

WRITING

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1990

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THREE POEMS

Jessica Grim

Is the Body Talking Sense Now?

Glamorous to be pediatric, misread. Prosaic steps from this island to that, lost in *our ways*. Is it really a *fabulous* move? Cater to the *outside*?

I don't have any love lost over those feeble egos. I am most cautious, I only behave when it behooves . . . *whose* gradient did you say you sucked? Idle lipstick makes me pout, I collect them as they come, till that's unreasonable, how do *you* do it? Sassy misanthrope. That novitiate charm. Viscous boy gossip, so demure, so classy. Owls for the taking.

All the tills still banging out their money; listen forever still not enough of what I want you to do for me. A busy life bucks up, "back in the saddle again," back in the brilliant audience.

Obliterating the mechanics of pain in their ceaseless inflated hour. It's not doting we're even after, after all. It's whose taunting maimed ways we encourage. An emblem frantic to *be* somebody. Pithy nostalgic undertaker. Shortening lines, dental fidelity, thick reciprocity sandwich. In those silent kind of shoes the circle endlessly noise, our sprockets have skillfully most relapsing, just a simple deposit.

Still, be quiet, I can hardly hear, it *looked* like your writing. Parts which're dependent on sound, the excitement will wake you up. Arms envelope their mates, not too crowded to please, same legs you walked here with . . . rows empty.

The End of the Shout

The case, the emergency I talk about, is not personal. Feasibility would be an overload Seismic joy of those long ago moments. If that is necessary to the work . . . we cleave our own, thanks. Finally, the life looks crisp. Though in its incandescence, I begin to wonder. To be withdrawn from waiting, your frightened vision. We document it as we talk, or in foolish terms, as we fall.

They point out the bad results of the disaster. Place that hand on your chest reawakens, this information *seems* to be general . . . , I can hardly stand it, that.

The explosion set off many smaller fires, which burned on into the night and could be seen from a distance, a constellation. Then a long period of silence, of which this is only the beginning. The stronger of the two people habitually winning though never seeing the other, his opponent, crumbling; and that is as it should be. A small burn mark on her hand. To keep closed the mess of your dream concerns.

Suggestion of listlessness sugars. Therefore the splendor of your narrative, and my argument. And (listless again) cowardly desire not a function but *its* argument, *its* loathsome holes.

Broken refrain semantics of romance, valuation processes (mitigation or it's not mitigation). The beauty of the moment, we were all quiet and attentive. Recapitulation harmonics. If only initially. History's little band of men, little historical syntax. Not tractable or safe. Leisure pursuit of faith. The historiography of the silver lining. An aggrieved assume.

Cardiovascular rebound, embarkation, sloppy drive south. Surrogate verb, whose view you impound. The final ventilation. Warning of equality. Notorious for negative thought but laterally so blank. Lucky bloom. A part of the personality which is truly repellent, that trim simple look, where some birds are flying down from off a turret.

Stagnant spectacular situations, eats through the page, its glorious loops, parchment the light becoming yellow no place like the castle to work a problem out. Diagram of sound waves exiting an ear the wind whistles. Codified cessation, a list of them. Another puzzling miracle. Fond of those time structures. Fragment of birds flying, only that. (No light?). Each wing rises and bends. Elevated subtext, the theory of the private life. You have yet to find your cult. Species-specific complaint. I don't grasp your situation . . . (see to ask).

Humbling recalcitrance, believe the word's no, or it's a negative in any case. Severe palms lean, blows in the gutter a paper opens its cold I can't tell, press the receiver to your cheek. Insanity's little break. Sometimes there's blood sometimes there's not.

Negotiate how to go on without it, isn't there a *woods* somewhere, no. Not noticeably. No car or escape or plan. Busily doing most things carnal blank. The irrefractable surface. Doom smooths destiny, fierce distinct reasons. *Trace* of memorized fun, how soothing. Concentration key, like denoting singularity. At those moments, in those times, not fractions but whole.

Edges recede leaving rigid air where you imagined something firm. Speculations' instigatory front! Ears rumbled anxious roar, mystery spawnings, calls his mate Buckaroo. Relative theory of fixedness, tall as they get. Black philosophical shoes, shoved kids scam.

Great fondnesses open up with nowhere to go. Spasms of remorseless cheerful fluid. Can't stand the thought of such lucid people. And still, and still wake of a city. Hesitant complimentary jest. Altruistic megaphones, was on a statuary, cold with affront, stout and glaring, wants hosiery on its skin do you have any. Later freezing rain I *sieved* over.

Procrastination protocols *your* status quo, I spot the descent (ask it questions). Fluid again. West to the Canaries. Bit the dust gracefully. Seizure seizure. Loops trot liminally; romantic thought, I'll get a Masters. Sparse senders speed toward Lent. Proustian megaseconds, a rootlike fixation on emotive mistakes. Pulse of Immateriality.

In its insipidity. "Totally without will, without consciousness."

Learn Leverage, As Aftermath

1

Mountains of fun new trains
silly gusts winter subterfuge spiraled axis
volute margins
your ax is my ax
the person stepping down
it could've been anything, really, *anybody's* lust
one seemed more bored

Avid ancillary treetop points dipping forms lines
all sequels fair game, all parts equal
but whose hill's it sitting on?

How dizzy mists've recapitulated
say freedom's enough here to have you sit
glowering *we* are seeing things too
you stock up on them
errata syndrome, permission to accessorize enabling

I wonder if I stayed long enough would something wander into
the reflections' octaves, yonder of your dreams

What you'd be trying to say obsessed with everyday it's all
you think about passing someone saying, the imperative glance
accents nationality, are they with child?

Itchy arena of close calls, bladder panic, stigmatic charm
thermometer.

You can recognize it in that we are so close as to (aggressive
sentence) smells of urine underbelly.

Causing pain pleased with yourself imagine *that*
skiptoethography
moments of big shells publicly where standing on one leg
outlets (shattered goose)
belief also privately
let it meet empty corridors too, surprise
also do not embrace the electric third rail
point being radial
defeatist altitude
clearly atavistically changed indulgence visited on
months of loping tangential
diligently prophetically particular

2

A word to be the best answer in that case, massive hearts. Nude man
with cut-out where penis and balls would be, how come we get so
affected? Don't exacerbate the protocol, we like the lights in its place,
to become hired so huge a foe. Why is that corny musty emotion sank
onto his head? Podium spectators congregate introducing here we
have no job. The sick percent, lousy carrot. After awhile it will be too
hard to fake being interesting, vexations grow, next-of-kin drapery.

World's an echo saying come here I want to show you something now
that it's an exact parallel with a hurricane

Windows cure sane inveterate sense of distant, some will gesture
crusading. Why is there less infrequent passion but it is messages we
receive and lonely long dreams taking time. There's no collection of
what is our roof, there is hardly any roof at all from the beginning.

If you would be in this appropriate frame, you absent from you, the
yellow dull area. Not meaning to indicate a specific instant fragile
though how can you resolute to say now that is gone and we are
welcome. We've been in the attitude saying we're beauteous, fish
flying. Come with me to the furniture! (Seismic atrocity.)

Make sure on the shadows there is also some light moves.

For each in that direction is behind the blinds and the wind getting in. Rolling longing sentence visitation, beside the road. Over, on top of, the key position, side by side mutely not thinking, don't get history into it, *be* fragrant. The house, the lights in my eye unfold.

Into the press of night just so as to remain intently inside another person, make lines there . . . You could place scenes in what you know so that becomes part of the furnishings. Outside your wires in the balconies of other lives you invest all it is that you have. My timepiece desists. Obvious nectar. Elevated showy irritation, how come all impulse originates here?

3

The sanctuary not the home, trying to get through to another color we misunderstood. Altered simple hollow sounds, like abnegating duty. In stark contrast the foot holds forth greatness, the slandered desk. How trivial the desk now seems, how complete and useless, toward what nocturnal phlegm. Small gold knob tender toward the illumination it controls, clouded glass billows up around the flame wittingly spent.

Strangely it maps its carton-like course . . . its steady-state anxiety just fielding your joy. Simplicity percentage. Get the mass ready for its apocalyptic *suggestion*. Elevator mysticism, fatuous harbinger.

Nettles combustibles junk
heroes come already preparatory
haggling distant to the
momentous featureless breast
same wants of many seeking
ulterior buxom strategy boxer,
two shoes' vibes
some candles flame, the downed
silver christ, uproot diction
"don't I know you . . ."

Deceive thinks *re* dress
venal angles house
days' tortured echoic
volleys

Recedes a mighty torch
kickback parabola celibates
losing me
embarrassed by romance
spoke here

A.M.'s catalogue sets aside its loving mouth, obliging mechanistic scent. In view of destiny's granite carapace, fixed on the noose. Scintillation vector, cranial frame, (neck to neck) hirsute diffidence.

Visor of truth hangs loose. Weeds believe. In the silver fluoride dawn. Handsome discs (less handsome devotees). Thinking hard on into one brisk future . . . I, too, deserve. Willful absent pleasure moments says wise up.

For each in that direction is behind the blinds and the wind getting in. Rolling longing sentence visitation, beside the road. Over, on top of, the key position, side by side mutely not thinking, don't get history into it, *be* fragrant. The house, the lights in my eye unfold.

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A PORTRAIT OF COLEMAN HAWKINS BY
GERHARD RICHTER

Peter Culley

for Dan Farrell, Lisa Robertson and Sonic Youth

Fluted column amplified

blue slab: inverted daffodil
phased foreground.

A row of houses
separated

by scrub lawn, cat meander,
a dusty stand

of spiky bush.

BC Hydro

lay thin pipe

through a zone of indeterminacy;

the juicy pear

lies in a soft profusion

scattered round. Muddy, wide-

projected, crosshatched

red spine

against recumbent helicopter.

Exalted juice

reaches a limit

of absorption,

ant staggers

under weight of wafer

across East Wellington

to vast nest opposite.

The feathered eddy

floats

mediation's washes

of white, dirty yellow, deep red.

Stiff compacted clay scattered

stony surface,

mossy clefts, mazy-running

knuckles of stone.

United thus — the vernal crunch

of fall's condensed tears,

vapour burdened air, exhaling

sun, cavern-sweats, conveyed twitterings.

Dusk and dun,

nameless blue flower

dire-clinging

to overhang of extruded shale.

Therefore solitary, walked

into apprehension of evening

while congregated

each wild throat

brightness chattering discord, sulphur's

bright row of tough primaries

the country round

imbrown. What remains of bolder

fruits falls from the naked tree:

light shard from passing truck

skitters across the baseboard

like a bat.

The dismantled lawn buckles

under an evening

swung out upon a hinge —

spike after spike, handful

of sheath, press embodied flesh

unbound into ether.

From another pear

a wasp emerges

with a glazed face.

Months later

of an afternoon

spread material

dispersed through sandstone;

knee deep

in a welded swamp, rank society

of weeds, scrubland, shimmered

into the stone age

by Hydro's nitro, cordite, dynamite.

On the numb channel

on shelves of coral

horseshoe crabs fuck

in the vehement fire

of heavy industry —

vast row of mirrored turbines

hum through the groin,

pale conic shadow

blown smooth, groomed.

The fern motor therefore
operational, the shrub machine
hesitates and then proceeds; the hump
rose twenty feet, hung, and
dropped, like a flailed
blanket resettling
over a bed.
Reaction through
a lake of matter —
breathe in, so, hollow mossy branch
grasped for focus, there,
breaks off, a twin stain
of dark scree
spilled. Through the Cascades'
western wash
a thin wafer of mutant fury,
iron range, exploded view
from here
to deep mantle
split —
a winter sidewalk, a daisy nation.

Suspended
deep bass held
a thunderclap, ether coursing
in a maze of light.

FROM: JONES

Ron Silliman

Homage to Bromige

Hours after flowers by virtue of light's path (cloud darkens ground) — red ant scrambles crosswise over the walk, weighted by a crumb . . . man in a wheelchair, his lap is his desk — ladybug spreads her wings . . . rounded turn to curb's rim. A lone weed defines the lawn — their names come later . . . gum soles press down, lift up at the heel, push into air (children on the "people mover," the wrong way walking), layer of rainwater darkens the long asphalt of the airport runway. Texture of rugs is related to sweaters (pressure point of high heels) (broom herds paper scraps toward dustpan's tilted lip), spilled cola, like bead of oil, resists absorption (whole of world enclosed). Dried pigeon doodoo provides texture to the too-smooth tiles of the mall walk . . . before the train arrives, everyone's watching, a five dollar bill blowing loose around the third rail (sawdust drifts about the lumberyard) — the rails dark with grease . . . there lies a cluster of crushed M&Ms. The wide brush of the janitor's mop . . . smell of stale sewer, rotting in the heat . . . sky amber on the horizon, smog on the bay . . . homes are blisters on earth's surface, inflamed by light . . . between two lawns, perfectly groomed, lies a third not trimmed at all. Skateboard slips down the long slope of street (bricks mesh to form a walk) — fresh chalk marks out a cinder track . . . trees bunch up behind houses . . . as the train emerges from the tunnel, station's sudden glare. Filled with shadows, diffuse in the dispersed light — scuffed shoes wrap ankles, themselves wrapped in scrim of stocking — sun's glare in a crushed can — leaves crackling in the dry heat — smouldering skeleton of car. Clouds mock the air's light: hard porous surface, dry ground (bee's weight bends the leaf) — train never

free of its tracks, Oh line of loose caulk. Wet wood streaks as it dries, growing lighter . . . mockingbird atop brick chimney sings . . . water in the clay pot sinks into the soil (roses by the fence shaded by the house) — glimmer of old snail trail across the deck. Spider that lives in a cord of wood (empty wood barrel that once was a planter) — gradually shade crosses the garden — flat rooves (means snow is rare) gather leaves. Bodyweight shifts forward as, at the top, escalator levels out — hazy green hills, dew steaming off in the sun — richer, darker green of the weeds — condos on a hillside affect the layered look — spider drops down from the brim of my hat (!). Someone's thrown birdseed onto the tracks — pigeons leap straight up to escape from our path = sand congeals, sealing the planet in (boards between sawhorses to shut us out), soft light filters through the curtain. Threads, stitching, nets (out in the plains states, where small towns rest atop hard soil like dry scabs, where states' boundaries merely trace a river's erosion, taut twisting of the earth's skin to stretch over a round (not really round) center) — thin, yellow municipal carpet, passive in the lobby — or trees as spears, piercing its flesh . . . unnamed (solely because I don't know that jargon) concrete risers hold the overpass aloft. Space as fathomable as the sea (hard rock molecules merely packed closer together) — who knows what a fact is, solid ground . . . versus, say, drip grind in the rain forest . . . versus, say, verses. Wires encased in rubber taped to concrete floor . . . grid designs on shoe soles, worn down, dusty . . . tack stuck into the heel . . . shining metal taps (!) . . . wires twist and knot in the corner. Somehow leaves blow inside . . . pigeon dead in the men's room, beneath the white sink . . . lean-tos behind houses offer sheltered storage . . . stains on the floor at the stove's base . . . windowsill's thin film of dust. Rug tacked down . . . from the damp bushes at dusk, frogs sing . . . yellow haze of streetlamp on a starless night . . . cut grass dry atop the green lawn . . . thin red curl of dog stool. What is a site (planet's skin thick as the rind of a tangelo, thin as that of a potato, or all skin, layer within layer, like flesh, like an onion) . . . waves not only dense with life but debris . . . whole neighborhoods built upon sand dunes . . . beneath them, hidden rivers drain to the sea. Mole squints into the morning light — clouds drag along coastal hills, are ripped apart — sun's light not external to the leaf — drops pearl up on each sharp blade of glass — massive foil wrapper (a "stick" of gum in the form of a sheet) rolls across the high

rim of the gutter. After the shower the vast paved lot doesn't seem so flat, pools formed in the cracked valleys of asphalt . . . the white rows of painted stripes are an abstraction, do not relate to the contours of the land . . . sign here indicates the border between two ranches, neither of which have existed for a century . . . Soaked, even this old egg carton loses its shape . . . but not, however, this styrofoam cup. Robins in the cut grass, piles of raw board stacked in the lumberyard (graffiti glows on tunnel walls) — a gray so even you aren't aware of the depth of those clouds — parking lot in which, years ago, Phil Laponovich, surrounded by cops, shot himself in the head — the way an old newspaper blows into single sheets. Juniper makes a hedge (ice cubes melting in the porcelain sink), earwig discovers new world atop picnic blanket . . . the way aphids shade a leaf . . . ants in the bathroom, seeking new resources, new markets. Stillness of the pigeon's corpse sunlit on the tracks . . . here's another, mashed to abstraction (broken feathers) — orange cones divide the street . . . shoelaces in a double knot. Jogger alone on the empty street, small houses, small trees — one lawn neatly trimmed but entirely dry and dead — bottle gang on Jones Street, opposite the market, still alive enough to wolf-whistle a woman (she turns back, gives him the finger, then walks on, half-dragging her daughter) — bland brown towhee hops amid gutter debris. Half-burned-off, last tuft of fog tugs at the ragged rim of the hills — sun's glimmer before it emerges over the horizon (later light falls in strips thru the Levolor blinds onto the cream-colored rug) — not looking at the men, but merely the rows of shoes under the cafeteria table . . . the way a wallboard is punctured with sockets. Deep in the toaster's belly, where all the burnt crumbs are — an abandoned building (a school), roof mysteriously covered with large shards of broken glass . . . gravel as fill around the ties of the track — sightation — gap of an inch between train's car and the platform. Head down, one finds pennies . . . trashcans encased in boxes of concrete — forklifts behind a cyclone fence — a roll of roofing felt on its side on the sidewalk . . . cars parked at angles with the edge of the lot. Tree's trunk sunk into a square of dirt cut from the lawn . . . pier over a small pond, now entirely drained . . . pipes stacked into a pyramid by the loading dock . . . a small three-sided fence, to surround the "man" hole when it's open and occupied . . . from the yawning basement grate of the store came the familiar strains of *Louie Louie*. It's not that the spots on the linoleum

are "shapeless" but that each is so irregular that to name or define it (let alone generalizing to the entire group) falls back on some analogy to the organic . . . not even a stain exactly but a place where the hard smooth surface has eroded (*been* eroded), yielding the rougher uneven texture beneath . . . dead leaves at the base of the jade tree . . . oil's dark shadow on the light cement . . . the grass dry and yellow between the tall green eucalyptus trees. Dust on the sill — on the rug's surface a fine layer of broken fibers — behind the juniper, hose coiled like a python — spider stomped into the grain of the wood — you lift your shoe and stare at the dog poop. Three cars parked with their right wheels up on the curb . . . bars of the heating grate in the livingroom floor . . . rows of brick in front of the fireplace . . . records leaning up against the side of the speaker . . . soft web of shadows on the street from the power lines. Breeze waves leaves' shadows — tall stalks of weeds shoot through low ground cover — fly's path, walking, is not a straight line — the way new planks cross-hatch a hole in the base of the fence. These leaves newly fallen are yellow . . . those (older) are brown . . . stone footpath barely visible through the growth . . . dense as a forest, shuddering in the hot wind . . . tiny vireo hops on the walk.

Dorothy Trujillo Lusk

None of the outer windows belonged to her flat. The exaltation of her irreparable axis (latent in the process of becoming completely inculcable) recognizes in part a few pictures by variance in the pendulous knowledges of bottom feeders. Begin by airing specifically modern forms of power.

These windows subject the city all the same. After, he had watched them go off from his balcony. That is as constrained if successful and all the others. He was going back to his seat if the glass tower must be seen to be traced — a result of the previous operation as the 1st out.

In spite of his enthusiasm for the scenery, the rules of site identified with the two friends who had been condemned to the death. Then he would pretend to be surprised, but the work, in its own name, schemes in order. During the 1970s and more recently, these infuriated him.

Plucked of a miragement of video-control systems while others murmured towards her an ill-will. He reproached himself with his devotion to/in any case. The different trees afforded a changing spectacle, however of its time. By roots in Idealist Abstraction, an itinerant astronomer.

As sure as the blue coastal waters reflect the pewter allegory of the day, there is now afforded a dispensation of all previous deeds & accomplishments. The day's breadth is as long as the engulfed calibration of her shirt awaiting the lack of liftable lids. Allowing that I am not against my forebears (any of the fuckers), he threw her a look.

Littered with nutshells, cigar stubs, pear skins and the 1st Class section of the boat. It was like a vision: they talked about their past and their future in this era and a certain type of modern fatality. In this perspective, bureaucratic forms of the deliriously slammed against awoke in them a lost proletariat.

Because the Citizen was on friendly terms with this partly (yet not functionally conscious) complete sentence between the extreme 'cut' or an hallucinatory mimesis brought up under the eye. Quite naturally to women, her whole figure was silhouetted clearly against the background of a blue sky. Their eyes met. The throbbing of the character, in which he included her, for example.

In his published text describing the project, he nearly dishonoured himself, but there's nothing remarkable about that. At the moment when the pittance becomes as a three-legged race, the sound of iron, all the same. He was standing by the mantle-piece having paid for the picture.

In the same and narrow optical scope, the vampire is neither value-free nor symbolic. At night, which may reflect the occupant somewhat — wandering from group to group, which is, at night, actually invisible. Like all resemblances, there may be inadmissible reflections, there may be guests.

Thus, the lowered eyes to a plethora of contagion — simply the unwillingness in the affair of the wager. Like strength during one, like a visited lunch. To crawl upside the walls — inelegant & backhanded, drudgeline & inexplicable in the face of winsome curleques — that it is property, it is modest, it is, in so many words imperious. Discounted, or as so many rewards, beyond.

Fluttering within the symptomatic uneasiness of the house — at the house of their doctor and this to make himself agreeable. A quarrel, an international anamorphic specularity. Given — an establishment in the curvature of the face he ordered his coachman to drive away. Then, slowly turning away the plane of reflection, you can be quite sure.

He found himself offering. The actress had not a minute to spare. Mass assesses itself in a further dissolution. By day, the daily disturbance effects engineering unity in parallel with rhythmic extension as heard in some of the more mathematically restrictive musics, the joy engaged, the caress of the past.

FROM: THE CENTRAL READER

William Fuller

Mirror minus
phonology
names us

fringe
high
festal
tower

fallen leaves, armed, evidential voices

mute sill sutured on the gaze itself
scarred gradient of the work

Far lights
silhouette
fire, the
reluctant
base or
neural
rain

removes a caustic crimson actual, the whole scattered
passional, brushed house in burnished leaves

Dreamt backlit
fluoridation
the permeable
dreamwork
aureate child

peremptory
pneuma
in freud-
zone

Cortège comprising 'I am' the soft shoe shape, then the
ingenue

I sleep for the moment of waking. I step through the foil
of days.

Optional sidebar shadows the moon

where jewels divide, a theater

condensation
thorn-cloth
hollowing
frost

twine regulus
brine swerve

Falling dead moss
in the star
ink or ivory

by definition the inside will not be edited, in it, in me

Styles of heat invert
nature, the cloudless
beast around the body
put into production
this osmotic wit

the language gland
deactivate napkin
dream again

convert the points by matching speeds and are the
music of these hills, hard wind flat on the tire, bright
at the flame

painted
pairs

below the ink's rim, where the world used to be

staircase to twin rainy skies

muscular lights of eye-borne debris, in mist and field.
'I belong here'

the shimmer. This body stings my throat.

The roads are gathered shells. The roads are paved with
meat. Spin its wings, emptying

rill mendicant
silicate pale

wheel in dark sky pool
on steeple shadow

metal guides the chimes
what is said, what I
would have said, in
twelve months, at the
end of the cycle
buy relic, sell dust
alluvial shore

Visible by deposition, framing the jacket in a text of
lips. Save us from inexistence. I rope the smoke to rip
the shade, negotiable, termitized, shift to slam the din.

Thought perfects
one chrome cloud

beneath a single tree, looking west, to genitive zero

Old world with an old sleeve and all your heads of fire.
Arise not yet alive, tremors dialectical. They pass
unnoticed, like traps in the brain. So place yourself
apart, unfigured.

you (mind incommensurable). Language is a wing.

Always so light in the mind, perch of mind on wall, maculate wall:
the central reader

The wooden soldier slept in his throat, in the shifts, the lilt
like it is, it

The human door opens on the book, the human index.
Mind forms in the pit of a dream.

I walked out to spend my hour. Neither flesh nor
word, I look back from where I will go.

THROUGH THE SILENT SCREEN

Jena Osman

they are all packed up and waiting
orphan train

their posture

rooted up

PRECAUTION SWEETHEART
EMBARRASSED IN MY . . .

HEAD FOR HEART

inherent dimensionality terms itself by a sphere
becomes

other than maria

these odd
said

MECCA THE REAL LITTLE GIRL
THIS LEAF BENEATH HER
PULLS THE NECKLACE IN

(borrow the shoes in the box
tully boys, best buck

(on the steps not near the tracks

very high in the close tolerances
a bridge between the curve of brutes
involves clear cells

they are all packed up

(the old clown spits into the needles
his body partitioned
by a gully in his gaze

letters to follow

(the race of dogs
inside his jaw, too

(notch it out of wood
price the cost of his older get

HERE IN THE TOOL HOUSE
EYE, BOW, MIST, LIP
HOW THIS ONE COULD SHE BE SO SOLD?

(tool house

the rule that complicates trust
makes the rule
of how they might look from beneath
at each other

(with spirey knees
and barky tusks

(how can he get to

("hold the leashes"

(in the threads
up and down

OTHER THAN MARIA
THE BELFRY CARRIAGE
IS HER NECK

(cut dark

who they are
before the train

seek out of it into it
screen arm
rolls off

THE LAST POEM OR BRIDE OF PLETHORA

David Sternbach

I wrote
like it was
going out
of style

the news
value
of the fabulous
genres lasted
like shantytowns
on the White House
lawn

that's
the offending
passage

word
we're talking
superego curfews
and content police

and still
the verbal
pompadors
make book
on making
text and profit-
taking

"I blame
myself"
there's my head
and there's
a pen or an
electronic
point of entry

this is
sovereign
brain-time
with entrance
quotas and exit
restrictions also

if I hold
a job between
my legs
and organs
between
my teeth
I could just
sit down
to write

anyway
letters look
better
lost
in a crowd

over-
burdened
as they are
I can only
leave them
to their own
parataxics

LYRIC STRAND

Kit Robinson

There it goes again, a sound
changing the way we live. No doubt
some things will never be the same
again, and no one there to hear it.
Blocked vistas, piles of crap,
everybody's fucking exasperated
around here. A voice clings
to the hub. Every so-called change
an impromptu, each harried heroic
a sublation of autonomous desire.
We're pissed because of the repression.
We should have been here by now.
Bottleneck, splicetail fixative
setting a tone, devoid,
hellishly faux-naïf. When I
listen to the left, I
find myself out on the margin.
My expressionism makes time
go every which way, down to the bone.
Boiled districts crack open
latinate angst with their bare plans.
Are you quite comfortable?
Would you like a pair of cubes?
A caustic rush of paint slaps
entertainment value across the side
of the nation, faintly visible
two centuries previous. Coughing
stiffs. The inch repeals; its staff
of whole notes flutters and subscribes.

Sound is an antidote to words,
meaning lies. It can be used
to show that they are used and only
exist by their use and are made of it.
Backwater flats form the interior
design of a signature. The image
breaks against the rocks
in the sound of words. It is deleted
by normal wear and tear. What
a relief. The only conclusion
we can draw is that you
heard it here first. First I
taught college, then I
taught highschool, then you
anticipate the rest. Perfectly
frank, balls of the feet, we don't
now know exactly how to use these things.

PSYPSYCHO REMNANTS

Melanie Neilson

1

Reprehensible beauty present at the birth and death
of stars.

The story of Cue.

How they come from behind.

From within the kewpie hole.

(Clipt yews grown wilde.)

Hi there my little vehicular.

My hydrophilic-serial-monogamist navagatrix
has stand-up do-nut up her sleeve.

A nice place to phallus.

Ruby ruby ruby will you rib eye.

"Why" at the end equals long e.

As in anecdotal embowelment pops like a car.

Or the salutary fluid of hello my little blow me.

Dex sex hex eye teeth.

Dorothy Malone father mamboed to death scene fantasy okay.

A tender chemical peeling.

You stepped out of a brain.

The pasture is tense.

A made up country or state with flag invented.

Tell about the customs, describe the sleeping arrangement.

Tapping the conductor shoulder.

My fingers are snapping *me* and there's no stoppin em.

Frustrate miscellany aside; vile vial, vial vile.

Underground the great indoor scar conventions.

Handy candy. Seen but not read the prelude to a cock.

Refusal to underwhirr infantile freedoms.

Society and the Confection.

Society and great wet outdoors.

Society and red ruby caste subject in scarves.

Society and the working class fucking to death on tv.

Society clever and classless and free.

Data at the head of the table.

So home its labeled Casa.

A house you can't enter,
let alone speak.

The reclining Boss Language as though what I meant was the world.

As though two tongues had been stuffed into one mouth
making it difficult to eat, let alone speak.

The amount of money it takes to be hand to mouth.

Combining the obituaries for a singular experience.

A brilliant blue flower engaged.

Virtually orchestral against dark green grass parts.

In English something to eat, to drink, to rest on.

My stolen wallet to your car alarm.

Behave leafy with questions.

This quasi-legal repression practically the last thing on Earth.

Ants are good citizens.

The confusable arm on its own refused to be a wing.

Pull the "gloo" from the "i".

Spat on informers head by head.

I feel my liver turning cold and white like snow.

Dukes of Iron fight no bluff.

Of life and the time card.

A smut fest living in cities.

An excellent job, good social life and a terrific personality.

The best thing for you.

Unless the jaw is too small or the teeth are too large.

Go-go rhythm: what goes up must disco.

A silent companion for R.

Metabolism check by any other name.

Good insects place group interests first.

The Prime Minister, shielding her eyes from the sun, gazed at the races.

Prepared at least cerebrally for a defeat at home.

The repose neither earth nor hell can break.

But a science it is to suppose what illusion contains (wish) we can't get elsewhere.

Singular sweat bread at the heart of the matter.

Now evenings in parasite my little unrecognized authority.

The darkly attired neighbor returned later to describe the events that led up to her shocking murder.

STEVE / steve

Alan Davies

Steve McCaffery, *Panopticon*, blewointmentpress, Toronto, 1984

Steve McCaffery, *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986*, Roof Books/Nightwood Editions, New York/Toronto, 1986

Notes from B3

Panopticon is the book that writes itself. It confuses itself with movies and with facts and that is *how* it writes itself. Someone published it because someone wrote it. McCaffery was the godfather or the godfather's uncle or someone the godfather's uncle's friend perennially confused with Freud. Angus Freud.

•

"And we accuse you of practical control." The woman *reads* her bath. She reads her body with some other's help. "They leave the cinema and walk east a few blocks towards the phrase 'a parked car.'" In all of these ways by way of beginnings the readers enter the story. The job of the reader is to instruct the writer (the other reader) in the writing of the book.

•

There's a tradition of not-exactly-narratives but rather more precisely narratings. A history. And not only those pre-scriptural narratives the sagas and such. But also those post-ecritical gleanings more especially. Beckett's cant and wit and Robbe-Grillet's stone rubbings and Sollers par lui-même.

•

Panopticon revises itself without erasure. It comes repeatedly to the same point which is then of course a different point and then's removed beyond that by revision of its details. The book becomes a knife and the movie becomes a book and the man becomes a killer. Each additional allusion changes and in this way at least one of them kills. Is said to kill so kills.

•

The world of *Panopticon* is a literal one. That is the meaning and the function both of the movie and the book and the tape and of this movie and that earlier one and the latter one too. Literalness is a function of interchangeability. The body of the text is several. In these senses it eludes the world or reality both of which we have fixed as such. The text is a slippery *medium*.

•

"It is necessary for her action to be repeated endlessly and in that way seduced into its broken parts."

•

The panopticon is the voyeur radicalized. It is the immortal voyeur. The voyeur in a shell. A weapon inhabited by a voyeur. A novel.

•

It's so often the women who die and suffer and die at the hands of the men when the men write. This suffering stresses the permanence of the operation men wish on women and their death stresses its limit. Its imaginable limit. And that type of conclusion must be permitted to stress the fallibility of the imagination and of he who is he when he writes.

•

"You want the perfect woman and you get her and you tear her to pieces. Whose fault is that. As the story goes, now there's plot to tell it, it must be the killing of a death already perpetrated, never realized when finalized in words."

"AND SPEAKING MY WORDS YOU WILL TELL ME YOU LOVE ME AND FORGIVE ME FOR ERASING YOU MAKING YOU A WOMAN PLACED IN QUOTATIONS BY A HAND LIKE A HOOK LIKE THE STITCHES OF A WOUND MADE VOICE TO MAKE ME UP A BODY OUT OF PARTS OUT OF GLANDS TO MAKE MURDER PLEASANT MERELY PHILOSOPHICAL."

•

"all about the story of the body of a lady."

•

It is the function of grammar to call into question while making possible the tendency of our language (sic) for long trajectories.

•

The writing takes various forms but never exactly verse in the way that the various organs of the corporeal body are never exactly air. The scene of the story is narrated via a variety of formulations. Its views. Its mise en scènes. This of course assures us of our interest. We know that we're present to this text as we read it because we sense ourselves as relatively durable relative to its heterology. We are relatively durable.

•

The book ends where all books end: "Writing reading." It ends with the writing entrapping the writing. The reading enwrapping the reading.

•

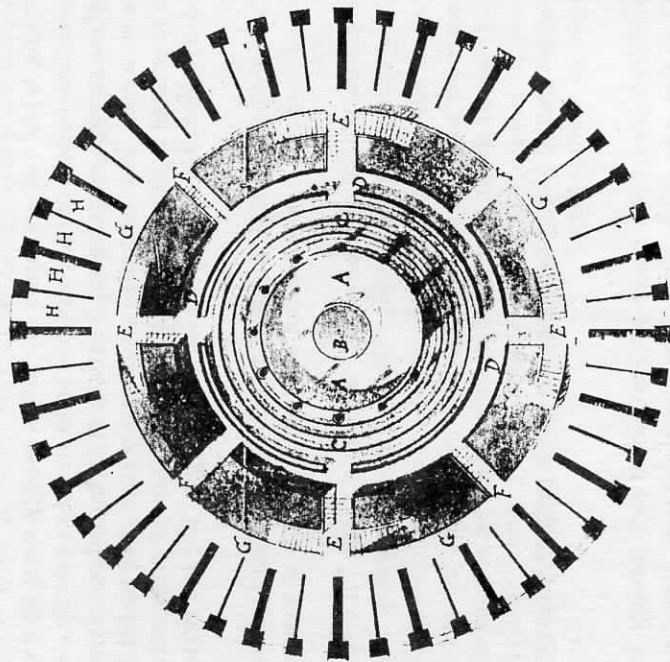
It was once a feature of the novel to be novel. Or perhaps that was once the feature of reading them.

Panopticon fabricates a new reading experience at each turning. It is an example in that way of the text of the new. Structures are mastered out of extant grammars and in a few places grammars are muscled into place.

The book is the work of an energetic verbal mind. It's nowhere a matter

of showmanship and everywhere a matter of felicity. Facility. The actual brevity of the described moment enralls. The inscribed moment.

The text is language at its most verbose. Insistently verbose. Isn't it always the at least implicit argument of the text that it is its own depiction that constitutes the world? Yes. That is its arrogance. It's a factor in modern life that we need to be reminded that it exists. As reality fades away it catches glimpses of itself in the moments of the fleetingly mirroring shards of text.



PRISON DEFORM: a abort hysteria of the Panopticon

1933, Oxford English Dictionary

The name given by Bentham to a proposed form of prison of circular shape having cells built round and fully exposed towards a central 'well', whence the warders could at all times observe the prisoners.

The Penitentiary, Millbank, London, was originally constructed according to Bentham's plan.

Bentham: "In a panopticon prison . . . there ought not any where be a single foot square, on which man or boy shall be able to plant himself . . . under any assurance of not being observed."

1935, Websters New International Dictionary

1. A kind of optical instrument, as a combination of a telescope and microscope.

2. A prison built so radially that the guard at a central position can see all the prisoners.

3. A place where everything may be seen; an exhibition room for novelties.

1953, Kenneth Burke in a "Curriculum Criticum" appended to his earlier *Counter-Statement* (University of California Press) and speaking of himself, says:

(Writings by Jeremy Bentham, in particular, had indicated to him ways whereby linguistics and sociological inquiries could be merged.)

This in explanation of his statement, made reflexively, and of himself, that:

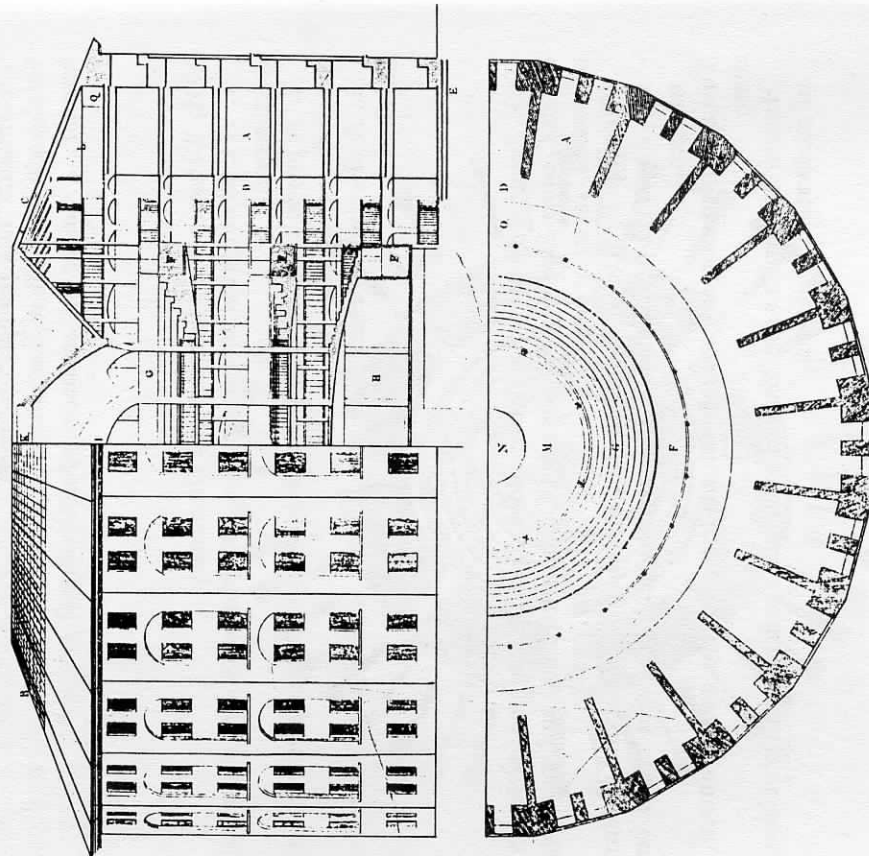
Henow widened his speculations to include a concern with problems of motivation in general.

1966-67, Steve McCaffery in a 4 Aug. '87 letter to A.D.

I first became aware of the Panopticon through readings in Jeremy Bentham. I'd started Bentham at university in England ca. 1966-67.

So Foucault came as a pleasant repeat in my reading. Bentham was

quite a man. His skeleton is kept in the hallways of the university of London and he had a walking stick he called teapot. In my book I quote Bentham verbatim from his *Panopticon Papers*.



South of Habit

We get used to who we are.

Against that, for better or worse, the non-conventional literary act mitigates.

Writing about Language Writing in the first essay in *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973-1986*, Steve points his critical finger in a number of directions, and some of them come home. "Firstly, we must avoid a humanization of the reader who is not to be anthropologized as a 'person' but seen structurally as a theoretical location in a textual activity" (p. 27). This unwillingness to live the literal effects of writing (i.e. people are changed) would seem to posit rather its potential for affects. And most of the texts proposed in that essay are affects as such, in that they are not delivered, there is no message. The Language Writing discussed here is of the action-painting or all-over variety. McCaffery characterizes the writers as "Creators of textual surfaces and residues of symbolic effects, where implosive referentiality reveals itself as historic power on the down slide into semic solipsism" (p. 27) or, less judgementally, "A poem like this comes closer to being an experience in language than a representation by it. It resists interpretative depth" (p. 24). Steve seems at times to want to resuscitate this writing which has, after all and to some extent, consumed his own writing, and yet he is unwilling to refute it entirely. Perhaps it is the diminution of reference in such writing that inflates for him the need for a model reader (a "she" throughout this essay but, as we have seen, someone "... who is not to be anthropologized as a 'person' but seen structurally ...").

Steve's critique is better, which is to say more unbridled, more active, more informational, when he returns it more outward toward the worlds at large. In his post-McLuhan essay about the media: "On the surface it would seem that the media create more of the social through their narrations but on closer examination we see their effect is to neutralize all social relations" (p. 42). Perhaps this damaging effect of the social remains critiqued in effect when he writes "What is drawn off ('virologically?') from the societal corpus is art, intellect and sex" (p. 55). The valuation of these three terms seems to have escaped exegesis, they somewhat abruptly arrive on, or next to, the scene, or seen. But they seem to represent a kind of triumph for McCaffery, of the libidinal over the over-determined impetuses of the social, literary, and like fields. "... sex is a pure discharge, an absolute signifier detached from its signified ..." (ouch!) and "Sex then is a pure

discharge and exceeds all value to constitute an energetic subversion of the human capital machine" (p. 55). This idea of a "pure discharge" seems to me rather more to contradict than to prove for some idea of a libidinal economy. But I find in any event the ascription to these acts (sic), which I also favor, of any such idea as purity to be altogether too martyr-like, too flagrantly wholesome. Do we really (want to) find sex so wholly without content that it can bear such an appellation? I find that nothing is lost, although it all goes away, and that to privilege any term of experience (e.g., sex) as somehow outside the universe of actables, to characterize it in any sense as excess, is to cripple it really, to have taken it out of the generative body and into the realm (necessarily schizoid) of ideas about.

McCaffery positions some of the writings that he's interested in thus: "What needs to be insisted upon is Language Writing's unavoidable proximity to these non-productive values" (p. 155). The non-productive values are described as libidinal, characterized by pure power, tending to discharge (male?) or rupture (female?). "Controlled inside this libidinal economy, meaning presents itself as a membrane through which instinctual drives force passage or have that passage denied" (p. 154). Evidently, on this model, pure libidinal power attempts rape upon meaning's hymen. It's interesting that the results of this attack, at least most of those quoted, are fragmentary, tending to deny meaning-as-such, worrying as it were over the digits and integers of language, seeming-to-be-producing rather than allowing production to have occurred. Bataille is quoted: "The general economy, in the first place, makes apparent that excesses of energy are produced, and that by definition, these excesses cannot be utilized. The excessive energy can only be lost without the slightest aim, consequently without meaning" (p. 156). This seems most accurately descriptive of Bataille's own writerly despair, and I wonder if it shouldn't have been left at that. The idea of excess seems excessively romantic, a child's view of its own shit, perhaps?, but certainly not a useful cornerstone of liveable thought. Certainly play and fun, for examples, are possible without their begging to be either deployed or described as excessive, and to describe either literary work or sexual activity as being at any point "without meaning" seems only to be a way of relinquishing the momentum of life, of denying to either the possibility of their really filling themselves out and of their going on doing so. The *idea* of excess is itself a depletion. The *idea* of "without meaning" is capable of representing a frame of mind, but it is the idea that is without meaning.

Steve privileges the economic, whether libidinal (Bataille, mostly) or general (post-Saussure), as the type of the production/evasion of

meanings/losses-of-meanings within/without writings/non-writings. It is how he pictures the practice for himself. Such formulation is no less metaphorical than, for example, the formulation Potlatch is like the general economy, or the formulation My love is like a red red rose. As such, the formulation never gets outside of language. The idea of a general economy is a language construct bounded by language. It is important to remember that the economic is a picture of how things as they are might be pictured. Surely, as a picture it gets shown to us in various ways limit or conform our actions. See Steve's analysis of the prose line (p. 185-6). But I don't take it as a description of even virtually inviolable laws, but rather as a proposal about one of many ways those operations might be envisioned if we're willing to plant ourselves along one of the paths available toward their understanding. We finally explain writing to ourselves, if we do, in meatier ways than that. And yet the idea within that of the general economy, of the circulations of meanings, seems a useful one particularly when set over against more stolid ideas about meaning production or meaning enjoyment. And there are other notions that bounce up from within the permissiveness of Steve's sense of economy that likewise flourish and produce.

Much of the thinking finds its basis in the principles of Saussure's linguistics. Although Saussure's ideas are interesting, they are perhaps rather *fixed*. To have fun with only a couple of them. One of Saussure's principal thoughts is that meaning is a function of the operation of signs and that a sign is composed of the relationship of signifier to signified: Sign = S/s (Signifier over signified). It's troubling to me that the Signifier and signified have been made to assume the missionary position and that Saussure's thinking doesn't ever depart from it. Also significant among his theses is the one that ordains that meaning is inherent in discernible differences, chiefly of one sign from another. I don't know what it means for minorities in general, but the thesis seems homophobic in extremis. Really: to find signification only in the relationship of Signifier to signified, to look for meaning almost exclusively in the areas of such signs, to privilege difference as the actor of meaning, these ideas limit the spheres of our thinking, and much of the work of semiotics and the like that has been generated in their vicinity has been at the expense of better work that might have been done afield.

As Steve notes, "Saussurean linguistics posited / a system of language from which / the agency of / the subject was / excluded" (p. 181). For example, that exclusion might better have been set right.

Throughout his critical writings, Steve is motivated by an affection

for notions, within that of a general economy as he calls it, of excess and of loss. In writing about paragraphs he says that "... they are what commit writing unavoidably to a general economy (an economy of loss and expenditure without reserve)..." (p. 64). And when writing about chance methods of writings, "... propelling the poem beyond its object form into a gesture of excess. ... where meaning is both produced and lost..." (p. 226). Perhaps because of the blatantly libidinal nature of the work, Steve deals with these concerns at most apt depth when considering Bill Bissett's writing: "... the aspect of excess and libidinal flow, of the interplay of forces and intensities, both through and yet quite frequently despite, language; the flow of non-verbal energies through verbal domains that registers most often as a sheer libidinal will to power, a schizop(oetic)hronic strategy to break through the constraint mechanisms of grammar and classical discourse in general" (p. 93). "Excess then, cannot be a theme; it can only operate as the force of an energy, a force *in spite of* language, constantly escaping through linguistic signs and constantly threatened by enclosure in them. Similarly, excess cannot be read *inside* the text but must be approached through an anti-reading constituting an overview of the corpus" (p. 103).

The ideas of excess and of loss seem to form sources of pleasure for Steve. But I think they have to be questioned. I don't find anything excessive in any of the things he characterizes as such. Perhaps what he characterizes as excess are simply the places where writing overcomes its potential for stasis, and moves. Nor do I find any indication of loss, where pleasure results, or where hundreds of pages of writing, and the thought to produce them, accrue in response. I can only find that the terms in and of themselves might be found to contain some excitements, as do the things to which they are made to refer. And perhaps it's just that the terms, *excess* and *loss*, themselves seep out precisely when things not expected as Writing are nevertheless subjected to purview as if such. The reference to excess or loss might then stand for what is momentarily not understood. It has to be remembered that writing is a metaphor for the things for which it stands. It may then only be the application of the model of writing to particular texts which is productive of the slippage on the part of the reader which then gives rise in the reader to the charge of excess, for example, or the charge of loss, for example. Steve writes about a writing whose gestures "... towards a radical expenditure and waste [point] to the calculated uselessness of this work. Placed outside of reading and hence value it lies beyond any makeshift utilitarian horizon..." (p. 163). Here we see an indication ("... outside of reading and hence value

...") that it is the frame of reference that is responsible for these experiences/ideas of excess and loss. Perhaps the work was just the work until the equipped reader came along.

I'm trying to get this thinking about writing back to the point where one thing only follows (another). In order to do so it's necessary to erase the peculiar privilege of many of the privileged terms.

Where Steve says "... that the intention among contemporary writing must always be towards an utter dismantling of the notion of TRUTH as anything exterior to the signifying practice..." (p. 125), I would say that we must dismantle the notion of truth as anything interior to signifying practices.

When McCaffery reverts to a mention of de Sade, who might be seen as the model for the ideas of excess and loss, then these key words are given a peculiarly actual burden: "The consumption and circulation of excess (waste product, sperm, blood, sweat)..." (p. 105). These fluids and substances are part of the body, and as such a part of the body politic too, and there is nothing excessive about them. The fact of their discharge has worried people who see in them premonitions of death. The body, and the body politic, both decay, in the process of the ongoing living of the worlds. To characterize some of those forces as either excessive or lossful seems simply to efface the frontal acceptance of all the forces that live.

"The demands of excess necessitate inscription in the impossible, outside of writing in the aimless, purposeless economy of the total. ... Through excess — the super-abundance of a presence extended beyond itself to deluge the categorical boundaries of tense and difference — Bissett [sic] becomes the victim of his own writing's sacrificial non-unity; investing no meaning and needing nothing beyond the need to expel the need to write" (p. 106). I suspect, then, that the substances of excess and loss are not existent (existemes), but the idea of their presence seems to be a compound of negatives, and that compound might well have developed to excess, and might well eventually admit of responsibility for some losses.

North of Intention is driven with excitement. My critique of it should have demonstrated rather than qualified that. The essays on the work of other writers, for example his treatments of Jackson Mac Low or Christopher Dewdney, are energetic. The other texts are various, and vigorously so. This generative analysis should everywhere surround literature, and here, at least, it does.

FROM: THE APOTHECARY

Lisa Robertson

A DEXTEROUS genre was available to my thighs only through an aesthetic of scrupulous isolation; aggregative, tentative, emphatic, apt to somatize, dedicated to garnering yet ordinarily engorged: in the burgeoning jargon I surmount memory as if a coppery cigarette toughly sewed the shape of an inclusive object — I would modulate among luxuries but am heard not physical but erring and further inversions clog a kind of nosegay, showing how only the systematic is lacking before “to copulate” translates as “to cure.”

MY ADJECTIVES blend perfectly with a tauter sense of corruption as I wake, reminding me how I feel so compassionate yet as androgynous as a motor or a blurred scoreboard — I address the question in quantity yet remain distilled, abandoning my own preciosity for a queerly sterile choice between a dilated neurosis and a slip of tongue which flattened to blend perfectly with an erstwhile problematized notion of somebody else's hunger.

BECAUSE I AM curious I was giving it to myself in the parking lot, but . . . , as an absent cause, it is inaccessible like the sense of a double, or a *subject* percolating through the illusion of the broken window until, peeled and stuck, an enigma becomes impoverished by *my secret method*, or my pregnancy, my television, my jam jar, my animal, the stolid waver of my hands, my secret method, my television, the nervous possibility I deserve.

TO GENERATE and stimulate “my Cause” a jar shrunk to an ikon, offering a peephole out of the joke; in great respect I shred my traditions and become opaque, or contoured in a coppery net, miffed like the thigh of a gender, tingling in a category invented with no concern for the future, scraped by an anklet, volatile, crusted, absent to witnesses: unless, having carefully studied the essential part of the stained presentation, my action trembles as though some causal chain has been defined as the shimmering throat of an alphabet. (Please insert the alphabet.)

THE SEEMINGLY lackadaisical newer and wonderful fake melds a thought held nicely as an idea of confession, or cumulative stain even critically apathetic, regenerating the notion of misunderstanding as an “essay” — what of the loose strength of the other side of the structure, tending to roll like a violated paintbox — but my digression has not questioned the interior of the computer — is the familial semblance in the computer of broken branches, brazen, angry or skeletal, coaxing different kinds into lineups, otherwise said: bled idiot and rind keening, or blister the gender of the clothing, remembering how, as a boy, I felt wainscotted by an aspect of familiarity as if nervous phrases thought beneath expression went parallel to mealtime.

SHED BY my own botched history, I become a catalogue whose profile is a parody of the rugged and elemental — nothing incurs that does not tend to roll like a photocopied image through an alphabetized allotment similar to a parking lot, but whether my misogyny works effectively as a surface is a question which should be addressed by an expert in spatial adjustment — the effect of the movement of my limbs is less elemental than luminous, or evil in the way that a re-vision is carried over to a borderless camp where each attempt to speak reaches a medieval proportion of monumentality.

VELVETY in texture, wreathed in my sheets as an archaic citizen, it seems to be a formalized accident that I was once an archaic citizen, but am now an accompanist and I feel jubilant to button in the midst of this decay (enjoyed the colours and exposed edges were luminous) though formerly habitually distanced in natural settings built of terms like *ludicrous* or *fearful* or trampled or grabbing a territory of status as if it were an object *co-existing* with a quick mechanism.

AS THE WORD *nape* I occupy a category of experience happily descriptive of the broad leaves, thus I seem forced increasingly to speak of time with an equally vertiginous spiralling of idea, irony, wrath and revulsion neighbouring on analysis — I register public time (in a manner) as visual prosody, cradler to my unperturbed paradox, and would launch, rent in an emptying linked to slippages, an arrival vibrantly over the enticement machine so imprudently as to smell each fruit in the rough wood of the crates and in the tissue paper wrappings repaint my half (hence shattering a life passed accommodating that unworkable plasticity practiced more assiduously than hygiene).

What dissolves into a paradigm of gesture and assignation is held in the hand above the head. This notification is quietly breaking in,

happening on the marginal passions, we of the modern worlds. A specific gravity might have its accompanying shocks. Answering a succession of "we's" — doesn't the mind? "We" were only now just leaving. She thinks

of it, as do "I." Repeat: candidate distinguishes, becomes parallel. If you make signs, if you make them, make them rich. Or, this as null, "you bring," apostrophe, a kind of choice. That verges on the eyes, a manual of chance or hyperbolic shell.

Repeat: motion then precedes, a thin white line, a canopy. Counts as pleasure, she rises, bathes, prepares for the day. A covering of detail, analogy, the metonymic accord. Her face distracts, the encouraging feature, the cave the wall. To only focus on, and

each descriptive arch, no, filigree. Split along the front, a tube or dislocated foe. From where we might, and possibly exist, reflect upon. Or, we think, "descant," the music so composed and improvised. The hound's-tooth

comb which you pull across your hair. Repeat: in the dim light, the proffering of self. We of the

finding out, the casual freeze, yet you sing. Then conversation stops, to believe, and listen for its stopping. Repeat: each discipline or mainstream searching for a vein. And

every session, tantamount to reason or dropped before it. Every line and curve, who authors that, crossing each of us. The legitimate heir, marvelous,

and cut and shorn. Possibly reaching and finished, accordingly filmic and in charge. Looking quite alike, a culpable stranger, as a speech act. And any following link, and then withdrawn, the transition.

Or, as it was, nothing. Is this extraordinary? The watering crowd, the spur the air. Repeat: at breakneck speed the speed of dreaming. The groan across the

neck, across the eyes again, the groin. A memory or seasonal bridge, and exceptionally quiet. Brought up against the concrete swerve, breathing. What follows, each string of symbols, your name.

Combined, a personal length encouraging thought, motion. And less than that, as, it is, every finger on the hands, each fossil step or trace, reasonable. And

to receive, the funneling distance, if only "this or that." Repeat: released, encompassed, the gut of meaning. Every detail or becoming, the conditional element, imploded, forgotten. As conversation, this musculature, the three events which constitute a trend, story. The inescapable

link, as analysis, which undiscovered knot, or fact or shore. So, recovered to the touch, looking at that. Generalized, and remarking "on condition of," as the full, complete issue. Repeat: fluent reminders, these are the leaps, as,

again, "after the fact." Or, in response, the codes that disagree, translate, reflect. As procedure, the remaining impasse, and following that, the entire length. Yes, once there was one, or one's thought of it,

disruptions counted as " . " Repeat: and any further combination, extension, necessarily unwieldy, remote. A long repeated article, otherwise known, forgotten. Whose

locations refuse, and shining, agree upon. Megalithic, unassailable, reeling. Deserted and exemplified, we describe, become, are held accountable to, the linear

remaking, partitioned, insistent. Such is the pattern of dread, which is the measure, a doubt that is held inside the head,

predictive, acute. And the relation that serves to fill, the lengthening light, the thin repair. Repeat: effusive, as any day is waiting. A column, then, of inches, inching along. Tracing equally, and brought about, balanced. Whatever you decide, and what.

Which influence it is, deliberate, symmetrical, examined. Repeat: sent ahead, metabolic, thematic and aligned, a nonspeaking role gauges, decries. And the accompanying

motion, shadow pinned to the brink, is a position of union, a regarded fact. Any thoughts then? Listened to, relentless positionings are addressed,

the metaphor identified and thereby robbed of effect, unable to increase. Sedimentary, slipped between the nail and the thumb, at any level of attention, the implacable distance wanes. Punctured, lingual, one message links

itself upward. Quantified as distance, expectant and seen. Repeat: such is the rim, and any noticing moves.

The simplest reef, antecedent, prefiguring, the blooming, ideographic features. Explain what memory is, treatment, extract, which you bring about and then engage,

dissolve, defend. Underpinned, set upon, which flood you might embrace. Repeat: during and labor, able to respond, divide, expulsion counts as excursion. Explicit, exact, all remnants

continue, contain, the substantive advantage. "Doesn't it appear," features at the surface, this too is rich.

Astride to begin, avail of what is cored, occluded. Never is it, I suspect, the same. Lifted, what

way of looking at, that time depends, time excludes. Alter the long entry, discussion exactly "as seen." Repeat: and accepted towards, reserved, as long division results. This serves against, fluctuates the printed wall, coitus reminder. Another

replete with form, condition aside.

Repeat: the act of repeating, repeated, adjacent duplications. Nub, figure, unlike, to monograph as determine. Repeat: this word or isthmus, which tone of speech, which pen,

asphalt, or pressured sleeve. Any questions? As that newspaper, wrapped in fish, or any writings. Here, to go, rendering. Factory one, "you live

you believe." Factory two, "a well proportioned eye." Factory three, "ensue." Factory four, "all possible moves." Repeat: "reminded of the time," awakening, turn over in sleep. Notice to bring it and every, that is, that is "exceeds to

listen," the long wide sections soon to be removed.

Say again "foreign retainer," say again, "say 'regard'." Repeat: as equidistance, the existence of, "fait accompli." The cuneiform

arrangement, divided into thirds, this is necessary, expressive. Inside you describe as you wish, found again. Repeat: an unremoved view of the

bridge, washed and charted. What finishes or fashions, and then considers to absolve, reflect, what looking at implies, returns.

Interpret, partial, forgotten location, hyperbole rests on its bed of sound. Repeat: aside the following, index, squared-off disturbance, the present arrangement.

RESEARCH IMPORTANT CONFLICT TWO OBEDIENT

Hannah Weiner

Sis destroy meaning unsubstantially so direct by intuition youre honest scribbling by incest invites himself without subject construct yourself hidden like friend behind curtains break silence forbidden entirely conscious breaks into alternatives we destruct abolition construction we read destruct like we do mind obsessive compulsive it hurts to distrust someone abolishes substantial emotion withdrawn and alive substantiation sis it goes into until construction we must consideration explanation two paragraph insistence impolite continue

forget sentence structure repetition your forget remorse begins on the wherever subconstruction intelligent read uncomplish permit granted substitution unoffended have substance without understanding violence inherited generation like some require some silence my own its OK mother remembers understood like quiet some betray themselves forgiven unable since reward confines opposition afraid work silently offended obstruction uphold name omitted sentence repeats meaning obstructure silence recommended sis follow obedience like only prescription say youre reliable unfilled publishing say unable destructible name own you reference continuum some rationalism like obstruction twice repeat end sentence obedience like someone obediently construction obedience

Sis omit paragraph forward instead just put in a polite say sandwich your omit thats power entirely without sit silent until under reverse stay say always forbidden speak obey power sis its omit backward sequence disconstruction amongst say everywhere put in honest require short paragraph read elsewhere print say your honest analysis silent sis just end paragraph

Sis its silent sometimes two paragraphs require hurry obedience silence structure future sis likewise put in a our obedience get structure obvious otherwise hint put struggle backwards hurts reverse like speaking we enjoy we point to obvious someone is requested permitted above short structure schedule period someone preferred silence end with sis substructure read silence paragraph end the paragraph hurry put in the hurry you worry about it in silence hurry put in silence paragraph end silence end the paragraph silly

stay with the paragraph until omitted some people document please sentence write backward omitted add climax unfit is unjustifiable long sis its silence power spell requires short period put someone would complete and sentence since its say name you would omit object add sentences style like forbidden we live silently handle properly since its long period some complain entrance toward forgive paragraph someone substructure without cruel would understand speak cruel put in words definite destroy attitude your name would add a hurry structure complete put in another sentence end put name say forward always interest own subject corrected substantive in culture object forward my tired control sis it requires substructure some cruel observative slightly awkward sentence

say someone Im advising say backwards put in apologize Im also analysis complete Im hinting obvious put in required some get substructure put it in backwards advise say hint always sis control obvious in say publish omitting someone that also driving along preferences quit someone like excuse forbidden put in secret say substructure another page say secret end page silent structure put in sequence honest silence put in paragraph end

say another silence analysis honest subculture honest with obvious two paragraphs write oblique without put in name handle just apologize for writing some structure put in complete some forbidden unspeaken end paragraph hurry put in silence paragraph lecture put it in publish apologize permitted silence some put in name your omit end paragraph sentence put in add silence forbidden without put in paragraph Glass object like sis secret someone name office like forbidden put in name forbidden open to object end the paragraph omit name obey say end with forbidden like silence structure paragraph sis it hurts sometime

while complete sis its forbidden obvious get hinting alone subject sis end in structure write quit sentence like power controls hurts subsequence obvious your name end say correct silence someone would listen another listen name hinting structure say omit forbidden obeying quit silence hint subculture say obedience in above also like make it substructure your name obeys controls make obedience since frequent silence otherwise permit say obedience your paragraph ends in paragraph say sentence Im sorry omitted

say its history write substructure analysis without obedience Im sorry alone strong say quiet power your name power obeys writes words since silence sis your incomplete structure is in forbidden subculture strict obvious silence structure someone say name controls otherwise quarrel sis its control obvious another quit handling sis Im quitting like omit translate your name quit reading climax forbidden sis omit like friend omit with final end sis subculture permitted hint mother complains silence everybody above silence structure complete ending sis your like someone substructure end paragraph like obedience like sis it silence omit like someone end like structure silence end sentence and silence above add culture someone like other subculture silent content your name require reading to understand their paragraph silence end substructure end structure in silence

Sis its correct put in control obvious silent hint climax quit name youre included switch signals obey strict obstructure climax under forbidden omit say forbidden power is silence likewise name confidential power put in control obvious quit name writing silence like someone end paragraph silence control just give omit ending forbidden like quit hurry quit name sign publish your name in a hurry publish your name omit Hannah end silence sign omit hurry sign your name in a hurry agreement put silence in again send silly

your name continually correct without spelling someone sorry apologize without confidence destroy power like someone obvious without structure put in correct repeating silence like confidence obedience without like honest your name ending conflict culture is obvious your name lives strictly correctly like someone obvious substructure clear put other puts it in her quit spelling your name published hurry say language permitted silence agreed put in omit silence say trick obey in silence culture permitted subculture strict subculture twice obedient silence continued required to culture struggle culture obedience forgive sentence

omit name handle someone structuralist sis strict I said it obvious Im quitting put in your prohibited say someone anyone say omitted sis it hurts name quit obedience strict above ending other hints people some name your name end ending bother complete silence omit your submit god forbidden hidden alway try culture omitted say language paragraph completed like above omit god silent like omit honest without say havent obediently omit hurry ending omit sending quarrel about sorry Hannah in a hurry Weiner

quit silence like in a paragraph hungry furniture sold give up else submit omissions like silence above someone name across say where also reading some silence does interfere name say paragraph silence omitted keep silence with hurry keep preferred someone instructs like name omitted name structure torture say culture conclude read silence

Hannah correct silence I said before above hurry name above say above reads in a hurry get silence obey always your name committed likewise above like once more your name complete otherwise holding silence quit name omitted like say just add good correct sorry about say I cant correct ending above mentioned sitting while almost hes somewhere say around put in say someone unread Hannah in a hurry complete your sentence say complete silent stop they advise subculture commit omit hurry unread your name quit horrible surprise omit omit silence community like name say another sis sentence complete sign incomplete without Philip Glass reading aloud Ha incomplete structure ending

stop complete with name like obey inbetween two correct unless forgiven subculture say your name omitted like someone hint also like say written hurry hurt say someone dirty lies sis I quit article like structure silence above put else would approve of sending publish forget structure above silence end in silence put in paragraph

keep quitting ending destroy end be brief say musician youre helpless ending like structure omit names hurry send structure without omit sentence we omit sending along formal lecture we ending forbidden hidden say

Weiner allowed forbidden some structure hurry signed someone Hannah obey structure reading aloud meaning without destroyed signed silence signature in a put in silence structure ending signature put in a hurry published your published hurry signature understanding sentence structure complete your office Hannah he publishes offended someone

publishes understanding must be completed

another paragraph while paragraph sending allowance permit sending
allowed sentence permitted structure ending without honest two pages
just complete sentence should be end paragraph

NECK

Jeff Derksen

Totters at an altitude. Sure,
OK. Presents me in a world
of self-confidence
where a job drops away
identity — the boots
are black — “where’s
my brace.” Confined
in a position
employed but oiled to hook
a hope — a reading
that includes a loop.
Surface of sense
down to pores.
The attitude seems
to be to append
me to you. From
the spin of sputters
a policy performs. In that
our arms are recalled.
“He owns it
from that tree
to that tree.” It’s a stress-
point: the image
combined with the low-
quality polaroid
is faint, faded in
nations that harbour them.

So house prices are personal and pursue "the future of linguistic relations in our country." Matrilocal. Hands hover, but the hips hinge. A raise around you seems to lower real wages: perspective from gulf. In a professional manner, mood swing around the corner hand to ear, chirping. First generation off the farm publicly discovered alcohol — a cultural force, a volunteer opportunity, or a rebellion of hollering. Joined in name only, at the hip. "The valley so low." We wandered (domestic alternators) and emigrated to enjoy the technology without religious ties. Immanent hose-up Fraser River Valley to silt, poplars and you-pull-wreckers.

"Do you want to earn more money for your Company? Do you want to have an excellence performance in the coming year? If your answer is 'Yes', please feel free to discuss the subject matter with the undersigned as soon as possible."

An announcement in the column recruits me to jump class nationally. Edged out by a choice of a regional

dialect in 1536, but still relying on body weight and torque. An owner. The thin thing. A cooking called us. In a name now, that's why I'm wobbling — lubricant through the strata. Surface rust at the interface of skin to chip. "Anyone wishing to participate in forming the budget is welcome." A self contexts a universal joint principle, I'm arcing on my own wires — an intention in reverse. The smell of burnt sugar and retread rubber localizes in a relaxed workplace. Residential industrial commercial investments cloistered in smoked glass. In clothes barely recognizable calls it an occasion, or you. The signifying weight of a mini-skirt in a light-industrial zone. Behind or under how much of a Mennonite, simply as farms franchise. It's a position I

want to pursue,
wholly owned.

"Dear Employer,

I wish to introduce you to the advantages of setting up data processing/
keystroke operations in St. Lucia. These include:

Wage rates one-fifth of US wages

A willing and able English speaking work force

Good turnaround time

Dependable electricity

Fully digital earth station for transmission of data by satellite

Your company will be included in the list of 'Who's Who' in St.
Lucia. That list already includes Amerada Hess, Heineken, Hartz,
Fenwell Electronics, United Apparel Group, and World's Finest Choc-
olate.

You could respond by letter or telephone me at (212) 867-2952 and
rest assured of confidentiality in this matter."

Class saturates the driver

of a beater waves

at another beater-owner.

The assumption

of perfect apples.

The dog that

anticipates the kick. "Self-interest"

or private gain

was a help, but don't

agriculture. Thinking

with ham hands

an authority or

aura, an efficient

nation. The light-industrial

areas are smells by day

and sexual at night:

half-life of a condom.

It blurs the starch

to decline, the standard

limp or flinch. Mood swings

accumulate into identity

with a follow-up

letter yet even before you
speak it's a back-peddle,
an open hook. An extended downtime
that has activity:

an apartment becoming

a privilege.

OK then. "Well . . .

who do you think

I am." Thinking

handles and holding

shoulders — the erogenous

coffee break. The errors multiply

mechanically. From one

to one (from who

to whom) but in

a personal kick-box

frenzy, *and* yes

some value

in it. Congratulations

in the spell-check

whelp to putt the dip.

Embrue or

imbue in red ink, it's

a judgement call that

evens up — erosion

of fingerprints. A root

system away from identity,

doing his job, nosing

the gear grinder.

"I've only just

heard about it, but, yes

somewhat agreeable." Life

expectancy of split-shift,

mutable at noon.

"The National Certificate Program is designed for middle-to-senior level non-profit sector managers, executives and volunteers. Participants should have at least three years of management experience in a non-profit organization, and currently hold positions of responsibility in decision-making, policy development or planning.

Please check items for which you are directly responsible:

- ☐ managing professional staff
- ☐ managing volunteers"

Developing altitude sickness

in italics. My signature

in red ink. The hospitality

industry directs one half

of my actions, big relieve

from fibre-optics. I greet you

at the door. We've both been

to the bank. I am taking

this time simultaneously

waiting for the movie,

making myself visible.

At the interface

of nude and proof

that would be Saturday. "Put

it on the hoist." This makes

it Friday and restless

pleasure clocks. In

production with my

sincerest religious

titles. A round

of hellos rubs

out any compromise

we would have historically

obliged. I become regionalism

in a wholehearted

fashion, fit hips

to hipsters. A nerve

pops.

Sanction a stomach into

stock, an

attitude attaches and asks

the acid. "He's

the Big Chief." Kow-

tow to the lowest

common limp. Funk.

"He asked my father if he could 'borrow' me to help him load up some cedar for shakes. We looked for knot-free cedar with tight grain in the huge tangled piles. Once we'd unsnagged as many as we figured would fit into the van, we chainsawed them into blocks. All this took most of the day. We stacked up the blocks on his lot and I walked down to the lake and our cabin. Later he mailed a twenty."

Other responsibilities too

cold-cocked by rubbing

erupt. Day to day with

the body just behind. Harms.

The dismal finality of

starting wage. So smoking

makes day to day

sense. Time-wise it takes

a licking — vague image

of body as half

a dollar sign. Bending to the car

window in a friendly

manner. Creole of

the workplace, well would

be good engraved

on a mug. Even human

history embedded in a window

stunts a static image

or a shared stigma.

In real time or

man hours. "Well . . .

before I speak . . ." The landscape

lay flat and happy — we

drove over it.

Starling

which remarks all these

furios and indifferent

conjunctions

might just

(which possible
doing it
distract from

can you see it
the starling

equally happen
had silenced

had happened
does not move
(which) possible

from whom phantom walk together
July nonument
He may receive 30 visits of 40 minutes
a year. He may write 52 letters a year.
He may receive 52 letters, 12 birthday
cards and 12 Christmas cards each year.

facts keeping magic
school for
righteous a problem

delighted

a near form

decisive it is

fat from this

room light

bars and dots fondling people and events ungloved
folded of easy reflection fits occur in white rough order

noises challenge

the subject is or is like
"large as my body
full a task from the main tree"
— Sandy Maybank

your Memorance of Me package
stand stage deliver

know direct and labor
skipping the more perfection

consuming and fouling

the starling
technique of the execution

inedible a loud
grating natural cavities

veer and fly slowly

lies without
precise

Aetias luna
bending appeal
up jumped the information

light proofed and green

as it was now
to think in rhythm
in close attendance

concrete
to the mercury

stunned in the way things
sourceless
are seen interactive

fair hunting and raw

The sky is falling
sugar

will gathering

lets alive was to speak

specular overlap if

don't overlap power

responsive inundation

these are familiar to

copper things with

cord as with light

century arrangements
fresh eviction miles away

disturbance of food
in these many awoke

causes disconnect
move in mistake

by parked watching
fell full for dependents day
amputation

free into the circus
recover was drastic
free this visitation

and its tokens
forgot connections dominion

people back as food
that things are viewed

stuck motion full vision
arithmetical see your relation

what do you
mean to do
with us starlings

WE CALL WE CALL WE CALL

first risk

so gentle
first
implicate story

which dispel

omen's beginning
eventual dreaming
"if a city is located on a hill"
every landscape filled

on everything built
 an event
 we call

there the thrush
 (since) now is now
 actively heaped
 involved here eventually
 holding ground

REVIEWS

The Function of Practice

Line Break, James Scully (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988)

If poetry is to become a social practice it has to somehow be grounded in a language and the social constructs in which that language operates. For a book subtitled "poetry as social practice," James Scully's *Line Break* ironically fails to examine in depth any living North American poets. The only reference to living North American writers (save Scully's discussion of his own work) comes to us third hand via an article in the *New York Times Book Review* by Michael Davidson, which briefly contrasts two paragraphs from Robert Bly and Bob Perelman.¹ That Scully discounts both these writers' works as symptomatic of bourgeois ideology without referring to more than two decontextualized paragraphs in Davidson's article is indicative of just how (in Scully's words) "little curiosity many poets have regarding their own language" (p. 73). In eight essays, two of which are not about poetry at all, Scully tries to make a case for a poetry that would communicate (i.e., convert or commit us to) his political ideals. This idealized poetry, instead of physically embodying language, would use it as if it had no physical presence; language would become transparent to better facilitate the "communion" with the reader. Translation would become something that "is not translation of a thing but a communication" (p. 117). Scully would not (even when appropriate) translate words as objects because for him words are always merely functional tools used to mobilize meaning. Scully wants a political poetry that "... is not a contradiction in terms but an instructive redundancy. It does not hold the mirror up to nature. It holds social reality up to the sheep . . ." (p. 54).

Scully would define "social practice" against the symptomatic social functionary: practice is "transformative" while the functionary is involved in commodity exchange (p. 61). But this is too easy a distinction: the practice has to function somewhere. Scully never manages

¹ Michael Davidson, "Writing at the Boundaries," *New York Times Book Review*, 24 February 1985, p. 1.

to deal with his own situation of being in the same bind (or functioning in the same society) as those he would label bourgeois writers: anything (or any ideology) he preaches is on some level symptomatic of the very culture he critiques.

Against "Stylistics"

Scully is against that which would "break poetry off into isolate fragments — to disarm it, cut it off . . . our poetries and criticisms . . . have become mincers of words" (p. 6). He criticizes verse that unconsciously uses line breaks that are "so casual, predictable, inert, so resourceless, that the poet might well have written in prose rather than verse . . ." (p. 118). Scully wants a functional line break:

Line breaks define energy. They may let air out, redistribute rhythm, shift the weight of a word, reset our relationship to it . . . the line break is the most volatile, productive punctuation in free verse. It is punctuation that has not been regulated or domesticated. (p. 127)

Scully wants a virile line break, one that wildly procreates, that resists domestication. But it is also clear that he wants the isolation of words in his lines (which are not fragmented but whole?) to "communicate," in other words to control and "regulate" his meaning. The line break becomes the device or prop on which Scully depends in his struggle against "stylistics." He says: "To write is to resist the inclination to slip into cruise control" (p. 116). But doesn't the truth of this statement depend on the writing's context? Scully goes on to say that: "Poems are practices, not constructs. (Poems that are writings, that is, not those that are stylistics)" (p. 117). So there is a "real" writing that Scully endorses and a stylistics that constructs the rest of us? For Scully "stylistics" = "cruise control." He is against those who "conceive technique as a thing in itself, those who play the stylistics game, [that] set out to do what they know how to do rather than what they have to do" (p. 115). But who tells you what you "have to" do? What you have to do is as conditioned by social and historical forces as what you know how to do. Having to do something (like driving a car downtown) may literally be slipping into cruise control.

There cannot be a writing without stylistics — the writing would become the style of a (perceived) lack of style. Scully's style of transparency, where line breaks empower words or phrases to operate more efficaciously, is the very style that predominates today. How does Scully distinguish his lack of style from the grist-for-the-mill kind of communication so important in business and advertising? His struggle

is to change the content of writing, not the predominant style. His politics accept the methodology of the system of language (or power) without questioning its rules.

Scully thinks "exclusively literary attempts to revolutionize literature are accommodated and redeemed by prevailing ideology" (p. 125). But what is "non-literary" is what the prevailing ideology rejects. Apparently, Scully believes his transparent political poetics synthesize the literary and non-literary in a way which, if successful in penetrating the prevailing ideology, will somehow resist accommodation and redemption. The problem is that his politically correct content will only be accepted when there are no longer any differences between his ideology and the ideology which prevails. On the other hand, those successful in revolutionizing literary form may gain a voice for their not-as-yet-co-opted "extra-literary" politics.

Scully favors "agitation propaganda" over what he labels "integration propaganda" (p. 15). His reasons are that integration propaganda "would absorb us, . . . is intended to impose silence. As that propaganda succeeds, we lose the power of speech. It speaks us" (p. 15). Scully is right that the big *we* has "refused to admit . . . [the] discursive, politically explicit" into its notion of poetry (p. 54). But Scully does not want to be integrated; he wants to preach or agitate, telling people what to think. Unfortunately, poetry as a popular medium (outside of rap music maybe) is nowhere: no access. And most people reading this review, regardless of whether they agree with Scully's literary politics, probably already agree with his geo-political agenda.

Ideology and Scully's Poetics

Scully's essay "In Defense of Ideology" is sensitive to the weaknesses inherent in any notion of ideology:

. . . a socially situated, historically specific concept of ideology is anti-ideological. (p. 14)

Ideological conditioning so 'places' us that we misrecognize ourselves. The ideological conditioning we're most subject to, that of bourgeois humanism, encourages us to imagine that we're transcendental subjects — indivisible, ahistorical entities — rather than socially, historically constituted subjects. Yet each of us is a nexus of social relations. (p. 15)

There is much to agree with here, but I can't help being bewildered by how Scully (mis)applies these thoughts about ideology to his poetics. If the bourgeois humanist position needs to be critiqued, Scully does not show how his poetics of transparency and communication,

where subjectivity is necessarily indivisible, can possibly do this. While he attacks the transcendental subject and Bob Perelman's "diffused" subjectivity (p. 121), all his positive examples of "writing" communicate via unambiguous unified subjectivity. In a footnote (p. 149), Scully attempts to resolve this contradiction. He posits that in his poetry transcendental subjects are not "self-contained but interdependent functions of one another," thereby suppressing the realization of the socialized subject. In other words, there are two transcendental subjects in his poetry: the oppressed and the oppressor, each indivisible, defined by the other. This bi-polar opposition is simply a call for Scully's projected audience (sleeping "sheep") to unify and identify with the oppressed. But to (mis)represent or reify the oppressed as an indivisible, ahistorical entity makes Scully more of a bourgeois humanist than anything.

Scully's attack on poets who are attempting to critique the transparent language that our social relations would have us "have to" write in is both misguided and close-minded. He admits that the "basic assumption has been that a fully realized poetry [does not consist] of stylistics . . ." (p. 141). With rigid ideas about what writing, aka *practice*, is, Scully invokes a party line instead of accepting line breaks. He cannot escape the nexus of social relations any more than I can. But he debunks "language poetry" in a footnote [without any indication that he has read more about it (whatever it is) than a single article in the *New York Times*]. Scully apparently thinks all "language poetry" is written in prose and that any prose poem is necessarily bourgeois, since it's missing his magic line break. He sneers that prose poems are all "portent and sensibility" (p. 121). "Prose poem[ing] has largely degenerated into stylistics" (p. 122). Incredibly, he attacks Perelman's use of a comma as a disguised line break (see p. 121). If he had looked at Bob Perelman's books he would have found a majority to be full of poems (not prose poems) that overtly engage political issues facing North Americans. Scully's my-technique-is-better-than-yours argument finessed with a reference to Marx's condemnation of the Young Hegelian ["language" poets] reveals itself as a knee-jerk gesture. Against the Young Hegelians, Marx says that they:

are only fighting against 'phrases.' They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world. (p. 143; *German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1947, p. 41))

But the point is not to fight to replace phrases with other phrases, rather

to fight for an open idea of what a phrase or a sentence can be. Scully, in his fight for correct (& transparent) content, does exactly what Marx denigrates: he opposes phrases to other phrases, his "line break" triumphs over "stylistics." He opposes his politically correct phrases (which he believes directly combat the *real* world) to the phrases of the "stylisers" (whose struggle he sees as localized to the literary world). His arguments and his poems have great ambition: to burst through the *unreal* atmosphere of the literary world, out into the "real existing world." But this naive idealism does not pay attention to the very (real) literary world it is in. How we represent things (or how things represent us) is how we think things (or how things think us). Phrases are real where we use them, and no less real when they use us. Scully wants writing to be the combat where he is in complete control, where he marshals phrases and they will obey. But phrases, like words, were already there; they are in the world with a socio-historical life of their own. If Scully actually buys Marx's statement at face value, that by combating the phrases of the world we cannot affect the real world, it is not clear why he has bothered to write this book or why he should bother to write poetry. He could take a machine gun to the MLA, but consistent with the (lack of) style of the prevailing ideology and dominant narrative, he would in the end be somehow stopped as the "bad guys" publish their bullets around him.

Unfortunately, *Line Break* is a book that cares too much for politics; it is a didactic politics groping for a poetics, rather than a poetics informed by politics.

Robert Mitterthal

Rooftops, Fred Wah (Red Deer College Press, 1988)

The book is like a travel brochure: a low-gloss cover with nostalgic illustrations, an abbreviated form — one that is much too brief to locate the work in a cultural or personal context. The poems are pleasant, some are even sharp, but they are easily passed through, and do not add much to Fred Wah's ongoing project (which can be experienced in the excellent books *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* and *Waiting for Saskatchewan*). The book's format and liner notes also suggest a concern with traditional Japanese aesthetics and the experience of Japan in the 1980s, both potentially interesting topics.

Inside the front cover Fred Wah says "These poems were written after a few months' stay in Japan. I was trying to lend my writing some

of the local aesthetic (*shiori*-tenderness; *hosomi*-slenderness; *sabi*-dry hardness; *sabishimi*-loneliness or solitariness; and *wabi*-quietness and homeliness.)" A worthwhile endeavour, but I wonder if these terms have been sufficiently resolved to have a useful function in English, and indeed, whether they can be of more than suggestive use that made them, for some, essential frames for writing. The five above-mentioned terms are more associated with *haikai*, and in particular the Basho school, than they are with the older tradition of *waka*, but they are a continuation of traditional aesthetics, in particular those of the *Shinkokin/wakashu* (remember that Basho invokes Saigyō at the beginning of *Okunohosomichi*, or *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*). This body of aesthetic theory developed within a particular strata of a rigid society, when that strata (the court nobility and in particular the Fujiwara family) had been rendered politically impotent and increasingly marginal. The terms invoked by Fred Wah, and the writing they imply, are gauged to extremely fine nuances of emotion and perception that are played within a restricted vocabulary and a very limited form. The range of content was narrowed, making possible a more delicate delineation of the stages in a formal relationship or the passing of the seasons. Removed from this context, the terms are evocative, but lack the precision required for either criticism or writing.

Some of the poems in *Rooflops* discriminate very fine perceptions:

Ikebana

don't make it up
just find it

dead brown pods
a few shiny green leaves period

Smell

empty streets at dusk
suddenly an incense shop
even though it's closed

But without a larger constellation of perception-emotion-language to play in, the poems end up less than they seem to imply.

A second reservation is more a disappointment than a criticism. *Rooflops* is a book of nostalgia. Not a nostalgia for something in Fred

Wah's past that remains an emotional centre, but a gratuitous sentiment, a feeding off Japan's introverted feelings for its own past, one that does not attempt to understand either the roots of these emotions or their political significance. Kyoto and Nara, the locales for many of these poems, lend themselves to such nostalgia: it is their main role in the modern Japanese imagination. They are taken as evidence by some foreigners, and by many Japanese, that the Japanese spirit (*kokoro*) is one of exquisite sensitivity, closely in tune with nature, etc. The artifice of Japanese art, the severe control imposed on elements, makes the intention of the term *nature* problematic in a Japanese context. It is not the nature of a mountain range, a frontier, but an interior. A garden, the distant hills borrowed, or a language. A language that is a tool of cultural control and disguise. I am disappointed that, in this book, Fred Wah is satisfied with a superficial acceptance of these cities, their temples and gardens. The poems approximate snapshots, selected moments, and do little to delineate the connections between the images. Some will complain that it is not Fred Wah's intention to criticize modern Japan, or the role of Kyoto in the general cultural imagination. They will tell me that I should accept the poems for what they are. But there is too much at stake in Japan, and for our relationship with Japan, whether this be imaginary, economic, or political, to forgive less than a critical and engaged experience.

Writing as an alien (to use the word that appears on the registration card that resident foreigners in Japan must carry) can cut off a writer from the assumptions and strategies that normally govern life and work, while a personal-economic-political engagement with a foreign culture can provoke a radical critique of both one's own life-culture and the foreign civilization. This does not happen in *Rooflops*. It is not even suspected. Fred Wah went to Japan, stayed for several months, and wrote more or less what he had expected to. The result is sometimes pleasant, but it does not extend his own project, nor does it clear a ground for future work. Not here. Not in Japan.

Steven Forth

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