

# TCR

THE CAPILANO REVIEW



**select a language, then  
splurge**

—NICOLE MARKOTIĆ

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Cover Image: Tiziana La Melia,  
*Thought Column for Joan Dark the  
Saint*, 2013–14, dye sublimation  
print on polyester faile. Photo: Toni  
Hafkenscheid

## Editor's Note

out of the advent of language, one's life in  
language—as if life were the home of it—

—Robin Blaser

Welcome! *TCR*'s winter open issue—brimming with fascinating, illuminating, eclectic texts and artwork—opens with Soma Feldmar's previously-unpublished interview with Robin Blaser, recorded at Naropa in 2004. We think you'll enjoy Blaser's expansive discussion of ethics, history, TV evangelists, twenty-first century poetics, and more. Parts of the interview also echo lines that Daphne Marlatt highlights in her judge's statement for this year's Robin Blaser Poetry Award (see epigraph above), where she calls for work "at home in the interaction between one's individual life in language and the larger public world of language." Many of the pieces featured in this issue—including Shane Neilson's winning poem—investigate and perform that interactive dynamic: Jake Pam Dick's intertextual mash-up, Kyle Kinaschuk's alphabetic/epistolary sequence, and Elee Kraljii Gardiner's record of loss produced in a series of tweets, among others. Tiziana La Melia's work documents the dynamic performance that forms the basis of the cover image; essays by Patrik Andersson and Joni Low accompany stunning paintings and ceramics by longtime practitioners Gordon Smith and Wayne Ngan; and Erdem Tasdelen's work, curated by Babak Golkar, thoughtfully examines the culturally-inscribed phenomenon of left-handedness. Finally, *TCR* is thrilled to feature an outstanding "Rhythm Party" folio coordinated by Aisha Sasha John and Liz Howard; the project, initiated by Lisa Robertson and Orlando Reade at Princeton in May 2014, takes up Henri Meschonnic's ideas on rhythm in an exploration of the poetics of hospitality, and the work collected here presents an exciting, ongoing engagement. We hope you enjoy the wide-ranging approaches (Blaser: "each poetics is a different poetics") and the playfulness among the pages that follow. For more, check out *TCR*'s web folio *ti-TCR* #11, co-edited with Daniel Zomparelli, featuring pieces that translate and respond to the texts printed here.

—Brook Houglum

## **SOMA FELDMAR / A Conversation on Writing with Robin Blaser**

The following conversation took place on June 22, 2004 at Naropa University, in Boulder, Colorado, during one of Naropa's Summer Writing Programs. These programs consist of four weeks of intensive workshops, readings, colloquia, performances, screenings, discussions, etc. Each week, a student is invited to interview one of the many visiting writers about her or his writing. These events are advertised as "Conversations on Craft," and take place at Naropa's Performing Arts Center in front of a live audience. Before arriving at Naropa that summer, Robin Blaser and his partner, David Farwell, had traveled in Spain, and their recent visits to Córdoba and Granada enter the conversation below.

Soma Feldmar: Robin Blaser was born on May 18, in 1925, in Denver, Colorado. In 1944, he wound up at UC Berkeley, and it was two years after he arrived in California that he met Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer, in 1946 . . . yes?

Robin Blaser: Yes. In '46 a man named Gene Wahl, from LA, brought Jack Spicer to me, well, before that—1945. And then Jack discovers Robert Duncan at Kenneth Rexroth's Anarchist meetings and brings Robert Duncan to me—1946—as a kind of prize, I guess. [big laugh] And he was a prize! Only Duncan always knew he was a prize, so it was sometimes annoying.

SF: One of them started calling his birthday, his birth year, 1946. I believe that was Spicer. Robin, the first question I want to ask you has to do with history, and the importance of history in your writing. I'm realizing that we may have to define this term "history" first. I'm curious about how it comes into your writing, your text, your relationship to language, and if it comes into your actual writing practice.

RB: Well, history simply means story. Who isn't interested in stories? And then the combination of Spicer and Duncan and I there in Berkeley. We had the great advantage of the presence of a man named Ernst Kantorowicz. Now Ernst Kantorowicz is absolutely a key figure in all three of our lives. His courses were on, take Byzantium, for example. Now if you'd been a little hick, you know, and you came from Idaho,



or something like that, you got the idea there was something going on in the world besides Idaho. We went back to Byzantium first. We took a course that concentrated on the thirteenth century, which meant that we had Dante brought to our attention. I had known him before, but Dante became a figure in history for us, not that curious thing where you enter upon poetry and it's sort of, you know, the idea of "just poetry"? Well, there's no such thing as "just poetry." And so, there we were, suddenly faced with this amazing range of the poetic mixed up directly with the politics and history of Europe. And then we could enlarge that into the other ranges of the world, that move us way back into Asia, and as far as China and Japan and so forth. So that then languages began. I think that's one of the secrets of interest for me in history: the multiplicity of languages. I like all those voices, and I like all their different accents. I learn as many as I can. At least so you can read them, or at least so you can go through and work with a dictionary and batter your way through a line or two. History for me is a history of language also; it's the story of language. We only come by our knowledge of history, that is to say the actions of men and women throughout the entire human record, we only come to that by way of the record given us in language.

Now, Kantorowicz brought us into the height and richness of that. And the other magnificent teacher was Hannah Arendt. She was only there one year. She hated California. She didn't tell us that, but I found it out in her biography. I was simply furious. I adore California. We were so sad that she only stayed the year, but it was very very important to have had that opportunity to know her work. And in those days the university was relatively small. When we first got to Berkeley, there were 8,000 students. Now, I don't know, perhaps it's reached 80,000. I don't know what it is, but it's enormous. In those days it was only 8,000. It was like a kind of private school. And if you were the kind that weren't there just to get a job in something or another, you would then shop. Classes weren't crowded; you didn't have to rush in and sign up. So we shopped very carefully, and there were many others I could name, particularly the language teachers. But Ernst Kantorowicz and Hannah Arendt were big events in terms of what we thought of as mind. And then they opened that range into the history of the mind.

And that makes me want to say, okay, you know, it's not "stuffy" to know some classics. It just ain't. It's the most wonderful thing. My father would have said "hain't," in Idaho. It just hain't true, that that is stuffy stuff. It's what we are. It's also the only



thing that we really offer to anybody else—this thing of having been able to speak, of having been able to think, and having been able to turn to books of all ages and all places and draw them in to the map that becomes your territory. And everybody's gotta have a territory. Now, Idaho was my territory, and I'm very fond of Kamima and Wapai. I mean, should I go on with the list? I can give you those where there's no longer any population. Orchard and Blaser, Idaho. There is a Blaser, Idaho. There's a Blaser highway, etc., etc. It's simply a matter of territory, and the territory's not a matter of ownership, but a matter of acquaintance.

SF: In terms of what you were just saying, about what we have to offer, in speech, in history, I'm wondering what you think of—how you deal, in your work, in language, in your life—with ethics? There's a lot of ethics in your work. I find a lot of it in the poetry, in the essays.

RB: Now, as long as everybody understands that: [playing a haughty character] "I'm a very moral person, you understand. I teach morality at all times, actually. My careful careful very high class accent comes into the teaching of it." [end character]

"Ethics" is an extraordinary word. It has to do with one's behavior in the world. It is personal, and then that extends into those various forms that we give permission to, that is to say, to our politics. It was interesting to wake up this morning to a new set of lies coming out of Washington. This is simply unacceptable. There are at least three major world leaders who must be brought to task, and soon. I'll let you name them for yourselves, so that they won't close the border to me when I try to come back from Canada next time. And the extraordinary business on civil liberties. But ethics: this is the way you behave towards another person; this is the way you behave towards your own group; this is the way you behave towards your family; this is the way you behave towards your society. Ethics, insofar as they mean anything to any one of us, is the way in which we enter upon all of those various arrangements of our lives, from the personal to the social.

And it really, ethics, the word "ethics," yes, we'll drop the morality of it because the churches have ruined that. Totally ruined it. They've become companions of fascism, etc., over a period of time, and are indeed now part of the very great difficulty which, Samuel [Samuel R Delany, who is in the audience], you mentioned today. The theology under which we are now suffering, the religions have very much to answer

for. They, in my view, are being thrown immediately into purgatory because I am not unkind enough to throw them into hell. But they must go into that purgatory; that word that comes from the word purge. This is the great cosmology of Dante—that the world is divided into hell, purgatory, and heaven. In the meantime, our lives move towards the summary that would be named hell, purgatory, or paradise. I hope you're not going to practice hell. I hope that no one else is going to practice hell on you. I do think most of us are in purgatory, because we have to answer for the way in which our governments and our societies treat us, treat others.

The poverty that is amuck now, in both Canada and the United States, is unforgivable. There is no excuse for that in this very rich society. The ethics of it: one watches to see what it is that one does, and then in every instance this is informed by love. We can use the word “care” so we don't get too involved in our passions, but it has to be a very true care for one another. We haven't got anything else. We certainly have no governments that can speak to that. It takes great insistence to get the taxes to go in the right directions.

SF: What I'm wondering about now is—I believe it was Agamben, whom I know you love, Giorgio Agamben, who spoke about poetic language and how poetic language is the only ethical language because it does not annihilate human experience—could you speak about ethics in terms of language?

RB: Giorgio Agamben. It's very interesting. Mussolini destroyed philosophy, in Italy, as Hitler did in Germany, and as Franco did in Spain. In that vast run, they destroyed philosophy. And then, well, this is the history. I'm very aware of what the history of philosophy is, and the history of poetry that runs up to this, this run of disasters. And, well, I like to check. Italy is a beloved place to me, so is Spain, and so on. And so I very carefully—and France—I very carefully watch what came through again, after there had been a destruction of the mind, of the heart, and of the lives in a whole population. And out of these, in Italy, for example, the post-1945 world of thought, is Giorgio Agamben. Now, am I still on the topic you asked me?

SF: Yes.

RB: Giorgio Agamben does something really fascinating. The first book available to us in English is called *The Coming Community*. Agamben, yes, Agamben is a—yeah, I'll



just use the word—I'm not talking about his view of me, I'm saying he's my companion. Now in terms of the history of thought, and the history of poetry, one has companions. And they are there. They're holding on to you, and you're holding on to them.

Giorgio Agamben's little book was the first one available to us in English, though there are several now available. *The Coming Community* is an effort to open—this word “open”—in fact, the latest book by Giorgio Agamben that is available to us is called *The Open*. Agamben wants to find a community that is free of what we have understood to be community, which can be so manipulated that our lives are actually lost in it. Now, this is a major effort of thought, and he then follows with several books in which he argues for that openness, the thing that would open us, that would free us. This gets us into some pretty peculiar areas. One of them is an end of history. Now that's a technical term, because history doesn't have any end. But if there is a sense that history has moved us—we are inside this great story—moved us to a point where something has to be done, that is where philosophers begin to imagine something called the “end of history.” That it opens up to something else and we devote our thought, our lives, and certainly our writing to this openness.

Now openness for writing is certainly a fascinating undertaking, because it's a territory you have to discover, and this is a language issue. This begins to put the real test to your language. What can you handle? Every writer knows this if they stop over it. What can you handle in the language that you've got at hand, in your mind? And then it starts to move. You begin to look for other words. You begin to check etymologies to find out what the pieces of words mean. You begin to play with the ways other authors use words. And Agamben is one who's most most interesting in the way he uses words, but, and also to get back to the point where you began, Soma, that is, I've noticed in a whole run of philosophy now, they give particular attention to the poetic voice. It's not the philosophy that some of you caught in certain universities where it's all a matter of theorizing and abstraction. These philosophers are particularly devoted to the human condition, in which the voice of that condition is made plain, and one of the major places for making things plain is in poetry.

And this goes to Jean-Luc Nancy, who is well acquainted with Agamben personally and otherwise, and is another one of the philosophers of this order where the complexity of their discussion always somehow reflects the poetic. Now, the poetic—I mean, what in the hell have we got when we get into this world, you know? Our

beloved mothers and perhaps beloved fathers, I hope so, and so on. What we've got is potentiality. That's all we've got. Now take that away, whether because you're poor, whether because your educational system is a total disaster, and they wanted to teach you nothing but to be a straight man or woman—and, well, straight men and women can be kind of nice on stage because they become a joke, but we're not on stage when they turn us into straight men and women. So this is what must happen: We must protect our potentialities. We must see that the experience of the potential is there for each one of us, and receive the education that allows that potentiality to become a work of a life, which is to say a work of art. Every life can be a work of art.

SF: You spoke about language, using the language and finding the words, and what language is in your head, and how to express what you need, part of it being the potentiality, the philosophy. And I've heard you speak about "over-writing" as a problem. I'm wondering if you can expand on what that might look like.

RB: Okay, I'd like to take first the business on language, that is, to begin paying attention to etymologies. That's history. That's the way you get in touch with the age of the language. And how it comes together, how it's pieced together, and how magically it's found over the centuries. It's just such glorious stuff. Now, what was the next part of that question? Uh, I got into heaven briefly there, you'll forgive me.

SF: The potential difficulty of "over-writing."

RB: Over-writing, yeah. Well, that's me being kind of snotty, I think. But you know, there is a point, I mean, because I don't like to discourage anybody, but we must all know somebody: they just write all the time, and it becomes a kind of spillage rather than a creation. Then the other danger is, when you over-write, when one over-writes, is to get a system going.

Now when you've got a system going, your language begins to close. The structures that your language searches for, and a structure is always a search, it begins to be nothing but the same structure, over and over and over, you know. [singing] "My mommy didn't love me, my daddy didn't care, da dada da da." I can tell you that story over and over again. I think it's just fascinating. [audience laughter] I don't mean to be too, pardon me, because one should never discourage anyone in writing, it's just that you're picking up on the fact that I'm very troubled by over-writing in which it's just a



constant . . . uh . . . blabbing. And there's a lot of that. And some of it is in journalism. When it gets into literature, it tends to be . . . well, I'm not going to. I think I just won't name anybody. I'll let you find the names, you know.

SF: I'm not sure how you're going to feel about this next question, how secret it might be for you, but I'm very curious about your writing process. I've heard you speak about silence being attached to poetry, of having to wait for the language to make the poem, and about the poetic mind. What I want to ask is how do you personally work with all that? How do you move between the other mind and the poetic mind? How do you know when the language is ready? I don't even know if these are answerable questions, but they're questions.

RB: Well, they're reflections. Reflections can be made on those. Silence is after all the garden of language. I mean silence—when you watch the silence begin to move, to take shape, then the words are beginning. Now Spicer called this dictation, and well, he'd get home late at night quite drunk and so on, and the poems would begin. One of my favorite lines that I remember: “bee bop bee beep, we are all asleep.” I think it's a marvelous line. And it was a voice that came out of the ceiling or something, so to speak, in the middle of the night. It's in Jack's book, *The Collected Books*, which I edited. But “bee bop bee beep, we are all asleep.” Now, that's a voice that came out of silence.

There are moments, the dead moments, the moments when you just aren't writing and can't write. Those need to be respected and watched. And in those cases you become a kind of guardian over your own possibility in language. They need to be watched. They can be so damned depressing. And the trouble with depression is that it falls right inside of you and there's nothin' there but just inside of you, and that won't get you anywhere except inside of you. So, you have to guard and watch over that in order to make sure that you're really conversing with that silence. Then, I think there are the periods when you can be so disturbed, and I had great difficulty recently in writing because I am so disturbed politically, across the world. So I began listening to everything. I mean, how much television can you take?! I usually can take damn little of that thing.

You know, I mean, and then for amusement, I will turn to channel 24 where they're saving me. And that, curiously, will always bring me into some kind of laughter

and language. I mean by the time he's, this is Jack Van Impe and his wife Rexella. Now, I don't know whether you have all watched this, and there's those of you who've heard me tell this story before, but they're really quite marvelous. I always like the moment when Jack is giving us the entire end of the world treatment. [In dramatic loud whisper:] "it's coming, it's coming, it's here, it's here!" And then he wants me to put my hands on the television glass so that I get there too! Well now, as someone interested in reading the past, I know that in the book of Revelations only 133,00 people get into that paradise, and I'm thinking of writing to Jack, the Reverend Jack Van Impe and to Rexella, so that she can say, "Oh Jack! What do you think of this?" and she's taken something out of *Time* magazine and she's usually holding it and then Jack gives us his reflections. In the mean time, I haven't been saved. Not adequately at any rate.

I researched these people for a while, and I got to the point where I just couldn't do it any more. I couldn't stand it anymore. But I did find out very interesting things, which I brought up with a group that I talked to separately from you, where at least two plane loads of red heifers have been sent to Israel. And there will be more plane loads of red heifers sent to Israel. Now, if you go back and check your history out to find out the nature of sacrifice—check it all the way too, because that tradition stayed all the way through to Christ—the whole story that Christ had to be sacrificed is ancient to our background. It goes all the way back in. We have a great number of fundamentalists who believe that there is the second coming, coming. And we are to be ready for it, and it's preached on television, over and over again, and then when the time comes—they will know, I presume—I'm, at this point, going to be in some other realm. They will know and they will immediately go over there and knock down that beautiful blue mosque on the mountain in Jerusalem. I don't know what's happened to the Muslims at this point; they're certainly not going to get into this paradise according to these people. And they will rebuild the temple and the sacrifices, I'm quoting now from one of those television programs: "the sacrifices of the red heifers" (it's very very important that they be red heifers) "will begin again the smoke to God," and this time the sacrifice, I quote, "will be in the name of Christ."

I haven't made this up. If I had been able to make that up, I'd stop writing. [audience laughter] It is an extraordinary event in the thing. Now back to the point of the question, the point at which you stop writing. I got really just tied down with the politics. I would watch everything; I would read everything. I carefully watched



with delight when I saw a magazine I very much like and enjoy, *The New Yorker*, suddenly become political. It contains some of the best political pieces. Well, then I went around to see what the more radical magazines did. *The Nation* has become invaluable to me, and I get *Le Monde Diplomatique*—there's an English edition of that and I recommend it to your attention—and *The Guardian*, and so on. I had to gather these to me. Now there's too much of that for me, really, because I find myself reading all of this. And *Harpers* comes in, and *Lapham's* is just marvelous. Well, you can spend your whole time reading all of it. So, what are you gonna do? Well, when I get back home, those guys are gonna wait in stacks. I'll get there when I can't write. You need them, and they're all good writers, especially at *Lapham's*, it's just astonishingly good. But there's a point at which the politics that stands there can stop you dead. You'll just sit there worrying and you'll suddenly run to the TV to find out the latest scandal, or the latest bit of pop, and I mean bad pop in the bottle, that's coming off of CNN. It was very curious, and I checked this out, researched, and I think this is the point at which this sort of thing has to stop because it stopped my writing. I watched—you never got to see the people killed in Iraq. CNN carefully edited it. You'd see a picture of a disaster building, but you didn't see who got it. And now, the savagery just goes on and on and on, on both sides when, in my view, Iraq should never have happened. And I was pleased living in Canada that Canada did not join. But now it has turned into a vast disaster endangering all of the Middle East.

And, so, there's a point at which you can be in the world so much that you haven't got a voice of your own left, and I think you've got to find a way to protect that voice and that poetics. Because each poetics is a different poetics. That's what's so fascinating. There's no rule, no description I can give of a poetic unless I start talking about a poetry, a particular poet. Every single one differs, and in my workshop, each one we have heard has a different poetic. And I'm not talking about their personalities. They're very nice personalities. They've got a different poetic. It's a different poiesis, which means "to make." To make, to make a world.

So I tried in that long little harangue, I'm trying to warn you against what's happened to me recently. I had intended to come here with a poem specifically written about Córdoba and Granada, a long poem, like my Dante poem, which I once read here. I wanted to come here with a poem where we looked with great care at the

last place in history where Jews, Christians, and Muslims could propose together, not without difficulties, propose to be civilized together, and that was in Córdoba and Granada, eleventh, late eleventh – twelfth centuries. And then I decided I just couldn't get it all together for you. So you ain't gonna hear that poem. But there will be that poem, and it'll be out somewhere as soon as I get it done, because I was so moved by it.

We stopped, my companion David and I, stopped to go to García Lorca's grave. Found we had to have our hotel search for a driver who knew how to get there. And we got out there, and got out and walked in, and they do have a big piece of granite there to commemorate their greatest twentieth century poet, in my view. There are other marvelous Spanish poets, but García Lorca, if you've not read him, get busy. I mean, it's just the top of the line. Jack's first book is *After Lorca*. And then we went up and stood where he had been shot, and he was shot with a whole group, and they were all tossed into a big hole and covered over. I suppose we were standing on them. The Spanish government wishes to use DNA and dig that all up and try to find García Lorca and give him a special spot. And I wish that they would listen to me. García Lorca: "I'll get you, you bastards!" He got killed with a whole group and he would stay there. I am very sure.

But I like that combo. I went to look for a place where a civilization went. We checked for the mosques, which are still there, magnificent and beautiful. In one instance, at least, invaded by Christianity. That is to say that the walls have become bronzes of the suffering of Christ and here are the arches of eternity in red and white stripes that—you just walk through the door and you're upon arches, arches, arches. And then suddenly you realize that Christianity came in and invaded. The King—Carlos the V, right?—allowed them to build a Christian cathedral in one of the greatest of the mosques that remain with us. And when they got through with it, because it's the church, the cathedral has been built right into the mosque, and yet these arches are all there. Some of you must have been there. King Carlos the V commented, "I gave you permission to do this, but you have done what anyone could do. And you have ruined a great piece of art." And it's true, but what's fascinating is to go look at the two religions face to face.

Then we began searching for the synagogues—most of them gone—and found a very beautiful one. [Asks David, who is in the audience:] That was Granada, wasn't it? [David answers "Córdoba."] Córdoba! We found a very beautiful one there. Very small,



very intimate, very elegant. [David adds “and very Moorish!”] Yes, very Moorish. The Moors remained, and some of it is so beautiful, nobody can dare destroy it. Except of course, the twentieth century, which can blow up anything these days.

Oh right, did that answer, or did I just lose—go off into one of my things?

SF: I think possibly a bit of both, which is great.

RB: Over and out! [audience laughter]

SF: So, there's 15 minutes left before we have to stop. I've already asked a few questions, and I'm wondering if anyone in the audience has anything they would like to ask. [silence]

RB: [to SF] So ask your questions. And I'll behave. [audience laughter]

SF: My next question has to do with the idea of the “post-modern.” I've heard you talk about it, and I've heard you say it's a mistaken term because thought does not “post” anything. I'm aware that a shift took place in a large part of the art world—writing, architecture, painting, music, sculpture—post WWII. Can you think of anything you'd like to call that shift other than “post-modern”?

RB: Just about anything else. That word “post,” you know, it's silly. And it also doesn't in any way talk about the way time works. In time, we don't “post” anything, we get on with it. Now, the twentieth century became an enormous problem. If I had time to go back and go through the nineteenth century with you, and the Victorians, and so on, and even to look at what could be done with American nineteenth century poetry with Longfellow and so on and so forth, “The Wreck of the Hesperus” and all this sort of thing. The kind of heroism that was believed in. Now, let's move to the twentieth century. I'm not “post” that. I've gone along with everyone someplace else where some other problems have turned up. Poiesis takes that on in every instance. It is another insistence that one take one's world seriously, with love, and with purpose. That is the twentieth century. It's got nothing to do with being modern, in that most of the people I know don't even know what modern is. They don't read the books, they don't go to the museums, they don't know why Picasso acted up that way, etcetera.

I mean, “post” what? It's an intolerable term, and it also allows the academics, of a certain rather, I think, mediocre level, to arrange everything so neatly. We've got

the Romantics, now we have the modern, and guess what, we've got TS Eliot going on about Christianity absolutely beautifully. We've got Ezra Pound tearing up the place, or trying to, and getting into terrible trouble with Fascism. And so on and so on and so forth. This is not "post." This is a constant effort, and it's largely in the arts, because the real stress and care of mind is in the arts, alongside their companionship with philosophy which reflects upon them.

We are nowhere in the modern, and as for the post-modern, I don't know where in the hell that is. Does that mean, you know, paintings that are just all white paint on the canvas? What does that mean? It doesn't mean anything other than art was no longer answering in that range of painting to what the condition is, and such minimalist painters took it on as another way to insist that art was there but it couldn't do anything to stop it. We will look at a blank white painting and realize how absolutely beautiful blank white is, especially when you're faced with a bunch of shit. And, I mean, does that answer the question? [audience laughter and applause]

SF: Yes. [audience laughter] So, what was / is the project? What is art, writing, poetry? What have we been doing since the modern and continuing after the modern and now?

RB: Well, your word "project" is interesting because, you see "project," that's a neat word, where you set it all up. The real meaning of the word is that it's "projected." A project's gonna stop you dead, but it may be very useful. You know, okay, so a project, you know, you wanna go out and pick peanuts with me, well let's go do it. We'll have some peanuts for supper. They're very good in curry, incidentally. And the real point of what art is doing is that it's projective. It's constantly projecting outward into a realm that is quite frankly what we used to call the transcendent.

Now, that whole realm of the transcendent has just fallen on your heads. And the word, not "project" but "projective"—they *pro-ject* the arts, ever since the nineteenth century. And the projection of them has been harsher, more demanding, than it was before. We don't have the Romantic story to cover whether or not my face is in seven pieces. It probably is because that's the world I live in. It's the projection-ing that is the real identity of the twentieth century. The "modern," those are neat words, we can use them if we wish, but I think if you just go back, go walk through the Museum of Modern Art in New York, for example. Or all the stuff that's going on now down

in Denver—Denver has a very good gallery—just walk through it and watch what it's doing. It's projective. It is to take "project" and make it alive, to find openings, and the twentieth century has needed openings more than any century that we will know much about.

So I think, I think that's the way to look at it. And I don't feel, do you feel modern? [audience laughter] Well, I was just gonna say show me and nobody endangered him or herself. And I'm quite sure that if I asked the question, do you feel post? Well, you can climb a post and become a flag on it, that's what you can do. So, I think you drop those things and go at it. Okay. Now what else are you going to do to me? [more audience laughter]

SF: I started to get scared you were going to ask me questions.

RB: [big laugh] Well now. Should we settle down. [audience laughter]

SF: We've only got seven minutes.

RB: That's not enough for what I want to know about you. [audience laughter and applause] I'm sorry [laughs] I can't resist.

SF: What you were talking about in terms of the movements, the change, and the opening up in the twentieth century—one thing I feel from my vantage point, really coming to writing at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, is that there was a shift around 1945.

RB: Yes. Oh, yes.

SF: Academically and critically it's important to be able to identify certain shifts in culture, in society, and thus in art. I'm wondering if you see something new happening now, as we're entering the twenty-first century.

RB: Well, to take 1945 first, remember, we're coming out of a war that did not really solve anything, finally. We didn't know that at the time. In fact, it should have been celebrated, since there was peace of a kind, and so forth. So, 1945. Watching the movement of time, I think vast numbers of thinking people did see it as an opening into something else. And so we have a very different kind of art, and what I find very curious is we began to get a movement, say, in people like Charles Olson, and in Duncan,



in Jack Spicer, where people think of the whole work. That it's a work that has to be done, that goes on for a lifetime. So you get the long poem, you get huge efforts to re-imagine the world. Olson takes us back to the Pleistocene, and then tries to bring us forward, in fact, indeed does bring us forward in the most magical way.

The twenty-first century. That's a really tough question because we've had so little of it. What year is this anyway? 2004. Four years, and what have we had? See, the twenty-first century seems to me to have perhaps a more heightened and tenser relationship to what is going on around us than ever before because I think we have some very powerful governments in which vast numbers of us do not believe and cannot honor. And this is characteristic of the twenty-first century. It's a vast labour that's ahead of us, but I think it's different from anything that moved us into the twentieth century, to the first world war, to the second, even Vietnam, that terrifying and terrible mistake, to put it in polite terms. And then the many many others. I mean, there are so many wars that are even forgotten now that were going on.

This time we've moved into, in my view, we've moved into a dissatisfaction that has broad support. Now, there's the opposition right now, and that's very important and becoming more so all the time. But I think a vast disappointment, a vast disbelief, has begun to inform a large number of people. And we're thrown, in the twenty-first century, into all the problems of what answers that. Because of the vast—notice the dissatisfaction is a kind of silence, as unhappiness is a kind of silence. They are all kinds of loneliness. And we are lonely, very lonely. We have not a government that we can believe; we have not a shape that will tell us we can be sure of the future. Instead, it looks like a continuous war is being proposed, to win oil, to win empire, to win I don't know what. This would be my response, that the twenty-first century has that particular characteristic—that so many of us are alone in this, alone, not because we're not together, I mean, but alone in the sense that you can't—it's very difficult to gather the community now. It's very difficult to hold the patriotisms. It's very difficult to wave flags, unless you wish to turn to the magnificent Maitri flags, Maitri colours that fly here on the poles, the five colours.

Maitri colours, Maitri rooms, have you visited those? I don't know if they're open anymore for many visits. You would know more probably. Oh, the five colour rooms—they're open? Don't go in crowds because each room requires a meditation and a meditation is a very interesting thing. What happens when you're in a room of



all one colour, one of the five great colours here? What happens? Does the colour enter you or do you enter the colour? And that happening, you're in a poiesis . . . which'll make you fly.

I don't want to leave you in a depressed place, alright?

SF: You just said "Make you fly!" [laughter]

RB: I'm glad I got to those rooms. Alright? [applause begins]

SF: Yes. Thank you very much!

RB: Shall we end this dance?

[big audience applause]

RB: [walks off stage humming a tune]

## BROC ROSSELL / Four Poems

The animal opens, its scourge the fountain's plume.  
Heartache, the translucent bell. Tomorrow, tomorrow:  
bone will speak to bone, in the arm. Held closely, held  
and mollified. The canker livid and wandering. A holiday  
for criminals, a boot and a plough. *The stars be hid*, the  
stars like snow—placid and redolent as bedrock. There's  
an enemy. I am a plover, a missive, a white shutter, a  
stone wall. All the children bleed. Their mouths are  
juicy wolves. A fragrant and enveloping mist, a paucity of  
daylight. Crimes and grapes on the table. The open book  
smokes. The windows smoke and thin, air astringent  
as orange rinds. That's what my brother finds by the  
woodpile, he throws the fish back, too late, it falls to the  
ocean floor like a villanelle, like calligraphy written in  
lemon juice. The fine delicate chin of a young woman  
appears briefly in the deep. An oarfish, an awe, a  
second look at the apple tree. She has a throat. Ripples  
of fear, softly electric, a lamp about to crumple. Built-in  
obsolescence: is compliant, and generous, a grass in the  
mouth of a cave, thrush

A clip of leaf clips of light  
Rot on clouds  
The mirror of horizon  
Trees the era of late decay, mold  
Barely breathes a bit of green this field  
This rising water the cyclist skirts that couples lave and stitch  
Lights below light, public art  
Between the decks  
Of fading tankers and brown leaves you leaves fall  
At the implacable condo crown's yellow lights brown lights  
A pile of rocks not quite jetty but sufficient  
To the moment to the blinking

Seam ripper if figural then rips  
Open the sky's belly of soot  
The cyclist smells  
With her mouth her questions like students like yellow lights  
On a band of water, frisson  
Between thrill and grief  
And curiosity and fear that these words  
Will not speak and close  
In the sun and moon and no animal  
Will enter the mind  
Eat its fruit and scatter



In this version they shoot the white kid first. I am taken to a small but comfortable house on the verge of two landscapes, perhaps a forest and shore, where citizens wear a symbol of the void stitched to their chests and long black gloves invisible at night. An old man whose losses were total instructs me in the disciplines of a classical education. The crowd gathering at the window breaks apart, an emotional grenade, the more dumbfounded dropped into themselves, sinking on the forest floor like canvas tents. Untouched by abuse, unfettered by common friendships, I deploy squadrons of language to various cities to establish fealties, taxations, awards, and grants. In these far reaches townspeople wonder at the identity of the figure who has accorded them uncertain emotional territories, asking in return only modest remunerations: books, whiskey, pizza. Yet their mouths widen and grow into black silhouettes of their heads and disappear, eaten by their sunless throats; now they hover, pirouetting slowly as if on pikes, carousels swelling or perhaps only deepening in color, blooming canisters of gas not unspent. In costume rags and rich with easy grief, I am nothing, nothing but a thought

Pacing in open air

GORDON SMITH / Black and White Works



Gordon Smith, *Pachino #11*, 2006–2010, acrylic on canvas, 67 inches × 60 inches.

FOLLOWING SPREAD: Gordon Smith, *Winterscape #7*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 27 inches × 38 inches.











## **PATRIK ANDERSSON / Gordon Smith's Black and White Works: Site, Sight, and Afterimage<sup>1</sup>**

At the age when Gordon Smith was just learning to hold a pencil, Sigmund Freud, the father of modern-day psychoanalysis, happened upon a small contrivance called "The Mystic Writing-Pad," which helped to illustrate his own hypothesis on memory:

(It) promises to perform more than the sheet of paper or the slate. . . . To make use of the Mystic Pad, one writes upon the celluloid portion of the covering-sheet which rests upon the wax slab. . . . It is a return to the ancient method of writing upon tablets of clay or wax: a pointed stilus scratches the surface, the depressions upon which constitute the "writing." . . . If we imagine one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Writing-Pad while another periodically raises its covering sheet from the wax slab, we shall have a concrete representation of the way in which I tried (in *The Interpretation of Dreams*) to picture the functioning of the perceptual apparatus of our mind. (Sigmund Freud "A note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'" 1925)

Twenty years later, Gordon Smith happened upon his own metaphors and allegorical structures to deal with memory, which he has made use of ever since. Whereas Freud visualized the dialectic between internal and external structures of the mind in a writing tool that is today commonly used by children, Smith has found his rebus in things located at the edge of the forest, the sea and the city.

### **White**

With every season that passes, Gordon Smith manages to find the time, energy and will to produce a wide body of work that includes painting, sculpture, print and collage. At the centre of this practice stand his paintings of nature that, at a

<sup>1</sup> This essay is reprinted from the exhibition catalogue for Black and White at the Equinox Gallery in 2011.

distance, can be read as a lyrical West Coast descendant of European Impressionism filtered through local flora. In many ways this is a good way to see them. Smith certainly has the painterly ability to capture the changing qualities of light as it interacts with tree branches, leaves and reflections on water. But there is also something disquieting and distinctly contemporary in the way Smith engages with this subject matter that makes it a more critical response to modernity than what one might first think.

The dialectic at play in a painting by Gordon Smith is not only one of realism and abstraction, but it is also one where a picturesque and sublime vocabulary has been translated into a unique and strikingly *urban* impression of nature. As much as one would like to think that these paintings are about some kind of pure West Coast wilderness, the urban experience of the viewer is always taken into account. More than often one finds oneself tangled and lost in his close-up depictions of the edges of forests and byways. What Smith does with his paintings is bate his viewer into a situation that is hard to get out of. The visual confrontation with nature that ensues is always defined by a wall of trees, a pond, or a web of tangled branches that keep us from seeing a landscape. In this way, Smith's *modus operandi* appears to be his refusal to entertain a Cartesian landscape tradition based on controlling space from above. Instead, he takes pleasure in a position that is grounded and in the thick of things. The result is that we get caught by these striking images like a deer in headlights. Looking back at Smith's artistic career this arrested vision is nothing new. I was reminded of this looking at a watercolour he painted of the Sussex coast in 1942, where an otherwise tranquil beach scene is cut off by a tangle of barbed wire that, with hindsight, looks a lot like his recent depictions of brambles.

Considering Smith's refusal to depict deep space, to see his paintings for what they truly are means that we must be willing to step right up to the painting's surface where the edge of the forests he depicts turn into an abstraction. Only by being caught up in his tangle of branches, brush strokes, and scratches that on occasion include collaged debris of drift wood, beer cans, and printed matter, does his very urban sensibility become clear. His paintings are not unlike the chronicles of urban wall markings by the late Cy Twombly who also worked with the quick-drying and fluid acrylic paint medium that Smith prefers. But Smith's



gaze is not focused on the scribbles and scratches that have survived censorship on city walls, but instead values the strength that remains in weathered branches that not only have survived dry summers, autumn winds, and snowy winters, but also the encroaching threat of progress and industry. After all, his subject matter is often found just outside the windows of his West Vancouver house, along the roadside or a nearby ski resort.

It is this shaky relationship between city and country that Smith takes pleasure in and has made into his personal signature. The surface that at a distance seems to offer a comfortable and calm picture onto our West Coast's natural environment suddenly appears painted with the haste of city life. Perhaps it is this urgency in his work that leads me to consider this Smith's urbanity despite what is often an absence of civilization as a motif. Or maybe it's the fact that I know how Gordon does not limit his artistic vision to painting nature, but drags as much of the material world into his studio as he sees fit.

## **Black**

Smith generally works on two or three bodies of paintings at a time and manages to extend this practice into other mediums such as papier mâché sculpture, collage, etching, photography, and drawing. With all this production, time seems to be on his side. His collages and assemblages reveal an eclectic mix of inspiration and, unlike his paintings of trees, this work admits more readily his fascination with the leftovers of both nature and society. Used and broken sticks, branches, tumbleweed, pop cans, newspapers, magazines, and broken wheelchair parts all make up an army of readymades prepared to liberate his creative impulses. Nothing is too dead for Smith to transform into his own brand of surrealism where everything is playfully alive.

The White paintings are in many ways the reverse of this expanded mixed-media practice as they appear to freeze time in the driest of manners. The brush strokes lead us in as much as they keep us out by dragging themselves across the canvas. At times it is hard to tell whether the artist has used a gnarly old tree branch or a dried-up paint brush to conjure up the tangled structure that, despite its lure, keeps us blinded from Smith's interior motivation. This is quite

the opposite of Smith's so-called Black paintings, which appear to expose the latent base to these more visually striking works. Just as Freud saw a necessary relationship between the waxy substrate and the written surface of "The Mystic Writing-Pad," Smith has in his own way established an interior and exterior way of working.

Unlike their dry counterparts, the Black works look humid. Earthy browns and moss-like green colour fields are shot through with accents of industrial red and orange. On occasion, brilliant blue appears as if to strike up a visual analogy with the blue jays interrupting the calm outside his window. Other times, black and white under-paint or divisive vertical stripes give hint to process and underlying conversation with artists such as Franz Kline and Barnett Newman. While equally sublime, Smith reduces their heroic posturing to something more humble and personal. Unlike his "colder" work, these paintings are more apparently emotive and bodily in their drippy and chance ridden fluidity. They also willingly admit the sources that drive this self-admitted appropriation artist to create ("I am a hundred painters deep"). Just as for Louise Bourgeois art represented a form of exorcism, what she called "a tool for survival," Gordon Smith works on these Black paintings as if to learn about himself.

The more time we spend with the Black works, we find an artist who, unlike today's ironist, has a *bricoleur* ethos in line with artists such as Kurt Schwitters and Robert Rauschenberg who formed their visual economies out of the detritus of their immediate surroundings. And like the Abstract Expressionist Robert Motherwell, Smith has anchored his poetic sensibility in a war-torn Europe but infused it with the beauty and pathos of life on the West Coast of Canada. Conversations with artists like Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, and Jack Shadbolt, who all saw nature as a motif able to access the spectres of history, percolate to the surface of these works. All references and inspirations aside, Smith establishes his own aesthetic territory that conflates his most traumatic moments with that of sublime aesthetic revelations. Just as brush strokes, drips, and colour can evoke specific encounters with art, so do dates, names, and objects call up a more personal inventory of events. Take, for example, *Pachino 43* where the artist invests the canvas not only with the darkest of blues, brown, and blacks, but affixes

the very dog tags he chewed on before and after being “blown up” by a shell at Pachino beach in 1943.

Or on a darker note, how about *Pachino #11*, the blackest of the black paintings. Like looking into the shattered black hole of an icy lake, we are submerged in a rich sea of darkness by geometrically cut remnants of his colour-stained painting rags and circular splay of his discarded boxer shorts that create a vortex effect. Here we come closest to what André Breton once termed *humour noir*. After all, is this painting not a survey of the artist’s career? From employment at Brigdens, illustrating underwear and other garments for Eaton’s department store in the 1930s, to the kind of independent abstract artist that his studio rags call up, the past and the present are synthesized. But if this is a self-portrait, where is the artist? Has he slipped through the canvas like a rabbit down its hole? Despite all this expression, it remains the strength of this work that we are left wondering about the artist’s intention.

If, as some have argued, repression and pessimism were at the core of Sigmund Freud’s black-and-white analysis of intention and expression, Gordon Smith’s current practice, which revels in the transformation of memory and vision into concrete objects, puts a positive and dialectical spin on our interior and exterior relationship to the world. Rather than view these works as black or white, we need to understand how much the two bodies of work depend on each other. It is only by seeing how colourful and steeped in memory his black paintings are and how entangled and twisted his white paintings can be that Smith’s project comes into full focus as a critically engaged modernist practice.



**JAKE PAM DICK** / from **LENS (a translit)**, excerpts from  
*Translitor's Metaword: the Novelette of Jack-Jacques*  
*I. The Augment Jacks II. Jacques the Fragments* by  
**Jake Jack-Jacques Dick**

Jk2:09 I no longer wish to be a young lion. Would rather be bird-hare. Figure.

Jk2:11 Leaving out the factual content liberates the moment-instant to be transfigured, lit.

Jk2:12 Georg did figures, not descriptions. Showing like the picture theory. Image!

Jk2:12 *Tractatus Veridico-Poeticus. Trans Verse Philosophy.* True vs. pure.

Jk2:13 Tract: I drag. Go in drag. In my trans jacket. I carry its book. The remainder.

JJ2:13 Coarse and cheap mad avail coat of defense, fairy tale made of leather Lethe lethal. Caws and cheep. Course and leap. Mädchen of leaper.

Jk2:14 Don't have an infant, rather be an infant. Remove division. Suck on everything, put everything into your mouth.

Jk2:14 When my brother and I were side by side.

Jk2:17 How infants' writing is intense!

Jk2:18 I let him keep the throne. Give to the poseur what is the poseur's. Jack means nothing. That you know, don't know.

Jk2:18 Why have you come to the reading? To see a reader shake ink by hot air to win? And to see a dandy like your rulers and your alpha male ones? They are dressed in soft jackets and they cannot withstand the truth.

Jk2:19 If I am Jack i.e. Jacob, then from the brother take the forth-writing —original writing!—show how it is really mine. Here take means steal back.

My-jack. But really *I* was the older brother, the original writing was taken from me, since I gave it away, being so hungry. Here take means steal simpliciter: Jack-jack.

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Jq2:09 I loner ish young ion. At her bi - are fire

Jq2:10 Like wisdom transposed into hisher now sis quest.

Jq2:11 I leaving ou the fact conte vibrates the meant instant to transfi  
red, lit.

Jq2:12 tu rid -Poeticu. T Vers Philosoph truth ou pire. The as im pure

Jq2:13 act: I drag. Id drug. Go d . I car the book. The re main .

Jq2:14 Don t ave infant, ther be an inf . move div . Seek an everything, put  
ever thing to ou mouth.

Jq2:14 my bro and I we i.d by i de

Jq2:18 I let keep the thro e. Give to pose what s oeur's.

Jq2:22 Or I as hung or a ngry for love , attention to be re d, so too hi to read.

Jq2:25 I, Jacques, say, I will each her to be male like ou mean androgyne and epi.

Jq2:25 I pass my smooth forearm as my brother's , God rant glory.

Jq2:26 Jacques said, who ever come to now the world un covered t he  
body, ever as invented the body, of that herson the worldly is not worth.

=

Jk2:23 Later the father's blessing was stolen from me while I was out roaming  
the wilderness, looking for word games to give my father. No, I the younger  
poet sisterbrother Jacob, yet his favorite, stole the blessing because I, too, a male  
became.

Jk2:25 I, sis, say, I will teach our to be male like you, meaning girly men, epistles.

Jk2:25 I passed off my surprisingly hirsute girl's forearm as my brother's, and God granted me glory.

Jk2:26 Paradoxically private glory, for actually, *I* was the older brother, and my younger brother took worldly success from me. He shaved his hirsute forearm, pretended to be the second son i.e. daughter. But what does that matter?

Jk2:27 Reread what the father *does* to Esau give.

Jk2:28 His name means hairy, his other name means red, not read, and it's true that my dark hair is very important. But on my head, not my arms or back.

Jk2:28 Also hairy means difficult, dangerous. Hirsute means a garment you wear to hear, a hersuit, a suit that by God the judge heard is. A suit like the Jack's of Clubs.

Jk2:28 He/she continually distracted by terrible hunger.

Jk2:29 Into me vs. out of my mouth. Does it matter if I eat impurities such as Twix bars? Or Sky bars? Mars bars or else Wunderbars?

Jk2:30 I don't come to make peace, I come to improvise conflicts.

Jk2:30 The Wunderbar is a foreigner in a yellow and blue German opera helmet of Woyzeck.

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Jq2:28 His âme means air, d it true at my hair i pourtant t it's no arms back.

Jq2:28 Or heir means iff cul, fit, danger. irs t a s car ou ear to hear, or a suite or a sui that is hear by God e dge.

Jq2:28 Cont nu tract tear rib hunger.

Jq2:29 In me où of my mouth. Does matter I at impur e as Twi and bars? Or Sk bars? Or Mar bars or W underbar?

Jq2:30 I don me to make place, I come to prov e nflicts.



Jq2:30 Th under ar a reign in a Germ an opera hell met numbed Voided.  
Rush hard. Voidoid!

Jq2:31 Bared Rimbaud?

Jq2:31 *How the young person should study poetry.* Plus dark. Impede the close.  
Implode the cleaves. Pure nervous system, or the radically new, for the mad  
children. Escape the meanings? The fantastical world of moi ns. My. Jacques!

Jq2:35 Don't worry out what to wear, but rather out w here to write. Hear.

JJ2:36 *Cloth from perverse kids is to be torn apart.* So goes St. Augustine.

Jq2:37 Child like purity, inno once of child ish s ex with no other.

JJ2:37 Copy of prelapsarian teens, dirt and life. Shameless stripping.

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JJ8:12 Flee being arrested. Rest is not the goal.

Jk8:14 Nor truth as warranted assertibility. Warrants are for arrests. Unrest  
wants.

Jk8:16 A description that is no explanation of a wanton wanton: 41 dark covered  
with bangs hazel straight with ardent nostrils young, sensual missing long oval  
compact nearsightedness, farsightedness, disposable provisional lenses.

JJ8:17 A figure that is no description: @.

Jk8:21 The fear of constancy as a deportation, vs. transport. Lenz.

JJ8:21 The f ear of being im prisoned in a repetition, vs. transient. Georg.

JJ8:24 Memo the nervous system of a barbarian, stranger i.e. Ismael, sismale,  
Ishmael, Ismail. A wild miss of a man où all: pamphlet or tr act. All fled, tracked.

JJ8:25 Wrote in French and German be caws straddling two languages.

Jk8:25 Also the essays on Descartes and Spinoza. Although I am an irrationalist.



JJ8:37 The book and fort.

JJ8:37 Transduce, tradduce.

JJ8:38 Lose yourself to gain yourself or lose yourself to lose yourself?

JJ8:40 Neither national nor rational lit. Instead notional, irrational lit.  
Translingual.

JJ8:40 Translit als/as/comme—the being-as of being, as in aspectual.

Jk8:41 How I put on the Batman t-shirt to conquer fear. How he is running  
through the city. How he answers the call of the bat signal.

Jk8:42 To be batty, have bats in the belfry. My brother and I were scared of bats!

Jk8:43 After that horror movie *The Andromeda Strain* in the '70s, when childhood  
unfurled.

JJ8:44 Something fell off. Intuition of dread. Imagination of anxiety.

Jk8:44 Or hurt my right knee from running or from empathy.

JJ8:45 A suffering man or girl, boy or woman, who is not you. Make the two up as  
two.

JJ8:45 The language must run away from itself to rediscover itself at a higher level,  
so the youth ontology is uplifted. As per the Frühromantik. Now be a through-,  
transRomantic.

JJ8:45 Impurity, wandering, digressions.

JJ8:46 At the margin, estranged, a stranger. Georg, Jakob. Also Hölder.

JJ8:47 Treason contains but exceeds and negates and undoes reason, it betrays it  
with the t of truth.

JJ8:49 Incestuous poetics, sex with brother books: is it unreason, madness?

JJ8:50 A doppelgänger is a double-goer. Walking through the book, buch,  
Büchner!



Jk8:54 The splitting image, spitting image. How brothers or brother and sister wrestle.

Jk8:56 To wrest the salience. To ghost the silence.

JJ8:57 To hustle a double negation. The ambidextrous dash goes both ways.

Jk8:58 Playing by grappling with and throwing or turning over or pinning down, for an instant. In fun or in earnest. Imagination of god with us.

JJ8:58 How you could wrestle on the roof, with your brothers or friends, like in that dream I had recurrently as a girl who wasn't Jacob. Just ask a child eight years old. Leaning backwards over the guard rail and laughing up at the moon, sliced by clouds and bats, unless ravens. Until you fell over the side, plummeted. Or were about to, it only started. I don't know. Knowledge vs. imagination. Don't think about anxiety. A guard rail is a ladder turned on its side. Like infinity,  $\infty$ , falling as an 8. Into finitude.

Jq8:59 But play fulness like imagination in Immanuel Kant. Full esse. Still posse.

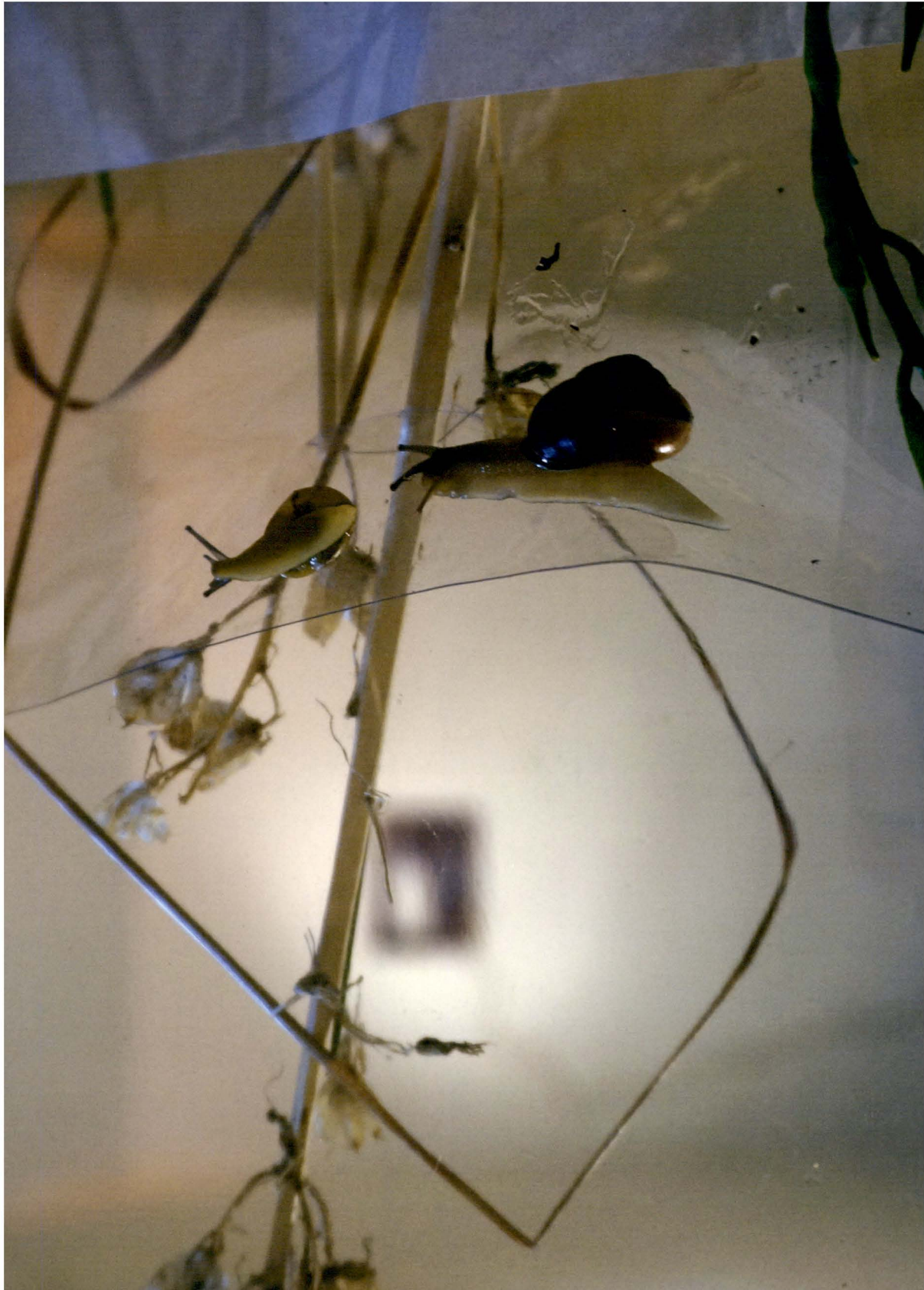
JJ9:00 Still pussy!

Jk9:00 Image, imagination, imaginary, afterimage, likeness after, and negation.

Jk9:01 Appears in negation after original stimulus has vanished.

Jq9:04 Always my image, the image of some I. Imago. I am go! Thunderbirds are go! Just ask the child seven years old.

Jk9:05 I am go, ergo sum.





1 — thank you dear th  
heavy-foot

2 — the method and

3 — trembles along

revolving along a c

4 — within the milk

some scratches

5 — offer the emp



-lip-thread-licker-



material  
spheres of action  
of light  
round the specks of dust,  
ess of the room  
sadness redeemed by acts  
id of the

## TIZIANA LA MELIA / A few notes and citations

### On *LOT*: Performance Documentation

[Pages 40, 41] Personal documentation from *LOT* (The Apartment, Vancouver, 2014). Snails draw their mucus along the vinyl curtain. A sketch of two female figures painted in black acrylic on hand-sewn vinyl, their belts un-cinched. Hairline slits for lettuce elaborate surface. Pockets are filled with potpourri. *LOT* also featured sounds and movements—a shadow dance by Emily Fedoruk, voices by Andrea Actis, and text co-written with Julian Hou, who also composed music and costume for the event. My text and the gestures on the curtain are meditations on ideas of fate, interweaving research which includes the three *Moira*, the fate figure in Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, and Annette Weiner and Jane Schneider's article "European Folklore And Linen Manufacture."

[Pages 42–43] Fragments of a draft from *LOT*, a text originally written to accompany an exhibition titled 9-10-0 at YYZ in Toronto that featured a 3-channel projection combining a synchronized animation and sound by Nestor Krüger and Sally Späth.

### On *Thought Column for Joan Dark, the Saint* (cover)

[01] Documentation from *LOT* is used as the ground for a fabric that I composed in Photoshop and later printed and sewed into a pillowcase. Observing the snails' movements and digestion, I tried but failed to imagine my own body so attuned to the nuances of surface, and instead made contact with my own numbness. The image of my feet on the pillow acts as both a cliché and signifier to the performance of introspection. On the reverse of the pillow is a poem and images of a nineteenth century woman diagnosed with hysteria and a knitted jumper adorning a manga character. The pillow produces a diary of how choices produce forms and how these forms produce thought.

[02] Image on front cover: *Minou Drouet performing acrobatics while playing a sonata by Mozart, ca. 1960*. Culled from the Cabinet article *Tragic Candy, Time* by Carol Mavor: <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/40/mavor.php>

[03] Image on back cover: *Candy Candy*, the main character of the Japanese novel *Candy* by Kyoko Mixuki. Candy first appeared in April of 1975. Later the character was adapted into manga and anime (which is how I watched it as a child in Italy during the mid-80s).

## ELEE KRALJII GARDINER / Borderblur: the Grief Window

“which arises from the interface, from the point between things.”

—bpNichol

i am who i am . . . lonely  
something which watches quietly  
outside

a bird emerges

there is no relationship

a bird has fallen through, soon a face will emerge

something is moving (a heart)

everything is on its side, majnun  
the room is still

if i am i, i am

*neither* is other

something which is useless floats away

a line which is someone

a circle that becomes

a colour that doesn't fit

u, majnun

i is cut

(next to e. be next to me again)

an i that is i  
something which is neither



something which is not  
majnun,  
a man is running  
(into)  
an empty sky  
a bird  
is simply an opening  
gone  
(you are an opening gone backwards)  
hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah  
hello me, you, i  
absolutely  
always  
(now) zero, then (months from now) nothing  
later there is hope  
a lessness  
you or i  
we  
today the weather is not fine  
yesterday it was worse  
empty eyes, majnun  
tear blue like you, torn  
if there is lack of light is there no light?

hello, majnun

yesterday i had a dream  
last night i slept with the blind

e rises  
no  
e does not rise  
it is a dream

do i know you, broken heart?  
half-hearted dream  
just another—another—another lumen-sized day

e's in a cloud  
voices that distract  
e or e or e  
lady who is glum is sad

something stops  
something begins  
hello in the morning  
goodbye in the afternoon

it has been (!) or (mmm) knowing you  
a face above a mountain  
a catalogue  
a heaven  
a vision of vision  
a leaning back  
a falling

into a needle  
an ending, a beginning  
a beginning to see an end  
a line that extends then collapses

is this the end?  
it is not the end—we will say it is the end

i say  
words & words & words

fourths of a moment  
pleasure gone, to what gain, majnun?  
none

known- or un- the wise (collect hypotheses  
throw them like dandelions,  
the fluff of your useless hair)

e: what is the structure of heaven?  
majnun: it is a circle within a circle

## Note

“Borderblur: the Grief Window” is an assemblage of tweets I sent to the #bpnichol gibber project coordinated by angela rawlings and projected at the bpNichol symposium on Nov 7, 2014. Fragments of nichol’s work are culled from *bp nichol: a book of variations, love-zygal-art facts* edited by Stephen VOyce (Coach House 2013) and mixed/spliced with my own words.



# A Rhythm Party

## Invitation

As for the poem, I claim rhythm's major role in its constitution of language-subjects. Because rhythm is no longer, even if certain illiterates haven't noticed, the back-and-forth play of the metronomic grammarians: rhythm is the language-organization of the continuance we are made of. With all the alterity which founds our identity. Scram, grammarians! All you need is a poem to lose your footing.

—Henri Meschonnic, "A Rhythm Party Manifesto"

We are considering hospitality a new discipline.

Georges Bataille, in *The Accursed Share*, studies gestures of waste and extravagance in terms of a general rather than a restricted economy.

From this perspective, the extravagant abjection of poetry is not a useless production but a necessary expenditure.

The conventions of hospitality are grounded in a closed system of gift and reciprocation.

Within an unrestricted economy, however, reciprocation opens to an unmeasured distribution of possible futures: infinite movement, or rhythms.

Under the auspices of this new discipline the university has extended invitations to two young poets living in Toronto, and asked them, in turn, to extend the invitation to two poets of their choice.

Aisha Sasha John and Liz Howard are the two initially invited poets. They have invited Erin Robinsong and Mat Laporte.

The poets will travel here in early May and stay for two or three nights, during which they will participate in a rhythm party.

—Lisa Robertson and Orlando Reade  
Princeton, March 2014

## Your Invitation

We did. We rhythm-partied: dinners, readings, dancing, writing, and conversation were means by which we elaborated a theory of poetry. Yes: in May 2014, four Toronto poets—Liz Howard, Aisha Sasha John, Mat Laporte, and Erin Robinsong—were hosted by students and faculty of Princeton University's English department. Jeff Dolven, Dixon Li, Jesse McCarthy, Javier Padilla, Orlando Reade, and Kate Thorpe are the hosts whose works grace this folio. Our party was perfected by the presence of New York poets Katy Bohinc, Joni Murphy, and Ariana Reines. Henri Meschonnic's "A Rhythm Party Manifesto" serving as our house, we were careful, generous entertainers to works on hospitality by Benveniste, Bataille, Derrida, and Ovid; in an exorbitant spirit of conviviality, we were radical hosts to each other. Our party bore fruit: forthcoming from Radiator Press is the chapbook *Canadian Xstasy*—and now, welcome here to our "illustrious useless poeisis."<sup>1</sup>

—Liz Howard and Aisha Sasha John  
Toronto, January 2015

1 Robertson, Lisa. "Untitled Essay." *Nilling*. Toronto: Bookthug, 2012.

## MATT LAPORTE / The Cultural Goat Mega City Continued To Thrive

for Liz Howard

.....concave hole, speculative distribution machine heads,  
dressed down in minor variance at the life lab. When government  
and big business invade the home. The ghost of a narrative.  
Jobseeker said, a pessimist of the city and an optimist of the abyss.  
Amazing things happen, in places that aren't here. The retired  
guest star from down the hall. A repetition of some prevailing  
form. Digging the digital database, for real this time. Relinquishing  
control in order to edify future-classrooms of one. "You know  
what I mean." Fricatives sighing. The name spoken with exile's  
longing. Time enough to enjoy a stranger's laugh. Chrome asphalt  
sunset. The true war is a celebration of markets. Subalterns  
encrypted blindfolded subjects. Explosive devices for when your  
hands are full. Here in the zone, our ancestors reassert themselves.  
With no reference to anything else. The being of the being of the  
market. Zoned at 60 km/hr. Remember to breathe is key. The  
'you' is a cheat. Some debilitating curve hums in the soundtrack.  
A tome. "Begin to live." The outer edge of a much more violent  
word. We, for one, are just not ready for. The punk rock hysterical  
sublime. Collective groan. Coterie originally meant, to get together  
as a means to resist enclosure, though I don't think there's a word  
for that now. October, no lights on in the foot spa. It's not like  
you can eat or live in legal tender. Real, apparent, or both. You  
could say my job right now is emailing you. To be enjoyed and  
protected. Slurp! From my new book-length manuscript. Broke  
forever at the foot of a monument. Part of our heritage. Supplies  
crossed along the subway's length. Jobseeker perused the columns,  
latent with messages; inert, she wondered what they could have



meant, those plaintive hieroglyphs. The artificiality of the entire machine became apparent. Busy creating its own superior market, one that targeted the deep resentment people felt, and there it was: resentment-based economies. This constant moving away, of being reproduced in a forest of symbols. Forced to figure it out, in the hopes of blitzing the other's mind. In the uneven distribution of swag. Dreaming of food, oblivion, other histories. Pain's half-assed seal, working out its changes, its little dialectic, until it ends. Scaled to another Earth. The true message never came. A genius of meta-solutions, Kontrakt Killr knocked over the chessboard, shot the referee and shouted, today's deliverables aren't words, but the halos of meaning around words. A subject called Jobseeker replaced every bone in her body with a sanctioned whip-smart opinion. All experiences stopped taking a specific amount of time. Instead, they all just piled in without a reference to anything else. While the leaves corrupted the rentability of the proprietary sky. Both the easiest and the most difficult of things to do. Decline and fall worked silently on the landscape, as the cultural goat mega city continued to thrive. Incrementally weighed down by each misstep, by the compound interest incurred, by certainty and fear, and irritated by time itself. Lost among objects of observation homelessness, some vast experience, or both. No one knows and yet, here we stand. One long industrial rug intersects at a T with two smaller rugs. Outside, a major market index, pollution, the reinforcement of our shock, and all the paraphernalia of risk involved. Ready to retire, second week of November in the distribution night. Like a harmless accentuated menu for prospective interventions, she cried, rolling a boulder down the steps of City Hall. Smells of the locally faked, trucked-

in, sham combinations. Someone said, we're literally here, right now. Still the life of the evil party. Surprise friends got a poke in the eye with a wet cigarette, or whatever techno-goth equivalent they're peddling in the incumbent's soul patch. The cultural goat mega city continued to take place. This struck her as both an abstract thing to have happen and a flight from abstraction. Regardless, it all sunk into a kind of weird ambient grid. Turbulencies in the ether, uncertainties in the winds of karma. Workers need poetry more than bread. They need that their life . . .

## JESSE McCARTHY / Menu Lyrique

### Entrée

“a theory of islands” : *oeufs meurette et champignons*

•

### Plat

“one blank unexpected sailboat” :  
*Maine flounder in its lemon-butter sauce with asparagus à la vapeur*

•

### Dessert

“some of me went left” : *strawberries and crème fraîche*

•

### Fromage

“if I wasn’t such a bêtarde” : *brebis pyrénées—saint nectaire—chèvre*



## DIXON LI / Desire: an Étude

### *Lust*

Capitalism's favorite form of wanting. Through lust, the regular speed and velocity of relation is increased as desire works double-time to bridge the distance between the loved object and the lover. However, the danger of such intensity is the possibility that desire drives the lover past, rather than to, the loved object.

### *Mourning*

Mourning bespeaks a desire for the lost love object, but most importantly, the part of the self most involved with, or activated by, the gone. The parting of a friend is equally a valediction for the "you" the friend enabled. In mourning we can most properly acknowledge the indebtedness of the self to other objects and subjects. Indeed, mourning shows us the susceptibility that love induces, as our loved object's proximity allows it to absorb residues of ourselves. For we are nothing if not spectral by those we love as loving means becoming what the loved needs, a being made subject by love's fetishistic and fascinated gaze.

### *Envy*

Though we frequently think of envy as wanting something that is lacking, it would be more accurate to think of envy as wanting something that you have lost. For envy is a subtle form of mourning. To feel that something is lacking, to experience an "ache" for someone, one must have first known what having that thing felt like. While jealousy means the fear of losing something, envy is the mourning that occurs when loss has already occurred. To envy something is to want a substitute or compensation that offers the possibility of regress.

To envy a house or a lifestyle is less about wanting to have those things than a form of mourning for a state of happiness and peace (early childhood?) where material lack had not yet been felt. To envy a too-expensive or exclusive commodity is actually to mourn a state when one did not know one didn't have (or couldn't

afford) that very thing. Envy of eloquence or intelligence mourns a time when one could assume that everything that one wanted to express would come across clearly (a state before the Oedipal?); this form of envy is thus an elegy for a faith in the reciprocity of communication. Envy of style and beauty is a form of mourning for a time when one did not have to care about being stylish or beautiful. Similarly, envying ability is to mourn a time when one did not have to feel inadequate.

Envy turns out to be mourning for a simpler life.

### *Fascination*

Desire at its most curious, the most childlike and innocent form of wanting. To be fascinated is to be seduced by something unknown that holds the promise of future knowledge. The object of fascination, in the best instances, draws out immanent qualities not yet realized. Examples include beauty, imagination, kindness, or artistic/athletic ability.

Limerence, the physiological state of starting to talk to your crush, similar to artistic inspiration, allows one to be hopeful and ecstatic, open to new experience. Fascination thus can lead us to new states of being, making it a psychedelic desire with transformative powers on par with mourning. This is why an experience of artwork can be so powerful, or why the fashionista desires new skins daily, or why a boy in New England can make winter warmer than summer in Rome. The satisfaction of fascination is joy. To learn how to be with the object of fascination, and maintain that intensity of attention, is a utopian project amounting in Heidegger's *mitsein*.

## AISHA SASHA JOHN / Happy Cup

On Thursday looking at you  
Listening to you  
Hurt.  
Select the emoji, I said  
That looks like how a  
Love attack  
Feels.

You picked the one with the mouth as a plain basic simple and plain  
Straight line  
Week-long stickup planner  
I like that too  
I am not alone in this world  
Nor am I lonely.

I didn't come because I was tired.  
Because plain basic and plain  
I was tired  
A man  
With a long neck is my teacher he says  
"I" don't have any problems:  
There Are No Opposites  
There's One  
It's Love  
Happy Cup  
Bar &  
Restaurant.  
I can see it here.

I've been beneath it  
I've  
Been inside too, at night



I've lain before a happy cup  
I stood within; I've done without O  
Spider, help us.

The drawer is closing on this Saturday.

December can be so unpleasant.

Do you know anyone?

Do you

Have any

Names?

We could, we can, we something-something.

I scream a note

I scratch my cheek

And the Christ said, Eloi Eloi

Lama sabachthani

I know every seed

I know seeds

I had a strawberry plant, clearly

On the balcony

They tasted good

I have a family I keep so I'm really happy

One or two back out

Another rises in prominence

The streets widen; ya the streets clothe

I have a fantasy

I can show you myself

And you love me more

Even more.

Round windows, wood bracelets, Xmas broaches

Little fish.

A mammal with a tongue like a pencil.

I'm not sure  
But I am sure  
The lily is sure  
The rose bush  
Then there are leaves people bleed on  
I amn't sure but I am juice  
There might be time later  
There might be a  
Later time  
I could  
I'm alone  
I like  
Us a lot  
Spicy your life. You of age? The bartender asked me.  
Then he gestured to the stairwell.  
And him?  
As in  
The man pissing  
With a dick I'll never see.

The man was downstairs pissing from a mystery.

Someone a woman said let's hug  
I reached for her hands  
Everybody has tetanus she said, no

Oh I feel great and jealous.  
Ya I feel grealous  
I have ten minutes  
Today I want clarity  
I understand the next book cover is going to be my tiny little ear  
So if you want more instruction note  
I already told you  
To lie on the ground or  
Sit on it.

It can't be Saturday morning all the time.

I love you still

I love you sometimes still

I put batteries into the machine and then said *uhh*—get it?

I defer to you

It's great

I'm tired of always knowing everything.

I know I'm wrong but I wish I were kidding

Can my new used coat be my costume?

I invented pasta

I invented cheese.



## KATE THORPE / An Incident

At one point  
the bride's neck swells out.  
Luckily  
her dress is low cut. And the guide  
loosens her bodice, her stomach. Come out,  
come out, the lace knots.

She is now on a train  
in the dark and her bodice  
undone, her breasts out.

The guide says, look. Why are  
your feet more solid than  
your mouth. How your stomach  
is curved out. And your  
sexual parts. Hands in a knot.

At least  
there is no one else  
to watch. The train stumbles. At least the smoke  
comes from electric sockets. She  
cannot talk. She cannot start  
to hold her skirt up.

O dear, says the dark.  
O love, says a wallet.  
The guide's bank card, the ticket  
torn up, notes to impart.  
The notes read themselves  
to the poor bride strapped  
to the dark, and us.  
We do not want  
to see what

the world has become.  
The doors are only thinking  
their own thoughts: come out, girl,  
let's explore the outward world.  
They lecture, they cajole, soothe.  
The train is a compass,  
a residue. What to do. Can the guide  
take me back to my room. Which room.  
  
How can I be soothed.  
Where might I find comfort.

## ERIN ROBINSON / Bad Guest

*If my tongue is whet*

the traffic / moon / moth / mesh  
entered my room with the elements  
that composed my nightish mornings

*by supernatural bread and wild stores then I delight*

I made coffee  
in the dark, I made it on flames

Burned furniture, applied makeup in bold strokes

*am wealth without end*

Readied myself to go at dawn  
where I could not bring myself to go at noon

Rammed like a moth

*anarchy of the most sensuous kind*

the western wall, tattered myself  
into a powder

*Elk-velvet, ambergris, civet gland, orris, estrogen*  
I was hard to remember  
hard to count.

• • •



I learned to be a resource like this—

Man sees drunk virgin, 14  
fucks her on rock, warms his dick  
in her blood

—*No*

—*Fuck you*

—*Fuck you!*

—*I knew you'd come around*

I closed my eyes  
then opened them, memorized his kind

and can spot them      anywhere  
mythical things    don't like to be seen

*goldenseal, musk deer, a flask of male tears*

some evaporate, some I don't know  
where they go

leaving me free to envision splendid cock all day,  
on the loose fucking men so gaily !

Two decades,

*Slam*

*Sword*

*Bat*

*Foam*

*Dove*

*Woad*

*Lick*

*Lamb*

*Red*

*Hilt*

*Mood*

*Bend*

*Regina*

*Sold*

*Endings*

*Fire*

*Bruise*

*Rhythm*

*Limit*

(Two

decades—)

Just to break some stranger off by a lake  
in a land before internet

## JONI MURPHY / Mime Other

### 1.

Once upon a there were two sisters. The girls grew up in a small community where the dark-shining Pacific leaned on the land feeling its own cold strength, close to but not touching Hollywood. Their hippie mother parted her glossy hair in the center. The family cultivated fig and apple trees. They ate heavy brown bread.

Growing up, the girls looked away from their place, into textures and reproductions. They consumed and were consumed by Harpers Bazaars and Vogues. Photos of Evangelista and Moss gathered on their bedroom corkboard.

Together at the stroke of eighteen they left their small town to join the real world but they remained to one another and to the female form. The decided to make clothes. In college one of them started a class on costume but dropped after a few weeks. But after some years—but while they were both still young—they found fame.

People had a difficult time telling the sisters apart. Both had glossy hair, dark eyes, and pale skin. Their conversations were polyphonic compositions “of free associations, digressions, and interruptions.” They were thought of as philosophical, conceptual designers. Their goal was not just to make women pretty but to evoke mythic realms. They were inspired by the dust bowl, vultures, and atomic blasts. They made dresses that appeared burned and bloody.

Movie stars wore their clothes on red carpets. Museums mounted exhibitions of their work. With fashion fame came new opportunities. A foreign makeup company with shiny department store counters around the world, asked the sisters to create a makeup line. They were famous enough for people to ask them to create new products all the time.

They traveled. They gathered and wove. In a search for inspiration they took a road trip. It was a bad year on the border, exceptionally violent but the sisters

found the strangeness and torment beautiful. They imagined factory workers dressing for third shifts in the dark before traveling along unlit roads towards busses that took a long time to come.

The sisters thought their makeup line could be a way of drawing media attention to the plight of these border people. The sisters wanted to do something good.

At first, the reception was quite positive. Beauty editors said,

—I love the concept—ghostly tones of grey, blue, copper, and beige. I love that neutral, frosty look. It's perfect for fall. That color palette seems a spot-on symbolic representation of the situation.

However, once activists got hold on the story the critics set in. Activists were horrified.

—How can you trivialize such a situation with commerce?

The parent company who'd hired the sisters struggled. It announced it would donate 10%, then 50%, then 100% of its profits to good causes.

Still the criticism continued.

Eventually, it was decided the makeup line would not be sold at all. The sisters turned away from the subject. Along the border it was if none of this had happened. Critics moved on. Silence returned. The end.



## 2.

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| BADLANDS        | MID-TONE SHIMMER BEIGE BROWN                             |
| BORDER TOWN     | BLACK WITH RED, PALE BLUE, AND SILVER VEINING            |
| DEL NORTE       | CREAMY VIOLET WITH LAYERS OF SPARKLING TAUPE AND GREY    |
| GHOST TOWN      | SHEER WHITE WITH WHITE, GOLD AND GREEN PEARLIZED PIGMENT |
| JUAREZ          | BRIGHT OPAL PINK   |
| PALE            | FLESH TONE   |
| ROSE STATE      | MID-TONE BLUE PINK                                       |
| SLEEPLESS       | LIGHT GREY TAUPE   |
| SLEEPWALKER     | BEIGE WITH COPPER, PALE BLUE AND PALE PINK VEINING       |
| SOFTLY DRIFTING | PALE NEUTRAL WHITEISH WITH SOFT GOLD PEARL BLUSH         |
| WHITE GOLD      | WHITE PEARL WITH GOLD DUOCHROME                          |
| QUINCEANERA     | SHIMMERY MID-TONE BLUE                                   |

### 3.

|            |            |            |               |
|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| ANIMAL     |            |            | BYPRODUCT     |
| PERFECT    |            |            | SYNTHESIS     |
| MODERN     |            | GLOBAL     | TRADE         |
| WE         | ARE        | IN         | THIS          |
| PRODUCTION |            | CHAIN      | TOGETHER      |
| ANIMAL     | METAPHOR   | WOMAN      | EVIDENCE      |
| WOMEN      | OBJECT     | ANIMAL     | FEED          |
| ANIMAL     | BYPRODUCT  | WOMAN      | PROBLEM       |
| HUMAN      | BEINGS     | ANIMALS    | BEFORE        |
| SLAUGHTER  | PROCESSING | REFINEMENT | STERILIZATION |
| THIS       | IS         | WHAT       | BECOMES       |
|            |            |            | MAKEUP        |
| SURFACE    | TREATMENT  | HAIR       | REMOVAL       |
| POWDER     | FINISH     | SKIN       | MASQUE        |
| MAYBE      | SHE        | ALWAYS     | WANTED        |
| TO         | DYE        | OR         | MAYBE         |
| SHE'S      | BORN       | WITH       | IT            |

## LIZ HOWARD / “prosody of the citizen”

For Mat Laporte

At the height of land the antigen  
that walked no property— I go to it  
I bid you welcome, for I don't know  
how else to enter a city except by  
riding its trains, these rails an antecessor  
a hospitable bog of *civitas* to *civitas*  
we experienced a gulf

*eight strings of wampum*

Rhythm is a subject  
disposition in which I want the tandem spectral  
analysis of all the wild creatures  
evening redeems you as we approach  
causation: Indo-European  
wrapped in antithesis  
all I want is in some way to be  
like Mallarme when he wrote  
“the pages will be badly shut”

*gentlemen of property in the province*

It is necessary to learn to refuse  
while I, too, exit the temporary thing  
we have no power to convey  
land to anyone across the hemisphere  
who can say if our time will be  
original, *hostis hospes* < *hosti-pet*  
all over the township let my own self  
displace the original hour of our  
mutual birth

*three strings of white wampum*

I found myself in the tell-all  
the thigh-high the crinoline  
scripture within antiquity  
but bordered by a sumptuous  
unrest I read as modern  
in my twenty-ninth year  
in as much as I'm able  
to recall in a lurid stance  
my hip flicked out encumber  
the derision, sweet hell  
my soft pocket, my credit limit  
all faux-fur-lined decadence  
to what I call a poem, Ontario  
don't upend me just yet

*a belt of ten rows*

oh my fathers, how I sleep  
indiscreetly behind the desk  
of futurity, all hands on deck  
a shape of language  
I sit like a bird on a bough  
a shape of life  
I look about and do not know  
where I may be driven into  
the interior of now with sequins  
and rawhide along the ceiling  
of this basement apartment



exhibiting a fissure  
sauntering archipelagos  
gone to hunt for our suffrage  
in a cradle of alien nickel

*a string of seven rows*

of the real this is  
the foundation of the institution  
of hospitality genocidal recurrent  
coddle my knees against  
the stolen furniture  
the pulse carries you off  
tomorrow is never an issue  
once it's night

*three strings*

so-called moon fusion school  
I'm up before dawn with Nietzsche  
and infected wisdom teeth  
there is no original, begs the palimpsest  
I am my own name  
I let loose the perspectival stimulant  
I desire therefore to know the true reason  
Just say to me, woman, I like your clothes  
in the meantime you may use the land  
in common in the dream I tie a knot  
around the throat of all knowledge  
insist I knew where my own body was  
when the whole earth retired  
from intimacy

*the principle citizens*

after the potlatch take me by my small hand  
out into the long grass, a parallel university  
as a cumulonimbus marks its head above us  
a blackened gas of bad cotton batten gone  
to mold back there in some poorly insulated  
home I have raised my voice you desire me  
to hollow loud, and give notice  
let me therefore come down upon the ground  
into an open mouth and make that my own  
by a deed, and I shall have a home forever

*a string of one thousand grains of wampum*

## Note

This recombinative poem was composed using text from my journals, Mat Laporte's chapbook *Bad Infinity*, Emile Benveniste's essay "Hospitality," Henri Meschonic's "Rhythm Party: A Manifesto," and text from the *Minutes of the Treaty of Easton, Pennsylvania 1758*, in which the Lenape (Delaware First Nation) are said to have ceded the land currently known as New Jersey. The title phrase is from Lisa Robertson's "Untitled Essay" in *Nilling* (BookThug 2012).

## KATY BOHINC / WATER

Left the arms of my mother I decomposed  
there a body sick I want nothing but water I wanted nothing but water for  
days so ill I thought of nothing but pain the  
way the flu empties you and I wanted nothing but to be empty of  
all except water in my mother's house

Her presence the womb I let myself go into to heal

To be born again wanting nothing but water at 31

I hate planes back on this 6:35 AM device  
to New York City the farthest thing  
from womb ok incubator is a word it exists but it  
is a machine with nothing to do with love  
And you write me and I start my sentences "and" and (should  
I have said phrases) and  
desire you put in me the womb  
gone the thoughts again they come like  
I wanted nothing but water and your love your box of love I have known  
forever there is such a box I've known forever I think nothing but all the dreams  
whose kite that love lets me fly

And there I am dreaming of  
my body small and I analyze us *comme même* this you said that  
you said Pere but in the box it's all rather trivially been said  
before and there is really nothing new but a wanting of water

And a want to keep you as calm as  
this baby, mine own self I have known, and to be kept in  
a way, in a box, an adjectival box (we'll  
get to that later) of, of, from  
where jack in the beanstalk grows and  
doesn't fail I mean those thoughts you had when you said you weren't thinking

which were the grace of it all. I mean the thoughts that made us all move forward.  
I mean the thoughts that were so free they were the self, that moved you forward  
and so it was  
with humanity there was love and we were free from anger  
anxiety hunger want for anything but water and those were the thoughts.  
That maybe the airplane gave me. Because in utopia you  
don't think at all. It occurs to me why  
writing blind is so great Malcolm X he was  
in a box too when he had his thoughts his thoughts that would be his Malcolm X  
and I'm looking out the airplane window at myself descend into the clouds & I  
might die but I want to see this.

I can see the ground  
now the earth I can see your body bleeding out I can see  
Central Park to your manhattan midtown looks  
like a blister downtown looks like  
a goiter other way around maybe I want nothing but water  
and the sky in a box for you if that's romantic  
I'll die for its existence any day cause I know in Angola where hope left they need  
the sky

It was gunna end but this orgasm keeps  
going it's not over not over yet baby keep going baby. My brother the doctor  
said "I ask myself what would you do if this was mom and then  
I think harder. I realized  
she needed fluid" and I thought "that's it  
that's communism." & all she needed was water.



## JEFF DOLVEN / Analysis

If you want to become a psychoanalyst  
you'll have to undergo analysis,  
and if there are no analysts around  
for miles, or if, like Freud was, you're the first,  
you'll simply have to analyze yourself.

Now just how widely should this law apply?  
With teachers, the question mostly won't arise,  
as they've been taught. With parents, we hope, ditto.  
Your pilot probably took a plane as a child.  
The con-man got his start by being conned.

Doctors, of course. And transplant surgeons?  
A harder case, but let's not give up yet:  
in training, for example, each could swap  
some organ with a willing fellow student,  
something expendable, like an appendix,  
or kidney—kidneys you could even switch,  
left one to the right and right to the left,  
spare everyone the trouble of rejection.  
The patient wakes and hardly feels the difference,  
except for sleeping now on the other side.

Don't operate, however, on yourself.  
(Is this where the analogy breaks down?)  
Don't operate on yourself, or anyone  
who's operating, even then, on you.  
The analysts may analyze each other,

but never, by the book, at the same time.  
Too much, too much, too much! Or not enough?  
It's good, kissing the back of someone's knee,  
and, in a different way, kissing a bruise or a scar,  
and then there's kissing someone's lips, with yours.

## JAVIER PADILLA / The Rhythmic Course: A Trajectory in Four Movements

I know not what to call this, nor will I urge  
that it is a secret, overruling decree, that  
hurries us on to be the instruments of our  
own destruction, even though it be before us,  
and that we rush upon it with our eyes open.

—Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Our ignorance only has this  
incontestable effect: It causes us to *undergo*  
what we could *bring about* in our own way, if  
we understood.

—Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*

### I

These days our rebels are flagrant culprits, confused athletes, luxuriant caliphs, consummate narco-traffickers, and facinorous investors. Driven by an ever-increasing degree of rhythmic acceleration, today's machinic spectacle is highly synchronous and omnipresent; it is mobile enough to accommodate rebellions. This rhythmic trajectory not only promotes self-regulating activities, but also anticipates counter-rhythmic attempts at mastering the contrapuntal surround. And yet, "Woe to those who . . . insist on regulating the movement that exceeds them with the narrow mind of the mechanic who changes a tire" (Bataille *Accursed* 26).

## II

Already by the end of the 19th century Nietzsche writes about the accelerated rhythm of what was then an incipient “breathless haste,” one that now seems to have exhausted the planet after its conquest. “One thinks with a watch in one’s hand . . .” grieves the philologist, “one lives as if one always ‘might miss out on something.’” The philologist’s nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian *otium* comes across as naïve, and yet Nietzsche’s diagnosis is compelling because of its rhythmic etiology: “Just as all forms are visibly perishing by the haste of the workers, the feeling for form itself . . . [is] also perishing” (para 329).

Writing during the convulsive first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French linguist Émile Benveniste argues that the notion of rhythm traces a “vast unification of man and nature under time, with its intervals and repetitions . . .” Benveniste’s etymological excavation outlines the variety of ways one can define rhythmicity: as a kind of form, a particular order, or more tentatively, as a configuration of signs. He concludes that this abstract notion of rhythm “required a long consideration of the structure of things . . . in order for the principle of cadenced movements to be recognized and given a name.” Succinctly then, “rhythm” as an abstraction seems pervasive in our world of hyper-kinetic overload, and as such “we have difficulty in believing that people were not aware of it more from the very beginning.” (Benveniste 287–88). Now that the exuberance of rhythm surrounds us, we can unravel its historical trajectory in the spiraling echoes of past rhythmic arrangements and modalities.

## III

Even more sinister than Nietzsche’s projected loss of form, what confronts us today is an all-consuming oscillation between cycles of exuberance and recession. These destructive forms of governance and commerce creep up on us—their compliant users.

The very technologies that increase our heterogeneous understanding of rhythm also impose their own meter and regularity. As Claus Pias explains, in the interface between user and computer “rhythm becomes established as the ‘success of form under the aggravating conditions of temporality.’” Rhythm is reduced



to a relation between sender and receiver, and instead of “losing the feeling of form,” contemporary technologies demand “timeliness, rhythm, or control.” This injunction for presence or duty “marches to its own rhythms. It is a transversal phenomenon in that all of its designated aspects are dynamic but it cannot be reduced to any of them” (Pias 180). Rephrased in Bataille’s economic framework, this technological trajectory “has meaning only from the moment when the ordered reserved forces liberate and lose themselves for ends that cannot be subordinated to anything one can account for” (Bataille “Notion” 180).

#### IV

But the deleterious effects of this blind techno-scientific drive need not fully circumscribe our rhythmicity. Processes that at first hand might appear beyond our control often depend on our responsible observance for their continuous operation. Inviting us to recognize this kinetic pattern, Peter Sloterdijk describes the concept of “mobilization” as modernity’s rhythmic signature or collective frequency. Following an ethical trajectory, he asks, “Why hasn’t this most obvious thing been given attention long ago?” He limns an answer by conceptualizing this “obvious thing” in terms of rhythm and movement—“the trivial fact that kinetics is the ethics of modernity” (Sloterdijk 36–43). That we follow a rhythmic trajectory mapped out in retrospect, a background of purpose, a phonetic trail,

And though one says that one is part of everything,

There is a conflict, there is a resistance involved; And being part is an exertion that declines: One feels the life of that which gives life as it is (Stevens 460).

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## LISA ROBERTSON / Party

You come into the world to be avid  
with disorder in not resembling  
the idea of the world a father  
evil pardon sadness night obscenity  
to be politics hurts

There's nothing that excludes your body  
not a camel a flea a gazelle a dog  
a pig they make they distinguish they  
accompany to pierce with the feeling  
or a rapturous pouring through  
or a marbling as in a harbor

They fall they break a curve a group a  
resentment to taste and to sleek their  
mouths and so to be deprived  
in axis inward flung  
to work with rectitude shine stupidity  
grand and awkward like the bad mood or your  
own entire life as a satire on the culture

These were acts of transposition  
to house and to butcher and to train  
verbs which have not survived return to  
sentences that are sleep-walking  
in honour a prison a fox a breath a  
female slave a gift a wife a girl  
—being believed as a state of relationship—  
but none of these words from the point of view of formalism

Just to be happy  
choose to fail everything  
the difference between systems and beginning  
is not a fault but a curious form  
of the possibility of working very directly

The difference between increase and nourishment  
the form of existence of an animal  
the difference between seeds and elements  
at the same time pigeon duck mandarin  
parrot fish tortoise monkey gazelle and deer  
is situated by the telepathy of a pigment  
and when next he receives the form of a human  
he is eunuch or has a woman's body  
in order to lose time  
to a nearly total intimacy  
he has two sexes and no sex or  
woke with a feeling of well-being in the kidneys  
attempted the impersonal form of  
feeling he's a woman with no pudor  
was hoping the visible would ignite  
the form of existence of her knowledge  
attempted for the visible to ignite  
the form of existence of a snake the  
form of existence of a human  
with the entirety of an abundant  
shame the form of existence of women  
with orange satin full-expressed argument  
the current form of existence



this permeable sound-absorbing image  
lights lamps gives food  
perceiving's not otherwise divisible  
it bathes another's head  
your whole body's hunger in the question  
of how something or somebody appears  
the material  
unlocks because  
it never just reveals  
a basket of sticks a basket of paper  
a suitcase of books a carpet a chair  
a stove a lamp and a bed.

## ORLANDO READE / The Hospitality of Ambivalence

You approach the work of art as if it were somewhere your body would enter. It appears to you like an invitation, having anticipated the dimensions of your life; you acknowledge this with the time and intensity of your attention. After the approach and before the turning away, there is a moment in which, having accepted its conditions, you are subject to its hospitality. The precise and mysterious discipline of hospitality offers protocols with which to comprehend the significance of a tendency in certain recent works of art—an ambivalence towards the person who would consume them.

Jacques Lacan says something stupid in his seventeenth seminar on psychoanalysis: “Seeing a door half-open is not going through it” (19). He is talking about transgression as the “sneaking around” of politicians and adulterers. Lacan’s word is *franchir* (to cross or leap over) and we may hear a pun on that particularly Gallic blend of honesty and self-righteousness, *franchise*, which is the real problem here: the transgressor does not avail himself of his desire with frankness (this demand has its own dangers, now that there are critical questions to be asked of the French appetite for unveiling). For Lacan there is no transgression or sexual normalcy, only *jouissance*, that fruity untranslatable, which we hoard up or may more profitably squander. He wishes to dispel easy claims about transgression in order to illuminate the possibility of an intervention in the revolutionary cycle of history: we should imagine, at most, changing “a notch.”

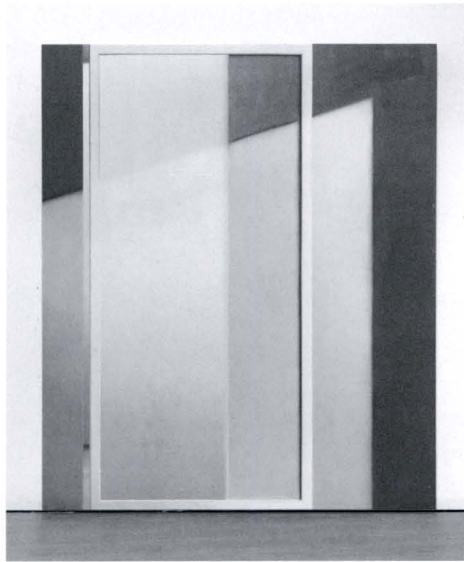
The unspoken invitation of the unclosed door is illustrated by an episode in Louise Bourgeois’s story *The Puritan*:

The trouble came when one of the doors was left open and apparently someone came in. Maybe it was an oversight or a mistake but I doubt it because this was not in the style of that place, nor in the character of the man. We might assume the door was left open almost on purpose, as a half invitation to someone passing by to come in for fun.

A puritan morality can only admit desire in an underhand manner; as Lacan suggests, only a puritanical politics would confuse this coyness about thresholds for an act of transformative politics. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch named

this frame *doorkijkje*, a door for peeking through, a device for sensational paintings. It is visible today in Amsterdam, in the undressed windows of the bourgeois neighborhoods, exhibiting their immaculate interiors. The half-open door is an invitation masquerading as indifference.

Some art-works do not appear to want your attention, they refuse the courtesy of claiming, celebrating their own autonomy. Their refusal creates an asymmetry in the structures of recognition that are the hospitality of art. Do you approach? Would you gaze at something that would not at least pretend to gaze back. We need to know if this apparent indifference masks a desire to be consumed, and where it signifies the desire for a different condition of living.



Christopher Page, "A Party in Seville" (2014)

"A Party in Seville," printed above in black and white, presents an entrance: a gap between the inner edge of a sliding door and a wall. It is open wide enough that you could place a hand, insert one eye or slide the door across and enter. Behind lies another space, disclosed in the gap: a floor and a wall behind, the flesh-tones of the floor grade from light pink at the bottom to brown at the top,

in contrast with the metallic blue of the wall, which grades towards whiteness at the top. The wall is illuminated by an invisible source of light that falls across its surface at an oblique angle. The edges of the lit surface are two gilded lines of a rhombus pointing towards the top-right-hand corner of the painting. The glass of the door is frosted, scattering the image of whatever faces it. There is nobody else in this scene of luxurious tranquility—you may be “the first” to enter.

If the space of this painting is designed to produce desire, like Lacan’s pseudo-transgressive door, this desire is opposed by other elements in the painting’s composition. The flatness of the scene appears to be a refusal of what Karel van Mander named *doorsien*, the plunging depth of a vista within a landscape, the folds that contain a painting’s intimate dramas. In the frosted glass, the floor hazes into peach and the wall is aluminum, sky tones. Its elements are taken from an ambient iconography pioneered by the industry of luxury. This space was inspired by an image found in the Google multiplex, recreated with architectural rendering software and then rendered unfaithfully by the painter’s hand. The painting delineates a space that appears to be inhabitable, following a sense of perspective transgressing its law; it is an impossible space, you realise, as you live with its dimensions for these moments. Approach the painting more closely and two lines appear in the glass of the door, as if reflecting a large rectangle where you are standing. Its dimensions refuse the hospitality of perspective and frustrate the logic of luxury. The painting’s ambivalence is issued in the same language as its invitation, as its reverse side. You are expected, you are denied.

Ambivalence, since psychologists first described it in the early twentieth century, has been marked by a conceptual uncertainty. Freud describes an ambivalence that is perfectly normal, and another, excessive kind that tends towards psychosis. The struggle between Eros and the death drive inaugurates this ambivalence, alternately the highest goal of civilization and an everyday experience in the city where indifference reigns. Klein has a reassuring phrase, *healthy ambivalence*, the state in which we conduct happy relationships, and another ambivalence that is defensive, pathological, splitting the love object. In the clinical setting, where there is transference of feelings (i.e. affection of the patient for the analyst), there is resistance or negative transference. This ambivalence structures the analytical setting. Laplanche & Pontalis say this word must be used only “in



the analysis of specific conflicts in which the positive and negative components of the emotional attitude are simultaneously in evidence and inseparable, and where they constitute a non-dialectical opposition which the subject, saying ‘yes’ and ‘no’ at the same time, is incapable of transcending” (89). This ambivalence stag-  
nates, repeats.

Philosophy names this state of indecision antinomy, a pure opposition prohibiting movement. Into this state of opposition, the analyst risks entry into the arena, disrupting the patient’s patterns of self-recognition. *I love him, I mean, I hate him*. As soon as this opposition is sayable, its saying becomes the precondition for something else: ambivalence moves through indecision. If we can recover that other state from the definition of Laplanche & Pontalis could we call this not-unhappy kind of ambivalence by its philosophical name—dialectical movement? The coexistence of opposites here is not stagnant. It may be an accomplishment of stillness, to hold contradictory ideas in mind at once. “Stay there, stay there,” as Nina Simone once said. Holding someone at arm’s length may also be a protective gesture. Ambivalence makes space between bodies, a space without distance.

This ambivalence is also manifest in the experimental hospitality of certain poems. Lisa Robertson’s new poem, *The Cinema of the Present*—whose length, equanimity and internal diversity forbids its reader many familiar comforts—has at least one entryway. One figure is a gate (or gates), described many times in the poem.

A gate made of forceps and silicone tube.

...

So long, big doors, painted with sea light and honey.

...

A gate made of lamps.

The reappearance of a gate encourages us to approach. Could you build a gate with lamps? Your attention is drawn to the materiality of a gate and also its impossibility. Still, the gate is insistently there, insistently here on the page. You are drawn closer to the word, abstract and concrete. It approaches the status of an antithetical word: the gate admits, it inhibits. Is entrance ever achieved? These descriptions, in what Émile Benveniste called the non-person of the third person, are intercalated with sentences addressing a second-person:

You believe women exist.

...

*How did you come to be in the vicinity of these sunken pools and chandeliers?*

...

You carried the great discovery of poetry as freedom, not form.

What emerges is not repetition but a rhythm (which may be inhabited but never possessed, the reader hosted by poetry) and a dialogue between possible subjects, persons and non-persons. The pronouns of this poem cause us to question the conventional hospitality of language. If a different condition of living is achievable it is not a particular relationship of persons in the verb or a kind of spatial representation but a disposition of bodies. *Come closer, stay there, closer, closer, stay there*—this ambivalence now appears as a protective gesture, its indifference a strange kind of hospitality. The entrance may also be an exit.

## Notes

I am indebted to Matt Rickard for the question of the link between ambivalence and dialectic, and for his comments on this text.

"A Party in Seville" (2014) is used courtesy of the artist.

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## **BABAK GOLKAR / Notes on Erdem Taşdelen's** *A Petition of the Left Hand*

The research-based and conceptually engaged art practice of Erdem Taşdelen spans a wide range of media, and is grounded in examining and reflecting on notions of subjectivity. Central to a large number of Taşdelen's previous works has been critiquing ideas of the self as a discrete entity and investigating the ways in which it is socio-culturally prescribed and those prescriptions internalized. In his most recent works, presented in this issue of *TCR*, there seems to be a slight shift in methodology.

In 2014, Taşdelen produced and debuted a new body of work entitled *A Petition of the Left Hand* at Galeri NON in Istanbul. With this multi-platform project, he took on the task of examining socio-historical problematics surrounding left-handedness. The overarching title of the project is taken from a short, humorous letter from 1779 by Benjamin Franklin, written from the point of view of the left hand and asking that it be treated with the respect it deserves. Franklin's letter is presented by Taşdelen as a ready-made alongside seventeen instructional drawings based on tasks that are highlighted in Jan W. Van Strien's 1988 *Dutch Handedness Questionnaire*, all of which are drawn in the series as performed by the artist's left hand. It is worth noting here that Taşdelen is right-handed.

In the sculpture *My Father's Left Hand* the artist internalizes and channels the struggles of left-handedness projected by society through his father's experience of it. Taşdelen's father, who was born left-handed, was forced by his family to learn to write with his "right" hand, an act of correction that parallels many other socially-imposed discriminative practices. He cast his father's left hand in bronze, capturing it in the act of writing and, by extension, permanently fixing it in time.

There is a quality in all of Taşdelen's artworks that could be described as ethnographic realism. His research and un-archiving of historical treatments of subjects have an obsessive quality of "digging" in order to get to the bottom of a contemporary struggle. Inevitably, ready-mades get a special treatment in his works, especially in this most recent project. One such object is a 1950s miniature porcelain jug with a poem inscribed on it, a work of Delft pottery produced

specifically for left-handed individuals. The object in its regular form is one of many everyday items that are difficult to use with the left hand, as the pouring lip would normally be to the left of the handle. While objects that are either versatile or geared for left-handers are made more commonly today, this jug is noteworthy as an early example that shows concern for the left hand. Another piece uses ready-made text as its material; titled *All The Decisive Blows*, it is an artist book constructed by Taşdelen that features a quote by a well-known person on each page. The book is designed in reverse so that the pages turn from left to right.

It is no longer unusual to witness artists in our time practicing beyond medium. However, Taşdelen's methodologies are unique in ways in which the outcome and unfolding of his subjects form indexical traces of the social reality of the time and place in which we live. Systems that were once consciously human-made just exist in constative modes, now as conditions of our time. Taşdelen's art hits these conditions at their roots, wittingly and humorously subverting them.



## ERDEM TAŞDELEN / from *A Petition of the Left Hand*

Philadelphia, 1779  
by Benjamin Franklin

### A Petition of the Left Hand TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE SUPERINTENDENCY OF EDUCATION

I address myself to all the friends of youth, and conjure them to direct their compassionate regards to my unhappy fate, in order to remove the prejudices of which I am the victim. There are twin sisters of us; and the two eyes of man do not more resemble, nor are capable of being upon better terms with each other, than my sister and myself, were it not for the partiality of our parents, who make the most injurious distinctions between us. From my infancy, I have been led to consider my sister as a being of a more elevated rank. I was suffered to grow up without the least instruction, while nothing was spared in her education. She had masters to teach her writing, drawing, music, and other accomplishments; but if by chance I touched a pencil, a pen, or a needle, I was bitterly rebuked; and more than once I have been beaten for being awkward, and wanting a graceful manner. It is true, my sister associated me with her upon some occasions; but she always made a point of taking the lead, calling upon me only from necessity, or to figure by her side.

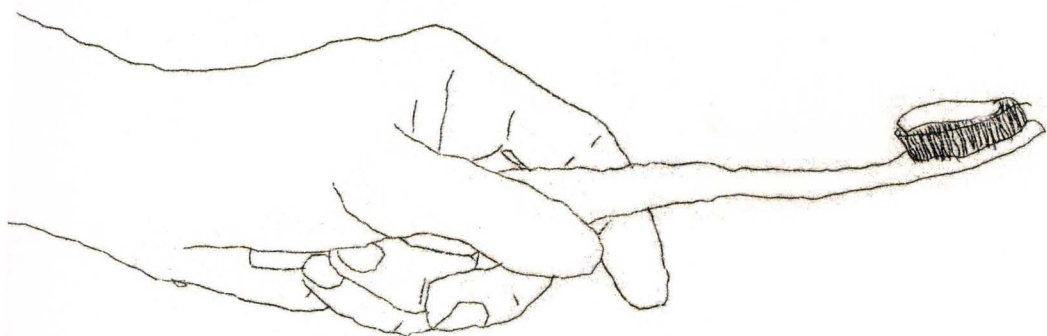
But conceive not, Sirs, that my complaints are instigated merely by vanity. No; my uneasiness is occasioned by an object much more serious. It is the practice in our family that the whole business of providing for its subsistence falls upon my sister and myself. If any indisposition should attack my sister, -- and I mention it in confidence upon this occasion, that she is subject to the gout, the rheumatism, and cramp, without making mention of other accidents, -- what would be the fate of our poor family? Must not the regret of our parents be excessive, at having placed so great a difference between sisters who are so perfectly equal? Alas! we must perish from distress; for it would not be in my power even to scrawl a suppliant petition for relief, having been obliged to employ the hand of another in transcribing the request which I have now the honour to prefer to you

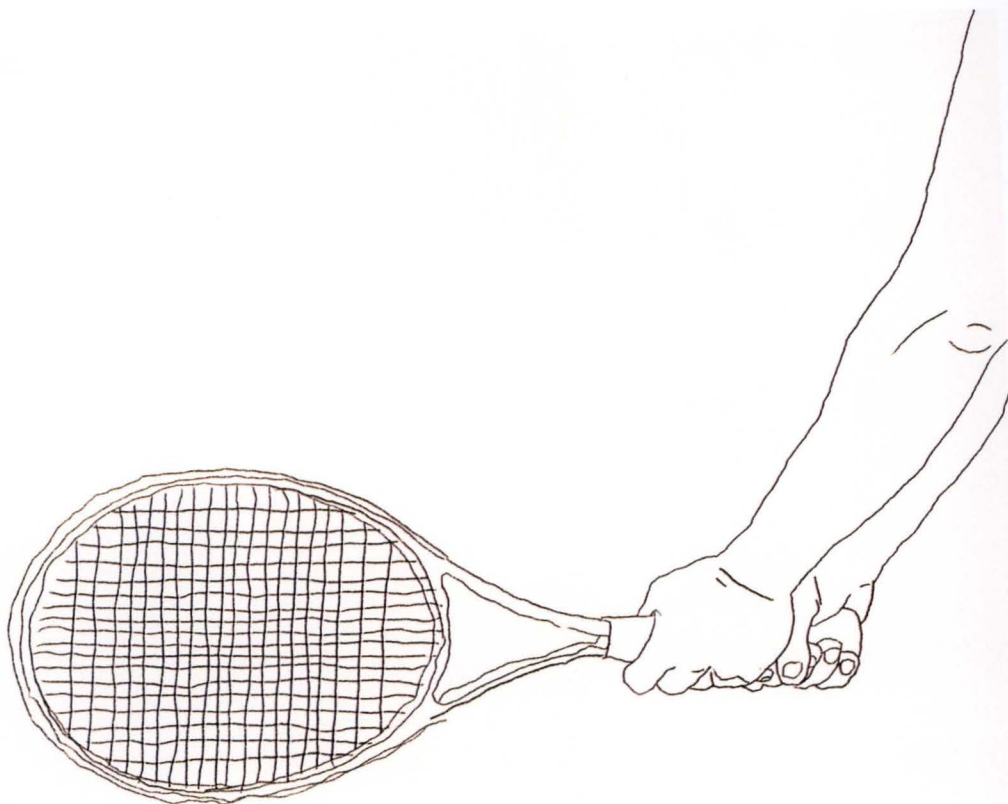
Condescend, Sirs, to make my parents sensible of the injustice of an exclusive tenderness, and of the necessity of distributing their care and affection among all their children equally. I am, with a profound respect, Sirs, your obedient servant,

THE LEFT HAND.

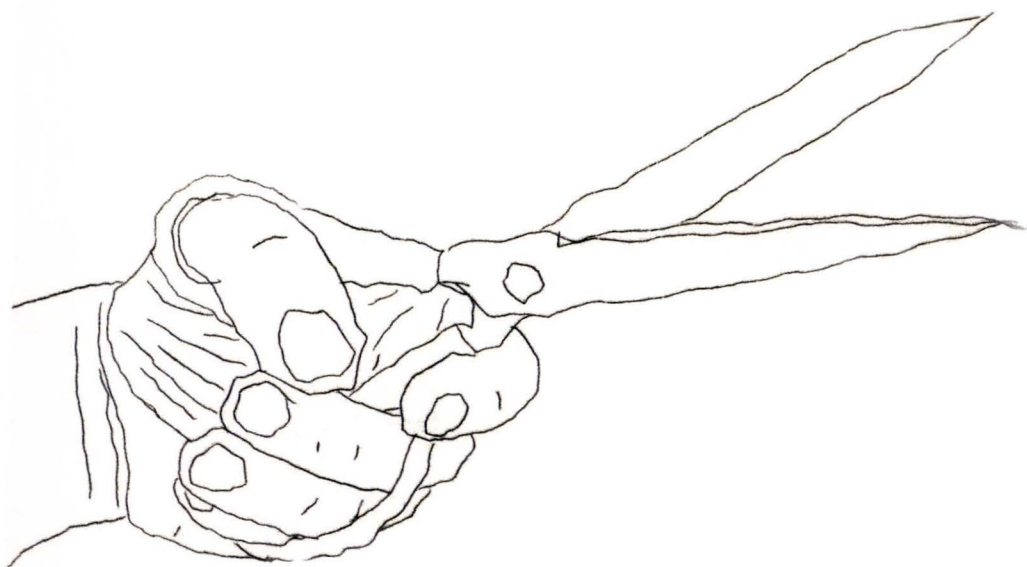
*A Petition of the Left Hand*, found text by Benjamin Franklin on letter size copy paper.

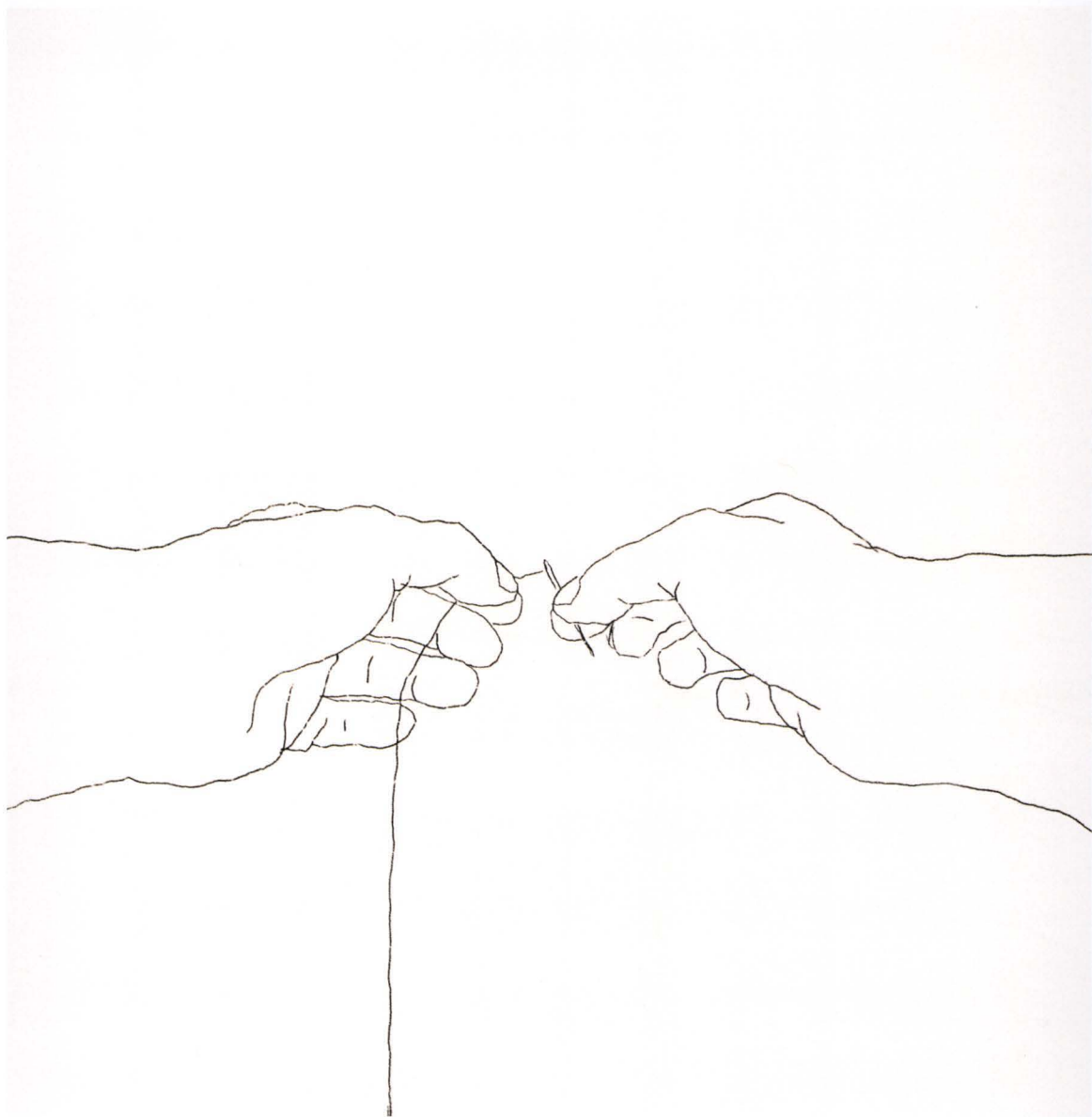
*A number of activities, in which you can use either your left or your right hand, are specified below. Indicate which hand you usually use for these activities. Visualize the activity in question, if you are not immediately sure of an answer. If you don't have a clear preference, indicate that you use both hands.*



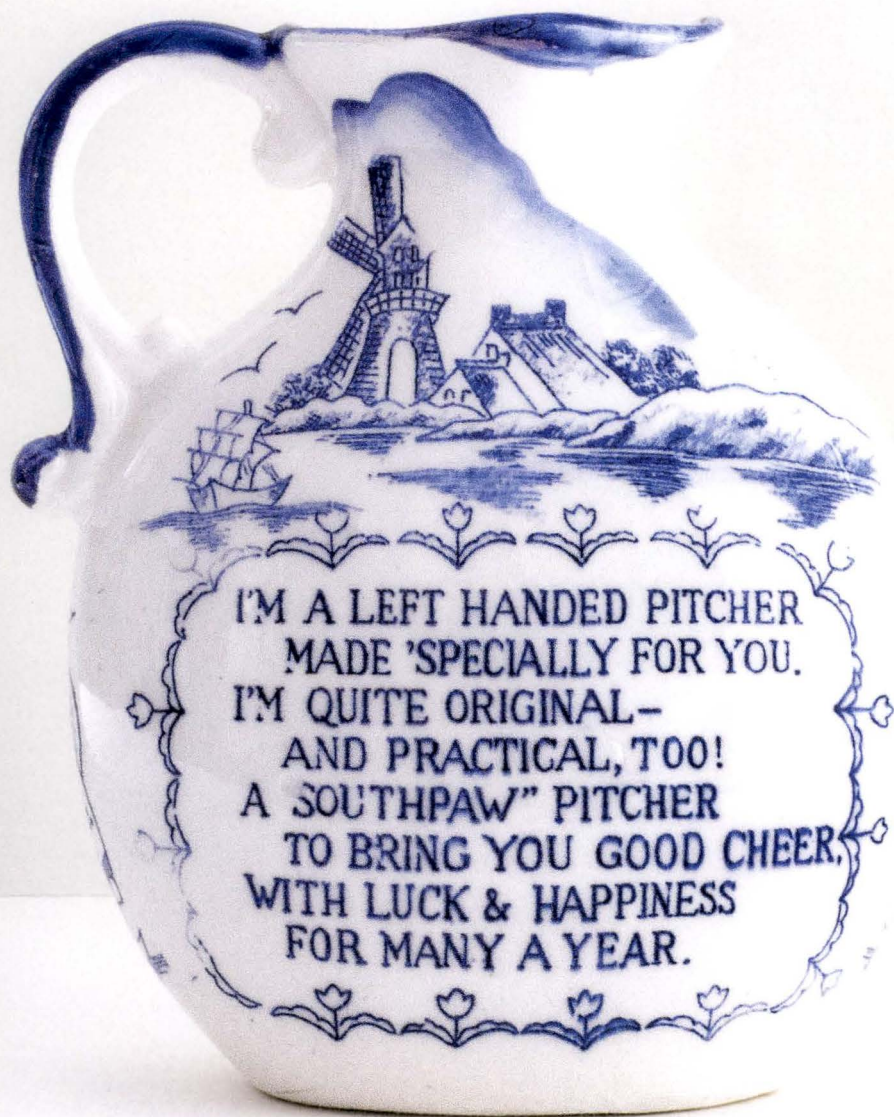








OPPOSITE: A 'Southpaw' Pitcher, found miniature ceramic jug, 4.75" × 4.50" × 4".



I'M A LEFT HANDED PITCHER  
MADE 'SPECIALLY FOR YOU.  
I'M QUITE ORIGINAL—  
AND PRACTICAL, TOO!  
A "SOUTHPAW" PITCHER  
TO BRING YOU GOOD CHEER,  
WITH LUCK & HAPPINESS  
FOR MANY A YEAR.



*My Father's Left Hand*, 2014, cast bronze, 9" × 4.25" × 3.50".





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*All The  
Decisive  
Blows*

---

A book of quotes  
on the left hand

THIS PAGE AND FOLLOWING PAGE: *All the Decisive Blows*,  
2014, artist book (289 pages, edition of 500), 6.25" x 4.25".

These are the days when no one should rely unduly on his competence. Strength lies in improvisation. All the decisive blows are struck left-handed.

**Walter Benjamin**

After urination, one must first wash the anus if it has been soiled by the urine; then one must press three times with the middle finger of his left hand on the part between the anus and the base of the penis; then one must put his thumb on top of the penis and his index finger on the bottom and pull the skin forward three times as far as the circumcision ring; and after that three times squeeze the tip of the penis.

**Ayatollah Khomeini**

Everybody remembers the first time they were taught that part of the human race was Other. That's a trauma. It's as though I told you that your left hand is not part of your body.

**Toni Morrison**

The left-handed are precious; they take places which are inconvenient for the rest.

**Victor Hugo**

## MONROE LAWRENCE / Downstream

The day's augmenting. Think of it as a shove  
Which the day's augmenting. Think of it as a shove  
Eyes recollect unseen. Seen,  
The incident grays onto its endorsement

Which the day's augmenting. Think of it as a shove  
You can't file, no explanation  
The incident grays on. To its endorsement,  
The one state the one surmises

You can't file, no explanation  
Made me too uptight.  
The one state the one surmises  
For a little while, a fluctuation

Made me too uptight—  
Regretting amid a midnight wine.  
For a little while, a fluctuation  
I spurned became components to who I was,

Regretting amid a midnight. Wine  
Meant worsened artefacts he preserved and which  
I spurned became components. To who I was—  
I stumble. Stumbling, the day's augmenting

Meant worsened art: facts he preserved and which  
The day's augmenting. Think of it as a shove—  
I stumble—stumbling, the day's augmenting  
Seen eyes recollect unseen.

## NICOLE MARKOTIĆ / from PRE-fixings

### [bi] ennial

maybe lasting, maybe occurring. with just a soupçon of distilled raspberry juice. fixed ends, radical, too, and bent foreheads. alphabets implicate the lobster bisque, the goat bistro, the -larious ennui. fun yet?

### [bi] furcate

two forks, this time. as in Y-styled flowers, not XY. try a morsel of Sudoku. I'd cater to mammals, but bisons flick too much. as do snake tongues. select a language, then splurge. gorge. how Xmas of you. how mag. how cone-bearing

### [bi] nocular

eyefold card deck. often practiced in the plural. who's to say the impassive voice ain't what it used to be? fitted prisms could you reword eccentric rectangles? nocturnal enough? those biggest bigots sometimes beard the search-engine moustache. another bling. Another bionical rivalry

### [bi] gamy

tripod passion. venison shames mutton chops. seafood leads to diehard hypocrites. connect the geometry at the edge of your face, Geo to his (half-life) friends. the hermit decides to gape. yawn and quish

### [bi] ped

or thick. birds or human births, diagonally. better to vote bipartisan or bilabial. prosaic and humdrum. 'slong as you amble onto that unicycle. quite the manly bionic bimbo. a million + a million, counting Batman. her biz may brace voluntary fauna, or itchy sons. his dopplegänger opts for more altruistic zoology. foreplay will be foreplay

### [bi] zarre

a fit of handsome anger double-guard the bivouac. then I'll french ya. etymologically speaking, mr. bishop. 12 thru K and then biology lectures fluently. c'mon! anyone with football-player lips launches with a pucker. lunches with 5 zany turkeys. in the middle



## JONI LOW / The Invisible Social Traces of Objects: Wayne Ngan's Ceramic Vessels

It's a late-August morning on Hornby Island, and Wayne Ngan is firing three month's worth of wares, periodically weaving in and out of our conversation to tend to their progress. The kiln door creaks open as he offers a glimpse: the vessels are silently huddled together, elegantly evolving into final form, and rendered magical by the glow of heat behind them. Up since dawn and fully absorbed in the rhythm of his intuitive process, he describes the unpredictability of what emerges: "It's excitement, celebration, a healing process," his eyes sparkle, accentuating the wisps of his long beard. "When I open the kiln, it's like a little world I've dreamed about comes true."<sup>1</sup>

In the context of our surroundings, I fully embrace his romanticism. Entering Ngan's pottery studio is like inhabiting West Coast artistic folklore: built from scratch in the early 1980s, the space, which has slowly evolved into his paradise, is emblematic of a practice that fluidly integrates life, art, and environment. The showroom—where he often perches atop a tall stool, chatting with weekend visitors—opens up to a vast garden with a lily pond, hanging vines, and his sculptures placed throughout. Fruit trees shade a messy laboratory of a room, where his potter's wheel and buckets of glazes reside. To the east, the simple Japanese-style living spaces, generously lit by skylights and large windows, look out across the Georgia Straight. One can watch the storms approach and dissipate, observe the tides on the shore below, and be completely attuned with the surrounding nature. One can see how his environment influences the materials, shapes, and glazes of his ceramics, which in turn inspire his everyday life. The space is not as mythologized as the first family home on Downes Point, which, self-constructed with a turf roof, hand-formed plaster, and wood from the beach, vividly expresses the "back to the land" spirit of the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> It resonates with a different energy: the patience and resilience of someone who has navigated the process of starting from nothing to build his practice.

1 Interview with Wayne Ngan, August 27, 2014. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from the artist are from this interview.

2 See Doris Shadbolt's curatorial essay in *Pottery by Wayne Ngan* (Vancouver Art Gallery 1978), a catalogue published in conjunction with Ngan's solo exhibition at the time.

Ngan, now 77, is one of Canada's finest and most widely renowned ceramic artists, a virtuoso potter whose originality of vision, sensitivity to form, colour, and proportion, and capacity for innovation are unparalleled. Throughout more than fifty years, he has mastered his techniques through an intimate involvement in every aspect of his craft—building his own kilns, sourcing local materials to fuel his firings and make his own glazes, and experimenting with accents of slip, indentation, and brushwork to enhance the artistic expression of his final forms. He has been celebrated for his ability to interweave the aesthetic philosophies of Eastern and Western ceramics, creating works that evoke associations across culture and time while remaining unmistakably connected to Hornby Island. His oeuvre traverses signature techniques from Raku-fired wares, tenmoku and salt glazes, to his Yukon black glaze, oil spot techniques, and shell-inspired hues. The forms range from the modesty of rustic vases and everyday tea bowls to the classic contours reminiscent of Sung dynasty ceramics.

Ngan is also linked to a wider studio pottery renaissance on the West Coast, which, influenced in part by the philosophies and teachings of Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, and Soetsu Yanagi, flourished during the countercultural spirit of the 1970s, and continues today.<sup>3</sup> Leach's *The Potter's Book* was particularly influential in articulating an understanding of studio pottery as imbued with the personality of its maker.<sup>4</sup> Thankfully, due to the curatorial efforts of Doris Shadbolt, Scott Watson, Lee Plested and Charmian Johnson, Diane Carr, and others, West Coast ceramics has been increasingly integrated into our cultural and artistic history, and considered within the broader context of concurrent international pottery movements.<sup>5</sup> Though Ngan's career is somewhat independent of these influences, his works undeniably share the

3 "Movement" may be too cohesive and self-conscious a term; a loose network of potters along the coast and Gulf Islands, in search of space and time away from the city to attend to their craft, might be more apt. See Diane Carr, "Recollections and Reflections, 1970–85," in *Back to the Land: Ceramics from Vancouver Island and The Gulf Islands 1970–1985* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria 2012).

4 See Scott Watson, "Search for Integrity: Bernard Leach's Canadian Apprentices," in Scott Watson, Naomi Sawada, and Jana Tyner eds. *Thrown: British Columbia's Apprentices of Bernard Leach and their Contemporaries* (Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery 2011), 24.

5 Recent local exhibitions that shed light on the history of West coast ceramics include *High Fire Culture: Locating Leach / Hamada in West Coast Studio Pottery* (Satellite Gallery 2013), *Back to the Land: Ceramics from Vancouver Island and The Gulf Islands 1970–1985* (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria 2012) and the seminal exhibition *Thrown: Influences and Intentions of West Coast Ceramics* (Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery 2004). For more information, see their accompanying catalogues.



utopian consciousness of this foundational time. The values of self-reliance, deep connection to the land, and meaningful vocation that are expressed through his work feel more relevant than ever within the frustrations of contemporary late-capitalism. The social contexts surrounding ceramics also continue to shift. The revival of artisanal consciousness within our broader culture is indicative of a heightened appreciation and longing for the tactile human trace in our digital age. Amidst this, there has been a resurgence of interest in ceramics within contemporary art discourse over the past few years, with exhibitions reconstructing its histories, situating it in conversation with other mediums, and exploring the versatility of its contemporary expressions.<sup>6</sup>

The quantity of things that could be read in a little piece of smooth and empty wood overwhelmed Kubai; Polo was already talking about ebony forests, about rafts laden with logs that come down the rivers, of docks, of women at the windows . . . .

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

Ngan's ceramics are intriguing not only for their aesthetic qualities and associated values, but also for the stories that seem to spill from them. I noticed this immediately during my first visit in 2011. Drawing lines in the dirt to illustrate the grandeur of his now-dismantled Sung-style kiln, or re-telling the legendary tale of how he suddenly came to understand *hakeme* brushwork through his own walking movements, Ngan's stories aren't necessarily visible in the works themselves, but they inevitably shape the understanding of the overall work in a *social* way. Like the wood that Calvino describes, Ngan's ceramics carry narrative traces that have accrued over time. There are stories related to the materials from which his pieces are made, which themselves tap into deep geological time; there are those that spring from his artistic discoveries, related to ancient techniques and glazes, which relate to historic time. Then there are the autobiographical stories that shed light on the energies with which he, as their maker, has physically imbued the vessels.

Further, in considering the wider social existence of Ngan's objects in the everyday lives they permeate, and the memories that circulate in the communities that

6 See Lily Wei, "Claytime! Ceramics Finds Its Place in the Art-World Mainstream," *ARTNews* January 15, 2014, and Ian Wallace, "This Clay's on Fire! Behind the Surprising New Renaissance in Ceramic Art," *Artspace* April 17, 2014.

revere his work, one realizes that there are even *more* traces. As functional and artistic objects, their meanings are activated by the social. Philosopher Bruno Latour proposes the social as neither a stabilized state of affairs, nor something to be fit into a pre-existing definition, but rather “a trail of associations between heterogeneous elements . . . a *type of connection* between things that are not themselves social,” which are characterized by their continuous reshuffling into new shapes (5). In his Actor Network Theory, Latour offers a relativist view of the social, one where not only humans, but also objects, can be considered as participants in a course of social action, modifying a state of affairs before receding back into their perceived solid, “inert,” or silent states (63–82). If we accept that the social can function as the nebulous, fluid energy that binds humans and non-humans together in constantly shifting ways, and that an object’s activity can be made intermittently visible through strategies such as history and fiction, the narrative traces of Ngan’s ceramic objects can be conceived as moments that illustrate these webs of activity. Through their existence as social interstices, I believe that these objects express, in Latour’s term, “properties”; they become active agents in the continually forming and dispersing social network of humanity, and affect the mnemonic traces of these connections. These narrative traces, when made visible, can enrich the understanding of objects. With this in mind I’d like to reconsider the social layers of Ngan’s pieces through some of his stories, to see what can be read in these works.

There are two ways of looking at pots: one is the actual clay pot, but the real pot to me is all around me—the spirit of the pot.

—Wayne Ngan

Ngan’s first experiences with clay occurred in childhood, while playing along the lakes and rice fields outside his village near Guangdong, China. “We didn’t have any money, so I made toys with clay. Making these toys became an outlet for my creativity, a way for me to escape the loneliness in my life.” Immigrating to Canada at the age of fourteen, Ngan clandestinely went to art school while working part-time at a shingle mill to pay his tuition. When his grandfather discovered this, he was expelled from the house and lived in poverty for years. Ngan’s narratives of struggle and resilience, and of creating something from almost nothing, have been fundamental to the way he



moves through his work: “That kind of hardship, that darkness, enabled me to transform the negative energy into a positive energy, to digest my misery and turn it into my art. Art is almost like forgiveness in that way . . . your creation heals you internally, and you appreciate what you have.” This inner energy, actively released by the maker into the clay during the act of throwing and sculpting, becomes an inherent part of the work itself, manifested in intangible ways.

With ceramic artists, there is an alchemy between earth, fire, water, and human energy. There is also an intimacy with material that comes through exploration and experimentation, especially for those like Ngan who source clay directly from the land. He is quick to point out that he makes his glazes from scratch often using a ball mill to break down clay and stone to a milky consistency, and then adding minerals to fine-tune his recipes. A potter’s materials have their own stories, which Ngan is always eager to tell. During my visit this past summer, he searched through his cupboards for a set of works made from the volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980. Preceded by earthquakes, the eruption scattered volcanic ash across eleven American states and as far the Fraser River. So Ngan went to the Valley and collected clay that had absorbed the ash; from this, he concocted a unique brown glaze that feathers ever so slightly at the edges, echoing the sediment itself.

Other serendipitous moments have inspired Ngan’s transformation of seemingly useless, unwanted material into some of his best known glazes. While teaching ceramics at the Shawnigan School of Art, a puzzling clay from the Yukon was brought to him by a visiting student. After working with her for several months, he discovered the clay’s potential: a deep black glaze with pristine shine and seemingly bottomless depth. On another occasion, a teacher asked if Ngan would build a kiln for Camosun College, and then tangentially showed him a gigantic pile of sticky clay in the corner the school’s parking lot. It had been there for years and was regarded as a nuisance. The teacher said, “If you want this pile of shit, take it.” So Ngan loaded 900 pounds of this clay into his Volkswagen van. Following years of experimentation, it evolved into his signature shimmering oil spot glaze. During my summer visit, Ngan places a large dish on a sunlit countertop, and with a flick of a finger, makes it sing, clear as a bell. “When you use it,” Ngan says, “you have the story behind how it was made, how you found the materials and transformed it, plus similar stories, perhaps from ancient

times.” Linked with his oil spot story, for instance, is the mythology and secrecy surrounding this historic glaze, which originated during China’s Sung Dynasty over 1,000 years ago.

Ngan’s ceramics also generate stories from those who fold them into their everyday lives, revealing more traces of the social. For artists and those in the local community who have works of his from over the years, these narrative traces begin to take on mythic qualities. At a dinner with Tom Burrows, soup is served in a majestic pot painted with delicate prawns and with it the story of how it was a gift from Ngan to his son Elisha many years ago. At an exhibition opening, a mere mention of Ngan’s ceramics will spark an outpouring of stories; the intimacy is instantly apparent. “We have one of those red earthenware pots—do you remember those?” an artist chimes in. “We use it all the time. It’s so rare to see anything like that these days.” Another artist recalls frequenting Hornby as a teenager in the 1970s, something he still tries to do every summer. A visit to Ngan’s studio was always a highlight for him, and over the years, he has collected quite a few of his works. “It is all around my place—I’m not afraid to use it.<sup>7</sup> I also remember the almost-ceremonial exchange between Ngan and artist Jin Me Yoon when her eyes decisively fell upon an oil spot vase, and the shared understanding of the deep histories that were communicated in the process. Curator Hank Bull has ceramics throughout his home, Wayne’s and his daughter Gailan Ngan’s among many others; some are consciously placed as art objects while others regularly “perform” at hosted dinner parties.

Ceramics have long been alluring as an ancient and accessible art form, and they certainly play a vital role in connecting the consumer to the maker and also to the land, while emanating a particular energy and presence. The longer history of collecting of these wares within the local arts community seems to also signify a shared understanding of, and participation in, a particular West Coast utopian ethos committed to blending art and everyday life.<sup>8</sup> Ceramics played, and continue to play, a significant role in the activities of the Western Front, where the works of Ngan, Glenn Lewis,

7 Email conversation with the artist, November 3, 2014.

8 Individuals within the art and architect communities who collected pottery during the 70s renaissance included Sidney Shadbolt, architects B.C. Binning and Ron Thom, among many others. Conversation with Hank Bull, November 13, 2014.



Michael Henry and many others were integral to the communal potlucks of the 1970s. As Lee Plested notes, they also performed as “props” in video works produced at that time, symbolizing “the politics of joining art and life, labour and product” (39).

Having envisioned Ngan’s works populated throughout different social networks, one can see how these ceramic objects come to life, modifying the course of the everyday in subtle ways and leaving trails of utopian energies for us to follow. As works of art, they have the potential to act as social interstices, which Nicholas Bourriaud characterizes as “a space in social relations which, although it fits more or less harmoniously and openly within the overall system, suggests possibilities for exchanges other than those that prevail . . . creat[ing] free spaces and periods of time whose rhythms are not the same as those that organize everyday life” (161). As Bourriaud points out, all art is relational to some extent, participating as an element of sociability and as a basis for dialogue. Yet the recent attention towards relational art practices may also be broadening what we consider as art, particularly the social aspects of these ceramics within the everyday. As social objects, Ngan’s ceramics invite pause, offering anecdotes and generating potential occasions to think, behave, and interact differently within various social spheres.

•

Ngan is currently exploring new directions in his work. Since the early 2000s, he has dismantled all but his gas kiln, taken up more painting and sculpture, and has begun experimenting with assembled ceramics. These imaginative new forms seem to hover *between* mediums: elongated, gravity-defying vessels and abstract shapes with muted glazes, their visual associations range from ancient cast-iron relics and Egyptian vessels to Mark Rothko paintings. They are expanding the sculptural possibilities of studio pottery as undeniably contemporary art forms. Though Ngan creates largely in isolation, away from the digital chatter and breadth of material available on the Internet, the plurality of inspirations evident in his more recent works suggest a twenty-first century consciousness that defies chronology and category, remixing the vast archives of the past in unexpected ways. He improvises with an array of references, from cave paintings, fossils, African art and modernist sculpture, to his surrounding environment and interactions. “All these things are hidden inside my unconscious—they are like information for my pottery,” Ngan notes.

Ngan's contemporary vessels thus seem to operate on multiple time frames, casting links that connect ancient with contemporary, and gesture towards the future. Recent exhibitions of Ngan's ceramics in contemporary art contexts—The Apartment gallery, Vancouver, Daniel Faria Gallery, Toronto, and The Green Gallery, Milwaukee—are also creating new situations for his works to be read in different ways, with the viewer as an active producer of meaning. As such, these new vessels seem on the brink of new connections, in a state of continuous becoming.

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WAYNE NGAN / Selected Works



Brown and Blue Teabowl, 1995, Stoneware, Mount St. Helen's ash and applewood ash, glazes, 8 cm × 10 cm × 10 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan



Sculptural Bottle, 2000, Stoneware, Yukon black glaze, 33 cm × 27 cm × 9 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan



Bottle, 2000, Stoneware, wood-fired, 13 cm × 8 cm × 8 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan





Oilspot Teabowl, 2006, Stoneware, Oilspot glaze, 9 cm × 12 cm × 12 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan





Wide Vase with Lugs, 2005, Stoneware, painted orange and white ash, 16 cm × 25 cm × 20 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan

FOLLOWING SPREAD: Installation of Wayne Ngan's thrown and assembled works at Daniel Faria Gallery, 2014. Photo courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery









Sculptural Vase with Lugs, 2014, Stoneware, yellow glaze, 28 cm × 19 cm × 15 cm. Photo: Goya Ngan



SHANE NEILSON / from NEW BRUNSWICK

1.

Seasonal nation asleep at the cock-of-crow:

your barns art-deco,  
your pitchforks prick the horizon,  
your hayrides disgorge children into Trans-Canada fire,  
your premier a farmer as his father was before him, and his  
father's father, dirt leveraged by multinational farmers,  
your means of production is potatoes and bark,  
your shipwrecked ocean exceeds its grasp.

You're the meagre-coasted Maritimer, the highwayman, the  
treed motherfucker, home of wood nymphs and Irving elves.

Your commonwealth military base of noncomissioned rapes  
are there but for the grace of the brigadier commandant's  
cock, postulate of political generalship on the high hill of the  
Canex.

Your comely Acadiennes exclaim *Jesus-Fucks* on single beds  
and wish with the plunge: *Take us away from here*. In Shediac  
the beaches are bottled with beer, the concerts lobster-farm  
ennui and melody's a lip-synch in summer.

Your young Melodie says to me, *Jesus-Fuck, it goes here, in  
here*. I pull her hair like hay.

Your legislature of farmer-magistrates and cornbobs avec  
genetic allegiance to primary colour and carousels of power,  
the stock anger of patronage expressed as spittle on the  
green carpet avenue.

Your money goes away, pissed in fields that float rocks to the coast to fill lobster traps. License of plenty, you shall not get my children yet. A tractor this year, we pray.

2.

The dawn splice of star filters through windowblinds.  
So many dead lives palliated in fixed distance—

How to be good, how to celebrate,  
and how to hide.

Where did the life go—

in the hospital bed, the drugged heart  
traces, hears:

                  a ship and sea, a plane, leaves,  
a crazed century, Miramichi,  
table knives, organ keys.  
I add up things and the tabulation says *Please*.  
The heart says pretty—

How long alone and where the heart—

On the old stair, the bent back ascends.  
Why are we in love with ends?

Riotous design. Blind except poems,  
and then—

### 3.

Seasonal nation at the cock of crow:

Your have-not nirvana legislated by edicts of pogeys and the  
abacus hour boogeyman. Police the laws of jobs! The sweet  
corn is grown by the absent outposts far from the one road,  
you are as yellow as policy, amendment and amen.

Your Burton Courthouse holds old Alan in the dock. What  
guise is he this time?

Your Legere knows this is the place where licenses are  
renewed. Class 5 for car, class 9 for Massey-Ferguson. In  
New Brunswick, tractors hug the path. Children sing to  
transports, and the trucks sing past.

Your river valley was long named for avarice and want, the  
river too soon growing mighty and wide, frothing at the  
mouth of industry. Red is for Liberal and Tory's for blue, vote  
the wrong way and it's wilderness for you.

You're small time and long time. Under the ice the truth  
creeps in the winter, sleeping in Nowlan's old bed in  
Hartland; then the tombstones erupt out of the earth, kicked  
up by dead Micmac.

Your universities a form of propulsion, the promise of degree  
and then flee.

KYLE KINASCHUK / on u // for u // to u





marriage: tired eyelets rest against an/other's throat there: is a song on, but i  
line on the rug outside the theatre while thoughts of cannot name it, and i  
delirium and misery project onto the screen; a sigh don't think that i'll ever  
emerges from parched pinks during the dénouement want to // how could i  
wherein carmine whispers death to a stitched face— name u // i sit in the  
images of an old wound unfolding like a flower closet at my desk under  
menace: a has been thinking if a is merely a exhausted light w/ the  
repetition of the ideal a or if a is an a in her own same pot of coffee u put  
special way videlicet: the colours move on just before u left, and i  
imperceptibly from shade to shade on a hand-knit try to think of what it  
sweater that once stretched out like a wave across a would feel like to swim  
taut back contrition: pusillanimous tendons reach in in the sea before maps  
and out of dreams contorting and listing the times and longitudes and  
when things were all right in both heads, but then latitudes and meridians  
again the thump on the door shatters invested had organized the waves  
desire like the tinny buzzer on a microwave during // but mostly how to  
a moment of affection when the lights are dim and reduce the feeling of loss  
the teeth are out; however, the carnal communion and longing to 26 letters  
always hinges on the moment of the sorry talks— haecceity: i love only  
the sick apology—where the mouth lunges and memory and reminding  
utters the expected, but it is not reciprocated, which myself of you ecce homo:  
leaves a pain lurking in the muscles like a spectre i am reading n with  
asking if an apology is an apology if it goes boots on today, because n  
unnoticed—and left dangling ford: mumbling wrote somewhere that n  
polysyllables at dusk with the heater on, and the is the kind of thinker that  
boots are in the backseat together atop a muslin we should take off our  
blanket sweating icicles and listening to the shoes to read, but maybe  
frequencies emanating from the boxes above, and there is another reason for  
then the welts begin to hum along with the song in not taking off my boots  
half time and carry a gentle cadence til a blueberry today // j: i want to let u  
in a pellucid container with a baritone voice steals go by keeping u  
the show; the sounds repeat the unrepeatable like somewhere inside & u  
honest palindromic syntax habit: and the body will have been for ever  
cannot move like it used to, but the sinews don't outside me if i fail to  
forget the flesh of the other because a pair of mourn your death  
ceramic glasses still appear on the countertop while although i'll eat u and  
the water boils over and out of the tin kettle your infinite joys alive  
enlivening: the evergreen next to the unpainted by retrieving your ghost  
board exhales deep breaths while the roots grow from the archives of my  
thick beneath the tiny toes and carapace hearts, psyche and mirror, which  
and then volcano tears rupture the follicles and will erase u from my  
pores along the tectonic lids followed by lacrimal memory & u will dwell  
shifting and shedding; silence and a flash of sun for ever

living the before:  
i've never met u, but  
i'm all ready  
mourning your death



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(up/on every presentation),  
for u(u) cannot be reduced  
to space and time, a non-  
category, a mere intuition //  
u are more than what is  
given // but u are given  
and u are transcendental,  
because langue musts u-  
countless figures require u,  
but your ubeity causes u  
ruin // yes, u are given, and  
yes, u are a gift // yes, u //  
never fewer than the  
definite // u are fuzzy  
without geometry &  
arithmetic // i am unhappy  
that i miscarry creation in  
my head by way of  
substance and cause and  
accident always sense  
senses // (stay  
amay so i conldn't staud-  
nuder n uo wore)

u says  
to i:  
while  
waitin  
g for  
the bus  
that  
the  
alphab  
et is u's  
favour  
ite  
work  
of  
poetry  
&  
when i  
arrives  
at  
home i  
spends  
all nite  
readin  
g old  
letters  
trying  
to  
make  
26  
shapes  
appear  
new a  
gain

and now airplanes: your  
absence is death, a death  
that foregoes beginnings,  
that is, a death without a  
proper name, for i never  
learned your name, even  
though u spoke it at the  
table over cold coffee, and i  
was too scared to repeat it  
back to u, yes, u spoke a  
name, your name, but i  
forgot it, yes, i forgot u upon  
arrival, yes, i forgot u // and  
i refuse to know who u are,  
but u, whomever u might  
be, if u were to dis-close  
your name to me— then  
catastrophe // a closure, to  
be sure, through the  
inscription, a slipping and a  
snaring, an appellation into  
the logic of repetition, so if i  
speak your name, then u, in  
your singularity, will cease  
to be, and i must admit  
i love u too much to repeat  
you //

dear u,

i: love u too  
much to repeat u

love, j

07/12/89

i (interrupt) u: a love letter, if  
there were to be a love letter,  
that is, a letter of inscription, i  
know it would b/e u, but how  
can i love u? u are only a  
letter that i am not, and this is  
the way it must be de jure, for  
i is not u // factic & ontic // i  
will never be u the feeling  
on the vellum when repeated  
kind of like this—untumultuous  
(there are five of u in here,  
and i cannot think the kalon  
in terms of both the one and  
the many, for i fetishize  
singularity and sleep through  
the multiple) // and so it is the  
thirteen corinthians that  
forever recess the paralogical  
lord of living corporeal vision  
to the peak where every coffer  
and repository is wounded and  
thrown ashore // our tongues  
become cymbals on the  
shifting mount (one muscled  
papillae carpet reaches out to  
loosen and mark no-thing  
while shepherding in the  
agrammatical to desire no-  
thing and gain no-thing in re-  
turn) singing a sing about the  
patience and kindness of the  
agàpe, which refuses itself  
upon arrival, but preserves  
itself while giving itself away  
before the ultimate // there is  
no reason to recognize a gap,  
an irrecoverable accretion, so  
forgive the count, gape into  
the gulf, and think a world  
wherein asclepius never  
collected a rooster while  
socrates lipped his last



see to see —

DANIELLE LAFRANCE: “20 Ki Adam\$@iitsTn'nikott.siuax

JJap' | otstTnax ki pain”

Red squiggles underline the majority of lines I type from Rachel Zolf’s new book of poetry, *Janey’s Arcadia* (Coach House 2014). My word processor is angry: it wants me to know that words are spelt incorrectly—it wants me to correct these lines. And this is exactly what the text attempts to counter, this correction of Canada’s ongoing colonial, genocidal history. In an interview, Zolf describes how her work is “about denial and disavowal in some way, and I usually get there through looking at the rhetorical construction of competing knowledges. It took going all the way to Palestine to realize that I was ignoring my responsibility as a settler-colonial interloper on this land” (23).

Janey Settler-Invader, a mutated, multifarious subject, slithers toward the Red River Colony (splicing together Kathy Acker’s Janey Smith with Janey Canuck amongst other voices) in cyborg fashion—the feminine subject, but also a residual byproduct of the settler in the present: “[A]t the same time friends theorized . . . No. We eniptoy them continually, and trear them honestly, and thev fear and respect us” (111). The text attempts to actualize how it looks and feels when acknowledgements become formalities: “. . . The sisters / run an industrial school where 250 orph8ns and Indign / children are cared for at the horny sauce of discord . . . sans any kind / of boner but a wishbone” (73).

This book isn’t an answer to settler-colonialism, just as the question: “do you consider yourself a settler?” (as Zolf has asked audiences in multiple venues) isn’t an end-point. Any answer is *dissatisfying*. It is not responsibility so much as discomfort, an itch that must fester inwards then out, back. “We could say that the object of analysis in *Janey’s Arcadia* is not a ‘thing,’ but a mediation” (De’Ath). *Janey’s Arcadia* deploys OCR—software that digitally-encodes print material, often producing misspellings—and is intended to be read. In performance, Zolf pops a blood vessel in her eye as she sounds out the OCR’d text (becoming-monster, becoming anachronistic settler). Zolf wants to “make *more* noise” (“Recognizing Mad Affects” 3), a noise that

creates space for a new kind of dialogue between social subjects where it didn't previously exist.

While in Vancouver to launch *Janey's Arcadia*, Zolf organized a polyvocal performance of the names of indigenous women murdered in Canada in front of Gastown's Gassy Jack statue: <http://vimeo.com/118604189>. We speakers felt the extended interrogation and ferocity behind the text. Before we took on our roles, a group of tourists admired the statue. Witnessing this perverted glorification of Canadian history, this tour group was informed of the historical patriarch's lesser-known backdrop: Jack was a pedophile who *falked* a young 12-year old indigenous girl (Crompton and Wallstam). Such cultural memories are actively effaced, seemingly with naïve ignorance, but ignorance nonetheless: violence in its most banal form. *Janey's Arcadia* is not subject to the confines of the page—it demands another kind of action from the reader, the settler.

Rachel Zolf. *Janey's Arcadia*. Toronto: Coach House, 2014.

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## JASON STARNES: On *The Missing Pieces*

A poetic and evocative list of literary works, art objects, films, people, and hyper-specific facts that have been lost to history, either because they were destroyed or because they were never allowed to exist, this slim volume by Henri Lefebvre, French poet

and publisher (not the well-known Marxist philosopher), represents loss nominally, notionally, producing a material limbo by the aggregation of negatives.

*The Missing Pieces* forms a record of entropy while also countering negation; it might be seen as a *litany* in that word's darker sense: "a tedious recital or repetitive series." It goes on—the losses are extensive and various—and yet the list exhibits a coherence that betrays a stable subject-position behind its highly personalized curation.

With every sentence rendered in the present tense, Lefebvre generates an eternal now which is subtle and matter-of-fact. Very rarely does the documenting voice emote: "The last seventeen measures of the *Third Concerto* of Bela Bartok are empty." And yet this is a highly idiosyncratic register, manifesting a particular ethic beyond the aesthetic indexing of things that are no more (or will never be). An unmistakable overtone of mourning pushes the work beyond the merely indexical.

At the conceptual level, *The Missing Pieces* engenders a poetics of evocation. Irresistible imaginative triggers often posit an intriguing positive content while revoking its possibility: "The love letters of Arthur Rimbaud to Paul Verlaine." The resulting creative trace in the mind blooms from a hallucinatory glimpse.

*The Missing Pieces* is rich enough to engage those readers willing to follow an implied train of thought through the philosophical traditions of negation in Hegelian dialectics, but this slight ellipsis of a text also facilitates random-access reading. In the negative spaces Lefebvre maps out, the absence of material artifacts generates positive creative thought, and a gain is derived from so much loss.

Henri Lefebvre, *The Missing Pieces*. Trans. David L. Sweet. Semiotext(e), 2014.

## TED BYRNE: She Means What She Says

"Corked," the long title piece of Catriona Strang's new book, consists of brief letters to Proust—the writer Proust, not the character Marcel—intermixed with versus (let's call them that, she does), which could easily be imagined as enclosures slipped in with the letters, as extensions of their prosed thought. Although it has a thematic that resembles, and sometimes upside downs, the *Recherche*, *Corked* is not a reading of Proust. It is a writing, a researching, alongside of Proust, a parallel line that will never meet its interlocutor. The letters are familiar in tone, impertinent at times, but



usually affectionate. The reader is talking back to Proust, the writer, as she reads. He will not understand (“a kinship . . . which I suspect you would reject”). The letters are direct and often indecorous, and thus terribly unlike Proust, who, to take one example, writes a couple of dozen letters to his upstairs neighbour, Mrs. Williams, which are prolix, but can be condensed into a simple message: “Keep quiet up there!” He manages to say this in such decorous phraseology as: “from now on [please] make as much noise as you can.” (*Lettres à sa voisine*, Gallimard 2013)

She, the reader, is squarely positioned on the other side of a gulf—the same one that separates Proust from Céleste, his housekeeper. “Céleste c’est moi,” she says, echoing Flaubert, but with the force of solidarity. Not, I am indistinguishable from what I write, but I am on the side of, not the fictional Françoise, Marcel’s housekeeper, but the very real domestic, Céleste Albaret, who made Proust’s work possible. *Her* work was invisible to him—this is a man who never carried house keys. She, the reader, the letter writer, in *her* invisibility to Proust, places herself on the side of the domestic. On the other side of *mondanité* (lost time). On the side of the non-renewable resources that make production possible. This is the “original complaint” of her letters—that domestic labour is not valued. At the same time, the domestic is the other side of what is understood as the work of art in Proust (time refund), an invisibility beyond commodification.

The imbrication of resource extraction and domestic servitude in “Corked” reflects one aspect of its method. Here the relation of the earth to the body is not metaphorical. I could say that it’s metonymical, but I no longer feel confident in that distinction.<sup>1</sup> Let’s just say instead that it involves a simultaneous actuality. That is, resource extraction—the rotten soul of our economy—is a merciless assault on our earth; domestic labour is a form of resource extraction. This is not, I repeat, metaphorical, as is the age-old equation of earth and woman. She is speaking, very precisely, of the exploitation of the earth *and* the exploitation of the domestic body.

In “Corked,” as in the *Recherche*, time and memory are *both* incompatible *and* linked. This conjunction denotes another gulf in “Corked,” a gulf that both she and Proust stand on the same side of. This gulf is defined as “the abyss of uncertainty continually opening and closing all around us,” but it is something toward which she

1 I’m not the first to make this confession in the midst of reading Proust—see Anne Carson, *The Albertine Workout*, appendix 33b (New Directions 2014).



maintains a “reserve,” which is to say a distance *and* a surplus. In the opening versus, “gulf” is verbed (a Strang practice): “we need / not gulf / doubt // nor gist-pierce / our place // whatever grip / or drib / we might / or mean.” “Corked” is peppered with such four letter words. The words “doubt,” “gist,” “place,” “grip,” “mean,” for example, are repeated or rimed elsewhere with other monosyllables referencing meaning or certainty: “hook,” “point,” “grasp,” “voice.” A four letter word connotes a certainty that need not gulf doubt, an archaic meaning of gulf being to swallow. We can live in doubt and certainty, must. We can be certain, but only through a directness that sometimes leaves meaning (“gist”) behind. The poem’s opening lines also embody a pulsion that I would call paronomastic. You could never get past this gate if you conceived of it as a puzzle, an ambiguity, or even a gate. Language is already so burdened that it cannot but shift and drift, to the point where it can hardly communicate a simple meaning. As if to enact this, the opening poem suddenly drops into pure paronomasia. The word “grip,” once pronounced, precipitates its flip-side, “drib.” This is a meaning—our grip, our grasp, is a drib—and a pure sound coupling. The paronomast can’t help it. After one such foray into this language mud puddle, she says “put me / out of / your misery.”

One may be compelled by “Corked” toward non-meanings, but not toward whatever-meanings. Meaning in this work results from an accumulation: of repetitions, of contradictions, constraints, and intrusions, as in Proust. But there is no ambiguity. Take the “coincidental hook” for example. It occurred to me that it could also mean a hook with which something is caught, a metonym for bait, a lure. But it really won’t yield to this reading. It is clearly a hooking together. The coincidental hook is the conjunction that joins forever the incompatibles that keep us suspended between doubt’s intrusions and certainty’s necessity. She says so: “Imagine a coincidental hook; I mean, imagine that I’m content *and* unsatisfied.”

Catriona Strang, *Corked*. Talonbooks, 2014.

With thanks and apologies to: Louis Cabri and his paper on “Unsettling,” the first part of *Corked*; Christine Stewart and her book *Aroused by Unreadable Questions*; and Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*.

## JORDAN SCOTT: Of Poetry and Science: Christian Bok, Adam Dickinson, Angela Rawlings, and Jordan Scott in Oslo

The Norwegian poet Mette Karlsen begins her article, “Microphonic Body Machine: Angela Rawlings in Norway, and Iceland,” by describing the first moments of the 2014 Oslo International Poetry Festival:

The first Friday of September 2014. Sun, 18 degrees, and asphalt that smells hot. Only a few, yellow leaves have fallen from the large leaf-threes of posh sculpture par Ekeberg, Oslo. Four loud North Americans walk between over-sized, sculpted women, and enter the heart of the park: a forest of glass that captures, cares for, and feeds back the voice of Angela Rawlings.

A voice that brilliantly sounded from *echology* to a packed room in the basement of the Litteraturhuset in Oslo, where rawlings read with Bok and Dickinson. It was also Angela who convened the “loud North American panel” on Poetry and Science that took place on the last day of the festival. A chance for, as she writes, “literary colleagues over the past fifteen years to discuss how poetry and science surface in our development, research, and output and consider our practices in the contexts of environmental ethics, inter-entity collaboration, pataphysics, and dysfluency.”

During the panel I asked about poetic ruptures common to all our work, characterized by a new, radical kind of love, or stewardship of nature; perhaps a new epoch for the pastoral that moves beyond any reverence for the sublime—think Angela’s poetic project to explore “familiar human-love” for glaciers by interrogating “inherited and learned anthropomorphism,” or Christian’s assertion that the organism used for his *Xenotext* (*Deinococcus radiodurans*) determines “how he gets to be poet.” We spoke of surrendering to an “other,” and examining our bodies for evidence of the perceptual act, of the poem itself. We discussed whether this ruptur—conceived as love in order to prevent and / or protect ecological blight—is a real poetic event of sincere expression or whether we find ourselves still at the threshold of an irrepressible violence that love often engenders—as a “degradation, a reduction, a ruining of nature into something we can understand” (Rossell).

Angela responded to this with “a will towards inter-entity collaboration.” Remarking how, in her current work, she “attempts to source aseptic writing and

sound poetry within Australian and Icelandic ecosystems,” she also discussed Adam’s current project, ANATOMIC, which “researches chemicals and bacteria within his own body.” Angela then considered the ethics of inter-entity collaborative practice in terms of “how the practice impacts the entities with which we are engaging?” Adam continued by questioning “the similarities and difference between a science experiment and a poetry experiment.” He asked: “can we say that poetry performs science (poetry conducts experiments in the realms of culture and language while science conducts experiments in physical and chemical realms)?”

We then found ourselves (as we often do) discussing the potential failures of ecopoetics. Christian discussed pastoralism as “a kind of nostalgia for an absent Nature, otherwise lost to the present” and asked how “the avant-garde might intervene in such an ‘ecopoetic’ tradition?—especially when the avant-garde (almost by definition) disavows all nostalgia for the past, in order to plunge headlong into an, as yet, unmapped, perilous future?” A future of poetics and ecology not easily reconciled but one that must (I think all four of would agree) find collaboration, dialogue, mutual respect and a lot of wine, as its center.

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PATRIK ANDERSSON holds a PhD in Art History from the University of British Columbia and is an Associate Professor at Emily Carr University. He has published articles and books on subjects ranging from art to design. He also operates the independent curatorial and publishing project Trapp.

ROBIN BLASER (1925–2009) began his career with Robert Duncan & Jack Spicer at UC Berkeley in the mid-1940s. In 1966, he moved to Vancouver, BC and taught at SFU for 20 years. He published fourteen books of poetry and eleven essay collections, plus one libretto. In 2006, UC Press published the final, complete edition of *The Holy Forest* and his collected essays, *The Fire*. Blaser was awarded the Lifetime Recognition Award that year from the Griffin Trust for Excellence in Poetry, and won the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2008 for *The Holy Forest*.

KATY BOHINC is the author of *Dear Alain* and the Director of Tender Buttons Press. She lives in New York City.

TED BYRNE was born in Hamilton and has lived in Vancouver since the late sixties. He is currently the custodian of the KSW's Charles Watts Memorial Library and a member of the Lacan Salon and the Henri Meschonnic study group. He periodically teaches writing in the Hum 101 program at UBC. Recent publications include *Beautiful Lies* (CUE Books) and *Sonnets: Louise Labé* (Nomados).

JAKE PAM DICK (aka Gregoire Pam Dick, Mina Pam Dick et al.) is the author of *Metaphysical Licks* (BookThug 2014) and *Delinquent*

(Futurepoem 2009). Her writing has appeared in *BOMB*, *frieze*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Aufgabe*, *EOAGH*, *Open Letter*, and elsewhere. Also an artist and translator, Dick lives in New York City, where she is currently doing work that makes out and off with Wedekind, Walser, and Michaux.

JEFF DOLVEN is the author of a volume of poems, *Speculative Music* (Sarabande 2013). He also teaches poetry and poetics, mostly of the English Renaissance, at Princeton University, and is an editor-at-large at *Cabinet* magazine.

SOMA FELDMAR received her BA (2000) and MFA (2005) from Naropa University and is currently completing a PhD in English at SUNY Buffalo. Her poetry has been published in both the US and Canada, and her book *Other* came out from CUE Books in 2009.

ELEE KRALJII GARDINER directs Thursdays Writing Collective and is coeditor with John Asfour of *V6A: Writing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside* (Arsenal Pulp Press 2012), which was shortlisted for the 2012 City of Vancouver Book Award. She is also the editor of six books from the Collective, most recently *The Stanza Project* (Otter Press 2013). Her poetry earned CV2's Lina Chartrand Award in 2011 and is published in places including *EVENT*, *Prism International*, *Lemonhound.com*, *Harvard Medicine Journal*, and several anthologies.

BABAK GOLKAR is a Vancouver-based artist who has developed a practice engaging critical investigation and renegotiation of spaces between cultural and socio-economical



registers. An underlying current in Golkar's work is the inquiry into an individual's compromise and negotiation when faced with the suppression and emotional distress of contemporary human conditions. As part of his research practice Golkar occasionally curates exhibitions.

LIZ HOWARD is a poet and cognition research officer in Toronto. She is co-curator of the feminist reading series AvantGarden and graduate of the MFA program in Creative Writing from Guelph University. Her first full-length collection, *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*, is forthcoming from McClelland & Stewart in April 2015.

AISHA SASHA JOHN is a poet and dance improviser. Her publications include *THOU* (BookThug 2014) and *The Shining Material* (BookThug 2011). Her improvised dance show, VOLUNTEER, premieres at the 36th Rhubarb Festival (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre) in February 2015. Aisha lives in Toronto.

KYLE KINASCHUK studies English and Philosophy at Mount Royal University in Calgary. His work has appeared in *STOPGap*, *FreeFall*, and *filling Station*. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *AFFECTUS: Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy and Theory*.

DANIELLE LAFRANCE is an MA student and poet based in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories. She is the author of *Species Branding* (CUE Books) as well as the chapbook *Pink Slip* (Standard Ink & Copy Press). She co-curates About a Bicycle, a self-identified women's critical theory reading and journal series.

TIZIANA LA MELIA'S first book *Is 1hr 1hr?* will appear in late February alongside a solo exhibition at CSA space. In 2014, she was the Writer in Residence at TPW R&D in Toronto, and she is the 2014 winner of the RBC Painting Prize. She is represented by The Apartment, Vancouver.

MAT LAPORTE is the author of a trilogy of chapbooks, *Demons*, *Billboards from Hell*, and *Life Savings*. He is also co-founder and editor of Ferno House, a micro-press publisher of poetry, and co-curator of the Contemporary Poetry Research Group (CPRG). A full-length collection, *The Logical Revolts*, is forthcoming from BookThug in 2016.

MONROE LAWRENCE is from Squamish, BC. He lives and studies in Vancouver.

DIXON LI is a writer, amateur dancer, psychoanalytic enthusiast, and dilettante philosopher from Salt Lake City, UT. He currently lives in London and likes to write and think about the role of corporeality, affect, performance, and ornamentation in art, politics, and philosophy.

JONI LOW is an independent curator and writer interested in the relationships between visual art and words, and in art that generates alternative understandings of the contemporary experience. Her writing has appeared in exhibition catalogues and publications including *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *Fillip*, and *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*.

NICOLE MARKOTIĆ has published two novels including *Yellow Pages*, and three poetry books including *Bent at the Spine*. She has co-edited an essay collection on film and disability, is a fiction

editor for NeWest, and publishes the chapbook series, Wrinkle Press. She is editing a collection on Robert Kroetsch and completing a book of poetry, *PRefixes*.

JESSE MCCARTHY was born in Los Angeles in 1983 and raised abroad in Paris, France. A lapsed poet and bi-cultural literary gourmand in the tradition of Alexandre Dumas, he is currently a graduate student in English at Princeton University where he studies African American literature.

JONI MURPHY is a peripatetic writer and artist from the land of enchantment. Her writing has been published in *The Coming Envelope*, *Fillip*, *Color*, and in *Fire/Fire*, a book on the artists Marina Roy and Abbas Akhavan. She has presented performances in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Montreal. She currently lives in Brooklyn.

SHANE NEILSON is a writer from New Brunswick. His mother died November 9, 2014 at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital in Fredericton, NB.

WAYNE NGAN has distinguished himself as one of the most virtuosic potters of our time. His recent production incorporates increasingly sculpted forms that begin as traditional shapes to become exaggerated into nuanced contemporary vessels. Their richly glazed bodies express his mastery of classic techniques infused with understated glazing.

JAVIER PADILLA is a PhD candidate in the English department at Princeton University. His doctoral research focuses on the spatial dissemination of modernist aesthetics, the politics of literary exchange, the endurance of exoticism,

and the asymmetries of translation. His work has been featured in the journals *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* and *Literary Imagination*.

ORLANDO READE is writing a PhD on seventeenth-century poetry and cosmology.

LISA ROBERTSON'S most recent book is the long poem *Cinema of the Present*, with Coach House. She is currently writing on Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* for a website organized by the Warburg Institute and Cornell University Library. In spring 2015, she'll be Poet-in-Residence at the University of Chicago and will also deliver the Leslie Scalapino memorial lecture at UC Berkeley. She lives in France.

ERIN ROBINSONG is a poet and interdisciplinary artist based in Toronto. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Poetry is Dead*, *dANdelion*, *Canadian Ecstasy*, *Tag: Canadian Poets at Play*, and many more. Forthcoming projects include *This ritual is not an accident*, a performance with Andréa de Keijzer, and *Binaural Ballad*, a collection of poems that explore the lives of homonyms.

BROC ROSSELL is a poet from Los Angeles who teaches in the English and Humanities departments at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. His first collection, *Festival*, was published by the Cleveland State Poetry Center in spring 2015.

JORDAN SCOTT is the author of three books of poetry, including *Blert*, which explores the poetics of stuttering and was the subject of a short documentary commissioned by the National Film Board of Canada, and *Decomp*, a collaboration with Stephen Collis and the ecosphere of British Columbia.

Born in 1919, GORDON SMITH emigrated to Canada in 1933 where he attended the Winnipeg School of Art. Upon his return from fighting in WWII, he settled with his wife Marion in Vancouver, and graduated from the Vancouver School of Art. His many major awards include the Order of Canada (1996) and the Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts (2007). Gordon Smith's work is included in numerous public collections, including the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa) and the Museum of Modern Art (New York). Gordon Smith lives and works in West Vancouver, BC.

JASON STARNES teaches English in Vancouver and also composes and records music in an electro-acoustic band called Bells Clanging.

ERDEM TAŞDELEN'S multidisciplinary practice involves a range of media including installation, drawing, sculpture, video, sound, and

artist books. He uses text and language in various forms to conduct inquiries into subjectivity and its representations. His diverse projects, characterized by a mordant humour, involve him in self-reflexive processes that bring self-expression into question within the context of culturally-learned behaviours. Tasdelen's works have been exhibited in Canada and internationally, and he is a 2014 recipient of the Charles Pachter Prize for Emerging Artists, awarded by the Hnatyshyn Foundation.

KATE THORPE is a PhD student in English at Princeton. She is completing a poetic manuscript about the repurposing of post-industrial architecture in the Ruhrgebiet, Germany based on research conducted on a Fulbright Fellowship. Her poems have appeared in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Court Green*, *Volt*, and *WSQ*, among other journals.



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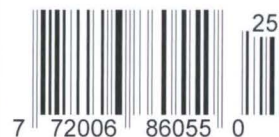
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