White Poem

after Robert Rauschenberg

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Do The Work As You Would If You Were Getting Paid For It

That time teacher said coding was an extension of "the domestic." There I was IRL washing dishes, looking out my window, hands in greasy suds, scraping cabbage roll shrapnel into garburator, thinking of my little code houses that await me once I finish up. My baby LESS-THAN paragraph SLASH GREATER-THANs that need my feminine validation. Hold on LESS-THAN body SLASH GREATER-THANs. I'll be there in a second LESS-THAN head SLASH GREATER-THANs. Don't worry, LESS-THAN division identification equal somethingsweet GREATER-THANs. Thank you for your patience, LESS-THAN body SLASH GREATER-THANs. I admire your stoicism, LESS-THAN heading one SLASH GREATER-THANs. Your time will come, LESS-THAN unordered list SLASH GREATER-THANs. We all work together, LESS-THAN list SLASH GREATER-THANs. I toil in your characters, LESS-THAN charset="utf-8" GREATER-THAN. I wring my hands in your alphabet, LESS-THAN html lang="en" GREATER-THAN. My unsung hero, hearty worker, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN, LESS-THAN break GREATER-THAN. This is the house that HTML5 made.

I am interested in translating the web programming language of HTML into plain English in an effort to engage with a dimension of digital life that works silently under the websites we use every day.

The language of HTML5 programming is made up of repetitions and commands. The syntax of a command is clearly marked with a "<" at the beginning and a "/>" at the end. An example of a simple command is <i>italic</i> for italic font. Literally translated into English the code becomes powerful repetitions: "less than" and "slash greater than." Beneath a website, a clear hierarchy exists, one composed of excess and violence.

I am also thinking of ways CSS code, which is used to describe the look of a page to a browser, can be used to embed physical objects into digital spaces. Robert Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, for example, can be translated into the hex code for white, #FFF, as a way to embody the painting within a browser without the use of a digital photograph of the work. Within the digital space #FFF can become further translated into something associated with the #FFF hashtag on Twitter.

With my code translations and work with code language, I am working towards a body of work that uses both plain English code and HTML code in poems that interrogate the social aspect of programming and computer-mediated interactions. The digital world is deeply engrained in the contemporary in-person social world, and I want to look into the implications of this by exposing the foundation on which these websites are created.