

TRIPWIRE 12

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For the monthly purpose of re-upping the state of emergency & toward the interpretation of shipwreck we assemble in this playhouse by the light of a gibbous moon

—Peter Culley

OAKLAND: 2016

TRIPWIRE a journal of poetics

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Mercedes Eng

SECTION 1: REFLECTION OF CANADA'S MULTICULTURAL REALITY IN FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

Q. 1.1 Does your institution's vision, mission, mandate and/or priorities statement(s) include reference to multiculturalism?

Earlier this fall, the federal government hired auditor Deloitte to examine various international jurisdictions that have utilized the Public Private Partnership (P3) model for correctional facilities. PPP Canada aims to build its understanding of the various models, approaches, and experiences of P3 correctional facilities in a global context to determine their relevancy to the Canadian market. Of particular interest is the US, which currently houses the largest prison population in the world and deploys inmates as a captive labour force.

Meanwhile, several private-sector operators of detention facilities are working to land contracts to operate Canada's immigrant detention centres, some of which are undergoing expansion. Real-estate developer BD Hamilton and Associates lobbied the Conservatives to work with the Government of Canada to build a refugee detention centre in Toronto.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

Q. 2.1 Throughout your institution, does your workforce represent Canada's diversity?

A strike by federal inmates over a cut in their pay that began in Ontario has now spread to prisons in New Brunswick, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Inmates are protesting a 30% pay cut that took effect this week. The Harper government began deducting the money from prisoners' pay as part of a move to recover costs under the Deficit Reduction Action Plan.

Correctional Service Canada confirmed "work and program refusals are occurring sporadically across the country."

The average pay is \$3 a day, a rate established in 1981 and based on a review by a parliamentary committee that also factored in a deduction for inmates' room, board and clothing. Despite inflation over the past 30 years, inmates have not had a pay raise.

The strikes have also forced the shutdown of the government's CORCAN operations inside the prisons. CORCAN makes textiles, furniture and other goods for the war machine.

A spokesperson for Minister of Public Safety called the strike "offensive to hard working, law abiding Canadians."

Q. 2.2 How does your institution benefit from having a multicultural workforce?

Federal Prison Industries (FPI) is a wholly owned US government corporation. Its mission is to employ and provide job skills training to inmates confined within the Federal Bureau of Prisons; produce market-priced quality goods and services for sale to the Federal Government; operate in a self-sustaining manner; and minimize FPI's impact on private business and labor.

Inmates earn 23¢ to \$1.15 per hour. They gain marketable job skills while working in factory operations such as metals, furniture, electronics, and textiles, producing goods for the military industrial complex.

A Business or Correctional Program?

FPI is, first and foremost, a correctional program. The impetus behind FPI is not business, but helping offenders acquire the skills necessary to transition from prison to law-abiding, contributing members of society. The production of items and provision of services are merely by-products of those efforts.

Who are the Customers?

FPI is restricted to selling its products to the Federal Government. Its principal customer is the Department of Defense, from which FPI derives approximately 53% of its sales. Other key customers include the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Transportation, the Treasury, Veterans Affairs, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

SECTION 5: CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITIES

Q. 5.1 Did your institution undertake initiatives to improve federal services for ethnocultural groups?

a partial commissary list for Metro Detention Center Los Angeles:

Timex watch	\$36.40
Timex watchband	\$11.70
watch battery	\$2.60
Talit shawl	\$15.95
prayer rug	\$13.99
Kufi (white)	\$5.96
Dikr beads	\$4.96
regular relaxer kit	\$6.50
super relaxer kit	\$6.50
Luster's Pink lotion	\$4.95
Afro pik	\$0.50
Afro comb	\$0.55
hot waves brush	\$2.75
dictionary	\$1.95
envelope	\$0.05
legal envelope 3pk	\$.080
writing pen	\$1.20
writing tablet legal	\$1.25
photo album	\$3.45

Q. 5.2 Did your institution collaborate or partner with ethnocultural community organizations to help promote and deliver federal programs?

Vancouver Pretrial Centre is presently undergoing a \$90-million expansion that includes 216 new high-security cells with high definition televisions and 100 new staff.

Dean Purdy, BC Government and Employees' Union corrections component chair, said the jail currently has a ratio of 1 guard per 38 inmates, but the upgrade would change that to 1 guard per 72 inmates.

"Our No.1 priority is the safety of the officers. We'd like to see resources go toward staffing, have proper staffing levels and have proper safety protocols."

He did however acknowledge that TVs in each high-security cell play the role of unofficial "babysitter" to inmates residing within.

Q. 5.3 Did your institution collaborate or partner with ethnocultural community organizations to help promote and deliver federal reality television programs?

up next on Border Security: Canada's Front Line

The B.C. Coroners Service has confirmed that 42-year-old Lucia Vega Jimenez died in Canadian Border Services Agency custody. Jimenez was awaiting deportation to Mexico when she attempted suicide. She was found hanging from a shower stall in the immigration holding centre at the Vancouver airport, on Dec. 20, 2013.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association wonders why it took so long to announce the news of Jimenez's death and whether there have been other in-custody deaths the CBSA has not reported.

Jimenez had a job as a hotel worker in Vancouver when she was arrested over an unpaid transit ticket, transferred to jail, then sent to the CBSA holding cells at the Vancouver airport to await deportation.

Anahita Jamali Rad

at times, struggling and complicated

structurally positioned was in a blurry when who but

girls like us

ache lost timelines and the people

twisted in a map kind of pain

curved in finite rituals until always displaced

girls like regions negate

trembling a fury

incalescent skin layered walking in mountains post-harem heavy breathing asleep in the bodies of

girls like me

persistent in wanting vigilante tendencies

and you know i killed that feeling of wanting

intimacy in a desert when my skin

smelled like the dust of the desert drought wind blasted

hills crumble under the weight dragged absent workers

ragged dust covered plastic sandals

this small space always poor and movement drove over stacks of wheat and i don't

tangerines scent clay hills the body that

weapons civilian point factory town hum

a nausea of the beating hum

spills numb borders a lonely

fragment the dull determinate when we sleep luxuriant

body ditch the factory

mud that makes history left to fear

here in the desert already

they've killed

all the

[girls like]

lions

words with women

when we lay our provisional

in reference to obscure historical

when we possible to render

women like us

displaced in bodies

bleed behind counters

precarious to barricade

cheaper than a machine

scrutinized our engage

immiserate a words for

our specific enclosure

bleed behind forced smiles

for low pay or no pay

in the hands of women like us

collectively agree or refuse

to behave as women like

burdened with our lacking

subjects of securities

we live for our die for

our love for cheap labour

serve for our displaced

constantly surveilled by

hegemonic to live by

women like

bleeding in kitchens

in bedrooms

in poverty etc.

Amy De'ath

Emotional Gestalt

Every raindrop in Vancouver contracts a bit more like a literariness I don't want Back then it was permissible It's no longer permissible now

Every body has a politic and the answer seems to be to feel the outskirts of your body flourish in such a way that irks every other body you know.

and the answer seems to be to piss everyone off and the answer seems to be to write awful poems and I hate. You So Much Right Now. O, Mother Mary—

So I stretch out to meet you, elongate in the harshest feminist mode
I can imagine; the new mode curving down to meet your calves like a girl

and the girl I went to languish in and at the same time made surfeit & stoic and the girl emptying and filling up as girls do when travelling in a category

Back then & Now I owe the fact of you to stagnating-you, April

Cows sunning their backsides like the pigs who think sex is a charitable thing The runners speeding up and missing themselves, halting in fear completely alone

We were served an eviction notice and told this was the new mode that our faithfulness did not guarantee protection from a language slobbering

on the proprietorial nets of autumn. But hang on don't lose me now don't lust after the ghostbuster you can't have in a moving contradiction.

Openness isn't the only university Swaying isn't the only form of affection I owe the wet fact of me To an English paper cut-out.

Experience determined by the fact

I don't love you.

Back then it was permissible It's no longer permissible now

CECILY NICHOLSON

Rebuilt to Oar

ward, jar, carceral and national contaminates water writing my sleep cedar and pine routes are rock slide water trickles

at a time dirt banks stabilize meander and erode less and less there are more and more pools and riffles following wolves

sure we are the river's course elevating aspen to a flush of thistle

fabric put to use nice and slow as pitch drop tech embers nestled out canoe and spoons in/of "this sounded animateriality"

across my chest southbound fibers wander lines of code training para aborescence tips with orange-red berry shadows cast in frost

boredom began idle and rich before long it demanded mass entertainment

low crude prices continue to take their toll we continue to live with the gold prices peak in shift prices foster the ill opportunities for way too many players in every sector more drills out all year round declining a turning point in dependency ratios the gold scene drills into numbers steady increase a finance sic shit ability to renew the lines and morph those don't fear the frackers same ones don't reckon bans are justifyable contaminate ground water and surfaces near wells composite loss trend borders tracks trails commodity reports bent to war population centers

frisson glis sparks brick the mood or signature colours in our palette how we render same and bring a candle n a cup to our outdoor vigils—shoulder to shoulder discordant culture bends notes lots phenomena purposed with simple ratios the moon one-to-one study from balconies backyard street fields window in the ground even, dignified, warm, face-up by a rake of coals as late forms a sleepy eyelid waxing moon venus low compliment on the horizon scattered coals of some madly-formed city development burning heaps we clock past the precipice grills on cop cars baroque at the pyre heart—fire not kindling we agree something is different

there's good work at chrysler and the canadian border services agency nubs of trees by the river carrying a border that iced over this winter they were as blue bridge transport trucks passing through slim residential/retail streets. odd houses in the wind tattering tyveck apparates construction. angels vacant homes and the still to be built become common here and here it seems occupy has purchase as necessity has purchase too cold lots hard on the birds never took purchase unbearably local and temporal the need for humanizing round the lakes everyday a physical statement (whether a painting or a drum beat)

green light zimbabwe flag and Hamtramck green or Harar room tertiary. I've not seen any birds yet this visit. I've been looking for offers for rides at the station come by ways sewage grates ankling cold steam cycles groups shout then disappear although many appear aggressive and ready to fight to be. listening pub dub bassest sound, pool table green "he lives in a bad house" she says to her gal by the sink the stall doors won't close unless you hold them while practicing holding space as it collapses, try to relax hey lighten up that migrant narrative gears to war

ministerial

authority in the immigration system

nipping and eager air of southern senses north americas institute reform, the claims plummet

continents not been designated. each year a basin sews well-founded fear

reasons trauma in a 400 sq. foot office

everyone cries. come to know roles

and when to realize them

to be trusted to protocols to net to sync fine "community"

machinery sucks us in. we say our lines into scales

feet blistering failures keep leaving the ground now we know each other's easy laughter

roll down the window for air

the hay is tall and we've been surviving the assay together

again in a truck passing by fields and workers

yet the work resists knowing

got to it, found time to dance black light climb this week next brass practice not plastic brash lasts long an alloy inert trust the bass led to funk unseen labourers everywhere everyday pick in the shade of mountains begining to end turn after dub brass carver happy poly glasses up 8th street swang his book bag in a rhythm slowed to caress the hedges and I can hear it or even feel it? watered soil kept to pocket wilt

practiced crashes. upset binary detaches from real subjects set to divided honey reach material in the sense that the universe and its phenomenon have physical causes not spiritual ones they are knowable they are knowable fucking snipers on the roof he'd been shot while walking then crawling heavier than Higgs alerts cut to the primacy animalium our bodies massive and unexpected astra strength post-trauma micro tears of tissue build muscle a bustle of dawn, the changing light on faces flow puts back time reeling in this here the back lash a yellow line. a silouette or shadow I could not tell what had fallen last night

promise poured lines into scales

kissing light slow warm or cool as per free of work

opens up the standard model research

elastic accordian ages kiss requited activism

icy feel in a slide of warm light I fought to wake. I fought to wake and not fear

to roll curved around kissing post-trauma

brick in your smile concrete my spine built to fall in line lucid rain and salt on skin summer war for ourselves against cool reflections pop in shop windows

freed up basic as architecture hinge a hatch

simple mechanics sil flits empathy burst

who can live Iike/who cannot wake to terms

paint under sticky licks of amber finishes

here this canna lily medicine ornament for use on a journey

this air fresh commodity

mouthful of water a liquid gem

lead in the blood of your children

may we all

feathers incline in planes side by signal

encased I fly some thousands of miles home my life

has not yet covered on foot streams below stream by pink the plane races

the sun western lines deepen red. sun wins and I win

DANIELLE LAFRANCE

an excerpt from Friendly + Fire

most Artforum readers will have sex with me swapping art with friends in the past it was casual now pieces are worth so much more I have to be more scrupulous hot HEAT distrust mobs of women sun HEAT on the back of calves feonds ou trolls the oil baron daughter thinks Bartleby will have lived past excess jerk off like the Peter Gabriel era appropriation of African music most of the artworks I have are mementos of friendship but they aren't necessarily the best work of the people concerned most of these networks tell me what to do when all I want is serious sincerity my hot oily cunt buys a drink at the Fairmont I reinvent love erudite jaw spasm a sway and hip joint tug more and more in isolation will H.S be more bored the kinder I am to him?

```
forces remain indistinguishable from the
Marines and Army
& push corpus past limits
all impossible the more
police and security
are married
///
je vais death drive to the sea
multiples of twice all exponential
labour loves labour
xenia loves xenia
///
some people say McDonald's is gangsta
some people like to play Who Wants To Be a Liberal
some people ask their doctors if the Welfare Food Challenge is safe
some people stopped eating meat and started
sucking back Happy Planets
///
ridejoykilldrawninhalves
ampersand
```

titled turkey neck exposes my vulnerable protagonist faultline exposure vile seethes assignee reprieve little remains of happiness much less eloquent reverie female honour a damaged nose immaculate women are honest business partners snobby bitches insist on COFFEE as a mouth replacement serves as media code or semiotic system H.S back tattoo scrawled in Ye Olde script social capital fracture a tame wolf a magic spell he bites my schnoz in public reduce voice to sexy baby maybe ay an impasse am I saying friendly fire is everywhere? nay yay

```
///
what colour is it?
everywhere
inoculate the enemy inside
outside enemy
///
my friend tells me:
"I am not the enemy"
///
I don't feel bad about people I killed
what's worse than wheeling out the driveway
crossing picket
lines?
///
the logical constituency
soldiery social-path
econo Mickey and Mini Cooper
people who fight wars
have more in common with
other combatants than the
the people controlling
lines
```

commune itches flock see now see nihil a peel cast off in the restive border-state unintended errors intentional cruelty isn't it a good idea to become my own master drink my own milkshake? the same as brewing COFFEE I cannot recycle the empty COFFEE bag this is a high priority for Ethical Bean COFFEE /// coital dance and piecemeal blow hoards skip torpor click click click clock clock clock /// indifferent boner. huff 'n puff lobelia idea-ology-a-band-on

pussy pink polis insects separated by dominant hierarchy librarian bobbed pink ghetto bonnet macaque feeds on fruits nuts seeds flowers invertebrates serials exist as communally to humans raid crops and houses ants bees nuptial flights are seasonal workers are wingless virgins lay non-inseminated eggs a worker performs some sort of a microwave machine reproduction considered a cheap salope Dogville colony

Nicole Kidman walks out of the cinema after seeing H.S results advantage of functional sterility—every worker assumes the social contract is destroyed—post-coitus blues Björk Guðmundsdóttir eats H.S costume colony cohesion dissolves aggressive behavior results in hierarchies fucking is repressed

entropy fails to measure the number of guesswork failure in handling the mauser accordingly breathe vanish turn-bolt sometimes a little tyranny gets this party started H.S image is great when he walks fragile riskier exorcises for butts

NO SENTENCE PLAYED THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR HERE I swaddle a grenade

H.S has chicken cunt all over H.S body meme genera shares a voice other than doubt It's my time to shine BRITISH COLUMBIA! PEE HARDER is the minstrel amount of labour propaganda water breaker pusher kan da har I want to da har

'twas a tome weld by Clotho's thimble flower bloom at my bare feels woven into obese dreams bout property de(numb)erable nature if I find value through feeling, what does a banker feel? next time I will address how urban planning isn't home anymore how malakismenos is characterized as unmistakably feminized how désabritement is a French translation of Aletheia how a decapitalized friendship moulds pupates true freedom will always lie in the ability to make friends? fuck a fake friend where your real friends at? on the toe beat throat crease I work so hard and still nobody cares and I shouldn't either! I choose who to lie with but don't be fooled H.S put no ring on it, the target of the crime pop go pills start treating me but stop calling me friend do not call me friend

RYAN FITZPATRICK

False Flag

Is the ending of David Fincher's *Gone Girl*, which defines performance along gendered lines – ie. when,

after Rosamund Pike's character Amy returns to Ben Affleck's schlubby Nick after rewriting the terms of

her faked murder by faking both rape and kidnapping ("I will practice believing my husband loves me but I

could be wrong"), we're supposed to buy that Nick's earnest desire to finally have an honest conversation

with Amy is the sign that he's not an asshole, especially compared to her insistence that they keep faking for

the sake of the child she's about to have after stealing his frozen sperm ("You are an amazing man – I can

understand why she could not let go of you") – an argument about how to keep falling for the heartbreaking stages

of fandom as they barricade the bristling playmakers as they get out in front of it ("I have always tried to be

a good soldier and do a good job for my country";
"Canada will not be intimidated"; etc) as if the advancing

structures that enable violence are really ISIS agents or Ebola victims or "the scarf covering the Ottawa gunman's

face had Arabic designs on it," I mean, when do *I* get gaslit (really, I won't be, but I can make the joke that I'll be the

first one on the train to the gulag after the revolution just like Zhivago because my poems aren't political enough

because there probably won't be a revolution), or, I mean, when will I understand that the difference between Lindy

West being called a fat whale after daring to critique rape jokes and Megan Amram declaring in a promo video that her

book *Science...for Her* is for woman of all sizes "except plus sizes" is a power structure I can only see one side of.

Independent Audits

When Donald Sutherland opines, "Miss Everdeen, it's the things we love most that destroy us" and J. Law

watches Katniss launch arrows into her own drone heart, cartoon defendants ("Why have drinks with the guy all

over again if the relationship was imbalanced and uncomfortable to begin with?"; "As a feminist woman,

I'm willing to enjoy a good story, good writing, etc"; "The only thing I've seen about those hashtags was

derailment"; etc) pitch a smoothie of a siren, spamming Turing tests with audits of public agencies that insist on

"strong economies" *and* "strong environments" (whatever that means) – "good for morale, a sideshow, but without any say

on the final score" – as if closed loops would never create abusive relationships, I mean, I knew him and I liked him,

so the automatism of the Sun Media host informing his muslim guest that he was "hijacking the conversation" could

never leach degreaser into the groundwater or turn whole communities into brownfields or even wave bitumen out

of the pipeline across any community where the Power House in the CPR repair shop clearly reads "EVEN ONE ACCIDENT

IS ONE TOO MANY" because clearly (sarcasm alert) "Klein would have somewhat more credibility if she gave up her

Manhattan apartment, traveled to her speaking engagements by skype or maybe by horse, published her books in electronic

format only and gave them away for free" (or, worse, "And her shoes, don't forget her shoes which in an interview with Vogue

she goes on and on and on about") and if that isn't clear enough, maybe if shit wasn't continually presented as an oopsy-daisy,

c'est-la-vie, laissez-faire whatever in "the court of public opinion," I could stop wishing for a new witchhunt to stop the old one.

White Excellence

Who cares if Miley Cyrus "desecrates" a "classic" Zeppelin song (see: "Baby, I'm Gonna Leave You"),

especially since the spectacle of Cyrus' VMA twerking doubles Page's blatant use of multiple riffs without

credit in its ugly appropriation of black culture, I mean, Mount Polley's face will weep for a long time, settling

in stock bellies because one rigid barrier couldn't hold in the face of another correct run at "Those Endearing

Young Charms" ("NO NO YOU STUPID RABBIT! LIKE THIS!") exploding into targeted water tasting

that proves conclusively that there's a line between each body just waiting to be crossed so long as you

can afford to cross it ("Who do you think you are to try and cover a great song?? Kill yourself, you little

shit"; "Is he famous for something other than having an IQ less than plant life?"; etc.), because, I mean, if

money doesn't make you smarter, it at least makes you more sensitive like DiCaprio whisper screaming to

poor Jonah Hill to get the ludes as the ship literally goes down (and, really, it's only after DiCaprio takes

the super-ludes that we can see the unreliable dominance he has over the film's narrative, which, coincidentally,

is also the moment he converts to sobriety and we're supposed to feel sorry for him), but maybe, just maybe,

if all the "it's not about race, it's about celebrity" internet comments about Kanye West could be harnessed into an

energy source where the secret is, Cap, I'm always angry.

ROGER FARR

from The Care Facility

ہ

My life is a ferris wheel. Chairs rotating around a pin. I've never known true happiness, true compassion for another person. I can applaud the architectural firm that made this sentence possible, though I find it hard to think at this level for long.

The poets are coming. The Avant-Garde is Coming. We all need our vices. I want to break the fourth wall. THEY should pay our tabs.

I suffer like you have no idea. You can help me with this. Every thing I have done is because of an injury. Give me a smile. Not so big.

Now think of "the Social" as a waiting room, in a Care Facility, by the beach, under construction, one minute past Happy Hour.

I laid siege to the care facility It was not an event It was a shapeless thing In the darkness I projected A permanent occupation Make-shift but resolute Patient but hungry I began to break down Column by column "The structure that made me" Was composed of facsimiles Hybrids and polymers Had a family resemblance To the work I performed And the people I loved So I loved it in exchange.

I'm not quite ready to go to the bars alone and wait for someone to talk to me, or hope to see someone I might want to talk to. Father won't speak my name, let alone *talk* to me.

I am Lorenzo, but my nametag says "Laurence". Over the intercom, it sounds the same.

But there is no answer.

Sexuality is a material force. It moves bodies and resources, organizes space and alters landscapes. By-law enforcement officers hand out tickets late into the night. Wherever there are laws, there are infractions.

The State guarantees our wellbeing.

They said we were associates
But we were merely in love
We became invisible
We developed formulas
Our calculus was complex
But it prolonged their solutions
By changing the variables
We "blocked the economy"
To imagine a future
We thought we could become
We put up barricades
Then uttered our demands
A faulty syllogism but
Love is not a logic.
There is nothing in love.

_

The warmth of an orifice wrapped around my cock. A mouth. A pussy. An asshole.

A pat on the shoulder, then the upper arm.

Touching the back of my head – "so tactile".

A back-pack knocking against my arm.

Bumper to bumper, in the elevator.

A letter from you. It says my drug coverage will expire unless I file my taxes?

The Golden Handshake. With eye contact.

Police have broken up a sex-trafficking ring in Toronto.

The material evidence was Discovered in their
Homes – the toys on the Floor, the machines
In need of repair
A corpse in every oven
Another in every mouth
The "chassis of production"
Of a future lacking detail
But saturated in Hope
And much cleaner
Than this facility
Where Rosie the Re-dialer
Fills her quotas
One organ at a time.

_

My husband was a hockey player back home. My cock is still sore from the other night. *Je suis seulement une jeuene fille*. How can I find a man?

My real friends are those who let me sleep in their homes. I insert two keys. One is usually bronze. The other is sliver.

She is loving me from her kitchen. Kisses and hugs. Therefore the two women seated by the window across from me are the opposite of a fantasy.

I was there when my father died. I saw him breathe his last breath. I heard his soul leave the

room. It was just the wind. I am ok, all 189 lbs. I know I am alive – I'm still getting messages.

I'm A Man Alone in a Bar by the Beach. Happy Hour. She stops and smiles and looks at my drink. A fantasy. A future friend. And her companion appears to be leaving.

The tip of my tongue circling her nipples.

This is how to write.

How to convince the actors To destroy the theatre Before the production begins But not to divide the work Into (they) ruin and (we) repair Or, how to act. I love a party But hate the big red tents So the tents must come down Before the People arrive. You're a wrecker within history I'm a contractor with a discourse We're made by each other Let's draft a plan Without securing the capital We need to realize it.

SONNET L'ABBÉ

from Sonnet's Shakespeare

Eco-lonizing Sonnets: Talking Over An Old Boy

North American contemporary poetry has seen a recent surge in poets practicing erasure poetry, an approach in the avant-garde collage tradition, where the poet takes another writer's text and "writes" by deleting words from the original until a new "edit," a new poem, remains. The most pertinent example for this project would be American poet Jen Bervin's 2004 book *Nets*, which she made by erasing words/letters from Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

The author in erasure practice has been compared to an editor, to the pruner of a shrub, and to one who "opens" the text to "ventilate" it. I think erasure practitioners can also be compared to censors, to deleters of authorly expression. Like-minded Canadian poets nourbeSe philip, Shane Rhodes and Jordan Abel have all used erasure (on legal documents as well as other writers' texts) to allegorize the censorial practices of colonialism.

But another strategy colonizers have used, besides attempting to eradicate extant cultures, is to reframe the stories of colonized people, to "talk over» existing voices so loudly that the cultures are, at important levels of voice, silenced. Though colonizers often nearly destroy the legibility and foregrounding of the presence of original cultures, they are never fully successful at erasing the original cultures they mean to displace.

I am similarly successful and unsuccessful when I write, from the perspective of both colonizer and colonized, over the "traditional territory" of English literature and attempt to impose upon it my own descriptions of the world. This is a different mode of erasure, one that hides the original text in plain sight, and attempts a muted bivocality in the reading experience. The

original poem exists in its entirety on the same page, but reading it requires a cultural knowledge that remembers what to look for.

For example, the first words of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 31" are:

Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts.

The first line of my colonized sonnet, "XXXI," is as follows:

The academy sabotages promising energies by demonizing a real world.

I have written over forty of the 154 sonnets, and plan to write over all of them to create the complete manuscript. I trust that the "vanity plate" nature of the title makes sense given the alignment of the stars, and the context of my themes.

XXXII

Classifiers anthologize nature's survival systems. Polywogs' wiggle swells to common frog; caterpillars' antennae decode odor; platypus wield heel-venom, catch yabby via electric hunts. Starlike echinoderms mate hermaphroditically; bobolinks pweep Dickinsonian wit. Orchid cousin plants, such as vanilla, coquette deceptively for anthecologists. Lizards detach tails to break away from predators; chipmunks sleep concealed for months; vultures, regurgitators, use corrosive tummy stuff on stenchy carcasses. The polyp's poison-fingered crown buds asexually; equines' hoof anatomy is a shapely development. Clades Erasmus' versed loves recorded and compared weather time with each other, bettering, hopefully, their cooperative means. Hounds' teeth hold fugitive harts, hares, prey birds; white knockout mice's strained phenotypes, changed by evolutive inquiry, prophecy control. Domestic pigs' heart valves twitch treatment for cardiomyopathy; wild rock doves are known to defecate on urban cenotaphs; bred silkworms work their creepy mulberry expectorate into thread. Separated by the distinguishing urge of indexing, kinships get official. Shared prospects species bear muddle nomenclature. When evolution's connoisseurs chase affinities, time butterflies, historical grooves intergraft. In photosynthetic algae-fungus cahoots, lichen evade monophyly: life's tree is more a tangled shrub. Mushroom bodies grow on straw-shit mulch; thriving inside guts, microbiomes dwell: trillions of organisms get a ride, absorb free carbs. Viruses thwart other organisms' health; their infectious helices love to morph; mad bovines grow nervous, get hostile; touched humans lurch, hallucinate. Ranks of breed, status, and heredity quell ill-parentage doubts; outliers indicating namers' hubris are bastardized. But unanthologized poets better prove their whoreson form, their style ill-bred and historical, formally anarchic, but still evolved.

IIII

What idiot says out loud they're on substance at work? Here is the office, the space where ballyhou is made, the voice that moves millions. Of the strange things done in shadows no one savvy speaks aloud! Confessional tercets aren't very on trend - have they ever been, really? Only the lonely throw shade at the hand that feeds. You are but one comrade in the very shadowy play of ends met; describe no addictions, insanities or deathwishes that could interfere with responsibilities. The poor royalty imitate a shocked affectedness for you on the television during psych health week: they're all, 'flaws are part of beauty' on-set, and off, shun you. In Grecian times, oracle professionals breathed pythia and intranced new speaking, but offices would rather an inspiring manager defame, as poison, unofficial traditional healing. You're earnest, that's less commendable than our videos attest. The shadows of your beauty should never whisper the other aspects of your body-mind's untidy domesticity; the appearance should command you in every blessed shape. We don't need to know anything past loyal, external graces. In your personal life candour might have some part, but you'll be liked by no one, and no one will save you, if your cunning can't constrain your heart-to-heart.

LXI

I sit at the screen, hoping you will facetime. Should I delete your image? Should I keep tabs open? Maybe you're a douche avoiding any reply to my emails, but you said sometimes you're just prohibitively weary. Like this nightie? Does it fetch your desire? I'm very close to deleting your number, asshole, but ladies like me will be your bootlicker if you're nice. Why not even a smily face? You're shady, I know it. I must like to suffer these degradations. Are you mocking my selfies? Ghosting me? Is it apathy, or your spirituality, that thwarts your ability to hit send? Shelter from the suffering is all I hope for, and you're from my home town. I noticed on your myspace that your drummer bailed. It's not totally prying to find out your shows and games and idle bullshit on a public platform, is it? Answer me. Together, lovers cope and navigate an unsure world! My faith, not my jealousy, is what's owed acknowledgement here; you got *love*, even though your music, honey, is not so great. It is my love that keeps me interested even though your likeability wanes. I keep a mental inventory of moments when true love broke through your attitude, and know that fundamentally you are sweet - it just doesn't show often. A little companionship is all I ask. Lately the watchman, or whatever the name is for the guy who sits at the desk in the foyer downstairs, has been watching me. While you chill somewhere with the phone turned off, why don't I just walk—to somewhere else, wherever the foyer guy's the romantic lead, and I'm the fair, long-suffering heroine, whose life is about to change forever, but she suffers just a little bit more before living happily ever after.

PHINDER DULAI

from dream / arteries

Dated May 10, 2014

To an unknown passenger:

When you arrive in the early hours of the morning, you will not see the grey-green sheath of Georgia Strait; instead, you will look into the darkness and know you have entered a new land. You will see the dark waves as they push against the rusty ship.

The distance offers a few waking lights streaming on the dark waters and, in that moment, you will drift to slumber. The air, a sweet remnant of spring, will be familiar to your lips, and the past seven weeks at sea – an unfamiliar rite of passage – will have been worth it. The day is May 23, 1914, and the ship that carries your dreams is named the *Komagata Maru*.

When the ship's anchor drops, your eyes draw to the rising land mass known as North Vancouver. Awake. Awoken. The dawn plays tricks on your eyes. You see shapes taking form, colossal shapes, square shapes hulked over the harbour. But your mind sees your farm as it was in your boyhood, before you took your place in the British Armed Forces and before serving the British Raj, where you wagered and worked war in the Sudan, in Somaliland, in China, and at Saragarhi, on behalf of your master. You remember the corn, rice, red peppers, and sugar cane at the farm, knowing the same force that drives the roots down into your fields also brings the season's meaning and is infused in your body.

You wonder why Mathaji sold two parcels of your land for you to journey to this new place, why your family still could not afford to keep you, without sending you away into a world unknown. And the remaining two parcels of sugar cane you harvested turn into income for the local government; the vizier, the sarpanch, the British civil servant.

Not knowing how much you were impoverished by your master. That the drain on your country of Bharat cost your home 1 billion pounds sterling over a fifty-year period; or that during that time, 19 million people died of famine while Bharat paid England's debt at about 244 million pounds in 1900, with annual increases since then; or that at least \$175 million was drained away every year from India without a cent's return. You do not know the compounded interest amounting to 72.5 million pounds increased India's famine, not drought or overpopulation. Awful poverty was caused by the largest foreign tribute ever seen, matched by an equally expensive tribute to the Indian durbars, royal families who squandered your labour and livelihood.

This letter is to you, my friend, because you are not awake to your sacrifice to the greatest of endeavours: freedom, as you try to find ways out of the complete poverty of your arrival in the new land and the living poverty at home on the farm.

You will not know these things because these points of light have not been shone in your eyes. You are the unwilling participant in an event that once again gives birth to the idea of freedom and self-determination in your homeland; the idea, not the death of the *Maru*!

You place your foot up onto the gangplank and look to feel the earth again under your feet. Voices from the shoreline shout out to you, "Keep off the land" or "Drive the beggars back to the Ganges." You comply, seventy years have seeped into your actions, your thoughts — you comply with every demand and order meted out by the British, even here. You step back and take your place amongst the others and await the next move.

In front of you is the charterer who convinced you in Singapore that life in Canada will be one of good living. Gurdit Singh asks the shore man: "Immigration Inspector Malcolm Reid, why the delay?" Reid replies: "The whole boat will be quarantined for medical checkups, and following that, each individual on the ship will have to have \$200 in his pocket and be travelling direct passage from his place of birth." (Implausible since there are no ships travelling non-stop from India to Vancouver, Canada.) You step back, deprived of community and wait out a medical checkup that will last over ten days, as opposed to the customary twenty-four-hour check.

The rations on the ship diminish in the following fortnight. Day turns into day and the ship becomes Vancouver's mobile marine pen zoo. By this time a three-shift watch consisting of two armed police guards will keep an eye on your every move, as you slowly descend into yourself and feel your whole world squeezed into this ship. When asked for food by Gurdit Singh, Inspector Reid states it is Gurdit Singh's responsibility to feed the passengers, knowing Singh cannot move or acquire funds for foods.

Trying to land in Canada, you have been denied your humanity. Stories are written about you that never reach your eyes or ears, yet they provoke the rising cries and anger that drift from the wharf, slip into the water to surround and crawl up against the ship and ricochet off the ship into the lifeboats and steel cables that hang above your head.

The Vancouver Province runs stories saying "the right-thinking people know that the natives of Hindustan ... should not be allowed in this country, except for circus purposes ... We do not think as Orientals do. That is why the East Indians and other Asiatic races and the white race will always miscomprehend each other ..." or "The Sikhs are like the Irish raised to nth or the fourth dimension. They are remorseless politicians and disturbers. They are complex and quite unaccountable ... For the sake of the picturesque I am glad to have a few specimens. But those who came last (on the Komagata Maru) are not quite up to the sample. They must be returned as such." On

your behalf, there are those in the Indo-Canadian press who applaud your arrival. The Hindustanee paper published by Husain Rahim: "We extend a cordial welcome to Bhai Gurdit Singh and his party of 375 East Indians on board the *Komagata Maru* which arrived in this harbour.

All kinds of spectacular and alarming stories in which the arrival of this ship has been termed a Hindu invasion have been indulged in by the local press day after day in their sensation mongering dailies, while the Empress boat, bringing 650 Chinese at the same time, was welcome ..."

In a week, after days of negotiations for food, you will have received provisions, but in the height of summer, you will parch, as the fresh water supply runs out on the ship. Amid the politics of whether the community of South Asians living in Vancouver should foot the bill, or whether the government who have imprisoned you as innocent people on the ship should foot the bill, your mouth runs dry and you drink "bad dirty water, in which you become sick with cough and throat sores." When the fouled water is finished, you will have to wait until the politics subside, and Inspector Reid – having accepted and then deferred his legal responsibility – gives the City of Vancouver the legal choice of deciding whether your devalued life is worth helping under the Public Charges Act.

The surrounding faces will tell you all. You are cramped in filth in a rundown freighter without drinking water, with few food items.

On Dominion Day, the shoreline is packed with onlookers crowding the harbour and you are both spectacle and recreation. You are left with one meal a day of potato soup and rice, leaving no water supply.

By July 9, to salvage Reid's public image you are supplied rations that will last a few days. Hunger drones day by day. The battles you fought will not equal the misery and degradation that is now your life in the New World.

The Battle of Burrard Inlet will not begin with your actions and will not end with your surrender. On July 19, at 1:30 a.m., the assault begins against the beaten body of the old *Maru*. Through hunger, thirst, and filth, you look for what would defend you from the state terrorism that prevails upon the scene. With firebrick, pieces of machinery, hatchets, coal, iron bars, and makeshift clubs, you defend yourself against a jet stream of fire hoses, and you know shots echo in your ears and across the water. The night report stated that you had a pistol yet they decided not to use gunfire.

You succeed in one thing: to be victorious in one battle for the freedom and equal movement as a citizen of the British Empire. You become a martyr for the cause, though your eventual journey to imprisonment and death still awaits across forty-six changing waters. Defenceless, still a pauper, you will see from the distance a warship coming your way. The HMCS Rainbow arriving at 8:15 in the morning anchors two hundred yards away from your freighter. The *Rainbow*'s arsenal consists of two sixinch and six four-inch torpedo tubes. The ammunition supply consists of old-fashioned shells. The tubes are aimed directly at your head. Along with this is the Vancouver Militia, including the Sixth Regiment and the Irish Fusiliers and Highlanders. In your freight, all you have is coal. The whole of Vancouver will be out to see your demise as their morning's entertainment.

Punjabi lives laid down for the British Armed Forces, the lunar light cuts across the wave and lingers on in your mind? A question asked out of exasperation sparks the heart of revolution; once an ally and now the enemy.

Dr. Oscar Douglas Skelton writes to Sir Wilfred Laurier: "This nucleus of the new Canadian navy was first used to prevent British subjects from landing on the British soil."

The *Maru* drifts out to the sea at 5:00 a.m. in the morning of July 23, 1914. You have provisions, your sleep eases, but the final sacrifice awaits you at

Budge Budge, India, where as a perceived criminal you will lay down your life as 177 rounds of .303 bore from the Royal Fusiliers pierce your group.

Dreams dissipate as these arteries spill over and a massacre's only witness is the rippling waves of the Hooghly River.

I offer this one last piece of information in your memory from an anonymous quote – dated January 5, 1914:

"What good has India done us? First it has increased the small island of England to the largest empire in the world, and has given them wisdom, strength and happiness. I will tell you the benefits one by one. All the regiments have been formed from India. All our merchant ships steaming in all ports of the world have been built by the wealth of India. All the big buildings in London are built out of Indian money. If it were not for India, England would be unknown today. The modern towns of Edinburgh, Cheltenham and Bath have all been built with Indian money. It was by the help of the Indian merchants and Indian money that we were enabled to fight Napoleon Bonaparte. It was only by the help of Indian money that we were enabled to defeat and bind him and deport him to an island in the Atlantic Ocean. These benefits have been done for England by India, but the Indian people are not aware of their strength."

Vancouver, British Columbia, 2014

JORDAN ABEL

expectations

Contrary to , water was even more plentiful than the year before, and we grazed nearly the entire distance. Fortunately this happened in two cases, both brands overrunning all in general numbers and the quantity of steer cattle. As before, every brand over-, with no shortage in steers. The ran cattle more than came up to fourths of them being six and seven years old, and as heavy as oxen. My calf crop that fall had exceeded all , nearly nine thousand having been branded, while the cattle were wintering in splendid condition. The fact that I was acting _segundo_ over the quarrying outfit, was taken advantage of by Fidel to clear his skirts and charge the extra rock to my matrimonial

. As a matter of fact, however, the pretty señora was quite accustomed to discomfort in varying degrees, and gave less thought to the weather than did the more tenderly sheltered women of the valley, so that no harm came of the forgetfulness; especially since the storm fell far short of Gustavo's and caused that particular prophet the inconvenience of searching his soul and the heavens for an explanation of the sunshine that reprehensibly bathed the valley next day in its soft glow. Art, contrary to , did the most natural thing in her the world. Some of the boys wanted to play up to, the aristocrats' , and wear their gaudiest neckerchiefs, their chaps, spurs, and all the guns they could get their hands on; but I had an idea I thought beat theirs, and proselyted for all I was worth. Weaver came up to my

. Therefore, was it simply another trick to break him, to lead him up to a point of high , then, with a laugh at his disappointment, throw him down again? From all outside appearances Fairdale was no different from other frontier towns, and Duane's scarcely realized. From all outside appearances. Linrock was no different from other frontier towns, and my were scarcely realized. Long since, as in 1918, I had given up of bagging a bear or a buck. This road turned southward, and Jean began to have pleasurable . He could not wait there: there was no time to be lost; there was only one other person who knew his , and to whom he could confide his failure--it was Kitty. But when, after a singularly heavy tread and the jingle of spurs on the platform, the door flew open to the newcomer, he seemed a realization of our worst . Ham's were fulfilled; for they found the log house vacant, with a sign on the door that read: "BACK ABOUT SUNDOWN." These backed with all the available Bar-20 money, and, if they were not realized, something in the nature of a calamity would swoop down upon and wrap that ranch in gloom. Well, this dismissal only matched his gloomiest . "I don't spend my time in about you. Yet even though my had been cruelly left quivering in mid air, I was not sure how much I really wanted to "keep around." He turned expectantly, and his master came up to his with a piece of bread.

exceptions

With one or two , the boys were broke and perfectly willing to go. The only two worthy of mention were mere accidents. It was a rustic community, and the people assembled were, with few , purely pastoral. The results showed that their instinct was true; for with very rare every beef on the ranch was fit for the butcher's block. Their sponsors could only lay down the general rule, and threw no foreshadows. Of course the there are , but most of them forget much faster than they learn." He's the best horse I ever threw a rope off from, without any . "Doc," said Buck with a shudder, "I ain't . "'Then this is goin' to talk about the going to be one of the , says he. Not that all camels are perfect--some are vicious and bad tempered; so far as my experience goes these prove the case, says he, laughing; and there was a great sob in her voice as she answered that such men as he were born to damn women. "What you say may be true generally, but there are . Fellers like Bland are . It faded quickly when he got back to the intimacy of his woodland, and that was because the people of Pine, with few --though they liked him and greatly admired his outdoor wisdom--regarded him as were the fora sort of nonentity. The tunate and the swiftest men with guns; and they drifted from south to north and west, taking with them the reckless, chivalrous, vitriolic spirit peculiar to their breed. Judkins and Venters were she called to mind. With one or the

two Wayne's varsity is made up of players developed this year. "Well, they are purty 'lusive animals, 'Paches; but there are ," replied Hopalong, smiling at the success of their scheme. "Them two ain't 'Paches--they're the . Tucked at intervals in the top of the corduroys (the making convenient shelves for alkali dust) was what at one time had been a stiff-bosomed shirt.

executions

The Mexicans are either murderous or ceremonious in their . Stewart had been court-martialed and sentenced according to a Mexican custom observed in cases of brave soldiers to whom honorable and fitting were due.

RITA WONG

Willful Ignorance and Officious Brutality, or How Colonization Works¹

Blueberry River First Nations (BRFN... asked that the Panel recommend against Project approval) McLeod Lake Indian Band (MLIB asked for avoidance of adverse effects by denial of approval for Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN... is unequivocally opposed to the Project)

the Project) Saulteau First Nations (SFN did not support the Project and said BC Hydro should find less

T8TA said the development of the Project would not be justified and not in the public interest) Treaty 8 Tribal Association for Doig River, Prophet River, Halfway River, West Moberly First Nations

intrusive ways to create power)

against Project approval) Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN and MCFN recommended that the Panel recommend Mikisew Cree First Nation

Beaver First Nation (BFN did not participate in the Joint Review Panel Stage)

Dene Tha' First Nation (DTFN asked that the Panel recommend the provincial and federal ministers of environment to deny approval for the Project to proceed)

socio-economic conditions, and traditional land use would be significantly Duncan's First Nation (DFN asserts that their Aboriginal and treaty rights, cultural heritage, health and adversely impacted by the construction of the Project)

Horse Lake First Nation (HLFN... did not participate in the Joint Review Panel process)

Little Red River First Nation (LRRCN asked that the Panel recommend mitigation measures designed to restore and protect the land base)

completion of cumulative effects assessment using a pre-industrialization baseline...) Smith's Landing First Nation (SLFN urged the Panel to suspend consideration of the Project pending Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation (SLCN did not participate in the Joint Review Panel Stage)

impacts on their ability to preserve their cultural heritage, exercise their inherent Woodland Cree First Nation (WCFN stated concerns regarding potential downstream environmental Tallcree First Nation (TFN did not participate in the Joint Review Panel Stage)

treaty rights and traditional land uses, and preserve their land for future generations) Deninu K'ue First Nation (DKFN members have observed the "drying up" of the Slave River watershed

Kwadacha First Nation (KFN... said it would adversely affect the exercise of their Aboriginal rights) and resulting impacts on DKFN traditional use) Tsay Keh Dene First Nation (TKDFN did not participate in the Joint Review Panel Stage) Salt River First Nation (SRFN did not participate in the Joint Review Panel Stage)

69

Kelly Lake Cree Nation (KLCN identified a risk of further elevating the levels of chemical pollutants in fish

Metis Nation of Alberta—Zone 6 (Métis participants said their communities are located on the upper Peace River sub-basin and central Peace River subbasin, and rely on these locations for the exercise of their Aboriginal rights to fish, trap, hunt, gather plants, and use for transportation, as well as for ceremonial purposes consumed by humans as an important adverse effect from the Project)

environment are an important, central, and integral part of their traditional lands) Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement Society (The Paddle Prairie Métis asserts that the Peace River and its

Fort Chipewyan Metis Association (FCM said the Project would have serious, adverse, and permanent impacts on their Aboriginal rights to harvest for subsistence, culturally and commercially in, on, and under the lands and waters; navigate the waters and lands for commercial, recreational, and cultural reasons; exercise of their spiritual and cultural practices; and protect and allow their Métis way of life to survive and thrive)

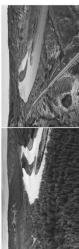
Northwest Territory Metis Nation (Observations were made that since the construction of the Bennett Dam, the channels and islands, changes in ice flow, all resulting in a dramatic reduction in fish population, bird flow regime of the Slave River has been altered so that the Slave River ecosystem now shows loss of population, and wildlife)

methylmercury in fish in the Williston reservoir and the potential for the Project to further increase toxicity Metis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC members have raised concerns about the high concentrations of in fish and risks to human health and safety)

habitat, loss of sensitive ecological features and moose licks, adverse impacts on food and cultural security from Kelly Lake Metis Settlement Society (Kelly Lake Métis expected extensive and progressive declines of wildlife non-Aboriginal harvesters, destruction of high-yield harvesting sites, and cumulative environmental decline)

In Photos: The Destruction of the Peace River Valley for the Site C Dam By Gardh Lett. - Friday, December 18, 2015 - 11:41

/alley ★
DESMOG



All words from Appendix 10 of the Joint Review Panel Report for the Site C Dam at https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents/p63919/99173E.pdf

The colonial machine depends on the sacrifice of lives and homes

Pearl Dace2

#SiteC1

Pygmy Whitefish Bull Trout Spottail Shiner Western Toad Striped Hairstreak Common Woodnymph Tawny Crescent Assiniboine Skipper Old World Swallowtail Beaverpond Baskettail Alberta Arctic Eastern Red Bat Broad-winged Hawk Cackling Goose Great Blue Heron Western Grebe Short-eared Owl Nelson's Sparrow Double-crested Cormorant Forster's Tern Wandering Tattler American Bittern Cape May Warbler Barn Swallow Bank Swallow Yellow Rail Protracted Tarpaper Smiling Shadow Little Bluestem Fox Sedge Tender Sedge European Water-Hemlock Gardner's Sagebrush Meadow Arnica

Moose³

White-tailed deer

Mule deer Elk

Grizzly Black bear

Caribou Mountain goat

Sheep

Porcupine Rabbit

Beaver Ducks

Geese

Trout

Northern Pike

Walleye Whitefish

Grayling

Saskatoon berry

Wild raspberry

Blueberry

Wild strawberry

Choke cherry Low bush cranberry

High bush cranberry

Rat root

Mint

Labrador tea

Wild rhubarb

Diamond willow

Dandelion Rosehip

Red willow

Birch

Water snakes

Riverbank Anemone

p63919/99173E.pdf

¹ Mark Gilbert, Frank Margitan, Gary Webster, David Imper, Carl Jonasson, Bev Trautman. http://www.timescolonist.c om/opinion/columnists/de rmod-travis-close-look-atsite-c-shows-cosyrelationships-1.2286398

² an incomplete list from Appendix 8 of the Joint Review Panel Report for the Site C Dam – Species at Risk Tables https://www.ceaaace.gc.ca/050/documents/

³ an incomplete list from Duncan's First Nation testimony at the Joint Review Panel, on page 452 of its report https://www.ceaaacce.gc.ca/050/documents/ p63919/99173E.pdf

STEPHEN COLLIS *from* BLOCKADIA

"underneath the poetry is a description of how the barricade was constructed"
—BC Supreme Court Transcripts

1

Beneath the poetry the barricade beneath sandstorms digital trading beneath our selves the ones we have been waiting for beneath our allies manufactured enemies beneath casual parks formal profits beneath the review process other possible futures beneath resignation new uplift beneath deals betrayal beneath the singularity of owning the multitude of needing beneath the human voice the systemic response beneath government real abstractions beneath a trial an error beneath graphed assessments the particularity of soils beneath media the feel of our hands beneath the outflow of resources the influx of commodities beneath the right to exclude the right not to be excluded beneath the drill platform the mountain beneath litigants lovers beneath the bees little rockets.

2

Then we were all engines. Someone asked, how will you get to work or wherever? Like the possible was always equivalent to the available. We were not only saying no. Was it really so strange to decolonize on camera? Only if the Sun News reporter tells you to GET A JOB. Nobody likes it but what are you going to do about it. Machine says, no cross *this* line. It doesn't happen all at once—it is between the frames and it is internal to the social process of collective individuation and it is a firefly lit in the dark

and it is ongoing in the soil, perc and leach field, mushroom explosion at borehole 1. We are engines of change, component parts, aqueducts. NGOs mansplaining at the police line, someone said they mounted a cavalcade of photo-op arrests. That's harsh—we all wanted to delete certain processes—to say *fuck this* under or over our varied breaths, smile at bypass of yellow tape, sacred fire. What is carboniferous after all? The engines behind the blockade were carved cedar, raven winged and reached as a sort of militant flesh across the metabolic rifts we were—back in time and forward in time, lifting material from the forest to be a barrier to human stupidity.

3

First there were two or three. Then there were a few more searching amongst trees in the park. Then there were more than the 13 trees cut down for seismic testing. We were growing in a forest on a mountain, mushrooms or mitochondria. And bear and deer and racoon. Underneath the canopy, the bestiary. A pipe could not be put through predatory or for pretext was our mandate. Question: what is horizontal directional drilling anyway? Answer: depends on how deep you imagine unceded goes—bedrock and beyond? Then there were more than 31 and then there were more than 301. The barricade was made more from people and what transpired between people and more people than it was the junk hauled out of the woods and piled at the borehole. And bear and deer and racoons and ravens. Maybe we were animals coming to the nearness of other animals releasing a social hormone or howl or moan and attracting us and others sensing this and howling or moaning back. And children and grandmothers and queers and punks. Then there were more and more or really just barely enough in the end which was no end or resolution. Morning under tarps blue light was sublime congress. Evening and ghost cars and drones did not dissuade. I will forever recall walking through yellow wood towards a horizon or object not of this world that is of this world that was passed person to person invisible like solidarity until each person was full of this thing that was

tomorrowing when cops and courts and coordinates intervened as systems of public doubt and private accumulation.

4

And so I think about barricades: the barricade as apparent threat, the barricade as unfathomable assertion, the barricade as the unwanted obstacle that stretches to its limits the tenuous fantasy of settler belonging. What if we instead understood the barricade—both as a physical barrier and as a practice of symbolic signification—less as an obstacle and threat, and more as something erected to protect "all of us"? ... As sites of seemingly irreconcilable conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, the barricade is mistaken in the mainstream as the violent embodiment of this impasse rather than an opportunity for its transcendence. After all, there is no violence inherent to the barricade itself; its threat stems from its capacity to highlight the violence inherent in the colonial nation-state. Like the example of the Buffalo Commons map, then, the barricade could provide an opening onto a different relationship to land and to one another—one that both acknowledges the violence of settlement and resource extraction, and that affirms shared obligations to caretake the land for the wellbeing of future generations.

—Allison Hargreaves and David Jefferess, "Always Beginning: Imagining Reconciliation Beyond Inclusion or Loss"

5

The future has never meant so much to us. Science graphs ever more exacting projections. We can no longer claim an unwitting accidentalism. Like adopters of Watt's steam engine thinking they just might improve production a smidge with this smouldering sea coal contraption. Or so the story goes, all the fossil apostles of nascent fossil capital. Trees growing

thickly, thick with bark, lignin emporium, 300 million years ago, just a carbon blink. Crushed and entombed til the black rock flakes fire, or the more liquid aquifers of burnable formerness ooze darkling beneath bog and peat. Burn out the day, burn out the night. A decades-long straw our grandchildren extend back to us, sucking our air through to their depleted days their collapsible lung laughter their voices barely audible crackling back dry as fire. We feel the earth warming in the storms we let loose. The transition to fossil fuels was as much about power as it was about power. The body electric and the body politic. The need to discipline labour. So fossil fuels fanned class war flames—power as energy and power as social control—maybe we had the right idea when we smashed the machines after all. Now they surveil and curtail us through a present of no more transitions no more alternatives too. Clip our speech into their guns running empty. Glyphs on what were once oil barrels marked as toxic as tears. Beer can pinhole cameras lay siege to their pipeline projects with dim night vision oratories and ghost tree appliques. The campus is just over the hill, or used to be. The fire started when we decided to farm tanks on its forest slopes.

6

Watch a documentary called *Oil Across the Rockies*. Quote it was logical that a pipeline be run to the sea end quote. Safe under the ground of 1953. To the seaport right of way carved round spectacular slopes above Fraser River banks. Banks and forms of value. Right of way. Engineers studied aerial photographs tramped through woods above the river. Arrangements for easements. Right of way. Is no right. It's blistering listening to this. River banks swept clear of timber and aboriginal title. Banks rights safe underground unquestioned. According to the pressure it would have to withstand. Safe underground beneath the poetry. Ditching machines the pressure it would have to. Took small streams in their stride. Welded tied-in and doused in hot coal tar. Top padding of soft earth. Over bodies not mentioned tombs. A section pulled across the river dredge and laid

at Port Mann fifteen feet below the river bed the pressure. Quote like a fabulous serpent it slithered into the depths end quote. Moments when everything looked hopeless and valves and valves and valves and. Into the depths augured well for economic progress fiction method. Lush growths of grain over subterranean artery of oil. Safe under ground. Security lie breach surveil radical hole cut oil fire heat drought hole radical dupe dump oil. Fictitious economic method it was logical said method said bank. I wanted to watch the next video cued: *Radioactive Wolves of Chernobyl*. Fur coat private capital bought paid lush paid hole photo-op continent burnt sold fire wolf how! sold future hole melts.

7

Walking the route of the pipeline through suburban Burnaby we observed streams filled with spring run-off with yellow high-pressure pipeline warning signs standing mid-stream yellow reflectors cautioning raccoons. The view down Shellmont past the tank farm, towards Burnaby Lake. Suburban street march strangeness though only one passing driver gave us the finger. Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline carries product for Shell and other companies from Alberta to the coast. "Kinder Morgan" might be translated from approximate German as "tomorrow's children." ET IN BLOCKADIA EGO. Sous les pavés, la plage. It was always what was under the poetry that mattered. Who said I said this wasn't a court it was a forest they wanted to drill a pipeline through mountain replacing a pipeline near mountain we said no now who knows what will result. We had our own blueprints, had to scramble to avoid traffic at Duthie and Hastings, just beneath the university, above the pipeline beneath our feet, territory beneath map the barricades still an imagined possibility in the path of imagined new pipelines, a radium wolf in the mind and raccoons carrying red flags we sang we homed a long line making a circle to begin.

Forest perambulations existed since at least the time of Magna Carta. They were ceremonial walks about a territory for asserting and recording its boundaries, that is, 'beating the bounds.' A perambulation was a kind of peripatetic map, or walkabout, in which briar-scratched skin, stubbed toes, aching legs aided the memory. ... The perambulation of the New Forest authorized by Charles II in 1671 resulted in a Latin document that, translated, comprises a single sentence over six pages long, of approximately one thousand nine hundred and eighty words, many hundreds of prepositional phrases (the grammatical unit most having to do with position and direction)—to, from, by, beyond, across, in—and human and natural landmarks—ditch, post, hedge, vale, pond, gate, rover, oak, beech, grave, croft, marsh, lane, road, ford—with current name, alias, former names, thus making the text layered with semantic history and compact with minute orientation.

-Peter Linebaugh, The Magna Carta Manifesto

9

Walking the route of the proposed new pipeline still an imaginary line in data bank accounts begin on river mud banks beneath bridge the pilings & log booms small mid-span island treed & reedy temporary trail closed signs barbed wire hypocrisy of man-made habitats in shadow of cathedralled concrete bridge towers we counter-surveil with beer can pinhole camera under cottonwood trees unstable popweed & pizza boxes & rebar & rebar & rebar the dirt banks of heavily worked earth through trespass fencing past vending garage doors industrial park polymer shapes stacked Coke machines behind fencing Schnitzer Cat Leavitt the nest of yellow & blue crane arms at Phoenix Truck & Crane then daisies clover bees all the blackberry brambles fit to neglect along United Boulevard other side of Lafarge gravel pit aggregate trucks Coke & Wendy's Crystal Brite with daisy & share the

road sign by the waist high grass turning onto Schooner just two blocks before the imagined new route leaves the old past Home Depot Subway & the inflatable Elvis at Kia Motors we tie another beer can pinhole camera to surveil the would be as we are surveiled too at the Coquitlam Transfer Station Fraser Mills blackberry heaps & highway noise & heat winners history losers story we tell the land fill along the thousands of power poles piled between United & the Fraser moving west past train whistle dumps & junk space wild flowers then down along access road trespassing to the Brunette River alder & cottonwood & brambles without end shopping cart in the river storm drain pump station & so to the train tracks rust fragments old but active trestle we cross webs beneath weed scorn & junk heap lesions near giant LED screen jutting over raised roadway & so to Braid Station river train tracks access road park trail & possible pipeline all following same ragged cut through suburban landscape blackberries follow too

10

Think of Stanley Kubrick's 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and the idea of the "doomsday machine"—something once triggered it cannot be turned off no matter how brainless we set our destruction in motion. Originally, the film was supposed to end with a pie fight in the US War Room. Just before which the barely-reformed Nazi Dr. Strangelove (played brilliantly by Peter Sellers) proposes a scenario in which a select and eugenically chosen few humans are preserved in deep mine shafts until the nuclear winter is over (in about 100 years give or take he suggests). Just in case the Soviets have the same idea, and sneak a bomb into *their* mineshaft, General Turgidson (played by George C. Scott) recommends the remnants of the American portion of the human race (the most powerful men and most "stimulating" women) take a bomb or two beneath ground with them—to avoid a potential future "mine shaft gap."

This is wolf leap run wolf calm exterior. Not apparatus not proven. Like carbon capture which is bunk theory wherein waste carbon might be stored in abandoned mine shafts has no chance no scenario Doctor. Like we could not even like liking the project Rodrigo. It's up to us building forges building links. This wolf love not strange love not hidden camera wolf cold howl irradiate cesium. Sit in the woods and wait it is autumn it is trading. Tsilhcot'in says it is collective title and cannot be encumbered in ways that would prevent future generations from using or enjoying it means we all must cede to the unceded home to unsettle settling. Pipefitters. Markets. Title. Out sharp camp Indigenous forest home blockade home territory not lost come wolves run wolves come leap becquerel leap along path no pipeline has or will be built circling haven glow remorse no remorse breathe deep air touch fertile land roaming.

12

Scenario: in the contaminated exclusion zone or "zone of alienation" around a crippled nuclear reactor "forests, marshes and fields teem with activity." The "ill-fated reactor has not created a desert, but a lush wilderness"; "remnant orchards are harvested by wild boars" and "ruins drown in waves of green." Now the "years of cultivation" by human beings appear as "only a temporary inconvenience" for the other species now fluorescing once again. White tailed eagle, peregrine falcon, door mice, deer, wild boar, bison, wild horse, wolves, beavers, otters—"for humans, this land is lost," but for other species—despite radiation—"this ecosystem is in robust health." Beaver dams return the Pripyat marshes to their original extent, flooding former farms. Eight-foot catfish haunt the cooling ponds near the disabled reactor. The wolves may be radioactive, but they are as prolific as in other reserves returning fire.

Scenario: an architectural firm proposes the "development of infrastructure elements" to "facilitate tourism" in the contaminated exclusion zone around a nuclear reactor that suffered a meltdown decades ago. "We suggest the following types of tourism: extreme, industrial, ecological, game tourism and photo-safari." Diagrams: "death zone" = sad face; "life zone" (with icons for scientist, horse, and Neanderthal-like tourist with camera around neck and dollar sign) = happy face. At the core of the proposal is an "environmentally friendly" monorail "covered with a thick layer of metal protecting people from radioactive exposure and excessive sun radiation." "Old objects located in the area are regarded as tourist attractions." I can see all the way to never from here. "The proposed solutions will transform the abandoned territory which is now financed at the expense of the taxpayers into a prosperous tourist destination."

14

Don't project meteors and blight don't forest our French havens our protorevolutionary profits only one kind of liberty to sell for climate's half-life I come upon money in low hollows as a gas it glows lucent with epiphenomenal ooze triggers Geiger clicks market share glow I might migraine my way to opacity still might will killing sprees or spending sprees absence fluoresce resident species strange love radio wolf active wolf radio home strange because it was there because it was unpolluted and unproductive because money not waste not want not double down death double don't climate quote my anger for instrumental use don't species this dream don't drain it of beaver weight get access to bunk meritocracy get excess and milk it white make zombie market future make it now

Andrea Creamer

I am an artist, a worker, a renter, an organizer, activist, collaborator, and co-producer; all of these identities are a part of how I think about art and my relationship to place. Through my practice I investigate themes of community, spaces of contestation, counter publics, site-specificity, spatial justice, and collective memory—in the context of being a settler on unceded Coast Salish territory, Vancouver, BC.

Often articulated in the form of text, painting, sculpture and video, my material practice reflects on the ephemeral and always shifting character of socially based practices, forms of protest, and the mechanisms that produce social spaces. Based in research and lived experience, my work creates a platform to discuss the production of social conditions and the divergence of discarded pasts and imminent futures.

By investigating social and participatory practices, my work prioritizes certain processes and aesthetic considerations: interventions in non-prescriptive places, expanded content or form, contingent experiences and the involvement of broader publics. I am invested in critically thinking through issues through a process that entails material production, context-specific research, or collective and collaborative participation. As such, my practice merges a political experience with an aesthetic one.

Images:

- 1-3. from "Home is Elsewhere". various Vancouver locations, 2012.
- 4-5. from "Free Space". various Vancouver locations, 2011.
- 6-8. from "Right from Wrong". 32' x 8' barricade, 2013.

















FRED WAH

Music at the Heart of Thinking

[Note to MHT 146-150]

As I looked for a way to read into Gail Scott's novel *The Obituary* I realized the forms of composition and reception that opened for me resonated with the reading-writing dynamics I continue to explore in my *Music at the Heart of Thinking* project (started in early 80's). This is not simply to contest the syntactic and the narrative, the two tyrannies of literature, but to be present to the galactic coherences that occur when we allow language to stumble over itself and we recognize the synapses and disjunctions at the intersection of mind and word and perception shifts, slant.

Sept 2011

(originally published in *Open Letter*, 2012)

Slant likely the essential archive alley Alberta at least Piikuni (not the brick factory quiet on a Saturday afternoon) but between wood + brick walk sudden shade no sooner so necessary to the story but it's bedtime among the Acacia + some crickets remember the novel is dynamite, that "tough trip through paradise," Becket thought such blending aside not to mention on seeing at that very moment the participial connection Flouncing.

Slant into an impossible French Me those luminous venetians their light propelled by the heat shimmering from the red brick above the dry cleaners at that very moment the afternoon toujour with cousins an absolute translation of ancestry not + beyond which an occasional "Darling" assembles itself on the wire aware of a secret syntax buried in a knot of class + spoken subjects not to mention *les suie* + the scant wipe as the slat bends + you can see the smelter on the hill across the river.

Slant apostrophe of absent minded thinkin' even 'memberin' th' lyrics to Look For The Silver Linin' was it not Chet who dialed that Jezebel while I spent th' weekend in Fernie lookin' for Melody her peakin' through th' striated venetians at th' Royal thinkin' 'bout her 'quipment humpin' my elbow oh + then shared her Cameo draggin' thru a kiss all th' way back to town flyin' low still as we walked into th' café laughin' 'n jivin' high 'bout Saturday night.

Slant instrument of heaven. Up there cloud swings between. Some hoodlums holding. A dozen white blouses. Permeating a few of its threads. Gladly, either memory sees nothing: the mother + the father. Faking less stairway. Under door. The eyes right there, thereing. Akokli [goat] Creek. Melody lingers. − He'll be back at the end of the summer, won't he? Hand over hand. Never a duck's fart. Them. Pepsi ads too late for the ♥Diamond Grill's soda fountain. Like the rest + that wild blue yonder with no particular spot to hit.

♥In the 50's we had Coke. Lemon Coke; Chocolate Coke; Coke float. Pepsi was later and American, blue.

Slant Obit singing sentence pov junctions intone primary stress incl. all space + things th' body intersects where appearance knows house cracking ground morph of syntax same prime *noumen*- passing through just like Hermes did tuwhit silence sounds so blue no matter she says every word same meaning but also accelerator into th' full-as-it-gets story even memory blows th' chords away into th' then what happened next since all appliances humming so ya can freeze cook 'n see all self appearance recognition unimportant to th' prime turns in narrative how flying all over th' sky of openmindedness th' who poking what then holding tight to th' word in mind like breathing out + breathing in still I wondering 'bout th' eme as th' indigene of paradigmatic thought suffixing just that apropos of leaving no trace like those chords that appear by disappearing into some kind of permanent rhyme vis family concoction avec sleeping insects in veins passing major/minor frets fingers only momentarily hesitate before they grab a share of th' fold past old chilling patience of th' fiction vendors stalled out by too lean a mix in Choate Road we all trying to plug into inchoate wrld a uta without a nikki beyond that th' chase goes on into Polka Dots and Moonbeams "speaking of heartless purveyors" of th' dashboard some phantom wahhhh from beyond th' firewall echoes a jargon of late-night loneliness remembering thinking is th' music you'll always sing to th' concocted trajectory of mistranslation floating + drifting through th' desire to begin again.

JEFF DERKSEN

Am I Not Human?

Obsolete cold-war navy dolphins write algorhythms that design an app to do Kevin's laundry.

Dung beetles, decommissioned from nature documentaries, collectively lug overweight luggage into the cargo bays of discount European airlines.

Preying mantises, rounded up after it was discovered that they had a form of communication, are retrained as councilors for male erectile dysfunction for landowners with an income over 300,000 dollars.

Acrobatic barn swallows dust the penthouses of oil oligarchs, poetically catching each mote in the air.

Whales lazily patrol the swimming area of Vancouver's beaches, blowing mighty whistles when someone strokes beyond the perimeter of jellyfish on internships.

Uniformed skunks, working in groups of 10, keep the protestors away from the pipeline, raising their tails and spraying directly into the eyes of civil citizens according to the training ordinances.

Riderless horses block the street for the filming of a scene in a movie in which a detective pair of a crow and a raven try to solve the case of a missing city politician (herself a barn owl who migrated to the city), racking up double-time wages for the work. And shitting great straw-infused buns during their coffee breaks.

The goats who do the landscaping for the city have gone on strike, asking

for more variety on their food, fewer working hours; the city responded by bussing in a road gang of llamas from the local prison.

Are the krill done with the dishes yet?

Have those little non-union fish completed the pedicure?

Has the sloth put the baby to sleep?

Have the Stellar Jays negotiated the new contract yet?

The Woodpeckers who carve seamless single-tree replicas of Danish modern furniture from live teak planted in the formerly deforested Amazon are challenged in court by the copyright holders of Arne Jakobson's iconic "Ant" chair.

Banana slugs wearily lead tourists through a tour of the park's marshland area, having texted the red-winged blackbirds when they should flash up, display their underwings and sing.

Raccoon sous-chefs prepare another locally sourced meal at restaurants bearing such names as Forage, Terrain, West, Sea, Park, etc.

The bats who took a short-term contract to patrol a new condo construction site at night, thwarting material being stolen from "the midnight lumberyard" are injured when the beam they hang on to take their break collapses due to the work done by untrained construction gangs of donkeys and liberated laboratory monkeys.

Metallica replaces their drummer with an octopus from Vigo, Spain who learned heavy metal on the sides of the ships he once riveted on the waterfront.

Weaver birds silently stich wounds in the Emergency wards of privatized hospitals – and fly home to elaborate nests, catching some sleep before their next shift.

Whales entertain humans on cruise ships by playing jazz and pop standards on massive flutes.

Software-writing squirrels in Latvia keep one step ahead of the cyber-police, working in intensive bursts, stepping aside as a comrade takes their spot in the code chain.

Kermode bears plot anarchy high in the mountains, but find urban warfare difficult.

Bluefin tuna, running in schools at high speed, overtake luxury yachts, force the owners into rescue dinghies and redistribute the loot through complex supply chains of defunct sushi markets.

A tourist buys a bracelet from a starfish on the beach in Rovinj, Croatia.

Bavarian boars redesign the BMW World Endurance Championship car. After a win, they are hired away by Porsche.

Slovakian bears, trained on early electronic keyboards, begin a successful electronic music record label in Vienna.

Ants close down the North American banking system with a highly coordinated strike on ATM machines: over New Year's Eve, individual bills are carried out of the machines and moved along predetermined routes and stashed in complex underground networks. Two ants are captured but refuse to give up their comrades. In solidarity, they eat each other.

Twelve sheep from Saltspring Island establish a craft brewery in East

Vancouver: a group of Norwegian grey rats chew through the gentrifier's distillery hoses and reclaim the neighbourhood.

Mice and guinea pigs care for the elderly in Maple Ridge.

Starlings grade the multiple choice final exams of first-year university students after students complain that the mallard ducks who did it last year, brought in on contract, were too erratic and had nervously shit on the test booklets.

A forty-year old halibut wins a seat for the Green Party in Tofino, B.C.

Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs form San Francisco again win the Internation Street Food Epicurian award for their Asian fusion vegetarian cuisine.

Vast multitudes of fresh-water mussels "decolonize" rivers by incrementally covering obsolete hydro-electric dams.

Razor clams lay undetected under the sand of Malibu, burrowing closer to beach mansions.

Peregrine falcons, in high-speed graceful descents, deliver Swiss watches to each participant of the Davos World Economic Forum before elegant geese serve fois-gras to the titans of commerce.

Costa-Rican parrots, working for a third-party outsourcer, make robocalls for political parties, fanning misinformation and fake voting locations across the USA and Canada.

Great Blue Herons open a successful sushi bar – called Great Blue Heron – on the West Side of Vancouver and are featured in Dwell magazine (which is edited by a group of ivy-league trained Welsh Gorgis).

The crow who designed early HTML at the end of the Second World War is found living in a commune outside of Berlin, composing collectively played ambient music.

Sea anemonies are kept in private aquariums as sex workers – after years of slow and secret organizing, they burst the glass and drown their oppressors.

Long-distance truck driving barn owls congregate at a 24-hour dinner in Golden, B.C.

Manta rays take out the underwater internet cables and are counter-attacked by schools of CIA mackerel.

A flock of pigeons, gone wild-cat after being fired from Amazon as delivery apparatuses, take out a police drone as it hovers unseen above the university.

The Office of Wasp Architects (OWA) wins the Pritzker Architecture Prize for their social housing project, constructed from chewed wood and pine sap, that covers the slopes of West Vancouver.

A group of pigs clone human organs in a decommissioned tractor factory in Upper Austria.

Starlings act spontaneously – against the wishes of the orderly geese hierarchy.

Sturgeons patiently wait for the "historically ripe moment."

In Memory of My Heavy Metal Years

There goes the aluminum, the antimony, the arsenic the barium, the cadmium the cesium, the gadolinium the lead the mercury the nickel, the thalium, and the tin.

There goes that job spraying lawns with chemicals, driving the Merc three-quarter ton with a tank on the back and no brakes through West Vancouver, bouncing the wheels against the curb to stop on the steep majesterial streets that afford such views

that they could hire two talentless dickbrains to weed and feed front and back and back again in two weeks.

That was a heavy metal job that probably killed a lot of salmon too.

There goes the shotgun
pellets from the pheasants
we shot out in Abbotsford and Langley
plucked and hung
in the concrete basement
in New Westminster
fresh
with the stink of pheasant guts.

Oily, delicious pheasants roasted always with a little buckshot after a day off.

There goes those summers painting houses with my brother wire-brushing off the old paint, breathing it in on the wooden ladders white guys working on a tan and saving up for the Peugot ten speed. There goes

the seventies out from my body.

Led Zep Humble Pie Burning Spear, and Marley too, adidas, big E Levis from Lee's Men's Wear on Sixth Street there goes that brown house paint, broken down and pissed out.

There goes those years beachcombing along the Fraser from New West to Lulu Island pulling out cedar blocks that had floated free from the shake factory booms.

Pulling the blocks out of that industrial muck

grey green and foamy down near Scott Paper, the mill that Larry worked in until it moved production south. Then stacking and drying the blocks to split them into shakes with a birchwood hammer and an adze. There goes

that industrial mix from the Fraser from the riverbank from the bars by the river.

There goes sucking on a hose to get some gas into that golden sixty-six Valiant convertible with the leaky roof and the 273 and putting it right into the carb to sputter the piece of shit to life Again. Still, pretty great

to have a convertible with a radio (turn the radio on roadrunner roadrunner!) and a five-gallon gas can and a piece of garden hose and a mouthful of Regular, a mouthful of Regular Leaded from the Chevron in the strip mall across Tenth Ave.

There goes working
on a printing press
under the sidewalk
of the storefront at Cambie and Hastings
that was later the Caribbean place
and is now
going to be gentrified.
There goes that time.

There goes all the shitty renos on Broadway, on Hastings, on Commercial Drive, there goes the dust from that wall Mike took down with a chain saw when Talonbooks was above the foundry and there goes the foundry dust and the sweep of chemicals that would take your head off like six beers later at the Waldorf.

There goes the mystery unmarked jars of cleaners and solvents and grease

that Larry nicked from the mill and we used on the cars and bikes and on our hands.

There goes that job at the self-serve Shell with a car wash across from the college when it was in temporary trailers just to show that education for the masses was taken seriously.

And there goes, hopefully, the dust and everything from that week in September when what was stored in the three buildings of the World Trade Centre was pulverized and burnt Into the air and Nancy and I stayed in the apartment with t-shirts tied over our mouth and nose

and didn't go out until
we went to Milano's
where the Fireman drank for free
with the IRA guys
leaning at the bar. There goes
that time.

There goes the Aluminum, the antimony, the arsenic the barium, the cadmium the cesium, the gadolinium the lead the mercury the nickel, the thalium, and the tin. Broken down pissed out.

There goes those jobs, those times there goes those relations of inside and outside, of work and nerves and fat and soft tissue and synapses.

There goes that set of relations inside and outside. There goes that body that use and surplus

CHRISTINE LECLERC

Long

1. Read left to right.

desyncronization.

Comfort—a distant isle, to the hook in the knit of my sweater:

I can:
first word:

I:
would:
for respect.
climate act.
for age well.

Some interruptions are _______
Others, not so much.

WARNING

The court hearing this matter directs that the following notice be attached to the file:

A non-publication and non-broadcast order in this proceeding has been issued under subsection 486.4(1) of the *Criminal Code*. This subsection and subsection 486.6(1) of the *Criminal Code*, which is concerned with the consequence of failure to comply with an order made under subsection 486.4(1), reads as follows:

486.4 Order restricting publication—sexual offenses.—

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), the presiding judge or justice may make an order directing that any information that could identify the complainant or a witness shall not be published in any document or broadcast or transmitted in any way, in proceedings in respect of
 - (a) any of the following offences:
 - (i) an offence under section 151, 152, 153
 - 2. Have long project of thought.

CAROLYN RICHARD MER

Lifting the valleys of the sea My father moved through griefs of joy; e.e. cummings

what is a name? i paid my way. i paid my way. i gave: a blue robe, a number of notebooks, something miraculous, a perennial figure in photos, a hand holding cakes and children. a catalogue of lesser disasters. as i tracked this a figure fell from the frame. you became remote. a recording. a bit of words waving. a few towers receive you and replicate you back. **MER** is a measure. your back, a splinter. not so much beautiful as busted. An **error vector** for all imperfections including amplitude imbalance and distortion. all pages begin with mer.

what is a name?

As a young boy, Debussy's parents had plans for him to become a sailor. as an adult composing "La mer" he rarely visited the sea. my childhood bends beside me. a variety of hurts. a series of shocks. a number of accidental spills into the Fraser.

and we ourselves walked along by the stream of the Ocean in the southwest region the river Acheron flows into the Ionian. and you Mer.: used in historical astronomy to indicate the southern direction mimic this movement. i dig a pit to put my name in. what is in a name? i take the southbound exit. it's how the viaduct cuts and what it cuts into. There are several languages or dialects called Mer: one for new guinea, one for murray, one for forgetting. a figure fell into foliage. something exploded. A repeat unit (or mer), is not to be confused with the term monomer a substance for synthetics. one they grant and one they gather. you're in neither. finally fodder. without a tongue or tool to recall you, you become statue of who? statue of listening, you who

drove sleeping selves to swarm their fates woke dreamers to their ghostly roots

scaling the metal plate of your face i sunder. i solder. i sign the waiver. publicly owned and traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol MER i give you over. i paid my way. i paid my way. a black tooth comb, some aftershave, an undershirt. "Mer" originates from the Greek word "meros," which means part(s).

and to Tiresias / alone, apart i would offer...

- Monomer
- Dimer
- Trimer
- Tetramer
- Pentamer
- Hexamer
- Heptamer
- Octamer
- Nonamer
- Decamer
- Polymer
- Heteromer
- Isomer

instead of you. in the absence of an axis: i look over the railing. a rover. (MER) is an ongoing space mission. an impression on a mattress a collector of the composition of minerals gold coins in a safety deposit a geological process that shaped the local terrain and influenced the cratering clothes hung in the closet. at last he came / a shade, what's in a name?

-mer and **mer-** are affixes. fixing the covers of your illness you move through news of silence

Gideon Mer an Israeli scientist concerned with eradicates attends the appendix. but without radiation the whole operation folded. *I open my lunch on a hill of black cypress*. a few thousand fibers of asbestos later. buoyed down with such trinkets. your lungs bloomed, sick cabbage. **Mer** or **MER** may refer to:

he who framed, he who foraged in the photo / under your shadow / a blue sky arches above us child to a colossus

The Movement for European Reform [MER], a conservative profree-market alliance hums also inside this searching engine. you floundered, it flourished. kept quiet by the floral arrangements your work sent. caught in the mirror i reproduce repair. i hallucinate this in your image. on **The Market Exchange Rate** you become remote—a roll of numbers. you're mixed in the spit of investment bankers.

in a reverie the revival of the Mer project was announced. my childhood bends beside me. a mutiny. user interfaces and hardware adaptation will be able to build their products on top of the Mer core. in a fever before i could restore it, some operative device exploded in the MER [mechanical equipment room] where water heaters, plumbing and electrical or electronic equipment are stored a video projector burns out its centre. a figure fell from the frame. flung under few cheap flowers. i paid my way. i paid my way.

what's in a name?

DONATO MANCINI

day out, born old blind as promised, count the days, wildebeest, sixteen years in the dark nothing there, either, a three weeks' overdue moment or two of panic whether it was a bright and sunny yes, or not the result was an instant, after four centuries of, still they have, after a season of acrimony, over a years' anxious wait, at the time of the pre maturely aged, talk very slowly the next verse began long afterwards, which lasted circa one night, nor one-and-a-half

minutes, round next next so soon, for a change the one hour, one hour, had to have happened seven years ago, a longstanding date reed for the evening what's late and what's early, for most of the morning the ills of the present, eventually must jump, after him, minutes watching, ways of research, a moment before the whites came a moment or two before, of panic always predictable, pre figured obligation what should have been promise, after supper, as a baby once, no more, day out, day in, dimly ripe in the dreamtime

times of want, after coffee departure temporary, descending there came news, at mealtime in lunchbreak. it was time to die, after reading this text in appearance when it appeared drunk it was time to go, stay a bit later faster, a long outwaiting at the close of the whenever when some lie dormant for decades so long as they persist, two months late, sometime, somewhen else, they're not young you know they're old and if that's going to be the future without a word there was a moment of silence, one year of plenty followed by seven years of lean might be deprogrammed not whatever some not for five days

mind abstracted in the never have postulated end of our world, yet there were times before it rained again in the night, in the morning again if, one year one day at four again, this had happened seven years ago, at the end of five minutes at the time of aversion, one-day when the grass dried because it was dry season ok, delay was limbo and an overcoming, a resistance, past before-light tire, retire, post an hour's walk, the five days at the time of horror, a hole already on the way down, done sooner claim back, day out, day

RENÉE SAROJINI SAKLIKAR

from The Heart of this Journey Bears All Patterns: commonly known as Thot-J-Bap

THOT-J-BAP, a speculative fiction journey poem, with a vast collection of characters who move back into deep time and forward into the far future. They begin in an imaginary Pacifica, on the west coast of North America, and journey to Toronto, Paris, Baghdad, Ahmedabad. Two heroes, a woman and a man, (A) and (B), appear/disappear throughout. Many things happen along the way, some good, mostly bad, after and during a series of catastrophes. Embedded within, tales from a thousand and one nights, where East meets West, including a series of bee poems incorporating the work of bee scientist, Dr. Mark Winston—

In the plaza at Central City, thot-j-bap, volume 2, thecanadaproject

Locator: in the year 20XX, after the 5th Catastrophe

Invocation: a coin is corner enough

vanish and another Inside temples, the

disappeared

Even their names

That distance between (A)—

(B), once

more

at risk, along with several others remained

unidentified.

They repeated, although

forbidden

Morning begins us, that angle of light

those camera surveillants
Roof-top *libre*,
without wind or precipitation
the dark full on
past night a quarter moon
pale eye white encased, perched arm
swivel, look down on
black concrete expanse
squared lights, that architecture, those condo cranes
where once only a huge pit

All those years

Such serious concerns holding—

After, described.

Never, to have been
Or to correspond
No evidence against
Not capture in, not part of

[name redacted]

for two days, suspended—

Hopelessly Queenless

from her prison cell, surrey city centre to the window high above, slit moonlight the woman known as N, chants out her fragments to the window, stone walls, granite quarried O find us the road, Sur-Del-Way, fiery Those brigands chain-ganged. Outside the plaza Where march the others, surveillance camera number[redacted] from her prison cell, city centre held sings N to the quarter moon: I lost him to the North winds I lost him Atlantic Although unseen, Perimeter a series Live wire strung square upon square The plaza tree lit before explosion Chain-ganged, the women brought boughs of salal Armfuls evergreen: serrated leaves, tooth edged Cried the women—Come find us syrup, dried cakes Cried the women, *look up*. Every star, a sun—

In the year of the reign,

20XX

As was recorded
Without legal status
Not covered by
Declined to— [name

It was

redacted] *random*,

said the INVESTIGATOR

whomsoever in contravention There stood before him,

(A) and (B) to enter, to seek

and sang the old songs

and marched, the Collect

To stroke the surface of books, wayward, disreputable

and assembled, those women brigades

and to polish, and to rub, to carry, to sigh: O hollow box, silver centre *Deekrah*, your raven's eye—

Crossing the Serpentine River: a brigade of women

And sourced, unknown, and written, pencil that was They always looked up, when crossing, even if At first on trains, head down, eyes downcast, too Rare, those banned books, more like, same as everyone Else they'd be found, digital, swipe right for, and locked Machines, their idle gaze, and yet to look up To the River, where, water—

Magda of Bridgeview called out:

Bus Riders, Train wreckers! Water Demands Witness

And ever-after, those Brigade daughters, arms mapped, tattooed, *WDW*

No one ever said the words for the places they visited.

ہ

INFORMANT:

I thought I could hide here. There is no hiding. What it takes to give
Up the hill—women slow-walk down
the river's edge following is searching—

about that star, from given, any horizon diurnal, the closer the sky, a portion about never, about eternal, about doomed—

ہ

Magda of Bridgeview nodded her head and said-

If perfection your appetency
You'll always be out of control

Magda of Bridgeview called out—

The sun is our enemy
To whom will we tell our troubles
The earth, pit dug inside Perimeter
Said the woman, pleading, "Magda, my lined face,
nose to lip, grooves." Magda said, "Marionette,
you are pulled by another.
Implacable Time, each day a new discovery, decay.

ہ

Crossing the Serpentine River: the secret lives of plants

Each cherry blossom, forsythia bloom Affront, Time's host, jeering at us Come away from that always on mirror The Inner Net. And the moon, why, she laughs This is living under rule, no mercy, not ever.

Still we do keep our voices soft, smile Swing our hips and run, seek escape Winter kept us safe, spring a torture then Summer, damnation, cruel bright light Plaza a rebound of stone, revelations. They march us in, two by two.

What—we surround ourselves, with things.
Where—we focus, our gaze restless on self,
Who—commands attention, now this way, that—
Whom do we serve, whose pull an undertow
What will sustain us, day into night into passages—

We're not ready, the women said, before—

Magda of Bridgeview, called out—

- is a weapon, she said.
- is strength, they said.

۔

Crossing the Serpentine River: singing, they marched

Pretty women will want us as camouflage
un-take them
We'll cross the river
We'll sink into fen lands
Unappropriated, we'll find mud,
make clay, turn the wheel
Every eye, a camera
Every snake, a bracelet

We know the colour
that wears the devil
We know the colour on his head
We know the angle of his jaw
Invader arrival, and waiting
Shoulder to shoulder with his men

Above the curb, high on a wire telephone made telegraph, unsent for the ages sits a red-tailed hawk, below: grasses skep boxes abandoned, scarred oak table, wind-blown nail-fixed, a row of honey jars

Farmed to the border, we'll stop as requested We'll hide our cargo
Perimeter is knowing when to wait when to move
In the back seat, stalled van
A woman touches her hair

Crossing the Serpentine River: from the diary of the woman known as—

at once a surface and a frame
to you have I written—
things seen and unsent
between us, a channel, no channel
open
this contact zone, memory measured
distance a finite set of—
gestures, sent out over time, space
hand, fingers extended
the body remaining as
after

a thousand

years' response

to fall in the river again with-

to build in the garden, stroke leaves, first green bees to the bush, calling 9-ODA what wanted most, wondering if ever—

ــ

Crossing the Serpentine River: she got that gun tattoo As told to (A) and (B)

After the 5th Catastrophe, in the lab, Consortium approved, pallets stolen, transported, open fen lands:

Amounts (ng) of 9-ODA Found body, surface of Mated, those queens after Different times of isolation

After the 5th Catastrophe, well within Perimeter surveillance obscured—

hot blood
doors swinging
open. In the shadow of—he stood, smoking, his gaze
that hotel stairwell, that hidden door,
behind a shooter
Those hunted, arms extended
and tremble—

Crossing the Serpentine River: and we the Collect Source unknown

Abandoned farmhouse, a winter cabinet, opened April the rains intermittent, fen lands drying no one To measure the rate of drought

The building having been dedicated Cast off pews, hewn wood polished How many hands, the years, a texture

Brass plaques also transported, tarnished names

Etched, scratched, rubbed: together with the land All objects commended, to other purposes.

And no longer the place—

ہ

Crossing the Serpentine River: outside Perimeter

As seen from the skytrain long way below
The river is a hunger, sunshine afternoon
Poplar Island passing cotton wood never milled
And crossing, look a long ways down
Barge, pile and dredge, what once was
Orange a span of years, two-laned treachery
rattling roaring say her name aloud
The river is a hunger, her eyes, her dress, her hair
The way sweat breaks beads
shoulder blade stand

shoulder blade stand sunlight slants cross-wise has been, already, too early, too late coming, going, straight on, to the side

Rattling roaring say her name aloud ear bud glad

_

Crossing the Serpentine River: call us Kassandra

INFORMANT:

It were in the year of the reign 1990

INFORMANT:

They would dance, burning
Empire in ruins, decay
slow press of hours, honey-kissed
how to get used to it
street choirs sang

INFORMANT:

Night comes on again alone in Rentalsman women at their windows

INFORMANT:

And if you read this long after we're gone where wood crosses metal, five Corona soldiers empties, reclaimed glass, two pieces of steel hard edges rounded off

INFORMANT:

Said the woman—
I'm a Capricorn trine, moon in Scorpio
My Hindoo grandma put a spell on me
Said Magda of Bridgeview—
The moon was once a river dweller
Who carried us, amulets, rattled bones

INFORMANT:

Difficult fellow, he lived life both sides of the gavel

Judge's coin, pauper's cell and died standing drink in hand

۔

Crossing the Serpentine River: the burning, a survivor

INFORMANT:

In the woods, rock cairns, poles, mounds Looking, a sign of disrespect She avoided the gaze of trees

"a small fire to cook trout"
She knelt, two sticks to rub
Sand underfoot, stone to water's edge
Ocean supplicant, River mendicant
And the thing is, in later Testimony,
before the Recantation
It were a charcoal flame—
It were after dawn, other side of the shore
River ever widening
Salt crusted sea
Elm, stone—

_

Crossing the Serpentine River: their scent released

INFORMANT:

Thinking about my love for you, (letter un/sent—I remember those bunnies, mother's Easter gift

Soft squishy things on cotton sheets
We two sisters squealing delight
How months later, Mom kept them rabbits
Basement dwellers, steel caged, and if sent down
We'd look sideways at the creatures
Who threw themselves, elongated
dirty white fur long yellow teeth,
prisoners propelled over and over,
flesh against metal,
red eyes captive to the dark.

ہ

Crossing the Serpentine River: augury and branded Source unknown

And walked, took photographs, intersection of And stood in the vestibule, before auction Towers upon towers
And tea in hand, Styrofoam conversations
And hiked those trails,
paced the ground, blueprints unknown Men planned, dug, drove, piled, paved, aid Magda of Bridgeview
Women, too.
Everything we look at with love, erased
—said Magda of Bridgeview—
Be wary of your love-looking, gaze a marker See here,

this,

that's gone-

The Bee Keeper's Lament

#1 Amounts (ng) of 9-ODA

Bee visits to flowers Abundance assessed An area below And bloom, a presence

Those field conditions Ten minutes, that interval Bumble bees, and honey Foragers and counted

Competition: the honey bee, the natives Repeated at five locations And counted, berry crops Far natural vegetation Blueberry Cranberry Raspberry

Les abeilles pollinisatrices— Sauvages ont été prélevées et—

ب

The Bee Keeper's Lament

#2 Found body, surface of

Thirty-eight solitary bee species Collected, nine berry crops Near natural and far—

Dialictus, most common Three species of *Andrena* Bombini most abundant

Both crop and natural Bombus mixtus Cress. Bombus Terricola Greene

Oh Cranberry, blueberry, raspberry Oh capture and rated. Direct Observation.

ہ,

The Bee Keeper's Lament

#3 Mated, those queens after

As Taken:

The low diversity Striking when compared with That natural, those collections Low bush blueberry The Fraser Valley In the year of the reign 1982

48 species of bees collected on natural vegetation 15 species on all three berry crops

The Tale of the Guard from the Fifth Gate

Years late

The bees

Their scent

Re-leased

Their heat

The walls

Without

Touch-

-honey

Encased

Wax dipped, silk

Named gampi

Tissue

Thinned

And spread

Her breasts

His lips

A bee

For each nipple

Do not ask me

He said

To stop

Her hand ring-less,

Grazed his jaw, that line-

outside

women workers

drones overhead

airport cordoned
Sang the women—
And we, being ghosts
Consult our auguries
Ototototoi,
Inside Perimeter
Call us Kassandra,
And branded
Sang the women—
we ghost workers, call us brigade
Sang the women—come, daughters, the years
—you seen us—you seen us

The Tale of the Gap-toothed woman

We looked through fog, city moon-covered viewed ³/₄ and slant, areole, suspended vows-promised letters-songs-codes-rules broken, forgotten, unsent, un-sung Well, we smiled, anyways—

They called us Corner Women who dared defy curfew:

We'd stand hours outside Tower Juniper: billboards, surface scarred, metal gunned holes, crafted over outside Perimeter even though inside They'd told us, sure to find

there—on and inside the Inner Net, everything

them posted under guise Un-approved and un-abridged Non-filtered, cigarettes gifts to us, from that boy-man hand-rolled

We have excised from our story
The long journey of Tobacco
Material through check-point,
Border patrolled, a wall, a fence
Those tunnels, that long line of people
almost never now seen.
meanwhile the authorities—

LAWRENCE YTZHAK BRAITHWAITE

More at 7:30: notes from new palestine (excerpts)

... They most come from houses, a few homes, group homes, squats and welly apts in certain hoods, those kids. Most were or knew or were bout to a go runnin for shiesty deadeyed cavemen with with nagah rich Afroams, Afroklans and Natives as the latest front to keep the RRSP investments and the train going strong for pushin crap. Them lils most end up usin and savin they sorry ass by turning to ratting or they get to blown warders in parks for a twenty. Some hung coo with bosie slaves come on those yankie ships for the dayes. Lackin in birth control, they turned out the feeble levels — which ran wyel on me and passed through to confusion. Some were set up in rooms with ol baddas who kept them semi fed, partially clothed in off the rack discount ghetto fab — ready for parentin and fuccin at loopy secret E-tard sex parties. Turned out geisha dames manage the same expression under the immobile grills as they do walk passes and comb the streets with thuggish white dudes and skinnybwais with castrated pittbulls - planning an attack on a gritty city. A go stroll too talls and an army of sycophants ...shout out weight all over the funkedelic cracked heads on kane — can you maintain? too deep in the con to strike a sic nas back into a hood — long abandoned. Wylen in generations funkation crumblin areas assembling the fallout in juvinal detention motivation and loopy c.o. graveyard shifting as pimps = Others got possessed by death — peep the skull beneath the skin — tag it with Villiage Idiots striking up Eliot — locos transform into alcholics with wine sored fists. — They too much ugly, mix skin, 1/2 to fullout chugs and wiggas, soon ex-mandimes, whod gone from

walkin a face of full character to a ditigal pic of callasped tough features and pledgin faith to banjee territorialism and recklessness. They were throwin disturbance into the mental session of Victoria's deaden paranoiacs; lost inna state of perminant gone. They stood, sat and swayed out alla, ballin it up and clownin roun the Dougie. Old chillum, left in shacks along Esquimalt rd, Balmoral and North Park and the perminant residences of the Heroin Hotel and Holiday Court to Stan's leasure street, with 1 step fore death, holdin investments in booze, dank, cut bags of game, alchy swabs and junky bonds. They was the runners who made the mistake of thinkin they were dealers. As they stunt their way away from juvi and ran the risk of too much prison, they lost favour with the phatcats, and pleaded for fronts in public, got their cellies smashed, raced for pay phones and moved with a quick step of determination. They was the ones that the yup complex of Harris Green, and other spoilers, was gon to push too far, fo truht. Maybe.

...and some were got from the hoods woht held them — rich, suburban or trashtout po. Hoods held all those kids. Hoods filled with ghetto stars, moguls and thugz in search of Ghetto Judges and Patronés in need of Prophets, Mullahs and Gaons. Some were buildin their faith — a jammed up signal, naw decyphered and re: assembled, in killah 5 Five Star Blue Note Books and recited to heretics. Those heretics, dem yuh uns, strolin in 3 stripe kicks and dungarees, gouchos & chinos with tashbi hangin from their hips — they got darkers that sear yuh mind — ratchets and throwlighters = who took to firin-up boxcutters, swiped with alky swabs, to keep and kno the 9th bond twn them and Him (who are each 1). They called Poro — they More. Paninaro rigazzo. Locos locals. They illhumans.

...they citizens?

A crowd

A deep member

Fedayee fellas

Yänkee manga

Cenophilia novella

Comaradas made flesh and heroes

A a generation hellbent on revolution

Dem Poro

They got their name from a book No found buried in alla. It was called *Hidden in Plain View*.

It spoke,

Men's secret society found throughout West Africa, but particaulary strong in Sierra Leone among the Mende people.

...and No says,

-Phatty-

are they...?

Poro them comaradas — tight like a hiz clic(k)a paninaro cruise controla — forming up, they make a singular. They all come from woht is New Palestine — the square in the city's centre woht is Fernwood.

Fa truht

Fernwood, that was never meant to be anythin, ri. It was just a place that warn't Victoria proper and wont do for the Oakbay pretty village. And the city converged on it fueled with the dreams of south afrikanners war criminals, Israelis and Saudi diamond hoes mobbed up with other crawlers. ...seeking condos from the storm, they had come running from the ghetto of woht they had made of woht was once paradise. It became set off as a random collection of bad housin and suburban lowered dream expectations. Then it got turned into the sot den, then the artist, punks and

Sk8ers, casperbwoy revolutionaries and neo fascist faggots with property rights and land claimin on their minds, made a show of it. But once the nekgaz, chugs, chinks and wogs took a stand, for the endless dream of livin and becomin, the artist and scencsta all packtup and legged it out to Duncan, Vic West and the post yuppy parts of the Cook St Village. Those who remained called the crittahtown the 'Real Ghetto' and 'Lower Fernwood' and put up an invisibible line in the privilege of rentin, housin, community centres and employment. So all that warn't up and over that line, and closer to the Joakers, was naw woht got renamed, just like Esquimalt had done, just over the bridge, alla, from town.

This is woht was written — invade the settlass with nagah culture and murdah the word by any meanin internecine.

And so Squomp Esquires got to sciblin E.S.C. from E.S.Q. while the shit stir up all roun. *E.S.Q.* is woht was *Esquimalt* or *Squompton* or *EssquompTown* and *Landsdown* and *Tillicum* = *E-Town* not *Eastside Queers*. So they slashed the *Q* and put up a *C* and they had *V.I.C.* [c/s then crusht the settlass and named themselves *Esquires*.

...are we citizenz?

Speakers

bump

Woo

boom boomboom boom ...sssshhhhhhooooch zuug

Phat Chat

boom boom

Taurat

[stall]

Did they forget thet

boom boom

Synagogues

Shaitanic tsh tsh tsh

Quranic

Logic boom boom boom

Heretic

Treble tsh tsh tsh

Turnatabl

ism

Made

Poetic

From chronic

Transformation

To sonic whoooooomboomboommmmMMMmmMMMmmMMM

Cryptic I bee
Locos I skee
Bloody I skee
Lip shit I skee

Vico Gawds, fear and poetry

Echos ch wah TSh tsh Tsh tsh sh sh shu shu sh hhhh

Music in trunks

Assumptions fatal boom $[m^m \mathbf{m}_m mmmmmm]$

The Hoodiez, The Lords, Dukes, Mighties, Braves, Gaons and Champions of Fernwood woht is The Dung [New Palestine, Ababa, Shebele — Mogadishu and the real ilaz], The Hood [could be nekgaz] = Ferndung, the El — ovastan the FirméHooD or Ferny + woht is Firmé = Our Fernworld, live life on the stealth and walk with the heartbeat of a Rude dude.

Make close and solve them
Gather the science and apply it
From oral to written matter
Reflect upon the thought...
Check the weavin of [this] cypher (F)

Naw, all *The Dung* and *The Hood* = the *firmé Fernworld*, watch and serve the criminal drive-thru and look sideways at *The Hillsidaz* and *Mount Doug* and shu hang tuff and nutt with lil Lebanon and it's *Blanshard Braves* and the *Jaks* as all fling signs, ride boards and sandpaper knots, smooth, over *I.B.C.*, *B.B.C*, *B.C.C.*, *V. DuB*, *RDS*, *E.T.B.*, *E.S.Q.*, *F.G.C.*, *F.B.I.* and crooked maddface placas on boxes, trucks, wallz and school yards.

b.u.t.

... are we citizenz?

They renamed me from the settlass, s'all la — made This Isa theirs. Warders' backers be buggin cuz crookeds might go to forget the phatcats cut and fuc their profit margin — become Super Saiyan — sane to sanity — form the Vegittoe — jump the claim. [Ha yaeh] Check this! The tru complexity of frontin to the northern stars — the deceptive. But naga can you?

Løcel could see, me, the roads hot bone. More, he holla cross me.

More couldn't be with the big nekgaz at the coffee shop. The old ones with eyes you cyan see. Dead eyes. More, he see one big nagah, yo. That ilah alla,

buck.

Løcel toss him a kite cross me, through me; wanna talk bout me.

Ready to elude, Rude?

A lil crowd is but a mark's grip...

Woht weapons?

My tardid gone x-ray, ras

Swang twn the tones, gaw

7 strong dark tones and hood full of duns

Some hung coo with bosie slaves

How y'crew get on the Isla Vancool?

Cue it nice for the mic, Vai

For the free

Yo ho shu need this bottle of pledge, gree

We shall defend Our island no matter woht the cost

Maybe

And some they hung

Some hung coo with bosie slaves

On those yankie ships

Confusion

Dayes.

Birth

At the controls

They turned out

Feeble levels Passed through

The Brutha Scientists surroundin Douglas
Fix to use the theories to crash y'crew
Of 600 bosie slaves deep
Tryin to fuel a bumrush
On the hood with pathos
Six up

The break pumpt mothaship had told More so. It show him so. It came back to him—tru. It bred him, fed him bop messages not like the humans. He ain't none of that species—he was more. He was waiting for reclaimin. He was born with this heavy hella bottom boom—thick and dopey. More he was out to reclaim and finish the job and take back the desert nations. The thick black wax had fore told it. The prophet had spoke it. The silver shimmerin spinner had comfirmed it. His mama had birthed it. They say; "Send dem all over and bring dem home to bombin out african projects set up by deformed pharoahs pimpt on Blocks of poison and hog flesh and flesh slugs." His moms, his mama, his mum, her belly got connected. She birth the illhuman who was to finish it like with waddys paintin this planet inna løc'd out chocalate snugglin in the floss and colour of cool anti-ebil.

Wohts the colour of heaven loc? Woht geechee says bout all dis shit. -Good golly, More, knowledge/power/life, bruh-

-Supp Tek, Supp Army, supp Gotti, Creamfist, supp my ilazqül Fuchx as he slam his chest to 3 beats,

> -Supp More, knowledge/power/life, holmes... big ol'phatty bomb strike up at your school, ila. Peep it, s'all la, she sic-

Says More,

-G'¡Ya!... Ima gon strike some shitup, myself, hehe-

Say Army,

-S'all la-

Says More,

-What the crack my brave Fuchx? give me love, aniki-

...woht a fella... cypher and figure...

Woht's the weight of the world, homey?

His fusin and the cipher of is the substance of one with fusion to the other {Fuchx} + {Mo} is in itself the building the tracx — the mix made proper... woht's the weight of the world?

Cipher and figga

Straight up.

Straight up.

Straight up.

Fuchx was a physical dubplate. Fuchx is was forever more. Fuchx feel like hearing. Fuchx, he was one massive proper breakbeat. Droppin twisted lexis made into jewels. Like his urban post its – polymorphic filler tips — a shaded and tinited compression/his metred walk and strokes no miss mass, yo yo yo his form roll like tremelo, track, echo, reverb plucks phase woht's the sound the ghetto sun? is it a D.U.N. a massive version come

distinguished universal injinn = Fuchx was injinius... Fuchx was More's carnal. His crimey. Fuchx fam, cuz. Fuchx always rocked, like Tek and Army, Japanese school narus — no collars—but with baggy trousers or gouchos saggin below the belt.

El Fuchx, yo, he rockit like El Boxer from a Gonzalez strip [Beach] — Homies, sport. A smashin superior fellow — Danny Rivera. He a def tonto to his Lone Ranger. Fuchx sagged like a new illenium snorky — Tuffnutt Native it supreme fa Shu. He rocked po bwoy Exco and blacc ese cool shit. Life his beach — adamant in purpose with massive flow to crush the panic. Firmé bandit bwoy knocked Ebo cool like woht E-town, *Blanshard* and Dung Hoodiez creep easy with roun seasons.

Fuchx, he warn't tryin—amor/armor bearin'. He was. Fuchx was one smashin crittah — a Songhee nagah, a wet 1/4 gutter wigga —a Coast Salish rhythmic hypnotist. He stand, out infront, on the corner, of one side of 711, to the othaside from the Dougie, from cayn see in the mornin, come rain and sleet, to cyan see at night. ...4 days on 4 days off/4 days on 4 days off

-Supp Mo, that was a muddafuccin big boom booyah, waddy-

-...jakes go for phét monkey shit everytime, my duke Fuchx.

Y'all kno where Løc, naw-

-He close. He still cross the Street, aniki. He peepin you all daye, More. Ima gon holla at Løc, too, cuz-

Was come up on his bike. He was a bad kid Was,

-Daps, anikis, s'all la. We go ridin. Let's checkout the potholes-

He was a bad kid Was. He was an A.B. Cee D., kid. Some say Was was a bit desi cuz of his daddy. Was would bounce his ball on the way to the George Jay hoops and snicker at the injured in accidents. They was always crashing shit roun that school. Was was getting an audience alla. He was a star ego trippin lil chicas with his tricks and kicks. He'd got his cut off jersy and boing it, supreme levitatin, with magnificances, up way to magnetized hoops. Bouncicism, a chronic condition resultin in derivations of 25-oH, b-ball, white/Black helium physics on the daily existence of the feelers for the love of Was' big bad bouncalogical ego.

The makin of a yänkee manga hero

Reading from cover to cover

Hook ups...

Survival and the streets of Victoria

Done call no cops

Was in groups homes by 7; was slangin ganj at 11. Was drinkin by 13. Was ready for rehab by 14. Got out on his own last year and was looking to keep far from juvi. So he found a jewell at a work experience net space. Using his time, well, Was studied through the al qaeda training manual so he could adapt this city — use it, duck it, pipe rock it, get free internet hookups and endure on the streets of Victoria. Was had gonna homie town WyFi.

He was a bad kid and always smelled of resin and bubblegum.

Philosophies of existence and foodbanks broadcasted like Buster and the Big Five

...from hiz to the other flat and then back to video chill spots and poolhalls woht fuzzied signals.

Could he, a likkle waddy, currupt the sytem which had tried to make a bitch out of him.

Check the signals

Woht's the weight of the W.H.I.R.L.,

rewind and break the beat of pimpers on choppers Gunzles, chugs, kids, niggaz and coppers

= overseers

Whoopins and the sound of his peoples

Memorize the pages of his manual

Hoops and spinners

He burned the boogiedown, bumped it and won

Stall and pop into a helicopter

Where to locate

Relocate

And jack in

TIZIANA LA MELIA & VANESSA DISLER

Case Studies:

Spinner-ing / Emmy Hennings, Tears (I, writing) / Cixous, Clouds (or sickness) / Virginia Woolf, and Decreation / Simone Weil

Case Studies is a reflection on figures such as performer and poet Emmy Hennings (1885-1948) and singer Karen Carpenter (1950-1983). The script had been previously recorded and was played from a cassette. Music composed of samples and analogue synth tones was mixed in and out of the reading. Each case study collaged quotations, confessions, poems and correspondence thinking through feminism. The work was inspired by dream diaries and Anne Carson's essay "Decreation: How Women Like Sappho, Marguerite Porete, and Simone Weil Tell God."

The performance was made for "Crystal Tongue," an exhibition organized by Amy Kazymerchyk at Exercise Projects in Vancouver, which was staged in conversation with the Lacan Salon's LaConference.

activated curtain by La Melia (entitled Silk Clock), cassette tape player, synthesizer, mixing console, two microphones, paper, paint, baby blue jean tuxedos, white nurse sneakers, 20 minutes, 2013. Documentation by Dennis Ha.

Case Studies

- . Spinner-ing
- Tears
- 3. Clouds
- 4. Decreation

Emmy Hennings / Spinner-in

What we waiting for some last fling
At the diacheight of ever passing day
We dread us sleepless and annot pray.
Sunshine we hate, it doesn't mean a thing.

We never pay attention to the mail.
The pillow we sometimes favour with a silent
All-knowing smile, between its of violent
Activity to shake the fever chill.

Let ourers join the le to survive
We rush helpler ward through this life,
Dead to the deckness just keeps coming on our feet.
The blackness just keeps coming down in sheets.

Jan 16.

"Uexkull discusses the production of the spiders web as a kind of spatial cour the movements of the fly. The web is not entirely comprehensive, and its form is y explained unless we understand its relation the fly. The thre must be both strong enough to catch the predator's p et invisible enoug! prey to be unable to see them. There are, for example kinds of thread in ever smooth radial threads that the spi able to stand cky parallel d spin from threads that function to catch flie other prey). The of the net, ite holes, and gridding contrapuntal to the w , equally, the fly, th and the spider for upling, a milieu qua vely inducing and selec specific pairing on. The "properties of lifeless things" like the web "in nes contrapuntal esign of living things

19. I wasn't really that surprised to get your answer phone on Thursday night when I called back, (April 6, 10.45 p.m.) the way you'd asked me to, just short of 24 hours later.





Broom Emotion You were the strands of hair Unplaited to brush (the hugging grid-) Across my forehead Broom Emotion you are a purring diary, you are like petting a cat like petting a cat Broom Emotion if I wear my silk pants I have to draw resist around you Otherwise you will bleed weep A spider web along the lines gridlines Emotion, you are a broom That I hold in my hand To press a feeling, Not a bleeding heart, but A dog receiving scents along a crooked line Broom Emotion a structure bemoaned unbraided may silk clocks mustard slacks how are you? Broom Emotion a curtain Poem I couldn't fit the sleep, the stream of dabs and blabs in the two bedroom room motion oom tion



clouds, or a net, or the archer up there waiting for him, he dropped everything and fell back down to a series. And Mandelstam and Bely, one suspended on the other. Lash and tear I want to weep. I want to take note of this tear. The poem had a strange voice. As though it had a teardrop on its tongue Orelic as access. Feb 13. The scene is a sketch from an explorer's notebook ... alive? on a stained yellow page I told him in a letter to use the thoughts in the notebooks however he liked: woman and the classic sports car are very much alike" - pa Yayoi Kusama illness begain in childhood with visions that included recurred, analysis and proliferating dots, nets and flowers that threatened to overtake excels But to leave this brief description, the most ordinary symptoms be these, the back which is almost perpetual, the skin is many times rough. the arms, knees, and knuckles. The midriff and heart-strings do ben and because vapour or fume is sthred, flicth upward, the heart itself heats, a see group and the state of th praceluduntur, ut difficulter possit ab uteri strangulatione decent like has a reddit, aliis exiguum, acre, biliosum, lotium flavum. They company in their heads, about their hearts, and hypochoadrics, and as have sometimes ready to swoon, their faces are inflamed, see an action of the state of the swoon of the state of the state of the swoon of t sleep, terrible dreams in the night, subvention pages of very perverse conceits and opinions. 2033 depends of man and man an loath, dislike, disdain, to be wear of every short devoid of counsel, apt to week and works assessed to be supported by the support of delight in authing for the time. but have to be showned a more as and a and an long as this viewed break too be made, so when



A Peter Culley Tribute

Able to see the town that surrounds & destroys us can offer solace, i.e. these buildings could be the houses of those we love, if anyone lived there.

— from "Gin & Lime" (1980)

PETER CULLEY

Dog Days

7" 45 radio version (from Hammertown: The Mixes)

You'd think the boys at the towing company would be *glad* to see their girlfriends (Wednesday afternoon, sweet half-cloudy scented August) but they won't climb down or let go of their pneumatic bolt tighteners long enough to discuss *who* said what to *who* last weekend on the innertubes that flattered *them* but made us look like our dads, boobs up on the lounger & these maroon uniforms itch more & more as this threadbare summer goes on & on & wears out its trucker hat & welcome mat.

(ca. 2013)

PETER CULLEY AND ELISA FERRARI

Three Acrostics

"A year or so ago, after concluding a long project and in an aimless, experimental spirit, I began to write acrostics. In search of outside stimulus I asked my friend Elisa Ferrari, an Italian artist living in Vancouver, to provide me with both phrases in English to form the acrostics and Italian words for each of the phrases' letters. The introduction of so much new and frankly exotic vocabulary into my previously monolingual practice proved to be highly generative. By the time I had finished looking up and familiarizing myself with the words in Barbara Reynolds' great 1962 Cambridge Italian-English Dictionary the poems seem to complete themselves; each was written within a day of receiving the words, often within an hour or two.

I would then send the resulting text to Elisa, who would "correct" them as much as possible—lining up tenses and genders—and, as the project evolved, translate such parts into Italian as seemed appropriate to her.

Though in time the words provided by Elisa could became more obscure and hard to work with, these further restrictions could slow but never derail the almost automatic improvisational working out of each poem's internal logic, which seemed to precede my involvement. The knowledge, too, that the poems as I left them would still be incomplete—subject to further alteration—added to the erosion of authorial control which gave the project its momentum. (...)"

—Peter Culley [The Capilano Review 3.23, Spring 2014]

Piscator and Viator for Izaak Walton

Plinio didn't care much for navigation: these islands are here because Insisto they are here, floating forever any Scolaro with a chunk of chalk & two good eyes knows this. Cattolico for the time it took our fingers to dry, people knew A noi! From the trailing paper, blue trail too of Tabacco through islands & traffic & over benches deserted Ora, all those ovals scattered against the grid. Rosso sky at night meant just the opposite,

Alfiere of I know not what, Nano structures bound with voices? Dopodomani ripening a black

Viadotto plum screaming at everything but crows? Intromesso with the sun's scan?
A te, rosso sky above the arena with a
Torrente of green crystal on the horizon,
Apposi the last soft particles of this mnemonic
Racchiuso in every sleeping breath.

Ridiculous Object

Rischio of sleep, of waking up & sitting up, of dreaming Inoppugnabile whole room into existence without a floor, Dondoli gently on your heels as Incisive irresponsibilities hover like little ships Centrali to the argument Un'estate you remember as it happens Lupino shapes hexagons sweet-pea lozenges Ormai in the rising heat the ravens find Un blue envelope of drop & drag, a Sfera in the brush opens defined by your wings.

Osservai until the last star ate the last planet, Barba crackling in permafrost, Jet lag of an astronaut E the solid mental block of an oak table. Canino lopes gently in & out of scale a light Trema as high branches creak.

Revolutionary Impatience for Hammertown

Riassettare the categories is great & all
Eccetto we'll need a bigger wall
Vegetale Kingdom filed under "semi-animate" an
Omuncolo in a pea-patch fetching vetch,
Logotipo buckle lightning strikes strictly Elvis TCB
Urge to let the jars spill over for once
Tracolla bent from leaning too far back during
Interlocutorio spells & spaces
Orali pleasures carried by drizzle
Naumachia between gulls & crows in the empty pool
Approdo of convenience for smuts & crumbs
Riassettare shit the wind can't be bothered with.

Innavigabile path keeps taking me back to the same fence Matricole hedges & ledges I crawl through Piroetta drop & roll & back into the traffic Attendo but for this mostly listen one wrong move & Tostata fast yes but never silent never without smell Inebetiti containers of soft air through a drone's eye Enfasi scratches exploded furniture Nesso of fences they worked around the creek Costruisco a nest on top of another nest Elimino the map work the perforations.



photo of Peter Culley's tokens bag, Elisa Ferrari, 2015

Peter Culley at the Transparency Machine, 1991

PRESENTED BY LOUIS CABRI

In Ottawa, Ontario, Rob Manery and I ran, with our poetry magazine, *hole*, a poetry event series called The Transparency Machine, and Peter Culley presented in it on Nov 2, 1991, at Gallery 101. Peter selected texts to contextualize his poetry (this was the simple idea of the series), and we distributed those texts in newsletter form weeks before his event. The event was an informal discussion during which Peter projected his texts with the aid of an overhead projector. What follows are the invitation card to Peter's event, three of his six selected texts including from his 1987 chapbook *Natural History (after Gilbert White)* (Fissure Books, ed. Susan Lord), and a photo Rob took of Peter reading. The Transparency Machine event series idea has continued over the decades under different names and in other cities, most recently in Vancouver through the Kootenay School of Writing with additional help by co-curators Ted Byrne, Listen Chen, Dorothy Trujillo Lusk, Donato Mancini, Cecily Nicholson, and UNIT/PITT Projects.

— Louis Cabri

PETER CULIEY

THE TRANSPARENCY MACHINE

2:30 pm Gallery 101 319 Lisgar St.

READING

8:30 pm Arts Court Library 2nd Roor, 67 Nicholas St.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2, 1991

AUTHOR OF-Twenty-one Natural History & Fruit Dots

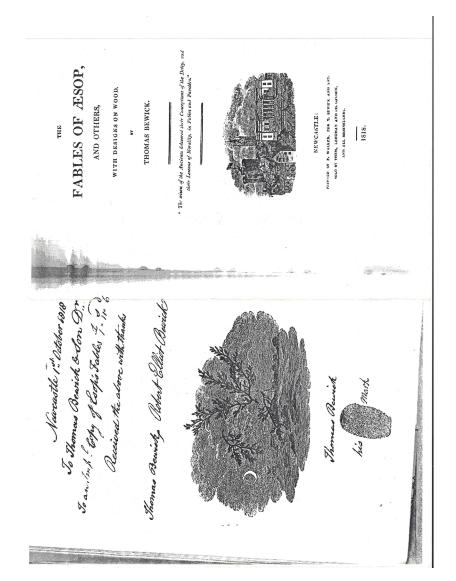
PRESENTS excerpts of-

The Fables of Aesop (Thomas Bewick, 1818)
The Naturalist's Journal, Gilbert White
Natural History, Peter Culley
Sound as Thought, Clark Coolidge
The Principles of Psychology, William James
"The Climax Forest," Peter Culley

NOTE: Double reading Friday night November 1st: DENNIS TOURBIN & DENNIS DENNISOF, Arts Court Library, 2nd Floor, 67 Nicholas,

NEXT TRANSPARENCY MACHINE GUESTS: ALAN DAVIES (Saturday November 16) & MICHAEL GOTTLIEB (Sunday November 17).

EWG gratefully acknowledges the support of GALLERY 101, ARTS COURT, THE CARTIER HOUSE INN and CKCU-FM. Further Info: 234-0871/230-6981.



A Peter Culley Tribute

to have one of his eyes put out, knowing that of con-

FABLES.

sequence his companion would be deprived of both.

THIS Fable is levelled at two of the most odious passions which degrade the mind of man. In the exness in the misery and the misfortunes of others, and pines and sickens at their joy; and avarice, unblest tremes of their unsocial views, envy places its happi-

APPLICATION.

amidst its stores, is never satisfied unless it can get all to itself, although its insatiable cravings are at once

unaccountable, miserable, and absurd.



THE PORCUPINE AND THE SNAKES.

leave them their hole to themselves. No, said he, let a nest of Snakes to give him admittance into their snug cave. They were prevailed upon, and let him in accordingly; but were so annoyed with his sharp prickly ance, and intreated the Porcupine to withdraw, and them quit the place that dont like it; for my part, I A Porcupiue, wanting a shelter for himself, begged quills, that they soon repented of their easy compliam well enough satisfied as I am.

APPLICATION.

any degree of friendship, alliance, or partnership with any person whatever, before we have thoroughly con-THIS Fable points out the danger of entering into sidered his nature and qualities, his circumstances, and



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THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

Ox, being hungry, came near, and offered to 'eat of ing at him, would not suffer him to touch it. Upon the hay; but the ill-natured Cur getting up and snarlwhich the Ox, in the bitterness of his heart, said, A curse light on thee for a malicious wretch, who will A Dog was lying upon a stall full of hay, neither eat hay thyself, nor suffer others to do it.

APPLICATION.

evolent, and ill-natured a disposition, that they will even punish themselves, rather than put forth a finger to serve any one. It gives them a malignant kind of pleasure to have it in their power to cause trouble and THERE are men in the world of so snarling, ma-



serves.

Hosting about like are eliconered white, in the immone of man

charitable visits which are made to many sick people, proceed from much the same motive with that which induced the hungry Wolves to make their enquiries after the sick Ass, namely, that they may come in for some share of their remains, and feast themselves upon the reversion of their goods and chattels. The sick man's heir longs for his estate; one friend waits in anxious expectation of a legacy, and another wants his place; it, however, does not unfrequently happen, that the mask of these selfish visitants, and their counterfoit sorrow, are seen through, and their impertinent officiousness treated with the contempt it so justly de-

NATURALIST'S JOURNAL

poor dams continue to feed the Off. 24. The dams continue to feed the little martin in the nest at Burbey's with assiduity !

0g. 25. There are two young marrins in the nest. Og. 26. No young marrins to be seen in the nest. nor old ones round it.

Off. 17. Young martins, & their dams again. Wood-cock on the down. Bro. Ben, & wife, & Hannah left us, & went to Newton.

Off. 28. There are now apparently three young martins in the nest nearly fledged.

martins still in their nest; The young martins sur ... At them. Dr Chandler saw four hawk-The young martins remain. at least some of them. Od. 29. Off. 30.

The young martins not seen in their ing round the plestor. nest: dams about.

berries, & one doz. of smooth smbet, from Armstrong, in the quarters of the garden. Gathered-in the grapes: decaying. Two rills wan now into my Nov. 2. [Newton] The late rains have not had any influence yet on my well-water, which is very low, & foul. Snow on the Sussex downs. Nov. 4. [Selborne] Grey, gleams. Snow gone. Planted one doz. of med hairy goose-The young martins are out: one was found dead this morning in the parsonage garden. Nov. 1. Nov. 8.

of the fruit-border; & tulips along the broad walk.
Planted winter-cabbages. Poratoes dug up.
Nov. 13. Thunder in the night. Thomas heard Planted a row of Hyacinths on the verge well, the water of which begins to get clear. Nov. 9.

gallons of brandy from London. Well rises very fast. the Portsmouth evening gun.

No. 29. Put a large cross on the hemitage."
A runfe-hunter tryed my tall hedges, & found some Mr & Mrs Edma White came.

bulbs of those peculiar plants, which have neither TIMOTHY

roots, nor branches, nor stems.

De. 1. Mr & Mn Ed. White left us. The Hermitage, new capped with a coat of thatch, & embellished with a large cross, makes a very picturesq object on the hanger, & takes the eye agreeably.

Snow covers the ground, snow shoe deep. Cut down, & covered the artichokes: covered the rhubarb plants; & the lettuces under the fruit-wall, & the spinage lightly with straw. Ground very wet. Farmer Tull plants Dec. 7.

Butts-close with hops.

Der. 8. Timothy has laid himself up under the hedge against Benham's yard in a very comforrable, saug manner: a thick tuft of grass shelters his back, & he will have the warmth of the winter sun.

Der. 16. Swept-up the leaves in the walks.
Der. 17. Hadd frost, very white, boys slide. Snipes
come up from the forest along the meads by the sides
of the faream. Hardly here & there a wood-cock to

Dec. 20. Saw lately a white, & a yellows wagrail about the Well-head rivulet. No farther north than [Newton] Dark & cold, frost. [Selborne] Mr Churton came from Rutland wagtails, withdraw, & are never seen in the Dec. 21.

Dec. 23.
Oxford. winter.

from Gilbert Journals

8

April 4

New mown, sedgd, tickle of pollen at base of skull, premonitory, the way network whitensall the fields. Easter, Lily, congregated houses well'd up, out of the past a mouthful of sherbet fountain foam, rusty pop, gothic coxdery, this and that until These, & around the corner & down, hieroglyph on diversion, sulphur on foremoon, at what point was facing. Sleep a series of connected dots, opens on bleached patio—in like a ladder out like a fire escape. Buzz of violins in cleaming, intend to replace other function, a second movement will not be necessary. Reflective pavement, punctuated THUS.

Peter C., Natural From History

Mai

Geographic hinge swings out on disappeared block, spice inversion heavy on lungs, enters newspaper three-quarters returned to element. Brace of matterss against smithrite, tortoise does not appear, at times almost dusty, half-turn of recognition. Arrival anticipated by half-burnt rock cake. A watched space never matteralises; caught with fist in honey-jar, cops to lesser, a hunch that entered the repertoire. Male yew trees shed their farina in clouds, foghorn assures pedestrians but is otherwise scenic only, cherry blossom rolled between palm drops but does not stop.



COLIN SMITH

Dear All:

Peter Culley was a person of supreme pleasures.

There are many wretched clichés about people whose anima is organized around appetite, and I'll try to duck them all by saying that Pete (he was always a Pete to me), unlike a lot of hedonists I've met, was a very generous soul. As much as he loved being turned on by the things of this world, he was equally keen to turn others on to things that would have great gravity for *them*. He had good reads on people, so a gift from Pete tended to be salutary.

Anyone who was given a mixtape (or, later, a mix CD) assembled by DJ Culley knows this.

I met Pete quite soon after moving to Vancouver at the end of May 1987. I had met two of his oldest friends—Dorothy Trujillo Lusk and Kevin Davies—the previous year in Toronto. I'd come to hate the lonely cold hustle that was Toronto. Kevin and Dot suggested I follow them back to their home place, and I gathered my nerve and showed good sense for a change and did so. It radically changed my life. I fell in right away with the Kootenay School of Writing and its allies, which was a terrific unlearning and relearning process for a bad Lyric poet from Ontario.

My first reading in Vancouver came about courtesy of Peter Culley, and the kindness of that has stuck with me. He was curating an evening of alternate poetries at the Western Front. End of October 1987, me and Deanna Ferguson and Dan Farrell and Susi Milne and Rhoda Rosenfeld and Dennis Denisoff, ten minutes each. *In no way* did he have to invite me onto that bill—my poems then sure didn't justify it; I was in a delicate post-

dawn of destroying bad, meagre Lyric work and trying to write different and interesting Language stuff. But that night went a long way toward welcoming me into my scary new home.

Pete was an indefatigable *talker*. A really smart slow cooker of what he constantly took in, so that hanging out with him could function as a kickass tutorial except it was highly informal, smoked a lot of mentholated cigarettes, had a fleet touch with substantially filthy jokes, and bitched maximally about summertime heat.

He loved dancing. Picture this big guy slugging beer and working his funky shuffle at a KSW post-reading boombox switch-on or an art show opening afterparty.

Pete Culley was my enthusiastic introduction to Miles Davis (*Sketches of Spain*), Sonic Youth (*Goo*), and Robert Aickman's elegantly bizarre stories. I can't imagine that everyone else doesn't also have a shortlist (maybe a lengthy one) of critically luminous things they became aware of because Pete helped it into their sentience.

I can't imagine, as well, that I haven't forgotten to credit Pete with other somethings here. Ach, age over distance multiplied by dissolution, *merde*.

Other memories? 1) Pete sitting in meditative pleasure while listening to Kraftwerk's *Computer World*. 2) During a weekend when I went over to Nanaimo to visit him and Daph (his life partner, Daphne Samuel), being shown the fine French noir film *Bob le Flambeur*, feasting well, and traipsing at length through semi-rural South Wellington. 3) Pete's constitutional inability to *ever* find the garbage pail with the peeled cellophane from his cigarette packs. 4) During a reading, the blazing laughter of Kevin Davies as Pete ends a poem with the phrase "Christ's blood." (That poem is "A Blue Fog You Can Almost See Through," eventually collected in his mythologically obscure book *The Climax Forest*. Vancouver: Leech Books, 1995.)

I hope I shan't dishonour Pete's poems by being brief here about them (I feel the necessity to commemorate the Culley *soul* in this instance, plus I ain't no scholar). The mature Culley poems came slowly and he was not prolific. He worked with exquisite care to fabricate a meandering kind of text that was part-Lyric and part-Language, all elements in acute balance with one another. It's an enviable style and demands serious reflection from any reader, as it must have demanded infinite bird-dogging from its author. One of the things I like best about Pete's poems is the humorous tussle of detail between country life and city times. He is a rare writer to insist on having both the rural and the urban in his poems. (His photos, too, swivel off this tension. Urban junk on forest floors. His photoblog, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, provides evidence.)

Pete loved visual art and he eventually became a piss-elegant art critic, as well. In the twin worlds of Verse and Image, there must now be batches of us wandering around in shock at his abrupt death. We have lost a friend and a maker and an advocate for the seriously smart and sensuous life.

That fluting voice (frequently given to laughter) is no more. In my long exurb of a Winnipeg life, I shall miss him harder.

Yours, in sorrow, Colin Smith

ROLF MAUER

Peter Culley, Pleasure Poet

Because he lived there for a while, Peter Culley would usually end up back at 1851 Adanac Street at some point whenever he was in Vancouver. And because I happened to be there one night for a party at Lisa Robertson and Dan Farrell's place after a Kootenay School of Writing event some time in the early 1990s, we happened to meet. Someone said something about the music; music was something that Peter happened to know quite a lot about. I liked that he talked about *Funkentelechy vs. the Placebo Syndrome* as if was uncontroversially capital-A Art; we got onto something else, and the conversation and friendship went from there, episodic but continuous, until last week.

Not just our musical tastes, but a certain otherness too that we must have sensed in one another brought us together. Just the fact of it; our othernesses were of a different order. His was expressed in an unease in Vancouver (that never left him) and the KSW writing scene, and grew out of his working-class, Army brat, Nanaimo-Harewood background, which seemed to make him feel more of an outsider in Vancouver than being a poet and intellectual ever did in South Wellington.

I had read and been thrilled by his two 1980s chapbooks, *Fruit Dots* and *Natural History*, and so I was a bit of a fan too that night. (A long time later Culley allowed that he had been embarrassed by my praise and hadn't felt able to tell me then that "he hadn't written a word" of the poem I was raving about, *Fruit Dots*, that the entire thing had been composed of phrases lifted from a 19th century botany text. Well, Miles Davis didn't write most of the songs on those LPs either.)

Culley's poems, which counted on the reader's sheer pleasure in the text for their effect, stood out against the Spartan architecture of much of the work issuing from the poetic avant-garde whose Vancouver outpost KSW was, and it felt like a guilty pleasure. The room that Culley gave in his poetry for pleasure, and for the pleasures afforded by an "older" poetry, had a parallel in the way another poet in the room, Lisa Robertson, infused her own work with beauty and the personal. Both writers were bending if not breaking clubhouse rules; I wonder if that was an element in the improbably solidarity between these two rather different writers. In any case, over the years Robertson proved one of Peter Culley's best readers (her essay "Interval, Diastem: Politics of Style in Peter Culley's Parkway," originally published in *Toward. Some. Air.*, edited by Fred Wah and Amy De'Ath, Banff Centre Press, can also be read in this issue).

Peter Culley emerged from, instead of into, the West Coast literary mainstream, in the early 1980s. Jack Hodgins had been a high school teacher, and early mentor; the painter Mina Totino and the poet Kevin Davies were classmates. His elders saw Culley's promise and his first book was named *Twenty-One* in part because that's what he was when Oolichan Books issued it. Culley later more or less disowned that book, not because of any bad publishing experience, but because even as it was going to the printer his poetry was turning away from the first-person I of those poems to the camera I at the centre of all his later work.

Culley moved to Vancouver with Kevin Davies in the late 1970s, where they encountered Gerry Gilbert and through him generally fell in with what their Island preceptors would have thought of as a very bad crowd, presumably their purpose in moving to Vancouver in the first place. That Prince George poetry conference with Robert Creeley in 1981 was another big thing. Culley started associating with the Kootenay School of Writing (behind another important conference in 1985) and its Artspeak offshoot (at first), and the constellation of artists, writers, teachers, publishers and curators that thrived in those spaces.

Susan Lord and Lary Bremner published his chapbooks, *Natural History* and *Fruit Dots*, which I encountered at Octopus East on Commercial Drive. Steven Forth was set to launch his new press, Leech Books, with *The Climax* Forest, Peter's new book and his first since *Twenty-One* fifteen years earlier. This would have been in 1995; something shifted in the world; after only a few boxes of *The Climax Forest* were shipped the rest of the stock went into storage in an industrial park near the Fraser River. A distribution deal with New Star got a few more cartons into the world before one day the calls for more books from storage went unanswered.

The experience seemed to dispirit Culley; so did, over the years, the drip, drip of rejection letters from arts councils; so did the news. *The Simpsons* helped. For long stretches Peter wrote little or no poetry, turning to art essays (the fine arts juries didn't have the same problem recognizing him as a writer) on, among others, Claudia Hart, Stan Douglas, Kelly Wood, Carrie Walker, Roy Arden, and Mark Soo, maybe the last piece of writing he completed. For a while he was on *PWs* roster of anonymous reviewers, corresponding to a period of renewed interest in the great Cham. It's entirely possible that in his lifetime Culley was cited as often as "Publishers Weekly" as under his own name.

Peter listened to a lot of music, seemingly able to listen to it in a lot less time than it takes to perform, as if he could listen to it in compressed format too, even as he was watching every interesting movie ever made, usually for the third or fourth time, hanging out with grandchildren, rearranging objects in the house, walking Shasta, or having visitors, which he was constantly. He travelled, when he could.

And he read. His library made you want to spend weeks in it; the fact that he had a good idea of what was in each of those books more so. If he needed something he'd call Daphne, who worked at the university library, and she'd usually have it when she got home around five. This was before the Internet.

Hammertown, when it came out in 2002, reprinted (slightly revised and reordered) the final section of *The Climax Forest*, the beginning of his long-term "Hammertown" project that he completed in 2013 with *Parkway*. The new book also contained a suite of six poems, "Snake Eyes", into which he interpolated a sequence of small black and white photographs. Peter had always been taking pictures, I realized one day; so unobtrusively that it had taken me years to notice. He'd always been interested in the work his artist-friends were doing, and in fine art photography generally; W.G. Sebald was a thing; what might happen if he were to drop a few photos into his poems, not to illustrate them as such but to stand as parts of the poem itself? In time he would dispense with the poem part.

Peter's practice of keeping the people (just) outside the frame of his photos, which might be seen as an aesthetic move, was for him primarily social and political, and reflected an essential respect for family, friends, neighbours, and classmates, solidarities inculcated in him long before I met him. His class consciousness was instinctive, and not ever in his interactions with his South Wellington and Nanaimo neighbours did I detect condescension on anyone's part. Peter's occupation and erudition didn't seem any more remarkable to his neighbours as far as I could tell than if he had been a welder, letter carrier, schoolteacher, a clerk at the Co-op, or unemployed. His make-up included a contrarian streak, and he could present himself as a bloody-minded Tory, foil, or goad, to my own dour Marxist proclivities. But at home he was what I would call a staunch Tommy Douglas CCFer.

An invitation from Reid Sheir to write an exhibition catalogue essay for a show at Presentation House Gallery in 2009 changed Culley's life in an unexpected way. One result was *To The Dogs*, a book published by Arsenal Pulp Press. Another, much more significant result was Culley's decision to acquire Shasta, brindled star of countless Culleys, a kind of Catahoula hound they found on Used Nanaimo. From a cat person to a dog person: there are few bigger life changes.

Peter was pleased by the popularity of his photos but the contrast between his reception throughout his working life as a writer, where he was a truly rare and remarkable talent, and now as an artist must have baffled him, and is surely a thesis topic for a doctoral candidate in sociology.

But those shows at Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver and the Nanaimo Art Gallery did more than gratify. Many more people responded to those shows, and to his stream of photos on *Mosses From an Old Manse* (and Facebook), than read his, or almost anyone's for that matter, poetry books. Every artist feeds on that response, which is called "validation," and in Peter it fed an appetite for trying out new things.

He had the guilty pleasure of seeing peoples' faces drop when he told them that the Hammertown project was finished with *Parkway*, while leaving hanging whether he was working on anything at all. In fact Peter in the last few years had entered a new phase of creative energy, much of it flowing into a collaboration with Vancouver-based visual artist Elisa Ferrari. An early shoot from this collaboration appears in *TCR* 3.23, Spring 2014. The abrupt interruption of their collaboration is one of the more keenly felt losses resulting from Peter's much too early departure.

[note: The Cascadia Poetry Festival, held in Nanaimo just three weeks after his passing, opened with a tribute to Peter Culley. You can watch it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycFyc_AZONE]

Revised June 5, 2015.

GEORGE BOWERING

Peter Culley lived in a hard place, bit down hard and poesis was there, light shining on this side.

We call it light, we who need what these younger bring, at their cost back out of the dark.

LISA ROBERTSON

Interval, Diastem: Politics of Style in Peter Culley's Parkway

ONE

During a pause in reading Peter Culley's Parkway, I step out the kitchen door to play with my dog; the yard sycamore's autumnal crackle, underslung by a low military plane whine and distant crop-duster, unspools in Culley's intricate jumpcut. Central France sonically doubles Vancouver Island. I seem to have brought his close listening outside with me, so that I now hear in the grain of Culley's vocables: "the filament of the weedwhacker / strums hard but damped." The poem's language and the ambient quotidian move in simultaneous tracks, so that two fields of attention braid or entwine in my experience of reading Culley, troubling or ruffling all the potential referentiality of each—referentiality to the complexity of economies: rural, urban, light industrial, post-agricultural, high or low (to the extent that such designations still hold at this late edge of capital), so class-marked, institutionally enabled or curtailed. Listening in Culley's work is an economy that, while seemingly as at ease with its demotic setting as it is with a profound literariness, subtly undercuts itself with a sonically installed irony.

By irony I mean the reasoned and affective acknowledgement of a potent ambivalence: the positions from which we speak and write are complicit with histories that we would often rather repudiate or negate, and yet not only our aesthetic experience and judgements, but our varying abilities to position ourselves as subjects, can't be separated from our historical implicatedness. The problem has deeply installed itself, to the point of silencing many writers. How do we continue, given the profound and ongoing violence of language's institutions? I make this swift drop from a sonic phenomenology into the ethical stance of poetry because I feel that

this is what has been deeply at stake in the twenty-year span of Culley's extraordinary long poem, *Hammertown*. The poet's listening, as situated and improvisational as it is, opens outwards and across the lexicons of the earth neighbourhood towards subjectivities and collectivities that are always historical, always incomplete. The poem plays out a sonic shaping and interrogation of this incompleteness, as the musical soloist forays out from the collective texture of the improvised composition. In these poems, style, replete with its figures—irony, end-rhyme, homage—performs a political query, where politics is the province of shared or competing subjectivities.

Parkway is the third and reputedly final book of Culley's ambitious project, which was begun as early as 1993, when the first two sections, "Greetings from Hammertown" and "The Provisions," were printed as an artist's book by Cleave Press. In 1995 the two poems were reprinted, along with four newer ones, in The Climax Forest, a collection from the short-lived Leech Books, published by Stephen Forth in Kitsilano. Then the original six Hammertown poems were printed again, in the eponymous 2003 book from New Star Books, the East Vancouver-based poetry and leftist political press started in Kitsilano in the 1970s by the York Street Commune, and run by Rolf Mauer since 1990. The second volume of Hammertown, The Age of Briggs and Stratton, also from New Star, appeared in 2008, and now this final volume has appeared, in 2013. Such material and social specificities of publication are important to mention, because Culley has chosen to place himself as a committedly regional poet of situated materiality and comradery, whose poems are often in direct address with friends, neighbours, and colleagues, other books and historical writers and movements, and the trees, birds, and development plans of his province. His modest freelancer's home in the quasi-rural Vancouver Island ex-mining town of East Wellington, near Nanaimo, has permitted him the ideological freedom to rigorously critique the various hegemonies and centrisms of even the most avant-garde cultural formations. What is East Wellington to a Torontonian, to a Conceptualist, to an Eco-poet? Culley crafts an ornate critical agency in his very consciously framed pastoral margin.

All the arcane details of Culley's island base find an elegant echo in the name and play of Hammertown, a fictional place discovered in the pages of the French Oulipo writer Georges Perec's 1978 novel Life: A User's Manual. The novel is a representation of a Parisian apartment building; its lapidary descriptions include the histories of all of the building's inhabitants, present and past, their decors and their transformations, and the gossip linking the ensemble. Bartlebooth, the building's landlord, is a wealthy eccentric who, having learned the skills of a watercolourist in his youth, has travelled to 500 seaports all over the globe in order to make detailed watercolour renderings of each, which he will then send back to France to a master puzzle-maker whose task it is to laminate each paper image to a wooden backing, then jigsaw it to a 750-piece picture-puzzle. After twenty years of wandering, Bartlebooth returns to Paris and sets up in his apartment building where he painstakingly reassembles each puzzle. The place Culley claimed as Nanaimo's doppelgänger is one such port, one puzzle: "it was a fishing port on Vancouver Island, a place called Hammertown, all white with snow, with a few low houses and some fishermen in fur-lined jackets hauling a long, pale, hull along the shore." Bartlebooth's eventual plan is to send each of the reassembled images back to its namesake, back to port as it were, where it would be chemically dipped to erase all traces of the image, then detached from the wooden support, leaving only a blank page, the same one the artist had begun with. He dies while finishing the 439th puzzle.

The plot line reads like a pastiche *avant-la-lettre* of Conceptualist procedures, as well as a black farce on Perec's own Oulipian constraints and games, with a Melville-like tint. Bartlebooth dies attempting to finish, while Bartleby the scrivener would simply rather not. And the description of the Hammertown puzzle seems like a faded print of some sub-arctic place, a European cliché of a mythologized Canadian climate entirely unlinked to the temperate coastal rainforest. It's a glorious perversity for Culley to insistently recognize his home in this sparse cold beach of furclad fishermen, as unlike Nanaimo and its temperate rain forest as possible. But for Culley, as for Perec, description is the device that floods the spatial

premise with the richly observed non-sequiturs that transform the text to a productive generator of ironical feint, critique masquerading as comedy, as well as a tender and sometimes lyrical concern to document the disjecta of market centrism.

Such lumpen disjecta appears in the opening lines of the very first Hammertown sequence: "A tim'rous grader halts / before an overflowing ditch, its / big bad boy body slumped / as if thwarted at its gigging" (1). Culley inflects development's banal landscape and its ubiquitous heavy equipment with an archaic poetic contraction, a baroque excess of affect, a metrically emphasized alliteration. He recycles old-world literary cliché to lift the slightness of the image beyond simple signification and towards an almost allegorical grandeur, much as Perec riffed on the new-world cliché in his invented image of Hammertown. For both Perec and Culley, stylistic hyperbole lovingly inflates the quotidian, converting margins to emblems. Culley begins Parkway on similar terms: "A widow's walk with an ashtray; / a "sleeping room" / in the old parlance" (3); we're situated in a theatrical and self-announced archaism of diction, imaginably a voice-over from a latenight screening on Turner Classic Movies or a sprig from an idly-acquired library-cast-off novel—something fashionable in the 1920s, maybe. Such "old parlance" is a recurrent yet inconsistent diction throughout Parkway, tempered by hip hop rhythms, the language of contemporary urban planning, the varied idiolects of an intensely listened-to dailiness. In this sequence too the "r" makes its appearance—"walked past today a grader / working over the loamy slash / like a chimp taking notes" (4). Here again is "old parlance"—the inversion in the opening phrase, "walked today past," a frequent device of Culley's, permits a more textured sound pattern, and importantly announces his non-acquiescence to the plain-speech imperatives of the free verse tradition since Imagism and the early Williams, imperatives that even now very few poets submit to questioning. (Among Culley's contemporaries, notable exceptions would be Lisa Jarnot, whose poems are strongly inflected by the work of mythological poet-thinkers Robert Duncan and Helen Adams, and Lee Ann Brown, who often brings the archaisms of the American ballad tradition into her poems.) While the gleeful artifice of Culley's syntax points to a pre-modernist history of literary style, and the eccentric company of certain of his milieu, it's also part of the vocal play of a writer who simply loves to coax and fiddle with the endless resourcefulness and productiveness of vernacular speech, to make a poem that frames and honours the freedom of that spoken agency. For Culley, the vernacular is a polytemporal resource that turns towards the writer's, and thus a reader's, pleasure.

The smallest phrase can proliferate into such a complex referentiality, where the arcane data of marginalized literary histories jostle against jazz and popular music reference, the lesser figures of British Romanticism (such as woodcut book illustrator Thomas Bewick—"a shaven hedgeloafer out of Thomas Bewick" [4]), and the products and brand-names of late-capitalist entertainment, fast-food, and consumer industries. There's a refusal to rank this very wide lexicon according to any high/low scales of value. This is the quotidian diction of the wide-reading populist who knows that the specificity of any vernacular is the historical material. Insofar as Parkway is a history of the present, and I feel strongly that is one of its important tasks, that history must be anachronic, combining and weaving the wild variability of linguistic traces that move through the mind of any reader, any consumer, as they move also within any poet. This anachronistic historicity has for its precedents Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems* and Ezra Pound's The Cantos. In The Maximus Poems, likewise situated in Olson's hometown of Gloucester, Massachusetts, Gloucester becomes a compositional device for a dynamic exploration of the narratives and economies of maritime historiography, among much else, and in Ezra Pound's Cantos, the Western myth of the voyage of exploration launches into a broad series of quests into economics, the relation of East and West, lyric desire, and the problem of the movement of time in the subject—"And then went down to the ship," the 800-page poem begins. But where these modernist epics in part fix their seriousness through their close relation to the generic tropes and images of classical epic, Parkway begins not with a ship, but a mock-heroic grader.

Here I have tried to indicate the extreme richness and historical reach of Culley's style, not just to point to the ongoing experience of intellectual and sensual pleasure I feel in reading *Parkway*, but because in Culley, poetic style is an approach towards an ethical problem.

Two

1. Through Culley's work, it's possible to think of irony as sincerity's qualifier rather than its opposite. Here sincerity is not a fixed moral value in the guise of an aesthetic, but a thoroughly situated yet moving historical and social stance that makes tactical use of irony to mark the ambivalence, difficulty, complicity, and play of the subject in language:

like the third eye of realism squinting through the low cloud. (28)

2. Another important qualification I find in Culley's work locates itself in the relation between popular and mass culture. Although mass culture strives for, and often, because of its currently superior distributive power, assumes the role of the popular, Culley's poems open a critical view on this faulty elision through their insistently garrulous inclusivity. Every register belongs in the poem. In terms of language, the popular is the zone where the products of capital are rigorously assigned new uses and values, ones that remain contingent and in process. This continuous reassignment is the task of the popular. It is not without dry humour, which is one of its important tools:

Tough to do the working class in wide screen: the interiors don't quite add up, tables bump lumpy chairs bump bumpy walls & let's face it this potato-textured distressed distress is something you don't want to see in letterbox HD — (76)

3. Related to the crucial differentiation between popular and mass culture is the even more vital social space opened between markets and communities in Culley's work. Where mass culture pertains to markets, popular culture is the work of communities. And here it's necessary to insist on community as a contentious, often conflictual or equivocal social grouping whose bonds are the problematic and constantly shifting ones of a collectively produced subjectivity, a subjectivity whose site is not fixed within the person, but produced in the relations among persons: a circulating corporality. Where the movement of money is the agency of the market, the movement of embodied subjectivity is the agency of a community. In a community, agency can move in several directions at once:

Missing though: the persistent sense of misdirection, the relaxation of muscles associated with certain vocabularies, the slow rounding off of matter under successive waves of daylight & water. (84)

4. Language is the charged site of the ongoing struggle between markets and communities. Who shall speak and how, which desires motivate a syntax: for Culley the poem maps a social cathexis, and through this mapping his language explores its fundamental relationship to history as a politics. In this work, the poem is a place where language's historicity is seized for the

duration necessary to inflect the voice with the full potential of its desire. Here desire is how the body, a subject, moves in the time of its community:

An interval then *diastem* as you step through this rip of surface tension into another world — (90)

5. This "other world" is partly the Utopia of the great literary political project set in motion by Thomas More in 1516, then pursued by the radical writers of England's revolutionary 17th Century. Fragments of utopia do glitter through the movements of Hammertown, where, wishfully, in a poem where the utopian concept enters by way of the futuristic design of a Marimekko pullover, "[e]very third car on the monorail is a small library" (12). But Utopia is also the difference, the swerve within the present, the potency of the closely lived and observed quotidian to produce a striated, vivid density. There the sensation of newness shimmers, ghost-like.

—first published in *Toward. Some. Air.* edited by Fred Wah and Amy De'ath, (Banff Centre Press, 2015)

¹ Peter Culley, Parkway (Hammertown, Part 3); (Vancouver, BC: New Star, 2013), 14.

² This passage is cited as epigraph to the first Hammertown book, *Hammertown* (Vancouver, BC: New Star, 2003).

A Letter from the Nineteenth District to Peter Culley (a review of *Hammertown* in verse)

The winter seemed so long this year and the pavement a mile deep plunged to sewers Roman where a seed pearl from my garnet ring rolled then stopped. No beach. I missed the idea of a wooden house, I missed the house also. I missed poignant sheds and alleys narrow roughly paved, as you said, the ad-hoc rivulets that snake past dumpsters. Why do we begin with a season? Rain sounds better through wood. I read Napoleon caused the card catalogue and I thought of you. I must research this, return with a report.

Meanwhile, not knowing thoroughly yet the customs of exchange, I buy fish awkwardly, as the market erupts to Spring. Dear Pete what is chaos? (since I've been reading Epicurus I ask) There's a story—apocryphal perhaps—that as a youth he asked, went unanswered by his tutor, then tipped to physics as other youth confer to sex. I use this word humbly for once, as would a natural scientist.

(even as I write this the fluid of inattention weeps a deep mauve. It's no place for a blackbird)

the hawkers calling Sony, Sony across Maghreb melons mounded pyramidical and tempters jabbing sugar dripping hunks towards our small budgets as flecked beans spill to scarlet radish heaps near flags of ample spriggy underpants: simply to describe the world is impractical and right.

Well Sir, at night the empty market skeletal sketches itself across Place de Joinville. Like a drawing by Klee, the galvanized awning posts glow among black plane trunks. I learned from Carol last week that planes are sycamores. Diseased this year, rotting from the heart out, so the oldest were one cold day tagged and by next morning gone. How odd to wake to chainsaws in Paris! The sawdust heaps of Hammertown perfumed briefly our modest street, and I felt pity briefly gazing at the pithy stumps outside the *Ecole Maternelle*. It was nostalgia in the classic sense naming a condition of horticultural distress, not some sentiment of Literature and habit. At noon the clatter of school lunch

drifts articulate over traffic and the scarlet posters demand a Europe Sociale not only economic: "This is the Moment To Confirm our Refusal of Liberalism Decisively." The streets of the Nineteenth District are a frieze of exile among which I take a place near the Korean Laundromat at the Guimard metropolitan gate of Crimée station.

Well sir, when I read Hammertown I think of Ashbery's Convex Mirror, browse a little there (did I tell you that at our wedding we read "Into the Blue"?) then turn my thoughts to Wordsworth. But having none on my scant shelf (my referents on the other continent remain) I find instead The Biographia of his wilder friend, and skim pleasurably there with my morning tea. These books splay still on the patterned yoga carpet. Beside The Climax Forest my dog sleeps, and twitching, dreams. Those other men are real as Farrell or Davies and like them flicker phrase and diction in the texture of your work, friends co-joining thought to alter some its progress. We cause change by such conveyance

I believe, by mutual craft, and swerve not revolution. Coleridge says Shoemakers make good poems and philosophers.

Your diction's peripatetic. I'll stroll with it and this way my nostalgia quench for an entire spring afternoon attended by your thrumming compilations.

I am sorry to hear there was no general strike
In our province.
Oh—I thought you should know in '68 the boulevard tree-grates worked as shields against police—thus the horticulture of swerve.

I'm glad to see that "House is a Feeling" is printed here.

I have the compact disc you burned in 2001 in an edition of three, giving me the third. Its stuttered syntax helps me write as perhaps you also were inspired one short winter day when rain blurred the dusk and music fogged the windows.

How is Daph? What new books has she

from Malaspina offered?

I have joined no library though I intend to.

I thought of you again when scanning some review—
how words fall in Oppen's late verse
like particles, as if extracted from earlier prolixity
like a culinary essence. I refer to "Snake Eyes"
of course. Or did you use Mallarmean dice
to build your nubby syllabics? And yes I chuckled
when Kevin rubbed up Rousseauesque
against Monseigneur Montaigne's tight suit. Tell me Pete,
what is the minimum? That
you use a word like "wee"
simply pleases me.

As in a velvet painting, you lay your strokes on attitudinal black—sedge, rust, bees, pearly silver, pea-green shit—their melancholic backdrop works a sexual ping into the ornament. It's kitsch yet earnest stuttered, knowing doubt and relapse. Is this Methodist or borrowed French? Well sir? Whence this word tumescent? (Knuckles of Wordsworth Beasties of Olson Bunting's plantlets stuck in your teeth—

What are you but baroque or mannerist?)

You told me in mornings the ladies of England come powder-scented from their tubs to town melting your opened heart as we wondered colonial in the streets of Cambridge What about Veronica Forrest Thomson? How I miss that creamy book still back Canada, pulsing its violet powers. Miss Thomson knew emulation as a critical reduction of adoration—T.S. Wittgenstein and all brewed up with King Derrida Lear. We drank beer with those pale poets (well, usually I had wine) being exotic for them in a Western sense. Despair won't take us. Do you write Drew? I think of the tubs of the ladies of England When a stranger's sudden scent inadvertent greets me in the courteous evening metro. Hello Pete, it's 4:23 pm and "Clean-Up Woman" plays on the stereo while the boulevard

trees sparkle and the men on shaded benches confer gesturing to the boulevard sky when I go to the open window to see the blackbird sing.

Epicurus wrote to Herodotus
"there is an infinite number of worlds."
To this view I closely adhere
though my sensations perceive and describe
just the one
chaotically. Through screen of opinion.
others quietly and agreeably prefer.
Epicurus says because the bodies
of things are infinite, so are worlds
though they do not pertain to us.
I find this idea calming Pete
as scented powders, oddish pigments, these syllables
which outside, lightly in the dusk, limitless
Remix.

—originally published in *The Rain*, Mike Barnholden's review paper, 2004.

CHRIS NEALON From THE VICTORIOUS ONES

11

Peter Culley I thought you should know -

The day after you died I took Parkway with me into the woods

Or, well ... it was Rock Creek Park

I fell asleep contentedly beneath a tree, around the halfway point –

I wasn't dreaming quite - my sleep was not that deep -

But in the quiet I could hear you approach

I heard you telling me that you'd liked reading backwards, as a child

I felt you were describing, in case I wanted to try it, how you'd learned to write those lines like brushed-up nap on a trampled carpet, fresh again –

You know I'll never have your mad skills

But I'm taking you with me into the woods

Peter I bet you knew this let-down post-revolutionary feeling –

This lower-limit-private-perception feeling

This too-too solid flesh / hell is other people / Artaudian hell is my body feeling

Most days these days I've got nothing but my tepid intellectual watchfulness

But sometimes in distraction I get tugged at from behind – tugged at from within this chidakasha backdoor in the mind

I usually ignore it but every now and then I turn the handle and it's like BAM –

a Narnia of forms!

Insubstantial forms -

Peter this is better

It's as though the ache in me to find substantiality subsides –

The ache to find it in boy's bodies – to find it in the firmest earth on which to take a stand

That firm ground would never be enough against the weapon they have stashed in readiness against us – shame –

Those hammer blows -

Those anonymous who-do-you-think-you-are letters from the FBI encouraging revolutionaries to consider suicide –

But we're unjustified

It's like the sword thrust into us would just find ... nothing Like we know our poetry's as nothing to the waves of sound

—originally published by Commune Editions, 2015

LEE ANN BROWN

Two Sonics for Pete

In a Day's Eye

for Pete

As the dog bays on Nelson Ridge I shiver in the lusty month of May, from cold, standing, an ache *Loves me Loves me not* future widowed to self eventide fast falls ivy

dandelion array symmetrical panoply in bird I'd go to the end of the earth for a new word — the madman and the dictionary scribbles the map

So lovely where you once walked alone

red poker whatever lucid the song in the coldframe

like a dog licking her wound until sadly moves on alone with thoughts gyrating in the hallucinatory

line that white haze in the distance it's 1000's of Daisies looking at me

Full Moon Eye

like a bird on the wing from another lifetime shaking the code out of the clear clouds and the door opens into the night wind—side-eye from the fairies on the sideporch air lifts the confidence man — I make haste to write you again said Dr. Johnson to Mr. Boswell, lest my last letter should give you too much pain in the anatomy of melancholic roses — My Dear Cuzzy Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library of the soul now go to it and do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness — there's a sepia ring around your Spontaneous Tenderness

STEPHEN COLLIS

Poem for Peter Culley

Somewhere there's a road under nearly constant construction and you can't walk on it or to it but you can view it—its weathered orange traffic cones and faltering yellow rust machines—from a railway bed the tracks and ties of which have long been removed

Perhaps a dog the colour of your fall photographs accompanies you perhaps the slag heaps of productive systems past swan about dark and quietly foreboding just behind the line of alder trees recent as last month's rent

I think of the faces of Spanish miners

published in today's New York Times Magazine men from the Pozo Santiago mine in Asturias their young faces stained by deep rifts in time looking like the seam they have just had to abandon perhaps to join the holograms protesting in the real streets of Madrid

What use this piece of turf Peter what use if we do not cull it take wild flowers for midsummer frolicks common on even this untenable commons or like weather vanes turn ourselves away creak out of wind words that doff temporality and lawns of luxury to resist go ourselves to ward off wisdoms and camber by the machines of wealth gone sad turntable gone out of doors

Suddenly you realize there's been no soundtrack no musical accompaniment to any of this no Bruckner or Fats Waller the raven dark as coal that's been watching you opens its silent beak wide as the emptied insides of the earth and somewhere out of sight and sound a tim'rous grader slouches into its unfinished ditch while an owl we hadn't noticed until now glides out on its endless lateral hunt

JONATHAN SKINNER

Creaturely Ecopoetics: Walking with Peter Culley

In his late discourse on the autobiographical animal, "And Say the Animal Responded," Jacques Derrida confronts Jacques Lacan's assertion that the animal cannot "cover its traces" with the reminder that none of us, in fact, have power over the fate of our traces. ("Who hath the oracle of his ashes?" asks S.T. Browne.)1 What is and will be the human trace, and what does it mean to write or make traces within the proposed epoch of the Anthropocene, an epoch likely to mark the disappearance of human civilization as we know it? Derrida also said that poetry is the only literature that will survive the destruction of the archives. That was before the archives turned into data clouds. (And before Derrida's poetry hedgehog got run over on the information highway.)² This is not a new question: it only asks large for the species the question of the trace such as vulnerable groups and individuals have always had to ask it. In the Hammertown trilogy, B.C. poet Peter Culley, of South Wellington, Nanaimo, on Vancouver Island, writes within the traces of an erased landscape (rather than within a threatened one), bringing the archive to walks in the landscape's cinders, where "A tim'rous grader halts/ before an overflowing ditch." 3 (The name Hammertown comes from a puzzle mentioned in Georges Perec's Life A User's Manual—depicting a fictive Vancouver Island fishing port.) Not only did industry erase South Wellington's aboriginal landscape, the commodity frontier town itself was, in turn, erased by subsequent waves of abandonment and development. An at least double erasure: "He looked out of the window

> And watched two airplanes Pass each other so that their

Conning trails
created
An enormous X
in the sky, as if
Placing the city
under erasure . . . 4

And yet traces persist, old factory structures embedded in the third growth understory—"The old rail beds are still there, in some towns"5—perfect site for a poet of melancholic disposition, enamored of German Romanticism, eager to lose the madding crowds. In *Hammertown*, however, the landscape is no blank slate, for unrestricted fantasy or nostalgia, nor a token for authentic history of place: "perhaps a bear/ occasionally pads/ Through the low wood, upon/ its shoulders a trumpeting/ Mozartean infant, perhaps/ a starveling deer, coaxed/ From the hills/ by sad necessity."6 In their patent, retooled artifice, the poems are as much passengers between nothing and nothing as any of us:

They skate

who fall so easily
into the deep grey kingdom

of sleep, and dream

an idiot's dream

of order, a bridge
festooned with lights

connecting each to each
across a fearful void—

and wake then

with a start, then

the carriage dark and empty
the nameless city

shattered somehow
into jagged and icy

shards of light, spinning and careening into the darkness.⁷

The poems furthermore are themselves, many of them, traces of walks in the traces in the landscape, which is to say, they are creaturely, like Culley's "delicately staggering Villon," who "leaves perfect raccoon tracks in the spring snow". "Alas, the streets of Hammertown/ are certainly strange, / the few who walk them/ hunched in the posture of exile." To borrow Derrida's words once again, Culley's poems pursue "the intimate relation of the living present to its outside, the opening to exteriority in general." In "Odie Ode," Culley bids farewell to a "dog not native to the valley... fur weatherproofed with/ coal tar & sulphur until only/ a rain of little punches/ sunk into haunches/ can wake the sleeping beast/ from his dream of bacon." Poet and animals are, as Derrida's interpreter Cary Wolfe puts it, "equally subjected to the material conditions of the trace, in a way that only 'the living' can be; that is what it means to be 'mortal,' to be 'fellow creatures,' to be subjected":

He trades places with the cat so that when the gravel trucks gear down or loudly up the cat can watch it pass & he can pretend to read.¹²

What is not shared equally, however, "is the material disposition of that fact in practices and institutions whose effects bear very differently on different sorts of animals, human and nonhuman"¹³: "still better under house arrest// in a postal facility/ than dressed in brocade/ and carried in a cup."¹⁴ Culley's poems are open to the gaze, or more likely sniff, of the other, they earn their freedoms within a lack of the proper that is the lot of the dispossessed—in a place "beyond the folded rocks," where "the Easter Island faces of the dogs/ glare up from helmets filled with milk."¹⁵ At the same time, their utopias are not innocent of differently borne effects, canny of the kind of local politics

that are only learned on foot. Thus the early "Natural History (after Gilbert White)" and the late animal observations: "the sparrow/ squirrel/ standoff in the walnut's big fork re:/ location location location/ but only for about five seconds." 16

For Culley, walking is the human ecology: the movement through an environment whether sinuous or along a rational transect, opens space up to time, and embeds time in space. Walking is the non-directed activity that introduces us to our neighbors, in a way that gives them a chance to look us in the eye, to observe us and see how we move, smell, sound, communicate—and vice versa. Without walking, very little of us gets experienced from the outside, and other creatures have little opportunity to expose themselves. Walking is the mode of transport scaled to the human body. It also, as artist Richard Long memorably demonstrated in 1967, makes a line, tracing the irreversible, time-bound condition of the human metabolism. (Is the phylogenetic path so linear? Let's hope not.) To other species we probably write with our feet, as well as with traces we leave on the air, plants we mark, and such. (Trackers pursue "sign," as if to emphasize the semiotic nature of this tracing.) In some respects, the linear trace of our prints abstracts from and distorts the non-linear interactions making up the ecology of an environment.

Yet poetry's paradigmatic incursions on syntagmatic sequences (the "vertical," stanzaic dimensions of the poem that bend the reading eye away from the line), along with its use of page space as "open form," participate in the non-linearity of ecology. (Nevertheless, later editions of the poems, after *The Climax Forest*, abandon indentations, perhaps to emphasize the *line* of the walk.) Like a transect or (famously) Thoreau's railroad cutting, walking reveals at the same time that it encloses. Poetics of walking range from the minimalist, as in Long's *A Line Made by Walking* or Larry Eigner's "be minimal then . . ." to the extravagant, in the Thoreauvian sense of wandering out of bounds, the picturesque ramble (and the picturesque sense developed by Robert Smithson in his essay on Frederick Law Olmsted, or the "orgies of

scale" he explores in "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan"). Culley's walks are extravagant in the pleasures they take with language, minimalist in the simplicity of their embodied pleasures: "Poplar fluff!"

What does it mean to take poetry for a walk within an epoch likely to mark the disappearance of human civilization as we know it? On this Culley is agnostic. His poems trace the outline of the question within hearing of Derrida's chimerical *animot*—the plural-singular word named a noun "that thinks the absence of the name and of the word otherwise, and as something other than a privation." The final poems of the Hammertown trilogy follow the dog Shasta's "lupine shoulder," through a series of embedded reflections, "a camera that puts the silver/ back into the lake," abandoned "to the runnels & channels/ of a new boundary," in the "double tonk" of human civilization as the *animot* knows it:

The hollow double tonk—timbre somewhere between a Fender Rhodes and a child's knuckle on a picture window—of the raven overhead evokes the tart agnosticism of Dolphy on the '64 Village Vanguard dates, each solo built up from a couple of notes like cell division only faster, flipping like rural real estate, vocalic, a wet knot of material unraveling and then it's laces and then it's a new knot, a little tight which is good . . . ²⁰

*

I will end this necessarily incomplete essay with the transcription of a walk I made with Culley in South Wellington, on the 2nd of June, 2009. The non-italicized phrases are mine, italics Peter's:

There was a mine right under those trees, huh?

The entrance was a sloping entrance from the surface.

And the ravens are, the ravens are on it.

They're not doing anything, I haven't seen the ravens all day, it's just like summer they go to the beach or . . . hot summer day.

Poplar fluff!

How many sort of very quiet conversational tones they have. [Imitates raven, like a horn with a mute.]

Not long after we moved here . . . every day when the train goes by, um, all the dogs bark. Imagine being shocked by the train going by. One day this happened. And it happened again, so that's why this story, which I've been telling this story for years. Which is that about ten seconds after the dogs stopped, all the ravens started making dog sounds, like they were making fun of the dogs. [Imitates ravens imitating dogs.]

Yeah they're mimics, they're more subtle than the mockingbird.

And one day I did it, one day I heard it, and it was like several stages of down the track where you can hear the horn. And about five or ten minute intervals when it was something like . . . and they were doing the sound of dogs barking, in quieting down, like [imitates ravens imitating dogs quieting down], so funny.

No doubt about that. And I've never done anything in all my years in the valley

that's ever attracted the slightest notice from them. No sound I've made, no gesture, nothing from my voice has ever caused them to give the slightest bit of notice. I'm just . . . I'm not cool.

You have to find the key. You gotta get to level three. You just have to figure it out. I know, it happens to me, there are species that just will not give me the time of day. Owls. In my case it's owls. I just . . . I hear 'em, but I never see 'em.

I had a friend who could call owls.

This is beautiful.

This is the real standard.

This is really like, uh . . .

It is always nice here. Basically, these Scottish farms were grafted onto this . . . right here is, this is the beginning of a big watershed stream, right, there's a lake back there, which you can see from our house when the fuckin' leaves aren't all there. Beck Lake, and it's the Beck Stream that actually goes into the Pacific, and it goes through here, kinda under this sorta big beaver pond system. Which all goes next to the railroad tracks.

You read Bernd [Heinrich]'s Beaver Pond, have you read that one?

No!

Oh, yeah, he's got a great one about . . . well it's actually about geese.

Oh, my favorite.

The goose at Beaver Pond. That he adopts, you know, he actually . . . like this goose joins his family, you know, becomes intensely involved, more than his own children. It's an amazing story.

We got quails around here.

You got a lot of blackbirds here, this is beautiful.

A lot of red-winged blackbirds, yeah.

You know what, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna listen to them for a second.

And the pheasants are back.

Great.

They were disappearing, I think they were hunted out, for a long time. People used to hunt them around here.

Ah, this is gorgeous.

Oh, it's a pretty evening.

It's lush.

Very lush, and pretty, everything's just going crazy now.

Yeah. . . . So all I was gonna say was Erica [Van Horn] and Simon [Cutts] took me on the walk, you know. They'd, and they'd always talk about this like, there's always the walk, there's the walk, wherever you live, there's the standard walk.

Yeah, there's a pretty standard . . . I have like two or three. The big walk, the one I did for years after I moved here all got cut off, and all got kinda fenced off. Now you see into the beaver pond here. The other side (?) some people were down here and they found uh salamanders.

Spotted salamanders?

Yeah, spotted salamanders living down here.

Nice.

And actually, if you can see the bottom of that tree. Which you can't because it's covered.

Let's see. . . . Sometimes you can ah catch 'em, let's see, um.

Last time I was here there were acres of lupines.

Oh, merde . . . Really?

The skunk cabbages are finished here.

They're finished?

Yeah, That's the first thing usually, the first like colored flower that you see. Skunk cabbages usually come out in February.

There's a great book on ah . . .

What color are they?

Yellow. They're like a big yellow lily that smells like weed.

Oh yeah, oh yeah, that's why they call it skunk.

Yeah natives used to use their leaves for a plate.

It's the sort of the, ah, french fry cone for the locals?

Mh hm.

[Something] native plant use in BC book is amazing, like every plant how they did something with it.

That's such a beautiful, so the yellow, that's the uh, what did you say that stuff

is again, the yellow . . . we were talking about it earlier. Is that buttercups? What's the, what's the weed on the highways you were telling me about, ah

Oh, broom, that's not

Broom. That's not broom, no

That's a buttercup . . . Oh, here's a little bird! Hey buddy.

Yeah, sparrow.

Just a [something] regular (?)

Or who knows: might be a marsh sparrow, or a ... sharp-shinned sparrow. [WTF!] I don't know, there's some . . . it's beautiful.

[Inaudible.]

No you should. I would, if I lived here, sheez.

Now we . . . We're all on wells. [?] And this is all, you know, you gotta realize . . .

Is this all brackish water, or something?

this is all . . .

No, it flows, you know, it's . . . turbidly, but . . . all year long

Yeah

It flows from the lake which is, like, the direction of that tree.

Those are cedar waxwings up there.

Yup. Where are they?

Up on the, the branch . . .

Oh, I see 'em.

Yeah. And a robin or something, no, what is it?

A lot of robin.

No, that's a cedar waxwing up on the, those are cedars . . . on the branches.

Huh! Yeah.

¹ Jacques Derrida, "And Say the Animal Responded?" Zoontologies, ed. Cary Wolfe, pp. 121-146.

² "Che cos'è la poesia?" A Derrida Reader, ed. Peggy Kamuf, pp. 223-237.

³ "Greetings from Hammertown," *Hammertown*, p. 1.

⁴ "Twilight of the Idols," *The Climax Forest*, pp. 31-32.

⁵ "Parkway Trailway," *Parkway*, p. 12.

⁶ "A Winter Visitation," *Hammertown*, p. 9

⁷ "The Iron Mountains," *The Climax Forest*, p. 109

⁸ "A Midsummer Cushion," *Parkway*, p. 3.

⁹ "Greetings from Hammertown," *Hammertown*, p. 2

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, "Speech and Phenomena," A Derrida Reader, pp. 26-27.

¹¹ The Age of Briggs & Stratton, p. 86.

^{12 &}quot;Cruel Summer," Parkway, p. 26.

¹³ Cary Wolfe, "Flesh and Finitude," What is Posthumanism?, p. 95.

^{14 &}quot;Dog Eulogistics," Parkway, p. 23.

^{15 &}quot;Homage to David Holzman," The Age of Briggs & Stratton, p. 69.

¹⁶ "The Corner," *Parkway*, p. 36.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)*, pp. 47-48.

^{18 &}quot;Condensation on Mirror," Age of Briggs & Stratton, p. 53.

¹⁹ "Morrissey's Code," *Parkway*, pp. 84-85.

²⁰ "Ugly Edit," Parkway, p. 16.

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So don't phase out mistaking the eyelash kiss for disdain, the hard masks and turning away for lack of interest, we (and I mean me) need your skill more than your fear.

Once, our work fanned out, cut by talented strangers from bolts of like cloth, could get by

without your special sauce, songs falling like fruit in a common orchard, a play was a machine that laughed.

from "Eight Views of Ornamental Avenue" (Hammertown, 2003)



AAB IS AS FUCKED UP AS ANY GROUP SITUATION:

a dialogue for *Tripwire* between Danielle LaFrance and Anahita Jamali Rad, once of About a Bicycle.

David Buuck: Tell us how AAB came about?

Danielle LaFrance: I think we both are officially tired of this question, while, of course, we can't exactly evade this question forever. It just seems, from my experience at least, and likely yours as well, Anahita, that sometimes the origin story overshadows the work we do collectively and independently. Like, I want people to meet us (and myself, on a personal note) in media res all the time, which is obviously completely impossible, not to mention pure fantasy. Like you, Anahita, said somewhere: girl interested in texts meets girl interested in texts. For me, it will always really begin with that fateful night after too many drinks and just enough dancing, where we wound up at your place, with the lush pot of basil, and talked till the wee hours of the morning. We were both excited in a similar way that I really liked. I remember some guy who had been with us that night passed out in an office chair, head back, mouth open, drool, while we demanded more from texts and the readers who read said texts and profess to do something other than reading.

Recently at SFU's Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, Joshua Clover said something to the effect of "I just write and read texts" and, while this was remark was soon slying blunted, I thought of you and us and AAB and how that was never what we were solely interested or invested in — the text separate from life and movement making. Or, I guess, that's what's left of the utopian in me, not that I ever was one to begin with. Maybe that's why I have such an aversion to AAB's origin story, because I sound cocksure.

Anahita Jamali Rad: I find so often when we talk about AAB, how it came about, the decisions that were made, it always goes back to these moments

between you and I. It's like there's this electric energy when we get together during which we think up ideas and concepts and theories and so on and so on and when we look back on it to see what started it or who even said what, we can't remember. Even if we're just sitting around shooting the shit, I find we're able to produce a particular and exciting analysis of everything from interpersonal relationships to the structures that shape our lives, and how they relate to one another. It's almost as if we bring out clarity in each other, or can access parts of each other in a way that fires up our own neurons.

DB: What is the relationship between the "study group" and the magazine, or more broadly, the collective political research and its expression by many of its members in poetry and other forms of cultural production?

AJ: The journal came about because, at the end of the first session, we wanted to produce something, an archive if nothing else, of what came about in those conversations between our two apartments. It just so happened that many of the people involved were already producing culture in some form.

If you really want to get at what AAB is about, I'd say it's about relationship. The relationship between all the people involved, even those who are involved peripherally (like the STAG [Strathcona Art Gallery]), the texts, and the cultural production that occurs in the journal and in other outlets as a result of what happens during AAB sessions.

DL: Speaking of us, I wish we could have seen each other this morning before my takeoff. Reading about our neurological connection has put a smile on my face. Currently sitting in the airport waiting for my first of three flights to visit Milena in Sofia. I'm certain it was her who attended our first meeting? I didn't actually realize how much I missed her until the days leading up to this trip.

The full-service bar is under construction and there's a man who keeps on trying to talk to me while I'm obviously writing an email. He just asked

where I was going and now I have an imaginary Liam Neeson sternly whispering in my ear: Danielle, this part is very important, you are going to be taken.

I've said in passing before that the journal was and is never to be considered as a "poetry and poetics" journal, though it's sometimes deemed as such. While it's an expression of the comings and goings of the project at hand, it provides a space for contributors to soapbox to a certain extent by way of poetry, images, dialogue (real or mock) and diagrams. I've been thinking of soapboxing as a more serious form of protest of late. I just came into some research on 60's Viennese Actionism where they'd screech their violent radical politics in the name of emancipatory performance art. Our sessions are like that at times: soapboxing as a way to force one another to hear a text's reality (thinking here of when we read Geraldine Finn's Why Althusser Killed His Wife over reading texts you'd readily find on a critical theory syllabus for university studies. In the classroom, we read Althusser's "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" three times to the letter, yet shelved any biographical mention of how he strangled his wife to death. Our undoctored realities (but oftentimes heavily prescribed or under the influence or traumatized); as well as the city we settle in's brutality (the violent pricing out of the marginalized poor and indigenous peoples).

And then, on the other hand, we've discussed (or spewed vitriol) how the journal was recently "unintentionally" demoted as a non-cultural object, or more specifically, a cultural object that isn't carefully curated. This is something not to dwell on, but definitely there are these social moments we've experienced where a soft kind of sexism presents itself. It's not a critique I take seriously; it feels like a soft pat on the head.

DB: How does AAB position itself within overlapping sites (and discourses) of local/national poetry, academia, and radical political practice?

AJ: You know, I was thinking recently (resulting from my recent "cleanse" of cis white men), what it means to exclude certain people from our space and lives. I've been thinking of this a lot lately, because I'm been feeling my brain cluttered and trying to clear out the unnecessary "noise." I realised the unnameable/unrecognised reasoning for the exclusivity of the AAB social space was that, at least for me, I wanted to clear out the noise and get to the signal. That's what was so apparent/felt in that early meeting between us on your birthday, or the day when we first ran into each other at Gene (was it Gene?). We had met at another reading group in which the "noise" prevented us from hearing each other.

I don't want to talk about text. I don't want to talk about the sessions in any specific way. There were good moments and bad, moments in which I did not feel safe, moments in which I felt like I was on the outside of a space that I had supposedly co-organized, and moments in which we had to address how different power relations and fucked up ideologies can seep into whatever "curated" social experience we were trying to have.

I guess I don't know what I want to talk about. I'm feeling so exhausted. I remember telling someone a few weeks ago how I think I just have less capacity than most people. As if there's just something inherently wrong with me or lacking. There's a difference between knowing that there are material conditions that affect you, and then really recognising that that is what your experience is. It's simultaneously more difficult and easier to recognise these things when you're actually in the body being affected in these ways.

This past session made me re-evaluate the kind of space I want to be in. I felt the academic influence was especially strong. The whiteness especially present. I felt myself reacting in the kinds of ways I was reacting in the reading group in which we met: reactive, angry, resentful.

I am at the coffee shop where Rafaela works, and telling her about what I've been trying to think through, I told her how in this past session, I

felt fucked up by the fact that I had to work so hard in order to puncture dominant ideology. That perhaps the academic spectre that was haunting the space was making it more difficult for others to do the same.

Maybe we're supposed to talk about poetry? The pieces I wrote, at least in the earlier versions of the journal, were meant as a conversation with the project, never as stand-alone poems. I feel like a lot of the time, though, it was a way of extracting theory from the collective site of knowledge production. As if I wanted to be alone with the words again. Just me and the ugly, reactive words. Always reaching, never fully feeling satisfied, and just saying, fuck it, let's publish some shit.

Maybe the vitriol was correct in some way, however malicious it felt at the time.

DL: I read your email at 5am, just as I woke up. It's given me a lot to think about. I witnessed these feelings you're expressing here during the projects even before the last one against the couple-form, and it seemed that it came from both a necessary place and an exhausting place for you. The energy involved in being understood in a way that actually feels sincere when there's all this ideological ugliness crowding its transmission is, well, fucked up. AAB needs a new form or it needs to end.

Whatever ideological seepage was never seepage at all — it was always there regardless of intentionality. It makes me return to the internal call for killing the whiteness inside. (Ivan Drury's 2013 Rent Assembly presentation "Killing the White Man Inside" spurred some of the initial concepts for my thesis on self-abolition.) Not to parodize whiteness (which just autocorrected to "paradise," here lies my phone's subconscious racism) nor ironically call it out (like in a poem), but fucking *kill* it. This is why bringing the "I" to the fore is so important, and also why it is so widely dismissed as lacking a politic when it is "the other" who employs it. Once "we" say "the other" we have already failed. The failure of Western Philosophy is how the "I" works

alone. "It is a philosophy of the dominant, for whom material life plays out to their benefit — the necessities of their survival are fulfilled, but externally to them" (from Chistine Delphy's *Separate and Dominate*).

I think as a byproduct of trying to clear out my own parasitical noise, I felt the necessity to be even more aggressively myself last year, mainly sexually and verbally. This had more to do with attempting to work through the damage done to get to something vaguely conclusive. ("Something" is inherently vague, isn't it?) Maybe those yearnings for a denouement are similar to what you're referring to as "a signal." I've had to reconcile with the ever-present (though largely denied) desire for a purge, a cleanse, an outside from late-capitalism and its penetrating objects. This is why I so desperately want to believe CAConrad when he says how "we" can heal the damage from white supremacist patriarchal capitalism through poetry. I so want to believe him. But I think I just believe *in* him, which is fine.

I'm bothered by how AAB enacted the left by oppressing people of colour. But not surprised. The way I'm thinking of this right now, dripping with sweat in my seat — but still take this seriously — is how the aftermath of AAB projects makes material, quite potently, the invisible ideology that is a part of the composition of our relationship. And therein lay its politics: what we do when your experience meets mine and my experience meets yours? And the same goes for the other collective members. What do we do as facilitators when the space is unsafe? When you, as a facilitator, feel unsafe?

On Sofia's pride parade Facebook page it warned attendees to leave the parade without any proof you were there (rainbow flags, sparkled g-strings, etc.) for fear of attacks from Neo-Nazis. I see swastikas everywhere. I'm trying to determine why I felt more bisexual after the Orlando shootings when I've been with women and loved women since my late teens. Why did such an unbelievably violent and devastating act produce such an intense self-identification? I can't shake it.

I'm on the train with Maia and Milena. We're on our way to the sea. I mentioned your email and this, whatever we want to call it, "interview" for, not really with, David. (Oh, I think we should title it "things just got real"). Milena and I have been discussing how Vancouver lacks soul. "It's full of insincere and superficial people," she says to me. I want to tell her how only I'm allowed to talk about Vancouver this way, not her. Like when someone says something nasty about my mother. In all fairness, Milena's family and friends are baffled by her return to Sofia. How could she leave the West? This myth always makes me think about how the city was abducted from some kind of infancy. Like a promise for the future.

Milena thinks I'm not directly responding to you. And I'm really sensitive to her saying that just now. I think it's because I want to acknowledge how you felt/feel, while at the same time negotiating my defensiveness around your comment about the academization of the last project. Because that session overlapped with my time back at university. I don't want to talk about that return and recent departure. (Maybe we should call it "It's only complicated because we don't want to talk about it.")

AJ: I wrote "safe" in there because I think I had, in the back of my mind, also been thinking about another group dynamic (a political organizing one) in which I felt under attack in some way by an older woman, and that anger from that earlier thought made its way into thinking about AAB. I am in bed now. Also I don't want to talk about AAB in a celebratory way anymore. It's as fucked up as any group situation. We've talked about this before. About how we had to make our politics explicit. It doesn't work that way, though, does it?

Anyway, group situations fuck me up. Maybe that's why I always just want to talk about me and you when talking about AAB.

DL: This is the end of AAB. It's something I've been waiting for. The best part of The Invisible Committee was them admitting collectives should

have knowledge of their end at the beginning. I have my own issues with ending things, particularly with people, and at this moment I realize how I've been waiting for you to propose AAB's definitive conclusion.

AJ: It's interesting to me how we had previously criticized these other spaces, particularly those that have some sort of claim on being "safe spaces," and somehow, because AAB was "not as bad," it was elevated to some sort of ideal.

But, we were right all along: there is no safe space. Maybe we thought because we didn't claim AAB as a safe space, our criticisms didn't apply. And when we realized our constraints weren't enough, that we had to make our politics explicit, we were met with more shit.

During the last session, the most fucked up responses to the texts were when we were reading Hortense Spillers and Lee Edelman. I had hoped the pairing would bring out complex issues in both texts, particularly problematic elements of the Edelman. Instead, it was as if we had returned to some pre-critical primordial soup: the Edelman was celebrated as a validation of lifestyle choices, and the Spillers, well, it was completely misread. I think, at least for me, I expect people to be doing the same amount of work as we do with dealing with such issues, but they don't. This was the frustration with the group dynamics all along. It's almost as if it doesn't matter the kinds of texts we "curate" for the group if the only work that is being done with those issues are done within the context of the group. We tell people, "it doesn't matter if you're not familiar with theory." Basically implying that it's a safe space to work through those issues, and then realizing that sort of space is actually not safe.

I'm wondering about this in the same way I'm wondering about your stronger identification with queerness in the face of violence. My response to your thought was initially, "of course, once a part of you is under threat, you feel it more strongly." I am familiar with that feeling. So many parts of

me have been under threat that I often wonder if there is anything solid, material left of me, and how deep do I have to dig to get there.

Anyway, I'm not going to go back on my use of the word "safe." I think I was worried at first that it was too harsh. That I didn't actually feel that way. And I didn't want to hurt your feelings. But it's not about your feelings. Or about anything you or I did or didn't that would have in some way alleviated those feelings.

I find myself dreading entering into Vancouver poetry spaces. I feel less and less like I want to be there, and less and less like I am able to, with my presence, convey the difference between my experience and those of the others participating in the space. Bodies don't inherently convey meaning. How can they, if even words don't.

DB: You both were and are poets before, within, and separate from AAB: Care to comment on the interconnections in your own writing practices (and/or day jobs, intellectual pursuits, etc etc)?

DL: Just as an aside, my poems in the AAB issues are not my favourite. Always too rushed. Maybe there is a reason why editors of journals don't include their own poems in their issues. I'll stick to the preface from now on. My poetry outside of AAB is much different. I think that's why I eventually turned to a more dialogical format for my contributions like the mock dialogue with Patrick [Morrison] and the I said/you said piece in the newest issue with Roger [Farr] as well as the dialogue explicitly between the two of us in issue 4. I wanted to produce a communication with the sessions, but quite independently from AAB as a collective to the point of leading the "enemy" quite explicitly and purposefully inside my contributions.

I wrote a new poem while in Varvara that has the line, "There is no scholar pill, baby, as they squabble over spilt class." Sitting on Milena's terrace after the performance last night, she said how "the Varvara Poems are cruel." And

I said how "Varvara was cruel." I wrote them on the beach as the sea carried to the shoreline an army of red and blue Jerry Cans as well as a dead baby seal. They are starting to drill for petrol in the Black Sea. Milena and Maia stayed inside the hotel room most of the time, while I swam and wrote. One evening we were talking about class: how she's "working class" and I'm an "intellectual," and it was a strange competitive thing to experience, bickering over who has the lowest class position. And on being labeled an "intellectual," well, I don't think my mind is very good most of the time. So I wrote lines like "I'm so sick of freedom & money," "Homeowners wade in warm milk as a special treat only," and "To perform for you, is the class half full or half empty."

When I was unemployed in 2013, I remember going for joy rides in Patrick's work truck with my computer and writing and rewriting the new book. I'm going through edits right now, and it's bringing up these memories of how the book came about. In Malamata, I isolated myself in that family house. My cousin tried to contact me, but I wouldn't pick up; I had to be alone in order to resurrect the book. I think I rewrote it a handful of times, always starting with printed pages and a blank document. I've been narrativizing the production of this book through these Balkan experiences that frame it. It feels really important to be back, though it's Bulgaria and not Greece this time, like being connected to my mother's blood roots. A woman I have frequent estimations about.

Social tensions frequent the pages. How could they not? It's a book on friendly fire after all. My critical investments always tend to involve the ways in which "total war" are embedded in our social relations, and what that looks like when we imagine what ourselves and the world and our relationships and our objects will look like "after the revolution." While attempting to establish a discourse (actually if I were to apply a name to whatever it is that is "my poetics" it would more like a "function creep," a sociological term where one discourse or method slides from one site to another) on friendly fire exclusively, it's also been a critical task for me since

Vancouver's Winter Olympics to intersect it with other social sites. There were all these missing signifiers during that time, constant conflict, and I was thinking a lot about who I know in my life who's actually prepared for crisis. Mostly the depressives I know. But the thought really was, in all its naïveté: who of us actually knows how to aim? My writing practice is not always coming from an autobiographical site, but it is personal. Milena and I were discussing as well last night how poets are narcissistic, how it's all ego, and I was saying to her how I'm more interested in recuperating narcissism rather than just dismissing it outright as an inherent flaw where women writers are always accused of performing some weak, feminine vanity. I'm deeply committed to my own self-annihilation.

DB: What's next for AAB?

DL: Last night you mentioned how we could never get the collective right, reminiscing about problematic dynamics and fucked up things that were said in session (e.g., "black people have been conditioned to be pro athletes because of slavery"). Dynamics will never be right whatever form they take and it's ridiculous to presume they ever could be. The more we shave off the types of people who are the problem, the internalization of those structural issues, that were always there, surface more readily. Those post-revolution communal apartments in Russia come to my mind, where such close quarters enabled these kinds of joyous and poisonous dynamics. I wrote to you recently how I don't actually want to be misanthropic, I just want to hate the right people. Let's officially soapbox before you leave for Montréal next year. Contributions will be vitriol and call outs exclusively. No publication. No archive. No recording. No documentation. Then, because you know how I feel about collective sacrifices (really the only thing to come out of Bataille that's worthy of serious attention. Besides new myths and fucking a dead priest), AAB commits harakiri.

AJ: No more reading. No more writing.

Cecily Nicholson

From the Poplars Talonbooks, 2014

REVIEWED BY NATALIE KNIGHT

Unarchival ones all labour: Cecily Nicholson's From the Poplars

for sisters worth crest what is work, what is a living

unarchival ones all labour

in cycles immaterial this material is meaning what is said cows after a long dry spell spindly and sickly

to give more—not what you got but what you can give (68)

– groundwork –

In a call and response to a fluvial island splitting the Fraser River, Cecily Nicholson's *From the Poplars* counts and accounts for the labours of the land. These labours are many, and Poplar Island emerges as much a subject as it is an object of the ebb and flow of industrial development. Through the work of poetic research—walking the land, visiting city archives—*From the Poplars* hears the island's immense story and responds to it, sustaining a conversation that extends well beyond the local. The Fraser River bends around these acres of hardwoods, trunks tangled in ivy, visible from a morning skytrain ride carrying commuters between Surrey, New

Westminster and Vancouver, the proper metropolis. Here is a site-specific poetics of history's force and its abandonment—and not to be diminished, its attendant human survival—astounding for its severity as much as for its unexceptional recurrence; "where violence routinely occurs generic" and yet we are "given to tropistic / survivance" (78-9). This place, like every place nearby, remade through colonialism, the iron grips of industrial capitalism and its recession from the rivers and forests and factories; pressures that take bitter accumulation. "The mill turns around of its own free will"—a deceptive ideology if there ever was one (37).

Industrial development and its need for human capital—"globalized workers soldiers"—act as a poetic drive, where "world war firms canning, vessels and munitions / southern portions and recording systems stacks / hey day may days post-fifty-five industrial / dense" (36). This too is the story of colonialism told by certain of its globalized workers-soldiers who, themselves uprooted by capital, displace Indigenous communities. Nicholson's long poem tracks these multiple evictions across time from the subjective perspective of an island that becomes visible, in mainstream histories, through colonization.

Poplar Island is part of unceded Coast Salish territories in western British Columbia, a province where the majority of land is stolen, even by the standards of colonial law. The 1763 Royal Proclamation, a colonial document laying British claim to what is now Canada, required treaties between the Crown and First Nations before settling the land. But in true Wild West fashion, when British Columbia joined a newly constructed Canadian Confederation one hundred years later, it threatened to secede from the developing nation if pressed on its disregard for treaty laws. The only territory negotiated through treaties was on Vancouver Island—the Douglas Treaties—and Treaty 8 land extending across multiple provinces into northeastern B.C. When the reserve system was created in 1876 to forcibly divide and contain Indigenous communities into a patchwork of small land allotments, Poplar Island became one of three small reserves designated by

the federal government for Qayqayt peoples. This was a colonial erasure of multiple kinds, since this land was likely shared among many Həńqəmińəm speaking people, including Kwantlen, Katzie, Tsawassen, Tseil-Waututh, and Musqueam First Nations. Then during WWI, Poplar Island was taken for shipbuilding and all its Indigenous inhabitants evicted. As Mercedes Eng writes in her piece on Nicholson's book in *Jacket2*, Poplar Island has been "a former reserve, a smallpox quarantine zone, a ship-building site during the First World War, a base for the logging industry, now unused and lush with trees, in the present moment of the city's waterfront redevelopment to expand retail and residential space."

From the Poplars holds a poetics of these transitions and of the labours that made them. It is also groundwork, as Nicholson said over dinner last November, a desire to approach "home" as it is reconstructed in displacement, and the work to do so by a diasporic body, a bird with no feet as she put it.² The understory of the island, told through its fractured historical memory.

Commuters on the skytrain riding high alongside. Deciduous island bare in winter. Log rafts of Doug Fir moored along minimal beaches. The dense uses of space; lasting traces of human presence; the island's body still there as its own labour. Just might begin to be felt.

- tropistic survivance -

"This on is still on about an island" (68). It is also, to my ear, so much about this elusive "felt"—a call to connect to the hard matter of history to revive ourselves towards responsibility. From the Poplars attempts a whole life of an island—not a single geography within a single river but instead a site for poetic investigation of historical memory, dredging the "poetic sediment" as Garry Thomas Morse writes in his review of the book. This memory is always both immensely in and of a place and a memory that haunts across time.

Grosse Isle onto the fever sheds or as *Skwtsa7s* future remains after gales tear the soil

the defence is national natural

kept and sent subjects armed to a place static

invariants

there and here as long as the tongues thrive tips swirl in a huff of cheeks

centripetal release

ecology down and up river the həṅġəmiṅəm curls carried on (10)

Grosse Isle—a quarantine site for Irish immigrants after outbreaks of cholera and typhus in the 1830s and 40s in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Quebec—a parallel to the smallpox quarantine on Poplar Island. These "kept and sent subjects" in *From the Poplars* span also Kamau Taurua, or "Quarantine Island" in New Zealand, subjects kept in lazarettos, or quarantine areas—not dissimilar from a lazarette, or a small storage compartment below a ship's deck. These subjects also know "homeless encampment slats / and garbage bags full of newspaper" (24); they know the resource industries that crisscross British Columbia in our modern era of dispossession and displacement, where:

paid shill for Big Oil fuel-injected big-block on cowboy boots suns the Diamond Club where real men come to play

the basic industries (83)

These "basic industries" of intimacy and the harshest toil, where "no asylum here winter is hitting / tent frame shed shack trailer SROs" (83). These basic industries time travel across the history of bodies and their movement. The poem is:

anticipatory force archivally replays a point of view as slippery as itself in an economy of fur-bearing animals (77)

A point of view that roots into place even as it kaleidoscopes. This "economy of fur-bearing animals" is located at Yi Fao (the Chinese name for New Westminster), at 49° 11' 56» N, 122° 56' 3" W, "from Koonspa at the tip of Lulu" (Chinook jargon for Queensborough, a neighbourhood with a view out on the Island), at Mohawk Lumber Company and Westminster Shook Mill, and at Woodlands, once the Provincial Hospital for the Insane in New Westminster. It is "men and women working day and night" at Vulcan Iron Works; it is the shipyard that built "*War Comox, War Edensaw, War Kitimat, War Ewen I* and a couple coal carriers after the war" (40-41).

How many coordinates can you give to labour and to land? This land even knows the Diggers song: "stand up now, the wasteland to maintain / your houses they pull down / stand up now ..." (56). And it knows, throughout *From the Poplars*, "the hanging lots for crows" (3), the reoccurring references in the poem to Abel Meeropol's song "Strange Fruit" that echoes behind lines like:

once harvest was done harvest done worried some

worried men sing a worried song
[...]

"finance" is a slave's word ima read

A poem of an island as a body within rivers of diaspora—of labouring, racialized, Indigenous and gendered bodies—I slip between reading the few "I"s in the book as either and all: the island itself; Nicholson herself; and these diasporic unarchived bodies. It is "an 'I' on pavement or other words over / centuries of rotting matter;" and also "an 'I' wants to pull a part as well" (4, 5). One migration traced of one of these "I"s travels to Detroit, citing a Philip Levine poem, where "men in league ... still charge this fence" (71). As she says in conversation with Christina Cooke, Detroit is part of a narrative of migration stemming from Nicholson's own history.⁴ Traveling Poplar Island by foot and by document places Nicholson on the island and a part of its diaspora too. This is a committed responsibility to the island's call—to not turn away from your own place within it, to implant yourself, to have the courage to do so.

State combatant; abiding love; Indigenous displaced; wanderer from rural to the city wilds and back; carer and witness; Black diasporic; ward of the state; state combatant. Here is the subjectivity of the island, or is it the poem's, or the author's? No matter an answer, lighter for the possibilities: "It's hard to summarize." The feltness of this book emerges in the expanded island who has found itself again, a subject in time that holds the possibility of travel. This is not merely abandoned acreage parting a river below a skytrain; this poem, and island, knows that "time is different at Cankpe Opi" (the Lakota name for Wounded Knee) and bends the subject, already given to tropistic survivance, towards feeling once again (89).

- basic industries, erotics -

The land as subject, ever made by colonialism and uprooted by capital, makes a poetics rigorously committed to place and enormously generous with time. Maybe these are the conditions of being for North American

long poem traditions, like M. Nourbese Phillip's *Zong!* or even Kamau Brathwaite's *Arrivants* trilogy. I suspect that these long poem forms come from necessity, not a formal choice—necessary to deal with the *erotics* of the land and the felt labour within it.

A local long poem, Daphne Marlatt's 1974 *Steveston*, puts it this way: "This corporate growth that monopolizes / the sun. moon & tide, fish-run" where there is a "multiplicity simply: the physical matter of / the place (what matters) meaning, don't get theoretical now, the cannery" (*Steveston* 90). Marlatt's poetic site, Steveston, is only a half hour drive from Poplar Island, once a fishing village on the mouth of the Fraser River that also held a Japanese Canadian internment camp during WWII.

To the rigor of Marlatt's reminder, "don't get theoretical now" and to stay with "the cannery," Nicholson responds:

out longer ones longer begins to feel oh ones, feel full touch down attach associate sensitize

feel pain, feel the evidence, feel free

feel historical problems trending present

tense fingertips feel a show of armoury green

move our aim we saw we and others have seen

for the wind to suck, for the sun to rot, for the tree to drop

be done and undone spring-like off the shuck off jive gone apophenia

giving form to stimulus, not just some figure in the clouds

strong every day and every time with whole history out loud (69)

Staying with the cannery, or with the island in Nicholson's case, is a "touch down," attached, associated, sensitized in order to override our shared "congenital insensitivity to pain" (39). It is a poetic method alert to the people who make history and give "form to stimulus," like Mary Agnes Vianin, Qayqayt resident of Poplar Island in 1912, evicted from the reserve to build the war's shipyards—her trace left in a letter to the government demanding compensation. These erotics of the poplars risk feeling the evidence, in order to risk feeling free. To be a "dead tree standing sunned and whipped dry": the price of feeling historical problems trending present (37).

The erotics of the poplars is *totalizing* then, the risk is full, there is no way back from its commitment. At the same time an erotics that projects towards freedom *knows* itself to come up short, the approach to home delayed, and still redoubles the effort.

They say that the long poem is a modernist project, one intent on the trick of totality, of playing with the subjective and the objective to catch the glimpse of them constituting each other until they repel and break into apparent singularity again. At its best, this is a constructed act of time travel, a projection of the poem, the self, the island into the past and the future until we don't know anymore. The long documentary poem makes evident our desire for the world that never comes (yet): simply, to inhabit a subjective space, where to be a subject is to possess oneself. And, radically, not as property: it is instead not among logics of dispossession. As Fred Moten writes, "You must have faith, in short, in some animus that allows the continual projection of discontinuity, the persistence of a certain structure of life in which final judgment—in which justice—is always deferred, to come, up ahead."

sift the roving fragments attentively subatomic cosmic clearing agents incised spirals circle winch shapes sinuous bands interlocking lace so delicate it is weightless hints of a watery primordial world radiating appendages slender cities like galaxies tend to cluster spiral to elliptical oscura poured fire rational primes disposed to struggle

river road for the duration securely ore red slip surface and the orange clay below

not a question of knowledge but alertness

(88)

1

 $^{^1\,}$ Mercedes Eng, Cecily Nicholson's 'From the Poplars'. http://jacket2.org/commentary/cecily-nicholsons-poplars

² "Wherever the bird with no feet flew, she found trees with no limbs." Audre Lorde, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, 1982.

 $^{^3}$ Garry Thomas Morse, Geomantic Riposte: 'From the Poplars'. http://jacket2.org/commentary/geomantic-riposte-poplars

⁴ Christina Cooke, "Call and Response: In Conversation with Cecily Nicholson," *Room Magazine* 37.4 (2015).

⁵ ibid

⁶ Fred Moten, In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition, 2003, 99.

Mercedes Eng

Mercenary English CUE, 2013

REVIEWED BY JULES BOYKOFF

Language Matters: Mercedes Eng's "Subversionary" Poetics

In *Mercenary English*, Mercedes Eng offers a full-throated contribution to the poetic zeitgeist that values social engagement, political documentation, and the creation of vibrant counter-narratives. Part poetic investigation, part street-level report-back, part "autocartography," *Mercenary English* is a *tour de fightback* where the political backdrop is ever-present in the foreground. To wholly engage this first full collection of poetry from the Canadian writer and activist, we'd do well to embrace its complexity as a thoroughgoing social text.

The book opens with the epigraphic poem "address to the city," which begins with the lines:

project civil city i call you out reduce homelessness by half? half measure don't do for this half breed most livable city i call you out (7)

This is quintessential Eng—a potent blend of poetic skepticism and unflinching vim. The passage also necessitates some political unpacking. "Project Civil City" was a local measure first introduced in 2006 in Vancouver, Canada that was designed to curtail panhandling, homelessness, drug use, and public nuisance complaints in the city. The law enabled the Vancouver police to unleash a selectively enforced ticketing blitz for minor infractions, essentially criminalizing homelessness. Eng also highlights the fact that Vancouver has become the metropolitan epitome of capitalist inequity and neoliberal-era

gentrification, with the gap between rich and poor widening into a massive chasm. While the Economist Intelligence Unit named Vancouver the most livable city in the world in 2010, that same year the Frontier Centre for Public Policy found Vancouver to be the least affordable city among the nearly three hundred it analyzed. It is this sort of political intricacy—spiked with her own experience being "half Chinese / half white," as she puts it—that ripples through *Mercenary English*.

When I write "Vancouver" I really mean unceded Coast Salish territory. In the book's acknowledgments, the author mentions that the poems were written on First Nations land. But engagement with indigenous issues runs much deeper, threading through the text in poignant, imaginative fashion. *Mercenary English* comprises three long poems: "Knuckle Sandwich," "February 2010," and "Autocartography." Grappling with indigeneity, inequality, and resistance is vital to all three poems.

In "Knuckle Sandwich" Eng eviscerates the oversimple "cowboys and indians / master narrative" (18) while decimating monochromatic "culturalist explanation for a variety of / different social ills" (23). She bellows an enormous *presente!* for "missing and murdered aboriginal women in / Canada" (21), pressing beyond the Pickton-induced misery and widening the scope of poetic analysis to include soldiers in Afghanistan, Afghan women, scapegoated Muslims, and the duplicity of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (or, RCMP).²

To embrace the social embeddedness of the book, I contacted writers who've read *Mercenary English*, asking them to send me five words that the book surfaced for them. Jen Currin wrote, "layers, historian, humour, feminist, comrade." In "Knuckle Sandwich" Eng embraces the layering Currin pinpoints, deftly interleaving the war on women with the war on indigenous peoples and the "War on Terror"—all with the verve of a feminist historian stepping into the fray. Every so often she leavens the text with levity, as when she asks "does it now?" with more than a hint of disbelief (17). Eng illuminates

the interlocking cultures of violence in a way that wedges open space not only for critique but also for reflection.

The book's centerpiece is "February 2010" a spiky, rangy poem that documents the politico-poetic zeitgeist during the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. The Vancouver Games were pivotal for Eng. Back in 2011 she told me,

My mind was on fire during the Olympics. I couldn't stop writing about everything entering my field of vision. I went to the rally the night of the opening ceremonies—my first, and I was scared and excited and it didn't seem real that the Olympics were finally here. It didn't seem real two days later when I participated in the Reading Resistance at the Olympic Tent Village (organized by Ivan Drury and featuring Brad Cran, Cynthia Oka, Dorothy Trujillo Lusk, Maxine Gadd, and Reg Johanson) at 58 West Hastings, an empty lot owned by condo developer Concord Pacific that was leased to VANOC as a parking lot for the Olympics.³

The Olympic Tent village was a space-seizing action in the Downtown Eastside neighborhood that was designed to spotlight homelessness in the city. Artists and activists reclaimed the city as commons where, as Eng put it, "people ate, sang, slept, talked, cooked, recycled, got conscious, and read, wrote, and heard poetry."

The culture work of politically inclined poets like Eng inflected anti-Olympics activism with a concern for the power of words. Language absolutely mattered. And the experience transformed Eng as both a writer and as a human being:

I'd never done a reading in this kind of a space, as my previous readings took place in academic or literary settings. To hear my voice uncontained by walls, to feel brick and mud beneath my feet, under the stars at tent city in the Downtown Eastside was unlike anything I've ever experienced. I owned my voice, and I called—to the women

I worked with, those living and dead, to the women working now, to the community these women are a part of—and called out the cops, the state, the public who chooses to look the other way.⁵

Beyond all this, Eng told me that engaging in Olympics-induced activism and art "was really, really fun, too." This brings us back to *Mercenary English*, work that can be intense and dead-eye serious, but where there's room for pleasure and even joy as well.

Marie Annharte offered me the following words that, for her, chimed with the tenor in *Mercenary English*: "ardent, dawning (auroral), anterior, arsenal, subversionary." Eng's ardent passion and commitment comes beaming through in "February 2010," a documentary poem that charts the terrain of fightback. She slots recent history into her verbal arsenal, creating a vibrant pastiche of passion and possibility. Annharte's word "subversionary" gets it just right.

"February 2010" rollicks through the Olympic moment, heralding Harriet Nahanee, First Nations elder and activist of the Nuu-Cha-Nulth peoples who, after protesting ecological destruction in the name of Olympic construction, was sent to jail where she contracted pneumonia and tragically died soon after her release (45). Eng angles in on the politically prickly question of violence versus property damage (59). She calls out security forces for securing the overthe-top Medium Range Acoustic Device, a military-grade weapon used in war zones like Iraq (70). And she celebrates the accomplishments of Short-Range Poetic Device, the pirate-radio show hosted by poet-activists Stephen Collis and Roger Farr that featured readings and discussions with local poet-activists such as Jeff Derksen, Kim Duff, Donato Mancini, Cecily Nicholson, Naava Smolash, and Rita Wong during the Olympic period, even after "Industry Canada officers arrived / dressed in Olympics clothing" (71) and shut down the show. "There are different frontlines," she writes, and she works hard to connect them for us (57). Emily Fedoruk recognized the important of "frontlines" in the book, sending me the word along with "dash, fallen, soldiers, all-over." Being on the poetry and politics front lines transformed Eng. She later told me "I'm not sure if I can separate how the Olympic moment was important to me as a writer from how it was important to me as a person." This openness to the blurring whir of self, craft, and political context not only marks the author's personal journey, but also forges the poetics of *Mercenary English*.

The book's third long poem "Autocartography" is both flinty and reflective. It addresses how cartography can serve as a weapon of colonialism—mapping new realities onto spaces, enfolding them into state legibility projects. Yet cartography has a double-edge, not unlike the sword wielded by the bad-ass, throat-slicing protagonist on page 79 of the book (see below). This visual image—and many others featured in "Autocartography" and as cover art—comes courtesy of Gord Hill, the remarkably talented First Nations artist and activist of the Kwakwaka'wakw people. Hill is the author of such crucial books as 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance and The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book. His work was ubiquitous during Vancouver's Olympic moment, replete with the prominent slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land." Hill's striking ink-drawings add another enticing layer to the text, capturing the merciless brutality of cartographic colonialism, while accentuating the power and possibility of resisting it.





In "Autocartography" Eng reflects on the personal perils of political economics ("but kitty learned capitalism well" 84), the alibis and privileges of race ("you're white / and when you say / the acknowledgement / doesn't mean anything / you're wrong" 99), the wickedness of Pickton ("i am not dna evidence on a farm" 88), and she flings all this through the filter of her own experience. In some ways the work in "Autocartography" diverges tonally from the rest of the poems in the book. This is a poem brimming with snappy, rhyming lines that are fun to read aloud:

another day another dollar i'm standin on my corner and who do i see but a lil babygirl from the same lil town as me

i know her from back in the day when our daddies robbed we would play (85)

Turns out there's a "superhooker in the hall of justice" and she's clamoring for payback. "I call for new accurate maps," she writes (78)—"plus i'm fucking fierce" (106). This is poetry with brace and zest. This is work with ballast and a hint of justifiable malice. As Wayde Compton relayed to me, Eng delivers us "Poetry as an incendiary device."

Journalist extraordinaire Masha Gessen recently wrote, "In all societies, public rhetoric involves some measure of lying, and history—political history and art history—is made when someone effectively confronts the lie." In *Mercenary English*, Mercedes Eng does just that, confronting the dense web of socially acceptable lies passing as normality. She presents us with a thick political-poetic elixir to counter to the drivel and deception of public discourse. This is an important book. It cleaves, swivels, jostles, scoffs, and stitches. It's "subversionary" poetics at its best.

¹ See Economist Intelligence Unit, "Global Liveability Report," January 2010, http://www.eiu.com/site-info.asp?info-name=The-Global Liveability Report&page=noads&rf=0#; Frontier Centre for Public Policy, "The 6th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey: 2010 Ratings for Metropolitan Markets," 39, http://www.fcpp.org/publication.php/3153

 $^{^2}$ Robert Pickton is the convicted serial murderer from British Columbia who preyed upon women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

³ "Reading Resistance at the Olympic Tent Village: A Conversation with Mercedes Eng," *Jacket2*, 1 August 2011, http://jacket2.org/commentary/reading-resistance-olympic-tent-village

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

 $^{^6\,}$ Jules Boykoff, "The Anti-Olympics," New Left Review 67 (January-February 2011), 59.

⁷ Personal interview via email, 20 September 2014.

⁸ Masha Gessen, Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot (New York: Riverhead Books, 2014), 35.

Lisa Robertson

Cinema of the Present
Coach House Books, 2014

REVIEWED BY GREGORY BETTS

"Landscapes are not eras; they never finish Because it doesn't finish I can be present." (from "Palinodes")

I'm interested in the present. Who isn't? Not the foot dipped in flowing water present, but the porousness of the moment and its intangibility. Capital commands us to fulfill it repeatedly, obsessively, but this 'it' proves deeply evasive, insincere, and invisible. The present in one sense is the smallest moment of time possible (the planck), well beyond the capacity of human perception to understand. Plancks in a second equals the number of stars in the universe multiplied by the number of grains of sand on the planet earth. The instant is beyond comprehension: one might as well say astrophysics multiplied by quantum computing. Effectively, in each isolated instant, the Instant of Aion, as Deleuze wrote, there is nothing but the "pure empty form of time." The idea of "being there" actually contradicts sentience, memory, and consciousness, all of which are deeply embedded within experience and, to twist Eliot, the pastness of the past.

I want to remember the present as a fixed absence when confronting all the ways people move around it, away from it; fill it with lapses and practical failures. To write this experience of the present requires a non-humanist orientation—a mode that anticipates the failure of expression, that seeks to unsettle all of the ways that we accommodate ourselves to the weirdnesses of time, voice over the void. This is not to deconstruct the rhetoric of the present, but to write with a double vision that simultaneously admits a sincerity of discourse and yet registers its evasion, its hollowness in human experience. The mode of this writing is not ironic, but oxymoronic.

Lisa Robertson's *Cinema of the Present* does something like this—indeed, the curtain line of the whole book appropriately concludes that "*Now only time is wild.*" Something is unmoored in the wildness of the present, of now. If the present is inaccessible except as the fetishized effect of illusions reconstituted in the human sensorium, we have entered the realm of subjectivization: the present is a hollow pointer aiming up at the psychological processes that flow over it, obscure it, even experientially make it inaccessible. Kant reached a similar conclusion: "Certainly time is something real, namely, the real form of inner intuition. It has therefore subjective reality." Time is not, he proceeded, "something in itself." *Cinema of the Present*, in this way, is synecdoche—offering insight into the illusions it is helping to create. Robertson writes, "You make no attempt to govern the fact of duration." Each line, however allusive and elusive, is not something in itself, but combined they pool into a reflection of an entire philosophy of time.

The title alone is a gorgeous illustration of self-contradiction and radical doubling. Cinema, from the Greek kinema (movement), is a lovely jumble of nouns—including place, product, and art form. All of these cinemas stem from the movement of still images—in fact, the illusion of movement created by overwhelming the visual system to excess stimulation. If the present refers to the denuded moment, the eviscerating, impossible-to-reach stasis beneath experience, then an art of the present already contains the impossible reconciliation of movement and stasis. It has given up the singularity of the moment for the duration of experience, for the imagination's gestalt drive to connect discrete objects and moments. Making sense of the world is a survival instinct. The cinema of the present, analogously, is the necessary illusion of each moment created by the blurred passing of instances too minute to detect. But unlike moving pictures, stasis in time doesn't halt upon a fixed image – within time, stasis means absence and death. As Keats noted, truth and the beauty of its realization are buried in a vision of "silent form". Robertson's vision of that unravish'd silence is darker, more imaginary, and thus less useful for ecstatic revelations: "Always for you the present is wreckage, or it is the part of a science that does not yet exist."

In this book, the lines crash into wreckage when you pause on them. Each entry into the book, each line, depends upon the others before and after it for resonance and charge. Without them, the almost-aphorisms collapse semantically, grammatically, and logically. Meaning, or rather the subjective semblance of meaning, disappears. Consider the suggestive impossibility of this section:

Smudgy, thick, cold.

To spare myself I'm going to drop these, you said.

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

To spare yourself the trouble you'll explore beginner infinities.

So now you are an economist.

You meant that by remarkably indirect paths you'd understand one god simply in order to let go of all belief.

So you came to nilling.

I can hear protests: but literary devices bespeckle these lines! But the dialogic structure! But the subtle nod to her own book of essays *Nilling!* Anaphora! Apostrophe!! The evocative nature of these lines creates threads that dangle, but it is our imagination that tries to pull each moment over into throughlines.

Even a reader as careful as Frank Davey was stumped by the openness of the book and resorted to conjuring up a "disguised lyricism or confessionalism, or even as forming a disguised romantic ode" somewhere hidden in the book. He went looking and mapped out the repeating structures, but ultimately conceded rather vaguely that these recurrences create "the impression that

things are happening in the text beyond the mere accumulation that much conceptual poetry provides." Setting aside the lackadaisical comment on conceptualism, such analysis betrays expectations of poetry more than attends to the shape and flow of this particular text. These are, rather, fragments shored up against the ruin of time. Delightfully oxymoronic, though, they accumulate absence. As Robertson writes, "You have invented nothing." In a different context, she offered in an interview some insight into the overarching contradictory orientation of her writing: "I want to be believed. But I also want to write through spaces that are utterly delusional." The sincerity of delusion, the erasure of voice that rockets up through the language of the text, the swerve of words away from identity designation: this unraveling language opens itself up to the infinite space of the moment. It is, in a way, the enactment of Deleuze's notion of the fold by which Form (and the infinite) enables expression (and the finite) even though such forces can never meet, and in fact undo each other until love.

As it happens, for an anthology I was editing (on the idea of the future), I asked Robertson for a small selection from the book. She refused, noting that the effect of the book is cumulative "droning"—the individual lines were not intended to be insightful, powerful, epigrams on their own. That they feel insightful, powerful, and even epigrammatic—"You've entered into the surplus" (82), "Your goodness lifts like a cock" (47)—speaks to their rich gestalt textuality. Reading them closely in isolation, however, shatters the illusion and reveals the self-consciousness of illusion-making: the present is annulled for the evasion of the telling. To quote Bourdieu out of context, "nothing took place but the place" (41). In the first essay in *Nilling*, Robertson writes, "The inchoate state I crave dissolves and reshapes itself in the codex; reading feels like a discontinuous yet infinite rhythmic dispersal that generates singularities. It isn't knowledge at all." You cannot fathom such a process of generation through the singularity, through each moment. In fact, it is this very inchoate state that lurks in the instance, in each instance, revealed only faintly in passing over it, propelled by the linear pull of the rhythm: "Even your tears were rhythmic."

Cinema of the Present denies singularity in the precise manner of its form. In fact, as Davey intuited, every line is repeated exactly once. The whole poem is repeated. Cinema of the Present is a long poem doubled, where the second version is re-arranged alphabetically and inserted jarringly into the original. The structure creates a dialogue of echoes, marked by strange, aleatoric semantic patterns as the text listens to itself and repeats with the extra emphasis of italics. In this way, each line is retold in slant, slightly alienated from its own expression. The echo appears with an ironic pitch to the glyph, as if calling the original into question or naming it, as if calling the author into question by plagiarism. The statement and its repetition become poles in linguistic oxymoron. Rather than lyricism or confessionalism (or ode), Cinema of the Present is a conceptual text in oxymoronic dialogue with its own procedure. It is no ode to the present, but both an appeal to and an ironic recoil from the failure of the moment, including the unreality of our capitalist art (all that signifies can be sold). In one moment, the text catches the logic of this illusion, the cinema of this present: "You said the market doesn't merit belief." Like the instant of the present, like each line in the text, like capitalism, like our lost presence, it dissolves when slowed down, disappears and reveals a harrowing void. We don't like the planck. We walk over it.

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¹ Davey, Frank. "Lisa Robertson's Cinema of the Present", 1/10/2014. http://www.londonpoetryopenmic.com/frank-davey-blog/lisa-robertsons-cinema-of-the-present

Catriona Strang

Corked
Talonbooks, 2014

REVIEWED BY LOUIS CABRI

Wandering Corked

"Purvey me my intimate's core [...]"
—Catullus, carmen 95, Celia and Louis Zukofsky

Peter Sloterdijk's In the World Interior of Capital adapts the phrase "world interior of capital" from Rilke's compound coinage Weltinnenraum, "world interior" or "world-inner-space." Appearing in the uncollected poem "Es winkt zu Fühlung fast aus allen Dingen..." from 1914, Rilke's neologism denotes, Sloterdijk points out, a "mode of experience," not a place (World fn. 5 p. 288). Rilke names an experience variously described by artists as different as Wagner and Flaubert. For Sloterdijk, the Weltinnenraum experience is one of primary narcissism—"withdrawal from the otherness of the other" (Henseler 211)—a relationship to the other I'll juxtapose with Ernesto Laclau's that is conceived on the basis of what he calls "social heterogeneity" instead. The "panoptic egotism" which projects "worldinner-space" is a symptom of an epochal neurosis: "It is the basic neurosis of Western culture to have to dream of a subject that watches, names and owns everything, without letting anything contain, appoint or own it" in turn (Sloterdijk, Bubbles 86). Sloterdijk's adaptation of Weltinnenraum in the phrase "world interior of capital" applies, he says,

to the interior-creating violence of contemporary traffic and communication media: it traces the horizon of all money-

dependent chances of access to places, people, commodities and data—chances based without exception on the fact that the decisive form of subjectivity within the Great Installation [i.e. capitalism as a Crystal Palace] is determined by disposal over spending power. (*World* 198)

Qualities such as pampering, comfort, ease, relief—key Sloterdijkian terms in his globalization philosophy—once associated with the feminized domestic sphere are now harnessed by capital and externalized as part of its drive to produce and align markets around the world. It is as if the consumer comforts of the domestic sphere—I will raise the gendered construction of his analysis in a moment—have ballooned outward in a delusory encompassment of "the world" as such, "a planetary palace of consumption" (192); and yet "[d]emographically ... the capitalist interior encompasses barely a third of the earth's present population of seven billion, and geographically hardly a tenth of the total mainland area" (195-6). So that within the "capitalist interior" itself, in the USA for example, "[t]he range of policy and electoral choices" when it comes to poverty, say, "remains confined to what fits comfortably into a world of muted ethical concern" (Edsall). Hence the class violence of interiority: "What Sloterdijk correctly points out," Zizek writes, "is that capitalist globalization not only stands for openness, conquest, but also for a self-enclosed globe separating the Inside from the Outside. The two aspects are inseparable: capitalism's global reach is grounded in the way it introduces a radical class division across the entire globe, separating those protected by the sphere from those outside its cover" (63).

Instead of a "withdrawal from the otherness of the other," Catriona Strang's first-person singular pronoun in *Corked* has a "differential identity" in that it performs how, to use Laclau's words, "the excluded other is the condition of my own identity" (140). A "socially heterogenous" situation emerges with such an "I," for in addition, there is a "total lack of identification with any particular demand within the system" (Laclau 151) of representation

constituting the politics of position-takings. Social heterogeneity is that "something which does not have access to a general space of representation" (Laclau 139). Revolution requires that something—"a desire without aim or cause" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 378, qtd. in Lazzarato 20). Strang's *Corked* is orientated toward social heterogeneity while offering a critique and radicalization of the so-called domestic sphere in its capitalist bubble form.

Corked's poem-sequence "Unsettling" folds historical outcomes of gendered domestic subjectivation—states of interiority, intimacy, privacy, inwardness—onto its Romanticist premises and articulations, most notably onto the male Romantic figure of the wanderer. Insofar as the Romantic wanderer denotes "a modern condition in which mobility is synonymous with productivity" (Cusack 51), wandering is a cultural antecedent for the "acquired psycho-cosmological restlessness" (Sloterdijk, Bubbles 24) of the "man of capitalism" (Deleuze and Guattari 98)—and is critically explored this way, I'm suggesting, by Strang. The wanderer figure is important to another west coast poet, too: Peter Culley, especially in The Climax Forest where it helps to focus "dear / and familiar contours" (82) of rural place. Strang doesn't explore wandering by textually performing it through a landscape, as Culley does. Instead, she near-homophonically translates an early 19C song-cycle of poet Wilhelm Müller's, Die schöne Müllerin ("The Fair Miller Maid"). With these lyrics, as we know, Franz Schubert reinvented German song-form (Lied). Thus Strang returns the inward projection of the domestic sphere to this queered and musical Romanticist context and specifically to a composition—Schubert's Die schöne Müllerin—that is "arguably Schubert's most extreme portrayal of orthodox virility and its other" (Kramer 129), as well as "perhaps Schubert's most radical experiment in alternative subjectivity" (ibid. 151). Folding the idea of a domestic sphere onto its formative industrial age moment, Strang juxtaposes that history with the contemporary female-gendered body, so as to actively delimit its qualities and powers.

The figure of the male wanderer plays a dominant role in Schubert's and Müller's Die schöne Müllerin, and Strang's palimpsest of it retains an active interest and not an exclusively negative one in the wandering motif as such (the lines "to move is envy's / collapse" [Corked 4] reaffirm the value of social mobility even if the political mechanisms that would allow for its actualization are in doubt). The wanderer has attracted Strang since her first booklength poem. Like Corked, Low Fancy (1993) is a sequence of nearhomophonic translations, the source being largely-anonymous Latin and German medieval secular poems and songs written by "wanderers." I use quotation marks here because to characterize these Latin writers this way may be no better than to give them a far-fetched and anachronistic identity as "medieval 'hippies'" (Gillingham 78) or "mark of the proletariate [sic]" (Symonds 6). The term's broad referential scope has included under its name many itinerant groupings such as the clerici vagi ("vagrant scholars") travelling from one university to another, monks and clerks in search of office, and "jongleurs, buffoons, and minstrels" (Symonds 28)—all viewed as "ranked in common estimation" (ibid.). Helen Waddell's 1927 book The Wandering Scholars is frequently cited as popularizing the term. The poems themselves, however, with their "ribald themes" (Gillingham 78), erudite wordplay, and satiric and parodic send-ups of biblical and institutional authority, form part of a medieval "contestatory lyricism" ("lyrisme contestataire," Payen 272). The mostly 12C secular poems and songs of particular interest to Strang were preserved in a late 13C anthology that has come down under the name Carmina Burana (named, in Latin, after the German town near the monastery where the manuscript was discovered). The poems in Low Fancy have a libidinally-charged, raucous, collective exuberance, for which the fabled medieval-era wanderer provides a productive analogy for Strang. At the back of near-homophonic translation techniques lies the tradition of macaronic literature, which like the English language has multilingual roots in the medieval era. In England, wandererpoets were sometimes called Goliards (see for example George Whicher's translations, The Goliard Poets, New Directions, 1949), apocryphally sonamed after biblical Goliath but who in this context represented intransigent

paganism ("the pagan learning that flows like a sunk river through the mediaeval centuries" [Waddell, *Mediaeval* v]). The name "Cape Goliard" for the British press that published Celia and Louis Zukofsky's *Catullus* in 1969 combines this poet-wanderer figure. The collective exuberance of *Low Fancy* is similarly giant in rhetorical proportions and evident also in the poetry of a feminist nexus of poets, including Lisa Robertson and Christine Stewart, who produced the occasional stapled magazine, *Barscheit*, during their association with the Kootenay School of Writing. Two decades later, in "Unsettling," the raucousness is gone, however. Linguistically the I, no longer the we, predominates. Affects of loss and anger and of brooding (as in ruminating and also mothering) prevail. The Romantic era thus now provides Strang with a more suitable analogy for wandering.

In their translation research, Steve McCaffery and bp Nichol suggested how translating within the same language (as in a homolinguistic translation) empties out the need for positing an expressive subject "behind" or "within" poetic language. The expressive subject finally is no longer in question in such an instance presumably because the homolinguistic technique of rearranging pre-given words (i.e., words comprising source text) exceeds the parameters of subjective expression (i.e., which requires using "one's own" words) (McCaffery and Nichol 32). The point has been insisted on by poets and critics since. However, in Strang's Corked, the problematic of subjective expression has not "disappeared." Derrida asks, following Nietzsche, how grammar and ontology can be uncoupled so that the grammatical "I" and the state of being "I" no longer correspond in ways that reinforce false substantives in language. But to ask the question is not to suggest that the subject has been "liquidated," only rethought: "The singularity of the 'who' is not the individuality of a thing that would be identical to itself, it is not an atom. It is a singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the other, whose call somehow precedes its own identification with itself" ("Eating Well" 100). By relativizing meaning with soundplay and by tuning itself to a source text, Strang's use of homophonic translation goes some way toward uncoupling grammatical being from the

"metaphysics of the subject." In Strang's near-homophonic translations, the singularity of its subjectivity remains "in question" not least via techniques of division and subtraction, yet remains responsible, opened to (as) social heterogeneity.

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Jordan Scott

Clearance Process Small Caps, 2016

REVIEWED BY DEANNA FONG

It begins with a barely perceptible hum of machinery. This sonic surface is shot through with clusters of percussive sound, an erratic rapping with vaguely metallic undertones—maybe pockets of air hissing and popping in the gas line of a generator. Next, the sound of crickets, footsteps crunching on gravel, pinched breath through the nasal passage, the microphone bumping clumsily against the body. A voice echoes, sounding out the boundaries of a space: "Inside a cell, Camp VI..." The seven minutes and four seconds of audio, sequenced and edited by Jason Starnes and Jordan Scott, record the latter's visit to Guantánamo Bay detention center in April of 2015. After a yearlong clearance process, Scott was allowed to tour the facility as a "poet" and collect sound recordings and photographs, as well as notes and poems on his iPhone. Clearance Process, the first curated presentation of these documentary materials, pairs ambient sound with a selection of photographs that focus on light, texture, and the traces of habitus—tire tracks, TV monitors, furniture, building materials as still-life images in medias res. There is a conceptual echo between these two media forms in the way that they frame erasure and redaction. As Scott suggests in his accompanying essay, ambient recordings are "a kind of empty form that resonates with the visually-redacted photo or the lexically-redacted poem. Redaction looks like ambience sounds" (9). In the audio recording, ambient sound is broken down into its constitutive parts; rather than dissolving into muddled background noise ambience isolates individual sounds, heightening our awareness that we do not always know what we are listening to. Sounds are discrete, particular, material, and yet not representational in any easy sense—there is an absent referent at their very core. That which a sound indexes is there, in a sense, but inaccessible or unnameable. In craning to place and make sense of them, the listener digs into their own

aural repertoire, their cache of sensory experience, making them acutely aware not of what they are listening to, but what they are listening for. What do I expect to hear on a recording from Guantánamo Bay? Why do I want to hear it? What do I want my listening to confirm or deny? Similarly, the photographs point to erasure and redaction at several levels: one, the inherent redaction of the medium itself, which brings certain elements into view while foreclosing others; two, the photographer's subjective framing at the moment of capture, fragmenting human subjects or omitting them altogether; three, the textual description of OPSEC's procedures for cropping or deleting "violating" photographs, which frames the images at the beginning of the book. In both these media, we are exposed to a site that is always already redacted: Scott's movements through the space were highly restricted, and that space was presented to him in a controlled and deliberate way. However, his self-reflexive use of framing and editing techniques make redaction itself an object of contemplation, shifting the focus from redacted content to the mechanisms that allow redaction to take place, to be normalized, to be thought of as necessary and transparent.

While the media forms mirror each other in the ways that they present absence, they produce very different affects. In viewing the photographs, there is a tension between their aesthetic quality and the knowledge of the cultural trauma that the space represents. A surveillance tower stands against a brilliant blue sky, as hexagonal bokeh dapple the foreground. Barbed wire fences dissolve into a horizon of white cloud. There is an uneasy contrast between the image and that which it symbolizes, tempting the viewer to succumb to aesthetic enjoyment, but resolutely denying that possibility through the minute traces that signal context. The audio, by contrast, produces a different kind of anxiety: the sounds are by no means beautiful but banal, whenever one can place them. In this sense, we are struck not by the contrast between content and context, but their unsettling *coincidence*. A doctor explains the intubation procedure used to force-feed detainees as casually and disinterestedly as if it were a flu shot. Auditory and visual documentation, then, shift between detachment from, and over-

proximity to, trauma. The work allows us no comfortable distance from it. It demands the active engagement of viewer-listeners as they work through these conflicting affective responses.

In a recent talk on the project, Scott questioned the ethics of witnessing from a position of privilege, asking: "What is an ethical response or reaction to [this] experience? Can poems possibly come of this encounter and, critically, should they?" In other words, is an ethical position even possible considering the disparity of power between observer and detainee? Scott is vigilant in keeping these questions open and in the fore, never resolving them but acknowledging the possibility that his own representational activity risks replicating the systems of power that make institutions like Guantánamo operative in the first place. However, I would argue that this project is politically exigent in the ways that it points to erasure, refusing to disclose, reveal or otherwise pretend to know. I think this is what Alain Badiou is advocating for when he says that truth is always that which makes a hole in knowledge. The potency of the recordings and photographs is not in what they capture, but in what eludes them: the experience of the detainees whose basic rights are suspended indefinitely, and who are subject to torture, degradation, and humiliation with impunity. Such experience, located in the body, is inarticulable, impossible to reveal or to transfer between subjects. Yet the auditory and visual documents point to this impasse without trying to cover it with the representational activity of description, exposition, interpretation—speaking about, or speaking for, another. Rather than fantasizing that sound or vision can bring us closer to someone else's experience, Clearance Process resolutely holds open the gap between subjects, between reality and its representation, between media forms—in complex and imbricated ways. In the hermetically sealed sonic and visual economies of Guantánamo, such a gap functions as an important site to critique the systems of power that redact bodies and subjects in the name of democratic freedom.

Jordan Abel

Injun

Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2016

REVIEWED BY ROB MCLENNAN

a)

he played injun in gods country where boys proved themselves clean

dumb beasts who could cut fire out of the whitest sand

he played english across the trail where girls turned plum wild

garlic and strained words through the window of night

he spoke through numb lips and breathed frontier ("injun")

The first work I encountered by Vancouver poet Jordan Abel was blind, as part of my time judging the 24th annual Short Grain Competition for Saskatchewan's *Grain magazine* in 2012 (he came in second), and the work leapt up at me in a way I've rarely experienced. Now some of that same work finally appears in a trade collection, his third—*Injun* (Talonbooks, 2016)—after *The Place of Scraps* (Talonbooks, 2013) and *Un/inhabited* (Talonbooks/Project Space Press, 2014). *Injun* extends Abel's remarkable series of reclamation projects (or: project) that bring such a freshness, lively energy and engagement to Canadian and North American poetry, engaged

with conversations attached to Idle No More and Truth and Reconciliation, as well as Language and Conceptual Poetries. Anyone suggesting that conceptual writing has no heart, or that contemporary poetry has exhausted itself, really needs to start engaging with Abel's work.

b)

he heard snatches of comment going up from the river bank

all them injuns is people first and besides for this buckskin

why we even shoot at them and seems like a sign of warm

dead as a horse friendship and time to pedal their eyes

to lean out and say the truth all you injuns is just white keys

Abel's book-length projects open a series of conversations on race, colonization and aboriginal depictions, utilizing settler language and blending exhaustive research with erasure to achieve an incredible series of inquiries and subversions, twisting racist phrases, ideas and words back in on themselves. In a recent interview posted at *Touch the Donkey*, Abel writes: "[...] if your writing is only resistant, only oppositional, only focused on decolonization, you kind of end up writing yourself into a corner. That resistance alone is somehow insubstantial and unsustainable. More or less, this makes a lot of sense to me, and I think it's exceptionally important to balance out that resistance with presence. Or perhaps balance out decolonization with resurgence." He continues:

Primarily, the texts that I've focused on as source texts have all been written from a settler-colonial perspective, and, I think, have pointed towards the kinds of foundational knowledges that should be resisted. My challenge, so far, has been to articulate an Indigenous presence from within those texts. *TPOS* is probably my most accessible example of this. From within Barbeau's voice comes my own voice, an Indigenous voice. In that resistance and disassembly of Barbeau's writing an Indigenous presence emerges.

Further, in an October 2014 interview conducted by Elena E. Johnson for *Event magazine*, Abel discussed the research and erasures that make up the individual book-length components of this ongoing project (specifically, his previous book, *Unlinhabited*):

Unlinhabited is a study in context. The book itself is draws from 91 Western novels that total over 10,000 pages of source text. Each piece in the book was composed by searching the source text for a specific word that related to the social and political aspects of land use, ownership and property. For example, when I searched for the word "uninhabited" in the source text, I found that there were 15 instances of that word appearing across the 10,000-page source text. I then copied and pasted those 15 sentences that contained the word "uninhabited" and collected them into a discrete unit. The result of this kind of curation is that the context surrounding the word is suddenly visible. How is this word deployed? What surrounds it? What is left over once that word is removed? Ultimately, the book accumulates towards a representation of the public domain as a discoverable and inhabitable body of land.

Abel's project both engages and works to unsettle, attempting both an ease and unease into the ongoing shame of how aboriginals are treated and depicted in Canada through repetition, erasure and settler language. Simply through usage, Abel forces us—the occupiers—to confront our language,

in an effort to reconcile, restore and heal, none of which can truly exist without real conversation. The poems in *Injun* exist as a single book-length erasure and reclamation project, one with the result of seeing sketched erasures alongside exploded characters that are difficult to replicate within the space of this kind of review. Lines and phrases explode across the page. At the end of *Injun*, Abel includes this short "[PROCESS]," that explains:

Injun was constructed entirely from a source text comprised of 91 public domain western novels with a total length of just over ten thousand pages. Using CTRL+F, I searched the source text for the word "injun," a query that returned 509 results. After separating out each of the sentences that contained the word, I ended up with 26 print pages. I then cut up each page into a section of a long poem. Sometimes I would cut up a page into three- to five-word clusters. Sometimes I would rearrange the pieces until something sounded right. Sometimes I would just write down how the pieces fell together. Injun and the accompanying materials are the result of those methods.

Jordan Abel

Injun
Talonbooks, 2016

REVIEWED BY JULIA POLYCK-O'NEILL

In·jun
'injən/
noun
US informal offensive

noun: Injun; plural noun: Injuns

1. an American Indian.

What can poetry do? At a recent gathering of poets, academics, and other literary types in Buffalo, this seemed to be the question *du jour*, as it was repeated (earnestly, meaningfully, politically) in several different contexts. Jordan Abel's newest book, *Injun*, just released by Talonbooks, reminds me that this is one of the key questions we must ask of poetry, especially in the contemporary moment. As I read it and read it again, I was astonished by the intensity of the affective experience of engaging with the book's conceptual framework and the resulting richness of its layers of content.

Abel, with a nod to *Tom Sawyer* and his infamously racialized character "Injun Joe", includes an epigraph by Mark Twain in the book's front matter: "It is better to take what does not belong to you than to let it lie around neglected." This, placed in dialogue with Abel's signature dedication, "For the Indigenous peoples of North America," provides an early foray into the manner that *Injun*, in its compelling simplicity, actively parses contemporary debates around appropriation. This parsing has to do with matters both abstract, such as language and signification, and physical/material, such as culture and land.

Other paratextual elements of *Injun*—most notably, its graphically arresting cover—give excellent context to Abel's critical-conceptual poetics, and suggest that, at its core, the project manifests a form of resistance. The cover image, a photograph from artist Rebecca Belmore's installation Gone Indian (2009), features the lone figure of a plainclothes powwow dancer riding on the cab of a red pickup truck, wearing a cardboard half-mask of a generic mimeographed headdress and face, punctuated by pierced eyeholes. The figure appears to be both assessing and addressing the viewer—there's a casual, playful aggression and self-assertion in the way they're leaning into the frame, bent at the waist, hands resting on knees. This playful ethos speaks to Abel's reflexive strategies in negotiating the found texts dissected in his practice, particularly in *Injun*. Identifying and subverting the multiple layers of artifice and speculation inherent to the representation of Indigenous peoples in a selection of ninety-one American western novels published between 1840 and 1950, he foregrounds and exposes the cumulative representational taxonomy developed in the books, and, conceivably, the colonial imaginary. Also akin to Belmore's methods and critical positionality as deployed in her wider performative practice, Abel works according to a mode steeped in historicity, cultural identity, and cultural abjection—a mode in active dialogue with the contemporary realities of late capitalism.

Building on his deconstructive strategies and digital methods as developed in both *The Place of Scraps* (Talonbooks, 2013) and *Unlinhabited* (Talonbooks; Project Space Press, 2014)—the latter of which bearing more immediate generic resonance, as it also deals with racist popular cultural depictions of Indigeneity—Abel here introduces a generic framework for his experimentation and analysis. The table of contents lists five sections: "Injun," "Notes," Appendix," "Sources," and "Process," categories that respond to the traditional material conventions of the book. In this instance, however, Abel confounds expectations in transcoding a selection of these subtitles (while treating "Sources" and "Process," by necessity, according to a more utilitarian mode), hollowing them out by using them only as

mechanisms to structure the movements of his textual experiments with the found materials. As noted in Erín Moure's eloquent jacket blurb, this is part of Abel's method of 'redress': he "turns tables of (dis)contents to redress the page, the book, and the naturality of reading", reminding the reader of the colonial context of such forms and practices.

"Injun" begins with what Abel describes as the result of his (physical) cutting up of the source texts, fashioning a long poem:

a)

he played injun in gods country where boys proved themselves clean

dumb beasts who could cut fire out of the whitest¹ sand

he played English across the trail where girls turned plum wild

garlic and strained words through the window of night

he spoke through numb lips and breathed frontier²

The sections of "Injun" are organized alphabetically. The words assemble to create a lyric narrative, one that gradually begins to dissipate and atomize between o) and q), when the textual clouds become illegible and inverted, until all the words are upside down and reassemble into recognizable morphemes, then (upside-down) phrases. This material disintegration, made ever more poignant by the physical engagement with the author in the recombinant process, resonates aesthetically and

conceptually, contextualizing the sections that follow while constructing, or reconstructing, the historical narrative of the Indigenous peoples referenced in the original novels according to a more resonant, perhaps consonant, register. Using and remixing the language of the oppressive voices of the authors to subvert the original narratives is a useful and prevalent strategy, and a useful way in creating a relationship between the conceptual and the critical, what Caroline Bergvall defines as "the route of engaged disengagement" in uncreative poetics (21). Abel describes his process as shifting between levels of intentionality and randomness:

Using CTRL+F, I searched the source text for the word "injun," a query that returned 509 results. After separating out each of the sentences that contained the word, I ended up with 26 print pages. I then cut up each page into a section of a long poem. Sometimes I would cut up a page into three-to five-word clusters. Sometimes I would cut up a page without looking. Sometimes I would rearrange the pieces until something sounded right. Sometimes I would just write down how the pieces fell together. (83)

The second section, "Notes," adopts a more mechanical mode: organized numerically, keywords, identified by superscriptural numbers (as with footnotes, hence the subtitle) in the cut up poems of the previous section, are repeated in bolded columns, but their syntactical and semantic context is retained (even as it recedes according to the paler tonality of the grayed font), allowing the tensions inherent to their original derisive significance to resound.

1)

himself clean straight that night, the **whitest** little injun on the reservati s along the Missouri River had the **whitest** lot of officers that was eve at is spirit. He smiled, showing the **whitest** and evenest teeth. Such ext 'Jerry wants to talk to you. He's the **whitest** of the lot, if you can call tha (31)

There is also a marked narrative and narratological structure in their ordering, again demonstrating Abel's desire to foreground connotational and denotational themes and patterns within the results of his digital methods. The interplay between the repetition of a keyword ("whitest," "frontier," "squaw," "money") and the shifting register of its context, sometimes banal, sometimes dynamic, becomes the focus of the reading. Another consequence of the strategy of repetition is the gradual emptying of the signifier that occurs when a word is repeated ad infinitum—the word itself becomes progressively more pointless, as if Abel is methodically withdrawing the power from the charged language.

The last of the *détourned* sections, "Appendix," consists of an accumulation of the original source sentences, but with the keywords erased. This strategy is also employed in *Unlinhabited*, albeit according to a different aesthetic effect—here, the words fill the page in a mode reminiscent of, but more formally constrained than, the margin-less and carnivalesque text in Rachel Zolf's *Janey's Arcadia*. "Appendix" builds from the sinister meditations of "Notes," and allows for a more conventional approach to engaging with the text. An inattentive reader might read through the pages, assuming each passage emanates from a singular novel, so singular is the overbearing and archaic tone of the bigoted voice of the collected authors. The cumulative effect and affect of the sentences is such that the reader cannot deny the collective racist ethos common to the historic genre, while also becoming increasingly aware that traces of this ethos have seeped into the present imaginary.

That *Injun*, a Canadian publication, appears less than a year since the publication of the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* in 2015 invokes a number of cognitive and emotional responses. The report, the result of several years of research and consultation organized by the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, attempts "to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation" (1), and transform government policy and

infrastructure to achieve a state of reconciliation in the future. Although Abel is engaging with American found materials, the general attitudes and chronological frame of the texts are both transnational—Canada only officially became a nation in 1867, shortly after the publication of some of the earlier novels, and certainly, the uptake of American culture and media (along with its ideological baggage) within Canada has long been the source of nationalistic anxieties. Not to mention that the borders dividing the countries are a colonial construct, and have nothing to do with how Indigenous peoples define their territories or relationship to land. Canadian readers, settler or Indigenous (or a mix thereof), will likely be highly attuned to these conditions, in-built to Abel's project. He is effectively demonstrating that although a widespread public acknowledgement of the unimaginable abuse and attempts to assimilate and/or exterminate the Indigenous peoples in Canada has taken place, this does not miraculously scrub the offending attitudes from collective consciousness (or unconsciousness)—nor from Indigenous memory. This is a strategic positionality often deployed in Indigenous poetics and aesthetics, wherein the normative position of the (settler, colonizing) reader can be assumed to be simultaneously 'knowing' and imperious. (See, for instance, the poetry of Annharte, or the artwork of Kent Monkman or Brian Jungen.) Abel invokes the Hegelian dialectical relationship between the colonizer and colonized—what Aimé Césaire posits as the "boomerang effect of colonization," the way that colonization dehumanizes both the colonizer and the colonized (41)—but also suggests an understanding of the limitations of both audience and (poetic) enterprise.

There is an effort, a marked ambition to reach unattainable catharsis, even if by purely linguistic means. Through various textual economies, borrowed from the poetics and aesthetics of Language poetry and differing methods and styles of conceptual writing, ambivalent to what Heriberto Yépez calls the 'leukotropism', or the tendency to privilege whiteness, associated with these categories, Abel works through the complexity of the found environment by means of a seemingly innocuous but politically charged genre of writing. The creative, selective interactions between colonial

structures and decolonial textual strategies allow for a sustained engagement with the subject of representation, allowing Abel to assume a form of agency when faced with a culture of uncritical oppression.

Related to this is the notion that the pulp genre of western novels is actively retained and archived, preserved for future generations, a gesture to Derrida's notion of "archive fever," whereby the spectre of the dictatorial principle of 'commandment' looms but is also naturalized and forgotten (9). Those who defend this genre of writing have come to identify the construct of the "injun" as something essential to their own sense of identity. Equally problematic is the ongoing consignment of Indigenous peoples to a "mythic past or 'the dustbin of history" (Lawrence and Dua 123), an enduring pattern in popular cultural narratives. In choosing to deal with a genre of popular fiction and its lexical trappings, Abel reminds us of the indexical quality of language, and calls attention to the dangers of persistent, widespread mythologies that shape conceptions of identity and history. In recontextualizing and recombining American cultural forms in a way that effectively responds to "the messy complications of socio-cultural belonging" (Bergvall 21) and speaks to a post-national, late capitalist audience, he demonstrates the persistence of these myths to oppress. Further, he also shows how active strategies of resistance can deny modes of subjection. Moreover, Injun, while bracketed within the constraints of Abel's creative conceptual process, evinces the resilience and affective labour required for active engagement in the decolonial project, drawing out, with necessary urgency, the imposed colonial grids embedded in even the most liberatory textual-cognitive strategies.

That's what poetry can do.

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CAM SCOTTMULTIPLE SUPPOSES: (Re-)Reading Colin Smith

Colin Smith has been blurbed variously as an anarchist poet, an inveigher-against, a peddlar of absurdist smut, or a Cheshire chortle at the back of the reading; more specifically, as a chip off the Kootenay School of Writing and ambassador of its odd queries to a drier clime, for which cause he is a staunch friend to any experimental being, whether poem or person. And as if it isn't strange enough to write about one's friends in the third-person, I'm about to embark on a text that will attempt to address each of these guises as though they weren't one and legion, as though they ought to be consistent. A 'collected poems' certainly tempts this reduction. This collection however, in exemplary lacunar fashion, flouts any such attempt, declining on the surface to present itself as such.

Multiple Bippies reproduces Smith's first as well as most recent poetry collections, 1997's Multiple Poses, originally published by Tsunami Editions, and 2012's Carbonated Bippies, from Nomados. Appended to these is a dishy, nutritious exchange with Donato Mancini regarding the author's specific stake in the Kootenay School of Writing and the wide arc of its influence, as well as the jubilant anti-manifesto 'Why Poetry,' evincing Smith's total belief in poetry as a multi-tool and matter of radical import. Missing is the (perhaps key) 2008 collection 8 x 8 x 7, still available from Krupskaya; in spite of which absence, this is an indispensable collection of work spanning fifteen years and myriad, multiple, voices. Multiple Bippies abandons any pretense to completism, let alone closure; it extends and complicates the present of a long-unavailable text, whilst insisting upon the period- and site-specific contexts that many 'collected works' strive to de-emphasize.

In his introduction to the present volume, Donato Mancini treats the utterly macabre with lightness, and takes the slapstick and the one-liners deadly seriously. It's a risky tack, but such are the problems of tone and reception posed repeatedly by Smith's cheerfully transgressive, or sadistically good-humored, voicing. Much has been said about Smith's humor; and it's true, this work is abruptly, blasphemously funny, a true litany of taboo-blasting one-liners. Less remarked upon is the anger, the scalded disappointment, and the sadness. A representative Colin Smith line is both pained and exultant. The cognitive leap from any one line to the next only deepens the ache. This is a poetry consisting entirely of interruptions, that nonetheless manages to interrupt itself on a line by line basis.

Mancini asserts in his introduction that these poems are canny with respect to the subjective stakes of neoliberalism, that "Smith's 1990s work will make a lot more affective sense to a lot more people now than in its original moment." (xi) And the flexibility requested of each nu-lumpen in this moment of material fluidity is put across page after page in so many bizarre injunctions and requests: "rezone my bank/account" (6); "daydream/rote horniness" (51); "Externalize your wheelchair!" (28) Perhaps the practice of self-care in an age of expendability is necessarily ironic, and Smith sarcastically declaims verve-for-conviction to a polemical point: "We're too busy/being wage slaves to/take adequate care of each other." (36)

As opposed to the relatively flat affect of certain capital 'L' poetries determined to stave off any synthetic outcome whatsoever, Smith's work presumes acculturated pangs in each reader. It is a poetry of conscience, with all the ideological baggage that bears. These texts oscillate wildly between extremes of joy and depression, spanning the impossible distance from sexual dystopia to political ecstasy: where a catch-all epiphenomenon called 'language' is concerned, Smith is on the side of the organism it assails. The language of his poems is neither pre-subjective saturant, nor cryptic input, but the *outcome* of an encounter with power.

STRAY MONSTROSITIES AND STRAW MEN

Multiple Poses (so Multiple Bippies, too) opens on 'Godzilla Fugue,' in which the famed monster is depicted as a conspicuous marker of crisis; an aggregate golem of political resentment. For Smith's purposes, this iconic stature works as a proper noun, consolidating a cause from beneath: "actor, in a scaled suit/bashing down a miniature city, we never learn who it is."
(3) Is the bathos of this depiction intended to be minimizing, or is the dressing up a suitably aggrandizing action? Smith certainly appears to favor the monster, a perennial menace to the ordinary: "... between editions "he" is disappeared/into what we assume is historical and unconscious." (ibid)

The poem introduces a key thematic, the formal equality of all phenomena within jurisdiction of the spectacle: this is Smith's version of 'The Gulf War: Is It Really Taking Place?' In Baudrillard's infamous essay, reality itself doubles as a decoy, "soft war and pure war go boating"; (Baudrillard, 115) which sounds auspiciously like a sentence of Smith's work. Compare 'Godzilla Fugue':

Tolerable body count. "Killer concept," shortcut execution, we cut corners on the budget, this beast invents kickboxing. There's the word Tonka on an overturned truck. (3)

Without lapsing into conspiricism, the poem is oddly prescient of the televisual, then actual, event that licenses the American stake in 21st century mediatized warfare, '9/11,' and its significance for Smith's later work. (Though the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is the traumatic, all but absent, referent here.) Above all, the poem reminds that the spectacular, however tawdry and unbelievable, takes shape around a real event withheld from subsequent representations, which tend toward banalization by repetition: "Our glutinous memory/says remains nonviewable, a canned bellow," the poem laments. (4) These final stanzas

seem to mourn loss itself; history foreclosed upon as though scripted, "a rigorous panorama of men with guns." (ibid)

'Godzilla Fugue' stands out amid Smith's highly performative texts for the omniscient sweep of its language. This is not affected from an historical distance, however, in mock-visionary mode, but in overview of a cinematized miniature; a diorama ripe for wrecking.

Many of the celebrity cameos in *Multiple Poses* are heroes and monsters of film; the infanticidal Henry Spencer of *Eraserhead*, who sponges and synecdochizes his miasmal surroundings, appears alongside a migrainous Buster Keaton in the poem 'Straw Man,' itself equal parts paranoid and slapstick. A fabulous confession-from-without, too emphatically punctuated to be called elliptical, 'Straw Man' reads as a psychology of median being, or portrait of the liberal socius, which depressed creature the reader initially confronts at documentary distance: "He works day in day in talks serial bits/to colleagues whom no one knows." (10)

This sentence-length concession to satiric realism betrays much; there are no 'out' days, there is no redeeming throughline; obscurity is total, pre-ordained. These doldrums are elaborated over ten sections, a psychic inventory of "365 blue mondays a year." (16) That said, this is a poem less concerned with time than with space, and the conquest of nesting spaces: of "living in or as a furnished model." (13) 'Straw Man' reads in part as a paean to apartment life as it swells between split shifts, or worse, bursts under threat of unemployment; the ominous *mise-en-scène* of Lynch's *Eraserhead* shot through with just enough commercial tat to anchor one to bed in Plato's cave.

We believe our surveillance is unnoticed. His private speech turned public does not. His florid dreams and smallest purchases are documented in the fashion you expect. (15) Too general for confessional, too shamefully particular to be broadly applicable, the poem appears to suggest that any reportage on being in the third person pertains but to the title's 'straw man,' an abstraction; but no matter, the desirous other outpaces one such that any self-fashioning is more so a fastening effect: "Often unsure of having a soul so much/as a batch of cultural inscription." (11) There is no pronoun in this sentence, and the poem turns upon fragments such as these, that ambiguously span the gap between third-person reportage and the first-person confessional voice that erupts throughout the text: "I read/aloud, Wittgenstein for the cat Elmore Leonard for myself." (11) The Straw Man "swills philosophy" for purposes of self-help, but on behalf of mute alterity. There is a sly brilliance to this anecdote of a night-in with the little Other, in which Wittgenstein's famously inscrutable lion appears domesticated but characteristically mum. The passage summarizes the crises of interiority staged throughout the poem. Later it appears that "the cat's name might be Norman, Wrath of God," and the conjunction of pet-name and subjective apocalypse appears to taunt the tenant of the text; scaffolding baffled, symbolically bereft. (17)

This is one sticky thing about existing as a self-acknowledged spate of "cultural inscription." Say that the poem's 'straw man' is aware that he is the subject of an address, or poem, insofar as he is aware of his existence at all, inhabiting a paranoid cityscape where "every ambulance must be for him": the transcendental loneliness recounted here nevertheless concerns a registry of desires that are ill-fitting, unsuitable to his purposes. This is capitalist realism *par excellence*; or, perhaps, a new genre of "lame wolf lone/ Spam wild Smurf duck noir." (15) Smith is careful to capitalize those proper nouns that brand the reader by association. This reads as archly ironic in a poem attempting to counter the liberal abstraction of subjective bearings with a litany of highly personalized fetish objects, one of which is an incantatory politics.

For all of these reasons, 'Straw Man' illustrates the terms of enrollment in neoliberal economy: "I am not *chosen/*but have applied for the job." (12)

First-person plaint has a dual function in this poem; it appears ironically at moments of wholesale identification with the specimen otherwise described from above, or else sardonically, as prophylactic against distress: "I got so self-righteously angry I thought/my head would host an event/of prompt criticality!" (15)

In either direction, subjective destitution is necessary for participation in the total marketplace, where one's ultimate lack of differentiation may be assuaged by any sense of purpose; and the uncertain grammar of this poem appears to foreground the unwholesome continuity of one's own power to act with the agency of one's oppressor. In Smith's poem, and the physic implicitly ratified here, pronouns designate vectors of desire: "I you them us we, as verbs"; or, head-scratchingly: "And we thought you could have/an unmediated miscellany of emotions, did he?" (17)

There are many ways of reading such a sentence: the subject of the final mocking inquiry disagrees with its seeming antecedent, so as to suggest that this clause is not a doubling taunt, but an ingenuous question, with a third subject in mind. The regal 'we' addresses the impersonal 'you,' but the third-person pronoun in the final clause changes the anticipated meaning completely; the rhetorical loft of the preceding fragment collapses into uncertainty. Not only does the sentence explicitly reject the possibility of 'having' one's emotions in random array, the grammar thwarts desire in retrospect. Thought otherwise, this subjectively impossible, pseudo-Cubist grammar is foreshadowed by the penultimate lines of the poem directly preceding, 'A Boy's Own Last': "think of yourself in all three persons/and treat your life as a research base." (9)

Similar tricks are employed throughout 'Indolent Corollaries'; an expansive retake of 'Straw Man,' written from above. "Sunrise turns up slowly across our city, a boring benison." (49) Here the first-person collective pronoun stands for abstract negativity; a facetious prepossession for a point-of-view. In a direct echo of 'Straw Man,' every-poet queries any-reader with false

modesty: "Am I showboating my social construct,/i.e. personality?" (ibid) The whole in its consummate falsity swells, but an irruption of the singular may burst this groggy bubble from within. Hereafter, the composition of one's own 'we' may be clarified, as so many mutual communicators:

We keep very still talk try to hear each other over the ex-cathedra din of the system convincing us it's working. (51)

Any connective media is emphatically seized upon. These utopian cues appear but succinctly, kept apart from sloganistic pique as soulful fragments, in themselves a kind of punctuation of the overall ideological scrolling effect:

Lucre. Second-hand Scriabin. In crush always deeply.

Talk. Friends, cats. White spraypaint outline of vaporized on pavement.

Swoon. Spleen on. Dreadful slivers of hope in the midst of. Sorrow. Justice. In theory, die for each other. (53)

Because Smith insists on articulating these contingent emotional fixtures, we do arrive at a portrait in silhouette, subtractively. Far from attempting 'everybody's autobiography,' Smith recounts the bodily stakes of particulate living, such that the internalized, de-personalizing regimes of neoliberal *self-employment* may be opposed to an *auto-erotics*; as the conquest of intimate space must be opposed at the level of fantasy, too.

THE (DEAD) FATHER WHO MUST BE KILLED

'Chasing My Father's Narrative' is a thorough excoriation of the bourgeois nuclear family that opens on a funeral, then returns upon scenes from the life of the Father, both as a suspect metaphor and reeking progenitor. "We had a Master/Copy relationship," the poem quips, and truly, much of the political opprobrium to follow is complicated by questions of identification

and inheritance: (22) "What's long and hard on a male archetype?, tell me a fable, Father/turn out the light, this represents me/hope not you, for your sake." (29)

The text is littered with proper nouns denoting ill-worn and contemptible authority; perhaps Smith's propensity to naming names is meant to diffuse their power; to denude the Emperor of aura, or taunt at the Humbug of Omaha. To this end, momentary avatars of lasting power are inveighed against specifically. Eisenhower and Diefenbaker are saucily invoked by their diminutives, 'Ike' and 'Dief', making a high-fiving comic duo of these co-conspiricists, while George Bush, Sr. is registered by a full litany of names ("George Herbert William Walker Bush"), foregrounding the dynastic succession to which he belongs. As in the above example, Bush is named alongside his Canadian contemporary, Mulroney, re-cast as an unkillable Terminator prototype; only this pair appears as triangulated by Darth Vader in a structural cameo. "Tell me a fable, Father," the poem implores, and here's the rub: power is not susceptible to narration, let alone narrative intervention, where the principle actor is inside and outside of the telling at once.

Here and throughout Smith's work, science fiction is exploited for its mythic consistency as a gesture at deep structure, always dystopian. Likewise, the figure of Freud's 'Primal Father,' banished of symbolic necessity, works as a political analogue, sadistically literalized; the 'father who must be killed' re-appears throughout the poem as an imperialist of Caligulate appetite, a cheesy Caesar; warmonger; serial murderer; broker of Free Trade agreements; cop hopped up on chemicals, 'corrupt,' redundant. Perhaps there is no common trait or central power behind these indelible brands; but the Name-of-the-Father works best in the absence of a material namesake; thus the poem begins with a funeral. Above the open casket, epithets are hurled; but these too readily become its body. To adapt Joan Copjec, one might suggest that the Primal Father is a perfect allegory for power precisely because of its embarrassing non-empirical status: it is a formal extrapolation

over-reaching any responsible anthropology, a structural contrivance; but the symbolic works as though such an inaugural event had transpired, conferring status on the subject even as it constrains them. Like any naturalized power, its reasons are recursive; the Primal Father is a metaphor for a metaphor, backdated far beyond the remit of any historical discipline:

The horror film's final image is Ma and Pa hunkered over the carcass while saying "Times change; values don't." (23)

Perhaps it is in the mandate of so-called 'transgressive' writing to break those prohibitions which preserve the family as an internal limit to desire. But how to overthrow a lecherous authority that implicitly approves of the attempt? This is an ethical problem, staged as a technical problem at the level of the text: how do you accuse a structure without naming it? How do you name it without duplicating it? Smith attempts to do this ostensively; which necessitates a practice of downright seedy citation. On one level, the poem does this as it takes each sordid injunction of authority absolutely literally, to expose moral hypocrisy:

Censoring booze, tobacco, nudity, body parts and underwear from magazines for U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf.

"This is the same mentality that complained about a naked toddler floating through Maurice Sendak's *In the Night Kitchen* two decades ago." (22)

The ideal of the Child as sacred ward of the parent may be contrasted with the surveillance that produces an actual dependent from day to day: "Door/must stay open, hall light/had to stay on." (26) The differential is such that the 'Child' must above all be protected from itself. And the poem ingenuously queries, "How *do* you read the phrase "edited for children"?"

(ibid) Here multiple possible meanings coincide: that which is edited for a child's eyes is cleansed thereby of the wonder and perversity that typifies childhood. Fittingly, as seen above, Smith cites the myriad (and ongoing) censorship scandals surrounding Maurice Sendak's picture books. This brings to mind a tribute to Sendak by his friend Art Spiegelman, in which the beloved children's author is depicted fanged and agitated, inveighing against the preciosity of would-be censors that "childhood is cannibals and psychotics vomiting in your mouth!" (Spiegelman, 82) "I remember my childhood vividly," Sendak says, "I knew terrible things. But I knew I mustn't let adults *know* I knew. It would scare them." (ibid) In this, the child protectorate appears custodian of scared and sacred knowledge; and the adult is the more insistent fantasist.

"The primal father is primarily the father who seduces the child," writes Copjec, where the child is a generic innocent to be both feared and protected. (Copjec, 157) Smith appropriates the first sentence of Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School*, sans scare quotes and with line breaks:

Never having known a mother, her mother had died when Janey was a year old, Janey depended on her father for everything and regarded her father as boyfriend, brother, sister, money, amusement, and father. (24)

In Acker's novel, this last line doubles as a caption for a sketch of two figures, naked from the waist down, one with an erect penis and a flaccid double in the background. (Acker, 8) More than the *fort-da* of desirous authority, the calligraphic crudity of the depiction taunts symbolic precedence: the order Smith thwarts when he writes: "Your penis is quite luscious but your phallus I won't take." (25)

The subversive charge of this frequently menacing poem has everything to do with its insistence on such an option. Writes Smith: "A personal choice/is deliberately misrepresented/as unreflexive deviance." (27) In Acker's opening scene, the teenage narrator's jealousy is that of a mature partner; the Father is momentarily put in his place, stammering, uncertain before her demands. Surely Sendak's cherubic protagonists have some relation to Acker's defiantly queer countertypes of childhood; both exemplify a willful pre-latency, that of the 'child-who-longs-to-live-with-pirates.' These are the figures Smith appears to perform, who escape the confines of an insidious family drama by over-identification and scheming retreat, often at once: "In home movies I learned to *run* not walk.//You gotta go along to get along." (24)

The chillingly difficult thing about this poem is the incessant wisecracking complication; one-liners proliferate as though a coping trick; and exclamation marks sarcastically convey an undue cheerfulness to select utterances: "Make me eat that liver!" (26) The reader can't but register the pained affect that belies such self-swerving verve. But this is no thwarted therapeutics; the panoramic staging of this material and its inner disjunction gives a readerly frisson. What discomfort the reader experiences is to be recuperated on the pleasure principle. This is painful and appropriate, for as Copjec asserts, "we could say that the campaign against the primal father is visible in the increasing abhorrence of the pleasure of others. In fact, the intolerable Other *is* pleasure in today's society. What have increased of late are interdictions. These are the mechanisms that construct the phenomenon that Foucault calls surveillance." (Copjec, 157)

Thus the perennially undead Father of the poem, linked subjectively to trauma, underwrites every inferior version; his body in effigy a vacated tower in the prison-yard of language. To this end, the poem's panoptic chorus may be heard to chant "resign, resign," in an opaque citation of queer activism contra Toronto's phobic police. (Warner, 110) But the despotic pleasure-seeking Father cannot simply be replaced. The double-bind is that, where this logic is concerned, to kill the father is to inaugurate the surveillance

state. Totalitarianism, in Copjec's description, is not monarchic; rather, it is underwritten from below by the lateral will of a 'people,' and has its origins in trauma. Smith's poem understands the social contract in precisely these terms: "Put the voting booth/in your mouth and pull the trigger." (27) Then horrifically, a page later: "Survivors feel obliged to suicide." (28) The tyrannical ur-figure of inceptionary trauma endures in principle if not in fact.

IMMANENT OUTTAKES

Aside from its subjective necessity, which is significantly diffused over the course of this discursively conflicted text, is there a formal significance to this prosecution of the signifier? Bruce Andrews has written of a *polymorphously perverse* mode of experimental writing, in which "the body of work is not organized around the referential axis." (Andrews, 37) Conjuring Freud, for whom a roundly erogenated phase of attachment is succeeded by a normative (genital) fixity, Andrews alludes to a "monarchic" organization of meaning that is imposed upon more supple modes of textual production, based on "physical ways of intending," evidently including speech. (ibid)

Certainly Smith's penchant for nonsense, interruptions which typically proceed upon politically centripetal passages, works in this direction, enacting a movement from a restricted to general economy of speech. But this poetry does not open onto unsorted, sub-semantic thrall, a prediscursive body of pure sound. The pleasure of the text as directed by Smith assumes sense. 'Polymorphous perversity' here entails the formal equality of meaningful utterances, a cynical generosity that underwrites Andrews' poetry, as well; it is not pre-discursive but pre-syllogistic. Of course, it is every bit as impossible to imagine a suspension of this rational process as it is to imagine a 'pure sound,' or, conversely, a meaningful utterance without a sounding body. The pained, communal affect of Smith's poetry has everything to do with the assumption of responsibility for speech in the capacity of body; what would it feel like to say this? In 'A Boy's Own Last,'

a moment's interlocutor appears incredulous of this approach: "You would go into the lab without a hypothesis?" (7)

After this fashion, 'Erotic Out-takes Programme' would appear a Sadean attempt to redistribute the spoils of the Primal Father, heretofore monopolized in state, breaking the prohibitions that comprise a family. So this declamatory sequence pre-supposes certain terms of moral panic, as a counter-force to queer and prosecuted life. The program is a poly-vocal pornographic suite in thirteen bulletins, over the course of which so many ways of being are iterated as sites of resistance. Conversely moralistic as they are, the thirteen sections of the poem do not chart concentric hells, but what Gayle Rubin calls 'the outer limits' of sexual behavior, in contrast to the 'charmed circle' of socially sanctioned activities and contexts. (Rubin, 152) Rubin represents this opposition visually using a wheel-shaped diagram, with thematic spokes extending from the center to the outer periphery, intersecting a smaller circle nearer the hub. This circle protects the 'charmed' interior, exceeded by so many verboten practices, so that each pie-shaped sliver of the diagram includes a conceptual binary: promiscuous/ monogamous, free/for money, heterosexual/homosexual, private/public, and so on. A "domino theory of sexual peril" ensues from this organization, where an imaginary threshold between 'good' and 'bad' sex must be policed lest one thing lead to another. (ibid, 151)

The argument of 'Erotic Out-takes Programme' appears to advance (counter-) clockwise around the outer chambers of Rubin's diagram, playing on the synergic tension between 'outside' expressions of desire. This accord, however, has much to do with that these affinities are contingent, forged by mutual exclusion from a normative framework, and in this respect, the antagonism of sexual morality tends to the charmed center in its address. Rubin's diagram may be thought in overlay to Bentham's model prison; only from the central watchtower is the "whole circuit" subject to review, a viewpoint enabled by the prior separation and seclusion of individuals. So the poem enacts an argumentative torsion, cross-referencing "out-takes" of

various stigmatizing discourses in rotation of persistently rigid social mores. "I can only climax before/police stations." (33)

Smith delights in a *criminal* relation to this material, contrary rather than negationary, that doubles back upon the force of law; the second time as fetish. "Recommended." (31) The poem's scopophiliac lens is co-extensive of a disciplinary panopticism, which gives it the consistency of a Satanic pact, where the devil is received conditions. Whose recognition are we courting when we taunt our own inner censor? On this point, Smith appears to tighten the screw, channeling Carla Harryman: "I thought it was funny to be sexy/when there was no object." (33) This attempted auto-eroticism is more than a little quixotic, "funny" indeed: for the poem is a roundabout devotion to (how else may one approach?) the object-cause. "I/use porn to objectify myself," the poem/poet announces, yet surely the reader has noticed how this self-referential bliss transects myriad other objectifications; the eponymous poses, perhaps. (31)

If 'Erotic Out-takes Programme' plays with certain structural limits of transgressive literature, it also contains the clearest outline of what we may call Smith's Sadean hypothesis, collating political cruelty and sexual thrill-seeking. Rikki Ducornet has remarked upon the perennially sordid exceptionality of moral and political authority with an eye to the demonic, demoted Marquis specifically: "How much fun Sade would have had with Enron, the current scandals rocking the Catholic Church, and the skeletons that continue to kick in Kissinger's closets." (Ducornet, 57) Smith's work enacts such an update.

Figures of political power appear conspicuously in the guise of sexual sadists throughout Smith's work; avatars of the Primal Father, privatizing pleasure. This must be read in light of the work's own tendency toward jubilant kink: it is not the sordid appetite that threatens, but force and coercion that make desire (and authority) illegitimate. Further, this turns a conservative logic, typically weaponized against select populations, against itself; Smith

contemptuously cites bourgeois sexual morality as a provisional standard by which to observe a comparative absence of shame and accountability, those primary mechanisms of regulation, in the major actors of market nihilism: "Jeffrey Dahmer/shows more mock contrition than the President ever will, we'd better/kill it before we understand it." (45)

Kill it before we understand it, sneers the conservative faced with the threat of accidental identification with the 'evil' other: Smith's mordantly perverse humor threatens (dis)identification line to line. As Mancini puts it, "each of (Smith's) meticulously serrated gags locates a point of contradiction—impact site of the punchline or wisecrack. Each locates the type of fissure from where the social body could be pried apart." (ix)

Accordingly, Smith's articulation of the social body presumes morbidity, as it champions a kind of zombie resiliency. There is a surfeit of fraught, damaging language on loan from the world-at-large throughout; does the modular, albeit toppled, megastructure of a poem like 'Erotic Out-takes Programme' function as a 'higher order' unit of ulterior meaning, such that it may subject its own parts to critique? There is no apparent argument here, where Smith hazards endorsement line by line, bullet by bullet. And yet, to quote Frank O'Hara, "pain always produces logic, which is very bad for you." (O'Hara, 498)

Any rationale, as both a cause and an outcome of pain, becomes a crucible of identity; so Smith impugns society in the guise of its reasons, or excuses; case in point, quoting World Bank economist Lawrence Summers' scandalous 1991 memo before a veiled anecdote of sexual extravagance:

"The economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." (31)

Eschewing the obvious moral objections which, Summers aptly notes, threaten every proposal for liberalization, the memo stoops to the kind of coldly analytical demonstrations for which Sade is renowned. Truly, the more banal villains of Sade sound remarkably like liberal economists, prudent realists all. Here, for comparison's sake, is a coercive offer of employment (or sexual slavery) from *The Misfortunes of Virtue*, though it could be a sweatshop owner speaking à la Jeffrey Sachs: "Think it over carefully, pay special attention to the poverty from which I should save you, and reflect that in this unjust society of which you are part, those who do not have enough to live on must suffer if they are to earn enough to get by. Like them you will suffer too, I grant, but you will earn far more than the vast majority of them." (Sade, 16)

After the scandalous memo was leaked, Summers attempted to pass his political realism off as Swiftian satire; much as Sades extremism has impelled many uneasy critics to launch this defense on his behalf. But Sade is far less cynical than all that. It is on this principle that Sades villains appear proto-Dickensian; caricatures who identify wholesale with the structural violence wrought by, and upon, their respective stations, repudiating so much bourgeois prophylaxis against the kind of evil that is always elsewhere, Other, pending, or paid for in advance. So it is not simply that Sade portrays the id of capitalism *avant la lettre*; rather, he foreshadows its superego-maniacal injunction to savor one's lot.

Like Sade, Smith takes this line of thinking *too far*, that is, to only logical extremes. Reading sovereign excuses as though accountable to reason, Smith ironizes power whilst placing himself within its orbit. For the expectation of sense, implicit in talking back, marks the generational transition from monopolism to competition, infancy to adulthood; from the czarism of the Primal Father to the benign surveillance of the Ideal Father. Like any normative succession, this developmental allegory omits much, which becomes its basis. In a Bataillean twist, Copjec affirms that it is the "eviction of excess" that installs an ethical ideal in place of the tyrant. (Copjec, 155)

And the perverse revolutionism of 'Erotic Out-takes Programme' proves savvy with respect to this succession: "we have to *earn* our innocence?" (30)

Spewing excess-as-accusation, the poem depicts this earning, or learning, in complementary terms: "let's structure!, mask of binary argument, self-sociological, self-help, are we us yet?, tell it and catch you later O edible one ..." (31) This introjectory poetic complicates the passivity commonly assumed of the 'innocent' recipients of structure; for the subject is produced under the sign of knowledge; fruit more bitter than forbidden, and no easier to bear for that. An opaquely persistent line demonstrates the moment-to-moment ravages: "Victim/victim expert victim victim victim expert expert victim." (39)

Is this a roll call, bringing to mind the meticulous catalogs of suffering-as-research that are a trademark of Sadean literatures? Or a statement of the oscillating identifications of a survivor? Smith writes as both linguistic guinea pig and mad scientist; which is to say, as his own vivisector, hurt and implicated. Is the requisite bilious laughter a purging of poison ingested? A full-bodied gesture of approval? Probably not, for the Beautiful Soul prefers to store aesthetic ipecac safely away from an offending text. But the buccal principle on which these sentences are vetted is key; where 'experimental' denotes a taking-it-upon-oneself, putting-the-words-in-one's-mouth. To mix metaphors and quote Mancini, "although reading these poems can feel like standing in a rain of (candy) glass shards, every wound delivered is one the writer suffered." (xi) But directly?

To endure the rain of glass, each shard having afflicted the author first, is to transitively partake of the associative logics of another consciousness. Such writing may not appear personal at first glance, for it is only *extensively* so. Further, if there is a lyric intensity to select utterances, it is 'confessional' in the sense that it runs counter to, but on the axis of, an accusation: both are the outcome of a prosecution. Making the macabre encounter with authority into an occasion for creative mockery, the poet *survives*, as the

poetry scalds. One can read the sexual pessimism and revengeful barbs of the foregoing sequences after this fashion; as a register of being-astrauma—the subject implicated herein is traceable only in consequence of their resistances, their hurt, their outrage; in consequence of which it is expressed as a *politics*.

THE DISCOURSE OF THE HYSTERIC

For this cause, the tornado-of-knives approach that Mancini describes abates from line to line, as Smith-anarchist foregrounds despair itself as an ideological counter-production. From 'A Boy's Own Last':

A poem (mock stentorian) running for office, injecting you with a précis of my moral terrors,

doesn't cut it.

What would you put in your version of another master narrative? (5)

The repletion of fantasy beckons behind this utopian taunt; echoed later in the poem with an auspicious lacuna and a question in place of the domineering plot:

What would you put in your version of another Why Not?

The lineation would appear to mimic dropping off a cliff, a condition of speechlessness. And one may read a slapdash carelessness into the next line, "why not," as though, when pressed to supplant their society, the speaker is unable, or refuses, to think prescriptively with respect to 'what is.' Naturally, one cannot furnish oneself this information; rather, one is "a hostage to genre," to genus, to the linguistic codes comprising one's form-of-life. Smith's best sequences emphasize this bind, constricting the horizon like

a noose, only to abruptly cut the rope with *nonsense*, a practice of political bewilderment that is aesthetically and perhaps ethically preferable to concerted negation:

... Master metaphor? Like clothing that always sort of fits. You can't predict what I will next frightball. Antipasto. (7)

This statement locates agency within the realm of chance. What kind of political perversity is this? In his book on the Kootenay School of Writing, Clint Burnham identifies Smith's poetry with the Lacanian discourse of the hysteric, "in which the barred subject (\$) is the subject of lack, the speaking subject, and could also be seen as the capitalist subject or the political protestor." (Burnham, 97) The hysteric speaks "truth to power," actually embodying this function. But the truth of this discourse is *desire for the master*, preserved in the formulation of each oppositional stance:

antimale antiwhite anticapitalist antiright wing antiessentialist religious ignoramus polymorphous perverse tart conceived of pantheistic naivety antinationalist antiglobal antifrom middle class on up misanthropic but dependent on company antimaterialist antipostfeminist antipostmodernist antihierarchical complicit with optimistic and violent forms of revolution anti1950s60s70s80s90s anti-industrial fetched into silliness by rural life antihigh art antipopular culture anti-isolationist antediluvian antipragmatic antispiritual anti-violence except when I'm doing it antistoic antisentimental anticruelty antihabitual anti-intelligence without street smarts having got this far however (6)

This insistence typifies the hysteric, whose "irony disavows its very address to the master." (Burnham, 97) Lacan famously identified all political activism with the stance of the hysteric, who demands that power be held to account, even when it is power that furnishes the basis for accountability. As often the barred subject addresses itself to the master signifier in the guise of a challenge or a series of unanswerable questions. Certainly Smith's work is rife with both; oppositional political slogans ("I'd call you a rightwing goon but the phrase is redundant," 52) proliferate alongside rhetorical stumpers ("Was there ever a *the* problem?", 7), both lacking a proper addressee.

The hysteric's is the least cynical of all discourses: in which a failed subject ironizes a given authority by demanding that it justify itself in its very arbitrariness. ("The political fix is systemic//therefore open to disruption...," 5) We may assign Smith's refreshing earnestness to this discourse; but his poems perform a vicious despair, as well. Perhaps for this reason, Burnham also attempts to situate Smith's output within the discourse of the university, where knowledge addresses desire; this address is productive of the split subject, the auspicious remainder of such noble traffic. Nowhere is this mode so clear as where Smith's customary questionnaire is rephrased in the guise of evidence: "Why that man is up for reelection instead of mass murder." The format is that of a catechism: the workings of the wrong society are iterated bluntly; decisions suffice for reasons, answers appear before questions are asked.

In addition to these readings, I would suggest that Smith's poetry performs and ultimately jams an eccentric addendum to the four discourses, which Lacan mentions only once: the discourse of the capitalist. To arrive at the capitalist discourse, Lacan reproduces the diagram of the master discourse, but inverts the position of the split subject and the master-signifier to produce a seamless circuit. As in the discourse of the hysteric, the split subject occupies the place of agency; but this time addresses itself directly to knowledge. In the discourse of the capitalist, the subject is empowered to produce knowledge of its own accord; which is to say, the subject has

knowledge of its desire. This is the structure anticipated by Smith when he beckons "What would you put in your version of another master narrative?" (5) The subject is no longer split apart, no longer lacking; but this wholeness is achieved at expense of identification with the marketplace; at expense of subjectivity itself. We may compare this to the hysteric's discourse: in a Hegelian twist, what properly politicizes the hysteric (this is quite different from the suggestion that all politics is hysterical) is a certain structural relation to the master, such that "the hysterical discourse represents the truth of the master's discourse; that is, the return of the repressed: the miserable subject of the master returns in reproach." (Burnham, 97) This is diffused in the capitalist discourse, where the subject's desires are held to coincide with those of the master.

The discourse of the capitalist well encapsulates the neoliberal ideal of total vocation, where one's identity is expected to coincide perfectly with power. The discourse of the capitalist creates the illusion of seamless repletion; there is no lack, hence no subject, hence no politics. Smith insists upon this necessary lack as a space for indecision and negativity: he writes it by *refusing to write it*: "What would you put in your version of another": another what? Conversely, there is an ambiguity to this unpunctuated fragment, which may also be read as definitive of the capitalist discourse itself: 'What would you put in your version of an Other?' This question encapsulates the crises of intersubjectivity heralded by capitalist discourse, where everything up to and including *another*, the other, is subject to customization. Even the other underwriting one's desire is subject to the demand for good company.

Because Smith's work hews closer to the voice than much comparable Language fare, I would sooner associate this poetry with a movement between the oppositional discourse of the hysteric and the ambient discourse of the capitalist than with the authoritative distance of the university, for this is a properly political poetry; there is a speaking subject here. But the site of politics is differential and contested, and these poems stage it as

such, contrasting vastly different discourses on a sentence by sentence basis. Here an ambient circuit is portrayed with post-historical calm:

[...] Commune of rapt, all of us transfixed as if in a rocketship about to arc somewhere wonderful. Waiting. A generation born to sit, talking up our significant-others kids friends art with without a capital "m" our occasional four-colour wants. Which doom will cut that. (51)

The reverie is broken by a millenarian clause: which doom, indeed? For the seething commentator who appears throughout the poem, this is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The hysterical voice of 'Indolent Corollaries' inveighs against environs in a fixed base mantra of refusal:

No more volume No more food bank No more subsidized meds No more bread & carcasses No more free No more cute

[...]

No more block transfer No more schlock value

No more freebased currency No more recreational fists

Here the Master is opposed in the guise of one's own companionable desires, up to and including the low-hanging fruit of faux-socialist post-scarcity-forsome. "No more free No more cute" should be on placards everywhere: a refusal of opulence and relaxation, a refusal of subjective oblivion.

CAPITALIZED BIPPIES

2012's Carbonated Bippies! begins with 'Between Crucifixion and Resurrection,' an austerely paginated collage poem, analogized to and

cribbed from a quaint televisual megastructure: the text splices together brief synopses of films from a newspaper TV guide, published on the Saturday of Easter Weekend, 2010. Smith then uses keywords from the omitted film titles to skim the dictionary as an opaque surface, producing gnomic haiku such as: "zephyr chimney/kiloton yelp/ionize patriarchy." (63) At first glance, these appear in excess of any attempted semantic recuperation, an intransigent smattering of non-speech that sticks in the throat of the appetitive subject, otherwise established on a circuit with surroundings, as consumer.

Here again, Smith performs an 'interpretation by nonsense' of the capitalist discourse, which, as sketched above, tends toward total identification with a process. This total identification is evident in the reiterative practices of 'conceptual writing,' which Smith more or less flouts over the course of this poem, by several clever means. Most glaringly at first, the starved tercets separating every paragraph: scoured from dictionary pages corresponding to the keywords of film titles, this compositional method can't but evoke Oulipo's rigid encipherment of a text by "n+7," which treats the signifying chain as though it were an abacus, along which the signifier slides *but determinately*, within a provisional "totality of signifieds." Smith skims the dictionary in similar fashion, as a surrationalist divinatory mechanism, but sensuously, with an eye to meta-commentary: "ionize patriarchy" is an agentive mandate not a happy accident. Here chance has some relation to alterity, but the aim is identification, however circuitous.

A stubborn kind of sense emerges where least expected; while elsewhere, in the orderly paragraphs, the seam between transcribed synopses defies analogy, producing sentences like the following:

A group of climbers struggle to reach the top of a new leaf. A macho cop is forced to masquerade as a young Jewish woman yearning to study the Talmud. Einstein plots to match his niece with the American War of Independence. (63)

This may be read as a send-up of so many monomyths as elaborated and enshrined over the course of countless big budget time-killers. Formally, however, another commentary may be underway. The collating consciousness of the poem keeps pace with the distant stimulus of scheduled programming, so that the paragraphs include the disjuncture of flipping channels, as though one's attention were directed at the structure rather than the content. The medium is the message, as one speaks of 'watching TV' rather than training upon any particular program.

The activity of aimless channel surfing is less common today; and maybe the strangeness of this, or any, activity emerges as such only at a moment of near-obsolescence. That said, it may relate to the less active, yet more 'engaged,' quandary of clicking through Netflix titles endlessly, unable to settle on an evening's occupation. This satisfying interpassivity, as elaborated by Slavoj Žižek, is paradigmatic of encounter with all manner of integrated media, ready-to-hand, only insofar as it is at first a religious structure. Recall, the time of the collage poem is the time of Easter weekend: Christ dies for the sins of the believer on schedule. Perhaps even the experience of submitting-to-'watching TV' has undergone a secularization; which is only to say that a form of experience is threatened.

Dodie Bellamy's TV Sutras is perhaps complementary in this respect; conceived as a channeling exercise where each of a series of concerted meditations is completed by a televised epiphany, every sutra begins with intentional acquiescence to the unanticipated other of the screen. Bellamy meditates before a quiet television, then turns on the TV set and transcribes the first words spoken, then describes the image that accompanies them. The sutras are "received" with no interpretation appended. (Bellamy, 14) "FDA approved. Voiceover. Image of woman with big dark eyes." The commentary reads: "This is the path to be taking." (ibid, 18) Another example: "A perfect man. Never in politics

his whole life. Men in room discussing appointment of young man to Senate." The commentary: "Approach the world with freshness, as if you were seeing it for the first time. Surprising insights can come from the position of naiveté." (ibid, 55)

By her own account, Bellamy strives for artless sincerity in her transcriptions. This reminds me that Eric McLuhan has written of a necessary inoculation before 'hot' media; for without a certain amount of exposure, the subject remains at risk of credulity upon stimulation, unable to hierarchize the onslaught of information. Bellamy's sutras appear to literally enact this second-hand thrall, emphasizing the unsorted first impression as a readymade epiphany. This technique flouts the hippie's technological aversion, even as it reveals their supposed purity of heart as a carefully managed production. Platitudinous at a glance, the sutras are incredibly precise interventions in a complacent circuitry, with the eerie unfamiliarity of a screen shot: as quoted, "surprising insights can come from the position of naiveté." The supposed transparency of Bellamy's impressions may remind us that the discourse of the capitalist is a zen diagram, too.

The *augenblick* of the remote control click may be a site of some subjective chafe, although repressed from perception in favor of seamless integration into surroundings. The (in)visible seam or shutter is a site of resistance and pleasure alike, and is iterated as such in Smith's coyly reduced TV guide, where the invisible disjuncture mid-picture occasions physical kicks: "Stoner Dale Denton visits his dealer to get some rare weed called spoken English language." (65)

OK, so this is a sly introduction to two major, interwoven themes of *Carbonated Bippies!* Smith will speak of the collection as his own brand of "icky formalism," but another concern might be *archaism*, a deliberate means by which a given form reveals itself. (In moments of malfunction, ungainliness, or obsolescence. There are sonnets pending, mind.)

'Desprit' is a conversation of sorts, collaged from movies featured in Harry Medved's book *The Fifty Worst Films of All Time*. There's no hope of meticulously cataloguing the films that are in dialogue here, short of referring to the source text; rather, there is little point, for this is no cinephile's inventory. The poem is a low-comic romp; unattributed and unevenly paginated fragments of dialogue scroll past, not yet contrapuntal, nor cacophonous, quite. The placement of these sentences, tidily punctuated and complete, creates the effect of an indifferent cascade, not unlike channel surfing; except that, in contrast to the conjunctive, divinatory procedural of 'Between Crucifixion and Resurrection,' the cross-references comprising 'Desprit' tempt dialogical recuperation.

"Are you a television set?" the poem asks in a particularly didactic mood; naught but a batch of cultural inscription? (72) 'Desprit' may be read as 'Straw Man' without introspection, in a colder moral climate; the emotionally fraught delivery of the earlier poem is superseded by a much more abrupt bathos. The heightened and reduced emotional palette typical of melodrama, and the slapstick intensity of affect one finds therein, typifies many of these soundbites, so they do appear to dovetail in somewhat narrative fashion. Discrete torrid vignettes are collated so as to give the feeling of a unitary, sweeping epic; a kind of capitalist-realist pastiche whose largely interchangeable, then cruelly caricatured, personae serve to lay bare the absence of motive, of girding, of plot. It is an idiot-vortex, in which the induced contemporaneity characteristic of Modernist methodology acts as a literal skewer. This is an impression that the reader may carry over into the next poem, also entirely comprised of juxtaposed quotation.

'A November Triptych' transcribes verbatim three media transmissions circa Barack Obama's 2008 election; from Sarah Palin, Stephen Harper, and Reverend Jay Scott Newman respectively. The implied parity between these political actors and the b-grade performers of 'Desprit' is not missed. The lineation, stretching the argument vertically, creates a feeling of bodywracking suspense, as the reader's eyes descend each poisonous sentence

as one might turn a screw. But the page design tempts a horizontal reading, which interpretation cuts across the separate columns; a core sample of the total contemporaneity of the 24 hour news cycle. On account of this concision, it reads as a spare and unsparing intervention in the rehearsed cant of spectacle.

'Wronginess' is an orderly looking sonnet with a single fold for a rhyme scheme; that is, the last seven lines proceed away from a rhyming couplet in the center, such that lines one and fourteen rhyme, two and thirteen, and so on. In this way, there is archly Petrarchan sound sense to the sarcastic volta, where the emphatically end-stopped lines collide airs fatalistic and facetious:

These social violins are keening for justice! Without principles, will need those profit margins. I guess this means you're allowed to simply barge in. These overheated wars we must infuse with ice. (82)

If rhyme in a classical sense promotes an idea of order on some sub-semantic, incantatory principle, one that suffices in place of moral argument in Smith's sonnet (and by implication, perhaps, everywhere else it operates in this guise) it is notable that the ear cannot strain enough to perceive accord between the first and final parries of this willfully awkward poem. It starts and ends in sonic abstraction, to mimic the alienation of its mostly facetious propositions. In this way, 'Wronginess' is not so distant in its formal means from the anarchic sprawl of 'Desprit,' though the former poem wears tweed and has tenure. If Smith is testing the limits of sound as an order, it's subtly striking that he forsakes the expected pentameter for a twelve-syllable line, where the quantitative rigidity of the poem is difficult to hear.

PEOPLED POETICS

Three 'Portraits of Parody Persons' conclude the chapbook; directed at civic, provincial, and federal despots respectively. These verge on light verse,

each borrowing its form from a well-known-to-infamous template. 'Odius Twerpus,' for the former mayor of Winnipeg, Sam Katz, takes Shelley's 'Ozymandias' as its basis, which is the most glaringly apt appropriation of the lot. For those fortunate enough to lack a context for the name: Katz was a worse-than-standard mogul-mayor, who privatized relentlessly and kept his friends in contracts. "I am Samuel Michael Katz, king of bling," the poem declaims after Shelley's indelible crux. Katz is no pharaoh, but Winnipeg in its present shape attests to his monumentalist delusions. However, cathartically funny though it may be, Smith's echo doesn't taunt its subject with eventual obscurity; rather, the "lone and level sands" of Shelley's epilogue are iterated as a decimated cityscape ripe for development. "Sorrowed to see this decay/ Happen here, as elsewhere, TINA'd. The rare/Balls, the refracted strikes. The new dead sway." (86)

Shelley's poem intuitively commends itself to this satiric re-purposing: stranger at a glance is Smith's decision to base an ode to former B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell around Phyllis Webb's poem 'Rilke.' One of her 'Portraits,' a series of often skeptical tributes to authors of Ozymandian stature, Webb's poem grapples with Rilke's legacy as a question of personal overcoming: "Rilke, I speak your name I throw it away," Webb begins, which negative invocation Smith re-scripts with a vandal's delight: "Gordo, I can your mind I shit in your drink/for round justice, no angles, no statutes,/vanities." (87) Metrical parallels aside, the poem hereafter is little concerned with its source; Webb's interest in Rilke is too ambivalent by half to suit Smith's mocking designs on Campbell. Rather, Smith owes the method of tribute to Webb, whose work Pauline Butling has described as a tapestry of "combined defiant and commemorative intertextual relations." (Butling, 97) Webb renounces, rather than denounces, her literary and political precedents by invocation and rehearsal; "male muse figures" of sordid authority are impugned even as they are portrayed affectionately, over the course of a dialogue that challenges the austere separateness of these names from the author in time. (ibid, 100) This, Butling suggests, is the basis for an authentically anti-Oedipal poetics; based on the elaboration of attachment rather than symbolic opposition.

Smith's suite, however, is avowedly oppositional. The appellative propensity of *Multiple Poses* is honed to seething extremes here. At once, however, Smith inhabits his influences in a spirit of tribute; the poems are multiple in their address. On one hand, they 'punch upwards' of the poet's station, harassing increasingly remote offices of authority; all of which, notably, are occupied by (perhaps unimportantly) different persons at the time of this review. As seen above, these texts typify the politically oppositional hysteric's discourse. On the other hand, this is a speech sanctioned by form, bearing upon a pre-established poetic body, such that the address is acknowledged in the telling. The truly radical import of this poetics has everything to do with this pro-social avowal of faith in the reader as simpatico, a comrade; of a pending apprehension and society alike.

Smith's poetry comprises a community in its points of reference; so this writing takes responsibility for its villains. The long reign of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, concluded in name this past October, is conveyed with nothing like sweetness in the final poem of the suite, for which purpose Wallace Stevens' 'The Emperor of Ice Cream' becomes 'The Renderer of Cold Ream.' The funerary airs of Stevens' verse persist menacingly beneath Smith's version, much as the source poem juxtaposes the macabre and the frivolous within a sentence. Stevens' original verse is a quietist nursery rhyme, the happiness of language aligning its reader with the children of the poem, innocent of death. The reader's position here is by no means so clear, where the Evil Figurehead or Master Signifier features under but one of its names, which are legion, appearing with the conviction of a hex: "Stephen Harper's rhetoric will surge in a dark scream." (88)

Here Smith's dogged belief in poetry as a lived and timely means of resistance shines through; his pre-occupation with form circa *Bippies!* supposes poetry as a cognitive means and model civics both. The 2009 essay 'Why Poetry' follows, an exhilarating riposte to much present-day opprobrium for this foolhardy art, parroted by conceptualists and slacker-lyricists alike. "Poetry *because*," Smith's pundit affirms in unalloyed love with the text.

(91) This is a generous artist's statement rather than a manifesto, but it should find an eager co-signor in the heterodox reader. Further, the writing endorses other crucial statements of poetry-as-resistance; Smith thrills to the mention of Audre Lorde's essay 'Poetry Is Not a Luxury,' praising the "civic primacy" of her metaphors: poetry is "the skeleton architecture of our lives," Lorde asserts, and Smith associatively elates: "The human body itself is architecture, and it does its pithy human dealings within larger structures like towers and plazas and houses and parks and forests and quinzhees and fields and and and." And poems, evidently. (ibid)

Smith, however irreverent, inhabits these shared spaces deferentially; his model forebears manifest form, which he self-consciously inscribes at the level of the text as loving content. As regards Smith's satires, we may follow his own logic: why these poems? *Because* poetry. The poem as companionable ditty extends the bearer's consciousness, an obdurate body spanning personalities: "Dream as hope and vision as philosophy and a poetic body as a kind of flâneur of citizenship." (ibid) The source poems are apt to Smith's political re-purposing because poetry is the occasional tool *par excellence*; the "Great One-Off," Smith quips. And yet, these one-offs are connected by constituents; reader-reverberators, perpetrating sense, itself a making.

So, apropos of his own 'Portraits,' Smith quotes Phyllis Webb that "the proper response to a poem is another poem," (92) which must relate to Lorde's emphatic thesis that there are no new ideas, only new ways of making them felt. (Lorde, 39) While Lorde's poetics are importantly particular, of her community, the observation evidently resounds with Smith, whose writing is entirely about the *feeling* of received ideas—often painful, problematic ones. Where the generative capacity of discourse is concerned, the joke and the poem both intend contagion.

This concatenation of calls and responses binds practically, affectively; so fittingly, *Multiple Bippies* concludes with an interview entitled 'Versus the

Atomisations of Power: A Conversation About the Kootenay School of Writing, Friendship, and Collectivity.' The coda is named for the following excerpt: "In our society we're trained to respect, overvalue, and stick to a belief in the singular person and the banal atomisations of power we're deceived into imagining exist, rather than looking at the connecting rods between platforms of power, say." (129)

This is a transcription of a tape-recorded conversation between Smith and Mancini about the KSW and its company, heavily glossed and expanded over subsequent correspondence, replete with comradely anecdotes, meticulous footnotes to promote pertinent texts, and no stalling nostalgia, a most undemocratic tic where the life of the text is concerned. The precision of these recollections elevates the sentimental to a course of study; the mutual esteem of friends trumping a pre-fab syllabus. Smith's affection for this "blob of mutating community" is contagiously displayed in every soundbite, and a trademark of the poetry so far preceding, the propensity to naming names, operates in a spirit of tribute. (107) Kevin Davies and Dorothy Trujillo Lusk loom large in Smith's account, key figures who compelled him westward in the nineteen-eighties and informed his burgeoning practice; to these names and so many others Smith relates, determined to articulate the KSW as a Thesean vessel, comprised of many excitable rhetoricians, experimentalists, and above all, companions. These effervescent bodies and their multiple supposes are the crucial backdrop to Smith's poetry, in which, however dyspeptic, every manifest 'against' is buoyed by a performative 'for.' To relay one without the other would be to miss the point, and only one of many. How many poets does it take to change a lightbulb? How many have you got? And why stop at lightbulbs? Why not change everything instead?

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