

# 大觀

大觀樓額甚為厚照中法攝王公攝文所書  
名公征海歷不稱及額實銀鈔的一代名手  
也感費丁已樓毀而額亦無存余重建斯樓

五百里滇池奔來眼底披襟岸帙喜  
素高人韻士何妨選勝登臨趁蟹嶼螺洲梳裹就風鬟霧鬢更贖天華地點綴堪翠  
孤負四圍香稻萬頃晴沙九夏芙蓉三春楊柳  
昆明孫拜翁先生舊句

WRITING  
26

# WRITING

WRITING

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COVER: The "Long Couplet" by Qing poet Sun Ran Weng flanks the main entrance to Dagan Tower near Kunming, Yunnan, China. Its one hundred and eighty characters are a continuous description of Lake Dianchi and the couplet is reputed to be the longest and the best couplet ever written in China. Once considered barren, the site has been (since erection of the building, 1696 – 1866) a source of inspiration to many poets for its breathtaking view. Like much of the poetry written on the outskirts of the empire, where ram-bunctious officials were often stationed, the landscape poetry of the "Long Couplet" contains many political overtones. — Henry Tsang

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FROM: RUCK

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Lary Timewell

Well met, antipathy! Diaphanous  
garment-condition of work, little  
*violin d'Ingres* of semi-retired, tight-lipped facsimiles.

Drone mogul endures, tangential to  
theory's impossibly patristic squat,  
the confident suffrage of our little dog Doxy.

Seep patrician grousing.  
Equipoise of caterwauling.  
Exchange:

an internment, my interim-marooned  
paucity for your best woolen tropes.  
Cherub gristle for jock demise.

The cloud machines "much  
praise & a little counterpoint,"  
down to "Let them eat fur."  
(So far *some* "the," eh? That commodity tart.)

Neutering clerk postures gestures "out there," more  
choreographers for patriotism by spectacle remove to  
spatio-temporal spats. Sit calm, sit tight.  
As a talking-to merely descriptions some  
recently bought self. "Recently we . . .,"  
behaving-away in a conversational  
wish to be taken serially.

Overnight the Banana Republic became the Footlocker.  
Where homespun *philos* deletes,  
bingo results. (No, but  
I believe you were about  
to tell me.) Proof of  
God the quad or coughing, coffee,  
copy.

Strategy rents a hall for the Doubt benefit;  
mentions the future as if present fact  
in a sit-com destined for re-runs.  
I rants on account drawn against for trifling sums.  
If we had enough cream then, we went to the lake.  
All ways of leaving

the house. The title  
was *Hood Ornament*, but  
inside was more  
beans & rice, rice & beans,  
brutal ticks roving initials and a series of baffles.  
Saved blocks all occurrences of sought, burbs  
on no-good ground, unrealized nest of the frail  
hegemony of eyes' constellar bloom.  
Reading comfort. Misnomer  
of the loner's double-agency.  
"Liberal demonology" distances interest,  
anticipating impelling presage  
hounded by spittle, and a good cry as required.  
Devisive links Tex Rabelais to the flinch covenants  
of "less illicit, less thrill."

A subject builds in  
the shape of subject evasions,  
flings shank sweat down the small running fissure,  
licks salt against a ripple of identity, yet lacks  
the entire in-alley kitchen of the Elsewhere set.

"Notations, though not writing, could be  
read by the maker."

Lascaux my eye.

The animal, renewed by no muzzle,  
*yeildeth thyne flowre thinge*, coincidence & simultitude,  
lofty churlish improbable *recit*,  
a low rant dousing  
more jargon than actual cash.

(To wit:  
peruse *this* phatic opulence, Mort.)

Assert has a CERTAIN cachet:  
The cute-with-a-vengeance pseudo-Elizabethan argot  
genuflecting before the tatters of oracular orificii. Gimme  
my sequined glitterati back, my barebacked  
ducats too. Lucid  
tactic wefts of finale  
disaccomplished by *l'Academie*, winging  
procedural sideswipes,  
clod dross,  
*ex cathedra* pronouncements, mores & more  
wide-angled pariahs than you can stick  
shakes to period.

If first thought (Sony!) is corporate thought,  
the margin is where you *can't* focus on  
the benighted beach of "needless to say."

The popular prank imitates  
Harv's Business School, meretricious,  
microcosm-enhanced, too angry  
to consequence, the problem being  
both "deeply funny" & "moving" in a book.  
"Roman," I said, "you'll just have to  
trust me on this one."

All this upscaling of the *usée*, the new  
reticent format gambit of *The Compleat Caretaker*,  
incremental slips, broken by laughs,  
lowjinx & chipdip excitement,  
years of baffling neglect grapple,  
extrapolate the "boneheaded blunder"  
of the subordinate.

She (singer) parts time, he  
(open fire) permits of  
Contextual Collectables shoppe. Buy it  
second-hand, you still have to  
break it in. Wan  
bungle in the Harlem could mean.  
(Only the Strong Sur-etcetera, Ur-  
etcetera.)

Tearing lost cat reward  
at the edges where  
the surplus is weather, its nym  
& norrations. "Be" film, all gory.  
I decided to re-read it in the original,  
(penumbra, porch, pratfall)  
"from its very *inception*,  
as it were." As if

the long throw to first were  
49 per Kapita pages  
of Neighbourhood Watch. Intention  
hamstrings proportion (the salesman's  
"opening" salvo), portent  
*caudillos* the pseudo-scientific bravura  
of New Age entrepreneurs. A "turnout"  
is not a "general strike."

Text incapable of quelling the internecine,  
mystical sputum, hemorrhages of spiritualization.  
"Sanitized" collaborationists quaff  
*Flag & Tether Ale* awaiting the grilled  
bream of confirmation.

As a "concession to *divertissement*" the 4 a.m. Medical-Dental  
collapse just grazes the witty Viennese polemicist in us all.

A parable is heard off-stage, another  
word, another error of omission intersects  
a delicacy & a plain-  
clothes conversation.

Samizdat something.

Trumped-up curios, maps blank  
by going. Patiently  
waiting to merely practice  
rueful shrapnel brickfest &

thumbnail fish-barrel shot of  
disruptive colouration.

Rankle memorandum straddles a catch-all,  
die-hard hyphenation. Nothing quite  
satisfactory, quotable. Nonetheless,  
she *did* get off that chemical  
quip at the weapons conference.

Now to hash-out a sequel: Nebbish  
Bob, the lonely ocarina salesman, our nabob of dust.  
And beloved covert catalyst. Fundamentalist  
farm-team convinced the walls would best  
in khymer beige. In imported memory.

## DOUBT & DOGMATISM

---

J e a n D a y

### Skeptical Questions

Once upon the book began  
in front of one a science  
of what original experience?  
Next the neighbor  
learn no subjectivity  
this me I am again  
I write  
in which lie all  
these particulate refutations  
of formula. What  
need have you for  
you? I have already published  
too much. Can the skeptic  
live her skepticism? This distancing  
is only interesting if catachresis  
entertains. So let the Back View  
turn around to the front.  
Let electronics think.  
Let Naum and Anna  
say hello, machine,  
it's a house (they laugh).  
I cannot help myself out  
of this mess thought  
of as order. If all perceptions  
are true, no one should feel bad  
if I ransack books.  
The brilliant metricist himself  
chose a suburban life begetting

a generation who want to say  
everything, and on a grand  
scale. Stop me.  
Stop. Or all their standards  
will go fly.  
Terminology is not, of course, accidental  
in my poem (my poem) and  
a dilemma is named "Of Course"  
in the incommensurability of being ~~ACMH~~  
vs. I see now how that scale  
comes to rest. So of what  
am I evidence? To what  
witness? Incurable knowledge  
of surface, weight, a carpet-covered  
table in a small apartment?  
We might think of things  
then as real rather than  
true as a bottle holds  
explicit its re-use  
without addition or subtraction,  
the murky liquid now around  
and about. The tower is round and the oar  
bent. Annexed  
are our simple ideas.  
How can you ask me? I do  
not and will not. Each  
measure has some right stimulus,  
each paradox, some sneak  
on the other side,  
a white, too white, escaped, goose  
on a reservoir meant  
only for drinking water.  
For imperceptible things have no taste  
and drop out  
from where we were  
as far as I can see  
having barely scratched the sacred turf  
to see how someone really tastes  
but in paradise our children  
still are bored  
and whenever anything tastes sweet  
they go.

## Learning Politics

Can language live  
her poetry? To work hard  
does day?  
If day it's light  
and we're appropriated  
and either three follows two  
or M's dilemma is dangerous  
for if the blunt prong  
melts, what then of difference?  
Irremedial (but patient enough  
to read) heavy the elements above  
looking down on the work  
we do suggesting a thought productive  
of speech by which the speaker  
sees. It may be time to put the book  
away to appease  
those who strive  
at opticality, when surely the mind  
knows not what it thinks  
in either case.  
Her language was not English.  
Nothing is internally interesting  
or true; not you  
or my long itch. If you are a man  
you will die at sea  
but if a woman have eyes  
two abreast  
see day  
progress without working  
harder to define  
weak links in logical contradiction.  
More of this; it grows  
from that which fathers it: boot  
out the door  
to the edge of the world  
where dead souls squeak like bats  
stopping off of course at work, first.  
It was you who  
thought of counting every citizen,  
tooth and I.

As rain clears  
so earthworms become manageable  
in the grand overall table  
kept of natural order. One moves  
but its place remains  
behind. You're not sure  
your idea can carry  
out the building of another western  
town but how could it? You're  
just one idea and  
will have left the woods again  
for as good a reason as he went there  
to begin. In this very  
cabin passage  
reward may come as story  
moves the whole  
thing along toward what we seek,  
that tilt  
of plank over rock, of what the saw  
may be composed,  
another version of ourselves  
invented daily in the pressure,  
bite of animal-plant, plant-  
animal, work  
horse. From these the honors  
are done. How?  
In their desire to speak  
somewhere out of bounds.  
"I do not wish to go below now."

## In Profile

For I am, in fact, not similar  
to any human being.  
What we know of you  
seeds the ground neatly  
leaving the furrow to the plow  
yet the line grows not under you,  
only greater upward. It's  
generally agreed, nowadays,  
we exist side by side  
with our translations  
but the field we survey is littered  
with sorry brains. Or simply paper  
cut another way. Why  
should I worry about my shield  
when someone steals the goodness  
of my speech even now?  
What right have the poets  
to pass judgement?  
Love is a force which all but makes  
us greater than women  
roaming, sore, in need.  
Heart, my organ, understand.  
That is, all that my heart longs  
to accomplish may not be diminished  
by radical institutions, though all  
of us have ceased to interpret  
the soul. Sappho, with her bold  
neo-logism "bitter-sweet"  
vexes the one  
anticipating her. What did she  
know? A righteous individual?  
The great mass of people roll  
mightily along  
and once they have gone down  
there is no coming up.  
Man's history is not  
a meaningful unit. Then  
where is meaning? Man?  
Snatched from the stream  
soaking wet and hollering?

Bonds. We send our thoughts  
to both of them.  
Longing to see smoke rising from my land  
and then to die honoring  
the community of thought from whom I am  
entirely feasible . . . .  
So moderate a wish  
allows the pleasure of the world  
to survive; there was no grove  
where in the spring the song  
might not unmask its  
solidarity. The law is not the link  
binds writers together  
for they are symptomatic  
use words  
and are more or less  
explicit: history is a garment  
hiding a relatively small  
people.

One's dogmatics are  
another's disbelief. Only rarely  
do we lock each other up  
for what can be said  
or not. The teacher  
has misplaced the dialogue  
cassette and the mother (teacher)  
says hold the baby up.  
The things of the older  
emigré couple come slowly  
into focus. Their job  
to glide  
directionless in myth  
landed in opportunity. His speech  
before the senate makes  
more than one of us cry;  
his speech before another man  
tries him in his bed.  
The haggard man walks away.  
The way rolls up  
spins until it cracks  
and no more talk can get

around it. I don't know where  
this is that you seek to understand  
the nature of that goodness.  
We long to open the cracked object up and  
intermediate  
stand the ground of conflict.  
Your belief in the pact —  
vitamin, face, and a changeable  
third term —  
flattens. You walk quietly home  
among the broken statues  
to heroes of thought and excess  
and won't be spared. With the succession  
of days only repeatability  
hungers for registration.  
The gnat in its assembly.  
What troubles *me* isn't the great rhetoric  
of the power-lords  
but its disregard for this particular's  
electorate.  
This is the situation.  
You are that witch  
lying on her shield who dares  
to go to sleep.

### **"Nothing Can Become Sweet Which Is Sweet To No One"**

His speech began like this  
then faltered  
fumbled by its tongue. "Why does the bail  
bond office stay open  
late at night?"  
the students ask the doctor  
of philosophy. "How can you ask  
me?" he says as we find  
he was stolen as a boy  
from itinerant tribes  
we've failed to know  
outback. Ask *them*  
to describe our state,  
not disposable but passing on  
to the next correctable  
thing. No one knows  
the name of every company. So  
let us call the whole, "corporation."  
Defaced, at the edge of the world,  
aggravated and resplendent  
we carry the thinking-shop on our back  
a living demonstration  
of material success. A fairy will  
come by on a worm, it's  
true, but men and  
women on the street won't seem  
to notice though they have this intuition  
in their legs. One would have to see  
only words to believe  
the voyage to have ends  
with the scar. If I have but one  
life let me live in the subsequent  
question. Old ones are passing  
in the street and to them  
we seem strange  
but speak the language.  
After numerous twists changes the citizens  
resume the overcoat  
studded with shredded soles  
of hobnailed boots

discarded by the world. Many fences  
held them in. Many lives  
or many fictions.

### Back View

I remedy the thought  
what is not  
having originated from organization.  
This eyeball may look prosaic  
standing on the street but it exists  
in the time of painting  
itself, looking at  
the face which holds it in.  
The friend is also one  
gigantically after the fog  
of political doubt no particular  
can resurrect. The spasm  
the skill the skull  
of all in the bleached future light  
of looking at the book. The moon shows us  
hidden behind our works  
subject to a rainfall  
of knees. In this documentary  
the outerwear of hundreds hangs  
upon a wall  
to show we have limbs  
and love the private sign.  
Then having turned  
from the public  
we find it inescapable  
even in our tools  
lying ready  
about as we see fit.  
You don't want a strategist  
telling you what to do  
yet you have schemes  
for getting enough  
of a uniformly objective present  
to understand the fish-dance  
of the sultan's girls  
or the hundred nights of story  
gotten here. Say we *are*  
the sultan's girls, after Freud  
but before the fun.  
Heavy in material

light in articulation  
making do  
around the clock.  
Such that  
an unsuccessful gravity  
in the displeasure not only  
of texture but taste  
spits the fish  
back to its plate.  
Wrongly allegorical  
the wing of Pegasus  
pumps a riddle full of holes,  
reversing the pull  
of massive works no longer  
pressing through the gates of  
Oz. Open it and see  
radical innovations  
de-mystify the regularity of day.  
Can-opener, canopy, canebrake,  
"cranberry." Otherwise local  
and otherwise sane.  
When you can't say in writing  
what amounts to knowledge  
you may as well turn around  
to the fluid sky, and  
either drink up or walk back.  
I don't speak for everyone  
but for the brave  
and curious alien,  
the section (head or tail)  
the compromised, the one who moves  
whose place remains the same.

FROM: AT THIS POINT

---

Eric Wirth

no owner not resist could look at contortionist:  
that's pure us danger I sweep government cutworms  
before each step whi ni, why in tongue pitched into harm

I can't pour faster I let my hand get shocked with copper,  
kind of liked the seeping part of the ceiling, length  
to stain story touching wire A to wire B arc

male you yes through hydrophone, take yoga breaths, wonder  
at the pull of lifelessness stronger than the sea-floor  
psi you staggered under — nude — for hours  
. . . whether him or him little matters to win-through,  
capitulate to relax

(prayer) the hedge to hog is plenum, mithra we can't  
even look at a slug and name one accomplishment  
(the shot of maggots under Valli's tread tracks  
at their level) prefer apology hadn't shrunk

slick the mud slope soreheads in poplin must — they,  
you, funambulists, stars: don't brook objects, so called,  
which would lash or stonewall the star power e.g., glass  
jar on shelf in boat — yet the pickled hands rest in peace . . .  
essentially objects pass generically and unaudited  
under touch

if I keep serving Lachryma Christi in my tresses,  
face coated mien stomach starch, forget inclination — time!  
lungs not soured to time border recovery

don't skip a day, moldy now, your raspy hack dispense  
with false indices of health leaving you where everything  
is flat with a blow to strike: now that life in sand  
is dead value doubles back on the beach

this, at last, is payoff  
in anesthesia lozenge swallowed  
through completeness mania —  
still you whirr and flier let go glass

backpedal unavail, sharky grin  
and tremolo add  
to paramour if that means all I know  
coming acrox

from this perch Tigris of  
sensation pass through earphone

...  
for droppings, ground wood — we went  
around, or it did? discovery  
under the door  
that's our oeuvre reward

general, folks are cleanly, you make  
one though hushed 'n' slit — lame throat —  
internal body habits vary don't always  
want to know; maybe glue  
brushed on palm and on diploma

see the crushed grass I conceived  
here what hear of me  
from abysm uneducation,  
fan  
must enter star's house blink

teacher regress citadel  
conceitum pituit hero every lameness  
asks pause  
on top of everything else  
hardly ever

FROM: SCOPTOCRATIC

---

Nancy Shaw

### It's Always The Good Swimmer Who Drowns

The only complete stationary object in the  
room. Their hands, set lightly, never quite  
chatter. If she saw me out of the corner of  
her eye, she gave no hint. As you may  
imagine in the course of this adventure.  
About her life as a *femme fatale*.

Good mother.	Devoted father.
So obliging.	So amusing.

Unforgettable days.

In principle, always answer yes. In this instance, the relation of confusion and the patient's life. Hence, it was for years that she kept the portrait of herself. *The horse was as good as the rider.* A submitting display. A place at every table, at the next table. That all goods be held in common.

The two details of their behavior:

A speedy marriage.

To arouse natural instincts.

The latter is never attempted. The former only tried, owing to motives that will only later become evident. Scenes of married life. Horseback riding. Rain bistro. A traditional grouse shoot. After much study, the eternal victim.

I shall spare myself the details, but by the beginning of the last chapter, the hero's horse rarely wins. He admitted the scene had probably occurred one or two years later. Without having heard myself, I explain this by supposing I spoke to them out loud. In a way *that* was not at all remarkable.

Of that celebrated affair:

Spectacle. Romance.

Action. History.

Ravaged hearts. Squandered fortunes. An unauthentic revolution. Back to his early life. A change of scene. Happy days despite the weather. I have seen your portrait.

You will observe a set of pitiful misadventures and accidents. An ordinary object or scene. A sudden flare. The said clock, wound up. On the dangers of curiosity. Figurative pity. Ill-considered intimacy. A calculated plan for doing good.

Only fear of seeming so. I shall finish as I began with a timely and well-executed attack. I am a man of the circus. Mere examples: to put one in the picture. Stand still. Shadow show. The most wonderful, fantastic episode: If, I . . . . Nevertheless, he was not at all a scandal machine. That it should come to this.

The elements of the tenth year, described by the hero in the first hour are not merely as he supposed. Tyrants have other means of seduction. Then she told the story for the third time. In the shape of a vow. A recital of debts, in pantomime, with tableaux, and acrobats.

One false move.

Rumour. Scandal. Passion.

That he became her bodyguard. I have watched you discretely. One may infer from this episode and begin to take an interest in nature. Ascertaining to all her habits. And so on. That the father met the daughter in the company of a lady.

The very element of seduction. These few words should have been enough. The temperament of this situation might have seemed intriguing. And so on. Triumph and perdition. The twelve elements of an ideal life to which we were sworn. The displacement with which they had become involved in reproducing these details.

A certain natural duplicity extended to this end, completely motionless. Don't oblige me to regret having known. You might have found it amusing. I turned my consideration to our safety. In perfect view, only a stupid question. The history of surrender in greater detail. All that had passed or rather she appeared to have been saying.

I will only add at the end.

*Complete. Character. Obsession.*

Happened to fall to his feet. Names that were of little consequence. And immediately, in accordance with a type of procedure with which she was familiar. According to the wording, we were obviously very fond of cruelty.

The first part, with questions: a charming

inn, a good dinner. The most indelicate. The most indecent. At the time perhaps, he hesitated. If one may use such a phrase. A case of prudence or impending arrival. It could have happened fifteen years ago . . . .

## BOARD FEET

---

Kevin Davies

The middle of a long  
happy decline, which accounts for the ear-popping.

One frame is not  
enough to coerce a purchase.

Copyright your ventriloquism.

[War is normal.]

[Miniaturized  
and placed into others.]

Coming of age  
between musical generations,  
waiting around outside the rink.

Hazardous haunted  
public waste.

After a while good pals turn into conniving spies.

Cats swim if they have to.

[Elope in haste and  
taste the ether.]

[If you don't plan ahead you'll be sent north.]

The books  
are trash and this is history.

Inward, Xtian warders.

Claustrophobia is an element of the screw  
musics.

It is your body  
that is being asked to house these assumptions.

[Zero vacancy.]

In the old days a big part  
of the job involved speeding up and slowing down  
the machine in order to approximate  
reality, but that is no longer necessary.

Animals are attractive.

It's made up  
as it goes along.

Great lengths  
will be gone to.

See,  
all they do is play.

A national characteristic.

[The sign says "Don't Even Think  
About It."]

Eat your wog wheat.

Idaho dream sequence.

A mind-altering  
insubstantiality.

Tufts of grass  
behind the abandoned  
potato pool.

Boy those are the days eh.

There is no way  
to understand what these individuals are saying.

Acceptable hard-R  
border guard aggression.

To be fair,  
equal time  
must be given  
to  
opposing views.

Those indignents have been captured in acts.

Montage of untrustworthy-  
because-vulnerable.

They are destroying our air.

Men enjoy hard  
fast fucking and  
sleeping in ditches  
and dying.

The hidden camera is God's only idea.

Terrified people  
are forced onto boats.

Packed solid with continuity consultants.

Seeing is similar to believing.

Do as  
you're told.

[Drive  
for hours in a stolen Camaro.]

Calcutta test-pattern.

Life out of  
boxes.

At the last moment the circus clown realizes it is going to die.

This Australian  
journalism.

What the short  
star stands on.

Patrons spit at  
mirrors.

Scenes of average nudity.

Consume that  
city-scape.

The world is a wonderland of colour.

[Sticking  
to the topic.]

You eager picture  
of an otter or otters, swarming  
unwanted from the selective unconscious.

Give that leper a  
downer.

The brain  
ought to look like this.

An evening at gunk beach.

[These cadets are ignorant of  
what awaits them.]

Tinny edit-  
orial voice-  
over.

They go looking for drugs but find bombs.

The invading army enters the stadium just before the earthquake.

Huck the rock.

The time-lapse  
photographer, dying of cholera.

I don't want you to feel  
it.

One big spliced police  
riot.

We immediately identify with the  
main character in any  
civilization.

[Only the skeletons go to  
heaven, youngster.]

[Strapped to the front of the train.]

## TWO POEMS

---

Tom Raworth

the only part that didn't float  
about whatever had happened  
could feel rain in the air  
a fine handmade panama hat  
near the altar rail  
in the soft glow of chandeliers  
an almost square grey  
bookshelf filled with history  
all the movable property  
mangling one of his legs  
that same damned ugly sofa  
swept up and carted away  
cool water playing over  
the dead and dying

almost as to a stranger  
taking advantage of the numerous  
candles, in a room  
painted at the same time  
through the coarse sieve  
not continuously being guarded  
of a dying hour  
fed by an inexhaustible  
external unity  
fever had now taken possession  
of disturbed contours  
lustrous in the shade  
behind mirrors  
their dying could not alter

down in the grasses  
silent, leaning forward  
each one of them accomplished  
through the narrative  
accustomed words fall  
easily into dreams  
in order to arrange  
dust patterned with immutable  
antiquities, various  
doors filling the apertures  
of tradition  
so accurately  
it was easy to recognise  
the remedies she had used

passing near the black hole  
in ordinary flat space  
around a small loop  
of objects formed  
for symmetry reasons  
species of particles exist  
not yet pinned down  
as coincidences  
moving relative to one another  
on the edge of the quantum zone  
by gravitational amplification  
irrespective of the identity  
of metals in their spectra  
to collapse into a mathematical point

FOUR POEMS

---

Ray Di Palma

**INDIGO SHIFT**

**BLIZZARD OF AEONS RAZING  
THE PATHOLOGY OF GAPE**

**TIME HONORED ENSIGN**

**ANCIENT OF ANCIENTS  
SPOOLING THE WHITE HOLE**

**LOST ILLUSION  
OF THE IRRITABLE ABSOLUTE**

**WHO TO SALUTE**

**ON THE MOEBIUS**

**DAY AND NIGHT THE NAVIGATION LEAKS DUST  
OUT ONTO THE PARROT WEIR  
TIDAL NO ROOM TO WALK**

**TAVERN CELLO PRINCIPLES  
WALKING DOWN BIG IN A CLEAN SHIRT  
FIRST THE GLASS IS WET THEN COLD THEN FULL**

**OPHELIA DRAFTS PULLING UP SHORT  
LIKE THREATS DISSOLVING INTO PROPERTY  
GUIDE STAR GREEN AND BLUE NO EXCEPTION**

**BLOWS DISTANCE NO IT TOUCHES ME  
WITH INLAND ACCENTS FLAT ENOUGH  
TO AMPLIFY THE NEBULAE**

**A QUICK QUESTION WHICH FAR  
HOW ONE  
MAKE IT TWO**

**NIGHT AND DAY THE NAVIGATION MAKES WAY  
FILLING THE UP WITH THE WAY AROUND  
AND THE HOW WITH BOTH**

## NO MAN MUSIC

A HOAX OF CLAMOR CRAWLING WITH AMBITION  
OR JUST ANOTHER BUSY DAY

ALL SPOTTED-OUT WITH DETACHABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND  
THE KIND OF HOSTILE GENEROSITY THAT BLEEDS DETACHMENT

THE GRIM LOOK OF BOOKS FROM 20 AND 30 YEARS AGO  
NOTHING MORE FORGOTTEN THAN SOMETHING THAT GREW

FROM 70 TO 500 PAGES ONLY ONCE A MAN WAS DEAD  
CALCULATIONS THE EARNEST SHUFFLERS MADE WINDING

DOWN TO ADDENDA AND MONOGRAPH  
BETTER PAPER LICKED WITH CRISPER TYPE AND FAT MARGINS

WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALIZE  
WHEN DID YOU START TO REALIZE  
WHEN DID YOU FIRST START TO REALIZE

CONVERSATIONS WITH PERFECT STRANGERS  
PERFECT ONES HOOTA HOOTA HOOTA FRESH AIR  
IM FOR THAT AND LUMBERING QUASI-PRIMITIVE REALISM  
AT LEAST FOR A FEW MILES

MUTED TRUMPETS AND PHONY SAXOPHONES AT NIGHT  
A BADLY DRAWN THICK LINE FROM A TO 3  
A VAST SLOPE OF CLARITY ENDING AT THE BACK DOOR  
JUST ANOTHER PRIORITY ESTABLISHED TO TAKE HOSTAGES

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER MAKES YOU  
AN AMBASSADOR TO BAGHDAD  
DESPERATE CIRCUMFERENCE (REMEMBER STALIN  
AND WHAT THE FRENCH MADE OF HIM IN THE 50S)

FOR A CONJUNCTION  
IN AN ALLEY FULL OF CASH  
CAT SPRAY AND PALE SHADOWS  
EAST OF THE INDOLENT DOLORS

Lyn Hejinian

**Chapter Fifty-Three**

It's Armenian at all that someone has faith in your wealth  
Fear of bank teller in America for its telling authority  
No night falling  
And a little girl was playing on Vasily Island between the switching  
rails where Malii Prospekt meets Gavanskaya Street  
Every night the ghosts become more numerous and violent  
Their special interest is in altered states of consciousness and speech  
The rails switched and seized one of her feet  
There was a colonel across the metal  
It is futile, he said later, to fight against your feet  
The colonel was just crossing the street  
A man at a window was thinking in his writing light  
A life locked in that look — the colonel helping the child to fight her  
foot free  
Behind her a trolley turned the corner toward them — speeding in  
gray light, it was almost night  
The child and the colonel continued to fight

**Chapter Fifty-Four**

Winston Churchill had arrived at this same point on a switchback in  
the mountains  
His ears were clearing  
It was at the last minute, so without melancholy  
There was open-air music and Earl Warren was dancing  
Since Wallace Stevens wrote poetry this wasn't frightening  
But you must know why you are in Leningrad, said Boranovin  
In a metonym  
It's not displacement but relocation  
In fact on the same date we were doing both sleeping and waking  
Preoccupied with production, always provided with basic necessities,  
a person like itself  
Then the woman, without lesbian experience, gets the man excited  
about lesbian life, because of what women like  
A woman's baby napped by poppies in the Ukraine  
Repeating, dispersed, tired  
The excitation of the same experience by two grammars — it's not  
impossible

## Chapter Fifty-Seven

The child was blinded by the greatcoat to die  
Not agent nor agency but instrument  
The idea is to save one from the sight of what serves  
The canal but no potential  
The bare statues in the Summer Garden boxed to spare them from the  
    lifting frost  
Behind closed windows through open curtains the neighbor was  
    dancing with his collie on its hindlegs  
The old woman's husband hit the nail in her head  
The toddler was lost in a communal flat by going to sleep in what he  
    saw was a darker drawer  
It was his dilemma to sleep  
It was his dilemma to say he was paying for a Panzer  
Another colonel knew all along — such poetry isn't beauty, it's inquiry  
We have any experience to deliberate  
In sex inquiry  
At the door stood her legs and boots

## Chapter Fifty-Eight

The mosquitos were sleeping in the cellar for the winter  
Inspiration in abeyance, no sense of mind  
No sense of life size  
Is sex the excess of subjectivity  
Everything happens so frequently there's no sense in saying so  
So even in the enormous space of a New York loft you can instantly  
    find your own glass, Gavronsky said  
Gavronsky was explaining his theory of the tiny sign  
Progress suspended, no condition to maintain  
Persons find themselves increasingly small in this century, so that  
    smaller and smaller things appear normal  
If Leonardo were to paint *La Gioconda* today he'd put her in a 3-inch  
    square  
The jiggling of all things 30 to 40 centimeters high — no more  
Sex the excess of objectivity  
It seemed to be cold, but it might have been wet  
Zero degrees celsius — no less

## Chapter Fifty-Nine

Some possibilities take place on a plate  
A process whose pace doesn't coincide with comprehension's pace  
I remember the instructions  
To see is such deferred  
Zina was jarring the milky liquid for Ostap's priming  
Such is our medicine, he said  
Old people's skulls thicken  
I am to interrupt myself tonight at exactly 8 and propose a toast to  
    "our colleagues who at this moment are reading verses in  
    Tambov"  
Both largeness and lozenge to collide  
The crows' voices in winter light like copper pliers  
The reading an open word shutter  
Only slats, and they faded into winter  
Paints (of any color), aspirin, artichoke hearts, and printer ribbon  
Dispersal at either end — eight passed without interruption

## Chapter Sixty

If you whistle a tune within a flat its residents will never have cash  
The collie was barking on the opposite balcony it filled above the trees  
    with its inexhaustible faculty of negation  
It puts grammar to the hunt  
Ducks swimming in the black backwash of the canal and several  
    women and children feeding them in the wind  
It isn't the cold — scarcely one degree of frost — but the wind increases  
    the sensation of it  
The feeding of everyday life put to sex  
I like such gaps, Arkadii said  
A neighborhood of rotting bricks housing an enterprise of brick  
In the next neighborhood a plant of plasticity  
And wind — Zina tightened my hood  
The ground emitted an odor of oysters  
No clocks worked  
From the sensual instability of volition, of willfulness, of intention I  
    had slept  
I was not disappointed

## Chapter Sixty-One

He was not nationalist, Vasya said  
The room was blue, the hue an indescribable grasp  
It was not village prose and not a Siberian correction  
Misha was moaning with hangover  
There was honey on the dish and three spoons  
They have made him write a trilogy and then they dispensed  
There was humiliation in its typing  
It was a great joke  
Then what is prophesy but a logical violation  
A sort of limerick, but longer  
A mechanic, and more fortunate  
A Soviet Faulkner, a Soviet Rilke  
There are constant predicates and variable subjects  
One sits beside a river and knows its name, the other digs a canal

## Chapter Sixty-Two

A ram has a job — interruptions, just leaping  
I was sleeping past the depression that reality divides  
It's assigned to lead the other rams and sheep to slaughter  
Perhaps the traveller should be obsequious, not the one who resides  
I was sleeping between Me and Not-me  
The cousin to a navy guy, just up for adoption  
The corpses behind and the ram ahead  
One day it takes a stand and refuses to do so  
If there are no great opposites there are no great parallels  
In the film Alyosha described, the ram is condemned then and itself  
is slaughtered  
Another ram takes over the job — it simply replaces it  
There are many Bambis, Bambi is normal  
A face so familiar and one sees that it expresses something in life that  
we have seen on that face  
Alone, after work, things were happening to it

### Chapter Sixty-Three

If each day were new a person would be incomprehensible  
To misunderstand it was to be rejected  
The person left out, in its unsoviet sensation  
Many things left in observation  
Greeting a man we pretend is a man we've come to meet, we were  
admitted into the Writers Union  
Black mushrooms stuffed in sturgeon, radishes, vodka — the sturgeon  
rolled and sealed  
The oak was very complicated — Masonic groves, the grooves in  
plots, and Jews  
There are members of memory and they have attacked the Jews  
Jamal talked of race cars and wood carvings  
I had run far faster than any of the other white girls could do  
Or of confinement and submission  
Something further had to be said about a cousin, a forger, in prison  
Every man to his mafia, Feodor said  
To America

### Chapter Sixty-Four

Goodbye, America, which I have never seen  
I float forever in my paper boat  
A paper flicker, no telephone  
If there would be phone, there would be love  
No taken distance — but there's only difference  
Description of it is a form of waiting  
But the time deteriorates  
I remember how it was, and what a fine memory of it was forming  
Or that was the anticipation  
Cold was imminent and my sense of it merely deferred  
The climate was inexact and inert  
With the person disappeared the person's obsequiousness  
The person now morose or immune  
It's afloat in its intimations

## Chapter Sixty-Five

A question occurred about *Opoyaz*  
Empty stores  
The satchel of Lydia Iakovlevna on psychological prose  
And there was no other man  
There's such impertinence in subjectivity  
But what could one predict from the semantics of the desire  
to overcome the opposition between "I" and "you"  
The manifestations of the library as a whole were different from the  
manifestations of its single books  
Old-style trolleys passed through the Vyborg, but within minutes  
they had disappeared  
Jugs of muddy juice half-settled pulp remained in plenitude  
In web  
Bourgeois lyricism is predictable, Papa, said Ostap — he was telling  
his father about necrorealism  
They very frequently said names — Mitya, Vitya — active repetitions  
At dusk in the Vyborg the colonel, sweating under his fur hat, was  
making his way through the park on the darkening snow to the  
thawing path  
Our colonel is duck-footed

## HOUSE OF BEFORE

---

### Spencer Selby

Question almost anything  
I would want to dignify  
as fortune's assault.

My family chases itself around  
the place where we bought our vehicle.

Pictures advertise the difference  
everyone fails to avoid.

They shout and cover up nothing  
more useful in a minute  
you should always contain.

Blue Day made its way  
from last impression,  
going over a bridge  
when the water doesn't show.

A contrast does its job  
for something to think about.

I'm getting married one by one,  
and now I'm reading  
what you said  
that wouldn't satisfy.

A force that pulls my throat  
pulls everyone but you  
in the way they stand outside.

News was swollen by a river,  
leaving words behind  
a rescue attempt  
I imagine on the way down.

The train crosses over  
and sits in a station  
getting prepared.

I sit in my compartment  
with one window  
broken just enough  
for damage I can dream about.

It's moving every time I forget  
the person next to me is wrong.

Listen just a word  
is what you hear.

A leading thinker  
represents my passage  
on a channel  
I no longer receive.

A crowd surrounds my pronoun.

Certain speech now aggravates  
an epic of man-made interest  
growing slow.

With a sound I can never remember,  
the patrons of this language  
decide to exchange difficulties.

I wonder if their limits  
carry them through walls  
of restful absence.

The first vacuum bottle  
sits in a field  
as perfect as the day it was born.

Don't forget your guarantee.

SEVEN POEMS

---

Karen Mac Cormack

**Positive Midnight**

The open splurge, so detritus, pick yourself up.  
This *is* personal:  
craving direction in buildings of stone rings on a finger mean  
nothing now the shoe's on the other foot.  
Drawings don't culminate so much as suspend  
suspense for an eastern shore.  
Delegates seldom move in Chanel unlike circles.

Pierced.

All acknowledgement undertow expels the word *dainty*.  
Reviewing magnet in place of minutes wear a watch.  
In the alley *at home* we repeat what gains us most attention.  
Stumble before a fall.

Riots, more pieces of metal than puzzles quickly or foxed.  
Freestanding.  
Portions, pastoral, and all the boom covered twice.  
Saw goes in the wood it corners and crates.

**Negative Noon**

Wood pitch.  
The dots join.  
A leaf in parentheses.  
Corruption on the sand carpets.  
Re-fuel peace of mind.  
Surprise notation.  
Headlines running truce.  
Vaginal not baseball diamonds.  
To enact buildings.  
Red hair *and* a fur coat.  
His words closer by.  
The opportunity of memory.  
A particular cashmere shell.  
All done falling down.  
Transpose order, epaulettes.  
Diplomats knife and fork we spoon.  
More countries to aid good conscience with less for all.  
Avoid birthdays.  
Walking or otherwise dog.  
A waist believes its belt.  
Each sometimes simultaneously but imprint no more.

### Numerable Plectra

That around which the axis molests.  
The desk and Japanese warriors.  
Straight lines in the curve.  
Their battle, knife, the window.  
Speckled gulf.  
Shield against cancellation, glass on swords.  
Silk rein.  
Involuntary pastel.  
Carpets, helmets, bridges, steal.  
Colours pack easily.  
Bookcases, two lengths of leisure, obey.  
Sounds that are new to this century only.

### Bouquets in the Fields

The carrier pigeon did not offer knees.  
What we choose to think, forced through.  
The provocation of history.  
If the landscape moved with us.  
Lanes if lanes and lanes loan.  
Image on the upside down smokes gravity.  
Numbers to a crow.  
And the letters written but the subject thought.  
Postage due to extinction.  
Plenty of room in the concept *house*.  
An easy squirrel learns circus.  
The news when I don't read headlines.  
Nimiety as mentioned.  
Lateral pause.

## Sighting Dover

Admission. Turn style argument  
there was and to escape neither thorn.

Sincere timing.

Skin longer hives tassel  
not to incinerate control, coagulate.

Birds call. Fenced in hover.

The preamble of *us* all  
perfect pitch. Lower than mole. Cream.

A rejuvenating weave.

Castles clothing open spire. Design command.

Cut; lessening. Recess severance  
and the instance dumbfounded lettering.

When points cease. A marker. Men on the rise,  
window watching.

## Raze Water

Noticing as opposed to wanting attention goldfish hold only their  
colour in a bowl fed *x* number of times a day telling the time became  
a lie human error reversals of inevitable distraction doesn't launder fins  
transparency is what's there in the bulb to look at this employ and  
feeding that the autobiography stoppered lives a hint at all traction  
makes for sensation clarity doesn't enhance comprehension of what is  
seen through or perceived during the day in other ways might taper  
to breath reaches instance unused contradictions of so much regularity  
intact aperture when grill.

## All Four Sides

*Jung Nails* and *Scruples Footwear* for the finer deductions become mere extensions to these consumers daily showers please reduce the aftermath of their novels' fog the very edge of can't-quite-explain easier to put a man on the moon than teach that same nation to read peppered with moving much rolled-out thought back formed by far could not provide hip bottom of stroke closing past scuba music coincidence greeted later suffered proposition *you* fondly with what happens inches sort of nondescript hatching ignition the nearest locksmith left in ten thwart garden party of the current lulled.

## TWO POEMS

---

### P. Inman

#### wide face

Montana by sections  
of wrist from  
birth he was  
built through woman's  
motion snow kept  
in thrown dune  
each blank nod  
to its mineral

she saw him  
as the blunt  
of a pond  
as her height  
in white cells  
she took to  
wake hilled work

French sight eke  
fluster nerve form  
"I meant the  
earth I held  
left in my  
behavior" sooners of  
razors talk forced  
from social brook

he was shooting  
alot of geometry  
thinking afterwards each  
sky at his  
health wheat earths  
of vaseline town

she's walking toward  
him sight frosted  
churchyards as temperature  
description tar lapses

sliced up coffee  
Pacific crudes of  
initials field before  
her made of  
radio source scrapes

tawn brunts of  
bodies of lake  
error liver with  
the wit in

frozen climate drum  
Hempstead Long Island  
as food nouns

day after sight  
tallow in another  
age Balzac would've  
been waved drink  
the odds of  
certain people at  
his blood cells

the rewind on  
mill dwindle clerks  
at their form  
of voice shoulder  
blades out of  
weight her solves  
of bird past

she wouldn't rub  
through where the  
coast had been

a grift of  
olives spanned to  
parenthood a creole  
about energy salt  
for name ice

a heckler stands  
up & says  
suppose all the  
lines in his  
face were money  
an odd pause  
to his factor

horizon line filled  
of simper parts

under farina turpentine  
on white suffix  
conference a sand  
from mind palmer

what she crosses  
after her as  
miniscule put in  
sight hedges on  
late pills a  
field he hadn't  
smelled of hewns

years later i  
wrote birth a  
coal sight toast

rubbing mitchum shoreline  
into his lips  
pictures of mercantilists  
& their need  
for motion prose

a soda that  
the trove of  
a hill single  
lighthouse pleural cavity  
broken into time

skin beside the  
name where its  
peer would form  
over dusk by

the sound that  
he snows by

protein composure still  
mind dried off

friended building trades  
the liver abides  
of their people  
the work days  
they couldn't get  
past the money

the land &  
its pepridge weathers

fenced blood flow

an olived cell  
horn of her

## "Likeness" (II)

psalmist fleuve  
could be fork flow  
    taken as a plus  
payday ceased through the knees  
a picture of crooked lipstick hill  
    a girl's neck thin  
from years ago  
her last sound as oleo  
pinches of river

charcoal night behavior  
could be prose turned to footsteps  
hears to touch chats  
    chaired sorghum  
description as raisin mennonite

backs of soapbar ear  
unknown how he puts down shadow  
prairie land by grades  
    of reduced ego  
crinked clock  
skin about forest  
behind the eyes

pour surd  
    birded o'clock

thoughts as salt bodes  
laned glances

anissette meters  
the same mold boy  
    in his hat of cat gleam  
first pour as dystrophy  
    biscuit  
    Amokeag

thought weft  
all the waist  
    at their particles  
as low speed literature  
rice sight lasts  
french river  
    in her lungs

grimes of crop page

villagers as reflecting surfaces  
applesauce of compound words

thigh of horn peen  
    class culture  
below letter  
    prose dulce  
    a fur under

shorn hertz  
miner's grimace  
of barn lean

a kelter sight cut  
his height to her carbon hinder  
    sight grips of meal to him  
she'd watched them as amounts of space  
    passed through her  
orchards on couches  
lined cough as riffle

pronoun nire  
    stelk  
    compose

every husband as earthed ass wafer

what the Green Mountains lacked  
    were brims by its speech  
she thought of a past of turned paint to her money  
a sealevel lip of each  
    barn at the last naple  
a stroke of gists  
his nose from a beer

from some photo of pea crop  
    phone ring shapes

every mind has its sight spouted  
frowned river time scale  
facial chore  
    reap left  
        casted haircut

tawn cubes  
punctuations

copoeia  
women leave more voice  
shunts of yearns  
    production relations  
entirely of leather average

sulp at speech  
coast boned  
    cress alight

the newspaper boy had his brain out of crow edge  
she held her weight in knuckles  
time of day color all pat  
a rain past lever sift  
salt erg sidewalk

teal of sorted work history  
camera shot filled with mouth  
    salem  
    forecast  
herringbone about thickeners  
children subtracted in plaid blankets

seconds of lopes  
    skull fit as large ink  
the lock he was built through

eightball of lake names

## THREE POEMS

---

David Gilbert

### Reputation

Certain vulgarities  
  are under  
pidgined  
  longing  
forms  
  in pre-memory  
denying blackout  
  and blood  
in the sink  
  a rotating patois  
of white drizzle  
  to disorient  
eastern enjambments  
  their collages attract  
pedestrian deranging  
  a marker  
called  
  placid second surface  
  playing through  
a correspondence  
  of wobbling pivots

## Horizontal List

I was there  
    a perspective  
[That has a kind of tree disease, eating everything  
but the leaves]  
    centrifugal  
the hobby  
    of licking memory's  
ejecta  
    [I don't believe this interiority any more  
    than you do, but the part is right for me  
    and I think it would be good for my career]  
lost populations  
    faking flatness  
bad latitudes  
    contained before  
you wore floods  
    with the head  
screwed on behind  
    an afterthought  
bent oedipus  
    autobody  
wrecks self second  
    helping  
the stars shortfall  
    you know, siding denied

## Staples Make the Man

Chance is work  
    the walk, then  
as a voice full of sex  
    the field  
a way out  
    a convenience paradise  
and back  
    perfect bound  
pancake  
    to go on  
and story  
    of life measured by entries  
    into public pools  
real then preparatory  
    radiance  
prayer RV  
    downbeat  
    weak  
memory for shadows  
    very few  
can afford  
    to mark a place  
for their victim  
as if seriousness were a disease  
spread by its own etiology  
    a work  
of light children  
    coded and circling  
promiscuous gravity  
    on its way to a conclusion

FROM: THE LETTERS OF MINA HARKER

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Dodie Bellamy

November 5, 1989

Dear Quincey,

Remember the dawn of our *liaison intime*? Of course you don't — an all-American like yourself would never know French beyond *Oui*, *Monsieur* or *escargot*! Let me begin again. It's been a century since you poured your heart out to me and I still haven't recovered. Have you? The occasion is lovingly recounted in Dr. Seward's diary:

*Van Helsing was evidently torturing his mind about something, so I waited for an instant, and he spoke:—*

*"What are we to do now? Where are we to turn for help? We must have another transfusion of blood, and that soon, or that poor girl's life won't be worth an hour's purchase. You are exhausted already; I am exhausted too. What are we to do for someone who will open his veins for her?"*

*"What's the matter with me, anyhow?"*

*The voice came from the sofa across the room, and its tones brought relief and joy to my heart, for they were those of Quincey Morris. Van Helsing strode forward, and took his hand, looking him straight in the eyes as he said:—*

*"A brave man's blood is the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble. You're a man and no mistake. Well, the devil may work against us for all he's worth, but God sends us men when we want them."*

Perched in front of my MacPlus my fingers itch for your "goshes" and "gee-whizzes." Quincey, we both know the pleasures plain English provides — to hell with that artsy mumbo jumbo you're always hearing in Berkeley. Let me dish you up some good old down home dangling participles the word "Illinois" pronounced with an "s" at the end a syntax just bursting with Tina Turner *I don't do nothin' nice and easy* **did you really think you could get to know Dodie without having to deal with me?** She can tolerate an incredible degree of

ambivalence but I **Mina Harker Queen of the Dictaphone and Typewriter** always want to know whatever there is to know. In those innocuous 40's films you're so fond of some malcontent invariably wails "Try to get some sleep" or "Wait, I can explain everything!" I wouldn't be caught dead in one of them. Call me Mia — Sigourney — Catherine Deneuve — Fay Wray — I am the heroine of every horror movie — fearlessly I turn in the direction of your words/telekinetic activities and demand: **WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?**

He fails every test I throw his way yet, crazily, I keep coming back for more.

Beside me on the couch a young man called "Quincey" sat folded and morose *is this any way to show a girl a good time?* When the words HELP ME etched themselves across his forehead in reverse he simply sighed, "It's been a rough year." His soft brown eyes stared at the polished oak floor but I doubt he saw anything reflected there. A demon was scribbling inside his cranium! Was it Mary Lou the prom queen who was burned alive in *Prom Night, Part II*? The jewels in her tiara gave her the power to possess teenagers and computers, to seduce all the wrong men . . . with a single evil glare she crushed a row of lockers accordion-style. Last week I saw her scratch the same backwards HELP ME on a blackboard. Mary Lou (hidden on the other side of the board) was really writing forwards, but we the viewers reversed her words like a mirror. I knew better than to examine this young man's forehead: when the naive ingenue leaned towards that blackboard caressing the H with a manicured forefinger Mary Lou's dead arms poked through the slate and jerked her inside — the board's chalky surface churned to a turbulent pool of black liquid as large block letters swirled around her screaming face. The young man sighed, "It's been a rough year." **END OF TRANSMISSION.** He sank down deeper into the cushions as if the year were a whirlpool drowning him in real time. Before this brooding man this vat of alphabet soup I had to grab onto something solid — my own elbows or the arm of the couch.

*God sends us men when we want them* his American throat so squeaky pink beneath his button down collar all that unripe ruby potential — I know the type *firm and lean on the palate though not as exuberant as some* a fresh berry character you'd gulp down rather than savor — as a connoisseur I'm interested in his potential *a spiciness that could develop complexity with a few years of cellaring.*

I'd grown used to your face . . . relentlessly pleasant and smiling a face devoid of dark corners. Without warning your eyes broke through — I said, "You make too much eye contact." You locked your arms and pouted, "Then I'll stare at the floor" and I was amazed how sexy you looked — all tiger like the long-legged women on MTV languishing in their negligees and anger. We were at a cocktail party the first time I saw those mild brown eyes come alive: after an evening of tolerable chit chat we wandered to opposite ends of the hall — as you idled by the stairs with your coat on I stood in line for the bathroom — your eyes like ferocious beasts snared me and no matter how much I feigned interest in the ceiling or the doorknob they wouldn't let go — I didn't know how to read this but I do know your eyes are the devil's playthings their pupils glowing violet, the room threatening to dissolve.

The bus is electric — that is — the ride is bumpy though relatively quiet . . . twin gleams of turquoise satin come into focus *am I seeing double?* a couple of Asian grade school girls sit in front of me disguised as unicorns . . . frenzies of lavender taffeta sprout from their compact equestrian bodies *mane and tail* from each hooded head pokes a single woven metallic horn . . . I'm afraid — but of nothing in particular (just the thought of anyone near enough to touch me) so I stare at these girls cute as salt and pepper shakers turquoise spats sliding around their four little feet. I keep waiting for my subconscious mind/artistic soul to come to some conclusion or witty summation to nudge these juveniles from decor to anecdote to myth . . . their costumes remind me of sleepers or snow suits . . . matching mittens . . . *nothing about them will open* . . . I pull the bell and exit at Octavia, a blast of chill air distracting my thoughts in the direction of a khaki green mailbox which has been uprooted and twisted around backwards — I can't look at it without thinking *automobile accident* or *Linda Blair's head*.

He doesn't even have the patience to read a novel — how's he going to deal with *me*, my line-up of selves as long and gilded as the Great Books of the Western World.

Holding the computer printout in your veiny fingers you wonder *how dare she write a letter like this to a man she barely knows* — at least that's what I want you to think, my epistolary urges simultaneously high tech and primitive as opposed to your black scratches hand drawn in perfectly even rows — virtually marginless — no sides for the Great White Whatever to creep in you keep to well-mannered topics, the

nicknames of your relatives, an in-depth critique of Franz Wedekind (the claustrophobia of live personalities bungling lines from another world). *Shy yet persistent aromas of creamy lemon and apricot . . . faintly grassy flavors that betray the region of origin . . . a touch of light oak*. I can be elusive too. In my last letter I disguised the protagonist so well that when I confessed his true identity to Lucy, she sputtered, "Him? I never would have guessed it — I can't imagine *him* that sexual." Glancing around the bedroom, I replied, "If it suits your writing, you can make a vacuum cleaner sexual." We were on the phone so she didn't realize I was seated on the floor beside my Hoover with the broken bag. Safety pins kept the dust from flying in my face.

Small of the Back, 1 pat = just passing by, 2 pats mean "Is anybody alive in there?" while 3 is a definite, "Hello, honey." What are you who do you want from me?

Did you know it was my thigh you were rubbing your leg against or did you think it was the table? I realize that touch is not an idea, but do you think this is a good one? A person can never tell what hocus-pocus an idle burnish will release. Look at Aladdin — take it from me — his survival was pure blind luck. Quincey, for all you know I Mina Harker who possess Dodie could in turn be possessed by Mary Lou who might be a marionette manipulated by Freddy Krueger . . . **WHO** . . . That isn't blood on the front of my nightgown it's juice from the pomegranate I was eating during *Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3*. All the special effects made me kind of messy the mute boy his arms and legs bound to the bedstead with tongues, the mattress dissolved to a rectangular pit over the fires of Hell — those tongues writhing around his wrists and ankles like fat snakes *even in his dreams the poor thing couldn't scream out his despair* my breast bloomed crimson in sympathy, like your breast, Quincey, bloomed for me on page 408. If you had to save my soul all over again would you still impale yourself on the blade of a wild Gypsy? Dying on the manly shoulder of my betrothed you gazed up at me with your pragmatic brown eyes and feebly exclaimed, "See! the snow is not more stainless than her forehead! The curse has passed away!" I hate to break this to you, but with my libidinal atmospherics as of late, Love, I fear you may have perished in vain.

Try to get some sleep. I can explain everything.

Love,

Mina

Mina

## AGNES BERNAUER

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### Frank Davey

The city of Augsburg has a rich heritage of buildings and memories. I had dinner at the Agnes Bernauer Restaurant because it had posted a menu of Bavarian game. Augsburg is twenty-five minutes from downtown Munich where the hotels cost two to three times more. With the menu the waiter brought an English translation of the history of Agnes Bernauer. Augsburg, the birthplace of Holbein, has preserved or rebuilt almost all of its Renaissance houses, churches and guildhalls. The fountains, unfortunately, are boarded up in winter. The Agnes Bernauer Restaurant is located in several small rooms of a sixteenth-century building, each room decorated with traditional Bavarian hunting emblems and with stuffed game birds, foxes, marmots and the heads of stags and bear.

I was travelling to the annual Canadian Studies conference at Grainau in the Alps south of Munich. Many of the spectacular medieval guildhalls of Augsburg were painstakingly reconstructed after being damaged by World War II bombing. The Fuggerei, built in the fifteenth century by the wealthy merchant house of Fugger, was the world's first subsidized housing project, and is operated today by the Augsburg city government. I had flown to Europe a week early to be a speaker for our embassy in Brussels, but nothing had been arranged and now I was a train traveler in southern Germany. A small portrait of an attractive young woman in medieval dress marks the signboard and menus of the Agnes Bernauer Restaurant.

The Agnes Bernauer that is remembered in the Agnes Bernauer Restaurant is the daughter of a thirteenth-century tavern keeper. Augsburg, home of Rudolf Diesel, was once one of the most important towns in Roman Germany. The remembered Agnes Bernauer is beautiful, pious, graceful and modest, and manages to be so while serving the tables of her father's tavern. My alternate plan for this week had been to stay in Paris, but because of the trial of the Hamadi brothers there were troops with machine-guns on each streetcorner. In medieval and early Bavarian times Augsburg was the German trade centre for Italy and the Mediterranean. The older churches of Augsburg offer many Madonnas. The hotel room featured a duvet and a colour TV. The son of the local baron was one of many young men who fell in love with Agnes. For those who prefer philanthropy, there is also a very fine restaurant at the Fuggerei. In many German folk tales the peasant girl is shown to have virtues the upper classes cannot equal.

On the street between the restaurant and the town centre the power & light company features maps and photographs of Augsburg before, during and just after the war. Nearby are the foundations of a Roman temple. I am also the cousin of someone whose Halifax was hit over Hamburg and crashed with him in the Black Forest. The local baron forbade his son to marry Agnes Bernauer. I ordered slices of wild hare cooked in red wine. Agnes Bernauer is remembered as cheerfully serving her father's tables and as praying a great deal for god's guidance. During the writing of the Augsburg Confession, Luther could not appear publicly in Augsburg because of death threats from various noble families. A few weeks after the clandestine marriage of the prince and Agnes Bernauer, she was murdered by his family and her body thrown into the river.

The story of Agnes Bernauer implies a critique of the morality of medieval power. The prince is portrayed as more appreciative of her piety than of her exuberant beer-bringing beauty. My waiter at the Agnes Bernauer was very helpful, but under the circumstances I would have preferred a waitress. That year the Grainau conference focussed on communications. The town hall was gutted by bombs and only in 1984 was replication of the inlaid floors and baroque ceilings completed. The beauty of Agnes Bernauer is also portrayed as more simple and natural than that possible within the baronial class. In the lower town, the medieval workshops that were enabled by canals that brought water-power from the Lech River are still intact. The city has re-opened the canals which were covered in the nineteenth century and built several new waterwheels. I spoke on the fragmentation of the literary audience in contemporary Canada, and later took a long walk with an Austrian scholar who had first learned of Canada as a POW in Quebec. Perhaps because of my limited German, I read the sign at St. Anna's to say that Luther had lived there during the drafting of the Confession.

The name of Agnes Bernauer occupies an ambiguous position in the quest for justice and for market-share among Augsburg restaurants. Augsburg, birthplace of Mozart's father, re-opened numerous canals to celebrate the ingenuity and prosperity of its medieval workers. If you seek to dine alone in an Augsburg restaurant, you may have difficulty being seated. In one of the small rooms of the Agnes Bernauer a group of male diners are singing traditional Bavarian drinking songs. After repeated resistance to baronial authority, in 1276 Augsburg became a free city. Everywhere I walked I felt haunted. As we looked at the 1944-45 photographs displayed by the power company, a German friend who teaches Canadian Studies at the university assured us there had indeed been a Messerschmidt factory nearby. One can dine out on innocence. Agnes would have only one or two real opportunities for social mobility. This unusual restaurant commemorates a saintly heroine of the class struggle. Elsewhere you may read of my visit to Augsburg's very silent seventeenth-century synagogue.

We do our best to construct violence as other, as a part of princely power, as a special circumstance, as an absence on the beer-tray. The wild hare I was served at the Agnes Bernauer was one of the best meals of my life. Dachau is a fifteen-minute journey on the rail-line between Augsburg and Munich, but most trains follow a slightly different route. Fantastic. Every visitor should spend extra time exploring the cobbled squares and promenades of a very special city. The extent to which we rely on some humanizing urge in women. Another route from Augsburg, my hosts noted, leads through Landsberg. Yes, the stylized portrait on the Agnes Bernauer signboard does suggest a generic role. Later events show how wrong. Then there is the baron's son, who in the story at least survived, and the various roles the spiritual beauty of Agnes have continued to offer him. I recall the restaurant as being on Frauentorstrasse but perhaps it was Prinzregentstrasse or Ludwigstrasse or maybe Fuggerstrasse. Grainau is the largest annual Canadian Studies conference outside Canada.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dodie Bellamy**, San Francisco, recent work in *Front* magazine (303 East 8th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5T 1S1), and a recent book *Feminine Hijinx* from Hanuman Books (P.O. Box 1070, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y., U.S.A. 10113). **Frank Davey**, London, Ontario, is the editor of *Open Letter*; his *Popular Narratives* from Talonbooks (201/1019 East Cordova, Vancouver, B.C., V6A 1M8) will be out in the spring of 1991. **Kevin Davies**, Vancouver, recent work in *B.C. Monthly* (Box 48884, Station Bentall, Vancouver, B.C., V7X 1A8). **Jean Day**, Oakland, *A Young Recruit* (Roof Books, 303 East 8th St., New York, N.Y., U.S.A. 10009); she is currently translating the work of Russian writer Nadezhda Kondakova. **Ray DiPalma**, New York, *Mock Fandango* is forthcoming from Sun & Moon (6363 Wilshire Blvd., #115, Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A. 90048). **David Gilbert**, Pacifica, CA, *You Asked For It*, a chapbook, is available from Post Neo Publications (9/28 Milton St., Elmwood 3184, Victoria, Australia). **Lyn Hejninian**, Berkeley, her translations of Russian poet Arkadii Dragomoshchenko are forthcoming from Sun & Moon; other sections of *Oxota* are in *Raddle Moon 9* (2239 Stephens St., Vancouver, B.C., V6K 3W5). **P. Inman**, Greenbelt, MD, *Red Shift* (Roof Books) is his most recent book; recent work is in *Verse* (Dept. of English, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, U.S.A. 23185). **Karen Mac Cormack**, Toronto, has work in the second issue of *Avec* (P.O. Box 1059, Penngrove, CA, U.S.A. 94951) and a book *Quirks & Quillets* forthcoming from Chax Press (101 West 6th St., #4, Tucson, Arizona, U.S.A. 85701). **Tom Raworth**, Cambridge, U.K., has published many books of poetry, including *Tottering State*, *Writing* (The Figures), and *Visible Shivers* (O Books); he edits *INFOLIO* (3 St. Philip's Rd., Cambridge, CR1 3AQ, U.K.). **Spencer Selby**, San Francisco, his first full-length book *House of Before* will be published by Potes & Poets Press (181 Edgemont Ave., Elmwood, CT, U.S.A. 06110). **Nancy Shaw**, Vancouver, is currently the curator of The Or Gallery; other sections of "Scoptocratic" are in the "New Vancouver Writing" *West Coast Line* (English Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6) and *Motel 2* (Box 65402, Station F, Vancouver, B.C., V5N 5P3). **Lary Timewell**, Vancouver, is the publisher of Tsunami Editions (#3-1727 William St., Vancouver, B.C., V5L 2R5); another section of "Ruck" is in *Verse*. **Henry Tsang**, Vancouver, has work in the new *West Coast Line*; he took the cover photo during a recent trip to China. **Eric Wirth**, New York, has poetry and a review in *Aerial 5* (P.O. Box 25642, Washington, DC, U.S.A. 20007).

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