

Ken Babstock / EXPLANATORY GAP

Happiness, happiness, happiness. Happiness. Sound of rabbits
freed from the hutch, ass-
upping their way toward the Interstate. Etymology of 'blizzard':
unknown.
I repeated that for weeks when conversations stalled, dried up,
exposed

the embarrassed cracks, or I'd stopped listening. But sure as shit
one among us would get it in her head
to thief a cache of civic pride

that wasn't ours, then stain the river with it, and we'd be up and
out, hailing
the Jumbotron we'd nailed our eyelids to ... ah, Big Face.
Speak when spoken to. It glowed a gory orange at times, the river,
like the bands

of a milk snake, and just thinking of kibble made mid-sized dogs
recall that reek
of acetate. They thought of kibble a lot, back then, the dogs.
Crest and trough and the distance between crests over
a given time span.

Explanatory Gap

Would Form, Colour, and Motion please report to Area 17
where you'll be met by Memory and Recognition. An unbroken field of light
is uninformative. The cracks,

the jinks, what won't cohere or blend but bends, fissures,
falls to the field
or becomes figure. A visual percept is degraded light.
We all like to sound important. I was convinced I'd actually loved

by a hot tinny pain spreading downward from the sternum. She
was gone, though,
by the time the evidence appeared, and I'd mull around the train ditch
of an evening, reading German dictionaries and pulling
loosened spikes

from the tie braces, designing industrial versions of croquet. Home shot:
through the St. Louis Arch to the CN tower. Oil derricks and wrecking balls.
I had no friends for a time. Whether

it happened or didn't it felt as it did and affected the weather. I
was being fleeced, still I paid
for entertainment. It helped me feel worse, and worse was where

lovely numb wet its tongue. I sucked it like a strip of dripping lamb —

Explanatory Gap

It was Nineteen-Eighty-BoreYouToDeath and sex had attached
its lips to Things.

New was no longer the inverse but the utter annihilation
of old. New laws, models, growth on the hedgerows
that had to be hacked. New

fear: moles with bleeding edges; monkey bars, merry-go-rounds,
outlawed lawn
darts; the poems of ex-presidents; crack, glue, gas, E; evangelists
on their knees, and a funky steam roiling over from the
Unter den Linden.

I hear *Stasi*, I see the *Nordiques*. We can't know what things mean
in the place
where they're meant, or know what's meant by place
with no map in our head. Like those whose hobby

it's become to dog-sled, day-hike, air-lift in to where latitudinal
lines meet the north-south ones at some lonely, never stepped-on
patch of steppe or muskeg mat in Labrador; and they intersect

there, apparently, though there's nothing to see, or nothing
visibly marking the spot other than the spot itself: the mapped
land beneath the numbered globe. Say hello

to coordinates-ordinates-ordnance, and a ground rodent
sniffing the spruce air under a daytime moon.
There'll be a sign here soon.