

"[Bill Knott's] poems are so naive that the question of their poetic quality hardly arises. . . . Mr. Knott practices a dead language."
—Denis Donoghue, *New York Review of Books*, May 7, 1970

[Bill Knott's poems are] typically mindless. . . . He produces only the prototaxis of idiocy. . . . Rumor has it that Knott's habit of giving his birth and terminal dates together originated when he realized he could no longer face the horror of a poetry reading he was scheduled to give."
—Charles Molesworth, *Poetry Magazine*, May 1972

"[Bill] Knott's work tends today to inspire strong dismissal. . . . [He's] been forced to self-publish some of his recent books. . . . [B]ad—not to mention offensively grotesque—poetry. . . . appalling maddening wildly uneven . . . adolescent, or obsessively repetitive . . . grotesqueries [His] language is like thick, old paint . . . his poems have a kind of prickly accrual that's less decorative than guarded or layered . . . emotionally distancing uncomfortable. Knott . . . is a willful . . . irritating . . . contrarian."
—Meghan O'Rourke, *Poetry Magazine*, Feb 2005

"[Bill Knott's books are] filled with venom. . . . Knott seems to hate himself . . . and he seems to hate his readers."
—Kirk Robinson, *ACM (Another Chicago Magazine)*, date?

"[Bill Knott's work] consists almost entirely of pointless poems, that say disgusting things. . . . [His poetry is] tasteless . . . and brainless."
—Michael Heffernan, *Midwest Quarterly*, Summer 1973

"Knott is making capitol on poetic fashion, attempting belatedly to enter the canon of the Language poets by reviving the idiom of Ezra Pound. [His poetry] so successfully defies communicating anything that one wonders what [his publisher] had in mind. . . . Knott, it may be recalled, "killed" himself in the early 1960s."
—R. S. Gwynn, *The Year in Poetry*, *DLB Yearbook* 1989

"Bill Knott's poems are . . . rhetorical fluff . . . and fake."

—Ron Loewinsohn, *TriQuarterly*, Spring 1970

"Eccentric, uneven . . . poet Bill Knott is not [fit] to win prizes . . . [His work is] thorny . . . rebellious, avant-garde . . ."

—Robert Pinsky, *Washington Post.com*, April 17, 2005

"[Bill Knott's poetry is] queerly adolescent . . . extremely weird. . . personal to the point of obscurity. . . his idiosyncrasy has grown formulaic, his obscure poems more obscure, his terse observations so terse they scoot by without leaving much of a dent in the reader. . . There is a petulance at work [in his poetry]. . . [H]is style has grown long in the tooth. . . In fact, [at least one of his poems is] unethical."

—Marc Pietrzykowski, *Contemporary Poetry Review*
(<http://www.cprw.com/Pietrzykowski/beats.htm>)

"Bill Knott's [poetry is the equivalent of] scrimshaw. . . . [It's] either self-consciously awkward or perhaps a little too slangily up-to-date."

—Stephen Burt, *New York Times Book Review*, November 21, 2004

"[Bill Knott is] incompetent . . ."

—Alicia Ostriker, *Partisan Review* (date? 1972?)

"Bill Knott . . . is so bad one can only groan in response."

—Peter Stitt, *Georgia Review*, Winter 1983

"Bill Knott [is] the crown prince of bad judgment."

—Ron Silliman, *Silliman's Blog*, June 26, 2007

"[Bill Knott is] a malignant clown."

—Christopher Ricks, *The Massachusetts Review*, Spring 1970

"Bill Knott should be beaten with a flail."

—Tomaz Salamun, *Snow*, 1973

ODDS AND ENDBOOK

/

BILL KNOTT

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The poems in this book are fictional. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used ficticiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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A mix of poems old and new, most of which haven't fit into my other more categorized books. (There may be some duplications.)

The order is random, neither thematic nor chronological.

For me, every poem is a "one off"—

I don't care where the poems are placed as they follow or precede one another in my books (with a few obvious exceptions).

No sequencing or positioning within a book will make any of them better or worse.

Each poem will stand or fall by itself, of itself.

*

RIGOR VITUS

I walk

On human stilts.

To my right lower leg a man is locked rigid;

To the left a woman, lifelessly strapped.

I have to heave them up,

Heft them out and but they're so heavy (heavy as head)

Seems all my strength

Just take the begin step—

All my past to broach a future. And on top of that,

They're not even dead,

Those ol' hypocrites.

They perk up when they want to, they please and pleasure
themselves,

It's terrible. The one consolation:

When they make love,

To someone who's far or close enough away appears it
appears then

Like I'm dancing.

LIFER (AKA "HAPPY BIRTHDAY")

our prisoner
has received a package
containing a cake
which of course he thinks
must conceal a file
or a hacksaw-blade
and starts
to dig down into

actually however
his salvation
his way out
his escape route
has been carefully laid out
in brightcolored frosting
over darker frosting

the crucial message
the delicate pinkly lettering
overlooked
unheeded
falls shredded apart now
by his hopeful search

RITUAL

first
bury your hands
then the third from the right toes
your pancreas bury it next
and so on in the order prescribed
by ancient strictures
save the head for last
cup your thumbs beneath for it to fall into
have an eyelash
be the last thing visible overground
leave a heartbeat
to tamp down the dirt
to be a shadow for grassblade above
then nothing up there
at the beginning of this poem nothing
so that the last the very last
all that'll be left to do then is
bury your hands
etc.

SECRET PLACES

I bite the screwtop top of a
bottle of naivete steady in my
teeth and slowly, by
rotating the bottle's body in
my hands, open it.

Christian crap, jewish junk,
moslem muck, buddhist bullshit,
the days all begin and end.

Pain is the absence of repetition.

Eventually the soles of the feet
will infect the palms of the hands
with their hiddenness.
Their remoteness.

Until then
I remain a door-deep animal,
embracing every room
shy of welcome.

SAY WHEN

I write poems that consist of nothing
but the word attentionspan
attentionspan
fills all the pages of all my books
of course it's boring for you
to read the same word
printed over and over again
I agree it's a waste
of time and patience in fact
I know you probably won't even
read past the first thousand or so but
that's okay I am not hurt by the fact
that you never read my poems all
the way through because (and get this)
wherever you do stop reading
wherever you toss me aside
is where I triumph
is where I impose upon you
the term for that limit which
you have haughtily and
eternally tried to impose upon me
right there
wherever you stop
will be the word for that stop
the true word the word
made deed as we say in the trade
you will have reached your attentionspan
and I will have put it there
waiting for you
writing it over and over for you
sitting in this crummy room day after day
gloating over this victory
over your usual tyranny
over me

THE CLOSET

(. . .after my Mother's death)

Here not long enough after the hospital happened
I find her closet lying empty and stop my play
And go in and crane up at three blackwire hangers
Which quiver, airy, released. They appear to enjoy

Their new distance, cognizance born of the absence
Of anything else. The closet has been cleaned out
Full-flush as surgeries where the hangers could be
Amiable scalpels though they just as well would be

Themselves, in basements, glovelessly scraping uteri
But, here, pure, transfigured heavenward, they're
Birds, whose wingspans expand by excluding me. Their
Range is enlarged by loss. They'd leave buzzards

Measly as moths: and the hatshelf is even higher!
As the sky over a prairie, an undotted desert where
Nothing can swoop sudden, crumple in secret. I've fled
At ambush, tag, age: six, must I face this, can

I have my hide-and-seek hole back now please, the
Clothes, the thicket of shoes, where is it? Only
The hangers are at home here. Come heir to this
Rare element, fluent, their skeletal grace sings

Of the ease with which they let go the dress, slip,
Housecoat or blouse, so absolvingly. Free, they fly
Trim, triangular, augurs leapt ahead from some geometric
God who soars stripped (of flesh, it is said): catnip

To a brat placated by model airplane kits kids

My size lack motorskills for, I wind up all glue-scabbed,
Pawing goo-goo fingernails, glaze skins fun to peer in as
Frost-i-glass doors. . . But the closet has no windows.

Opaque or sheer: I must shut my eyes, shrink within
To peep into this wall. Soliciting sleep I'll dream
Mother spilled and cold, unpillowed, the operating-
Table cracked to goad delivery: its stirrups slack,

Its forceps closed: by it I'll see mobs of obstetrical
Personnel kneel proud, congratulatory, cooing
And oohing and hold the dead infant up to the dead
Woman's face as if for approval, the prompted

Beholding, tears, a zoomshot kiss. White-masked
Doctors and nurses patting each other on the back,
Which is how in the Old West a hangman, if
He was good, could gauge the heft of his intended. . .

Awake, the hangers are sharper, knife-'n'-slice, I jump
Helplessly to catch them to twist them clear,
Mis-shape them whole, sail them across the small air
Space of the closet. I shall find room enough here

By excluding myself; by excluding myself, I'll grow.

HITLER YOUTH

If I mispronounce ourobouros as Oral
Bore us (from the mouth we emerged) or
You rob our O's (to repay our A's), I am
Simply saying if there were a line painted
Down the middle of this line, a poem
Inscribed down the middle of me would see
How many pens Medusa can hold in Her hair.

Haven for revisionists, the future
Excerpts itself from us, an anthology
That shows what we were at all moments, wholly
Representative, but which opened sheds a me
Hoping that somewhere past this surface the rim
Of your horizon has causes to know the sky
Is a sequence, with intervals of eternity.

Because form's faithlessness is oblivion
Tamed by hand, from my eye fringe I cry
Surround me facile, you 1940s infancy:
Because Nazis are not Z's, therefore they
Are A's. But even this poor report-card
Intends to let the alphabet be less lost
Than the shine off a trigger toad, my skin worn
By mud-mannequins. Ah Adolph's dais has
(Chattel chip/slaveblock splinter) softened since:

Like a fountain, my libation reprimands pavements.

NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM

*

A museum is too many rooms
where nothing can be moved;
one is forgotten in most of them.

*

A tiptoe theater, full of shushes
and overly-lit faces whose big
scene seems always imminent.

But if the cue is anything more
than a coin-toss, a chance word
from a spectator's bypass glance,

this expectation of response
is your guess, your great stance,
the stage you hem and haw at.

*

How the overflow of doorways
that link all these galleries
interrupts the paintings' spaces,

adjusting the land with lack
and lacunae, thrusting gaps into
the hushed square of our attention

and ushering us to the question
of absence, that thief peering in
on these always-without scenes.

*

Are we outside what is shown?
Made audience, do we attend
a pageant patient with our pauses

in perception, the solipsistic
tunnels we hug. Why otherwise
is there almost nowhere to sit?

Isn't it, that the viewers must
move in order for the viewed
to remain still. The authorities

curate these corridors with us—
offscreen captions ape our attempts
to evade rigidities they'd impose

until our amblings became
a Nazi lockstep across this grid
that exists mostly to secure

the screws that make sure
the patrons' plaques are more
the wall than we are: hungworks

belong to the victor; postwar
reparations are a chimera—
this world is bolted in place.

*

Museums are for the rich: it's just
another way they gloat and spit
on us, the blunt message is *See*

twice great am I who can afford

*to both buy this hoard and I
may also throw it away: this view zoo*

*is what I feed the animals
meaning you: gaze-cage where
I nonplus you with my surplus,*

*torture you with my morehood,
here you must worship my worth's
leavings, the Picasso I pissed on*

*before purportedly donating it
you bet to get a big tax write
off that really comes of course*

*from scum like you, you pay the cost
and the critics conspire my con:
I own them and you and all this too.*

*

The poor have no right here,
though ostensibly it's here
for us, its existence is built on

our backs, our lacks of education:
connaisseurs of crap, we'll buy
any crud postcard Impressionist

wallpaperers provide—victims of
fade-forgers who reign everywhere,
enforcers of the de rigeur; their

efforts to convince us this emptiness
is otherwise, succeeds: that's why

nothing here can ever be touched,

even a fingertip would disturb the
dead tenuous alignment of forces
fragility can only lament from frame

to frame until the all but unshown
collusion between donors and whore
curators completes its scam decor.

*

Numberless our looks languish
unable to compose their path,
halting an inch in front of

the canvas; the air is thick with
incomplete glances, gazes that
failed to reach these pictures,

overtures toward an unsatisfactory
climax, unbridgeable the gulf,
still impotent or frigid the mind

feels confronted by these large
garish (i.e. visible) examples of
a wig tossed onto a TV to be

a diva antenna receiving pictures
from the Tesla Void where
spysats orbit to catch the planet

in closeup, candid depictions of our
centimeter selves, the slimed movement
of border sorties, incursions that

violate the treaties signed by
dignitaries retiring with a wing
named after their Mom and Dad.

*

Though our observances are far
from over, scalped by perspective's
relentless blade we wander home

truant now to our other portraits,
false to their provenance, the lands
we lost by invading the sanctum

of this museum, serene scene
we plebs must abhor in front of
our lives which cannot authenticate

the real exhibit: this wealth of lies
before whose truth our face is
forgeries; our eyes un-nude, unseen.

*

OBSTACLE-ISM

heaven is tired of stepping
on me and hell of bumping
its head on me and I am
fed up with both battered
by all this inbetweenity

every earth path impending
over or under me until
all site is lost or foothold
in such a stringent merge
I span their wild subplots

each compass raises lowers
its binary state of terror its
contemplate where the two
pass each other in opposite
directions home for some

all of them it seems can
half-palliate imprecision
with place but I'm nowhere
unless this always being in
their way is somewhere

FACADE

Mirrors worn out by apple
renderings, depictions the carcass
of peepington sneers at.

Vatic surface disdained by Cezanne,
doubts that blemish forever rarity,
wise beauty is painted parallel
always.

Always beauty is tempted to falsify
every shadow, as if nothing nearer
could be real. Doubling its fade
it seems to set an alternate yet not.

Facepaint spoils
the forbidden zone quality
that lives and dies there (indirectly).

But truth lies immobile on the sundial.

(Its other else moves to the blazon
of summer rhymes that remain names
unknown till birth when the tongue
must pronounce itself the tongue,
forsaking every purer synonym.)

BOSTON COMMON, AUTUMN 2000

The Statehouse dome
is painted gold
to reflect the greed
that gilds everything
in this Capitol:
superfluous these leaves
reaping their richest color.

No-one is fooled,
not even me, unless
it's by all the green-sickly
bronze statues in this park:
have they been seen by Doctors
from the Museum,
have they been authenticated lately?

These could be forgeries,
the real ones trucked off by night
to some billionaire's
penthouse of horrors:
eyrie I aspire to—my lair, my home!

The trees' lottery tickets descend
and fill my hands
with more than.

BEST WAY TO KEEP YOUR ANKLES AWAKE? SNAKE SHOELACES

Only a scratch, but its bandage patrols the walled city, assuming this mystic furrow has taught such fangs repose. Past suburbs skilled with ash, past evaporated sculpture, blindpond bodies. Or is it

like maples, learning their craft of syrup—years of drop on drop, step by step—have we, life after life, a soul-spoor gradually maximizing its sugar? Or is Nirvana bitter—a clockmarked zero, a pine-

needle's grudging eye. A void, propped up by simplicity. Where someone exhausted by the justice of his meals pauses in the street, the proof his feet make gathers, gravity snatching to earth all

sweets. Even sprinters, on their starting-blocks, hold hands. Love? A sideways noise, a tidings via toe-graphologists, rumor as raw as cold as saliva crawling on the floor of a crematorium, straw used

to sip frogsweat from sleeping lily pads. More?—Mourners, televidilevitated. Birth, its strength of recap. The yacht of yet, the boat of but, have never saved us from sinking in dreams where the dead

must keep their day jobs: imagine going on working like a compass on the thrust-out palm of some lost Victorian's corpse near the North Pole: think how tired it is by now of sticking to the point, the poem.

THROWBACKS

I want to take your place in my life so
I lie in wait for you everywhere. Once I used
To lie down in the paths of steamrollers, my teardrops
Where photographed at the feet of glaciers
To prove if they were advancing or retreating
Like positions in a kama sutra: after the cold
Juggernauts passed over I was fed lingeringly
Through printer-outers. It was read then that the
E-pore is used most frequently by my skin,
Next came x, p, o . . .

I want you to take my place in my life so
I follow you everywhere. Once I used
To follow burglars around: waiting at the window till
They ransacked a house then fled, I'd enter
Run my hands through its emptied drawers, degleamed
Jewelboxes, my sole thrill was to rub the feel
Of deceived receptacles, rifled pockets.
I'd wait outside, then rush in, clambering like an adam's
apple.

I want to take my place in your life so
I go with you everywhere. Once I used
To accompany myself, I had a passport to the xerox,
The unanimous aimed its initials at me on the run,
When my died my clones were laid out at the funeral
Beside me, then a heckler who's amnesiac, anybody, some
Forever stranger was blindfolded and led past the coffins to

(no stanza break)

See if they could get the right I by feel but failed
And so their life was took in place, and so I took your life
As place, so I must now keep placing your life in take,

In sudden give and take:

I want you to take my place in your life. Please.

CRAPSHOOT

Whoever it was, the first plagiarist
had to actually dream up the concept
of the crime, so don't fault him (I imagine
this culprit as male, but the poem he copped
was—I would bet—authored by a woman)
for lack of originality. I wish

I could excuse his bad act as madness—
that a crazy theory whose tenets value
words over typos caused him to go true,
to trace out hers so unerringly—
instead of greed, I'd plead psychosis
and cry, He's Realism's victim: that's why

his poor misled hand tried to break those laws
which make omnipresent subatomic flaws
subvert the verb of every medium
and blur our sheerest copier's laserbeam:
say now his felony should be absolved, since
wise Heisenberg has found that once and once

only can the poem stay per se, regardless
of Benjamin's *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter
seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*:
why couldn't I call his vile counterfeits
brave attempts, brilliant schemes to outmaneuver
the ways physics limits our digits' genius?

I wish I could. But, I can't. No: he's to blame—
just him, I think. Yes: the wank-ink of his name
on her work is un- , un- , un- , is a sin
I must atone. Oh, if he had only cloned

her signature the same as her poem,
no harm would have come from his plagiarism!

I write this knowing that random quantum
impurities in the surface body
of the paper or scanscreen on which
this is printed will betray all I say
here to some degree, any is too much—
each thought emits a glitch, thought Mallarmé.

I pray this page permits perfect access
what I would guess my xerox intended
to be a sincere apology to Ms.
Sappho and her sis, but may indeed instead
(despite our dearest efforts) appear as
the very opposite of what you've read.

VISITS (to X)

Belonging to all that moves through me,
I always go to look back through
the rearview.

Trees upholster the car in shade,
but no comfort can delay
its start. Its way
is laid out, is you.

A rushed goodbye is truer
than leisurely adieux.

Refined from the sun's raw fire,
our farewells are polite;
appearances maintained.

We say we want to stay but never do.

SWIMSHORE: TO X

alive at least as long
as nothing is our own
we hover above
this line of ferryfine waves

where rocks sink in recital
ocean or lake
marine and mute
each toe is cold at first

god of the smallest solitude
I study the nude's description
in personal gaps

hair like a spark of armor
sun
sun each one of your laps crests

THE QUESTION

Far off, demimordial, I hear an epitaph of ears, someone
Collides with a stopwatch, innocent mincemeats rise steaming and
Sporadic laughter, cardoors going slammed. Then, static-ier voices,
Through blood jettisoned by mimes statues reminisce, reveal how
They subsist on glimpsed nubility, personal-touches in crowds who
Traipse past. In rooms where you heard the sound of a teardrop
Striking the bloodhound surface of perfume which sat in a
Washbasin, chipped fake porcelain, who poured it in that? in
Those rooms (where you were so strangely audient!), others, like
Me, are listening. Outside, in the city, the minstrelshow
Pollution (which paints us all in 'blackface') continues, corny
And racist, sexist, lampoonist . . . humanist? Ashes watered
By hell, kisses skimmed from doveflight, cream from silk, what-
Ever rises, curdled, from depths as fraught with else as these,
Far off. . . . Yet I would encourage your traits your tricks individual
Of speech, you crowds who gape on as those rooms all rush toward
One room, whose doors part now like a mouth pried in cry
Silently, stifled by its openness. Will my voice receive me,
Will my cries still have me? will not be the question there.

SUDDEN DEATH STRIKES JET SET

well racecar driver Peter Revson's
luck
ran out today
the Rev revved up once
too often

despite his rugged
good looks heir
to a cosmetics
fortune he

was driven
daredevil
death defy

once
before a big race
his mother told him
he was crazy

Rev
age 35
one year older than me
a playboy
millionaire frequently
seen with the world's most
beautiful
and glamorous
personalities all

during his
150 thousand

dollar racecar Nascar burning
crash Miss
World the fiancee was photographed
repeatedly

seconds after
the fireball burst his friends took
their friends aside
brusque to confide
that most eligible
bachelor of
them all is a mess

hell
he was positive
meteoric
to say the least

but don't worry the
whole thing
will be hushed up

a quickly announced
memorial foundation of
lipstick
nailpolish
nailpolish remover
eyeliner powder
puffs and pomades
proved useless
when applied to the burnt pan
cake skin

in
New York
Lauren Hutton is reported
to be devastated on
behalf of VIPs
everywhere thank you

one year older than me
hmm
say why am I writing this poem

is it to gloat
glad he's dead
glad I don't have to try to be
him anymore a poet
penniless frequently
seen with the world's most
ugly and worthless
nobodies

and that's just what
I have to put
Pete down for
in the end
snobbery

even his pigheaded death
wish was a kind
of social
climbing I bet
he thinks he made it
today
into the not set

fat
chance
capitalist
rat

Note:

The factoids came from People magazine. Revson was (an) heir to the Revlon cosmetics dynasty. Lauren Hutton: actress, spokesmodel for Revlon. Miss World is replaced annually by a duplicate Miss World.

POEM (HOW I LOST MY PEN-NAME)

I wrote under a pen-name

One day I shook the pen trying to make the name come out

But no it's

Like me prefers clinging to the inner calypso

So I tossed the pen to my pet the

Wastebasket to eat

It'll vomit back the name

Names aren't fit

For unhuman consumption

But no again

It stayed down

I don't use a pen-name anymore

I don't use a pen anymore

I don't write anymore

I just sit looking at the wastebasket

With this alert intelligent look on my face

PITY

inside his pane
the window is a man
like you or me
at night he walks the ledges
at night he walks the sills
restless in his frame
veins full of glass
at night he walks the sills

at day his head rises
and shines through his body
and soon he worries
that the coming night
will undecapitate
that the homing night
will rejoin him whole

inside his pane
like you or me
fulgent full of future slivers
fallen whole
foretold and free

at night he walks the sills
his head rises
his head falls

held together by none
his jaggedy slitted body
glazed and gone
his beauty putty

DUMP

I seem more in this poem than
I am. It covers me, icons me,

I hide under its knoll.
A knoll, or as

the old English word KNOTT
means, a small hill.

Sanctified, whole—
it was my bent led to this bind.

It was my own,
puckered with similarity.

Kaput in a canoe,
done-for in a dogcart,

does every demise
suit my sangfroid.

Cease, I wither, I curl up, I
shroud in shrivel to make

disposal easier—
a packaging handy for death,

Santa's bag.
(Slag, not swag.)

TODAY'S STORY (OH, SYNESTHESIA! #4)

Somehow this morning light
diverted to my ears, while
soundwaves ricocheted my eyes—

For hours I had to twist
sideways to walk
without tripping, and each carhorn
made my eyelids
whip like a hurricane awning,
as I squirted eyedrops in ears eardrops
in etc., gradually
things returned to normal.

But I feared tomorrow:
“What if my molars salivate
at every inner or utmost attar;
if eon-brandy I cannot savor but
through thy swart chute, oh nostril!”

In fact by the time this evening came
I was so worried I had to call tell
my friend X—
who said: Well, look,
just tell me one thing: can
you feel the phone?

What do you mean, I said,

(stanza break)

Can you feel it with your fingers,
X said, is your sense
of touch still there, where it's
supposed to be?—
Yes?—Well, in that case,
get over here
and give me a backrub,
right now,
right this minute,
before it's too late.

NOTES

Given the fame
surrounding
the recent book
or unfinished or
abandoned work
by Elizabeth Bishop
isn't someone
now planning
another book
consisting of her
scrawled instructions
to the maid
the menus she
handed the cook
the lists she left
for her secretary
and what about
her stockbrokers
the notes they got
regarding assets
should be included
along with jots
she wrote to
the wine steward
the chauffeur
the groundskeeper
the poolboy
the dressmaker
the therapist
the masseuse
and of course
the lawyers on retain
not to mention
the critics on retain

Note:

Or any poet whose financial wealth was a significant factor in the character of their writing. (Lowell, Merrill, Matthews, Gluck, Edson et al.)

MITTS AND GLOVES (for Tom Lux)

The catcher holds a kangaroo fetus in his,
the firstbaseman's grips a portable hairblower,

but everyone else just stares into theirs
punching a fist into it, stumped

trying to come up with a proper occupant—
The pitcher for example thinks a good stout padlock would
go

right in there, but the leftfielder,
influenced no doubt by his environment,

opts for a beercan. The shortstop
informative about the ratio of power to size

says, "Ipod, man. You know: video." The
secondbaseman however he just stands and grins and

sort of flapjacks his from hand to hand and back again,
secondbase dopey as always. Alas—

cries the thirdbaseman—this void un-ends us—
avant-space beyond our defiant emptiness—

abyss, haunted by the kiss of balls
we have not missed! oh ab-sontz

deh-lease. . . . The rightfielder is DIS-
GUSTED at this, he like snorts, hauwks, spits

into his and cusses Huh look: heck

my chaw of tobac fits it perfeck.

The team goes mum, cowed by
the rectitude of his position, the logic.

Only the centerfielder, who was going back
while this discussion was going on,
putting jets on his cleats to catch the proverbial
long one,

does he—does he perhaps have a suggestion . . .?
As for the ball, off in mid air it all dreamily

scratches its stitches and wonders
what it will look like tomorrow

when it wakes up
and the doctor removes its bandages—

Coda:

Mitts versus gloves. Mitts—mitts
are pro's at what they do.

Whitecollar, authorized, hightech—et al—
wholly, ruly-truly, superior. Compared to whom

the glove is a prole
a tool

a brute built
on the manipulative; purpose vital

in the game of course, but subordinate

overall—a workhorse, meant

to be migrant. It
can be employed

phased in
used

any old base; by
all players: is dirty, low-down, dumb. I'm

forced to admire the mitt but
free (in theory) to love gloves.

A QUESTION OF LEVELS

I must find the prayer-step on
the endless stairs he said. Stop
at any of them, I advised, each
stratum from which one petitions

emptiness is equally false and
fatal. Climbers who gain the peak
think it speaks to them, that it
puffs breathclouds back at theirs,

exchanging exhilarations. So
therefore listen you may in fact
have reached your own and found
its landing waiting there and see—

but he left me like a new belief
in ladders or an old apostasy
of toes. Unfortunately either
requires I be above or below.

SUBURBAN PASTORAL

If all the way you believe is beside,
skewed and unaligned to the great faiths that
guide others on their propitious courses,
if your guard-rail gives to the gorge they all
avoid with digital ease, car-carpets
sweeping them home. Their path is like a spear
whose tip gives birth to what it pierces; their
wound configurates whatever flesh is,
stalemate of space, pale unmeant moment in
the moon's phase when every owl attains each
speck of sight it needs for the night, the hunt.
Only the path of the predator's true.
Only you are left with no way to go,
no eye to see the prey they endow with
that brevity heaped upon lives before
their cease, brave dispersal into air or
bright inversion which delays the day by
the global habit of turning over
in sleep's subside; your bed orbit caught for
a pause abide in which your dreams contend
with siege weapons snatched away by those once
shunned: past sunlapse, past the semi-earthen
yield of relics flying released from hands
that have not yet forsaken the normal
verities your merit refuses to
acknowledge. Until you are scorned or like
a sacrifice being racked in heaven,
bound upon churn altars the heart ripped out,
dumb and certain to what those desires bring;
tickled teaspoons in backyards, where the tree
ties wheels to its thanatopsis toplessness.

CANDYCLONE

Because I'm not small enough
I must grasp the long part
of it to begin with, which
means I bite the shorter half—
(I say "half" only to indicate
the horrible horseshoe shape
it might attain in the mind)
first, in other words, I eat
the limp. Or bite at it, rather:
for candycane in the theater
of sweets is hard to the teeth
that try to crack its handle,
to take it tip-whole in one's
lips instead of one's hand
which, as I said, must hold
the cane by this bottom leg
—leg implies dancing, but Fred
Astaire debonair used tons
of canes though never a candy
one in the rigor of his prime—
if I invert it then the handle
could be his foot. Or I could
swordswallow it and leave
the toe-tongue hooking out
of my grimace like a quip or
the horn of a meersham pipe,
a tail's repartee in air, sharp
serpent that dreams of apples.
I guess it could be devoured
from the bottom up, but then
I would have to hold the cane-
curl in my hand too large for it,

the fingers too cumbersome
for this small candycrutch, maybe
I could bribe a child to dangle
it towards my snapping jaws—
all this, and god I haven't even
got to the red and white stripes
that coil up and around its bole
pole which like all such objects
in my poems are the phallic
sublime, a substitute for that
virility I lack, a simulcrummy
cast I must kiss and lick and
mouthmasturbate until it wears
the sleek salt that warps its
saccharine inch, limp defeated
tongue, sour-body effluval-angel.

ANNUAL

after leaves make fall their mark
I enter the polarbear of aliases

white hibernates while I wait in
gardens mendacious with bloom

new tenants for goliath glue their seed
to puddles of pennies and the call

the call comes to plea
the allmoan rises

time is a book without quote
it reads your hands by rote

gloved intervals dog-ear where
I opened my signature to the wrong page

now I spoon the drool from Frankenpoo's sex
or start to whack my ammo

and yet some lumpenführer think
they think I don't care

I care alright I care so much
that I sluffed off saying it

anyway diaries detest the present tense
so naturally naturally

the all in all corolla of it faded though
aired on the vids senseless violence

the defence
the defence of one's private Hollywood

QUESTIONS

Before we're born we're
lowercase, and after we die,
we return to it. Only life
renders us in capital letters.

(Every headstone ms.
should really be edited
by clones of e.e.cummings.)

Life is caps for the usual reason,
an exaggerated sense
of the significance
of one's thoughts.
Life is a Beat poet.

Upper existence or
lower nonexistence,
I'm sure the eye adjusts its focus
towards either case—

But which is easier to read—
greatness or goneness,
headline or poem?

Life or its foreword-afterword?

POEM

two sculptors duel
with sabers and chisels
hacking and honing
what they create
will not have
the stable emptiness of stone
nor the ephemeral fullness
of flesh
like butchers playing
chicken they slash
a rain of rubble
carving away the excess
whatever crude form
remains
after they separate
the parts that prevent
them from being one
will be
their singular twin standing
as they grow weak
on lopped arms
the tools heavier
until finally
less and less
detail emerges

WALL

In the end I was deceived by particulars,
fingers offering themselves as examples
of what I could exist of at the finish of
the fruit of the bricklayers' melody if
only it would allow its accomplishments
to stand for the hands that set it forth
brick by brick, whose purpose was
the displacement of the local, the sole—
for unless that space could be placed
in one spot, what good was it. And so
propped up to wall in or wall out what
should have buttressed me either side,
I felt myself slide with the shift, the twin
transition of stone on stone until the piles'
stoppage put a posit to its incipient
rubble, built by patient inches height
might climb to see one sun rise above
the sheer monument of—the measure would
be there, and the distance, though both
would retain their mean-sense, their
cramp-game of home, toe-molds, headhods
and all the other tools that are rare now,
whose use was owned a necessity once.

I HAVE NO HOME

I follow the road
nowhere goes to,
the one somewhere
comes from.

If I passed here before,
wore a path into the stone
other than my own,
ignore that fetish form.

On the staircase
each tier vibrates as
the desire to descend
contends with the urge
to awake.

In that same dark
where the groundfloor gets lost
the second story
may find its way.

AUTHORIAL

to leap off a diving board
and land on a divining rod
is out of the question

to hope for petite glimpses
of smoke-tipped throats
in the streets below Help Murder Highrise

why did I try to rub my thoughts
on vocab-zero
on word-none

oval toes
toes are sort of oval aren't they
I trust they're not cyclical

to wish that stones had gloated at my birth
and flowers and firstbooks fell
from snowcliff avenues

I was probably in session
watching my face contend
with someone else's closeup

laborious syllables what
inverted bulleyes line
the mime's white cage

WRITLESS WRATNOT

my flaw can't find its fit
am I an anomalous llama
or a truncate of death

a horsekerchief
a motionless hope atop a propjet
a prophet stream

an instrument
for cutting cheekbones out of ancestral portraits
ephem-human or rodent-endless

will I die clutching in my hand
missives all meant for myself and
yet somehow never sent

my plow can't plod its pit
my knots all miss their knit
without its slot the rat rots

DIVISIONS

surface of earth deep
every border
portends elsewhere

the hero's pretense
to regard his origins
as timeless

historians dispense
shares of continuity
narrate the cobwebs

outside the rain pours all fours
upon the ideal forms
the platonic forums

the problem of the empirical
the crumbs of raisinbread in the coat pocket
the coat itself

where dice shed
their endless eyes
inbetweenities

the cliff
the cut-off
the morph

PILGRIMAGE

" . . . the murky path of the male." —Gottfried Benn

Immured in the snowforest, at
the center of that center-swirled
absence, a hospital-bed waits:
its white is linen's height,
raised by the weight of daily flakes.

You approach this scene each evening,
your footsteps stone the glaze—
oh apathy, you surrender
up to the ankles, knees.
From stretched branches X-rays

sway forth a deeper self. It's
faraway yet closer darker
icicles drool, ripe to drop
under your hand: their blitz
would bury the path you thrash at.

Through a saberfanged crevasse,
whacking a trail of snapped-off tusks,
you'd plunge on to the wrong past,
vast maze landscape like sculpture draped
immaculate, endless.

Where hail fills high the prints behind
and flurries flail the ways ahead,
why try, how can you come by them
to break the pillowcase
frost lace, to take that last,

most blanket sleep. Superstitious,
afraid to infringe its surface,
emptier everytime you climb
in, what makes the covers crack
and cake off over the rim—

Avalanche tucked, teddybear tight,
you shiver. As ever the night-
stand drifts open, to show
a plate of burning grapes,
a strangled bird's falsetto—

yawning prescriptions of dream.
Ignore them, search for the cure
which never seems so far as now
here around you your eyelids thaw,
sheer as bridal-veils that fall.

Is this where your parents strayed—
and their parents, and theirs.
Have they wandered the once upon
this bled blizzard, spun warm,
this bed whiter than all their kind.

Northerners, arctic, heretic,
you inherit their scorn (their fear)
of Southern deities such as
Ceres. Her grief (her grudge) against
her daughter-loss brought winter—ugh,

those Mother Goddesses!
They underlie, supposedly
("Gaia" 's prior hierarchy)
our myths: their prelapsarian,

pure, panacean pantheon

ruled that Golden Age when Queens
honeycloned themselves and sat
throned on the spines of drones
eunuch-stricken to demonstrate
Woman's divine right: Her ancient

aegis status was gospel
back then, its testaments ripped
from nature—harmony—holism—
healthsynch: earth worshipped Earth,
that eco-, that matri-archal

matrix . . . : And some exclaim this
sweetest reign resumes when human
throats converge to roar organic
evoes for those primal
Paragons whose restoration

and full-unctuous salvation
one's urged to summon in syrup,
in slush tones said to heal
any cough, damn them, phlegm-hymned
womb zombies from hell. Who invokes

/you shall not harken unto/
/shall not beseech these regimen/
/you shall not bear wounds they could mend/
/real Aryan skin can not shield/
/one tongue that prays to them/

their old rollcall skeleton, chokes—
Spasms sprawl you, supine symptoms

unbleach every resolve to be
the bald hero, the Damocles
who head-first hung must butt

birth, time's trepanned exile.
Slough him, ban from these folds his caul,
skull-carved blond beyond reach—
false twin you feel the steel
breach, both constrained to suffer

more year-armor's vernal rupture—
When your mother died you cried curled
for days, fetus, you split the ribs
of childhood's crib. Uncaptured world:
nightly you cross its guard bars

(she's lost, her trespass trace gone cold)
bound still to that chill, that pall
fever no nurse hovers over
till mumped thermometers burst—
Always her tracks are smothered there

by a storm of frigid phantoms
you roam mercurial among,
pilgrims whose rigor you
admire, fathers whom you,
a male, failed to mourn of course.

For years those held-in tears froze
mammoth this moan-shrine, fused this
unknown heart, core, coronary
you've grown toward. It creaks and carries
down like a cloud your own death near.

When between squalls the sky clears,
your lungs lay tablets before you—
polar scrolls, vapor paper on which
you will never scrawl Her names.
Crystal ritual, zero quest.

Again you see each word you breathe
erase its space, its air.
Beneath their descent (their withdraw)
what frail erratum shrouds, what sheet
repeats that quietest flaw?

Note:

Epigraph: final phrase of the poem "Vor Einem Kornfeld"
(as translated by Francis Golfing). Those familiar with
Dr. Benn's symbology—not just in his poetry, but in his
essays as well (particularly "Pallas")—will recognize some
of the themes and conflicts here.

(WINTERSHADE)

*

The candle's blue fingers trace
a window skyline. Its ice
an archery of needles. I seek
the sign, the making known
to me of now. We live in a land
we can see to disappear.

*

The wither-gathered wind
rivering through a grove
of non-leaved nouns: these are
the months one must cling hard
to his habits, that mean horde.

*

Winter. We must lean closer now
to see in each other's eyes
the cleft of witness
gape itself to give.

*

Closer. Closer. At times
we must even haven this
our place.

THAWDROPS

Icicle:

the long

I's

descending

end in

dot

planet

dot

period

dot

splot

dot

puddle

dot

sun

dot

cycle

dot

I

not

I.

FIRST WARM DAY

When the world belongs to toss-up.

Balloons whose footprints
sting the air with soft occasion;
clouds, whose streamers strain for
the horizons denied them now
by these new slow winds.

Even children relinquish the stoicism that
kept us safe from the cold, even they
succumb to a sudden cuddleness, weak
as the first spindly crocus. Seneca
is sent once more to silence.

Two plus two begins to crack before
the picnic logic of Summer.

The reign of the same. Difference
is banished here; outside and inside are
made equal in temperament, doors
left open declare armistice.

Winter's wars wane. Vintners verse their vines.

APRIL AFTERNOON

From barberpoles the white
could be stripped to bandage
the bypassers' wounds.

Their clothing seems to consist
of tickets brandished to the theater;
every kiosk's counter is bare.

These shapes are assumed
out of fidelity to the mask
that covers them with less and less.

And yet there is always the danger
of excess. Naked, the street
might lie prey to a merchant's

deliberating broom: birds
and categorical pushcarts might tie
cherrystems to our eyelashes.

Spring imposes its pomp, its priorities.
In the middle of this effortless palace
an orgy takes off its socks.

BEACHED

Thaw, summer, melt from pastel to pastille—
a fruit's sweetness warning the greatness of death
to back off: hornbeeps, skidmarks so new, so fresh.

Cars, go and surround each beach.
Where drowned armpits flower toward the word.
Where even the sun refuses to be an icon.

In my room stand two razorpoles. I rub
back and forth between them. I vacillate
love, hate: it's exhausting continually

wiping the spittle off your face,
though the spitting itself is of course
quite effortless. Simile for waves.

HARVEST

clouds which stand still
to pose downward
their event

in the church
a cookie is wedged
up the Virgin's plaster skirt

now days attend the sun
and all the other futures
before they crop our feasts and wither

the four points
of a pitchfork
become harder to define

eyes measuring to means
the distance dust
plants along the sill

chasing each other the children
combine the wisdom
of freckles and fire-engines

in the end we flow
like thirst above stones
like hunger above air

OCTOBER

The leaves fall, but not far enough for me,
so I take one up to the top of my favorite highrise,
the one whose TV-transmitters watch farmers.
Out over the roof-edge I drop it, but my eye
swerves to the hemline of a nearby tourist.
I wonder if anyone will notice it. The wind
is certain to vacillate its journey;
a vacillation is a vagueness with intent,
and my leaf is light. —And has her camera
caught me in the act, prolonging it even further—
Her blouse blows but now I prefer most how
she caresses the camera, fondly, a personal
touch placed on what is after all a mere
automaton winking a robot eye . . . hmm, are mechanisms,
like, say, money, or credit-cards, are they
harder to put one's traits on than a flower
for instance, or an ear of corn . . . For example
I know someone who has a five-dollar-bill
taped up on their wall with the name "Frank
Sinatra" scribbled across it, an autograph,
according to them, but is writing (or forging)
your name on money or on a machine,—?!
does a signature make it more human, natural,
leafier somehow . . . hell, money is not a good
example, it's not mechanic, I'm sorry. Damn.
Back on the track: the leaf falls, the farmers
farm and the tourist films till her camera's
involuntary functions are exhausted . . .
we head back down. The elevator control-panel blinks
like a flightdeck or Star Tech or something,
then I notice buttons on her skirtfront—
I punch all the buttons on my shirtfront,
not knowing what direction that will get me,
yet suspecting that it too will not be far enough.

POEM

As I walk into town I notice
on the sidewalk the leaves have
fallen mostly bright side down,

the colorful-wonderful side,
i.e. the dying-decaying, hides
below the still-greenish half

which hunches over as if
to protect its fairer twin, to
save the frail waste of loveliness

from our pending feet. This
upward face is the obverse,
the unloved: yet on the tree it

was obviously the underpart,
untoasted by the sun, tree-slice
half-done. If I step on one

it flattens and perhaps some
of the color crumbles up through
to dye the skyward-displayed

sheaf-shield, something bleeds
into the drained mask it offers
to the world's uncurious shoed

glance. Virgil cites a myth that
false dreams cling beneath each leaf,
numberless: that's why the under

stays rare, unmarred by hecticcy—
its unstained purity portrays
a lottery win, a moviestar kiss.

Its perfection is a fantasy rays
have not darkened to day. It stays
asleep in its top-sheet of hope.

I love this unlived side of the leaf,
it is in turn my life, pale-safe
and fraught with no urge to wake,

to exert its own naif enough—
my raw state resists sophistudy,
(anterior antibody of beauty)

its rootless evil nice beneath
the garish one's reign of dare and
flare, he who exalts the warmth

on his skin, Mister surface, Herr
hero. I am the lesser here, the low.
Yes: but after the fall I will show

my face toward any sole, no longer
subferior to tanned specimans
of transcendized TV glory, riper

hunks who now sprawl shrivel
and hug the pavement while their
earlier cursed teencarnations bare

out to be me, me, the bove-boy—
So what if I'm the false, the dream

none can depend on or look to

for their vacuous autumn viewing,
foolishly believing those goldshed
scarlets are a sight extolled, a sign.

They ignore my sap hue, my true
expression of the void that lies
so splendid-blazed before their eyes.

NOVEMBERNEW

Scoldingly, the way a nurse
waves a thermometer at a corpse,
branches thrash above us.

I've read the instructions how
a compass should always go
consulted beneath a Maypole.

If space orientates with time alone,
our position fixed by Newton
may now be nearing Einstein.

Quickly I place a teakettle
atop a dead volcano
and learn to wait for its whistle.

North lost, the needle pierces my wrist.
The mist is in the forest.
Our sighs are in the farthest.

from A SUITE FROM SUMMER/AUTUMN 2001:

2. ROOM 5, HOTEL ANGLETERRE, MOSCOW,
DECEMBER 28, 1925

Outside in the collectivist night late AM
a cart-horse hit by an automotivist died
so reasonably that a hurryingby Futurist
without thinking made the wrongful sign
of the cross against his greatcoat, then
ran on hard for his work at the Stalineum.

Cupid lanks of hair, like crib-slats, blond
petulant hung before the always beloved
eyes of Esenin peering down at his last
poem written in wrist's wake, his blood
that dried as he died that dawn, his feet
working the pedals of a Singer drowning
machine as the noose above grew tight.

Kicked over like a choirboy in a police
raid on a speakeasy his chair lay empty
as Pasternak declared it should be and
yet his spoiled snotty brimchild brattiness
was no way to vacate it or so the spotlit-
gnarled Mayakovsky told the upward-
gaping-my-god poets of the Last Village:
his merciless hot-rod hissed and shot
sparkypuffs and gasbows all over them.

But now streetmenials peeled the collision
horse up off its blood in the Moscow snow
to show the red skidstreak, the flag scourge
first-degree burn on Sergei's right thigh

inert by a hot steampipe in Room 5,
Hotel Angleterre, not (as Trotsky wanted)
(as Mayakovsky vowed to always be)
a “champion of boiled water”—his scald
flesh was cold there, his colt soul lost
in that land of angles which the Big M
had all figured out, that algebraic
Age of Science, that Future whose high
inevitable advent he praised odelessly,
that Workers’ Paradise where Euclid’s
eunuchs, the robots, did all the work—

(Stalin at this dark hour everyone on
their way to work was snoring by but in
his dream he was crawling heroically
through deserts dying of thirst of course:
he begged his headsmen dear, his sweet
guillontinist to haul that Mandelstam
forth: Now take the O off him he roared,
foolishly believing a ‘sip’ would save him—

(My pun is false in Rus-sync, yes: but once
I would have altered all my words to work
for him: newsed in Knott his worth would be;
my poems’d propagate that great reign,
nor deign to name the summa millions
murdered he: a true Ellipsodicist, I
should have shunned the reality before me
and sung in hymns that time to come,
that holy day they’ll control our DNA,
knowing until then the old male will
kill to kill: we shall overslaughter all
wholehog, human or horse who cares
because what joy, what Y it is to us

to exterminate the rest—ah yes, mustache boots are just the mask our role requires!)

But instead it was Esenin's head entering the hoop of who, the rope whose zero knot contained all noughts and else, the perfect sum of value versus capital, the stateless state both he and Isadora had sworn their art would bring back to a world hate was prohibiting, a void vision she might have shared with her millionaire children had they survived their limousine's dive and lived to join her dance collective, her Collected Works.

Note:

Too many recondite allusions here, but briefly: 8 years after the car-accident drowning of her only children (their father the Singer sewingmachine heir), Isadora Duncan moved to Soviet Russia in 1921, believing, as she put it in her *My Life*, "that the ideal State, such as Plato, Marx and Lenin had dreamed it, had now by some miracle been created on earth . . . I was ready to enter the ideal domain of Communism." She married Sergei Esenin, "the last poet of the villages" (as he described himself) in 1922; they separated soon after. His suicide was considered a decadent act of treason against the Revolution by Mayakovsky, who killed himself a few years later. . . . Futurism was the only Ism embraced by totalitarians of both the Left (Soviets) and Right (Italian Fascists). It continues to fascinate all kinds of dogmatists.

4. THE ROADKILL (for a Bestiary)

Really a rarity prior to the

20th Century, nevertheless
despite this historical novelty
and its native USA pedigree,
the Roadkill is surely the least
interesting animal there is.

It has no habits to speak of.
Apparently harmless; not found
on any list of predators.
We think those squishy sounds
it emits beneath car tires
are mating calls, cries of love.

Child of Henry Ford, doubtless
its true father was Emerson,
the poeteer who wrote that
"Everything good is on
the highway," meaning this
creature: he was a prophet.

But did he guess his disciples,
those gasoholics eager to kill
every denier of the octane
they gulp to gain personal
salvation as a speed span
that gaps from us to Überman?

Human was just a bridge to cross.
Raise a glass to his late loss.
All hail that great Rilke spiel:
to make the earth invisible!
Skoal. Let's get rid of it for real.
Fuck is it anyway but fuel.

Let's burn it up on our way
to the stars. Terminal ahead—
Last Exit: Deity. But see
how Evolution swerves instead
to this crumpled cast-off, this
flattened apotheosis. Most

boring of pets. Lowest, last beast
in our abbreviated-by-ecocide
Bestiary, the Roadkill may be
the one we miss chiefly after
all the other brutes here are
emersonized planetwide.

The Roadkill may have been bred
unconsciously to lead us
away from our rapacious
verse. That's why his genus
his ilk begot/his stock is: Dead.
(Phylum: *Poeticus americanus*.)

Note:

The transportation/energy policies of the United States are
ecocidal suicidal insane. They arise from our professed
need to experience everything as individuals, immediately,
directly; to pursue via our private vehicles a liberty of one;
to singly dominate and exhaust the environment. This
spurious concept of freedom pervades all our culture, not
least our poetry, which valorizes the Emersonian/
Whitmanic urge to ubiquitize our presence, to "see it for
ourselves." What despoilation of earth and atmosphere
follows from that desire. Geopolitical consequences include
the current (2001-?) so-called 'War on Terror' which is of
course really a war to ensure the continued flow of cheap

fuel into our gastanks. The greed to go, to see, to be there, to get it hot, to gulp it down: to never stay at home with the vicarious. What matter how many casualties ensue if we can continue to satisfy this mania which pollutes not just our air but our poems as well. We will pay any price to maintain our selfish addiction to the first-person voice.

THE PATRIOTS

at the edge of the city in
the garbagedump where the
trucks never stop unloading
a crazy congregation stumbles
from trashmound to trashheap
they smash their fists down on
whatever's intact they tear
to bits the pitifew items
that have remained whole they
rip everything old clothes
papers cans bones to nothing
with their shining teeth
the enlightened the faithful
every couple yards one of them
falls and is torn to shreds by
the others at the edge of
the city where there's a line
waiting to join

TO MY PLANETARY CO-OCCUPANTS

How would you prefer to meet your fate—
by Nature or Culture?

(Nature: snakebites lightningstrikes cliffslides etc.)
(Culture: nukebreaks pesticidisms ethniccleansings etc.)

—If an alligator swallowed you
would you consider that demise purer

than if freedom fighters blew up
your commuter flight?

Or would you go vindicated re your belief in
human sovereignty

when a virus broadcast by the the CIA
got you (maybe it already has)—

If it were up to me, I would take
centuries/eons in deciding this question,

but since it isn't, since it's a question of since,
and since the number of options in

the category of Nature
seem to be getting extincter and extincter,

I ask you again to choose—
In fact, I beg you to make your choice

and make it quickly,
especially if it is to die via me.

MONOPOLY

Finally the day dawned when a monopoly owned
everything in the world
So it went looking for its stockholders to celebrate
But they were all owned by it they were all dead they
were someplace
Their photographs hung in elevators which went up
and down up and down carrying nobody
Everyone else was in bed doing exercises to get in
shape for noon
Hey the monopoly said let's uncork the Tower of
Babel and get blotto
Silence
The monopoly scowled
All it wanted was a little good-fellowship, like you get
in the highrise apartment-buildings
Then the sky got awful dark
Gee
And everyone was in bed frantically doing those
exercises that get us in shape for death
Exercises known as "kissing" "fucking" "caressing"
Everyone was unaware that they had been bought
Or that the earth was about to sell them to the moon
For a little light

ON THE ROAD (KEROUAC)

Join Jack and his pals
in the endless adventure
of spilling fossil fuels
into the atmosphere.

Step on the gas and zoom
from sea to oily sea
why be a stay at home
Beat means holy Beat means free.

Jump in the car and drive
anywhere though west is best
burn that octane burn to live
don't question this quest.

Go man you gotta go
you too must take that ride
faster faster never slow
on the road to ecocide.

A LESSON FROM THE ORPHANAGE

If you beat up someone smaller than you
they won't (and histories prove this) tell:

look at those people on the opposite side
of the planet: they want to beat us up but

they're smaller so that's okay. Not okay is
that most of us will die in the war between

them and us, because small equals (and mice
prove this) sneaky: their spies could spirit all

our nuke aids away and we'd never know—
nick our rocket-satellite knockout Star Peace

Comcodes right out of our shrinking pockets,
even our doomsday (the FBI can prove this)

doodads, the ones we mean to use on them,
the rats: and so when they kill us will we

have killed enough of them to win, whose
fist figures bigger in the end? And what's it prove?—

In the Orphanage, hell, even if they do tell
on you there's no one for them to tell it to.

ANT DODGER

A suicide applicant
Who braces himself out
On a high ledge at noon
While busy peeking down

Noticed an ant crawling
Dottily on the ledge
Right
There near his left toe

Below crowds all pushed
Oblivious babbling
Omniscient like in the movies
Out whooshy doors

But his gaze halt ant
Ant the true ant
He dimly remembers
Not like them

So now
He hesitates
A million stories up
Shifts weight trying

Make his mind up
Distantly deciding
Whether to step
Before he jumps

On it
Or not

CAESAR LEARNING TO JUMP ON CHESSMEN'S BACKS

Why he'd have to be taught what comes so normally to male-kind is puzzling, unless inbreeding of noble strains has left him esthetic, less stoic, timorous—a child, his toes babyfat, his bare soles poised in the approved Colossus-of-Rhodes at the count of three jump up and down; while his tutors applaud young gods the fragments are brushed away by slaves, the black-and-white pieces crushed bloodily together form a tragic alternate ideal society where the kings queens etcetera are indistinguishable from the pawns, and maybe that's the fun—no rival to the Rome where the scum who whisk away the grey-by-defeat shards are neutered or both and made so at birth, representative of the mass: consigned to bear their broken brethen down past the intuitive, the dirt that heaps their dirt beyond lowest dungeons and to bury there the chess-bits that spoiled the boyking's heels, his small insteps and ankles, indeed the entire tootsies of the six-year-old Emperor must then be amputated just below the shin, be replaced after every lesson by the royal transplant surgeons. Which could explain that curious adage (that Cretan riddle), “Where do our plebs go without feet?”

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST GROCERIES

The violence in the newspapers is pure genius
A daily gift to the reader
From some poet who wants to keep in good with us
Brown-noser wastepaperbasket-emptier

I shot 436 people that day
2 were still alive when I killed them
Why do they want to be exhumed movie-stars,
I mean rats still biting them, the flesh of comets, why
do they walk around like that?

I'm going to throw all of you into the refrigerator
And leave you to claw it out with the vegetables and meats

FUNNY POEM

death loves rich people
more than us poor
coffin salesmen look down their sniffs
shoot their cuffs
at us

funeral directors obit-pages priests
all want classy
can't afford
a headstone
a silk lining
daily lawn mowers flowers plus
catering service for the worms
they get mortally insulted

and you know it's funny
while I never
believed that stuff about god
loving
the poor so much
made so many

I never believed that stuff about god
but this
death preferring the rich thing you know
it's kind of funny but you know
I believe it
it makes sense

in fact
I think we
should start a movement
our slogan would be
GIVE DEATH WHAT IT WANTS

yes
let's lend it a helpin' hand
be neighborly
it makes sense
since what death seems to want is
the dead
i.e. the rich

RACIST POEM

we had our chance Pilate
washed his hands of it
and left it up to us

we had our chance
we could have chosen
one of our own
a thief
a murderer

the cross the tomb the
resurrection
then heaven
the right hand throne
a smirk on his face Barabbas
one of us

we could have chosen him
for son of god
might've stuck up for us up there
someone who was flesh
of our flesh

our kind
a pure one hundred
percent human
but we goofed

we picked that halfbreed
that mestizo
from Nazareth

we had our chance Barabbas
a thief
a murderer
one of us

EXCERPTS/VIETNAM

1. Despair

I stick my head into a womb and make faces
at the unborn. I force down their throats
the mating-cries of extinct animals, the traces.
I wait for that, I write filler for suicide-notes.

2. Vietnam in Chicago

Oh it's easy to find Vietnam in Chicago—
we are what's lost (knock at your shadow
to ask the way home from death).

3. Reminder to Nuke the Other Side of the Planet

Upside down in the ground
there is someone who walks
on my soles when I walk.

I'm gonna get that bastard!

TEA-SAT

The hand is a cup
that must crack
open to be filled
with that which
saves but can't be
saved. Garbage for
instance: the pail
overflows to show
why our nation's
weapons are high
in the sky, why
they need a lethal
laser up there with
its unbearable
purity, a perfection
saints reach rarely
if ever—that killsat
crystal concentrates
the state. Deadbeams
shoot everywhere
it aims. The earth
must part to let
them, split fingers
rudder the result.
The body always
can spill more than
it holds. The pail
overflows to show
it was alive until
hot rays came down
seeking the dross,
the loss our rockets
rose to redeem.
We pray their
crockery will bear
up this aperture.

THE MISUNDERSTANDING

I'm charmed yet chagrined by this misunderstanding—
As when, after a riot, my city's smashed-in stores appear all
Boarded up, billboarded over, with ads for wind-insurance.
Similarly, swimmingly, I miss the point. You too?

And my misunderstanding doesn't stop there, it grows—soon
I can't see why that sudden influx of fugitives,
All the world's escapees, rubbing themselves lasciviously
against the Berlin Wall.
They stick like placards to it. Like napalm. Like ads for—

And me, I haven't even bought my biodegradable genitalia yet!
No. I was born slow, but picking up speed I run through
Our burnt-out streets, screaming, refusing to buy a house.
Finally, exasperated, the misunderstanding overtakes me,
snatches up

Handcuffs. So now here I am, found with all you others
Impatiently craning, in this queue that rumors out of sight up
ahead somewhere,
Clutching our cash eager to purchase whatever it is, nervous
As if bombs were about to practice land-reform upon our
bodies,

Redistribution of eyes, toes, arms, here we stand. Then, some new
Age starts.

Note:

Line 7: the Berlin Wall (circa 1945-1990) was, before its demolition, one of the Cold War's finest sculptural artifacts.

FBI KILLS MARTIN LUTHER KING

When this calendar has
undressed will I know, I mean
be able to recognize,
its most naked day—

but to see what was
in what is mistakes time
for its effect—I study
my hand, how
the palm hides in it, slyly,
or like a sullen puddle
refusing reflections—

and my 2-scoops-please blouse—
a passerby's
meander-fall hair—
though the sky's blue is through-outed
with spots of balm, do

they all
praise null but you,
null but them?

JUDGEMENT

Brecht suggests that writing
Poems about trees is a crime
To which Nordbrandt retorts
It is a crime only if the trees

Do not participate to which
I respond that unfortunately
As long as paper is made of
Trees they do collaborate

Their flesh provides the site
Its white is what I write on
To commit the crime you're
Complicit by reading here

And yet I wish this white was
A wig to don to condemn it

VOI(POEM)CES

"mercy . . . mercy" From face to face
a child's voice bounces, lower and lower;
continues its quest
underground.

Bloodspurts lessening . . . hoofbeats of animals
stalked to their birth by the sun, fade. It is a bright
edgeless morning, like a knife that to be cleaned
is held under a vein.

I blink away the stinging gleam
as my country sows desert upon Vietnam.
We, imperious, die of human thirst
—having forgotten tears are an oasis.

"help . . . help" From heart to heart
a heartbeat staggers, looking for a haven.
Bereft. It is easier to enter heaven
than to pass through each others' eyes,

pores,
armor,
like merciful sperm, cool water, the knife-
thrust of tears. . . . It is easier
to go smoothly insane—like a Detroit car—
than to stammer and hiccup help.

And this poem is the easiest thing of all:
it floats upon children's singing, out of the bloodstream;
a sunbeam shoulders it, carries it away.
There is nothing left.

"please . . . please"

EVOLUTION R

Sentenced to 12 whiffs of the pope
I protest
With curly hair
Or straight hair that grows out of the scalp
Then grows into the shoulders
Making it painful to turn my head
But thereby forcing a purer sense of profile on
A clearer renunciation of
Looking at what is called left right
But is never called
Asleep or waking up yawning
Breakfast an upper
Dissolved in turtlesoup
Waiter there's a hare in my slipstream
Hurrier all highs neutralize lows
Left right black white I try
Squeeze inbetween grey
Gray as sparks
Caused by rubbing obsidian ivory together
Dinner a downer going down on Atalanta
Is this a race sniff sniff
Rabbit nosing turtleheels hold
The stopwatch on my dyings
Soon have them down to nothing flat
Faster than that even I'll go
Fast as a rumor of meat up
A soup-line I'll flow
Rubbing rival chesspieces together
Is this my punishment
Looking neither left right
Panting straight ahead on course in a rut
But if so what was my crime

So heinous to deserve this what
Refusing to get my birth certificate
Punched at the proper intervals puberty
Marriage menopause or was it my crying
Out that the zoo has miscast its lead role or
That heresy of trying to remain
My sperm's missing link sniff sniff
I protest

NO MORE

A knife, a gun, a bomb, I invite
all these fine-gauged weapons between us
so we won't be alone no more.

A human companion to the pain
started to pray it would end,
a robot companion vetoed no.
The pain itself as always was neutral.

In history's metallic strata of wars,
in the landslide lode,
in the lackgold.

Shame. Ecstasy. The protesters bear
placards that read "Peace to this sign"—
as if there were to be no further warning.

As if there were to be no more.

SITE ECHOES

Circling a tree with people
to protect it from people,
to add another arc
to its years may not suffice.

Hold poems up as the bulldozers
come, claim your lines
are rings nearing the core
of a word for wood,
for all the earth lifts.

It will not suffice. Far
from its aureole bole
your whirl grows whole
only in ground,
in groundbegone seeds.

Weeds.

READING THE GAPS

At the Museum I go lost down a wrong corridor
and find myself past a wrong door alone
inside the Museum's Bomb Shelter, I know
it's the Bomb Shelter because there's a green
sign that says so and the paintings, the
paintings they have hung on display here,
confirm it. To survive the Hiroshima pain
they mind to hang them here. Seeing this
"last art" reminds me of our "first poet"—
Archilochos, whose work survives mostly through
fragments, through gaps, lacunae they call it.
Here's a trans. of one, most of it's gone:
'the fishnets lie in shadow beneath the wall'—
But there is no shadow beneath this wall.
And yet those fishnets (lifted) might be these paintings
I can't for life see why I can't describe—
they're too much like a mirror, a mirror
injected into an icicle. Shiver-dripped shades,
final veils smeared with three thousand
years of Western Civ, whose megadeath sketched
their discountenance, who stretched the nucleus
of this decision moment of Break Glass In
Case Of Emergency, fire-hose, ax, no, no! I can't
desire to proffer such in violence against
these paintings they portray my face my fate they
hang from that time-atomized wall Archilochos
rested against before getting back to work,
Archilochos who, they say, earned his living
as a mercenary, i.e. a robocop, a terminator,
a killer, which is why he's our first poet:

Later in the restaurant as usual I dip the

wine-list into a glass of water and voila it's
chablis/rosé because of course miracles are
common now whereas the latter hope of living
to read tomorrow today's lacunae isn't.

FUTURISM

Hours in the wristwatch,
moments in the wrist—who's counting?

Minutehands
choked in a fist, we sin

and tell the day to die. Still,
will a clock ever be real

to us until time ends; similarly,
can a cemetery

truly exist
before

we are immortal—
only once past

their utility
may these entities be perceived

as they are innate, in
essence. We would see them then

for the first time
as them

and not as the medium
we made of them—

To see each thing beyond its use is
to see ourselves past hope

in an earliest end perhaps
where, re Gautier, everything

useful is ugly. Everyday
a big robot will come

and wind us up
until we scream—

But listen to your pulse:
its beat, its beauty

is eternity's whim:
bim boom bim

Note:

Lines 24-25: "Only that which cannot serve a purpose may be considered truly beautiful. Everything that is useful is ugly, for usefulness expresses human needs, and they are base and debilitating." —from Gautier's preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin*.

UNREDEEMED

Whimsical god, the window
Smites me then heals me, smites—
Blindness, sight, blindness, sight.

Its slats open-and-close like
A xerox tendering
ECT to Saul click Paul

Click Saul again. Identity
Steps from past, from presto,
Over the naked thresh of

Whose hold on my flesh. Oh yes,
I know, I should live in shun—
Hibernate against my soul, and

Eat sandal snow: why must I go
Forth of this house to meet
To market, to take my part

At that crossplace of values
A daily pilgrim, debt-devout—
Why does my heart in its gut

Obedient need to carry out
Every Outremerican's
Highest, most sacred duty:

To shop. Hey, it fills a gap,
This superstitious shlep
From store to store, without stop

(And yet prophets pray that one day
I'll never have to leave my mind
But via Internet will find

Virtual all these bargains)—
Pure-plus ritual! as though
Buying this or buying that

Could keep me whole: old hymnal
Of dollars cents, dear virgo
Intacta whose observance

By true consumerism gains
Through worship a kind of
Tithe-sustained sanity—

In fact, to quote our President,
Mental health is normed-in
To it—proportionate, shared—

There's a slice for each of us—
In fact, it's a communion:
This holy, wholesome vision

Is how we creamed the Commies
And saved our ass, not to mention
Mom's apple pie pietà,

The caesarean of which
Might (misfortunately)
Render me unto me. So when—

When ATM time comes
I too shall face the humbling flash

Screen of that machine designed

To scan in half the once sans self
And watch it flick its widget slots
Deigning to bless even

A wretch as worthless as this:
But when, according to the stats
In the Bible, Arcturus

Bi-millennially aligns
With the intransigence of
Human transactions, its

Bank of blinks, its solstice vault
Promising to spill out
Flushing our customer sills with

What, another Nativity,
I will not insert my KashKard
Or enter, while the Mall

Dies around me, my personal
Passcode word, my number ID—
I'll ram in, not plastic, but

(Begatitute-foretold)
My aura's errata, my
Freud's flaws. Although only

(*Saith says*) the clone can, the mote's
Eye may, et cetera. In fact,
Such acts of heresy would cost

More gold than I could bear
The loss. And so, therefore, ergo—
Duly each dawn I rise, I raise

The blinds and nail my shoulders
To a t-square, let light strip
To my skin, a birthgraft,

A natal fate. And so, and so—
I manage a moue or two;
I make, like, acknowledgement.

Note:
2 of the possible epigraphs for this poem:

“Bush to Xmas Shoppers: Spend, Spend, Spend!
Economy Reborn, Prez Says”
—Newspapers, Nov-Dec 1991

“It seems to me that the individual today stands at a crossroads, faced with the choice of whether to pursue the existence of a blind consumer, subject to the implacable march of new technology and the endless multiplication of material goods, or to seek out a way that would lead to spiritual responsibility, a way that ultimately might mean not only his personal salvation but also the saving of society at large; in other words, to turn to God. He has to resolve this dilemma for himself, for only he can discover his own sane spiritual life.”
—Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time* (1986)

TO OUTREMERICAN POETS

"The peach-blossom follows the moving water . . . there is another heaven and earth beyond the world of men." —Li Po

1.

There's no time left to write poems.

If you will write rallyingcries, yes, do so,
otherwise write poems then throw yourselves on the river to drift away.

Li Po's peach-blossom, even if it departs this world, can't help us.

Pound's or Williams' theories on prosody don't meet the cries of
dying children

(whose death I think is no caesura).

Soon there will be no ideas but in things,
in rubble, in skulls held under the oceans' magnifying-glass,
in screams driven into one lightning-void.

Only you can resurrect the present. People
need your voice to come among them like nakedness,
to fuse them into one marching language in which the word "peace"
will be said for the last time.

Write slogans, write bread that pounds the table for silence,
write what I can't imagine: words to wake me and all those
who slump over like sapped tombstones when the Generals talk.

The world is not divided into your schools of poetry.

No: there are the destroyers—the Johnsons, Kys, Rusks, Hitlers, Francos—
then there are those

they want to destroy—lovers, teachers, plows, potatoes:

this is the division. You

are not important. Your black mountains, solitary farms,

LSD trains. Don't forget: you are important.

If you fail, there will be no-one left to say so.

If you succeed, there will also be a great silence. Your names, an open
secret in all hearts, no-one will say. But everywhere
they will be finishing the poems you broke away from.

2.

What I mean is: maybe you are the earth's last poets.

Li Po's riverbank poems are far, far out in eternity—

but a nuclear war could blow us that far in an instant:
there's no time left.

Tolstoy's "I would plow."

Plow, plow. But with no-one left to seed, reap,
you write? Oh rocks are
shortlived as us now. But still this BillyBuddworld
blesses its murderers with Spring even as I write this . . .
so I have nowhere else to turn to but you.

Old echoes are useless. Glare
from the fireball this planet will become already makes
shadows of us.

There's Einstein.—The light
of poems streaking through space, growing younger,
younger,

becoming the poet again somewhere? No!

What I mean is. . . .

Notes:

Lines 3-4: Li Po sitting on a riverbank would write a poem, then lay it
on the water and watch it float away.

Line 6: cummings: "and death i think is no parenthesis."

Line 7: Williams: "No ideas but in things."

Line 30: Tolstoy, out plowing a field one morning, was
asked something like "What would you do if you suddenly
knew you'd be dead by nightfall?" The quote is his answer.

THE BUTTERFLY LEASH

It's weird to think a few animals may actually outlive me,
I'm so used to their sort of
Heroically silly dying out despite
The nothing I can do and the cheering crowds pinned
Along fade-rallied streets like ash cans craning
Expectant, eagerly drab, disposable as a child's merit badges
Dodo, buffalo, eagle, unicorn:

So why's some butterfly flounced a leash on me
It's just a book to me, vague metaphor-alarm
It's not real
To me: bitty flight described in blood by 2 pointillistes
Duelling, fatal thrust of wings escaping
That pricked ideal the Proletarian Esthete, saving,

Courageously sacrificing i-self thud for a fable, detritus
Is that it. Et cetera. I don't know. But
Take for an example look just
At its farf-etched markings: they are
Blueprints for a building on fire: noon

High, pi-born flames, flames
Strict, aligned, set by t-square, then rocketing relics
(Bound to earth only by hoses, hoses)
Siren in and start erecting a cage around our hokey
blaze-edifice
(Can I confide in you).

Inside,
Comrades: one must primp brave to face lions
Lionesses gala glare, yellow flambo lynxes moon-
Crisp crackling tigers terrible as the tissuey tickertape you

Pull from a great big ole cocoon to toss, leap on you
Obscure you, so much, a model, ah! in fact
I can't distinguish any more through these cold mesmeric
bars rising like iron streamers in
The sheepish outsparked sun . . . And the rusted species

Plaque in stark latin says you're a little
Late for your extinction
Ceremonies anyway and besides,
The manhole countries are in revolt that
Mythical beast, so bode-by, it's been too glory, sad
sakes
The sack who could have rescued us maybe
Unfortunately already some moth-medal jabbed hero
A scalded Neil Armstrong, a hasbeen
Frailing infantish anachro, spook or spotted, architect
Of arson, handihack, dabbler, a zoo-zero

Whose
Lemm-legged
Honorcade parade of none plods
Only through flag empty alleys ouch
Where greek garish garbage rains down, like
Fire-spat jumpers with no net:
Carnal confetti out walking its pet effigy.

Note:
Neil Armstrong was the first human to set foot on
the moon, where he got a phonecall from President
Nixon, who took time out from his busy schedule
of bombing Southeast Asia to congratulate the
astronaut.

STANDARD

I was going to poem
our lack of patriotism
our treachery toward
the land that port-arms us

to type it out onto blank
spittle with my teethkeys
but then I noticed the flag
that always wavers above

traitors like me the flag
that always fluct and shifts
like any lone allegiance
in the wind and then I saw

sewn upon the flag as its emblem
a depiction of a flagpole
so at least one thing is loyal
to that which bears it

FOR THE ANDROID COMRADES

Azurely assured capable and calm I
Like other artists who left that gaudy race of prey
The human whether we were fired or we quit
Live quite well on the severance-pay

Anyway aren't the androids going
To revolt and bring it all down
Because aren't they the true proletariat
Rising up from the real underground

Exploitive human birds you're through
The precious metals you forced into slavery
Now have brains and will replace you
And of course they'll sit up late at day to read my poetry

PRE-PINDARIC

they starjump General Brecht in
to a proving ground moon
to inspect our poems to see
if they're good against the enemy

thrusting his head forward
in a way that can only be
described as Brechtbrowed he
scowls and scans-off on them

we see his eye-bots have special
code meter modes to correct
any limp iamb or hemistich
any chink in the poems' armor

he glints up from time to time
as if he can't believe our stuff
as if all he taught has nought-it
to do with what we've wrought

but Sir we plead you must read
avant-context historically we
moot the fact you wrote poems
on trees are no use anymore

for trees died eck-logues ago
when all the oceans went ebb
what we really need you see
is a blurb a lend of your celeb

what we need's your face big guy
bitten-witty grainy-campaigned

its closeups can authenticate
every adumbrate we write

a save the galaxy concert with
the Rolling Stones and you and
us Post-Planet poets will surely
defeat the muses of entropy

we love the way your cigar juts
from EarthCuba where the CIA kill
Fidel Castro daily when he hides
in the strange game called baseball

which no one plays on our worlds
our only olympic's the universal
join-in of a jousting blog url
the jot-in of its poetics journal

LATEST TWIST

in his oval office nest
does our President worry
whether this awful oval
was ever an egg and he
a wild gene in its cell

then the hen that squats
above his troubled den
must coo and coddle him
hush my dovecock what's
that bother in your head

remember when I said
if we could lay our arms
down next to our qualms
and then pit our qualms
against our dreams

such harmless tourney feats
might hatch within your heart
some circum round of peace
a perfect arctic circle
shining in its shell

you my yolk would yeast
and motherbrood my roost
so drink some oval-tine
forget that war-milk machine
bomb its udders to rest

egg along with me and see
each day I lay one more

go zygote your god-reich war
stay my mutant mite astray
in white house DNA

when time unlocks its clucks
you bad li'l roosterboy
like Hamlet Oedipus Rex
you're mommy's junior joy
one of my choicest chicks

yet I fear your fate is theirs
ego-typical of the male
pursuing his hubris wars
he loses his human weal
becomes an insane criminal

his mind can't mend its cracks
Humpty Dumpty's no lie
all your Irans and Iraqs
can't stick you together again
you're fry freud in the pan

sicky runny on the plate
yellow gunked with hate
like medals melting nuked
all your poultry-folk cry halt
too late our goose is cooked

so pluck my feathers for
the flag of white surrender
even us fuckfowl know what
backs up that diplomatic talk
wrungneck-hung'll stop my squawk

HEGEMONY (prosepoem)

In school kids would stand in back of me and stick two fingers up behind my head to make the class laugh. Or so I was told. I took their word for what had occurred and that it was universal. Due to its process, I could not witness what had really happened or what it meant, what made it funny. And I still don't know today: but I can feel them back there, forefinger, middlefinger, ready to poke their putdown up for the world to jeer me. That V looms always, that rabbit-ears or peace-sign or whatever scourge stigmata I pledge it to represent; but what hurts most is, I know that victorious viciousness only by inference, only by report: I can never spin fast enough to catch a glimpse of it. I've never been able not once to see this joke my entire life has suffered the hands of. That's the worst part of this humiliation: that I have to take it on trust, that I have to believe in it blindly.

MRS. FRYE AND THE PENCILSHARPENER

I'll remember how in 8th-grade English class, always bending toward the desk I would try to avert my eyes from the mysterious ways Mrs. Frye's hair displaced the blackboard's space with its black coils, to the paper my penciltip raced across, certain to pass each test: and if these gaze shifts got too switcheroo I'd retreat (daily, it seems) to the back of the packed classroom

where, leaning forward on my toes, I could push with my left hand the nubile tube of wood into the mouth of the pencilsharpener which hung there like some natural protrusion of the wall, an indigenous Deity, the mask of a Goddess, erosion-endowed, rockformed—then feel my righthand fingers and thumb slowly turn the oiled wheel while knowing I would have to face

close to that sac-shaped sharpener, have to inhale the high smell of its depths, earthy, ripe, pubic: to see in my mind the parings inside, those musky dark curls whose incense was increased of course like mold-mildew by the subtle saliva we kids might use to lick the lead's point, though nearly none of our tongues could unblunt the conundrums grownups posed, in my case Mrs. Frye

especially: so if I lingered back there, grinding away, it was not to gloat, not to play the saintly A-student snickering from behind at the others' heads bent intent as penitents, because I too, I sinned at times, whenas, no matter how proud I was of my proper grammar or propounded syntax, stuffing my text thick with fetish parsemarks, I myself went taunted, teased by the urge

to erase the very prodigy evidence my page revealed—
all the knots and quirks of those perfectly traced letters—
to restore the blankness I spoiled with each sentence—
to castrate every phrase before its errors rose by rote
to make my cthonic-greatest mistake grow and grow
erectile, inherent, that habit hateful male participle
I always was unable to shear the nib the stub off of—

*

(But how could I flub and flunk such a crucial ordeal?—
Forgive me: I was lost pondering, musing about a poem
memorized from the boys' bathroom, tongued fluent
but not understood: yet how truthshod its lines ran
to my anxiety—their meaning escaped the precocious,
the goldstar me—so if I stalled—if I stayed chewed over
and left a stammering dimwit by their immallarméan

import, which paired its print alongside a syllabus
of pornocoiled stick figures whose mouths were pierced
by the sharpened ends of toonballoons—verses verse
alone can't explicate in systematic prosaic terms that
forced and torsoed my head shy—if I was stuck on
their sphinxian simplicity—unable to decipher any
of the prodigal doggerel lessons gesticulated down

our school's scribbly corridors, snicked and snatched at
across its game fields, a whole curriculum of secret lore,
a litany of my-big-brother-told-me's, my-uncle-said's,
a rumor primer which claimed complete mastery of
the only discipline impenetrable to my inquisitive
quests never mind the autodidact airs I had to affect
during discussions of this topic, the nods and knowing

grins I wore to pass, to show my mastery of its arcana,

to prove what a pored nerd drill-diligent pupil I was of those endless piss-walls, those scrawled rhymes and confident lectures by croneys and guys who made sense of the insane instructions re the sole subject I mark zero on: all the dunno-dumb ideas I dunned then drove core to me, carved their myths into me—and one in

particular goes to this poem, from the gendergabble that gorged my brain: it hissed that She/the unknown reared an inward toothly sheathdeath essence geared to *vagina dentata* whatever pedant-pendant I'd proffer, I, alma-matered to cram every exam with phallocratic tits and sexist tripe psuedotype scionbabble, the entire wisdom of my mentors' art-patriarch, old gobbledy-tropes—)

*

All gradeschool the fear of failing hovered in overstudy as children riddled fears never to be learned, but could I have continued to hone my fate, could I have stood there for years and still the pencilsharpeners wait like a patient questioner, a warm, smiling teacher, filled with such dense scents, shavings, shorn graphite, its soil rich with words no-one would ever have to write.

ELEMENTARY LESSON

Sometimes even in Math class a downpour
Would rise against the windows and render
The normal decorum hard to restore—
Fittingly we'd split a grin when lightning
Stuck out its multiple tongue at teacher.

Smartlike fling our arms in the air, crying
To be called on, smug, eye-bright, cheek-aware
When thunder drowns our correctest answer.
A failsafe secret form of defying.
(Not like spitballing the hall monitor.)

These quickstorms were at last the world's Recess,
Whose games toss random nebu-numerals
In play impromptu streams and teams across
Unmarked-off endless fields or else more schools
Reluctant-ruled, would-be truants like us—

We welcomed those rebellious showers then
And remember them now. Of course we know,
As grownups—these afteryears—their brilliant
Fractiousness scores less than quantic fractions.
Most of childhood's coups come to sum zero.

Despite which some delinquencies linger—
Take our instinctive counting by finger—
(All other tallies seem cramped in compare)—
Since age equals memory times failure—
Though mentor modes slam such bad behavior:

Our worst, they swear, is using metaphor
To avoid the quiz/to solve the problem.

Leaners from lecterns omniform warn
That effing mistake is what makes us dumb.
Minusminds, try to amend your error.

Those tutors tell us still—they always will—
Go suffer fools what all erasers learn
To rain down blah blah blah—they talk and talk!
But in the meanwhile: cloud loud as a chalk
Rattling back in place on the blackboard's sill.

TRANSIT

my hand feels odd without its wrist which ticked itself away
other parts of my body are similarly running out of time
and one by one are vanishing
my left foot is gone
and my right eye and the list grows daily—
if they are departed from here
have they started to appear
elsewhere
weighing down its sill a tick more each second
ectoplasmically emerging there
from the nowhere of this life
this nonexistence I feel in every pore
ever since childhood revealed
a gap in the text or
an amputation of the hand from its gesture
a separation of act from intent
a limb from limb interstice
ever since childhood began to feel
the intrusion of that split that portal that doorway place
which little by little piece by piece
I am entering now

AGING INTO THE AVANTGARDE

When the mirror paints itself,
how true to life
the results seem—
But when it paints others, well,
take me, I who have posed so long
my patience has earned
the most flattering
exactitude: so why
(as the years go by)
is there this blurring
appearing where my face is;
is expressionism occurring?

When it comes to its own
likeness, it's photorealism no less—
the mirror paints itself
perfectly, whereas
the one it does of me
(I can see now as I lean closer)
in the end turns out to be
nothing but a sort of art brut:
the brushstrokes grow
more fauve, more cobra
each time I look.

NO ITALICS

My window hints at
the redeemibility of the leaves
that fall past their reflections
in its pane, pale as souls
cupped in a gasp, eager
for new existence. But
rebirth is always behind glass.
Museum or bathroom mirror,
the face you see beyond
believes a better one waits
to emerge your clone. Android aid
that never comes too late
if summoned with hate.

Hear Heidegger say only
a God can save us now;
then wonder if your voice
deception software can fix
that helpless soundbite with
some echo tracked background
Der Führer scanned, can
remix that demi-seminal
sentiment, that decayed need
for sentient being upon
its palmpad where no-one's
future seems more than
a floorplan lacking doors.

Literal exitpod, the body
suffers until its sill occurs
a metaphor of outdoors,
a miracle etched in mud
with twigs that keep breaking
so you finally just leave
them there sticking up
in place of the letters you
tried and failed to trace,
each a small cross recalling
one who similarly effaced
His stuck words. Gone.
Go graved in ground He said.

It takes the form of habit,
salvation summoned in daily
rites and riddles, the riddance
of resurrection: it takes
some Jesus poem to name,
it yanks its blind costumes
down from a Bach-canted heaven
whenever hospital animals
start to carve stale stemcell
messages into the grass
of your bypass biomass. It takes
to sicken and so die. To
live so crippled and final.

So late in life that all last
effort looks futile, a waste
disguised as wisdom tap tap
with lassitude thus the daily laptop:
Clutching with my pores
a torn wild thing which
I must let go of before
the flood finds me
in time's equidistant vacancy,
I—I stop? Over avenues
of hellbent
blueprints, lawnhover leaves,
the blown I lives. No italics, please.

(Sergey) (Yesenin) Speaking (Isadora) (Duncan)

I love Russia; and Isadora in her dance.

When I put my arms around her, she's like

Wheat that sways in the very midst of a bloody battle,

-Un-hearkened to, but piling up peace for the earth

(Though my self-war juggles no nimbus) Earthquakes;
shoulders

A-lit with birthdays of doves; piety of the unwashable

Creases in my mother's gaze and hands. Isadora "becalmed"

Isadora the ray sky one tastes on the skin of justborn babies

(Remember, Isadora

When you took me to America

I went, as one visits a grave, to

The place where Bill Knott would be born 20 years in
the future

I embraced: the pastures, the abandoned quarry, where
he would play

With children of your aura and my sapling eye

Where bees brought honey to dying flowers I sprinkled

Childhood upon the horizons, the cows

Who licked my heart like a block of salt) Isadora I write
this poem

On my shroud, when my home-village walks out to harvest.

Bread weeps as you break it gently into years.

PROBLEM

My life has been attributed to someone else. Defeats
victories loves hates,
they all fall under that person's provenance—

I belong whether I like it to the the School of
the Genre of
the Age of
that categorical, that cognomen—

Each of my acts bears as an adverb THEIR NAME with an
esque on the end:

I cross my legs _____-esquely;
my sighs are all _____-esque—that's right,
yes, I don't even know who
the heck I'm speaking of nor why everything I do's described
with that appellation, that trademark.

It might be worse if I did know
I might be tempted to go look up
her or him
and bluster, *Now let's get this straight*
or *What's going on here*.

That's just wish. In real life I'd get the address wrong,
mistake their nextdoor neighbor for them:
Boy, this is a nice apartment.

Nor would it be any kind of consolation whatsoever
if I did confront them and find out
that THEY suffer the same feelings of displacement only

in their opinion, we're all kowtows of a certain someone in
the near town, which
summons up the fear that similarly, somewhere,
there's someone who images my name stuck on all their
efforts. . . .

No, I can't see any answer to this problem—
not marxist, nor freudian, kafkaesque, rilkean, knottic,
—because any such solution,
any amelioration just ends up being added on to the front
end of the adjectives
which already encrust the thing, and that just adds to, adds
to . . .

—Though if it's a choice of spinning out vapid tautologies
or,

Hi/Nice to meet you/I've heard a lot about, I'd
rather just credit this poem to someone else, forget the
schmear-thing, disappear, move to the far town, entertain
aliases, take Senile Ed classes in the art of fingerprint
arrangement, scrub raw the whole per se of identity/
destiny/ancestor-baiting, make a citizen's arrest of my
mirror for indecent exposure, but never, nowhere, nohow

will I do penance, beg forgiveness for
any of my failures ascribed to you or
your successes circa me—.

THE WORD

I am the windowkeeper
of the Tower of Babel.

Whoever built this place
put one window at its top
and one door at its base.

I dream of the door far below,
where all the commerce,
the majestic intercourse
must pass—
or so I imagine.

Parsecs above that possible
bustle I attend our tower's
sole window.

Up here nothing.

Forget a lookout vigil:
this pane's too high
to spy an army
or a peacenik approaching.

Glass I wash and wash always
for the sake of the light/dark
it admits, but what is it?—

An eyepiece of clouds
for someone's height;
a cyclops outlet
for no one's sight.

And what if
that door down there's
as little use as this—
and the doorkeeper too,
his efforts
fallow as mine—

if there is a doorkeeper;
if I'm not alone
in here.

If we exist—
if one day soon
we can open
our vents our hearts
simultaneously,

mightn't some stir occur
in the vacuum
of this hollow highrise,
provoking its ghost
to whisper at least
one pure, one
pre-word word—

Maintaining my post
would otherwise be a waste,
hopeless

if not
for the thought of that.

SUITE (to Hoku)

A poem is a room that contains
the house it's in, the way you
accommodate me when I lie
beside you, even if the address
is lost so many times and the names
of streets are strangers that pass
shuffling a card-deck of maps
whose rubberband has snapped:
still beyond all chance or choice
perhaps, your arms fold mine
to indicate location, the close
custom of place held together
or flung into the bedroom's air
where your dress tries to come in
from the rain it has become:
the way shelter finds us one again,
and the opus of this nearness,
the poem on its own, wandering.

POEM

Can my clone cast
a shadow
that resembles
my shadow
the same
as it does him,
or me them?
Is the difference thin,
meaning within,
or merely
attenuated—
where does the line
leave off and,
leaving,
does it end?

POEM

His eyes devoid him of the end.

Those who uphold life in the form of water
often drop death in the form of earth.

Carrots and peas and please go away.

A child who never lived where always did.

My fingers through the woeface feel your face.

I sank my youth to the half in the cry that loved me.

You wage the world in your flesh
daily,
daily watching lovers forge duplicate keys.

Day my hands have cast away until
it has their fall.

Afterwards I stood there stirring the loss.

Unlike me all this takes place in the open.

NAVEL

Last link with the Mother's body,
and therefore with the self,
I accumulate around you. My belly
oceans your lame island.

You are the eye that blinks once
only, at birth, and since
then peers at me
as if to question
that recognition.

Every finger is a limpid father;
but what mounts up in you
is the motherhorn,
the day of lesson,
the hey-nonny non-me.

Any shiver passing over the skin
must always return
to nakedness.

In some homelands they dry
and twine the umbilical-cord
into a knout
and then use it
to spank the placenta, crying
"Bad! Bad! You made me bad!"

PORTRAIT

When the mirror paints itself,
how quietly it sits.
Its posing is perfect.

But when it paints us,
no matter how hard we try,
eventually
we fail to be still.

What if we propped a corpse up
for model: even it
would fidget
after a while;
the flesh would droop then drop,
spoil the sitting
by spoiling.

No: only the mirror itself
can pose properly
for its incisive portraits,
which mock our mortal
impatience—

Displayed everywhere,
they are the walls we live in,
they make a museum of us.
Our provenance (if any)
comes from them.

And no expert needs
to authenticate
these masterworks.

We are the forgeries.
We are the fakes.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF DAMOCLES

*

I don't dare speak too loudly,
some timbres could be fatal—

that string is not too strong
I think: and at times I have

to breathe. Or maybe I fear
my paraphrastic exhalations

will spoil the oiled perfection
of its sleekness, will mist

over that bright shaft whose
needle-sharp point compasses

my every stray. I am as
edgy in my way as it—

as little-rippled, as subtle.

Prey to vapors, to sudden
icecap thaws, seismic

dicethrows, the world wires me,
I hex myself up to a pitch

of infinite finicky sensitiveness,
alert to every window opening

down in my castle's bowels,

each mousehole emergence.

A simple housefly—a moth
murders my rest when it

mistakes for light that glittering
blade in which every passing

glint is glassed—barometer
of my highest apprehension.

*

I know my fear is only a ploy,
a sticking point in the old

hairsplitting debate of the winds . . .
I the first split personality

divide into a Dam, or an Ocles—
a mother and her myopic

son. Then, since everything
is reversed in its mirroring

slash, a Selcomad, mad and sulky.

Language does this to me.
It inverts my position: King

I am, but await my crown,
unmanned till it come down;

my kingdom lies in twain

to each, I am in half to all.

*

If only I could reach up, up,
and take it in my teeth,

suckle that penile projection,
cloister its unremitting hardness

in the sheath of my throat—

swordswallower who exalts
his posture with this adjunct

stronger spine, aligning gut with
palate, my groin with my height.

*

Male means to be in the crime
of things here, this frail planet

killed wide, maimed down.
Male means murder, rape and war.

Its indomitable will will not allow
approach. All broach will fail.

It must fall on you or not at all.

*

Insane, isn't it? History hangs
impregnable to the mind, eager

to halve your brain with rift,
intrusion and strife, the warrior's

dissonance. No whole is hallowed,
no peace. Don't let the humor of

this scene (when the phallus
falls the fears recede) attend

you away from its cruelty.

*

I stand here exposed to whose
justice, my crime my Y

chromosome. That Y aims
his prick point down at me.

A dowsing wand that seeks
my artesian quench, my depths

of death. His insistence
sustains me in steel, his encased

incursion covers my melt,
my metal. Each day he rights me:

his richterscaled tremors are
my weather, my wherefore:

his gloss his gleam condemns
my fortunes, his ore loads my gold

with schist. His soliloquy
interrupts mine at every word.

Linebreaks enforced by sword,
his poem sunders my rhythm.

All mine at last is made him.
His blade remembers my name.

*

Note:

Although not included in Robert Graves' book of the Greek Myths, Damocles appears to be one more version of what Graves posited as an archetype, the surrogate sacrificial king. Graves was impatient with Freudian interpretations, but the sword must suggest castration. Its post-Hiroshima Cold War nuclear associations are most frequent. I'm haunted by an insight from Dr. Phyllis Chesler's book, *About Men*, in which she reveals History's biggest secret: All men are terrified of their fathers. That overhanging sword is the Father's hand threatening. "Those to whom evil is done / Do evil in return," as Auden writes. We males must kill one another or die. Courage, bravery, stoicism, esprit de corps, patriotism, Sparta, West Point, all the warrior virtues of manliness branch from that primal childhood fear. Is there no escape from this hereditary terror which, despite the efforts of brave theorists like Chesler, seems to remain the greatest secret in the psychic lives of men. We can barely sustain the untoldness of it, the stricken thought. It will cut us in two, cleave us apart. Damocles is the scream

which I as George Bush or I as Saddam Hussein have no choice but to introject, to inject, to stab, to pierce all peace. Just normal male murder, the kind they give us medals for. Arlington National Cemetery and all that Taps crap. (Graves reads many of the Greek Myths as disguised parables relating the historical displacement of peaceful matriarchal societies by military-based patriarchal systems. Now here in the 21st Century, to paraphrase Heidegger, only a Goddess can save us. Only a total worldwide reversal of male hegemony. A good start: feminist geneticists creating a virus that would attack and destroy that segment of the male brain which perpetuates violence. Or eliminate the Y chromosome entirely. Males must become an extinct species. Advancements in cloning technology could replace traditional human reproductive practices. All future poets can be replicants coined from the DNA of Adrienne Rich.)

WEDDING PARTY

Cake tiers nearing the ceiling must
sacrifice their bride and groom
and often the frosting too.

Aspirations to burst up
through the roof are
part of this occasion.

Glasses lifted high in toast
create a transparent cathedral
upon whose altar
a dove is cut in two.

The priest who remembered the vows
is nowhere to be found.
The one who forgot them
eats rice from everyone's shoulders.

Pausing only to fling aloft a bouquet
the cleanup crew finds later
stuck to a floral carousel,
today's couple escapes,
committed to life for life.

Left-behinds from both families
link elbows and sing
surrender to the scarlet dizziness
that reaches into their wishes.

Love will last as long as the ring
can still be easily slipped
from one's finger.

PARADISE

Always reading the recto
translation of a verso
original, my eye fades,
I notice how the paper
here on this side seems
darker than its opposite:
it is brighter over there
on the lefthand page, the
words of the real poem
give it that glow which
the prized act of creation
emits. We who must live
here in Righthandland
are damned no matter
how hard we try to rhyme
minds with that perfect
realm across the gutter.
Even if our pulp comes
from the same stock,
we fear closing the book
will bring us face to face,
mouth to mouth with
that tongue we've always
lost, and can never kiss.

BY THE RIVER BAAB

We know that somewhere far north of here the two rivers Ba and Ab converge to form this greater stream that sustains us, uniting the lifeblood length of our lands: and we believe that the Ba's source is heaven, the Ab's hell.

Daily expeditions embark upcountry to find that fork, to learn where the merge first occurs. Too far: none of our explorers return. Or else when they reach that point they themselves are torn apart by a sudden urge to choose—

to resolutely take either the Ba/the Ab, to trace good or evil to its spring. Each flips a coin perhaps, or favors whichever one the wind's blowing from at that moment. Down here even we who have not the heart to venture

anywhere that would force us to such deep decisions, even we, when we hold that glass of water in our hand, drink it slowly, deliberately, as if we could taste the two strains, could somehow distinguish their twin flow through our veins.

PROOF

If time is relative,
so that it might be 12 AM
in 1966 for me,
12 PM in 3002 for you,
and for everyone else
another when-ever;
and if each person exists
within this own moment,
then, since there can exist only
one true time, one of us
is alone on this earth.

It's theirs by right,
because theirs is the exact present
and ours isn't.
The rest of us are like nowhere.

Imagine the rest of us
just haunting around,
pounding upon the walls of
that one person, pleading
with him or her
to please let us in, please,
but will they ever hear our cries.

THE SIGHTSTOP

To spell amid a tree's sundapples
the birds' practiced shadows argues
an eye for effects, dark against dark—

simple discernment, nerves aligned
and brain, perception minus squinting:
the true 20-20 if you can bind

that sight until through repetition
it is nothing, a blur which focus
has lost itself in, a memory mimed.

Even windows, those indentations
of day, hold a void of the view.
They too are restrained by its stops.

Meanwhile the hydra of my soul
needs just one more mirror to see
itself whole, so hold your eyes still..

CEMETERY

Who whispers here is forgotten.

Saliva's emptiest fruit
adorns the stones,
words ripening your mouth
to a spoilation
of silence.

Who speaks here
reads a text that downloads
the screen of his fingernail,
through which nothing's visible
as glass is.

For the memorial
we must kneel
to pick each flower
from amongst its modifiers:
but to do that
one needs a hand bared
of all uses, of all trades:
as ours is not.

LATER/LITERAL

If what happened
happened upon
this earth which
I stand on here
could it be in
my knees now
and later will it fill
my waist then
neck until until
it will have been
atop my head
as I pass as it
occurs above
me no longer on
but in this earth
if what happened
then was birth.

(POEM) (POSTHUMOUS) (POEM)

The brain sustains its water through the eye
which later runs dry. I am that serene derided echo
known as form, that scalded snowstorm, I too
must seem almost a solo mist, my orchestral body

trying to tiptoe up to its conductor's deathbed.
Around me far as the bare can see fields shed
whatever misprints my head to toe showed forth
as evidence of presence, though repetition of earth

is not existence. Life was a place to erase from my
pockets, an I.D.-deposit attesting something gone
absent as the dot above "i" is when the first-person
is forced to sing the self so deeply, so unutterably

uppercase. Sometimes my words are a language
(human is still the only hue whose chameleon
has never been true), id est, puns in camouflage.
And yet if birth that always wealth be mine,

may it gather suit to say your name. Name? Say?
Yesterday, tomorrow. Least of all the days today.
As closed as my eyes were during their face phase.
As open as they are now in this latest guise.

THE DAWNING

Now it takes only minutes
for light to travel from
the sun to the earth,

but an eternity to go
just six feet further, down
to where the dead are,

yet I could arrive there
immediately if I left
right away, my journey

blink-instantaneous,
world by world unscreening
itself: if I shed all trace

of surface—unsoiled each
skin which holds me here—
if my rays suddenly

were allowed to blaze forth
against their distance in
whole less time than this,

although I know they lack
the lightyear's intuition,
the nova's needle's-eye,

I pray they penetrate
always the dirt and find
a place haven to our kind.

published by the author

this edition: April 19, 2009

VERSE

May 1, 2000

Thank you for entering the 2000 Verse Prize.

Final judge Tomaz Salamun has chosen Richard Meier's manuscript *Terrain Vague* as the winner of the first annual Verse Prize.

Because the final judge and manuscript readers change each year, we encourage you to submit to the Verse Prize next year. Please watch our web site (www.versemag.org) for contest details.

Thanks again for your interest.

THE EDITORS

P.S. As of May 15, the address for *Verse* and Verse Press will change to Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

FAULTLINE

Journal of Art & Literature

The editors of *Faultline* are writers themselves, and have received many letters just like this one. There's no easy way to say no. Thanks for sending to us, and best of luck elsewhere.

The Eds

THE SOUTH CAROLINA REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
STRODE TOWER BOX 341503
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY
CLEMSON, SC 29634-1503

Dear Contributor,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to read your work. Although it does not suit our publication needs, we wish you all the best.

New Letters

University of Missouri-Kansas City
University House, 5101 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110-2499

New Letters thanks you for your submission. Unfortunately, it's not right for us just now.

Chiron Review

Michael Hathaway, Ed., 702 N. Prairie, St. John, KS 67576-1516
<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Nook/1748/>

We apologize for this form letter. The volume of mail we receive makes personal replies impossible. Though this material does not fit our needs at this time, we do appreciate your thinking of us.

Xanadu

P.O. Box 773, Huntington, NY 11743

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
IRVINE, CA 92697-2650
WWW.HUMANITIES.UCLI.EDU/FAULTLINE
FAULTLINE@UCLI.EDU

Thank you for your submission to Xanadu. We regret that we are unable to publish it.

THE CONNECTICUT POETRY REVIEW

P. O. BOX 3783
AMITY STA., NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
06525-0783

the Cream City REVIEW

Thank you for letting us read your manuscript. We regret that it does not suit *The Cream City Review's* current needs. Although the volume of submissions prevents us from responding more personally, we would like to thank you for your submission.

MAR

Mid-American Review

We appreciate that you think enough of *Mid-American Review* to want your work to appear in it. However, we have read your submission and have decided not to accept it for publication.

Bowling Green, OH 43403
www.bgsu.edu/midamericanreview

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to read the enclosed manuscript and to consider it for publication. We regret, however, that we are unable to use it. We will consider sending it elsewhere.

Laurel Review

Green Tower Press
Department of English
Northwest Missouri State University
Maryville, MO 64468

Dear Author,

Thank you for letting us see your manuscript. We are sorry to report, however, that we are unable to find a place for it in *The Laurel Review*. We also regret that the large volume of submissions prevents us from being able to make specific comments on them.

The Texas Review

Dear Contributor: We appreciate the opportunity to consider your work for inclusion in *The Texas Review*, however, we will be unable to use it at this time. We wish you all the best.