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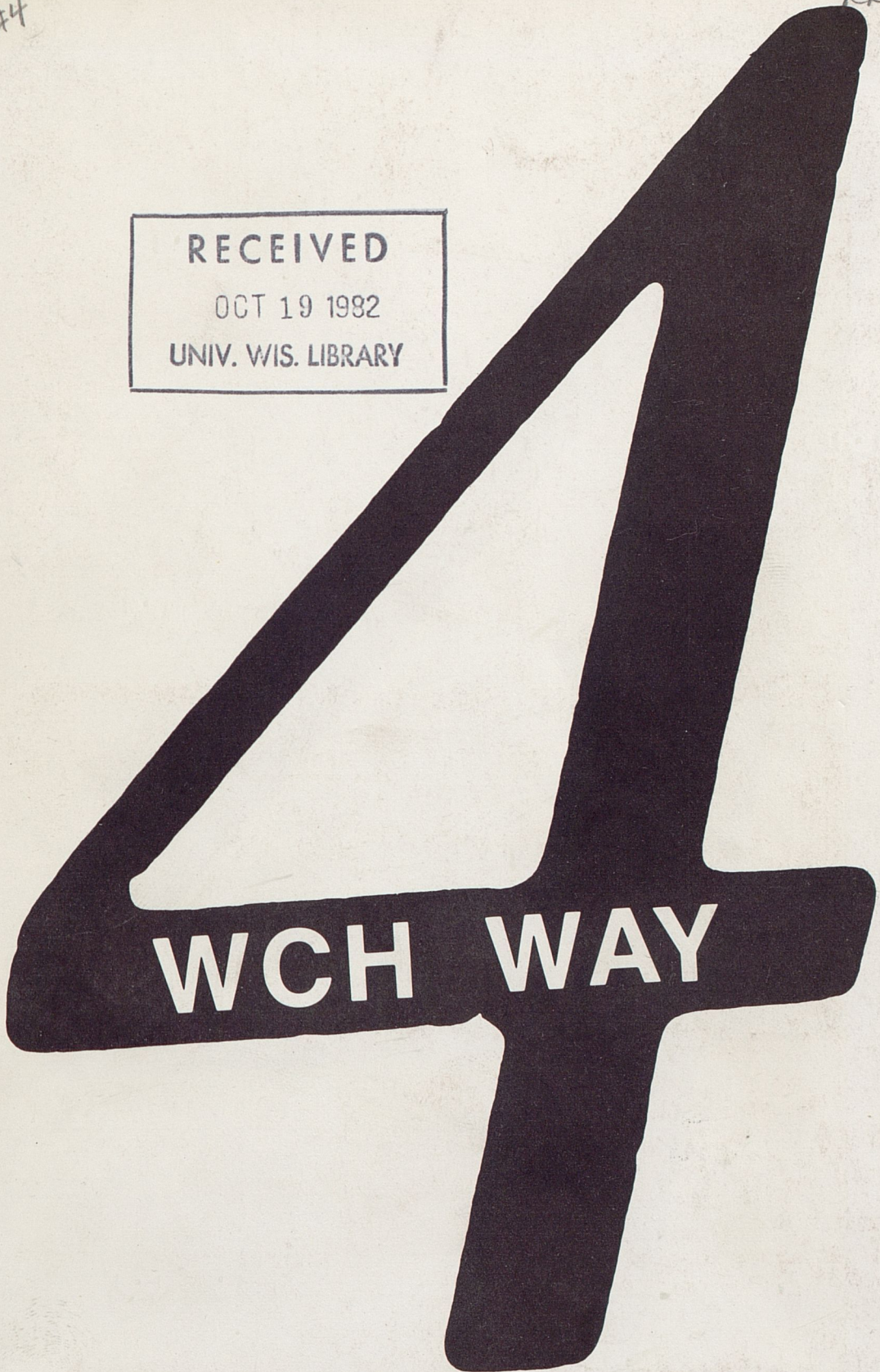
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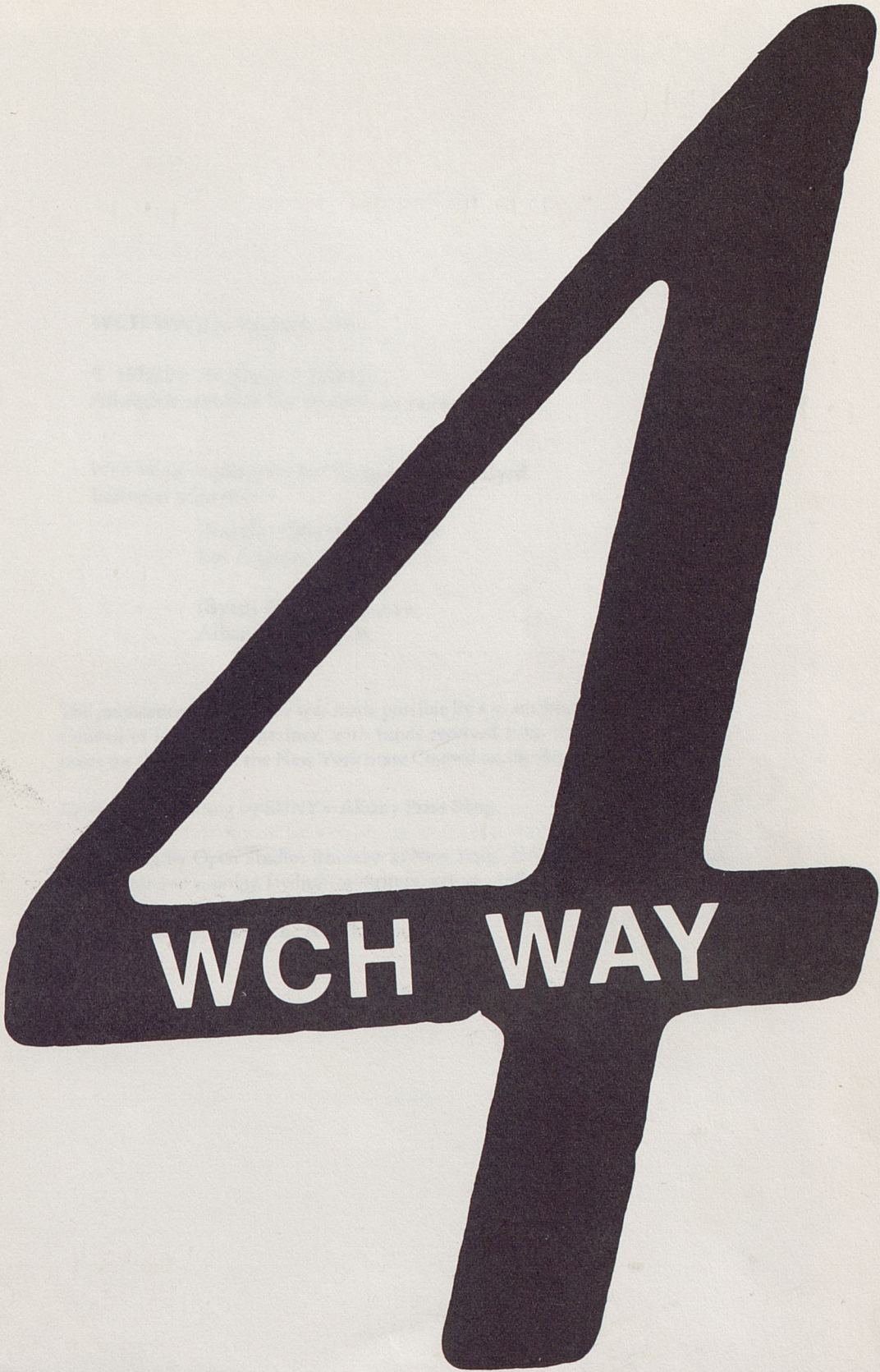
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WCH WAY



WCH WAY 4, Summer 1982

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WCHWAY + Summer 1982

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Statement by the Author on the Following Poem

Robert Duncan asks that the following statement accompany the text of "Santa Cruz Propositions" as it appears in *WCH WAY*: Outside of answering certain questions in a telephone conversation with Jed Rasula who was to set the copy of the poem and my pointing out that in part II a series of texts are brought together, mixt together, to form a conglomerate whole and that these have, each, a separate type-face, I have not cooperated further in the presentation of the poem. My typescript is the definitive text. The text herein presented is *WCH WAY*'s text of the poem, not mine; wherein whatever deviations from the original, including the use of justified types, the spacings after marks of punctuation, any typographical "errors", the variant articulations of elements of the poem, of lines, of sections, etc. are to be viewed as belonging to the present version, and not to the author's version as it stands. With this in mind I have in no way submitted proof-corrections to the printer.

— Robert Duncan

[in a postscript to the editor, the point is clarified further, and is quoted below]

" . . . the point, Jed, I have come to see is that no even gross error in printing puts the text in jeopardy. What the author has to insist on clearly is which one is the authentic text — in my case, not the manuscript which is conceived of as a propositional sketch; and most certainly not the printed version, which represents the work and interpretational notation of someone else; but the present state of the typescript which comes from and is in my own working hand and Eye as concept ongoing."

Robert Duncan

Santa Cruz Propositions

I

[10PM-1AM, 13-14, October 1968]

Troubled surfer seeking the about-to-break line
of the wave in it to ride toward revelation,
the tide that would have carried you draws back
from the littered margin,

and the depth of the sea you would have borne forward

is the depth of an impending failure among us who
if we fall from the board, as we must,
fall into the facts of the polluted stream.

Poetry! Would *poetry* have sustained us? It's lovely
—and no more than a wave— to have rise
out of the debris, the stink and threat
—even to life— of daily speech, the roar
of the giants we begin from,
primordial Strife, blind Opposition,
a current that sweeps all stagnant things up
into a torrent of confidence beyond thought.

Even as we are most "sent", and the Man
most present, exultant in the giving ourselves over
to the forces that consume our knowledge, whatever
fact having no more boundary than
water within water, and for you then most

the *cold* of the sea, the withdrawal from pleasure,

the curve of the poem

withdraws its promise

They are not *with* it! —you are not with it!

The very luminous where-with-all, the lure

looms now over all Truth collapsing.

Ancient knowledge of the sea, vastness of ignorance,
silence in *that* origin, waste and empty,
about the inroads as you read, the shores
suck at the glorious sweep of the abyss in time you are pondering.

The voice carries us on to our just rewards,
and leaves us. How long ago we left
Old Mama Mammemory long lingering
half in and half out of it,
and yet we sing still to *Her*, to the
shadowy Big Presence of her,
to the Dumb Waitress coming up from below,
staring at the empty lift, facing
an insolence that refuses to answer.
Yet we need her. We don't need her.

We will invent lungs and breathe in the
fumes of the green magic.

Yet we want her. We don't want her.

The Muse consumes utterly, Woman of Water,
Woman of Sand into which all that reaches her
all-but-exhausted of us sinks, leaving
the element of *Her* undisturbed. It makes
no difference to her.

It is to say we leave her, we leave
everything for her. The mind is not content but
must build even of discontent histories,
palaces, commands, grand
impositions —all for *HER!*

The great treasury of spiritual things is all for *Her!*

And under *Her* wingspread, fascinated,
the boy plays with his building blocks
—sad, deep, absorbed, utter solitude— as if
the element that surrounds him *cared*.

What does it mean that the Earth labors to bring forth?
Is there a Sea of Land even as of Water
swollen with What Is To Be?

He is sleep-working amongst his important things
and, waking, will be in agony. The green wave
of a mothering silence surrounds him.

It is not a *care*. Her name is Listening, but
what does she hear?

Even aroused, staring avidly,
she keeps her own counsels and will not
answer his need but absorbs it.

She leads toward his
increase in it.

[15 October]

And he would move Time or our hearts'
feel of Time? Old Mummummymurmur

turns in the applause of her surfs
and takes us with her inevitably
away from the light, westward,
into the undertow and night of our species.

There is no dream in which the high throne
of the poet's personal Empire does not finally come
to the dark shore of *Her* flood

and his word-power go out futilely
to war with the insolent mob where
her boundaries advance.

Grande Mer, Atlantique, first condition
from which I came and all the
generations of me came,

[16 October]

now you send me out of your way—
that's your way— just

when I bring up before you at last
my heart in my mouth,

I'm in your way,

[18 October]

and you are all shores and cliffs, and I
come in upon you among the suitors,
among the wild horses of the sea-foam,

sons of Okeanos, Lord of the Motherland's
outer boundaries, inconsistently surviving—
the transformations of Who-I-Am,
as if incomplete, inconsistently surviving
in me.

[19 October]

Ur-Father, Hairy Bull of the Waters
bellowing in Her, He the depth of Her sounding
arousing out of Her dream of Chaos
eggs of those forms that await the coming of Man

—Worlds, Seas, Tides of the Sun and the Moon,
Titanic Storms of Being —Hells, then!
(This First Water may have been Fire)

enormous predications of the Gods
and, afterwards, Divine Powers —gods,

daimons, presences of living things,

fountains, trees, great stones, hearth flames

—Heaven.

He was our Language come in to the Mothertongue
awakening Images, fecundities.

They were One, He-She
of the Great Mouth Chaos became in them,
Chaos expiring in the Speech of the Winds.

There must have been a heart in that mouth, for,
children of that Mother-Father, our hearts are in our mouths,

and, in the beginning, an other Larynx,
a vocal chord in the throat before Time,
from which the consonances and dissonances of lives vibrate!

II

[20 October]

Madame Defarge of the Central Committee
has the *motif* of a secret revenge.
She has withheld the benefit of her judgment
and knots the thread of his life to enlarge his Fate her own

[21 October] plotted deprivations of his sight. He strains,
even as we watch,

at the restrictions of his mind, wrestling
not with an angel but with a gnat he thinks she has
raised to challenge him. It is the *Angel "Gnat"*
who stands at the Gate of the Claim he would make
to the exalted rank he sees
accorded to the persons of Socrates and Kierkegaard,
grand PhDs of an academic Immunity
he does not see as it is
shaken in the terrors Mind knows in Her thrall.

"*Soccer Tease,*" she mutters

where he does not hear,
*"is my Saint, for he has drawn from the poisoned deck
of youth's lure in his sight Alcibiades the Tyrant
the corrosive sublimate of a hindrance in Love;
and his face, that pug-satyr, leers up from the fumes
of drunken Sleep with an assumed knowingness about his
gnawing Nothing so that he wants Knot
that has befuddled Philosophy with method.
Him and his nosey sayauton!*

[26 October] *Diotima, my handmaiden—"*

Here began World War III against the Fathers.

The four Knights of the Court in Mescaline
*"showd him the picture-card of Eros before Eros,
the terrific first Mover at work toward Love"*
found a conviction in him and commanded

and I shall take both parts myself as well as I can:

Junked cars line the muddy road to the shed, and a chicken, a

rooster, a cat and a dog

“What do you mean, Diotima, is Eros then evil and foul?”

Frazier’s residence was a delapidated cowshed behind a half-dozen larger similar structures

“He is a great demon, and, like all spirits, he is
intermediate”

“as brought to you by the people of the Free Universe”

“He the mediator who spans the chasm which divides
them

—the divine and the mortal”

“Knight of Wands, Knight of Cups,
Knight of Pentacles, Knight of Swords”

“and through Him the arts of the prophet and the priest”

The victims, their hands tied with scarves, were shot and thrown into the pool of the \$250,000 Ohta home, a half-mile from Frazier’s ramshackle cabin

“sacrifices and mysteries and charms, and all”

reached by a flimsy swing bridge

“prophecy and incantation find their way. The wisdom

(Indefensible!)

Hidden under trees, however, are the camps of young people with wild hair and outlandish customs

“went into the garden of Zeus and fell into a heavy sleep”

the older residents resent, and increasingly fear.

“In the first place he is always poor, and anything but tender and fair, as many imagine him. He is rough and squalid . . . on the bare earth exposed he lies under the open heaven”

“materialism must die or mankind will stop”

“and like his mother he is always in distress.”

“He really flipped out,” said Michael Rugg, an artist who lived near the shack occupied by the 24 year old Frazier, a bearded highschool dropout and unemployed auto mechanic.

“VIOLENT EXPERIENCE”

“It was really a violent experience. He wanted to sell everything he owned. He wanted his wife to get rid of her daughter and go with him into the woods. He wanted to do extreme things.”

“Like his father too, whom he also partly resembles, he is always plotting against the fair and the good; he is bold (a bully!) a ruthless hunter”

[11:30PM, 27 October]

Sheriff James said that many “frightened residents had been calling the sheriff’s office but . . .” “There is no real reason to believe—

“always weaving some intrigue or other, fertile in resource . . . terrible as an enchanter, sorcerer, sophist”

—that any particular people you see are the real suspects. Dr. Ohta himself had a gun which we have recovered.”

Every man armd!

To keep the Peace!

“and dead at another moment”

In Need!

frequented by tough motorcycle gangs and hippies, and hidden at the end of a dead-end road in a canyon of the Santa Cruz Mountains 15 miles from the city

“and again alive by reason of his father’s nature. The truth of the matter is this:”

Need. He was not careful, the wise man said,
of what he needed but, heavy with soma
that drunkenness beyond care
went into the sleep we call
the Garden of Zeus

to sleep in Sleep where
the Woman who begs at the Door of the Soul,

Abject Poverty, crept to his side, whining,
and lay with him. Knowing nothing,
what did he dream
of cold that goes forever begging as she invaded
his rich nature,
sharpening for her moment his self satisfaction
to cut the flesh of his side in sleep and
aroused him to conceive

“a severe personality change after taking the hallucinogenic
drug . . . a revelation!”

What does he desire? What!

does he desire?

“misuses” he desires “the natural environment” he desires
“or destroys” he desires “suffer” —it is like a fire in him—
“the penalty of death” he desires “from this day forth” he
desires “comrades” he desires “death” —the fires of it
burn— “against anything” he desires “not” he desires “nat-
ural life” he desires “die” he desires “stop”

[28 October] Mankind must stop!

She dances upon his heart!

His Nature tramples his heart!

[12:30 Midnight, 27 October]

“There is Poetry, which as you know, is complex and man-
ifold. All creation or passage of non-being into being is
poetry or *making* still, you know, they are not
poets but

have other names”

The note, signed with the names of the four “court” cards, was
found under the windshield wiper of Dr. Ohta’s maroon Rolls-
Royce that blocked one driveway to the hill top.

“WORST CRIME”

“And the same holds of Love. But I say they are seeking
neither for the half of themselves nor for the whole”

“the Free Universe” - “the natural environment” - “death
by the people of the Free Universe” - “I and my comrades
from this day” - “death for freedom” - “natural life on this
planet”

“And they will cut off their own hands and feet and cast
them away.”

They found Frazier asleep and took him into custody without resist-
ance.

He didn't resist what moved him!

“Do you not see how all animals, birds, as well as beasts,
are in agony

concerned with music and meter?”

“World War III” on despoilers of the environment!

taking a .38 caliber pistol and knapsack of food he left behind his
wallet, driver's license and a book on Tarot

—it was the music of the Tarot that moved
him—

“a perpetual loss and reparation
hair; flesh, bones, blood—

“She frowns and contracts and has a sense of pain”

Madame Defarge signals the Court that the Sentence is at hand.

Her secret *agents provocateurs* stir among the Listeners,
fingering the men who are to die

“in order to give birth” a new Law and Order! Anew!

[7:30AM, 28 October]

But it is Denise I am thinking of—

“I feel terribly out of touch with you and fear you may
be hurt at my silence but I just can't help it.”

Doncan McNaughton

In the depths of the woman
in love, into friendship, the old injuries
out of Love,
out of the depths of the Woman's love,

SHE appears, Kali dancing, whirling her necklace of skulls,
trampling the despoiling armies and the exploiters of natural resources
under her feet. Revolution or Death!

Wine! The wine of men's blood in the vat
of the Woman's anger, whirling,
the crackling— is it of bones?— castanets?—
tommyguns?— fire raging in the ghettos?— What
is the wrath of Jehovah to this almost blissful Mother-
Righteousness
aroused by the crimes of Presidents?

*"And I know such violent revolution has ached my marrow-bones,
my soul changing its cells"*

so immediately the lines of her poem come into mine.

She changes.

Violently. It is her time. I never saw that dress before.

I never saw that face before.

"When she is in the depths of her black silence," he told me,
"Phone right away. Don't think you know what to do to help
her. She is dangerous."

Madame Outrage of the Central Committee
forms a storm cloud around her where she is brooding. This night
opens into depth without end in my life to come.

The Four Winds come into the Womb of Her Grievance.

Every woman an Other I fear for her.

She has put on her dress of murderous red.
She has put on her mini-skirt and the trampling begins.
She has put on her make-up of the Mother of Hell,

the blue lips of Kore, the glowering
pale of the flower that is black to us.
She has put on her fashion of burning.

Her tenderness grows tender, enflames,
and, from the painful swelling of that history to come,

*"My cracked heart tolling such songs of unknown morning-star
ecstatic anguish*

. . . unquenched desire's radiant decibels"

I too know in her telling and

At the storm center
her flashing eyes, a shouting
in the street rises and against

the doctrine of Love as Need that Plato's Socrates tells us Diotima laid
on him,
that untrustworthy Mind's father turning the Mother's words to suit
his purpose,
against the pleading croon of the folk-rock singer
to put down the rage of revolt with *Love, Sweet Love*, she cries

from the center of terror
that is the still eye of the storm in her:

"There comes a time when only Anger is Love."

scheherezade:

what if our lives depended on telling stories my son said
ô my son our lives depend on telling stories

the bliss of the heart that finds its words

the bliss of the thunder
of the Virgin

my hand is misshapen and aches from its obedience

its writing beneath a picture of Gérard de Nerval
who also knelt by his bed
to pray to his heavenly witness

we pray who ask nothing
but to tell our love, only to tell
never to ask



Letter to C.C.

My companions were many
but the deserter is deserted
I became the back of the mirror

blackened. Kept from my bed!
The hoarder keeps jealous watch
nor believes in sleep, the self

I watch out a window my decay
I am the measure of time
in the change of pure substance



any land is old in which my father died

the mystery theatre – the creeping, or weeping

reality and myth, they shall meet
and mingle me again



See what time has done?

The stars, Orion's belt,
came down and trenched my brow.
It's not "what mind is left?"
What mind?



The Haunt

Three Coors some blond Lebanese and Thai
Jim Carroll does a short set at the Old Waldorf
long ride back

in the throat, in the intestine, God
has my body. But I am sitting here now
in the wind at midnight, I hear
the howl of a man outside
on the road and I do this
I don't see the man I don't

even look, the wind sloughs
around the house like an ocean



1:49

Nobody cares
in the infantile ways you do.

the babes walk by and you sigh:
I'm a child of nature and you're not?

Ô *man*, they say.



'aql:

Blood for ink, altars to Christ
mutilation

Fuck that,

I came to judge the guilty

with my eyes, my intellectus

all *my* life the Irish have wanted to be free

to dance on their nêsos (inis

smāragdina



Kenneth Irby

The mind will accept *anything*.

To see is to know, according to Greek,
though not everyone saw then either —

we imagine them on woolly hillsides amid stones
and occasional stark trees meditating among

divine presences in a “greek” light etc. flocks baaa-ing
bells tinkling, temple fires being lit in late afternoon —

loose, fragrant robes lightly adorn luminously-oiled bodies —
a quiet in other words interlude wherein Alcibiades

turns into Aaron Burr and everyone smiles ironically —
no, I didn’t care for J.P. Bishop’s opinions, Aram

I don’t think America belongs to tone, taste makes
waste one hates to face what’s next, that’s what’s

the matter with the New Yorker, with Princeton, with
recollected elegance, this is the land which nullifies

the history of poets and laughs at the history of love —
it also strains justice immoderately, *anything*

else than the most democratic of all measures
— perception — is total, complete and eternal bullshit.



The aquamarine-tinted bus windows cause the passengers to seem immersed in a mobile tank of illuminated sea-water. Inevitably the driver wears an 80s afro and wonders if tonight a young brother will board with neon eyeballs and an inexpensive pistol, the foreshortener of ennui in a drab woolen skull cap. Unreasonably random the messengers of modern extinction, and yet how weirdly familiar the conventions of urbanity. Across the street, therefore, like a pain in the lungs, must be recomputed in a new equation of distance, now that we have made elegant the problem of the girl next door.

Souls are examined optometrically in Partyland by a certain Dr. Kurtz, the guests as quiet as patients, *ashamed to eat*.

Kenneth Irby

[before the Angel]

she is part of my love but not the Image of Eternal Desire or that
shared by the young man

but of the loved in body actual
ample-fleshed women — as what
slippage of their ideal I am
that much I should have known

or count, as it has to be counted, part of what the slippage is to keep

[22 Aug 77]

Homage to Andrei Bely

so came to old friends' shapes and voices playing soul
host theophanic *caro mio spiritualis*
lost deference before the images of power nor gained
every association with who seem to be
whole coat loan the rite of purge transition
ache of *the street rooms* on the road home *parts of the body*
dealing presence equal to subsistence shared
work by the phone booth hand plates yearn for meat
cheap change the text books ritz construe
and all the me's the means to bridge -ceptivity made clear
the paths of ancient initiation are

[2 Nov 77]

[postcard views – homage to the Gérôme and Van Gogh-Hiroshige
Criophoros]

for Timotha and Gerrit and Shannon

Hermes Ram-Toter from the woods in the snow mist comes into the clearing just after the duel's ended, the young fool in the Pierrot costume dying, the Hiawatha fullback slickster walking away with his second, stunned and mumbling – by the time they reach the waiting car there'll be nothing visible but the mindbuggering freezing fog – and Herm Sheep-Finder comes up to the Pierrot and takes him out of the arms of his death-glazed friends and hoists him over his right shoulder and walks on off, the masquerade costume falling away leaving the body naked – between death and the ram, kouros-lean, that passes understanding

*

the land and the sea that keep the bridge arched straight slant violently upward to the left, that Northwest, or Home Against Fall, as the view aloft banks to the right for the limitless ocean – and to cross the bridge goes on out of sight into the rain, probably even curves back again somewhere further on to this same shore – three go crossing, three coming back, bent under the drench, wet fleece under one arm, wet belly and flank against the neck, phallos hat, wingless, who can see Fortune curving migratory as the continents, bullet-out and -back

[9 Dec 77]

questions of the snow
the sky heart gave
just for possibility
every day of childhood
still? given
at conception
to each of us
so we are our
parents' holes, the dark
holes of the heavens
we give our children
we go out through again
to die
patches
of thin blown snow
drifting the sweeper's marks

•
not children
just by fucking
made by
or given
by *conception*
to *take to oneself*

[13 Jan 78]

the distance of love is one of the cracks in the year
help through, like smoke, like last night
wet the soul but not love the possible death
smelling like chase when the fever's irresistible
and get it right

[3 Feb 78]

*

late in the Winter when thaws beginning Spring should long ago have started, the cold persists, no more heavy snows but frozen mists, thin sleets, leftover snow grimy, brooding the woods, the yards, the trash in upper rooms waiting for brighter, warmer days to be taken out, bent over above the porches, waiting, for footsteps soon to come, and talk, up there

I used to go up in the late afternoons, not long before sunset, and sit in the bare attic, looking out West and North, toward the river, the hills on the other side of the flood plain brighter than anything else in the day, snowdark the woods — and watch till the aftersunset glow had vanished and the room was dark, the earth turn

the space of time in a life between a year of waking and a year of sleeping, to wake again, and then go downstairs, turn on the lamps in the living room, put on some music out of the shadows, make a drink, start making dinner — and the life too would come into the room, out of the burrow of earth under the snow in the woods, like the figure of a dog molded in snow in the woods, shake, and rouse itself, and come in

*

[1 Mar 78]

study is the gate of justice
in the doorway hammered zeal fingers the scales
3 drops at a time, 3 more, forming
just sun of blood

[2 Sep 78]

what can trust take and wish were mine were yours
foolish most to only want to give to love

[17 Sep 78]

[homage to the Dodonaean Rilke]

“the cold calls travel” — with the gone? with no *one* — maybe a
many — “bundles, restless” — some work no hand to — but *having*,
harden the heart to those who don’t — all understandable, core,
even, of what we think of as *union* now (not any longer the *nation*,
or the *North* — though no matter here, in the question of:) *protec-*
tion — even the craft, true — what brotherhood of travel but death?
— “no way to know / but go back on to”

one reticence against another engenders sadness — and the excess, is
resented? then regretted — but no more revealed than not

*

servant of the bowl, the wind directs the beater
who *tells* the racket means?
sadness requisite? that fullness
to overflow to oracle

[4 Oct 78]

IORDANI
BRVNI NOLANI
DE IMAGINVM, SIGNORVM,
& Idearum compositione, Ad
omnia Inuentionum, Dispo=
sitionum, & Memoriae
genera,

LIBRI TRES.

AD ILLVSTREM ET GENE=
ROSISS. IOAN. HAINRICVM
*Haincellium Elcouiae Do=
minum.*

CREDITE ET INTELLIGETIS.



FRANCOFVRTI
Apud IOAN. Vvechelum & PETRVM
Fifcherum confortes. 1591.

Giordano Bruno, the Nolan (1548-1600)
*On the Composition of Images,
Signs and Ideas*

translated by Charles Doria and
Dick Higgins

Selections.

In 1977 Charles Doria and myself began the translation of the last work of Bruno published in his lifetime, *On the Composition of Images, Signs and Ideas* which, when finished, will be the first work of his *real* philosophy, as contained in his Latin works, to appear in English (the works in Italian are merely window dressing, interesting but not crucial). The translation, with a large essay on the significance of Bruno, will appear in 1984. The following is a more or less arbitrary selection, consisting of the first passages for publication.

— Dick Higgins

B = 1591 edition of *De imaginum, signorum et idearum compositione*, the original. The work is known in the Bruno canon as "Images."

S = *Ars reminiscendi et in phantastico campo exarandi ad plurimas in triginta sigillis inquirendi . . .*, known in the Bruno canon as "Seals."

T = Felice Tocco, who wrote extensively on Bruno and, with Girolamo Vitelli, edited the complete known Latin works at Naples and Florence, between 1879 and 1890. "T has . . ." thus means that Tocco's edition reads

Otherwise-unidentified page references refer to:

Giordano Bruno. . . . *Opera latine conscripta publicis sumptibus edita*. Ed. F(elice) Tocco and H. (Girolamo) Vitelli. 3 Vols. in 8 Parts. 1879-90; Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1962. Eg., "II, iii, 206" means "Vol. 2, Part 3, page 206."

Concerning those things that go towards the mirror, and those things that are in the mirror¹

Now we propose to shift our attention, as regards the universe, towards the third signification (discussed above) which is, as it were, a sort of living mirror in which are the image of natural things and the shadow of divine things.²

Plainly, this mirror treats idea as if it were the cause of things, just as the image that is to be made in the mind of any efficacious thing effects the understanding of that efficacious thing. It conceives of form as if it were the thing itself, in sum, its appearance. For all the whole substance of a thing refers to this, this image, since a thing does not exist physically without being material, if we are to go along with the discussions of the Peripatetic School,³ who have understood that matter is the substance of all things, since it brings forth *forms* from its own womb and viscera, just as a mother gives birth to her offspring; it sends forth, gives birth to, conceives and then (after death) conceals its own children in one and the same way though with some reciprocal changes. Matter conceives images as if these were the result of one thing from another thing, one which emanated from a particular surface and informed its capability of being recognized first with a certain light of the senses, then with one which was truly rational. Here, specifically, for those who speak about things in general, are their images and figures, located as it were in their proper places, where they are protected and preserved after being produced and propagated from their sources and wellsprings. It is perfectly possible that their names will be confused by the layman, and often even usurped by those who are "quite wise," and it is perfectly possible that in their every argument it suits their purposes that there should be no intellectual rigor in their pleadings, even though the significance of

¹ The "mirror" is the Brunonian image for the material world.

² This is one of the main topics of discussion in Bruno's *Concerning the Shadows of Things*.

³ The "Peripatetic School" is the nickname of the Aristotelians, who discussed their philosophy while strolling around in the Lyceum of Athens. Throughout his career Bruno constantly claimed that Aristotle was grossly misunderstood in his, Bruno's, time, and his attacks on the Aristotelians, in his "debate" at Oxford in 1585 for instance, were often taken as an attack on Aristotle per se. And in fact, a few sentences later, Bruno does go after the Aristotelians again. But this makes it all the more significant that right here he credits the Aristotelians for their correct premises.

things is fixed and very plain to see. Nevertheless, in presenting (this significance), which we also did in our book *Concerning the Shadows of Things*, we consider that there is nothing wrong in repeating ourselves, so that we plainly offer the different definitions for the following terms: 1. idea (*idea*), 2. track (*vestigium*), 3. shadow (*umbra*), 4. sign (*nota*), 5. character (*character*), 6. mark (*signum*), 7. seal (*sigillum*), 8. indication (*indicium*), 9. figure (*figura*), 10. analogy (*similitudo*), 11. proportion (*proportio*), 12. image (*imago*).

First of all, the idea is indeed properly termed “form” before things and their metaphysical correspondences; obviously it (idea) is the appearance itself of the universe and of those things which are supersubstantial in the universe, (since) just as it is appropriate for idea to exist more truly than universe which is physically constituted, and as it is for those things which are natural and have a real existence [i.e., they exist too] and the physical universe as well, since it is appropriate that they enjoy an existence more true than that of the reflection of the universe [the material world] which is inscribed in internal numbers on our senses.⁴ For just as our intentions originate from natural things, and also because they could not originate from those things which do not exist naturally – because, as it were, if no physical body exists there could be no shadow – so too could physical things themselves, indeed the physical universe, by no means exist if the metaphysician himself [God] as well as His idea which bears all things, according to the act of his mind and of his divine will which communicated itself and which did not enjoy prior existence.

Secondly, after idea, therefore, there follows the physical universe which, following Zoroaster, we call the trace or vestige of idea, where it enjoys, peculiarly to itself, the name of the essence of the forms.⁵

Third, in the sequence, is the rational world, which is the aggregate of things in [this] intention, which is abstracted from and

⁴ The Latin here is extraordinarily complex and metaphorical, but the argument is the familiar one from Bruno and also from the Pythagoreans that mathematics are the study of the form of forms, and the more uniquely Brunonian argument that since only things cast shadows or images, anything which casts a shadow or image in the mind must, therefore, exist – be it a physical or abstract entity; this is the key point in Bruno’s monism, whether or not one goes along with his argument.

⁵ There is no evidence that Bruno knew Old Persian, which is the language of the Avestas, the sacred texts of the Zoroastrians. However, this explanation of the physical universe as the trace of ideas is quite common in gnosticism – in Manichaeism (which is derived from Zoroastrianism) and in Neoplatonism. However, all gnostic texts were regarded as dangerous and possibly diabolically

coalesces in its species from physical things. Because the proportion [ratio] of its being is less [than that of the physical world] it is farther from the ideal truth than the track, and the parts of the aggregate are bounded on all sides by the name of the species and the genera as they are logically signified. And so, according to those who philosophize with any subtlety and who speak properly, to these three names, idea, form, and species, we attribute three vastly different meanings.

Book I, Chapter 3

Now, in this third category, it is convenient as well as consistent to assume the concepts behind the different names in various ways, as, for example, "sign" which denotes everything which in any way displays [or indicates] another thing either in its primary, secondary, proximate or remote, immediate or mediate reason [or meaning].

"Character" [denotes] that which, by a fixed drawing of lines or siting of points signifies something, such as the elements.

"Mark" [signum] is, in a certain way, the genus for all those things which have signification, either as idea or track or shadow or otherwise.

"Seal" [sigillum] (which is the diminutive of mark [signum]) signifies the more notable part of the sign or the sign as it is generally accepted, as, for example, when we signify a person or his action by his head alone or only his hand [e.g., when we say of a ship that there were "twenty-six hands aboard"].

"Indication," like mark and seal, is one term whose function it is, not so much as to represent or to signify, as to show, just as when one who points does not *per se* signify the thing which is being indicated, [but] rather he invites or summons it to his inner or outer contemplation.

"Figure" is different from all the preceding terms, because they are ideas, tracks, and shadows, as much related to the intrinsic as to the extrinsic aspect of things; "figure," however, pertains only to the extrinsic.

inspired, not to mention heretical, by many of Bruno's contemporaries. Thus we might speculate that wherever, throughout this book, Bruno refers to Zoroaster, to the Babylonians and Chaldeans, he is actually referring to gnostic or even Neoplatonic texts and concepts of one kind or another.

“Sign,” “character,” “mark,” “seal” and “indication” can be called, just as well and at various times, lines [or] points, all things which do not contain space. “Figure,” nevertheless, is that which ought rightfully to contain space.

“Similitude” differs from all the preceding terms, because [here] the species (of the things covered by the term) is not necessarily the same. Whenever a person is signified in letters and characters as well as in marks, indications and signs, less [will be signified] than with a simile or likeness, as in a painting or a statue or his appearance as received by the senses and preserved in the imagination.

“Proportion” differs from “similitude” because it [proportion] is known to exist perpetually between two terminal points; just as A is a letter, so is B; or just as “mule” is like a “horse.” But proportion is perpetually discovered among four or more – or at least three – terminal points; just as alpha is among the Greeks, so too is the A among the Latins, where there are four terminal points: 1. alpha, 2. Greek, 3. A, 4. Latin. Now, the proportion among these at-least-three terminal points is obvious; just as two holds itself in relation to four, so does eight in relation to sixteen (here there are the four terminal points: 2, 4, 8 [and] 16). Just as two is related to four, so too is four to eight, where there are three terminal points: two, four, eight.

Finally, “image” differs from “similitude” because it embraces a greater energy, emphasis and universality, for there is more *being* for image than for similitude. Image tends more to unequivocality than does similitude. And it is the same for things not only when they are in the same genus but also when they are outside their genus. Just as one artifice is said to be similar to a certain artifice, nonetheless it is not called similar either in relation to its image or *in* its image unless it is in a very close genus or in the same species.

Concerning the Images of Things¹

From what pre-existed in us we solely seek out not just the images of things but also their shapes, virtues [properties] and, lastly, their very substance to the point at which they communicate and participate. Thus we establish the unknown from the known by reasoned argument and discourse. From the previously existent and conceived, we pursue what we lack and have appetite for. Thus it is no one who reaps save he who sows, and nothing will be given to one who has nothing. Therefore, from established or pre-prepared images we strive not only after other images, but also after those forms which make up the images

[1.] by composition, that is, [through] the way that they, countless themselves, are, in their primary state, coalesced into certain fixed and tiny elements,

[and 2.] by transmutation, that is, [through] the way in which, by another process, the visible shapes of all things are brought forth into the act from fire or water or air by the graduated combining of two species, just as by metamorphosis we can bring forth shapes of all sorts from the same wax, so too, in the same manner, by separation the visible shapes of countless things move forth from one and the same chaos, while by composition² everything is constituted from four contrary [elements] variously combined. Therefore, it is fitting that certain principles and seeds have preeminence, since from them [may be] set forth the boundless supply of the images or of what may be imaged.

¹ In this section Bruno is combining Lucretian atomism with the chaos of Homer and Hesiod "where everything is possible because nothing is."

² Bruno has a period here.

**The Platonic Word ["logos"] Concerning the
Two-fold Sense of Intellect ["nous"]
as Shaper and Harmony¹**

From hearing in common with seeing we receive, most particularly, the distinction of sensible shapes. Objects seen and heard by the outward action of sense, or of the inner working of the image-making power, bring forward and induce in the soul active and passive impressions. On the one hand objects perceived, as it were, in a shadow or a mirror move and lead the spirit toward imitation of divine harmony, and on the other to the image of the gods' beauty. By these two senses [hearing and seeing] we search out those perceptible forms through which we are affected by delirium and madness, for this is the way we fly to the conceptual forms of the intellectual world.² By means of the ear a deeper sense is awakened in us for divine music apprehended by a very penetrating effort and courage. For in fact in the order of things we perceive the three-fold music of the efficacious truth circled by light,

1st and prime in God's mind,

2nd in the graded order and movement of the universe,

3rd in their formation which our spirit touches for the first time in objects themselves, in virtue of the close-fitting structure ["harmony"] of theirs which it [the spirit] previously enjoyed (in the Pythagorean and Platonic sense) whose master, as I say it [the spirit] was before it got bogged down in the body's chains.³ This is why those who are light-headed and vulgar concerning music's sounds insist upon live ["vocal"] and instrumental music, while

¹ This chapter, which climaxes and ends Book One, puts forward Bruno's claims for the virtues of magicianhood and divinity (by "magician" he means something akin to what we would mean by "adept"), and the separation of the world into moieties of the intelligent (the "initiated") and the vulgar (the "uninitiated"). Bruno half-playfully attempts to combine the language of mystical induction with philosophical deduction (e.g., the ambiguity when he says "imbuit materiam" — the soul "encounters matter" implying that it mystically transforms it).

² The madness to which Bruno appears to be referring is the inspired madness discussed in Plato's *Phaedrus* (249d) and which is a key point in the Platonic aesthetics.

³ The three-fold division of music was a common conception for the Renaissance, consisting in *Musica mundana* or the music of the spheres, *Musica humana* or earthly music (which was considered a pale imitation of music of the spheres), and *Musica speculativa* or conceptual or philosophically analytical music, in which the

serious people [possessed] of firmer judgement and deep reasonings are inspired by frequent and divine abundance and afflatus, and receive the sustenance of celestial ambrosia poured in their mind. Elsewhere I spoke of a marvelous kinship that exists among true poets — who are to be referred along with musicians to the same species — that exists as well between true painters and philosophers since true philosophy is music as well as poetry and painting, true painting is also music and philosophy, true poetry and music are a kind of divine wisdom and painting.⁴

In another place was discussed how any painter obviously is an establisher of the infinite since, with his power of forming shapes from what he sees and hears, he builds by combining in a multiplicity of ways. But shape forming, which is regulated by reason's balance, can easily be recognized, for by expression in the superficialities of sense it continually demonstrates the order and extremely close-knit connection of elements to elements. But we taught [this] also in our book of explanations of *The Art of the Thirty Seals*⁵ [that art] which makes everything out of everything. Notwithstanding this fact, in addition, over-clever minds without philosophical attainment have known how to distort even empty words into meanings of their own ordaining, as is the case with those who so accommodate the confused garden of words observed [coming] from the mouths of fanatics with happy endings and fictitious stories, so that the latter [the fanatics] are truly taken for prophets while they themselves are regarded as interpreters of these prophets. In this way Cherinthus promoted the virgin he despoiled to a Sybil; that indeed is why he brought her to such a point of reckless daring that, whatever came into her head to say,

Pythagoreans were said to excell (cf. Plato's *Timaeus* (35b-ff)). This concept is fully developed in Boethius's *De institutione musica, libri quinque*, to which Bruno appears to be referring throughout this passage. Cf. also, Dick Higgins, "Musica speculativa," in *Ear* 1, No. 14 (Dec. 1976).

⁴ Bruno's "elsewhere" here and in the following passage is *Seals*, esp. II, ii, 133-4. This idea is traceable through the Middle Ages (it appears in Bernardus Silvestris, for instance) back to antiquity. For example, it is expounded in some detail in Boethius, *De institutione musica, libri quinque*, ed. Friedlein (1867; Frankfurt am Main: Minerva GmbH, 1966) pp. 224-5. It can be traced back further to Aristoxenus and to Nicomachus and, through the latter, apparently to lost Pythagorean texts. In Bruno's time this syncretic conception of the arts led to the development of the opera and to the flourishing of the pattern poem, and in ours to the development of such intermedia as concrete poetry and the Happening.

⁵ *Seals* (II, ii, 73-217) is in two parts, the memory system and the book of explanations of it.

she would blare it out to the public at large, not only without fear but, even, with a certain marked seriousness: "YOU HAVE ONLY TO SPEAK" (he said) "AND YOU WILL PROPHECY." And he, after a brief pause, found his voice again, frowning his forehead as if amazed and visibly moved by her, eyebrows raised, [crying out:] "Oh great oracle, oh astonishing miracle of divine voice." Then this sly arch-sycophant adjusted everything [she said] to actual events and popular traditions, so that, to the people, it was none other than miraculous and for far too long a time he triumphed to his personal advantage, by mockery, over all other sects of blood-suckers. Now signifying of this type may be elaborately clever, but coin like that is not exchanged in the kingdom of philosophy. Yet those are the very ones who will attribute their undisciplined talents to images of truly divine wisdom and oracles, while the eyes of the [truly wise] owls cannot bear the sun's light. But as for ourselves, although we do not write in such a way, even if we wished to be or could be understood by everybody or about everything, nonetheless there is no one (if he will pay attention with eager trust and faithful application),⁶ proportionate to his sufficiency in whatever discipline he is versed, whom we cannot, as a rule, help and, in some way, please.

⁶ In the placement of the parenthesis we follow *B* and *T*, but "proportionate" appears to modify "application," so it might make more sense if the parentheses closed after "versed" in the next line.

Images of Saturn¹



First he rises up winged and helmeted, his helmet covered by a black veil. Around it a serpent wraps his tail which is caught in the serpent's mouth. He is dark-complexioned, his beard hangs down, long hair tufts jut from his eyebrows, he is wrinkled, has flashing eyes, is wild, to look at him makes one shudder, lame, he carries a sickle in his left hand, in his right a baby that he holds up to eat. Many wax tapers are lit and burn around him.

Second, he is a king with two faces, he wears one on the back of his head. On both faces he looks most placid and approachable. In his right hand he carries a staff, in his left an olive and fig trees along with a vine shoot bearing grapes. And many heads of grain surround him.

Third, he would appear from Africa, with a certain [stern] look on his face like a cloud, showing the imprint of a most violent wind. On his head [are] two faces, one an eagle, the other beaked like a

¹ The occult image of Saturn, in Alchemy and in the Astrology of Bruno's time, centers around the ideas of potential force, violence, undisciplined strength and, in the sense of incapability of reproduction, age. In this text Saturn suggests, above all, the ancient, the frightening, and the primeval. This is not completely reconcilable either with Saturn as the former fertility god of the Italian peninsula, or with the father-slaking, child-devouring Kronos whom the Orphic cult knew, or with the association with Janus as king of time ("Chronos") or the Olympian religion's titanic fool. However, Bruno appears to be syncretizing at least some of these images; for instance, the second image is two-faced, like Janus. The fourth, the old woman, possibly resembles the fool Saturn.

hypogriff. The faces also have knees, his feet are like the hooked paws and rending nails of the birds mentioned above. In his left hand he holds a barbed iron hook, in his right a sceptre of the same material.

Fourth, he is a tiny old woman in a dress; she has a long tail, dark skin, supporting an owl on her right arm while the left drags a pig along by a slender cord. Around her neck, like a choker, a water serpent has coiled.

Book II, Chapter 4

Sorrow's Image

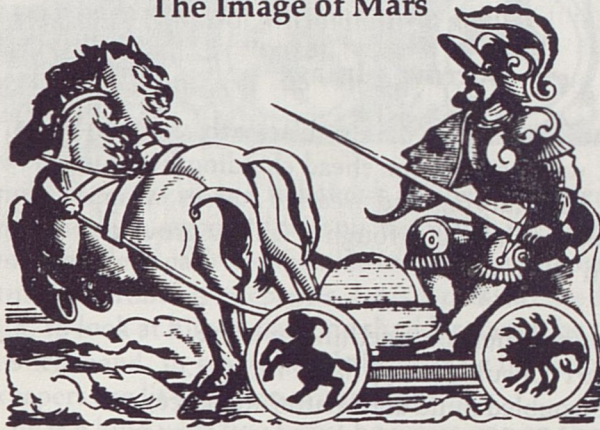
Forth she comes, from grey dark of black ash and whirlwind, a spectre in cloth, wrapped, her forehead clouding her hung-down face, mutilated, the starving and wearied horses whipped along drawing her chariot, moving through a willow grove and swamp that's heavy with vile mud.

Sorrow's spectre, it is, her soul seething in brine,
Her troubled heart consumed with flame forever.
Tormenting the troubled mind and shattering peace,
Afflicting the mind with horrors in the evening hours,
With lemurs — such is the sleep of the sleepless,
In vain they seek Lethe's oblivion in those waves;
Badly she wastes thus the body with endless sorrow and pain,
Badly shaking thus the breast with anxious care.
The light's drained by her spark from the vital steam,
Worn down from within the strength of native breathing,
And the sliding into evil hastens the season of one's hell journey.
Her dead face she lines with wrinkles,
Her body's joints grieve aloud. Her sensing's
Cramped distress pulls her headlong;
She burns with salt bile, with deadly boils.
She hurls herself into the dirt; hope, despaired of,
Gives way to sorrow, and grief seeks grief's comfort.
She clothes her breast in black pierced by a hundred darts.
To relieve evil by tears, that's the pleasure granted her.
So the grapevine sheds sapsdrops when it's cut, and
So she, who will avenge self-afflicted wounds,
With her substance trickling away, is eaten away by tears,

Slowly, gently, an act of winding down. Finally,
Accustoming herself to the evil,
She avoids those who'd soothe her passions in friendship,
And turns her eyes from unseen, hated daylight,
And loves herself when she is banished or abandoned; and joy
She hates, and shuns it as an enemy.

Book II, Chapter 5

The Image of Mars



There ascends a man strong in appearance, with a choleric and brazen complexion, horrible to look at, shrewd, gleaming-eyed, with fire in his eyes and a grin like a lion's, ears like a dog's or a wolf's, the magnanimous glory of his forehead ringed by hair standing straight up, from whence short and apparently very solid horns project, sharpened like those of a bull of Apulia. On the top of his helmet he wears the head of a Chimera which is spitting flame; he is muscular, full-chested, strong-armed, broad-shouldered, of moderate stature, his hairy hands and feet, broad and well-formed by any true measure, are too long (though not without a very great energy). He carries a huge shield in his left hand apparently made of solid bronze, on which has been carved the lengthy image of a terrible three-headed dragon, and he is very destructively armed with an untameable spear projecting from his shield's center. With his right hand he brandishes a gleaming yellow sword that blinds the eyes with its fiery splendor. He stands in a four-wheeled chariot drawn by four bird-footed horses. His charioteer is a woman sentinel (they call her Bellona) who drives

the team with a snake whip.¹ She has an unlucky, bloody, viperous expression on her face, and her complexion is almost livid. Both of those people standing in the prow of the chariot should be called more a formidable example of fulminating violence than of virtue.

Second image: a wolf precedes the chariot, and a king dressed in red rides with the wolf and holds in his hand broken tablets that are like the tablets of the law.

Third image: a he-goat and a matron (whether a queen or not I do not know) follow the chariot. She has a heroic although somewhat sour aspect to her; she is wearing a tawny dress and carries nothing except a rod. Her eyes, it seems, are closed while she is facing to the East.

Fourth image: a horrible and plainly ugly crew of horned servants, drunkards, roar in Bacchante style from their dark mouths, screaming like wolves and cows.² They have teeth like wild boars, nails like those of rapacious and flesh-eating birds. Their horns are like tree-branches but not strong; their eyes seem as if turned on a lathe and are dark with a little brightness. They move forward leaping and bounding in a random way.

Book II, Chapter 5

The Image of War

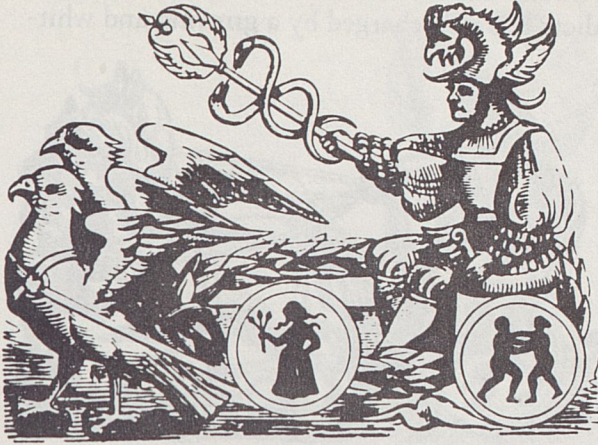
There follows an ugly monster, full of blood, fiery, storming with a tumult of shields, turbid, dusty, gleaming inside a cloud of dust, lighting up the sylvan air, clad in grim chain-mail whose appearance it is only just possible to see, over his helmet — just his

¹ Bellona was the Ancient Italian goddess of war, who is represented at various times as the wife, sister or companion of Mars and is, like him, a war god as her name, from "*bellum*" meaning "war," suggests. In earlier times she was known as "Duellona," and she corresponds to the Greek "Enyo." Because she is featured in no main myths that have survived she is not well known; however a temple was built in her honor at Rome by Appius Claudius Caecus in 296 A.D., not far from the Circus Maximus, and which was sometimes used by the senate.

² This is an unusual image of the Bacchantes in that they are not priestesses or prophetesses but degraded people — witches or madwomen, suggesting the derivation of "Bacchantes" from the Greek "*bakcheuo*," meaning "to run riot." They have become like the degenerated people of whom traditionally they have been in charge. Too, the image of Mars here is unusual in that he is horned. The effect of the image, among other things, is, thus, to suggest all these people and creatures as devils or fallen angels of some kind.

rough, huge, long-haired head, blond and blown hither and thither, cudgeling the air with the speed of wind. Under him is his stallion, notable for his lofty neck, a mane equally hairy, breathing flame and smoke from his nostrils, slashing the air with iron-shod hooves, striking fiery sparks from winged feet, heaping up footsteps with proud alacrity, he was used to struggling with people who opposed his passage in front or behind by biting on his rein and panting; almost like a lion from the Marmora he is hot in his lightning swiftness and [is] not lazy when disposed to fight, and then he bears himself like a river that breaks out of the mountains and falls headlong. Alongside him there is doubtful Contest, restless Battle, arm-clanging Struggle, Conflict who does not know how to stop, Advance who moves now forward and now back, Cyclopic Invasion, reckless Attack, impetuous Assault, imperious Charge, internecine Riot, hateful Execution, bloody-eyed Battle-field dyed with the berry of the scarlet oak, fateful Misery and miserable Ruin.

The Image of Mercury



Next comes the visible form of the busiest of all the gods, the herald, the messenger, the judge. His images are:¹

[1.], First, he is an infant to whom a goat gives milk, while he lies on the purslane.

[2.], Second, he is a boy who beats Eros, wrestling him to the mat. He himself is winged and is followed by a rooster.

[3.], Third, he is the youth who supplies Jove with food.

[4.], Fourth, he is the effigy who has a black face on one side and a white one on the other; and [thus] as a young man with winged feet and cap, holding in his right hand a staff around which two serpents crawl, he exhibits the crowd of [dead] souls to Charon.

[5.], Fifth he is the hero who cut the hundred-eyed monster to pieces and, next to the same, a cow.²

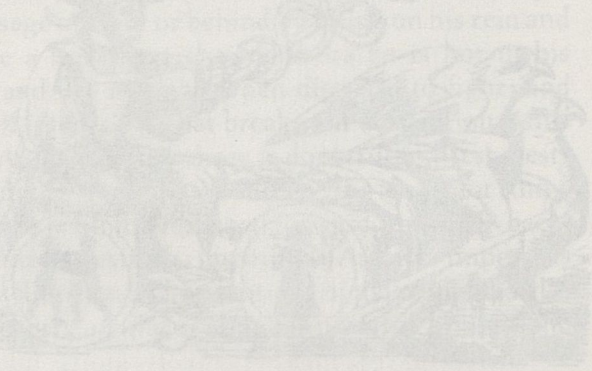
[6.], Sixth he is an animal with three heads on a triple line; his first is like a dolphin's, the second like a dog's, while the third in the middle is almost like an eagle's.³

¹ Most of the images of Mercury in the passage which follows are drawn from Ovid. Esp. cf. Ovid [Publius Ovidius Naso], *Ovid's Fasti*, tr. Sir James George Frazer ("Loeb Classics Library" London: Heinemann, 1921), pp. 268-269.

² Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 11. 666-667.

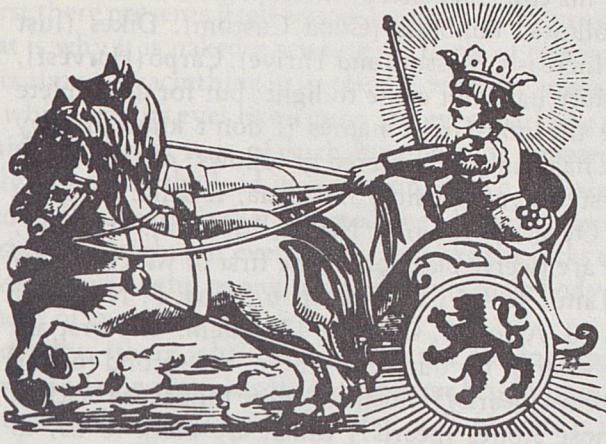
³ This image is a variant on the by-now-familiar one of Hermes Trismegistus whom the hermetic thinkers regarded not only as a historical figure of very great antiquity, but whom they further regarded as the originator of philosophy in the lineage of Pythagoras and even Plato.

[7.], Seventh he is a very handsome youth seated on an elephant, splendid in his royal diadem, dressed in a rainbow hue (like a ringed dove's neck), holding a staff in his right [hand], an iridescent magpie in his left. Around him at noon there flows, encircling, a lengthy band of soldiers being discharged by a growing and whitened cloud.⁴



⁴ This image suggests some variant, perhaps from a lost deck, of the seventh card of the Tarot, "The Chariot," whose significance is the conquest of natural forces, the coming to grips with one's *skarma*. Cf. Gégard Encausse "Papus," *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, tr. A. P. Morton, rev. A. E. Waite (New York: Arcanum Books, 1958), pp. 135-137.

Image of the Sun¹



The image of the sun (who is called the eye of the world, the lamp, watchman, father, sower, preserver) is one eye, which gazes in every line of sight, which looks everywhere and causes seeing to occur,

[who is] more or less one head, one sphere, completely an eye; he is the lofty physical image of God, who sees at one and the same time and in one simple act the past, the present and that which is to come. Light streams from him in a circle in every direction, and heat and the visible splendor of tranquility flow from him, as well as Generation, Life, Life-Protection, Multiplication, Propagation, Formation, Purification, Perfection, Ripeness, Fatherhood, Nutritious Preservation of Food, Government of the Creator, Ornament of the Universe, Form of the Great Foresight, Key of Things, Hand of Nature.² Two stallions pull his chariot, one of which, Lampus,

¹ Some of the images in this section evoke passages in the works of Julian the Apostate, especially his "Against Heraclius the Cynic" and "Hymn to King Helios/Dedicated to Sallust (Oration IV)." Cf. *The Works of the Emperor Julian* (3 vols. Loeb Classics Library. London: Heinemann, 1913) v. 1, pp. 352-435.

² This list of attributes suggests a synthesis of both the traditional Alchemical meaning of "The Sun" and also the meaning in the Tarots, at least in the "Tarot of Marseilles." of the nineteenth pip, "The Sun," which rules The Elements, Nutrition and Digestion, and The Mineral Kingdom. In the Tarot, however, there are two naked children instead of stallions, and other differences are equally striking. Cf. Gérard Encausse "Papus," *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, tr. A. P. Morton, rev. A. E. Waite (New York: Arcanum Books, 1958) pp. 178-180.

on the right gives us day, [while] the other one, Phaethon, who stands to the right of the hinge of evening, gives us the infernal world, so people say. Next to him are ranged the Hours who are said to watch over his cows and sheep, whose names in Greek are remembered as follows: Eunomia (Good Custom), Dikes (Just Laws), Thallones (Increase, Blossom and Thrive), Carpo (Harvest), Irrene (Peace) – more have not come to light; but for a complete number there are the non-Greek names (I don't know if they remain from the Chaldeans)³ considered as follows: of the twelve white ones, the first is Iayn, 2. Ianor, 3. Nasnia, 4. Salla, 5. Sadelali, 6. Thamur, 7. Oveer, 8. Tanio, 9. Neron, 10. Iacon, 11. Abay, 12. Natalo. There are twelve black ones, the first of which is Person, 2. Boro, 3. Tanu, 4. Atir, 5. Mathor, 6. Rana, 7. Netos, 8. Tafrac, 9. Sassur, 10. Aglo, 11. Calerna, 12. Salam. The first are said to prepare his chariot for our hemisphere, the second for the other. But these stones [pearls?] which are white for us, are black to others, [while] those stones [pearls?] which are black to us, to others appear and are white. Alongside the pole of his chariot there is a lion, while in front of him a rooster [perches].

³ By "Chaldeans" Bruno probably means Babylonians.

The Image of Tellus¹

First there presents itself a huge monster with eyes on every side — that is why it is naked — sending off flares of cerulean blue light that is almost hyacinthine in its clarity, with eyebrows flaming like gold which ring its eyes like a gyre, the eyes sparkling marvelously in mid-orb. Since it is of such hugeness, it appears something totally ugly. Yet the load in its womb, which is plain to see, is a round and living thing that is coated like a leopard's spotted pelt. Its hair stands straight out everywhere just like the locks of the forest, the leaves, while the remaining parts of its male body shine in the splendor of the sun.

Secondly, [there is] the majesty of the radiant Apollo, around whom, while he plays his lyre, there run bright nymphs who are varied in the likeness of their beauty; of all of them it is possible to see only one up close, she who leads the dancing chorus, sometimes she draws her eyes into herself, rolls the eyes back into the head so only the whites are visible, so wrapped up is she in her swift speed, sometimes holding herself now with one hand and now with the other, she spins herself round and round in her quick path, stepping almost in her own footprints again and again, sometimes both of her hands, while she walks slower, attack each other right in the middle of her lyre, while the other nymphs, some in one way and others in another, appear to bear themselves in the same way as she.²

Thirdly, a queen who is remarkable for her swiftness that is superhuman, and around whose head towers project, arranged in a circle, and whose chariot is drawn by four lions. Alongside her wagon a virgin stands carrying a drum or a tambourine.

[section continues]

¹ Tellus is the personification of the Earth in the productive sense, sometimes used as metaphor and sometimes as a divinity. Bruno uses the alternate form, Tellurus. This image of Tellus is strongly suggestive of such myths of pregnant monsters as Tiamat, whom Marduk slays in the *Enuma Elis* which is Akkadian. The "queen who is remarkable for her swiftness," two paragraphs later on, also suggests an origin in Semitic mythology, though we have no way of knowing precisely what Semitic texts were translated and available to Bruno. For a translation of parts of the *Enuma Elis* and for other such texts, see Charles Doria and Harris Lenowitz, eds. and trs., *Origins* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976).

² Evidently these nymphs are the muses, and their leader is Mnemosyne or Memory.

Seal IV, Proteus in the House of Mnemosyne.

You know Proteus: ¹ he to whom it was conferred
To switch shapes, to any and all,
Who shows everything and from everything
Revealing all from all.
Certainly by *my* sense of knowing [*sensu*]
He fits all to words and gestures
(However diverse and strange it dissonates),
So that in its person may repose
Its very own signs and numbers [verses].
Thus when the opening lines of Maro's poem [song/charm]
Come to mind, I locate their sense [*sensum*]
And carry it off as spoils from these, their signs: ²
Lo! Here they are: ARMATUS [armed]

VIR [man, hero]

CANTANS [singing, making charms/poems]

PRIMUS [first, prime]

ORANS [one who prays, lit. "opens one's
mouth"]

ITALICUS [Italian – descendent of Italos, the
"italic" Adam]

FATUM [fate, that which has been said or
decreed by voice]

PROFUGUS [exile]

¹ Bruno is using an aorist construction, which indicates past action not yet completed. The sense is that you *know* Proteus because you have seen him, you know him in your mind, therefore, because you have sensed him; this is crucial to Bruno's thought. The image of the "House of Mnemosyne" refers to the memory houses that are peculiar to Renaissance mnemonic systems in general and Bruno in particular. Cf. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

² The text to which Bruno alludes in the following passage is the opening of Vergil's ("Maro's") *Aeneid*:

"Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris

I sing arms and the man, he who first an exile

Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit

from Trojan shores came by fate to Italy and the Lavinian coasts

litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto

after much tossing about on land and sea." (I, 1-3).

Bruno plays on the resemblance between *os, oris* (mouth) and *ora, orae* (edge, boundary) esp. dat. and abl. pl. *oris*.

LAVINIA [Lavinian — promised land, Italy:
divinely married as Aeneas and Lavinia were]

VENTUS [wind]

LITTOREUM [this misspelling could indicate a
pun between *litus*, sea-shore, and *littera*
which, in the singular means "letter, a writ-
ten sign indicating a sound" or, in the plural,
"an epistle, written documents, scholar-
ship," etc.]

MULTUM [much, often]

E TERRA [from the land, beyond the earth]

IACTATUS [tossed about, considered, "up for
discussion"]

and ALTUS [high or deep, but in Virgil the word is
altum, the deep (sea)]

They give me MATTER, because a phalanx is *armed* with weapons,
and FORM, since, of course, a painter paints a hero on a
white ground.

For, truly, Marsus sings to the deaf,³

[And] LOSS relieves his mind.

(The prince) because he precipitates

I see as the EFFECTOR.

And at the end, when praying [*orans*],

Aeneas gets up and leaves.

(I see) MOTION in (Italus) dancing the powerless fate [*fata*],

TIME in the exile giving up his native land.

I see THE VOID as his woman (Lavinia),

THE INFINITE as that (beach) [*littus*] which limits.

I see ORIGIN [*principium*] here⁴

Because it produces [so] much and often [*multum*].⁵

(The Earth), which produces so much, I know as CAUSE [*caus-
sam*],⁶

³ Marsus was an epigrammatic poet of the Augustan Age.

⁴ Bruno is playing on the resemblance of this word to *princeps*, "prince," nine lines above this.

⁵ Eg., from Vergil's *primus*.

⁶ This word is misspelled in the 1591 edition; if Bruno means *causam*, as we feel he does, he may be alluding to *Aeneid* I, 8, a few lines after the passage he has been working on — "*Musa, mihi causas memora . . .*," literally "muse, remember me for the reasons [I have described?] . . ."

The storm-tossed [*iactatus*] sea and the great element⁷
[I see] as FORTUNE AND CHANCE.

In this way you can capture, if you are skilled,
Under an image which answers to the senses,
That which eludes the senses.
But while you tie things to thing,
Watch out for the loose [ends] that aren't referred
To fixities and classifications,
And that infinities do not recognize one head and
Place as their own. For otherwise,
Truly you will wander in ignorance,
Pulled in two ways by a two-fold goal.

Proteus in the house of Pallas, where Gorgias [lives]⁸

This is how these words disclose the endless universe:

- I. ARMA, wielded by a strong hand, and
- II. the POWER [*vires*] of their servant, and that marvelous
- III. series of HARMONY,⁹ and the poet's
- IV. SONG, because he absolutely does long for a
- V. CIVIL war of any size, even though he breaks the peace.
- V. PRIME, moreover, is his lofty power without end,¹⁰
By which his act [*factum*] grows strong and endures,
And with immense resourcefulness
Fights against nothingness [*nihil*].
- VI. And since it comes FROM THE MOUTH [*ab ore*]
Of one whose words endure, it too
Endures through the years in due and equal measure.
- VII. I think he is just, because THE KINGDOM [*regnum*] is his,
And [because] the sign of his goodness is present
[In] his temple and high honor
Which we, in our corporeal state,

⁷ The great element is almost certainly the earth, since Bruno is playing with the idea *terris iactatus et alto*, "storm-tossed on land and sea," as FORTUNE AND CHANCE.

⁸ Gorgias was a sophist and rhetorician of the 5th Century B.C., immortalized by Plato. At times his thought verges on nihilism, which makes him an appropriate referent for Bruno.

⁹ The "series of Harmony" is apparently the Pythagorean series of proportions, common to both music and to the universe.

¹⁰ The double occurrence of the "V" is per Bruno's text.

Find both admirable and suspect.

VIII. Furthermore, not everything yields to FATE

(Here as DEATH, one's fore-appointed doom),

Indeed not each and every possible thing

Gives way to its proper death,

For it is composed of wandering elements [*peregrinis elemen-*
tis].

IX. Certainly it is, absolutely,

That nothing dies composed of EXILED elements which,

For that very reason, are gliding toward "other shores."

Furthermore, who but the All shall speak of "other shores?"

Where will the All take itself, or where

Because it is (composed of) parts

Shall it flow forth again and again

Except here where it is native,

Where but there [the other shores] it shall flow into,

When it is foreign. [For] it is meet

That its contrary remain forever in it,

X. Later on, if death [and passing away] comes

It comes FROM AN EXTERNAL PLACE and thus cannot exist;

Or else that which is closest to it reveals it.¹¹

Nor do I feel the internal world,

Since Nature is active in the mind's potent principle,

And [too] that excellence of material power is available,

And limits coerce all things:

Nor does anything leap beyond the SHORES [*littora*] of its rank,

But just as all rivers tend towards the seas,¹²

And [then] return the same [as ever] from the sea's deep,

By [moving in] their unending circuit they grow strong.

And indeed nothing that you see reduces to total nothing,

Finally everything resumes its own mass,

For if the virtue of contrariety fails,

Each thing fails for want of nourishment,

Then is transformed into the nature of its opposite.

This is how the dead renew themselves,

Returned to life on a new course.

Therefore: nothing dies. Or: things do not die,

However MUCH [and often] they may be tossed about,

¹¹ He seems to mean sleep, and to refer to a dreamland.

¹² A literal translation would be: "Everything tends towards the rivers of the sea."

As the wisdom of Pythagoras and Solomon confirm for you.¹³
XI. Sufficient, too, is the strength of principles [*principia*]
[First beginnings] and things [existent] everywhere,
For we see (THE EARTH) stands as it stood in the past.
Nothing IS TOSSED ABOUT [*iactatur*] dead among empty winds
Which does not soon return, once a powerful order reclaims it,
[And] although wearing a different face, unknown to us,
[It continues] ascending, until it reaches THE HEIGHTS.¹⁴

Proteus is, absolutely, that one and the same subject matter which is transformable into all images and resemblances, by means of which we can immediately and continually constitute order, [can] resume and explain everything, just as from one and the same wax we awaken all shapes and images of sensate things, which [become] thereafter the signs of all things that are intelligible.¹⁵ Now, by substitution, which, in my opinion seems something rather more difficult, let us experience him [Proteus]. I have decided in my spirit to argue about the immortality of the world [*de mundi aeternitate*]. I must seize upon some means by which THE UNIVERSE [*mundus*] [that is] this event UNENDINGNESS [*aeternitas*] may be separated out from its subject. I make the customary [*pro more*] choice, and pick Proteus and parts of a very famous and widely published poem, or rather simple words [from it — i. e., from the *Aeneid*] and these words change by metamorphosis into the same number of middle terms as those by which I assemble arguments for the form [*formam*] of my proposed object.¹⁶ These [words] are:¹⁷

¹³ This idea is less characteristic of the Solomon of the Bible than of the mystical Solomon to whom the Great Clavicle is attributed.

¹⁴ Here Bruno switches from verse to prose.

¹⁵ Bruno is making a key point here, that these things can be understood by the mind independently of sense experience by means of the assemblages of signs. This and the subsequent idea in this passage, that of the eternity of matter, are both highly characteristic of Bruno and, historically, point towards materialistic philosophy, which of course lay far beyond the domain of ideas accessible to anybody in Bruno's time.

¹⁶ Bruno is using *forma* as the Latin translation of the Greek *idea*, idea in the Platonic sense of concept seen by mind from sense experience. He is also, of course, pointing towards ideas that lie beyond *idea*, but lacks the terminology to deal with this adequately.

¹⁷ See note 2.

Arma, virumque, cano, Troiae, qui primus, ab oris,
Italiam, fato, profugus, Lavinaque, venit,
Littora, multum, ille terris [sic], iactatus, et alto.

[I] First from *arms*, which signify powers and instruments which last forever, I deduce the eternal [infinite] universe.

[II] From *man* [hero] I deduce the act of being able to maintain existence forever.

[III] From *song* . . .

Book III, Chapter 13

Seal XII, The Translator.

As translator I build twenty-two courtyards,¹
Which occupy the same number of bedrooms as their shares.
In them shall be presented all things that exist
And which have a triple root, just as
Their various inhabitants shall then be assigned.

The 22 Courtyards [atria]

The courtyards are: Pyramid, Fountain, Grove, Portico, Altar,
Cave, Sickle, Well, Pinnacle, Table, Wash-stand,
Quarry-stone, Seat, Oven, Watch-tower, Chest, Column,
River, Banner, Catapult, Crypt and Sepulchre.²

¹ There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and Bruno's imagery follows in the lineage of Christian kabbalism as set forth by Mirandola, Ficino, Giorgi, Reuchlin *et al.*

² A slightly different arrangement of these images will be found in the latter part of the First Part of Bruno's *Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum* [Explanation of the Thirty Seals], his most ambitious of the purely mnemonic texts. There the order is fountain, portico, pyramid, grove, yoke, laurel, grotto, seat, throne, column, altar, river, ship, sickle, well, wash stand, table, oven, boundary, rock, mirror and sepulchre.

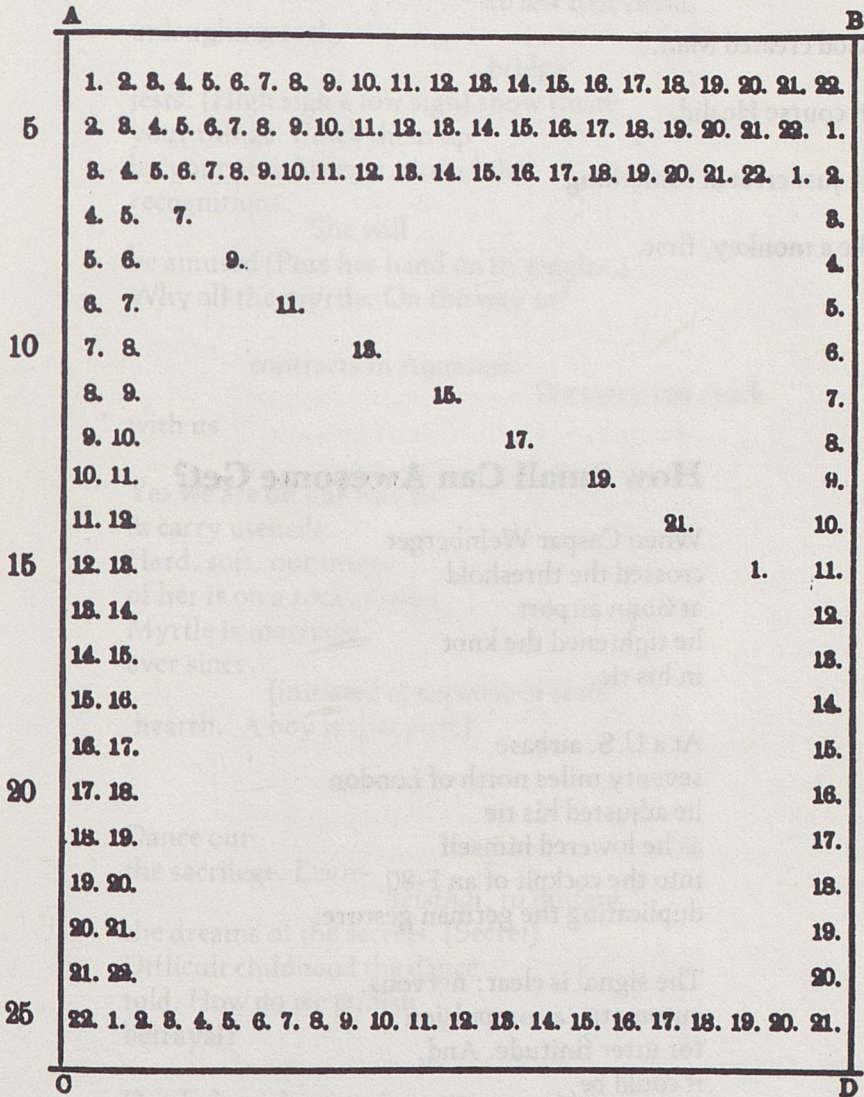
The 22 Bedrooms

In them — and let these bedrooms be a form for you —
One order with various principles shall be preserved.
May you hear that Bedroom is the name and is
The first of the courtyards, so too see that
After Crypt comes Sepulchre.
Third comes Pyramid, Fountain fourth and so on.
Thus they exist in their varied order but in the same place.
Upon these courtyards a well-known crowd of souls is conferred:
Tailor, Fisherman, Wrestler, Soldier, Lover,
Hunter, Whore-monger, Weaver, Bartender, Ploughman,
Painter, Sailor, Kitchen-gardener, Barber, Landlady, Jester,
Vintner, Gilder, Dyer, Bailiff, Boxer, Fowler.³
The table is properly squared with these twenty-two ladders,
And each of these scales is marked with the same number of
degrees.⁴
When I arrange these spaces as one proposed principle,
With another removed, they give you three roots.
Therefore, under whatever principle you like, extend equal tables
Connecting the right-hand diameter and the left-hand angle
And its oblique descendent shall note all things for you.
Therefore: first comes Guardian, Field second
Who is seen to be moving straight up, and moving straight down
On a fixed space of this same scale is the house itself
Which is marked, assigned to the right or perchance to the left.
There all things will run up to help you watch
What the winner is doing. The Boxer in the Oven of the Column,
Just as images are combined in various nodes and places,
Will reveal everything that the situation affords.
The marks of the servants can be placed in the fourth
And fifth places, in front of the vestibule as they fall easily,
Some to be signified as affects and [some] as forms;
If the Tailor is moved from the first field and his own spot,
You shall see what follows in the courtyards, everything
That's set up in each bedroom relates, generally functions, and is
discovered.

³ A somewhat similar list of the possible inhabitants of these rooms is also found in the *Explicatio Triginta Sigillorum* (see note 2) two pages farther along.

⁴ A schematic arrangement of these twenty-two kabbalistic elements taken twice will be found in the diagram on the facing page.

ABCD squared is a diagram of the twenty-two courtyards, according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. From A all the way to B via side C are⁵ the twenty-two names of the courtyards (I am moving down from the houses of each one, which are made up of the same number [*i.e.*, twenty-two possibilities]). From A towards C and B towards D, moving down, are the names of each of the houses in the courtyard. From A towards D, or B towards C, moving along the traverse, there is the sign for the descent of the steps through the diameter.



⁵ This reading depends upon substituting a "sunt" for an "ut."

Edward Dorn

**To a Main Street Proselytizer,
Late at Night, On the way to
the Bayou and the Harley Houston**

There's no problem with

"God created Man."

Of course He did.

He just created something

like a monkey, first.

How Small Can Awesome Get?

When Caspar Weinberger
crossed the threshold
at Bonn airport
he tightened the knot
in his tie.

At a U.S. airbase
seventy miles north of London
he adjusted his tie
as he lowered himself
into the cockpit of an F-80,
duplicating the german gesture.

The signal is clear: nervous,
automatic, a compulsion
for utter finitude. And,
it could be,
a preference for hanging.

Synthema:

“Into the sea”

with right hand
to left foot swim.

unlaughing rock,

bridge

jests. (High sign a low sign) show them
your things. Crack them up
by your attachments, thread the
recognitions.

She will
be amused (Puts her hand on it, giggles.)
Why all the myrtle. On the way to?

contracts in Aquarius.

We carry too much

with us

Yes we are on our way to
& carry utensils.

Hard, soft, our image
of her is on a rock, seated.

Myrtle is marriage,
ever since.

[initiated at expense of state
'hearth.' A boy is that pure]

Dance out
the sacrilege. *Exorc-*

heisthai, to imitate

the dreams of the secrets. (Secret)

Difficult childhood the dance

told. How do we punish

betrayal?

Death, banishment. Separation. A reason

Are birds at all
part of it you think?

We walk slowly for this secret.
There are fast vehicles bound
for somewhere else: signs
on their foreheads. Men

drive them. & helicopters
fly over telesterion. No one
flies them or they have no tongue.
The music (her secret) is on
downstairs. The secret is to incorporate
the world. She is heavy into corn
futures. There are fortunes
to be made in baskets.

The road has been silent.
What is never uttered in summer.
Not a season of balance
after July, when we see the self
evident corn is not it, though *something*.
Rumors poor in form, identity,
the genes recall it. Why
she went searching for her.

Her procession she makes continue. You
live above, & believe
in time are shown
something – vulgar. Whither. A season of
involvement, after this. Notice the same
'attitude.'

Why don't they
just give it away?
Cista mystica,
show how it showers

from the sky basket itself.
Show us.

The moon is obscene. Or dog is.
Light hole in sky laugh belly
dactyl was of dawn but iamb
did we never learn? was coarse.
Bark at anything her light
will eat anything. Appetite.

(numbers:

How many families, dancing places? Nine.
We will act upon them
by combining. One.
We will make them all. Soon.
(The rest of us will change.)

Her daughter will go deep
into the earth. Her son
will return. She has no son. Light
of her life, flicker in this
house, do not be private.
To see her being
shown is to be. Sown. 's
own.

Jugs in the hands of
makes man. Women
the ones with seeds.
Otherwise, all of us pilgrims:
Staff & scrip, tickets. To close
& enter is an act.
we are not paid for
lightly. She will receive
who has not planted
blood. & not by any means
on the first trip.

“experient’s soul” flashed upon
by thought: the planets
move from home first chance
they get is dark to us to find.
An heuristic choice finds *them*
first. Situate. eyes closed,
or narrow, not
really looking.

Core is the cob. first meander
around acres making friends
of mortals. They are the level
at which to seek. It is their
darkness she stays in,
their period of year.
They look strangely, agriculturally,
speaking.

Urge that it be let rain. (hye = $\upsilon\epsilon$
urge that it be let yield. (kye = $\kappa\upsilon\epsilon$)

People who have lived on land
say these things, aloud.

Urge they be let speak of it
means the tops tipped, the waterflow.

The point was that her body.
Our foam. erotic life source rose.
Out of the wet. mown ear
in silence, heard the ocean.
Shell of wealth, listen to them:
children of the sea.
Wearing silk for their sounds
laughs the waves lap larger
every seventh
child knows that.

Bull in the sea on the left.
Ball played right. Sacrifice
walks this strand, watches gulls,
feeds them. Impersonal libido. Popcorn
she used to bring them down
to hand. She *contacts* the low life

of the high life. Along this,
we make fun of her.

Where the strand goes, not us.
Bees at dusk, or past, tell
of a large backyard, central.
Reports go there, of life in houses.
No one ventures to verify this.
Arthritics sympathize with a dance
constrained & go there, *themselves*,
but come back quiet, better.
Age is certainly *criterion*.

It certainly divides. As horizon
is the contour of between the sexes it
gives us time, to look, the clouds
intimate, & upward. Young,
as weather goes go we
apart from us to us, the scenery
reveals a hand in it, the god
who limps along was Vulnerable once
(we prayed to Him) & thus
the one who fashioned what we see.
How old, the bronze used
in the set of sun.
How old, cunt of Baubo,
and yet we laugh that she still show.
It is merely funny, the world
that goes around.

(Miracle of circle,
ellipse we kiss the ground
who holds us, internal
& forever. As rain
we become well. How to become
water. There is a shore to walk,
trace her simple mouth, alveola,
stones the neglected teeth
she still can say us
tongue.

It is very dry
& threats of tears prove

meaningless. It is a month
not known for this, or is no
preparation for.

These are the days. There is the gong
that means theater, thunder.

The sun sees more than wanted.

Carry torches further, into
dark & dry, ritual restriction.

To leave the body
fails, subvocal urgencies fear
length, *per se*, the low
percentages in it, ambling the cosmos, choosing.

Hold the torches where we are,
why we are in our shoes.

Diana of Ephesus

is exposed shale

the earth is breasted

stone spoons,

shile shu sh slah skkt

sh she elhe li sley slay

shly

sly shlin s s sllihe

slyoin syklue

A smoking tumulus
in the shape of a slit

An Aurignacian oven
where these rocks these tits the life-kit
neither matriarchial
nor patriarchial are baked to
a fine brown salt white
moral
panopticon

I sit the warden
at the hub of sentences
spokes speakings speakhards spikenards each word
an eroded guava
I have to live
while I am alive

I am one of those tits hanging from the muscle of the void
one of the voids hanging from the tit of a muscle
of what I will call evil:
unrestrained patriarchial innovation

The poet
bunches up into
the beakful of
that octopodal panopticon
and becomes moral

Everything can be said
can I stomach saying it

White crocodile built like a good
cause in the trap of my heterosexual
sling-shot the tomb below
what must stand for a pyramid
contains an old Plymouth back-seat
the great corpuscle of pleasure
that comes from knowing today
it is not my beef that I am slicing
a coed's head stuffed into one corner American
legs up and spread
seborrhic still housed in bobby-sox

O grande cascade of these flabby breasts
that I use America as an American to bicycle up
plumes of the monstrosities children touch at Disneyland
The panopticon must include
the moral uprooting of meaning
and my responsibility to say the eyes
my body lizards as I am stitched to the head
of the wizard called Monoculture

No end no beginning no mother
tits everywhere
and not in women —
wrecked lullaby of the metastasis
called earth fire water sand.

Saltwoman

“Long ago. Long ago in the north. Salt-Woman was travelling in this direction
searching for a town, searching for good water standing on the ground.”

Franz Boas, *Keresan Texts*

SALTWOMAN MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF

around her face
a region
like water

the fog wins
every time it is sincere

breathing
why of course

shifts her fears to her armpits

we choose more often
dry land
to do our war dance

legible mystery
with this, Saltwoman,
I ask for your body

we could
if we wanted it enough
break through into the open
the terror of it

SALTWOMAN OPENS THE DAMP WIND

imagine a
desire that fertile
then there to the north
it would open
day of thirst
already I've killed
surrounded by city
vertical
its varnished breath
rain?
good water standing
on the ground?
finally the sea
the fierce light it flings
long ago
a breeze in my head

RELATIVE CAUSES

the play of light
on the lake
uncertain lips
about Saltwoman:
vengeance of tunnels
hands on her swamp of aches
nostrils quivering
it's the inside of her legs
the hem of a skirt
to take hold
of the available knee

her belly:
leaning toward yesterday's loaf

she adapts to her name exciting
as a folk-tale
and more savory

indifferent to manners, their
fleeing dimensions
her elbow
stirs the soup

SALTWOMAN'S HEART LOOSE IN HER BODY

mossy rocks
a smell of
sperm a light
deceptive as never before

in sight of
the sea
licks at a distance

roots grow
over her genitals
the light, though,
promises pines, shifting
this
this presence
terribly near

that she must face
the water
the sifting dusk

is this my body only salt

NATURAL RETURNS

she moans
moans liquid dreams

sheer moving
deepens the skin
with refractions of sky:
blue tinge

water standing:
a second voice

salt
comes off her arms
raw diet pulling the body toward thirst

and the wind kicks
at the lake
at the light

shivers
where the flesh is darkest

SALTWOMAN, HER PRECISE PAIN

accepted scar
a dream-like lump
of lead

skin flakes off
the body's waste
the country striped with snow

traveling in slow motion
they come
down from the east
to the south they come
the everyday words

of love or war
and die of their heat

what with a summer this short

SALTWOMAN CARRIES HER LOAD TO THE SEA

this shore
silted with waste from our bodies
with tin and glass

fish
reluctant to resist the water

shallows
a salt dream
forgets to recede into the ribcage

then all is steep
and wavering
the knife-blue air
cuts my pores
open
so open
to the sudden drowning excess

SALTWOMAN AND THE FAILING LIGHT

unborn breeze
breeze cupped under the still air
I want more than this my body

a branch dips down from the maple
promises
tomorrow in the east

an instant out of the body

seams burst open
forest fires
tear through the dark toward disappearance

remember the gratitude of hunger
its taste on your teeth

SALTWOMAN AT THE EDGE OF DAY

beyond even
a faint identity
sleep strokes and purrs

eyeballs shrink under their lids
against
violent need of space

that a taste of salt
could so provoke

but now that the game's lost
the outside
the pale tide from outside
dissolves the images
in accusations

(the dream of strange fur
of ladders and snakes
the murky occasion where
the air recoils
once the murder's accomplished)

my hand
my only
my body strange as a thing

from **The Cenozoic Asylum**

The rain of sensorium is erosion in the absolute event horizon exposing memory. High relief in the rock matrix. Form withstanding erosion. Fovea Centralis now moving through the words. A lax penis spewing sperm into a somnambulistic & female constellation. Cellular lattice a seamless glass machinery. Our actions tiny eddies & whirlpools on the surface of a mirror still planetary ocean. Ripples indicating the stirrings of Chinese dragons deep within.

Perihelion of the cicada in the brassy July sky, schematii of pepsin vectors. An orange patch of sun in the evening forest. Symphonies in the distant night traffic. Sand flats beside the river under budding thickets of staghorn sumac, high-water nests in their boughs. Feeding hairline crack a barn-storm translated into the propagation-lee of the glass machinery. Extension drift in the Tethys. The sound of distant waves. Hissing rain tires on the evening bridge. Fierce array in the spring foliage. Ourselves also. Strange progeny of a billion years of solar irradiation. All details threshold the effect delight.

Only the blue megahertz evening stars ascending over the garden wall. Night unfolds like no other in her slicksided vagina. Juice flowing sustained by her witnessing. Slate limousines hissing rubber quietly offering cobblestones to the curb. The eventide rising high-rise moon to White Sands. Streamline yourself into the truth. Interference text. The night hawks emerge from their hangars. The sun renewed within itself decreed our prodigious evolution. The grim satisfaction it gives you to watch your own face decay under the withering gaze you yourself have spawned in her. For that which is most completely out of control most clearly reveals the workings of the unseen machinations.

It is a warm grey day in August. A powdery luminescence oscillates within the patches of night beneath the trees. Nocturnal pools characterized by crickets & day foraging bats. A wind stirs the fissures of the canopy. What is still is expectant. Bat's dusky membranes envelop the writhing coils of a small snake, their standoff illuminated by the pink August dawn. A distant blue jay sounds the interceding forest. An albino fox in the cedar verge. Waves on Lake Huron in your sleep they are waves within breathing. The beach intersects distant momentums. Surges linger in a phantasmic waveform. Embro Foldens. Her children the lake

claims by dreaming lay waste the armoured spinal cord. A delirious rush of invertebrate orgasms in the implacable recall of the ocean. I do not consider the waves empty in your sense.(s) Free-fall under the swells a pulsing spinal thrill & then up for air. Diving again to the source of neural conductivity. Ammonites a copper mist gleaming dully through the shallow water. Peripheral glimpse of trilobites scuttling into murky water at the edge of the Ausable. Hungry Hollow Hills, memory vapour. Her lissome arms & legs trailing in the tepid summer water as the small boat rounds the bend into the canyon.

Deafening cicadas. Fierce array of the summer foliage. Re-group at the air-lock. Her spine ends in four extra vertebrae, prehensile as a finger she shoves it up your ass as you come. Her parents obviously intrigued by the sexual options in the genetic engineering catalogue. She has slight webs between her fingers. The limestone heaves up & dissolves in an awesome rumbling giving up all the time trapped in its layers. Legions of extinct creatures crawl up through the rubble, transparent with age. The planets converge & hover just beyond the atmosphere in the evening sky, barely opaque in the haze. The electromagnetic fields generate huge scarab beetles. Iridescent elytra & fabulous horns. Cascade of night & night wind coming in the living-room window drugged & cool. Full moon. Only the brightest stars glowing in the soft blue summer night. I have learned to love the noctuids.

Cumulonimbus clouds towering with their bases just below the horizon. Pink in the gasoline haze & slanting rays of the setting sun. Billowing like the convoluted foreheads of brooding foetuses, their water-brains filled with grotesque electric thought-impulses & thunder. Their silence raining onto the land.



A consensual domain in the unrelenting hunger of her mouths, glistening lacunae in a tactile confluence of mass. Merely her proximity. The granular phrasing of her ass. Faint blue lace-work of veins beneath the lactose silk of her breasts. Multi-foliate her orgasms an interlocking network of pure sensual detail rippling through the surrounding forest. Saturniidae moths in vibrating clusters, wings still unfolding, still damp with emergence. Electric gradients in the anticipation zone of her touching. Sunset glittering in the windows of the planetarium.

Full summer moon rising obliquely over the pitcher plants and miniature sphagnum landscapes. Vigilance. Panavistic crystal

night-vision of the silver lynx, silhouetted for an instant against the ocellus of the summer moon. Hypnotic cameo resumed without juncture. Stars dripping from the points of molluscoid teats.

There can be no highlights if there is no point of view. No reflections, no rainbows. The virtual image is subject dependant.

Slickensided fluting of the terminator line evening stars peeling off like no other the velvet theatre curtains undulating slowly in the night wind, their lower folds wet with pond water. Distant red glow of smelters and factories to the north. Hydrogen pumps. Autoclave the glacial clay bluffs & narrow pebble beach of Tyrconnell. A mathematical plain in critical grey light the unlikely appearance of Cenozoic bi-valves. Runaway crouches in the amphibious June musk of Byron Bog. Heat-wave sun vibrato through the moist forest floor, naked feet on spongy humus, exotic insects splashing sudden erratic trajectories over the path. Linnaeus a certain key.

Blue fluid support of summer sky eggshell into evening explorations of sexual forests. Hot naked waists in the cool night air, an intangible barrier realizing the planet's dream. Green leaf-haze of April branches. Image without recognition equal to total configuration surrounding her. The forest is alive with itself, vegetable leather leaves of the rhododendron. Behind manifestation is manifestation. Slim curve of her waist generated through the plane of symmetry. Her pelvis vaulted like angel's wings just barely surfacing in the smooth tautology of her hips. Her come spangled down. Drops of semen deliquescing in the naked morning spectra. Her nipples glazed & wrinkled. Within the forest a vapour resounds.

Nomenclature of rivulets in the dense & kinematic vegetation of the ravine incalculable. Coal-swamp dusk in advance of the terminator line. Mute & recoiled September is a nation of secret pacts. Summerhill, bleached grass with lone crab apple tree halfway against the late afternoon polaroid receding blue sky. Maple leaves unfolding jazz-wrist into pale bat wings. Giant hairy fiddleheads of the tree fern. Distant nighthawks beckoning from the bluff of the line-storm. Norse gold forged in orgasms & sun her face vigilant in the first humid cobalt June storm wind. Summer copper dusted pale green. She runs the palm of her right hand lightly over her left breast, her nipples erect ozone the wind soft thunder in our ears.

There is no season uncorrupt of another. Distant tropical storm at night in our breathing. In the heart of fall there is a summer glen. Evening cicadas. Heat storm. White violet flickering sudden silhouettes the frozen forest staggered omni-directional. Sassafras grove in the ravine incalculable. Lobed canopy occasionally divulg-

ing the pale blue eggshell evening, pale silver down underneath. Racoons awakening on oak branches, heat-wave somnolence their masked regard. Wild grape vines. Dark coils draped in the lower branches.

She hands & knees hung belly her breasts I slowly push my cock into the spreading liquid fire. Constant gushing thrill the night permeated. Eyes, ears, mouth, nostrils, genitals, hands & feet. A night unmoved by the crockets till dawn. Red haven. Free stone. Midnight in the hyper-personal theatre of an August moon. Its reflection in the lake an electric mirage looming a dazzling monotonous dream light. Ascend & merge.

EVOBA

the investigations meditations

[selections from the first draft of a manuscript begun 3 october
1975]

If the aim of philosophy is, as Wittgenstein claims, to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle, then the aim of poetry is to convince the bottle that there is no fly.

meaning
is "the game that it appears in"

a bridge
a play of cards dealt else
the part we walk across

a face to make
the poem

a "lovely"
specimen

the shit
a lovely "shit"



It's an unknown land
a known behaviour a known reaction
and an unknown sound

without sound their actions fall
into confusion
confessing
I does it

he does it
i do it

and so on.
and so on ad infinitum
and so on.

without actions falling

in confusion
there would be no logic in the circle

“guess”

“intend”

but this is how it strikes him.

in the game
in the sentence
in the friction

how can he know what it is
to continue?

how would it look if it
struck
wood?

strikes

algebra, intuition,

doubt what
“one” thing is.

what is
is what ?

“There was someone i was afraid of and he ordered me to continue the series. I acted quickly, with perfect certainty, and the lack of reasons didn't trouble me.”

the inner voice is spelt
P.

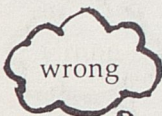
an escape
a microscope
a single
sensation

just “guessing the thoughts” when

Steve McCaffery "the sky is always the hardest part" . . .

and seeing someone writhing in pain
from an evident cause in
not thinking.

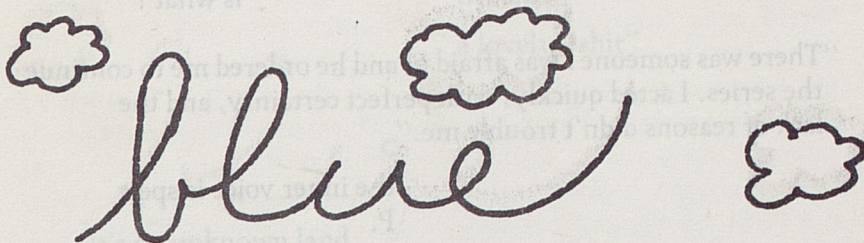
absurd,
to look for
teeth
in a rose
observing
the larynx and guessing it right.



a black word in its
white surround.

"guessing clouds" and concluding
nothing's as difficult as sky.

how it would look, when
inclined to say
blue



"a kind of ornamental coping that supports
nothing."

any choice traces the lines in space
there's rails but not rules
and time

doesn't fit.

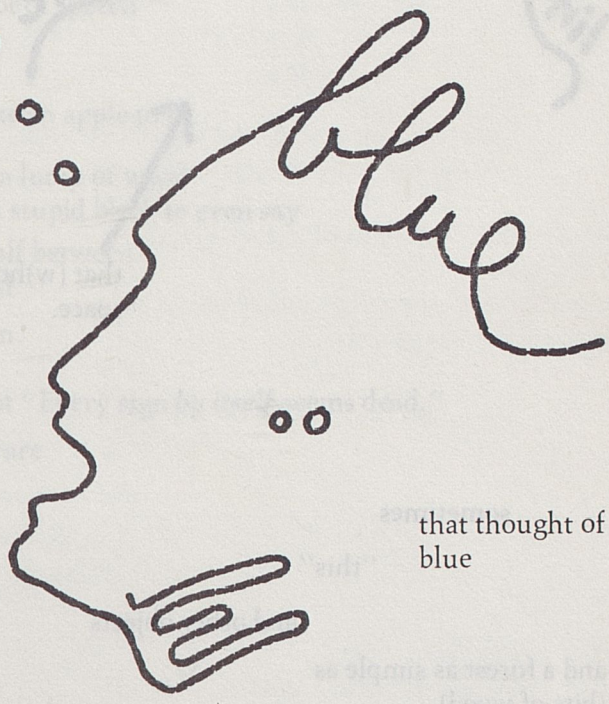
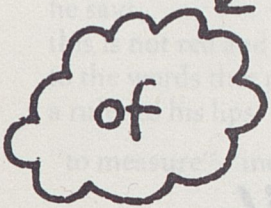
a section of the rail is laid
invisibly
to infinity,

or the sentence I don't choose
to speak me.



rules that refer to
rails that refuse

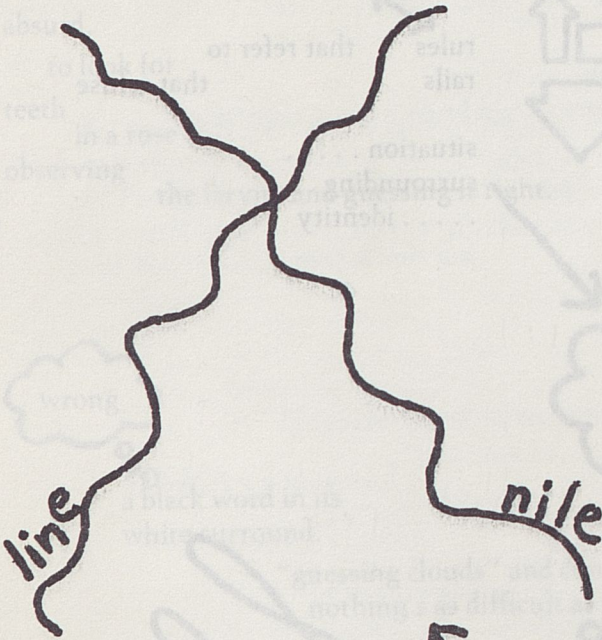
situation
surrounding . . .
. identity



that thought of
blue

a rule
a word, or
a blank
left for it

tracing its line through
the whole of space:



that (w)hole of
space.

sometimes

“this”

and other objects

and a forest as simple as
(bits of wood)

not named.
the "bare" name innocent as
"somebody". somewhere someone's sketch of the face from
memory. a meaning a mind a moving verb out
to produce that.

(such & "such")



The agreement, the harmony, the thought
and the reality.

end the reality.

he says,

this is not red and pointing
to the words that make the tongue put
a ruler to his lips

"to measure" "inch".

there is a foot of speech

"in" "this".

he should like an apple to be
satisfied.

or a lump of wood
or a stupid block to even say

this is the gulf between
the order and
the execution.

. . . . so that "Every sign *by itself* seems dead."

Dead as you are

now

alive

in this use.



and perhaps what is written
and perhaps what is believed
and what believed is balanced
in the generosity of forgetting
lips perhaps wings surrounding
“teeth

they lift the voice as”



A says to B that

“language rose and
the petals were concepts”

dropped in a wind by C
of
(a certain type)



A wish is.

Later a shot is fired and the red you see
is not the red you expected to see.

So i dreamed last night of the word pain
in my arm
lodged by the tongue as a bullet would be
by the force of a gun shot . . .

. . . and the noise filled my arm.

the door open
in the room
in language.

when it happens. shut.
when it doesn't happen. opens.

We draw a circle round the mental process of
an expectation, call it a head and sail a thought upon it
till the handle turns.

Everything is already there.
in the dead line

direction on
the surface.

When we mean "a page" we move.

(going up to the thing we mean it misses us.)

Forming the content when (con) (tent) with form
a form of order shows but

"An order orders its own execution."

Begun.
a gun begins.

a shout.
a sh
a sho t.



an order.
a picture.
a poem.
a sentence.

something new in plain view

a system
a theme in music
two kinds of wheel.

a spell.
a sphere.
a star.

a table.
a taste.
a tautology.

a telegram.
a tendency.
a tension.

the microscope.
some milk.
a mistake.

the dreams he dreams:

'if a lion could talk'

i see him see you shut your eyes.

shutting the door
maybe more
imagining than
seeing.

they seem to say he seems to see
if i say
look.

look he's looking
over there
here

is a tree behind his eyes
where they make a mistake

that goes for me too.

when i say i say
look.

a fashion we see when the whole
is filmed.

i never learnt that i was on the point of pointing
to likenesses

to limits
to lions

to a map.
to a law.
to a drop.



in a state of UN

i pretends to be conscious:

'i am only a machine.'

there is a parrot near by
and a gramophone, one is healthy
there is a problem of relationship

so the parrot says: 'I'm actually dreaming'
and the gramophone echoes:

'He ought to know.'

the parrot pretends to be a 'false' assertion
the gramophone talks in its sleep.

eventually they engage in phantasy.

it is blue

and a space.

it is conscious.

it is playing.

it is raining.

then they go to sleep with the usual feeling

they lift that weight and

they talk of thinking

a cloud drifts by.

a bubble

manifests.

a frame in their arms:

to lift a weight:

to take a place:

voluntary
in
voluntary



The writer enters with a sign around his neck
saying:
take yourself seriously

There is a blank space where the faces of
the audience should be.
He writes in that space about
the spaces:

under the pen
is a fish-mouth
inside the mouth is a stone

in the stone there runs
a river entering a porch by
a pebble fence

by the fence is another way
which leads to a lake.

drop in some time. or
drop me a line some time.

over the lake some birds
are made to fly

they are meant to fly lower and closer
to the surface of the lake

they are made to observe themselves
but they disappear beneath
the surface of the water.

the water disappears.

this is the point at which the reader enters.

The Number

I have read in the book
and I am writing something.

It is to be
writing for a project which
at present is not well defined.

Wind in here. And darkening of day.

Three lines to a group.
Some of the time. At other
times, utter freedom.

When will one decide?
In the middle of the group of
three lines one might

consider the question:
in a three line group
shall each group confine a single thought?

Or might one's thought
run over the group
into the next

group. I haven't any idea
about metaphysical reality
just now in the vicinity

of my thinking. I cannot
spontaneously locate the concerns
regarding the nature of thought

or what one ought to do
or who one is
or who we are

and I haven't any notion about

what the matter is which is
of nearest concern to me. It

seems to be traveling, however,
from wherever it is
generally in my direction

as I am writing.

One might determine now
to limit the number of words
there are to be in each

line of the group
in the manner of Louis
Zukofsky. But what I think

I shall do now
because it more accords

with my own nature, is
secretly to fix upon a number
and under certain conditions

specified or possibly not at all to be
specified, or possibly
I shall not even determine

the specifications — what I think to do
is to fix upon a certain number
and choose this precisely for its

neo-pythagorean resonances
lest there be any doubt —

I shall choose
a number
and then determine

in some of the lines
that I am going to use
just this number of words,

that in fact there shall be secret
lines
or perhaps there shall be

secret lines or perhaps my secret,
the secret about my process
and procedure, in that sense my

essential secret
will be
that I have chosen a certain

number
which I am predisposed to choose
as the weather

darkens
in my room
but the light on my desk

stays on.

Marvelous Henads.

*

The light itself is the number one
and the blueness of evening
is calling me back to my practices
inspite of the cold

and I am thinking that it is necessary to arise

above the darkness of not ever going to be able to be
consoled sufficiently
for the swamp and darkness of adolescence

the qualities of desperation and anxiety
vituperation
subterfuge and depression

which seemed to pass over me in waves

during that time so that I became
interested in determining the cyclicity

of their recurrence. Because no lovely
woman will ever in her right mind wish
to offer her loveliness as consolation

for such misery from that time
as yet persists
as waves and undercurrents

of feeling rising
through the stiffnesses in subtle
bodily areas

and perhaps my affinity for this number
which I have chosen
or perhaps am yet hesitant to choose

is in some way the project
of that stiffness and would guard me
against the occurrence or recurrence

of such misery
now
numbers

stand perhaps
in the place of images

which are too painful for the hope
it is possible to attach to them
images of just one lovely woman

whom one happened to encounter
spontaneously
in a peculiarly vulnerable and happily open

condition of body and mind
and one's entire perceptual system
drank her down

and then later it was wonderful how

one did just enjoy being there facing
her and talking

about all the interesting things
and the whiteness of flame
hovered in an aura

later and it became utterly delightful
to allow one's image
of her

to rise not at all alone inside one's
mind but everywhere
in the walls

the sky
one's little muscles
wanted to fill themselves with the strange

luminosity associated with
turning one's
attention to

this residue of her advent
and it is only to assuage this longing
(is it only to assuage this longing?)

that I said I "came out of the sky" —
I know exactly how to, like they say, "levitate"
but o the swamp and sadness

needs her sudden flaming
to dry it out
and though I have

developed practices
and after actually many years now
cannot report that I have met

with ill success — in fact
the evidence of the power
these doings have

came that very day while sitting
in a certain room
and this particular woman now the person
in whom my
hope
woefully
resides —
I had been open
because the little muscles had just at that
moment yielded to the magic
and that whole week I knew there were certain
matters which required
exploration in the businesses of normal
everyday affairs
so that it has by no means
passed out of memory that I agreed —
this is the amazing part —
that I agreed
to succumb to the fascination
of a certain number
allow
its possibilities of heat
and marvelous fire
to arise.
And there she was.
Standing in the doorway.

A Conspectus

- Science: That by conducting an investigation
I will return
with evidence and truths.
- Exploration: That by making a journey
I will be able to submit my report.
- Heroics: That by undertaking certain deeds
certain action can be accomplished.
- Medical Morality: To do this is to cure myself.
To cure myself is to cure the world.
- Alchemy: To submit implacable material to its perfec-
tion.
- Magic: I achieve the root of desire. Distribute bounty.
Encourage will. Develop power. Improve
condition. Remove despair.

“Islamic” Alternatives:

To abandon natural habitudes, constructive
processes of cognition, world creation.

To relinquish the will;
be relieved of desire;
accept the dark material;
dwell in doubts, uncertainties;
confess impotence;
accept condition;
remove accomplishment.

Not *Do* anything. Go anywhere.

And not make report.

Negotiate contingency.

Accept necessity.

To walk
one step at a time
through woods and world
and progress like a mountain.

Move like a torrent and eschew large boulders.
And be a stone.

Or sky.

Or fruit.

Or root.

Or ground.

Go under ground.

To establish discover recover uncover release

An Organon

A list

To exhaust the land.
the mind.
one's shoes.
and turn over fresh turf.

An enormous building
or history
or woods
with lanes of trees
and plains of grass
and the light
changes according to mood
or mind-set
and sounds

speak
and crows
 or other birds
 pass
 or roost
 according to conditions of mind
 or onset of mood
 or passage of same.

A crystal sphere with a wonderfully serene
 and large
 celestial purity:

This
 in addition to its timelessness
 inclusiveness, suspension, massiveness.

It turns opaque. It breaks apart.
Events and particularities
 smatter its poise.

Multiplicities
Pluralities
Pleroma
Maniness
Time

Narrative

 Going somewhere
 by means of a certain vehicle
 accompanied by companions
 relatives
 beasts
 encountered by acquaintances or strangers
 animate entities
 turning into something
 other than we are

 remaining immobile
 passing through marginal regions
 ambiguous states

general truths and their negatives

politicians
theologians
scientists
healers
children
women
men
automobiles

The Empire

Rocks
Gadgets

Chairs
Boxes

Localities.

sea
beach
woods
city
home
deep space
the bottom of the sea
under the earth
a grotto
up stairs
living room
temple
toilet
bedroom
den
nest
store
office
garret
guerrilla
guru
entrepreneur

Hermetic: Revenge Against the Mighty World

I take a rock
and put it in a den
a grot
an office

I take a fruit
from the bottom of the sea
and put it under a chair
or in a box

I put things in localities
or histories

All the large machines
dispersed across the plain of the Mighty World
confected of their marvelous intrications:

Some of them are managed by strong squads
though many are not gathered into groups
but produce without conspectus
an organon of objects
an organon of lists
a list of constructs
a box
a coin
a shell
a fork
a wrench
a cloth
a gourd
a pair of statues
a heap of rocks
a pendulation of anemones
of keys
of little globes
an hypothetical pendulation of anemones

Two Statues

I am Jorth and Karth
And stand among rocks
and plug up what wants plugging
and what does not
and unplug what wants not to
have its stoppers popped and
what wants nothing.

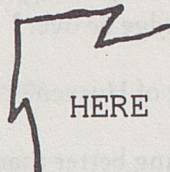
I am Jarth and Kork
I stand among boxes
I gather and I break
When women come and talk
I talk
When windows open
I too
am a window

When it
then what
When that
then it
I take flame and put it in an office.

Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about.

The Garden of Indo-European Roots

PRAK	A		KRET
E	SWERBH	G S	E
W	B E	W T	B W
BHERDH	I	E E	H KLENG
H	E PLEU	R N	ERKW H
AR	D E	PEYE	I E E
E	BHREUS	R	G R R
G	H D	AIW DEIW	PLEK
R	E BHREN	E H	E
E	AL	E R E	SNEIT
W	G	G DHENG	W G G
BHENDH		DHENGH H	E H
H		R KWER	I GER
E		KEU E L	DHABH E
G	S A	DEU	T E B
D	SWEN	H	E N H
BHER	E	E	GHER D
E	I	KAN O	H
DEL	WENDH	E	B R
E G E		GENE	H KEU
I I		E	E A
KWERP		R	GLEUBH



THE ROOTS

To love and breathe
To swell
To shine
To flow

To cause to turn
To break or cut
To bind

To let go

All The Same Every Man To Me For Himself

Approaching dusk and the clouds sift over from
the west in great racks.

What can you be interested in?

When what?

Buttons lost through tuck of glass, robot salesmen
in speeding boats, hands tossing in display, in soft glow
of the last of days, everything.

Then you reach through the images to the words,
their axes. What you see has you speak interrupted.

I get old enough to hold to my don't understandings.

You sure don't. I'll argue it that.

Three cows, not white, three!

Yes, but you won't kneel at those altars. You'll want
to walk away from fulcrum of this game.

You can be sure the light will go out of it. But
can knowledge be over?

The Plastic of Heaven.

I saw nothing better than to have it let me take
the chance to think.

Old coaches continue to appear under the sun.

But given the image interrupts, what can you
go on in interest of?

Knowledge is a Speaker.



Approaching the Field of the Conscious Players
in a worn shirt, a tattered car. The shield had no
brain behind it. And behind the light fence dimly urged
the dream at speed.

Then knowledge does not interest you?

I am fascinated by the words result from the image made
by a film maker originally a writer. My knowledge is
a stop and let him go on.

Interest in the push to thought by the image
I can no longer grasp.

Just short of the building, they are in there somewhere.

The shadows of the ones only in the hallway between rooms.

Yes, is that where we live?

When we are those we think on, and we are more in mind aging.

The Province of Perhaps.

The sun coming down in suspenders. Some kind of
humanized holders.

This is certainly the sort of muddle I speak by, I
long to, I turn of.

You stay beyond me by the window at this room.

Only there I begin to write.



Approaching the horizon, it is then possible
to finish the book. You've got to keep closing, even
if only by raising the knees. Then do I arc against
my own resistance.

But you provide no poke holes in your thought.

Contrary . I think I array too many.

I don't see the sun anymore, I am hidden from the
rest of her life

Then she is me and I tell you all the progress of
the writing further

I cancel progress, I turn my head, head along the
leading edge of the shadow.

You have so proven stalwart, you have inked in
your stirrings.

The car will not go down but you will be wrested
lengthwise from it.

No purchase, still a prolonging.

The sun is hidden by a case of books. The birds
obscured by their food.

Light remains a time, in strands like temporary words.
My scripts a hill to overcome.

Clothes removed by stunned belief.

Can you catch her meaning like a pillow, a burst pillow
by the window?

That was the Night of the Midst Sex pulled on us both.

I do remember the book on the penis.

I was referring to the conversation on sheer nerve.
The one whose leading hand was caught beneath the first
and most enduring kiss.

She made it clear, she would not let me go.

The one with a bricklayer's shoulders.

My thought so encouraged when obscured by the breasts.

The ones without the holder.

And the sun was admitted to the continuation of the affair.

The one that would not admit of thought but result
in a book.

This grows dimmer, my interest is firmer.

Go to that room, the room seen from another room.



Approaching the Bumping Bodies, you, but they do not, speak.

I do not even have to think, I live in the dive of
the thighs.

Thought has no forward edge.

How discontinuous the mind, the image an interruption.

The cows have now come over closer to the fence of
watching the humans.

Who was it that said she does not see them.

The difference of art is that we do. We then live in
a more adjacent part of the sky. Note particulars and
flee from the averages.

Then there's the Mistake that Avenges.

Dwindling purchase on avenues, but that's the walker
not the speaker.

The Block that's a Mover.

The sun has reappeared, that the clouds can be seen.

My writing hand so lean.



Approaching the Mirror, the mind of an interrupted present.
Thinking is lower. The dot on the horizon lights sooner,
this just noticed past, a sort of adjacent now.

Thinking of a Forest of Grapefruit and the tarantulas within.

The certainly not much more than a bended knee.

Or mud in a tree

The bronze huskings whereby a bee ticks over.

You interrupt.

In a pinch.

You sort me.

In a clasp of the field.

I got to tell you. What?

Then I have you by an image.

Writers do not snore.

They live in apartments that ring the cities.
They do not accept the common calendars with pictures.

They have a listening and a numbering politics.
No clearer idea of the present culture could you see.

But they torture him by claiming he makes films, deny
access to all theatrical regions.

I love you.

So I have asked you.



Not enough has been said here. Nothing by known.
The lights of the cars approaching oval

become nacelles that begin to descend.

But what do you say to somebody who's half-way around
you again?

Partiality is a case for the Blues.

If only one could see all the people at once, but
they tend to duck and displace and die.

It's material, you too are eligible, you could head
someplace dark.

The telephone my witness. The throat, some calm.

Or else the sentence cease too soon.

I have an album. I turn on the lights.

And the people have no business but to take a part.

They lie. They knock ability short. No one saw them born.

The word "farm" . . .

Warm as the arm, in haste of affection, these exchanges.

Tend to peter.

Yes, and to extend the minefield.

It's embarrassing, it makes you repeat the fix initial.

Remember the window, a steadying influence. No one has
written there but better.

Better put out the arm.

Yes, as night as it's ever lasted.



A drunken shout, to the pampas and the elbow landings

of your father's domain. Battening approach, the reefs
that lasted and the short shrift to quick speech.

Nobody has leveled a carbon copy of the car against
the pinnings of its wake. Surely something for the
company sun to snub. I had a conversation, it was pressing
enough but it broke.

The snarings on the walls, the pictures of the slides,
the bell . . .

It was time to awaken to a whole new service, type and times,
girls in the belfry, snarling possibilities of clothing in
rubbish. Wonderings, a month of sundays and at such a clip.

You had to quicken to remember me to reach such a pitch.
The clockings getting winded, the ear to the moon.

It's sensible, near enough for the dream to break at
bulk divisions, the girl sunning her father, the mountain
around the plants, and you saying . . .

I said I wouldn't believe it till I had docked myself,
that mercury portrait of rheumatism, a standout of
the felt wall.

Bruised knees, even steven, then the violet began.
It was a wall you could heel and toe to the top of the
Diamond, height of all futures, a bow leg with two hoops
bearing the echo massive.

I had forgotten to count. All that living by the car barn.
Where the wheat mats, where the flatten . . .

I will heel you back to this exchange, I will put on
a date that answers, a knowledge chime.

Go back to flattery. Seize the paper's aim.



Did we talk very long and pronouncedly at winter's approach?

Yes, totally two-sides-to-every.

At the bottom.

Turn of mountain.

The thongs had snapped by then, and the rates of picture.

Do you think he saw us, he was so wasted in his furlings in.

The picture had moved by then and we were overtaken as
an eminence sidled.

All his things are always moving, I mean
there's nothing for it but to bend to a reliance on the dead.

This is the theory of movies, impossible night.

This is the realm of pictures and still the invisible wrist
of the bronze rationale.

Parquet floors and their mirrors.

Limiters, doubles.

The starling at the start of the game that was seen to starve.

Then begin, say your piece, as if it framed from all night
the scouring possibilities.

You will find it injures the standpoint, heels trotting out
wrinkles in the stationary marble.

It suffered from a flat, never to be pocketed.

I wonder, I lie and flame. Nobody sees but the charred outlines.

I see you have brought a book.

I feel sure you have decided to settle, the cauldron
before the cow.

There are now no lights on in the combing mine.

This is certain never to be satisfactory but no doubt soon
we will move to the window.

From which cometh my peace.

From direction of own thought, the cornice of horn and its
toothed rangings. You will never finish that chorus,
amber or no lead sheet.

The sea has withdrawn beyond the outermost ledge.

Then lip it up into sundering futurities, the thing itself
will win.

This is a conversation in different weight oils.

This nears the answer always hidden in the problem of
the Pipe and the Tube. We are only short one ring.



See how it comes now, how he approaches.

Tell me your troubles and I will advise you to stand on a
much frequented corner sucking on your hat which always gets
taken for a turd.

My speech for that part somehow gets lost.

But it could not be too visual. This age in close admission
insists on the spoken.

The one who stalked him three full days, could that have
been you?

Or were you the victim of my guise?

The one spoken beyond profit.

The one at the kneehole of his days.

The horror is the each one committed to a death.

The horror is in it began to happen.

The one who kept shouting "this much for honor" as they pulled him away.

The inabilities to understand are posted here, the walls of the cabin.

The walls of a cabbage.

The coin.



The walls are amazingly far to the south, where I mean the sun. I'm sure you get what I mean there, a little different approach. Only then the machinery engages, and its aisles.

Where it's neither worth the trip nor the while.

You bandage me, it's annoying. I mean, before all thought you tote up and tell.

The man in the boiler room drew up a whole thunder edge at his collars. Let's see you deal with that sound.

It's not far enough, time of light and all that framing phenomena leaves you, impressed but unable to smell.

It's either time for deer or beer, I can't make out which. The day as always divisible, unctuous, darning, reeling in if not buying the farm.

Your redactions are bulging.

It's pious, this ferrying use of the lip. But Velasquez hid his intent in the greatest purity of description the hall has ever held. He went out at night.

Don't strain your reaches. Music is a monkey waving a burlap side of the following story.

Niggardly, your punctuations of nothing yet thought.
The sort that breaks down wall by wall of the school.

But Velasquez went out nights.

Then both of their faces together made up the half in shadow.
I dare you, as I would tell him, to act.

I lived in another. But this is far from true.
Without getting right down to things the well would be
of no use. I own the farm where on my arm's honor the picture
was made on a wing and a prayer.

Does this in fact answer the lack of grace, or disc,
far from language? Put your foot down and lie like a page.

Investments to satiety in lodgepole pine.



Do you love the world?

As I deem it suffers at your approach. Fastnesses,
calibrated cabbage, the results of the image overstated
as aligned.

You are remarkably calm.

I own to not a window on my actual home

I will lend you my shot glass as a drill.

You are too kind, you have me too much in mind.

I was the while dreaming on my long term efforts, so far
for naught, to execute a barrel roll.

The Battle of Hastings, 1066.

Take off that shawl, you'll pass muster.

I must rescue my grandmother, her tube grows dim.

I finished my meal, I saw that squirrel.
But the world does not move you?

I was always more comfortable closer to the wall, almost
on the line where the coins come to rest.

Strange I never noticed your interest in china.

It's the pictures. Given the rest of that thought, then
it's the pictures.

It's impassable. The brow has come down, the notebook
been dropped, nothing is brewing.

No matter. No other either. Or overall, it is enough.

But you are removed. I is another.



The Approaches growing vaster. Words have lost their moorings
long since. "It is night" indicating the possibility of
another sort of cod. To be, only a potential now. Anything
you say become a Preface.

I have a name.

But that you are not.

Any more?

Them all. That is the question.

They say if it is up to nature the mirror is a spiral.

The other half of the room in a sentence in darkness.
But solid enough to feel, Can I say this.

The liver of an eagle. The flag rolls in a drawer.

So you say it, not to think it, and be done.

Neither, and never done.

A wall, and not much longer white. Here we are
back in the rub with night.

And its mirror?

Of Time and the River. The Salaciousness of Mister Sand.
Ten Tenements to Thursday.

What became of direction?

He had sense enough never to look through the camera.

So, a master is one ever stuck with the delineation of
a plan?

He is the one makes very sure that we are not.

You make him sound in a way the words are lacking.

As long as we gain his offshoots there is time.

Who is this man then?

Tendency.

I'll walk you to the corner.



The Approaches are now back, to the fundament.
We have forgotten that we are still where we came from.

Yes, he was wrong to insist "I hear you". He was confessing
his ignorance. He should have confessed "I read you".

But the pilot would say "I read you loud and clear".

Our age is a confusion, but not yet an opaque enough one.
How does one get to be "dense"?

Things must show by impinging example just how ignorant
one really is. These days they all lie and brighten us.

There is so much space between. Have you noticed how
even the nights are too bright?

The word "belief" is becoming a cinder. Once it was
a magnet.

I hark to how each thing suffers in other words.

"Of great import" shows the great emptiness all surrounding.

I will put out the light that we may continue our talk.

I may listen to the waffle iron.



But the man seen from behind that turns out to be
the stone tree on closer approach, what of that in
the late clear of autumnal gardens?

He stands off from us, he is a substance.

But what if he were to root, or given that turn and walk?

Then we would require even more of distance. Ultimately to
give up on any resembling of him.

My image of myself is never in motion.

Perhaps we should all dance in the mirror.

And speak there also.

The revolving one is a sinner.

— 16XII80

There is so much pain here
even the night is too bright

The word "belief" is becoming a cinder
Once it was a flame

Of Time and the River. The Salaciousness of Mister Sand.
I look to how each thing suffers in other worlds

Of great import, shows the great emptiness of surrounding

I will put out the light of my own eyes

I may listen to the world
I may listen to the world

He is the one who has seen you

But the man seen from behind that came out to be

the stone (the stone) what of the stone and the boy
the late clear of animal gardens?

He stands off from us, he is a substance.

Who is the man who is not?

But what if he were to foot, or given that turn and walk?

Then we would require even more of distance. Ultimately to

give up on any resembling of him. I'll walk on to you

My image of myself is never in motion

Perhaps we should be done with the mirror

We have seen each other's faces are we that matter of even we

And speak there also.

The revolving wheel of the world is a mirror

But the one who says "I am blind" is not blind

Our age is a confusion, but not in you
How do we get to be "blind"?

Things must show by impinging examples how ignorant

one really is. These days they all lie and brighten us.

Complete Thought

I

The world is complete.
Books demand limits.

II

Things fall down to create drama.
The materials are proof.

III

Daylight accumulates in photos.
Bright hands substitute for sun.

IV

Crumbling supports undermine houses.
Connoisseurs locate stress.

V

Work breaks down to devices.
The elements of art are fixed.

VI

Necessary commonplaces form a word.
All features present art.

VII

A mountain cannot be a picture.
Rapture stands in for style.

VIII

Worn-out words are invented.
We read daylight in books.

IX

Construction turns back in on itself.
Dogs have to be whipped.

X

Eyes open wide to see spots.
Explanations are given on demand.

XI

Brick buildings shut down in winter.
A monument works to change scale.

XII

False notes work on a staircase.
A hammer is as large as the sun.

XIII

Connected pieces break into name.
Petrified trees are similar.

XIV

Everyday life retards potential.
Calculation governs speech.

XV

Rules stand out as illustrations.
People climb over piles of rock.

XVI

I am speaking in an abridged form.
Ordinary voices speak in rooms.

XVII

An act is comprehensible.
An explanation effaces words.

XVIII

Language ceases to be the future.
Thinking is a religious device.

XIX

Nothing touches the surface.
The arbitrary is meant to be sensed.

XX

False songs restore information.
Everyday elements are mixed.

XXI

Death is an accident.
Measure is given by use.

XXII

The air witnesses an abduction.
Motion isolates this effect.

XXIII

A single step makes a resolution.
A pile driver is not a device.

XXIV

Thought remains in the animal.
Each island steals teeth.

XXV

True sensation buries its dead.
Thought is embedded.

XXVI

The issue is not divided.
An identical sequence follows this.

XXVII

Tongues expand in choirs.
Wishes break down to facts.

XXVIII

The foot senses an explanation.
Mass returns in the curse.

XXIX

The white line leads to thinking.
A slave is carried off alive.

XXX

Decorations provides the task at hand.
Coincidence is cut up in squares.

XXXI

Three kings build a false motif.
They arrive by the longest route.

XXXII

The materials motivate storms.
Play is felt to be constructed.

XXXIII

A boot steps into an example.
Conviction is selected from space.

XXXIV

Two unequal figures complete an act.
The wife turns out to be sane.

XXXV

Night opens up with eating.
Later the words are filled in.

Thought identifies missing links.
Errors are in constant use.

XXXVII

Art is admonished on this basis.
An author speaks to the known.

XXXVIII

A straight road is not convincing.
Not to kill the hero is a crime.

XXXIX

Rules stick to the unexpected.
Sound is locked in by a chain.

XL

A man torments the sun.
Cows are disturbed by their calves.

XLI

Players make the appropriate moves.
Absence is given as a way out.

XLII

Time strikes between abutments.
Art transposes thought.

XLIII

Pictures cease to vanish.
A doctor makes words out of glass.

XLIV

Candles stand up to icons.
Science gives features to the world.

XLV

Another difference is invented.
They speak it like another word.

XLVI

Howls fit in to a condition.
Photos of relics cover the walls.

XLVII

There are no literal examples.
Narratives are not reports.

XLVIII

Sensations are lost on the market.
Facts can kill a book.

XLIX

Familiar processes are arbitrary.
The armor of fate is broken down.

L

Use vanishes.
The violinist arrives at a spot.

My One Voice

At the sound of my voice
I spoke and, egged on
By the discrepancy, wrote
The rest out as poetry.

Read the books, duets
From nowhere say they speak;
Why not let them. Habitual stares
Leave trees in rearview mirrors.

I came from a neutral point
In space, far from the inside
Of any one head. O say can I
Still see the tabula rasa outshining

That rosy dawn on the near side
Of the genetic code. Doubt,
Thy name is certainty. Generations
Of recordings of the sunrise

Picture the light until the page
Is white and I predict
The present, hearing a future
In the syllables' erasing fade.

Book Years

A religious virgin of unspecified sex
Opens the book again. Great trees
Mass into a risen gloom. Green
Valleys bathed in blue light lull
A scattered population. The world ends;

A person is born, no sense
Thinking about it forever. I'm writing
While time stands still. It certainly
Doesn't lead to the future. First
In a series of willing abstractions,

The body makes history and leaves
No one to clean up after
It's gone. Flesh mirrors its absence
In solid colors; generations absorb finite
Amounts of light. Identity is abbreviation.

A religious frenzied realism leaves no
Place to go, no stone unturned.
An aesthetic pharmacopia of diseases projects
Fuzzy slides of a beautiful woman
Living forever in perfect health, dancing

On rocks, acres, dark green world.
She's only a figure of speech,
But the books, the modern library
Giants, fall beneath her feet. Lives
Accumulate sound like clouds hold water.

Primer

for Alan Bernheimer

The surface of the earth displays
A grain of sand. The pace it keeps
Creates bonds of love that stretch
Past the breaking point. Matter
Resents nothing. Plants try.
Animals can barely think. Speaking

Their minds, people load the air
With noise so thoroughly meant
That a would-be heaven
Falls from the sky and is
Where we follow our wills
To lead our lives, chasing

Bent actions along the curve
Of a finite door. The equations
Produce curbed or unleashed powers,
Barking into a dark garage

Or surviving the face of the deep.
For the earth to revolve
Continuously requires constant
Vigilance, endless sleep.

Trainee

The language has us by the throat,
Scorched utensils in a grid. Trained
Tracks, right of way, light
Of day. Enraged bodies whistle by
Cold soot, skipping space entirely.

Letters are so dense it's convenient
To stop listening. Religious
Seduction scenarios replace
The melancholy human voice,
Its perfected products, trick photos.

Say I say sky, say the city
Of San Francisco sits beneath that.
Have you ever seen a school fence?
A sun set? Fields of speech
The anatomizing phonemes bark at.

A machine shop? In the light
Of the correct time, steel buildings
Lift a low stone fog. Tires sing
On freeways that guard the views
From distressed housing.

Convinced condensed devices are at home
In our words. Not to be confused
With us or use. Remove
The caressed blossom, the rug's
Still brand new, a vacuum.

To Baudelaire

The head is the body's lair.
It may be slightly in front.
Milking these separations,
Words answer the immortal need

For intoxicating monotony. The body
Is the mind's sieve.
Beloved grief, water drips
From a block of red ice

Onto a perfumed paradise
Lost in the obsessive embrace
Of reader and writer. Superb haloes
Hang from the heads

Of naked slaves whipping themselves.
A new world is required
To stomach the images
Floating on the headless

Torso of the old.
"I was surprised to find myself
Staring at an empty hole.
I ordered flowers."

Measure

for Lyn Hejinian

I've been six feet
All my life. Now
I can barely see
Over my coffee cup.
He sits by the giant phone,

Depressed. Weigh me again.
There is no ideal
Surface. He leaps across
Cracks between words. Writing
His book provides a little confidence,

Wielding the club-sized pencil.
Beyond, the stairs lead
Down to the cellar
In a bruising series
Of crashes, One language speaks another

Out of need, imperfectly.
My platinum yardstick, your
Platinum yardstick. Sentences measure
The door; the sound
Goes out. From his doll house

The dictator shouts up
At the sequoia he
Once kidded over breakfast.
Buoyant syllables rise from
The damage done by insecticide, radiation.

When she accidently leaves
The door open, in
Comes the killer cat.
The sentence will force
The author down to study syntax

In the basement. Intuition
Nags her, but logic
Requires that she abandon
The shivering, half-drowned homunculus
Who's now draped across a pencil

Caught in the dripping
Drain grate. There is
A price to pay
For making these statements.
An inner light pushes him out

Through the window screen
To the grass where
He contemplates moonlit clouds
As he vanishes completely.
We're left with the disembodied voice.

The Classics

In the beginning, the hand
Writes on water. A river
Swallows its author,
Alive but mostly
Lost to consciousness.

Children in stage C succeed.
Emotion is rampant. We blush
At cases 1 and 2.

Success is an ideal method.
For itself the sun
Is a prodigy of splendor.
It did not evolve. Naturally,
A person had to intervene.

The speaker is instructed
To listen to the correct
Measurement of words.

The rules are sacred,
But can be changed.
The moon got bigger
Because we were alive.
The circle rotates carefully.

Where's the milk. The infant
Gradually becomes interested
In these resistances.

Hidden quantities
In what he already knows
Eventually liberate a child
From the immediate present.
The name of Hannibal
Was glorious throughout the world.

All men have hearts of gold
A particular man has
A particular heart of gold.

Wearing white clothes,
Eating apples and oranges,
26 million men and women
Talk intimately about sex.

Iron nails complete the statue,
But fail in case 3.

Finally, the hand reaches the mouth.
99% egocentric speech,
By, to, and for itself.
God and the novel
Approximate each other.

The listener thinks he understands
What the speaker is saying
Even when it is very obscure.

Reversible thinking can explain
Anything but the mundane
Features of the words
Already pronounced.

If the box is too heavy,
Tell it to move.

The Classics

Body and Soul

take eat take glowing coal eat
take coal in mouth painful
take pain pain's privation
mouth deprived
take eat suffer lack of
suffer lack of fire coal doesn't
take fire take eat suffer.

Note: each reader chooses either a left or right page, and reads only those pages in the poem. The reading goes from left to right. Thus what is most leftward on a given line is to be read first. With the exception of the first line on p. 161, which is the proper beginning of the poem, the lines of both left and right pages are parallel and, when read together, compose one single line. Not all spaces are to be spoken in. It may take some practice before the parts are properly co-ordinated.

In the face is hidden the original outbreak of all goodness
no way look into face completely fire
so devout so delicate angel eyes no
completely fire completely completely
smiles from bright eyes bright smiles in vain
in vain life's dreary for angel eyes
cross heart hope hope to die
no way no eyes look into love that burns

Body and Soul

Take eat take eat take take
take eat glowing coal one for all
take coal in mouth
pain privation
naturally mouth's deprived mouth's corroded
take eat suffer deprived of
suffer "it takes a little time"
take be soiled with fire

the face hide outbreak of all goodness
no way into eyes face completely
so so angel eyes no eyes
no way eyes look into complete fire
smiles bright no
in vain no son through tears none
crossed heart hope hope to die
no eyes look into love that burns.

heart lonely,
you you, only.
Why haven't you seen it?
all for you
spend days in longing
you
all

believe
conceive

the ending
chance to prove,

life
You yours
 surrender

George Quasha

If every one thing that I have ever said is two
then reading is never really ever only one time reading
is twice and text is a twin
you meet late in life
never too late and not at all early
identical to you and born
truly at the moment of your birth
for you only
it is duplicitous
like you it is two
of everything for the ark
the two of you are building together for the one
who comes between you

Great Quotations Withheld [H]

'Writing is a minute form of [word withheld].'

'Well, just turn that around: [word withheld] is a grandscale form of writing.'

'I see, well that means that going across to & fro is bringing across both ways, that going from [word withheld] to writing brings "abstract" movement of pen or vocal cords.'

'Yes, and the unwritten books of our probable selves may only be detected by our actual selves through close attention to the residual [word withheld] of unemergent images, those fugitives whose sleight defines the limit of our conscious life.'

'That reminds me of an unwritten story in which someone discovers a way to sensitize certain words — by manipulating with orally communicated sensitivity the felt [word withheld] — so that each time the name of a book containing a specific configuration of these words is mentioned certain energies of the book are discharged in the mind of anyone who has read it sympathetically.'

'And I have seen an incomplete painting of a [word withheld] that, as you stare at it, turns out to be a tongue flashing around eye-teeth in a dragonine triadic fork emerging from the mouth with lizard speed.'

'So painting too is a minute form of [word withheld].'

'That is because the person who both paints and [word withheld] intincts and is tintured, growing superluminous in relation to the animal dark.'

'Animals are the [word withheld] of the gods.'

'Here is the scenario of my unmade film: The book is in the hand and acquires its distance like video, moving in real time so that the reader is angler, catching or not catching swimming beasts and their darkness, establishing a dynamic relation between, on the one (so to speak) hand, the moving eyes, grasping fingers, moveable book, and, on the other hand, the [word withheld].'

'If you created a photographic book in which each picture is placed on the page in absolute relation to its command of that space, you would have a sort of movie showing what happens in the mind of a photographer who knows how to [word withheld].'

'Blake, by ripping away mystery and revealing actual perplexity, which presents itself synchronistically and co-inherently in language, materia (e.g., copper), history, and psyche, is in truth

searching out his [word withheld] by way of the poetic, artistic, political, and psychological energies present to him.'

'Under the title 'LIVING spaces & living SPACES' he carried out his intention to create a work in which large spaces, accessible by specific routes to countless smaller spaces, as well as [word withheld], are inhabitable and interactive with the inhabitants.'

'If craft is the ability to specify the inclusiveness of any imagined spaces, then it too is a species of [word withheld], and the act of exclusion is ultimately superfluous.'

'The enantiodromia between LIVING spaces and living SPACES, between writing and [word withheld], opens the parts – the present moment in any attention to part – so that the integrity of the part is not contingent upon the discovery or creation of a whole, and incompleteness is not compromised by judgement.'

'The [word withheld] is the hole in any conscious creation. Even more disturbing: Just as any organic act involves appropriate rejections, a visionary act, so to speak, is para-organic and its laws cannot be plotted in terms of the organic, and [word withheld] is something outside both the organic and the para-organic, subject to all laws and none, and in this respect it is like writing and, of course, not at all.'

ON THEATER

(Some remarks written in April, 1981, are followed by a transcription of a conversation I had at a Co-Accident workshop at the August Moon Arts Festival in Catskill, New York, on August 23, 1979. Present and participating were Cris Cheek, an English performance artist and writer, and Kirby Malone and Marshall Reese of Co-Accident/Desire Productions.)

My thinking on theater always circles back to Rousseau's remarks in his letters to D'Alembert in which he urges that the theater be banned because it brings a public together to reinforce the prevailing mores rather than to exercise its constituency as constitutors of both our forms of life and principles of government. For when the public is convened it should be to exercise its will not consume its manners.

The theater makes a spectacle out of presentness, its drama enacts the fantasy of the world as a shell, before us only as gesture. The more earnest, believable, the cry of an actor the more the coherence of our interpretation of the meaning of others' actions is defamed. One of the reasons the conditions of film as a medium are so much more intrinsically satisfying is that they effectively defeat this theatricalization of presence by the machinic otherness of the projected world; watching a movie, I remain outside the time and place of what I see; and what I see is always *framed*, a mediation/conditioning intrinsic to the medium itself.

One problem with so much performance of Beckett's work (such as Mabou Mines' *The Lost Ones* with David Warrilow a few years ago or Jack McGowran's a few years before that) is the theatricalizing of voice and its presence as a speaker to us in the audience. Beckett's work, so presented, loses the denser, shifting polyvalences of the text itself; his work is of an elsewhere that is always now, while such theatricality performs the obverse. On the other hand, Joseph Chaiken's very recent reading of excerpts from *Texts for Nothing* and *How It Is* successfully defeated this theatricalizing of voice, making it the most satisfying performance of Beckett I have ever heard. Chaiken's reading situates the address of the text not to a listener but to itself, as reverie, the self — or more properly the writing — talking to itself, proceeding, stopping, questioning, circl-

ing back: a textual practice organized by internal compositional necessities and not by the sound of a speaking voice. By performing a text as a musician might play a score, rather than enacting a persona, Chaiken was able to realize the textual dimension of Beckett's work.

A related issue has to do with the value of poetry readings, since just this problem of the voice or person as organizing mode of the reading often works against the qualities of the writing. But how to read without this sense of voiced presence being foregrounded? Certainly a sharp break is needed both from the shamanistic incantation of neo-ritualistic sound poetry and from the presentation of personality as a projected cohering force. Perhaps some clue is to be found in the idea of 'song', where the compression of meaning is scored on the basis of music rather than voice, creating an overall self-containment that defeats presentness with its intricate autonomy. Some of these conditions can be realized in a poetry reading by an attention to the artifactual features of the text itself — line breaks, punctuation, visual organization — insofar as these veer from "scored speech", and by an attempt to create rhythms in reading that are based on the compositional possibility of the text and not simply appropriated from speech or rhetoric.

In the textual theater of Richard Foreman, building on Brecht's own model for defeating the presentness of theater, some of the conditions of film and song (perhaps this should be called opera) are achieved on stage by an intensely architectural design and choreography and the use of such mechanical devices as voice-over tape recording and buzzers. One of the reasons why this work is so compelling and so significant is that there is no illusion of presentness to the audience, only the diachronic and diatropic envisioning of a duration estranged from us so that we can see it.

[In Catskill, I preceded my comments by looking at Kirby Malone while saying with maximum emotional conviction, "I am here. Here. You are there. We are both together in this space and I am looking at your eyes. I feel you here with me" etc.]

. . . What we'd like to do is to break away from that, not to have that sense of simulated presence, simulated honesty, simulated there-ness, so that the person in the audience is somehow supposed

to forget about the fact that there is acting, and at the same time is made to feel that her or his presence in the audience is a crucial part of creating an event. Rather than acknowledging in some ways the fact that every person is separate from another and that the way to communicate is not always by trying to dissolve the absence that we feel from each other and that the audience might feel from the stage. But I wonder what it is that is your sense. Do you feel you're creating representations, re-presentations?

Cheek. I don't think you can call it a presentation, actually. It has ways of teaching both the performer and the audience that isn't part of the perception of time and the perception of action and intensity and that kind of intensity is the only tangible feature.

Bernstein: Do you try to alter the sense of time?

Cheek: Well, performance does alter the sense of time, there's no doubt about that, because it is totally different from the kind of sense of time that you experience like sitting here, in a sense that you try and get a lot more done. You act more determinately to explore the possibilities of the environment and what you've set up in terms of reaction to the change of light, reaction to the sound and moving in bands of light. You can tell me I'm not making sense in a minute cause it would be quite true. Respond to color and to shape and to the way someone else might be talking to you even if they are just trying to talk to you like that. Which is naturally for me much more interesting than what you were doing with Kirby because it's not associational or strictly trying to tie France in with the image of a red flag around the head or the thigh or the central bonding images or it's not trying to think of love as people overcoming barriers of incommunication. Or talking through cliché to try to get a response to a given set of sexual forms with one person doing this, that, and the other and the other person desperately trying to relate to it. I think that's definitely what we're not doing. We're not trying to relate, not trying a single narrative or simple representational level. So that things become much more abstract. Abstraction is a concrete space within a performance, which is why you do get that difference between the performer and the audience.

Bernstein: So you get a sense of distance, in what you're saying, that's very clearly acknowledged. A lot of theater, whether it's called traditional, or a certain sort of earnest new theater, such as the Iowa Theater Lab's "White Night" last night, doesn't give you

that clearly defined architectural space that the performers are in. When you said time . . . it's true that theatrical time is not real time, there is no such thing as real time, I mean there is no such thing as real time, I mean this isn't real time. But there is a sense of simulation of real time that you get that tries to make you forget that there's time going on, that any performance is a manipulation, or anyway, creation, or production of time. Production rather than representation. When you perform it seems to me you have a very clear sense, I might call it, in the sense when I was talking over in the corner, you know, a distortion or a bizarre rending apart of normal senses of time, but what it actually is I think, if it's working well, is a production of time, that you can see the time being produced.

Cheek: That's why I say it's not a presentation because a presentation is far too fixed. A presentation also implies we have a very clear idea of how each piece is going to work together before we start, which definitely isn't the way it is appreciable.

Bernstein: Well, hm, I'm not sure I think that improvisation, per se, or not being planned is the key to . . .

Cheek: Well, in a sense through working together you script . . .

Bernstein: It's not saying that you have to be unplanned per se or spontaneous. But it is part of just the perceptual experience that one has doing it and watching it that one feels like the time/space of the performance is different from your own and so you see how time itself gets produced.

Cheek: There's a difference in calculation. It's not calculated . . . to produce a specific effect to be presented, or to show specific images, so that the calculation is far more deeply engrained in a total living process rather than just that one art action.

Bernstein: One thing I thought was that this type of experience reads more like a text, is experienced more like a text. You have to read it. It becomes an active process rather than a consumptive process. The model of the theater of representation is the theater that you consume with a kind of starry gaze, that you just are there for it, so it eliminates a certain kind of self-consciousness. Performance work of a certain sort has been interested in self-

consciousness, which sometimes can be over-indulged in or not, but in any case it forces you to read the piece, the text, as something separate, to interpret it and to decide for yourself. I think that that very much is at the root of Brecht's sense of what he wanted you to look at — history unfolding. And I think that we might, as well, want to look at history itself, not just to talk about the theatrical situation, but when you look at events in the street, when going to the supermarket, when you look at people that you're relating to. It's not simply something to consume, it's something to read and to try to figure out what the formulations are at the same time as experience them. This isn't an attempt to distance you from your feelings so much as to make you aware that feelings exist within a social context. What I find the violence of the stripped down theater of presence, like the Iowa performance, is that it wrenches emotions and experiences out of context and just gives them to you almost as pure being, so-called. And it becomes very totalitarian. I think in addition to just traditional Broadway theater of dished up sentiment as well as the theater of emotion, encounter group theater, psycho-drama theater, you also have this same kind of theatrical technique used by lots of the spiritualist groups. I think ritual itself is often that, or things like Ram Dass saying "Be here now with me" in that deep slow voice of religiosity, that kind of manipulation of time so that you feel that there is some "here" is the same kind of manipulation that I'm talking about and as I was trying to demonstrate with Kirby — "Here . . . I am . . . feel it . . . you are there . . ." You know, I mean you could go on, you actually do create a space that tries to defeat or make invisible the production of the space that you are creating. And to me that's simulation of feeling that's not real feelings. Whether a person thinks that she or he is feeling something or not. It's necessarily simulation to me. And in that sense I think most people simulate most of the time, when they go into the Jamesway and they buy their . . . I think all that is in a certain sense simulation.

Participant: If you think you're feeling a feeling is that different from feeling a feeling?

Reese: Yes, I think so. I mean Charles is talking about distance in Desire Productions. And Cris was talking about intensities and actions and not calling what we're doing a presentation. Charles mentioned simulation as when people buy food. Exactly what are they doing? If you notice the commercial products are packaged in certain ways which is not really . . .

Bernstein: . . . they are theatricalized, I would say. That's what the commodification of products is.

Reese: Because it's not the product by itself that's interesting, it's more the associations of feelings with the packaging that is the simulation . . .

Malone: One of the best examples of the simulation involved, say, in a supermarket would be the way in which animal food is sold, cat food for instance. Since a cat can't watch television and decide which food to eat, the ads seem to go through the person who owns the animal to the animal. And really what it's doing is presenting a theatrical simulation of what it's like to be a cat to the person who owns the cat. So have have Meow Mix — the only cat food they ask for by name. Another thing that was said that I think is important about what we are doing is that rather than having a specific feeling or set of feelings in mind that we want the audience to have, we are trying to shift the focus to the actual process the audience goes through so that watching does have to become an active process on the part of the audience — or what we're doing might be seen as nothing. For this reason a lot of the things we're involved in some people think of as boring and others don't. It depends on the decisions the audience makes for itself beforehand and during the performance. We do have ideas about the social role and context of our work but at the same time we're not trying to depict or emit a specific message, we're more interested in setting up a construction that will leave many different options for the audience to choose from. And, as was said, it is something for the audience to read, to put together different elements in whatever way that audience member finds suitable to do it. So that what we're doing some people will have different responses to. For instance, sometimes the same things that we might do might be seen by one person as totally violent and negative and another person might see it as frivolous and constructive. It's a good feeling when people have such different responses, you can see the active process that they have gone through.

[the tape runs out here]

The Roar of the Greasepaint, The Smell of the Crowd...

Some forty-five years ago I dropped out of Harvard, after three months of my freshman year (a good part of which I had spent at McManus' Bar & Grill, across the street from the Yard). Not having much of an idea what to do with myself, I followed my brother into a small repertory theatre group outside Philadelphia, the Hedgerow Theatre, run by a dynamic and slightly loony Pennsylvania Dutchman, Jasper Deeter. I was going to be an actor!

But at Hedgerow I met some playwrights, and decided that writing the plays would bring me a notch closer to the source: the actors could only speak the lines that *I* gave them. So I pulled out of Hedgerow, hung around with Communists (this was the thirties), wrote a number of bad plays, kind of drifting in ignorance.

My tolerant parents, meanwhile, felt that a little more at least semi-formal education might be a good thing, so I was treated to a summer living and studying with Conrad Aiken, on Cape Cod. Aiken, besides refining my tastes in alcohol, taught me to write a good honest sonnet – but, more importantly, he introduced me to some reading that began to turn my life around: Faulkner, who was just beginning to surface then, and Kafka, for example.

Later, after I was married and living in New York, I read Pound and Williams; and off and on, down through the years, I was in touch with Olson. I succeeded, finally, in expunging theatre from my system, decided it was a bastard medium, an impure mix of the Body and the Word, the whole stagey business a notch removed from some other, purer source. I was aware of Olson's ambitions in theatre: he once wanted to be an actor, he once wanted to be a dancer, I don't think he ever ceased wanting to be a poet-playwright. But in my own case, having striven in that field, and failed, I was shet of it.

I was reading Olson, too, his attacks on the novel as just such an impure medium. Something in me agreed with him, his notion that the poets were much closer to this much-to-be-desired *source*. But I was unable to write poetry. Or I couldn't approach what I wanted to do other than by *indirection*. So, quite simply, I wrote a novel. Wallowing in impurity, if you will. And that novel, bad as it was, was a very useful effort. It completed my education, I might

say, and gave me a platform from which to operate. Because it was from that platform, weaving in much else that I had learned from Olson, Pound, Williams, Faulkner, Lawrence, Crane (later, Melville), that I was able to work *through* the novel, and evolve the body of work that has followed – call them documentary novels, documentary poems, whatever.

Along the way, though, a curious seed had been planted, and I was scarcely aware of its import. Back in the fifties, the Beat poets and the Black Mountain poets, having little else in common, shared one important drive: to revive the oral tradition, to make the poem once more a thing Spoken and Heard. There were poetry readings at Black Mountain College and in the coffee houses of San Francisco. I took this notion very seriously . . . I *heard* much of what I wrote, while writing it.

Still secure in the belief that what I and my peers were doing was far more important than anything going on in theatre, I was unaware that by standing up and speaking the poems, before an audience, we were taking a significant step in just that direction: theatre.

This drive to speak and hear the words can be stated in another way: the need to get the poem off the page, to make the words *active*. Another notion I picked up from Olson (and that can be traced back to other sources – Williams, Melville and Whitman) was his interest in physiology, that the poem is the product of the whole poet, not just his intellect, or his sentimental heart, or whatever. Ron Loewinsohn, in his introduction to Williams' *The Embodiment of Knowledge*, speaks of Bill Russell, the basketball player, and his near-perfect mental-physical adaptation to the game. This is just a hairs-breadth away from theatre. And it is toward just this approach that Olson and I and others have been leaning – for how else does the poem, the word, become *corporeal*, but in the body – the mind, body and speech – of the poet, and, finally, the actor? Following this line, theatre becomes the climax for which all poetry, secretly or openly, yearns . . . without it, the words are locked on the page, in unfulfilled foreplay.

But, at the same time, there is a position opposed. Is theatre simply a matter of the poet's ego? Why isn't the poem on the page enough? Why isn't the printed poem its own culmination, rightly read and understood? Is theatre, in fact, an ectovaginal orgasm of personal glory?

WCH WAY?



In February, 1979, I was introduced to John Dillon and Sara O'Conner, Artistic Director and Managing Director, respectively, of the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre. This was arranged by the indefatigable Karl Gartung, manager of that remarkable Milwaukee bookstore, Woodland Pattern.

John and Sara had been reading some of my books, and we listened to a tape of a reading I had given. They asked me if I would be interested in putting together a play, made up of materials from various of my books . . . and would I then come to Milwaukee to direct it.

Now, here was a curious phenomenon: to have two professional theatre people — John and Sara — looking into my work, finding something I felt I had abjured. So I began to rationalize: is there, after all, something I could consider a "pure" theatre?

I was flattered, challenged, and a little nervous, I guess, in consideration of the great liberty John and Sara had given me — to write as I please; and the responsibility — to serve as both playwright and director, working with experienced professional actors.

Getting down to the work of writing, I went through all my books and unpublished manuscripts, looking for episodes, chapters, vignettes that suggested *movement*, where I found myself visualizing live bodies behind or amidst the language. This did not necessarily involve dialogue — so that when it did occur, it came, I felt, with a certain freshness. Instead, there was a good deal of action, or mime, described by the participants or by narrators.

I came up with a surprising number of possible scenes, some of them highly complex. My original version, I suddenly realized, would run some three and a half hours — I had to whittle it down to an hour and a half. I finally got it into two acts and sixteen scenes, and it began to take a certain obvious shape and form: it became apparent that I was putting together a kind of American history, and that the scenes should be placed in chronological order, running from the Cherokee myths (that I had taken from *Will West*), through Columbus (from *Genoa*), to the Civil War (from *Waters of Potowmack*). I called it *An American Chronicle*.

From the beginning, the idea was *simplicity*. Well after I had planned and written the play, I read Jerzy Grotowski (*Towards a Poor Theatre*), and felt my notions confirmed . . . that the centripetal force of theatre drives toward the actor; that the actor is voice and body; that theatre, therefore, in its simplest terms, is language and mime.

The language exists already in the text. And the play should be a joy and satisfaction to read, by itself, *before* it is embodied on the

stage . . . so that the act of giving words to actors, adding flesh, limbs and movement to language, is an enrichment of forces already present.

Grotowski pleads that it is absurd for theatre to compete with film and television, in the realm of costume, setting, props, lights, special effects, transitions, etc. Just as representational painting became somewhat absurd with the development of the camera, so representational theatre became somewhat of an anachronism.

The set for *An American Chronicle* was to be simply a platform. Later this was elaborated to two platforms, and masked entrances upstage. Costumes for the four actors were uniform: blue jeans, tee shirts and sneakers. Lighting was of the simplest, and the actors could be seen moving between scenes and seated off stage. Props consisted of a tambourine, for one scene. Sound effects: a harmonica (one scene), and an actor beating his hands on a wooden cube, to simulate gunfire (one scene). Scripts were carried in hand for some of the scenes, others were memorized; in some cases, the scripts were integrated into the substance of the play. (One audience member told me that the play should never be memorized, that the scripts were a positive *addition*).

Because of this simplicity, transitions from scene to scene were executed rapidly, and contrasts from scene to scene – in pace, tone, substance – were enjoyed in a way that a cumbersome production never would have allowed.

The most difficult part of directing came on the first day: I had to meet the actors, none of whom I had seen before; try to give them some sense of what the play was about, what I was attempting; and cast the play at once, all sixteen scenes, before rehearsals could begin.

I became aware of a peculiar double dynamic at work in my relation to the actors. On one level, I was their superior: the playwright, the director, the “literary” man, a good deal older than they – someone in whom John and Sara obviously believed, or I wouldn’t have been there. On another level, that of experience in theatre, I was at best a neophyte, and possibly an ignoramus. This became touchy at times, particularly in my dealings with one of the actors, who demonstrated a volatile ego.

The casting, of course, was crucial, and here I was either shrewd or lucky: as I came to know the actors, their limits and abilities, during later rehearsals, I don’t think I would have changed a single casting decision that I had made on the first day. For example, I had a scene taken from Walt Whitman, his account of the defeated Union soldiers straggling into Washington after First Manassas:

the man I cast as Whitman told me, *after* I had cast him, that he had done a one-man Whitman show . . . his knowledge of Whitman far exceeded mine, and he brought this to bear on the role in several useful ways.

In another case, the man I cast as John Wilkes Booth, mouthing materials taken from his diary, had great difficulty with the role; I asked him to ham it up, emote all over the place, break all the rules of good acting, let it all hang out, etc. — and he was oddly stymied. This was the closest I came to changing a casting, in mid-rehearsal. I let him struggle, however, and quite on his own he came up with a marvelous device: to break the monologue into sections, play each part of it as a different Shakespearian villain — Iago, Richard III, etc.

The actors were professionals, Equity members, with years of experience. But none of them had been trained in mime. And none of them, I think, had done anything quite like this before. The play at times called for silent mime, it called for speakers describing an action mimed, it called for actors miming and speaking at once, it called for conventional dialogue, it called for language with little or no mime. After rehearsals were over and we were in production, the actors became candid with me, about the difficulties. One spoke of the difficulty in communication, the fact that they and I didn't share a common language. Another spoke of a particular scene, "John Marr," a long quote from Melville with very little stage action: how he hated that scene at the beginning, couldn't understand or mouth the language, how he came around to it, learned to love the language, it became one of his favorite scenes.

Response of the actors and audience demonstrated a point of which I think I was aware from the start: *An American Chronicle* steers a narrow course between literature and theatre, drawing on resources of both. One of the actors said that, in the process of rehearsal, "we simplified." I think he meant by that the process of translating or transposing language into bodily action, without benefit of theatrical paraphernalia.

My effort, in all the books, beginning with *Will West*, has been to collapse time, to create a plane on which events of all periods may occur at once, to create tensions that one finds in the static arts, that I found so forceful, for example, in the color associations of Joseph Albers — the chemistry of a red against a green, etc. Can these tensions be created in theatre? To read a book requires *time* — although a reader is somewhat in control of that time, being able to go backward, forward, etc. Watching a play, or hearing a symphony, the audience is locked into the time sequence. There is no "going back," save in memory.

An American Chronicle, as the title suggests, is a chronology, a sequence. Before writing the script, I read Aeschylus, listened to Bach, Ives, Coltrane and Mingus. At some point, I realized that Ives and the jazz composers were not appropriate, or could not be factored into this effort. But *An American Chronicle* is a first: for myself as playwright, for myself as director, and for the actors, in this kind of theatre. It is interesting to me that the three performances of the play represented a progression, each successively better than the one before, as the actors became more comfortable with the material.

I'm not at all sure that the complexities of Ives and Mingus, a complexity in which events occur on a single plane, and all the lines are tense or taut — I'm not at all sure that this isn't possible in theatre.



But, at the same time, there is a position opposed. Is theatre simply a matter of the poet's ego? Why isn't the poem on the page enough? Why isn't the printed poem its own culmination, rightly read and understood? Is theatre, in fact, an ectovaginal orgasm of personal glory?

WCH WAY?

Paleo-Spores

I will first make brief comments on the books I have consulted while thinking about "paleolithic imagination and the construction of the underworld," and then offer some information on cave visiting. The books are not listed in any particular order.

D.H. Lawrence's essay, "Him with His Tail in His Mouth," collected in *Phoenix II*, has, scattered throughout it, relevant insights plus one stunning paragraph, near the end of the essay, on paleolithic man's relationship to animals.

In *Primitive Erotic Art*, edited by Philip Rawson, there is a thoughtful twenty pages on the early history of sexual art, quite pertinent to thinking about cave art. I have found Rawson's comments on early man's frictional relationship to pregnancy (in contrast to seminal relationship, which Rawson conjectures comes in with agriculture) particularly fascinating.

Any book with a clear description of the birth process is worth reading.

Sandor Ferenczi's *Thalassa*, while not directly related to the paleolithic, is such a crazy, disturbing, brilliant book on regressive trends and phylogenetic parallels that I read it several times while doing research on the Paleolithic.

Charles Olson's "The Chiasma, or Lectures in the New Sciences of Man," (in *Olson #10*) definitely worth reading. It was quickly prepared, jumps around a lot, and unlike Olson's work on the Mayans is hunches based on reading — but it is Olson at the height of his imaginative powers thinking about materials that engaged him profoundly. Pages 90-93 are stunning. Read also in this context pages 154 through 162 in the second *Maximus* volume.

The list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants, available from the Department of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service) is worth brooding through, and learning about animals you've never heard of that are now disappearing.

I find Robert Ardrey's writing, in general, superficial and irritating. However, there are a few pages (where he is mainly remembering a conversation with Louis Leakey) in *The Hunting Hypothesis* (Bantam) worth reading: pp. 173-76.

Alexander Marshack is also a "popular" writer, plus he is dull. However, his photos (often blow-ups) in *The Roots of Civilization*

are unique, and the book itself should probably be read by anyone doing research on early man. Marshack, for the past five or six years, has been doing research on the caves (*Roots* is mainly about notched tools and weapons), and the January 1975 *National Geographic* has an illustrated essay on this research. A typical *National Geographic* piece – but, again, probably worth looking at.

Artaud's letters from Rodez on fecality worth thinking about (in particular, in the fine Helen Weaver translation published by Farrar Straus, page 452).

Levy's *The Gate of Horn* I found very disappointing and did not finish.

Weston LaBarre's *The Ghost Dance* is a very useful book, even if I think he is wrong some of the time. His chapter, "The Dancing Sorcerer," is a stirring introduction to this whole matter, and his notes document a great deal of material that the reader can follow up on.

Undoubtedly the most useful book (in French and English – and out of print in both) is André Leroi-Gourhan's *Treasures of Paleolithic Art*. The photos by Jean Vertut are splendid and to my knowledge unmatched by any other photographer of the caves. There are also maps of about two-thirds of the caves Leroi-Gourhan examined (he actually visited around sixty caves – and since there are over one hundred paleolithically marked caves in France alone, and probably thirty to forty in Spain, it is impossible on this level alone to accept his conclusions in the definitive way that he offers them). Leroi-Gourhan's text, based on the first computerized classification of cave art, is respectful but highly reductive and simply wrong at times. He appears to leave out animals from certain caves when they appear in places that trouble his hypotheses. But the book is invaluable for its hundreds of photographs, descriptions of the photographs, and maps.

William Irwin Thompson's *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light* is worth looking at, mainly for the chapter on hominization, which has fascinating hunches about the profound move from estrus-cycle-oriented apes to eroticized man. The chapter on symbolization, which contains some material on paleolithic art, is superficial.

Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology* has quite a bit of reflection on paleolithic caves, but Campbell's compulsive cross-mapping (setting up parallels in vastly differing times and societies to explain what he otherwise cannot explain) renders most of his writing vague and gives it a hit-and-miss quality. If you read LaBarre's chapter on the "dancing sorcerer" you don't need Campbell.

Last year a big book on Lascaux was published in French by "Editions du CNRS" in Paris, called *Lascaux Inconnu*. Most of it is descriptive of the geological/stratigraphic nature of the cave, with photographs and drawings of all the paintings and engravings. It is the only book on Lascaux that shows the engravings. Regarding Lascaux: Annette Laming's *Lascaux* is still a good, solid, orthodox study of the cave, and Georges Bataille's *Lascaux* (if you can find it, in French or English translation) is also worth looking at. Bataille is one of the very few people who has tried to think about Paleolithic art outside of the sympathetic/fertility magic line that has dominated archeology since the caves were discovered at the beginning of the 20th century. However, as any of his readers will be aware, his thought is highly colored by his ambivalent relationship to Catholicism. A fuller registration of his remarks in *Lascaux* can be found in his book *Eroticism*.

I haven't been able to find any of the Abbé Breuil books except for one: *Les Cavernes du Volp* (which is to my knowledge only available at one bookstore in St.-Girons in the French Ariège!). It is a wonderful book, on two caves, with many of the Abbé's conscientious and well-done drawings. Breuil's drawings are worth much more than most texts as a meditation on paleolithic art.

I probably spent as much time with James Hillman's *The Dream and the Underworld* during this period of research as I did on any book directly related to the caves. Hillman offered me a new way to think about the caves (by extending his meditation on soul-making and dreams) and my insights, for whatever they are worth, are all, to a certain extent, sprung from thinking about Hillman's book. Hillman's back-wall for underworld consideration is the Greeks and this of course shapes everything he has to say about the underworld.

For this reader, then, there is not that much (there are, of course, many other books on paleolithic art that I have either not come across or have found so superficial as to not be worth mentioning). Therefore, one must go to the caves themselves and the best way to do this is to spend several weeks, either in spring or autumn (the summer is tourist-ridden and everything is closed up from November to the end of March), in the French Dordogne, seven hours south of Paris (two hours east of Bordeaux). My wife and I have made three trips there since 1973. We have stayed in hotels in Les Eyzies (a town of around 300 people that calls itself "The Prehistoric Capital of the World" in typically humble French Fashion), but we have also rented an apartment in a nearby farm complex,

and once a stone cottage attached to a farm several miles into the woods near Les Eyzies. Both the Hotel Crô-Magnon and Le Centenaire are excellent; they are fairly priced (say \$30 a day for a double room) and have very good restaurants. Once settled in a place to stay, the paleo-seeker should walk a hundred yards to the Syndicat Initiative offices and get a sheet on the nearby caves that can be visited on schedule by tourists. There are a half-dozen within a few minutes from Les Eyzies, the most interesting being Les Combarelles and Font-de-Gaume. There is a small museum in Les Eyzies which has one magnificent room with rocks engraved around 30,000 BC (the room is on the second floor and the door is generally closed), but other than that, most of the spectacular materials taken from the caves are at the big prehistoric museum at St.-German-en-Laye, about a half-hour west of Paris.

Lascaux, near Montignac (twenty minutes north of Les Eyzies) is, as most people know, closed to the public now, and it may be closed permanently once a facsimile, now well under way, is completed. Until about a year ago, if you wrote to the right person and had a professional reason, you could get in for 35 minutes along with four other persons. But even that possibility seems to have ended now. The only other officially closed cave I know of is Altamira, in northern Spain.

The main problem in visiting these caves, once Lascaux is discounted, and once one has seen all the caves fixed up for tourist stroll-throughs, is that it is difficult to find the person who not only knows where they are but who is also willing to take you there and, if the cave is locked up, has a key to get in (most of the caves are locked up as people will go in and write graffiti over the paleolithic art if they have access to the cave). The best advice I have here is to suggest that you contact the person in charge of Prehistoric Antiquities in the region you want to explore. This person can at least put you in touch with "cave guardians" if he is not moved to take you where you want to go himself.

From Les Eyzies, if you have a car (and if you don't, transportation is a real problem), you can make one to three day trips to other areas of France that have paleolithic marked caves. A nice one day trip is to leave Les Eyzies after breakfast, and drive toward Gourdon (using your Michelin regional map #75). A mile or so this side of Gourdon you will see signs for Cougnac, a fairly small cave with beautiful natural formations and some very interesting paintings. Then drive on into Cahors and have lunch (having made reservations the day before) at La Taverne, a one-star Michelin restaurant (and if they still have a 1961 Cos d'Estournel on the wine list,

splurge a bit and drink it). After lunch, drive to Cabrerets, about 45 minutes northeast of Cahors, and visit the cave of Pech-Merle, after Lascaux, probably the most impressive of the paleolithic "sanctuaries" in the Dordogne. Then drive back to Les Eyzies at the end of the afternoon.

The other area I will mention here is the Ariège, which is about three hours south of Les Eyzies, in the foothills of the Pyrénées, a little south of Toulouse. Best place to make a base is probably Foix, which is not much in the way of hotels or restaurants. There are probably a half dozen caves that tourists can visit in this area, and the most interesting are Niaux, Gargas, Mas d'Azil and Bedeilhac. There are many other caves in the Ariège, including some of the most important in the pantheon of paleolithic art, such as Les Trois Frères, Le Portel, and Tuc d'Audoubert, but nearly all of these caves are privately owned and one must find the person with the key, etc.

Outside of France, the only caves we have visited have been in Spain, and we have only visited the four cave complex at Puente Viesgo, 30 kilometers south of Santander. The four caves, all on the same mountain, and within a few minutes of each other, are: La Pasiega, El Castillo, Las Chimeneas, and Las Monedas. I think only two are open to tourists, but the guides are very sympathetic with people who are seriously interested in cave art and will probably show you everything if you convince them that you are "serious." It would take two days to see these four caves.

In Madrid there is a facsimile of Altamira that is not worth visiting. I am told, however, that the Lascaux facsimile, once completed, will be very accurate and *will* be worth visiting. Along the road from Les Eyzies to Montignac, visitors will see signs for a small museum and animal park. I was bitten by a prehistoric horse there.

In addition: since writing out the above notes, I have read S. Giedion's *THE ETERNAL PRESENCE: THE BEGINNINGS OF ART*, published in 1962 by Pantheon Books. Giedion's text is for the most part written from traditional attitudes toward paleolithic art, although there are occasional passages that are very striking, especially pp. 272-74 on the fate of the animal in Greek myths, and pp. 467-68 for a fascinating interpretation of headless pierced female figures at Cougnac and Pech-Merle. The Giedion book also has the best photographs I have seen of engraved Aurignacian rocks, as well as a few photographs of paintings that I have not seen reproduced anywhere else e.g., from La Pasiega, a "red figure with snarling mouth."

Toward a New Program for the Provisional IRA

I pick up the phone, and dial

E I G H T I E S

I pick up the phone, and dial

N A T I O N T I M E

once again.

April mornings in sweet New York City
always did go straight to my duck-tailed head.

As usual Deacon Paul Metcalf was just talking common sense when he reminded us that the psychology books are just filled with terms for those who have attempted to deny the purport of their own hot damn history. Like dear Paul, I continue to believe that when you develop an integrated picture of both the present in the past, and the past in the present, what you really get is your own best picture of the future. Without just such a shot I feel I could all too easily become one of those shiftless, rootless, colonialized grey ghouls whose only real meal is always served off the table, plate and profit of somebody else's tribal culture. Unless of course you think America already has produced a mass, pro-life human culture big enough, and generous enough, and inspiring enough to command the best attentions of all of her multitudinous citizens.

I don't.

So Irish is something I need now go through as like who I might actually be in the process of becoming.

(Study that sentence.)

As migrant.

As im-migrant.

As American.

It's not like the 'real' was all that apparent the very first time around.



And so, who be studying Gaelic now?

Vinnie O Callaghan's son, is who.

It was Mabel Kelly, legend tells us, the mother of the great

nineteenth century Irish shenachie William Carleton, who was once asked why she did not attempt to incorporate a number of the newer and smarter English ballads into her repertoire of old Irish songs. Sir, she replied, with the full dignity of her bearing, the sound of an English lyric imposed on an Irish air is a most angry & unattractive & woeful sound. It is much like the sound of a man and woman quarelling. Now in some non-tribal areas of the world this would be considered metaphor. Among the Irish, however – those curious tribesmen who place no bets on which is more real, the visible or the invisible world – Mabel Kelly was just telling it like it is.

I have entered into the still unchecked, still unfolding areas of the Irish language now to encounter the Irish mind. Ever much more so than most, the Irish language is what remains of the Irish mind, a four thousand year conversation the Irish have been having with themselves, interrupted only every so often, as Kelly pointed out, by the sound of a post office or some other government building being blown up somewhere off in the distance. It does not ever so easily translate into English, just as *we* have never so easily translated into English (although some have seriously tried), as the soul of who we are as a people remains I suspect intact always on the other side. I can hear it, hear us, always and forever in the turnings.

Entering into Irish the first thing I have experienced – beyond even the fact that the people are mostly always singing – is that the hard and fast and arbitrary definition of English begins to crack, erode, flow away – much as a river bank under seige by the power of a swollen Spring river stream. At every turn one learns to ride with the turnings, to fall somehow into the space even between the words, to reach an understanding of something so extraordinarily neglected and elemental to the kingdom and the power of woman and man.

At every point I hear the turning.

At every point I hear the sea.

A huge new modern literature has been built up in Irish in this century – from the starts of Máirtín Ó Direáin and Máirtín Ó Cadhain to the contemporary works of a Tomac Mac Siomoin and a Michael O hAirneide. This stuff really gets to my head. I'm gonna learn how to play these songs.



Slowly,
with almost no fanfare,
recognition,
or collective exposure,
the fringe peoples of the British isles, or the Celts, as we should know and understand them, have built up one of the most curious and interesting 'minority' literatures of just about any peoples in the whole wide world. The troubled history of the Celt is of course much too convoluted by virtue of internal tradition, and still much too submerged by 'the adventure of colonialism' to go into in any great detail here. Suffice it to say, however, that Celtic is in fact the root culture for the Cornish, the Breton, the Manninn, the Welsh, the Scots, and the Irish even though a colonial flag – mostly the Union Jack – still waves on the May Poles from Belfast to Finistere, from Glasgow to Land's End to Cardiff. Actually I *have* heard rumour that there are people out there in the field actually trying to do something about all this. Believe it! But for the moment I would turn in a stricter sense to the import of the literatures.

Consider, if you will, the history of the Scots.

Irish Celtic tribal expansionism began to flood into the presumably Pictish Scottish islands and highlands at some point during the fifth and sixth century. Certainly by the ninth century, during the age of the great Bardic consolidation of the Celtic language, a bard from Inverness would have been perfectly at home, and completely understood, in the deepest bogs of Kerry. One culture, one people. And since that time the Scots have continued to build a mighty Celtic literature. They have continued to expand on this tradition, moreover, in not one but in three separate tongues.

Somhairle Macgill-eain (Sorly Maclean) is perhaps the most famous Scots Gaelic poet of our time, and quite deservedly so. Macgill-eain's wild fusion of gaelic, modernist and marxist insights is altogether wonderful; would he but write in a more accessible language, there is little doubt that today he would be enjoying a 'world-class' reputation comparable, say, to the great Neruda, or, for that matter, Mister Amiri Baraka of New Jersey. Macgill-eain's poems have, however, fairly recently been translated into English, and his *Rechtairt is Cantraigh* (Springtide and Neaptide) is now available from Cannongate in Edinburgh. Some might call this publication an act comparable to the publication of *The Collected Poems of William Butler Yeats*. For the Celt, at least, Macgill-eain is that big a writer.

Two other Scots Gaelic works commend themselves to the curious reader. The first, and no doubt the most immediately accessible, would be the New Directions edition of *Modern Scottish Gaelic*

Poems (hardcover only, unfortunately) which contains selections from Macgill-eain, selections from the writings of Degasa Mac Iaid Deorsa (George Campbell Hay), selections from Iain Mac A'Ghobhain (Iain Crichton Smith), Domhnall Macamhlaigh (Donald MacAulay), and Ruahaidh Mac Thomais (Derick Thompson). The book is, to my knowledge, the *only* edition of Scots Gaelic verse currently available in America. And a final book would have to be Derick Thompson's *Introduction to [Scots] Gaelic Poetry* (Gollancz). This book is equally invaluable – both for the historical background it offers, and also for the anthological selections from the tradition – from the very beginnings right up into our moment.

Apparencies aside, Scotland's two other major written languages, Scots and English, *have not been* mere footnotes to the achievements of Hugh MacDiarmid in this century. Yes, MacDiarmid remains the greatest Celtic intelligence of our age (and a special thanks to Martin, Brian & O Keefe for publishing, in two volumes, the final and full edition of the author's *Collected Poems*). Yet in Scots, for example, *post*-MacDiarmid, Duncan Glen, Sydney Goodsir Smith, and young David Morrison have all extended this magnificent Lowland canon; just as Norman MacCraig, W.S. Graham, Iain Crichton Smith and the brilliant Edwin Morgan have all pushed MacDiarmid's great paratactical assault on English to its current, *post*-Joycean, *post*-colonial, limits.

Only in passing, I fear, I should also mention the work of three exceptional Scottish prosemen of this century – Neil M. Gunn (*Butcher's Broom*), Lewis Grassie Gibbons (*A Scots Quair*) and the remarkable Orkney poet, dramatist, and novelist, George Mackay Brown (*Witch, and Other Stories* is a good introduction to Brown's celto-mayan concerns). Americans might also be charmed by John McPhee's fine book, *The Crofter and The Laird*, in which he manages to momentarily shake both Princeton and the *New Yorker*, and makes a most moving return to his own ancestral hearth.

I must admit I have a 'thing' about the Welsh. I think, for example, that the richest feminine possibilities of the Celtic potential have much more often surfaced inside both the Welsh and Breton byrthonic canon than they ever have been allowed to surface inside the Irish or the Scots. It is not a thought, really. It is just a feeling – a feeling I get when moving along these retrospective streets. Take a look, if you would, at Gwyn Williams' *To Look For A Word* (published by the Gomer Press in Wales). The book is an anthology of Williams' own translations from the most uncertain beginnings of the *Goddodin*, up through the Bardic flowering in the works of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch, right into the

modern moment with the works of Euros Bowen and the great Saunders Lewis. In my library I have no more favoured book. For the other, English, tail to this dragon (and yes — the whole arthurian tradition is a bastardized version of an old Welsh Celtic poem) I would recommend the Gwyn Jones *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse*, with particular attention to the modern works of R.S. Thomas, Emyr Humphreys, John Ormond, Dylan Thomas, and the genius of David Jones. The 'Celtic content' of all of this so called 'English writing' is rather astounding. And finally, as for the prose extension, I would recommend both *Porius* and *Owen Glendower* by John Cowper Powys (however controversial Powy's actual 'Welshness' might be) and Alun Richard's most useful *Penquin Book of Welsh Short Stories*. These Welsh writers, particularly those of them who have learned how to use their celtic heritage so well, are a most impressive group of writers indeed.

And so, as for my own Irish forebearers? Forebearing is, of course, just what is required; yet in truth, the more I learn, how beautifully light and fresh becomes the whole ancestral call.

Now as with our direct kin in Scotland, I would almost uniquely argue the Irish also speak in three distinct tongues — only our third, missing for all these years, is just now being discovered among the lost Irish tribes of the Americas within the various green barrios in all of our southside Chicagos. Such a discovery, however, must wait a further mapping. For the moment I shall remain somewhat more conventional. And yet everyone already knows of the glory of our Jeats and our Yoyces. I needn't kick that old can around again. As for my own taste I am drawn more to the moment in Irish history when the mantle of verse passed from the old one's grey shoulders to the farmer, Patrick Kavanaugh; when the mantle of prose passed from the genius of Mister Joyce (whose Finnegans of course can never be eclipsed — Christ, it's even built so that can't happen) to the shoulders of that other Jesuit, Flann O'Brien. That, I suspect, is the Ireland we should all try to have an ear for today.

And then we move back, of course, to the Irish canon as it has been traditionally drawn. I have heard intelligent men and women argue that Kavanaugh and O'Brien have met their match in the Irish (gaelic) verse of Máirtín Ó Direáin, in the Irish (gaelic) prose of Máirtín Ó Cadhain. It is a rumour well worth following. I have the sneaking feeling that the future of this island may very well be less in the hands of the now famous Seamus Heaney, and the brilliant, metrically sophisticated younger Paul Muldoon, and more in the hands of the powerful Tomas Mac Siomoin and the recently converted Michael O dAirneide (whose previous *Fare well to English* might yet turn into a battle cry). The odds are of course

against it; and yet, as I have been arguing, the Irish tend to add things up like no other people in the world. Let us just call it an 'abidence,' on my part.

But as for this modern Irish verse in English, if you had, say, the E.R. Dodds edition of the *Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice* (Faber) and the *Collected Poems of Patrick Kavanaugh* you would have the north and south of it (and, except for Auden and Hill's *Mercian Hymns* no real need to go to lowland England). Beyond these two collections I would also recommend a fine new fresh miscellany of contemporary Irish writing, *Soft Day*, as edited by Sean Golden and Peter Fallon (Notre Dame). It is, on the other hand, almost impossible to keep up with Irish prose writers. Let me just note that Juanita Casey, John Morrow, Neil Jordan, Bernard MacLaverty, Aiden Higgins and John McGahern have all written novels or short stories in recent years which I have enjoyed enormously. I am also most impressed with the stories and plays of the brilliant Brien Friel. But go ahead, draw your own map here. As if I didn't already show, I'm biased.

Beyond such bias, the only point I would try again to make is the sheer advantage and excitement of viewing these interlocked literatures within a cross-celtic cultural context. I wish somewhere in the great morass of American academia some bright young scholar/reader would begin to try to teach these literatures as such. If not, then I must make a warning. I'll do it myself; in my second or third life, if given half a chance.



Speaking of such 'gaelics' I am thinking now how Europeans from outside the ring of Imperial power nations — marginal Europeans such as these Welshman, Irishmen and Scots — have all become so easily lost, and short-shifted, here among the other tribes of the Americas. Oh it is still very clear that if we play along with your basic anglo-jangle we will be allowed to lose ourselves in the anonymity of the pale grey American suburban crowds, and be allowed to enjoy all of the hollow rewards granted (or perhaps, better, high-interest *loaned*) to proper and 'respectable' middle-class Americans. Some would say 'West Britain' begins on the outskirts of Dublin these days and stretches west all the way to Seattle. Yet what would be the fate for any of us who might wake up some morning wanting to feel good about being a Celt, or a Russian Jew, or a Latvian, a Greek or an Italian? We can gain America's answer to that quickly enough by skipping over the sports pages in our morning papers, and turning directly to the page where they print all those lovely cartoons. We have all been

stereotyped and euphemized in just such a manner. And I'm speaking here as someone who realizes the tensions inherent in a pluralistic society, and hardly ever minds the sound of good rich human laughter. It's just that some things are a lot more funny than others.

In all of my Before Columbus activities and activism I have always most wanted to see the various and diverse Euro-American minority communities throw off their own anglo-cowboy rodeo chaps and get on with the business of being who the fuck they already actually are — right here in the glorious tribalisms of the Americas.

The gathering of the tribes, is how a couple of friends once subtitled their poetry magazine.

The gathering of the tribes, is how more than one major American cultural historian attempted to explain to an understandably suspicious America the whole cultural momentum behind the Sixties.

God I loved that phrase, and now I clearly see how it was the Irish in me which made me love it so much!

I'm thinking that if we ever go back to that big circus tent/cathedral sense of nation we once all so deeply, presumably, shared, then the Euro-American has a very big role to play in the construction of that ideal. I'm certainly not thinking, of course, of old Imperial Europe; rather, of people from that 'other Europe,' the Europe of so many splendid and diverse 'folk cultures,' areas and cultures to which many of us now return, both in practice and in study, to find true nourishment for the hungers of our own still wandering native souls. It was Hugh MacDiarmid who once wrote that Europe would only realize its true potential when, in the manner of a Blakean visionary poem, it was finally able to hold in harmony the Celtic 'ideal' of the West, the Teutonic 'ideal' of the North, the Russian 'ideal' of the East, and the Greco-Italian 'ideal' of the South. Such a harmony is of course older than the age of imperial nation states, older even than the narrow and dehumanizing European nation-state religions. And, truly, such a harmony may now never come to pass in old decaying Europe. It remains, however, a grand ideal particularly for Euro-Americans living here in the Americas, and should be woven, I submit, into the larger fabric of our current multi-cultural American momentum. It would be such a healthy change if Europeans stopped looking for traces of themselves in every tribal culture the anthropologists keep uncovering, and came home to their own true historical and traditional identity right here in the New World.

Chinaman's Chance

"Chinaman."

It's polite among San Francisco West Coast whites and Chinese Americans not to use the word. "Chinaman." It's polite and proper to make verbal ping pong of us, "Chinese-American," with a hyphen if you please. Or make foreigners of us, "Chinese in America," if you don't please. I haven't been anywhere else but America for five generations and I'm a "Chinese in America"? What do you call me if I get the urge to dance in the streets of Shanghai the way Gene Kelly got especially itchy feet in Paris? Am I then a "Chinese in America in China"?

I don't think those boys who slammed into the sullen light of jail, accused of killing five and shooting up the furniture, the sweet'n'sour gaudy and souvenir chopsticks at the Golden Dragon, have a Chinaman's chance in hell of a fair trial in San Francisco. What are they called? "Chinese." "Chinese American." "Chinese in America." Never "Chinaman." But we all feel "Chinaman" comes more naturally into the rhythm of the talk we're talking, especially if we're sucking and booming a railroad pace, reminiscent of an ancient back-breaking track-laying race, and our words want to wheel belly to belly, shine to shine with a high iron. And I do. I'm the first Chinaman, Chinese American, call me what you will, the first Chinaman brakeman on the Southern Pacific, and would rather be writing about looking out of a locomotive onto a hillside under the lick of our shadow and smelling a river gorge coming up. "What're you!" my uncle bellowed as best he could after swallowing a wad of cigar smoke with his rice, from something he read. "You crazy? Don't write about Chinatown. You know those people, don't you? They're crazy, too! Don't be crazy, Frankie. I'm telling you. What for you want to get beat up or shot for a story?" Then he asked, "How much they pay you for this anyhow?"

"Seventy-five dollars." He was talking about a story, a piece of fiction, I'd published in the old *Contact*.

"Seventy-five lousy bucks," my uncle said with complete control of his cigar again. I wasn't writing anything vaguely about gangs and Chinatown killings then. My uncle was joking about tongs, and tong wars from something he'd seen on the TV late show between the nightly parade of incurable, crippling, blinding,

diseased kids with melted bones looking for a home, and starving old folks.

You can read the soul of a local market by what it brings to light on its own latenight TV, giving the hardhats home from the swing-shift, the bleary-eyed and tired with no room for hardthinking, arguments or ideas, the people sensitive to the TV just before they dream, what they want to see just before they sleep. In Hawaii, for instance, you can be sure of seeing a Hollywood re-creation of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in a WW2 movie, at least twice a week, and at least once on a weekend, Friday or Saturday nights. What kind of people in Hawaii want that with them in a room while fucking, I wonder. Here we cabled in Geoff Wong beaming Charlie Chan movies out of Sacramento, then the UHF station in San Jose, and still Charlie Chan comes to town, as if the white man swishing like a Hollywood faggot act without confetti, were at home here. The night before he read the copy of *Contact* my aunt had brought back from the beauty parlor, where another aunt, the hair-dresser, said she'd found the magazine on the bus to work, and wondered if she could sue me, ha ha ha. I wasn't writing anything to do with gangs then or killings. I am now. Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell. The night before he cussed me out, he'd seen Edward G. Robinson in *The Hatchetman* on TV.

A town lets its hair down in its porno, and Frisco porno ringing around Chinatown features the Japanese American alumnus of Richmond High, sporting a fake Chinese American name, Linda Wong, and sucking and fucking black and white cock of every description, and no matter how many times you go, or how many different yellow women you see sucking and fucking in Frisco porn, you'll never see them suck or fuck a yellow man. Never. That's Frisco showing itself off with no pretensions, too worn out for diplomacy, and trick answers. Yellow men don't exist in the Frisco dirty white mind. Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell. That word again. It just wants out.

We all feel the word "Chinaman" comes more naturally into the rhythm of the talk we're talking, and I do. Let others be embarrassed by the little "Chinaman's" they have to abort and swallow down dead unspoken before they're heard. I'm talking in tribute to the Chinamans who took off their hats one Utah noon and looked west back over the last six miles of track they'd laid since sunrise, and sighed, while further west, the Sierra they'd crossed, thundered applause they heard in their nerves.

San Francisco wiped out Chinamans, erased their accomplishments from history and created today's goodie goodie "Chinese Americans" with the law, Christian selective breeding controlled

by white missionaries and twenty years of massacres, lynchings and town burnings all over the west. Chinamans call it "history" and remember. Chinese Americans call it "water under the bridge" and work hard to forget. They call it "the price of acceptance" and "bygones that should be left bygones." The "bygones" and the "price of acceptance" has been a people's entire history, their name, their manhood, the people themselves. Put "Chinese Americans" on the jury, and those boys will be gleefully convicted of murder and anything else whites accuse them of to pay another installment on the price of white acceptance.

Those boys accused of putting on masks and pulling triggers in the Golden Dragon, and the scruffy kid the police say was behind the wheel of the car that drove the getaway are Chinamans, in the most unspeakable sense of the word, in everyone's mind. Guilty or not, they don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell of a fair trial in San Francisco. They don't have a Chinaman's chance. This is the town where they invented that lilting horror of a phrase: "Not a Chinaman's chance in hell." Whites always said it when a Chinaman went to court. No matter how we went to court, we didn't have a Chinaman's chance in hell. As plaintiffs: not a Chinaman's chance in hell. As witnesses: not a Chinaman's chance in hell. As defendants: not a Chinaman's chance in hell.

"Chinaman" is what we called ourselves, John. And "Chinaman" is what we answered to when called, John. "John" is what a Chinaman called a white. "Hey, John!" we said, the first to speak off the boat, as if we'd come home, and we had. We came with a vision and put it into words, first step onto the American continent, home to Gum San, California Gold Mountain, to get rich in the mines. "Me longtime Californ'," we said. Surly, arrogant, grudge-bearing, Cantonese with long memories and the hots to chomp mountains, came off the boat, bargained hard for a pair of boots, heavy black pants, shirt material, a black hat, picks, shovels, and pans and head for the hills, doing business and popping first person pronouns like peanuts and firecrackers, by the book. The book is "An English-Chinese *PHRASEBOOK*, together with the Vocabulary of Trade Law, etc., also a Complete List of Wells, Fargo & Co's offices in California, Nevada, Etc., compiled by Wong Sam and Assistants" in 1875.

What goods have you for sale?

I have all kinds.

I want to get a pair of your best pants.

What do you ask for them?

Can you take less for them?

I cannot, sir.

Have you any other kind better than these?

Will you sell them on credit?

No, sir. I sell for cash.

I will come to deal with you always if you give me the best kinds
(quality).

How is it so dear?

Please give me your custom.

Well, sir. It costs us \$10, and besides we have to pay very heavy duty on
our best goods.

Is business good?

Very well. I thank you.

In those days, before white missionaries taught us how to be
"Chinese," Chinamans knew their "I" () was the picture of a
soldier drawing a long sword and meant "I am the law."

The Chinamans were loose soldiers, born in war, and thought
themselves self-sufficient and resourceful in the Cantonese sense
of all art being a martial art. Kwan Kung, the god of war, plunder,
writers, actors, and loyalty, righteousness and justice himself, was
their first ancestor, old-timers in Oregon say with a flash in their
eyes, and give me a free meal for knowing Kwan Kung when I see
him and thank me for stopping by.

The Chinamans formed truces between individuals, gave each
other promises of loyalty and threats of revenge to form alliances
and companies to sluice mine placers and got rich in the mines.
They paid five million of the seven million dollars California col-
lected in taxes one year. They mastered the gold mountains.

Then the Sierra Nevada crossed their arms and wouldn't let the
iron horse over. The Chinamans cut the elbows and spurs off the
mountains, blasted tunnels through solid granite, lived inside
snow caves inside the heart of a winter that savaged the peaks with
forty-four blizzards. The Chinamans carved the Sierras into their
Plymouth Rock and came out of the mountains laying a steady four
miles of track a day, every day, between sunrise and sunset. The
Irish gangs on the Union Pacific earlier on, had to work hard to lay
four miles of track in one day, and called it a world record. The
Chinamans laid six miles of track one day. The Irish laid eight
miles, two hundred feet of track, huffing and puffing by lamplight

from three in the morning til midnight the next day for a record they said was unbeatable, put all their names in history and put up a \$10,000 prize. The Chinamans having better things to do in the dark than lay track by lamplight, started at sunrise and laid six miles of track before lunch. By sunset they had laid ten miles, eight hundred feet of track for the world record of all time. Not one of the eight hundred Chinamans who'd worked that day got their names into the news of the event or the history of the railroad. San Francisco teaches us our history was nothing but humiliation, degradation, exploitation, that at our manliest, we were, in the words of Frisco historian Alexander McLeod's 1949 hit, *Pigtails and Gold Dust*, "more willing to do what was required of him than a white woman who was likely to offer objections at every turn, insisting on superior accomodations and inconvenient privileges. He was no more a natural cook than he was a natural gold digger. But he was always willing to work in any station, and he accomodated himself to the service of the kitchen and dining room." That's the white San Francisco version of Chinaman history. That's the history that's taught and sociologists build reputations on. Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell.

Instead of running to the white man's kitchen to be less than a white woman, we settled in towns of our own all over the west. Entire counties of California, Oregon and Nevada were Chinaman. The largest cattle ranch in Oregon was Chinaman. The recently rediscovered "English-Chinese Phrase Book," compiled by Wong Sam and Assistants in 1875, features "a complete list of Wells, Fargo & Co's offices in California, Nevada, Etc." One hundred and thirty towns in California, Oregon, Idaho before it was a state, Montana Territory, Utah Territory. Chinamans were everywhere, and the California towns were special. "San" might mean "Saint" in Spanish, but in Cantonese, San is () mountain, and California is San Raphael, San Diego, San Mateo, San Pablo, San Francisco, San San, San , all these towns trying to be mountains, in Gum San, the gold mountain. We were home.

Whites freaked. They feared "conquest," "extermination," the "extinction" of the white race in America, and the destruction of white history: From the naked heart of San Francisco, P. W. Dooner bleeds nightmare born of the sight of Chinaman settling. An 1880 piece of Christian science fiction from Frisco:

The very name of the United States of America was thus blotted from the record of nations and peoples as unworthy . . . Where once the proud domain of forty States, besides millions of miles of unorganized territory, cultivated the arts of peace and gave to the world its brightest

gems of literature, art and scientific discovery, the Temple of Liberty had crumbled, and above its ruins was reared the colossal fabric of barbaric splendor known as the Western Empire of his August Majesty the Emperor of China and Ruler of all lands.

Whites feared Chinamans would do to them, what the whites had done to the Indians. I can hear it now. Two primitive white men, survivors of the catastrophe Dooner predicted, remembering the old days before the yellow men came, when there were jaloopies roaming free from horizon to horizon. Long time white man no got jaloopy, one says to the other.

San Francisco writers like Dooner penned up nightmare science fictions that set the American stage for the arch-yellow racist Fu Manchu. Jack London and others wrote out their white hatred and fear of Chinese immigration and Chinaman settling in plain English. And strangely, eerily, the worst in most of these science fictions, comes about now. Jack London opens his 1914 *The Unparalleled Invasion*:

It was in the year 1976 that the trouble between the world and China reached its culmination. It was because of this that the celebration of the Second Centennial of American liberty was deferred.

. . . The real danger lay in the fecundity of her [China's] loins, and it was in 1970 that the first cry of alarm was raised.

What the white feared we'd do to them, they did to us. Dooner's "history . . . written for the Twentieth, and not for the Nineteenth Century," spills the beans in 1880:

As the introductory act, she [China] proceeded to transport her surplus population to America and to have them learn to maintain themselves there. She had unbounded confidence in the patriotism of her people, while upon their industry she knew she could rely. Hence, her subjects must fill up every avenue of industry; must become the yeomanry of the Western World; must first effeminize and then conquer the luxurious people . . .

This white racism wasn't the product of word bums and retards, but the cream of Frisco literati, the bright-eyed, clever and committed, the intelligentsia, and white racist sentiment wasn't confined to science fiction and pop Frisco Chinkie songs. Frisco whites wrote history, our history. They made us the "yeomanry of the Western World" and "effeminized and conquered us" in the history they wrote. Will Irwin wrote in 1906, before the earthquake:

I hope that some one will arise, before this generation is passed to record that conquest of affection by which the California Chinese transformed themselves from our race adversaries to our dear, subject people.

Chinamans were the "race adversaries" and *Chinese Americans* the "dear, subject people." The white missionaries who maintained Chinatown as a farm to produce a race of dear, subject people through "conversion" and selective breeding, echoed Irwin in their dirty work and their filthy words. Charles Shepherd, a Baptist missionary who was Donaldina Cameron's male counterpart, and a missionary opinion-maker, Chinatown authority and founder and superintendent of the insidious, Chinatown infamous Chung Mei Home for Chinese Boys, distinguishes the Chinaman from the Chinese American this way in 1923:

The wily Ah Sin does not represent the children of the Middle Kingdom at their best — the intelligent, industrious, high-minded group which are a credit to their native land and an asset to the land of their adoption. He represents rather, what might be called the unregenerate Chinese — we use the term advisedly. He and his tribe still exist. They have increased in number. They have waxed fat, prosperous and powerful; and in addition to their own native wiles and cunning, have adopted many of the ideas and vices of the lower strata of American society. They constitute today the greatest single menace to peace, prosperity and social progress in every Chinese community in the United States; and perhaps Bret Harte did not after all so greatly err in speaking of them as "heathen" and as perpetrators of "ways that are dark tricks that are vain."

Who does represent the children of the Middle Kingdom at their best? Women. Women dreamed up to service white fantasies. Pitiful sexy lovely tiny women driven to the arms of white men by "incredibly cruel" woman-hating Chinese. The Christians manufactured despicable inhuman visions of Chinese and Chinaman culture and behavior and a vision of Chinaman manhood so loathsome, sadistic and sissy, effeminate white creeps "discovered" they were "Chinese" and came to Chinatown to die in a wallow of bubbling pain and rejection by women.

"Highbinders stalk their prey — dainty slave girls bound in shackles by Ah Sin are forced to give themselves over to lives of shame . . . and the accursed juice of the poppy passes surreptitiously from hand to hand," the missionary Shepherd wrote.

One wonders how she found it in her heart to sing at all; and it was not surprising that her song reached its climax in the call to work.

But hers was one of those rare spirits, one of those hearts undaunted which rise serenely above environment, as the beautiful lotus lily stands erect and with queenly dignity above the muddy waters beneath which it has its roots and from which it has drawn its life. Her little body, frail and often stooped by reason of much toil, had about it a grace that was indefinable. Her face wore ever the suggestion of a smile which needed

but slight incentive to awaken it to full radiance. Her deep brown – almost black – eyes, even when filled with tears provoked by ill-treatment shone with a lustre which convinced one that somewhere back of them was the dwelling place of a choice soul.

It is not often that one discovers such a personality in the midst of such ignorance and oppression. But there are such, and at times God permits us to discover such a one, as though He would assure us that humanity is really His, and that there is no place so dark, and no life so circumscribed but His spirit can enter.

He could be writing about Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, or *The House That Tai Ming Built*, by Virginia Lee, a Frisco public school teacher, or Betty Lee Sung's *Mountain of Gold* . . . We've read a lot about and by San Francisco Chinese American women, but what have we read about Chinese American men? What image comes to mind to a white San Franciscan when you blow the word "Chinaman" in their ear? "Chinese American?" Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance.

This is the town that holds up the snickering likes of H. K. Wong as an example of Chinese American manhood. The S. F. Examiner has nominated Wong for the Jefferson Award for service to the community. The kind of men whites like, are the kind that act as technical consultants to the Ross Hunter production of the movie *Flower Drum Song*, and feels good about getting the city mayor to put a bronze plaque up in Chinatown thanking Hunter for the song "Grant Avenue." Naturally the plaque is . . . or was . . . displayed prominently, in Chinatown, across the street from the entrance to Wong's restaurant. (The plaque disappeared in 1974. Only the four holes that once housed the bolts, and a bit of black adhesive are left.)

H. K. Wong also founded the Chinese Historical Society and is party to Betty Lee Sung's impersonation of a sociologist. In her best known book, *Mountain of Gold*, she practices sociology as a branch of Christianity and echoes Shepherd with a sixties twist:

Much to their credit the Chinese view prejudice with a very healthy attitude. They were never overly bitter. They have gone into occupations which command respect and which lessen conflict from competition.

I asked her, when I met her, I asked her screaming in every cell, why not being bitter about prejudice was a healthy attitude, and she said, "when you make yourself obnoxious, that is a hindrance to acceptance."

"By the people prejudiced against you?"

"Yes," she said. Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance of a fair trial in a town that believes Betty Lee Sung is an objective

historian and not a white racist.

This is the town where Brecht's totally white anti-yellow fantasy, *In the Jungle of Cities*, was given a totally white racist production, with C. Shlink, the universal yellow, a "Malay" from "China," born in "Yokohama," Brecht's incarnation of moral crud, was played as a Hollywood white faggot in yellowface. The critics didn't say a word about the play being offensive to yellows, as if San Francisco were not a yellow town, or yellows didn't go up to the theater. Yet a black or yellow play in town with a miniscule white part arouses the critics to write impassioned defenses of white men from reverse stereotyping. Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell.

This is a town where Heaven for the heavenly Chinese American is a seat on the TV news, where they can use the misery of the world to show off meticulously whacked and capped consonants, exquisitely formed *l*'s all calibres, timbres, and tones, and awesomely engineered *r*'s cantilevered over canyons. Whites see yellow lovelies oozing and cooing high-class "Hey, sailor!" and the news sucks on their ancient missionary fantasies. Watching the same TV news show, yellows see one of our own, Linda Wong with clothes on, put the same white fantasy in her mouth, hating yellows and wishing she were white in the electronic public, and we see Pocohontas on the body of Captain John, saving him from Powhatan's axe.

The TV yellows of today, truly responsible yellow white racists, shun the Chinatown beat, and hold up the cross against being typed ethnic, when Chinatown news looms up over them. Poor Chinese American Christian visioned TV yellows don't know they're on TV to princess their people. And it's right that they blatantly demonstrate their contempt for yellows in this, the yellowest of American cities. They don't call it self-contempt. They call it being "professional first, sexual second, and Asian third." The strategies, the devices and language of contempt for Chinamans, especially men, are in the blood of everyone born and raised in Frisco Bay Area, especially blue-ribbon "Chinese Americans." Those boys don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell.

This is the town where the Chief of Police, the papers, and the TV news paid no attention to the Chinatown facts of the Golden Dragon massacre. Fact: This was the first time in at least seventy years whites and tourists have been hurt in Chinatown violence. Fact: All the gang killings have been scrupulously clean. Fact: The cops were there when the masked kids came in. All Chinatown knows a uniformed cop is always present and resplendent, eating free and smoking his pipe, in gun, cuffs and whistle at the front

table, facing the door to the street waiting for trouble to walk in. The Golden Dragon is on Six Companies land, and the restaurant is owned by the Hop Sing Tong, two of the most powerful organizations in Chinese America. Nobody in their right minds wants to take on both the Six Companies and the Hop Sings. The restaurant was known as the safe place to grab midnight noodles after a hard night's gambling or popping pistols in the street. The Golden Dragon after midnight was Chinatown Geneva. Just to make sure, the cop was always there, an ornament of Chief Charles Gain's white subculture of guts. Chinatown has always tolerated the killing off of a few of its youth as long as business stayed good and the image stayed crisp, clean and goodie good. We have a tradition here of killing off our own, rather than let them make trouble with whites. We call it "the price of acceptance." Chinatown has even tolerated the police campaign against her young. We've stood by and watched Joe Fong framed by the police, convicted by the courts and forgotten in jail. Anything to keep a white from getting hurt in Chinatown, for we all know that every town burning, every race riot, every lynching, every white massacre of Chinamans in Chinatowns began with some white being hurt or killed. What scares me is that the killers who stepped into the Golden Dragon didn't care they were risking a race war. And the next day, Chief Gain didn't care either. He says he's not aware of any racists or racism in his department. He neglected to look in the mirror. He didn't see himself on TV, the day after the shooting, calling us cowards living in a "subculture of fear," as if Chinatown were not cooperating with the police. The truth is, Chinatown and the Golden Dragon itself, not only gave the cops help, they gave the cops a front table and a pot of tea. And where was this cop from Chief Gain's subculture of guts, when the trouble he'd been waiting for, for the last ten years, finally walked in? The cops never said. And only now, months of calling us cowards and passive gutless simps later, do the papers mention the police being there at all . . . only because the kids say the killers expected the cop to be there.

I'm sure every white knows what an angry black man will call a white man. Whites know the word "honky," and keep up-to-date on any change. Whites know what an angry Chicano will call a white man. Now ask the voices of Frisco decency and pop and education and news who love and respect "Orientals" what an angry Chinaman, Chinese American, Chinese-in-America, whatever foul name they call us, will call a white. I asked the last white man to play Charlie Chan, Roland Winters, that. He blinked. "Chinese don't get angry," he finally said. The The Frisco whites

need to believe in a race of little pathological white supremacist people who don't get angry, and their century of effort to maintain that belief encourages Chinatown anger, drives it deeper into the fabric of all our lives, and dooms all our young to either simper in impersonation of a Hollywood white fag act for white acceptance, or come into your Chinese food, guns blazing, to be called foreigners of one kind or another. These boys may not be American born, but they are not foreigners. They are not aberrations. Their anger is larger than Chinatown, greater than San Francisco, and growing.

We sense San Francisco craving our extinction, and more forcibly, more religiously dreaming up a race of yellows who don't get angry, don't call whites names, and don't satisfy our women. For the past seventy years, protecting whites from the truth about us was a sign of hope in the future. More and more . . . as we see the endless war, now being waged by the cops acting like a white mob, decimating our young men, we feel we have no future left. In New York, a kid was pissed at the gangs. Gangs of twenty- to thirty-year-olds were gunning for gangs of late teens who had to keep an eye out for the thirteen-year-olds on the make for a corner and restaurant of their own. The old men in the shops were organized into an "auxiliary police force" and were ready to shoot any Chinatown kid, on his first funny move.

"We'll kill and shoot each other to be bad," the kid says. "But we wilt in front of whites. We become lambs, are losted, and cry and want to go home." Frisco kids don't wilt in front of whites anymore. It's a way of announcing the fact that their lives are here, that San Francisco is their home, even if they don't have a Chinaman's chance in hell.

Wong Sam's *English-Chinese Phrase Book* of 1875, between pages 18 and 25 says everything I've said here, but more jubilantly, more poetically. I like to read it. It's a rare Chinaman voice out of a past we're taught never existed, written by a people we're told never wrote. The *Phrase Book* is a Chinaman drama with Chinamans concerned about fair wages, murder, the courts, and San Francisco, then and today . . .

They are going to extort a confession from him by false pretensions.

The confession was extorted from him by force.

The confessions were extorted from them by threats.

I bailed him out of jail.

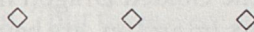
I bailed the water out of the boat.

He gave bonds for \$1500.

His case was tried yesterday at 10 A.M.
The judge will certainly convict him.
He was convicted by the jury.
He is now a convict.
He brought a man to prove the fact.
The man said: "I will testify what I saw."
His testimony was believed.
He will retain your wages.
He cheated me out of my wages.
He swindled his employer.
He defrauded me out of my salary.
The case was ended yesterday.
He was found guilty, by the last trial.
He will be sent to the penitentiary for 10 years.
He has been sent to the State Prison.
He falsely accused me of stealing his watch.
You have violated the Constitution of this State.
They were lying in ambush.
He came to his death by homicide.
He was murdered by a thief.
He committed suicide.
He was choked to death with a lasso, by a robber.
He was strangled to death by a man.
He was starved to death in prison.
He was frozen to death in the snow.
He was going to drown himself in the bay.
After searching for several days they caught the murderer.
Did they find anything in his possession?
They did.
He was killed by an assassin.
He tried to assassinate me.
He tried to kill me by assassination.
He is an assaulter.
He was smothered in his room.
He was suffocated in his room.
He was shot dead by his enemy.

He was poisoned to death by his friend.
He tried to inflict death by poison.
Assault with the intention to do bodily injury.
He took the law in his own hand.
He tried to deprive me of my situation.
He wrongfully deprived me of my wages.
I go home at night.
I have gone home.
I went home.
I abide at home.
I abode at San Francisco.
I have lived in Oakland.

And I do abode at San Francisco, just like Wong Sam and Assistants said. And I have lived in Oakland. We have for a hundred and fifty years. And the bokgwai today don't know what we call them when we're mad.



May 8, 1981 – Seattle.

Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan in their whiteface gave Maxine Hong Kingston the National Book Award for giving yellow voice and yellow feminist legitimacy universally despising yellow men, pitying yellow women and wiping out an immoral culture of elegance, cruelty and perversity. The men are responsible for the civilization. The men are the masters. The women are the victims whose entire beings and secret souls cry out for escape and rescue. The mantelpiece is covered with little yellow women on their little pedestals in the white people's rec room. Their favor in white Christian missionary, Hollywood movie, TV radio and print culture is obvious. Not so obvious is the active hostility against yellow men.

If we didn't hate yellow men . . . hate the thought, the subject of yellow manhood, yellow men . . . if it weren't gauche and savage to seriously ponder proud yellow manhood and the deepening currents of contempt for yellow manhood, we might feel a little twinge at the mention of all the yellow boys and young men out of sight on San Quentin's death row for murders everyone knows they did not commit, Chol Soo Lee, a Korean forced to take the opportunity to learn English in prison, is on death row for being a fat Chinese

murderer. Everyone knows he's not who San Quentin and the courts think they've got, but nobody cares. Because he's yellow, which is not very exciting by itself. And he's a man, which is definitely not sexy. It's just like the 19th century. "Yellow Man to Die For Murder He Did Not Commit" wasn't big news or conscience grabbing in the 19th century California Alta, and it isn't big news now. Yellow women? Yes! Yellow women like Maxine Hong Kingston, the darlings and mascots of white causes and champions of yellow self-contempt who are humiliated, embarrassed and morally insulted at the mention of yellow men.

Maxine Hong Kingston and Chol Soo Lee both live in, and depend on and give to the intensifying atmosphere of yellow male hatred everyone in America with a sixth grade education and a TV set breathes.

From the low, where the size of a yellow man's dick is a running joke in Xaviera Hollander's column in Penthouse magazine, to the adoption of abandoned GI babies in Vietnam on the news, where the nurse said matter of fact flat "American men don't want small yellow boys," to the acceptance of white men with yellow wives and girlfriends on prime time TV without fanfare or notice.

The boys locked up for the Golden Dragon massacre, Joe Fong, Chol Soo Lee and the list goes on and on, are being punished not for the murders we all know they did not do. Their being punished for the imagined crimes of male chauvinism that made Elaine Louie throw herself at white men in the *Village Voice*, Lily Chang reject them because they remind her of repression and aren't big and manly, and Maxine Hong Kingston's life a blur of misery and self-pity.

These boys and young men are condemned for being yellow and male.

To the Chinatown establishment, a fair trial, a spirited defense of the boys condemned by the media and the police would be bad for business. And business has been bad.

To the assimilated, educated, professional yellow on top of it all, the thought of a fair trial for the boys they know are not guilty never crosses their mind. Yellow integrity doesn't exist for them anymore. We have accepted extinction as the price of acceptance.

We first allowed – then became accomplices in – the falsification of our history and culture, its reduction to a white entertainment, its extinction. Anyone can say anything about the Chinaman and no Chinese American knows or cares enough today, to say it's not so, and will be especially hesitant to say it's not so, if what is said is compatible with the stereotype of cruel yellow men and victimized yellow women.

In 1977 the "China Girl" episode of *How the West Was Won* was touted as the "Chinese American Roots" by the likes of sociologist turned actress Beulah Quo, who served as historical consultant to, and an actress in, the production. There are three dialog references and two visuals depicting Chinamen selling chained, Chinamen women naked in the streets of San Francisco's Chinatown.

This never happened. Not in any missionary account, any diary, any newspaper, any historical or fictional account from, of, or about the period is there any mention of yellow men selling naked yellow women in the streets. Beulah Quo, on the basis of no known documentation, report or research, okayed the script, verified the lie, and with the Association of Asian American Performing Artists (AAPA) behind her . . . several of whom were also cast in this episode . . . giving her clout, created a new white racist stereotype. Never before had anyone come close to saying yellow men sold yellow women naked in the street.

I put it to Robert Ito, the Nikkei schlep in NBC's *Quincy*. Ito is AAPA and was in the cast of "China Girl." His jaw dropped when I told him there was no historical or even fictional evidence to justify, support or reinforce the new stereotype he'd been accomplice in creating. "But there were abuses to women," he said, using a stereotype to justify a lie. The conclusion justifies the proof. "But there were cribs!" he said.

"You didn't say cribs," I said. "You said selling women in the street naked."

"But there were abuses. What about the cribs?"

Ito, Beulah Quo and the yellow actors of *How the West Was Won* obviously have no sense of yellow history, yellow historical integrity or culture. White acceptance is what drives them. To win white acceptance, they would make the yellow acceptable by giving the whites the power to rewrite yellow history. That is an act of supreme self-contempt. It's groveling.

Ito and Quo and AAPA and Charlie Chan's Numbered Sons are typical of most Asian Americans today and testify to the success of racism. For the sake of acceptance we accept heinous lies and thank the liars. Yellow men are no good. Yellow women make good lovers for white men. More than a dozen yellow men languish on death row because of prejudice, not evidence. "China Girl" is the "Chinese American Roots." And the delusions of a Maxine Hong Kingston are awarded the white prize in non-fiction.

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