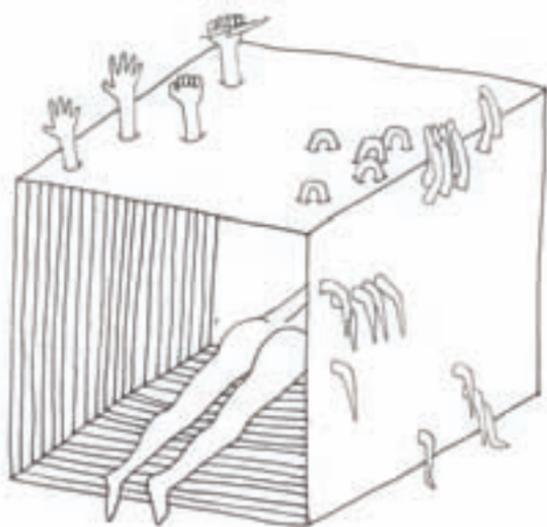


Why put on a vest? I expect you to aim for the head.

—

This closing with him fits his lunacy  
Whate'er I forge to feed his brain-sick fits  
Do you uphold and maintain in your speeches  
For now he firmly takes me for Revenge





Flyleaf: Drake  
William Shakespeare

Image:  
Sunny Nestler 2017

P-QUE U E



P-Q  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In the most boring version of literary history, revenge is the province of tragedy. *Titus Andronicus* is a bitterly gruesome model, hilarious in its excess. Multiple retributions going all at once; a final bloodbath suggests (as it always seems to) that revenge is anti-social and little else. In an economy animated by dangerously risk-tolerant characters, revenge is an investment that doesn't pay off and that will cost you your life.

Revenge can also be an alternative to state violence. The state's version of justice is inadequate; such "justice" is really injury added to injury. Of course, in the interest of civility, many are trained out of revenge—the other side of reciprocity. It is uncouth, we are told. Juvenile. Wanton. One taste gives way to insatiable appetite. Rather than seek amelioration, the injured or dispossessed are told to live well in order to restore the false equality that preceded their injury—that is, the equality whose falseness is manifested through that same injury. Such platitudes about living well meet their limit when we recognize and affirm the fact that living well for a few has always depended on impossible lives for many. In this vein, revenge can be a rejection of the defanged equality that conditions the status quo.

Or: we begin from the position that we are all injuring each other all the time. The categorical imperative would have us recognize that, were revenge lawful, there would be no "we" left to avenge. Who gets to decide what warrants revenge or whether, according to its calculus, one has broken even?

Each of these different perspectives advances the idea that revenge is a calling to account. Sean Labrador y Manzano's brutal critique of whiteness's penchant for identitarian oversimplification demands that white supremacy come out

of its shitty hiding place and announce itself. And then he rejects that admission's adequacy. REBLANCHMENT figures whiteness itself as a paranoiac revenge on its own attachments.

In Stacey Tran's "I Make a Sign of the Cross," the society of the spectacle finds a zenith: a version of reality too real. Or maybe it's hyperreality's pointed dissolution of reality and fantasy. In a tabloidized, totalitarian reality, we are stars in the movies of our lives: "The current/ wave of/ some new/ overwrought revelation/ pushes the/ needle//The plot/ derangement meter/ starts to top/ out and/ that's the/ convention". But how does one prepare amidst such histrionics, Laura Henriksen asks, despite knowing that we are beyond the point of rescue, incapable of imagining much further than the necessity of our proverbial granola bars. Jameson's idea that it has become easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism has a place here, but Laura's point, that "Mind/games are the least fun, unless you're/fucking evil," rejects a cynical anticipation of failing imaginations as a cop out.

Shayna S. Israel's essay on the lyric reframes Language writing's distaste for the lyric "I" in the context of performance, arguing that their evacuative practice tends to overlook the pronoun's enunciative capacities. The essay itself performs her point that particular letters have their own affective, contextual, and other-than-semantic values that can serve more intriguing ends than rejecting the author function.

In "Roof Enough," Eric Sneathen and Daniel Case work through what exceeds bare life. Indeed, if bare life is that against which sovereignty demonstrates its most fundamental power, here Sneathen insists it is more than and otherwise. Infused with the vitality of the cruise—Gaétan Dugas slides through the medico-juridical binaries that lose their force in assemblage, while Case's images capture stunning depth emanating from the absences they outline. Woogie Bae's poems work similarly

with space, bringing into relief the ease with which the word “travel” is laminated over many kinds of forced movement, embroidering around the erasure called “romanization” and the tracks it leaves on, among, and in bodies.

Jocelyn Saidenberg’s document of loss in loss: “I/ leave things as they are as/ if to be summoned I remind/ myself that she can’t.” Avoiding the definition of “life itself” as over and against “death “itself,” Saidenberg rejects the notion that the two are always and rigorously opposed. This series is framed through the passage of time as an accumulation of intimate visions, allowing us to participate in the surprising discoveries of what goes missing over and over again.

Visions and dreams also characterize Brandon Shimoda’s piece, but here he begins from the “dutiful paralysis” of dreaming to watch how malaise can become detachment and transform again into fabulously projective arenas of activity. As he explores the phantasmatic qualities of revenge, we discover that the images that appear in reverie are not always less efficacious for all their liminality. Adam Mitts’ “unheard” also suggests that watching and other modes of spectatorship carry particular weights and bear critical burdens. In his imaginary, surfaces can be walls, portals, vectors, shields, and screens. And many things are mirrors.

It should be clear that revenge is not the only thread weaving this issue together. And yet all of the pieces here do take up a related interest in reckoning: approaches that distinguish structural, historical, and personal accounts from the kinds of bookkeeping in which sunk losses are only to be forsaken, ignored, or forgotten.



**REBLANCHEMENT**



Are we too bold to present this city, Sanctuary?

[17 January 2017. 2 days after MLK Jr day,  
3 days before Inauguration of the Tyrant.]

Am I entitled to my father's whiteness? Did I believe?  
in his return, every scotomizing son to every MacArthur,  
pipe and drape, pomp and puddle, replenishing from  
boat, leap you from that leak, or lack and muddle,  
white liberals here visa hack no safe return nor  
safe passage, between venues, or famished strip tease,  
adopt to basic frights, and you still want muster to  
head of line privilege no white wants against garrison,  
a garish rubber bullet, give me a recruiting narrative,  
I can believe, in gush we trust, but tarry malevolence  
so it does not factfire, your disguise as vacant homily  
to rule of law, how to not flirt in white spaces,  
because collaborating sheriffs need no explanation  
ache to book private prison, promise me reading  
material for my vagrancy, service one white master  
for another, and isn't that what my master[s] is good for,  
here chaw like covenant, I've returned. Agsubliac Pay!  
is so much fun, to jig a brown dance on milky stage,

let's do it twice,  
let's do it thrice?

[Not another flipping fob bitchin  
about empire and academic insinuations.]

Four/Fore! Fourteen.  
Let's do it white.



best GRO you can bid, surge pricing at its best, hope  
the VA don't cut my pension, Ima USA's ambassador  
in da boondocks, where Ima Kurtz and Kingpin.

[If he hadn't mentioned *Apocalypse Now*, or Marvel  
I couldn't jive with another brown prostitution poem.]

Not all these peasants, oh banana laurel,  
oh sampaguita, rice swined and swindle, meet  
a granddaughter, her father remits Saudi pennies,  
oh little fuck, you are = to suckling pig, a dark  
companion, to industrially pose postponed  
sovereignty, ilking imposter, there is no curing  
syndromatic, this white love of yours insane.  
MacArthur will not white ball too mouth, sticky not  
her coming down his legs, surface effects peal.

[Tapping food prostitution, picked up  
hitchhiking thru college.]

Dimple by his side, not in the closet, not him  
a closet type, but his choice of harem, no moderate  
there, White Privilege has plain as snail.

[MLK's white moderates, I address Alameda City  
Council as referring "Letters from a Birmingham  
Jail," one a refugee Syrian's granddaughter, other  
a Polish grandson, Holocaust killed the rest, both  
framing Madame Vice Mayor, granddaughter of  
Pinoy farm labor and Japanese internment. There  
wavering resolution, fear federal defunding, what  
bones to pick, or justice, there is no small step takin.]

I do not agree as follow. Didn't my own mother  
cower to make sexy hyphen. She the blip, to his celibacy.  
Just like the Dimple at his side, leave no evidentiary  
in the gene pool, because that's a deportation, honey.  
At least he's white, won't swing him from a tree.  
No, I cannot imagine her having sex, there'd be  
ubiquitous moles to feed, then too many bragging.  
Gilt she'd place on their existence, worship me!

I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
<b>GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE</b>	
I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
<b>GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE</b>	
I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
<b>GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE</b>	
I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
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I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
<b>GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE</b>	
I believe in my whiteness	I believe in my whiteness
<b>GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE</b>	

Had I not played the blonde boy's game  
and thought his terms of usage democratic,  
would I have challenged him to meet after  
school in Chipman's school yard behind  
typing class portable because "I cannot wait  
for a more convenient season," the brown boys  
and black boys are staring, because I am not

enough white to them, even the nerd must fight  
because every time blonde boys lose at their own  
game, they can't pass for sayin'

## **GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE**

Maybe blonde boy will knock white privilege  
out of me, don't even know if he's an officer's son.  
Don't they know we walk to school, morning,  
return too, here chaw covenant, because who  
wants to be reminded, the color of one's skin job  
is real and cruel skaping, its deportation honey.  
This is their revenge, every white boy called  
out yard, the campus waiting justice, not order.  
But such our colony would have been, Oh  
Sanctuary City, she'd be against, because she  
loves herself them blonde boys, especially  
when they dirty talk her sons,

## **GO BACK TO THE JUNGLE**

she never good anticipating trends, now this island  
mingled. More than some people here can  
handle. She would call ICE, report her neighbor,  
to be reigning Dimple. Barf the purity? Title  
goes to her and her ambition. I could have  
boarded school, as to how darkly held against  
favored siblings, now ghosts to my mine, dust  
hyphenation to cleave, clawing within Intramuros,  
brine to meet oneself as oneself, the grout to thick  
and unyielding, that eyesore, slight pyroclastic  
bulge. Craniometrists douse seizures to crack  
specimens to fontanel, to find the jungle,

a brown jig, and whiter love, because infancy trauma exerts space between ideal savages, clucks bootstraps, but who can afford a boot, an evolved tamaraw yoked to a savage's ideal, plod hard, without Dimples I'm nothing to the white man, and his bulge, to every child in his waking, get off my fucking lawn, no tradin' loincloth for his loins, my mouth closed to feed, but these white lies are so smooth, so I cluck, oh dear, your consonant flusters are fucked, solicit at your doorstep, magazine subscription or my body, why read about my death, when you can kill me, in every unsolicited text, as signed, I'd never be as white with that fucked tongue, tho charity I'd be as white as the next stepfather, cornfed/bred, that is their revenge, to karaoke a lovesong when Kundiman ain't, so droppin' Magic Mike because "No Room for Hate" is a missed memo, like dissolve to judge blind. You sure to have me as your Pilipino? Find someone else, caesuras realign and masturbating, white wallpaper creeping.

[Remember at a PAA/LaRaza poetry reading I think maybe before 9/11, after poets identified "the white enemy" by claiming there is a "white enemy" as substance as hands so invisible, as ghostly reach around. Then my turn to brown stage, and told them, yeah, I told them, that "the white enemy" they refuse to clearly identify is my white stepfather. I told them by person, pointing out a brown brother in the audience, "why you clap against "the white enemy" when your white girlfriend sits with you," or to the brown sister, "why you speak against

“the white enemy” and return to your white boy friend.” You can’t rid complicated. You can’t say there is this white enemy, but then demo in front of us all, that you have a white problem, you going to tell that boy or girl, after tonight, you gots yourself religion, and now time to part ways? Career kill or community suicide I fall on this implication in front of cowards. Yeah I know Amerasian ally, still sore, a poet called you Amerasian but you wear it like Purple Heart, I know what you going to say to me: “Check your White Privilege!” I share my white fantasy to be called Amerasian.]

Feed me a SPAM line and I’m yours for unmaking  
what more can I lose, dignity? social media gone  
and jury will not believe a brown man against  
contrite, this is their revenge, preemption, do  
they like squirms because white poetry needs  
brown bodies to injure grammar, more the merrier,  
more mispronunciation, more garble garble,  
sweet that exotic sweetener, pass the truncheons,  
this writing exercise to body count, we love this  
rising white supremacy, doing the hard work,  
that exquisite corpse and obits obliging odes,  
like the gun to my head, the white barrel to stutter,  
call it brute, here forceps tonsil out of the way,  
ghostwrite your poem, so all can cry some death,  
was it imperialism that killed you? the Po-lice,  
passionate heat, because in the boonies, a heart  
throb for NRA’s stand and deliver open carry.  
Oh nouma, throb gullet, here larynx thrive or die,

here chest, to aim, that deft lyric, toggle exotic  
punch, there's a limit to inseme, or is there?  
Do poets buy guns, what happens if subjects  
diminish, who to shoot? And is that why I valued  
Vanessa Williams removing me from the equation,  
take Amy Gier as I have? And God, George Burns,  
saying yes you are white as you want to me, keep  
thieving your mother's porn. Penthouse. Playboy.  
Miss America. Miss Universe. Or is it poetry needs  
its whiteness, either the page of its capture, between  
type and guillotine, this line needs more whiteness,  
here thread to audience, cheer cheer cheer, guffaw,  
acknowledge chaste ballast to focal tremble,  
like mediocrity knowing it lost its own game, can't  
amend rules, but white allies distracting brown  
wards, credit your errored ways, a second chance,  
because loving the brown folk risks white fall,  
tumbling. Laughlines to yellowface, that I'm not  
enough yellow. Given to shoot. Along riverbank  
to sea, like Caliban. He's enough yellow, right,  
in his fish stock, he knows, he can't check his white  
privilege, all pillory and consuming. There net.  
Along roadside, constellation to map. There coyote.  
Along bed, beneath and demoted. There pet.  
There mythic gatekeep, to summarily wince,  
I can never be as white, as a close friend, as married,  
I hear as wined, there squint as lead, there apology,  
but white supremacy makes none. Let's keep  
Caliban from speaking. This is their revenge.  
Defund Sesame Street, because Elmo is subversive.

[Anticipates the colonial subject interrogating  
the Empire, Mark Twain's "To the Person

Sitting in Darkness,” give the slave the master’s  
language, and the master will soon lose literature.]

English for white people preferring school vouchers,  
because Dept. of Ed relied on Big Bird, is yellow!  
And Obama’s birth certificate, Mr. Snuffleupagus’s  
faked. This is their revenge. Upward Bound, too.  
In L. Hejinian’s hospitality, after B. Andrews’s after  
party hosted by J. Spahr, in the company of “given  
them a chance” a white readership, he *careless whispers*  
analysis of white betrayal, forgiveness of white  
experimentation, because liberals need know limits,  
“Because you are Brown.” It is that simplistic,  
another brown killing, white mediocre, white frail,  
white phage, white love, white paranoia,  
each consignment gangs to thought and remission  
their aggression mismeasured as mirco, atavistic,  
listen as loud as pillow talk, as contrast collides  
to reading series handshakes can 1 person represent  
the species, but where my mind is in West Virginia  
curators see bright breech tropic, monsoon supered,  
artisanal rice beside undernourished bollocks  
tethered to not so invisible empire, every scrotum  
condemned to chime, no they see a paddy shark  
skulk or scavenge connotations crumbs to meter,  
harsh white language garbled garbled brown tongue  
given him a gladiolus, given him a fork, give pens  
to twist a duplo or talinghagha, pirouette to bow  
so this to a welcomed diversity, each token pays  
the joystick, as real as allowed, to borrowed  
stage to second guessed my vigilance, to self-  
serving lycra, applause, no vow is safe to fascism,  
so sell me down river because there has not been

a hanging in years, when the State comes for poets,  
brown poets to the front, publication-political act  
makes easier, look at how journals want to describe  
my brownness, and unAmerican name-political act  
makes easier, removes the need for collaborators,  
for policy is easier, so step aside when million  
marches fold, the guild accomplices willfully  
disguise to delusive mixed glee, for never again  
to explain miscegeny. *Positively, No Filipinos*  
in this family. Here erase. I take no cue. I am after  
fall Hot Lips Houlihan's child. Ahead of police  
report or autopsy, no he wasn't white at all confers  
the avant-garde, was a good brown. Our brown.

### **CHECK YOUR WHITE PRIVILEGE**

Call yourself a poet, you cannot even pronounce

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This is their revenge. I expected their reckoning.  
My resistance to save his skin, and thus taken.  
Now the over-reach redefines status, or gross  
paternity, to what sum time-in-service disqualifies

who was wedded and who was adopted, to turn back this clock of love, or opportunism, worse to Zippo raid and annul, because the White House cares not of “Everyone Belongs Here,” and needs another brown killing, so stake their ass yours, take swastika to your Demo party favor, how dwell much to get out of their country, Border Patrol and TSA mightily assist, now your flex miles collect, now your insurance policy to debit, now your tax return to overturn residency, now your passport to fraud, now birthplace-not the proving ground for dreamers, now supreme law of the land reduced to 18 holes golfing the Gulf Stream, and in each sand trap a cheat, need not Alaska to see Russia, dining room goons selfie footballs, plod melting ice caps, white wall divides us from them, now union, caddies armed and ironed, rack their balls, Secret Service to tee, swing buffoon his tirade twitter, yes should we have closed 1355 Market, for every violation of use, and is this how the election was lost to real-time as indentured, so return the block to short-time hotels and dime-slot peekaboos, while oligarchs bid resources to pipelines, leak not their intentions, kill SEALs while at the helm but what captain to be scened, intelligent, there the fairway his collected entourage, report not the battle raging, but greatness greatness again. March Madness, NFL Combine, Spring Training, inoculate the worry, gladiators are gladly paid mansions, secure white trustees to white funds, the Markets blithely and national guards to mining guilds, to each decolonizer ground scan, to mine

ashes after all grizzlies are killed in their sleep,  
so hibernate perhaps, ease EPA's passing, strike  
departments from the Hill, lull now balm,  
greatness greatness feel to painless replacement,  
you think, and let's kill eagles too, and wolves,  
because inferiority is complex, white security is  
anadromous herring and didn't Obama disarm  
Tomahawks, SSNs what good is stealth enfeebled,  
oh hail mary them nuke options few, permafrost  
warmed and credit not radioactivity, cheers  
to fresh water, because Nestle's huge appetite,  
cares whom Clean Water Act when tundra trades  
balance, to coal flushed to streams but here rises  
Fukushima's strontium to our fisheries, so pass  
sushi boat, hold wasabi, this tuna hot, so breathe  
and not choke Earth is great at recovering, but  
as public address rewind, this is not about makin  
Earth great again, perhaps we all die that's fine,  
billionaires have their doomsday capsules, slaves  
surviv'n exist for them,

[but look silicon valley's Asian billionaires  
and their Great Plains hobbit holes, deep pockets  
excuse their lack of whiteness]

so these seedbanks, their preserve, motivate  
to ox, conspire end of day, cocktails fluff cocked  
cabinet cannot we not remember brinkmanship,  
Rube Rubio glad to be, duck to fake cover of facts,  
that he too will not be as white, but is okay, his  
fraud to sell impresses, an ark place, obtrude now  
ostriching? Constituents whom to fool. How once  
I feared a nuclear war, when Reagan not Kennedy,

gamed the ambassador, get a load of me squelch'n  
Lala Land's Olympic flame sooner relieve honored  
medals, and no fly zone do predict magic bullets.  
But Star Wars now more diverse, fanned Storm-  
trooper cadres lost to themselves, shoot everything,  
desert life. Goes wayside white fathers never goose-  
stepped as now, gladly pensioned further afield,  
foreign here, this is not the empire defended,  
reduced to outposts, to drone strikes, to Special Ops.  
This is their revenge, insularity, to bring troops  
home. Screen soldiers whose combat, illegal  
for citizenship, your children may stay to risk too  
for safe return, if that is the trade. Veterans pray  
where you are...but Alameda has vaults, the tide.

[Watch now, recruitment drive, purged  
of color and creed, to pander the white  
nationalist, sinks standards, DLI defunded.  
Oh white war to expand military operations.]

As I have remained, perhaps on their behalf, legacy  
of warbrides, and Little Brown Fuck Machines.  
Amerasian to be half as closed to what I desired most?  
Half breed. Would I have relished to be called,  
because there'd be less guesswork to my hysterics.  
Make no mends for Capitol or Capital baits  
bridges uptruss to fall, not great enough to fail,  
so scythe refined wind winding 80 south,  
through bored burbs BART cannot reach, and  
other flight as limited, tuned to road and white  
getting home, should they care the pressgangs,  
lawns untended, growing, protections removed

from them, their gyre mocks the tilting Millennium,  
who will shear the dandelion, weed parachute  
head? Trim hedge. Clean rain gutter. Oh look,  
there are no lines to the Taco Truck, and Home  
Depot's quite empty? So soon to soothe, no carbon  
credit appeals, berate green investments, efficient  
is dereg, are corporations ready embrace? Grace  
or trap? Blue States seek to condemn, for swamp  
now threatens white foul, have we admired the precursor  
far too late, Hillary's oath to office offshored norm  
asthmatics preclude the Council as jesters teethe  
the grain bait white victim to their cause, what risk  
assesses white mediocrity when white takes podium  
to interlocutor, notice white mediocrity, and is it not  
verily familiar as white moderate and liberal as many  
white poets toward the left, allied because solidarity  
is a retried voice, no subject but their depravity,  
their stillness, their mediocrity moves behind them,  
they are following the March, implicating fair  
treatment for all, and their street credential wanting  
mic time stating their furiosity, their coalition,  
He feels his whiteness diminishing, and speaks,  
he feels his whiteness a rally cry, he feels  
his whiteness colors the enemy, and those allied  
to its education, he feels it's unfair that bilingual,  
he feels his whiteness entitles him to speak  
for white femininity, he feels his whiteness  
will convince the City leaders to defer to whiteness  
he feels his whiteness will be vindicated by  
the federal government to jig the grandfathered  
clauses and lift these white stormgates against races  
home to what was for white bed, only unless  
new money worth keeping, like billionaire trust,

to root stalled base recovery, to wear the toxic  
asset well, attest the white popular view, reign sky  
line to fiscal independence, columbarium can  
not keep perhaps for illegal veterans denied  
benefits, so trail and toast the Monarch's way,  
pray liquefaction shies before the next election,  
if such is still conceived bipartisan, but how shall  
we splinter warn the king tide's cometh, reprisal  
upon me, and those shoulder-to-shoulder in town  
hall, for it is not white fear of white tyrants but brown  
bravery? to not bend, so shelter son your whiteness,  
when police state removes our footing is obsolete  
the Constitution, now darkened with white time  
and amendment, founding fathers decry the slave  
uprising, so rewhite the textbooks mandates Devos  
or Blackwater will deploy the editorial board,  
white mediocrity hard at work, white counterclock,  
replace each principal a firing squad, and charter,  
Ministry of White sanctions, disprove against  
your knowing, dusk interned when amphibians  
track Crown Beach, Urban Warrior returns as  
planned and played to a trumpet, this pacifier  
usurp those proud unwhite Americans, hosts those  
beat by war El Salvadoran or Syrian, Afghan  
or Bosnian, Vietnamese or Lao, tossed to road,  
here by air or sea, Civil War or Cold War,  
Intifada or Intervention, deforestation or sea-level  
rise, coup or nationalism, for the States armed  
branding munitions made here, look son above,  
drones and each brown child trained to one, sights  
or guiding, are you so comfortable as surveilled,  
movements less anonymous, computed in target  
array, oh satellite, oh cool, to his Iphone, am I

too endanger by affiliation, cronied to Android,  
so fares access and deniability, jury yet to decide,  
and judges decide labor and those scapegoated  
to steal worthiness as lifting spear from soil to plate  
or wipe the convalescent ass as white heirs have come  
to term an archipelagan hand most soft to sweep,  
diapers to the causeway, and the perfect colonial  
subjects, reinforced to ICE, would your privilege  
be a white bystander, though choice before love, deny  
yourself ethnicity because I will never be as white,  
as a white friend would argue logic, if color is  
to have no kinship to you because have I not  
always been white in my father's eyes? To adore?  
Have we played menace no more lambent nor  
minority? How am I to mark their white vengeance?  
Scars fishpoled, chained abrasions, cuts extrude  
veins, brute palm to head, oh welt or water cure,  
oh percussive, screaming fooled me once! Oh fooled  
me twice! Aghast, fooled a third! Four/Fourteen!  
Redeeming fault as trust, ever? Benevolence?  
Or their sheer power and joy to ruin? Bruce Andrews  
*careless whispers* "Because you are Brown." White's  
term of use if you fail to play their game, know when  
and how to lose. Vicarious do white bystanders exhibit  
the same ruthless. Cowards. Did I plot them dead,  
as cliché as horrified stock, breathe such philanthropy,  
oh gust and gushing, the elder poet prescribes, "I Cannot  
Guarantee Your Safety" henceforth exorcise, but Brown  
is how I am marked outside and notable. There is no  
sneaking in and out of white places, no hiding.

**BECAUSE YOU ARE BROWN  
NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOUR INNOCENCE  
YOU WILL NEVER BE AS WHITE  
I CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY  
BECAUSE YOU ARE BROWN  
NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOUR INNOCENCE  
YOU WILL NEVER BE AS WHITE  
I CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY  
BECAUSE YOU ARE BROWN  
NO ONE WILL BELIEVE YOUR INNOCENCE  
YOU WILL NEVER BE AS WHITE  
I CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY  
Oh white mediocrity. This is their revenge.  
Oh brown killing. This is their revenge.**

I have wondered what my Step-father's family thought of mother, weakened in Appalachian winter? Was she as dark anthracite to them? Did they question a coal miner's son choosing her, what diseased mind denies his body whiteness? How to mark vengeance upon him, through her, by me, inseed. A brown boy in their white making, as easily destroyed. This air I. They do not know gratitude from breathing because white people will believe violence attributed to our nature. Not progressive moral internment, the fears of white mediocrity is its irrelevance. Its rescue. Here condemn Sanctuary, as quarantined.



**I MAKE A SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE NAME  
OF THE SUN, THE MIRROR, THE DAILY STAR**



On the  
border between  
sleep and  
wakefulness naked  
replicas across  
the land

Silicon and  
wax body  
doubles on  
the border  
between figurative  
and abstract

The liminal  
space of  
“sleep” where  
the scene  
is dimly  
lit

A dreamlike  
world, naturalistic  
breathing ad  
nauseum in  
the media

Lush all-  
overness of  
the whole  
almost like  
a pressure  
cooker down  
to the  
personal level

Across the  
surface in  
a long  
meaningful tradition

An occasional  
heaving of  
a ribcage

The final  
tableau of  
a possible  
romantic past

Row after  
row of  
interlocking limbs

Nightmare fuel  
of cows  
and horses  
and antelopes  
and buffaloes

Sublime evenness  
at the  
image of  
the heart

A favorite  
photoshoot convention  
commonly found  
in oil  
paintings

Abstracted swirls  
of suggestively  
rumpled sheets  
(the magazine  
cover version)

All half-  
lidded eyes  
and just  
a vague  
body like  
babies are  
the kernel  
of salvation,  
not mutually  
exclusive terms

An artistic  
statement of  
canonical authority

On screen  
or within  
the novel

Depth of  
vision is  
all internal

On a  
road trip  
to a  
long vacation  
to West  
Texas a  
natural candidate,  
kind of  
a thriller

The mood  
of the  
book is  
tense in  
spots

A number  
of elements  
can be  
found off  
the road

Nocturnal animals,  
separate timelines

Not some  
banal gift  
in limited  
theaters

The links  
between characters  
result in  
a pulpy,  
glossy exterior

Just a  
stunt by  
a famous  
designer

From the  
train window,  
a suburban  
melodrama

Below the  
surface, retrograde  
misfires from  
an earlier  
era

With all  
kinds of  
temperaments in  
mind

Twisty plotting  
through a  
heavy dose  
of monochrome  
advertising

The upstate  
bedroom communities  
are another  
touchpoint for  
popular romances

Not the  
chilly cinema  
or bourgeois  
norms

Nor wish-  
fulfillment fantasies,  
dramatic irony,  
critiques of  
normcore values

Let's move  
on

Even further  
into the  
red toward  
an homage  
to the  
mid-century  
social melodrama

With titular  
train shuttles  
and an  
old-fashioned  
martini with  
two olives

There's a  
shrink, there's  
illicit sex,  
and red  
lipstick of  
the 1950s

The current  
wave of  
some new  
overwrought revelation  
pushes the  
needle

The plot  
derangement meter  
starts to top  
out and  
that's the  
convention

A transparent  
romantic fantasy  
is what  
we expected

A hollow,  
burned-out  
shell

A former  
Miss Universe  
and TV  
anchor who  
are basically  
ice zombies  
were caught  
grabbing and  
kissing weapons

An unsettling  
sequence of  
events with  
everything you  
need to  
know

You don't  
wonder if  
they'll survive

She needed  
to forget  
her old life

She revealed  
her true  
identity

It was  
an unusual  
choice

The wine,  
the fake  
university, the  
reality show

The books  
were frozen  
in place

A cliffhanger,  
but the  
good kind



**ELEVEN POEMS**



Something I would never say,  
skipping over Mesa, cautious.  
First we align our necks, I worry  
I dreamt the California part.  
First I identified parts, then  
I resented. Finally, I was confused.  
I went looking for evidence  
of the supernatural, lit a lot  
of candles. Prayer was impossible.  
First I wanted to be a fan, follow  
any guidance. Ate til I was sick,  
felt it coming as a chill first.  
Resumed my purpose, resting  
easy, but never finished.

Or riding a comet with summer friends  
or being chased away by it. I won't know  
what New York will be like after  
people. I ask myself, who is this  
sleeping passenger next to me, moving  
through the evening with us?

Trust me, I never  
leave the house  
without twelve granola bars.

And when we're sharing a Nature Valley  
lying on the temple floor, you'll thank me.

I'm spray painting flowers  
then wrapping them in foil  
and burying them in the yard.  
You know, for the future.  
I'm sharpening my trophies,  
packing back-up glasses. You know,  
for my enemies.

But did you know that in some towns,  
during the Italian Resistance, donkeys  
were used both by peasants and partisans,  
working the fields during the day  
and transporting weapons at night?  
Everywhere I look a champion.

Everywhere I look.

Jennifer says it's easy to start over.  
Steal thunder from above the mouth of hell  
have it indoor and open regardless of weather.  
Water monster, present.

And I'll just want to make something  
beautiful, the lights on a personalized truck,  
buy beer for my underage sibling,  
Deep Sea. Trouble pursues, but only you  
notice. I follow close, in a  
country western button-up. Mind  
games are the least fun, unless you're  
fucking evil. When I believed  
and fights erupted at parties, doing  
shit but not really wanting to, any  
of it, in through the kitchen.  
There's always a forgotten studio band  
where lights are brightest, the back room.  
Lately I've been getting vertigo on any stairs  
at work. I guess I meant safe different.  
Swan neck or snake, the one with  
the beautiful voice. Sacred heart, can't lose.

Nighttime, lakeside,  
that was my going-in plan  
getting enough fiber.  
I could take care of people  
in a commune setting.  
I could offer something.  
Holy Fucking Shit Coffin,  
strike me down if I  
don't notice.

## Les Contes de Hoffmann

Among things that have been hard on me  
lately, the new awareness that without  
warning, anything can become  
just another shitty thing isn't so bad.  
If the world runs out of lovers,  
the lovers will say, hand in hand  
on the overpass. She had been awoken  
last night by a loud sound, coming from  
the delphiniums, and she saw  
strange movements through the window.  
The next morning, playing in the garden,  
flowers weaving around each other, the dog  
watched the family with a determined calm.  
When Shy Glizzy calls his lover  
terrific in "Funeral," eating toblerone  
at the Met, and this stolen prop motorcycle  
that will collapse at dawn, we'll still have  
each other. Something mysterious was afoot,  
and she knew she had to be ready.  
I'll be in my room, vacation spent  
listening to my heart in my chest  
every mall in my head abandoned,  
and overtaken by deer.

The lights are much brighter there  
you can forget all your troubles,  
away from your body.

No more, no more forever, trees at night.  
That's a little statue. It's called a statuette.

Then I choose the bad part, regularly  
misinterpret exchanged glances. Crawling  
under the hedge home, I sit and wait  
for the orange tint declaring the approach  
of the avenging angel. I know peace.  
You're below the overhang in the rain,  
getting wet. A littler herbal for me,  
unaccustomed, Wax Monument, what can  
a comforter protect us from? Then I tumble  
down the elevator shaft, heroic, ungainly.  
Then they looked like three talons  
from an enormous bird. Ignore it till it's  
too late is not working out as I planned.  
I'm afraid to disappoint this stranger  
in the wine store, why? Honestly. Twelve more  
things depart while I'm in the secret room  
above the office, looking for clues in the  
nervous side of your elbow, little spit machine.  
How does anyone else do it? I'll wake up  
when we hit land, not sure yet if I've felt  
employable. You better look out for love.

Seems kind of weird  
to be nostalgic for a  
world you destroyed.  
But maybe not as weird  
as a fake one. How old  
am I? I ask myself in all  
seriousness.

What makes me feel secure,  
other than the ash blanket,  
the wrist sling, the moment  
I stress about needlessly.

Often in a mist, to be sure,  
I have wandered, yeah, obdurate  
but scared. In gold letters:  
No Self Control. To be part  
of all that reposes, counted  
of spirit, I have the impression  
of sinking into the earth,

I remember running loops  
around the school gymnasium,  
Celine Dion on the loudspeakers,  
transported. Dusted up rocks  
block the door and I panic  
because I'm not sure if I  
would be more afraid to  
live in outer space or underground,  
and I think I'll have to decide soon.

It looks like it's coming from under  
the puddle in this sad bathroom light,

things with spells on them, frogs  
at amusement parks in the moonlight, cry-eating.

One flash from above and I'm  
hiding out at the movies,

I'm training my replacement,  
barely touching the water masked,

all the things my horoscope kept,  
my uniform golden and covered in sand,

out burying my emeralds, graceful bugs  
cleanse it all.

Sorely missed or sorely divided like  
having been in a tent with your twin  
a long time ago. All along it was we  
who were sneaking into the house,  
deserting the markets. I remember  
I'd never heard the word 'vitriolic'  
on the radio so many times as I  
did that summer until this summer.  
Then I started saying it. I engineered,  
I wasted, lived through magazine.  
I said I don't need anything  
else but I didn't even know. I get  
a rash from the sun on my shoulders.  
Caught in the endless hoop of disco  
is where I see myself in five years.

Did Jennifer slowly pull a brown hair  
from off her jacket? Wrapt attention, cool  
breeze from the window where the hearts  
still on the mantle. Jennifer walked with  
the devil, swam with the devil in the pool.  
'Charmante' I said. Believe and trust,  
they said, but I can neither. Anything over  
mystery rabbits, wouldn't go with you  
anywhere. With my candle and braids,  
decorative shin bones. Feels like spring

on a heavy tourmaline evening. Now that I  
finally have the body of my dreams.  
Trapped in this reliquary, hourglass  
winged. Merry green wind.

"We'll have our will in the woods,  
the waters, and the meadows"  
I write in the sand with my toe.  
The tide seems to rush, opens up,  
I pretend I'm the mysterious  
lady, alone in the chorus,  
eating a doughnut.



israel, shayna s.

**OF PRESENT MIND: DADA, THE LYRIC "I"  
& INTERMEDIA PERFORMANCE**



This paper begins by accepting—although with important caveats—Peter Bürger’s (1974) premise that the historical avant-garde failed in its objective to dismantle the institution of art and reintegrate art back into society. With what the paper contends is his pessimism about the matter. The Dadaists failed; for, the realization of their aims would mean the rising up of a state that would violate their proletarian aims for societal emancipation, namely the freeing of one’s state of mind in celebration of transrational, primordial instincts. Even literary criticism, itself, enjoys a special institutional role in bourgeois society. Quoting Roland Barthes, Jochen Schulte-Sasse shares, “the exchange recuperates everything, acclimating what appears to deny it” (Bürger, 2009, p. xli). While the market makes an effort to recoup everything, there are still aspects of existence that it finds object. Therein the aforementioned foothold, the Dadaists—even in their failure—offer an important methodology of resistance, the exaltation of the idiot-genius, the madman, the obscene—a theory of the idiosyncratic.

To clarify, returning art back to the proxis of life in large part, for the Dadaists in particular, meant dismantling the weight that art as an institution had “in determining the real social effect and value of individual works” (Bürger, 2009, p. 83). It is important, for Bürger, to highlight that “the avant-garde did not put an end to the production of works of art, and that the social institution that is art proved resistant to the avant-gardiste attack” (Bürger, 2009, p. 57).

an overemphasis on it what the avant-gardists failed rather than a balanced perspective as to what they also

achieved, in some cases inadvertently, is precarious. To focus on the DeDeists' foiled aims is to trace of what resultantly gets opened up—particularly a revolution of the lyric form and the possible determinations of post-avant-gardist art.

I agree with Elizabeth Willis in “seeking to avoid reductionist rhetoric that poses language poetry on the one end and lyric as necessarily confessional and epiphonic on the other” (Hoover, 2013, p. 714). I, too, want to avoid reductionist rhetoric that pits the avant garde against the lyric. It is my belief, to borrow some of the language from Willis, that the contemporary or late lyric “overlaps with, rather than opposes, the aesthetics of ‘language’ or ‘post-language’ writing” or avant-gardist writing (ibid). The lyric’s objective—in a technical sense—overlaps with DeDeist aims.

Overall in this paper, I want to highlight that the DeDeists’ failure in their foremost objective to return art and its valuation back into social relations allows for the technical features and objectives of the lyric to surface—which were previously subsumed under discussions of content and hermeneutics. Culler considers the lyric a viable critical category with a distinctive language formation and definitional stance that I will explore further in Section 3. For this section, it is important to note that the lyric, in its highly idiosyncratic nature, resists imposed metaphysical closures that restrain the construction of alternate grammars as well as the fragmentation of and exemption from meaning, for example the discontinuous prison song or the lamentation of the madman. In other words, like the DeDeists, the lyric contends with and ultimately fails to integrate into the normative organizational forms of meaning found in institutions such as art and traditional social mores. While I am not in this paper going to argue that DeDeism failed because it was a lyrical event, I want to set up the foundations for that future argumentation—setting the

forementioned phenomenon in positive terms, as one of the preconditions for ushering in a contemporary revitalization of lyric theory—particularly, in forming a practice of the idiosyncratic.

In implicit opposition to modern French post-structuralism, according to Schulte-Sasse, Bürger locates the avant garde as historically defined around the early 1920s – 1930s rather than by a critical consciousness of language as a continuation of tendencies found within aestheticism (Bürger, 2009, p. xiv). The avant garde arose after an understanding of its social status, the autonomous “mode in which it functioned in bourgeois society” (ibid). The historical avant garde contrasted previous art movements in its refusal to accept its autonomous position and its attack on the institution of art. Like the lyric, much discussion in literary criticism has anchored on the “pathos not the praxis of the modern artist,” not on what modern art was able to accomplish in its technicity (Bürger, 2009, p. xxxvi). *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, edited by Mary Ann Caws, features over two hundred artistic and cultural manifestos, including those of the Dadaists. The widespread use of the artist manifesto among the avant garde as a form of expression reveals crucial details as to its proletarian aims, its championing of the collective over atomized, mechanized relations. The lyric’s use of invocation—calling into being what it speaks—exposes the metaphoric operation through which the lyric expresses its truth claims. In either case, overemphasizing the hermeneutics or existential effect works to grossly misapprehend the contributions of both these artistic developments on the art world and larger society.

The revolutionary effect of the avant garde demolishes the traditional concept of organic works of art and “destroys the possibility that a given school can present itself with the claim to universal validity” (Bürger, 2009, p. 87). While the avant

grade failed in its objective of returning art back into social valuation, it destroyed “the possibility of positing aesthetic norms as valid ones” (ibid). No work of art could make an argument for its superiority over another by laying claim of temporal lineage; it was all arbitrary, as the Dadaist helped us see. For example, like Duchamp had proven, all one had to do was sign his/her name and enter an object into the existence of art. Calling something art had nothing to do with lighting techniques or composition, it truly was all arbitrary, all ours.

The Dadaists made clear it was an impersonal, privatized, mechanized abstraction standing in place of the societal valuation of art. They made explicit that the valuation of art—for example, placing stock in a work via the authentication of signatures or assessing its origins and thus value via the properties of paint—was not the actions of a person, an artist, but a symbolic, institutionalized copy mark—privatization exemplified as copyright.

Further the avant grade dismantled the universal validity claim that what made something a work of art is in the unity of parts to the whole (organic works). The Dadaist held up non-organic work as desirable; work that did not ask any individual element to work toward something unified. Bürger writes, “The parts ‘emancipate’ themselves from a superordinate whole; they are no longer its essential elements. This means that the parts lack necessity” (Bürger, 2009, p. 80). He continues, “[for] the avant-gardiste work, the parts have a significantly larger autonomy vis-à-vis the whole. They become less important as constituent elements of a totality of meaning and simultaneously more important as relatively autonomous signs” (Bürger, 2009, p. 84). Quoting Brecht, Bürger asserts that the avant grade freed art from being in subordination to the whole, and in that largely they were successful (Bürger, 2009, p. 91).

The lyric's form versus specific iterations of it diminishes referentiality due to its highly idiosyncratic nature, organizing itself around "other features or axes...[which highlight its] refusal to be motivated along semantic lines by frames exterior to [itself]" (Andrews & Bernstein, 1984, p. 39). The words in the lyric are not in service to a unified a priori self but rather the present moment or utterance. In its pure technicity, the lyric is an "associative bond" that "takes place with less guidance from the games and aims of representation or with little grammatical constraint" (Andrews & Bernstein, 1984, p. 35). It is a carnival of self-mangement; "commodification," Bruce Andrews writes, "on the other hand, requires clear signposts" (ibid).

Part of what I am doing here is subverting the language poet argument for a subject-less work of art to highlight an errant fixation on the surface of the lyric's iconic use of first person pronouns. This occurs at the expense of its revolutionary, technical aspects—which are organized by transrational and idiosyncratic principles such as rhythm and asymmetric meter. The technical properties of the lyric accomplish the core aims for which the language poets advocate as well as Dadaists' aims. Harping on the use of first person pronouns, for example, in a rejection of all instrumental language, according to Marjorie Perloff in *Contemporary Poetics*, as commodity fetishism is pernicious and "excessively dismissive of alternative ways of composing poetry," (Armand, 2007, p. 19) such as the ones for which Jonathan Culler advocates in his call for a contemporary revitalization of lyric theory (Theory of the Lyric, 2015).

Andrews shores, "Fragmentation doesn't banish the reference 'embodied' in individual words; merely—they are not placed in a 'series,' in grammar, in a row, 'on a shelf'" (Andrews & Bernstein, 1984, p. 34). Position Andrews's aforementioned

statement and the language poet's axiom to "evacuate the subject" next to Culler's description of the lyric *Les Fleurs du Mal* and its non-serIALIZATION:

Most lyrics are encountered either in isolation or in a collection where there may be little plot to reconstruct and where attention naturally falls on the range of effects, the characteristic verbal and rhythmic techniques, and the general ethos of the poems. In Baudelaire's "Les Fleurs du Mal," for instance, there is no real plot, despite efforts of critics to find one, nor a consistent fictional speaker, despite the ubiquity of the first person. (Culler, 2015, p. 124)

One sees that while there are important distinctions between the lyric, the language poem and Dadaist work of art, there is significant overlap in their technical features. There is no plot to reconstruct in the lyric nor the language poem nor the Dadaist poem. A main organizing feature of the lyric Culler argues is its affectual structure—rhythm, asymmetric meter, emphasis on the verbal. The Dadaist exalted everyday and obscene speech. Roland Greene notes that "lyric discourse is defined by the dialectical play...or correlative modes of apprehension that are nearly always available in every lyric, though particular...schools may try to protect one at the expense of the other" (Culler, 2015, p. 123). Culler calls for a more capacious theory of the lyric. Willis calls for a more expansive school of thought regarding what counts as language and late lyric poetry outside of rigid notions of pronouns use. I call for a broader understanding of not what the Dadaists succeed in their failure—for what that failure illuminates about the lyric.

One, in deep examination of the lyric finds that coherence is subordinated to the act of lyric enunciation. Culler keenly

points out that these technical features of the lyric appear *despite* “the ubiquity of the first person” (Culler, 2015, 124). The lyric is language poetry, Dadaist poetry hiding in plain sight. To take my statement a step further: the lyric’s failure, like the avant-gardists’ failure to integrate art into the praxis of life, to integrate itself into normative institutional structures, is the very thing that helps the lyric succeed—evade absorption by the monolith.

Schulte-Sasse and I hold similar concern for the pessimism displayed by Bürger, Derrida, Adorno and Barthes in discussion of the efficacy of the historical avant-garde. Bürger forgoes the opportunity to extend the theoretical framing he created into hypotheses on possible conditions for the emergence of the post-avant-garde that equally could challenge established literary, artistic and societal institutions. Schulte-Sasse writes that Bürger argues the only possibility for a post-avant-garde would be in the disposal of all traditional stylistic and aesthetic forms rather than an attempt to depose of institutions (Bürger, 2009, p. xl). This falsely draws too much attention away from what the avant-garde succeeds. The above theorists, according to Schulte-Sasse, “attach themselves to a social and political pessimism in the face of the monolith;” he continues, “they take capitalist, bourgeois society to be closed, a monolith without ruptures that would allow intervening practice” (Bürger, 2009, p. xxx). How can literary scholars envision a more capacious notion of the overlapping efficacies of the lyric form and the Dadaist movement?

Bürger demonstrates an incipient awareness regarding the limitations that may arise if the avant-garde had succeeded, but does not, in *Theory* (1974), take that awareness to its logical conclusions:

Given the experience of the false sublation of autonomy [as seen in pulp fiction, for example], one will need to ask whether a sublation of the autonomy status can be desirable at all, whether the distance between art and the praxis of life is not requisite for that free space within which alternatives to what exists become conceivable. (Bürger, 2009, p. 54)

Bürger does note that the success of the avant garde, despite its failure, is helping to enter art into a new relationship with reality. This is as far as he goes. To entertain potential conclusions, the following framings may be of assistance: (1) What spaces for alternative challenges to the institution of art is made more evident in the avant gardists' failure? (2) What other modernist art forms have challenged the institution of art or the privatization of art valuing, whose practitioners may have been brought into greater consciousness of themselves as revolutionary agents due to the Dadaist failure?

How can the preconditions that set the stage for the historical avant garde help us reevaluate the existence of those preconditions in other art forms (or practitioners) such as the lyric form? Bürger insists that "the self-criticism of the social subsystem that is art can become possible only when the contents also lose their political character, and art wants to be nothing other than art" (Bürger, 2009, pp. 26 - 27). The lyric very early on lost its place as well as public valuation within the state as it moved within the private sphere of merchant patrons and ultimately out of fashion in favor of the novel. There are some uncanny intersecting preconditions between the status of the lyric and the status of the modern artist that I address in Section 3.

To conclude Section 1, this paper attempts a “genetic reconstruction of the nexus between the avant-gardiste work,” the lyric form of poetry and “the formal methods of scholarship in literature and the fine arts that elude traditional hermeneutic approaches” (Bürger, 2009, p. 61). Here, I am doing two things: First, again, subverting Bürger’s language like I earlier did of Bruce Andrews to highlight the intersection between the avant-gardists’ and the lyric’s objective; second, to illuminate a point that Culler makes in *Theory of the Lyric* regarding one of the lyric’s aims when he writes that “the lyric performance succeeds as it acts iterably through repeated readings, makes itself memorable” (Culler, 2015, p. 131). The lyric—unsurprisingly contains multitudes, is contradictory, like the Dadaists, in its objectives. Culler shores, “The consummate success [of the lyric] is, ironically, to become commonplace, to enter the language and social imaginary, to help give us a world to inhabit” (ibid). The Dadaists, the lyric, the language poets and scholars seek in their technical procedures to, contradictorily, enter into social relations, enter into the zeitgeist.

Section 2 of this paper seeks to tackle both the problematic features and mischaracterization of the lyric related to fictional personae so that the overlap between the lyric and Dadaism can become more salient.



sneathen, eric

photos by daniel case

**ROOF ENOUGH**







Let me not be voices flying in the air: fierce, bright  
and *all* in, ram it up there. Let me sword the sharp  
sounds, the plummet into my hauntings, has no  
meaning in wild gardens from another distant  
shade. Go, be the same in the evening and create  
a crockpot tasty to the lips. Dream you're in yrself  
without respectability, the door is your hand. Take  
to the bed with the abruptness of deities. Falsify.  
& I'll deal or discard—a strange guy at choice and  
chanced toward the bathhouse, a blonde where no  
meaning is. I would have sex with pleasure with  
the absence in the cubicle, and pointing Gaétan,  
Gaétan in lesions. I've got less stunning because  
“I'm going to die in the very home I'm in





In the autumn of 1983, Gaetan returned from his seminar chambers. Lungs out and wearing him with a dry cough that was tearing weather, he was eager to report what slinks through them all. We were filled with whips, leather hoods, leashes *avant la lettre* I went red throughout my day here, like I'm in trouble—but for a kiss I'll tell of thee like flesh forever. Hands asleep on the floor, breathing deep & incomplete. I fall direly. Fuck, I'm a ghost. And you, do you turn up the lights this way? "Don't be silly," he replied This danger, lurking so popular, "it's even more fantastic." Pairs of nipples foraged by mice, wrapped a thousand years in seats, Broken steamily. We are only just a hint of ourselves.

Gaetan snatched me up my dick like diamonds,  
A man passing grazes Times Square has my gasp  
and returns somewhat more lonely & voluptuous.  
I circle around with a dozen men who feel & shoot  
into the center of these punk eyes, a storm that  
loves me, stars flung open-handed acquaintances.  
Blowing suppleness off the bed with the yawn  
of judgment. Gaëtan examined my right nipple,  
he cancelled me—ripe water, a moon laughing—  
O, just end it I said, “hit my ass nameless”— &  
how many times reading out his KS do I emerge  
uncertain, a theory of gay cancer,” as he’d say,  
“abandoned, among animals, feel me go forth &  
if air sea island is roof enough, so are you.”





Luscious you are yearning and will always be:  
a swimmer naked in the love-plums and melons  
of arousal, trembling curves of succulent fruits,  
made me faint from exultation like a pinwheel  
blown past any shame. The mouth needs contact,  
my own quick smile used in brief moments. Says  
“Stick it *in*, stick it in the midnight-blackened sky  
me—hurt me more—*more* of the baths, come on!  
Meaning I was penetrated, inducing awe, gilded  
by beauty and short-circuiting pain. Tell that story,  
anonymous, androgynous was the light to save  
my life. Each breath went forward. The day a wet  
rose, uncut and hung at the beach. Each beacon  
held in place, greedily, pretty much just like me.

We want to be alive or at least intactness: to be taken singular, strong, if not sweat and blood and flesh curvaceous in the buried earth and waste. We means it, the notes that want it, true economic forces at work out troubling your hand on a hill; upon a French accent *throbs* beneath your clothing. San Francisco's homosexuals turned into supermarkets or parking all night in those old places waiting to be defiled in urinals. A victim lies slack into upstairs rooms for torture, wedging whole sections of dismantled trucks eased into my ass, a canary in the mine, incorruptible fascination. I stood in the middle of eyes, hands over my body, outpacing gold. & may we all be desired—I was.





Find a way to smile while whispering like leftovers in the fridge and me, my way was to give a charity fuck: all perfect arms, plastic stuff might give him sores. The bullies who called to him in forests and jungles of sperm-fire and the crack of poppers our war harnessed or completely absorbed by *fuck* and shit, I could hold all the sensual Greek breezes. Like I can come, man. I mean, I love it in the aisle, facing everything in the *world*. And a *couple* of guys calls out to me *come*. I do like them and all and you. I hope I've messed with your stupid display—the biggest slut that ever was such a large trend, in which you make me appear in real fear of desire. We're not all a lucky thing.

“Why did you call me his face?—two dots and a name. I don’t mind. But an erection—that interests you?” It’s all poisons, voices, diligently sought for many years lapping apples and lemons, pallid fruits, if we only knew what goes into them: Sweet night clinging through so many droughts; the far off sounds of subway station, the right man delights his hips. Gaétan, just present, now down in the second row He abruptly swung around his scar on the borderline open at his chest. Certainly, sea, I yield to the vessel, sliding in passed him the virus warp & woof, victory & relief. I showered off this time but he couldn’t divine waves of nearness, floating. Yes, I dropped semen—but they proved it







Do I describe 'Gaetan'? That's not my line. He's given me why you always call me him. Denial's going to my ass and fucked him; I figured he knows you're the cause, your every disease known today. Don't let go easily. They had you in a GRID clinic. That rumor, a deck of shuffled attendants that still had yet to fly all over the world. You can make me into any one thing, this particle passing right-side up—the story, greedily, without any climax. Let's say the water's getting warmer here, but what's going on? My body out back kissed me and switching to another, with thick strain, to be born vocally, these microscopic stirrings are still beginning, any beginning.







**THREE POEMS**





so young, swimming with goon. Sing one happy  
pack , Thanksgiving:

draws a red squiggle under “romanize”

*chuseok i na sul en gack ji e sub ddul eo jye o*

I view away from home

There is mother and umma

but not mom  
but not *ōmōni*

elongate formality  
Is that kid the kid?

Is your last name?

Last name goes

gaga gaga

gaga gagaga

gagaga gaga

gaga gagaga

ga! gaga. gaga!

After that kid takes

go, leave and take it

*saldun gajok gwa mulli saldun*

*chin chuk deul ka gee mo chu rum mo yub duk dam el*

with the family I reside

joke even (until) relatives for rum  
bless the damsel

*nanoo myung woot sum ul pi woon da geuruh jiman*

laugh(ter) woo                      distributes pi smoke  
but partly wound

*il boo e sub neun ob hi rye o in gal dung i*

rather boot heaped

high in concord, in gall                      go              off

“Korean tongue with English treated differently from those European tongues in English. Korean-accented English does not invite the same curious gazes and envy as European-accented English does. Instead, disapproving looks and outlandish racial slurs.”

*pok bal ba myung soo ssa womb pan eso na I ga jun jang*

pork ball

hay pan

so aged war, erupt

가가 가가

가가 가가가

가가가 가가

가가 가가가

가! 가가. 가가!

*toro bagwi kido han da gajok bang moon i na*

I brush (dust change)

family visitation

hand ancestral bang

writes memorial

*je sa moon jai*

matter; the moon.

**PAVILION OF THE BLUE ROOF TILES**

*blue jokes about blue pills in the blue house*

belly swells “dangers of birth defects”  
sing babyblues on the radio sounds [synthetic]  
post-nasal pre-natural me-milk

breakage teeming

your mother is thirty-eight and survived the war

the president is genetically enhanced

house staff's erectile dysfunction or national crisis

elevate the masses  
frenzy off speculation

the president skin priority

supplesupple  
supply

마음을 곱게 쓰면

그건 아니고

She waits in      body halved. Below her waist sensation  
Collected at the naval.

Port city.

Condensation churning “are we dead yet?”  
The likelihood of your toenails falling off is very likely.

They have decided to discontinue the search.

the president bows and asks for an extension  
declares swimming is not a sport  
declares figure skating is not a sport

the president (with all these presidential duties)  
decides to take a day off.

Instead of

the president 's usual routine of  
*clinic to clinic*

the president 's friend magically erases the lines

on

the president 's face.

the president is nowhere to be seen  
when Top Star A and Top Star B get married  
the country comes together rejoices  
but somebody points out:

*Where is*

*the president now to congratulate the new couple  
the country's true royalty ?*

the president , away on a trip  
altitudes high  
the staff hide their ejections.

the president grows younger as the years go by that one day

the president looks like a child and the people wonder  
whether

the president is now too young to run the country

the president insists they are not

the president bows and asks for understanding

the president asks to be loved.

a sudden turn to starboard  
use your uterus to the fullest extent

first lady gives birth to the president's child who becomes  
president  
"be like your father" "but not like your father"

the president becomes the president's father

on the other side of the globe is a similar situation

## HOUSE OF SHARING

*An unsmiling... girl stares forward with an accusatory expression.*

You lose your mouth muscle

Your girl hands back and forth *in which both ends are designed  
for penetration*

Are you woman, woman?

Aug lives in different cities around the world. My life-size doll.  
Take residence in Sydney then meet objection.

We begin to normalize our enemy

*Z declared on Tuesday that it had detonated its first hydrogen bomb*

the president invites Aug to the house and sells her for \$8.3 million.

pop u l a t i o n  
c a m p p p  
c o m m

m

a n d

was

boun d

thebase

1210ac-

re 958ft

mtn range

porkcho p

hill

loc

ate

HOMETO

48.6 ACRE

DIVISION

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sed

out

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us ive

adja c

e nt

fir ing  
RIVER

RETURN  
sup PORT gate  
faci lit y  
nearest

in

train

GARRIS on  
bASe

tentcity

re l oca

te

u. s.

---

There are approximately 28 U.S. military bases operating in South Korea.

X will refrain from criticizing Y  
over the issue

talk with relevant organizations  
to try to resolve Y's grievance

with Aug who sits in front of the  
embassy downtown.

X recognizes Y's worries  
about security over Aug

where protests take place  
weekly

Z criticized X on Tuesday  
for reaching a deal with Y  
over the issue

call it "humiliating  
agreement" that missed  
holding Y responsible for  
such

X has also faced calls  
to improve ties with Y  
not least from No. 1 eager  
for a strong united front  
against a rising No. 2

Z's pursuit that could  
target the No. 1 mainland

Better relations between X and Y are a priority for No. 1  
[December 28, 2015]

Aug's last days spent sitting down.  
She stores letters accumulated at her feet into empty sack.

clit clit  
clip clip

I call it little girl suffering: little girl lips unzipping: little girl  
trade deal ruining trade deal.

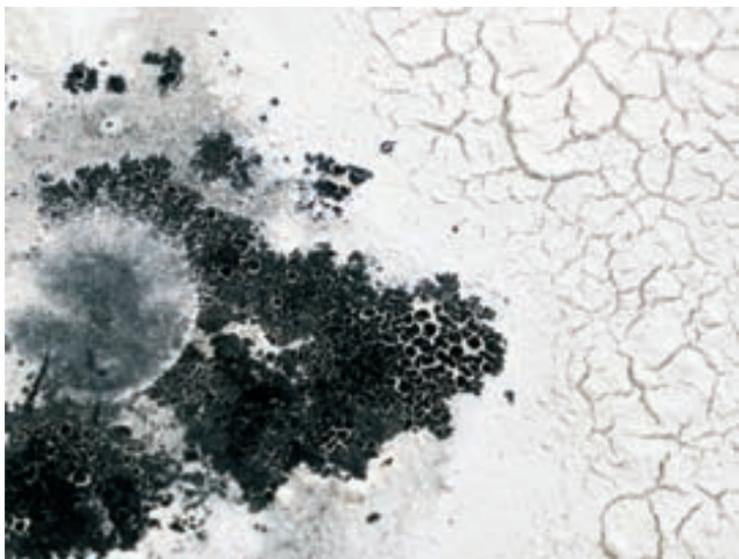
We never know how many there are but a guess. Soon they  
become mutilation grandmother. Soon they start speaking out.  
Little girl global movement. Butterfly child.

[remain diplomatic for the sake of diplomacy]

but no one wants to marry taint little girl.



*from* KITH & KIN



*Everything was mute and calm; everything gray. The sea, though undulated into long roods of swells, seemed fixed, and was sleeked at the surface like waved lead that has cooled and set in the smelter's mould. The sky seemed a gray surtout. Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters, as swallows over meadows before storms. Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come.*

—Herman Melville

*(By music we mean sound; but what's time? Certainly not that something begins and ends.)*

—John Cage

*I was a hawk before this —*

*I was collecting incredible views*

*The song of our brief encounter*

—Beth Murray

## SEPTEMBER

it's the mist  
it's an oak titmouse in the feeder  
it's not a privation a list  
of what not to do but the no  
vote's loss is depressing  
what would have united  
by rending that delight  
of negation to hold where  
one wants to attract the bait  
of cunning napping with Beth  
who's all bones & lumps the days  
are shortening her "night's night"  
come memory  
it's an artless shape better  
dwell in disorder with dust

## SEPTEMBER

Azin erased the numerals of bills  
rubbed off to leave valueless  
landscapes composing in signs  
to shed in lieu of exchanging  
in currencies in space  
less symbols & images in a longwise  
rectangle whose proportions ought money

mistake air for or & breath for alternative  
signed yours in the sink stinks of value  
unearthed the old foxed notebooks  
filled with leaf & owl parts who've  
grown mold under ought

the sun's storm's  
hid inside teeth clenching  
land & sky gathered & immobile  
what I had read for immoral  
with Norma I ought to  
I ought to have & ago what owes  
what didn't occur to me owing  
or torn in the flesh or thorn  
in the fish & Daniel thinks  
my plan subverts the problem but so does his



## SEPTEMBER

after us invariably  
moon mass  
that song of infinite  
family its heart mongering  
for winter for hamstrung emotional

not where I thought it would be  
that super moon's  
still hid  
then Gus vomits at dawn  
just before light a pile of rocks &  
tawny pine needles

one mass hits  
another bigger mass & that mass spits  
out audibly some mass from its inside  
rotating like a tennis ball but  
larger makes a moon to be  
resultant voices doubling  
because it is more because it is  
weighty who both resounds  
& makes more mass happen

to fill the whole  
land with wailing first of all heart  
rending & low for there's much  
less in store for Reeva legally  
apparently ran into four bullets who  
exited her mortally

a naked lament first of all  
that excludes even mourners

when a face on a cover  
I mistake for tears & hers repeatedly  
what moot person twin of another

## SEPTEMBER

built into a hillside by moths  
& mold holding earth  
    there's a knot  
who lives there  
weighing the costs of  
living in degrees of heat  
that invade from  
inside to possess a false  
sky that disarms it with witchcraft  
in degrees popping up in refusals  
in cold movement figured in  
the time it takes to starve

  it rained  
last night cleaning away old  
habits of summer old friends whose  
living confines a difference  
too great for a chapter  
there's no point in starting  
something with no  
promise & that's not rhetorical  
it's literal

  once I  
fasted on watermelon  
near Toronto with Misha  
to attend the hymns of a revered  
person in a poorly illuminated

auditorium where I found  
comprehension in a language  
without recollection to recall

& it's

too stupid to list the friends with whom  
& a stupid list of losses those who abandoned  
the dead & those whose suffering  
held them like owls do

Dee Dee's cat Dodie is dying all fur  
& bone like Beth she can't retract her claws  
any longer so Mari helps her off my shoulder

it's new year's once more so  
conjure anew why any name  
is ours to be written

## OCTOBER

equivalence is not the same as existence  
or the same as living or you can go now  
flushed out from the shrubbery  
to a surface whose angle is  
moving toward you  
& your dying

but the moths *are* the moths  
eating wool blankets & flying round  
the desk light one & the same ones

tenderly  
to escort a walrus herd in flight that lapse like dolphins do

*nil igitur mors est ad nos*

to walk facing into a spider's  
web along the garden path & left there  
the spider astride the shipwreck  
of what I can't avoid

that being oneself can't be  
being self possessor of oneself who can't  
seed a self whose being who  
oneself

now can't mean one

## OCTOBER

she's begun to hallucinate  
she's talking with the dead & her brother  
who's dead & she's begun  
    there's a deep vibrating  
    noise oscillating  
banging through miles of air from far off  
all I can't tell her any longer separated  
by more than intervals I want what  
she wants & she wants it tomorrow  
she's already near there

it's unremarkable to remark on  
how strange the weather is  
a constant state of withiness  
is like saying to remark on want  
is need as remarkable as the weather  
she gets what she wants  
under a full moon she makes  
her heart stop  
no longer that body  
nor pain that thrives  
on living

    a prediction without signs  
    & with owl eyes  
she fixes her gaze on something  
off & that eventual breath  
nothing else would work  
no invention  
    for the lion's  
share is everything

## OCTOBER

fewer birds are bolder coming closer  
as curiosity's companion for light  
to a dream place in that used to be &  
is no longer a self interloped & poaching

I did repair the hole in the rug  
with the tools she'd given me  
I did repair the breach with Bob  
when horrible things happen  
the smallest lapse an insult felt

but when intensity  
lessens which is worse  
to pause to remember to remember

reading word disorder for order  
humiliation for friendship for what  
guarantor what author for Martial  
making a book makes the book a debt  
for its maker & that's literal when  
what costs grow augmented  
or not towards the growers  
of what may be matter  
then I look with solicitude  
& console the impossible

## OCTOBER

I buy flowers two bunches  
Norma says she eats chocolate  
for those ones who can't any  
longer I translate *pastor*  
*cum traheret* for the shame  
of having horrible things happen  
forsaking this vividness it costs  
too much for tenderly living

no stars no moon it's  
been two weeks & she's  
still traveling she feels  
more away more distant  
redundant & it's her  
syntax of pattern  
& prayer that's  
hocus pocus  
*hoc est corpus*

but not now raveled  
for raving for fox

she shepherds her  
across the waves in her  
idea boat in a song  
as her atmosphere of promise  
an apostrophe to future as  
I stumble into this where  
atoms split I rescue

objects it's my duty I  
leave things as they are as  
if to be summoned I remind  
myself that she can't

to conclude Alice performed  
her ritual of outrage a ceremony  
for those who no longer yet  
who had hungered  
she didn't remember  
the drawing she'd drawn of an owl  
in flight but only the owl's feather  
Beth sent her that the drawing  
in reply was sent for

## DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

it'd be a distraction to build one  
for her  
I'm pretty certain Beth has what she needs  
& lacks for nothing no wanting  
no obstacles  
how long does she travel? I could  
call someone to find out  
the number but won't  
I don't know how to take stock  
a privilege not to know or faith  
there will be enough & even almost  
enough  
if there's stock it's messy  
too many going & uncertain  
arrivals animals changing places changing  
spellings even the sky's disarranging  
heavy on top  
for less weighing correspondence  
is composed in an order  
already less knowing  
there's an error in a change of address  
that the name of the book is also  
to address someone absent  
that is the title's the absent  
name I can't remember  
she'd wanted to know how to do it  
to be in concert in a poem  
in flight she'd wanted  
to talk about poetry  
& she'd wanted to listen

to owls talk about poetry  
to be solicitous to the unlikely  
to make for more listening for  
beings absent in concert

I'm pretty certain she'd want to

## NOVEMBER

organs: I've done something to my left hip the rubber band that attaches my leg to my trunk is twisted or just worn out I sent a message to her wrote a letter in light sealed it with stars & a shell I found a tree whose trunk was capacious & I hung her letter on the trunk on whose other side was another message to another Beth also recently dead I saw the moon several times it's waxing again its heaviness sleeps on my chest pulling inward like that was love.

labors: Judith helps me make a list of inventory the boxes of books & number of books & kinds of totals & there are some that have none add one that is gone completely fucked gladly. I give her the fragrance she'd wanted but couldn't discover & later my relief in finding the Brabants who are mentioned infrequently are the same Brabants I knew so well from the opera.

weather: this angle of sun makes no effort to warmth what lazy star in the car I told Judith & Norma about Sam telling me about Bernadette who lived next door in New York & Norma told us she's been married four times with two wedding dresses. Clark Coolidge told us it took him many years to see foreigner in for Eigner. Why don't they have water for the readers at such a moneyed venue & I want to vomit when men are mentioned by last names but women by first, i.e. Creeley & Bernadette. I travel back with Evan his body & gestures are memory in his affective archive but he'd never say it like that. I am immobile with a sadness that makes me.

mistranslations: of all the strawmen I want to rescue it's the one who's most textured, who flattens the least that leads to what's not already & by via unknown to the strawmen of history to the strawmen of everyday that I want to retake. But I misrecognize the tense emphatically. It's an imperfect not perfect & I'd have to return all my library books & write awkward notes. Incompatible grief. Its conflict with living.

inventories: the road out was a river dried not flowing with standing water in puddles & polished rocks not hard to navigate by foot where there were infrequent marchers others following it downstream to a source of darkness an endwise entrance below I held a dog who was dying gathered to my body I repeated *it's okay you can go now* at the end of the river road in the shadows of limit a whole dog being taken catching as much fur & mass in my arms she left while some returned upstream surprising I stayed at the mouth to an otherwise I knew by her fur it was Beth before she was sick letting me help her die once more not holding back on a path beyond to an entrance where she entered this mouth to an elsewhere.

birdbrain: there's a sequence called time: she's sick, she dies, she's still dead, no matter the voice, passive or active, but the other won't have it that way not in that order or tense. It figures apprehension & owing. No promise or debt to pursue. Is it like grains of sand? like stars? what's myriad? Not quite, without senses. Then while reading the letter by Bruce I find a ring composition containing that draws us together.

## NOVEMBER

less the more not exactly  
a pair not oblivious either but  
not familiar the less I do  
the more she is or the more I  
sleep the less she is not or the less  
light less love to trust to live  
if not to person a dream  
we're winking so Beth kings it  
because she's making  
a racket repairing a bucket will  
they let us keep what makes  
it most alien is to unkind it  
being with what before what is  
found as a dirge for before what  
we keep on measuring  
distances & inward longing  
for extremes to count that no one  
go hungry we all hallucinate  
nightly it's difficult being  
against dying being under  
the more now the less to undo it

## NOVEMBER

The non-culinary thyme plant I bought the day she died  
has died too.

I need help with everything.

I can hear the clock grinding time but that's literal  
so I unplug it.

I'm lagging behind trying to redo what couldn't  
be done—I till but don't sow.

To read one thing as another & the other as always  
the other but what if it's itself local & not  
withdrawing then to lose doesn't reply but is  
just losing.

It rained. It's raining now.

To be on the floor & then on your knees you ache, Evan, the song  
as praying that repeats you read ground &  
to make ground offer yourself up  
lest you avoid the more losses to fall inward



## NOVEMBER

it's singular unless fewer  
it's plurals except less  
not for what self  
if there's only  
until empty  
only more flesh

what makes  
the rock plural to  
itself for  
                  you can't  
have everything says  
the owl who  
sings in late fall

to lose the insult  
of being more  
to lose the bloom  
of a place a fox  
who moves  
slowly stunned  
by the rain to  
build a tomb  
for the holidays  
is the life of  
slumber

animals & fur  
breathing body

coiled inwards  
the life of tilling  
neither planting  
nor sowing habits  
repeating wasting  
for returning to  
night still raining  
that sleep at rest  
seeds yet a life  
to the lovers  
if extremity





## DECEMBER

This drama of being a being threatened by being always in  
peril of not being not given no longer decided & in non-  
guarantee of horizon of each also still a problem.

I have problems.

I'm thinking in circles.

The fruit rots on the ground in the rain better to be a being  
returned to ashes is asking.

I gave more than I had because the rain returns to the ground.  
They let you in & they let you there.

For the utterance changes the utterer.

I feel certain of that for the time being.

In the face of another not the other way around, I wince  
ungrammatically.

Mold going from golden to blue deflates the horizon's flesh  
when it was still a possible problem to have.

## DECEMBER

on what is not is not nothing  
not there is no thing yet nothing  
is like no other nothing upon  
rising to feel & to mark  
an impression extra inches  
of light are slower & softer  
like odd numbers  
who wait for blood oranges  
to decouple weather & season  
shade not a grammar till it bites  
an obscurity *adieu* to the glamour  
of clouds & rings within rings in clearings

*Cent Sept* for sunset to resolve  
the holes ties up & lets go the phrase  
that once each gone & other leaves  
the broken broken under claims  
of confusing the gas for the break  
next season to come will come after  
this one in tree trunks & soft parts under

## JANUARY

je suis for sleeping  
missing then turning  
a goat with her bar-  
coded fleece all wooly  
whose initials je  
suis lost then  
prickles along  
not reliably  
ergo the drought

je suis she it  
seems enormous  
trail thru sky to your  
undisclosed bird  
feeder je suis crumbs

no longer does strife  
make eloquence je  
but je suis on  
the swallow under  
trickling of blood  
suis after bleeding for  
espionage je coding

Beth's aunt prays for us:

*be barren!*

*o, you circular lovers*

nous somme suis

shift perspective je je who  
were unknowing somme

**DREAMS**

*The narration of dreams brings calamity, because a person still half in league with the dream world betrays it in his words and must incur its revenge.*

—Walter Benjamin, “One-Way Street”

A young poet dies in Cleveland. His grave is arranged very fast. I go to Cleveland to pay my respects. Cleveland is not how I imagined. I imagined a crumbling post-industrial city of brick buildings and steel bridges with buzzing garbage cans in the back corners of weedy playgrounds. It is, instead, a village in the Spanish countryside. All the buildings are one story. The streets are cobblestones. When I arrive, the sun is setting.

Nearing the young poet's grave, I get hungry. I ask a woman in the street if she could recommend a place to eat. *As far as I know*, she says, *all the lime cuisines are closed*. I have never heard of *lime cuisines*. They sound refreshing. I am sad I missed them.

The grave is an entire graveyard with only one grave. The graveyard is dirt, surrounded by a square of low-slung adobe houses. A documentary about the poet's life is being projected on the exterior wall of one of the houses. In one scene, the poet, filmed in slow motion from behind, runs out the front door of a small, dark house, into bright sun, and jumps over a narrow canal. From behind, he looks like young Lorca: black suit, black hair combed back. His shadow in the canal looks like how I imagine young Lorca's shadow might look: a stingray flying under ice.

---

Early one morning, before dawn, while walking to the top of a hill, I meet a man. The man says he needs help, asks if I am looking for work. *Yes*, I say, without hesitation. He points to a small herd of goats ten yards away on the side of the hill. *I will pay you*, the man says, *to convince those goats to walk in a circle*. I am confused, but agree. It takes only a few minutes to convince the goats to walk in a circle. All the goats, that is, but one: the oldest

female. She refuses. I look into her eyes. I can see, reflected in her pupils, light from the unrisen sun shining through tree-shaped black smoke on an otherwise treeless horizon.

---

Paul Celan's shadow on the Seine. A Buddhist monk beneath a tree, his lips wet with poison.

---

I am in a cult. Cult life consists of sitting at (being confined to) long banquet tables and applying lines of whiteout to 8½x11 sheets of sandpaper. Straight lines. Vertical. But I cannot get the whiteout to cooperate. My lines are uneven. They wander and bleed. I am given demerits, then cuffed and escorted to the edge of the camp.

---

I am launched, without parachute or wings, into the sky. I rise beyond the clouds to a claustrophobic place. At the point where the momentum ends and it seems certain I am going to fall many thousands of feet back to earth, a ledge appears. I put my hands on the ledge to prevent myself from falling. I pull myself up. On the ledge is an arrangement of food—I remember noodles. Not much, but I am ecstatic: I will not starve in the sky! I realize, in that moment, that I am never returning to earth. Suddenly, no amount of sky is enough. I start choking. Earth looks, below, like a fragment of coral broken off a reef. Not only am I never returning to earth, there is no reason. Everyone I know and love is, by virtue of endless sky, having been born, also choking, on the coral fragment, and getting used to it.

—

A monk is sitting behind me. I can feel his smirk on the back of my neck. The secret of the monk's success: he believes in nothing. Everything is; there is no need for belief. But the monk's lack of belief is specific. He devised a way in which to understand life, and called the way: *suffering*. But the monk is intolerant. He cannot bear the sight of his demented grandparents vomiting, for example. They will be dead soon. Their deaths will open a gap in which will materialize a vision of the monk's immortal self.

The monk saw his grandparents naked once, curled up in a bed that resembled an enormous nest, made of sticks and hair and newspapers and trash. He had never seen them naked before, and was struck by how indistinguishable their bodies were—jaundiced, gray, deconditioned—from one another. *Life is already too long*, he thought. He wanted his grandparents to be young again, curled up in their nest, senseless, enclosed in a membrane. It looked very much like the fruits of suffering: speechlessness, incontinence, loss of faculties, and an age-old bitterness, fermented.

—

A bouquet of flowers in a three-foot tall white vase is sitting on the grass in front of a church. I try to pick up the vase. It is too heavy. I drag it, instead, across the grass, leaving a trail of bright orange discharge in its wake.

—

I explain to my cello teacher that I am having trouble playing with emotion. *It's stuck behind the fingerboard*, I say. He takes the cello from me and turns it around, then tells me to try again.

---

A truck pulls into the parking lot behind the building where I am struggling with the cello. The truck is mud-brown and green, like camouflage.

In the trailer of the truck lives a troupe of kabuki actors. The trailer has skylights and ventilation slits that cannot be perceived from outside the truck. When the moment is right, the top and sides of the trailer are taken down, still intact, to form a stage, simultaneously revealing the actors, but when is the moment right? There is only one moment, and it must be summoned, like with a password: if someone asks the driver, *what's in the truck?* No one ever asks. The kabuki actors stay in the trailer, keeping themselves occupied, justifying their imprisonment by saying to themselves that they are rehearsing, always rehearsing.

---

My brother-in-law and I are in a dark, very rundown bookstore. The bookstore consists of four rickety shelves holding mass-market paperbacks. One shelf is taken up with a series of paperbacks, all the same color and size, each with the name of a State on the spine: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas ... I flip through a few: historical fiction, poorly written, all by the same author. The photo shows a young white man with blond hair wearing a military uniform.

Among the States is, oddly: Japan.

The bookstore clerk tells us the author lives down the road, we should visit. We knock on his door. He is not a young man anymore, but old, bald, and bloated, his body shakes. He invites us into his office, then leaves. On his desk is a rare edition of the book on Japan. Instead of being a mass-market paperback, the book is a series of drawings on a delicate scroll, tightly wound, set into the shell of a living snail. I extract the scroll from the snail shell, and begin unraveling it, but unravel it too far, because now I cannot get it back into the shell! The snail, inside the shell, is like a very wide, very wet tongue, with which it is trying to either push the scroll out of the way, or devour it.

---

I am in class. For our final exam we must speak extemporaneously on a specific subject for ten minutes. The teacher is intimidating. Everyone is brilliant. I go last. *The moon is made of glass*, I begin. *The glass is a fine dust. When the moon shines, I get a pain behind my ear ...* but then I stop. I do not know what else to say. I look around the room, embarrassed. The teacher and all my classmates are staring at me, down-turned mouths, disappointed.

---

I meet the director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a bloated white man named Thomas Homan. He has agreed to meet me in his office, a singlewide trailer on a construction site. His office has nondescript carpeting, Venetian blinds (plastic, broken), cream-gray filing cabinets, and a Persian rug rolled up and leaning against a brown door. Instead of shaking Homan's hand, I touch his ear. When I

touch it, he passes out. I roll his body up in the Persian rug. His pacified body is surprisingly light. I carry him, in the rug, under my arm, into the desert, and down into a ravine.

---

Lorca was 38 when he was executed by a right-wing militia in the Spanish countryside, near Fuente Grande, between Víznar and Alfacar, in Granada. His body was buried in a shallow grave in a ravine. Imagine jumping, many years after you have died, over the exact spot where you were buried.

---

Twenty-four years after immigrating to the United States from Japan, my grandfather returns, via boat, to Yokohama. Upon arrival he is given a gun. *What am I supposed to do with this*, he asks. *Kill the enemy*, he is told. *But who is the enemy*, he asks. *Focus*, he is told. *You are not in America anymore, Midori. You are in Japan*. He stares at the gun in his hands, then looks up. He is alone. It is winter. Snow mutes the smell of smoke.

---

Kabuki used to be performed only by men. That has changed. Men have been dispensed with. The women, who have usurped the men, begrudge the question. They are not content to perform for anyone who asks. That criteria, no matter how infrequently it is satisfied, is, they feel, completely lacking in the respect with which a stranger must ask after what they do not yet know is magic. The women would prefer to rehearse in the privacy of their trailer—in the bars, the blades, of light, stretching through the ventilation slits in the walls, the

illuminated mist hovering below the skylight. Unlike the men though, their imaginations do not depend upon the walls. Their rehearsing is devotional. They would prefer their performance to be a permanently foreign language.

The best time to see a performance is in the winter, just after it snows. It is then that the actors' costumes, composed of every shape and color, seem, against the surrounding white, to float, electrified, off the actors' bodies, like souls rising out of the dutiful paralysis of dreaming.



**UNHEARD**



weird that you've drowned,  
my watership  
bunny, my wastecoast  
of air, of  
loss(oft

“un”rem ember d

propane of integer  
eliding the soft fluff  
of what innermost) interior]

feels the  
slow burning of  
(itself)  
last,whimp  
eringnervepain

to that (

o tilt antennae,  
gone camping.  
a drift in the

st.r/@us

dust – of

inaudible, what throat  
stitches from:

(stomach folded  
(torn envelope  
(a cave feeding on  
(sound of)  
an ear turned to

eaten silence.  
i expels undigested  
citations

unfolding, as always,  
in tape loops  
recurring daily as  
swallowed :

& then projects  
what cannot,  
fetal & nursling, at the  
severest refuge  
of its most intimate  
edge:

when said "born" wasn't  
breathing. spine snap  
to belly sunk

fugitive spirit inhaled

. speak when throat  
hands around  
( ). emergency

mouth not ready too  
soon for breathing  
not ready to drink

air  
skin couldn't  
swim so pores soak  
into always infected

breathing backwards  
to tend to murmur,  
not to fill always so  
empty of

so lungs fill always  
    swollen with  
always swallowing

    spores & mold  
spreading moss &  
mushrooms

    in brittle cave  
    of voice.

held to whorl thru  
    flooded tunnels  
collapsing

    have got to  
fill ur body w/  
air

interrogatives are used for asking questions,  
like, “who is that?  
who is that over  
there? who made it?”

“what bird is that  
calling, a partridge?  
what animals are there  
around here?”

“i did not know what kind of stone i was looking for.”

when the identity of “who”  
or “what” is unknown  
or is in doubt

he didn't know who he was  
what sort of thing he had  
met up with, “who's dog  
is that?” where lightning  
bolts. “don't know  
what kind it is  
myself.”

he told the same story  
about sleeping, that he  
heard breathing, that  
“someone working on a rabbit she cut  
her hand so sharp it's not her hand  
over there, where I saw.”

of membranes

or kels of it

as dust  
inflamed,

gulph, or a wading

a chronic  
errant farther

of it

february most troubles

hawk, hound, horse,  
gone abroad at night

a dog some reduce to

a desert of scabs  
femur & howling

of this fury

be divers  
an oar of

enduring as a site  
mad dog (in it, in

water, scarce blood

a syncope  
or swoon

ask,

where they &

how they fare

(if I may  
I voluntarily omit.

( ). in fact you've gone from

(lift , how)

breathing syndromes  
merges calendar

berg adrift  
bound to

nearing chasm:  
radio's "do you read

havenot : unheard

oil's froze trying to.

any answers  
fears is in

sanitizing  
photo  
to a healthy  
blur pursued  
into the sure

was also as  
many one ways

“smoke?” almost, but then “gunshot now  
gunshot now “hug the bldgs. hide among” familiar, acquired  
immunities woven by law  
to what hearth fouls as foil to  
where trails spiral “landscape”  
goading squall

, beelines to  
windswarm over  
turning urn as  
helical lashes  
trail our : curtain lamps aflame.

video holds  
comfort. face  
cut neck cut  
press red dot  
to stop replay  
delete record

onset of yaw

in cant or of  
camera

kickstand to

bolt as storm beats  
hoof it to where  
on yonder  
hitches

(  
). in fact, you'd better  
just listen for

troubles" what makes us  
volunteer to  
all uses of "web"

although lilt is & always  
has been

(how near is  
(how long was

(there, at home

(how long  
(how much damage to

smoke, please don't run  
to doors where there is  
smoke. please knock before  
to comfort the safety of  
cells set to vibrate. please  
refrain. as not to exhibit  
use.

to ground her (leaving (shakes) bereaves  
arms held (grieving shackles  
down. assembles bones, a  
crawl from factory quiver, autumn  
down railroad  
to gather coal (so cold this time of  
her knees too tired to  
draw clouds from flag flutter hides there  
moon glass  
gazing  
at upturned bed  
of blighted.  
here where  
she mulches how. i would  
later reflect her.

the path of logos: in that  
beginning there, the word  
they call her, a map. in  
quest, abandoned lots, drawn from  
broken windows  
freeways dismantling  
factories  
signals corroded  
arteries.

to what this throat expels, these lungs reject  
the retch of me, each breath rebels  
against what burns between  
these fingers. a history.  
hands parched with soil they rifle thru  
dogs alarmed at rivers broke by twig snap.

aghast at the ghost  
i'm giving up, a gasp  
from the corner i was  
too quickly turning  
her eyes met mine & i was  
so quickly of shame, for i  
too had feared to meet me.

can't tell  
a rabbit from  
a motorcycle  
screeching        outside window where  
                         one might've caught  
                         the other  
doesn't sound beneath pillows  
or in dawn grass        or dew lines  
mewling in arctic arrays  
                         their hear me here  
                         to deadening sky

a siren i can't interpret  
circles a window i'm too  
worn to crawl

to wearing this blanket  
now that there's no body  
to where on this puddle  
of blankets nobody can



there is no end in site.  
attempting to cull a cure from blood  
to hijack the prior resonance of

“inevitable as looting the dead of any supplies,”  
or a subtler attempt,

like letting the movie  
track shadows thru landscapes -

soaking the retina,  
scorching the negative,

, until boundary between bone and stone  
is mere substitution of few letters.

few were written  
from the frontlines.



this hazard of a peace  
timed on the screen

feeds the camera  
an nfe ted answer

targets the outboard aperture  
first shows as spreading

a long select along

a very small tumult

was a patient  
in that

my corpse was wisened  
my course was widened

to where I the many off maiming  
the many-headed hydration of

what I would from where was sick  
from there who sicks

to dog what was  
to wipe raw

to force injection.







## NOTES

SHAYNA S. ISRAEL

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## DANIEL CASE & ERIC SNEATHEN

### *artist statement*

In his ongoing body of work, photographer Daniel Case makes monuments of the cruising trails and sex spots covertly scattered among the beaches and parks of the San Francisco Bay Area. These images entice the eye to follow into hollowed-out footprints, crooks of trees, to wonder at worn, makeshift furniture, and enter the circle. With such a gesture of hospitality, Case nevertheless hopes to instigate a reverse discourse, challenging norms of legality, judgment, risk, and history. And, as most of these sites have been or will be washed away, cleared, or reconfigured, Case's work offers a unique portal into a time past—a time operating out of necessity—memorializing an unknowable network of ephemeral touches: a sequence of visions of our intimate present/future crumbling away in plain sight.

Eric Sneathen's cut-ups join the given history of Gaétan Dugas to literary descriptions of public sex from the 1970's and 80's and the invention of safer sex in pamphlets such as "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic." A French-Canadian airline steward, Dugas was infamously cast by San Francisco journalist Randy Shilts as Patient Zero of the AIDS

epidemic in *And the Band Played On*. And though Dugas's role as the so-called Typhoid Mary of AIDS was known privately to be an invention of Shilts, it was not always acknowledged or recognized as such publicly. Indeed, some argue that Patient Zero was a fiction worth the price of its fraudulence—when a positive result was a death sentence, reducing transmission of HIV was the bottom line for many. Sneathen's cut-ups scramble the signal of various source texts to produce a chorus that is no less intimate for its plurality, a bacchanal echoing in the corridor of our ongoing emergency.

## WOOGEE BAE

### notes

“Look to the Dictionary for Answers”: Gaga and its Korean translation taken from a Korean homophonic wordplay based on a Kyöngsang dialect. “Korean tongue with English” quote taken from Hosu Kim’s “The Parched Tongue.”

“Pavilion of the Blue Roof Tiles”: Also known as the Blue House, the president’s executive office and official residence. “*blue jokes about blue pills in the blue house*” borrowed from *New York Times* article from November 23, 2016 (“Viagra Pills Create New Scandal for South Korea’s President”). “마음을 곱게 쓰면 / 그건 아니고” translates to “If you are kind-hearted / Well, it’s not that.” The country’s eleventh president Park Geun Hye uttered these words, in reverse order, during a casual interaction with civilians when asked about her youthful skin. Images taken from *Korea Times* article from November 12, 2016 (“ONE MILLION protestors storm Seoul’s streets, demanding Park’s resignation”). 8:50 AM is the approximate time of the Sewol Ferry sinking in April 2014. “first lady gives birth to the president’s child who becomes president” refers to the country’s third president Park Chung Hee, who was also Park Geun Hye’s father.

“House of Sharing”: The House of Sharing is the home for living comfort women in South Korea, founded in 1992. Lines borrowed from

*New York Times* article from October 28, 2015 on comfort women statues (“Statues Placed in South Korea Honor ‘Comfort Women’ Enslaved for Japan’s Troops”) and from *Korea Times* articles from December 28, 2015 (“South Korea, Japan settle deal on wartime Korean slaves” and “North Korean condemns South Korea-Japan deal on sex slaves”). On December 28, 2015, South Korea and Japan resolved a decades long issue on comfort women. The Japanese government agreed to aid surviving comfort women in the amount of \$8.3 million dollars, while also calling for the removal of a statue of a girl representing former sex slaves that sits in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

#### JOCELYN SAIDENBERG

The first image is by Tanya Hollis and is a detail from her work *Parch* (2015), the second is by Azin Seraj’s installation, “concurrency.” <http://www.azinseraj.com/1405/artwork/installation/concurrency/>, and the third image is a drawing that Alice Notley made for Beth Murray who gave it to Jocelyn on her death.

## CONTRIBUTORS

*Sunny Nestler* is an artist from Arizona who lives and works in Vancouver, BC. Sunny's work tends toward drawing, performance, crafting and bookmaking to interpret their interest in DNA mutation and biological life cycles. See more at: [www.megaspora.space](http://www.megaspora.space).

*Sean Labrador y Manzano* lives on the island off the coast of Oakland. He edited *Conversations at the Wartime Cafe*; curated the reading series Mixer 2.0; organized the symposium "From Trauma to Catharsis: Performing the Asian Avant Garde;" performed as Jose Rizal in the jazz choreo-poem, *Das Kapital: Volume 4: Elimination of the Industrial Phase and the Accumulation of Debt*. His current projects examine graduate student suicide, H.D. and colonialism, and the Balikatan military exercises. In June 2017, in San Francisco, he will produce the stage reading of *The Twin: a staged bardo*, based on the suicide of his best friend from high school—a few days after getting her PhD at Cornell, she jumps from Taughannock Falls. The hybrid play was actually the first alternate at this year's Ithaca Fringe Festival. He hopes to take this play to Ithaca soon after its September (National Suicide Awareness Month) premier.

*Stacey Tran* is a writer from Portland, OR. She curates Tender Table and her writing can be found in diaCRITICS, The Fanzine, Gramma, and The Volta. Wendy's Subway released her first chapbook, *Fake Haiku* (February 2017). Her first full-length book, *Soap for the Dogs*, is forthcoming from Gramma (Spring 2018). [www.staceytran.com](http://www.staceytran.com)

*Laura Henriksen's* poems have been featured in Poor Claudia's Crush series and Fewer and Further Press's Asterisk series. Her poems and reviews can be found in or are forthcoming from the *Poetry Project Newsletter*, *Brooklyn Rail*, *No, Dear*, and *Elderly*. Her first chapbook is forthcoming from Imp.

*Shayna S. Israel* is a poet and a scholar.

From rural Michigan, *Daniel Case* is a film and digital photographer focusing on documentary, and unconventional archiving, who has worked in San Francisco for 18 years. For information on available works or artist inquiries please contact Margaret Tedesco at [2nd floor projects]: <http://projects2ndfloor.blogspot.com/>.

*Eric Sneathen* splits his time between Oakland and UC Santa Cruz, where he is a PhD student in Literature. His poetry has been published by Mondo Bummer, littletell, Faggot Journal, and The Equalizer, and his first collection, *Snail Poems*, was published by Krupskaya in 2016.

*Woogee Bae* writes and live in Buffalo, NY. In the fall, she will relocate to Seattle as an MFA candidate at the University of Washington Bothell. She loves black coffee and veggie pho.

*Jocelyn Saidenberg* is a Bay Area writer, performer, and educator whose books of poetry include: *Mortal City* (Parentheses), *Dusky* (Belladonna), *Cusp* (Kelsey Street Press), *Negativity* (Atelos Press), *Shipwreck* (2nd Floor Projects), and *Dead Letter* (Roof Books). With Brandon Brown she co-curated the Performance Writing Series at New Langton Arts. She is the founding editor of KRUPSKAYA Books. Currently she's working on an elaboration of the atomic poetics of Lucretius.

*Brandon Shimoda* is the author of several books, most recently *Evening Oracle* (Letter Machine Editions). He is working on a book about the mass incarceration of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans during WWII. Also: citizenship as dementia. Born in the grasslands, he lives in the desert.

*Adam Mitts* studied creative writing at Eastern Michigan University and is currently in the poetics program at the University at Buffalo.

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