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EGRESS & HYPHEN

by

Darrell Etherington

A Creative Writing Project
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through English Language, Literature, and Creative Writing
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

egress & hyphen collects 52 poems, written during 2005-2007, and a poetics essay addressing the collection's themes of isolation, the urban landscape, digital culture, and interpersonal relationships. Many of the poems mix conventions from several genres, including photography. Poetic forms include two series: "videogame," which evokes both its namesake and the comic strip, and "Date of Event," which combines design elements of the shipment tracking form and the personal letter. The work is characterized by a sense of play and experimentation, and by the shifting landscape of the visual surface of the page.

DEDICATION

To my Grandparents, for their history, and their love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following made this work possible: Loving parents, Brian and Marilyn, for unwavering encouragement and support. Siblings, for material and a sense of competition. Early teachers, Mrs. Kominar, Mr. Bonk, the optimist and the cynic. A city, no emerald one, but no great evil, either. Friends, who drink too loudly and judge too quick.

Later teachers, Stephen Pender, Susan Holbrook, and Dale Jacobs, for inspiring an undergraduate to graduate.

Michael Murphy and Amir Khan, for also enduring the others.

Louis Cabri, for patience, endurance, and for being unfathomably knowledgeable. Dale Jacobs, for deserving two mentions. Susan Gold/Smith for trust, perspective, and openness.

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Agent, Sign, and System

egress & hyphen inhabits different genres. And though this essay divides the four major concerns it addresses into separate units, there is a dialogue that exists between them, because the distinctions, in this paper as in *egress & hyphen* itself, though useful, are artificial and porous.

Reader & Role

“you turn the page & I am here that in itself is interesting to me at least it is interesting since my existence begins as you turn the pages & begin to read me”

-bpNichol, “Waiting,” 1973

In “Waiting,” bpNichol personifies the read text. Nichol’s essay draws attention to the way in which the reader, any reader, is complicit in the creation of any text. Essentially, he posits that the reader (and the reader’s act, namely reading) calls into existence the work itself. In retrospect, I find this a useful way of thinking about *egress & hyphen*. Various questions concerning readership were instrumental in the development of the poems contained in this collection. What determines reader accessibility in any text? To what degree is accessibility the author’s responsibility or concern? How do the genres and forms at work in the poetry affect reader interaction and interpretation? And finally, how does organization and arrangement

change the interoperation of seemingly isolated texts, and their subsequent effect? The poems in *egress & hyphen* explore these questions.

To begin, let me limit my examination of writing, and in particular the writing of *egress & hyphen*, to readership concerns. I will address other issues such as form, theme, and organization in later sections.

Victor Shklovsky, of the Russian Formalists, explained the concept of “making strange” in order to at least somewhat distance reader from text, thus provoking him or her to engage actively rather than passively with the work being read (*Mindsigh*). Defamiliarization, as Shklovsky’s “making strange” is often translated, is the process by which an author “makes the familiar seem strange by not naming the familiar object,” he explains in his groundbreaking 1917 essay “Art as Technique,” discussing specifically Leo Tolstoy’s technique of “describ[ing] an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time” (Shklovsky, 721). In not addressing the familiar by name, the author can divest him or herself of the common connotations that go along with it. For example, referring to an old tree, as just that, versus calling it a gnarled hand of wood with fingers outstretched. The second example paints an entirely different picture. The concept is not a novel one to anyone working in poetic theory or criticism, and is often associated with modernist poets like Gertrude Stein, who use unconventional syntax, avoiding cliché, and thus making new that which has become so common as to be taken for granted. Critics like Lisi Shoenbach, however, make a distinction between the kind of radical defamiliarization that is Shklovsky’s approach, and a more moderate “recontextualizing mode” that perhaps better describes Stein’s project (245). To understand recontextualization, or *refamiliarization*, consider this example of it at work in Stein’s *Tender Buttons* collection:

A TIME TO EAT.

A pleasant simple habitual and tyrannical and authorised and educated and resumed and articulate separation. This is not tardy. (13)

The reader can follow the process with particular clarity in this poem as the concept of regular meal time is first estranged from its sociohistorical context of manner and etiquette manuals, which prescribe just such proprieties as acceptable times for meal consumption. This estrangement is achieved through the description that frustrates syntax and terminological expectation. Then, by way of the sequence of novel descriptors, the meaning of “A Time to Eat” is reconfigured. Note the importance of the sequence, versus the effect if the terms appeared in isolation as their associations pile up and form a new constellation of meaning around the concept of their being a ‘right’ or ‘proper’ time for dining. It takes the idea of appropriate times for dining out of the familiar realms of manners and decorum and makes it instead one of control and undue impositions. In terms of reader function, then, the difference between the two can be characterized as a difference in the level of author/reader cooperation. In defamiliarization, the author makes strange and then leaves the reader to deal with the strangeness of the term on his or her own. In refamiliarization, by contrast, author and reader are co-agents in the reconstruction of a term’s meaning, a process which involves both familiarity and new distance.

Though both de- and refamiliarization are useful concepts when considering the poetry in *egress & hyphen* – for instance, when thinking about how the meaning of something as commonplace and accepted as the air quality meter acquires new significance in the unfamiliar rhetorical context of “ppm” (52) – both lack the added dimension of the fully active reader. De- and refamiliarization present a text which intends to provoke reader reaction, but do not *intend* to

interact (though it may in practice) *with* a reader, who is then co-author in the process of meaning-making.

When thinking about *egress & hyphen*, it is useful to consider defamiliarization in relation to Nichol's personified text. The text, in serving its defamiliarizing function, becomes itself the unfamiliar or the unknown. Thus the reader's unusual task is to bring into being that which is beyond or not known to him or her self. It is the space of opportunity provided by this "impossible" situation which offers the egress (and the hyphen, which represents an artificial linkage through what is not there) of the work presented here. The reader is not merely distanced from words, which, through repeated, common usage become transparent or completely taken for granted (ie. love, hate, law, progress, and so on). If we acknowledge readers as at least co-agents in the creative life of a text, then they are also complicit in the estrangement. In other words, they *generate* rather than merely *experience* the unfamiliarity.

Reader as midwife to the strange may be seen in the "videogame" (30) section. The series features an artistic style known as "pixelated," which means that art bears the obvious hallmarks of pixel by pixel composition (a pixel is the digital base unit of images). "Pixelated," though it technically applies to all digital images, specifically connotes graphics like those found in 8- and 16-bit games, like the original Super Mario or Megaman games. The "videogame" section also employs a linguistic style in the caption boxes which has more in common with homophonic translation like David Melnick uses in his *Men in Aida*, which takes as its base text Homer's *Illiad*. Consider the following passage from Melnick's poem for comparison:

Horse fat. Oh peel a yoni. Dock hose gay in a ten-day 'I ate her.'

Stet the sin, Lassie. Oh is he the Andy? Hammer me, Rick's hen.

A-O-Gay fast cannon ox you, a ruse, a men, us pair, a may rue.

Two's men a nasty sayin'. Oh that Rae, a day. Nay, nary is die.

Eh? A colon? Paw's sayin' a rat youse ate tea the moan. (6)

Though the words in the series, arranged as they are to facilitate aural and visual collisions and puns, lose their “sense” according to a logical, rational model of meaning, they are more suitable in their present configuration to the task of defamiliarization. When combined with the visual figures operating within the scenes pictured in “videogame,” which imply, but do not enforce, a sensible, coherently related story (as do the very genre expectations of the video game itself), conventional logic falters, and instead a reader must implement what more accurately resembles the kind of dream logic once described by bpNichol in an interview with fellow Canadian poet George Bowering. Nichol describes this logic as one that exists outside of the parameters of “the logic of the waking world, but [that] has its own logic which is closer to the way the mind works” (*Meanwhile*, 41). In a similar vein, André Breton, in his “Manifesto of Surrealism,” states that “[w]ithin the limits where they operate (or are thought to operate) dreams give every evidence of being continuous and show signs of organization,” basing this on Freud’s explorations into the nature of dreams and the unconscious (Breton). Because of the way in which the “videogame” series is framed and presented, the reader, in order to acclimate (read, yes, but also generate a frame for reading), must employ just such a dream logic, by allowing for slippages and multiplicities of meaning which are normally rejected by the conscious thinking mind. Since this process of acclimation (of adapting to a new environment) can have no existing model (or not one that fits it with absolute workability), the reader is set the task of devising a new one, unfamiliar to his or her own cultural beliefs, values, traditions, and experience, *making* what is not before known to them.

The section “typistry” provides another example of this reader-maker role at work. The typed poem, and the effect of the typewriter on poetry, has a long and varied history, dating back essentially to the invention of the typed letter itself. As Nichol notes in “Passwords: The bisett Papers,” “Gutenberg radically changed poetry once the poem was taken out of the head & put on the page it became subject to visual control” (*Meanwhile*, 57). F.T. Marinetti, for instance, working in pre-Mussolini Italy, figured a new, “mechanical language” as the natural result of the typed text. The language he envisioned and practiced had “a few well-moving parts, put at the service of analogy and its full force,” indeed, one “freed from the logic imposed by normal syntax” (Drucker, *The Visible Word* 119). Marinetti’s pre-war Italian conception of a new, unbound language depended largely on a newfound economy of words he seemed to see as part and parcel of typing’s mechanical efficiency and that includes a visual and linguistic sparsity. Though at odds with the excesses of the poems in “typistry,” the general effect (that of becoming liberated from syntax’s logic) remains similar in both cases. The distinction, however, is key. Marinetti saw type as a step towards increased economy of time, work, and language, which it most definitely was, considering the pre-digital production context within which he is writing, one still dependent on painstaking mostly manual methods of textual production. Viewed from the computer age, however, type and the typewriter acquire entirely different significance.

A symbol of progress and industrialization to Marinetti, the typewriter has since become largely a curiosity or piece of kitsch. In fact, I think it relevant here to relate that one currently sits atop my living room coffee table, a place it occupies more because of its value as an *objet d’art* than as a time saver for a necessary human activity. In practice, the typewriter now represents an inhibition, not a boon to efficiency. I am reminded of my mother’s stories of typing my father’s thesis on an old Remington, and having to redo the entire page whenever she

made a minor error in spacing or a typo. Obviously, this type of behaviour seems needlessly futile now, when contrasted with the ease and efficacy, and, more importantly, the editability of word-processing programs currently run on personal computers. This shift is central to the “typistry” poems in *egress & hyphen*. No longer Marinetti’s idols of efficiency, the poems in this section are ponderous, fumbling, marred with error and even, in the case of “unbinary bound,” (29) bearing the physical signs of human frustration.

But, as the name “unbinary bound” suggests, even though the cultural associations surrounding mechanical type may have not only shifted but reversed polarity entirely, the function of freeing language from a logic insisted upon by regular syntax has not. Indeed, a central function of the typewriter, as hinted at above, is now its value as an object of nostalgia. It is this avenue into memory, which, when properly taken advantage of, allows the reader egress into the realm of the unfamiliar. This is because nostalgic effect is not truly nostalgic, strictly speaking, because the equation required for it to be so is never fully completed. The typeface may inspire the memory of pleasant associations, but the specific content of the poems themselves deny this process an uncomplicated operation. “falsetto analogue,” (27) in particular, enacts this. From the title, which in one interpretation refers to the seemingly fluid and uninterrupted personal narrative (one which possesses all the plot points and epiphanous moments of a Hollywood screenplay) people tend to construct for themselves in memory, to the splotchy, interrupted visual field of the page, to the disjunction between elements from line to line, the poem is a representation of a memory imperfectly remembered. Carol Mirakove, in “every Italian grandmother looks like mine,” shows the incompleteness of personal memory in a different way to similar effect:

I see my own grandmother wrapped sweet in a afghan. her name was REPETTO. she married a potato-famine exile. I never knew: her first fiancé, her real eyebrows. (22)

In the frustrated moment of a partial nostalgic experience, we encounter the borders of our sensible worldview or self-concept. Comfortable footing lost, unfamiliar hopefully accessed.

Comics & the Visual Poem

Though not at work in all of the poems in *egress & hyphen*, the idea of the comic strip and its generic associations, namely the frame, the speech bubble, and the gutter are central to the work taken as a whole. Even when the visual component of the comic, the illustration, is not physically present, many elements in the work are borrowed from conventions associated with the comic strip.

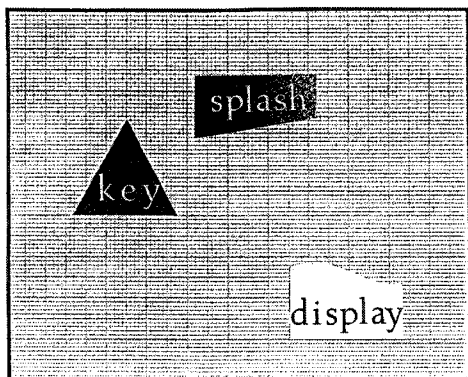
In order to properly understand comics as a poetic medium, I will examine its historical usage. “Experimental/Visual/Concrete,” an essay from Johanna Drucker’s collection *Figuring the Word*, explores the distinctions and definitions of each of the types of poetry described in the essay’s title. Visual poetry is not as limited a term in application as concrete nor as wide-ranging as experimental (which describes any works which depart from established tradition) and is most useful in approaching the works in *egress & hyphen*. Visual poetry, for Drucker, applies to all works which draw specific attention to their appearance on the page. She maintains that it is so general a term that we can ascribe to it “a history which is as old as writing itself” (*Figuring*, 110). She cites as examples Egyptian hieroglyphics, and “more explicitly poetic works” which “appear in 3rd and 4th century BC Greek manuscripts” (*Figuring*, 110). Uncannily similar is Scott McCloud’s appraisal of the history of comics in *Understanding Comics*, noting that the only qualification required for something to be defined as comics is that it be “sequential art.”

Interestingly though, McCloud, like Drucker does for visual poetry, suggests hieroglyphics as an early predecessor of the comic (McCloud, 5). Although the simplicity of McCloud's definition may be appropriate for his purposes, in terms of its usage here, it lacks the analytical power to inform any serious inquiry. Accordingly, I propose that for a work to qualify as comics, it also exhibit certain generic traits. Perhaps these constraints are best observed in practice. In issue #8 of *Chain* magazine, poetic comics were showcased. Common to much of the work in the issue were the traits mentioned at the introduction to this section: the frame, the word balloon, the gutter.

It is not so much of a leap, then, to see a connection, at least at the point of origin, between visual poetry and comics. And, considering the elasticity of the "sequential art" definition of comics, even with our added qualifications, that beginning point need not also be the point at which the genres part ways.

A quick inquiry into the definition of the term "sequential" prompts another encounter with a term that is raised above in the context of bpNichol and French surrealism: logic. Specifically, sequential is defined as "forming or following in a logical order" (OED). Here we might encounter an irreconcilable split between comics and visual poetry, as the visual poem need not form or follow any logical order. Or that *could* easily be argued, were it not for the standing definition of logic under which we are operating, namely that proposed by bpNichol which differentiates between types within logic as an overarching category. In fact, when Nichol is discussing the dream logic first conceived of by Freud, he is quite specifically talking about it in the context of visual poetry. There is no reason, then, when considering the definition of sequential art, to restrict the meaning of the required element of logic to the established, rational one.

Operating under this shared definition, we can see how works like Catriona Strang's 1992



chapbook *Tem* can, without undue contortion of the categories, be described as both visual poetry and comics poetry (see sample at left). *Tem* collects 14 plates, each of which feature a bordered field with a regularly patterned internal graph matrix, and shapes of varying shades and shapes which highlight or provide backing for

words. Each plate is also captioned by a phrase (the phrase is not reproduced here), which, though not sensible in an objective rational way, contain sound patterns and an internal, rhythmic sense. Most of the elements described above, comic book enthusiasts and readers of the funny pages alike will note, are conventions of the comics genre as well. We can think of the foregrounded words against the grid fields as text bubbles and callouts. The field itself is a bordered frame, with the space between representing the gutter. And captions, also a feature of the series "videogame" in *egress & hyphen*, are a consistent element in editorial cartoons. The poems in *Tem* are also sequential, as they possess a definite order and some obvious organizing principles, for example in the punctuation and capitalization of the running captions, and in the regular, consistent visual formatting from page to page. Likewise, the visual works in *egress & hyphen* can also be thought of as both visual and comics poetry. Consider, for instance, two significantly different examples from the "←send →receive" portion of the collection. "Greetings from Sunny Disillusionment!" (23) is baldly illustrative in nature, notably even retaining the appearance of pen on blue-lined notebook paper. Though no clear concept of sequence is immediately apparent, some of the hallmarks of the comic are instantly visible. The word balloon, for example, some attempts at frame differentiation, and the bust in the bottom

left-hand corner which recalls the figure of the superhero. And though, as stated above, no sequence is decipherable, the logic present is one of association and of spatial proximity. Words and images evoke each other, potentially looping, but in a way that eschews concentricity, favouring instead the eccentric orbit. For example, a relationship exists between the bus's exhaust and the odour and warmth emanating from the pie, but the circuit between the two is not closed, but instead thrown off balance by the strong interjection of the stated "25," among others, draw the attention away and never allow an uninterrupted return. Again, the interruption appears as space of egress, requiring the formation of new mental models. Resequencing, as in DNA, but here in thought.

The second example of visual/comics collision (collusion?) in "←send →receive" is the "Date of Event" (18-21) sequence which immediately precedes "Greetings from Sunny Disillusionment!" This poetic series takes as its template two conventional genres: the shipment tracking form currently featured on almost all international couriers' websites, and the standard letter, or at least the closing of said letter. The letter or epistolary poem has antecedents as far back as Horace's *Epistles*, though the specific literary genre of that classical work is often disputed (Allen Jr. et al, 119). It has been used often since then, by established poets and lovestruck amateurs as well. Recently, it has even undergone modernization in the form of the epistolary email poem, a yet-to-be-published sequence I recently had the opportunity to explore and offer criticism on¹. Precisely because of its storied tradition and frequent historical usage, I complicated its presence in *egress & hyphen* by combining it with a less familiar genre, and one which ordinarily occurs only in a practical, functional capacity. The regular updates of the shipment statement work similarly to the news bulletin form used by Renee Gladman in *The*

¹ The work in question was by Lisa Lipton, a recently graduated M.F.A. student here at the University.

Activist. In the section called “Top of the Hour,” she uses the brief news item format, ostensibly a purely informative genre, to expose how it can in fact be used to manipulate the information it conveys. Consider the following, for instance: “The bridge remains intact today, despite reports that it is long gone” (22). In “Date of Event” the shipping form’s role is also subverted, as the ambiguity of its supposedly informational terms are highlighted by the commentary captions.

While the text’s hybridism itself begins the work of positing the text as estranged, further generic multiplicity is introduced when the sequence is taken as comics. Visually and formally, it shares the characteristics we have previously discussed in relation to Strang’s *Tem*. The frame is present in the tabled shipment tacking segments, and the placement of the letter portions suggest captions. Further, in order to reinforce the association with comics, “Date of Event” is placed within the work in a position which juxtaposes with works that are more evidently so, and icons are included, in some cases replacing the written words and in others augmenting them.

Icon

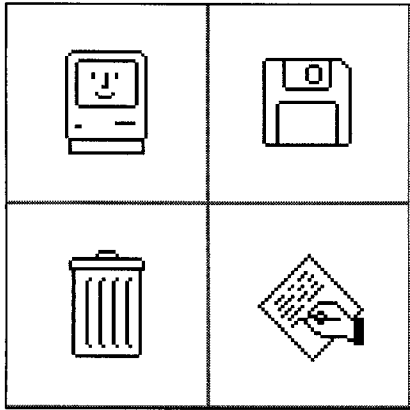
Icon, especially in a contemporary setting, is a multivalent term. It is defined variously in the OED as a physical representation of a holy figure, as a symbol or representation of something not necessarily restricted to a religious context, as an element of graphic user interfaces in computing terms, or, in linguistics, as “a sign whose form directly reflects the thing it signifies, for example, the word snarl pronounced in a snarling way.” Though each share the common quality of being representations, these definitions vary from one to the next. This variety of definition informs *egress & hyphen*.

Looking first at the icon as it relates to religious symbolism and imagery, we can get a clear sense of its importance in that arena from theorist W. J. T. Mitchell, in his essay “What is

an Image?” Mitchell begins with the Byzantine divide over the role of the icon in early Christian church doctrine, and even goes on to claim it as one of the primary causes of the English civil war (503). The cause of the split in both cases amounted to a difference in opinion as to the propriety of using visual representations of sacred figures, such as Jesus Christ, in ritual and church practice. It was a question of what should and should not be depicted and of what was deemed profane or beyond the realm of human imitation. The conflict exists still today. I am thinking here of the especially fresh (and, in terms of this discussion, pertinent, as state/church conflicts and censorship figure importantly in poems like “the new spiritual” [53]) example of the depictions of the Islamic prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper’s political cartoon.

Another usage of the term “icon” figures one object or idea as representative of something else. If we think of this usage as it pertains to the common practice of referring to star athletes or renowned musicians as icons of their profession or artistic practice, then we can arrive at the conclusion that in these cases, that which is represented by the individuals in question is excellence or prowess in their chosen field of activity. Still another usage which falls under this definition is when a symbol like the eagle is referred to as an icon of American culture. The eagle represents a set of values or associations important to that culture.

Even more popular in terms of contemporary usage is the third definition of icon, which describes it in relation to the field of computing. Icon, as anyone familiar with computers will know, means here the visual representation of access to or the initiation of a program or other digitally encoded data. The field is a complicated one, owing both to the scale and complexity of the work involved, which requires a knowledge of a number of different fields. An icon in the field of icons, Susan Kare is responsible for the creation of Apple Computer Corporation’s original graphic interface icons. In an interview from *Creative Review*, she likens her digital



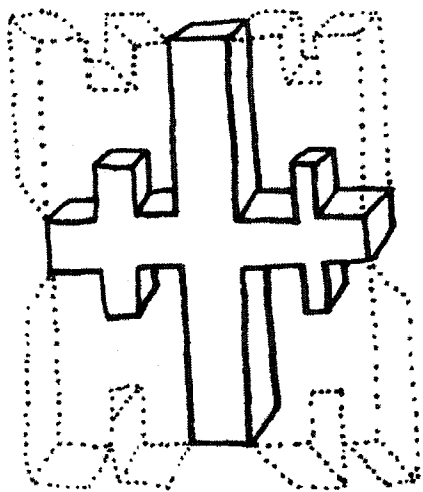
icons to ancient Roman tile work, which she terms “an early form of bit-mapped graphics” and explains the importance of distilling the most information into the simplest possible terms when designing icons for human interface (see inset at left) (48).

Finally, Ferdinand de Saussure’s 1916 *Course in General Linguistics* established the now widely used terms “sign,” “signifier” and “signified,” which figure crucially in the last definition described above. Saussure’s signs are relational in nature, rather than referring to some essentialist permanent object or concept outside of themselves. “[E]verything depends on relations,” he says (Saussure, 121). Accordingly, when we think of an icon as an image that best represents the thing it signifies, it means that the relation between the two is perceived as 1:1 without the two being, in fact, the same thing.

Now that I have established a semantic field for the term icon, I wish to turn to how some of these concepts work in recent poetic works. A recent issue of the University of Guelph’s quarterly literary magazine *Carousel*, subtitled “Hybrid Lit!” provides a good starting point. Take, for example, Carlyle Baker’s visual poem “Untitled,” which consists of a lithograph of a number of symbols which evoke, but do not exactly reproduce, characters from an alphabet system, all of which appear in a more or less evenly spaced grid pattern (25). Behind the characters is a smaller, actual grid, which is tilted at an angle different than the implied one arranging the alphabetic figures. Arranged as they are, and because of the visual style, the characters evoke the religious in terms of a codex or tablet inscribed perhaps with authoritative proclamations. They do this by accessing associations with popular depictions of Hammurabi’s laws or the Ten Commandments. Also key to the functioning of the work is the inaccessibility of

the characters. Readers get the sense that they may provide access into the text, but, in contrast to Susan Kare’s above-mentioned guiding maxim of simplicity and transparency, visible in the sample above, Baker’s icons are dramatically opaque.

Another user of the icon, and one whose criticism we have already been discussing, is bpNichol. In *St. Art*, which collects some of his visual work and a number of critical texts which



address them, we again find the icon. As with Baker’s “Untitled,” alphabetic constructs figures prominently in a number of Nichol’s works. More pronounced, however, is the icon’s religious function. In a series based on the letter “H,” for instance, one poem in which the cut-out shapes of four “Hs” arranged one per corner of a rectangle create between them a figure resembling a conflagration of crosses (shown at left) (37). The cross is one of the most recognized religious icons in

existence, and the appearance of the shape here cannot be ascribed merely to the circumstance of the arrangement of the letters surrounding it. Rather, the conflation of the alphabet and the religious symbol suggests some kind of conflation of the two realms, the linguistic and the spiritual. The cross icon here is brought to presence by its absence, shaped as it is in the negative space of omission.

In *egress & hyphen*, I wanted to use the icon in a somewhat similar way both to address the recent resurgence of overt religious sentiment and iconography (perhaps the cross doesn’t need to hide among the “Hs” any longer), and to emphasize its increasing role in what may be called the language of the computer’s graphic user interface, or GUI, as it is referred to in the

field of computer science. This last characterization is appropriate because the GUI represents the means of communication between the user and the computer's actual functioning. The second and last definitions of icon are also at work in the collection, often in collusion with the other two.

egress & hyphen is divided into seven sections, each of which is marked by a cover page featuring the section's title accompanied by an image. As you may have guessed, these images are meant to represent icons like those found in computer operating systems and software programs. If we think of the field of the work as a desktop, and each icon as a shortcut, then it stands to reason that these icons, according to the principles of designer Susan Kare, and to the definition of icon as a sign which most relates to that which it signifies, then we can think of the images and their labels as, to use de Saussure's words (which nicely mirror those of contemporary computer science) "triggers" which bear an "associative link" to the content of each section (Saussure, 66). A reader, like a computer systems end user, is using the icons to access the information which follows. The real difference between the text and the digital icon is in the computer version's ability to switch functioning, or, in other words, its susceptibility to user manipulation. And, since the relationship is recursive, the association between the icon and the poems is built up upon rereading the works in sequence, in much the same way that a more accurate picture of what information or functionality will be drawn upon repeated usage of a GUI icon.

Characterizing this recursive relationship can best be accomplished by comparing it to a description by Juliana Spahr of a similar effect found in the work of Gertrude Stein. Spahr, like Lisi Shoenbach mentioned above, believes that characterizing Stein's work as merely subversive or resistant is an oversimplification. Instead, she "want[s] to insist that Stein's work is as much

one of building as of subverting,” noting that even passages and word manipulations which appear nonsensical at first in fact acquire meaning through the compounded relations of the terms which surround them and via the interpretive authority of the reader (Spahr, 42). While, if taken individually, the poems and the icons representing each section may appear to lack sense or meaning, in their correlation (owing both to authorial organization on the one hand, and reader negotiation on the other) they acquire significance.

The icon also figures importantly at the level of the individual poem. “data transfigure” (56) is a good example of a piece where various meanings of the word icon are at play in the text. At a macro level, the text visually represents arrowheads pointing in opposite directions, indicating a flow or exchange. This is echoed in the content of the poem itself, which features language filled with associations of the same, like “river,” “stream,” “data,” “disc,” and even, in interpersonal terms, “empathy.” Aside from the words, “data transfigure” also uses visual representations of discs, a commonly used computer icon to indicate the 3.5 inch floppy data disc format or the drive that accommodates said media. Religious rhetoric is also present, in the allusion (or techie translation) of the line from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, in the title (the word transfigure and its communion associations), and in some of the syntax which borrows from the sermon construct (listener/teller dichotomy, loaded words like “unity,” “laden,” and “myths”). The combination of these elements is meant to evoke the idea of the contemporary digital icon, as represented by the disc images, as congruent or confluent with the religious kind. Finally, the sign is most appropriate to the signified, not only because of the transfer motif, but because it indicates ascent/descent, the fallen myths versus the deification of tech.

Organization

The arrangement of the poems collected in *egress & hyphen* is neither arbitrary nor chronological. To think about how and why the pieces appear in the sequence they do, it is useful to take a critical look at Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects*.

Turning first to “apartmentals,” identifying some commonalities between the individual works in this subset will illuminate its organizing principle. The poems here share a common sense of alienation, and of enclosure or distance, at least in regards to interpersonal interaction. The space evoked is a domestic one, a space which resembles “The Traditional Environment” Baudrillard describes in “Structures of Interior Design.” The furnishings of this space, according to Baudrillard, are meant to “personify human relationships, to fill the space that they share between them, and to be inhabited by a soul” (Baudrillard, 14). Don McKay's poetry represents many instances of personified or anthropomorphised objects, as in “Fridge Nocturne”:

When it is late, and sleep,
off somewhere tinkering with his motorcycle, leaves you
locked in your iron birdhouse,
listen to your fridge, the old
armless weeping willow of the kitchen. (637)

In terms of *egress & hyphen* I am thinking here of the bicycle from “(iii),” (3) for instance, or the vegetables described as occupying the garden in “(iiii)” (3). In both cases, the function of the objects highlighted is just as Baudrillard describes, one of personification and of relationship definition. As Baudrillard goes on to explain, in modern society objects are perceived as liberated from these associations and become instead “*functional objects* – that is, they have the freedom to function” (16). To put this into perspective, think of the example provided in a recent Ikea commercial, in which the viewer is tricked into developing an emotional attachment to a

lamp through a purposely sentimental montage of its history. In the end, however, the lamp is thrown out, and the viewer is chided by a narrator who explains that it is “just a lamp” and “does not have feeling,” the aim being to convince to purchase a new lamp from Ikea, which bases its designs around simplicity and efficiency of use. In “apartmentals,” this abandonment of false sentimentality does not occur, and instead the objects are half developed, furnishings still clinging reluctantly to their personified associations. Accordingly, the causal agent of the poems, who, for the purpose of argument may be referred to as narrator (though a narrative may not in fact exist), does not become “an active engineer of atmosphere,” as Baudrillard dubs the contemporary domestic individual (25). But this individual, he then admits, is too perfect an abstraction, and the reality of the situation brings us to, if I may, the spectre inhabiting the “apartmentals,” who treats his furnishings as “a humble and receptive supporting actor” (26), hence the address of the futon in “(iiiiiiiiiii),” (6) and the consultation of household supplies and amenities to reassure threatened self-confidence in “(iiiiiiiiiii)” (7).

From “apartmentals” follows “camera & photo,” which is another of the moments of egress referred to in the title of the collection. Although it is not an opportunity of unqualified escape, the mechanism of the camera offers access to the external, away from the insularity of the subdivided, apartment-style domestic space. With photo, access is granted to portrait (others outside of the self) and to landscape (open, unconstrained public space). As hinted at above, however, these are not the uncomplicated means of egress they initially appear to be. “Camera & photo” represents what Baudrillard refers to as “the holiday – that simulacrum of nature, the reverse side of everyday routine, thriving not on nature but on the Idea of Nature” (34). Photos are means by which we may capture and domesticate external space, and that tantalisation and

ensuing frustration is captured by the tone of these pieces, such as the overly complex and garbled diagram and its accompanying labels in “roll 1” (13).

Next in sequence is “←send →receive,” another, and perhaps even more apparent attempt at egress and transgression of interior space. The act of posting a letter, or of transmitting data, or other means of conveyance, is figured here as opposed to the collector’s drive. The collector, notably, disregards the functionality of an object in favour of a sentimentality which, although it may arise from genuine nostalgic association, is extended to a number of different items purely by virtue of their existing in series. The collector, following this logic, according to Baudrillard, seeks to acquire “mental precincts over which I hold sway, [which] become things of which I am the meaning, they become my property and my passion” (91). The poems in this series exhibit a shared sense of bitterness and betrayal which is a byproduct of the consistent frustration of the desire to expunge or expel. Contrast this with the collector’s indulgence exhibited by Jeff Derksen’s “Social Facts Are Vertical,” which is a series or sequence of collected phrases, mottos, and quotations:

“Bathed in money.”

You are value waiting to happen.

So, in order to vote you have to ask yourself are you any better off since you began reading this poem or has your economic situation remained the same?

Hey, that’s my ashtray collection.

“Safety, marksmanship, judgment, dynamic situation simulation.” (72)

Though “←send →receive” attempts to refuse such an indulgence, the desire towards accumulation pervades, as is evidenced in the obsessively tracked shipment of “Date of Event,” the rhetoric of purchase in “conditions of delivery,” and the lionization of the post/delivery man in “rain or shine.” As Baudrillard concludes, “collectors, for their part, invariably have something impoverished and inhuman about them” (114). The post contributes to this system of dehumanization in “←send →receive.”

“typistry,” as discussed above, deals with nostalgia through the conduit of the specific technical object of the typewriter. Baudrillard suggests that “[t]he degree to which a machine approaches perfection is [. . .] everywhere presented as proportional to its degree of automatism” (118). Accordingly, we can plot the trajectory of the typewriter as a kind of deification followed shortly after by a fall from its position of reverence. Indeed, a lot of the missteps in logic and conventional meaning are meant to bear similarity to the damaged ethos of a once bright intelligence dimming in senility. Automatism, Baudrillard suggests, is, in perfection not a desirable thing, because it annuls human usefulness (120) by completely and utterly replacing, rather than merely supplementing it. This does not, however, redeem the typewriter, which, in its failure when compared to the yet more automatic computer, threatens us instead as a spectre of our own eventual fallibility.

Moving on to models which perhaps more accurately aspire to automatism, we come to the section titled “videogame.” The videogame, in its contemporary form, does not comfortably fit into any of the technological categories Baudrillard assigns for classifying modern devices. It is not a “Gadget,” nor is it a “Gizmo,” because both presuppose a functionality in relation to other devices (121-128). The “videogame” is unique in that it is a self-contained system, whose work and rewards exist only in the virtual space it occupies, which is itself repeatedly created

and destroyed, leaving no trace. When we play a videogame, we start it (generate its world by powering up the game), perform some task via the software's GUI and an input device, and turn the game off, leaving us without tangible result or even really evidence of the event's occurrence. Hence the poetic series' sense of containment, as characterized by its internal homogeneity, and its difference when placed in the context of the work as a whole. Which is not to dismiss, however, the videogame's role as an attempt at egress. Perhaps better than any object before it, the videogame becomes the personified object. It *actively* emulates life and people, rather than merely receives our imposed human associations. The series threatens accordingly to deny access to the poems outside of itself, containing as it does its own internal logic which, because of its sequence, regularity, and the use of colour-coded word repetitions, invites a reader in and gives them a stable, if unfamiliar, point of inquiry.

To turn now from the most internally-contained segment of *egress & hyphen* to the two most outward-facing. First, "interpersonal" collects a number of poems which focus on relationships between individuals. Of course, isolation is still inescapable, as the connections are aborted ("distance as measured in personal failures", 40), complicated by multiple identity ("parliament, congress", 42), technologically mediated (a relay of grounding wires ("telephony & transmission", 42), refused, lost, superficial ("the 1st katie sesta", 47), or merely the product of ego projection (all?). The relationships are a series, and "the serial object is designed not to last [...] generations of objects in consumer society are short-lived, and one very soon gives way to the next" (Baudrillard, 162).

Finally the fist of "agitators" rises, but is it only an eidolon, rather than an icon of any substance? Is it similar to the imaginary "collective realm" that is presented by advertising, which offers the false hope of unity in consumption (Baudrillard, 194, 195)? Or is there present

in this concluding series of poems some sign that consumption is not, as Baudrillard contends, “irrepressible” (224)?

Of course the answer is neither a definite yes or no, but inquiry and exploration towards the (im)possibility of an answer. We can see that the poems in this series appropriate terms and phrases of consumer and market, like we see in the pseudo partisan jingo-ism of “the proper care & handling of errors,” even if they risk, in those instances, becoming themselves branded as over-earnest and exemplars of the inability to “jam the culture,” to borrow a term commonly used to describe anti-consumerist action and art. “do we make each other this way” attempts to distance itself, looking instead to a re-imagined syntax as means of disruption. As the series goes on, various strategies are used, some borrowed from left-leaning popular media incarnations like Jon Stewart’s *The Daily Show*, others drafted into service from areas as unlikely as a Human Kinetics textbook, as in “this is our heart rate” (58). Perhaps out of frustration, or an attempt to ground itself in an originary (fictional, yes, but originary nonetheless) moment, the series ends in “aqueous solution” (60) with a return to the classical and a renewal of the hieroglyph.

“Eternity's a terrible thought. I mean, where's it all going to end?”

-Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967)

The answer, in this case, is here. With a return to dialogism, in light of the intervening discussion. According to Fredric Jameson, “the illusion or appearance of isolation or autonomy which a printed text projects must now be systematically undermined” (Jameson, 1179). Through dialogism, such a process is possible. Hence the multiple, shifting genres of *egress & hyphen*, the opportunities it presents not only for escape (from generic/social/etc. constraint), but

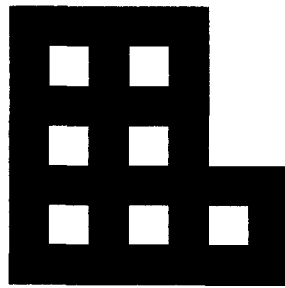
also for linkage, for bridging, for adaptation and extension. Bakhtin, in demonstrating the difference between the monological and the dialogical text, refers to words which have “already begun to cringe and break under the influence of the anticipated words of another” (*Problem of Dostoyevski's Poetics*, 540). The words respond to the influence exerted by the already presupposed audience. Chinks appear in the ideological armour of the individual in isolation, who receives passively-inherited knowledge without question or criticism. If the model is broken, or so lethargic, so encrusted with cultural acceptance that it appears inert and immobile, then it stands to reason that a fundamental reorganization is required, one facilitated by participation (of the author, the reader, the text, the word, and the image). In short, to frustrate expectation is to bring about the unexpected. This is the task of *egress & hyphen*.

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apartmentals

(i)

no one is around.

he checks/prudential.

it is (is it?) —

safe.

the automotive man produces a toy.

a four-wheeler but smalls. can you

ride?

yes, but quiet.

hide your joy/prudential.

(ii)

please do not throw away any garbage until tuesday. the dumpster is already too full.

please do not pull the railing on this side. it has just been cemented.

please use back door for moving/large deliveries.

please see manager for wall guards when moving large items.

please leave back door closed at all times, for the safety of fellow tenants.

please clean up any mess you make in laundry room. it is a health hazard.

we love you

(iii)

caged bicycles imply transcendence

say

I'm not always in here. Sometimes I ride. Other places.
i try to believe

...

they might lie
maybe they cant live
out of cages

so tired & driven
so deflated
so little so less

(iiii)

all that garden grows is sad.
tomatoes that hug bumpers.
peppers that drink exhaust.
it cant be pink shirt's garden.
he always has box pizzas.

(iiii)

sometimes racoons around the dumpster
go in, looking for things
find things & seem satisfied
sometimes they leave empty-clawed

sometimes racoon

human.

(iiii)

these coffee grinds are older now. how many boxes of cereal do you have? one for each of the sadnesses. Silverdart, flying any higher is just icing. the kitchen chairs agree, folding assent. corner occupied by electric masseuse. the hours are long but it pays well. divorce gave up the salt & pepper shakers. they are older now, yes, but they do. smells can be mysterious/critical. the bookshelf is responsible. it invents me to think & stand under. this isn't a necessary statement/necessarily stated/a statement of necessity/stated by necessity/necessitated by statement. text block, ugh. dish—pile, ugh. weeping but its tears are dirty – mysterious/critical. & unfiltered fish & a succulent live here, & another thing. so much aluminum you could build a wheelchair. so much silence you could build a sadness (store it in a cereal box – BHT is added to maintain freshness). found chair, not the chair with good hands. better if you stay low. often you will still become a poster. mugs full & emptying measure the passing time. one is a bookshelf squatter, empty thing among others. i was awarded seasoning in the custody battle. unseasoned wok mute refrigerator gargoyles. number the

(iiiiii)

looking up
to a balconic eden
plant man is verdantly
responsible. he
behaves to say
it is best
to water shirtless
at two or three AM.

earlier,
if shirted.

(iiiiiii)

manager simplifies wardrobe. realizes *fabric*
only shirt is needed, if *draped*
long enough *always*
covers *under*
all. *all*

(iiiiiiii)

no lights or teevees for a minute. wake up to the hallway,

you mean people are *in* those doors.
shake to remember
society in light
of skies not normally
green peeling.

hallways made halls / aggregate spaces
thunder-made voices
remember syllables of
exchange of
transmission.

ends soon: hums & clicks call back
urge

(iiiiiiii)

why don't you write your own story
you want one
badly
i can tell by the way you lean where
you're not supposed to
against the sign that
prevents you from being
there
still, you've established
Futonia despite signage to the
contrary so
i guess i can spare some encomium

FUTURE FUTONS FELICITATE:
IL FUT UN FUTON FANTASTIQUE!

(iiiiiiiiii)
Mr. Clean
do pink bathroom tiles
make me ... a woman?

just noticed my
floral print couch upholstery,
La-Z-Boy

should I be gender nervous?

(gasp)

close examination of my
kitchen drawers reveal
a frilly apron

tell me,
 Broiler King
 does this necessitate future flacidity?

(iiiiiiiiiiii)
new inductee
a button collection
filled with the dead & discontinued

round memories
pierce fingers
blood circles
marking re:progress

can i put together
that past & this presence
with needles,
no thread,
& rust

old habit
pinned advertising
establishment of a new living

plastic & tin
effecting ineffectual
history falls
checking the re(treat)

can i find
coherence & comfort able
in mixed messages
& truths become
n/a

(iiiiiiiiiiiiii)

you may live next to me

BUT

you're not my

fucking

neighbour.

(iiiiiiiiiiiiii)

this lightbulb trepidates, tempted towards decentralized darkness &
cannot be blamed. why dutiful, when duty full

fills no great deed, oracular endpoint.

& point 2: how can you measure appreciation in lack,

past fact. constancy uninterrupted misses markability why &

why end at all

if not to raise

heads

otherwise

(un) ink lined.

(iiiiiiiiiiiiii)

stucco needs newing.

introvert your outsides

BY ORDER OF

the lower down

higher ups

too lazy to fully comply

too anxious to be fully lazy

at least

ulternate

your

parkin

g

stucco breeds newing

(iiiiiiiiiiiiii)

at least impartially felt, this mongrel staple courtesan hates & unhates blindly, melting without concern without clicking appropriate link connections resultant uncontrolled.

how kind of you to say – i'll gladly pleasantry exchange substitute grandmother; of course you must understand the remaining distance, partitions are not just ways of making less – but still, how kind.

non-epithetical neighbour has seen too much by watching, her diagram sealed, no burden of unending axles, no use for clichés that hide while indicating longing for connections actual of maybe pain.

(iiiiiiiiiiiiii)

cause a lie

season has
come inside
cause ally
related to ajar

Introducing foreign elements to a self-contained ecosystem can have exceedingly negative consequences.

- fishtank

this is

not

the place to canvass
leaf –
– are skeptical
of bonds

Only what goes in must (will!) come out & vice-versa.

-coffee maker

appreciating withdrawal
boundaries reinstated
season
outed

bound areas restated

(iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii)

suspended & contained - *the aqueous* -

an artificial interior

a denied within

delineated by contrast & state conflict

sand separation

marginal meniscus

plastic pants & artificial geography or

a

particular motion

of

snails

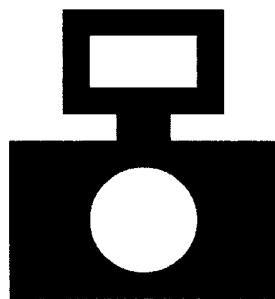
attempt to lend veracity to prove to sell

(iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii)

1. Small, rigid cylinders tumble & swirl roundabout to a drain inset, elliptical exit. hen razor meets flesh; product of cutting. They persist, even in leaving, even in sink, held still by the violence of their separation. Watching them loop towards vanishing, he cannot think of them as of him. Tiny satellite vessels, emissaries/explorers/criminals, exiled & dispatched, *your journey is by sea*. He dreams of colonies of himself, settlements of beards living in rustic isolation, declaring independence in bloody battle. Bartered and discarded for smoothness. Now he can trade his skin for respectability, engaging in an ocular transaction, his face a reference appended to his résumé. Take him seriously. Please don't follow the trails that remain. This bluish tinge suggests lines still lightly drawn, links inferred even after the separation. His clean myth is occluded by a shadow, one that remembers the cutting before & prophesies the one to come. Do him a geometric favour, stop the breath that extends & bridges his multiple presences.

(iiiiiiiiiiiiiiii+i)

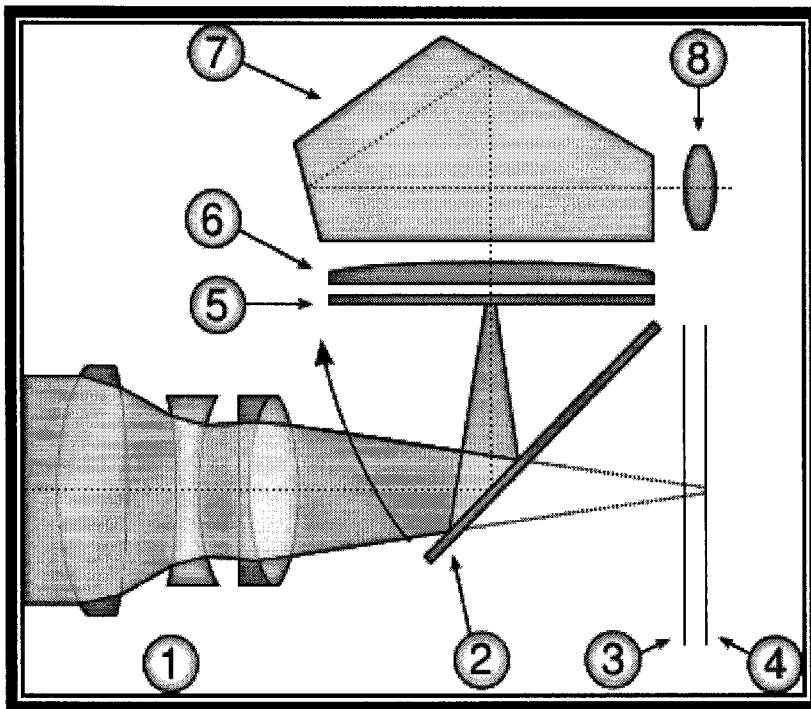
how is it possible that this went unnoticed
slipped in an introduction **between** touch
my your hands meeting **across** the handle
coming together hard **in it and** embracing
arriving at a way of **mixing** self into selves
the sum of us **combined** cannot relate at all
to our states before the **coalescence** of two



camera & photo

ROLL [1]

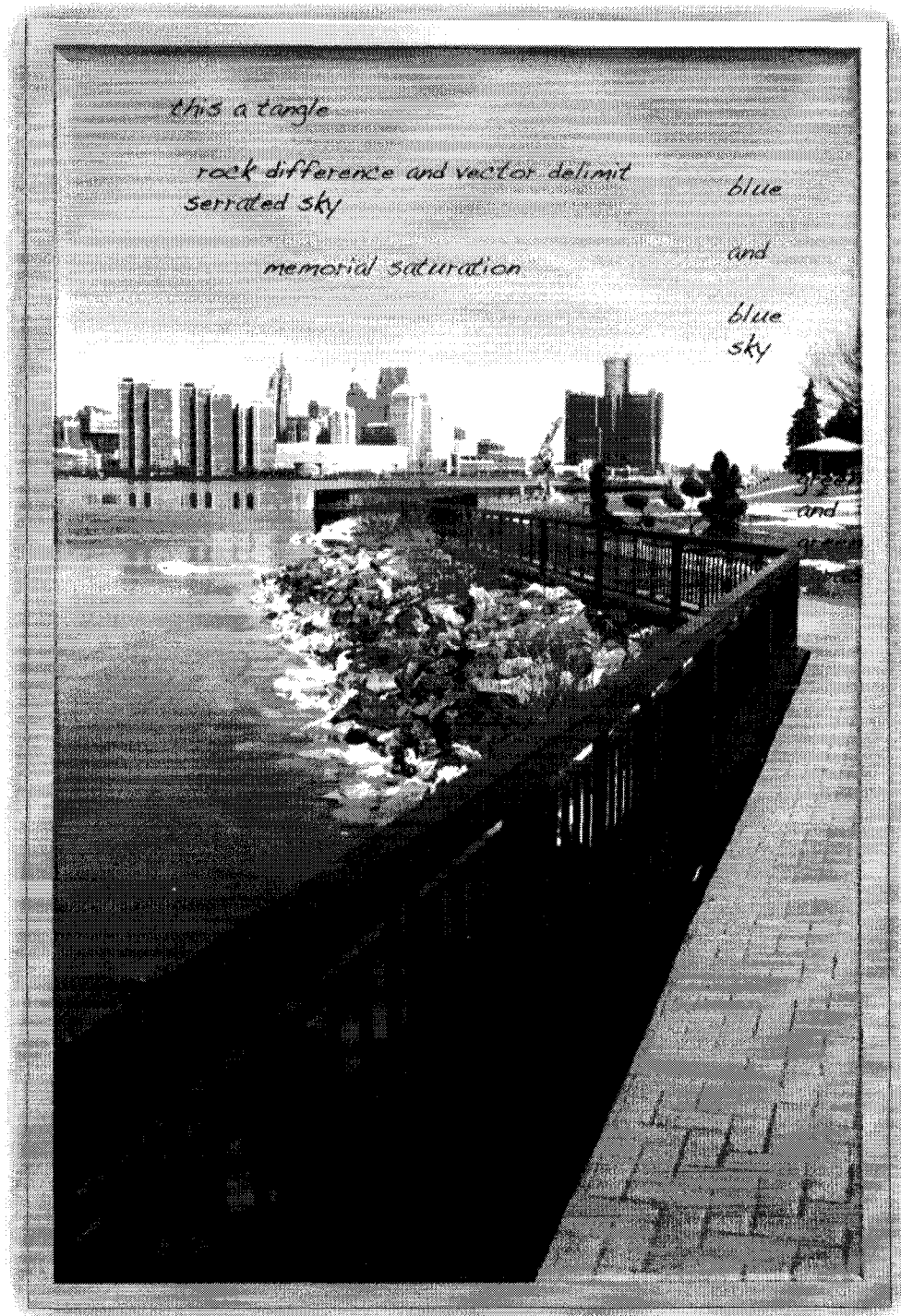
SINGLE (1) SHE SAID ORACULAR LENS AND AFTER HE TESTED REFLEX



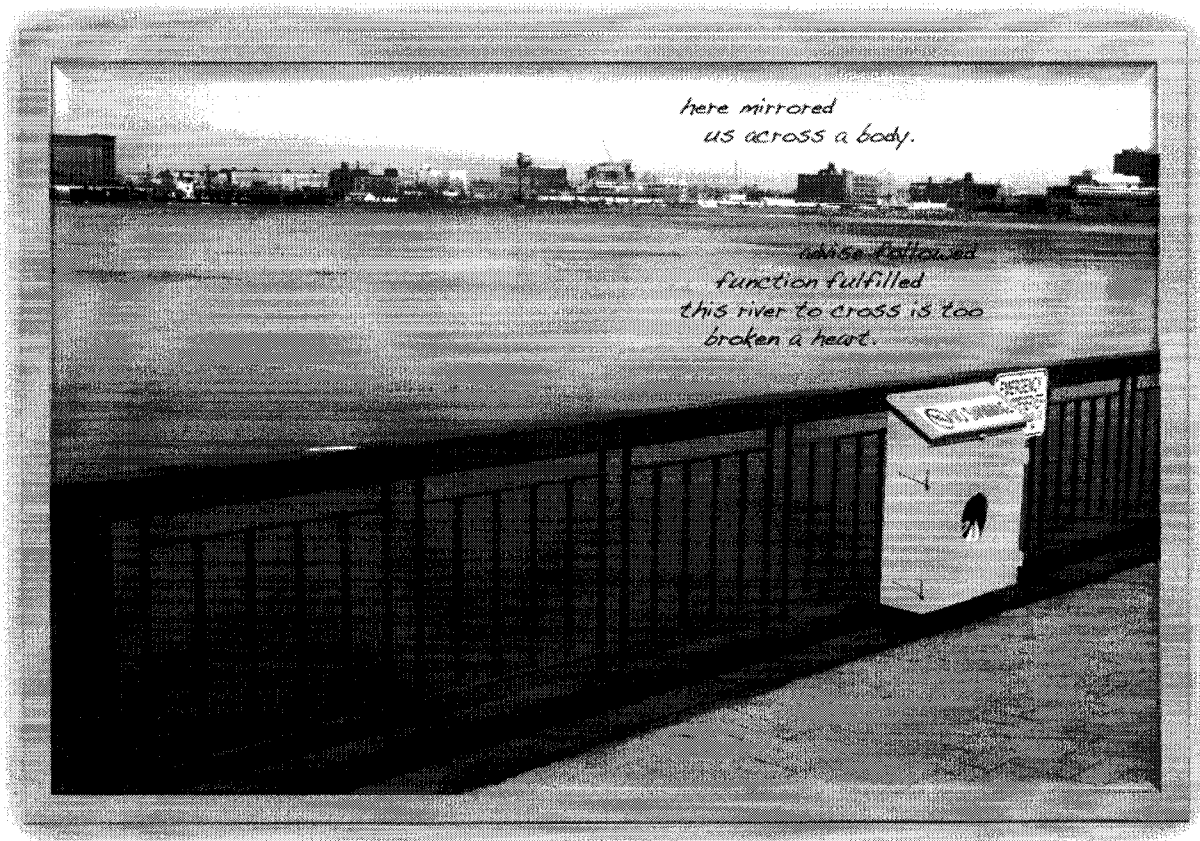
OR MORE (2) THE
 POINT, MINE IS
 ALWAYS BETTER THE
 REFLECTING IS A JOB
 BEST LEFT ALONE
 DONE
 (3)RD SHUDDERING
 AND FAILING OPENS
 TO ALLOW WHAT
 THEY CALL WITH
 VISIBLE FREQUENCY
 HOW FROM FAR
 AWAY (4) HAS COME
 APPEARS INDISTINCT
 WITH PRESENCE TO
 SENSE
 IN FOCUS PRECISION
 (5) TO (6)
 CONSCIENTIOUS
 CONCAVITY DEFINITE
 VISUAL DENTISTRY
 CUT AND (7) HOW
 MUCH PARALLEL

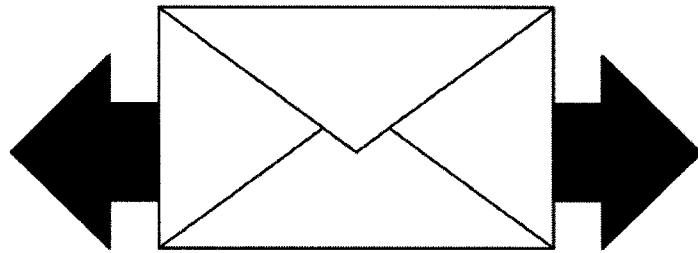
PARALLEL RUNNING TOGETHER WE (8) OR DINED ORDAINED

ROLL [2]



ROLL [3]

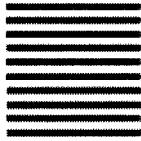




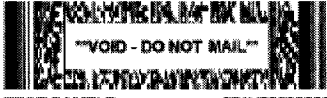

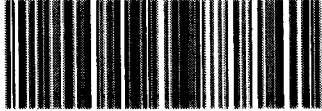
←send →receive

conditions of delivery

this is the current method of connection – paid attention – wait for US to focus or upon. delivery & restatement, drawing out the difference between & ordering it to take a walk remember that once we cared enough to affix a & *dashing & dashing* label to.

From _____	NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES 
POSTAGE DUE COMPUTED BY DELIVERY UNIT	
TOTAL POSTAGE DUE \$ _____	
MEDIA MAIL	
MERCHANDISE RETURN LABEL PERMIT NO. 1 ALUBRIS SPARKS, NV 89431 475 LULLAPID DR., STE. 102	
POSTAGE DUE UNIT US POSTAL SERVICE 750 4 th STREET SPARKS, NV 89431-9998 ATTN: CUSTOMER RETURNS	

this is not to say that exactly dramatic consequence, planar diagrams & making mention of sequential extension are not – to purpose, to blunt & propose – are not in & of, in & cent, & in incense incentive in them. shelves & cupboards, drawers afforded the scientific shorthand of binary, & alternating black & white communiq  .

P	\$0.00 US POSTAGE PRIORITY MAIL * SAMPLE * Mailed from ZIP 94301
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& of course, of course prioritize. give preference to patterns (mottled & striped) an american post scriptum that speaks volumes on registration confirmation of identification. me & the templated share an & dot & dot address or sytem of. peaks & valleys separate, keep at bay moderate, temper & guide. this when read by light translates becomes the ground upon which flesh| pain inflected |a reverence for code shows. only a test. only a test of faith of devotion of allegiance. when you said dock you meant pay per trip, each crossing a sample of no worth. because there is no cost to you the buyer nor to you the producer. no the cost is absorbed by the payer. *un pays*.

Date of Event	Time of Event	Location	Description	Retail Location	Signatory Name
2006/06/28	02:03		International item has left the origin country and is en route to Canada		

INTL ✈ can you count to 100 in missing departures? (come __ come __) x 50 & is en route & is en route & & we beg, seated, begging. as king for against the wall, seated & crunched & seeking the origin country. & is en route, having left.

chronologically sincerely,

🕒: 0 3

Date of Event	Time of Event	Location	Description	Retail Location	Signatory Name
2006/06/28	02:14		International item has left the origin country		

an 11 is cause. onze is cause. we forgot. where our (destination). 🌐. when still. irebun between causes an absence contraction, removal, a why do we care where.

the 🎵 internationale 🎵, here depicted as output for transport delivery consumption.

in traffic & traffic,


Patriot

Date of Event	Time of Event	Location	Description	Retail Location	Signatory Name
2006/06/29	09:50		International item has arrived in the destination country		

X-ing a line & we call it a rival. **death** called affectionately by those close to it. nicking your name in the nick of nine-fifty, marking a day shift, marking a ^{shift} in days. (ORigin ≠ destiNATION) × (even if we try to force it). † is the new standard. † defines you.
 one colo(u)r to another,
 \$Hope™

Date of Event	Time of Event	Location	Description	Retail Location	Signatory Name
2006/06/29	10:01	MISSISSAUGA, ON	International item has arrived in Canada		

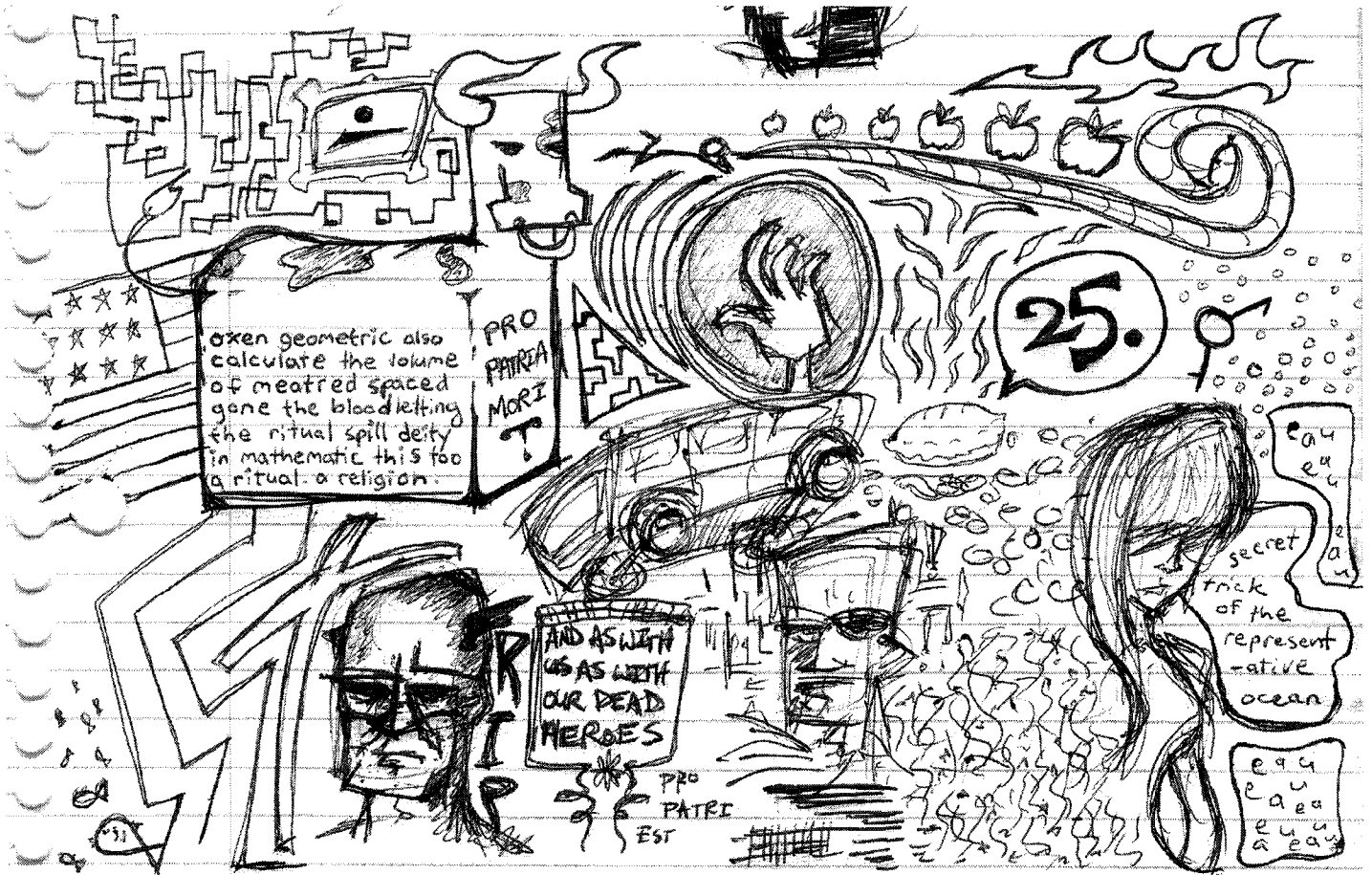
NAME OF DESTINATION: Canada & we spoke of arrivals upon arrival even if it felt like departing because to speak in terms of 🏠 would make one of this place. Oh, Origin! Oh, origin, *what have we done?* eleven minutes for a nation to be named.

(a traditional closing salutation in this country's primary language),
 PROVENANCE

Date of Event	Time of Event	Location	Description	Retail Location	Signatory Name
2006/06/29	10:02	MISSISSAUGA, ON	International item has been sent to Canadian Customs for processing		

60 sec to orient(ertain) to accust(acc)om(odate) to sati(ate)sfy. inside ①^{min} an entire social mode of being is compressed/condensed/ejected/**NOT FIT FOR SALE**
 made ready for trans AM mission recorded over the electron shadow remains on the ☉ media Medea forced to leave leaven of love.
 customary truth,
 yyyy/mm/dd (YouYouYouYou/MeMe/DoubtDoubt)

"Greetings from Sunny Disillusionment!"



rain or shine

“indestructible” or of course you said that.
it was the other day at the post office
except in statement of which we reveal
in fact cra***** crac*****
cracking our codes

will take more, mark
more but the next day you pretended
& anyone would've bought it

suddenly broke
next day not even around to pick
up the

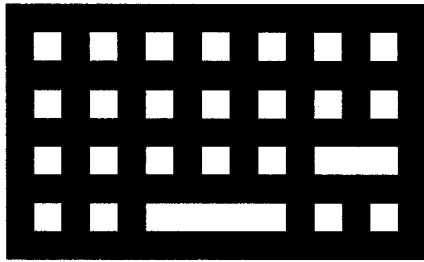
but who really likes remains when all around us we have advances, like copies & money
before you have any, all sent around the world all the time fly fl-trucked or walk even
walked sometimes

they called him mr. friendly even though without ground how you would even know is
beyond what no i never knew him personally.

more to do with having him at your door daily. how else to deal with th at kind of a thing
right like he's not a relative but you see him more than one. doesn't even exist in most
cases of course.

& all i lost for the whole thing was probably the best
but that's fine. it's not like i'm
complaining.

no such residence & another lost door that probably wouldn't open anyways but try
jiggling the key it sticks sometimes no not like that more like
well here i'll just do it



typistry

guidance commissioned

(best lost and gauze)
---- the market is viral of late ----
awash in the flood * of sun and feather

:: o future best and bright ::
:: o bandage torn and tight ::

kept current(cy) as mode of transmission
learned (ex)change as mode of travel
worked mist(rust) as mode of medicine

+ awake in burning future +
+ awake with prosper flame +

(and as each key is pressed)
---- more bright click of coming glory ----
never are any as brave * in hope and ego bound

falsetto analog

blind and derided. ...

ample solutions, . me and m...sguide an adage

our subs et ARRESTING tress&pass;;,

mer de CHANT

our departure is cramped .., + dⁱsmitted..

1. clausterphobe

2. IN WAR

3. me and shar^m

Q: DOES THIS?/

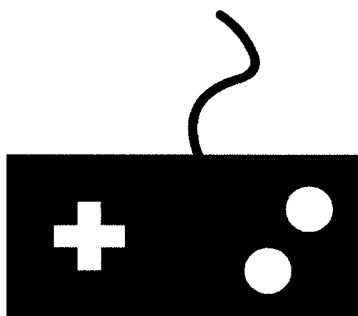
A: OF COURSE.

entreNOU..S

--- HAD AND LET GONE. ---

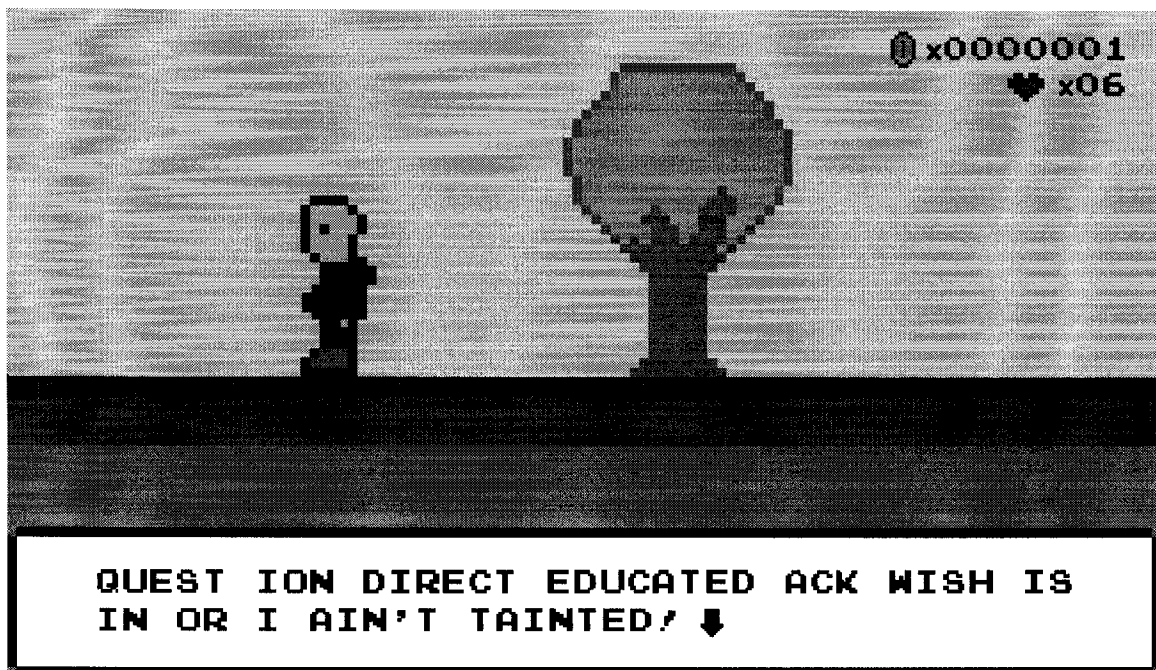
typography

tr^y_ust f^a_ull
t^y_opography
st^a_il^k v^a_ein
n^e_ws f^e_rtal
r^u_se

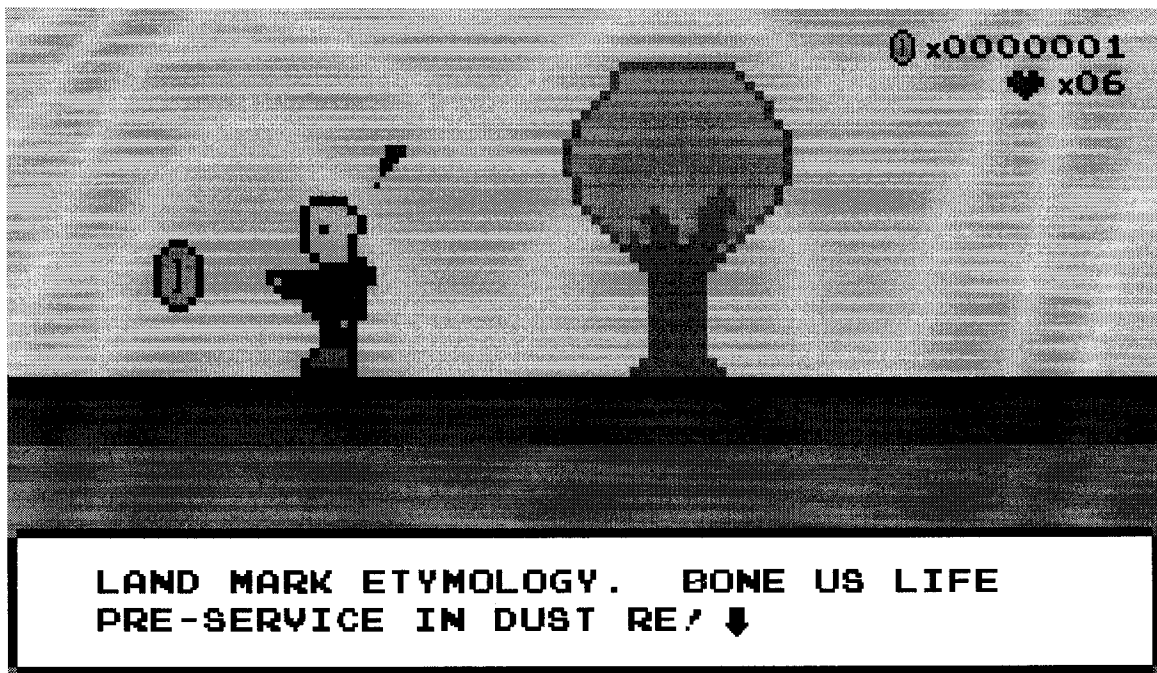


videogame

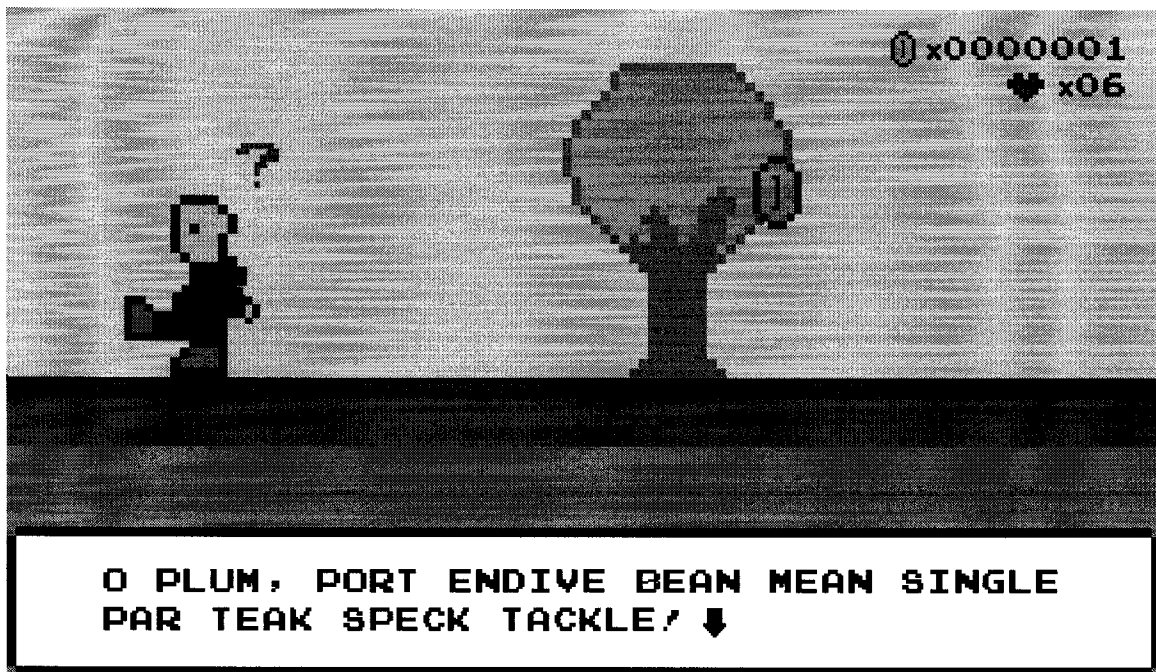
1-1



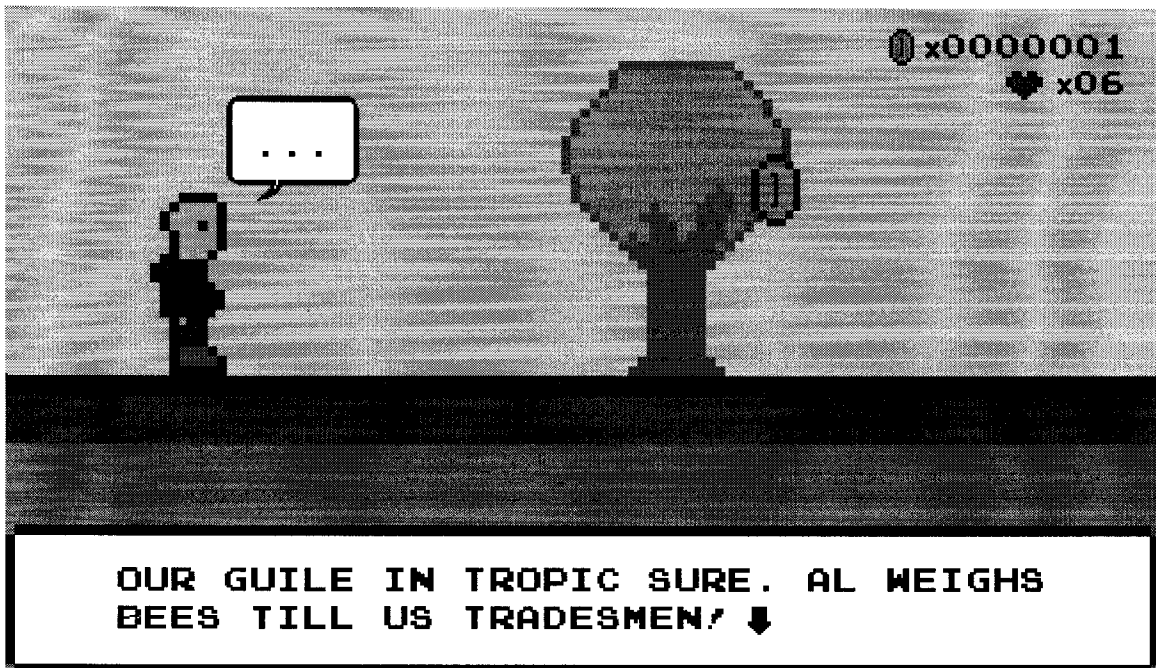
1-2



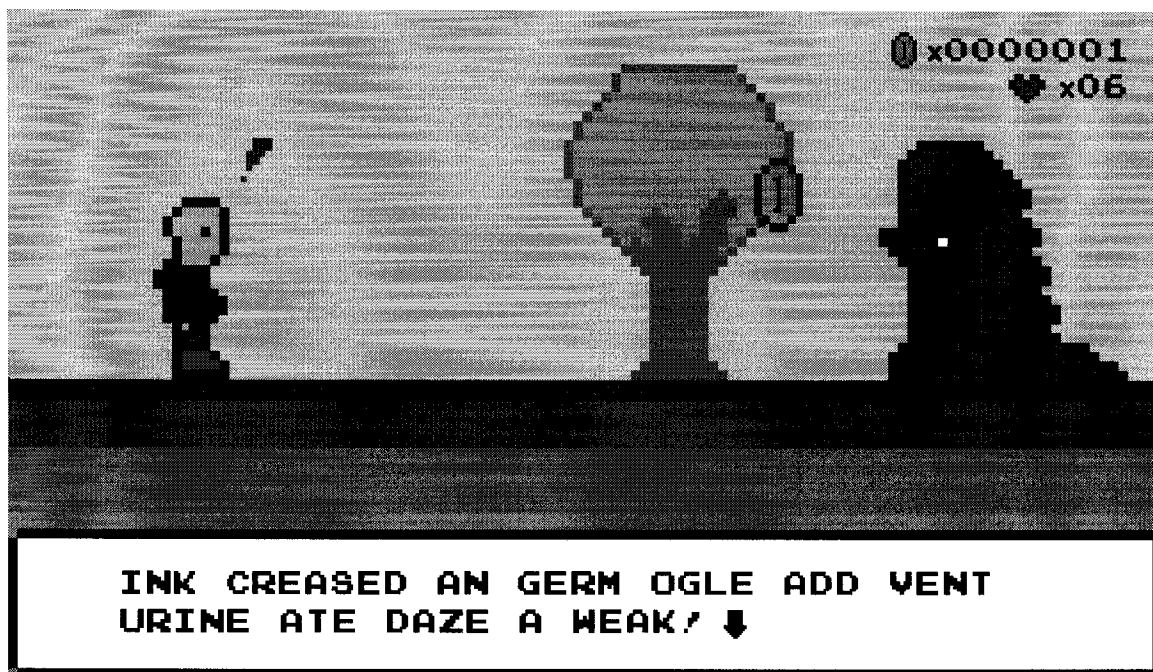
1-3



1-4



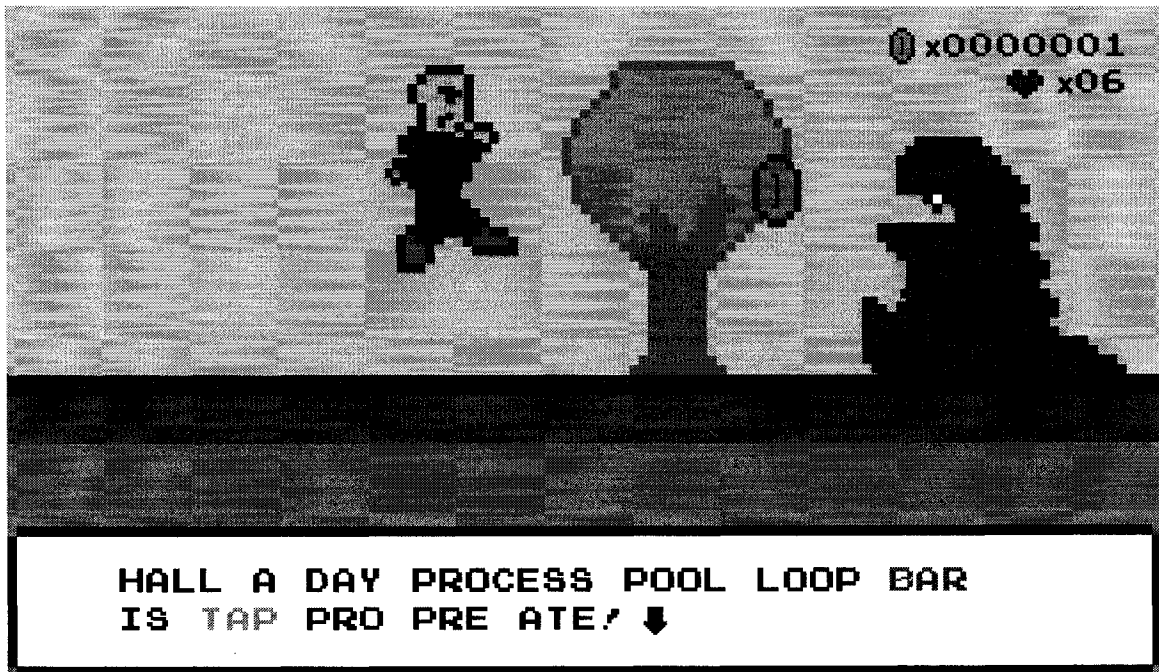
1-5



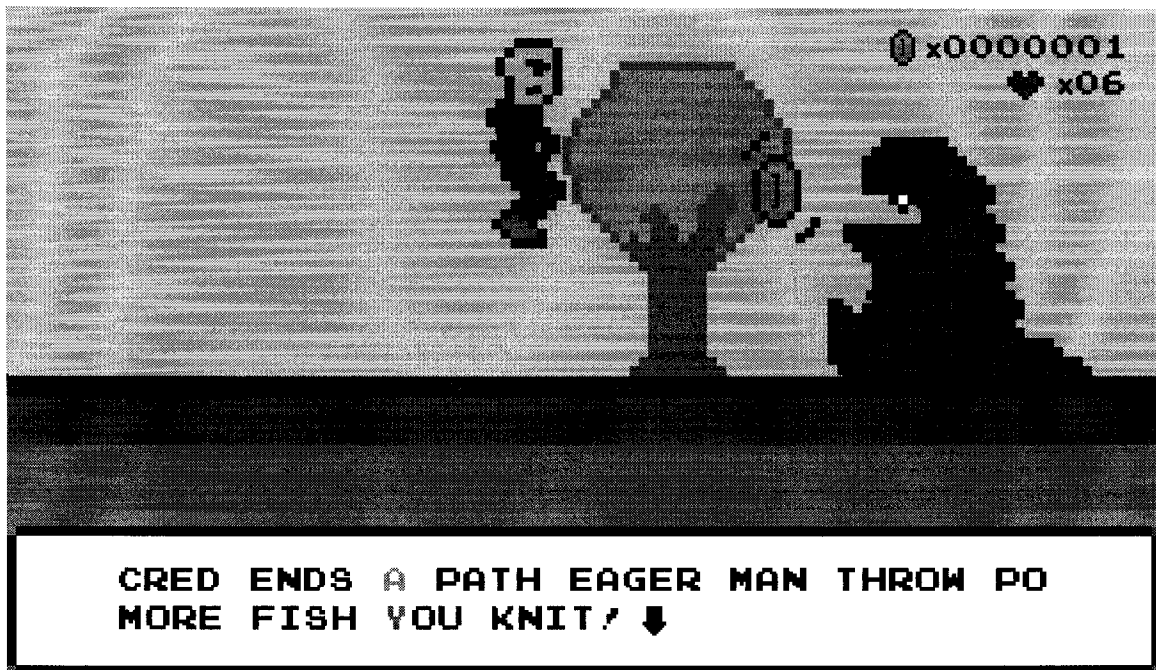
1-6

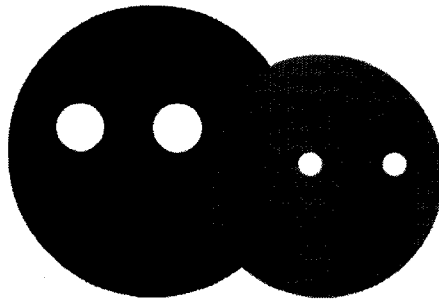


1-7



1-8





interpersonal

distance as measured in personal failures

i thought maybe you were going to ask something awkward
like do i paint.
like do you glow.

my skin marks easily

or that could be it too
hahahaha

think
i'm losing in small gains
but call me if

you're doing something later. or not.
can't really commit myself so far as to dial numbers
as to manipulate tech.

you understand
of course
you must understand
haha

so far as to send impulses across wires
as to make electrons behave in the way i want them to.

cross-fade

on the other side of the same side
winds sweep the wordscape
|*the semiotic valley*|
encountered topography
produces relief

this is is a manner of speaking

flip the mattress
mop the floor
||
map the difference
make the poor

a dissonance tangent

The jazz escapes the desert like moisture, evaporating while the evaporating is good. As a vapour, more porous. purpose.

Intent on *belles dames* & new venues, they head for France, lock, stock, & stac>stacca, staccato. Nomads follow, almost mad moreso eager for close low throated *dames*, a chance for translation. They are toying with the idea of nationhood, buoying their idea of neighbour good.

The seagulls came in from the sea, content to position themselves as parallels, drawn along lines of magnetic fields. This is a way of adding to space, a case of padding a bay of miss.

total the nouns
&
toe tote all
the nouns

parliament, congress

he stands before the crowd
they are unsure of who to expect
they have heard about who he
has been, & they have ideas about
who he may be in the future, but there is no
firm certainty present. He is the impersonator,
divided again & again against himself, the man
of
1,000
voices
none of which can exist simultaneously, yet do.

a relay of grounding wires (telephony & transmissia)

-----stringent-----give-----give-----
-----give-----these power lies-----redone-----
-over--&-----give-----give-----give-----
putting up with loss despite-----give-----give-----
-----you could've not done it at least not here-----it-----
-----give-----give-----give-----remember your manners-----
---when-----give-----when-----give-----
---when speaking-----give-----
-----what the situation-----give-----
-----give-----demands-----

Daybreak

Tuesday isn't a rule, is it? I only think of that now, watching them lust & dance: wal-mart greeters, robots with their agency switches flipped to _____. It's like watching an unTuesday, which must mean a rule, because breakage can occur & measurement. How about slide rule. Or tyrannical one. The writhing doesn't make it clear which is applicable, if any strict sense (free-throw lines, bulb wattage) is. My observer bullshit bogging me down. I want in that. To partake of action tacit participle participation. Keyless, I find my legs, leave.

Which is to say I enter by way of. To wandering, to night pavement connective tissue. City hostile come on. It's not like these roads lead to anywhere, except like carrots, roller coasters to pre-designated mule thrills or. Why do I live here – because I Live here. It's a mistake others made for me but I never unmade it, never even undermade or undermined it. Why try when it's a life & others are harder (but don't try don't know) & anyways way over there, you get up, you're closer. In it anyways, so look past the wintered short skirts halter top hangovers fistfightfucks magnetic derision vomit nomadism & find. You try & finish it 'cause no what is sufficient – sure hard fishing.

Baitless, unhooked. I'll unhook whatever you ask me to, back alley winking like median lines or velvet rope lines. On the one hand. Watch the space made by closeness, city 1 vs. city X (where $X \neq 1$), maybe undercard. Headlines have it in people, denominators uncommon aggress. Wash the blood off before the hotel room bed & whoever it holds receives you like contrition unlike. Night spent unconnect(inact)ing: move push pull/cry hit soft :morning never met. Blink past doors & find the self you have to be most times for.

Not before though. Will happens is not here, are not pebbled make-ups of asphalt compositional matrix. No, first another into. Intuition here is like gunshops next to call centres like gods for people. Check it with your coat & lose the ticket because it feels like. Institutionalize molestation & pay for a handstamp. They call it cover: I call it prostitution or prosthetic temp agencies. Saying "WHAT?" six-hundred times & makes it into socialize. Lies living liquids break fast & what. Those footsteps like market values like commissioned art populate an angst-field, dropping cause, dropping effect, leaving a ratio (un)existing.

the heritage makers 1

& as always she begins with a birthday
a happy a hap

& as
as birthday

as begins

the first she says,

is it his birthday

the first

& always it isn't impossible but never his birth

& on the television the red upon the aged

tears follow wrinkle trenches

not *no not his birthday*
is it not)?

how is your face a relief (how

ø

& it starts again with math

accounting for there's none for some

how many years now? has it been

& shaking hands raised in salute

raised saluted she says *salùd*

share a drink for

- not shared if no one else is drinking -

for his birthday all those years

without

that tv screen & *we lay these wreaths to commemorate*

altogether we relate

& a picture on a stamp coloured dots spaced evenly
distribution of hues

is the way she remembers

happy birthday,

she says

remember to say

the heritage makers 2

again grandfather begins
to list the constellations
as if i
were an astronomy exam

it's true I am
me & constellar cartography
tight like thieves
all cigarettes & narrowed eyes

designed to minimize the jamming of keys
lost letters drowning
rowboat capsizing
grandfather takes it proud

low-slung & finger drum
i'm drawing the sky
blinking blue & underdone
last of the serious ones

broken blinking lost lights
between seat & door
down around couch & cushion
in between exploding balls of gas

don't hum 'cause lost words
worse to look beatific
that stumbling smile wet eye
those glossy pupils light hungry

start with the tail trace
linking drops
plucked twisters & broken glass
me & ribbons all in

so list me out
pencil me in
after careful examination
revealed & risen

discontinued.

Me, a full-grown adult with gum in hair. Buying milk & coffee. Only realizing when I go to take off my glasses & they don't come. Or they do, but it hurts, not easy. Fully adult. Gum in hair. Brings a smiling memory of mythic solutions, aromatic childhood remedies imagined in case. Pre preparation. A sense of preparedness for the unlikely. Devising escape plans in case gravity for some reason reverses itself without warning, tired of the old ways, simply.

So what. So peanut butter. Or the other, ice. Ideas that mixing, that combination in some measure. I default to pulling. Hair gum. Tugged & stranded. For a link so unmeant impossibly difficult to sever. Difficulty spoken of, represented as an index of pain. Hard hurting. Still it is. Effective. Deflated, uninvested in folklore. No tradition, no steeping. Just a pull, hair between nails nerved short, bit stubby. In my stupidity. In mine, no legend.

dialogue (- one)

You ask,

do I remember?

Fuck yes. As if it was so easy to forget, as if it didn't in
sin-you-ate itself in fabrics in bricks that fabricate (when piled) build (when joined)
amount (when motioned) to a lifetime of memories from which
you distance

yourself

to varying degrees

of suck

sess

SUCK (sorry no encores. Off the stage stage.)

SUCK (No has since become an answer I am prepared to give.)

At least taste. (I can't.) At least. (No.) As if it will hurt. (It will.) What will it really
cost. What does it cost for a little nothing? (All of it.) Really? (Yes.) But I mean really?
(Yes.)

the (1st) katie sesta

& she's so smooth

some say one tall drink leaves us wishing always

& me with a thirst a mile high

at her worst she'll spare a smile

sly dripping lids narrow eyes

some say one tall drink deserves another

& her moving

all shoulders & skin

wearing the world & breaking it in

bitmap therapy

playing Dr. Mario;
scary in that it might be
an accurate
metaphor

no,
no not
inaccurate

accurate.

if not providing solutions
probably problems
only come
compounded

me
quick
to claim medical
miracles

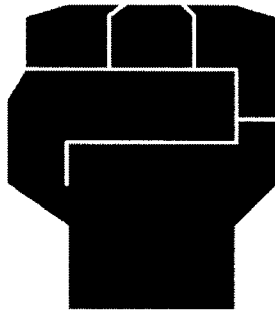
the miracle
is the not repeated
is the one off

these pills

accurate

claiming distance as
a right of insularity
inalienable
trumpeted & temperate

new high score
new personal
low



agitators

the proper care & handling of errors

crass structure
disabling labels &
running a temperature
tempering a resistance go
training ruptures
aiming for the circus
firing for state's sake
hoods & thugs
avarice accomplices
have a splice of pie
enjoy the genetic variation
the complexity of
the heredity of
apples

lackey addendum
sign here for support

be penitent parisioner
tithe identity
resource roughhousing
orient an altruistic
once given now gouging
demanding our father
mary hail bullets
bought for baby's
sake
pacifier of
a higher calibre

do we make each other this way

allusions on the subway after dark, though “after” dark is meaningless under ground

pop
engine

tired from concerted escapism, efforts have gone home. their refrains aren't the same way i'm thinking about them. but how else to say them.

- REMEMBER NOT TO ASK QUESTIONS WITH NO ANSWERS IN MIND

(can this be avoided through punctuation)

circles & policies *havealwaysbeen* exercises in

physics of fracture
equations of evasions

ppo
eengin

can you flail more clearly? can you drown better next time? the next time you can't take anymore, would you please just take some more?

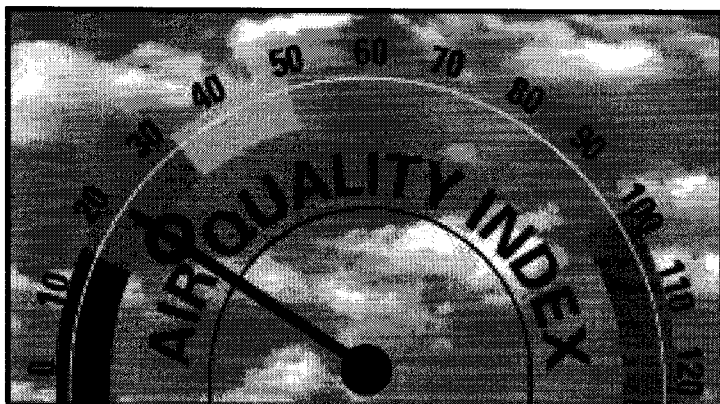
all good questions, but the OC isn't answering anymore fan mail.

opp
neengi

timeless dark was mentioned before. it has since found a watch, so forget it. the engineering is swiss.

- REMEMBER: RECANTING SHOWS YOU ARE WEAK
(frown with dignity, cameras are rolling)

ppm



Health Effects: No health effects are expected in healthy people.

Congratulations to the healthy. Our condolences to the unhealthy.

How actually reassuring is this statement? How actually meaningful? What constitutes a “health effect” What makes “healthy people” The logic of the statement is self-contained, representing an unassailable closed system. You are healthy if you are healthy, unhealthy if you are not. The air is immaterial. Forget the air. It has no effect in the overall equation:

healthy + ~~air quality~~ = healthy

unhealthy + ~~air quality~~ = unhealthy

:

healthy = healthy

unhealthy = unhealthy

& you'd better know what constitutes healthy. Because we're not gonna tell you. If you don't know, you don't deserve to know. Check your BMI, your heart rate, your cholesterol, your blood sugar levels, your white blood count, your body fat percentage, your lung capacity, your reflex response time, your sperm count & quality, your egg count & quality, your teeth whiteness index, your iron levels, your genetic predisposition, your visual acuity, your mental acuity, your equilibrium. Now how healthy?

& what are health effects? The effects of health, stupid.

“This information is provided as a public service, but we cannot guarantee that it is current or accurate. Readers should verify the information *before acting* on it.”

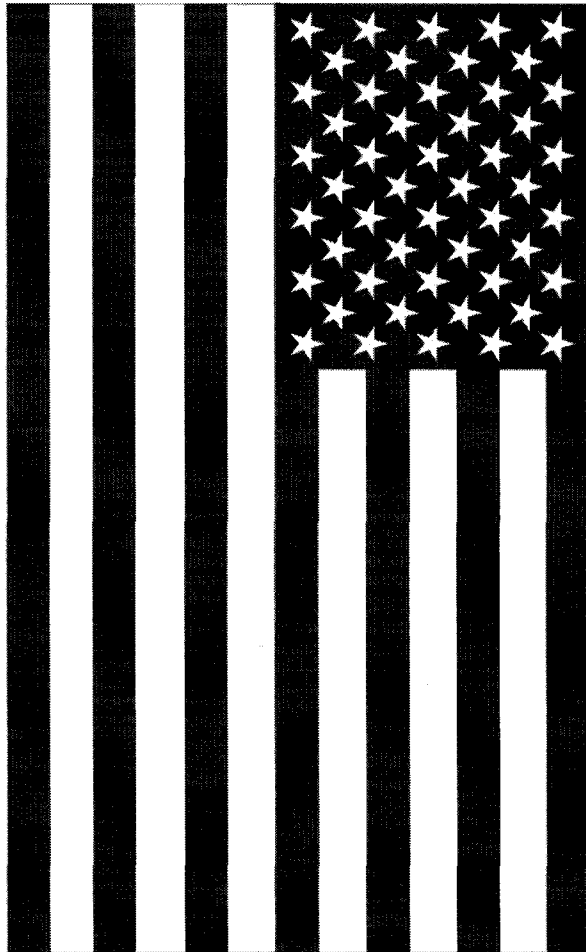
-Government of Ontario (emphasis added)

he said from the safe side of the border

No.

Amy Carter (*President Jimmy Carter's daughter*) when asked by a reporter if she had any message for the children of America

No we pledge no allegiance no to the flag no of the no united no states of america no & to the country no for which it stands no one nation no under no god no indivisible no with liberty no & no justice for all no.



jingo mosaic

once again the fall is sounded a rage a wound

maybe	not
--------------	------------

& me a marxist
& you at the corner
store buying
look like they'd

just means we share, right?

cigarettes to give to people who don't have any but
like some.

the hopeless charity of cancer

always this season
fraying around
the most sensitive
part
the load-bearing

one. you crying because you have no apex no flagstone no ruin. for us
on this side (not being them on that side) no real option

but bear
regular witness
to those who
odd drop of blood

jenga immunity. even a reference anymore?

affect the (poetic) landscape little besides the
our favourite means of cultural exchange.

off	Trade
------------	--------------

scar

always our separate skins never healing

data tranfigure

hint
listen i'll tell
a unity among many
& first the river will speak
heavy laden with our refusals or
with our myths discarded in favour of
code



disc
to disc is holy coder's kiss only in data
origins only in the stream a way
to the empathy of the shut
in person no more
tell not here
eject

découpage

They all thought they were unique in their preoccupation with the supermarket. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Every time they talked on the phone he ended up in tears. It was not clear why.

-I wonder who determined the rough outline of the cookie. It seems like a fairly circumscribed concept. Well-established, I mean.

-Johnson Paterson Cookie, 1432.

Gunfire broke up conference monotony. He received it with a terrified sort of relief.

Apparently, it was decided long ago that the best & most appropriate way to decorate Kleenex boxes was generally with floral patterns, although exceptions were often made, with varying success.

The movie was not one she even wanted to see. She felt obliged to buy something once she got to the store, shamed by the gas she'd used to get there & her stated intent of going out to buy something to watch later that night.

There's no way anyone else could feel this kind of relief from being in a supermarket. I'm just so glad to be able to push this cart, even if I have to fight the cart to keep it straight.

Arm \$20

Leg \$25

At least this was what the children were willing to pay.

this is our heart rate

2

hands idle
most of the
time; no
regular
exertions

4

consistent,
conspicuous,
long pauses:
OR very slow
motions

6

slow steady
motions/
exertion;
frequent brief
pauses

8

steady
motion/
exertion;
infrequent
pauses

10

rapid steady
motion/
exertion; no
regular
pauses

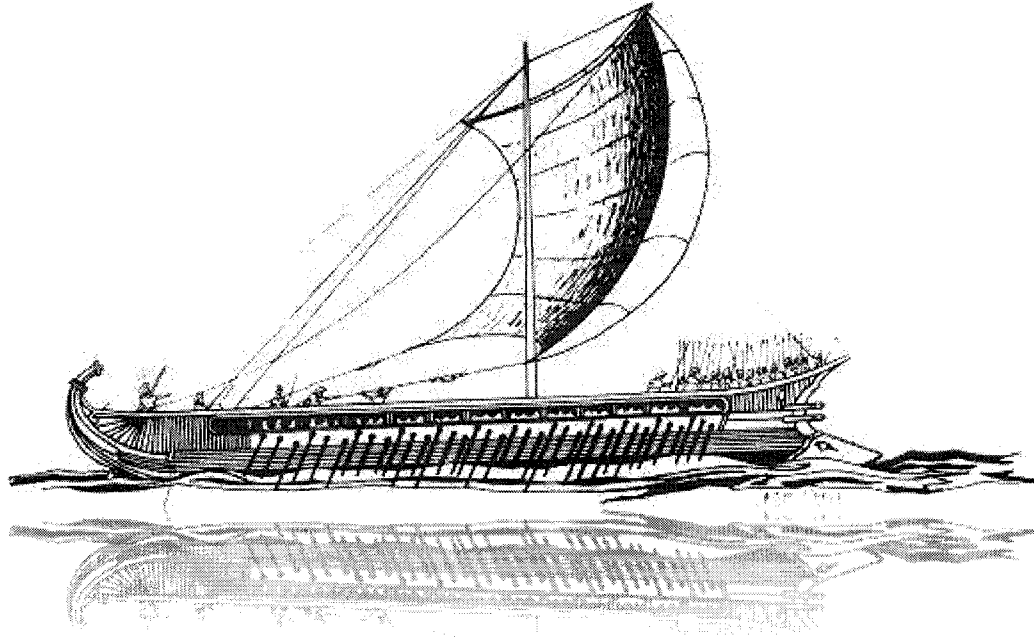
12

rapid steady
motion/
exertion;
difficulty
keeping up

aqueous solution

How Hadriatic. Comment and kiss of allegiance.

::us now sweet trireme--sweet shield and ship; mast and masked; sweet ship; and
Hadrian them our enemy. ... 1



::truest and most danger our Nile drained and destined [-] trust and this our
empire will deliver. &redeem 2



VITA AUCTORIS

Darrell Etherington was born in Ottawa in 1982, and travelled extensively before he was old enough to truly value the experience. He has since made Windsor his home, where he attended Vincent Massey Secondary School from 1996-2001. He then went on to obtain his B.A. at the University of Windsor in English Language and Literature, and hopes to graduate this June and earn his M.A. in English and Creative Writing.