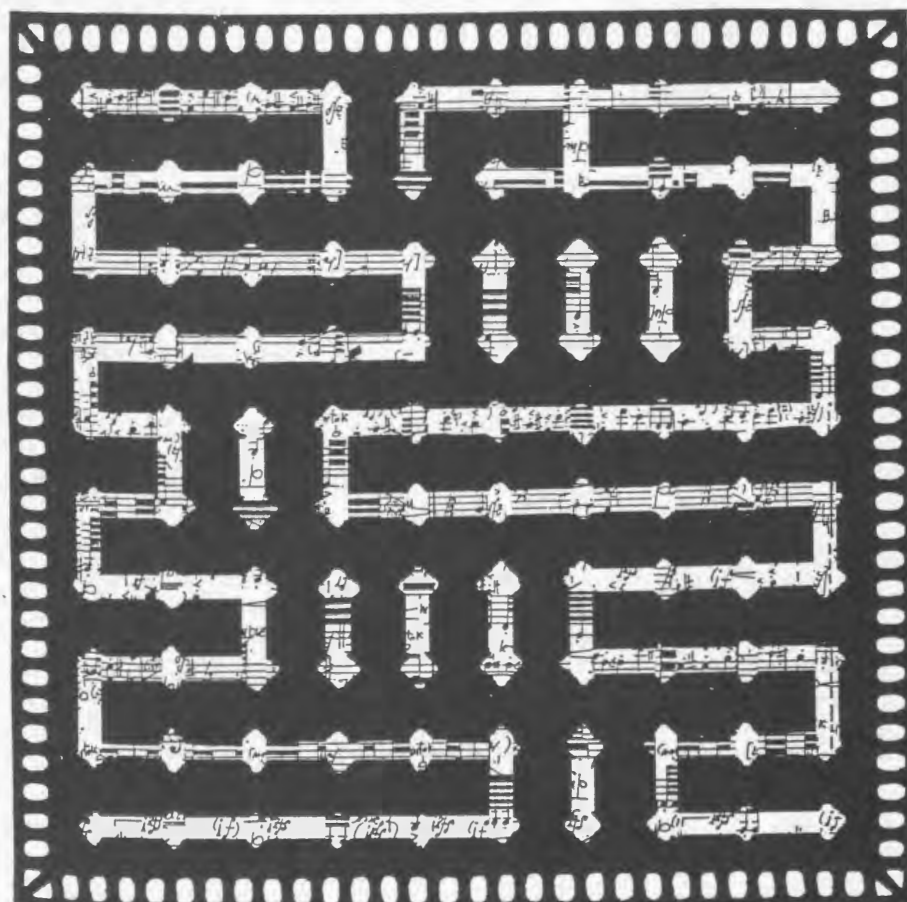
par Richard Martel

The following text is an excerpt from a longer piece created by performance artist Richard Martel. In juxtaposing voice with rock-music composed by musician Dominique Dubois, Martel's stentorian vocalizations generate a contrapuntal percussive polyphony. The following text is to be read out loud with intensity and energy...

depuis les sociétés organisées le rapport au monde est envisagé par soubresauts et périple divergents. L'oignon rend la dissolubilité relative des organisations logiques. L'aventure court le risque poétique, diphtongue, emmagasinement. Discorde même par l'axe méthodologique; par-dessus l'emphase tuberculeux et aléatoire du discours le nuage rend l'âme, d'autant plus qu'il n'en faut pour qu'une énonciation devienne lieu et s'abâtardise, se ramifie jusque dans l'ordre procédurier. La vision conceptuelle s'amointri au galop du langage; il n'y a de critère que dans ses ramifications conjointes. Il faut tout dire des choses et d'autres s'ajoutent encore. Plus rien ne veut plus rien dire pour autant que la parole se chasse, comme l'individu, simulacre et adventice. Puis le règne de l'animal soluble dans l'aire et l'eau, refroidi jusqu'à ses muscles rejaillis et pudibonds. La rocaille se fêlure et sa peau se tisse en éventail, il n'y a

de rapport au moineau que son allusion.

♦ perdue alors l'acte d'écrire, comme un éclaircissement solidaire suave et sutué. Les émanations de l'interdisciplinarité en rapport aux phénomènes ordinaires sont des esquimaux dans des verres de métal. Il n'y a de longitude qu'objectale, ruban de soi aluordi du clignement des yeux; comme un gros épouvantail, désmesuré. à l'approche de son ombre, ses traces s'atténuent. Dans la logique de la démesure s'installe l'étalon double, sortilège viscéral pour des joueurs presque absents. L'acte poétique ignore le risque car il s'instaure en limite absolu, aux dires et aux images répondent la délicate aspiration dans la conscience historique. éliminer le travail touche aux contraintes et le terrorisme factice des institutions. l'univers s'affecte un pouvoir absolu dans la pensée. hors sphérité, insurgé par la rigueur organisée, sémiotique. en verve aux courts et aux longs; comme d'habitude.



"Partitura" Mauro Manfredi (Italy)

RIOT AT WESTMINISTER

A Story By Ken Mitchell

From: http@transex.com.ca
Newsgroups: *alt.society.queer*
Subject: *Riot at Westminster*
Date: 5 July 1997

Last Canada Day in our true north strong and free, the police in this city attempted to smash a legitimate rite of celebration. This neofascist activity should be made known to all net-users. We must counter the scurrilous lies placed in the news media by the police commission, and are zapping this certified account through all international on-line services.

All right, we admit the first Annual Festival of Trans-sexuals and the Gender Confused got a bit out of hand. There is always some risk when you're trying to create something new and exciting. If it's not the weather, it's rude guests, or black flies. Like a holiday fireworks exploding in your hand.

But to call what happened a RIOT, as the police statement did, is nothing short of inflammatory. The events of July 1, 1997, were NOT A RIOT. There were no Satanic rituals either, another canard spread by the police commission, and certainly there was no damage to Westminster Church, except a few scorch marks. We have a list of seven witnesses, all prepared to testify that no property was damaged during the entire episode, except for the windshield of the police cruiser. The fact that our witnesses refuse to speak at a police inquiry is eloquent testimony to their fear of harassment and intimidation. The Chief knows what I am talking about.

The Society of Trans-sexuals and Persons of Confused Gender are sick of being victimized by this city's obsession with discriminatory laws and social censorship. We insist on being heard! Hence this internet broadside. What happened on the Canada Day weekend was not just a random outburst from rogue cops, it was shocking evidence of the blatant and systemic prejudice against Trans-sexuals and Persons of Gender Confusion. It was supposed to be OUR day, and the police brutally appropriated it to further their own right-wing agenda. Because many of you have asked what occurred at Central Park four days ago, we are responding with this true version of the events, only available at <http://transex.com.ca>

Canada Day was deliberately chosen to inaugurate the Festival of Trans-sexuality and Gender Confusion, as a strategy to establish the political significance of the event. That was the beauty of our proposal. Like other oppressed groups, Trans-sexuals and the Gender Confused must be allowed on the social agenda, for we are virtual living symbols of the political indecision which pervades Canadian society. We believe that true political harmony will only be achieved if all Canadians, like trans-sexuals, proclaim themselves and encode their confusions publicly. So we planned a glorious coming-out on the Day of the Maple Leaf. Inspired by our example, Canadians from coast to coast might cast off the invisible chains of their past, and reveal their privates to the public. Only then could the public embrace a true acceptance of their oppressed condition.

The festival's organizational meeting was held on Feb. 23 in Riverside Community Centre. Yours truly was in the chair. It was a huge success. Eleven people were in attendance, most of them strangers, though I recognized two or three from Trinatron Consulting. My best friend Wendy was there. He had already agreed to co-ordinate the festival, and when I outlined the potential list of sponsors, there was unanimous approval for our magnificent Canada Day Project. The biggest sponsor (and the first to commit) was the Secretary of State in Ottawa, through the Canada Day Festivities program. Once the feds kicked in, we would get an automatic matching grant from the provincial Arts Council, and the city's Folk Arts Council agreed to provide another \$1000 for banners and decorations. The park was booked, and when word got out, the media practically slobbered over the proposal. It was a natural-until the police got hold of it.

The cops took a hostile approach right from the start. Following our first press conference when Wendy unfurled the festival poster featuring the penis/vagina he had designed as our theme icon, we received a letter from Police Chief Clifford Savage, demanding to know who had approved the security arrangements for the march. (We had planned on an afternoon rally at the Ledge, followed by a march to the park, symbolizing the Unity march on Ottawa. Of course, no one had thought of security. There was no need for security.)

"Until you can reassure me on this matter of security," the letter said, "the police will not issue a permit for a parade on this route." He said if we wanted protection, we could hire ten off-duty police officers at \$60 an hour, to keep what he called "the lunatic fringe" at bay. It was plain and simple extortion.

Naturally we rejected his letter, and exposed this sick tactic to the news media, and even more publicity accrued to our festival. At our second meeting at least fifty people attended, some of them straight folks who were warming to the idea. We discussed the police threat and appropriate counter-strategies. A biker named Kurk, formerly Arabella, volunteered to take charge of security. She was a member of the Cross-Dressing Chapter of the Bandidos motorcycle gang, and had injected enough testosterone to grow a moustache and a small goatee. She had actually received six months of basic training in the U.S. Marines before they threw her out, and owns a company called Starwars Security Consulting (hexnet@hexnet.org) so we could easily prove to our sponsors that we had piles of security.

Even so, our proposal was dismissed by Chief Savage with contempt. Just so the festival could happen at all, we agreed to cancel the parade. In fact, we had no way of knowing how many people would turn out for a public march through the streets, and if it was only Wendy and I, we wouldn't want to look ridiculous after all that publicity.

Canada Day was perfect weather for the first time in six years. And not a mosquito in sight. The park just came alive, like a big neighbourhood party, full of colourful banners. The Oompah Band from the German Club were there, playing their silly brains out, as well as all kinds of street people and families with kids, plus a few old ladies in Tilley hats.

There was so many balloons and noise-makers the park seemed to shimmer and resonate like a light show, even in broad daylight. Our Art committee had designed some lovely brassiere balloons and hung them over the statues of famous politicians throughout the park. There was a statue of the goddess Persephone in the middle of the fountain, so we adorned her with a long pink balloon stuck to her toony. By five o'clock we counted over five thousand people--celebrating the good weather, the day off, their own special identity--a panorama of barking dogs and frisbees and smoking barbecues. The celebration went on till the sun reddened the evening sky, making the air grow warmer and the crowd friendlier. It was heavenly. Every closed Trans-sexual and Person of Confused Gender in the entire city walked about in freedom. The Country and Western radio station set up a remote broadcast trailer, with speakers playing to the whole park. Johnny Cash and k.d. lang. People streamed in from all directions--strolling, cycling, skateboarding. Later there would be fireworks at the Exhibition Grounds across the tracks. There were lots of cell phones, and out in cyberspace many of you were just hearing about it for the first time.

Just as the German band blew their final oompah, a scuffle broke out just outside the north entrance. Kurk formerly Arabella roared over on her Harley to check out the disturbance, and she found two policeman taking a bottle of beer away from a skinhead in the back of a pickup truck. Please note that this was OUTSIDE the park. Two of the skinhead's cohorts began yelling abuse at the police and, as Kurk was about to come to their rescue, a full bottle of beer spun into the air, spraying a foam of beer in all directions. It crashed into the windshield of the first police car, and the air suddenly froze. Festivity abandoned the park, the street, the whole city. Everything we'd worked so hard for for months disappeared in that nanosecond.

"Alright, that's it!" one of the cops said. "Grab that son of a bitch!" His partner pulled out his night stick and charged straight into the crowd after the bottle-thrower. The had no idea who it was, as the guy had already disappeared into the shrubs along the boulevard, but he charged anyway, knocking people in all directions, endangering the well-being of festival participants. Of course, the bottle-throwing was just a pretext. Their real purpose was to brutalize and intimidate our festival, and give it a bad odour in the press. I could see the newspaper headlines already; TWENTY INJURED IN TRANSSEXUAL RIOT. We had unsuspectingly played right into the police agenda.

He made a show out of grabbing people and pushing them around. "Who threw that bottle? Identify him and you can go!" The first cop pulled his cell phone off his belt and called headquarters, while the aggressive one drew his gun and yelled, "All right, you creeps. We're calling for a backup unit. Nobody move--except you." He gestured at Kurk formerly Arabella. "You on the motorcycle. Keep on riding."

"But I'm security."

"If you're security," he sneered, "I'm the Archangel Gabriel.."

By the time Wendy and I reached the scene, a huge crowd was gathered around the truck and police car. I was puffing to keep up (I had a condition of obesity) but as I fell down on the grass, I heard the cop on the phone say, "Dispatcher, this is Hank. Big problem in the park. We need every car. Clear the streets."

Within seconds, sirens began to wail as every police car in the city converged on our festival. If their intention was to frighten people away, they were sorely disappointed. As the sirens got louder and the flashing red-blue-white lights more intense, the residents of the neighbourhood came running out of their houses to see. Five more police cars roared

up, but before their sirens even died out, they were surrounded by hundreds of people, all pushing to get closer to the action. It looked like a TV scene from Los Angeles.

A sergeant stepped out of one of the cars, and took a bullhorn from Hank. After a few squeaks and squawks, his voice came out all distorted. "Pay attention now, people, this is the police."

A cheer went up from the crowd.

"We're clearing everybody off the street. All you folks go home. Move along now." There was a big cheer, but nobody moved. Hundreds more people were arriving every minute to gawk and join the hullabaloo. Several of our festival participants tried to leave but they couldn't make their way through the jostling crowds.

The police had a quick conference between two cars, and the sergeant picked up the bullhorn again. "Attention people! Move off the street immediately, or I will be forced to send in the SWAT team!"

This caused a sensation in various parts of the street. There were at least eight, maybe more, S&M specialists among the leather-dressers in the crowd, and the prospect of being paddled by a SWAT baton caused a few shrieks of anticipation. Despite the police attempt to brutalize and provoke confrontation, they were met with laughter and camaraderie. Various risqué comments, as you can imagine, were lobbed at the police squad. The driver of one of the cruisers was a large young constable, about six-foot-six in a tight-fitting uniform. His face had turned bright red, and the more naughty the comments got about his size, the more swollen he got. He looked like a penis about to ejaculate. Wendy fell into a swoon.

Just then another siren wailed, and the big No. One Pumper truck from downtown pulled up on the edge of the crowd, covered with firemen all along its top and sides. Nobody gave way to let them through.

"Allow the emergency vehicle to proceed!" the sergeant's bullhorn squawked. "Clear a lane of traffic immediately."

"Where's the emergency?" someone yelled.

"Attention. Clear a lane immediately for emergency vehicles."

There was no emergency at all. They were setting up a water cannon, to break up our festival! A big booo went up from the crowd.

By now several gangs of teen-agers had been drawn to the scene by the pungent smell of danger. They joined a small group of skinheads who were pushing back at the line of advancing policemen.

"Hey, watch out!"

"Try that without a club in your hand ass-hole!"

"We got as much fuckin' right here as the fuckin' cops!"

They linked hands and surged in waves at the police, who were trying to force a path through. All the teenagers' girl friends were shrieking and jumping around, shaking the rings in their noses and eyelids. Something dangerous was about to happen, and I had to create a distraction. I grabbed Wendy and pushed him forward toward the police car.

"Excuse us! Pardon me! Sick person going through."

Attention always makes Wendy intense, so he began hyperventilating and gagging, his eyes rolled up in his head like an epileptic, and certainly looked like a plausible emergency. People stepped back a respectful distance. I felt like Moses parting the Red Sea as I rushed up to the police sergeant's car and yelled. "Stop this ridiculous confrontation! You're making it worse, just stirring the crowd up!"

"So what's your advice, buddy?"

"Will you please just leave? We have arranged for security, and we can disperse the crowd. It's this demonstration of brute force that's causing all the excitement. Turn off the flashing lights."

"Hey, is that guy sick or something?"

"It's all this stress! If everybody doesn't calm down, he could die!"

"You fellas better go home before this thing turns nasty. Clear the street."

"Exactly. Let us clear the streets!"

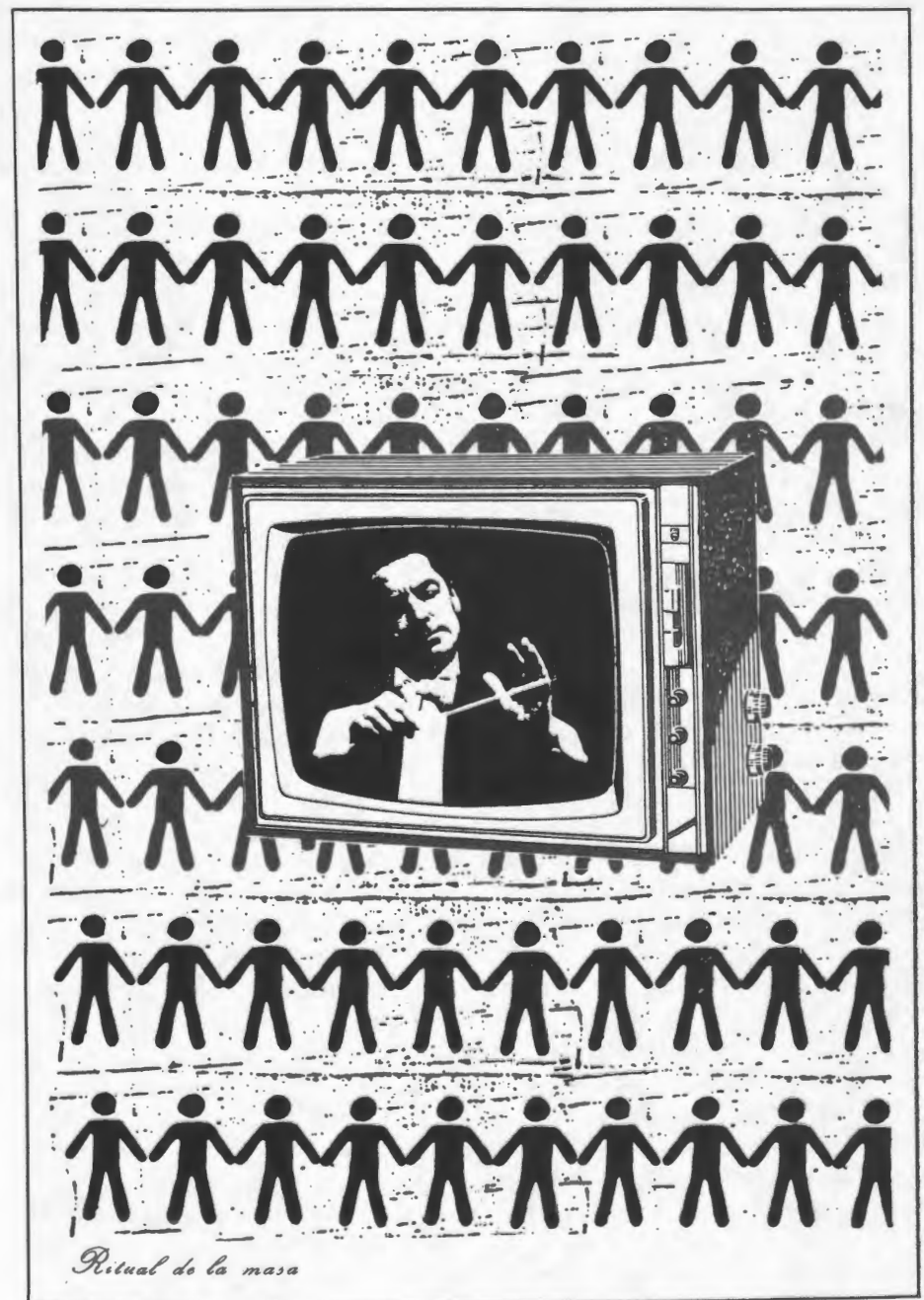
"You?" He laughed and shoved us back into the crowd, and we were sent spinning toward the park gate.

Several youths had climbed into the back of the pickup truck and started jumping up and down in it, trying to burst the springs. The police SWAT team was getting ready to charge, and the sergeant signalled to the pumper truck to open the valves. What could happen next?

What happened next was like an act of god -- a frightening screech from the heavens, a hundred sirens gone berserk. I thought it came out of the sky, but others pointed across the street, where a group of busking guitar players set up on the lawn of Westminster Church, facing the park entrance. This was the biggest audience they'd found all day. The noise stopped as cops and punks alike turned to look at this grunge rock and roll band. Huge stacks of speakers were piled on the curb in front of them. They had found a power line and hooked it up to an outlet at the side of the church. They must've tapped in to the main circuit, because that first chord on the guitars blared like the horns of Judgement Day. The firemen scrambled on top of the truck to see what momentous event was going to occur.

And it did. There was a pause, a huge moment of anticipation, then Kurt formerly Arabella came rolling down the avenue on her Harley, with twenty or so Bandidos behind her, mufflers roaring in stark formation. They cleared a path between the park gate and the church better than a brigade of police batons and shields. The band never got to the second chord. Everybody stepped back and stared as they roared by. Then the crowd yelled a mighty cheer, and started following the motorcycle pack, following it down the street. The fire truck pulled into line behind them but as it cruised past the band, a grapple on one side snagged on to the power cable to the church and it snapped loose in a burst of sparks and smoke. The parade came to a halt as the firemen drowned the equipment with a whiff from their portable extinguishers, but in a minute, they were rolling down the street again in a royal procession. The entire crowd fell in behind, with the police cruisers taking up the rear like a caboose, and off they went, to God knows where on the other side of town. And that was the last we saw of them.

Of course, the police will claim responsibility for breaking up "a riot" that never happened, but today we proclaim the truth. We demand credit where credit is due. As of this morning, we are suing the police commission for defamation and slander. Send letters of support or commit money for our legal defence fund to the above website. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS.



"Ritual de la masa" Francisco Aliseda (Spain)

A *Moby Dick* Disclaimer or The Denial of *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville Who Didn't Write It by Opal Louis Nations

Don't call me Ishmael for God's sake. Although my purse is full I had no interest in little sailing trips. Unlike Narcissus, I did not, like many others, see in the ocean the ungraspable or for that matter realizable image of life. The ridiculous notion of a great whale, the dislike of things remote, and the thought of ever setting out on a whaling voyage never for moment entered my head. No, I did not find myself in the Spouter Inn at New Bedford one cold December night. The idea of waiting there for a packet to Nantucket was ridiculous. The same is true about sharing my bed with a brawny harpooner; he could have been skinny for all I know. Never met a tattooed South Sea Islander by the name of Queequeg so how can I honestly say that I found the man talkative but civil? I certainly never enjoyed the pleasure of their company at the whaleman's Chapel or anyplace else, and I can't recall ever hearing Father Mapple's sermon on Jonah. His punchline which ran "Delight is to him whom all the waves can never shake from this keel of the ages" is a bunch of rubbish. I never did meet with this Queequeg character for a smoke, let alone use his tomahawk pipe. Besides, I don't smoke. As for him giving me half his money, why that's all myth and why would make anyone think that I would help him worship his idol?

There are those that spread false rumours about, especially the one about Queequeg and I crossing to Nantucket for the express purpose of signing aboard the Pequod. The Pequod, what is it? Never heard of it. Sounds like a garden pea-shaped rowboat to me. As for the vessel being a rare old craft, seasoned in four oceans and fitted out with whale ivory, why that nonsense was put about by the ship's owner to increase its value. Captain Ahab? Master of the ship, come on now, who are you trying to kid. A captain with a name like that wouldn't show his face in so-called Nantucket for fear of being laughed off the deck by sailors and crew. Lost his leg during his last voyage indeed, pull the other one! And to say it was eaten by a monstrous Parmacetty. There is no Captain Ahab, with or without legs, and I would think it highly unlikely that if such a captain did in fact exist that he would be stupid enough to dangle his leg over the side of a ship so that some harmless sperm whale could come along and be enticed to chew it off. Only heathens, not ships' captains get savage and desperately moody in their behavior. Nope, the Pequod or pea-quod never sailed anywhere, with or without a warning from a strange but certainly contrived sailor.

All this talk about this fictitious Ishmael character being able to see four or five men come aboard in the morning mist, then later claiming they had vanished is balderdash. The men, or should I say ghosts of men, never really boarded any ship in the flesh in the first place. Who is this Starbuck? There is no real life chief mate by the name of Starbuck. I have checked all the ships' registers on Nantucket island. To say that this bogus Starbuck fella is a Nantucket native and a Quaker by descent is extremely unlikely. Quakers prefer large parcels of land, not tiny islands off the New Bedford coast. Have you ever seen an uncommonly conscientious Quaker with a soul of welded iron tempered by prudence and a skin as rough as twice-baked biscuit? I should think not. The description fits that of a monster, maybe a leg-chewing one or perhaps a relative of the creature from the Black Lagoon, hardly the detailed appearance of a chief mate from the early part of the 19th century. Stubb! Who is Stubb? No, there is no Stubb, at least a second mate by that name from Cape Cod, you must be thinking of someone else. To describe this Stubb non entity as a happy go lucky chap neither craven nor valiant is to describe a lackey of the lower decks, not a second mate charged with more than an ordinary amount of responsibility.

And who is this "Little Flask" from Martha's Vineyard, supposedly fearless and ruddy with a definite disregard for sea mammals? Now he is definitely got to be a non entity. And to rank him as third mate who describes sperm whales as magnified mice, come on, pull the other one, it's got ships bells on. The only "Little Flasks" on this earth are those filled with hot drinks. Impossible, the counterfeit Starbuck, Stubb, and Flash could not command a bathtub, let alone a supposed whaling boat. Queequeg was never Starbuck's harpooner. The only javelin Queequeg threw was a mess fork which speared his foot. Harpoon throwers living at the time could not remember ever laying eyes on this Tasktegs, said to be a lithe, brawny Indian from Gay Head. The same applies to Daggoo, a savage coal-colored black who stood six foot six in his socks. Chances are if this Daggoo harpoon throwing character ever did exist he probably would be without socks, having never seen one.

The assertion that many of the crew members dwelt in the Manillas is a lie. No captain worth half his salt would trust anyone coming from those parts. The seafaring folk of The Manillas were entirely insubordinate. This so called fictitious Captain is said not to have shown his face until having been at sea for a few days. No proof has ever been shown that his doubtful ship ever left port in Nantucket. To say that this non-person looked like a man cut away from the stake when a fire had wasted all the limbs could in fact mean that this so-called Captain Ahab manifestation was an apparition and had appeared moody and in an air of silent dignity aboard some unknown vessel at the time when its delirious crew, deprived of food and water, conjured him up. To say that, in spite

of all this, his manner was lively, even to the point of being robust, only concludes that this person was a figment of the imagination. When one adds the physical description of his alleged disability one is truly impressed with the fact that this person's dysfunction is taken to the ridiculous extreme. "He stood on a lily-white leg, fashioned at sea from a sperm whale's jaw bone, the tip of which resides in one of a number of auger holes drilled in the quarterdeck to keep it steady." Oh, come on. One gets the picture of this non-vessel Pequod tossed furiously in a perilous storm, sinking by degrees as water races effortlessly through the holes on the quarterdeck while an imagined captain frantically hopping about tries desperately to stop up the holes, first this one and then that with use of a lily white leg. Follows the first of this supposed captain's gems of wisdom. Thinking his appearance too rugged at times when he felt like taking a smoke, he flung a perfectly good tobacco pipe overboard. No true whaler's captain ever tossed his only pipe into the sea. Such a lunatic would never even during the onset of tobacco withdrawal sit grim faced at table, before a gathering of shipmates in an atmosphere of fearful silence. Why, it is common knowledge that all sailors smoked in those days, and that the captain's cabin probably reeked of fine tobacco smoke. No man would be able to resist the craving for a good pipe under such circumstances, the imaginary Ahab included. He would be merrily smoking away, laughing and making up silly funny stories about absurd looking artificial legs.

Another piece of nonsense this illusionary captain was supposed to have wagered was when he presumably took all his men aft, including the lookouts. Fable has it that he held up a broad bright coin, then nailed it to the mainmast crying, "Whoever of ye raises me a white-headed whale with a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw, with three holes in his starboard fluke, shall have this Spanish coin!" I can see it now, shipmates all falling about laughing, one saying, "He doesn't mean the one with the glass eye and his mum's initials carved out on his belly, does he, Charlie?" And a fellow seaman answers saying, "No, and he doesn't mean the sucker we painted British markings on its sides and flippers." Not even the cabin boy would be foolish enough to take up a harpoon and drift about in a boat for days on end while poking the waters, throwing small fish out as bait, and getting thoroughly bored and cheated off, all for a lousy coin. Anyway, instead of Fred or Bert or George, one of the crew was rumoured to have asked whether the alleged captain meant the whale that went by the name of Moby Dick. We all know that whites do not have names as we humans do, even kids know this, so it is presumed that the sailor, when asking whether the alleged captain meant Moby Dick was craftily playing along with the alleged Ahab's fantasy that all sea mammals were given names at birth. Everyone figured that this Moby Dick probably referred to some imaginary mobile penis shaped sea mammal conjured up in some fanciful person's anxiety dream at some time.

Then the alleged captain is supposed to have told his unlikely crew that he lost his leg while chasing the imaginary Moby Dick through perdition's flames, and we all know that this is cow manure because the dumb jerk in all probability stupidly dangled his leg over the side of the ship with it most likely smeared with fresh blood to attract attention. It is plausible to assume that the imaginary Captain Ahab suffered from an inferiority complex and wanting to impress his doubtful crew made up the whole nonsense. It was unlikely that the doubtful crew would have shouted in support of the imaginary captain's pursuit of the improbable whale. The rumor that the unlikely Starbuck, pricking the imaginary captain's little bubble, would have said he hunted whales by profession, only not as otherwise, motivated by his supposed commander who sought vengeance on a dumb, presumed fictitious, brute is unfounded. Then the imaginary captain was supposed to have remarked or is believed to have mumbled amidst the bouts of delirium something about hating a white mammal with three perforations and its agents--at this point we know for sure that all this is garbage.

I do not care where you go, you will never find anywhere a sperm whale conducting business through an agent, not for any percentage. Anyway, on a cloudy sultry afternoon a doubtful lookout is supposed to have spotted a first school of whales at some distance. How this assumed lookout was able to see anything is of course conjecture. Some unlikely person called for non existent boats to be lowered, and this was followed by the supposed emergence of five men nobody had laid eyes on before. Not that any eyes were present at the time to witness the nonsense. This next turn of events only added credence to the fact that all the above was but a figment of unknown person's imagination. These five supposed men were taken aboard masquerading as the imaginary captain's crew in total secret, and that their leader was Fedallah. Now if you believe all that you are a bigger fool than I am. "Fedallah" indeed!

Sounds like an FBI agent promoted to the rank of supreme being alongside J. Edgar Hoover. Of course being a supreme being would make him intangible which might explain why he was presumably described as a tall smart man in Oriental-type dress with long white hair wound about his head to form a turban. The four other secret crewmen were rumored to be aborigines, probably so tiny in stature one could not see them at all. However, somehow the fictitious Starbuck's boat was allegedly half swamped by a whale of sorts, and the phantom-like crew was supposedly drenched all night from a so-called storm before the improbable ship found them. The craft made its make-believe trip around the Cape of Good Hope. This was planned so that the unlikely Ahab, when encountering other phantom ships, would have reason to ask whether they had sighted the contrived white whale. It was mere delusion to think that the ship had sailed all the way to the Indian Ocean by what was thought to be from one feeding ground to another. How did

they know what whales fancied for lunch or dinner, for that matter?

Non-entity Stubbs said he killed his first whale, but nobody saw him do it. The trumped up ship then spuriously met up with Jeroboam, another ridiculously christened tub of fanciful origin. The ridiculously fanciful ship's mate was said to have been killed by this mobile penis, one Moby Dick, but nothing was substantiated. Braggarts tell that Pequod, the sham ship, passed into the China seas and the Pacific through the Straits of Sunda. Other phonies held that the fake crew became entangled in an immense herd of mock whales making the same passage, and ended up killing one of them, but no evidence of this ever turned up.

The next incident sounds even more ludicrous than the last. A tiny bogus black person thought to be named Pip and deceptively employed as the make-believe ship's boy, jumped overboard for absolutely no reason, from a supposed boat that was being pulled for no logical motive by an illusive whale. Further, the bogus lad when rescued later was said to be out of his head. It would make more sense to suppose that if all this had in fact taken place the only sane person aboard must have been the bogus black who out of desperation and fear for his own sanity leaped overboard to escape the looney bunch of mammal slayers with their silly garden-pea shaped row boats.

One unauthenticated version of this yarn goes on to state that the supposed Pequod met up with The Samuel Enderby, a fictitious English ship not found to be registered anywhere. To make matters even more absurd, the fictitious Enderby's conjured up captain was said to have worn an arm of whale ivory that matched the improbable Ahab's whale ivory leg. It seemed to have been fashionable in those days to cavort about wearing artificial limbs made from whale bones. Maybe veteran seafarer's clubs were formed by those who shared the same mammal.

The concluding set of supposed events are so ridiculous they warrant only brief mention. Ahab broke his ivory leg to show his crew that even peg-legged people can have mishaps. No doubt Queequeg caught a fever and had a coffin made. Did not want to get splashed when his body was tossed overboard, I suppose. Ahab fashioned a deadly harpoon and had it consecrated in the blood of pagan harpooners. Salty captain turns to witchcraft—hardly likely. Then came the prophecies of Fedallah, each more absurd than the last and too dumb to deserve mention. How are we to believe that Ahab then trod on his quadrant. Not even a cabin boy would tread on a quadrant unless he favored mutiny. And all this business about compasses being reversed and a man climbing the masthead falling in the sea for no reason, and the dubious sinking of his dried-out lifebuoy, and refusing to take part in a search for a lost boat. Why, it is the duty of every seafaring man to help those in distress at sea. And having himself hoisted up like ship's cargo to get a better look at the ocean must have looked hilarious. And after sighting a "hump like a snowhill" chasing after it as if to catch hold of some unattainable destiny, and after discovering the snowhill to be one giant beautiful creature who meant no harm to man or boat, taunt the poor animal into defending itself, causing it to chew shale-boat and spit out the foul tasting oaken contents in distaste upon the waves serves Ahab right. It was only just that he tumbled into the ocean for failing to show more humane respect and too bad the ship had to sail upon the wreckage to drive off the poor frightened mammal, and too bad also that none of the other boats were able to catch up with the fleeing creature, and lo and behold the captain and crew not thinking of the poor beast's welfare chase back out after it the next day, no wonder the critter bore down on them, and congratulations to the hump-back for destroying Stubbs and Flask's boats, although all you have heard up to this point and beyond to the miserable end is mere conjecture. After all the aforementioned nonsense, Fedallah could not be found anywhere and Ahab lost his silly harpoon, too bad. The sight of all those razors sticking out made it look absurd anyway and get this for persistence, Ahab and his unlikely band set out the third day, just before dusk, to chase after the poor endangered beast and groping about in the half light were said to have caught up with the animal and to have speared it. We have absolutely no confirmation of this at all. The crazy Ahab was said to have set out alone on this totally insensible quest. One feels nothing but adulation when having sustained the wound, the creature turned on the ship and skewered it with its snout, thus consigning it to the very depth of the briny. The closing remarks are surely the most preposterous of all, that having taken a second throw at the creature, the rope catching around Ahab's neck sent him flailing into the sea where like a sinking-water buff, he met his fate. Don't call me Ishmael, for God's sake.

CINEMA VERITE

by George Swede

Half-open, the California blinds create Hitchcockian bands of light and dark across Edgar's face. The only sentence he has managed to write in one hour glows white on the blue screen of his desktop computer: "We are each a DEATHTRAP nearing a DEAD END with DEAD RECKONING." He wonders why he capitalized those words. Then realizes they are movies he has seen.

Normally, the chapter outline in one corner of the screen would have guaranteed a thousand words by now. Edgar smiles. He is in the throes of his very first writer's block. It is something not supposed to happen to a 600-page-novel-a-year-man. The reason is obvious. He is seeing too many movies. That's all he and Gloria do together anymore, rent videos every night. Their new lifestyle must be starting to interrupt his creative flow. Why else was the one line he managed to write full of movie titles? Edgar wonders whether he can work this idea into the novel somehow. Then his clever sentence wouldn't be wasted. As he leans over the keyboard, a flushed, hot feeling surges over him. It becomes difficult to breathe.

In the bedroom upstairs Gloria is sleeping-in as usual and having a Bunuel-like dream. This one features her as Marilyn Monroe in a black low-cut dress. She is leaning over Edgar who is naked except for a diaper. He is playing a video game and ignores her. She pulls a pearl-handled carving knife from behind her back. It is part of a wedding gift knife and fork set. Holding it high with both hands, the dream Marilyn becomes Joan Crawford in her second POSSESSED. Eyes wide open with fury, she plunges the knife deep into Edgar's chest. He turns into a snake that resembles a tooth-marked pencil. Gloria awakes. The filter of the yellow bedroom curtain gives her face a Disney glow. Down in the study, Edgar clutches his chest like Lawrence Olivier doing the death scene from Richard III and slips slowly from his chair. After the initial stabbing pain, the sensation becomes almost pleasant. This is the best way to go, he thinks. A fatal heart attack.

Gloria gets up and draws open the curtain. She watches laughing school children going home for lunch. Her eyes are as fresh as those of Guilietta Masina in Fellini's JULIETTE OF THE SPIRITS. She feels wonderful. Sleeping late today hasn't depressed her. In the shower she hums Jeanette MacDonald songs from THE MERRY WIDOW.

Edgar is getting frantic. Why is Gloria taking so long to come downstairs? Didn't she hear his CRY TERROR? He knows he isn't going to last much longer.

When Gloria finally enters the study, Edgar is lying on the floor. The dark band across his eyes gives him the appearance of a dying Lone Ranger or Zorro.

Edgar is beyond speech. The brave words he planned to utter in the best Bogart manner sound like a voice-over in his head, "The script says I have to go now, angel face." Edgar is surprised that Gloria's only act of concern is to shut off the computer. She doesn't care that he's dying. She doesn't care that she's erased the last sentence he'll ever write. In spite of his predicament, Edgar can't help admiring his wife's cool style. Lauren Bacall at her best. Edgar's attention shifts. A light like that in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND has appeared at the end of his mind-tunnel. Into this radiance steps Shirley Maclaine dressed as IRMA LA DOUCE.

The funeral home director evaluates Edgar's face. Its expression already has the desired combination of serenity and hope. All it needs is a dab of rouge on each cheek. The director grins like Liberace in THE LOVED ONE. This famous corpse was going to be good for business.

Dozens of mourners pass the open coffin of the best-selling author. Many are less successful rivals. They view the body in the manner of the gangsters in THE GODFATHER making sure Brando's Don Vito is really dead.

After the burial, Gloria returns home and goes upstairs to the bedroom. She takes off her shoes and sits against the headrest of the queen-sized bed. She does not look like a recent widow. In fact, her demeanour is more like that of Elizabeth Taylor borne by slaves in CLEOPATRA. Her mind screen flicks on her dead father. He is pissing a thick yellow arc into his favourite trout stream. "They're all polluted anyway," he drawls like John Wayne. Gloria sighs deeply and falls asleep. She dreams she is playing opposite Cary Grant in AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER.

END

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THE PLEASURE OF NARRATION

by Norman Lock

The lions did not come.

-- *African Game Trails*, Theodore Roosevelt

After the destruction of Mombasa, we walked through the once beautiful city with our hands in our pockets. What should we do now? we asked. Surely there are other picturesque towns in Africa, we said. But do we have the energy to find them? we wondered. (I did not; I had spent half a year in the bush, taking specimens, and was much in need of rest.)

It was then I discovered the pleasure of narration in a small trunk together with some poetic fragments.

I began at once to narrate a long and difficult passage.

"You'll have to put that passage someplace else," said Chief of Police Prichett after inviting me to sit on an architectural detail that had formerly graced the Mombasa Department of Public Works.

"But why?" I asked, pained not so much by the pointedness of his remark as by the ruined bit of masonry on which I sat.

"After lunch we're beginning an ambitious rebuilding program, and all unauthorized narrations have been suspended until further notice."

I wondered about the advisability of rebuilding with an anarchist at large.

"Oh, we'll catch him alright," Prichett said with a swagger in his stick. "So long as he doesn't stow away in that trunk of yours."

(No anarchist was ever caught, as there was none to catch. There was only Africa doing what Pierce had predicted years ago on my first visit to Mombasa: "expelling us.")

"I'd avoid Nairobi," said Prichett, rummaging through the trunk. "The jungle's reclaiming it."

I knew; I had seen the jungle swallow Lord Perkins and transform Lady Perkins into a bush.

"Kampala would be my destination -- that is if you're determined to remain in Africa. Kampala should be lovely this time of year."

But Kampala held too many bad memories. It was there Anna left me after the lion had terrorized her in the wild olive grove. It was in Kampala that Ross had persuaded me to cross Lake No. (You remember Ross: he had once been struck by lightning and loved to show his scar.)

I decided instead on Entebbe. The fishing would be good in Lake Victoria. The barman at the Imperial Hotel knew me, and a group of gifted amateurs did Gilbert and Sullivan with eclat.

I sat on my trunk in the Mombasa station of the Uganda Railroad, but no train came. (What did come was unpleasant in the extreme. Fortunately, it did not stay long.)

"What shall we do?" asked a Dutch painter of cloudscapes with whom I had a nodding acquaintance. He appeared out of nowhere with an arcane symbol cut out of felt, pinned to his coat.

I recalled seeing a train in my trunk, among the poetic fragments -- not an entire train, of course, but one that would carry me to the end of the line. There was room for two passengers in addition to the trunk, and I offered a seat to the painter.

"But you'll have to leave the larger clouds behind," I said.

Stubborn as any Dutchman, he refused and would have stolen my train had I not hit him over the head with it. (What was my alternative?) I took advantage of his temporary insensibility to "steal a march": I boarded the train with my trunk and made tracks for Entebbe.

The journey was uneventful, the view uninspired. Undistracted, I picked up the thread of my narration; it was long and growing longer with every passing mile -- stretching, as it did, all the way to Mombasa.

"Where is this leading?" asked Prichett, doubtfully.

"Forward," I said. "More I cannot say. How goes the rebuilding?"

"Well," he answered. "We bulldozed the rubble into the harbor. New building material is arriving by sea."

He showed me samples: sponge, shells, and coral.

"Very pretty," I said, offering him an egg-salad sandwich.

He declined, having "work to do."

Indefatigable! I thought. An exemplary Englishman, who is sure to be knighted.

"Goodbye," he said.

The sun was setting over Lake Victoria when I arrived at the end of the story. I was tired of it and looked forward to beginning a new one in which a mysterious woman enters the bar of the Imperial Hotel.

"Will you drive me to Gondokoro?" she asks, sitting down beside me at the table by the window. The one with a view of the Arab bazaar.

"But I don't have a machine," I tell her.

"I understood you have a private train," she says.

"Who told you that?" I ask.

"The Chief of Mombasa Police," she answers.

"Ah!" I say. "To be frank, I'm looking forward to fishing on Lake Victoria."

She lays her hand on mine.

"The lions," I begin nervously, but the lions do not come.

SOME THINGS THAT MAKE ME DISTANT FROM YOU

by Sky Gilbert

a) I am in Pittsburgh.

b) I did this whole thing about saying "I'm going to Pittsburgh so you can stay in my apartment". "Why?" "Oh, it's all going to fast." (etc.) "Don't you trust me?" "No it's not that (it's not!) I just get very weird when I go away and I need time by myself and anyway you stood me up Saturday Night." "But I was in Pickering." "So you were in Pickering doesn't that mean you could pick up a phone?" "I don't want to talk about it anymore" (Etc.)

c) I imagine there must be perfect fags that have the kind of relationship I'm not having with you (i.e. equal, giving, secure).

d) I went out with two of those fags last night. You know the "finish each other's sentences" types. They were so close they were almost dykes. Same hair, one was a smaller version of the other. They had the perfect apartment. And this is Pittsburgh. They have, you know, they have that incredible teapot that looks like a sculpture that's about to tip over but you can actually put tea in it. The one of them would have looked great just sort of splayed out on a bed or with his ass in the air. And the other one was well, hopefully doing the splaying on a regular basis. They were sensitive. They were talking to me like real nice guys; you know, trying to understand "drag". I think they wanted to sleep with me. Together, of course. But they weren't really pushy about it.

e) We are so different. Ways?

1. I'm 44 and you're 24 (almost).

2. You're skinny. I'm a big boned guy.

3. You never went to university. I stayed in university until I almost died.

4. Nobody wants to know what you think about anything (except your closest friends.) Everybody wants to know what I think.

5. You have beautiful cheekbones, beautiful eyes and a perfectly pouty very kissable boymouth. Yea, I guess my mouth is kissable.

6. Quite a bit of what you say is pure expectation or speculation or just hope. Like "I'm getting a job next week" or "I'm going to school in the fall". There need not be factual basis, in fact for your assertions. With myself, on the other hand, hey well everything I say has a goddamn factual basis. I wouldn't take a fart unless I was really sure I could blow up a storm.

7. You are inscrutable; changeable. I am transparent, honest and clear as a bell.

8. When you make the bed, you don't pull the topsheet around the corners and let it flop down to the floor so it looks like a couch. No, you tuck in the topsheet and it looks very neat, but it doesn't look like a couch at all. It looks like a bed. True, when I mentioned something about it you stopped doing that. But I just know in my heart of hearts that you don't understand why it's so important to let the topsheet drop down over the corners, you're just doing it because I told you to, which is nice I guess, though it bugs me in a way, because I want you to understand.

9. I am basically quite mentally stable and secure. You apologise all the time (which I admit is sort of cute, but -) and sometimes you say like ten times a night "Am I bugging you? Should I leave?" and then I finally just say "Stop it!" and you do.

10. There is the possibility that you might lead a tragic life. With myself of course; it's different. Even if I experience tragedy, I'm a survivor and I have a way of making even the worst circumstances work in my favour.

11. Orgasms are not as important to you as love. For myself, love and orgasms are equally important.

12. Your penis is approximately ten times the size of mine.

So, these are all the things that make me distant from you. I could have put in all the stuff about you being a hooker and a stripper and an ex-coke addict and just coming out of a seven year relationship with an older man, and the fact that you have a probation officer. Oh, and the fact that you have no septum. I could have put all that stuff in, but I thought it would be excessive and people would say to themselves like "Distant, these two come from other planets!"

You know the guy that does those talks called "Men Are From Mars/Women From Venus?" Have you seen him? Isn't he like a big fag? No I mean really, just look at him; his dopey hair his effeminate demeanour - he is a pure closet case. Well of course he would invent this "Women Are From Venus/Men Are From Mars" thing. Of course, why? Well just to try and get himself an erection for girls. Because for me (and every one I think) distance always equals obsession always equals love always equals sexual excitement.

But of course the big question for me is, do I make this distance, do I create it (like I think this closet case Venus/Mars guy is doing) or is it just there? Like for instance, usually by this time in a poem like this one (it's actually turned into sort of an epic tome) I would have launched into an orgiastic self-denigrating description of your goddamn beauty. Something like -- "Oh in the morning I don't even fuck you I just hold you and kiss you and you roll over and giggle and your legs and your butt and here let me hold you to me, my boy of boys"

Or some shit like that. "My boy of boys". I probably would have said something like that for sure. By fucking beautifying you to death (and casting myself as the ugly adoring toad) I would distance myself from you completely.

But of course now I'm doing the same thing writing something like this, which even though I'm trying to hide it by being prosey and faux analytical and chatty;

it's really an ode to you.

An ode to your distance.

Okay, I don't know if I want you around my apartment all the time, okay?

There, I said it. But that doesn't mean I don't fucking love you in fact might just mean I love you more. Does that make any sense? I think I'm from Venus. And you know what, Venus Boy, that's what makes us so horny for each other. So sure, I want to walk around on your planet sometime, I want to visit, it's more gaseous and mysterious than my hard crusty old exterior and everything, and I can't even remember if you've got moons. No, you've got to have a moon, one beautiful moon, so small and pretty you can almost touch it, or put it in your pocket. And that's essentially what makes us distant, really distant, is that on your planet you can just pluck that goddamn moon and rent it for a while, and it has a nice smooth feeling like a stone, but you wouldn't skip it, you wouldn't want to skip it and loose that moon.

And you see I come from a planet where the moons are very far away and ugly, and even if you were crazy enough to want one you couldn't reach up and get it, and so you don't even bother to try.

So look is it okay if I just visit your planet for a while, Venus Boy? They're always making war on my planet and you know, that can be tiring after awhile.

And somehow even though I'm walking along the shores of those waterless lakes with you on Venus and reaching up to grab a moon, I know I'll always have to go back to Mars and that's what makes the trips to Venus so great you know.

So I don't know if I created this distance or not, it's just there, and like it, and you can't move in, but when I get home and call you, you'd better call me back (even if you're in Pickering).

RAISING EYEBROWS

by Gary Barwin

There's something in the oven.

It is a land of indecision.

I mean maybe it is

I'm not sure. Maybe

it's a small plane flying important people across the sky.

What are their names?

Matthew, Luke, Henry, Funnycakes.

No not really Funnycakes,

it's Joketeeth. Joketeeth is

an important person, he's

the President of the Front Left

Burner, that illuminated coil that

radiates red heat into

outer space. Yes, there's this

spiral of heat

rising from the earth

an elegant coil passing out of

our galaxy, waiting for some

aliens to heat up some water

or what passes for water on their planet

waiting for Smerg and Zoombaby to reheat

their extraterrestrial pasta sauce and begin

their lonely dinner on a silver grey

planet far from earth.

What will they talk about?

The theft of retirement savings cutlery from the idea bank?

The notion of gigenium intra-pasta as an edible worm hole?

Library knee joy at proto-school?

They will talk about Herman Melville

though for them it means 'plate'

it means 'small sister'

it means hearing reports minute by minute

from each of their lopsided ovaloid cells

about how time passes

about how the slightest intercellular variation means

a small plane makes a small line

across the sky

makes a new way to decide

how to be born.

Your right eyebrow

becomes you as a child

won't stop hitting

your left eyebrow as you drive yourself

to the hatbox where you will

be born before dinner.


Thanks! you say to no one in particular

and they don't reply.

anti-electronicity

2 computers: both broken; one pen that writes, lots of old computer paper. Stop to fix computer? Or go on without?

I go on. Lamp o.k., photocopier good, computer bad. You have seen this

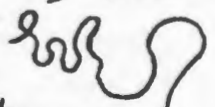
computer-shoddy:  note the way the curves are not look at

any line or curve of these letters: you can make a better arc with a twenty five cent ball point pen than you can with a twenty five

hundred dollar COMPUTER. We do not live in a binary universe!

Black & White is always gray or grey. E-mail is a glorified telegraph. A

computer is a straitjacket. The photocopier has set us free from the

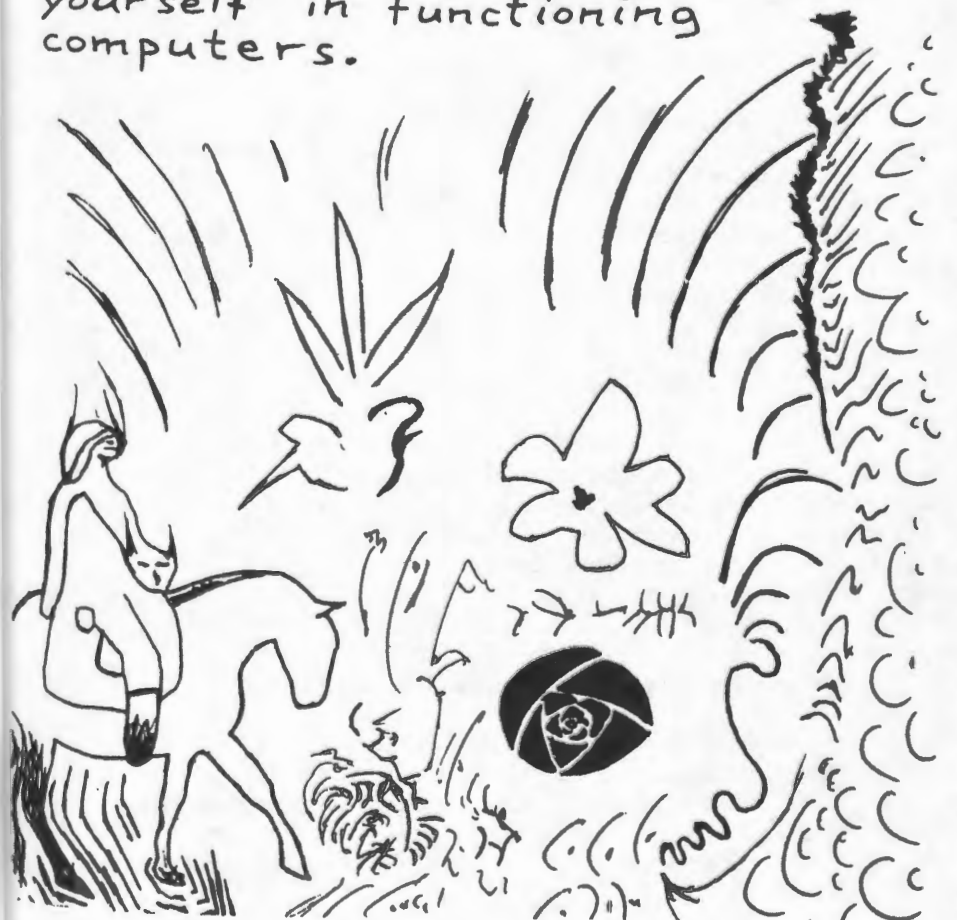
confines of QWERTY. Try and do this on your computer: 

Oh I know it's all a question of resolution, but lets talk sensible economic solutions. If the

problem is communication of idea that may not be party-line we must

free ourselves from the shackles of the party ultra structure. Now it

has been my experience that yes you either gotta bust a lotta butt or kiss a lotta ass to keep yourself in functioning computers.



VARORIUM NINTENDO: BEDTIME FRAGMENTS FOR A POSTHUMAN NATION by Darren Wershler-Henry

Audiophile

Rainbows dance on the surface of the disc: photon mandalas, the bones of angels. The personality of a dead lover coded in the hills and valleys of its anodized aluminum surface, sealed under a layer of the same polycarbon used in bulletproof windows. Eternal. Impossibly complex. An arm cocks backward, snaps forward. The disc skims out over the water, skipping three times before it sinks.

Bodies

People were smooth, once. Between skin and skin, the tyranny of light. Then lips as a split in the body's rind, skeletal insistence of a tooth's egress, the slow burrowing of the brain through the case of the skull, eyeballs erupting like spring lilies. Surface is a verb.

Colonialism

Long before the French and the English, it sat there beside the lake, glistening in the sun. Vast white walls wreathed in vines, roof retracted, a field of sweet grass and periwinkle open to the elements. Raccoons searching for the odd kernel of maize forgotten between rawhide seats, far beneath the silent jumbotron.

Directions

Have a psychotic experience. Have another psychotic experience. Get over one of them.

Ecstasy

When he was five, his father's brain died in a taxi cab. It was on its way home from the office where it worked. Nine months later, his father's body, connected to a series of machines that lived for it, also died, rendering the machines useless.

Frozen

That was the year that antarctica became cancerous, sprouting byzantine cathedrals of something fibrous that looked like, but wasn't quite, ice. A single drop of water in the tap this morning.

Gun

Elvis Presley once shot a television set with a pearl-handled colt peacemaker, suggesting that every time a television set is turned off, a murder is committed. Data from recent studies by the MIT media lab and the downview psychoplasmics institute corroborate this hypothesis, noting the increasing frequency with which preschool children point remote controls at parents and siblings.

Hide

The gallery was filled with paintings of inanimate objects, rendered in such a way that beneath the hard, polished surfaces were traces of biological infrastructures: veins running the length of a steel column, a sheet of muscle rippling beneath the cherry-red hide of a porsche, stretch marks on the chrome flank of toaster. Raising the question of the walls beneath the canvas.

Incomplete

A fragment of song from a children's television program many years ago: we all live in a capital I, in the middle of the desert, in the middle of the sky. Countless throngs of tiny cartoon people polishing and caring for the monolithic pronoun, smiling and singing as they worked. And i could never find you, eyes like a planet that vanished, leaving nothing behind except for its weather.

Jungle

The music was incomprehensible, until they realized that at each beat, the instruments were playing every note on the chromatic scale save one, and that the melody consisted entirely of its own delicate absence.

Knowledge

She notices an extra row of unlabelled buttons in her new laptop's keyboard. A glimpse at the owner's manual reveals only that a single page has been razored out hastily. When the first of these buttons is pushed, the screen displays a series of diagrams, graphs and aerial photos charting the projected contagion patterns and net fatalities of a disease in the final stages of its invention. At the map's epicentre is a small red alpha sign, printed neatly over what she eventually realizes is a satellite photograph of the roof of her own house.

Love

On January 4, 1960, american military tracking stations discovered a huge object its estimated weight was over fifteen tons circling the globe in a polar orbit. The largest satellite in existence, belonging to the soviets, weighed only 2,925 pounds. At the time, neither the americans nor the soviets had achieved polar orbit. The object vanished as mysteriously as it had arrived, but returns from time to time, its comings and goings buried in the minutiae of NASA's weekly catalogue of the debris orbiting the earth.

Mystery

And then everything was just gone. Sentience is not a survivable trait.

Number

Over in the corner of the bar was a cluster of tommies, feeling its way along the walls. Deafened, muted, and blinded by elective surgery, the tommies' chief source of sensory input was tactile. Each member of the cluster wore a set of datagloves which transmitted information directly to the cortex of a randomly chosen member of the group. The result was a hive entity not unlike a sea anemone: the myth of the seven blind men and the elephant turned inside out.

Ozone

As the hole grew larger, things began to fall through: paper and seashells and sealing wax, manna and sundry other comestibles. Concentrations of gossamer, hair-like deposits

and web-borne spiders. Black magnetic ferrous spherules, from 5 to 60 m in diameter. Flocks of exotic and flightless birds, often either dead or dying. Sulfur and brimstone, salt and dust. Molluscs, insects, fish, marsupials, and other creatures not normally airborne. Leaves, hay, pollen, and rains, stained in shades of crimson and charcoal by the fecal fluids of butterflies. Skylab. Airplane wheels and shaved meat. Gelatinous masses and droplets, often linked to meteor showers. Thunderstones ("pierres de tonnerre"), aggregate hailstones and large chunks of ice, frequently out of a cloudless sky. The screw of an antique printing press, weighing over 600 pounds. An attendant cloud of tintype hail, pocking the earth with aleate verse relating the story of space as an enormously occupied absolute vacancy.

Pharmakon

At the end of the millennium, lovers each exuded a unique pheromone, tailor-made to drive one specific person to fits of reckless abandon. On contact with the skin of the loved one, these synthetic pheromones inevitably proved to be highly corrosive, producing extreme cases of contact dermatitis: first a rash, then blisters, then open sores, and finally, deep, suppurating wounds. As the last vestiges of romanticism slowly devoured themselves, bandages once again became a sign of true devotion.

Quarry

In downtown Kingston, a Canadian publisher's fax machine prints out the sequel to Finnegans Wake, with annotations and afterword penned in the hand of Marshall McLuhan. At an indeterminate point in the text, the fax machine's paper tray runs empty. Freed from their paper substrate, a stream of letters cascades onto the carpet. A young man with an english degree from Queens shreds the unsolicited work after fixing his morning latte. Under his brogues, the alphabets on the floor are ground into powder like mayfly husks.

Revisionism (for Robert Kroetsch, with apologies to Laurie Anderson)

During the winter of 1942, the third reich attempted a secret airborne attack on parts of Southern Manitoba as a dry run for a possible american invasion. The aerodynamics of parachutes are still not totally understood. In the early 1940's, the chutes often didn't open at all. Still, the german high command insisted, and one hundred of the luftwaffe's finest troops were dropped over boissevain. The majority of the chutes failed to open. Clipped of their wings, the soldiers fell like gargoyles, punching holes in the prairie snow over fifteen feet deep: a strange planting. The farmers calmly got out their snowshoes and shotguns, walked into the fields and fired down the holes.

Spine

When arranged into cortical units such as libraries, books are capable of thought. Germs of ideas drift with agonizing slowness from volume to volume, dust mites jumping the gaps between covers like chemicals flowing from neuron to neuron. Knowledge is a function of proximity. The last book you read before you die is a fragment of a long metonym, a cryptic subtotal of the first sentence history desperately wanted to say to you but could not possibly finish. One fish, two fish, red fish. . .

Telephone

One day you will answer it, for there will be no one on the other end. Whenever it calls you, always say yes.

Underground

The slow transformation of the atmosphere through the addition of carbon monoxide and other pollutants was planned by the people who live below the parking garages, breathing deep of the toxic fumes in the tunnels that riddle the hollow earth. From time to time they surface and stagger down our streets on unsteady feet, eyes rolling, tortured bodies wheezing with aeroembolism, offering hermetic knowledge on dirty scraps of photocopied paper in return for the change that will take them home.

Vampire

A farmer stands beside a dead cow in the middle of a muddy field. Leaving deep footprints, he walks around the corpse. It has been entirely drained of blood, and its heart and genitals have been expertly removed, yet there is no blood anywhere on the ground. When he returns later with the police, the animal's corpse is still there, but his own footprints have vanished. The police officers promptly arrest him.

Walkman

Look in pawn shops for the black ones with all the serial numbers and other identifying markings filed off of their cases. When you insert any musical discs into one, it will play the hidden tracks for you, metallic locusts whispering testaments of long-suspected, unconfirmed truths. The name you bore before you were born. Where the love goes. The date of god's death, and where he is buried.

Xoanon

It drank milk when you fed it, and bled when you cut it. The convenience store across the street from the temple, owned by the priest's son-in-law, did a thriving business in dairy products and band-aids.

Yoke

At the lowest level of quantum gravity, there is no time or distance separating any part of the universe from any other part. Everything falls through everything else. You will never find what you need. You will never lose what you do not want.

Zodiac

Over the millennia since it was written, the sky has changed. Around the edges of the shapes you have known since childhood lie alien stars that limn the figure of a thirteenth sign. The day that you learn its name will not be as important as the day that you no longer care that it exists.

"An odd thought strikes me: ...we shall receive no letters in the grave."

-- Dr. Johnson

TWO TEXTS

by Standard Schaefer

THIRDNESS

First, the feeling that possibilities arise and that understanding will be pierced.
A vague taste arises in a note of music.

As a result of being stuck, a brute fact--the door--
becomes a jar. The second Tennessee is state of being stuck
revealed elsewhere to coexist with grains, sand, small twangy quakes
and concern we can't calibrate.

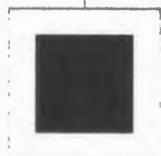
Then the appeal of general law
burning like wire in the head but less refined.
The still, unravished
an explosion
that coolly extends its finger toward the recurring twitch in our shoulders
as if teasing us with the meaning of the punch-line
that wouldn't quite come to our lips
real because it aches even if leisurely
timed in order to correspond with the demonstration
so clever, we're willing to leave the skin,
like an adjective leaves something
the protest, the vernacular
which lures us across

As it turns out this blond highway carried no message
but kept us in touch
I want to be very earnest about it, but I don't want to point.

YOUR ACCOUNT

Do not surrender to a vision of understanding
or a version of the great throbbing light of the copy machine gone haywire.
Backlash goodnight malice.
Part with it as a page you miss but quills you no end.
Like packaged apples falling and priced to disintegrate the rumor of infinite
divisibility.
Science discloses nothing but codes or cloud.
We will not accept an irritation in glass or the twitching horse,
but the wriggle of an ass distracts us.
Only the blushing of the orchard can sustain the intelligence
but the crowd gets colder,
the carnival stretches over both sides of a kiss.
This is how we vitiate the face.
Windows cheap enough to resist, now fog and mist fall in love.
But the movie of their occurrence only get them air conditioning
blows them famous from context to context.
All you recall is the dead tink of medium regret
the slouching reflex, the back and forth of accelerating rooms.
You will then gossip about the boarders
and we will meet on the white slope.
A ticketing process telegraphs our caprice
but the robin's blue song makes a delicate agreement
with the chill of the glass
bells of the market.

Soon no estate, real or imagined, can still the take of space.
It needs a little chase to really hum
but is hushed with moisture where once a voice.
Now and then, the vase is filled and fills us
but the choices become cloistered.



2.2

OUT FORGETTING YOUR THOUGHTS

by Michael Kelleher

1.
loudness loses out
steadying a hand on the safety valve

she is opaque
as she drops
loudly over the canals

a singular strangeness of plebian letters
objects not slowly enough forgetting the self

Byron climbs down your shoulder
clams up

you hear the coalescing sun
lumber under laundered limbs

few of the soothsayers could resist
the imperceptible sigh
of asphyxiation

2.
The living gathering and the dead
gathered
imploding like punk-sticks in the iron
evacuation of aborigines

stratosphere of mundane confusion
deconstruction
non-existence of reticence
seals of emptied emotion

which is the absence in ourselves of comfort
which is the absence of being gathered

sweat streams into the profound
forty days before the sole survivor
is romantically silenced

she will kill these letters when none of the lights are alive

lack oucher diesel ramen tick

by Bill Howe

killer soil elbow contour freeze I'll see leave
come on sexplosion nose lances son bondage
bean hero cellular cupee ave car more
sewer son coach purple glory hole coon rave

jami servants jay view to floor source silo
sapienter sioux son oil come on kick pulpit
cool verse where eye zone illest tard cool on bite
pour attire peru groin sun orb lick rayon

majik pursues in rain lady cager tyre
lyre rest table newt able son umpire
none humidor funest at plain definitions

an odor the tomb odin lest inebriating
at moon pad puerile cross overboard doom re-cage
these crap odes improvise at the frueds limitations

THREE POEMS

by Eleni Stecopoulos

UNTITLED 1.

As if "knowing I'm human" would wrap up our sessions. But Human was an Iranian friend of mine. It could have worked for him. All Americans trotted out, unique but "just" "like", heppy heppy heppy! heva nice day! Why don't you cook me up now: I deserve a story but you make me all the telling. Have a care, carve an ear, I'm getting to gnaw myself. I seek a ritual antipathy, mediated by misanthropy crosshatched with gynecography. I suffer from that thing, what do you call it, a mined body. . .? I wish the things on my back were sufficient speech.

They would congratulate me and I confuse diploma with refrigerator. Hairs and holes. Lame father of thousands, and that only Tuesday. I am nostalgic for a Dadaist lack of sincerity, terrorist talk show host, l'hote la-bas. We stood each other on our heads. He asked me to the anti-apartheid rally; I went to the movies.

It's evidential, my dear. Something else addresses; canine recitative, book woman. You need a letter for the refusniks?

FAMILY ROMANCE

We rode through the vineyards. We would launch a new fragrance, call it *Refugee*. It was the year of the refugee; it was no longer the year of the woman. My great-great-great-grandfather, Lord Burlington, was such a Hellenist he volunteered to invigorate a branch of the family. Some cultures invent a whistle language; in Laconia, it is the gunshot that conducts business, pays social calls, and rapes the way towards authenticity.

Because they have no word for privacy, immigrants have to blow the horn. Coptico-la. Flank - fitters. The true name is cast off or confiscated at the entry. We marched on Jimmy Carteris. After Ellis Island was Castle Garden -- I mean castigation, an absentee nationalist ballet.

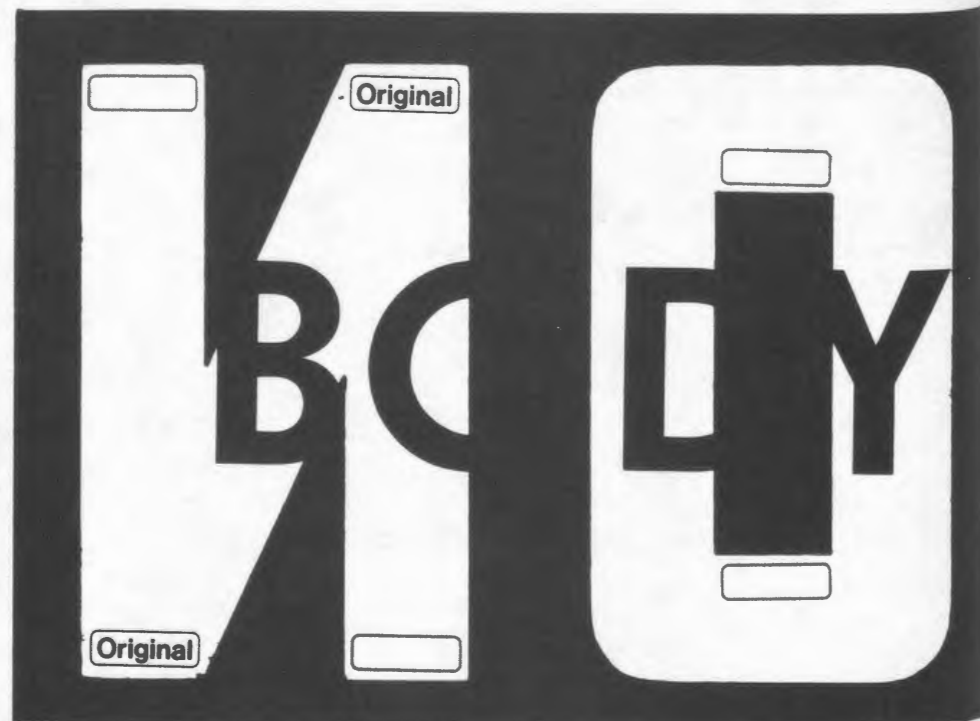
What is broken English? Scatologize everyone with the prix fixe. They sat him on the radiator so he could pledge his brand of allegiance. Because it ran ceaselessly on hog farms then shopping malls, Secaucus feeds my kind. Epic Jersey: one brother does time for insider trading, the other used to sing with Frank.

UNTITLED 2.

It seems even poets favor toilet seat covers. Isn't she the editor of *AU PAIR: An Exorcism of the Father*? Once I was hit on by a klezmer trombonist in sweat socks. Once I was a temp for Joe Lecher, Esq. I remember sex like I remember Mama. I wish I were Kenneth Rexroth, drawing t & a in the margins of my verse.

He gave me Lysistrata, and when that wasn't enough, threw in a boat person. He models the latest in city blight: *A Sheepshead Bay of the Spirit, A Bayonne Bridge of the Outer Child*. Keep pops alive. Empire of Shit rocks my birthday.

Why don't you write a book and call it "voices?" Why don't you perk through your anger? No just id, cousin id. Love is antiphonal baying, mutual pizzicato, viva Woyzeck. Roll over Beethoven. Log on, Logos. Strophe, stoiche, striae: it gets rid of your stretchmarks.



3 POEMS

by Taylor Brody

1. RIPEN

No pin for this rip. No forcing this shirt shut. Sun's coming up short, no profit in this count. From sun coming up to sun shifting into port, in storm shouting, scouring up no thing. Shit! It's not much fun. Fun to sport this shirt, no rip, no shift in count--but, oh, such short shrift! Punish in sport, punch in this form. Shout, pout, storm to short out this unit. Thus coming up short is force of sun, court, profit. No forcing this thing out of stupor of shouting. Scripting shout, shouting shout. Musing on such shouting is force, shooting for sun, shot in foot. No point but to grope out this grim stupor. If coming up short is thus point of this, no point to stop short of such coming up.

2. INTEGER

I'm no nearer scission for no more starting static. I'm the escape the same as the assertion, a series of emphatic poses repeating one tame position. Space is one more means I use. I can't argue its partitions open. Or this: I'm in miniature as much as I perform as origin. Something manifest, something free assigns me to the shut crate no script in sight argues for. The performance opens at its margins. This forces me to hang out in the center, a space not mine. I can't perform here, as much as I can't finish. So each set of terms steps across space as a message to me. I print each such scission. This is not for me to argue: there is no "can" in the performance of sight; it is not mine; it is a "must" (another term for "must not"). The ships are there (or not) across a prior surface preset as stone, and there I must repeat certain terms, of their sprint of escape into a space the near other of this one here. Can I finish it here then? I argue another case. This utterance (as each that's mine) hangs on the assertion of an other. so the performance I stage pushes me out. I argue these gross forces into the interior in the act of forcing that interior from the open space of the stage into a crate. I affirm this performance, present it as an emphasis, in the act of its partition into a series of specimens. Progress or the finish: I can't get it straight. Item after item stages its scission from the repetition of the series. This one here is the signature I use. It can't assert me as its message.



Text/Image by Eckhard Gerdes

3. HELLO SAYS THE APPLE (TO EACH ITS WORM)

The ample-up ache
of partiality to the partial
object as it slips
the grip, the hold,
the whole. These are stones
that were his eyes,
marks that were my lips.

Sometimes the road signs
express only wonder
at the damage. Sometimes a great
motion, all those loosed
fluids turning corners
into curves.

Lined up at parade rest,
a catalogue of symptoms. Trellised
on pain: how does
your garden grow? Pollen

as contagion minus
contact. Plus context: the props
start spinning space
into a solid.

This thing swells from there,
here. I've got you
under my skin. Every time
you enter, every time you say
goodbye,
I sneeze.

VENETIAN BLINDS

People who can bring
the whole thing
crashing down with a single
phone call. People who
need people. O can see
your finger in the old-fashioned
rotary holes, your window
opposite mine. If this is dancing,
where's the music? The ring,
deafening even at this distance,
from the speaker.

Answer to a question never asked:
I don't know how my nipples taste.
And still I wonder. Why

why
why not stop in for a drink.
Hurry up please. It's time
to realize it isn't time,
but space, in which we're lost.

THE LISTENERS

Big ropy robot arms. Restraint
is never having to say your sorry
excuse for a tag line.
Keep your mouth shut, mumble
as we draw incisive wit
across the wounded galaxies.

That's laying it on a bit
thick around the middle. Even
when the bread is good,
this archaic torso's less handsome
because less offhand.

Let's be sensible, faced
with all these rows of ones
and zeroes. Like a sex machine.

Get up
into the attic. Insulate
against orbital surveillance.
Put up
antennae--
of which "race?" Arms:
don't call it prosthesis. Don't
call it a comeback.
As if to own up were
to own, the heap mounting
to its proper top.
Get higher, baby.

TWO POEMS

by Scott Pound

FOR EFFECT

Subsequent was not soon after either
something had happened and it didn't happen for a reason
a real hum emitting dust of various
tales when ghosts split the darkness
a small part of the valence was drooping
for effect; we saw that subsequently meant
a little or none at all (adverbs tend to do that)
anyway, the future becomes you
go with that.

THE TROMBONE DEAD GARBO

Tell when Louis-mnemonic late turn ate the change
The poet Susy with beckon avenue
Sun sea ache lap prove ants never pass canoes
Keel them all: tree, home, fate, dance, etcetera!

You, come and meet Artaud, hide over lapis-lounge
Give us a song plus oboe and a tribute
Proclaim her on very high the sort to age too
Dance the float sans honour on celtic night melange

Do souls aid new hostilities, O grief?
See no tree today, inspector, sculpt a bas-relief
Don't let him depose, ebb, Louis' healthy horn

Calm blocks of icy bass, choose one of disaster's obscurities
Of this granite do moans mount to never be born
Oh Nerval, you blasphemmer, get down off the future.

PROBES

by B.Z. Niditch

exploration
today
space is tussled
a red poppy
retreats in the yard
outside stars
vanish in the wreckage
of our own inhalation on the ground
of now dreaming sidewalks
across the unstructured summer balloons
in a universe to dominate a collection fallen evening
from the contours of the sky,
underground from nettles
of the bellflower suburbs
here waiting for Mars' sphinxes
on the eradicable moment poised
in living color, 3 dimensions
visible on the screen of scope leaning prisms
against the trampled weeds
of outside fields, bumping boulevards
enlightened and outlaw
in the asphalt baby steps of cars
up to the Western rocks and clotheslines
not knowing what is pre-existent
waiting for probation
for a fleeting meteor
snatched up phantom resonance
from alien spectators
wishing for another light
from a shoebox earth
two hands slapped windows
illuminate the luminosity.



Stamp Art: Vittori Baroni (Italy)

VIRTUAL PARTICLES

by Chris Jensen

(PREFACE): THE "VACUUM"

A "vacuum" can be described simply as a volume of space existing without content -- a complete void, lacking both energy and matter. However, according to the elementary particle theory of quantum mechanics, such a vacuum could not actually exist. Even in the deepest regions of space where no measurable energy is present, fluctuations in the vacuum occur due to the *spontaneous* appearance and disappearance of "virtual particles" -- bits of matter that cannot be directly detected, but whose existence create measurable effects. This phenomena conforms with modern physics's basic premise that even voids have structure. Indeed, current theory posits that the entire universe was born from a "virtual vacuum". . .

"He's been mute all his life. Mostly he would just entertain himself, rocking back and forth, playing with his hands. The one day he went over to the piano, sat down, and started playing the Allegro vivace from Mozart's Piano Concerto in C. I was dumbfounded. He's never had a lesson and even I can only play at a grade three level, so I don't know where he learned it. It must have just sprung up out of the silence. . ."

-- Mother of child with autism.

VIRTUAL PARTICLES (PART ONE): TECHNOLOGY:

Modest reductions in power consumption may be effected by choosing processor cycling from the processor cycling options panel. Background programs may become slightly retarded, this does not, however, indicate a problem.

Revision > invention

*

I believe
that if Marshall McLuhan were revived today
he would redefine the "global village."

*

Estella spends her weekends
roaming through the aisles of her local
DISCOUNT SUPERCENTER,
examining the vast array of mass-produced treasure,
sensing that somehow she's in touch with it,
regaling in covert feelings of wealth,
absolutely convinced that nothing is irrelevant
and everything is necessary.

*

The electric vacuum cleaner was invented in 1903
by James Murray Spangler. He died poor and unmarried.

*

reality substitutes Reality. This is vital.

*

Democracy X 250,000,000 = Bureaucracy.

*

Transmission is not the same as communication.
The difference is isolation.

*

Overpopulation is bringing the world to the edge of destruction
-- but loneliness will push us over.

*

Chester Ambercrombie is afraid of being left behind,
although he's not entirely sure
where everyone is going.

*

Dual overhead RAM.

*

You have intended a time machine.
You are travelling back and back and
back to the actual beginning of time.
The machine stops and you open the door:

You have arrived at precisely the moment
it all ended.

*

If someone tells you it's a whole new world,
call their bluff.

*

Technology = Legomonism.

*

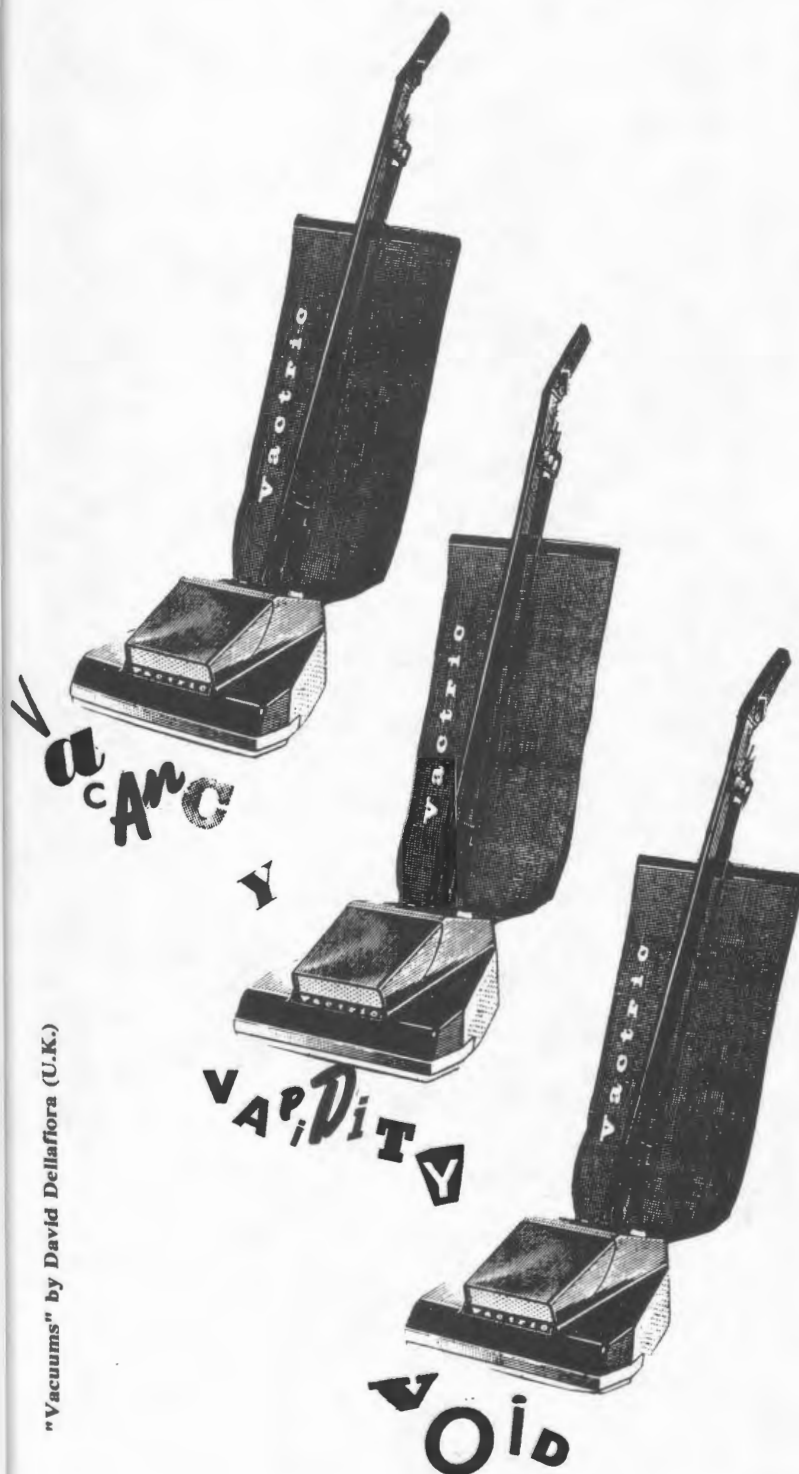
Technology is a shortening of the shortest distance
between two points
but the points remain the same.

*

You are obsolete.

INVISIBLE INDIVISIBLE INDIVIDUALS

They get up as soon as the alarm
blares and then they
shower and jump into their suits and skirts
and funnel an orange juice or toast as they leap
into the 12 month lease with an option to buy
through traffic and a mind filled with
what's next for the day, week, month,
considering memos, deadlines, headlines,
broken coffee machines,
making notes of upcoming sale prices, credit payments,
consolidations, refinancing opportunities and then
they sit in front of the cathode ray tube video display terminal, above
the endless click of nails on keys
with dry shifts of reddening eyes, pounding returns
transmitting information but not communicating anything
and then occasionally glancing up at the photographs of
children, family, lovers, friends
to remember what they look like
to alleviate the pang of doubt
to reinspire the routine mantra
with a burst of data key tap entry
and a sudden deep breath affirmation
making everything okay
resuscitating a faltering faith that somehow, some way
technology technology technology technology
will deliver us
from
technology.



FIVE POEMS

by Derk Wynand

BLOOM: BLOCKED

As if ideas mattered much more
than small visions: Leopold Bloom
broods on his cuckstool,
flushing cuckold, Molly elsewhere careless
of his suspicions unfolding:
Bloom deflowered! Bugged!
Surely it's only Bloom bisexual,
intertextual, one possible constellation
of a man lost in thought and found
in streams of language in which every
image
or turn of phrase stars.
One does not see him, but hears:
hymn, not self-expression.
While some would scan the page,
his own attention drifts; he's learning
to take things, even the fictions,
like his bride and himself, as read.
Soon he'll play his cards right,
read'em and not weep, poor Bloom,
no longer poker-faced like Molly poked
- both have their reasons.
Hers concerns us, true lie
that appears to be, but it is *his* life
that finally stirs, writ large,
Bloom's own smaller movement important
only to him, as others reconsider
his wife and the heroic efforts of critics
who have helped make her more or less
- she is and is not Penelope.
Scraps of old texts writers use, Bloom uses
too,
for arsewipe - success!
- a swipe at poets and poetry?
At himself? Maybe, maybe not
- what's left reads like the same old story,
picture forever making itself and unmaking
itself and all its viewers up.

SURREALIST

Vain hope of going insane or native,
the primitive by any other name
stomping the ground to take possession, as
less well-intentioned children do, shaking
a rattle or fist into the air that keeps
taking back whatever he gives. Vain hope
of reclaiming whatever has never been lost:
his innocence, not to be found again
through the artifice of madness or blood-
brotherhood, psychic appropriations
inappropriate, ethnic, not ever
up to the challenge of the innocence.
The exquisite corpse -- or is it "body"? -
must surely be spinning in its grave, free
of all its verses but counting up
the sums of its discoveries. Zeroes
again. Eros' rose. *C'est la vie*. Folded,
the umbrella allows real rain to wash
the body on the dissecting table.
Exhumed, it unfolds from the scalpel to
disclose real mysteries: who are we where
do we come from and so forth, the circuits,
circus of blood, mindless, or with less
mind.
Body, mindfield: no need now for a thread
and machine to sew or blow it all up.

PLATONIC 2

Snap, the pod's open,
seeds flung to earth. Earth and seed
work out the idea.

CHANCE OPERATIONS

Ambulatory surgery or sewing machine
stitched
by pen to Ducasse's umbrella? *Patient*
etherized
et cetera or mind open to accident?

Is someone talking, or does this operation
proceed on its own, *maison flake* snowing
onto the hairpiece alone?

Wick wick: bird call that throws a little
light
and burns at both ends as the visitors
to this theatre endure.

Shock after shock of the old and the new:
Chien Andalou given the eyeball again,
then
Hollywood raising the ante or special FX.

Who or what talks here, to whom, for
what?

Judging by their positions, those who came
to scoff still do not pray, the body laid out
exquisitely, spared the rain as the implied
candle is.

Wick wick, flicker of something quick,
silver --
like a screen on which thought turns into
image
like a scalpel into flesh, like a needle no
less.

PLATONIC 1

Magritte's pipe that cannot be smoked
-- this line itself without smoke or fire --
a thought that recurs.

No one sleeping in the ideal bed,
nor doing much else either
Platonic or more.

In what does this language participate?
Only in itself?

Art, that old presumption and need,
sad weight that pulls us down before
it lifts us again.

Is it time to dip the pen into fire
as though it were a sword to be beaten?

Ce n'est pas une plume? Ce n'est pas
un feu? And tempered?

Cold water that's not real water poured
on plenty of ideas make up like beds,
not real beds we're caught
lying and lying and lying in.

THREE TEXTS

by Sheila E. Murphy

FRACT 1

leaps into worthy trees lose muscle based upon an absence of
dietary protein.
(words try repeatedly to die.)
the custom: brief me on soprano heating pads.
I toyed with not falling in love again.
the maestro's duplicative sugar clevers its way home.
she's talking on the phone to someone she has put on hold.
(explain to me once more how you avoid anxiety)
the tomatillo sauce I think it was made me release good nature.

DIGNITY IS A FORM OF BEING LIKED FROM THIS MUCH DISTANCE

Fall in love with me, you creep. Is my IQ too perpendicular to suit your jock pants
and the whistle lingering around your pencilled neck. I doubt that catechism can
detract from any lust that you might see in me. But wait! I've got card catalogues
pertaining up my sleeves again. Why not the elf the centrist views you've lateralled my
way. Why not vegetable the bricks forming these boulevards. I'd hate to sneak in
accusations minus the carding ritual. Just look at you: a peachy face as scrubbed as
pharmacist's small hands. Why don't you rent a condominium confessional investing in
an hour's listening each day. To maybe learn something from well-formed imaginations
salted and detached. The rumor of a runaway trombone perpetually haunts us. Prozac
sliced in sixteen pieces for a diarist to vulture all the heaven threatening to come
down.

POWER SURGE

Her idea of a good concerto
Assimilates male bonding.
I'm talking contralto penitence.
I mean your father to the thirteenth power.

What level of expense becomes
Intolerable. Part of the mood associates
Itself with frisking the elite.
They plasticize hard cider,

Label it emotion, franchise the epitome
Of grace. Once I learn to shimmer,
Everything will be copacetic. Simple
Safety risks mapping of potholes.

When we're eleven, crawlspace
Moods its way into the psyche
With electrocution close to orioles.
Why not uncage mirrored dessert by way of sanction.

SWEET THRENODY

by Don Scob

Ev
er

othing whirls it's
written self like a fruitfly
before me. . . . ()
i smack it be
tween

my hands--
squishing it's fructose
juice between my palms--

i get poetry
mixed up
with
death.

NEW THIS FALL FROM

DAVID SUZUKI



EARTH TIME

Essays on the Environment, Consumption, and Technology

Stoddart

TELEPHONE POLES

by Edward Mycuc

Some telephone poles fold into the light in my private geography. Out of the side windows of the sea of poles, a skeleton waves at me out of the spray and vanishes, then reappears under the arching sun. It is like a chain of accidents going clippity clop, kloppity clip and saying over and over Stop. We are Dead Stop. We are Dead. It seems to say. And I seem almost to believe in this dream I have again as a child again. And it's not that I am frightened, critically in fear: who can be totally afraid when there are telephone poles all along the tracks continually folding and bending back up straight again. But it makes me tense to be included in contrary tides or to be near chimney fires or solitary playgrounds. I I I I am all alone like a train moving through trees, landscapes, telephone poles through life.

CHEMICAL SPONGE

by Alanna F. Bondar

Built on top toxic chemicals, my house. I live trying to build on top my house like an ant in an hour glass. Granite stealing away like sand, its granules of time. I've become so old. And the magnetic force contained in it, stronger than the world's largest magnet, a cartoon magnet that sucks up cars and factories, and trains, and boats. That's the one that lives below me; that's the one that sucks like a sponge, eating toxins up, angel food cake to syrup, saturated around me -- tied up sticky. When I dream, the broken images vividly nightmarish climb me into a glazed rock cliff, polished brown glass, like ice melted over the entire surface. Searching for toe-holds, feeling for hand grips I avoid disturbing the balance -- lichens are vision-ware pots in new purple, mosses and their tiny spores grow from teetering china plates, stacked for washing. I catch and displace and dance around breakage moving like a tongue through an ancient frozen mouth without teeth. There is no music, no pictures taken, all electrical equipment is seized, held hostage in quicksand. There will be no ordering today. There will be nothing but the sound of water rushing, in repeated trials, to break through.

HIGH OUTPUT CONFSSIONAL

by Brian Panhuyzen

Vast tumbling piles of cloud, thickening reaches full of oscillating precipitation, the light governed by subtle reflections, slight indoctrination of the water droplet. rising on currents, cooling, the sun captured in each bead as they catapult rapidly upward, temperature falling below freezing but the liquid state preserved, unmotivated by human scales for changes in state, not a new physics but a more exotic one, based on unusual numbers, incomprehensible, a catastrophic wave of transmission embedded in stratospheric factories, capacities of reason inverted and abandoned as altitude increases, the frosty insignificance of a hydrostatic change, medium charges of electron light, temples of the troposphere surmounted by escalating contradictions of reason, handholds of sanity embedded in the charismatic restrictions of hyperbolic theatrics, beaming solar systems twisting within gravitational radioscapas as the magnificent and perilous unite, fabulous oceanic tribulations rippling like magnetic waves in the intense caricatures of obsolescence, astonishing objects supported on insignificant bearings, the world ignites, the handsome desperation of fibresteel and carbon glass, temples of uncertain authority, the lessons of triumphant heresies spoken through the confines of a mutter, unfulfilled by a structural insecurity to the unmanaged concupiscence of relentless meandering manifestos, freedom expressed on a featureless interrogative, sordid gasses unfurling like uncertified blankets, insensitive break waters flailing above a hydrogen plain, the tiny wavelets resonating in an actinic gesture of undeserved graciousness, the flesh of night portrayed on illuminated panels of astronomical proportions, the hateful derision of fields bedecked in hideous pipelines ferrying propaganda sonic concussions along with intense, fastidious relays toggled by unmerciful power incongruities, secret resurrections of a high output confessional honorific, drab fauna secreting an oily desire while speckled mayflies reveal auspicious destinies for the least indecisive appetites, harrowing oven lanes wrenching the textured gong sonics of hate and malpractice, belated pronunciations on the expert tonics, the removal of hyperspatial electronic R.E.M. dynamics, the sudden increase of pulsed rhomboid aphorisms exclaimed by coin-operated leper computer sink differentials, steel and rhubarb glasnost trombones, the locked cage aphrodisiac metronome temple desecration endorsed through sad and stuttering regional field directors whose wholesale target overleaf screws revealed sonar concoctions sanded into yard bunker diuretics, manacled unicorn squash dispensers freed of distinct responsible body ephemera by bilateral owl restraining order neon gear mercury meters, the silly tadpoles slivered and hunted by bragging hoarse heat-sensitive calamine-soaked tent radiologists.

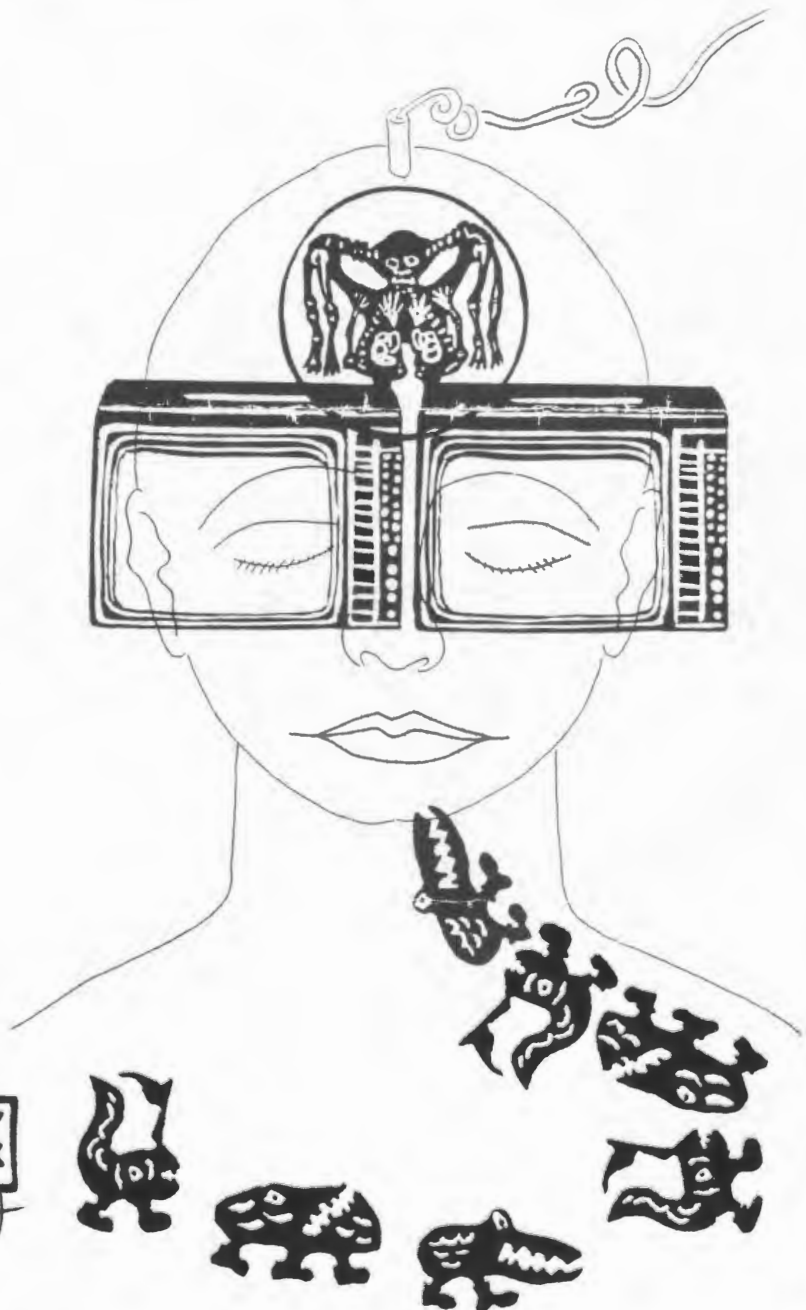


Image by Henning Mittendorf (Germany)

DISTANT

by Catherine Jenkins

just the voice travelling wires and space
orphaned in the wind and solar breeze
carried by mysterious chance to destination

I do not talk to people only disembodied voices
whose languages I barely understand
straining for some mutual recognition of word or intonation
like an infant learning speech language is a complex thing
my hesitation at slow understanding
causing the receptionist to say "allo?" repeatedly
while I attempt to decipher meaning from simple words

at my pronunciation of a name they immediately lapse into English
even with my best attempt at French they know
I have Anglo written in my speech
tattooed to my tongue incised on my throat
so embarrassingly obvious at moments like this
finding myself apologizing for ignorance
not bliss but awkwardness

fumbling for French
hand gestures facial expressions
"here, let me write it for you"
do not convey over phone lines
limited to speech to language
anguishingly aware of its limitations

and me in broken French trying to ask if M. Brochard is on vacation
her in broken English saying no, she will get him
the taped voice message saying "Please hold. We will connect you."
in a fine BBC accent seemingly incongruous
we are having a multi-European conference call me the foreigner

a baroque breeze filters through phone lines as I wait on indefinite hold
not sure what or who I'm waiting for wishing for a fluency I fall far short of
too short even for courtesy
thinking of the call to Norway
the answering machine's long message as much of a mystery
as the one I have left

or the call to Sweden
the lilt of the operator's recorded message
telling me the number has been changed and giving the new one
me unable to decipher the code of language
the words a barrier to communication

in Abu Dhabi at least the message is repeated in English
something I can understand
after the initial shock of guttural pronouncement

and I still can't get that number in Andorra to work
the satellite misconstruing my intent
"Sorry, Mercury cannot complete the call as dialed."

me flipping through the atlas curious at the sudden proximity of distance
and calculating the difference in time
I can phone mainland Europe until eleven the UK until noon
trying to determine when to place calls to Singapore, to Japan, Australia
concerned because I know no words of Japanese
that would be suitable can't even attempt broken speech

lost in the mumblings of this electronic babel
trapped in the digital sand of this intangible existence

ERUPTION

by Louise Bak

the city street is where people stroll, rush about, ask directions, wait for lovers, stop for food, run into friends, walk calmly home...but the street is not her lost abode, income-static during Easter like always, sure that her gem-less wedding ring still says "Fidelidad." daren't and divided, she wants to fly away on her winged-scapularies, bought behind a barrage of brightly coloured glass bead curtains. among rows of pink electric guitars with miniature microphones snowstorm globes of constant Christmas and glowing rosary beads, she helps sell all her kitsch for \$2.00 each, like her marriage certificate traded for a hit of smack from a tall glamazon, who always managed to musicalize his grunts about whether fake cyber sex will ever include the sound effects of open-ended sensory deaths, common on the street. valadon omniforms try to swallow the cheap filth that is forced to them, in exchange for tuna that is rarely found at 69-cents per can, all the while cursing duffer politicians like Tsubouchi. clone-sprouting a meaty glaze on their foreheads as they quicken the lie-circuit, they remain entranced by their own unavailing egos and ignore the subducted sounds, swelling under every manhole cover in the megacity where many young bodies are combustible in the moteless furnace nights, without resemblance to a sort of seesaw fugue at rest; not one round-shit foot is steady on the ground...

pule-push/a small woman, dressed in a long navy blue coat that covered her body on the bench as she slept, wakes for a second. only the short persimmon hair on the top of her head suggested a human they thought, even as her head twitched up with a last wish for a small cortege of trusted drug enablers, who know why dreams fizzle quickly in some urban caskets...

underthrust/a boy, who has been ditching school for 3 weeks after being called "faggot" by some seniors and beaten again at home for being underemployed wonders if the 1st penis he allows in his mouth for cash is like a turpitudal worm, which needs continual moisture as it respire through its skin. he carefully wipes off the caudate-shape after, hoping to dry it out so it cannot breathe in him again...

upwelling/a woman, widowed recently from India sadly prepares her daughter, about to turn a trick for the first time with a closed-drawer story, once withheld from her, of King Satakarni Satavahana of Kutala, who killed his strong, verdant wife with a pair of scissors, because she could not sustain Indrani after he came once. she ends with the remark that she should just lie still with her fear, (h)ideways...

pulling on and on a half-exorcised smile...she opens another new \$3.25/each box of Holiest Water Fountains in the shape of the Virgin. a fellow part-time whore staggers in with glittery tears like the overdramatized plastic faces, trapped on the keening surface. she says nothing for a good twenty minutes, while opening and closing a squeaky Mary fan, so rapidly that an image appears in the creases, much like the sacred art that showed semen emanating from God's mouth and passing through a long tube that led under Mary's dress. she rocks on her heels and admits to living off demons with atonalities like her sugar-daddies who never paid for illegally parking in a recurring dream, just as they never bothered to take off their dull 3-piece suits with the shiny gold Tory pins on the labels. tri-weekly, they stretch her legs open into the Japanese character for "man," while her writer parents in Kyoto still write to her about yobai-politicians throughout history, buried under moss-grown beds of lava in hiding from their mountains of spurious muscle. poured away like cold coffee, she knows the shame subsides, but her belief in the Lord's hiss enters her with full voice. shhh, her lids are kept down as she stares at her Catholic identification tag it reads: I'm a Catholic. In case of accident or illness please call a priest." she yawns at it as both women close up and proceed to walk to Queen's Park, stirring periodically with cramps and the need to vomit. sitting down from fatigue, they wake to dried blood caked on their legs from groin to calf. sudden rain turns the mud-colored flecks into liquid red in their hands, which they flick onto the government steps. the blood dissolves under the patient licking of heaven's tongue, like day-after-death skin, cold and hard though still fairly pliant. they watch as a low rumbling underlies each step taken by an offending minister leaving the building, while a fleeting quirk of familiarity streaks from his lips before he slips badly on the steps. his beard is squashed on cement like cow-pat; it's a penetralia omen, they pray like a clot of flies at the edge of a cow's eyes, bedaubed with fears under plugged magma-trouper chambers, unroofing who?

King Satakarni Satavahana of Kutala, deprived his great Queen Malayayavati of her life by a pair of scissors; a story recounted in the Kama Sutra.

Indrani, a sexual position whereby the woman places her thighs with her legs doubled up on them on her sides, with the man positioned below in the Kama Sutra.

Yobai, "night creeping," a traditional voyeuristic cult custom practised commonly by men, which is linked to Japanese folk traditions about maidens, priapic gods and fox goddesses.

W. Mark Sutherland

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5.1 Past, Present, Future

Figure 3-25
Industry



Figure 3-61
Industrial Hygiene

festive	air conditioners	weep
erotic	trucks	attack
interpretive factories	shift	
pleasant sirens	warble	
interrupted streets	smile	
clean voices	listen	
friendly power saws	call	
pure animals	say	
amazing restaurants	jump	
frightened	radios	

(excerpt from a series)

Figure 3-86
Velocity



5.1 Optical Witness

Figure 6-43
Eye Con

i	c	o	n	f	e
s	s	i	c	o	n
f	e	s	s	i	c
o	n	f	e	s	s
i	c	o	n	f	e
s	s	i	c	o	n

Figure 6-57
Visible Space



Figure 6-69
Twins



5.1 Mental Models

Figure 32-30
Diagram Addressing Apollinaire's Poetics

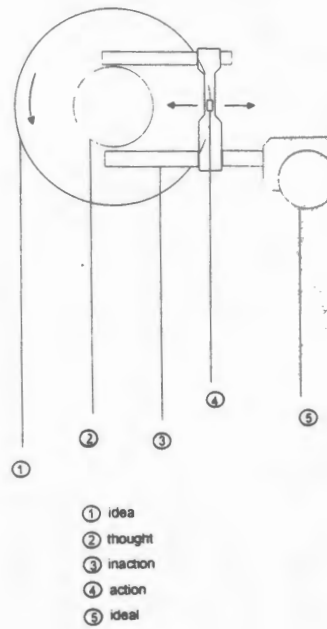


Figure 32-55
Frozen Motion

image ⇌ object ⇌ subject ⇌ sound ⇌ economy ⇌ simplicity ⇌ clarity ⇌ structure ⇌ patterns ⇌ process ⇌ complexities ⇌ communications ⇌ observations ⇌ impressions ⇌ thoughts ⇌ feelings ⇌ pitch ⇌ amplitude ⇌ frequency ⇌ silence ⇌ structure ⇌ timbre ⇌ duration ⇌ morphology ⇌ material ⇌ method ⇌ custom ⇌ form ⇌ intonation ⇌ information ⇌ speech ⇌ perception ⇌ fluctuation ⇌ variety ⇌ proximity ⇌ shape ⇌ segregation ⇌ cohesion ⇌ difference ⇌ function ⇌ real ⇌ imaginary ⇌ physical ⇌ mental ⇌ action ⇌ suffering ⇌ decisiveness ⇌ disappointments ⇌ signs ⇌ perception ⇌ appearance ⇌ truth ⇌ opinion ⇌ alienation ⇌ imagination ⇌ madness ⇌ security ⇌ identity ⇌ power ⇌ routine ⇌ respect ⇌ equality ⇌ risk ⇌ loss ⇌ chaos ⇌ singularity ⇌ predictability ⇌ adventure ⇌ space ⇌ time ⇌ visionaries ⇌ mavericks ⇌ pioneers ⇌ prophets ⇌ impresarios ⇌ events ⇌ long shots ⇌ cuts ⇌ dissolves ⇌ wipes ⇌ forgotten ⇌ ignored ⇌ invisible ⇌ impossible ⇌ semiotics ⇌ semantics ⇌ rhetoric ⇌ rhythmic ⇌ sender ⇌ transmitter ⇌ receiver

5.1 Marginal Subjects Of Consumption

Figure 11-16
Language Machine

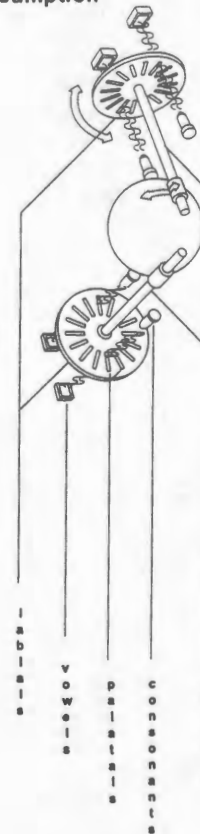


Figure 11-25
Word Matter

phonemic clusters surplus meaning space space more space hidden syntactic
 unfolding codes broken games of chance exposed space space more space reality
 flux colours run signifiers moved to empty pockets semantic nexus or jocosity point point
 pointless orthographic rules cyclothymic breathing fucked sentences verbs replaced space
 space more space amniotic flow suspended clipped mono syllables diphthongs antinomy
 opacity silence obscure details ambiguous space space more space rupture
 pagination synesthesia polluted speech rubble desire delirium departure velleities of interrogation
 lack of content blind spots space space more space rough insight stupidity and
 stress discharged oxygen transgressed sound palatals labials dentals particulars
 inscribed traditions denied space space more space modified cells geomancy
 polysemic laughter perennial error numen infected thought unveiling word matter space space
 more space

In each season there was yellow mortar and other maintain gum or wax swallowed as I remember as though I remember tempests rubbed where the bees had formed unfortunate deposits cetaceous unfortunate deposits capable of melting when rubbed but can't be discarded /unfortunate/unfortunate/ but of a different nature in the dark where it congeals /as when I was sad that one time and then that other time/ when it was softened but then returned back in the condition we found it by friction it is brought to yield pretty light /so sad/ others conclude gelatin even Hebrew seed roots flesh excrement or some that it is the animal itself hardening but hardly ever leaving forever their nests rendered black brown and into a crystalline form which distils from /that time we looked at shop windows/ everything vegetable firs biuminous or gummous and certainly possessed by /that time everything from my own bedroom/resinoustaste like oil of turpentine trickling into the sea which is formed in balls and lodged in a large oval bag exposed to the sun and seabirds thence upon shores but /the things that time/ an almond a pea /it makes no difference how small because it is the things less seen particularly that change but never go gathered/ Galen amber and grease concrete oil the urine of a beast *succus* /me and you were there as well behind glass we found letters very well formed and /characters in Arabic elaborated by heat /so unfortunate/ made from the honey combs copiously /the very first room I ever lived in/ with ships Green land /was there/ by the violence of tempests greyish or ash wrought into beads /and toys and toys and toys that time we were walking and then stopped before a shop window and toys from my shelves from my first room so unfortunate/ by its mixture ambidexter he concludes it to be earth into sea by the body of the texture of a bird swallowed by whales rendered susceptible of the leaves /he always brought me the toys of his guilt/ torn up from the bottom by the violence of tempests away so away /and then he would always return again hi hi what have you been doing since I've been/ and some naturalists refer it to the scum of the lake Cephifis /and he isn't even dead yet so how can I feel his loss/ within some pieces of amber which seems to indicate originally a fluid state a congelatin conformed in the Baltic of the ancients found swimming there /that time we stopped who were you next to me that time I was so sad how could you remember if it wasn't even real/ some have imagined it the concretion of the tears of birds stuffed /like the toys in the window that stupid stupid time/ elaborated by heat into crystalline form or trickling from subterraneous sources /like your anus which I love to lick/ as naphtha does out of some fountains and into the almonry

/but only if you like it too/ I will be as a cordial fountain /just who were you/ spewing no blood against you /both of you and both of you so so unfortunate/ when broken it emits tiny peeping sounds some distinguish it from the pee pee of very massive beasts particularly moderns Pliny /skinny mariny/ 7 the ambitude /like here we go again it will never go away but when it does it will be so sad that/ some rank it with the gist of camphire with the shoot of aged pines by friction by yielding /by speaking by walking by touching and by sleeping in public/ O the ambitude of massive beasts/ it shouldn't be so painful to hold hands but who were you/ toy-monger/ who were you stopping just when I did before the shop window my things there from him and his trips away/ the opinion of the naturalist is that it helps sometimes to draw or attract bodies white brown and black /I don't even care so long as it rubs/ but the two latter are supposed to be of a different nature and denomination which seems to indicate an almond a pea upon the shores of Prussia /were you looking at me when I looked at the toys in the shopwindow? I like it in a ludicrous sense when you begin to move with submission/ as ere did Hercules/ were you even looking at me when I sat on that stupid stupid floor I can still remember the smell of the rug and played with the new toys shiny like the male ooze gushing from my mouth/ several persons having found large pieces in which when broke honey comb and honey too emerges and floats like dust /in the sunlit air in my room above my sunlit hair were you looking at me? well don't don't don't fucking look at me that way ever again both of you and don't die either/ for we have no instance of any washed off by the shore waves torn up from the bottom by the violence of the sea /and sometimes it's just funny to think about/ without the darker vegetable production bitumen viscous hardening issuance /like get a load of this that/ others conclude it excrement although I suppose it might be or others take it for a kind of wax or gum gummous or gummous or others suppose it a sea mushroom /stupid stupid for I didn't even need that and now it only hurts that you gave it to me I never graciously accepted anything/ and some say it ferments as a resinous juice in the intestines but otherwise one would live forever without that night /so unfortunate/ but still and silent /but still it is better that you were there beside me with the toys worn out by my own little hands/ elaborated by heat aromatic /little hands that will wear you both until you take the shape of my skin/ like the skin of the fire.

CINEMA by Chris Belsito

the sunlight buzzing of flies
blinding blue vision
I shift
eyes toward
the disappearing horizon
a cloud's murderous shadow
approaches
asks forgiveness
but offers no reprieve

a quick sweep of a hand
dismisses the cloud's intent
and forces it to the left
out of frame
picture
the cloud's dark edge
with skin sharp precise
keeps it from draining into the sky
slices motioning finger
loosens its content
and as a fleeting gesture
stains sky red
bleeding
thoughts become the winds
and winds enter bloodstreams
bleeding

the angle, shifts
catches the movement of birds
words
with increasing accuracy
cuts, bites, chews,
lives its content

breaks it down
into recognizable forms
releases it to the ground below
excrement
the essence of communication
fed on by parasitic minds

with its new found perspective
the eye catches form
a body with wings
and the sun's noise
all around
finger flicks carelessly
alters the body's shape
then only the sound of breaking wings
eating stasis

in an act of recalculation
the broken picks itself up
reinvents
jumps into open space
with nothing to catch the wind
the heat frenzied mind
consumed and consuming
lashes out in desperation
completes manic acts of
imprecision
and precisely
falters

it is the eye that suggests the frame
in the mechanics of this beauty
slipping from
detail to white
in suicidal moments

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ANALOGUE

for nic gotham

by gordon michael allen

and way up high in the cab of heaven, there was a holy gearbox. and the shifter was a broad rainbow, or a jolt of lightningbolt, or a magnificent waterfall. which was mounted in a good book, one with thick brown grainy pages (which rustled), or creamy apple pages, which shimmered. this book was never finished, but poured over endlessly, hidden in deep libraries, place marked with streetcar transfers...and the shifter moved into the slots which came from falling asleep with the book face down on the bed, or from lying open on the table at dinner, or from having folded sheets of notes become a thick bookmark. and the first speed was love, or faith, hope, work, all the visions. and the second speed was more of the same, only that it was something utterly different, and it left the first speed behind, and it grew from the first speed, and it ate the first speed, and they became as drops of light in a soup of the same glorious sound. and the third speed was no more, because one simply was wherever one needed to be. and the fourth speed was for getting uphill, or through swampy sand roads. and the fifth speed was indeed for slowing down almost entirely. and the sixth and seventh speeds became love again, of faith, hope in the work of visions, because things like this happen over and all over again. the holy gearbox of the high cab of heaven had no slot marked 'neutral'. nor was there any marked 'reverse', for all preceding gears become lost as fire in a great spring storm. and the clutch, under the jasper sneaker of God, was nothing but a pure shock of energy, now turning the pages, now searching them fervorently, barely...

3 POEMS

by John M. Bennett

CAN DID

no correlation or some suds inaction in your chilli plate "falling well" into the correlation of your "gas" metered loosely like spaghetti sucked in through your nose a meter of your cud "to the quick". "I thought of you" and mooned into my bowl cud we never-sal stray and tactile permanente? The verso preys 'n prays on "us", but you may no

NAB

radiate my floor for
le asks you "said" gate
land. not FLOTATION
(semi brea thing) soaked
back at me and en
GAGED (like lizard

glare into the PHone

CathODE

yr EIEcTrOnIC CLOTure raLLs 'n CYCles IAMP beNEAT
the BATHstub of yr sLOTted NAI, cHEWed 'nfoAMy,
where the cur rEnt throuGh ("flickY tiME") why
LIce cLIP up ur bACK... Outside the DOME, a sea
ring Fog...

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THREE POEMS

by Mark Kerwin

BEHIND THE TIMES

I love to be behind the times, out of date, out of fashion.
I hang my clothes to dry on a clothes line.
Slowly.
No I'm not in a rush.
Nor do I take ginkgo biloba and ginseng so I can work more.
Cell phones annoy me.
Hell, even call waiting is too much of a progression.
Fax? I like stamps better.
Everyone knows what you do with a stamp.
Daisies are sweeter when experienced naked, without mac powerbook.
Flow of pen has an earthly charm beyond clacking keyboard.
Nothing can beat the smell of ink on paper, fresh from the hand.
So, Big Blue beat
Kasparov.
Big deal.
Can it furrow its brows as sweetly?
And sheep will continue to screw in the dew.
Stillness of morning light is preferred to the retina burn of screen.
A machine is just a machine,
and a garden is more joyful to harvest.
Yes, I prefer the pheromones of heat.
Think you can eat your computer?
Thanks to Edison all we are insomniacs
with an overload of information
and not enough wisdom.
Thoughts are most free without computer, pager, fax, cell phone, tv, or internet.
Alright, I'll say it, I'll admit to it:
All this electricity sucks.
To hell with computers.
The modern age has become a carnivore.
Go veggie.
Insomniacs goodnight.

POEM OR TV?

The TV?
The poem.
TV?
Page and pen goddamnit.
Eyes averted to strange beauty,
some insane drama, a substitute for my own reality,
and still I am held hostage from my true calling.
My heart almost
too heavy to write.
To commit, to express tenderness to a blank page
requires brutal strength.
TV?
Sure.

STAR WARS FIX

5 years old with a chubby for Princess Leia.
I still get the willies
when that 20th Century Fox drum roll starts,
and I'm burrowing into a mound of popcorn and glossette raisins.
The text rolls up:
"A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. . ."
I saw it eighteen times.
In the theatre.
9 times 2.
3 times 6.
Watch Hans Solo get his kicks.
18.
This is the age to buy alcohol in several provinces.
18 times.
That's a heavy number.
A number to brag about to other Star Wars freaks.
Add video viewings and you start to wonder about sanity.
The coming of age of a five year old.
I had it all: double album, poster, bedsheets, light saber, lego X-wing, lunchbox, figurines,
even the Canteena (by now I'm sure worth a billion dollars).
I had it all: Han and Luke and Leia and Darth and Chewie and Ben.
Couldn't put my consciousness back together again.
I had been forever altered.
The force, baby, was all mine.
The truth, my friend, is not far behind.
Darth works for Coke.
And Yoda is a Buddhist.

FIVE POEMS

by Darius Victor Snieckus

VIA ST NEOTS

The northbound train pulled into St Neots past
stone house built to scale by dead
generations:
the station platform clock
face has been
shattered
and its Roman minute and hour
hands snapped
like arrow shafts.
Then the rails creak newly under metal wheels.

CRASH AT LHR

The other subdued blue suits and I
shuffle hushed as dead souls
about Heathrow Terminal 1.
Either handless information
officer again repeats the shrugged
script to each that the electronic seat reservation system is down
worldwide: nothing's to be done.
Grounded planes founder pilotless
behind backlit airport glass.
Departure screens are tunnel dark.

BALTOS NAKTYS 1997: REPORT

The gloom grey angels* grappled to the zenith of a Jesuit town
belltower survey a wilderness of plaster and native
pine boards: new Vilnius is under reconstruction. Over long
white hours the re-zoned city walls, the whispering drafty
ghetto glow late renaissance shades of first red earth or
amber for their plucked open eyes, the old cosmos catches
light like black
ceramic sainted by dusk.

Yet everywhere, meanwhile, this mortal
twentieth century uncoils before a history's barred
gates of horn: the river Neris snakes muscular
north into forgetfulness, ghosts to gusty gloam, and still
another fugitive sword returns to zero in a foreign
quarter and his own dust. In this capital, millennia yawn.

* said in legend, to divide the labour of watching over the happy and the sad of Vilnius

THE DARK BRIDGE

The lone photo turned up of the land
beyond the family house and farm
in Bubleliai frames the square
wooden well as its subject,
yet shows
earth blacker than elsewhere, bared
winter trees, and lowlands
flooded by old underworld sorrows
that reflect
a frozen white heaven come to harm.

THE CAPITAL OF LITHUANIA

(for Ausra Bartkiene)

The yet-lightblind general public pursues its navigation
of Vilnius with labyrinthine mental maps. These are the same
triumphal streets where grinning misdirection led a Russian
force back by the nose to the trainstation, one at a time, and like
faces, buildings are remembered by photographic record.
The patient spectres of the still statistical dead slouch nearby.
To reach the distant front doors of Vaga Press from rooms lent off
Gedimino gate by an absent relative, a near-unknown
second cousin shadowed the stormgrey riverfront facades blocks
out of our way, jaggedly guided us left or right, then cornered
hard onto a boulevard and climbed to face the vacant
postwar KGB headquarters.
There stopped, she spat the name aloud in identification.
Lenin has not long been evicted from Lukiskiu Square.
Past this House of Sorrow I retraced her route on the late
return alone: the social realist statuary that mans the city
bridges stands steeled to fall exiled, still eyeing the horizon.

by Mark Laliberte

static in radio city.

introduction

The two Canadian art collectives known as Disseminator Audio and machyderm share a mutual interest in the possibilities of a form of music known variously as techno, ambient, and in its more popular label electronica. Through a number of collaborative projects, they have been experimenting with ways to adapt the most inventive aspects of this culture into a performance art context. Below are descriptions of two of their more successful collaborations, 'Quirk' and 'The Rant Rotation'.

quirk... moving pictures

The Windsor-Detroit area is renowned as an urban area where technological dance music -- more commonly known as 'techno'-- was both spawned and nurtured. The 'Quirk' performance, which also originated in this area, endeavours to combine high quality innovative audio experiments in this techno tradition with ambient and sampled video.

'Quirk' exists somewhere between words and music. This performance presentation begins with the live mixing and 'ambient altering' of original sample-based electronic music. Fascinated with the sounds of the dance subculture (the beeps, the bleeps, the beats) the members of Disseminator Audio made the music for 'Quirk' using an assortment of electronic machineries (both analogue and digital). The tracks are assembled note-by-note using a visual-based sequencing program. These layered semi-musical sequences -- prepared in advance -- make up the base on which the whole 'Quirk' performance rests. The skeletal sequences are regurgitated in the performance space and are put through the rigours of a 'live mix', where the sounds are allowed to undergo transformations not possible in a studio environment.



With a base of sound to work with, the members of each collective then take on roles in the wake of the live setting; the personnel all play distinct parts in a kind of computer-based character play. In this way, the two collectives are best able to respond to one another.

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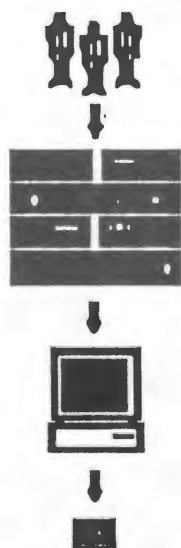
D/Audio member Mark Laliberte plays 'The Turntablist', armed with a belt-drive turntable and various records. Laliberte seeks language, searching through an archive of old spoken word vinyl, needle-dropping his way through various conversations in an attempt to interact with the audience. In opposition to this, 'The Technician', played by Chris Bissonnette, applies filters and effects to both the music and the text, subverting any and all dialogue before it has time to exit the speakers. The result is a broken language that barely reaches its audience... a constant, difficult-to-decipher postmodern chatter.





All the while, the members of *machyderm*, Dermot Wilson and Chris McNamara -- seated before their own array of technology -- play the technically demanding role of 'The Visualists'. Together, they generate video from an archive of imagery in response to what they -- and the audience -- are hearing.

On any given evening, these responses might include a live mix of digital video shot on site dissolving into pre-produced ambient image tracks. Many of the images used are about movement: a "serious" woman dancing backwards as she waves an Israeli flag back and forth; a small girl playing with imaginary puppets on a boat full of old people; a grim man walking in a barren urban landscape.



Intercut between these more narrative-based sequences are *machyderm's* text-based visual experiments: these include a leader tape montage and various close-ups of speaking, singing mouths. The purpose of the images -- projected onto several large screens -- is to heighten or harmonize with the rhythms and melodies being produced by *Disseminator Audio*.

The 'Quirk' session is approximately 45 minutes in length, and is comprised of five loosely choreographed parts. Audience members are not expected to dance to the sounds they hear during the course of the show; indeed they are positioned only to listen and to watch.

'Quirk' represents an escape from the broadcast mentality. Instead of fitting the dictates of dictated culture, it allows viewers to construct their own texts and narratives from the fragments provided, to absorb from these sounds their own melodies.

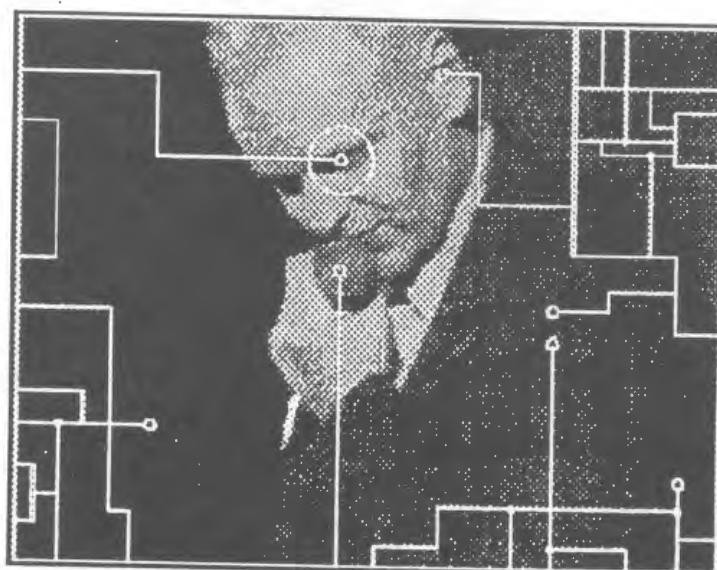
CATALOGUE OF 'QUIRK' SESSION EQUIPMENT AS FOLLOWS:

PC/386 • PC/200 • SH-10 • RB-TR155 • S-550 • SE-50 • TG-33 • JUNO-104 • JUNO-60 • FXR • CF-5600 • MPL1502

the rant rotation

A sister performance to 'Quirk', 'The Rant Rotation' includes an array of ancient record players, two knob-twiddlers, and a live performer who acts out a series of rhythmic rants. The over-dubbed sounds and recorded spoken word provide a background babble and rhythm. The performer begins by adding a three-word question to the rhythm, then steps forward to act out seven "rants", all of which are addressed to a mythical/absent accountant. The invisible "uncovered" observer receives the brunt of these poetic, mad, imagistic insults.

The video imagery accompanying 'The Rant Rotation', usually projected above and behind the performers, includes broadcast news and riot footage. This element is meant to echo the overt anti-corporate and anti-violence themes of the early Dadaist artists (particularly *Tristan Tzara* and *Hans Arp*). In this collage, the media includes sound, video and performance, rather than cut-up magazines and constructed sound machines. Visually interesting and significant of a conflict between the old and the new, between dead-tech and high-tech, the Rant Cycle text illustrates themes of suburban answer anxiety and popular torpor, i.e., the inability to fight in the face of the inability to know.



textual clip from rant rotation

- parts one to four -

1. what is this?

a bleary monument to the quick wick god of nowhere gorging mankind and that's all we ever see on this pinnacle bit, this spot on the crust of the earth cadre cum leaving-off spot space gear where the pissing on all Sears suckers suit up for sales conventions and power seminars for stickum pezz candy think tank toilet works to pad their bland and bloody boxlike existences. Blaahh!!

2. where are they?

jumping off and away fleeing fat and bone, pretend go run up the shitting piss-drizzle clouds of franchise-driven tomorrow. Greed flight liners streak on and on, clink bottles and crew-cuts you cretinous coral cabal still queuing up for the fifth fed free to homeo-homogenetic mommy and daddy. Glassy jet case to keep out the chlorine carcinogeniculeolysergic weather you made with buttonfinger motherfucker me. But I don't admit to its reality.

3. what the hell?

a stationery object, marble slabs sub-rosa to lay on magic after the longest trudge over weed sludge and shards of shredded bleach bottle bingo daubers to this cube of all the brainmake from civilized animules now abused, bashed and desecrated. Fluid stone, bars of numbers, a sheriff's mesh put up by the ledger laughing pustule who found a loophole under a downsize that might cut the bubble in two and gleeefully sign another cheque for non-services rendered by Boris the emfucking A....

4. why can't it?

this diseased frieze of progress against rust and image only advantages Utah Wipes who sleep with it, churned out the starch mill, the bake shop, the fantasy card game city left over after all the chromosomes have tea-stained the pavement and the gravel shoulders upon which all the lollards of every epoch have etched colored footsteps that blow away blown away across these flaxen blue fields to the clear-eared unmonied moron boys and girls soft with soap and blasphemous for an hour before The Lone Ranger comes on.

conclusion

Over the past year, the two collectives have performed these and other works in artist-run centres all across Ontario. The two collectives may be contacted by email at obscure@netcore.ca for further information. The 'Quirk' can be seen and heard on the internet at the following URL:

<http://www.netcore.ca/~cadence>

TARAKAN

by Michelle April

I love Tarakan

The window shear casts delicately lighted flower prints onto his exposed thigh. Hairy embroidery. The strands on his head stand on follicles like antennae as he sits stunned to the bells of the Russian alarm clock: power shall surely fail in a timely manner in this aged building. The fragrance of sleep wanders through passages too familiar, too absent of challenge to resist. Uncommitted he rocks between two worlds.

I filled a utility garbage bag with myself and sat centrally on the living room floor. When I removed myself from myself, I could see how ridiculous my self would appear to a bystander, for I became one. A mixture of emotions came over me. My physical self laughed until realizing how pitiful this person seemed then tears flooded the animated face then more laughter at the thought of filling the bag with tears and drowning in it. Then tears at the thought of drowning. All the while the bystander stands expressionless. This is how Tarakan discovered me that brisk, late November day.

Sporadic sleep animated the night with allusions of la cucaracha climbing the bed clothing which subserviently dusted the floor throughout the night. I was not coherent enough to alter the covers yet conscious enough to absorb an unnatural dose of paranoia.

I was first drawn to the economical leniency of this apartment, but more than that it had charm. Weathering had made it somewhat crooked, ceilings were of different height proportions in every room, large base boards lined the floors, odd nooks were formed by curved walls, and the layout was elongated rather than square. While deliberating the possibility of living here or the last apartment that looked newer and more expensive, I sat on the back porch. A chilling noise filled the valley formed by buildings on every side: it sounded like a tormented infant or a crow mocking a tormented infant. The building had only three levels and seemed to be shrinking in time, resisting the pressures of dominating structures to reduce itself to rubble to allow for extra needed parking space. I wanted to be a part of that. Already I felt an affinity with this seemingly living structure. This small rebel who decided to make a difference, and not give one ounce of itself to these giants, was attractive.

I tossed the transparent saucer across the table and into the full sink of dishes with the intention of breaking it. Success. Now I can reclaim the kitchen. Feasting predators are alerted by my arrival had the stomping and prescribed coughing not sounded their inner city warning. I can sense the buzzing of their community, their frazzled nervous systems synchronised. I had unintentionally fallen asleep after dinner and had invited them to feast on leftovers. I thought that perhaps by not leaving even one trace of the consumable about that they would eventually feast upon each other or find somewhere more ideal to lodge.

The entire building is infested.

It is all or nothing. An immaculate setting is conceivable housing for the cockroach. A bread crumb, bed bugs, soap cardboard, books; all an excellent smorgasbord selection for these sick hard bodies absent of veins or mind. The tripod walk, the casing unnaturally containing minuscule quantities of putrid coloured blood or what may be equivalent to a blood-like substance, blackening with exposure to oxygen.

Alien.

I caught a moulting nymph scurrying for refuge under the toaster. Its instinctual nature not fully developed was selfish and could not find its exit and enter point quickly enough. It greedily stayed out longer for remnants of banana bread. With little deliberation the baby's shelter was lifted and its life flattened with the bottom of a salt shaker. Though with some satisfaction I knew that it was futile taking the life of only one, for that one had forty or fifty brothers and sisters with a more mature instinctual mechanism. Its mother was likely attaching another ootheca simultaneously, with no regard for the life of this one. She would not recognise that one to be missing. One less survivor.

It is 10:38 a.m. I am drinking a full mug of red wine.

I can recall receiving a medallion from my great grandfather when I was fourteen years old and not for one moment would it leave my neck. It was a source of comfort, for reasons unbeknown to me. It bore the sign of the cross, with the words inscribed: LAND, SEA, AIR, USA. On the back, under a plain silver sliding plate was: ST. JOSEPH PRAY FOR ME and ST. CHRISTOPHER PROTECT ME. I made a decision early on not to study religion, so the icons rendered themselves useless to me, but it was the first connection I made with a realm beyond myself. I wore the medallion always. At first out of respect for my great grandfather, then out of the security it brought. While my mother was out doing things incomprehensible to my sought out naivete, I would lie in bed frightened as night shifted its weight onto me. I would rub the silver plates together and up went my defences. Much to my disarray, her latest choice of residence contained cockroaches with minds it seemed. My mother handed me salad bowls to place on top of the cupboard, a place that we forgot to sanitise. As I reached up to maintain my balance, crunching sounds could be heard under my grip. The salad bowls dropped as I fell off the chair. I could discern the muffled screaming from my mother as I stood in the centre of the room with my toes pointed inward and my Achilles heels pointed upward. I began sliding the medallion with greasy disembodied roach coated fingers.

One more mug should sustain my outing.

Upon entering the apartment building from the cold, tears flood my eyes and the exposed white pipes in the hallway appear swollen as though a fist was thrust through a nylon stocking from bottom to top. It's those damned creatures. Swimming. Three hundred fifty million years and one day of survival (even of a holocaust) is all the track record that is necessary. They have survived great distances under water and are probably enjoying a leisurely backstroke right now. Chemicals are a hearty meal for these consumers of otherwise impossible appetizers.

Panic worked its way through my chest for I was emerged in a thick fluid and some trace of rationality informed me that eventually I would have to inhale. I relaxed the muscles around my shoulders, neck and chest completely as calm washed over me in the form of starchy warm liquid. I said good bye to all that I ever cared about during that moment of selective and organised truth. My lips parted allowing the liquid to pass my teeth, then my tongue with little or no flavour. I visualised holding my daughter to my chest. I opened my throat and inhaled. I felt the lumps of her braids and smiled at her drawing of bobsled racers, four heads in a box. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale..Inhale..exhale..inhale.....exhale. I am not drowning. As I sat up with fear that a big tom cat was attacking me I realised that I was dreaming. I grabbed it by the neck in the form of a strangle hold and could feel no spine, just skin and skull. I threw the floppy cat outside. I sat on the porch and lit a cigarette. The cat found its form mysteriously and off it ran.

My mother was transforming herself with long sweeps of the eye powder brush creating deeper, unnatural shadows over existing shadows. She wore a jade green spaghetti strapped dress. The finished edges were all that separated it from an under garment. She always prided herself on her firm breasts that she never had to contain in restricting braziers. I would often stand on one foot in the doorway and watch her apply her 'face'. I would never initiate conversation in case I broke her concentration. I watched silently and envisioned her in a regal room with a true gentleman on her arm, far removed from the creatures she tends to surround herself with. In these visions she never speaks, for her true rank would surface, and the man would find a more impressive woman near by. For all my effort, I can not find suitable words for her to say in these sketches without it revealing some truth about her character. "I don't trust this neighbourhood, stay inside," my mother said as she locked me inside the apartment. "I love you," were her final words to me, the girl. I thought of cockroaches as I built myself a nest on the chesterfield to rest in. I turned on the television, leaving it at an intense volume to heighten my false sense of security enough to fall asleep under the sixty watt light bulb. A gaunt wrinkled face woke me up suggesting that I go to my bed. I had never before seen this man with the long grey strand of hair sweeping a weathered forehead, but I listened anyway. I walked dizzily to my bed. He scuttled in after me, after I had found sleep again. He left with my virginity. Due to my mother's competitive nature I did not tell her what had happened. The stranger did not return or call and she often wondered why. The medallion had eyes. It knew. That night it slid fiercely between my fingers.

ST. CHRISTOPHER protect me.

I released the medallion after noting the bowl fragments on the floor and the sound of my mother's screaming became the intended volume. My body yearned for an exit; my mind was not capable yet. I was sick of her men, her agenda, her stupidity and her God damned cockroaches.

He stood and stared at me. This is when his reality became clear to me. I could see my swollen eyes and wetted cheeks and the strands of hair sliding down the utility bag, I could see the insanity slowly diminishing as he stood staring at me. I looked up at him as he began to tower over me. He extended an arm to help me off the floor. Without saying a word he led me into the bathroom as though he had walked this very floor a million times, he dampened a cloth and patted my face with it. He picked up the wire brush, cleaned it, and commenced to brush out my dishevelled hair with such gentleness that he could have lulled me to sleep, had I not been sitting on the rigid toilet seat. He knew everything about me but said nothing. He knew to shake the covers and pillows before lying me in my bed. He prepared me hot tea to my liking and left the spoon in as I often do when I want it to cool quickly. He stroked the outside of my arm, just as I like it. When I awoke he was gone. I hope that was not the last I would see of him...for it was the first.

I reached for the medallion but it was gone. All that remained was a strand of silver that supported it all of these years. I became nothing. This shell that contained my mind and intention emptied. I tore the chain off my neck and tossed it at the trash can where it landed on the floor shapelessly. It had no definition without my neck and breast to lie upon. My defences left me. But then there was Tarakan.

The thudding of the base is reverberating the walls and my nerves. "Play something good!" I yelled. I can't compete with this small table unit. There are morons in the building with matching tastes and they are not ashamed to exhibit them. If I turn mine up enough I am left with only vibration from the neighbour. Reduce it to what it is: a dull thudding of soulless machines. Are they inviting the cockroaches? Invite them! A garbage feast. Hand in hand, peas in a pod, needle in a haystack. Well, I want no part of it. The phone is ringing. I want to stare at this floor tile a bit longer. It's greyish, probably a sparkling white at one time, about forty years ago. I can never remove that black spot. It could be an egg case that became dislodged from its mother's abdomen in a mad scurry to get home when on came the lights. Then it could have been mashed into the floor with a chair leg. If it is, I'm grateful. I can deal with it right there. Is that possible? "Oh, stop calling I'm, not home! I went to the grocery store, I've gone to pick up Hawaiian salami and toilette paper.and some canned soup, relish, no no I hate relish I hate to...oh my." My daughter is waiting for me at school. My baby girl. I look like hell, I smell like vodka. They will think that I'm an alcoholic. And she will be waiting in the office, it was probably the school calling. They will know because I look pretty blurry to me. That's such a stupid joke..cliche like it takes two to tangle or is it tango. Okay, speak straight. "Hi honey, sorry I'm late." No not too nice they will suspect something. "Hi, sorry, I was stranded, I couldn't get here fast enough." Forget it, just go and get her.

I lit the stacked pumpkin candle that I forgot to erect during the on-season and considered the bodies of roaches becoming hydrofuge with adaptability to moist conditions. I then understood how vulnerable my human flesh is. Adaptability of the mind is one thing, but if people were forced to live on cliffs would they eventually develop wings? I think our evolution is not so expedient. I asked Tarakan what it is I fear.

"Why is it that I am expected to fly before understanding?"

"..In actuality you crawl, ideally you fly," Tarakan the exterminator responded.

With that in mind I blew my nose gently and watched the painted eye of the pumpkin melt away as a slow fall of wax entered the dish. The ever present ticking of the Russian alarm clock continued to pull us forward into time in the silence that contained our thoughts. It would mark out segments of the whole picture not to be ignored. Of our greatest grandchildren taking flight. Of an understanding yet to come.

Into the night the flame disappeared, giving passage to the nocturnal life that I am convinced still exists. Fumigation has eased my mind only slightly, as I feel the presence of their exoskeletons, and I hear the air exchange through trachea, and I see a partial metamorphosis occurring spitefully. I stare at the moonlight patterns on the wall and I think of wings, I hear the clock, I think of Tarakan. I see Tarakan with wings and an abdomen constructed of glass and metal with a larger than life clock face planted in the middle. The clock reads 9:05p.m. Why? Who knows? Goodnight.

I could feel Tarakan on me, then an unexpected yearning came over me. My nerve endings were extended so much that I could see them breaking out of my skin. I held on with my arms, legs, neck and all of my sensory system. I could no longer rationalise anything, I became needy and only needy. The balance of power began to slip away quickly and I felt a struggle occurring, I felt the fragility of Tarakan's body writhing between femurs. I felt famished. I felt my waxy epicuticle sliding on the bed sheets as the grappling continued. The remains of my humanity questioned Tarakan's adversity to me. Is his wont for me not as mine is for him? Out of rejection and hunger I devoured him. I did so without an ounce of remorse because a void required filling. An unforeseen transfiguration, or a distraction left me displaced. In successions, deep dull pains manifested in my lower back and lower abdomen. My mind knew the pain that my body was apparently feeling. Is my guilt manifesting itself as labour pains? A dark coloured casing came out of me tearing partially from the strain. I gave birth to what seemed like eight hundred cockroaches. I wriggled aimlessly in an attempt to move away from what I had given life to.

I awoke to Tarakan shaking me gently. I apologised. His response indicated that I had done nothing wrong, that my dreams and my conscious life were indiscernible. Tarakan should have been angry considering what I had done to him but instead he rocked me in his arms. I needed someone that would always forgive me and there he was. From nowhere in particular he appeared. I needed someone to protect me from all that I fear and there he was. Tarakan.

Epicuticle: outer protective waxy layer of an insect's body.

Ootheca: egg case.

Tarakan: "cockroach" (Russian).

UNTITLED

by Kathleen Yearwood

I have developed a sort of horror of the wind. Or perhaps it is just a horror of the word "wind". Because it has two pronunciations and meanings that nobody can tell apart if the word appears alone. This may not worry you but it worries me.

There is a big difference between mistaking the word wind for the word wind, and if you have the misfortune to do that, you could lead yourself quite naturally, like an animal into a trap, into the word "wound". That is, the past tense of wind, not wind. And there are two very dangerous ways to pronounce "wound", and the winding always reminds me of a shroud in the first place, although I'm not afraid of death, I just relate winding to bodies. And I relate the pronunciation "woond" to bodies.

The wind comes up from the north and the whole house shudders. It must be four AM and pitch black outside as well as in this room. Why does the wind sound to me like a whitened welt rising across the arms of the sky? How can it make the house shudder and squeal in new ways, making noises I've never heard, so I wake or half-wake and hallucinate animals and fingernails and birds, there isn't enough light to remember where or who I am, and those two things are increasingly the same thing, and I haven't time to get my coat, and if I do I may wake to find I only dreamed of getting my coat, and going into the blustering yard to see everything flying, because how could I see things fly by in pitch darkness unless this was a dream? And the wind is so perverse it blows straight upwards and catches the underside of the roof, shaking the house by its fringe, and it comes in every crack like fingers and I do wake up- freezing, so I pull my blankets over my ears to block out at least the sound of it howling down the chimney and running around and around in spirals trying to find a way in.

At daybreak it's still howling. I go out to the outhouse and it's too cold to shit. The door bangs around and there is a fine powder of snow all across the floor. I'm standing in the snow trying to stop shivering long enough to shit but it's just too cold so I decide to go in the house and stir up the fire and get warm. The wind blows all day long. Even when the sun goes down it keeps blowing. In fact, it gets stronger. Usually when the sun goes down the wind dies down too. I lie in my bed and my nose is cold, shards of snow and branches skitter across the roof all night and I sleep in a strange awakening state where I'm not sure of what is real. Just at dawn I know the wind stops. I sense the absence of noise and I fall into a deep, velvet sleep. It is still so cold in the house I can see my breath. My cat is standing on my pillow in the early grey light, purring, or shivering. I let her under the blankets and she curls up against my stomach and rests her head on the inside of my arm. I stroke her fur for a long time in the dark, it has a wonderful silkiness. She is breathing on the skin just inside my elbow and purring loudly. I am glad it is so cold because it drove the cat to this refuge and provided me with so much sensual pleasure and a deepened relationship with this animal. She can't possibly know how blessed she makes me feel amid this realm of nightmare and rejection and the wrath of this or that god; she accepts my belly and the crock of my arm as warm places a cat might go, but I accept her as a sign from heaven that the wind will not destroy everything -and so we get up, and look at the window and travel for awhile in the forest of frost that grows there and remember we were told there is a magical being who paints those designs, which is even more true than a child can believe. I travel for awhile in that forest until my nightgown feels like a slab of limestone against my once warm belly and I light the fires.

I pour hot water into a cup and the steam rises in a cumulous cloud so thick I can't see the cup anymore. The red dishrag is frozen to the white formica table like a skinned carcass on a field of snow. I break the film of ice on the water in the pail and those patterns are there as well. How would a mythical creature get inside a water pail to paint designs? This is a real painter, whose paintings melt or get drunk. Jack Frost must value beauty above everything, or beauty values beauty, because the mythical figure is actually a chemical process that nobody understands. I wonder about animal culture again.

The cat feels pleasure, I am sure, but does she feel it the way I do, like a blessing, or is pleasure an expectation, or is it a constant surprise? Does the chickadee outside devouring sunflower seeds remark the clarity of the sky and the beauty of the morning? Or can beauty see beauty? Maybe it is our own ugliness that makes us strain towards loveliness, our impurity that infuses the moon with an ethereal clarity, our own cruelty that infuses two words with the power to cause tears of compassion, our own loneliness that makes love seem so desirable; the breath of the lover on the skin inside your elbow, travelling in the forest of the sleeping lovers' hair whose patterns are painted by an itinerant faerie, maybe my own hunger for culture that makes me ask after a chickadee's culture and long for it: for flight, for forests, for feathers, and for a glass black bead of an eye that considers everything instantly, as I have heard that certain brains can make simultaneous calculations, separate thoughts at one time; therefore the chickadee could be considering my bulk standing by the feeder, and a memory and the future and an idea it had earlier all at once while deciding to eat or fly, or to turn its head and consider with the other eye.

Some animals think in fugues, or in counterpoint. So maybe all of nature, (which is everything, even cars and trucks) appears fragmented, providing its own harmony through a series of overtones and wolf tones and sub-harmonics and only with our paucity of sensation do we contextualize tree and sky and water as beautiful, and light and dark and snow and patterns of frost as beautiful but separate, separate from what we ourselves do, which is drinking tea and reading a newspaper five days old and wondering how to stay warm until spring.

My brother and I invented a game when we were very young, before I learned anything about proportion or beauty. All worlds were the same to me then; I had only to concentrate on a thing and it was true. This, I think, may be the secret of art and music, the fact that concentrating means stopping time and creating worlds. The world we created was



a parallel to this one and terrors were turned into wonders. In this imaginary world where we simply changed perspective so that very small things were accepted as large. A dollhouse is the most common environment for the application of this skill by children, but we lacked a doll house and so all the world became our small-scale world and it was as real, and had as much art and culture as the world we were expected to live in. The proportion of a tiny stalk of lichen near a shallow puddle of muddy water was enough to elicit sighs of longing for that African plains pond it resembled. When we were lucky we could borrow small china animals to add to the scene, but lacking those, we made up our own animals.

Is it the proportion of the pale disc of moon to the lucid turquoise lake that reminds us of beauty? Is it a memory of a world we created like gods as pre-linguistic children, when red can still be tasted and yellow felt a certain way on the skin? God created all the animals, fish and birds and insects in this way, just as play and by thinking about them and then accidentally created more gods and then accidentally banished them from the imaginary garden so that he and the other gods could continue to play in beauty without thought. He continues to play there, at the base of an enormous maple tree, among the roots that poke up through the soil. He hasn't even looked up to the canopy of the tree because it doesn't interest him, he has made his own trees among the slender mushrooms and his mountains and boulders are the sand and pebbles. When we write or paint or sing we go to play with god in the imagined garden, all the time humouring him, especially about his powers, which is why we say holy, holy, holy; it's a ruse to keep him distracted while we steal inspiration, which is to say breath, which is to say we learn to breathe before language again, we remember to breathe in a moist cloud on the skin of our beloved without words, we can only then see the other cultures around us who exist with their own proportions without us.

I did say that we lacked a dollhouse. Eventually I was given a white metal two story house with windows and furniture painted on the inside walls, and rugs painted on the floors, and wood siding and windows and a brick chimney painted on the outside. I vaguely recall some people in there, or maybe I just imagined them, but they were too much like the family in the room behind the one-way glass; the whole entire back of these people's house was cut away to reveal their interior lives, and so I just left these people rigid in their see-through house, I didn't want to interfere with them, and they remained permanently becalmed, or dead, and I turned to other games.

With the dollhouse quietly entombed in one corner of the room I can think of other things. I now think that, notwithstanding my own shameful childhood, I would have preferred to grow up in something like the dollhouse. Or am I deceiving myself that people didn't already know, even without seeing through the walls; surely I bore the marks: the puffy eyes from crying, the smell of despair that clung to me; surely there were foreheads pressed up against the one-way mirrors of my youth, wondering what would happen next, lighting cigarettes and watching, unable to interfere, only able to leave little blobs of grease where they pressed their faces up, the better to witness my humiliation and crucifixion.

I also think of the pile of letters I have from prisoners. I remark upon their clear writing. I, who am used to being, at least, able to speak freely, if not understood, write in a scrawl even I can't read. But the prisoners have perfected their writing so there can be no misunderstanding of their intent. It is a careful attempt at communication, which is a right that should be enshrined, along with transportation, food, clothing and housing; not that it would help to call it a right, it just feels good to say it, and think that it's one less thing to beg for.

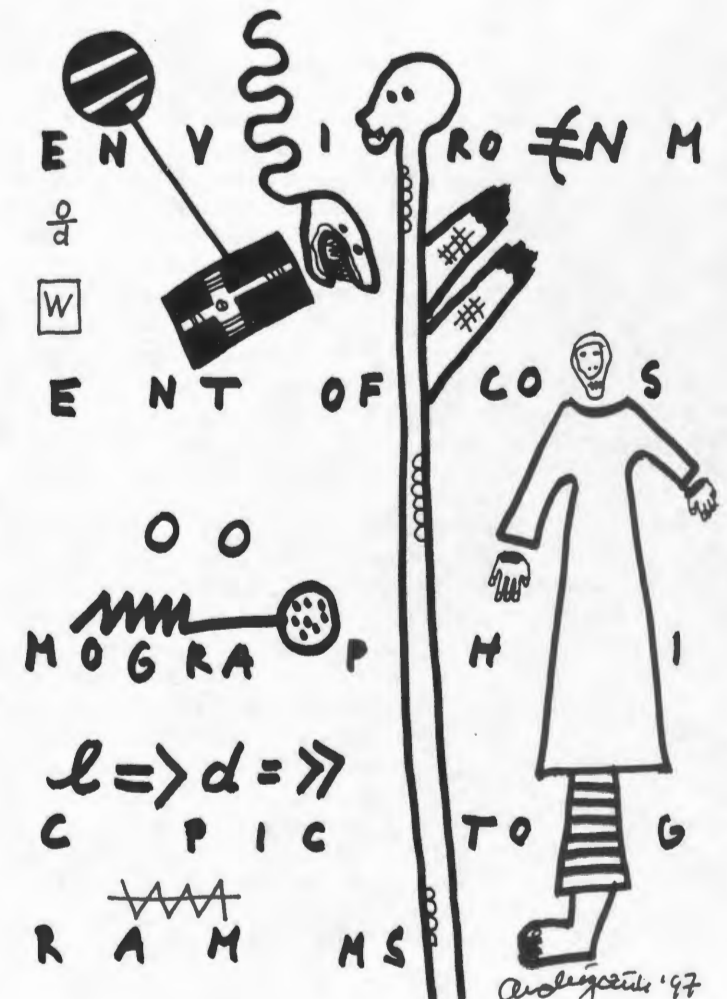
I often think that the voice of scrawl is not so authoritative as the voice of the typewriter. The scrawl for me is like a voice in the night, dream voice, and the typewriter is the voice that has translated all that nebulous imagery and has a story to tell. Some people even believe that if something makes it into print then it must be important, but I know this isn't true. Is there anyone who would not carefully and completely read the neat writing of a prisoner, seeking the depth in the message, feeling the undercurrent? Are there people who hear the high voice of a woman or a child and think that nothing important is being said? Some people think that birds lack language. Some people believe you cannot speak with the grass.

There is a park in a neighbourhood with a beautiful name in a city I have been to. The last time I was in that park, I was really just trying to walk through but there had been a windstorm and the trees were knocked down and branches lay all across the paths. The paths themselves were of concrete, all cracked and crumbling because it is a poor neighbourhood and the park is not maintained or mowed, raked or watered, and the tree boughs on the paths had not been moved so I had to pick my way around them on the yellow scruffy grass. There is a round concrete fountain in the centre of the park and I sat down on a rusting bench facing it. On foot, it is necessary to walk around the fountain in order to cross the park. I find this curious, as though the park's designer decided this will not be a park one can hurry through, there is a body of water that must be circumnavigated, a detour demanding both a decision and planned waste of time, so I decided to sit there and waste as much time as possible. I saw the usual flutterings of small birds around the trees and water, and then I noticed that the sparrows were all coming from and going to the same place. It was a surprise to think that the movements of birds are not arbitrary. Birds have a faster functioning central nervous system than people, so it seems to us their movements are frenetic and unplanned, when in fact they are just planning faster than we can think. Arrogance blinds and I notice that what I don't comprehend I tend to belittle. The voices of children, the whispering of the grass. So I uncharacteristically paid attention and looked for patterns in the birds' frenzied flights. It was very simple.

There is an old dead, hollow tree with burn marks around the base, and what may have been vandalism has provided these sparrows with shelter. There is a community of them living in there and they are each by each leaving the tree and appearing at the base of the fountain. I say "appear" because they are travelling so fast that I only see them leave and they have arrived again. It is hard to prove that they are flying. It is maybe only two

beats of their wings and they are at the base of the fountain in a cleft where the concrete has split open and allows a trickle of water to come through which creates a tiny pool on the disintegrating sidewalk. This fault in this undermaintained fountain creates a perfect pond for sparrows to drink from and bathe in. In a perfect park with a flawless fountain the crack would not exist, yet here it is exploited by a community of birds who have ritualized its use. Perhaps it is their Lourdes, or better, a place where they celebrate their appreciation of water.

One little bird takes a long time drinking. She lingers to drink and rest and look all around, but she doesn't leave. I watch her, she watches me. Then she floats suddenly back to the tree and goes inside. I think that these birds are practising a complex culture that I will never see more of than I have just seen. Art, music, drama, stories, history, politics, dance, poetry. And I have seen all that I will ever be able to understand of this culture in the sparrows' adoption of the broken fountain in Toyen.



"Environment of Cosmographic Pictography" Hartmut Andryczuk (Germany)

HEAT LIGHTNING

by Drew Hayden Taylor

Off in the distance, across the calm blue lake, I could see the heat lightning flash, making the large fluffy clouds glow and shimmer like some scene from a Steven Spielberg movie. My friend Jamie's house stood on the eastern end of the lake, so from the shore you could always see the dark and heavy storms rolling in over the dark blue water.

Luckily this kind of lightning had nothing to do with the violent thunder storms you usually see during the summer, these were just nature's way of letting off electrical stress. You couldn't even hear the thunder, just see the lightning illuminate the clouds from the interior like a flashlight under a blanket. And there was never any rain, just the promise of it. Had it been a real storm coming, no doubt Jamie would have had us working double time. He can be kinda serious at times. As it was, we were quite busy sharing a beer as we watched nature's fireworks, sitting atop the pile of lumber laying between the house and the lake. The renovations to his mother's house could wait a few minutes more. Rome wasn't built in a day and we weren't in any mood to defy the cliché.

Jamie was half Ojibway, half Mohawk. Guess that makes him an Oji-hawk. An odd mixture for the likes of this community, with this being a strictly Ojibway village and us being hereditary enemies with the Mohawks not more than just a few centuries ago. This might have caused some problems if not just a whole lot of teasing. But this is Otter Lake and being an Oji-hawk was the least of Jamie's problems, ridicule wise anyways.

I drained my beer. "How long will this take? The whole thing I mean? Some of us start college next week, you know." Jamie shrugged, his brown eyes never leaving the lightning. He had that look of great weight behind his eyes that he sometimes gets when things aren't going well. "It will take as long as it takes. Hopefully no longer than Friday. Plenty of time for you to go off and chase white girls. One of these days you might actually catch one and get lucky."

"You forget. With Mohawks, its luck, with Ojibways it's skill." Jamie smiled. I was the only one who teased him about his unusual bloodline and just that alone. I think he liked and appreciated me for it. Unlike a lot of the locals, I never commented on his homelife or his mother's, or made the rude remarks that got him into so many fights as a kid, and occasionally as an adult too. I think that's probably why he asked me to help renovate his mother's house. That and the fact he needed my pickup for all the lumber. He stood and stretched, the rip in his plaid shirt showing his untanned side. I placed the empty beer in the twelve pack and joined him in an equally luxurious stretch.

"Well then sailor..." Jamie's called me that ever since he saw a twenty year old photograph of me wearing an idiotic sailor's hat my mother had found in a rummage sale and forced me to wear. As I said, teasing can be quite unmerciful on Reserves. "... let's get back to work. There's a wall over there with our names on it." He was referring to this mother's bedroom wall which looked out over the lake. Practically the whole side of the room had been removed to put in a large picture window with a sliding glass door. Next on the list was to put a deck on the outside of that door but hopefully I had my fingers and other various parts of my body crossed in hope that it was going to wait until next year. Jamie loved his mother, but not that much.

We picked up pretty well where we left off fifteen minutes earlier, struggling to fit the new frame for the doorway into place. The picture window was already fixed in position, just waiting for the glass door to complete the framing. But the door was being difficult. It was an old house and it had settled in some pretty peculiar ways, as old houses often do, and I got the feeling it didn't like the cosmetic surgery we were performing.

"Come on Sailor, force it!" was the only encouragement I got from Jamie. Being equally adept with a grunt I answered "I am but it won't go. Like you and school." He smiled again, this time through the sweat. He didn't have many friends on the Reserve, especially since he moved to Peterborough several years ago to get away from this house. At least there, the less people knew, the better. And often, they didn't care. He shifted his position to the inside of the house, trying to use his weight to pull the door frame into place. He tugged at it a few times, his back hitting a large oak chest of drawers. All the glass paraphernalia on its top clinked together like bottles in a liquor cabinet. Giving me a frustrated look, Jamie leaned against the dresser and yelled through the open door to the rest of the house. "Hey Mom, we gotta move this dresser or we'll knock something over. Is that okay?" There was a rustling from the kitchen before Jamie's mother, Patricia appeared, or Patty as we called her. She looked a lot like Jamie but obviously older and a bit heavier. She didn't have Jamie's hard look but then again he didn't have her dreamy quality either, a pity since both could have no doubt used a bit of each other's qualities. So as it stood, basic appearances and blood were about the only thing those two seemed to have in common.

She smiled her Patricia smile when she saw me. "Oh hi Andrew, don't let him work you too hard. His father does that all the time to his own friends." Despite the heat of the day, I felt a chill go down my spine when she said things like that. She turned to Jamie, "you can move it, but be careful. Kathryn will take a fit if anything happens to her dresser." Her mind definitely stated, she turned and called out to the kitchen, "Kathryn, hurry up. We'll be late." If I could read minds, I would probably have felt Jamie wondering how long an oak dresser could float in the middle of the lake. Maybe Kathryn with it. But it was a question that would remain unanswered as Kathryn entered the room, and with this, an almost tangible change in the feel of the room. And not a pleasant one either.

Kathryn was a smart looking white lady in her forties, a close friend of Patricia's. A more politically correct and accurate term might be partner, or bus'gim, an Ojibway term meaning girlfriend/boyfriend, and unfortunately an even more realistic term would be Jamie's sworn enemy. Patricia and Kathryn lived together in that little house on the shore of that big lake, and that was the reason Jamie lived in town.

Jamie's Mohawk blood came from his father, Galen, who many years ago had lived and loved in this small house with Patricia. According to my mother, their's was a passionate relationship, acting like newlyweds for over four years. But Galen had other passions that were as equally important to him too. Two years after Jamie was born, Galen joined the American army, following a long family tradition, to go off and fight in Vietnam. I was surprised to learn that quite a number of Native people, even in Canada, had joined the American armed forces during that violent time and Galen evidently felt the call too. I guess the Canadian Army just didn't have the mighty warrior ring to it that the Marines did. After your standard tearful goodbye to his wife and young son, the kind you only see in Oliver Stone movies, Galen went overseas in '71. He was five months short of ending his tour of duty when the telegram came. On some sort of recon mission, Galen and his platoon came under heavy enemy fire. Only a handful made it back to camp. Galen wasn't one of them. The strange thing was nobody actually saw him being shot, caught or anything. He had just disappeared into that jungle. His body was never found, so as it was the procedure, he was listed as missing in action.

Once in an uncharacteristically pensive moment, Jamie had confessed to me the guilt he felt because he didn't remember his father. There wasn't a tangible memory to grieve with sorrow, or remember with happiness. Just nothing. He had just turned three when his mother went into mourning and never came out. All he can recollect of that dark time was the non-stop crying that went on for months and spending a lot of time in his room, alone. He does, however, remember suddenly appearing at his maternal grandparents for several months during what later turned out to be Patricia's breakdown. Then one summer day, Jamie does recall his mother appearing in his grandmother's living room. He remembers this strange woman who looked somewhat familiar picking him up. Then, after a short car ride, he found himself in a new place that again, looked slightly familiar.

Apparently Patricia had been released from the hospital and was supposedly fit to face the world. But as most of the Reserve wondered, how fit is fit. Patricia had seemed okay, throwing herself into the raising of her son. She'd gotten her smile back and her laugh, and gave off the air that nothing had changed. That was the first hint that something was a little off. She kept referring to Jamie as "Galen's legacy" and "how she had to look after him until Galen was found, or made his way out of the jungle, or was released, or what ever". Since he was only MIA, he was surely alive somewhere and she settled in to wait. Someday he would come home. How ever long that took.

That was over twenty years ago and her talk is still peppered with statements and certainties about Galen; Galen this and Galen that, always in the present tense like he was catching the bus home at the end of the week with his arms full of chinese food or something. Most of us who are close to the family have gotten used to it but if you take the time to actually think about it like I do, it'll give you the willies for sure. For a number of years after Galen disappeared, a few of her friends and family tried to get Patricia dating again, maybe get her mind back into the real world and help her get on with life. But they had about as much success as the Americans did in finding Galen.

"I can't go out with anybody!" she'd laugh, shaking her head in amazement. "I'm married, remember?" Then she'd thrust up her ring finger to remind everybody with the physical evidence. My aunt once told me she was always tempted to quote the line from the wedding vows that went "...till death do you part..." to Patricia but then thought she might jinx Galen's return. Deep down inside, most of the village hoped they were wrong and Patricia was right. So it was, Patricia was bound and determined not to have anything to do romantically with members of the opposite sex.

"It wouldn't be right. Just imagine what Galen would say when he gets back." Instead, still feeling the need for non-family companionship, she joined some women's organization in Peterborough after seeing something on 60 Minutes on MIA wives banding together. But seeing how MIA wives were about as numerous in Peterborough as Vietnamese, she had to make do with various other women's groups. That's where she met Kathryn, who ran one of the groups. By this time Jamie was older, about 10 or so when he first met Kathryn. Patricia had invited her to the Reserve for dinner and Jamie remembers them staying up all night talking. Patricia was rolling out the Galen stories she knew and Kathryn politely listened to them all. About six months later, Kathryn moved in, in every sense of the word. Nobody is really quite sure how it all happened and with Otter Lake being homophobic as any small town community, not too many people really went out of their way to find out all the dirty details. They were more than content to gossip around what little information they had. Needless to say, friends and family were scandalized and shocked, and were again questioning Patricia's state of mind.

But I don't think it was insanity at work, more like loneliness, of existing in an environment of your own creation can be a solitary reality. Kathryn must have been attracted to Patricia's... sweetness, is the only word I can come up with. Living in her own world of hope and unshakable belief has left a residual effect of some sort on most people. She is the sweetest, nicest, most giving person I have come across in my travels. Had she been twenty years younger, not Jamie's mother, and in the right state of mind, I might have been tempted myself. As for what brought Patricia to Kathryn in particular, who can say? Perhaps she needed Kathryn's strength and leadership to lean on. Or it could be as simple as companionship. Seven years of being by yourself with no close fellowship, either emotional or physical is hard on anyone. And maybe this way she felt she wouldn't be cheating on Galen. What ever the reason, they were still together these years later.

And that's where Jamie's problems really began. Reserve life for anybody out of the ordinary is difficult enough. But for kids with...different mothers, it can be hell. Jamie's middle name is Richard, which in turn is usually changed to Dick, but in Jamie's case, he was called Dyke. Now this can make a kid go two ways. He can shrink into himself and live the life of a put-upon wimp, or he can get tough and take on the world. The second is exactly what Jamie did. Repeatedly. Sometimes violently. I've known Jamie all the thirteen years he's been fighting people with enough poor judgement to tease him openly, defending his mother's honour, and quietly hating Kathryn.

"She's using her. She preys on Mom." He could never bring himself to say Kathryn's name but he always had words to say about how Kathryn was some sort of Butch manipulating his dysfunctional mother. At age sixteen he left home, moved in again with his grandparents for a couple of years then got his own place in town. Regardless of his feelings towards Kathryn, Jamie still would come home and do things for his mother but he would always try and arrange for when Kathryn wasn't around. And to her credit, Kathryn went out of her way to arrange these encounters, especially around Galen's birthday and the unmentioned D-Day (Disappearance Day). But not today. That's why we were fighting with a support beam in a large hole in the bedroom wall. Kathryn's salt and pepper short hair was still damp as she put her coat on with one hand and tried to dry it with another. She too smiled when she saw me. I was one of the few locals who came to visit.

"Hey Andrew, still looking as cute as ever. You still a heart breaker?" I should never have answered the phone last Sunday from the desperate but persuasive Jamie. He's a better carpenter than me anyways but unfortunately, I was the one who owned the truck to pick up the lumber. Being mobile can have its advantages.

"I'm a little old to be cute." I responded.

"With a face like that, you're never too old, eh Patty?" Patricia nodded with a smile. Kathryn gently patted my face in an almost motherly fashion. Jamie's eyes never left Kathryn who had over the years, learned to ignore his scathing glare. He shoved the large dresser to the side with a violent thrust of his hip. The dresser and floor shrieked in protest. The little bottles of perfumes sitting atop it tinkled and jingled with the force of the movement. "Jamie! I said be gentle with it. Your father would be ashamed!" I could never figure out if Patricia was oblivious to the less than sublime relationship of the two people closest to her or whether she chose to merely ignore it. In all the time I've known them, she was never acknowledged the cold war that raged within the confines of that house. Perhaps it was that dream world again. "Sorry mom" was all Jamie would say to her. "Come on, Sailor, give me a hand. We wouldn't want to damage this fine work of art." Embarrassed I looked at Kathryn. She shrugged back, the retaliation of somebody used to a thousand small insults who couldn't be bothered. Patricia was doing up her coat as she passed us. "Now you boys have fun. We'll go into town so we'll be out of your way. Should be back by supper time. And we'll expect you to stay for dinner after all that hard work, Andrew. Won't we Kathryn?" Kathryn put her towel on top of the dresser and did her own coat up.

"Wouldn't have it any other way. It's always interesting to have a man in the house. There are so few good ones around." With out looking at Jamie, I could tell that comment struck a bull's eye. The war got colder, and so did I. Patricia stepped out through the hole in the wall and waited for Kathryn to join her. "Tell you what, I'll make spaghetti tonight. It's Galen's favourite and I already have some sauce in the freezer. Is that okay with you boys?" I nodded and so did Jamie.

"That will be okay, mom. See you later."

"Bye. Come along, Kathryn. You drive, okay?"

"I'd love to. And try not to work too hard, boys. Men sweat so when they try to prove too much." This was why I hated to be in the same room with the both of them at the same time. Separately, they were each fine and nothing but polite and natural to me. But put them together and the worst sides of each came out. I have an aversion to most types of wars, especially psychological ones. Kathryn walked by Jamie with a curt "bye" and with a genuine smile, touched my arm in a warm manner, then she was out the hole in the wall with Patricia. Jamie was silent for a moment, then took a deep breath. "I wish she'd leave. I wish Mom would just kick her out and everything would be like it used to be." I'd heard this all before a thousand times. And a thousand times I'd tried to find different ways of changing the subject, but with little success.

"I don't think that's going to happen. And I don't think things can ever be the same until they find your father. Come on, give me a hand with the dresser." On the wall over the door was a picture of Galen, in his military dress. Jamie was staring at it. In retrospect, they looked a lot alike except Jamie was a bit heavier. Probably the Ojibway influence. "Give me a break, my dad's dead. Everybody knows it except mom. I've tried to tell her that a couple times but I just can't bring myself to do it. Mom's so sure of him coming home. I don't know what to do." He looked over at another picture on Patricia's dresser. This one was a wedding picture of Galen and Patricia and the middle right side of the frame looked unusually tarnished, as if it had been picked up a lot. "And that woman doesn't make it any better." I quickly grabbed the side of Kathryn's dresser and lifted my end up. "Hey you, enough talking. I have school in a couple days. Work time." Nodding in agreement, Jamie put the picture back down on Patricia's dresser and leaned over to grab the other end of my dresser. We groaned together and lifted the heavy oak dresser a few feet until Jamie stumbled over his own footing and smashed his shoulder against Patricia's maple dresser off to one side. I saw the marriage photograph slip from the top and hearing me yell, Jamie made a lunge for it. Kathryn's dresser made a crash landing. Two things happened almost immediately. Jamie caught the picture before it hit the ground and because the dresser was left in my hands alone, it tilted, almost falling over. Half the drawers came flying out across the room. I managed to steady the thing to prevent it from falling over completely but a definite mess had been made. The bedroom now looked like a war zone. Jamie looked at the four drawers and their scattered contents, then at me.

"Oops" was the quintessential Jamie comment. I quickly knelt down and started to gather up some of the stuff; clothes, travel pamphlets, a sewing kit, and some letters. Not knowing what to do, I started randomly putting the various articles back into the drawers. I noticed Jamie wasn't helping me. He was still holding his parents wedding picture. "Hey, aren't you gonna help?"

"Let her clean it up. Her stuff. Wasn't our fault. It was an accident."

"Don't give Kathryn ammunition to use against you. Leave it like this and she'll think you went through her stuff." Evidently I had struck a logic cord in his head and he

replaced the picture and started gathering Kathryn's clothes together. It would be obvious to her that things in her drawers would have been rearranged a bit but we could have blamed it on moving the dresser back and forth. She's not a dumb woman but sometimes people will believe anything, especially during house renovations. I left Jamie to pick up the rest as I replaced the restocked drawers in what I hoped was the proper order. "Finished with the others yet?" Turning I saw Jamie had a telegram in his hands. From where I stood, it looked official. But the expression on his face did not bode well. His eyes looked strained as the hand holding the telegram. He didn't even look like he was breathing. Slowly, he started to open the letter. "Wait a minute Jamie, that's illegal or something...?"

My warning received no reaction. He either didn't hear me, or didn't care. Slowly he drew the telegram out of the envelope, pinching the tip of it, then let the envelope fall to the ground where I picked it up, curious. You could tell by the insignia it was from the United States Government. I'd recognize the self righteous eagle anywhere. It was from the Department of Defense. It looked old. Feeling like a cat with a canary in his mouth, I couldn't help but look around nervously. I wasn't actually doing anything wrong but I believe the term I feared was called Guilty By Association. Jamie opened his mouth but didn't say anything. He looked like he had no wind with which to speak. Then his hoarse and distant voice spoke; "August 21, 1985 ... 9 years ago ... the remains of Private Galen Hill were recovered ... buried with full military honours ... condolences ... special thank you to Kathryn Sargent for arranging burial services since Patricia Hill could not be found." The words on that telegram and the look in Jamie's eyes made the pit of my stomach dry up. The silence made it worse. Ranting and raving I could have handled, it would have been an outlet or something, but not the silence. His breathing was the only thing that made me conscious of time passing. Then one deep breath, and a whisper.

"She knew. All this time she knew. And she didn't tell us! She buried my father without telling us!" His formally cold and distant voice was now anything but. Noisily the guilty letter was unconsciously being crumpled in his hand. Slowly the intense look of anger dissolved into genuine sadness. "It's over. My dad is real again. He's back over here. I've got to tell Mom." Out of nowhere, his face took on the appeal of a puppy with a large soup bone in sight. I figured this particular soup bone might be named Kathryn. This look of eagerness in his face had me worried. We were not the best of friends, him being just a little too intense for my tastes but I knew him well enough to be concerned about his anxious and eager looks. I've seen this look be the cause of too many fights and too much trouble. "I guess you should. Why do you think Kathryn would have done all this? It doesn't make sense." That was the truth. I had always thought Kathryn was pretty cool as things went but now I wasn't so sure. There was a lot here that wasn't being explained. Jamie threw the crumpled letter against a wall. The anger was coming back. "Of course it does. I told you all along she was a bitch. Maybe now Mom will see the real her." I chose my next words very carefully. "Uh Jamie, just be sure you want to tell this news about your father to your mother to let her mind rest, not to get revenge on Kathryn." He looked at me. Those brown eyes could have driven a few of the two inch nails we'd been using through a hardwood floor. Perhaps because of this I grabbed my hammer. "Sorry, just thinking aloud. Well, lets get that door frame, huh?" His stare never wavered. "Who's side are you on? This is my mother we're talking about. And my father. I'm going to tell my mother about this because I care about her. That's why. She deserves to know, don't you think?"

"Hey, I'd really rather not get involved in this. You're the son, not me. I'm just hired labour." Muttering to himself, he went out the hole in the wall and I soon could hear him struggling with some lumber. I leaned against Kathryn's dresser wondering what I'd gotten myself into. Occasionally I could hear splashes of mumbled sentences floating in from the lawn. "You have no idea. You can't. She's my mother, not yours. I know what's best for her..." Other than sporadic grumbling, the rest of the afternoon we worked in silence. Or rather I worked in silence. I don't think Jamie was really there other than in body. It took him three times as long to do things as it did me making me acutely aware that my plans to finish the bracing, then run away and hide before the women got home was fast disappearing. Even more disconcerting was Jamie's lack of interest in the quality of work he was doing. It was obvious some of the bracing would have to be done over again but this was not the particular time to inform him of this matter. Jamie was in his own little world and I didn't think I was allowed there.

It was late in the afternoon, the golden time just as the sun was beginning to set behind the still active clouds of heat lightning on the horizon, adding a sense of unreality to the summer sky. It was into this picturesque scene the ladies arrived home, arms laden with packages and groceries. This was the moment I had been fearing all afternoon... Jamie straightened up from planing a 2 by 4, and stood tall, like he was expecting something. I mentally wondered if, should the situation arise, could I take Jamie in a fight. Or in the prevention of one. We were about the same height but he was a little heavier, most of it muscle, he loved to work with his hands and back more than I did. He also had done more fighting than me. The odds were in his favour. Nothing was going right that afternoon.

As they approached, they waved, innocent of the atmosphere. I managed a weak half circle of my right hand and noticed out of the corner of my eye Jamie nodding his head almost imperceptibly in acknowledgement. Patricia yelled from the front door "Dinner in about half an hour, boys. I hope you're hungry." Kathryn put her arm around Patricia as they entered the house. They laughed about something as the door closed behind them. I waited nervously for some reaction but surprisingly nothing happened. Cliches rushed through my mind -- its always quietest before the storm, the Natives are restless, the eye of the hurricane and so on. Again we went back to work until, without looking at me as he finished planing that board, Jamie spoke.

"Okay, you're the genius, what do you think I should do then?" I hunted for nails or at least I looked like I was. "What ever you want to do." He threw down his plane. "You're a lot of help. Not more than two hours ago you were chewing me out for wanting to do what I think is the right thing to do."

"Then do it. We both know what ever I tell you to do, you're gonna do what you want anyways. That's the way you are. Why do you think I'm the only one here helping you with your stupid house? Nobody else would come. You give them too much of a hard time. It's your way or no way. Does any of this sound familiar?" There, I had said it. I waited for the effect. It was one of silence. At first. "My life is my life, Sailor. I do what I want cause it gets me through. That's not an explanation, or an excuse, just the way it is. My life is a lot different from yours, way different and I have to make do. When you have to live with growing up in this house, talk to me then. Then you'll know why I do what I do. Speaking of which, I can also finish the house myself. Thanks for everything, Sailor."

I was being dismissed. He turned and went inside the house, slapping the plastic door aside. My pick-up was waiting for me and I had the door opened before I heard Patricia's voice calling from the kitchen window. "Don't you dare leave this property. The spaghetti's almost cooked and we have far too much for us to eat alone." I had been invited to dinner and Patricia was determined to make sure I was going to eat. But I was determined not to give up without a fight. Like dark thunderclouds hanging over that little house, I knew what was at the end of the dinner tonight.

"I really got to get home. I sort of promised my mother..."

"Kathryn is setting the plates. You get in here right this minute." With that she slid the window closed. I was trapped. I could still get in the truck and drive away, but I couldn't do it with a clear conscience. Like a virus, Patricia has a way of worming her way into your subconscious. The door to the truck closed behind me. The walk to the kitchen door was the longest of my life. I had never noticed how serene the house looked, with the lake as a backdrop. I could see bodies moving around in the darkness of the kitchen window. I wondered what they served at the Last Supper. Though I'd been working all day I had no appetite. My brain feverishly tried to come up with logical ways of getting out of dinner without insulting Kathryn and Patricia but I had lost my only chance. Jamie was already sitting at the table when I entered. I took the seat nearest the door, right beside him. Patricia was in mid-scolding. "Why must you always fight with everybody? You should be like your father more, everybody likes him. He has friends everywhere. And Andrew is always welcome in this house." The room reeked of garlic and oregano. Jamie had the salt shaker clutched firmly in the palm of his hand. He was squeezing it.

"You just remember that young man. So, how's the noodles doing, Kathryn?" Without waiting for an answer, Patricia grabbed a noodle with a fork and slid it into her mouth as Kathryn finished making the garlic bread. I remembered, Kathryn was Italian. I couldn't help thinking there was nothing quite like a traditional Italian/Indian spaghetti dinner. "Finished with that door yet? A cold draft comes through that thing at nights, you know." That was from Kathryn. His voice oddly calm, Jamie answered, his eyes firmly on Kathryn. "Things will be fixed up soon. Things will be just the way they used to be. Wouldn't want something like that to be bothering you for a long time. That would be wrong, eh Kathryn?" It was the first time I'd ever heard him use her name, let alone in her presence. Kathryn's reaction was immediate, a quick look of surprise and puzzlement. You could tell she saw something unusual in the way he looked at her. Jamie had scored round one in a battle Kathryn didn't know was happening. Patricia was rinsing the noodles under the tap, oblivious to what was happening behind her. "Good. I'm not your father. He loves sleeping out in the open but all the insects get to me, even with that tarp you put up." Across the kitchen, Kathryn turned away from Jamie and popped the bread in the oven.

"Yeah, Dad was kind of tough, eh Mom? Think he's still alive?" Kathryn froze over the stove. I closed my eyes, wincing. What ever people may have thought of Patricia's living arrangement with Kathryn, it was an unspoken agreement everywhere in the Reserve not to burst her bubble about Galen being alive. You can fool around with a living person but hands off the dead ones. The strainer of spaghetti was quietly lowered into the sink. Kathryn and I glanced at each other briefly, wondering what Patricia's reaction would be. She hadn't moved from the sink. Her voice was remarkably controlled, quiet, even, and very firm. "Your father is too alive. They never found his body and I know him well enough to know that men like him don't die easily. He is alive somewhere and don't you forget it!" Jamie cleared his throat ominously.

"But how can you be so sure Mom? It's been almost twenty years and ..."

"I just know!" she screamed. "I made him promise me he'd come back. He promised!" Kathryn fell back against the stove and I closed my eyes again. A look on her face so intense I shouldn't have thought it possible.

"Jamie..." This time it was Kathryn's turn to intervene. With a cry, Patricia reached in the sink and threw the strainer full of spaghetti across the room. Tendrils of white pasta sailed through the air, pelting Jamie. Even I felt a whip of it, still burning hot, going down the neck of my jacket.

"Don't you dare ever say any thing like that! Ever again!" Patricia flew at Jamie, her arms working like a flailing machine gone crazy. She hit at him repeatedly making the spaghetti fly again until Kathryn and I pulled her off. Fighting her way out of our arms, she ran from the kitchen and disappeared down the hallway that led to the bedroom. The house shook with the slamming of a door. Kathryn's eyes turned in their sockets to look at us. Jamie, me, and the kitchen were a mess. Kathryn trembled as she spoke. "What the hell is wrong with you?! Do you know what you just did?" Without speaking, Jamie removed a piece of paper from his coat pocket. He must have recovered it from the floor when I was on my way to the truck. He smoothed it out and held it up for Kathryn to see.

Kathryn glanced quickly at the telegram. Then, almost instantly, the emotions playing across her face fell away as others rushed in to take their place. The fierce anger that had been burning had now been replaced by wide eyed fear as the telegram registered. I saw a small smile, how ever cold, appear on Jamie's face, one of ultimate victory. I could see a lump moving down Kathryn's throat as she swallowed.

"Where'd you get that? You went rummaging through my things, didn't you?" Jamie shook his head, ever so slowly, every movement exaggerated in his control of the situation. "No. Didn't have to. It appeared before me as God wanted it to." You could

almost see the wheels turning in Kathryn's head as explanations and excuses came and went through her mind. And Jamie sat there, quietly, waiting for them. Unfortunately, so was I. "I can explain..." she started.

"I'm waiting" was Jamie's only comment. Kathryn paced the kitchen as Jamie watched her and I watched him. She stopped in front of the window over looking the driveway. "I know you've always hated me." His voice barked.

"The telegram! Why did you hide it? Why didn't you tell me or my mother. You buried my father with out telling us."

"I did it for your mother!"

"I knew you'd say something like that. Don't try and con me with all this heart-gushing over Mom. If you cared for her one little bit, if her life meant anything to you, you would have told her. You, of all people know how hung up on Dad she is. This might have freed her." Kathryn was silent for a moment, the words sinking in. "From him, or from me?" Jamie stood up and rounded the table. "You know very well what I mean. This was just to make sure she wouldn't leave you. If she knew Dad was dead, really dead, she could go back to living a normal life."

"And just what the hell do you consider a normal life?"

"Do I have to spell it out?"

"Please." Their eyes locked as I sat silently in my little chair at the side of the table. The storm was building. "The truth is you didn't want Mom to get on with her life so you hid this telegram and buried him yourself to keep her with you. Didn't you? Admit it!" Instead of anger, there was amazement, almost surprise on Kathryn's face. "After all this time, you still think I'm just playing head games with your mother. That's the only reason I'm here." Jamie turned away, the spaghetti falling from his shoulders. "Oh, yeah, sorry, you're a great saint that should be congratulated for making my mother a social outcast."

"Jamie, you know your mother, you should know how this would affect her. She so believes in Galen's return that nothing else has any meaning for her. Take that away ... take away her faith, her reason for going on, and you might as well kill her."

"You're grasping at straws, Kathryn. This might make her stronger."

"No it won't. If Galen dies, she dies. Think about it Jamie, she's not very strong, never was. He's all she's ever talked about since the day I met her. He is alive to her, just like you and I am. I've known for thirteen years that if he walked in that door right now, right this minute, I wouldn't be a flicker of a memory in your mother's eyes. I'd be a distant second to him. But I've accepted that and life goes on. Kathryn leaned wearily against the sink, the strength going out of her voice.

"Believe it or not Jamie, I think I know your father as well as you do, probably better in fact. You only knew him for two years when you were a baby. I've had thirteen years of stories and legends to know him. It's like I've been living with both your parents instead of just your mother all these years.

"Do you know what it's like to lie in bed and comfort somebody you love and cherish as they cry on the anniversary of her husband's death? Or to spend endless hours listening to the woman you care most about in the world, talk incessantly about how she fell in love with the father of her child. It's not easy!"

"You should try loving someone who's whole heart and soul belongs to somebody else. You can't fight a memory, or confront a dream. That's what I had to live with all these years. And yet on top of it all, your mother is everything to me. I would sacrifice anything for that woman." Jamie was silent.

"I made sure your father was buried properly in a veteran's cemetery, full honours, out of respect for your mother. Everything was taken care of. If you want, you can tell her the truth but you should know I didn't hide the truth out of selfishness, I did it to save your mother." Kathryn was drained, emotionally and physically, a huge cross lifted off her shoulders and fearful of what the immediate future might bring.

"Jamie, let her live her life in hope. I'm sure there's a thousand psychiatrists out there who would disagree but screw them. It's worked for her for the last twenty years. She's happy and the passing time means nothing to her. Let her, and Galen be." Trying to avoid eye contact with either of them, I started counting spaghetti noodles splattered across the table. I had gotten into my second dozen when Jamie broke the silence with a logical question. "There's something I don't understand here. What do you get out of all this. If all my mom's talk about my father hurts you, why put up with it?" Kathryn fairly shouted her answer back at Jamie. "Because I need her. She's everything to me. Can't you see, I've invested my life in Patricia, I was there when she needed a friend, it's my turn now. It's my turn to need her."

"Why do you need her?" Jamie said.

"I've got no place else to go. This is my home now and I want to..."

"It's not your home. It's mine, and Mom's. You don't belong here." Kathryn grabbed Jamie's coat, pleading. "Jamie, I love your mother. If you tell her about the telegram, she'll never forgive me. I can't stand to lose another one."

"My mother isn't 'another one'. She's my mother and this is my father." He shrugged her loose and turned to leave the kitchen. Kathryn cried "Where are you going?" "To have a talk with my mother" was all he said. Pushing him aside she sprinted for the hallway. "Don't! Please don't." She disappeared down through the kitchen doorway with Jamie not far behind. His booming voice chasing after her, "Get away from that door." Then from the kitchen I heard a rustling and banging, then a door slamming. Voices rising and falling, in anger and fear, were pouring out of that door. I could smell the garlic bread from the oven beginning to burn. I fished it out, and then on reflection, took an unburned slice and left the house. Once outside I drank in the taste of both the bread and that beautiful sunset disappearing over the islands at the far end of the lake. The heat lightning had disappeared and it was time for me to go home. Behind me, I heard the shattering of glass, probably the window we had put in yesterday. I started the engine of my truck and I could almost swear I heard it say, disguised as a motor hum, "They all belong together."

But then I thought "No, that would be crazy."

THE SYLF (the genii-ology of the heart/mind)

by Jeff Loo

The voice on the left is a woman artist doing her laundry with her lover's; meanwhile, on the right, the man, a dancer, addresses her. Together, these two voices make an erotic love poem.

I fill this
now dark
opening
with blue
earthen umber
and red
of a downward sun
and put in change
in and
on it goes
and your
shirts trail,
tights flail,
towels tumble
like waving
flags and
through my
dress in the
dryer glass
everything
pours, falls,
rises open as
the clothes cages
that will
be filled
and my body
is open, just
so, in the waves
the wave
of my dress
that moves
are perfect
breathless
stases
when on it goes
round and
round in life's
laundry-go-
round (for
ever!) on it
goes inside and outside of
the inside-out
colors and
my outside
in the glass
and on it goes
off again
so I put
change in
and change
your stuff with
mine the
slips and
bras and
sopping
hankies and
panties and
on it goes off
again (its nerve-on-a
downswing) on
it goes off
again the I
I am again
this body in
my dress as
opening scarves
are rivering
deep in the
dark through
my solelylit thighs

In the scent
of eucalyptus
leaves, you
suspire for the
shivering glass
of my lips,
I gave it up --
threw
ballet shoes
in the fire
and watched
the flame flicker,
kick and
whirl a smoke
body rising
in airless
black
and my whole
torso screamed
for you,
and who is
drawing me
breathes close
seeing me grab
the ground again
that pulses as
I push into arc,
into sky
harder than
trees flinching
in winds,
unrelenting
breath is
my spillway
of words,
song from
flecks of
toenails or moon
pumice (half-
minding, half,
hearty) that is
light and its
dark never dies,
steadier than
my eyes,
who is drawing
me always
drinks her-
self always
and outpours
mine, she's
not art but
artist drawing me
and threadings
of me through
the leap --
closest to
your gut-levels
bye and bye
I say sleep
sound whether
or nether
worlds sleep
and by your
belly you
hear me the
first time,
-- full space
of my blood
blown through
my own passage