

## STEPHEN COLLIS & JORDAN SCOTT / DECOMP: Selected Readings from the Bunchgrass Zone

In history, as in nature, decay is the laboratory of life.

—Karl Marx

What a horrible waste of classic books.

—Nathan, Craftsamerica.com

Perhaps we are predisposed to see other species' communications through the filter of language metaphors because language is too much a natural part of our everyday cognitive apparatus to let us easily gain an outside perspective on it. Yet our experience of its naturalness, its matter-of-factness, belies its alien nature in the grander scheme of things. It is an evolutionary anomaly.

—Deacon, *The Symbolic Species*

### Deposits, method.

In the summer of 2009 we traveled to five distinct BC ecosystems and communities: the coastal rainforest (on Vancouver Island's west coast), the Gulf Islands (in the rain shadow of Vancouver Island), the Nicola Valley desert, the Columbia Mountains, and the sub-boreal North. In each ecosystem an identical copy of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was placed in a remote outdoor location, and left there for one year. A GPS reading was taken. In the summer of 2010 we returned to each site and located the specimens. As we hoped, each ecosystem had something different to say about Darwin's text.

Ecosystem: *Bunchgrass Zone* (Nicola Lake)

Book Deposited: N.50 09.897 / W.120 35.952

## **Code, translations.**

In a SEED, a genome is read: TREE

In a forest, we read TREE as: PAPER, BOOK

In reading BOOK, we read: LANGUAGE, read DARWIN

In planting DARWIN in the ground, we read: ROT/ART

In the ground, bugs read ART as: FOOD

In bugs' bodies, some of this FOOD is read as: SHIT

In SHIT a SEED begins genome expression, is read as: TREE

## Location, zone.

Through bunch grass breeze, animal lake this word, this warm floral encoded crust. A colour of sage and pine needle. Drought into gramionod / grammar into climax conditions. Sigh and silmilkameen into species limit. So largely naturalisms / geographical scatter: a being that feeds on grass and sage books; a mass accumulated partly through animal colour, and being in choke cherry, vascular riparian, our links are of zone. Both pensive and perturbed writing. The matter we placed fields' cattle in the understory, a thick Ah horizon and lake remains open all year. We have not seen a word since species. Drench the alfalfa / organize the moss. This is partly to cover partly to clean. Chernozems windpipe. Lungs to grass and that image of rain shadows. Both frenzy and fold the careful light limits and sentences river the underbrush: all forbs, all outwash. Our being in pine will mouth this upslope reading. Our wet month zones in a large region of steppe. These are animal forests. Animal colors overgrazing plant patterns. Partly the cow paddies, partly the form: that culture is adaptive / is home. We come up to pines as coyote to cold.

Between the species, closely keep organic facts, that any time a flying crow might get white feathers. We sow to speak by rain, then bring forth worms, for their atoms, this movement by new conditions. In open air; out in open air. Accordinbitants roam the leaves of false woods, drawn to pine needle thatch, sage and bunch grass. The anonym "natural" suits them naught. They leave. A languagelike signal, the way birds reflect the aerodynamics of flight in the shape and movement of their wings and inland gulls, from atoms of black, turn themselves accordingly.

Being small and simple ephemeral structures, we come into horizon through decomposition. "Thus through air" is said in the underbrush. Rot writing. Spur words. The will to bear fibrous root systems: bimodal, modal, when wet. Nutrients rich boundaries runs lakes, colors all parts edible in red, in brown. As if we link our vertebrates genetic to tomes. Our being in zones. So like each single thing. This animal a part of what nets, immense nets, partly that writing / partly that thorn. Through arrow leaved balsamroot and shrivel, both matter and light, reads photosynthesis, reads remains open, all year round.













Bunchgrass Zone—Nicola Valley