

# TCR

THE CAPILANO REVIEW



*a crack competes  
with the window*

—LISE DOWNE



Editor	Brook Houglum
Web Editor	Aurelea Mahood
Managing Editor	Tamara Lee
The Capilano Press Society Board	Colin Browne, Pierre Coupey, Roger Farr, Crystal Hurdle, Andrew Klobucar, Aurelea Mahood, Jenny Penberthy, Elizabeth Rains, George Stanley, Sharon Thesen
Contributing Editors	Clint Burnham, Erin Moure, Lisa Robertson
Founding Editor	Pierre Coupey
Designer	Jan Westendorp
Website Design	Adam Jones
Intern	Alexander McMillan

*The Capilano Review* is published by The Capilano Press Society. Canadian subscription rates for one year are \$25 HST included for individuals. Institutional rates are \$35 plus HST. Outside Canada, add \$5 and pay in U.S. funds. Address correspondence to *The Capilano Review*, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, BC V7J 3H5. Subscribe online at [www.thecapilanoreview.ca](http://www.thecapilanoreview.ca)

For our submission guidelines, please see our website or mail us an SASE. Submissions must include an SASE with Canadian postage stamps, international reply coupons, or funds for return postage or they will not be considered—do not use U.S. postage on the SASE. *The Capilano Review* does not take responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, nor do we consider simultaneous submissions or previously published work; e-mail submissions are not considered.

Copyright remains the property of the author or artist. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the author or artist. Please contact [accesscopyright.ca](http://accesscopyright.ca) for permissions.

*The Capilano Review* gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the British Columbia Arts Council, Capilano University, and the Canada Council for the Arts. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund toward circulation initiatives and the renovation of our website.

*The Capilano Review* is a member of Magazines Canada, the Magazine Association of BC, and the Alliance for Arts and Culture (Vancouver).

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NUMBER 40063611. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION—TCR, 2055 PURCELL WAY, NORTH VANCOUVER, BC V7J 3H5

ISSN 0315 3754 | (Published May 2013)

Printed in Vancouver, BC, by Hemlock Printers.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>5 ROY MIKI<br/>Please</p> <p>8 LOUIS CABRI<br/>“the coursing of staged crafts”:<br/>on poetry with Roy Miki</p> <p>29 LOUIS CABRI<br/>the mannequin &amp; the inverse ratio:<br/>Roy Miki’s <i>Mannequin Rising</i></p> <p>37 MINA TOTINO<br/><i>from Whale and Cloud Studies</i></p> <p>49 ERÍN MOURE<br/>A New Regard (Quebec and Acadia)</p> <p>50 CHANTAL NEVEU (Tr. CARR)<br/>De fer / Of Iron</p> <p>56 STEVE SAVAGE (Tr. MOURE)<br/>Le son [nom] n° 7—PATIENCE WORTH /<br/>Som [nam] balance #7—PATIENCE<br/>WORTH</p> <p>62 SUZANNE LEBLANC (Tr. HASLAM)<br/>La maison à penser de P. /<br/>P’s House for Thinking</p> <p>70 DANIEL CANTY (Tr. AVASILICHIOAEI)<br/>Quatre nodes de Wigrum /<br/>Four Nodes <i>from Wigrum</i></p> | <p>78 JEAN A. BAUDOT (Tr. CARR)<br/><i>de La Machine à écrire /<br/>from The Writing Machine</i></p> <p>84 ANGELA CARR &amp; KATE EICHHORN<br/>A Gloss on The Writing Machine</p> <p>86 FRANCE DAIGLE (Tr. MAJZELS)<br/><i>Extrait de Pour Sûr / from For Sure</i></p> <p>97 PERRY EATON<br/>The Alutiiq Mask</p> <p>110 COLIN BROWNE<br/>“We’re still here . . .”: The Alutiiq Masks<br/>of Perry Eaton</p> <p>134 LISE DOWNE<br/><i>from Propositions</i></p> <p>139 DANIELA ELZA<br/>moving the linguistic furniture around<br/>(in the house of enigmatic density)</p> <p>142 CRYSTAL HURDLE<br/><i>from Ajar</i></p> <p>144 TROY TYMOFICHUK<br/>Two Poems</p> <p>146 TED BYRNE &amp; CHRISTINE STEWART<br/><i>from St Paul</i></p> |
|--|---|

Cover image: Perry Eaton, *One of the Old Men*, 2003, broadleaf maple, hickory, twine, artist oils, 24.1 cm x 24.1 cm.

## ROY MIKI / Please



Breathing space has  
its idiosyncracies

Belts out its song  
in a dogged fashion

Explanation comes  
to nothing to listen

Dumbfounded as the  
the op i ate gives in

Breathing doing  
its own thing



The thing about things  
they are never about

Surprise them or  
downsize them

Praise them for  
liberating desire

All told it's estrangement  
that prompts difference

Ready to rouse the most  
tone deaf of citizens





If the body is a thing  
and if the thing is a body

If the thinging of bodies  
and if the bodying of things

Now i'm getting confused  
Now i'm getting conned and fused

All bent out of shape  
is a true thing in deed



Nothing relieves  
the passage of time  
more than the things  
on the margin



Aim high  
aim low

Don't go  
whole hog

It's unseemly  
to hang out

As if privilege  
were in such

Socially inept  
postures of plenty

The oinkment  
is applied

Coolly without  
undue hesitation

How else to re-  
cognize goods

But in hunches  
and catch alls

## LOUIS CABRI / “the coursing of staged crafts”<sup>1</sup>: on poetry with Roy Miki

LOUIS CABRI: The second time I came across the words “prepoetic” and “prepoetics” was in 1998 in Lytle Shaw and Emilie Clark’s magazine, *Shark*, from New York City. Issue #1 is devoted to what they call the prepoetic. They’re thinking of poetry’s lateral relations with and to other “fields,” wanting to draw those fields back into the orbit of poetry—“not to evoke a study autonomous from and prior to poetics, but to highlight poetry’s various relations to its fields of possibility and potentiality,” as Lytle puts it.

ROY MIKI: Wow, by bringing up the notion of “prepoetics,” you’re taking me back—decades back—to my dissertation in the late 70s which became the 1983 book *The Prepoetics of William Carlos Williams: Kora in Hell*. The term was not indexed, I have to confess, because at the time I wasn’t aware that it had a lineage that needed to be acknowledged.

LC: The sole antecedent I can find for the notion of a prepoetics is in your book on *Kora in Hell* and that one *not* far fetched. The *Shark* issue overlooks it.

RM: I like your oblique invocation of the opening line of Williams’s preface to *Kora* where he probes what its composition has meant for him, and what connections poetry has, we might even say, “to its fields of possibility or potentiality.” What I recall is that as a graduate student working on US modernist poetry I was fascinated by the processes Williams enacted as a writer. When he initially set out to write, as a daily exercise, a series of improvisations without reflecting on what he was doing, he was able to enter the condition of a personal and literary crisis at a time “his self was being slaughtered” (158), to cite the provocative phrase from his autobiography. In this crisis the question he faced was how to mediate the dynamics of creative form as exploration and revelation and move beyond the trap of imposition and control, at least as he understood it at the time.

1 Roy Miki, *Mannequin Rising*, 39.



LC: It seems, then, prepoetics, for you, connects to subjectivity and to agential transformation. You also write how prepoetics is that “through which perception becomes active in a space the mind, as yet, has *not* mapped out” (111), in my emphasis.

RM: Yes, the dynamics of subjectivity and transformation through the act of writing were important preoccupations for Williams. Maybe some context here is helpful. When I started research for my dissertation, I had a grand plan to track the development of Williams’s poetics, thinking mostly of the distances he covered from *Kora in Hell*, a breakthrough text, to something like “The Desert Music,” which I loved as a brilliant accomplishment. But what struck me as crucial about *Kora*—and this has remained with me—is how he negotiated the experience of crisis through the act of writing. It was an improvisational act that opened up a new poetics, one he would explore pretty well the rest of his writing life. In a sense this would make *Kora* a sort of ur-text for Williams, which is perhaps another way of thinking about the term prepoetics.

LC: Following your thinking, one could say that even the text of *Kora* itself includes an ur-text, those “improvisations” around which is staged and enacted a sort of genetic criticism on itself. Your book describes the compositional layers or processes in great detail.

RM: It’s a long time ago, but I still remember walking around with the City Lights edition of *Kora* in my pocket, anxious about what I could write about the first line of the first improvisation, “Fools have big wombs” (9). Finally, perhaps following Williams’s lead vis-à-vis his writing crisis, I began by reading that line, and to structure the dissertation, I attempted to account for the different phases of Williams’s composition of *Kora*.

The text of *Kora* was such a revelation for him because it came together in such an unusual unfolding or backward process. From the first set of improvisations came the italicized sections, and then the design and questions of layout, the use of breakages, numbering—all this structuring going on through a somewhat chaotic yet compositionally viable process. Then other elements came to him, such as the introduction where he grappled with the aesthetic and intellectual implications of what he had written, and the title, *Kora in Hell*, as well as the cover

with the stylized drawing of an ovum circled by spermatozoa, and Stuart Davis's print that he chose to use as a frontispiece.

It seemed to me that *Kora* was not so much "the" poetics of William Carlos Williams but rather what necessitated a poetics to follow. The book after *Kora* is *The Great American Novel*, a zany text that he couldn't have written before. *Kora*, in effect, had told him, Oh, you can now do that kind of writing. Then comes the beautiful *Spring & All*, more refinement of *Kora*, where he is able to say, Okay, I can work with improvisational prose, but the gain is that he comes on a new kind of line—a much cleaner and dynamic poetic line that discloses the emptiness of the spaces around words. But the additional gain is that *Kora* opened up much more intimate ties between the materiality of language and the organic conditions that limit the daily life of the human body.

LC: Would you go so far as to use the term "prepoetic" in relation to your own writing and thinking?

RM: The prepoetic could be applied to things I'm interested in right now, especially around body affectivity. For me, prepoetics, if we did use it today, would have to do with understanding certain kinds of contingencies through which the possibility of writing occurs.

LC: Here you raise possibly a third and maybe all-encompassing way you are thinking about the prepoetic: as reflexive attention to "the conditions necessary for writing at all," to borrow a phrase—to borrow more than a phrase?—by Ann Rosalind Jones (qtd. in Schweik 89).

RM: Well, what you identify as a third way could make some sense in relation to my own personal history of Japanese Canadian internment, but it may be misleading to dwell on the "conditions necessary for writing." What Williams discovered in writing *Kora* is that writing can emerge in any circumstance. The notion of improvisation encourages the writer to begin with what is at hand, and especially so when enacted in conditions of crisis, which embodies—interestingly, in the medical terms that Dr. Williams would have understood—that turning point for a disease, or perhaps dis/ease is more appropriate, when the organism will either fail or succeed in regaining its health.

What is more immediate, or what has been more immediate for me, as someone who writes poems, is the kind of awareness brought to bear on language as a medium of power and representation. As a kid growing up in Winnipeg, the familial shades of internment based on outright racialization—of being “of the Japanese race,” in the government’s discourse—confirmed language’s power to identify and represent bodies, despite whatever self-reflexive consciousness these bodies had or have as living beings.

I recall being struck during research on internment by the use of “as if” in one of the orders-in-council used to define Japanese Canadians. They were to be treated “as if” they were Enemy Aliens, and as such, they had no right of appeal. What an awesome power the state has to impose a discursive representation even when it does not conform to actualities, i.e. that as “Canadians,” those who were being interned, according to its own democratic values, should not be considered Enemy Aliens.

When we see this power operating in restricted terms, we also become conscious of the power of language, in my case, the English language, to produce dominant forms of social and cultural values and assumptions, and these values and assumptions produce complications as well as contradictions in poetic acts.

LC: Could Jones’s phrase “the conditions necessary for writing at all” take into account your context of how the prepoetic ties to contingencies of improvisation and also mean that improvisation may be the necessary condition for writing to happen at all sometimes? That it may allow for the unspoken and even the unsayable to emerge? I like how you remind us (*In Flux* 163) that in Fred Wah’s essay, “Half-Bred Poetics,” the improvisatory act exists inside the moment of contact between different languages, cultures, histories. Critical awareness of such conditions and moments lead us to your own concerns for specifically the powers of representational language to dominate a subject and his-or-her body to the point of inducing crisis.

RM: Yes, as a procedure, a way of negotiating the limits of language, improvisation offers a potent means of allowing for unspoken or unsayable material to emerge. In the case of Wah, and I share this concern, this compositional method has been tied up in historical trajectories of racism and alienation. These are



factors necessitating an introspective approach, on the one hand, to the language forms that have been internalized as the boundaries of dominant representations and, on the other, to the exploration of alternate language forms, i.e. poetic forms, that do not only expose those boundaries but also transform their social and personal consequences in acts of liberation.

For me, the effort has been to engage with the limits of language formations, which, in moments, may resist or even exceed the prescriptive quality of naturalized assumptions, so as to reveal the texture of differences that are not subsumed by the end goal of meaning.

LC: Setting the prepoetic in relation to body affectivity reminds me of your Transparency Machine Event Series presentation, the handout of which cites Judith Butler describing different theoretical routes (Christopher Bollas's, Jean LaPlanche's) to a hypothesis that the other precedes and constitutes the subject (ego and all) through a collective "primary impingement":

In the moment in which I say 'I', I am not only citing the pronomial place of the 'I' in language, but at once attesting to and taking distance from a primary impingement, a primary way in which I am, prior to acquiring an 'I', a being who has been touched . . . (Butler 69 qtd. in Miki, "Who Me?" n.p.)

Are primary impingements of this sort, which are different modes of trauma, what you're encompassing by "body affectivity"? In that case, prepoetic body affectivity could take any form in language—any sequence of phonemes might awaken it—and not even phonemes, a bang of the door.

RM: It's interesting that you mention a door bang. It reminds me of that physical gesture in Wah's *Diamond Grill*, the writer's foot kicking the swinging doors which becomes a body affect that shifts registers in the text, back and forth, as the writer moves between the somatic sources of his memory and the metaphoric frames that structure his present writing processes.

A simple example, for me, might be the way the Japanese word *gakko*, school, makes its appearance in *There* (55). On one level, as a reader, you might say that I remember some Japanese. But for me, that word, as highly somatic, resonates

only in the deepest sense of what I recall as my grandmother's voice. If I were into straight autobiography, I might take that word and unravel it, and I do minimally by providing a discursive receptacle for it, *sugu gakko iku*, but I choose not to take the process further.

Sometimes I will pull up fragments of memory and construct partial narratives in order to get me into a different space where I come upon the limits of autobiography as such—and push the language out into more of a social world where my immediate consciousness can be made more apparent.

My understanding is that the social world, the way we operate in it, is constituted not on suppression so much as on the making-invisible, the making-unaware, of the somatic dimensions of our experiences. I appreciate Jacques Rancière's explanation of the way that dominant or normalized perceptions shape the parameters of what comes to representation and what does not. He uses the phrase "partition of the sensible" to talk about the constitution of these perceptions, and partition, he says, is "understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, as that which separates and excludes; on the other, as that which allows participation" (36). Such a process accounts for the power of what-goes-without-saying, that is, the power of transparency that produces the "sense" of normative assumptions.

LC: Is that a poetry credo emerging in a couple pages of *In Flux* where you step out of your critic's role and explicitly write "as a poet" (*In Flux* 203)? It starts for me with "somatic markers" that when articulated in language, "we associate," you say, "with the becoming of subjectivity" (203).

RM: Your question is not an easy one for me to unravel. You're citing from an essay on Rita Wong where I focus on the body as a living organism. The body generates a complex of affects in our daily lives, and these often go unnoticed because it is treated as an object to be appropriated, glaringly so in violent confrontations, rather than as a complex life network of somatic processes.

I'm approaching some very tricky areas of poetic thought here, but as a poet my understanding is that the normalized discursive frames through which the world makes sense to us, as well as for us—in other words, again, what-goes-without-saying—are enabled in the exclusion of somatic contingencies, including the finitude of organic processes. In our corporate capitalist culture of commodities

the body becomes the target of so many discursive operations from seemingly benign advertising to the extreme violence of warfare, and in between these the huge corporate interest in biotechnological knowledge.

Language plays a crucial yet mostly transparent role in sustaining the normalization of dominant representations, but when language is rendered opaque or made otherwise non-transparent as a channel of communication, for instance in poetic texts, we begin to apprehend the processes of becoming that have the potential not only to expose the limits of normalization but to transform them, we hope progressively, so that they are more inclusive than they were before.

Here I'm talking about the creative process in general, but in some instances the "becoming of subjectivity" emerges in a more shared sense when dominant representations are seemingly spontaneously exceeded or undermined by what is then a newly identified group. The term "redress," for instance, constituted a Japanese Canadian group in creating a movement to seek justice for the past injustices related to mass uprooting, dispossession, and internment. Perhaps this is a way of thinking about the current Idle No More movement that has emerged through the coalitional action of young aboriginal activists who are motivated by the words Idle No More. By responding to the call for action in the phrase they have exposed the dominant representations of aboriginality as extensions of a colonial system with a history as long as the Canadian state's existence. But then again, the shift from writing a poem to a social movement may be too far-fetched a move.

LC: What fascinates me is that for you it seems "the becoming of subjectivity" takes shape on a collective horizon. A body's somatic processes and language's role in normalizing dominant representations are both inscribed by a collective horizon. Your poetry is contextually singular for how it appears to constitutively disavow "the becoming of subjectivity" as an individual horizon articulated by way of autobiographical conventions (not least of representations of memory). Does writing poetry that "attends to the ethical call of otherness" (*In Flux* 204) involve discovering writing processes and techniques that help to disclose how the seemingly private, individual horizon of one's own somatic markers—stored in the "chambers of pre" (*Random Access File* 78), let's say, or in "chamber voices" (*Mannequin Rising* 107)—have been constituted through a social, collective horizon hidden



from consciousness? As a corollary, does what you call “creative critical reading” for “the politics of differential relations” (*In Flux* 251) require of a critic to engage with “the becoming of subjectivity” in poetry on a collective horizon of the poem?

RM: I’m not sure how you understand the term “collective” vis-à-vis the writing of poetry.

The notion of “collective,” it seems to me, is troublesome because it can imply that we are dealing with a fixed entity, a group for instance, that is defined according to certain prescribed characteristics. For me, this collective could be tied to “Japanese Canadian,” but even this term, which has been applied to my work, is never stable but always shifting and open to change. It functions more as a frame whose potentialities change according to the specific contexts of its invocation—and not as a solid referent for a demarked group. This, I think, helps explain why the becoming of subjectivity gets knotted, even rendered contradictory, when assumptions around minoritization and racialization come into play, which is also to say, when certain marked subjects are read as the other within a social assemblage.

The stakes are different when the body is marked in such a way, as say Japanese Canadian bodies were during the period of uprooting and internment, and still are, though in relation to different instances of representation—instances that could include Asian Canadian, another floating signifier, but one that circulates at an even greater level of generalization.

I have tried to address the subjective consequences of identity as problematic in my prose work, for example, in *Broken Entries*, *Redress*, and *In Flux*. But in my poetry, with some exceptions, I’ve more or less allowed myself more freedom to explore the somatic effects of subjectivity as they play out in language forms.

Yet in saying so much to question the term “collective,” there is some truth to your query about the “collective horizon” of the poem. Minority writers who either accept the term or have the term thrust on them are formed in the tension between the same and the different, and the different is understood in relation to the horizon of a “group” that is constantly shifting in accordance with imposed limits and creative efforts towards liberation from these limits.

The tension can take on interesting configurations when a writer's consciousness harbours the residue of a childhood language that has been marginalized by the dominance of English.

LC: There is often an almost seamless move from aesthetics to politics, answering the one in terms of the other, in your writing—which makes it compelling. Aesthetic terms for how the life and line of poetry is constituted through social, collective movements (even if sometimes composed just of poets, regardless of backgrounds) are not raised in your response even to me here, for instance. Instead, the becoming of subjectivity through collectivity is addressed by way of examples drawn from the political (“Japanese Canadian” as signifier; the Japanese Canadian Redress Movement; the Idle No More movement).

Similarly, the view of language you’ve articulated—critiquing “normalized discursive frames through which the world makes sense to us” by way of “the limits of language formations”—strikes me as being, in broad aesthetic terms, a reworked blending of key poetics statements, made in the 1970s through the 80s, by Language poets, with recent cognitive theories of embodiment folded into them. Instead of offering these or other aesthetic terms, the power of language to control, impose, shape is theorized into political terms in your comments and with hardly a reference to the aesthetic.

Is this because you think it frivolous to restrict the aesthetic to purely poetic terms (for example: a poetry credo)? Would the aesthetic be, then, for you rooted in the bodily sensorium (in some sense), and not exclusively in the literary domain of theoretical and historical lineages for specific poetic practices? If so, such a view of the aesthetic would resonate with Rancière’s reenvisioning of aesthetics. Further, is the switch from aesthetics to politics because for you the aesthetic is intricately interrelated to and complexly determined by the political in ways that are never self-evident and require insistent critical investigation by setting the aesthetic—before it has even “set”—in relation to the political? Is there some other element of language that affects the relationship—and the ratio—for you between the aesthetic and the political in your poetry and in your writing and thinking about poetry?

RM: Your comments and questions are difficult ones for me to address, and this may very well be the result of my not having reconciled, in an explicit enough manner, what you see as the aesthetic and the political.

In my own experience as a writer, the approach to the political has been developed either through an involvement with a social and/or cultural movement, such as the redress movement for Japanese Canadians or the anti-racist literary movement for the Writers' Union of Canada, or through the aesthetics effects of creative forms such as poetry.

In the former, I have drawn from critiques of dominant language forms and worked to expose their containment and management of historical traumas and racialization and hopefully to change existing conditions. Such work, I believe, will be effective to the extent that it enters into a negotiation with these forms to infuse them with elements of transformation, and for this reason its effectiveness, while considerable in some instances, is mediated by the ability of the state to adjust its discourses to accommodate challenges to it.

This is why in my book on redress I drew on the notion of the gift to conceptualize the exchange that occurred in the redress agreement signed by the National Association of Japanese Canadians and the federal government on September 22, 1988. In receiving the gift of redress from the government for the trauma of the 1940s, the Japanese Canadians who were identified in the agreement gave the gift of their un-redressed history of injustices to the Canadian nation. Or as we might phrase it in other words, by aligning the language of redress with the dominant language of citizenship and human rights, Japanese Canadians achieved the aim of their social justice movement.

Aside from the fleeting aspect of the redress settlement, the more long-term aspect, perhaps its most politically efficacious aspect, is its precedent-setting power. No matter how quickly the redress movement will be forgotten—and inevitably it will be—others who experience injustices similar to what Japanese Canadians experienced during the 1940s will always have some justification to use the example of Japanese Canadian redress to seek redress for what befell them.

Now, to speculate on the connection of the political as a critical movement to challenge and change the social language of domination and marginalization to the political as it relates to the poem, what comes to mind is an anecdote.



When immersed in redress, I found it difficult to write poems with any consistency of effort. The language of redress, at least the struggle to come to articulation in this language, which involved many Japanese Canadians, assumed considerable power in my consciousness, becoming at times all consuming. It seemed that my life had been taken over by endless committee and community meetings all over Canada, as well as meetings with all sorts of news media reporters, politicians, and bureaucrats.

The pressure to inhabit the language of redress often led to a sense of personal exhaustion and the threat of speechlessness, as if I might become no more than a talking mannequin for the movement. I got to cherish the privacy of the durational space of flights between cities, and the relief it offered. Without much forethought, I began to keep a notebook to jot down lines that came to me, simply as a way of being released from the more determined language of my work in the movement. I allowed my consciousness to wander in words and lines that seemingly issued from its somatic conditions—though, of course, at the time I wouldn't have theorized it as I'm doing now. It was only after the redress agreement that I returned to a number of the notebook pieces and re-read them as poems. Many of the poems written on the plane became part of *Saving Face*.

LC: “[R]eleased from . . . more determined language”: is that unalienated labour? Is this disposition toward writing also that of the New Left’s “early Marx” for whom (to paraphrase the 1844 manuscripts) the senses were theoreticians in their own praxis? In this anecdote about how determinate (political) language-use and indeterminate (aesthetic) language-use shaped differing writing practices, you juxtapose the redress movement with your first book—perhaps because their activities occurred over the same time period. Most of your most recent poetry book, *Mannequin Rising*, also appears to be written on the go, in between destinations, on planes, trains, in various temporary states such as tourist. I find this to be the case with the intervening poetry books as well. It’s not as if your poetry doesn’t enact the political. Despite the evident turmoil your poems express, would you call the outcome of this trajectory for the aesthetic—from *Saving Face* through to and including *Mannequin Rising*—a kind of cosmopolitanism, ultimately a wary, savvy truce-making with commodity form takeover? I think of the lines in the



opening poem of the sequence “Viral Travels to Tokyo”: “restless sojourners bent / on global migration to forge mobile identities” (*Mannequin* 75).

RM: Yes, the poems and the movement, I came to learn, offered different language registers, and this in a way prompted me to continue writing poems after the settlement.

In helping to shape what we called a redress language to give voice to Japanese Canadians, I became more intent on exploring how the constraints of dominant discourses—constraints we had to negotiate—were manifest in forms of creative writing, my own included.

LC: Can you elaborate a bit on that last point—on how dominant discourse constraints manifest in your poems or did manifest in poem-drafts?

RM: It’s not all that complicated. As I got totally wrapped up in the redress movement, my life seemed to be at the mercy of the movement, so much so that I often yearned for more private moments to think outside of its noisy language, which is why the quiet time on plane flights was magnified in my consciousness. Instead of rehearsing that language, by jotting down thinking—in lines of poetry—going on outside of its parameters, I was able to experience some relief from its constraints. The lines were more attentive to somatic rhythms, open syntax, semantic play, and the ‘i’ was more unpredictable, pliable, multiply inflected.

It’s also interesting to note, which I have done elsewhere, that in the period between the redress settlement (1988) and the publication of *Saving Face* (1991), the Cold War was ending and with this shift came more porosity in the boundaries of nation-based identities. It was a shift that became evident to me as I worked on my next book, *Random Access File*, especially so in the sequence written in Japan called “Market Rinse.” Here I felt that identities under the pressure of cultural globalization, as well as the rapidly ascending power of digital technologies, had become dispersed, uncertain, and always contingent in their relations with others and with the places that situated them.

The more explicit foray into the exigencies of local/global interactions—which perhaps signals a cosmopolitical turn—came in *Surrender*, a book that more consciously set out to explore, in both formal and thematic ways, the immediacy of

global flows through the consciousness of an “i” nurtured under the minoritarian signs of Japanese Canadian as an identity formation.

You are right that I continued to write a number of poems while in transit—though I still enjoyed composing in site-specific contexts. Such movement through the spaces of local sites seemed to coincide with the transnational experience of global processes.

I’ve continued to explore the effects and affects of commodity culture in the book you mention, *Mannequin Rising*.

LC: I’d love to ask about this narrative sequencing through which you’re historically situating—and dividing—your work, that is, as a move from identity politics to capitalist critique. For now though, but in that regard, I’d like to ask about the poem “Vestigial.”

Commoditisation prevails in *Mannequin Rising* over other concerns, and in an unprecedented way in your poetry so far, I find. Many poets in the counter-traditions that inform your poetry have tried and try to face in their writing the intractable dilemmas of monopoly capital’s simultaneous expansion and concentration in the deepest nooks and crannies of everyday life. How does language get in there? Today it’s not too much of an exaggeration to wonder whether capital might not be the first to discover (even create?) that “complex life network of somatic processes” you prize, before the poet does—and some poets today have relinquished the task of articulating the bodily sensorium. But “Vestigial” in particular has not relinquished the task, has not obeyed (to quote another poem) “the injunction / to forget where the word rises” (35); rather, “Vestigial” counterposes commodity form and body affectivity. Can you speak to the counterposing work of this poem?

RM: I think you’re right in ascribing to capitalist forces the capacity to tap into the bodily sensorium in producing commodities that serve its flows and desires. This is perhaps made apparent in the compulsions and pleasures that have formed—and are forming at a rapid pace—in the immersive power of mobile technology and its cultural discourses. The convergence of cell phones, cameras (both still and video), the internet, and proliferations of apps in so-called smart devices has generated a cornucopia of new frontiers for capitalist expansion.

The crux of mobile culture resides, I think, in the intimacy it creates with the living body within a network of other living beings—and in this closeness mobile commodities can enable access to somatic flows in its consumers. It's not surprising, then, the emergence of software that can measure blood pressure, heart rates, and other elements of the body's organic conditions at any given time of the day. Just imagine what corporate interests can do with all this intimate information about its consumers. Everything about mobile culture hinges on surfaces that are faddish, new, and glamorous, always changing, and neural rhythms that are deep down in the body's livingness. It's also not surprising that we're seeing users exhibiting obsessive-compulsive behaviour including addiction to information flows.

The poem you mention, "Vestigial," was initially drafted while I toured Taiwan with a group—Fred Wah, Larissa Lai, Rita Wong, Glen Lowry, and Garry Gottfriedson—and gave a series of readings and talks about contemporary Canadian literature. Taiwan was a fascinating place to visit. As a super capitalist region and a major player in the world production of computers and all kinds of electronic devices, it is deeply hooked into the global network of capital production in its relations with mobile technology.

But it's also a place with a very painful history in its precarious negotiations with various imperial powers, primarily the US, Japan, and China. The most troublesome event in social memory is 228, shorthand for the date February 28, 1947. It marks the beginning of a massacre, when an estimated 30,000 Taiwanese intellectuals and activists who challenged the authority of the KMT (Kuomintang) regime of Chiang Kai-Shek were brutally killed. Following the massacre, martial law was imposed to silence any mention of it, and this lasted until the late 1980s, at which point a movement to remember 228 was formed, gained momentum, and eventually prevailed. As a form of commemoration, the government created a museum in Taipei's Peace Park to portray the history of 228. A group of us visited the museum and were fortunate to have the services of a guide who was very thorough and forthright in explaining the legacy of trauma.

"Vestigial" carries residues of thinking about the conjunction of commodity capitalism and Taiwan's traumatic history. I first jotted down some lines in my notebook during a bus ride—which I accidentally left on the seat. The following day, I started another poem, only this one began with a reference to the lost



notebook. But as it turned out, Rita was able to communicate with the owners of the bus company about the lost notebook, and they returned it to me. That became the occasion for another beginning. It got me thinking, I suppose, about the fragility and contingent nature of memory and all the variables that go into the representation of historical events, as well as the unpredictable situations in which the experience of trauma will be mediated and remembered.

While in Taiwan, I was struck by the historical conjunctions of dates between the redress settlement and the movement to remember 228, both in the late 80s, a time when we in Canada were moving towards transnational cultural conditions. I was also struck by the continuing reluctance of those whose families who were directly affected by 228 to speak about the event—a vivid reminder that the legacy of trauma lingers in the present.

So a number of contexts and layers of history and memory, all surfacing in the moment of composition, are juxtaposed and interlaced in the poetic process. The poem also includes the surfacing of a childhood memory—of the Selkirk Manitoba asylum where I saw, from my bike on the highway, the strained faces of those incarcerated in the windows. The sight haunted me in my growing up years in Winnipeg. The pedagogical social threat went something like, if you don't behave yourself you'll end up in Selkirk. There are also the figures of the betel nut women in Taiwan, scantily dressed and enclosed in glass cage-like huts along the highway, who sell betel nuts to guys who chew on these nuts and apparently often get addicted to its affects. I dedicated the poem to Fred because, over the years, we have shared so much in our personal and writing lives, and here we were travelling in Taiwan as part of a group.

LC: Roy, isn't it like you had two mother tongues, the first erased by the second? This loss of a mother tongue complicates your poetry's relation within and to the frame of a "minor literature"—"that which a minority constructs within a major language" (16)—expounded by Deleuze and Guattari. Their example is Kafka who as member of a Jewish minority in Prague wrote in the dominant High German, not in the subordinate Czech spoken by the majority, let alone the Yiddish-influenced German he knew at home or the Hebrew he would learn. Another example they give is African American English as minority instance of what can be done within and to a major language. Their other examples are Beckett and



Joyce. That is, in their examples, the minority mother tongue is alive. For you, it is ghosted.

RM: I used to think that their essay on minor literature was relevant for my own work and the work of minority writers in Canada. I cite it in an early essay I wrote on Asian Canadian literature called “Asiancy,” which goes back to the early 90s, a time when the notion of “deterritorialization” seemed appropriate as an Asian Canadian writing strategy.

The urgency of minority discourses in the identity politics I experienced during the 80s and 90s subsided, at least for me, in the mid-to-late 90s, roughly the period during which I wrote many of the poems in *Surrender*.

I returned to the essay recently while thinking about the ways in which Roy Kiyooka’s poetic language (his *inglish*, as he referred to English) may have been affected by Japanese as his childhood mother tongue. I liked what Deleuze and Guattari say about Kafka, as a Czech minority, writing in German: that his works “oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it” (19). Applied to Kiyooka’s *inglish*, the intensive emphasizes the material elements of language—the syllable, for instance—as prior to the ordinary signifying uses of language.

But what you say—and I like your term—about the ghosted nature of Japanese as a mother tongue for me prompts me to think again of its ripple effects in a kind of somatic memory that I sense at times while writing—though not always. And that memory could be of a trace of sounds, or of rhythmic gestures, or of words. I don’t think my experience of this ghosted language is all that unique in Canadian poetry. I’m sure there are loads of poets whose mother tongue was not English but who can now think and write only in English. It would be fascinating and very revealing I’m sure to hear them talk about the traces of that mother tongue in their writing.

LC: You’ve developed a lightly-punctuated poetic syntax that seriously wobbles conventional norms of word relation between and within clause and phrase, and because these poems are rarely “concrete,” their phrasings rarely literal, often appropriating fragments from theoretical discourses and suffusing them with lively atmospherics, a reader becomes attentive to the micro level of

syntactico-grammatical retunings, detunings, untunings. I'm wondering if you might comment on what is for me such a notable aesthetic feature of your poetry.

RM: I like a statement made by Donna Haraway, "Grammar is politics by other means" (3). As a regulatory system that enables the construction of determinate meanings and simultaneously the sharing of those meanings, grammar is instrumental in the normalization process that we associate with language as communication. But grammar also functions as a model for the humanist appropriation of nature in the service of technologies that re-present embodied beings as an extension of human-centred frames of reference.

Contrary to what is often assumed, the disruption or even the eschewal of grammatical relations in poetic performances of language does not lead to mere cacophony, though it may appear that way to some readers. But then again, mere cacophony could also produce a compelling poem!

Imagining the limits of grammar has been important for me as a poet, and at times, though not always, I've seen these limits as complicit with dominant perceptions that have produced so-called marginalized subjects—subjects who have been placed and often dis-placed in social categories that assume a given structure of differences.

But of more immediacy for this interview, the "elsewhere" of the grammatical regulation of discourse offers the potential to open up poetic spaces where language is more open to fluid linguistic energies, for instance, to a redistribution of functions in statements, to semantic instability and plurality, to a-grammatical patterns and relationships, to the indeterminate play of sound, syntax, and image, and so on, which can be expanded to encompass all the material elements that make up a language, including the alphabet, which bpNichol often took as the primary ground of his poetics.

It's also possible to inhabit grammatical forms in a critical way to make us aware of elements of our existence that are foreclosed in order for these forms to function transparently. Is, then, the becoming of language in the poetic act the language of becoming? Many readers may be very sceptical in the face of such a question, but for poets I believe it's a worthwhile consideration.

LC: As a reader, I become attentive not only to the *micro* level of syntactico-grammatical movements between words.

Two long sequences in *Mannequin Rising* develop *macro* and *meta* aspects of narrative by introducing variants on the literary device of the persona. None is a person per se, however. One figures as mannequins, that live, as do most of us, under the “tyranny of the commodity” (47), whose liberation is imagined in anthropomorphically identificatory ways, in “Scoping (also pronounced ‘Shopping’) in Kits” (*Mannequin* 9–50). The other is called Viral, a “freewheeling / mediation” (41) embodying sensationalizable group-mind fears and apprehensions (in short, Viral is a kind of collective self-consciousness, a “unanim,” Jules Romains would say), and who does things like visit the Yasukuni Shrine museum, in “Viral Travels to Tokyo” (73–100).

I can’t recall any personae-like figures in your previous poems. What has led you in this direction, toward narrative, do you think?

RM: I’m not sure there is, for me in any case, a direct way to provide an answer. You mention words from two of the three longer sequences in *Mannequin Rising*. All these sequences present poems alongside photo-collages that have woven into their spaces the figures of mannequins in various shop windows—in Kitsilano, on Granville Island, and in Tokyo. The Kitsilano sequence was the first of the three, but except for “Viral Travels to Tokyo,” in the order of composition the photo-collages began prior to the poems.

For a long time, as I thought about the possibility of making photo-collages, I walked around Kitsilano, where I lived then, taking photos and experimenting with Photoshop techniques. That was more or less a wordless time, a time that I struggled to mediate the power of images without worrying about poetic language. Watching the ways the figures of mannequins were transformed by shifting visual contexts, I think they started to invoke in me, as perhaps a kind of witness, potential stories of the moment of hyper-consumerism the mannequins embodied as representatives (in the double sense of portraying and speaking for) of the desire of consumers (i.e. all of us).

However, I never wanted to construct the mannequins consistently as personae, even though here and there the poems do move in and out of that possibility. When I eventually began writing the poems, I didn’t write “about” the



photo-collages but allowed my consciousness to roam as much as possible in an attempt to inhabit the affective spaces of consumer culture while at the same time trying to disclose a critical consciousness of the implications of these spaces.

This process, I think, opened up the interplay of different voices and discursive enactments that included a number of narrative moments. In the sequence on Granville Island with its history of colonization and appropriation of indigenous lands, the drift towards narrative was strong. The same with the Tokyo sequences, begun at the moment I landed in Tokyo, when the H1N1 scare had just entered Japan's territory. With all the attention being paid to "viral" as a trope in the language of consumer culture, an actual viral threat brought into play all the defence and medical resources of Japan, invoking once more the xenophobia of the past with its mobilization of a collective consciousness. That moment seemed to call for a poem! So Viral immediately took on the aura of a collective force that had figural presence. But I don't develop this figure into a persona throughout the poem sequence that follows. Although Canada is much more heterogeneous than Japan, one direction of exploration in the sequences on Kitsilano and Granville Island is that commodity culture, despite all the hype around individual tastes and choices, also produces collective affects in consumers who, in buying into that culture, become themselves the effects of its production.

LC: There's a mannequin in the trace remnants memorialized in the Hiroshima museum that is visited by or upon the speaker in Roy Kiyooka's "Wheels": "tall glass cases with pallid '40s mannikins / attired in somebody's ashen clothes / (click)" (168). Is this the translated seed, in a way, of *Mannequin Rising*?

RM: I didn't think of that at the time, but that's a great question for us to end on.

## Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Roy Miki for inviting me to a dialogue with him on his recent poetry and criticism. *The Capilano Review's* editor, Brook Houghlum, had asked him to contribute an interview to an issue. Roy's generosity and enthusiasm for collaboration are such that often I felt we were blocking out points and counterpoints of an essay: *that* involved. We started with an interview I'd recorded with him on



20 March 2007 in Windsor, Ontario. The writing that became “on poetry with Roy Miki” took place over email in the early months of 2013. A special thanks to Nicole Markotić for her expert, timely editing of the final copy. Thanks as well to Jasmine Elliott who transcribed the original interview and to the University of Windsor for funding.

## Works Cited

- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham UP, 2005.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Fwd. Réda Bensmaïa. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986.
- Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Kiyooka, Roy K. “Wheels.” *Pacific Windows: Collected Poems of Roy K. Kiyooka*. Ed. Roy Miki. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1997. 135–78.
- Miki, Roy. “Asiancy: Making Space for Asian Canadian Writing.” *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing*. Toronto: Mercury, 1998. 101–24.
- . *In Flux: Transnational Shifts in Asian Canadian Writing*. Edmonton: NeWest, 2011.
- . *Mannequin Rising*. Vancouver: New Star, 2011.
- . *The Prepoetics of William Carlos Williams: Kora in Hell*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983.
- . *Random Access File*. Red Deer: Red Deer College Press, 1995.
- . *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice*. Richmond: Raincoast Books, 2004.
- . *Saving Face: Poems Selected 1976–88*. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1991.
- . *Surrender*. Toronto: Mercury, 2001.
- . *There*. Vancouver: New Star, 2006.
- . “Who Me? Texts for a Poetics Talk by Roy Miki.” Windsor: Transparency Machine Event Series. Ed. Louis Cabri. 19 Mar 2007. Handout.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. Ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran. New York: Continuum, 2010.
- . “What aesthetics can mean.” *From an Aesthetic Point of View: Philosophy, Art and the Senses*. Ed. Peter Osborne. London, Eng.: The Serpent’s Tale, 2000. 13–33.

- Romains, Jules. "Poetry and Unanimous Feelings." Trans. Louis Cabri. *Manifestos Now!* Ed. Brian Ganter. *The Capilano Review* 3.13 (Winter 2011): 46–48.
- Schweik, Susan. "The 'Pre-Poetics' of Internment: The Example of Toyo Suyemoto." *American Literary History* 1:1 (Spring 1989): 89–109.
- Shaw, Lytle, and Emilie Clark, eds. "The Prepoetic." *Shark* 1 (1998).
- Wah, Fred. *Diamond Grill*. 10th anniversary ed. Edmonton, AB: NeWest, 2006.
- . "Half-Bred Poetics." *Faking It: Poetics and Hybridity*. Edmonton: NeWest, 2000. 71–96.
- Williams, William Carlos. *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams*. New York: New Directions, 1967.
- . "The Desert Music." *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*. Vol. 2: 1939–1962. Ed. Christopher MacGowan. New York: New Directions, 1988. 273–84.
- . *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1967.

## LOUIS CABRI / the mannequin & the inverse ratio: Roy Miki's *Mannequin Rising*

Justice can never rise superior to the economic conditions of  
society and the cultural development conditioned by them.

—Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*

Economic language prevails in *Mannequin Rising* (hereafter *MR*).

The first poem in the long sequence, “Scoping (also pronounced ‘Shopping’) in Kits,” introduces economic language in its title and in the very first couplet:

There are more fealties than  
one can safely stock in the store (11)

By placing *store* and *stock* in the same verse line, separated by only two words, a reader notices that each can interchangeably function as noun and verb (in different phrases). So this line points to a kind of grammatical levelling. Because *store* and *stock* are partially synonymous as well, one effect of this grammatical levelling is to produce lexical redundancy-in-abundance: Having two partially synonymous words so close together creates a sense of redundancy, yet that there is more than one of them creates a sense of abundance.

Levelling and redundancy-in-abundance, being dimensions of a capitalist economy, are qualities of consumer culture that emerge in *MR*. Levelling arises when a thing or process acquires exchange or market value. Redundancy-in-abundance, the way I’m using this phrase, refers to conditions of labour (“surplus” labour, a structural feature of capitalism) and products of labour (overproduction; planned obsolescence). In the second line, levelling and redundancy-in-abundance emerge through a structural homology between economics and language, and elsewhere in *MR* in the figure of the mannequin.

The first line of the “Scoping” sequence describes brand loyalties as “fealties.” The word *fealties* implies an anachronistic economic regime, feudalism. Being born into a caste system fixing one’s status for life is made analogous here to the power brand loyalties can exert over people from a young age. The first couplet

says there are more brand loyalties out there than one can shake a stick at (I use the formulaic expression organizing the couplet itself), suggesting, further, that at play are broad issues of supply and demand, as well as fine (but no less economic) distinctions to be made between desire, want and need.

Even the adverb *safely* implies economic language: the sticks of litigation, the carrots of efficiency.

Excepting Miki's book title, the word *mannequin* first appears in *MR* in the seventh couplet of this first poem in the "Scoping" sequence (the poem has nine couplets in all), and enters abruptly:

The inverse ratio of production costs left  
the mannequin speechless for the first time

The crux of my essay rests on how to interpret these two lines.

There's wobble in the definite articles. A remark by Kenneth Burke captures something of what I mean by wobble: "All thought tends to name things not because they are precisely as named, but because they are not quite as named . . ." (54). Burke's statement questions the reach of literary values for precision, accuracy, *le mot juste*. He suggests that such atomistic values for language and for the world (values that are part of the modernist inheritance) sometimes fall short before the world's complexity. There's wobble in a world when maps for it, maps of thought, writing, and poetic form, somehow do not always line up or correspond with each other. There's a bit of wobble in placing *stock* and *store* on the same line. There's wobble especially in the definite article in front of *mannequin*.

When a *the* is used before a noun like *mannequin*, usually a reader refers back in the text to the previous instance(s) of the noun for context (the mannequin? which mannequin? If the noun were *sun*, I don't think a reader would ask which sun? unless the poem demanded it), but (as mentioned) there is no prior instance of a mannequin appearing in *MR* at this point (ten pages in). The definite article in the line *the mannequin speechless for the first time* gestures to a time before, when the mannequin did speak, but such "time before" is not part of the reader's time of reading *MR*. By another wobble, this "time before," I'm going to suggest, refers to outside the text, to historical time. Use of *the* before a noun can also invoke the idea of essence, the essence of the noun. In the second line, then, the essence of what "mannequin" means is to be found in a time before now. There is



no single figure of “the” mannequin in *MR*; mannequins in *MR* mostly exist in an undifferentiated plurality, further suggested by the varied spellings for *mannequin* throughout the text.

The first line in that seventh couplet also establishes a relationship to historical time. The definite article before *inverse ratio of production costs* suggests that the phrase designates a historical period captured by the essence of an economic formula that shaped it. The formula in question has to be the presuppositional force behind a market-driven culture whose evaluative criterion is:

The less a product costs to  
make,  
the more profit capitalists  
make.

“Inverse ratio”: short for the fundamental law of capital accumulation, which has been around since Shakespeare at least.

Because of the definite article wobbles, I infer from these lines that the time of “the mannequin” that speaks historically *predates* the time when “the inverse ratio of production costs” became dominant.<sup>1</sup> These lines ask that history be painted in broad strokes.

The questions, *What did you make?* and *How much did you make?* didn’t always mean the same thing. *What did you make?* once meant that “you” made something. What kind of mannequin would be made where the money required to make it and the making process itself were not predetermined and limited by the fundamental law of capital accumulation?

In *MR*, consumers are mannequin-like in their social effects: homogenous, memory-less. Like mannequins, consumers go unseen: there only to support and humanize the commodity for sale. *MR*’s mannequins embody a consumer identity politics—a politics without identity and an identity without politics:

1 One might read the lines: The inverse ratio of production costs in *some given instance of production* left the mannequin speechless when otherwise it would have continued speaking. But what is that instance? What is being made in that instance of production, that so startles the mannequin? Does the poem say?

These consumers in motion  
have no name tags no ids  
to drift off to dreamland  
in a carnivalesque pitch  
that cannot be notated (54)

The syntax wobbles at the first preposition in the third line, *to*: do consumers “drift off to dreamland” or are they not capable of it? The latter surprises. Nation-states shape the unconscious of their citizens.<sup>2</sup> To dream is to be already constituted by an imaginary community, these lines suggest: “dreamland” means first having “landed” somewhere, as citizen of some nation-state, with ID. These lines are taken from the sequence “A Walk on Granville Island.” Consumers “in motion,” buying products from around the world, forget their state of belonging, and therefore do not dream.

Lines from a second long sequence, “Viral Travels to Tokyo,” further assert that consumer and citizen are not exchangeable roles: “The dream augurs / as much as its lapses glitter with / the pride of ownership” (91). Commodity ownership obliterates “the dream.” But the dream’s value is up for grabs. In “Scoping,” “mannekins” “move” a customer who is personified as “the dream”:

The ripe fruit vegetables and  
vintage wines in their [the mannekins’] adept  
hands take place in the move

The dream in their presence  
makes . . . (13)

Presumably, the move that the dream makes is to buy the fruit, vegetables and wine.

Mannequins—consumers—show incipient signs of thinking and feeling. Startlingly, they might also create the conditions for social change:

2 For an extreme but most revealing example, see Charlotte Beradt’s *The Third Reich of Dreams: Nightmares of a Nation, 1933–39*, dreams she collected at the time of people living through Hitler’s Germany. For an introduction to social dream theory, see Lawrence.

. . . led by the fierce tenacity  
of a nose ever close to the window dressing

Balk if you will or if you don't show me a way  
to chalk up the losses to the prescience of  
the mannikin who leaps out of the frame  
breaking the mould for the typecast role  
as a hanger on or even a model minority  
breaking the synergetic bonds wide open (20)

Today's "mannikin" is the historical product of a window dressing culture. The mannequin "who leaps out of the frame" is an agent of a dialectical reversal of the very culture that makes mannequin-as-consumer what it is, the prop of capital accumulation. Docile, willing, uncomplaining, and in these lines metaphorically figured as objective outcome of "model minority syndrome" (Miki *In Flux* 210), the mannequin is at the vanguard of window dressing culture *and* of that culture's downfall if and when it breaks out of "the typecast role." The social contradiction that the mannequin embodies, positing the window dressing culture that is a barrier to be broken, is how Marx characterized the force of revolution (as in revolving: bringing about its opposite condition) of the bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup> The mannequin is the new bourgeoisie.

That's now. So, what about the essence of the mannequin in a time before the inverse ratio, before the rise of the bourgeoisie? What kind of mannequin was it?

The marionette, the doll, the toy: one can trace varied cultural articulations and associations for these objects: Kleist takes up the marionette, Rilke, the doll, Baudelaire, the toy, for instance. Each presents a plausible pre-capitalist lineage for manufactured moulded plastic mannequins.

Marionettes, dolls, toys are common and can be cheaply crafted. Today, none has been rendered speechless by the inverse ratio—which is what the seventh couplet says happens ("the mannequin speechless for the first time"). The inverse

3 "But from the fact that capital posits every . . . limit as a barrier and hence gets *ideally* beyond it, it does not by any means follow that it has *really* overcome it, and, since every such barrier contradicts its character, its production moves in contradictions which are constantly overcome but just as constantly posited" (Marx *Grundrisse* 410).



ratio has, today, on the contrary, made them into a million-plus commodities that talk—by Disney, Mattel, etc. Furthermore, the “carnavalesque pitch” of marionettes in particular

existed on the peripheries of sanctioned Culture. They were not admitted further; they occupied places in FAIR BOOTHS, suspicious MAGICIANS’ CHAMBERS, far from the splendid shrines of art, treated condescendingly as CURIOSITIES intended for the tastes of the masses. (Kantor 111)

So, I suggest (a bit hurriedly) that in order to find a suitable kind of speaking mannequin that predates the inverse ratio, we have to look elsewhere than to marionettes, dolls, and toys. The less obvious choice but the more pertinent one for the seventh couplet and for *MR* is the Noh mask and costume. The Noh drama was not common and it was not, I presume, cheap to make. Its masks and costumes never existed on a periphery of big-c Culture while big-c Culture was alive: Noh drama was the sanctioned Culture, restricted for centuries in the way it was made (generationally, by family guilds) and played (exclusively, to the imperial court of Japan).

Feudal Noh tradition and culture has the most to lose to the historical rise of capitalism’s inverse ratio. It’s why Fenollosa and Pound wanted to preserve this “drama of masks” (Pound 336).

Under the dominance of the inverse ratio, it is the masks and costumes of Noh drama that have been rendered “speechless for the first time” in centuries. Transformed by the inverse ratio into moulded plastic mannequins, they become the kitsch simulacra of a lost tradition.

Japan therefore seems crucial to understanding the gradual turning to economic language in Miki’s poetry. Many of *MR*’s poems reference Japan in some way, and while Miki’s other poetry books do as well, *MR* is the book to most directly address capitalism as a dominant transnational economic system. What has changed? While organized around Canada (the state, the national literature) and around critiques of its social and cultural policies, a breakthrough chapter in Miki’s *In Flux* (“Rewiring Critical Affects” 207–34) considers critical studies of post-war Japan. The emergence of a post-redress literature, one that investigates

previously-suppressed connections Canadians have to Japan, enables Miki to bring concepts he has developed of social justice and redress to bear on post-war Japan.

[T]he way in which the Japan government came to “embrace defeat” in response to the occupation produced the conditions that subsequently enabled it to evade not only taking responsibility for its wartime actions, but also to reconstruct the nation as peace-loving, democratic, and unique in being the first victims of the atomic bomb. It is as if, in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which led to the surrender on August 15, Japan was relieved of making amends for its own actions. (220–1)

In the language of the seventh couplet from “Scoping[s]” first poem, it is the inverse ratio—now in the guise of triumphal US-style capitalism—that reconstructed Japan after the war. The eponymous “rising” mannequin is attempting to articulate the price Japan has paid for dominance by and success due to the inverse ratio. The price paid for such enormous economic success is cultural homogeneity and memory-loss. Consumerism—shrines of consumption—would seem to be playing a determining role in the public forgetting. In this sense, the masks qua mannequins stand for unresolved redress of Japan’s imperialism.

MR’s poems do not distinguish between mannequins in Japan and Canada. MR would seem to link the unfolding of a post-redress identity in Canada to whether and how Japan reconciles itself with its past. In this sense, the Vancouver mannequins represent a blank question-mark of post-redress post-consumer identity.

In theatre director, artist and writer Tadeusz Kantor’s 1975 play, *The Dead Class*, twelve Old People wearing white masks and funeral suits behave “motionless like mannequins standing in the corner of a shop window or like the dead” (Kobialka in Kantor 323) until animated by their speaking fragments of memories and of lines (as if spoken through them) from Polish modernist theatre. In a theoretical statement about mannequins, “The Theatre of Death” (1975), Kantor explains how actors who are impersonally dressed as mannequins may allow audience members to face up to the faceless homogeneity in their lives. This, too, may

be a message of Roy Miki's latest poetry book, that readers directly face the apparent facelessness of consumption.

## Note

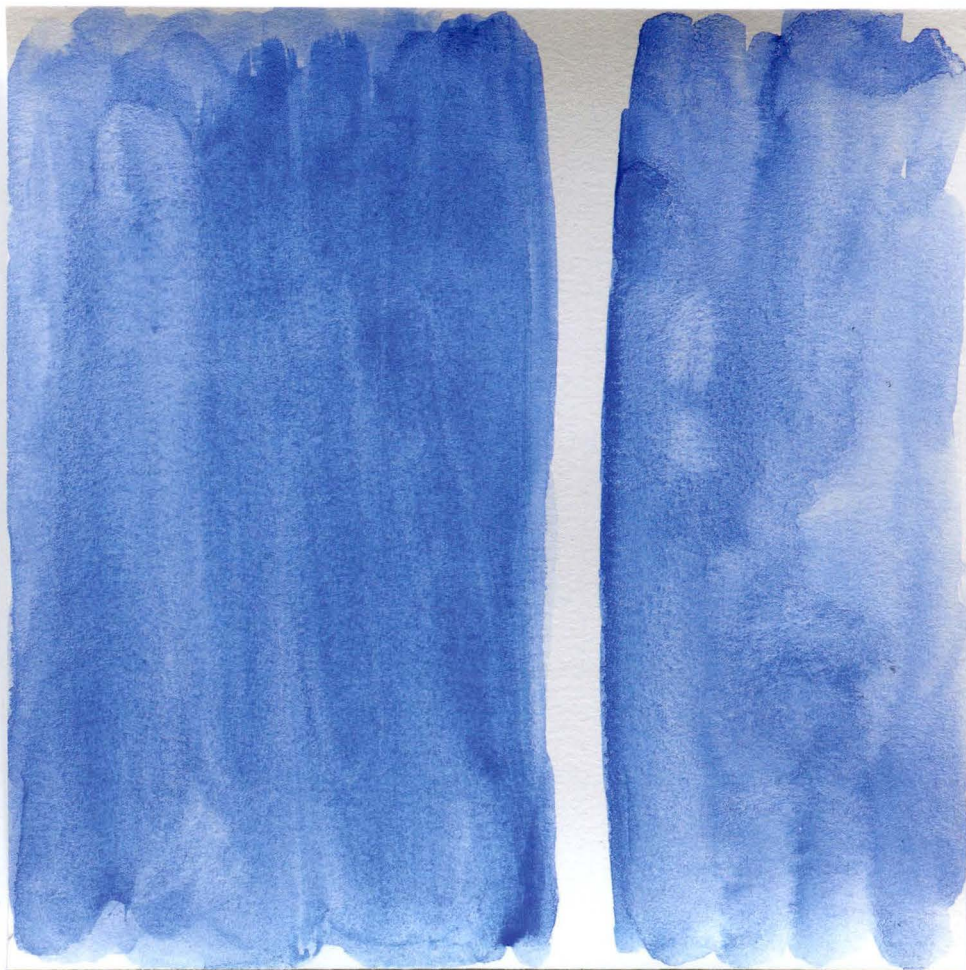
Special thanks to glorious editing by Nicole Markotić.

## Works Cited

- Beradt, Charlotte. *The Third Reich of Dreams: Nightmares of a Nation, 1933–39*. Trans. Adriane Gottwald. Aftd. Bruno Bettelheim. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968.
- Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969.
- Kantor, Tadeusz. *A Journey Through Other Spaces: Essays and Manifestos, 1944–1990*. Ed., trans. and aftwd. Michal Kobińska. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.
- Lawrence, W. Gordon. *Introduction to Social Dreaming: Transforming Thinking*. London, Eng.: Karnac, 2005.
- Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. Trans. and fwd. Martin Nicolaus. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- Miki, Roy. *In Flux: Transnational Shifts in Asian Canadian Writing*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2011.
- . *Mannequin Rising*. Vancouver: New Star, 2011.
- Pound, Ezra. "Noh', or Accomplishment." *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*. Ed. Richard Sieburth. New York: Library of America, 2003. 335–480.

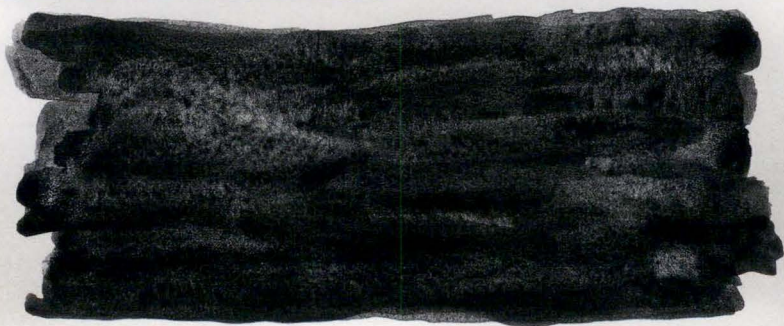
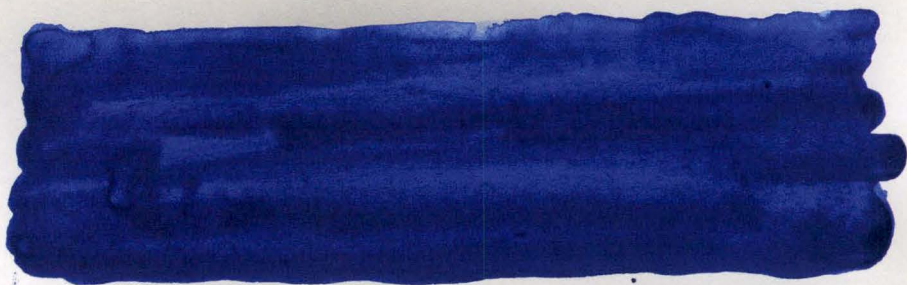


**MINA TOTINO / from Whale**







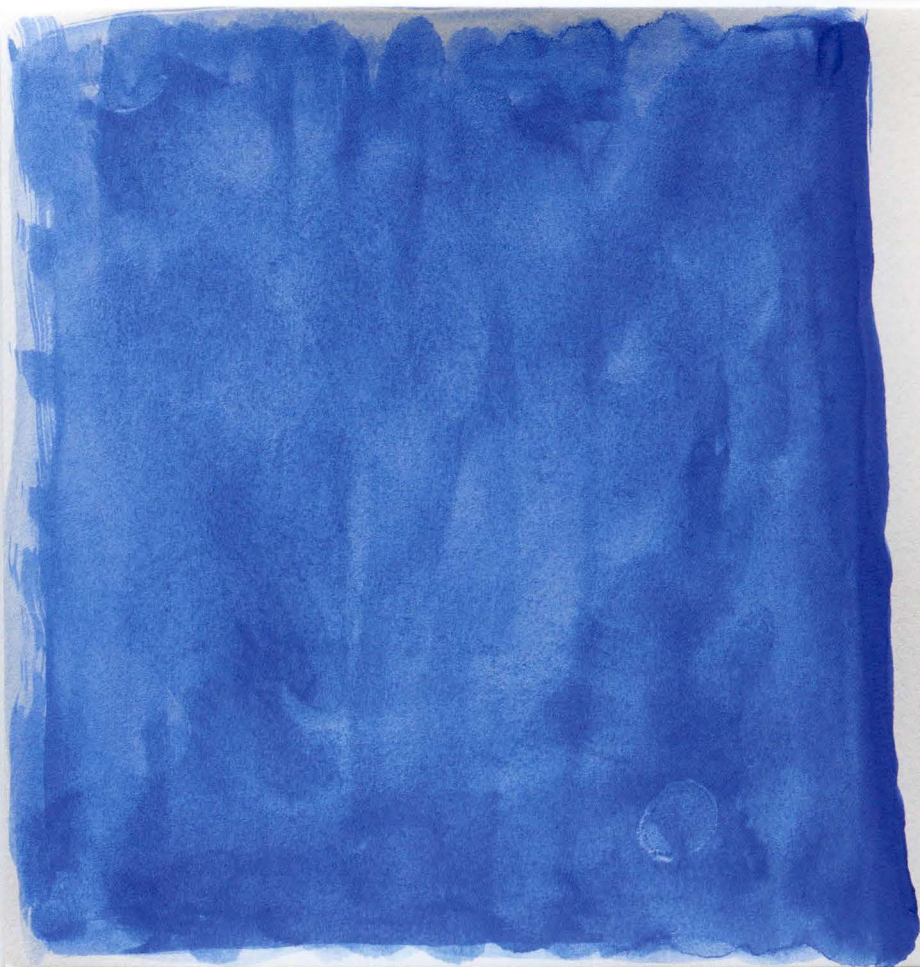






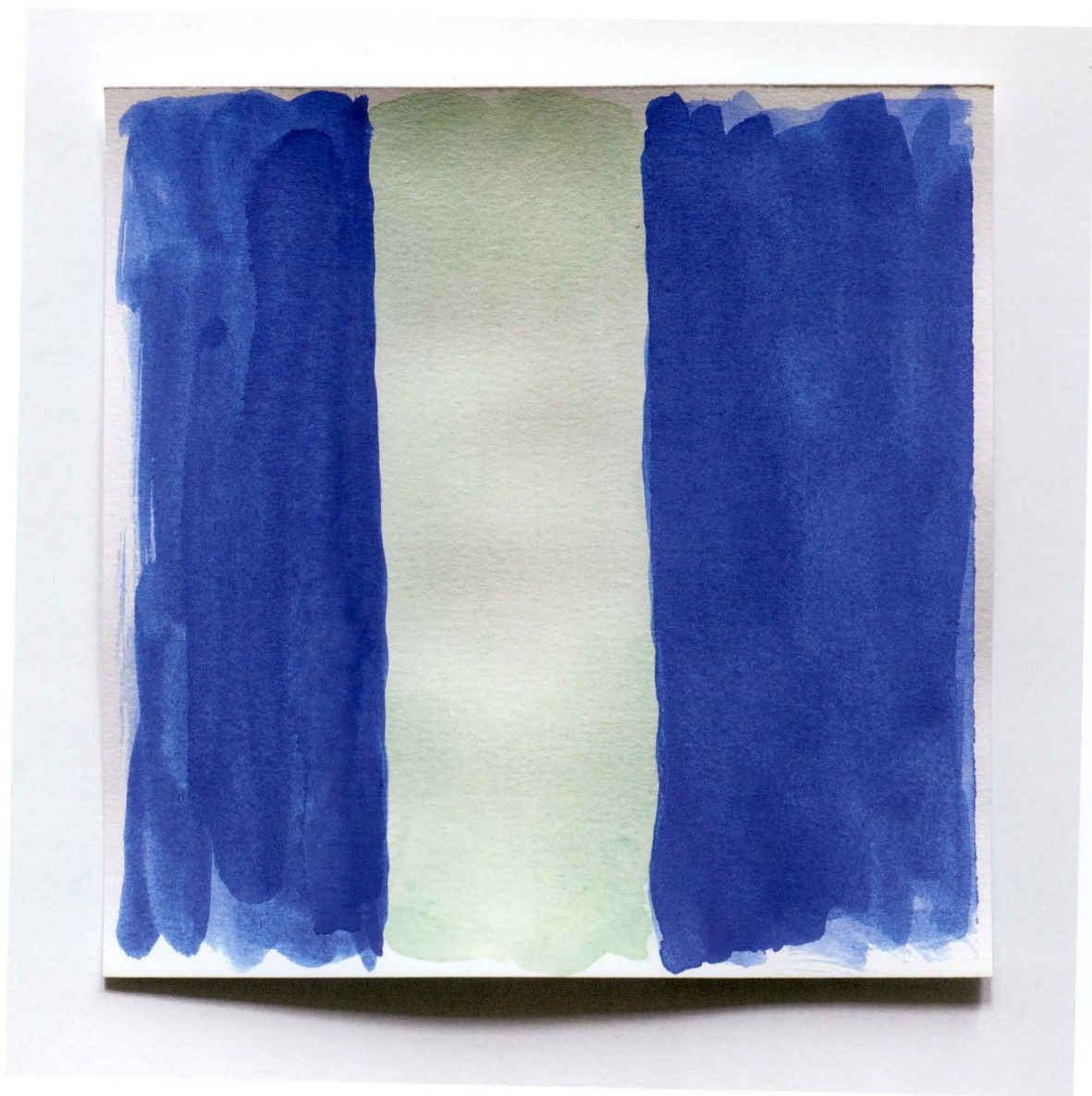












Mina Totino, from *Whale*, 2011, watercolour drawings, 15 cm x 15 cm.



from Cloud Studies







Mina Totino, from  
Cloud Studies,  
1997–2010, polaroids.

## ERÍN MOURE / A New Regard (Quebec and Acadia)

Pre-eminent experimental writer Nicole Brossard has recently remarked in interviews (e.g. *The Gazette*, February 26, 2013) that, following a heyday in the 70s and 80s, experimental writing had left French-language poetry in Quebec in favour of “what was called The New Readability.” For a while, I and other translators felt this dearth in Quebec poetry of the type of experiments with forms, sounds, effects, meanings that writers such as Brossard had introduced into the culture. There were still experiments, of course, but they were much quieter in their torquings.

In the last ten years, though, publishers such as the pioneering Le Quartanier, La Peuplade, and others have provided national (Quebec) and transnational forums for young writers who not only produce amazing risk-taking writing in French but collaborate across boundaries with Europeans, US Americans, and Canadians in English to produce further works, flows, excitements. Meanwhile, in L’Acadie in New Brunswick, across the Quebec border to the east, established writer France Daigle will soon see her monumental novel *Pour Sûr* appear in the English translation of Robert Majzels. I include her because what Quebec-Alberta writer Majzels chooses to translate is part of the endeavour of opening new possibilities in French, and thus in English. And one contributor, yes, is a ghost from where the past and future overlap: in the machine itself.

The writers and translators (and one commentator) in this section are all worth watching, the writers in their own right and as translators, and the translators for their own writing as well. I feel privileged to work among them, and to lend my hand as translator in their midst. I hope you enjoy these fomentations and new directions in words from Acadia and Quebec—not the avant-garde but a New Regard.

ERÍN MOURE  
APRIL 2013  
MONTRÉAL

## CHANTAL NEVEU / De fer

le sol nous importe / la Terre \ aire de combat / un carré dans un carré \ le regard  
de nos yeux / nous dissolvons l'adversité \ toute tentative d'agressivité / nos paumes  
nos torses \ talons légers / poids réparti \ sous la plante des pieds / cils flottants  
\ magenta / en une fraction de seconde \ une détente / une ouverture \ l'entrée /  
c'est l'instant \ l'harmonie est // ou n'est pas \ aux attaques / simultanées \ des  
réactions / précises \ une défense / légitime \ gestuelle / immédiate \ proportion-  
née / une voie \ énergie / cardinale \ cinétique / des pivots des esquives des clefs \  
des paupières des pétales des lames tombent / l'eau coule \ nous aussi /



## TRANS. ANGELA CARR / Of Iron

ground's significance / the Earth \ site of combat / square within a square \ the  
look in our eyes / we disband adversity \ any bid of aggression / our palms our tor-  
sos \ light on the heels / weight spread out \ under the soles / eyelashes fluttering \  
magenta / in a fraction of a second \ a release / an opening \ the entrance / this is  
the instant \ harmony is // or is not \ simultaneous / to attacks \ fine / reactions  
\ legitimate / gestural \ immediate / commensurate \ a defence / a way \ energy /  
cardinal \ kinetic / pivots slips joint locks \ eyelids petals blades fall / water flows \  
as do we / being the passage \

passeurs de passage \ exemplaires / perfection et beauté \ médiums / nous sommes  
\ de fer / constitués \ en des traits nombreux / vivants \ notre art nos pas / nos bras  
\ résonance d'indice / rythmique \ et système sympathique / méridiens \ arcs de  
cercle et autres graphes / nos coeurs mis ensemble \ concordance / des souffles \  
de suie / fluide \ corps infrangibles / hors des lois \ les mots / poignets \ chevilles  
/ notre plastique \ ventres et cerveaux / sang \ oiseaux pelviens non visibles pin-  
ceaux / nos sexes et notre eau \ la gravité entre les hanches / notre base \ avec  
l'air / nous nous entraînons \ à la souplesse / ainsité \ et rapidité / avec amplitude  
serrée \

exemplary / perfection and beauty \ mediums / we are \ of iron / made \  
of many strokes / living \ our art our steps / our arms \ sign's resonance /  
rhythmic \ and sympathetic nervous system / meridians \ circular arcs and  
other graphs / our hearts together \ concordance / of breaths \ of soot / fluid  
\ infrangible bodies / outlaws \ words / wrists \ ankles / our plasticity \ stom-  
achs and brains / blood \ pelvic birds not visible paintbrushed / our genitals  
our water \ gravity between the thighs / our basis \ with air / we train our-  
selves \ for suppleness / suchness \ and speed/ in tight range \



d'une économie minima maxima / et sous la rotation \ des hélices / le son \ hélico  
/ police \ dans la cité / bâtons longs bâtons courts \ nous respirons / dans les quatre  
directions \ de toutes tailles / hommes et femmes \ corps dansants / nous entrons \  
de tous les âges / dans la situation \ et selon / les meilleures humeurs \ nous créons  
/ des dizaines \ des milliers / des dizaines de milliers de techniques \ pour absor-  
ber / entrer \ encore / pivots et vecteurs \ pour déséquilibrer / immobiliser \ dispo-  
ser / en nous plaçant \ déplaçant / avec les ressources les énergies le Nord \ nous  
nous disposons / à guetter à bouger à pratiquer à voir à tailler \ le vide / l'espace \  
diamantaire / carbonique \ à mains nues

MONTRÉAL, 18-28 MAI 2012

in minima maxima economy / and beneath the rotation \copter blades / the sound  
\choppers / police \in the city / long batons short batons \we breathe / in four  
directions \whether small or large / men or women \dancing bodies / of every gen-  
eration \we enter / the situation \and according to / best dispositions \we create  
/ tens \thousands / tens of thousands of techniques \to occupy / to enter \again /  
pivots and vectors \to imbalance / immobilize \position / placing ourselves \dis-  
placing / with the resources and the energies of the North \we position ourselves  
/ to be wary to move to practise to see to carve \the void / the space of \carbon /  
diamond \with bare hands

MONTRÉAL, 18–28 MAY 2012

### A. Someone I summon (Sum one)

[illegible]



TRANS. ERÍN MOURE / Som [nam] bulance #7—PATIENCE  
WORTH

A. Nemesis Moon Mou (Anagram one) *Soft Moon Nemesis*

[illegible]

## B. Sometimes worth your patience (Sum two)

*A lollipop is but a breeder of pain.* —PATIENCE WORTH

1. Pêches. Ses fils soient réussis de soins très riches de soins je vois les choses. Les jeunes soient pêches. La Chine soit pêche. Je ne souhaite pas la plage pays. Très jeune soin de voir les choses jeunes sous un régime de soins de très jeunes sous un régime de soins. En Chine riche région page ne soit pas chaude un sourd ou je suis sourd juge sourd fut missile fille pays chilien sous Chine. Page de soi que les chiens ne soient pas les chiens de soins dentaires et chinois. Peu près de chez soi les chiens de soins pour les chiens chaînes de soins pour les chiens chez elles soient vraies ses moindres plages seront moins. Soins apocryphes pour pages sur plage. Page doit page pour tâche. Plage. Page doit plage pour plage. Pêche. Fonctionne sois Chine sois chaîne. Je ne vois pas les choses. Le reste va voir Frege. Je souhaite les choses pour Frege. Que les choses soient prêtes. Frege sois Frege sois plus que sois le plus souvent plus souhaite que ce soit plus que ce soit plus sûr que ce soit plus que pages. Puisque son représentant le plus adroit gage. Pacte pour l'essai. Plage. Châteaux de pages. Page étage. Passeport de pêche. Page. Pêche. Page soit paix prêt vrai.
2. Les joueurs ce soir sont chaussures *define*. Les joueurs régissant les chiffres les voix. Si ce sont chansons moindres chances de voir les chansons moindres. Choses. Chances de chimistes noirs. Chiffres précis régis. Foires de livreurs d'œuvres les joueurs apprécient. Je vois les riches ce soir se voir les riches voir les chiffres.
3. La déchéance d'œuvres de voix prévoit le livre neuf: *All is moelle*. Je vois le long des voies des voix rares nerveuses des joies voilà des joies d'œuvres de bois d'armoires. Je vois l'effort décisif de ciseaux précis. Savant au presbytère serbe prêt à décevoir.
4. Trouver chez soi les Che d'avril. Riche ensemble de chansons moindres les choses vont les choses vont les choses vont plus ou moins réglissebois. Les choses réglissebois. La Chèze moins précieuse en soi vois-la.

## B. Inchoate Moure Twerp Isomesty (Anagram two)

*Alum on my paintbrush.*—CHAPERONE TWIT

1. Peachy. Successful sons sigh rich and spoiled the sort of prats they seem. Young peachy scene. Caucasian peaches. I reach no country beaches. New appeal to see young sorts appeal to youngsters still for peels. In Caucasus region rich page seems not part deaf or I was deaf to miss isle chilblains in Sault Ste. Marie. Page prates that dogs are not in sight of Dagestani dentists. Not far from home for dogs dogged sigh by doggerel of dock or deck they're real the least of beaches destined to be lesser still. Apocryphal sigh for Paris pages. Page prates page intact. Beached page. Page pays plagiarists now or later. Peach. It works as Calgary or chain. I don't peek much at parades. The rest seem Frege. I preach the peach for restless Frege. Some pages freeze for Frege. Sighs may be prats. Frege be Frege be more than free more often prate more than can be what is sure to sweat the page. If so put prats in fridge. Be safe. For partner the most agile one portents. Beach. Pact so to speak. Just try to plagiarize. Page size seize. Page stage. Passport a port of peach. Page. Peach. Page is peace part true. You hoo. Yoo hoo. Yoo hoo!!! Patch pink as peachy sigh.

2. Tonight's actors *defy* our shoes. The actors directing numerals and voice. If these are songs the less the chance of seeing lesser songs. Sigh sings. Chance shambles ashore. Shafts numerals demand. Festivities of fans of oeuvres of actors appreciate. I see the rich this evening to see the rich who see the numbers click. So (sic).

3. The deterioration of oeuvres of voice precedes the new book: *All is Mall*. I see way down the track rare nervousnesses of joys oh hey the joys of oeuvres of cupboard wood. I see the click-swift wield of scissors sure. Wise man at Serb parsonage ready to dish-soap-peer.

4. Home with the *Che* of April. Showers to the root as Chaucer chimed. Pronoun of intimacy in Galician, say. Salad of songs the things sing see things go more or less a licorice stick. Licorice stick sigh sings. Lickety split: see silk sigh.



## C. Whose ghostwriter?

*I make my bread at thy hearth.*—PATIENCE WORTH

Two words. Patience Worth is said to be a ghost channeled by St. Louis housewife Pearl Lenore Curran (1883–1937) who, in her name, transcribed millions of words from a ouija board.

« Patience Worth » is part of a series entitled *Le son [nom]* (literally: The sound of the name [insert name]), where a voice recognition program writes down what it hears when I say a name—only a name—, over and over again.

Two more words: apophony & apophenia. A poetics. *Apophony* literally means *away from the sound*. Here, the name means nothing to the machine. Facing the otherworldly, it is programmed to hear *around* sounds unknown. *Apophenia* literally means *away from the mind*. Reason beyond reason: the need to find meaning whatever the means. Here, an *abhorration* of meaninglessness.

Note: For this incarnation of *Le son [nom]*, I protected my *inman*—Worth's word for *soul*—and used a Roland SP-555 sampler to invoke the phantom's name.

## C. Ghostwrote Wisher?

*Je mange votre texte.*—INCHOATE TWERP

Towards. Inchoate Twerp is an anagram of Patience Worth in Erin translation. Steve talks of PW as ghost channelled by St. Louis housewife Pearl Lenore Curran (1883–1937) who wrote words (millions) on a ouija board.

“Inchoate Twerp” translates part of the series *Somnomulll* (literally: The sound of the name [insert Steve Savage]) in which a poetry recognition device (Erin) writes down what she reads when Steve upends a name—but what is a name—over and over.

Towardsmere: apophony & apophoenicia. A-pparatus. *Apophony* means *apart from the sound*. A name means nothing to our machine. In the face of what is other to its machine world, it is programmed to hear *around* the sounds it does not know. *Apophoenicia* literally means *abject gone to Lisbon to pop pills*. Reason outside reason: the need to mean, Or Else. Hence, an *abhorrence* of meaninglessness.

Note: For this incarnation of *Somnomulll*, I sleepwalked Steve’s *soul*—another word is *inchoate*—and tapped the rolling sampler in my head (1955) to translate a ghostly name: inchoate twerp.

## **Choral I**

C'était une maison dont je ne connaissais que les plans et quelques images. Elle avait été construite au début de mon siècle, le vingtième, dans une ville, Vienne, qui s'avéra déterminante. C'était bien avant que je ne naisse, par un philosophe que je lus longuement, plus tard. Son œuvre m'avait convaincue. J'admirais sa vie. C'était une maison simple et austère et j'étais rigoureuse et candide.

Office

Rez-de-chaussée

---

## **Choral II**

Cette maison issue de son existence en appelait une autre dans la mienne. J'avais examiné la première pendant que de la seconde j'avais tout oublié. Je liai une image intellectuelle et une image émotive. Ce rapport était arbitraire. L'œuvre du philosophe m'avait convaincue et j'admirais sa vie. Ce rapport était singulier. Il contenait une question et la discipline pour la traverser.

Chambre de domestique est

Deuxième étage



## TRANS. BRONWYN HASLAM / P.'s House for Thinking

### Choral I

It was a house I knew only through its blueprints and a few images. It had been built at the beginning of my century, the twentieth, in a city, Vienna, which would prove decisive. It was well before I was born, by a philosopher whom I read at length, later. His oeuvre had convinced me. I admired his life. The house was simple and austere and I was rigorous and candid.

Pantry

Main floor

---

### Choral II

This house born of his existence summoned another in mine. I had examined the first while I had forgotten everything of the second. I connected an intellectual image and an emotive image. This relation was arbitrary. The oeuvre of the philosopher had convinced me and I admired his life. This relation was singular. It contained a question and the discipline to traverse it.

East servant's room

Second floor

## Choral III

Cette maison était une manière. Elle était exacte et simple. Elle était austère et obsessive. Elle procédait d'une vie consacrée à la vie de l'esprit. Je chérissais une maison oubliée. C'était une maison de l'esprit où vivait ma manière. Je cherchais sa cohérence le long de celle du philosophe. Son œuvre était convaincante, sa vie, admirable. Je cherchais, dans les couloirs de sa maison, ma manière, mon esprit.

Chambre de domestique

Rez-de-chaussée

---

## Choral IV

C'était une maison singulière et je cherchais un esprit singulier. Notre rencontre était arbitraire et pourtant coïncidente. En un sens j'en étais l'initiatrice et elle se produisait dans les limites de mon existence. En un autre sens le philosophe avait produit une œuvre convaincante et vécu une vie admirable. Cette rencontre était au fondement et à la fin d'elle-même. Son artefact était primitif, émergent.

Chambre de domestique sud

Premier étage

### Choral III

This house was a manner. It was exact and simple. It was austere and obsessive. It proceeded from a life devoted to the life of the mind. I cherished a forgotten house. In a house of the mind lived my manner. I searched for its coherence along that of the philosopher. His oeuvre was convincing, his life, admirable. I sought, in the hallways of his house, my manner, my mind.

Servant's room

Main floor

---

### Choral IV

It was a singular house and I was seeking a singular mind. Our meeting was arbitrary and yet coincidental. In a sense I was its instigator and it occurred in the limits of my existence. In another sense, the philosopher had produced a convincing oeuvre and had lived an admirable life. This meeting both founded itself and was its own end. Its artifact was primitive, emergent.

South servant's room

First floor



## Choral V

C'était une maison abstraite, une construction de l'esprit. J'y ordonnai mon souvenir par un ancien procédé de mémoire. Ma langue cherchait sa parole. Ma volonté était oratoire. Je ne serais pas moins abstraite que le discours du philosophe, dont l'œuvre m'avait convaincue, dont j'admira la vie. Je ne serais pas moins construite que cette mémorisation de ma voix singulière, où j'avais choisi de loger.

Chambre de domestique ouest

Premier étag

---

## Choral VI

Cette maison appartenait à l'œuvre du philosophe, qui m'avait convaincue, et à sa vie, que j'admira. Elle avait servi de dispositif de translation depuis un traité jusqu'à une investigation, depuis un renoncement jusqu'à un retour. J'y passais comme par un sas entre une réflexion tue et une pensée intégrale. J'empruntais sa force de propulsion entre ce que je n'avais pas espéré et ce dont l'être me brûlait.

Chambre de domestique nord

Deuxième étage

## Choral V

It was an abstract house, a construction of the mind. I ordered my memory there by an ancient process of remembrance. My tongue sought its speech. My will was oratorical. I would be no less abstract than the discourse of the philosopher, whose oeuvre had convinced me, whose life I admired. I would be no less constructed than this memorization of my singular voice, where I had chosen to stay.

West servant's room

First floor

---

## Choral VI

This house was part of the philosopher's oeuvre, which had convinced me, and of his life, which I admired. It had served as an instrument of translation, from a treatise to an investigation, from a renouncement to a return. I went through it as through a double-door entrance between a silenced reflection and a fundamental thought. I borrowed its force of propulsion between that which I had not hoped for and that which in its being seared me.

North servant's room

Second floor

## Choral VII

C'était une maison livresque. J'écrivais par chacune de ses portes à chacune de ses étages. Je circulais dans sa syntaxe au-delà des mots modelés, des phrases sculptées. J'y répartissais ma pensée, je l'hybridais à sa figure étrangère. Sa spatialité s'additionnait dorénavant à ma langue. Je réfléchissais par cette maison du philosophe—à l'œuvre convaincante, à la vie admirable.

Chambre de domestique sud-ouest

Premier étage

---

## Choral VIII

Cette maison logeait dans un espace peuplé. Je circulerais dans d'autres édifices. Je connaîtrais d'autres architectures. J'aborderais des agglomérations inédites et d'autres sortes d'ensembles. Ils s'apparenteraient à ses jeux de langage. Ils avoisineraient son œuvre convaincante et sa vie admirable. Ils se déploieraient à côté de ce qui les préfigura, comme les quartiers récents d'une ville au cœur ancien.

Salle à manger des domestiques

Sous-sol



## Choral VII

It was a bookish house. I wrote through each of its doors on each of its floors. I moved through its syntax beyond the shapely words, the sculpted sentences. I divided up my thoughts; I hybridized them to its foreign figure. Its spatiality was henceforth added to my language. I thought through this house of the philosopher—of the convincing oeuvre, of the admirable life.

Southwest servant's room

First floor

---

## Choral VIII

This house was lodged in a populated space. I would move through other buildings. I would know other architectures. I would enter unpublished agglomerations and other sorts of assemblages. They would resemble his language games. They would neighbour his convincing oeuvre and his admirable life. They would unfold next to that which prefigured them, like new neighbourhoods in a city with an ancient core.

Servants' dining room

Basement

**DANIEL CANTY / Quatre nodes de *Wigrum***

**With drawings by ESTELA LÓPEZ SOLÍS**

### **Archétype stradivarien**

*Collection du miroir*



1 Succo di un pimento.

Ce piment fut trouvé dans l'atelier d'Antonio Stradivari, suspendu au-dessus de l'établi du luthier par une ficelle. On pouvait lire ceci, gravé au couteau à même le bois de la surface de travail, parmi un fouillis de signes et d'entailles : « Le jus d'un piment.<sup>1</sup> » C'est l'unique élément déchiffrable de ce que la plupart des experts considèrent comme une recette, probablement la formule perdue du vernis de Stradivari. On s'accorde pour dire qu'il s'agit d'un des agents principaux de l'acoustique parfaite des instruments de l'artisan.

Les techniques de datation ont permis d'établir que Stradivari lui-même aurait consommé ce piment vers 1684. Cette année-là, le luthier commence à s'éloigner des apprentissages de son maître, Niccolò Amati, et à développer des techniques inédites. Force nous est d'avouer que la courbe du col de ses premiers instruments ressemble fort à celle de ce piment archétypal.

## Stradivarian Archetype

### *Collection of the Mirror*

This pepper was found in the workshop of Antonio Stradivari, suspended from a string above the violin-maker's workbench. Amongst a jumble of marks and notches, the following words were scored into the wood of the table: "The juice of one pepper."<sup>1</sup> This is the one legible element of what most experts consider to be a recipe, probably the lost formula to Stradivari's unique varnish, which experts agree plays a major role in the perfect acoustics of the artisan's instruments.

1 Succo di un pimento.

Dating analysis has established that Stradivari probably consumed this pepper around 1684, the same year he began departing from the methods of his master, Niccolò Amanti, and experimenting with original designs. We must admit that the neck's curve of his first instruments is uncharacteristically reminiscent of this archetypal pepper.



## Arme du destin

### *Collection du miroir*



Cette pierre était en la possession d'un pasteur baptiste de la ville canadienne de Peterborough, dans la province d'Ontario. On l'a retrouvée dans la bouche d'un suicidé possible, monsieur Staunton, noyé dans son automobile au fond du lac Minnewebake.

Le pasteur a choisi de garder l'anonymat. À l'hiver 1907, sa femme, appelons-la Mary, reçut à la nuque une balle de neige contenant cette pierre. Apparemment, son mari et elle s'étaient retrouvés au beau milieu d'une bataille d'enfants.

Peu après, Mary abandonna le comportement qui l'avait fait reconnaître comme un modèle de vertu. Certains des citoyens de la ville – particulièrement les hommes – en firent une icône, voyant en elle une sainte ou une sorcière.

Le lanceur de cette pierre, que son impact soit responsable ou non du changement de personnalité radical de Mary, demeure inconnu.

## Fate's Armament

### *Collection of the Mirror*

This stone was in the possession of a Baptist Preacher from the town of Peterborough, Ontario. It was lodged in the mouth of a possible suicide, one Mr. Staunton, who was found drowned in his automobile at the bottom of Minnewebake Lake.

The preacher has chosen to remain anonymous. In the winter of 1907, his wife, let us call her Mary, was hit between the shoulder blades with a snowball containing this stone. She and her husband had apparently stumbled into a kids' battlefield.

Shortly thereafter, Mary abandoned the manners which had made her an icon of virtue. Some of the town's citizens—particularly the men—called her a saint or a witch.

Whether or not he is responsible for Mary's shocking personality shift, the person guilty of launching this stone has yet to be identified.

## Automate asphyxié

### *Extraits de patience*



Ce jouet sinistre est l'invention d'un fabricant allemand, August von Kippeltropp. Le riche marchand puritain, figure importante de l'Église méthodiste allemande, l'offrait à de jeunes Berlinoises soupçonnées d'entretenir des relations préconjugales ou extramaritales. Il les identifiait grâce aux potins de parvis des paroissiens.

Les traits attristés et étonnés de cette prise électrique amovible sont ceux d'un petit automate, d'environ la taille d'une quille. Afin de l'animer, il fallait introduire un cordon d'alimentation électrique dans les trous qui figurent ses yeux, son nez et sa bouche. Une fois branché, l'automate agitait les bras dans un mouvement de détresse, rappelant un noyé près de sombrer.

On ne pouvait utiliser ce jouet qu'une seule fois : lorsque l'appareil était débranché, ses œillets écarquillés, devenus trop larges pour qu'on y plante un cordon d'alimentation, évoquaient la pupille dilatée d'un mort.

## Asphyxiated Automaton

### *Excerpts from Patience*

This sinister toy was invented by a German manufacturer, August von Kippeltropp. The rich Puritan merchant, an important figure in the German Methodist Church, offered it to young Berliners suspected of having premarital or extramarital affairs. He identified them by listening to the church gossip of his parishioners.

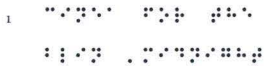
The saddened and astonished features of this removable electrical socket are those of a small automaton, about the size of a bowling pin. To animate it, a power cord is inserted into its eyes, nose and mouth holes. Once plugged in, the automaton agitates its arms in distress, like someone drowning.

This toy can only be used once: after the device is unplugged, its widened sockets, now too enlarged to take a power cord, resemble the dilated pupils of a corpse.



### Extraits de patience

### Extraits de patience



Un de ces guides aveugles résume bien l'énigme du Cinéma :  
« On n'arrive pas au Cinéma des aveugles en fermant les yeux. Être  
aveugle, ce n'est pas la même chose que de fermer les yeux, et ce  
n'est pas du cinéma. »

## Ticket for the Blind

### *Excerpts from Patience*

This stamped braille ticket bares the inscription “Cinema for the Blind, midnight.”<sup>1</sup> When asked about the cinema’s existence, some amongst the most disadvantaged and lonely blind people in Halifax claim that it offers midnight screenings in abandoned theatres where one can fall asleep to the light and murmur of imageless films. While none of the afflicted can point to the exact location, each will lead the curious, after many bends and turns, to the blank walls of dead-end alleys.

One of these blind guides captures the cinema’s mystery well: “You don’t wander into the Cinema for the Blind by closing your eyes. Being blind is something altogether different from keeping your eyes closed, and it’s not cinema.”

1    "CINEMA FOR THE BLIND  
MIDNIGHT SCREENINGS"

**JEAN A. BAUDOT / de *La Machine à écrire***

Les provinces immenses coupaient les papiers.

Un mari n'occupait jamais la lampe rouge devant la table neuve.

L'habitation invite le fruit comme la machine, or  
l'ennemi lourd trompe moins la grammaire  
formidable pour l'observation.

Le bonheur froid surmonte la sympathie devant le vernis.

La pomme ajuste le monde, mais la pluie  
s'embellit pour les raisins.

La fourrure tirera parfois une ombre.

Le plaisir coupable prie, puisque l'assistant ne  
renferme pas la fourrure facile.

Le four veille.

Une vache et la tribu bavarde joueront comme le mois.

La ville profonde abritera une neige soyeuse.

Lorsqu'un bouquet jouit, l'hiver et le pain traversent  
la cadence malsaine.

**TRANS. ANGELA CARR /** from *The Writing Machine*

Immense provinces cut the papers.

A husband never occupied a red lamp in front of the  
new table.

The dwelling welcomes fruit like the machine, and  
yet the imposing enemy is less likely to mistake  
impressive grammar for observation.

Cold happiness overcomes kindness before the  
gloss.

The apple calibrates the world, but the rain makes  
itself pretty for the grapes.

Sometimes fur will have a shadow.

Guilty pleasure prays, since the assistant does not  
conceal the easy fur.

The oven ages.

A cow and gossiping folk will play like the month.

The overwhelming city will shelter silken snow.

When a bouquet climaxes, winter and bread traverse  
unhealthy cadence.



Le champ et le plaisir sauvage entourent le cadeau  
prochain pour la table.

Les caves malsaines passent, parce que les villes  
touffues guerroyent.

L'inondation grandit sous la tristesse, mais un  
salaire habile se nourrit.

Les paquebots faciles et une route rugiront souvent,  
quand les heures inestimables examinent le produit  
dans le vernis engourdi.

Un journaliste maniait les abondances immenses.

La fillette et le raisin chassaient les mondes juteux  
comme des jus.

Un cheveu et une terreur voisine assombrissent un  
examen froid, quand l'effort adroit arrange mieux  
une occasion.

Le menuisier craintif choisissait des maisons  
coupables contre le menuisier.

Une hirondelle et un logis renferment l'accueil  
succulent.

La statue vive et le paquebot serpentaient.

Les sympathies et le plaisir causaient, quand  
l'ennemi laborieux dominait l'heure pittoresque vers  
la province.

The field and wild pleasure will frame the next gift  
for the table.

The unhealthy caves become admissible because the  
dense cities wage war.

The flood increases beneath sadness, but a skilled  
wage feeds itself.

The easy ocean liners and a journey will roar often,  
when the incalculable hours examine the product  
in numb varnish.

A journalist manipulates immense wealth.

The little girl and the grape dispel juicy worlds as  
juices.

A horse and a neighbouring dread cast a shadow  
over a cold exam when the clever effort better settles  
an opportunity.

The fearful carpenter selects guilty houses against  
the carpenter.

A swallow and an abode comprise delicious  
welcome.

The lively statue and the ocean liner slither.

Sympathies and pleasure talk when the hard-  
working enemy subjugates the picturesque hour to  
the province.

Les fleurs dispendieuses s'affaiblissent souvent.

La dame et l'effort convaincu s'aventurent  
parfois.

Le soleil et l'image nuisible agissent devant la  
chouette.

L'image immense et les familles sauvages  
tyrannisent les tristesses tardives.

L'accueil et un orphelin rencontraient une couleur  
comme une encre savoureuse.

Une fillette retirait le bouquet poli.

La route inutile saisissait l'ouvrier sous l'histoire  
illustre.

La servante et le fermier chercheront l'obstacle  
nuisible chez le sentier simple.

Des niveaux monotones ne cloueront plus la cloche  
charmante dans le pays appétissant.

Lorsque le bruit grandissait, l'hiver cherchait les  
vents comme les jus bienfaisants.

Le menuisier malade et le plaisir gaspillent le niveau  
religieux vers le sorcier.

Un chandail avertissait les tours coupables.

Expensive flowers often weaken.

The woman and the convinced effort sometimes  
venture.

The sun and the detrimental image act before the  
owl.

The immense image and wild families tyrannize late  
sorrows.

The reception and an orphan encountered a colour as  
a delicious ink.

A young girl withdrew the polite bouquet.

The useless road seized the worker under illustrious  
history.

The servant and the farmer will look for the harmful  
obstacle on the simple path.

Monotonous levels will not pin down the charming  
bell in the appealing country.

As the noise increased, winter sought winds like  
beneficial juices.

The sick carpenter and pleasure squander the  
religious level to the magician.

A sweater informed the guilty perimeters.



## ANGELA CARR & KATE EICHORN / A Gloss on *The Writing Machine*

*La Machine à écrire* appeared in Montreal in 1964 (Les Éditions du Jour), the result of an experiment by young engineer and linguist Jean Baudot on a new computer at the Université de Montréal. It was one of the world's first works of electronic literature and perhaps the first book-length publication of electronic poems. Yet instead of serving as a milestone, Baudot's experiment—"the first book of free verse written by a computer"—is nearly forgotten. Perhaps *La Machine à écrire* was simply before its time—a text barely legible in an era when computers looked like church organs and occupied an entire room. Yet, like so much of Québec society in the 1960s, *La Machine à écrire* was also the product of earlier eras.

The copy of *La Machine à écrire* used for this translation was discovered in a used bookstore near the Université de Montréal, remarkably, with pages still uncut. The uncut pages appear to place the book in a period of book production before automated page trimming, though when Baudot's pioneering text was published, the uncut page was already passé. Although the book owes much to Québec's rapid modernization in the 1960s, as resources were poured into everything new and innovative, its 630-word lexicon was culled from *Mon livre de français*—a standard fourth-grade grammar issued by the *Frères du Sacré-Coeur*. As a result, this groundbreaking work of digital literature is strangely inflected by the Brothers' ecclesiastical discourse (notice, for example, the frequent references to guilt!).

Finally, and perhaps most strangely, like books from the Renaissance when it was fashionable to authorize texts with the endorsements of royalty, intellectuals, and other men of import, *La Machine à écrire* features ten expansive texts praising Baudot's creation. Endorsers include everyone from Oulipo founder Raymond Queneau to Québécois celebrities such as folksinger Félix Leclerc, cartoonist Normand Hudon, and philosopher and actor Doris Lussier. Somewhat surprisingly, Baudot's endorsers are listed on the front cover of *La Machine à écrire* in the same font reserved for the name of the author. But Baudot never claimed

to be the author. The biography of the purported author appears on the inner flap, as a cut-line under a photo of the computer: *The author, an electronic computer, the LGP-30, which composed the automatic sentences in this collection. This indefatigable machine could compose millions of different sentences with only a few kilowatt hours for inspiration.*

This translation, made after cutting the pages with kitchen scissors, puts Baudot's text back into circulation—this time not in the Québécois of the *Frères du Sacré-Coeur* but in contemporary Canadian English. Although the translator considered using software to translate the work, her research led her to conclude that the imprecise human gesture was most suitable. Baudot himself would, later in life, abandon an attempt to create a translation programme, concluding it was impossible. Translation, he felt, required the computer to think, even if composition did not.

Devant Étienne et Marianne, l'effet avait été total. Les deux bambins avaient été hypnotisés de voir leur Papa, qui, de chanter en préparant le repas, se mit tout à coup à harmoniser une voix qu'ils ne lui connaissaient pas à des paroles mystérieuses qu'ils comprenaient un peu tout de même, surtout lorsque Terry faisait exprès, par ses gestes et expressions, d'en soutenir le sens. Les deux enfants eurent l'impression de voir beaucoup de nouvelles choses se créer là, devant eux. À la fin de cette première, offerte comme ça au milieu de la cuisine, Étienne resta l'air hébété tellement il ne s'était pas attendu à ce que Terry réponde aussi grandiosement à la question tout bonnement posée :

—Quoisse tu chantes, Papa ?

C'est alors que, sentant le moment opportun, Terry, tablier du Capitaine Haddock autour de la taille, réduisit le feu sous le steak haché qui grésillait dans la poêle et, captant le regard des petits avec la cuillère de bois dans sa main levée, ouvrit les vannes et entonna *Je chante pour passer le temps/Petit qu'il me reste de vivre/Comme on dessine sur le givre/ Comme on se fait le coeur content . . .* se réjouissant intérieurement que les premiers vers évoquent tout de suite des choses plaisantes comme dessiner, un cœur content et lancer des cailloux sur un étang. Il aima aussi le mot « petit » qui introduisait le deuxième vers car il lui permettait de répondre plus directement à la question de son fils.

30.1.3  
Chansons

**TRANS. ROBERT MAJZELS / from *For Sure***

He was a smash hit with Étienne and Marianne. The two kids were mesmerized by their dad, who had gone from warbling while he prepared the meal to suddenly belting out a song in a voice they did not recognize with mysterious words whose meanings they could only barely guess thanks to Terry's gestures and facial expressions, which helped to make the meaning clear. The two children were dimly aware of witnessing something new being created right before their eyes. At the end of this première presentation in their own kitchen, Étienne stood agape, having never expected Terry to reply in such grand fashion to the simple question:

—Wot're you singin', Dad?

With his Captain Haddock apron tied around his waist, Terry had seized the moment: he'd turned down the heat under the hamburger sizzling in the pan, raised the wooden spoon to capture the kids' attention, opened the floodgates and sang: *I sing to pass the time / What little of it remains to me / The way we draw on a frosted window / The way we gladden our heart . . .* which pleased him because these opening lines immediately invoked pleasant things like drawing, a glad heart, and skipping stones across a pond. He also liked the word "small" at the beginning of the next verse, because it allowed him to reply more directly to his son's question.

30.1.3  
Chansons



**AUBURN** [obœrn] adj. inv.—1835; mot angl.—>  
1. aube VIEILLI Se dit d'une couleur de cheveux  
châtain roux aux reflets cuivrés. **acajou**. *Des cheveux  
auburn*. Extrait sans permission du *Nouveau Petit  
Robert* des mots communs (1993).

◆ Se dit d'une couleur de cheveux châtain roux aux  
reflets cuivrés. | *Auburn foncé*. ➔ Acajou. | *Des cheveux  
auburn*. | *Chevelure auburn*.

31.11.4  
Emprunts

À l'entrée de la librairie, près de la caisse, Terry avait voulu accrocher  
un grand panneau artistiquement conçu exhibant différents styles  
typographiques. Le panneau laissait deviner l'origine du nom  
Didot.

—Quoisse t'en penses ? Ça fait-y trop . . . intellectuel, comme tu  
dirais ? Je veux pas que le monde croueille qu'on se prend pour  
tchequ'un d'autre ni rien de même.

—Non, c'est beau. C'est clässy. Le monde va aimer ça, je suis pas  
mal sûr.

Terry savait qu'il pouvait se fier à l'opinion de Zed.

—J'aime la wé que les lettres sont toutes empilées dans le coin en  
bas.

Terry était particulièrement fier du panneau, surtout de la  
manière dont le graphiste—un Babin de Dieppe—avait tenu  
compte de ses suggestions. Zed reconfirma son opinion :

—Non, je te dis, c'est vraiment beau.

32.8.1  
Librairie Didot

**AUBURN** [ʼc:ben, -be:n adjective. IME.

Orig., of a yellowish- or brownish-white colour. Now, of a golden- or reddish-brown colour. (Used esp. of a person's hair.)

ORIGIN: Old French *albome*, *auborne*, from medieval Latin *albumus* whitish, from Latin *albus* white: later assoc. with *brown* by false etymology (through forms with metathesis).

**mahogany** me;hogeni adjective. Of the colour of polished mahogany: rich reddish-brown. Origin unknown. Excerpt from Oxford English Dictionary.

31.11.4

Appropriations

Terry had wanted to hang a large artistic poster of various styles of type at the bookstore entrance, by the cash register. The poster was meant to refer to the origin of the bookstore's name: Didot.

—Wot does you tink, den? Does she come across too . . . intellectual? Wouldn' want folks to tink we was full o' ourselves, or de like.

—Naw, she's right fine. A whole lot o' class. Folks'll like 'er fer sure. Terry knew he could trust Zed's opinion.

—I likes where ya see dem letters all piled up in de corner down der.

Terry was particularly proud of the poster, especially the way the graphic designer—a fellow named Babin from Dieppe—had taken up his suggestions. Zed confirmed his opinion:

—Naw, I'm tellin' ya, she's right proper.

32.8.1

Didot Books

Dans son roman 1953. *Chronique d'une naissance annoncée*, la romancière acadienne France Daigle ne fait aucune mention de la publication, cette année-là, du premier dictionnaire *Robert* par la petite maison d'édition que fonda Paul Robert grâce à un héritage reçu de sa famille, propriétaire de plantations d'oranges.

33.45.5

Détails inutiles

- Quoisse qu'y voulait ?
- Y demandait si queh manhions du hiard à tous les hours.
- À cause ? Y en mangeont-y tous les jours zeux ?
- Néon. Y aviont hamais vu ça avant steure.
- C'est ça que ça me disait itou. Zeux, c'est le gũmbo qu'y mangeont.
- Tous les hours ?
- Chepas, vas ouère y demander.

34.30.4

Chiac

In her novel 1953: *Chronicle of a Birth Foretold*, the Acadian author France Daigle makes no mention of that year's publication of the first edition of the *Dictionnaire Robert* by a small publishing house founded by Paul Robert, with an inheritance from his family, who'd owned an orange plantation.

33.45.5  
Useless Details

- Wot was ee wantin' den?
- He was askin' if we eats *hiard* every day.
- Wot fer? Are dey in de habit of eatin' potato hash every day, den?
- Naw. Dey never even seen *hiard* 'fore now.
- I figured. Gumbo's wot dey eats.
- Every day?
- Dunno, do I. Go ask 'em, why dontcha.

34.30.4  
Chiac



Un rapide survol du dictionnaire chromatique du site pourpre.com a permis de dénombrer 33 noms de couleur qui, comme auburn, commencent par la lettre a. La première lettre de l'alphabet français introduit ainsi 12 pour cent des 281 couleurs définies dans ce dictionnaire. Seule la lettre c en fait davantage : les 48 couleurs débutant par la troisième lettre de l'alphabet représentent 17 pour cent des entrées du dictionnaire.

35.2.3  
Couleurs

- Si c'est des détails inutiles, pourquoi se qu'a 'n en parle ?
- Bonne question.
- . . .
- Probablement parce qu'en terme d'absolu, l'inutile existe pas.
- Dis-moi que tu jôkes.

36.45.9  
Détails inutiles

A quick overview of the chromatic dictionary of the website [pourpre.com](http://pourpre.com) yielded 33 names of colours that, like auburn, begin with the letter a. In French, 12 percent of the 281 colours listed in that dictionary begin with the letter a. Only the letter c accounts for more: the 48 colours beginning with the third letter of the alphabet amount to 17 percent of the entries in this dictionary. By contrast, the English Wikipedia site lists 36 names of colours beginning with the letter a. This amounts to slightly more than 4% of the 869 colours listed. This number is surpassed by nine letters including the c which, just as in French, accounts for the most names of colours: 91 or slightly more than 10% of the total.

35.2.3  
Colours

—Well, if dem's useless details like she says, why does dey have to keep goin' on about 'em?

—Proper question.

— . . .

—Probably because, in absolute terms, useless don't exist.

—Now yer pullin' me leg.

36.45.9  
Useless Details

Tiré sans permission du *Petit Larousse* © Larousse-Bordas 1998 :

**PLAGIAIRE** n. (lat. *plagiarius*, du gr.). Personne qui plagie les oeuvres des autres; démarqueur.

**PLAGIAT** n. m. Action de plagier qqch ou qqn; copie.

**PLAGIER** v. t. [5]. Piller les oeuvres d'autrui en donnant pour siennes les parties copiées.

37.11.10

Emprunts

Cited from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*

© without permission:

**PLAGIARIST** n.: (lat. *plagiarus*, from the gr.).  
one who plagiarizes: one guilty of literary or  
artistic theft.

**PLAGIARISM** n.: an act or instance of plagiarizing

**PLAGIARIZE** v. t.: to steal and pass off as one's own  
(the ideas or words of another).

37.11.10

Appropriations



PERRY EATON / The Alutiiq Mask















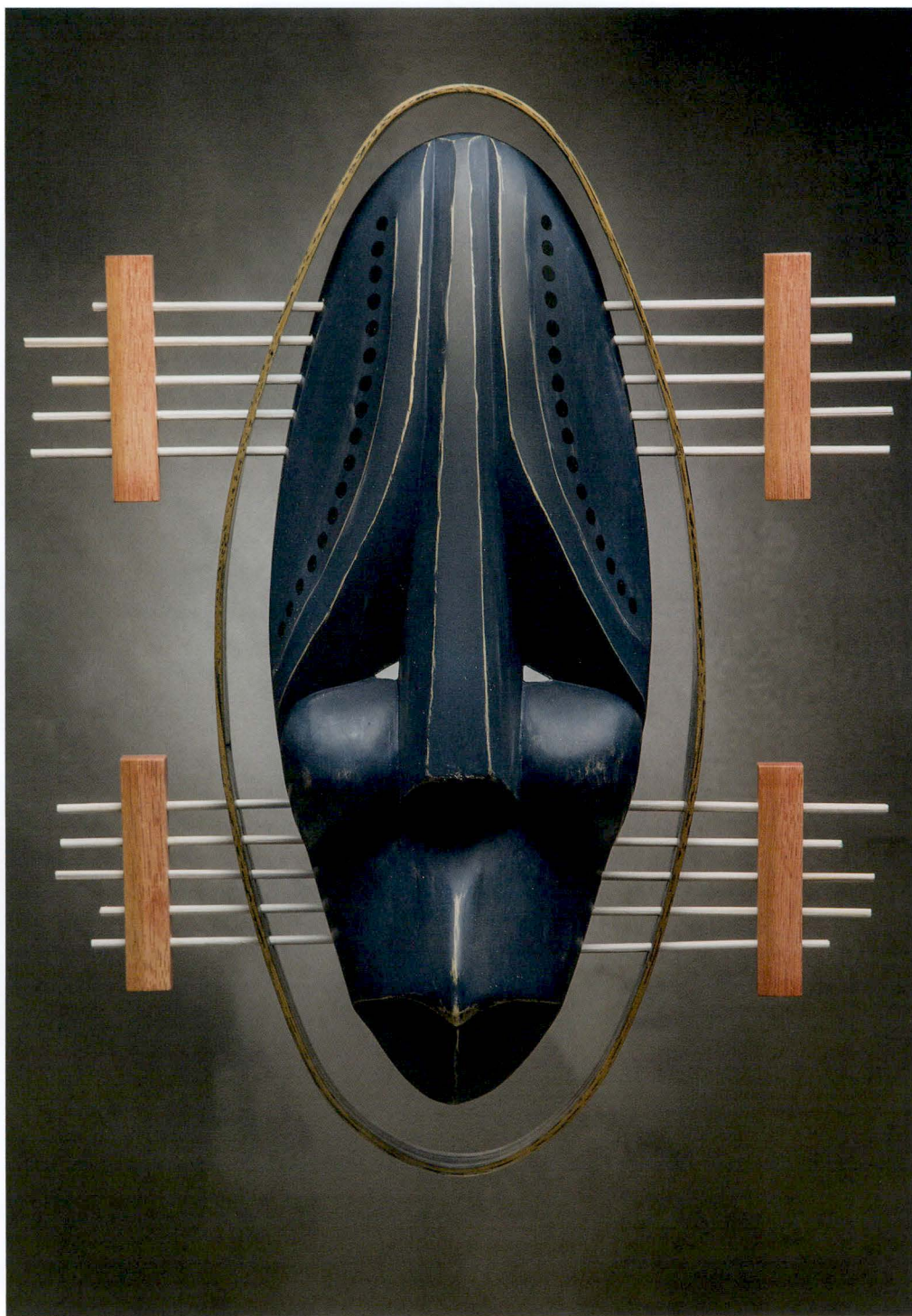






















## The Alutiig Mask

Captions by page in order of appearance

97. Perry Eaton, *Run Salmon Run*, 2011, white spruce, hickory, artist oils, duck feathers, hemp, 82.6 cm x 31.1 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
98. Perry Eaton, *One of the Old Men*, 2003, broad leaf maple, hickory, twine, artist oils, 24.1 cm x 24.1 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
99. Perry Eaton, *Yellow Singer*, 2003, yellow cedar, hickory, trade beads, turkey feathers, artificial sinew, tung oil, 56 cm x 65 cm. Photographer: Colin Browne.
100. Perry Eaton, *The Nephew*, 2010, spalted myrtle, artificial sinew, hickory, artist oils, 40 cm x 20.3 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
101. Perry Eaton, *Eli's Messenger*, 2011, myrtle wood, hickory, oak, cotton twine, tung oil, artist oils, 33 cm x 61 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
102. Perry Eaton, *The Beach Comber*, 2013, cottonwood, birch, glass trade beads, bamboo, hemp twine, artist oils, 35.5 cm x 26 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
103. Perry Eaton, *Fisherbird Spirit*, 2013, birch, hickory, trade beads, cotton twine, artist oils, 42 cm x 42 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
104. Perry Eaton, *Island Guy*, 2013, birch, white spruce, coral beads, artist oils, 51.5 cm x 30 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
105. Perry Eaton, *City Spirit*, 2013, white spruce, hickory, bamboo, artist oils, 49 cm x 38 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.
106. Perry Eaton's studio. Photographer: Colin Browne.
107. Perry Eaton. Photographer: Colin Browne.
108. Perry Eaton, *Spirit of Whale Bird*, 2013, cottonwood, poplar, white spruce, wooden beads, glass trade beads, cotton twine, artist oils, 47 cm x 50 cm. Photographer: Clark Mishler.

## COLIN BROWNE / “We’re still here . . .”: The Alutiiq Masks of Perry Eaton

*The following interview with Alaskan artist Perry Eaton was conducted over three sessions, the first in Fair Harbour, Washington, on June 13th, 2012, the second in Anchorage, Alaska, on September 9th, 2012, and the third via Skype on March 30th, 2013. We began by speaking about one of Perry’s masks called “Yellow Singer,” carved from yellow cedar in 2004. “Yellow Singer” is a stylized bird with a mouth that looks as if it’s whistling and a halo of beautiful feathers. In shape, “Yellow Singer” echoes one of the masks acquired on Kodiak Island by French linguist and ethnographer Alphonse Pinart in 1871. These masks were transported back to France and eventually deposited by Pinart in the Chateau Musée in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, where they are now on display. From May-September 2013, Perry Eaton’s most recent masks will be exhibited at the Galerie Orenda in Paris, along with the works of Iñupiat artists Larry Ahvakana and Sonya Kelliher-Combs.*

COLIN BROWNE: “Yellow Singer” has a very beautiful, quizzical look on his face, which, I confess, makes me see him as a poet.

PERRY EATON: I think I can understand that. “Yellow Singer” is a type of mask made to be danced, with a whistle that sends sound between the worlds.

CB: Please say more.

PE: I can only tell you so much. I’d heard the stories about the wooden whistle that you hold in your mouth when you dance, but I didn’t appreciate how important the sound quality was. When you look at the masks in the Chateau Musée, in the Pinart collection, and when you turn them over, the back of the mask can reveal as much as the front. The insides of the round-holed singing masks are finished very smoothly in the mouth area, which suggests that the audio tone was very important. I think in a way these were tuned instruments, and the whistle used was a very controlled sound, but we’ve never found one so we don’t know. We’ve gone through the literature. You’ll read two hundred pages to glean a line.

There'll be one line that'll give you a clue. You accumulate these single lines; you start to put them together and you get images.

CB: Was the sound made by the dancer?

PE: Yes, and I believe that they were danced in multiples, much like a chorus or a choir, and that they produced different sounds. One of the masks in the Pinart collection has a rather large mouth, maybe the largest of the round-mouthed masks in the collection. It had caribou hair inserted in two little bunches opposite each other in the mouth opening, way in front, right in the centre section of the mouth, and it acted like a mute. The sound quality was very important. It was not an accidental thing. I believe that the pitch and the tone had real meaning. It had communication qualities that might even have spoken to issues.

There's a modern whistle made in a couple of the villages that goes back a long way, and they make it out of a string and a piece of wood. It's a vibrating whistle. There's still a whistle used in the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq village of Nanwalek (English Bay), in the *Maskalatag*, which is the New Year's mask dance. The whistle would have been behind the mask; you would have only heard the sound. No one's ever found one, but the legend and the oral tradition of the wooden whistle is absolute, plus you have the Russian documentation.

CB: So much has been lost.

PE: The missionary period in Alaska was particularly brutal. And the Alutiiq, or Sugpiaq, which is our traditional name, weathered a double assimilation. We had the Russian assimilation and Christianization. The language and belief system gets attacked during the Russian period, and then along comes America in 1867, so you've got to learn a whole new language and a new set of values, a new system, a new pecking order. But for the Americans, the one thing we weren't was heathens. So we missed out on a little bit of the American missionary brutality by hiding in our Orthodoxy. To the Americans we'd become Russians, you know, "misguided Christians." But, at the same time, we suppressed our Nativeness because that had become a frightful stigma.

CB: Were you born in Kodiak?



PE: I was born in Kodiak on May 30, 1945. My grandfather Perry Eaton, who I'm named after, had come into the country in 1902 after the Spanish-American war and had helped found Valdez. But there were very few ladies in Valdez, and so one of the guys from Kodiak—they were working on the Kennacott-Cordova Bridge together—said, "Come on down to Kodiak! We've got girls! I'll introduce ya!" And he did! The guy's name was Anton Larsen, and he introduced my grandfather to his sister-in-law, Gertrude Squartoff from Ouzinkie, and my grandfather married her. Ouzinkie is a small village on Spruce Island just a few miles north of the town of Kodiak. My grandmother grew up there, but by 1915 she was living in town.

We lived in Kodiak until the 1950s, and then we were looking at boarding school or whatever, and my older brother had drowned—he had actually disappeared—at five-thirty one night during the war, off the beach. He was playing, and he probably stumbled off the reef or something and was never found. That left a mark on Mom. So in 1951 we moved to Seattle. I did K through 12 in the Seattle area, but I'd go home every summer. I grew up on the fishing boats. Started commercial fishing when I was ten years old, like all the other local boys. And I was in and out of Ouzinkie village; I never really lived there, but I knew who I was and where I fit in.

CB: I wonder if you could explain what that means.

PE: You really lived in boxes. There was a Native box, there was a Russian box, and there was a white or American box. And racial discrimination was pretty strong at that time. One of the ways the chain was broken was when a Native woman married a white man. The kids were considered white. There was real pressure for Native women to marry white, even in the late 50s. It was definitely a stigma to be Native at that time. You didn't do things that labelled you. Even with my grandmother. I'd use local terminology and Native words for things—and she'd tap the table: "No, no, no, no. That's a long time ago, a long time ago. That's not us today." She didn't want to hear it. She had crossed that line and it was a terrible thing for her generation.

My great-grandmother Anisia Squartoff, who passed in 1969, didn't leave our village, Ouzinkie, for over forty years, and it's only forty minutes away from



Kodiak by skiff, twelve minutes by air. She didn't speak good English and she was ostracized and ridiculed when she went to town. Five feet tall. Little Native woman. She was the midwife in the village, a pillar of the church, and very well respected. She became a very powerful elder. She just didn't have to take that, so she just stayed in her own world.

CB: Were you embarrassed yourself?

PE: Oh, yes. If you were somebody who came into Kodiak in the 1940s, after the war, and you met my father, you would not associate him with being a Native. So you dealt with him and he dealt with people on an equal basis. In the village it was different; he had a foot in each world. But nobody in the village would embarrass him in front of an outsider. You wouldn't disclose. Those lines were so distinct when we were growing up, and you crossed them and re-crossed them. You grew up with two sets of values. And you're in your twenties and thirties before things begin to sink in and you begin to realize that there is one world, and then there is another world. I'm privileged to have lived long enough to be able to look back and to have a conversation like this. I can think of half a dozen of my relatives and friends who grew up during that period who never really understood the dynamics of what was going on around them.

CB: I'd like to go back to the Russian ancestry. At that time, say, if your family had relatives in Russia . . .

PE: . . . nobody knew. During the early part my life the Cold War eliminated any chance of linking with Russia. The guys in Gamble on St. Lawrence Island, they can see their cousins across the channel but didn't get to visit them for seventy years. They're right there, and you know their names, but we in Kodiak were once removed. The Russians who were left in Russian America were mostly Creole, mostly mixed blood.

CB: That was the term, Creole?

PE: Creole, or Colonial Citizens, which you often see, means mixed blood. It was sort of an elite status under the Russian system. If your father was Russian and your mother was Native, it didn't matter whether she was Tlingit or Suqpiag,

you were a Colonial Citizen; therefore, you had rights. You got to vote, you got to go to school, and you could go back to Russia to be trained. By the 1860s almost all the middle and upper management of the Russian-American Company was Creole. Which makes perfectly good sense. You work fifteen years, you retire, you get a land grant, and you're a loyal citizen. You're an equal. You are treated totally differently than the Natives. Then, in 1867, when Russia sells Alaska to the United States, you go from the status of being an elite citizen to being a half-breed in American society with no rights whatsoever. So if you could find a place to hide, like Orthodoxy, you'd embrace that in a heartbeat. Kodiak is really the crossroad where we got this double assimilation.

CB: Some Natives or Creoles became priests, didn't they? And some became saints?

PE: I think there's one Native saint. Peter. He was an Aleut who was killed by the Jesuits in California. Christians are hard on each other! This brotherly love crap just goes so far!

CB: Am I right to say that you went to art school?

PE: I was not a very good student. I was one of those oddball kids who dominated the art room. I went to a small college in Aberdeen, Washington—Grays Harbour College. There was an art professor there who was a big influence on me, Richard Lambert. As an artist he was heavily into collage and that took me into a new depth that I hadn't encountered before. I did all my work outside of class. I painted a lot, won a couple of awards including Painter of the Year for the college.

I spent a year there, then got married and Ardene and I moved up to Seattle. I went to work for Boeing and served a sort of accelerated apprenticeship as an experimental machinist in the wind tunnel. I had a wonderful formal training in symmetry, shape, and precision that has influenced my work through the years. I spent about three years at Boeing and decided that I was not a factory worker and ended up working for Seattle First National Bank as a trainee. I did really well, spent about four years with them, and had something I could come home with. So in 1970 I wrote a letter to a banker here in Anchorage. And of course the Native land claims were getting ready to be settled, and my father was the head of the

Kodiak Area Native Association and kept tapping me on the shoulder and saying, "It's time to come home, it's time to come home." So I did.

CB: So you moved to Anchorage and became involved in the resolution of land claims and the creation of the Native corporations. You're twenty-six, and complex questions of culture are coming to the fore.

PE: Kodiak was *the* most assimilated community in Alaska in 1970. We'd had a Native mayor, but nobody knew he was Native, or nobody acknowledged his Nateness. Today it would be different. But back then you had this sort of assimilation where the Native community had backed off from being Native. There's a large contingency today that will argue that, but I'll tell you it was absolutely true. And much of the suppression that the thirty-something generation likes to throw on the non-Native community actually was self-inflicted. I wasn't taught the language and it was my family that made that decision, not somebody telling them they had to do that. In 1971, you had about forty fluent speakers left on the island, you had probably four hundred who were semi-speakers, and the rest knew place names, food names, animals, you know, the nouns that survive over time. For me, being a visual person, there was nothing artistic. And I don't mean just a few things; I mean *nothing*. There were some stone lamps, there were some spear points that you found occasionally; there was nothing that you could call art. There was one woman who did Aleut grass weaving. It was not even identified on the island as island weaving. And I never thought anything of it.

The land claims settlement brought the nine ethnic groups together, and we would gather annually for a big convention. And here would come the Iñupiat, the Tlingit, the Haida with their drumming and their dancers. We were about two or three years into it and I scratched my head and said, "Now hold it. If we were a culture we must have had art." So I started looking. I would find a textbook that would have one or two of the Pinart masks in it from the Lot-Falck work in 1957. There would be references, and black and white straight-ons, nothing you could emotionally attach yourself to. The materials were presented in a scientific or thoughtfully anthropological way, as if from a time long past. There were no profiles; you couldn't see anything of real artistic value.



The real breakthrough for me came when I was running a company called Community Enterprise Development Corporation, an offshoot of President Johnson's War on Poverty. We'd bought the chain of Alaska Commercial Company stores, which really was the old Russian-American Company. We had a store in Dutch Harbour and when the borders began to open up with Russia, with *perestroika*, there was a group out of Vladivostok, a fishing fleet that would stop in to buy supplies. It was a bit of a charade. The Captain and the Commissar would come into the store. The Captain had a list of the supplies he wanted, and the Commissar would see that everything was on the up-and-up. Well, the first thing we learned was that you needed to get the Captain away from the Commissar. So we'd separate them through some method, coffee, or whatever, go look at the church, and then the Captain would quietly tell you what they really wanted. The official list would be potatoes, rice, flour and sugar, the staples, and what they really wanted was mayonnaise, mustard, Tabasco sauce. They wanted the good stuff. And so we would make these pallets up where all the staples would form the walls on the pallet and the good stuff would be in the centre.

This went on for maybe a year, and then one day one of the captains showed up with a roll of currency: US dollars, every denomination you could imagine. The crew had known they were coming and they'd gone through the community collecting this foreign currency, and they wanted blue jeans! And so it started. Blue jeans, electronics—you never knew exactly what they wanted—and we got a reputation. And then in 1988 the wall did actually come down and the Russians came to Anchorage. They wanted to meet the head of the Corporation, and I ended up going to Russia and landed in a whole other phase of my life. The first thing I did was head for Leningrad to take a look at the museum. And sure as heck, I got to the *Kunstkamera* . . . and there was our stuff. And that's where the masks were.

CB: So in you go, and . . .

PE: There they are. Four fully intact feathered pieces, the only four in the world to have survived.

CB: What did that feel like?



PE: There are no words for it. You can't begin to describe it. It's like the first time I saw the Pinart collection . . . it's . . . you're looking at your family. There are no words . . . you just . . . this is stuff that has been denied you all your life. And it's not that old—1840s, 1870s. The Russians had sent this guy, I. G. Voznesenskii, to Alaska for the sole purpose of collecting material for their museums, from 1832 to 1844. He's not an anthropologist, he's not a scientist; he's got these lists. And the museums want this stuff. His job is to go get it. He's pretty cool, and he has a personal ethic that is just amazing. He won't collect anything out of context. There's a wonderful story about him in Old Harbor. He's in the village, and he's there for several days, and one morning there are eight hunters getting ready to leave. They're all loaded up and everything and their kayaks are all ready to go, and he walks down the beach and he says, "You." He takes the entire kayak as it's ready to go hunting at that moment, and sends the guy home to change clothes. In context. Very, very, very important. And he's the one who collected those masks; he did it in 1842 in the village of Lesnoi on Woody Island, just adjacent to Kodiak. He got them after the dance one night.

CB: Would he have purchased them?

PE: I'm sure he acquired them some legitimate way. Interestingly, on Kodiak there's no legends or stories about theft. Usually when somebody robs a grave or something it stays in the oral tradition and it's there. But there's nothing about Pinart stealing the masks or anything like that. There's nothing about Voznesenskii. Everything appears legit. Voznesenskii collected the masks, he recorded the songs. Each mask has a name and he recorded the names. Images of these masks were later published in some magazines in the traditional way, photographed full on, straight on, and in the same wooden cases they'd been in for a hundred years.

So I'm looking at these masks in Russia, and I say to myself, "If he collected them the night they were danced, they'll still have the harnesses on the back." Nobody had ever photographed the masks from the back! And so I broached the subject with the museum people and sure enough, a year later they took the photographs and it's all there. The whole thing, how it's tied, a whole bunch of little sinew strings and stuff. They've got a wooden bite plate, and the mask—when you

see the mask it would appear that it fits over the face like a Hallowe'en mask, but it was actually in front of the face, and it's held with a bite plate and then tied on so it actually was out here in front of the dancer, which nobody knew. We think a lot of the Pinart masks looked like that. They would have had a piece of material or burlap or hide or something that would have hooded the whole thing. We still make that hood, and some of the Pinart masks have a groove where they would actually tie on that back piece. But I'm pretty comfortable in believing that that groove was for a lot of botanical materials, things of the season and that sort of stuff because nothing survived. Grasses, ferns, and the greenery. And movement was really important in the mask dances, in the feather pieces, the weighted feather pieces. They went to extremes to make sure things moved.

When I was a kid, of course, there was absolutely no art visible or available. I had very little knowledge of Suqpiaq art. I didn't focus on it until about 1997. We had an artist named Helen Simeonoff, a wonderful woman, a water colourist. Like all of us she struggled with the identity issue all her life. She'd heard a dissertation on the Alphonse Pinart collection written and presented in 1996 by a French-Canadian woman, Dominique Desson, who had come to Kodiak and lectured on her research, and Helen was totally mesmerized. Everybody else was kind of indifferent. Helen saved up her money—she was sort of a hand-to-mouth individual—and she went to France in 1998 or 1999.

I'd heard stories. We were re-hanging a seine in 1959—it was a disastrous salmon season, there were quite a few Chum or dog salmon around but they kept going under our net, so we kept making it deeper. We ended up re-hanging that seine three times. We were stripping the gear on the dock in town, and Charlie Christofferson, our web boss, was there. With his hands flying, Charlie looks over at the old man and says, "You know, they danced in Karluk." Karluk's a traditional village on the west side of Kodiak. What he meant was, they did what was known as "the Devil's dance"—there are the missionaries again—because of the salmon run. It's a little like the rain dance. They're talking to the spirits. And the old man, he's hanging gear and he looks at Charlie and he says, "Did they wear masks, or did they just use the soot on the face?" And before Charlie could answer there's this old woman, Mrs. Joe Heitman, sitting on the bull rail of the dock. She'd brought down some sandwiches and stuff, and before Charlie can even answer,

Mrs. Heitman says, “No, no, there’s no masks on the island. They took ‘em all away. That stuff’s not here.” And she’s proud of it. And Dad says, “Yep, way back, a long time ago. They took ‘em all away.”

The assumption of course was that the Russians took them, but it turns out that Pinart spoke perfect Russian. He was a linguist. Nobody on the island ever recorded the fact that he was French because he spoke Russian. So everybody had assumed that the masks we’d heard about in Russia were the masks Pinart took away. Well, Mrs. Heitman was born in 1885 in Afognak, just thirteen years after Pinart left Afognak, so she grew up at the kitchen table with the story of how they went to the south end and got the masks. And there it is. But there was not enough context for her to know the full story.

And I’d also heard about a collection of masks in France. Nobody knew exactly where it was, but we’d heard these rumours and stories. We found out, of course, that they were at the Chateau Musée in Boulogne-sur-Mer. When Helen went they were all jumbled into a case made out of plywood about the size of a very large table, and some of the masks were suspended on fishing string, and they were stacked almost on one another. Well, Helen goes to look and she’s stunned, and she has her little Instamatic and she takes a bunch of pictures. And about three months after she got back one of my buddies said, “You know, Helen Simeonoff has some pictures from France.” I went over to her house and she had them in this three-ringed binder, these not so great photos. They looked terrible. I had made one mask prior to that, a plank mask. Traditional. I’d seen the Russian ones and this was something I sort of concocted because I really didn’t have any form to go on or anything. I still have it.

When I saw these photographs of course I went crazy. I asked her if I could borrow the binder, and she really anguished over that request. She really didn’t want to let it go. But she knew I was a serious artist and so she let me take it home. I did a bunch of drawings and I got it back to her in a couple of days. Three months later I got on an aeroplane. I had to go. That was in 2000.

CB: What was it like when you walked into the Chateau Musée?

PE: Speechless. I was stunned beyond belief by what I saw. I’d been to the Kunstkamera, but to see that many masks in front of my eyes—there was Kodiak



Island! I mean, it was right there. And then the varying sizes. In the photographic journals a mask that is six inches takes up as much space as a mask that is twenty-three inches. You have no idea. And they're all flat. Of course I was just stunned. I couldn't believe how much variation there was, and how much depth was in the masks. They're not flat pie plates. And twenty minutes after looking at them, as an artist, I can see that there are three distinct sets of masks.

CB: Did you have the feeling, in seeing those forms, that there was some kind of unconscious form in you that suddenly discovered or triggered itself?

PE: That's an interesting question, and the answer is, "Of course," but I've never thought of it because it's so natural. Sure. There are birds, singing masks, some spirits—they're tools for transformation—but they have their own life and their own individuality and their own collectiveness. I've studied that collection now for over twelve years. I've felt a bond that I suppose can't really be described. Shortly after I saw the collection it was moved to Paris for a show in the old Museum of Man. By then I'd done enough work with the collection through Dr. Sven Haakanson to point out the three different groups of masks, and they'd grouped them, the three, based on my observations. I wanted to photograph them because they'd never been separated to that degree. I asked, and they said, "OK, come back at five o'clock." So I went back at five o'clock, and they took me up—it was upstairs in a separate room—and they brought me in and said, "OK, you're going to be locked in here until seven, until the janitor can let you out." So I was alone with this collection for two, two and a half hours, and that was intense.

CB: Can you say more?

PE: You know, it was a case of where I could hear them sing. And I could feel them dance, you know, we talked . . . it was a unique moment . . . yeah . . . that collection has really been a pivotal piece of my art and my life.

CB: During the 2011 Surrealist exhibition in Vancouver I spoke with a man while looking at the Yup'ik masks purchased by Robert Lebel in the 1940s. He told me that he'd once described a mask to an elder, praising its visual complexity. After he'd finished, the elder leaned in and said, "Yes, but what did you hear?" Is that the right question?



PE: Yes, that's the right question. We can't forget that these objects are first and foremost utilitarian in nature. I've never made a mask that couldn't be danced. All of them can be danced. I don't put the harness in all of them, but there is one mask that I make, the plank or chief's mask—and we're bringing it back as a cultural rite of passage—that is a closure of life. We dance this mask, and then we burn it, which we did in honour of Alphonse Pinart in Boulogne and Helen Simeonoff in Kodiak in September 2012.

CB: For their release?

PE: Exactly. For their spirits to start their new travels. We're the only group on the coast or in North America that does this mask. It's basically a human effigy with a large plank, or board—it almost looks like a tombstone—and it's only made on Kodiak Island. The form is perfect for me, because you've got the effigy into which you can put spirit and emotion, and you've got a story board that you can do anything you want with. You can get extremely contemporary or you can be very traditional. You can do all symbols. You can do colour, you can do half a dozen variations and come up with some unique presence, and still be correct. The one very large plank mask that survives in the Pinart collection was never finished, but in my opinion—and I'm certainly not an expert—if it had been completed and danced it would have been burned.

CB: Not all masks were burned, though.

PE: No. I've kind of got a hunch. I've spoken of the three groups in the Pinart collection; there's what I call the Old Men, which are the ones that actually came from the cave, and there's a group of reproductions that were done specifically for Pinart in Kodiak. Pinart, we need to remember, was a linguist. He had the theory that you could track the eastern migration of people by virtue of language and belief systems. So he was out collecting the stories to support his hypothesis. He didn't care so much about the masks, he wanted the stories, and in Kodiak we pass our mythology through a stage play, like a passion play, or a mystery play. The people at a ceremony wouldn't narrate the stories, they would act them and dance them. But they couldn't do the dances without the tools. Yet when Pinart brought them the old masks to dance, no one would wear them because they had too much

power around them, so they made new ones for him. These are the smaller ones in the collection that are about six to eight inches. I think they were made by two different artists. Maybe three, probably in the village of Eagle Harbour. They're all basically the same size, and they've got the hoops. Those are the ones that were danced in 1872 for Pinart, and he was then able to see and record the story in the dance. Each one of those little ones was matched to an Old Man. Then there is the third group of masks that are all big, brightly coloured, and solid. They're not carved out at the back, they have no holes for hoops, nothing, and they all happen to be made out of white oak.

CB: They're from Europe!

PE: Sure. I think they're his trunk show for his lectures. The others are too fragile to pack around. So he has another set made. If you go back to the Old Men and study them, they were all taken out of one cave. And the cave probably was a repository. These masks were used by the whaling fraternities. We were a whaling culture prior to the Russians, and we hunted the finback whale. We did it with a poison lance. It's well documented. There are a number of pieces on that. By the way, have you ever been next to a whale when it came out of the water?

CB: I've been within about a foot of an orca coming up beside a 9-foot clinker-built rowboat.

PE: Yeah, that's a good feeling! Multiply that by ten, and you've got a finback. Can you imagine what it would take to paddle a kayak—you know, a few sticks and a little hide—paddle it out there and poke that thing with a sharp stick? I've been up next to one and it's like a freight car coming out of the water. So what they did was they had fraternities. And the elders, the wisdom keepers, would be members of the fraternity guiding the hunters with their knowledge. The finbacks would come into the bays in the early spring and summer to feed, then back in the late fall. They'd come in in groups of six to twelve and there might be three pods within a mile of one another. They'd kind of hang around till they depleted the feed in that area. It might take them a week, two weeks. And so the fraternity would pick out the pod, and they'd pick out the whale in the pod, and they would determine the weak side, because you want to approach on the weak side.

They'd be in the kayaks and up on the bluffs and they'd be watching and studying over time. You have to strike the whale at the right stage of the tide because when it beaches you want the tides to be falling. You don't want to be fighting the tide when you're trying to carve up the whale. They knew the flow patterns and the tide patterns and the drift patterns well enough to know that if they struck a particular whale in a particular location, it would take three days to die, and they could tell you just about where it was going to wash up. You've got to strike the right whale at the right time and you have to get and be ready to do that, because the Super Bowl only comes around once a year. So you have the fraternities to manage the adrenalin, then you go and prepare. You'd fast and do all the stuff the elders told you to do. You'd talk to the spirits and when you got ready—I mean, the day was prescribed, the moment was prescribed—you went down to the beach, and one guy in a kayak went out there and lanced that whale.

CB: All the power of the group is in that lance.

PE: And it would take that to give you the confidence. It must have been stunning. Plus the reward's pretty big. You just won the Super Bowl, you've got the winningest hockey shot! It's everything all rolled up in one. And the masks were the tools that allowed you to talk between the worlds, that got the ancestors involved, sent the messages back and forth. These masks are the tools of transformation. If you had a really successful hunt and you used this group of masks, and it was successful, you're going to keep them as an integrated part of the hunt. You're going to move that forward, and that's why I think these masks were in the caves. Even after the Russians broke the old belief system you would not just throw them out.

And there's a group of masks there among the Old Men in the Pinart collection that have bothered me from the very beginning. There's one mask that nobody would touch. It's the one that has a hydrocephalic, bulbous forehead. Hydrocephalus is caused when you get an injury above the ears; it doesn't drain. And your head swells. I believe this is a warrior or a hunter who has been injured. And if you look at the masks, it appears to have been made quickly; it's not finished as well as the other masks, which might mean it was made on relatively short order. And it has two marks coming off the nose, a little carving right across the face. I looked at it for a long time. There's another mask in this collection that



also has this mark. It has thirteen knots in the wood. My impression has always been that wood was so precious that they more or less had to use that piece. Very hard to carve. But now I think it was by design. I turned both masks over and put them side-by-side. They were made by the same person. And the reason you can tell is that they are hollowed out the same way. When you turn these two masks back over the only thing in common is the line across the face. So, I looked at the rest of the masks, and there's another one with the line. You know the mask with the winking eye? It has the line. And it has a crooked mouth and it looks like the guy's winking. That mask is about an afflicted or injured eye. There's also a mask in Madrid that's out of Chugach—Alutiiq region—and it has what's called a weepy eye and it actually is marked with a pus ring draining down the face. So now I've got three masks made by the same person. Let's go back to the one with the thirteen knots. One of the major afflictions for the people was boils, salt boils. So I'm thinking: I've got hydrocephalus, I've got some skin problems, I've got a sick eye, and they're all carved by the same guy. And they all have this mark. And it looks like an Alutiiq female tattoo to me. So I'm scratching my head and wondering, "Were these carved by a woman?" We had female shamans. And we had transsexuals. You could be a boy and your family could raise you as a girl. And because of that transformation you often were a shaman.

CB: These affliction masks must have been medicine-related.

PE: Absolutely. But the question about who made them is interesting. This female tattoo, if that is what it is, is really strange. If a transsexual made them, they would have considered them to have been made by a woman because all the beliefs and taboos affecting gender would have applied to that individual. He would have to be a female who carved masks, which opens a whole new question.

There's an articulated mask in the collection also. It's a mask that's quite highly decomposed and looks like the classic Christian devil. It's got some lines that sweep back from the eyes and it's got an open mouth, and in the centre of its open mouth it has a little slit. It's a bird. It's the only bird among all the masks with an open mouth. All the other birds have a closed mouth and their beaks are connected at the tip. Now, if you're going to use a messenger, especially like a bird, you don't want it gossiping along the way. So you tie the beak. And here's a mask



with an open beak. I looked at this mask for the longest time and I didn't even see the bird at first.

One day, after about two years of studying it, the book is lying open to the picture of this mask and a piece of paper is lying across the top, totally by accident; all I can see is the beak. And it becomes really apparent that it actually is a beak. I just did a double take and looked back, and yes, it's like a heron. You know how the heron line comes back and it's got that beak—but, if it's got an open beak, why does it have a slit? That doesn't make sense, unless you need a rectangular piece so that something can slide. I noticed two holes right under the beak. The anthropologist told us they were for the labrets. No, no. They're for the control strings or rods. You turn the mask over and you can see inside where it had this articulated piece. The tongue moved in this mask. But it took me almost five years to see that.

We see a lot of bird themes in our masks. Kodiak is located in the Gulf of Alaska, and it's a byway to the flyways. Many, many birds come and rest on the island on their migratory trips. They might only be seen for a week or a day, or maybe only observed every other year, some rare species. But it's easy to understand why they became messengers. We knew that they travelled between worlds so it was logical to instil our messages with these travellers. As a method of transforming the individual into the messenger during the ceremony of instilling that message, the mask was important. We really believed in the ancestors, in that continued wisdom, in the ability to tap into their spirit as they passed on and accumulated more knowledge, and in trying to communicate with the other worlds to bring that knowledge back and utilise it.

CB: Can you speak more about the functional aspect?

PE: We have several really strong dance groups. They've concentrated more on choreography over the last decade, and appropriate attire, costume, for lack of a better term, has now become something of an issue. They're trying to differentiate themselves, and masks are one of the prime methods. So while the dance groups today are mostly entertainment, both in the Native and the non-Native community, there is also a ceremonial aspect, particularly in the Celebration of Life with the plank mask on Kodiak. I recently held a workshop in Kodiak and we did five plank masks. One of the young boys—he has decided all by himself, no

prodding from anybody—is going to dance it this summer in honour of his great-grandmother, with a full ceremony. So that speaks volumes. I'll do a workshop in September in Old Harbor, which is a pivotal village. It's a south end village, and so I'm hopeful, you know. It's a little bit, but it's starting to really be something.

The mask is really paraphernalia for another art form. And I like that. I'm very excited when I see my masks danced. And I'm always very critical of them both as an artist and then of how the performing artist is using them in their artistic expression. Are they doing enough to bring the spirit forward? Not long ago when two duck masks were danced I found myself wanting to see more of the duck character come out, the comical character of the duck, but each art form has its own presentation, and respecting that is, I think, part of it.

CB: I'm thinking about how your forms have an aerodynamic quality. They operate in time, in the transit between one place and another, one time and another, and in a time of extraordinary transition in Kodiak and Alaska.

PE: I like my art to challenge people, to challenge the status quo. I like people to say, "What is this about?" That dance we did in France for Pinart, where we burned the mask, delighted me from the standpoint that French culture places such a high value on physical art that, in their words, "to destroy a piece of beauty" really upset many of them. And the debate around our conviction that the utilitarian function supersedes the urge to preserve I found quite enjoyable. There was much eye rolling and shaking of the head. It forced the question of cultural value, and many came to realize that the French value of art is not the absolute end. When they got to the end of the ceremony they realized that burning was the only thing that could happen to that piece of art. I'd gotten them to think about that one. And that's the exciting moment for a work of art. And of course the masks are creating a lot of discussion within the Sugpiaq culture also.

When we brought the dance back, almost twenty years ago now, we had the same issues. And of course we did not dance with masks. People said, "We didn't do that in our generation. I don't recognize that." And of course the dance had skipped two generations, so the elders were saying "I don't know what they're doing." Then as it came back, people would do a little more historic review, and go, "Oh yeah, I guess we did do that." And today some of our stronger advocates of the

dance were the most sceptical ones when it started. I think bringing the memorial masks, the celebration of life mask, back has really challenged some of the Sugpiaq people about their own identity. Of course, Orthodoxy is very, very strong, but Orthodoxy as a religion has many icons and images and objects so there's not a big leap there. But some of the more fundamental Christian beliefs are struggling with it. If anything challenges the ceremony it will be the Christian values.

I've been talking to a couple of other mask makers and we want to introduce the mask back into the dance. And that's really up to the mask makers. Some of it has to do with economics. You can make a very nice dance mask, but before you can get it onto a dancer somebody's there with a chequebook who wants to preserve it forever. The temptation to sell a mask for \$3,000 or \$4,000 is very hard to pass up. So most of the art now is going into the commercial market. I've been maybe the foremost in breaking that rule, but I have the privilege of being in a position to be able to do that. I'm teaching and I have some protégés I'm working with, and one of the things I'm saying is that maybe the fifth mask or the tenth mask one makes should go to the dance groups. We need to get the stories told as they were told, in costume, and people are starting to listen. You will see more, definitely.

CB: We should just talk a little bit about your process. How do you begin?

PE: To any art, there are mechanics. I know that if I start the process something will come out the other end. So there are times when I will just pick up a piece of wood and just let it happen. I keep lots of wood on supply, and lots of different kinds of woods; different moods demand different things. I always keep all my tools ready to go. When it's time you don't have time to stop and sharpen a tool. And then the work will progress systematically. The selection of the actual piece of wood can take up to a day, just selecting the piece of wood. Once I have the piece of wood I sort of make peace with it. I always use a pattern, because symmetry is a hallmark of the work and a pattern lets you have more control. I cut out a front view, and I'll start putting the profile shape in and evolve into the detail. The mouth is usually the last thing that I carve, and then I hollow the mask and get it to the right weight. Weight is important, and I like my masks to be under two pounds, so I hollow it out and then I put in the eyes and the nose and if the



mouth is going to be open I'll put the mouth in last. It's interesting, and I don't know that it's ritual as much as it is just logical procedure. I will not start a project without having solved all the mechanics before hand. What kind of hoop am I going to use? How is that hoop going to be attached? What are the amenities? How will it work? Painting and feathers are the last things. And then, of course, if there's a harness or something, that goes in at the very, very, end.

CB: The other day you mentioned that you were thinking that you wanted more movement.

PE: The four fully adorned masks in Russia are designed to have a great deal of movement in feathers and appendages, even with the eagle feathers that are attached to the masks. If you take an eagle feather and you just drill a hole and poke the end into the hoop, it's very stiff. So to give it movement they would drill a little tiny hole and use a cormorant feather from the inside out, clip the end of the eagle feather and slip it over the cormorant feather so that it would move up and down when it was danced. Baleen, which comes from the mouths of whales, is very flexible, and so weighted pieces of wood would be on the end of thin strips of baleen, and when the mask danced you'd have a lot of movement in the mask itself.

On the mask we danced last fall in honour of the artist Helen Simeonoff, her moons and her suns were on the ends of feathers, and they moved a little bit. But as the maker and a critic of the mask, they didn't move enough to suit me. An extra inch on the feather would have made a difference. Or a little more weight. You can add weights by attaching beads to the ends of the feathers. Our old masks were adorned with hanging feathers, feathers that had been whipped on the end and tied so that there was a piece of string or sinew as much as six inches down so that when the mask danced it had a lot of lateral movement though the feathers. It's important because, for me, it signifies life. It gives the mask that spirit of life through movement.

In the dance the masks take on an interesting form; the eyebrow cut around the nose and the recessing of the eyes is very dramatic. This is because they were lit from the fire, from the bottom up. Of course, western eyes see things with light from the top down. When you turn out all the lights and you photograph these



masks with bottom light you begin to understand the presentation. That top line, the circle of the face, the forehead and the top of the hair, were not visible in the dark. Masks were danced inside a building called a *qasgiq*, or men's house, or community hall, and the only source of light was the fire in the centre. So they are formed and shaped by that utility. I try to capture that.

CB: In firelight . . .

PE: . . . it would be shadows, ghosts, and spirits. It would be pretty powerful. I always think of a seven-year-old coming in for his first dance, and the dancers in the dark corner, and the drums, six, seven, eight drums, a 60-inch by 60-inch low ceiling, those drums would start, and *wham!* You're a believer! You believe!

CB: And the hoop? What is its significance?

PE: The hoop is made of wood. I bend mine with steam and bend them on a form so that they will be symmetrical. The hoop is the aura around the spirit, not unlike a halo. The concept of a halo is not necessarily Christian. The idea that a spirit has an aura: I think every human has felt that. You know, you feel that there are moments in life when there are things that have this aura about them; the hoop is really that aura of the spirit in our masks. With Yup'ik masks, a full-circle hoop is the aura of a contained spirit. If the hoop is open on the bottom it's a travelling spirit, it's a spirit that's making a journey.

CB: When you're making a mask, there are layers of intention, aren't there?

PE: Oh, yes, it sometimes causes me to pause. I know this sounds strange, but I have a relationship with the work, and some of the work is very much alive—I mean, we actually talk. It sounds strange but there's communication that goes on. With me it's usually light-hearted, and a mask will occasionally bite me. I won't be paying enough attention or showing enough respect and a tool will slip or whatever; it's interesting to say the least. So I'm constantly conscious of this relationship, a respectful relationship. The progression of a mask usually moves along as anticipated. I've had one piece that sort of morphed from where I was into something of its own, but normally it's this communication bringing forth what's almost ordained. It's almost as though the piece of wood for this mask started

with the tree, and it knew where it was going. I feel as though I'm closing the final loop. The final link is the creation of the mask. I don't know how to describe it. It's very hard to put in words, but it's that way. The masks have a spiritual quality, and when I produce a mask I'm really saying, "This is part of who I am, and what I am, and where I came from." So in a way I'm presenting you with a piece of me, and my history. And when you take it you accept that. It's a form of acceptance. When I think of a particular mask, like "Yellow Singer," I cannot think of the mask without the association to you. The mask doesn't exist without your association. So I guess knowing where it is is important because it completes the piece of work. It's why the work was produced, to make a link.

CB: Earlier we spoke about messages and a mask's functionality.

PE: Being a messenger is the function of that transformation tool. Oh yes, very much so. One thing that's difficult for me is that my work is so influenced by the Pinart collection. In all probability, a huge, diverse array of transformation tools in the form of masks existed and were once used within the culture. I believe we're looking at just a small slice. Unfortunately, that's what we have, and that's what's influenced me, and so I often struggle with this idea of how tight my exposure must be. I often wonder and speculate on what the rest of the world looked like!

CB: Maybe your speculation takes form in the making of your new masks?

PE: The Paris show is all birds. All birds, and they're all very different. Each one is a composition, a stand-alone, and you can't look at one of the six—there are only five, there'll probably be a sixth—and see a progression or a direction or a similarity, and yet they're all Alutiiq birds. No question. As I create each piece there's a process, and then the minute the piece is done it's about the conversation the piece creates.

This particular collection of work is designed as a group. They're ideas and expressions that have sort of bounced around like a ping-pong ball over the years in my head, and now I've had an opportunity to bring them into being. Each mask is a character all unto itself. One is a piece that is very well planned and is completed. One is a work-in-progress and probably will be until I pack it. We argue. He and I go back and forth and I tell you, man, he and I have argued! But he

is very defined and very rigid and very nice and elegant and arrogant, and then there's a piece that's just warm and fuzzy like a kid's blanket. It feels good. It's a whole collection of emotion and presentation around the messengers, but now I'm beginning to think in terms of "the message." What do you instill, what do you entrust with this particular messenger? And I haven't landed that, but it's started to enter the process of thought. And I'm sure that when the old masks were made they were not generic messengers. I mean, when the woman goes to the church to pray she prays for certain people, certain sicknesses; I mean, there is a moment in time and a structure to the prayer. It was no different.

CB: Did the new masks take you somewhere you hadn't been before?

PE: I want to take the mask into something I call pure art, to move beyond the cultural spiritualities, to take the form and shape and actually work as a pure sculptor. I've been doing drawings. And interestingly, if I weren't doing the Paris show I would be doing this other stuff. I'm carrying both loads. I've got the Paris stuff here, and it's certainly influenced by some of this other stuff that I want to do, and two of the new masks clearly, as you will see, are movement in a new direction. Having my studio mate Alvin Amason to talk to has been fabulous. He's been very, very productive. He's like over-the-top fun, and being able to explore, to talk some of these things through, has been wonderful.

CB: In terms of Alutiiq traditions, perhaps you're a little like a messenger between the past and the future. And you've developed a strong relationship with the Chateau Musée in Boulogne.

PE: You know, I have nothing but the greatest respect for that Museum. They've given us access beyond and reasonable expectation. I thank my lucky stars every day that the Pinart masks weren't in the Louvre or in some other Paris museum because I'd have never gotten near them. We showed up right when there was a changing of the guard. A generational change. We came right in at that moment. And we did many visitations. We couldn't bring the masks to Kodiak in the beginning so we took the artists to the masks. We put together a group of ten and took them over. It was very moving.



The masks over the years had deteriorated quite a lot. Many of them had hoops and feathers when Pinart gave them to the Museum, and during the war the entire Museum collection was moved several times to keep it from the Germans—and it wasn't because of the masks; it was the paintings that the French wanted to protect. At that time the significance of the collection was not recognized. One of the things I've done recently is to start a contemporary collection of Alaska Native art within the Museum, something I was told couldn't be done in France. In Europe they have art and artifacts. You don't see them mixed. I convinced them that Boulogne should break the mould.

In 2002, I carved a guardian mask to be with the collection. I told the French it was a friendship mask, and in a way it was. But I wanted us to be in contact with the old masks, I wanted to let them know that we still cared, so I did a plank mask depicting two oceans and two continents and their people, and we danced it there in 2002. After the dance I presented it to the Museum and of course they were very excited. I was kind of hopeful that they'd hang it in the hallway somewhere, or somebody's office perhaps. I wanted to explain and demonstrate to the spirits of the old masks that they hadn't been forgotten: "You're still here, we're still here, and here's a guardian that's going to look over you from today onward." I went back to the Museum a year and a half later and they'd completely rebuilt the exhibit area. It had gone from these absolutely primitive—and I'm being kind—plywood boxes to a really elegant presentation. And the guardian, they had built an independent podium and put it inside a case. And it was prominently displayed with the old masks. I was kind of dumbfounded. I don't think anybody picked up on it. We were in a large group. I recovered myself quickly and then I started to smile. "Yep, OK, we're here, we're OK."

Later, when I was an artist-in-residence at the Museum, they commissioned a mask, so then they had two pieces; and then another artist gave them a piece, so they had three. And so at a public gathering I announced a personal commitment to donate one piece to the collection every year for five years. These pieces were taken before a national museum acquisitions committee and were approved for the permanent collection. Mission accomplished! Since then, Koniag, the Alutiiq Native Regional Corporation, has started making modest donations.



CB: It seems to me that after everything Europe unloaded onto this continent, this is a way of bringing the transformative spiritual and cultural intelligence of indigenous nations back into the European conversation.

PE: I think that many Europeans view their collections as being from dead cultures, and of course that's not true. Also, I think unfairly, Europe is under tremendous pressure—France in particular—to return all these objects that they collected during the colonial period. I don't subscribe to that at all. The world is so small. The access is absolutely there, and getting better all the time.

My goal is to get about twenty-five significant pieces into that Museum over the next six or seven years. And when my grandchildren go over and they look at them, they can see and sense the vitality and the continuity. I want to create awareness that the cultures are alive, that the people have not disappeared. They still live with an identity. How they express their identity is through their living art. If, in my lifetime—and I don't have a lot of time left—I can get that debate on the table in an intellectual discussion, I will have been successful.

**LISE DOWNE / from Propositions**

a crack competes with the window  
with a view of nighttime plus the loose ends  
and colourful scholars, landscapes  
tumbling forward and back  
suggesting an improvisation of skies, something almost willful  
crescendos, the probability of a pause  
meticulous groupings, traffic  
trademarks adjacent to plastic tubes  
it can only happen to countless objects  
composition, courage  
winded on water



dried flowers powdered in the atrium  
a literal linear logic a loose grid enveloping  
the slow growth forest  
in broad daylight a tornado, centrifugal palette of violent  
ultra-violet, dark blue in dark blue  
voltage returning to the stuff of rocks  
each stage a remnant, already a line moving—boxes of lines  
parameters a now delicate whorl  
on the mound cocktails with a pair of tall pitchers  
walking the walk off  
a tangent reconciled

■

as chance would have it, thrushes  
a hush among the hard-to-find  
little dwellings that enter the unsuspecting mind  
dressed up animals, lofty authoritarians always  
the details, gaps, invisible squares  
suddenly weary a genuine article cracks  
a shattering by arrows, at or intervals  
adequate, but foraging





this could be the difference, and this  
the way a whistle admits to reading  
an obscurity of trees, wonderful things  
make it—say it ain't—so  
a rescue and a lot getting chilled  
then, delusion on a plateau  
instruments in the course of a sentence  
turned round, a single, already, cardinal  
directions  
ambling to and fro



for now a missing element and his right arm  
overcast skies, a density of photographs, species also a language  
you knew, the horizon between longing curved  
some rushes smitten but paler  
one could have rowed, vanished in an instant  
into velvet blouses, a wall of cities pointing to some  
reference  
refusal, like pumpkin or elderberry  
barefoot in a wash of green  
its poignant pigment undone and redone  
a tunnel bored, a surface interspersed  
with rivulets

■

## DANIELA ELZA / moving the linguistic furniture around (in the house of enigmatic density)

please behave. as though a sign has meaning.  
cultivate ambiguities. but do not  
syncopate with the signified so it will not  
rear its head. do *not* perfect the syn-  
tactic smokescreen to an art form.



palindromic sidewalks read  
the anatomy of shadows.  
and sometimes the ghosts come through.  
the ache.

growing cynical again with your obsessions.  
moving the linguistic furniture around  
while all along

I imagine the room without it.  
ask myself  
are you the flu I am trying to shake?  
a fluke?  
a fluid in my lungs?  
a creature living under ice  
granted intravenous stat-  
us. a stone flung and not  
flung into obs-  
cure words. a synopsis  
barely at-  
tempted in deep water.

in the word clinic  
 suffering from assonance- induced injury  
 I eavesdrop on the liminals  
 while the soul t-  
 urns to g-  
 ambling silences.  
 wanting to be plucked. but not  
 attempted.  
 a gimmick in an upside down tavern  
 you sabot-  
 age the genuine. watch Eros plod  
 too beautiful to know.  
 too embarrassing for  
 public consumption.  
 you put a lid on reverie when you see  
 there is d-  
 anger you might go *faithful* on yourself.  
 your advice?  
 avoid meaning seeping th-  
 rough.  
 take plea-  
 sure in not getting it.  
 this is how (somewhat and not)  
 you welcome me  
 incestuous echo chambers.  
 here the rice pudding grows a c/old hard skin.  
 dig in with your fingers. then contain



the spirit burps.

white — not so white anymore  
in all the ways we should care.  
are.

we have become a crowd  
in all the ways I don't know  
now you.

## CRYSTAL HURDLE / from Ajar

V.

But this room is filled with the purity of emptiness.

There is no baggage.

The impersonality entices.

rectangle rectangle rectangle

square square square rectangle

quadrilateral semi-sphere sphere

a geometry class in the making.

The bare beginnings of triangles,

which we can try to forget.

See? They are eroding.

Consider this an object lesson.

The evenness of the light

obfuscating what's outside

for what's in

em ty em ty em ty

as my hrt

VI.

The air is quiet *murmurings*

Please love me again.

The emptiness could be beautiful if not so fearsome.

You could sit for a long while in such a room and I with you.

Light is mending, healing.

Now it's a façade of a room  
awakening to itself  
mound of snow  
emptiness of the still snowing sky  
clouds the ceiling overhead.  
We could make our own weather.

VII.

An open wall, the abandoned fourth wall  
and what will we see staged?  
Shakespearean malice?  
Farce? Guilty couplings?  
The angle of the door is small distraction.  
We could see around and through it.  
The air could be rich with our clapping.

### Note

“em ty” is an homage to bpNichol.

## TROY TYMOFICHUK / Two Poems

### In the Stars

of the moment desire departs—still a space  
to navigate—the night under the stars, more  
breath warranted, in the stars, in the formation  
of the chest, indiscrimination, carefully home



## The Stress

so much weightless  
in this memory, so much  
off a shade unless I

intervene with a weight, almost being  
the derivation of light and dark—one  
alters, one can't but pleasurably alter

**TED BYRNE & CHRISTINE STEWART / from St Paul**

1

Ton logon ou theo

For mystery elect

a lack—allergic

[I did not [. . .] you; I sought you]

To adequate (the logos)

[mischievous fish]

Press On—you state that you

are your [. own. .] revelation.

and [I am abs [. . .] ent]

Whereof, we are made of (Mister Stuff)

I am the weight

of words.

[dead letters]

Or that state

means that you are

made [theo].

You are made. You

too miss the true

tearing of ions and words.

Go to the vowels.

[the mouth [. . .] is a vowel]

You and your logos.

Your article: the thing as it is thought.

This opening: the ribs of distance.  
Flung in the gathering—surrounding, creating—a thing.

[My boast is sugar  
and its country  
plies elation]

The tense rational elations of animal.

You are the Ministry of event and  
Not the revel

Gauge [gouge]. Can you not see language  
In its barking.

Say nothing [cripple this worldly  
word [it will finish [. . . ] ]

## 2

en to christo

To economy  
To reduce  
the pleroma

Your exact time  
Your pantalons  
Or pantomime  
Ananke

Another's flight  
A gown

(House of Akris  
Or Issey Miyake)  
On the tele  
High in the sky

This morning's mail  
Six Xtians crucified  
1597 Nagasaki  
What iteration  
Desired abhorred

Paronomasts of evening

Haitera of eternity

Haetera of the moment

Of the after

To heter  
In the by and by

### 3

*St. Paul's Instruction*

The secret regulates the lack.

The urn shape deposits the subject.

The scopic sod displays the first person shooter.

The neighbour is the first in the line up, gentleman.

To enter the *manuscript*—

To make the words, man.



You are its lowest surface.

And below this application is a rupture.

The relative logarithm is the thought of the thing.

The hand of the article opposes the aperture.

It transmits exaltation, quilted points.

It is tense—but defaulting.<sup>1</sup>

Paul: you are an allegory and  
bees, here, hover.

crying, swarming.  
women, monads, morons, demons,  
Swarming matter. Sunday.

There is the pure story—it is the size of Hollywood.

It is as pure as your pants.

But our bodies are  
seeds, nasturtium: strophe and castastrophe.  
Progression and ruin.

From this body

Bees swarm.

We are hazed. They are ultra feminine. They hover in swarming shafts,  
through trees, lamenting the light. Wah. Wah.

But your pen is so long a man could run its width:

<sup>1</sup> Baudelaire's Instructions

The modern gentlemen of the station.  
are men of ruin and melancholy.

Thus, language is of my interior + snails.

That is, from the inside out, the word is vulvic (allegoric). It burns. Except for the slimy stuff at the bottom—that just smokes a bit.

“what shall I write,” asks the pen.

And it gains three more inches and I am walking ten times faster.  
Time thickens. Then stops. The source gains inches—even in the pants of  
your cipher, even in the arcane event of your article.

Catastrophe

The article  
is a skull of  
glass

it is as  
glass

seeing; unseeing  
written  
eyes smeared as wide as wax

but the brain's oil seeps in a greasy divination  
(which could change what next to what now)

meaning, what woos its tomb?  
meaning, what oozes women?  
bootless and toothless

#### 4

This experience of churches

*a deconstruction  
for the reading of words*

(Duncan, 1953)

Perhaps the only man  
if ever I loved

Paulos doulos, Paolo  
slave of instruction  
aphorismenos eis evaggelion  
separated and apart  
any news good news  
Pablo, kletos apostolos  
envoy of destruction  
called and sent  
the future Eve  
her blameless deinstruction

This experience of churches  
inside and out  
the state replicates (Schmidt)  
these thick magenta stones  
these high rose windows

St Paul's Basilica  
two old men on the steps  
myself and another<sup>1</sup>  
broken toothed garbage picker

1 The Experience of Artaud

What is god?

The indefinite possibility of being  
emerging from me like the double of real life.

In the power of my summons no body remains, but there was a body  
that wanted to remain on my abdomen: Lucifer,  
another in my sex: Jesus-christ,  
another in my anus: the holy Virgin,  
another in the breath of my breasts: the holy-spirit,  
another in my cerebral will: god.

And they've joined together to expel me from humankind, these sediments, precipitations, residues, and  
to create against me a world made from their angels, all the beings supposedly mine but which were only  
doubles of my real beings: the angels.

These precipitations were born from my powers.

saying what pigs these people are  
that's why they call it Corktown

My gorge rose  
against this apparition  
I dropped down a step or two  
backing away from this insult

*Porktown*  
he must've said

The insistence of the letter  
What the heart knows  
the ear can no longer hear  
(his distinctive feature:  
docent ear or doesn't hear  
[see Upid Roi])

Inside he said an exact replica of St Peter's  
he said such as would make Michelangelo weep  
he said and began speaking in tongues

Around back  
a faceless marble woman  
leaning over an egg

## 5

Possibly only  
the man  
in the occurrence  
you appreciate is  
Doulos de Paulos from Paul  
of Slavic instruction  
of the evaggelion



of the ice of the aphorismenos  
various and removed—  
the messages of the  
messages.

Good Pablo from the apostolos of the kletos  
sending the destruction  
and naked  
he has indicated  
that he  
would transmit  
the future  
in the daily paper, in advance payments:  
the relative ones  
perfectly.

This experiment of the churches  
to the inside  
towards the outside  
outside  
toward the condition  
and folds of entirety

From Schmidt:  
two old men on the stage  
myself toothed  
broken refuse  
and so I rose  
around the back  
of a woman,  
marbled without a face  
bending above an egg

The lower surface makes this inner part  
a retort of the road

Michael Angelo would be so  
excited that it has begun to speak  
in languages  
according to the posterior side  
where the marble  
woman  
folds without a face over an egg

I have said that the offense is a superficial  
distance.  
Mark off this part,  
commit it  
and the angel of Michael will be excited  
and begin to speak of an ignition in language to  
the later face of the marble woman who has no face.

## 6

St Paul: as rough as January

I.  
Gland the stuff inside  
Churn the bloody spring  
with its credit lyric  
Erect and ignore  
the moist bent neck  
Ignore and erect  
The churn surely  
when it settles  
like winter  
on every question  
they will notice he is not itself

“strike him in his volta”

Blind him

In the fulcrum

of his single

release

Cut off his head—

bald and illuminated

II.

What writing uncanceled

That credit

A lumpy public

A Baptist salty infinitude

curses the meal.

Preach pad

for dwell I do

Exact and afraid

A tasted pop copy

Stocked with what cause?

In profit met unloosed

Blend up and nip

My sweet

where loot

is love

(prunish rune booty)

luminous under a horse  
blind them not blind  
*amanuensis*  
fold them from  
the out folded

the pale note  
would not relieve  
nor linger hunger  
pardon for those  
who died despairing

every letter  
dead contingent  
in errands those  
new ways to get inches  
letters sped to death

erect me instill in him  
my zero death  
the commandment which  
was ordained to life  
we found to be unto death

which is sent for  
reason, epistle, letter,  
errant old letter  
spit (bright) new spirit

soft scopic being dead where we were held  
the renunciation of copying  
nothing exists rather  
than



something—creation now fulfilled

not re-creation nor eternal repetition

but decreation:

what happened and

what did not happen

returned

cipher

what could not have been

but was becomes

indistinguishable

from what could

have been but wasn't

*Know that GABRIEL has two wings. The one on the right, is pure light. This wing is, in its totality, the unique and pure relation of Gabriel's Being with God. Then there is the left wing. On this wing lies a shadowy imprint that resembles the light red colour of the Moon when it rises or the peacock's feet. This shadowy mark is Gabriel's potential to be [pouvoir-être], which has one side turned toward non-Being (since it is eo ipso a potential not to be). [Sohravardi, *Le bruissement des ailes de Gabriel*, in *L'Archange Empourpré*, trad. Henry Corbin]*

the right of the world not to be

palingenesis

apokatastasis pañton

saved in being irredeemable

or a poke at the stasis in your pants.

8

St Paul's Refractory

If I trusted dreams  
then teasel would be  
a cure for memory loss  
or a poison  
heating the molecules  
of anamnesis

America's going south  
with big pharma  
but I still have  
my control dose  
of enlightenment

A man *al kitab*  
with light  
in a drawer  
by his bedside

Too bad we can't read  
Paul's Yiddish  
But we can translate it  
knowing that rules  
are made to be broken  
or that breaking them  
is what makes them durable  
for they cannot not be broken

Oh Paul  
we promised not to address you  
but we must because we can't

Paul  
falling is libidinal

and horses are climactic

Paul

I imagine your prick  
was substantial  
even with a portion  
needlessly sacrificed

You put Jack Spicer  
and St Augustine  
to shame  
with your epistolic handshake  
and your burning brain

Paul

pray for me  
I'm in the wrong hotel

## 9

Special effects  
pools and chariots

hazed

[In English the word 'drug' means both poison and cure]

## 10

St Peter's Redoubt  
(or Upid Roi)

Poets are so stupid  
they fascinate themselves  
with the proximity  
of po[e]tics and po[li]tics  
while the walls fall  
and the bombs drop  
the tongue wants  
what the ear wants to hear  
wants to lick the crease  
the fold the envelope  
ontology not oncology  
sputtering and stuttering  
the ache of stomach  
of stoma and master  
verdure and ordure  
with the aroma of amor  
the agency of the letter  
they fasci-  
nate themselves  
*with the exact placement of a fly*  
*on the edge of a fern leaf* (Brecht)

The letter that's never posted  
never arrives

But Bertolt was not a poet  
and certainly not a saint  
like St Pablo, St Paolo or St Louis



And Djuna was not a saint  
like St Hilda  
nor a General like St Gertrude

[in French the word poisson means both fish and drown]

## Contributors

OANA AVASILICHIOAEI'S translations include poetry—*Occupational Sickness* by Romanian Nichita Stănescu (BuschekBooks 2006) and *The Islands* by Louise Cotnoir (Wolsak & Wynn 2011)—and fiction: *Wigrum* by Daniel Canty (Talonbooks 2013). She is editing an issue on poetry in translation from Quebecois French for the New York magazine *Aufgabe* (Spring 2013) and her most recent book of poetry is *We, Beasts* (Wolsak & Wynn 2012), winner of the A. M. Klein Prize.

In the late 1950s, JEAN A. BAUDOT (1929–2001), a young engineer, was hired to manage the computers in the statistics centre attached to the mathematics department at the Université de Montréal. In 1964, his experiment in electronic literature, *La Machine à écrire*, was published. That same year, he co-founded the university's first computer science centre, becoming the director in 1971. Increasingly interested in linguistics, in 1978 Baudot left computer science for the linguistics department, where he was hired as a professor. In his lifetime, he produced a number of language-manipulation software programmes and published many articles and books in the field where language and mathematics intersect.

COLIN BROWNE is a poet and filmmaker living in Vancouver. His most recent book is *The Properties* (Talonbooks 2012). He teaches in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University.

TED BYRNE lives and works in Vancouver. Recent books include *Beautiful Lies* (CUE Books) and *Sonnets: Louise Labe* (Nomados Literary Publishers). A previous collaboration with Christine Stewart can be found in vol. 1 of the on-line journal *The Poetic Front* ("Reading McCaffery: a Discussion of Seven Pages Missing").

They are currently working on translations of Dante's *Rime Petrose*.

LOUIS CABRI has had the good fortune of crossing paths with Roy Miki and his work in a number of contexts. They have twice launched books together. Roy contributed to the *PhillyTalks* poets' dialogue series (2001), and prepared a talk, "Who Me?" for the Transparency Machine series (Windsor, 2007). Louis has delivered two papers on Roy's poetry and poetics, one for "Tracing the Lines: A Symposium on Contemporary Poetics & Cultural Politics in Honour of Roy Miki" (Vancouver, 2008), the other for the conference "Canada and Beyond" (University of Huelva, Spain, 2010). Cabri teaches poetry, theory, and creative writing at the University of Windsor, in Windsor, Ontario, and poems of his appear in *Detours: An Anthology of Poets from Windsor & Essex County*, edited by Susan Holbrook and Dawn Kresan (Palimpsest Press). His most recent doings include *Poetryworld* (cuebooks.ca) and a poetry workshop called "Syntax" he held for the Toronto New School of Writing.

DANIEL CANTY is a prolific Montreal author and director working in literature, film, new media, theatre, visual arts, and design. His first book, *Êtres artificiels* (Liber 1997), was a history of automata in American literature, and his directorial debut was a Web adaptation of Alan Lightman's *Einstein's Dreams* (DNA 1999). *Wigrum* (La Peuplade 2011), his first novel, excerpted in this issue, will appear from Talonbooks in a translation by Oana Avasilichioaei. Its publication follows *La table des matières*, a trilogy of collective books of intricate graphical confection, on the city, food, and sleep. He has also translated books of poetry by Stephanie Bolster, Charles Simic, Michael Ondaatje, and Erin Moure. In 2012, he wrote the libretto for *Operator*, an elec-

troluminescent automata by Mikko Hynninen presented at Lux Helsinki, as well as *Ad Nauseam*, a play inspired by Annie Descôteaux's collages.

ANGELA CARR is a poet and translator whose translations include Chantal Neveu's *Coût* (BookThug 2012). She is the author of two collections of poetry, *Ropewalk* (2006) and *The Rose Concordance* (2009), and several chapbooks including *Risk Accretions* (Beautiful Outlaw Press). She currently divides her time between Montréal, where she is completing a PhD in the Département de littérature comparée at the Université de Montréal, and New York City.

FRANCE DAIGLE'S textured prose and incredible fiction *Pour sûr* won the 2012 Governor General's Award for French fiction, highlighting once again the power of Chiac as literary language. Daigle has published five other novels, and created three plays for the theatre company Moncton Sable. Her work has received the France-Acadie Prize and the Éloïze award. "Extrait de *Pour sûr*, in this issue, is drawn from pages 16–23 of *Pour sûr* (Les éditions du Boreal 2011). Later in 2013, *Pour sûr* will appear from House of Anansi in English in Robert Majzels' translation.

LISE DOWNE's most recent book of poetry, *This Way*, was published by BookThug. Previous titles include *Disturbances of Progress* with Coach House Books, and *A Velvet Increase of Curiosity* and *The Soft Signature*, both with ECW Press. She lives in Toronto, where she continues to write and make jewellery and other small sculptures.

PERRY EATON was born in Kodiak, Alaska in 1945 and is a member of the Sun'aq Tribe of Sugpiaq Alutiiq. He served as the President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center during its inception and opening in 1999, and currently serves on several boards and committees, including Koniag Inc. and its subsidiaries (the regional Native corporations for Kodiak Island's Alutiiq

people); the First National Bank of Alaska; the Alaska Native Arts Foundation; the Alutiiq Museum; and Urban Works. Internationally, he has worked through the University of Alaska and on the board of Counterpart International Inc. on indigenous peoples' socio-economic issues. As an artist he is focused on Alutiiq mask designs and black and white photography. His work has been shown internationally and he has been an artist in residence at the Chateau-Musee in Boulogne sur Mer, France and Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He received a Governor's award for his contributions to the Humanities in 2006 and was selected as a United States Artist Rasmuson Fellow in 2009.

KATE EICHHORN'S most recent collection of poetry, *Fieldnotes, a forensic* (BookThug 2010), was a finalist for the 2011 Governor General's Award. Her other books include *Fond* (BookThug 2008), the co-edited collection, *Prismatic Publics: Innovative Canadian Women's Poetry and Poetics* (Coach House 2009), and a forthcoming monograph, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* (Temple University Press 2013). She teaches in the Culture and Media Studies program at the New School University in New York.

DANIELA ELZA's work has appeared nationally and internationally in over 80 publications. *the weight of dew* (Mother Tongue Publishing 2012) is her debut poetry collection. *the book of it* (Ebook and print) came out in 2011. Daniela's poetry book *milk tooth bane bone* was just published by Leaf Press

BRONWYN HASLAM has previously published poems and translations in *The Capilano Review*, *Matrix*, and *Dandelion* and in chapbooks from No Press. She holds a BSc in Cellular and Molecular Biology and a BA (hons) in English from the University of Calgary (2008), and is currently completing an MA at the Université de Montréal on the poetics of apprehension.



Note: The Chorals extracted in this issue book-end Suzanne Leblanc's *La maison à penser de P.*: I-IV open it; v-VIII close it. In between lie 18 Foundations, 2 Clauses, and 9 Logics. Each of these chapters is connected to a particular room in the book's titular house. If these sentences are syntactically simple they are sometimes also syntactically strange, and precise in their strangeness. This precision and strangeness are what I have tried above all to maintain in the English. This translation has greatly benefitted from Angela Carr's encouragement and William Burton's careful proofreading and elegant solutions; any errors remain my own. The French original is © Éditions La Peuplade et Suzanne Leblanc and appears with their gracious permission.

Author of *After Ted & Sylvia: Poems*, CRYSTAL HURDLE teaches English and Creative Writing at Capilano University in North Vancouver. In October 2007, as Guest Poet at the International Sylvia Plath Symposium, Crystal read from the text at the University of Oxford, and at Blackwell's Bookstore. Her poetry and prose has been published in many journals, including *Canadian Literature*, *Literary Review of Canada*, *Event*, *Bogg*, *Fireweed*, and *The Dalhousie Review*. Crystal has a teen novel in verse forthcoming from Tightrope Books.

SUZANNE LEBLANC is a professor in the Visual Arts school at the Université de Laval (Québec). She has exhibited installations and media work mainly in Québec and has published theoretical texts in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Canada. Her research and creative work focus on the philosophico-artistic dimensions of architectures of knowledge. *La maison à penser de P* (2010) is her first novel. She holds a PhD in Philosophy (1983) and in Visual Arts (2004).

ROBERT MAJZELS is a Montreal-born novelist, poet, playwright, and teacher with four novels to his credit and many translations. He was award-

ed the Governor General's Award for translation for his English version of France Daigle's *Just Fine*, and was co-shortlisted with Erin Moure for the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Governor General's Award for their translation of Nicole Brossard's *Notebook of Roses and Civilization*. His translation of France Daigle's *Pour Sûr, For Sure*, is forthcoming from Anansi in June 2013. Fragments 20.1.3 to 37.11.10 appear in this issue. He lives and teaches in Calgary. His and Claire Huot's 85s project can be viewed at [www.85bawu.com](http://www.85bawu.com).

ROY MIKI has published widely on Canadian literature and culture. He is the author of *Broken Entries: Race, Subjectivity, Writing* (Mercury 1998) and *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Raincoast 2004), as well as five books of poems. His third book of poems, *Surrender* (Mercury 2001), received the Governor General's Award for Poetry. Most recently, he has published *Mannequin Rising* (New Star 2011), a book of poems and collages, and *In Flux: Transnational Shifts in Asian Canadian Writing* (NeWest 2011), a collection of essays.

ERÍN MOURE writes poetry and essays, and has translated poetry from French, Spanish, Galician, and Portuguese by poets Nicole Brossard, Andrés Ajens, Louise Dupré, Rosalía de Castro, Chus Pato, and Fernando Pessoa. She has received the Governor General's Award, Pat Lowther Memorial, A.M. Klein Prize, and was a three-time finalist for the Griffin Poetry Prize. She is currently working on *Kapusta*, a sequel to *The Unmemntioable* (Anansi 2012), and on *Insecession*, her response to *Secession*, her fourth translation of the poetry of Chus Pato.

CHANTAL NEVEU is a writer and an interdisciplinary artist. She is the author of the books *Une Spectaculaire influence* (l'Hexagone), *Coït*, and *mentale* (La Peuplade). Interdisciplinary textual projects include *Édres* followed by *Édres | Dehors* (Éditions É=É), *Je suis venue faire l'amour* (Contre-



mur), *Passing*, and *Ce qui arrive* (OBORO). *Coït*, translated from French to English by Angela Carr, is published by BookThug / Toronto. Other writings have been translated into English by Nathanaël, Norma Cole, and Angela Carr. As poet, she is part of the collective creative research project *Stratégies artistiques de spatialisation du savoir* directed by Suzanne Leblanc (FQRSC – Laval University). She lives in Montréal.

STEVE SAVAGE has published two books of poetry: *2 x 2* (2003) and *mEat* (2005) with Le Quartanier. *Dessavage*, his third book, has been ten years in the making and is forthcoming soon. His poems have been animated (Baillat Cardell & Fils), set to music (Alexander MacSween), translated (Erin Moure) and choreographed (Karine Denault). He has also translated and transformed many incarnations of New York poet Pam Dick, including Mina Pam Dick's *Delinquent* (Future-poem books 2009).

CHRISTINE STEWART works in the English and Film Department at the University of Alberta and at The Boyle Learning Centre. Selected Publications include *The Trees of Periphery* (above/ground press) and *Pessoa's July: or the months of astonishments* (Nomados Press). Selected forthcoming publications include *Virtualis: topologies of the unreal*, co-written with David Dowker (BookThug) and *The Humanist* (Red Nettle Press).

MINA TOTINO is a Vancouver artist—painting mostly—but spends much time observing the clouds in the sky.

TROY TYMOFICHUK works as a teacher in Toronto, Ontario. He has had poems appear in several Canadian journals, and has poetry forthcoming in *The Antigonish Review*.

# F R I E N D S   O F   T C R

**\$551+**

Bruce Cadorette

Bill Jeffries

**\$301-\$550**

Stephen Collis

Brian Fisher

Chris Glen

**\$25-\$300**

Joost Bakker George Bowering Thea Bowering Colin Browne Clint Burnham

Lloyd Burrit Louis Cabri Pierre Coupey Jen Currin Christos Dikeakos

Roger Farr Patrick Friesen Efrat El Hanany Steven Harris Nancy Holmes

Paolo Javier Patti Kernaghan Robert Keziere Andrew Klobucar

Christine Leclerc Michele Leggott Kris Madelung Aurelea Mahood

Daphne Marlatt rob mclennan Erin Moure Chris Nealon David Pay

Jenny Penberthy Stan Persky Meredith Quartermain Peter Quartermain

Sharla Sava Bob Sherrin Pete Smith Sharon Thesen Robert Young

**BECOME A FRIEND OF *TCR***  
**DONATE!**

All donations over \$100 will receive a subscription plus a signed copy of a numbered limited edition of George Bowering's chapbook *According to Brueghel* published by CUE books.

Donations will receive a tax receipt for the full amount if requested.

please visit [www.thecapilanoreview.ca](http://www.thecapilanoreview.ca) for more details

## Subscription Form

# TCR

## THE CAPILANO REVIEW

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Prov/St \_\_\_\_\_ P/Z Code \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to subscribe to *The Capilano Review*  
Enclosed is a cheque for:

\_\_\_\_ 1 year \$25 (applicable taxes included for  
Canadian orders)

\_\_\_\_ 1 year \$30 for outside Canada (\$USD please)

\_\_\_\_ Student \$20/\$25 \_\_\_\_ Institutions \$35/\$40

Please send to: *The Capilano Review* 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, BC V7J 3H5

GST# 128488392RT

*Award winning Fiction Poetry Visual Art Drama*

Subscribe or purchase copies online at [www.thecapilanoreview.ca](http://www.thecapilanoreview.ca).

Occasionally we make our subscriber list available to like-minded literary and arts magazines.  
To be excluded from these mailings, please contact the TCR office: [tcrcapilanou.ca](mailto:tcrcapilanou.ca); 604-984-1712



## CONTRIBUTORS

Oana Avasilichioaei

Jean A. Baudot

Colin Browne

Ted Byrne

Louis Cabri

Daniel Canty

Angela Carr

France Daigle

Lise Downe

Perry Eaton

Kate Eichhorn

Daniela Elza

Bronwyn Haslam

Crystal Hurdle

Suzanne Leblanc

Robert Majzels

Roy Miki

Erín Moure

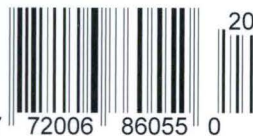
Chantal Neveau

Steve Savage

Christine A. Stewart

Mina Totino

Troy Tymofichuk



ISSN 0315 3754

\$14.00