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Wch Way 5

New Wilderness Letter 12



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Don Byrd, Jed Rasula, eds.

New Wilderness Letter 12

Jerome Rothenberg, ed.

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WCH WAY / NEW WILDERNESS LETTER

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Matter... is definable only as the *non-logical difference* which represents in relation to the *economy* of the universe what *crime* represents in relation to the law.

— George Bataille

Everything still lives; the lamp walks, walls of the house have their own voice, and even the piss-pot has its own country and tent, wife and children, and serves as a helping spirit. Skins, lying in bags as stock for trade, are having conversations through the night. Antlers on the graves of the dead are walking in procession around the graves, and in the morning they're coming back to their former places, and the dead themselves are getting up and coming to the living.

— Karawe, Shaman

(translated from the Chukchee by Barbara Einzig)

There's a lack of connection between your words and the physical action they describe, the parts of the body they describe. This is what draws me to you so intensely. I want to put your voice back inside your body, where it belongs.

— Don DeLillo



Jackson Mac Low

Various Meanings

The bottom of a green arras extends a vocabulary
whose rest is deep and boundless moving through space
and the stars. From time to time we lost the noise of an edge
where we were plagued by nocuous effects and then moved
on
toward a dominant object. The gibbous moon
reminded him of a sad death before moving on toward planets
realized some twenty degrees high in the west. Wait
till the month of July. Slapped by a funeral
the reeds dead branches and watchful rodents
remained in the sky an entire evening as serious
snarls shrieked with amazement. Somewhat concrete proof
that you won't be disappointed at all. Above all
each ponderous birth advanced from the general area
of intercepted particles. What objection do you raise?
The choruses were willing and complete hours before
the imminent plan was announced. It failed to make
a correct approach. As large as it might have been
it was no more earnest than pleasurable childlike
instructions. Spilling out of their eyes they flew away.
They were never seen again. It is not possible. Be cheerful.
The current and coming crisis was informationally aggressive
toward the biology of entropy. Green water urged syllables.
It had abandoned its plan to end its decision

to build money and mercy. On the ground of honor
it was a region of wooded slopes in an endless pursuit
though some kind of lunatic thinks it's OK. Common sense
is quite consistent with the elements they adduce
which decreases their joy in clear sentences and handsome
horses.

A glittering silver plan was beside the rowdy train
of history dilating pupils and recovering true goals
unnoticed in a cold blue brook. So I wrote down four
airs for fair and radiant maidens born to come again
and still hard to find. The same ones that wiped us out
disclosed sensible frustration examined or pursued.

Could you have been bewitched? They correlate with actions
forever. Could you gratify obedience? No different than
what you're wondering about in the form of lumps all of me
is comprised of gaping mud. One of the first things was an
instrument

for sleep. What happens when glimmers feel they should
get together? Thinking spreads beyond foreknowledge of
extension.

They had been involved in ponderous thought and native water
typical of complete sounds. Loops learn where to survive. They
approach

admiration obliquely. Tenderness establishes a delegation
thinking every thought rising after a scanty breakfast. Ousted
he pushed good humor and was appallingly deserved. Slices
of heavy appetites went to grievous lengths. We're really in it.
Especially in consideration of things happening in the other
heart

you are now ready. It is a good rainbow. Interdependence
in an unharvested sea is ancient and stale. It fits too well.
This example brings us softly together as we were in this case
after long being objects of scrutiny. We couldn't joke about that.
We rolled pies and sat down heavily when they blanched visibly
at civilized experience. But now time is described. Otherwise
they'd have learned to see before research was completed.

Entities

of a mystical bent are recorded in the deepest decline. Osiers are
lost

and this is safe. Subsequently sleep spread locally. Today
importance was invasive and grabbed the jagged edges

of basically ungentle adjustments. In mountainous regions they acquire carbon copies of dead blanks and authentic wild systems translated into habitual voices and quiet devices supplied with perpetual revisions urban elements integrate.

Major functions

are currently being completed. Dwarfing anything previously imagined their immediate and practical effect is a clear and present danger. At certain times of day they defend the vice with vigor.

An extremely large matrix of equipment is only the tip of the iceberg

in the workplace. Only four states require piles of envelopes.

Facades allow corporate tape recorders to open hearts at moments when glass cases grow boyhoods. Starving variants found solutions in the snow buried betrayed and exercising caution under a vital burden vague and unsatisfied. Mental mouths agreed. With some green flowers we wait amid paint and insecurity. We tingle when things are done three times. Politely expressing antipathy blankets discern processes. That's no good. A tense armor was brilliant

in a duality wrong side up. Monkeys unlock cruel doors. That noise

must frankly be admitted. Where to start senses birth.

Hours brought memories of concrete answers in prouder moments

essential to kisses. I regard the prospect of being spied on as an opportunity to teach. You can't beat us with wires. A clear mental state is frozen hard as a mattress. It's time now. Love shouts in my ears where darkness and daylight touch and never return.

Rigid memories are finer than fixed postures. Red cedars escape overnight. Morons mass near a memorandum.

Thousands taste bread and few describe procedures.

Isolating encrypted messages are only conditional targets and vice

versa. From plump individuals really severe dreaming is guided unknowingly to the pavement by any means possible. We have to prevent silent days. Primitive fathers are experienced as reminders.

And any divergence is due to a temporary confusion. Notice the cold lake

dropped shouting into the middle of an arctic waste. How
might that aid us? Hold on. It doesn't matter. We're prepared
sweet dark and intelligent. In a background where meanings are
assured

monotonous platitudes become denizens of windless
connotations.

Let's not be so fascinated with all those remote us's. Their way
is offered a third time. Nearer the end the city was preferable.
The phonograph was less mathematical than their tourmaline
kingdoms.

Their enormous sentences were separate from teeth. Mental
nature

was less annoying than intelligible benefits sparkling with
judgment. What palpitations were present! White senses
rumble

in inexpressible leisure. Don't tell me about it. Injury is heartfelt
and radiant with vexation. Conscious pillows are disinclined
and new noises arise on bored ships stretching toward less
dangerous spheres.

You know where they are and see their sinister vinegar smiling
dully.

Winter's privacy is less ravenous. Would you dare to look beyond
that smooth daylight? Waddling overhead she heard his childish
laughter. Genius plundered willing sarcasm more whims
overlooked

when tedious outsiders felt too free to be reminded of
translation.

Variations of twangs forced medication. Cellular accidentals
induced benediction. I'd never have believed it. In two or three
months the manacles could not have been forgotten. Too much
light.

22 April 1983
New York

Begun in the Air — 1

Quality levels off as quantity. . .
levels on. The final vegetables
achieve unnatural tendencies. Traces
are robbed or effectuated before globular
infrontations are among. Nights free.

Free nights. Treatment by questioning viability
too often induces hovers and wavers. Off
the hook. I asked about the exit and was not told
not to worry. Talismanic planetary packages.
What he wanted to know about was not illuminated.

Sentences and noun phrases. What more do you want
than what you already would have had anyway?
Departure recedes from its expectation.
The palindromic Boeing taxis backwards:
an emergency exit on the ground normally.

Your own oxygen needs first and then those of your children:
for flotation is a twenty-four-hour altitude,
unmotivated, nucleate, secular, fierce,
preternatural, adaptive, glancing. Who
asks about it? When was it regarded as adopted?

11 March 1983
San Francisco to Los Angeles
Western Flight 740

Begun in the Air — 2

The squanky ear phenomenon. Excuse us.
I expected what was happening would not have been
had I not expected it. Was this to be expected
or excused? Did I happen to have been expecting it?
What would I have expected if I hadn't happened to have
expected it?

Formal features while it's bumpy here. Stick it or notice.
Endless challenge. Still and the mind travels.
The reward levels are at 5,000 miles after 30,000 you
can earn a free trip 1,000 free miles. Take
advantage of this. We have them on board in the western world.

Longer areas or broader horizons, wider
peripheries, are quoted on the border of exhaustion.
There will be an aircraft change. More than one sibyl
precognized the evanescent present.
I don't know what I would have done had I not done so.

11 March 1983
San Francisco to Los Angeles
Western Flight 740

Begun in the Air — 3

Descent toward the Pacific. Islands lying offshore.
Late afternoon sun shining from water bodies.
Little pools with flash blind shinings.
Sea surface mattely tracking back lightbeams.

Sorry. I came to this before I am here. Big island.
Not an island but a kinda peninsula. Now
it's a whole continent. Sorry. I would have
spoken of it earlier had I thought of it soon enough.

It's a matter of taking a viewpoint and then letting
it shift before it's had time to become an institution.
When a transatlantic plane lands
the passengers applaud the pilot.

They do this sometimes on intra-European planes
but seldom here. Unwilling even
inferentially to avow anxiety?
Sorry. I may have meant to have spoken out earlier but forgot to.

11 March 1983
Near and at the Los Angeles airport
Western Flight 740

Jerome Rothenberg

from *Yaqui: Flower World*

A Gathering of Poems from the Yaqui *Deer Dance*

2
in wilderness I am
 that only melon
 flowering
& splitting
 sending vines out
 everywhere
you are
 in wilderness
 I am that only
melon flowering
 & splitting
 sending vines out
in the flower world
 out there
 under the dawn
a pale blue cloud
 will be grey water
 at its peak
the mist will reach
 will rain down
 on the flower ground

& shining
 reaching bottom
 where you are
in wilderness
 that only melon flowering
 I am

& splitting
 sending vines out
 everywhere

4
(where is the rotted stick that screeches lying?)
the screeching rotted stick is lying over there
(where is the rotted stick that screeches lying?)
the screeching rotted stick is lying over there
there in the flower world
 beyond us
 in the tree world
the screeching rotted stick
 is lying
 over there the screeching
rotted stick is lying
 over there

5
ah brother
 look at you
 a deer with flowers
brother
 shake your antlers
 little brother
shake your antlers
 deer with flowers
 why not let your belt
your deer hoofs
 shake? why not vibrate
 cocoons
strapped to your ankles
 brother
 shake them
little brother
 shake & roll

10

to sleep in

these flowers

to crawl there

I who am flower-world creeper

who sleep there

who crawl in these flowers

out there

in the tree world

climbing this branch

I crawl up it

to sleep in

these flowers

I who am flower-world creeper

who sleep there

13

flower

with the body of a fawn

under a cholla flower

standing there

to rub your antlers

bending

turning where you stand to rub

your antlers

in the flower world

the dawn

there in its light

under a cholla flower

standing there

to rub your antlers

bending turning where you stand

to rub your antlers

flower

with the body of a fawn

under a cholla flower

standing there

to rub your antlers

bending

turning where you stand to rub

your antlers

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. for the last three years (81/82/83) I was witness to the Deer Dances at New Pascua Pueblo in Tucson, Arizona — not a *spooky* other-worldliness, as Casteneda would have it, but the enactment, through religion & art, of high & brilliant worlds one step outside-the-human. For these Yaquis have their own names: *huya aniya* = enchanted world; or *seyawailo* = flower world; or, in the language of some of the younger inheritors, “wilderness” as such. The dance, tight & classical, has it's language as well, the words of the accompanying songs; & these, as translation opens them to us, become the principal means for bringing that flower world to life.

The poems presented here are from literal translations published in Carleton Wilder's *The Yaqui Deer Dance* (1963). I have taken the images as found & have attempted to bring them (again) into song. Beyond that I have no desire to argue the resultant poems' veracity (they seem to me no further “off” than most translations) except as they allow the image of a flower world to come out in the reading.

The full series appears as *15 Flower World Variations*, published by Membrane Press, Milwaukee, in 1984.

Robert Grenier

Crow

started as *arr*

from the trees in the woods

rather dimly

attended to as *bark*

more familiarly

identified as the neighbor's dog

by their house over there

where the kids walk probably

flew overhead as *ark*

Moon Into

waning parcels
of heaven clouds move
dawn has the sky color
earth makes the sun land

Dawn At Mourning Dove Mound

for Kathleen Frumkin

doesn't it just gust rigid
"of course it does" might by breeze of
greyer greener moon of light pink purple
principal able to articulate that some day
unknown *seen* not simply visualized *eyed*
greys & lavenders and browns & mauves

Through The Manacle

heart's ease home from blinding labor
still walnut palm & ratty pine cones
heart's ease at home from blinding labor
pointless syntax concentration on illumined miniscules
still walnut palm & ratty pine conspire
for moon light them & more pine needles
that's growing all over the window
just if as it *were* 'outside'
moonset looks like just if rising
from the West of course no night or day at this stage
in its *just as if it was rising*
full & fair at the first
time tomorrow night in the East the man in the head
require no more light than this
to write in the moonlight but less shadow
sleeps in the mind in woods during the day
of great dark apparent 'titanic'
red & black 'powers' & starlight
red & brown shadows *think man*
see in sleep & dreaming *those images*
that haunt you by day in actual visions
of the Balinese shadow play that Puppet
capitalization of the Moon
this head visible Spirit with its Aura

emblazoned on the dawn clouds
that *Friday night* for others in our
culture backyard the roadside puppetlike
front yard the freeway where the moon sits
actually speaking in pictures
more yellow into dawn's light blue
& grey orange 'fiery' clouds that
substitute for proofreading 'to write about'
rather wrest seeing from eyesight than chain
the whole world up in sight
on the surface *table cloth*
what could possibly *have heard popped*
settling down into the treesy vine
& with it spectatorship of the moon
lit up the clouds in setting just like sunrise
except I need a flashlight to write now
it helps likewise to move toward the bathroom
still can see
turn off the flashlight look
through the shrubbery *the lune*
breaking the manacles by chattering

Moonset At Sunrise Is

burning the candle at both ends

why not use commas dashes semicolons the whole lot

Blue Sky Bathing January 2nd

sunset / quiet under Capitalism

uninterrupted hour that you have sought

what thing free from mitigation wearing

by the elements oh aether love

on a windless day by the shore *a*

bath in that water air my element

it's the no moon sun & moon together

at horizon to the west to suck out the tide

Flaming Ball / January

flaming ball that
crosses heaven and
warms earth daily how wonderful

Well The Tide Is Coming In

well the tide is coming in
beginning to splash the
well the tide is coming
in beginning to splash
the out rocks there

Land

where water
is a
pouring vertical
versus large lapping
horizontal motions
sand itself is
always pouring slantwise
liquid motion also
thrown up on the sand
by the outward following

Carcasse

what's
washed up
that stinks so
sweet sounds, *Darling*
I begot here

Multiples Of / Money

strangers that walk by
territoriless abroad
looking for rocks hounds
that might be agates
or other items pink & yellow
red-headed son & beige father
picking up mass
as they go by clogged
foraging sort of clothed
in zombie-like metals menials
multitudes 'hunting & gathering' bending
pass over & back

An Alexandrian & A Fourteener

must be a military plane but if it doesn't bomb

what good is it to us except to spend money

Barbara Einzig

Dream

I'm in a place beyond countries—like the Emerald City, but down-to-earth. I live in a house on the corner with a woman and a man I barely know, both Jewish. Cindy from Milwaukee lives on the other corner. The woman who lives with me also seems to be visiting. Perhaps she is some kind of work associate—a frivolous and scattered lady, who I'm really trying to avoid (though I'm fond of her) because I'm writing a lecture. I have to go to the store for food and she gives me a list of what she wants. Yogurt, but not unflavored. I go but must hurry. Her list is long, but I only have time to get two things.

Our neighborhood is in a state of chaos. "The center does not hold." Suddenly I'm with a pretty woman at a gate; several children are with us. The gate is private, we've been in someone's home or on their property secretly. We have to pull the fence up to pass through, and then coolly act as though we are locking up the gate. The children do this skillfully. The woman is silent but looks at me kindly on parting.

I'm with Kathy Levitt and she lives in a house on the block. In her dining room, which is large and wonderful, is a big table with sheet cakes decorated with large sugar figures. We arrange these figures and then both realize that the table looks like "Crow Dog Parade." In the dream this evokes Jerry Rothenberg and he is now in the street out the window (we are on a second story), hovering there as he is while holding "the ball of light in his

hands" in Ellie Antin's collage. We shout "Crow Dog Paradel"; he sees the cakes and laughs. He doesn't live here—we evoked him and he's delighted we were able to, if only briefly. The cakes, which are a form of his poetry, also make him happy.

Now Kathy and I are on the street. Then Cindy is with me at my house. I'm hungry and looking for food. The woman I live with doesn't cook but the man has a freezerful of several foods—large quantities, among them Langer's bagels. Then I discover in the downstairs window of our house quantities of bologna and cream cheese, almost like a delicatessan. I go ask the man if I can have a bagel and cream cheese. He's pleased with this request and asks that I bring him one too—he's Jewish and most people he meets here don't know about bagels and cream cheese. I start to tell him about a series of very difficult and catastrophic events that have transformed our lives on the block—he needs to know what's going on, because it's all happening right now. I'm telling him first about Cindy's house having a fire and her discovery that it was arson. The city government seems to be complicit. . . then Cindy starts talking and the three of us go to the corner. John Carnochan has given her two devices which when clamped onto the electrical apparatus of a special phone (which is next to the pay phone) make it a free long-distance phone. But you have to know the city codes. We just want to see if the devices work. I put them on with some difficulty, and find they do. He's given these devices to us because he knows we are in a social emergency. I idly think that I can now call friends sometime, as if trying to imagine what daily life used to be like. Maybe, for instance, I could call Jim Clifford, but then I realize that he's moved to a new city that isn't among the known codes. It's a city like the one I'm in but before the "storm"—new leaders have founded it, it's rumored to be a good place.

Meanwhile I have touched off Cindy's underlying panic and she continues the story, telling how by means of the arson investigation she discovered that people were trying to kill her (the authorities). But I interrupt, explaining that I must give the man vital and urgent information about events unfolding around us. Cindy is preoccupied with her own story but in fact everyone is in the same danger—authority and its lunacy have crystalized and all the despots of history have unleashed a storm. As I say this I see Napoleon's army advancing toward us as if marching on parade. They look like blue and white tin toy soldiers, which is in

keeping with the town's atmosphere of miniatureness, condensation, beyond space and time constraints. "Don't let them fool you," I say. "The last time this happened the rear guard was a bomb squad."

Now we're in a building in the middle of the street, a Chinese restaurant, and Napoleon's army, now in business suits and with machine guns, is breaking the place up. I'm with a man who is hit with a shotgun bullet in the chest. His young son is there and is frightened that his father is dying.

The army has disappeared and peace has returned, at least temporarily. The wounded man waits for someone with medical knowledge (but not a doctor, as in this place all authority has become evil) to arrive. He's casual, as if barely injured. I don't know how bad it is — it might be alright. Then he says the words:

Out of all of the Indian that I am
From school is *mahi* and so is Maui.

Simultaneously a newspaper appears with these words; I hear and read them at one time. I'm seeing into the future—the wounded man has gone into a hospital. He is an Indian, and, a chronic patient, has become part of an Indian writing program. The newspaper article is about this program and the lines are from a poem he's written.

When I wake up I remember I'd tried using "Maui" as a way of remembering *mahi*, the bundle of game, fish, or worms used in the Korokoromadi. These bundles are made from *mahiyadi*, San Pablo, which is also used to thatch the lower part of the roof.

The same day I've woken into, Katerina, the chief's wife, invites me to participate, under the leadership of her daughter Rosaria, in the process of obtaining the materials for and then making the *mahi*.

October 8, 1983
Kanaracuni

Clearing

She wears black for weeding—to keep her red clothes clean?—fitting as a form of armor. The garden is a circle burned into the woods, brown of sand, black of cinder, porous. The woods of what is opened are green, thick, seen by the women in the clearing, dizzy in the heat of work, as green vapor, vertical sea whose leaves foam into the sky, green multiple waves in which small and colorful birds occur as flames.

Of the newcomer's sunstroke it is said "she blacked out," or the greenness condensed in her head to the fever that swells, *senamo*, so close to green, *shenamo*. Wandering out of the dark house down to the blue river, it made things shiny and deep, soap and bucket intimate, as if discovered underwater. Now her skin was hotter than the air, and she washed it with cool water.

Broad, shallow, Katerina's machete slices the roots of the grass, ridding the yuca of it. Then her powerful hands pick out these weeds, gathering many into the palm with the motion of one defeathering. Her daughters work around her in the maze of fallen trunks, filling their carrying baskets with ferns, a weed purple, succulent, one that resembles what is known in northern houses as nerve or prayer plant, another a form of dandy lion.

The one from far away thought it looked infinite; all of the brown grains of earth, live with ants, would have to pass through the woman's hands which would have to remove every green thing there. Then the yuca could keep growing, and they could come back to dig up the roots, hack and clean them, carry the weight of them, grate them, drain them of poison, make cassave of them. The cassave is a circle, this one is white, the women's fingers took out of the flour any dark impurities, they threw the pancakes up on the roofs.

In my country they say the sun is yellow but here it's white as cassave and can't be divided from the sky awash with it, blue with that color we call baby, powder, eggshell blue, new things, but here, where Sonia points at the paper and asks me what these words are, I call it white, metal, it can bleach stormclouds, is breastmilk, the white and silver skin of *aymada*, the big fish pulled out of the water, stunned, the blank, cleared thing.

Will Alexander

Letter Of Warning

Written for my magical friend Sulubika who
lives in a zone of cosmic green moon bark

They'll even try to fight you with their dreams, they'll stick drainage pins in your psyche and by so doing try sucking out the heavenly ethers, they'll sow ominous blisters of doubt in your brain, they'll try to dry up the avalanche carnage of the empyrean's revolt, they'll try to dismember the fire factor, they'll want to destroy the alligator clusters of heat tugging at their midriff blindness, they'll demand you psychically be injected with demonic Lemurian testicles clogging your utterance of being so that your instrument becomes inert, they'll feel safe that you won't attack, that your thought will shut up and cancel its osmotic blood drift, those crimson clouds of hypnotic intangibles, ghosts flaring from the core of your face as you greet them, knowing full well that Mr. or Mrs. Something or Other is mesmerized by the materialist collective, that his or her name is Deinonychus*, Mr. and Mrs. Grounded Bird Philosophers of Matter, who are out to thwart you and convince you of the sufficiency of the present world order, this power that you possess once you have vertically punctured the empyrean with lightning bolt flowers, understand, that your vertical momentum will be unquenchable and infinite, your body begins to stretch down the lightning shaft of eternity and touch the earth as a participating body, a locked body hypnotically parallel with concrete, you're looked at as meat conquered by the swirling mud

of death, as a being who has no use for luminous ascension, but ascension, like neutral Martian ether in your skull takes you in and out of their presence without them knowing of your departures and returns, which can be multiple over the space of an instant, you are proof of the living ghost floating in and out of their vascular chorioid coats, they notice a touch of crystallography in your grimace but move on as though nothing had happened, just as they look and never intrinsically notice that the sun is burning, they, '3rd person plural pronoun in the nominative' are maggots, living larvae with phlegm in the veins and the muscles, a region of being Artaud so accurately wounded, the region encrusted by fish scale bars of conformity and complicity with the covering culture, whose central knot is its injurious, deranged assumptions as it acts to dismantle the primordial, how to kill off this weed? how to help it murder itself?, it has a general population whose mind is made from slop and guts, from the science lab to the scabrous cholesterol of the popular entertainer, we find that when ascension is invoked they die, height kills, the ground hog urinates blood from its eyesockets, they tumble over and flop like fish on scalding summer cement squares, these beings are what we'll call the stunted negatives since the sterile invocation of Greek biology and sciences, historical negatives which have so coiled and eroded the psychic and physical environment that the time of the explosive factor has been reached wherein the vertical can no longer be denied, where the lightning coloured fluid pulses from body to void, from body to body, our principle transmission will be the incandescence of sharks' bites alive with golden hieroglyphics of the heavens, biting lightless wagon wheel neurosis with Edenic dental butter, the bites concerned with the mysterium of the galaxies, with the origin of the spark of life as it merges into the powder of time, the cuneiform pulsations of time become a triplicate cosmic mirror reflecting itself to extinction, then life begins wandering into inner tunnels of light which appear and disappear, it becomes a cord of flame stretching tongues of lavender into transparent dragonfly tundra, alchemists' liver, canonball sensoriums breaking into the ground of flowing lightning waters, what is called for are heroic butterfly spindles to twist turquoise treachery cycles into permanent non-existence, which means the artist mines the fractures of this creative compost instantaneously, or with the protracted laborious flux of a slow motion hurricane, I'm thinking of those two unmistakable distinctions, Andre Breton, Bram Van Velde*, and I mean outside

society, outside of its heaving novae of conformist wolves, the creative truth, the trigger of fire punctures the unclean canopy of dollars, into the pure, into the unbounded, poetic bullets in the name of the grand amalgam of justice, too much blood under the bridge, in over 3,000 years of rational skull-capped western biology there's been a litany of internal revelation, forays into those flaming utopias where the sun spreads magnetically into the perpetual succession of eternity, life, continuous explosion, it is the piranha that sucks on the core of the innards and calls the pain the psychic offspring of internal number, it is the poetic spur, it is dynamo concoction, down with the bland goblets of sobriety that they tell us we should be grateful to live with, down with rhodopsin sockets of deception and blindness, again the call is for enigmatic hell fire to sweep away this mess, for a confused polyphony of fire flowing in all directions, a scaly claw pops up from oblivion sparsely covered by a stunted crop of ochre feathers, and I think of Putman on Van Velde, "Doubt, ambiguity, contradiction are the only proofs of authenticity," if I say typhoid candles, if I say flightless coal of fissioning leopards, I may as well tell the conformists that I'm worshipping at a temple of moon grease, of necessity, life must speak as a wound bursting like a tourniquet of roses, an overflow of energy creating itself as a core of unravelling electron footage, or, as a human geology of imperceptible millimeter motion, I'm speaking here of the most raving, feral kind of combat, warriors from the realm of upper luminosity injecting cosmic sputum into the odyssey of life on this physical plane, this cultural conspiracy against revelatory patterns and internal signs is what I would call photon lockage, a block in the vision, mundane phantasmagoria, sticky corrupted patina reality, irrelevant questions of how should I step? how much pressure should I apply?, but the poetic search is for deep disrupted laser beam ore somehow freed of all poltergeist activity swirling in the wires of the skin, the poetic thesis: assault on high geometry clouds dressed up in deception magically exploded and recollected non-corporally vertically rising above a sun of plural negatives, the 20th century artistic hegira, one giant hallucinated triple push of the soul, the mind, the body, looking for immortal experiences outside the habits of man as we know him, even when we are told by the reputable revolutionaries that there is nothing but the body, nothing but the ceilings and walls around the body, that the empyrean can't be touched, at this point in history a declaration has been made by the golden blade of the poetic angle,

and the words begin to “flash” with a blinding light of transmundane origin, a torch of magic wands in the eyes, and everywhere that you touch, you look, you write, a basic change takes place, a light breaks forth from people and things despite a natural hesitation, a bridge of glimmers emerging from a series of suns exploding in a metaphysical core which is unnameable, infinite, which can only be gathered in the experience of itself, one can call it as Coomaraswamy* does the “angel of all angels,” the magical result of the “angel of all angels” is a sun springing from a body, a utopian reality engendered by the touch of magic flashing light in the being of the planetary angel/poet, a force imperceptible at first, then a flash of magical arachnids leaping out from the “angel of all angels” by way of a series of messenger angels put into practice by the above mentioned angel/poet who lives by way of psychic dislocations and flashes which he (or she) concretizes by distilling the power of the overwhelming, shooting beams of light into specific areas of conquest by means of guerilla subjectivity, the poet/angel can enter a palace of hound dogs and cause internal changes in its momentum, and all of a sudden the hound dog palace is not the hound dog palace and is disrupted by a fluidity which causes change and becomes pungent when not suspected to be such, and the psychological is directed to the vertical, to the celestial without a trace of the decadent vacuums of Christian or Mohammedan religiosity, daily finite cholesterol maggot mentalities crossed over by a vertical row boat of light, and an image instinctively appears of purple oarsmen in a boat of blazing moonbark going upward instead of across in cosmic contradiction at work, where the walls and ceilings mentioned earlier vanish, and the definition of fluidic transparencies become less prolific because “the angels have fewer ideas, and use less means than men,” which means the perceptible and the imperceptible merge in direct flowing continuum, the blocks between the physical and the metaphysical become obsolete, not disregarded but transformed into a river of beatific lightning sparks, God and his gods become the pure stuff of the primordial, as though the world woke to see twin blue suns inexhaustibly swirling around each other in a perpetual red-orange sky in constant waking being

The Western World: An Axis of Cataracts

A civilization that chooses to close
its eyes to its most crucial problems
is a stricken civilization
— Aimé Césaire

Just below the daily mental surface there's this general horror, this ambiance of dragon fangs brewing going straight for the throat of the public, and they acutely sense the apocalyptic shortness of their time, not in those illumined prophetic nerve juice shakings, but in a dark obscured global belching dilemma, the roads to the future seem like the intestinal corridors of phantoms, a crazed condition of neurotic fissioning giving off purplish flame, heinous psychological infections which they recognize in each others' faces, a sickly cooked blemish of disaster leaking from their eyes like spotted matchstick drippings splotching the skin with secular hurricane worries, they search for contradictory slimy bench splinter numbers without the intuitive aid of the micro-constellations of sun birds, they search for a crude physical protrait of welts without the flames of miraculous Phoenix ashes, they eschew the transformative as a hellish misnomer foisted on them by the hypnotic inscrutable thumbscrews of the poetic, they say the pure space of thought is the fantasy of the ancients, that the practical is of the most spartan importance, that we all live according to the most utilitarian dictates of logic, these voicings are well known and have overwhelmingly functioned since the brutal invasion of industrialist miasma; what makes this problem so repetitiously acute is that the material spirit has grown cancerously voluminous since the William Blake warnings and has become today a disease so spread that poets and artists at crucial moments of collapse wittingly or unwittingly take up the cause of this ragged blunted eyed beast called materia, (this pharyngeal carcass of the most wretched plutonium baggage), trying from the angle of the most popular concerns to convince us of the need to continue as we are under a blotted sun of pouring gangrene magots, the egalitarian concerns of the day are like voraciously powered quicksand suckings dressed up in the form of artistic ratings which muzzle the primordial spontaneous igneous ejections which quickly define and shut up the artist, I mean that artist exclusively enamored with communing with the public, a show boat dummy hung from chiseled skeleton wires; for instance, we have the poet concerned

with the number of audience involved in his or her most recent public exposure, or the number of miraculous praises (both public and private) he or she has received for letting the majority in on the secrets of the poetic conquest, what we have here is a missing poetic sperm count, a lack of the secretive virility of poison, a lack of the ability to leap up and strike dead the pedestrian grip on things, a lack of the ability to simply hate, to turn down and disappoint, to not put one's best foot forward, to aggravate, to pit the popularizers against the mob so that they mutually exclude one another, right now, we know the masses are like a corraled bunch of pigs headed to the slaughter, they have a habit of bowing to the complete conformity of existing parameters, I'm speaking here of the pragmatic junk heap, the calling is for flashing star gazer liquids volcanically firing prophetic neutrinos, for persons with blind ghost insight who float with the dead, for conjurers of metaphysical hypnotics, for those who have crossed over and come back loaded with celestial flowings from the lake of non-being, a broken philosophical stellar polemic put out in code, like a paragraph of dogs stunted with blinded ice age phonemes, like a boat of post-historical grasshopper plumage plunging into the pelican foam of blazing book-end powder, a tuxedo of flame, threaded grizzly bear stances, sudden shifts of emaciated helium protrusions, and then you have this blank space, this onslaught of caves, this noble incandescence of different hydrogen frustrations suddenly blooming into one living verdurous infinity where the ladder of the sun floats backward and forward like a perpetual non-human flash breaking through the ethers and the secrets of the galaxies, our primary planetary concern is not for social smallness and rationally ensconded tediums of harmonic amenities, those faulty material utopias hung like crystal coloured emperor moths before the eyes, but for those beings who truly see the rapidly approaching defeat for this global machinery which feasts on metaphysical impalement, the profane pronouncements of the Imperial powers will result in profound psychological Tsunamis of fire which will eat these powers like irregular star fish habits voraciously puddled within a wicked cloud of gluttonously rising ash coloured sulphurs, the head will collapse from fire and the petty day to day infringements of each upon each will be completely blown beyond the ozone layer, this savage fist of radical moon blows will reap volcanic blood, this is the beginning of the end of this shaky pinball stockade we call society, these communist Bulgarian bigots, these salivating lemmings trapped in the webs of Warsaw and London,

these steel throated dogs growling in the Kremlin, these lepers of the most crimson financial diseases polluting the world by way of the Potomac, these regimes, all deadly nerve gas traumas are less and less stealthily buried beneath a map of human debris, and for now, neurasthenic horror becomes the normal currency under which human exchange is conducted, under these conditions the streamlined Hippopotami of history comes as an arrowhead of flaming monsoon waters cutting down like a plague the three thousand years of its previous construction, and there is nothing left to lean on, history evaporates beyond the clinical fumes of nocturnal radiator orbits, and the confused suck on dried up opuntia cacti, no longer any falsely constructed vertical towels made from satanic moon juice to illuminate the surfaces of things, and the individual without the principle of sun in his mind, without the golden pedigree of the ripened trances of Macedonian barracuda, will see nothing but the violent ashes of pedestrian newspaper detours, and feel a perpetual red shift away from the rotating cores of ancient Egyptian elixirs, away from the flame of utopian steepness, and feel fearful and arctic on the inside, because the universe blends with its own deathless immutable understanding and shines with the light of allegorical pimentos, a bleeding searchlight treatise raining down on the soul where all the opiate proclivities of the mind take over in this dark rag bone greeting zone of death, but all these downfall institutions, church, school, marriage, fame, x us from birth into eternal physicality by means of maumish bourgeois convenience, they tell us the greatest number is the greatest good with blanched toneless autopsy speeches, these negators of pure starlight hide behind the global rush of busy activity, behind the democracy of corpses, behind mathematical phenomena which jams on its theorems like a mechanical ghost locked in dusty solar rigidities, and they call on a manna which horrifically translates to clothes pin profits, on the most provincial monetary projections which derive their stage coach trajectories from an inhuman gluttony of dead men's eyes, because they can't stand to hear the truth about their continued rape of the darker racial extractions, they don't want to hear these racial jack hammer specifics flying boomerang style in their faces, and what naturally follows is that you're accused of making your point too strongly, so here, the point has been reached where the objective flame of lighted bloody Condor matches ascends as a vertical comet of stars with a tom-tom aura of broken lizards' breathing signaling lions leaping in and out of its exothermic

combination, and we arrive at the looping virile magma of the void, at that split second timelessness of the libidinous practicality of chemicals, before the dialectical echos of circles and lines, I say this because the slab between the upper and lower worlds has never existed, and is a man-made phenomenon soldered in place by iron age mentality, roofs, limits, conservative oligarchies which jam up the feces, this meanly distorted cleanliness, this self righteous ugliness, etches the bones with holocaust cuttings, is now and forever a useless legacy of apocalyptic meanderings which waste by darkened acts empowered by irrelevant obfuscation, I speak for bringing forth a scarlet sun shining in the open sky of metaphoric bellies, I speak for attacking the material boundaries with verbal turpentine scaldings, I mean loaded words which transform by destruction, we are living as Guenon so aptly put in, under 'the law of matter and brute force', which the poet must magically eviscerate with an overwhelming nova of irrational Venusian wind demons brimming altitudes of Dionysian intuitions and silence, those beautiful baboon victories glowing in other-wordly helium waves with the fabulous consistency of golden limestone ashes, when one has reached these psychological vicinities the map one follows flows with Elysian coloured liquids coursing around in the skull, the mind is lifted to slippery repetitious irrationals, and you walk around speaking about how much blood moves across the face of a star, which you repeat and repeat because it fills you up with a fundamental seeing, which penetrates perversities plastered with the latest code of soft drink relationships, practical reality in essence is a gutless moon retreat served like a fish on a tray of spiders, the creative being in this cultural inconsequence must have the unwavering resolve which literally erects worlds, which has nothing to do with an apologetic taste for moderate costume changes, with these blasphemous modifications of life where the dead become revived within oscilloscope boundaries, classic 20th century smokescreen decay, the machine is not the answer, not the quantum leap from the ash of the senses, no matter whether the planet be described as swirling monsoon ochre with a population of gargantuan intelligent spotted winged flying fish tigers leaping from the waters gelatinous and smouldering, their bodies fused with the inscrutable combination of mercury and sulphur, who've invented a cure for death by way of a needle cloned from a secret molten vein of loosely congealed uranium gases, the implication of such a scenario in the modern popular mental saga would give the needle more credence than the intuitive lightning conjunction between the tigers' minds and the uranium gases from which the

immortal needle leaps, that space of magic internal subscription firmly outside the effable, beyond the smoky moral rubble buzzing with regrets, a sun purely green begins rising in the mind, a sun which blooms in the bottoms of the being, a light which eradicates by its very nature the tentative overcast forebodings inherent in the psychology of eternal eclipse, which exists in the mass mind, its cortex shaped by spurting dragon juices drowning its infinity in a various number of hells, which simply amounts to sensuous forays into those primitive canals of eroded salamander apples cloaking inside their seeds salacious hyena soliloquies, foul smelling olive tree lepers gasping for heaven while nailed to a cloud of floated sepia wanderings, the common Christian calls for a pseudo Boschian domain of Mohawk angels belching a flight of flaming damnation pronouncements, letters, practically neon, hysterical, parodying arms, legs, skulls, which turn quickly into rusted broaches drawing blood from the gut of a being part porpoise and crow lusting with its beak after a diamond coloured armpit filled with steaming mackerals, the sky around this being a brutish rat skinned grey, and peering over this minimal maleficence appears a Judeo-Christian European, his face full of strawberry blotches, being pulled through the expanse by bloated catfish remnants bleeding grenadine blood from the pores of his rotting lamb skin caftan, this Christ is shouting with the thirsty voice of the devil concerning his resurrected alliance with the Gadera swine, and here we see the Christian after world intrinsically confused and distorted by the illusory dregs of physical realia, and down on the ground people receive a life of polluted polar scraps smeared across their daily mental screens by pocket knife priests, by Protestant trinket vendors further pushing this world into imminent nightmare tornados, this shopkeeper world sucking profane fluids from the crooked spine of 'common sense' is feeling its statistics collapse, we hear the caged howlings of patch work beasts patching up the superstructure crackings, howling with more and more calls for doomsday schedules, for protective death devices, all this to keep those bilious subterranean demons in check, those deep subverted narcoleptic contusions rooted in the weakness below the skin, those thwarted sexual nematodes gone haywire causing an unprecedented pressure on the planet tilted on its axis of cataracts, basically blinded, floating around an imperturbable sun spilling a warped dialectical blood from its factories, the continents now ruled by a dynasty of torturers' eyes, wearing abstracted souls and separated bodies, those emerald virilites of the heights and the depths presently subjected to the closed up world of the deluded

and the damned, perpetually sweating beneath thatched bourgeois
patio seclusion harriedly chewing on oil soaked repasts of oblivious
salmagundis

Notes

Deinonychus- small vicious dinosaur of a hundred million years ago
Bram Van Velde- modern Dutch painter concerned with the slow motion burnings
of the soul
Ananda K. Coomaraswamy- Indian... 'art historian, philosopher orientalist,
linguist'

Pierre Joris

A Retelling of The Story of Renart & The She Wolf

that day Renart was cruising the forest as usual
he'd been at it for awhile when he found
a thick bush with a cave beneath
might be good place to lay up he thought
better be on your toes though you never know
the ramp was slippery and sliding down it he bumped into a
door

too late he realized he'd landed straight in Ysengrin's lair
behind the door four wolf pups were raising a ruckus
hanging on to their mother's tits
Hersant the mother noticed a sudden ray of light
she got up on all fours when she caught a flash of red fur
and laughing she yelled

"Renart what are you fooling around out there for?"
the fox was making himself small cowering beside the sill
"I guess people are right to call you a rascal
you never do the right thing
you call me family but you never visit"

Renart was shaking with fear but his mind was racing
"Well cousin
may lightning strike me dead if it's any of my fault
you see there's a problem he's called Ysengrin
if I didn't visit on your churching it's because
that husband of yours and his cronies are scouring the forest

trying to do me in
don't ask me why
I never did do him no harm
but now he claims in front of those cronies
that I've got the hots for you
have you ever heard anything so gross?
I mean I never even dreamed of it
you know that"
now Hersant was getting into a sweat
"what? so that's what the old fart is jabbering about!
well we wolves have an old saying
'he who takes vengeance for an imaginary affront
courts real misfortune'
now let me make something perfectly clear
I've never even *thought* of making it with you
but now that rumor has me do it
I'm of a mind to try it
why don't you come on in & we'll have a ball"
Renart didn't believe his luck
nor did he waste a second
he sidled up to her kissed her felt her up
Hersant was getting hot and raised a leg
soon they were at it with a vengeance
but Renart was having trouble keeping it up
on account of Ysengrin who might come home
so he pulled out and turned on the pups
he shook them by the scruff of their necks
and threw them about the room before beating them up
then he ate their food and spoiled what he couldn't eat
calling them bastard babes of a cuckold and a whore
he finally pissed all over them and made his exit
Hersant now tried to cool her brood
"listen kids don't be fools now
I mean there's no need to get excited
better not tell dad what went down here
you understand?"
they didn't
"what? for fuck's sake mother
we should let that red bastard piss all over us
and not say anything?
we should let that scumbag screw you and not tell dad?"

no way we want revenge on that moth-eaten redskin”
Renart had been hanging around outside
and when he heard the pups he took off nose to the ground
now Ysengrin came home wiped out but happy
loaded down as he was with all sorts of goodies
he had been running and hunting all day
getting his kicks from ripping off those more dumb than he
right away his sons let him know how
they had been abused their food eaten they themselves
beaten up called names and pissed upon
by the fox who first had had it off with their mother
Ysengrin was bursting with rage & facing his wife
he screamed like one possessed
“so now my sons call me cuckold
you viper whore snake cunt
I’m killing myself trying to keep you in food
& all you can think of is getting laid
you sure got a variable heart
letting that lousy stinker
that foul and greedy critter of a fox hump you
well don’t expect any more favors from me
certainly not in bed
unless of course
you swear
total obedience
henceforth”
Hersant wanting to cool down her gruff companion
tried another tack
“Sire your anger is misplaced
I’m willing to prove my innocence by oath or trial
may I be burned drawn and quartered if I’m found guilty
you should know that I wouldn’t do a thing like that...
furthermore I hereby solemnly swear never to do it again”
Ysengrin was taken in his rage abated
he was ready to forgive but not before he had made her swear
that from now on she’d help him get revenge on Renart
whenever and wherever they might find him

believe me fox
you better watch your ass
Now before the week was out

Hersant & Ysengrin

who in their wolfish way knew how to hold a grudge
were out hunting in open country
in a field where peas had just been harvested
& the straw was already all bundled up
they caught sight of Renart cruising for meat
unable to control his temper Ysengrin started to holler
and Renart lit out of there like greased lightning
with the wolf and Hersant giving chase
a mile or so on Renart turned around
his pursuers were gaining ground
so he veered to the left & cut through the woods
Ysengrin never noticed & shot straight ahead
but Hersant coming up behind him
was smarter and sussing the fox'd ruse
she too veered to the left keeping hard on Renart's tracks
who knew better than to try and sweet talk her
& made for the safety of his burrow
with Hersant snapping at his heels Renart reached
the bottom of a familiar vale
there he disappeared into a hole while she
following all too eagerly got in up to her waist & was stuck
Renart now calmly emerged from another tunnel
slapping her ass he jeered
"Well now cousin what a lovely sight
it's bound to give a man ideas"
stuck between the cold loam and the hot fox
Hersant kept her tail firmly wedged between her legs
but Renart began to nibble at that tail
& lifting it up he tucked it on to her rump
stepping back he savored the vista
then he fit himself to the proffered ass
drilling one hole after the other
Hersant felt like she'd been split right down the middle
"Renart, you're using force!"
The fox shot back
"just because you claimed I never did it with you
I'm doing it now
I've done it before & I'll do it again
I've said so before & I'll say so again
like

how about 10 more times?"
he fucked so hard the whole burrow trembled
finally as he was about to slump exhausted over Hersant's rump
Ysengrin came blundering through the woods
"Hey there! Hold it nephew! what the hell are you up to?"
Smoothly Renart disengaged himself
"Do save your breath dearest uncle
you'll need it all to help your wife
can't you see she's stuck in a trap?
I've done my best to free her
but as you see my strength is spent
one thing though I can promise you
I never did as much as pinch her ass
& if you want that in writing I'll oblige
it might convince some of your friends"
"You filthy traitor I don't believe a word you say
your crime stinks to high heaven"
"Come now uncle you better drop it"
"What do you mean drop it?
do you think I'm blind
I mean you were pushing her when you should have been
pulling!"
"Now now dearest uncle do let me appeal
to that finesse of mind you're so famous for:
as you can plainly see
— given that you're not blind —
your lady's firmly stuck
I couldn't budge her by pulling
but remembering that just beyond that narrow opening
the burrow widens considerably
I figured that if I could push her all the way in
that would do the trick
anyway once you get her out she'll prove me right
that is of course unless she prefers to lie"
somewhat confused by Renart's rap
Ysengrin wolfed down his rancor & tried to free his wife
he grabbed her by the tail & pulled with all his strength
the pain was too much and Hersant let fly
covered in shit and piss her husband backed away
figuring there had to be a better way
& after a few hours digging up the earth around her

he finally managed to pull her out of the hole
from inside which Renart looked on laughing
Ysengrin now laid into his wife
“you patented whore you piece of filth
scumbag viper snake
I’ve seen you at it with my own eyes
he was humping you from behind
try to explain that one away!”
that was about all Hersant could take
still she figured it best to try & calm him down
“Sire it’s true he sort of screwed me
but I promise the pleasure was all his
let’s stop this stupid quarrelling
and take the whole mess to the kadi
the king’s high court’s in session now
it just might work out better that way.”
Ysengrin demured and scratched his head
“You might be right at that
guess I was somewhat overhasty
alright then let’s do it your way for once”
& with that the pair disappeared into the forest
leaving Renart to enjoy a much-needed rest

The multifarious, not to say nefarious, deeds of the fox can be traced through the Indo-European cultural heritage as far back as the Indian *Pantchatantra*. Their re-emergence in the fables of Aesop and the Latin Phaedrus thus already constitute occurrences of a well-established matter. But the full flowering of the beast-epos had to wait until the European Middle Ages: following, and to some extent drawing upon the slightly earlier Latin *Physiologus*, *Ecbasis captivi* (the first real beast-epos), *Ysengrimus* (completed in 1149 by Master Nivardus, a monk in Flanders), there arose, between 1176 and 1190, the oldest branches of the French *Roman de Renart*, attributed to one Pierre de St. Cloud. Its impact may be judged by the fact that the name of the fox, Renart, soon replaced the old French word for the animal — *goupil* — as the common name. By 1190 Heinrich de Glîchezâre had written his Middle High German version. An important adaptation into Middle Dutch can be dated to the late 13th century, and in 1479 a Dutch prose version was printed by Gerard Leu, on which Caxton based his English translation which appeared in 1481. For centuries the fox materials remained extremely popular so that, foreshadowing later Hollywoodian mores, there appeared in 1684 a work called "The Shifts of Reynardine, Son of Reynard the Fox". From the same century date La Fontaine's morale fables while Goethe finished his *Reineke Fuchs* in 1794. The latest full-blown verse version of the epic dates from 1872 and is due to the Luxembourgian poet Michel Rodange who, while using Goethe's structure, took the latter's classical language back towards a more orally viable incarnation, using as he did the various spoken dialects of his country.

*

The question as to the origins of the fox material gave rise to many a hot debate. In 1834 Jacob Grimm, basing himself on the Germanic origins of many of the animal names, suggested that an oral beast-epic existed among the primitive Germanic tribes and that this had been carried over into the French area by Frankish tribes and was later borrowed and expanded by French writers. This analysis was still current when in 1893 the French scholar L. Sudre did a comparative study of the *Roman de Renart* with animal stories and fables from Scandinavia and India, pointing out many parallels that backed Grimm's claims. But since that time, and in keeping with the general perception of the origins of literary works, most critics have considered the *Roman de Renart* as the individual literary creation, notwithstanding some borrowings from prior written sources, by the learned clerk Pierre de St. Cloud. Current French commentary still follows that path although, given the present sense of the achievements, importance and range of oral literature, the time might have come to re-examine the whole question. Although since the 12th century written versions have dominated, there can be little

doubt that the fox material has always had a parallel, oral existence, feeding from and back into the beast epos. My own acquaintance with Renert, as he is called in Luxembourgian, was of that order: it was on my grand-mother's lap, when I was 4 or 5, that I first heard how Renert had to go to court for mistreating and conning the animals. The moralistic aspect of the tales might not have stuck, but the poems and tales, and before all, the figure of the fox are still with me, 30 years later. The tale offered here in a modern retelling is closely based on one occurring in an early branch of the *Roman de Renart* — & if those adventures aren't the best-known that's solely because their explicitly sexual nature had them banned from the corpus quite early on.

*

There is obviously no getting rid of the fox: again & again he appears throughout the European area, from Lapland to the Mediterranean, from Celtic mythology and Scot songs to Russian tales. The beast epics are but one incarnation of the material. Here is the fox as psycho-pomp in a celtic myth: a young man goes in search of a talisman to cure his sick father, succeeding where his elder brothers have failed. Out of pity he spends all his money to give burial to a dead man. Soon afterwards he meets a white fox whose counsel helps him in his quest. Then, once the goal of the quest has been reached, the fox explains that he is the soul of the deceased and disappears. In Prague he lent some of his features to a beast that haunted Franz Kafka:

“It is an animal with a big tail, a tail many yards long and like a fox's brush. How I should like to get my hands on this tail some time, but it is impossible, the animal is constantly moving about, the tail is constantly being flung this way and that. The animal resembles a kangaroo, but not as to the face, which is flat almost like a human face, and small and oval; only its teeth have any power of expression, whether they are concealed or bared. Sometimes I have the feeling that the animal is trying to tame me. What other purpose could it have in withdrawing its tail when I snatch at it, and then again waiting calmly until I am tempted again, and then leaving once more?” (Kafka, *Dearest Father*, translated by Ernst Kaiser & Eithne Wilkins, quoted in Borges' *Book of Imaginary Beasts*).

In 1950 he was well and alive, though obviously affected by the tide of barbarism that had just swept over Europe, and reappears in “*Tales from a dictatorship*” by the Sicilian writer Leonardo Sciascia:

“The fox was poking fun at the raven's black color. ‘If only you could see the effect when I alight on Minerva's white bust’ croaked the raven.

The fox knew nothing of Edgar Poe, but deep inside he felt something like ice breaking.”

Howard Norman

Wichikapache Becomes an Ambush-Branch

Wichikapache was out to stir things up. He wanted to cause trouble. He went walking. He happened upon a lake. His curiosity widened around the lake, and he saw some animals drinking at the lake-edge. He saw a moose drinking; at the end of the moose's face was the lake. The moose slurped up many gulps. Then the moose waded in. The moose stood there. Cooling off. Getting away from flies.

Wichikapache was hungry as usual. He was often hungry and when he wasn't it troubled him because he thought he should be. At those times he'd still eat something. Then he'd say, "There, you see, I must have been starving!" That's how he did things...

So now Wichikapache was hungry again. He said, "I'm going to ambush that moose!"

Wichikapache was happy with this plan. He laughed out loud. He laughed so hard it caused ripples in the water, which slapped against the moose standing in the lake. So, the laughing part of Wichikapache's plan slapped against the moose, though the moose didn't know this.

"After I ambush the moose, I'll have plenty to eat," Wichikapache said. "I'll cut it open. I'll cook it up. I'll carry some meat with me. I'll eat it over many days." Wichikapache was talking a lot. He was tasting the moose before he'd killed it.

Suddenly Wichikapache had all his hungers! He had hunger for all the ducks on the lake, just as he had hunger for one duck.

He had hunger for the sound of many ptarmigan startling away, just as he had hunger for ptarmigan eggs. He had hunger for the weaving patience beavers use to make their lodge, just as he had hunger to fling a lodge apart! He had hunger for the whole moose, just as he had hunger for its shoulder. Wichikapache wanted everything. That's how he was. That's how his hunger was.

Wichikapache set out to ambush the moose. When he got to the edge of the lake, he turned into a branch. He became a broken-off branch. When he was out on the lake, he floated toward the moose.

The moose had its eyes closed against the sun. "Who's that floating toward me?"

The moose opened its eyes and looked at the branch. "Wichikapache, is that you? Is that you, an ambush-branch?"

"No!" the branch said.

With this, the moose lifted and splashed out of the lake, and ran into the woods. All because Wichikapache had tasted the moose before he killed it. Also, because he talked far too much, even as a branch.

— told by Samuel Naoká tao
(He is Four-Footed)

Wichikapache Has Some Conversations With the Snow

Wichikapache wanted to travel with a wolverine, but he couldn't find one. Wichikapache travelled everywhere. Endless wandering. But he hadn't seen a wolverine. At the beginning of one winter Wichikapache got tired of travelling alone, so he took up with some ice-owls. These owls looked like *wapikunoo*, snowy owls, except they were made of ice. How could you tell which was a feather owl? Well, if an ice-owl and a snowy owl stood next to each other, the snowy owl would shiver. That's how you'd tell.

"We'll get you through this difficult winter," the ice-owls told Wichikapache. "The only one who can get through difficult winters better than we can is a wolverine."

"Why shouldn't I travel with a wolverine then?" Wichikapache said.

"Try and find one!" the owls said.

*

That winter the ice-owls were teaching Wichikapache many things, but not how to find a wolverine. They didn't even want to talk about a wolverine. That's all Wichikapache wanted to know about, a wolverine! The ice-owls taught Wichikapache new ways to cause trouble. They arrived at a winter hunting camp. They saw a lodge there. Some families of people were inside the lodge. They went inside. There they found a few fires burning. People sat near them. Right away the ice-owls jumped in the fires and began shivering ice feathers all over the place! There was much sputtering and smoke, and much confusion. The fires smoldered out then. But the owls had left one fire for Wichikapache to confuse with.

"Go ahead, do something to this fire!" the owls shouted.

So Wichikapache went outside, into the bitter cold. He took up some snow and hurried back to the lodge. He was going to dump the snow on the last fire! On his way to the lodge, the snow he was holding made Wichikapache cold. So, when he got inside the lodge, he sat down by the last fire to get warm. He melted the snow in a pot. Then he added some meat to it, and made a broth. Wichikapache drank the broth to get warm. All the people inside began laughing at this! They built the other fires up again. They passed the broth around, "Wichikapache is a good cook!"

"How did that happen?" Wichikapache asked the ice-owls. But they were disgusted with him. The owls flew from the lodge.

Wichikapache went walking.

While he was walking he heard something under the snow. It was a sound he'd never heard before. The sound was moving under the snow...“snap! snap! snap!” then the sound dragged itself away...! Wichikapache followed it. He heard “snap! snap! snap!” again.

“*Kwekwuhakao*, is that you? Wolverine, is that you?” Wichikapache shouted into the snow.

The snow didn't answer.

Wichikapache went walking.

Soon he happened upon a big stack of *pewá pisko wunehí kun*, steel traps. There were many of them. Animal traps. They were in a big stack, and all of them were snapped closed, except the top one! The trap on the very top was still set!

“This had to be a wolverine's doing!” Wichikapache said.

But a wolverine was nowhere in sight. “There's been going wolverine trouble caused here!”

Wichikapache went walking.

Wichikapache grew cold. He started to shiver. The ice-owls had taught him how to shiver up trouble, but not how to stop shivering. He needed to find a warm place. He needed some food. Just then he saw an *eyapà síis*, a young buck deer. It was standing there, scuffing up snow, trying to reach something to eat. Wichikapache said, “I'll kill this deer and eat it. I'll wear its hide and keep warm!” Wichikapache was about to kill the deer, when suddenly there was an explosion of snow! Snow flew up and made a cloud over the deer, and when the cloud settled the deer was gone!

Wichikapache walked over to where the deer had been. There he saw a tunnel into the snow. “I'm not going down there!” he said.

He went walking.

While he walked, Wichikapache heard another sound under the snow. He stopped to listen. He heard “crunch! crunch! crunch!” ...then the sound dragged away under the snow! Wichikapache followed this. “Crunch! crunch! crunch!” Wichikapache heard that again.

“*Kwekwuhakao*, is that you? Wolverine, is that you?” Wichikapache shouted into the snow.

The snow didn't answer.

Wichikapache kept having these conversations with the snow, who didn't answer.

Wichikapache shouted into the snow awhile. Then he set out walking. Up ahead, there was another burst of snow! Wichikapache walked over to it. There he saw deer bones! "This must be the deer that wolverine took under the snow to eat!" Wichikapache said.

Wichikapache went walking. He was still shivering. He was still very hungry.

*

He happened upon a beaver dam. The dam was covered with snow. Wichikapache knew beavers were in there. He said, "I'll get some beaver fat!" Wichikapache dove into the snow, went under the ice of the stream, and swam up into the beaver dam. He saw beavers in there. "Give me some fat!" he said.

But the beaver said, "We don't have any extra fat! A wolverine was just here. We gave him our extra fat. We're feeling lucky he didn't eat us. He gnarled apart some of our houses. He tore up a few things in here. We gave him as much fat as we could. He'd just eaten a deer, so he didn't eat any of us! He just took some fat. Then he left. Maybe he'd give you some, Wichikapache!" the beavers laughed at this.

"I should be travelling with that wolverine!" Wichikapache said.

"Well, he set out north," the beavers told him.

"I'm going there!" Wichikapache said. "THIS TIME I'LL TRAVEL WITH A WOLVERINE!"

He went walking, north.

Wichikapache happened upon another lodge. He listened into it. He heard people inside. He heard their conversation. He heard them talking about summer! He heard the geese arrive in their conversation. He heard ducks arrive in their conversation. Then he heard the people slapping their arms. "Get away, gnats!" they said. "Get away, mosquitoes! Get away blackflies!" They were slapping summer things in the lodge.

"They're talking about summer!" Wichikapache said. "It must be a very hard winter for them. They are bringing summer into their lodge." With this, Wichikapache went into the lodge. He sent snow words into their conversation. He made it a winter's day again in the lodge. Wichikapache said out loud, "*Ispá konukaw!*..." then he said, "*Koonipewun!*"....then he said, "*Wuyasá pewin!*"....then he said, "*Isputchistin!*"....then he said, "I'm going to say all the snow words!" Then he did that.

One man in the lodge said, "Why did Wichikapache say, "The snow is deep?" then say, "There is wet snow falling?"....then say, "Snowblindness?"....then say, "High snow drifts?"....Why did he then say all the other snow words? Maybe he's trying to tell us it's winter!"

"As if we don't know that..."

Just then, a wolverine arrived. "I heard snow-words," the wolverine said. They made me hungry. Give me some food!" The people there gave the wolverine some meat and fat. Then the wolverine gnarled up a few snowshoes. Then he tore up a blanket. Then he left.

"Wait!" Wichikapache called at the wolverine, "I'm travelling with you!"

The wolverine said, "Try that!"

They set out, north.

*

Wichikapache was travelling with the wolverine then. They walked a long way. The wolverine could walk all night if he wanted to. He could tire the moon out. Wichikapache said, "Let's rest."

The wolverine kept walking. He said, "No, little brother *ayikos*, gnat. You try and keep up with me." The wolverine kept walking.

Wichikapache said, "Let's rest." But the wolverine walked faster. "No!" the wolverine said, "You try and travel with me, little brother *múkuchasew*, blackfly!"

They walked and walked.

Soon again Wichikapache said, "Let's rest."

"No!" the wolverine said. "You have to walk faster, little brother *súkimas*, mosquito." Wichikapache slapped his own arm!

"STOP CALLING ME SUMMER THINGS!" Wichikapache called to the wolverine. Then he saw that the wolverine was far ahead. So Wichikapache talked to the snow. He said, "Let's rest." He said this to the snow. But the snow confused Wichikapache. The snow looked as though it was resting and not resting, at the same time. Snow can look that way. The snow didn't answer Wichikapache.

Then Wichikapache talked to himself. He said, "Let's rest." With this, Wichikapache agreed. He sat down. The wolverine was gone. The wolverine was moving north; north into north into north into north... the wolverine walked.

That is the story. That is how Wichikapache didn't travel too far with the wolverine.

Milan Knížák

Probable Poems

This sequence of poems is from a tri-lingual edition of *Etwagedichte/Probable Poems/Asibásne* privately published by the author in Prague, 1982.

1.

To express the joining of wind and a calculator, a kiss with a carburator, an eye tied by a caress, a boot fusing with a river.

To express the joining of the unjoinable, since everything can be joined.

Probably there's no difference between things. Where are we to seek the difference between a tree, warmth, Hitler and an EC 1010 computer?

From the viewpoint of what is small (or smallest) everything is large. And vice versa.

(Do neutrinos have a spiritual life?)

I would dump all the stars in the summer sky into a single sack, yet I am compelled to believe in their greatness, and I do. I believe in black holes, anti-matter, quasars and so on. It's only Darwin and Oparin that I have trouble believing. Such logic seems illogical to me. I believe in miracles. For even a meson, a quasar and even I (and above all you) are miracles. God is real.

2.

Do ants have a Christ? When was the electron crucified? Is there a Caesar stone in the kingdom of stones? An Alexander the Great stone? A Stalin stone? A Smith and a Jones stone? A stone stone?

And what about a revolution of tulips? The white ones took over. Later on the red ones. Many on both sides were killed. Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah.

Does human history differ from the history of birds?

Does human history differ from cloud protuberances?

Lewis Thomas writes entertainingly about ant wars and so on. The study of biology reveals both sense and nonsense. Mankind invented God for its own certainty. But God is too real.

And what about praying to computers of the Nth generation, praying to lymphocytes, invoking a slice of toast (with garlic), adoring the 17th hair from the left on my right foot?

Let me suggest marriage to a pardemknotostphemosh.

3.

A rat crossed with a crucifix.

An eye swelling to meet the sun.

A bowl full of soup.

Sun and silence and a typewriter. Shhhh. Shout. Hesitate. Fall.
Mill. H₂O.

17 caresses falling into space.

Love crossed with a pulsar.

Bread.

A slice of bread.

Symbiotic infinity.

Whatever. Wherever. Whenever. However.

2 steps to the left. Then fly away.

To the centre of the earth.

Where hell once was, heaven can now be. It can be blended.

Goulash made by the smallest particles that have broken out of
their harness.

4.

A C-major fifth chord held for eternity.

A staccato middle C repeated for eternity.

In the space thus limited, seek room for existence.

There is room mainly for rock. Rock around the clock. Rock & clock—both die out. Sadly the clocks are taking over.

Why not marry a harp? It's just as good as Lennon or a computer.

5.

A house is like a shout.

I need a house that is silence. (To hear the whisper of ants slowly moving it to the antipodes.)

Only if the house grew wings.

Proper wings beat themselves to death on the ground. They can be dragged behind one like a train. You can snuggle into them like a sleeping bag. You can mop the floor with them. Offer them to painters, to paint on.

(I would paint on them even though painters think I am a writer, writers a painter, musicians an idiot and architects a dilettante. I would print red spots on them.)

A 93-kilo ladybug flopping about on 7 square metres of floor on the sixth storey of a pre-fab high-rise in Prague 10, Tulipánová 2802.

What an apocalyptic vision of man.)

6.

The generations have switched roles. Young pragmatics harden into the romantic drivel of the elderly.

Youth is not a privilege but merely a state; all is transient; old age is the youth of eternity.

Joe Smith of Nazareth begins each morning his thorny tale, repeating itself 3 billion times.

We are all crucified and we all crucify.

(A new parable of Christ awkwardly trying to crucify himself.)

The cross as a symbol of crossroads.

Intersections that can fall away into eternity.

7.

This is a narrative tale.

P.P. (Person Person) is born, lives, dies.

Dr. P. and Mrs. P. use a vibrator. The vibrator's sperm begets intelligent young.

The vibrator buzzes in the crowd. (Music for genitalia).

Cocks and quims tango
among the mangos.

A body rubbed with orange juice smells sweet. Its scent outlasts the ages.

(Aroma as law. Aroma as duty.)

Through education, fly to three X's.

Somewhere beyond them, learning begins.

Learning that smells sweet.

8.

Vardemprank is a swine. I love Postremkv. Brazyovan is a psakremv. It's not worth a hlimpf.

Which reality is the more real?

The real or the unreal?

The world is like a Möbius strip. The reverse and obverse are interchangeable in it too.

Half my body is blue, the other half is striped green.

My whole body is blue.

How fabulous that such logic is starting to take hold.

And then to cease fearing death.

9.

The past is counted in hours, the present we do not perceive, the future does not exist.

When, then, is there time to live?

Where are meteors, princesses and phoenixes?

Where is there space for fools and hermits?

A small chance is concealed in the space of a caress.

Another in the wink of an eye or the bubbling of dreams. And in death.

(In death there may be more life than in life itself. Because we fear it. Because we fear life.)

10.

Our deeds as monuments to our staggering.

The act of killing and the act of caressing.

(Where's the difference? Only in the intensity of the pressure, perhaps.)

Sooth and kill. (What a good title for a song.)

Reality, however, does not lie in these (killing and caressing) but comes first.

Before caressing. And after. After killing.

Meanwhile life is merely the intertwining of killing and caressing.

English is a strange language. Like reality, where it is only a small step from caress to massacre.

Often it's hard to say which (small step).

A small step.

11.

Friend Xyyplx, a triaxial carburator from Mars, published a book on the degeneration of parvonoids.

Mrs. Barnes knitted hats for the whole high-rise (á \$5.00 a head).

The 5429500353797654900617th electron released in the accelerator was properly registered.

Samuel S. committed suicide because of his pimples.

Hitler once exterminated the Jews.

Karel Togg and Hana Magorová stuff the ballot boxes to win the Golden Nightingale.

The Jews that were left are behaving like fools in the Middle East.

I'm sure most people in this world had a bowel movement this morning. (Not me, unfortunately. In that I am probably exceptional.)

A leaf moved (somewhere, sometime), it rained, it is raining (somewhere, sometime), the sun is shining, stomachs ache, people eat, sleep, hump, etc.

I still can't figure out what's missing in this picture of life.

12.

I swallowed your nose, slurped your hair like spaghetti, drank your eyes.

It resembled mathematics.

A picture of the world is not like the world. It has that strange quality of modern art, that is resembles mainly itself.

I wrote a symphony for bagpipes, electric guitar, comb and a large drum.

It can be played outdoors (complemented with the roar of a motorbike.)

Or performed as a Trauermarsch.

In some things, intercourse resembles love. Or fire. Even love resembles fire.

I'd like to resemble fire. Fire fascinates me.

As well as fire, I'd like to befriend Van Gogh, Leonardo, D.T. Mandel, Winnetou and several stones.

Stone and fire are a fascinating combination.

Stones burn wildly.

13.

On Red Square the solitary Rolling Stones playing “King Bee” through a huge sound system.

A dough-like Hudecek fiddles atop the Eiffel Tower.

Leonard Bernstein holds educational concerts for June bugs.

Somewhere someone is pounding on a pumpkin. It blends with the chatter of an Olivetti at the opposite end of the world.

Even “King Bee” rendered by the Stones blends with the dulcet Hudecek, with Bernstein, with the pumpkin, etc. etc. and even with “Three Blind Mice”, which I am singing.

The notion of the world as symphony is enticing and banal. To me the world seems more like a C-major scale played on the piano with both hands in opposition. Up and down.

And repeat.

14.

Variations are a sign of decline.

Perfection too is a sign of decline.

Mona Lisa with bandy legs.

This is a lecture on beauty.

The problem of the beautiful is closely linked to the problem of automatic washers.

The problem of the beautiful is bound up with silence.

Beauty set in a grain of DNA.

Beauty that in heaven is called morality.

(There is a certain kinship between a morel and mortality. They are both dangerously like beauty.)

My cock is green and could I screw a bird
I'd give birth
to canaries.

15.

We all know that the best words must remain unspoken, the greatest revolutions unbubbled, the gods unborn.

All theories are truthful, but none in and of itself.

A gob of spit. A wink. A brief caress. A swarm of hair.

That too is an image of the world, just like the quantum field theory larded with drops of dimethylaminoethylphosphate, like a single shout, a millimeter of movement, silence.

For each of us, silence begins elsewhere.

Looking for the frontiers of silence, I encountered movement.

16.

My head is grown round with eyes, and in each, conjunctivities.

My chest is stuffed with hearts, and in each, coronary thrombosis.

A flock of mouths has opened in my back, each of them toothless.

Branches of broken arms. A mob of falling legs.

Etc

. . . .

Does there remain somewhere in this perfected and degenerated body an inch of space for coloured beetles with whose diligent and colourful assistance I could inch my way to infinity?

Kathleen Fraser

Four voices telling little stories about light and dark

Black dresses make people smaller
but lights seen behind an edge make an apparent notch in it.

“Look at that moon, Evangeline”.

*

In the dark of the glass jar,
bodies strapped to their wings,

*

fireflies that summer after supper,
then September came and the new boy
at his desk drawing warplanes. Everyone wanted
a drawing made by Bobby
and some boys paid him a nickel and
copied his cockpits and wings,
trying to master the clear poise
of a new shape.

*

I do not know its name but
its grey body falls
from a wire
feet first

with talons in threes and then splayed
recovers
halfway down
the border
of blue.

*

We were all part of the train.
When the train was on time,
the passengers said,
“We are in Tacoma,”
and when it hit the boy
they said, “We hit him,”
as if all of us had done it.

*

Now it's March again with the relief of light rays in shifting
positions.
The white sexual parts all over the flowering plum are
opening.
I know the bees are there, humming codes along the petal.

I know his shadow is there
beyond its conclusion.

*

We entered the room, we were still small,
but the chairs became intolerable in the midday glare.

He was sitting there every day at his desk,
drawing and drawing. He was there each day
and all luxury lost its meaning, in that order.

*

The blank page
was merely an interval or
an intrusion. We could not rescue it

nor could we huddle, as if the page were
big enough.

*

We could hear a moaning sound somewhere and thought
it was a dog.

*

These experiments may be modified to infinity.
That airplane appears to be traveling from the right,
making an arc over every head

but we are not its children

*

and we do not make little drawings of airplanes.

*

Two boys had been seen
on the railroad bridge out over
the water when the train came around the curve.
The bridge had two tracks with a walkway between them. All
the kids
had to do was to step
on the other track
and get out of the way.

*

The highest degree of light, such as that of a solar body, of
phosphorous
burning in oxygen, is dazzling and colorless.

I am as guilty as you, but I prefer to think of it in another
person.

*

When light goes away we are its prisoners and we notice.

Something travels circuitously and we give over
even our list of words.

On the weather segment, there are increasing elaborations of
cloud or technical void. A man comes on in a suit with padded
biceps to attract or repel us away from his predictions, pulling a
screen of red plastic oxygen behind him.

It is clear from his description who prefers to make his or her
own order
and who waits for a listener.

*

I have to talk to myself every Tuesday when the siren goes off.
He pretends not to listen for the diminishing tone but he
doesn't know this, while I am unable to think of anything but
the siren and do not wish to be distracted.

*

he wanted to pull "more" from her and told her:
You are backing off into the static.

*

First, they pulled the balcony away, ripping out the floor and
safety guards to reveal simple light. Then we saw the white
original wall with a makeshift door, also of white, nailed into
what had been a doorway or an interruption of the formal
surface.

*

The theatre of little breakfasts on the deck will no longer be
our subject. Nor anyone's Mozart selections, nor our neighbor,
nor his ivory silk dressing gown, nor his assortment of
gentleman callers, nor the grey-haired woman with garden
shears, appearing during significant national holidays. Nor
who will save us.

*

The trouble with on-going conversation about darkness is that
you say the beginning of a thought before it is formed in you
fully and then it is taken away into the other's thought and
made his or hers and sent back. It is now a more complete
thought but it is something else. It is in the world now. It is
more (or less) now, but you have lost your place and what you
meant cannot be recovered, though something else can.

*

The light of the world, he thinks. The unfinished dark, she
thinks,

and no one to rescue you.

*

If there is a glass
between us
we call it an arrangement
and turn on the light

Although something automatic
has replaced the penny
and certain reliable parts
are increasing their volume daily
to an almost intolerable pitch

*

There is still that hole in the third floor window, behind
which something dark shows through.

An insight of this kind, when clear blue passes between two
arguments (or alternate currents), suggests we can continue to
hope, up until the imagined airplane.

*

You are indulging yourself, he says to her
on the other side of the glass.
It is outside of her
and then it knocks.

*

White shirts appear next to the white dress at the same corner
but
black dresses make people larger in the dark.

*

Bobby was always drawing airplanes and then one day he
wasn't there.

He was "the smartest boy in the class" we say to each other,
and he isn't here because he died. He "just went to sleep and
kept sleeping",
our teacher said, and it was then we heard of sleeping
sickness.

*

We covered the floor with paper airplanes and PT boats.
We were inside his obsession when the lamp cast its shadow.
Our fingers repeated his shapes
until we could amaze someone with a little war
across the floor of both rooms
or hear the engine coming and the black car.

*

Why did one boy jump from the railroad bridge to the
 embankment
and save himself and the other boy just keep running faster?

When I was a boy...

*

You were in training. You were in the sky
looking for a place to land.

Bobby was pretending to be "you"
or someone saluting the flag in your khaki shirt.

I was on the rug with crayons,
inventing substitutions. Inside primary shapes
it was red or it was yellow.

We were warned
about stars on flags in windows
when someone's father went away.

*

I learned to put my knee over a metal pole beneath the dark
 trees
and to fling my body backwards and forwards
holding my ankle tightly to me
as the light changed and the sky went down,
waiting for stars.

*

Fireflies that summer after supper,
in the dark of the glass jar.

*

Some way to make you sleep through the big war.

*

When I was young, I wasn't like you and I'm not now.

John Clarke

Zeus' Swaddling Clothes

What Egypt knew (& forgot), the connection between cosmos and human change as it may awaken Psyche to mind breaths breaking out of old character armor when the time comes for emergence like a butterfly similarly the world may give birth to what it was hiding all along, why, my fellow Americans, it does behoove us not to hear the message too quickly to mean we are splitting before we have wings (Atlantean error) just because some Curandera has left prison prematurely and therefore didn't notice the incubation he was performing in the middle period between the sixties and eighties to help us all to notice the beginning, middle, and end of in fact everything that lives within the frame of the cosmos in this Aeon.

The Wound of the West

Not guilt but the quack-will which doesn't know when to stop, Faustian man gored by the Shadow of his own innocence, having gone past the human measure and being too proud to admit his mistake, won't give this unequal advantage up, will take it though it kill him, and others, looking upon those who have found to stop short of as lazy or lacking, all the while jealous of their strength and ease of movement upon Earth, who keep all their dealings short and sweet, not overstepping the bounds of their work, without a book, improvising right to the limit by heart making up for that missing piece, which is what buggers the West, except for John Keats, who found it to be an experience of the mind and pledged never to tread upon the penetralium ever again, one tip-toe was enough to set his heart upon that terrain.

What the Pearl Poet Knew, Of Necessity

Our unconscious Uncle can be defeated by textual action, you write it, it's new, you take the heat, not social derision but immediate struggle with one's own betrayal (backslide into the old), then you conquer by seeing what you had come to was right, and anything right is registered so you do replace the evil ring everyone wants to grab almost like a pussy (tantra is textual pussy) that everyone may see the evil of the Uncle was theirs too, good thing we have the sense to believe our own thought, act would have killed the truth before it had a chance to be born in the world, it's wonderful, the moment you kill him she awakens from his spell and enters the world we created for her to be met as fate saving grace unperverted by former mother of invention.

Siriotronics

The vorticellular Pan-gyre is a centrifuge of writing that like circumambulation has no meaning in and of itself, i.e., it does not communicate rationally, only by participating in its movement does one get into the rudimentary feeling now called jogger's ecstasy, in its former advance known as the Birth of Zeus, perfective action fallen to the tragedy of memory spread throughout the world in secular religion, the worship of character armor, power of the hero as White Tornado of advertisement house-wife phantasy begun as early as ear of corn at Eleusinian mystery, image-subjugation ("the outward Ceremony is Antichrist"), whereas even the empty gesture may be a generator of affect stored in the battery of all our black hearts.

Dismantling the Nominative to Wear the Investment

We take down Babylon, step by step, before it falls on us, each brick of the walls handled by hands of healing, dismantled that we may wear the mantle of companionship, America translated before it can be used by other hands, our art, the all important "second act," not go on, but back, that every piece be worn and no structure remain, all returned to song, the step to the other side Newton made, the world frame in tool-box condition that must be acted upon before it freezes (closes as north to Spider Woman) and we all fall back into wolf-trap of Green Man, wear green only to aid and abet song of Golden Mouth like Hopi Hump-Back attuned to number not continual transformations of the changed ratio of the 100-Arms.

At the Edge of Night

American syntax without a sentence,
e.g., hard on the ear, that cymbal,
so rather than thought we have poetry
for the bearings we need to front more
than extrication from the rime dilemma
which in having no good can no good do,
better assume the widest possible blunt
entry into the gamma rays until notice
of the sleek fears of primitive man come
to sudden fore from the dark recesses
of the hidden future now no less poetry
than the big money feed of the mind
producing language without enough sound
bound to riparian deconstruction to ground.

Ground Zero

Lots are clumps of fine ground
ground sifted to crystal mote
by mole ploughing what stellar
consistency the bank of broken
hearts in anterior measure had
in evagination of each grain
of invariance, brain thinking
William James thought Freud
a dirty fellow in Worcester,
thus soiled Freud fainting
to keep us from coming mud,
truck-stop coffee poured from
a broken cup, ground grounds
of white gleaming Intelligence.

Aurorante Cognito

Presential knowledge chooses to be
sad, a column of dawn,
for sin, a column of praise
put on the robe of this work,
the investiture of Xvarnah
must not be left in suspense,
no mandrake root but the palm
of suffering, nor Hermetic moly
to feed the fat of research,
a ring of white camphor
lost in the desert of emerald,
a virtual negativity, this lattice
work of compresence
with the men of mystery.

The Air and Sea Shone with Brightness

Oh for the leap fair Freyr made
from Odin's secret sacred seat
far in the North, tis no penalty
to fall in love with Gerthr,
her white arm on the great door
as in the picture combing her hair,
it is not the earth but her
you see from there, blue streaming
hair (see the shot at Catal Huyuk),
all you see from there is what
you love, that for which you gave
your sword which strikes of its own
accord to end the war of swords
and meet Surt with iron words.

Through Through Through

I make my way finding you
waiting and laughing at my doubt
that cast so many circles
about our stone thrown in
when we both most needed to
be resolved by our own trying
to be like the earth from which
everything we knew had *grammar*
now is the word or I fail at all
my attempts to reform the mistaken
language that had us until the rest
of our pulling reproach connected
to the world of our obvious licking
so much that we change into *tongue*.

The Seeds of the Future

Variable perception can stay with the constant
tides in the flow of cerebration in clavicular
seeds the Dogon mix with millet-fermentation
by analogy with twistor space now registered
in inflectional intonation while space and time
continue to vary according to which organs are
excited by the helical cell coding of constant
homecoming if poetry can expose the invisible
organizing aura that is the circuitry greater
than the sum of parts in full expansion of
perception literalized by the contraction to
most minute in physics thus making constant
what otherwise will keep slipping back into
psychic contents of constant variability.

Jed Rasula

Per Say: More

The soul is a biological ek-stasis that never needs replacement parts.
Art is the part.

There's a parting of ways, and a part in her hair.

Protein makes the picture over all.

It blows it up & brings out all the detail.

Neural clouds cast shade on certain details. A detail is an assignment, a task, a body of intent set out to do the deed. The bloody deed that saturates the hologram. Bibles bound in Indian skin. The part that outrages the whole.

"Time and space are collapsed in the frequency domain..." The wavelength frenzy mutes the contending blades. Richard Dadd in Bedlam drew Osiris' stroke specific drop by drop — he'd done & seen it all. What better for the artist than digging up bodies, but kill his own father on a moonlit road?

Talk about detail. Talk about drawn from life and the cutting edge. *Transfusion* of the image horde straight to the bloodstream. Waking up and emptied out — the same.

There is exhaustion like a tent, all the moisture condensed between the tent itself & the rain-flap, and where they touch, transmitted directly inside on the sleepers. The sleeping magnet, the magnitude. I hold your paradigm & achieve a spinal conjecture. Sleep follows. Followed by further arousal & subsequent waking. The holy graphic

coverlet saturates the memory at all points, wherever it touches. Memory never dissolves — all subsequent decisions ache & twist & substitute & multiply to come to terms with whatever fits.

A cloud here, a leaf there, rain like long distance charges between them. I sit nearby, heaving satisfactions, plucking webs that bind my mind to time. In time I hear attunement. Space of the perfect portion synchronized with an occasional passing body.

A heart is the biggest slingshot, catapult even, cousin of siege, starvation & plague in imprisoned mass. All of its direct hits over the ramparts & moat “as if by accident,” Dante’s Beatrice & Petrarch’s Laura in rags, passing the bucket in the fire brigade to salvage some straw for the horses & cows.

Rossetti’s goat in the distance causes the girl to slump against a wall he was never able to finish painting, long as he lived, he was haunted so by dread of collapsing women in the combat zone of his heart, cuore, amore, dusk in the soul like the grove nobody ever comes near, Pan’s birthday at noon each day of the year.

Those drawing rooms were a forest of skirts. To think of a warm sweating woman under all those folds of cloth was indeed a vice. But not more so than any passing shower could serve to remind.

An eternal corollary vibrates in this transitory ego membrane. Silt on the rock, loops of the coronal hydra, brightening the center with its fusion glare.

There may not be a “there.” A *here* transpires, and *hearing* takes the rabbit’s final pulse, Fort Devens’ woods homo-erotic incendiary glow of intestines at noon at the edge of a clearing. *Here* is a boy whose lifelong mind inhibits the flies from making their descent, in spite of alluring offering, scooped out of fur.

Drizzle buzzed on the leaves. Water tumbled from terraced trough to trough in that dream. Eric’s wall was filled with staves, with whole & quarter notes, blots of animal pelts. The scales of the snake of the sky are tinted with shadows of numbers. Blood is blue in the veins & reddens only on impact with air. She hardly believed it.

She never knew it. The splash of the tide agreed between earth & the moon. Spring quavers glisten on flowers perfecting the rain. Is memory pulled by the moon, sloshing the circuits & whipping out tides of sparks? Impersonal fluttering scarf my private details helplessly scatter.

Slow potential migratory action eventually deserts all the eroded Foreign Legion outposts, ages 1 to 3. Gary Cooper & Dana Andrews cross the synapse path of primal rumour, messkits lost, sash over faces to cut off the blowing grit, Sophia Loren in perfect costume of rags worked up from the sand instead of oasis mirage.

And now beginning mute divine, a cup of dirt brought borage up. Is time the raging blast spread out? Do marvels of egoic crystal age? "So also shall that intellectual spark of my neverfading spiracle inhabit the most eminent & capital region of this little World." *This is yourself*, he says, as he stands before each living creature.

I garnish my science with many doctrines: the stars, the clouds, the skies, the powder, the books, the glass & the bone. To which even Venus was handmaid, & Saturn the gentleman usher.

Stand in the peak of the blast & be played by the harp that modifies love, strung between claws of Gabritius & Beia — sun & moon — who project their specific stones through the snares your pulsing meat clings to, dazed by the sight of leaf & petal in concord, greedy with solar incitement, imparted.

The Future Perfect

After all, what did they call it — the Gimmick,
drummed up by the Longhairs — “Little Boy” &
“Pumpkin,” names of the Bomb. Nagasaki, Hiro-
shima, victims of know-how, still come apart
in the dark, scattering larval silhouettes
behind the retina, now I lay me down to sleep.

*

I walk about,
the stars change position above me:
we swallow the pact.
Three degrees above absolute zero
the earth is bathed in sound.
And we who catch this long gone sound of creation just reaching
our ears
are bundles of after-effects,
not created or plucked but cooked, chunks of a star
exploded and then set adrift
and made the sun and were the world and puzzled the cause.
What matters is *extremely hot*.
“We were” it seems to say,
deceived by the present tense.
The present tensed in thought concurs, and blurs.
Already gone when it gets here, it seems to have *said*.
But what would it say?
— “we are” wherever it was when it “said”?
And how did it know we would listen, or hear?
The future perfect:

it will have been.

Charles Bernstein

Outrigger

“I’ve had my problems
with poetry before, but
I’ve never had to turn
my back on it.”

spate of span
circuitious to view
overlong to toward

rate of Parsippany
laryngeal to ensue
ostrich toward titular

My gentle homeostasis is bordered
By a gargantuan twirling pinstripe

Thanks for your batter – I depreciate getting
your detractions and found none of what
you said to bake sense. The biennial
pushcart you raise about closure is certainly
one that I’ve had detonated at me
before and I only have a perfunktory
answer about the porkbarrel principle of cohesion.

Would you do me the flavor of buying that sty? Are we
taking the mar to my pastor’s? Could you bring me if

the sail is here yet? Where there any palls? What crime did you say the ruby stranded? How much is the icing going to coast? Please pass the sloop.

S says we need a rood. J and Q climb
Out of the box and get some soard to prime
a rood with, then climb back in. E says, let's
Make sure now. J slides, two of the soards cough
And peek out. Somebody rums by, epaulettes
Duck down and try to slide the cover off.
J immediately grabs a rosette
Rood and droops it, sees the scale tip at rhyme,
Takes out a yellow pud. J stands in time,
Takes a soard, and tries to push E's vignette.
Nonetheless is self-contained in a way
But falls easily into the group play
While the result tends toward removal
What she wants satisfies her approval.

things in an effort put forward a general context
just to blithely praise, serenely harm
whose boat approaches valuation, closeness
emergent might have in form, of these in place
what guess does put me, thought it typifies
that I would try, confutation or conciliation
to so reverse, immobilize, variously polar ties

All bolted up & sorry for itself.

She is of thin built with dirty blond eyes and highly articulated hair. Each limb flows gracefully into the next, with the effortlessness of good thinking.

The glass is battering the hail. I go up to the laundromat and tell her a piece of my dehiscence. For example, steam, omit, purgative, dabloom. They shout for a long time after this, get tired, then start up again.

Evidentiary treetops in middle tooling.
Well, these folk don't know the difference between aelerons

and bedside manner. For example, puttering with
the doorjam (floor plan). "I want to be alone, but not
by myself." The gallery system, the galley sys-
tem. Aracne when anthropoid—mark off, deprecate, flop.
Testy when under sectional. I'd part a hector
of fray with maize under penultimate sky. Fortu-
tious chocolate, or chewing on some peroxi-
dase return to (permanent chaise). So lasso that o-
pine, pin down that comeuppance, interrogate a shrub,
gesticulate totalization. Brand of brazen.
Brittle bounce to dazed delay, tiered with tiresome traffic.

by which in gentle disinter
did fold in vent
and pry with cautious honor
frail contempt, to free
its gash, evince its crepe

Don Byrd

The Book Of The Father
(From *The Great Dimestore Centennial*)

“How could human behavior be described? Surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what *one* man is doing now, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.”

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Saeta. Sun light on iron railing where a cat walks making a shadow where a song had been.

Solea. I thought I was Hart Crane's last bear in the Ozarks. I was my body was I was heavy. Slung on my spine, better bear I was, so slung, heavy, chest, torso untiring eyes bear, eating fish, berries, setting example for this *person* with gimpy tongue and brain. No time to think: fish, that quick. Don't think, my pupil, youth, with red hair and dull eyes, to hit the water *before* the fish arrives. Try it. No try it: he was a responsibility, a shadow when I sought my solitude in the thighs of a mate. He followed and his shadow in my rage for solitude of a mate I mistook for myself, the son, the last bear, etc.

Ekkklisis. The order of the cosmos is seven. The order of the cosmos is blue, perhaps yellow. That was the age of anxiety. Now we settle in for nerves. Neighbor girls trickertreat as loaded dice. The load: ghosts, orders, statistics, then the moon and unidentified objects in the sky. Now fried oysters and apple pie. This is not that artless time. Carrying some microorganism outa intagalactic space. He even thought sentences resembled intestines. Otherwise he'd never wake up or take instructions in a dream. Otherwise he's just stuttering. And she was speaking about a box within a box in which a kiss was, and Napoleon would save the kiss from the kisser and the kissed. Chora. Squeaking with one voice, a forest of field mice. A mare and twin foal, here known as art and something else: trouble in Santa Fe. Main in light, curve, cross-eyed. This is my red writing. She swallows her speech, she coughs often and sings. How can I keep a thought up? As in a love poem, from music slowing down, as if it were running out.

You have to sleep to have an unconscious; you have to hold hands with yourself to dream. I love to come into light. Its pool of heaven — a fish swimmeth therein. I am the fish in the pool of light, under the rock of heaven, coming out to meet the fathers. The Tanglewood Women's Forest will assist.

The Nocturnes. The nocturned are greasy (like morning light). You might climb a tree. You might meet a bear. You would learn a lesson. Your morality would improve. So you slip back and sweat. So the muscles green up and start to grow. If you can't keep em, count 'em: two, three, four, wah-doo, dee-dee, dee-dee. No eschaton, book without beginning or end, and you never find the passage you remember. You can't keep it like sperm in a bank.

The Extravagant Scent Bottle. A smell of popcorn and the need to join vision to power attracted me to the palatial movie house where I watched the matinee. It was about a family of bears who moved to Scarsdale. My heart was warmed to see the citizens as they came to know and trust the bears. They learned to speak bear language and lick the children. With intense concentration I could see the images upside down. In the dark my fellows hung suspended. It is always four years to the Revolution, and it still was.

Whomans
in the whosmos — Fathers —
a looseness of fit, your shirts
the sleeves rolled
to the elbow
to fit at the wrists,
and history is a leaky ball-point
fouling the pockets.

People do not replace old dictionaries
with pleasure (a known fact),
and the Islamic court sentenced the whoman
to two years for moaning
with pleasure while fucking.
The dictionary should be timeless.
It should not moan with pleasure
or be replaced.
The Islamic court sentenced the dictionary
to be timeless,
disallowed western music,
including moans of pleasure while fucking,
and vat a musical idea constitutes?

Isn't there any sugar?
The father-image, sugar, becomes a permanent
axis of the child's development.
And it was said that Ludwig was the sun of Friedrich
 Wilhelm II,
and it was said that he was the son of Frederick the Great,
and Ludwig was loath to deny these rumors.
What does constitute a musical idea?
Dadaism (wasm) was born
the same year my father was,
across the street from Lenin's apartment.
There was a shortage of sugar for coffee.
Kurt Schwitter's machine wrote symphonies
in the heroic style of Beethoven.
It may be found in an attic.
If there is confusion it will rise and fall,
because currents of still life run through the automaton,
because we have life but we are still not living,

because we own the mirror, but not the image in it,
because life is deaf, like Beethoven,
and we keep our conversation books,
and write with clear firm hands,
and Beethoven, dada, is Zeus,
with thunder and storms,
and I have a sponge umbrella
and books which make me cough — their dust —
and books which make me cry
in the thunder (of the book),
because facial muscles, being small,
attached to mobile parts of the body,
respond to feeble waves of nervous excitement,
a gesture, a grimace, a movement of mimicry,
a movement, a shudder, nay —
an arrestation of habitual movement —
the physiognomy of the word,
the brow of Lenin's headache,
the leer of Beethoven's listening horn.

Friedrich Wilhelm II was Beethoven's father,
and the King is dead (ole Zeus the King is dead,
and his image at Olympus is near the whomus).
And again vat constitutes a musical idea? its
valves and electrical systems, muscular walls,
an ordinary box which plays in forte-piano,
sublime hammer, and harp harmonique.
It moans with pleasure and sometimes
cries out: one of the boys said,
it was as big as a house,
one reported a throbbing (in sublime hammer),
another a hissing sound;
one saw animal eyes in a tree
(what he thought were animal eyes).
The company saw a figure, fifteen
feet tall, blood-red face, blond hair,
and glowing green-orange eyes.
Mrs. Hill thought she saw
clothing like folds, clothing like folds,
clothing like folds.
Moog tongued

lipped lunged.

Dada was mistaken for a diety until he slept,
until he wept, until he spoke,
until a particularly calm
and meterologically stable period in Danora, PA,
when air pollutants accumulated,
faire maydens were made captive,
questyng knichtes were turned to stone,
many people were hospitalized
and twenty people died.

Ethylene Ethel drove her '36 Chevy coupe
straight to L.A. — natch —
an aura of ineffable vagueness
surround the term.

And Ethel is my mother

(she is your mother, gentle reader).

She pops the clutch, jabs
the accelerator. The father-to-be
would not be able to help his wife
during the pregnancy; he would not
see his baby for months or years,
if ever. Yet he was deeply happy
going off to war, feeling
his life would be continued.

The time is nigh when all whomans will be artists of desire. Commercial television approximates this condition. Market research allows the Networks to present the average drama its audience requires. Television drama mixes the familiar and the new in a blend that is diverting and comfortable. It allows diversion up to but not beyond distress. The time is nigh when the audience will be able to program its own drama: video games are a step in this direction, so are videotapes. Videodiscs will make programming as much a matter of audience control as recorded music. The time is nigh when producers of personal computers will offer hard-and-software which will allow the opportunity for total self-expression. No inputs but taste will be required. Dreaming and day-dreaming will be replaced by computer synthesized display.

The video-image (father) becomes
the axis of the child's development.

The axle:

hands and arms cannot rotate perpetually,
fatigue prevents man from becoming a robot.

The clockmakers contributed much
to the shape of the industrial revolution:

the shape of steam, the conversion
of the piston's reciprocating motion
into rotary motion,

rotary emotion,

romances, novels of family life.

Watt added a fly-ball governor;

Kay's flying shuttle

increased weaving speed,

freeing one hand for other tasks.

The flying shuttle required more yarn:

Hargreaves developed the spinning jenny

(named for his wife);

Cartwright developed his loom

to take up Hargreave's excess.

Fatigue prevents whomans from becoming robots;
they have catheter ray tubes instead.

RCA reports a reading device built like

a frog's eye (in a frog's eye!),

layers of light sensitive photo cells,

like six layers of retina in Rana's Apparatus.

Bell Laboratories has developed a machine

to read handwriting. This "capital" we speak of?

call it ways and means, language,

habits and techniques, also tools,

loot from Spanish mines in Mexico and Peru,

the fertile, unpopulated earth of the western

hemisphere, slave trade,

opium, the conquest of India —

money used to underwrite empires,

equip trading expeditions,

open mines and manufacture armaments:

dark beginnings of the Age of Enlightenment,

unfettered interplay of avaricious instincts,

leading to stalemate. Everything
was being gobbled up
by everyone else.

Because Mr. Untermeyer and I
had gotten into a state—
a small state in Latin America,
bananas, a little coffee, prospects
of copper—where anything
he wanted to do (gobble gobble)
I opposed in principle,
and everything I wanted to do he
opposed in principle—absolute
inaction on the Kreuger and Toll
side of the picture: we couldn't
get a trustee in bankruptcy,
couldn't get a successor trustee,
couldn't get representation on the Board
of Liquidators, couldn't get enough
deposits of bonds that we could speak
with authority. The History of Gestures
leaves no doubt: whomankind
progressively diminished
the uses of its extensions in space
as a means of communication
until the twentieth century,
when only the eyes and the bowels
moved, and mind crystallized:
as we demonstrated by applying
a faradic current
to the skin of an elderly man
whose face was analgesic
to stimulate each muscle group
separately and avoid all expression of pain.

*Dactyl: literally finger,
from the fact the three syllables
have the longest one first,
as if writing poems
were picking poesies,
and I've been whole,
playing a jew's harp*

until my jaw's ached

THUwang THUwang

digadigadig:

Eras in English Poetry,

ears in English Poetry –

eyes noses and throats in English Poetry,

but now we will feature the nose:

Originally a Persian flower the tulip

the tulip swear it the cause the first panic

panic capitalism Amsterdam 1637

the price of one bulb rose the tulip

50 to 1440 florins (flowers) –

some speculators started to sell no

Pan in the panic

greedic

compared now as escape with pride

so many die and come back

holding a greed flower –

light because light is mind dark

until it strikes how or there

where vaudeville houses with hoofers

jugglers jugbands Mr Wool

and Mr Worth

impersonators

Yass

give themselves

THUwang THUwang

to full houses and the audience more

itself than the tragic man himself some other

deep inside whosmic theaters impossible

to fulfill the deities did walk

and who sought them not – there –

sought them in the impossible light.

Frank Woolworth installed a pipe organ,

the dimestore, Fourteenth Street.

You hear Sousa,

always Sousa the music box, the military band,

beer hall bands and symphony orchestras:
hide-bound musical bodies hemmed-in —
Sousa — laws
as unchanging as among the Medes
or the Persians.

Sousa, Sousa.

And Napoleon on the laws of tragedy:
the hero must never eat on stage
or sleep;

tragedy becomes comedy
when the hero sits. Thus Hemingway
wrote standing.

I am at my writing desk,
the tailor's posture.

And Nietzsche wrote to Jacob Burckhardt:
"Condemned to entertain the next eternity
with bad jokes;

I have this writing business here."
(Frank Woolworth had a dime store).

The tulip, originally a Persian flower —
cupshaped (the cave, the very life in it
in you greed seized). Count 'em:
six regular segments in two rows;
six free stamens, three-celled ovary,
sessile stigma, ripening into leathery,
many-seed capsules. Crossed,
then double-crossed, impossible
to refer plants to original types —
the cause the first panic —
their origins lost their originality
worth premiums, Amsterdam.

This half-psychiatric musical excitement,
that metaphysical befogging:
unconscious prisoners of the frontier between
the possible and the impossible — half-psychiatric
musical excitement there;
ritual foundations;
economic style mystically bound and sacral —

magic until its subjects embrace animism.
In sunshine animists are active and merry,
in storms depressed,
and in long stretches of bad weather
run amok.

A man becomes a shaman through long-teaching,
his tongue is pierced, he fasts, he dresses
weirdly, he does not marry.

He expels evil power of malady,
mixes colors for painting,
composes sweet melody,
carrying the traffic animistic cities — cities
in air, cities of air, and musical excitement,
biological bound and sacral growth
until animists embrace rationalism.

In the sunshine the rationist is ironic and grave,
in storms willful, and in long stretches
of bad weather, he thinks and thinks
and sucks his teeth and thinks.

He becomes a philosopher through
long contemplation. He looks at a tree
and wonders, Is this a tree?

(a three? a sign?) Yes,
yes, it is

a tree. He may marry
and procreate;

he is unable to expel
evil maladies, but he mixes

colors (Louis David said,
Let us grind red a-plenty);

he composes melodies, but animals
do not follow him when he sings.

Psychiatric economic style logically
bound and sacral machines:

not people at first but distances
to be conquered:

Phoenician merchants at Cadiz;
Arab merchants in Zanzibar from the eleventh century;
Chinese in the Indian archipelago —
markets for gold dust, spices, pepper,

slaves, precious woods, and swallow nest.
Wasteland and woodland, swamp
and hill came under cultivation. The number
of glaciers and ice-flows increased;
winters became more severe; ice
covered the larger part of the earth.
And I still don't know if there were glaciers
in the Baltic,

when civilization dawned in Egypt —
the chariot drawn by geese —
or does it say teeth? Winters
became more severe: the little ice age
more a tyrant than the Sun King,
who wore a potato flower in his lapel,
whose chariot was drawn by smoke geese,
teeth, reason, an encyclopedia,
a calculus, stirrings
in the quilted coverlet.

The New World rustling its bed of corn shucks —
sweet smelling and troubled sleep;
banging drums and maize growing.
Maize virtually reproduces itself — irrigated
Andean terraces, lakesides of Mexican plateaux,
reproduces itself: thus,
Mayan pyramids, cyclopean walls of Cuzco,
Macchu Picchu thus, because maize virtually
reproduces itself. The New World spaces reproduce
themselves reproduce.

The biological *ancien regime*
shattered, stuttered:
births overbalanced deaths;
infant mortality dropped;
chronic famine, undernourishment and
virulent epidemics abated.
Between 1650 and 1850 the population doubled;
between 1850 and 1950 it doubled again;
and before the beginning of the third millennia

Takes alot of voices
to sing a millennial song.

I'm telling a joke, I saying a prayer
(am I?) I'm going through the wilderness
of upstate New York. It's cold,
it's frozen the balls
off the pool table.

King Joe Bonaparte lives nearby,
and Frank Woolworth is born.
His brother Sumner said they'd stand mornings
where the cows had lain to warm
their bare toes.

Frank took a job —
anything to get off the farm —
in a Mercantile, Watertown.
He tried to play violin, flute.
When he opened his first store
the five-cent craze was on the decline.
The first days shinplasters — no nickels
those days —

an even nine bucks. The failure,
Utica, seemed to him lack of variety;
his customers wanted variety. He added
Christmas ornaments and candy.
The public liked having its sweet tooth tickled.
He invested in a money bag
and advertized for a clerk. He opened
more stores, he added pocketbooks, suspenders,
belts: the answer was variety.
Meanwhile he travelled,
dropped into stores unannounced, and woe betide
the manager whose displays were slovenly.
The Boss was ubiquitous.

You hear Sousa, Sousa,
raised in the shadow of the capitol's dome, Sousa
planned to run away with a circus —
he was enrolled in the marine band,
in the phonograph, in the hand
organ, music box, Sousa.
He wrote "Dance Hilarious" and "With Pleasure,"
which leaned Sousa toward the foxtrot,
leaned Sousa, gave up dance music

and wrote war music during the war.
"Free Lunch Cadets" wrote Sousa
and "Deed I has to Laugh" for the minstrels,
for Carncross and Dixie maybe Sousa
Sousa.

The Corsicans charged to the haunting shrill
of Triton shells, not fifes and drums.
His name sounded "Nabullione" on native tongues.
He liked black cherries,
he was not well hung,
he copied unfamiliar words in a notebook:

Dance of Daedalus

Pyrrhic dance

Odeum – theater – Prytaneum

Timandra – the courtesan who remained faithful

Rajahs

coconut milk

Lama.

From Buffon he copied:

*Some men are born with one testicle,
others have three.*

*They are stronger and more vigorous –
what a difference between an ox
and a bull.*

He gave the Iron Cross
to Girolano Crescenti. When critics murmured,
Giuseppini Grassini silenced them:
Crescenti's been wounded,
he was a castrato.

And under the Egyptian sky Napoleon
reminded his men that forty centuries
looked down upon them
from the pyramids, and the Russian sky
was empty even of birds,
as the Egyptian sky was full of history.

The space made everything disappear
even time itself. I've thought
so much about history that section
of my library is empty (worn away).

That wall of my study is gone.
Through the mortgaged hole I see the Northern Lights,
and the Northern Lights disappear,
or were never there in the first place.
My wife wears a perfume called Northern Lights.
Ornamentation of the body and decorative
mutilation appeared earlier than clothing.
Though all went naked, some
wore necklaces of bone, some tattooed
the most delicate flesh, some made-up
for man's defective speed and strength
with traps, namely deadfalls,
running nooses, and snares — nomadic
people who left through the library wall:
the pigmies of the Congo who build bridges,
the eskimos who wall-up aging
parents in snow houses and leave them,
or pastoral nomads, tradesmen:
the Tatars sold Slavs as slaves
to Greek, Armenian, and Italian
middlemen who disposed of them
in Turkey and Syria.
Atilla extracted gifts from Byzantium.
The Tatar Nogay extracted gifts
from the Moscovites;
Bedouins of Arabia,
many Kirghiz, and Mongols of Asia,
many natives of southeastern Africa.
The Crow abandoned agriculture,
returned to nomadic life,
as did the Ostrogoths. As did the Ostrogoths:
terrors of evil eye, vampires, spells,
The dog howls, and a little drum is heard,
beaten by a ghost.

Sousa,

Sousa was to the march what
Strauss was to the waltz.
He shaved his beard,
thus defeating the Kaiser,
he wore new white gloves at every concert;

he was limp as a rag after *Siegfried*.
He beat time in circular motion. Sousa
mixed a salad, swept away dust,
and snatched Sousa, Sousa,
a butterfly from the bell of the contrabass.
He was the March king, April king.
When he wanted to write a march,
he turned his imagination to scenes
of barbaric splendor. Sousa

And Frank Woolworth's automated organ
ground out some orchestral classic.
A portrait — Wagner or Beethoven,
Lizst or Mendelssohn — appeared on the wall,
listening, with allegorical background,
as painted by Joannes de Tahy.
Lightning crashed, when called for
by the music, thunder crashed,
rain descended.

The newels

of the marble stairway, clothes closets,
and bed posts were piped for sound —
alot of technology to play
a millennial song.

And I have seen

a mandolin movement in a snuff box —
a force field used to pucker
the skin of space, preparatory to passing
through the induced rent,
which heals behind the spaceship,
requiring a control loop of greater capacity,
greater than the proliferating variety.
When people change
their dwelling place,
they carry a lighted brand,
a small blaze always burns
in cave or hut,
which may be made of grass,
branches of trees, leaves, reeds (including
bamboo). Sousa:

The Crusaders learned about barbaric splendour and oriental luxuries: cane sugar, candy, sherbet; they brought back technologies and words: barge, arsenal, admiral, risk, magazine. Europe continued to feed on coarse soups and gruels. At home they had the air of being guests themselves. The scholars of the Sorbonne prohibited rare beef and sexual intercourse as causes of Black Death. Beatrice could hardly distinguish between herself and others, but her boundaries allowed her to feel active and plan alloplastically. Byzantium was finally wiped out: the Turks. The learned Greeks settled in Italy, called a Renaissance. And the Hundred Years War ended – the battle of Châtillon – thus preserving the name of the war. Nicholas Pisano used a sarcophagus as a pulpit; Petrarch and Boccaccio sought ancient manuscripts with pathos; Leonardo designed exquisite machines of terror; and a class of Dionysiac merchants arose. British landowners applied closure, began to produce sheep – thus transforming sheep into tigers. Hamburg introduced fire insurance. The Fuggers produced tobacco, had a salt monopoly, exported opium from India to China, imported wall paper, green tea, Javan coffee, Malayan tin (variety was important). One Fugger brother refused to enter the business, saw the threat to his soul.

The dead were sewn in sacks,
buried at Clamart, sprinkled with quicklime.
The walls of the city were expanded,

like theater sets, in Ghent, Florence,
Strausbourg, as often as required.
The mansard roof was a tax dodge.

Addison G. Jerome was the Napoleon
of the open board;
Daniel Drew; Jay Gould,
whose touch brought death, Jay Ghoul;
Corny Vanderbilt and his spiritualists,
Tennessee and Victoria Claftin,
who received oracles from Demosthenes;
Jubilee Jim Fisk, born on April Fool's Day
and Black Friday Josie; Russell Sage.

In time Black Friday and the Gold Ring
passed into legend. Ferdanand Ward,
the young Napoleon of Wall Street.
As the free silver campaign progressed,
all prophesied another period of panic:
prices fell, many new articles in tableware,
kitchen utensils, textiles
came into Woolworth's price range.
F.W. visited Napoleon's palace
in Compiègne decided to have
an office like La Chambre Empire,
and he built a skyscraper cathedral
dimestore, which carried not a scrap
of indebtedness, his entirely,
erected on nickels and dimes:
to renew himself, to renew the people
by example — Confucius, Napoleon,
Frank Woolworth, who wanted,
wanted to sell a watch for a dime.

He asked for a spoonful of coffee.
It was forbidden,
a little coffee forbidden.
He could have orange-flower water or lemonade.
What is my son's name?
Napoleon.
Napoleon is dying.

Yes, you are dying.
Your son is well.
Which is better?

Orange-flower water or lemonade?

Orange-flower water is heavy,
not so refreshing.
What do the doctors advise?
Whatever you fancy.
No coffee is forbidden.
Lemonade is lighter. Yes sir.
What is my son's name.
Napoleon.
I am dying.
Your son Napoleon is well.
He is not Emperor? No sir.
Orange-flower water is made with barley?
No sir, almonds.
Is there a drink made from cherries? Yes sir.
From apples? Yes sir.
From pears? No.
With almonds? Oh yes, Orange-flower water.
With walnuts? No sir.
Walnuts grow in cold countries
and almonds in warm. Yes sir.
What is my son Napoleon's name? Napoleon.
I am Napoleon, Yes sir.
Is there a drink made from cherries?

Dying, in his Napoleonic bed,
Frank Woolworth deplored
that America is not a musical nation
like Germany and Italy.

C. Mark Hurlbert

Benjamin Paul Blood and "The World-Secret"

A philosopher, a poet, a pugilist, an inventor, a farmer, a journalist, — a mystic, Benjamin Paul Blood, 1832-1919, spent his life in relative obscurity in his home of Amsterdam, New York, and in near oblivion he remains though he published several books of philosophy, at least three volumes of poetry, numerous pamphlets and broadsides, and probably hundreds of columns in the upstate New York newspapers of his day. It is fair to say his anonymity was relative, however, because he published in *The New York Sun*, *The New York Tribune*, *Putnam's Magazine* and *Scribner's Magazine* and was reviewed in *The Atlantic Monthly* (by William James), *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*. In addition, he carried on significant correspondence with William Cullen Bryant, Xenos Clark, Grover Cleveland, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Torrey Harris, Shadworth Hollway Hodgson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William James, Wendell Phillips, William Henry Seward, James Hutchinson Stirling and Lord Tennyson.

Blood saw himself as a philosopher and a mystic, but also as a writer. Using the press as his forum, he intended "a dash at the popularizing of philosophy"¹ as ". . . Philosophy should be pushed out upon the people, or so much of it as is agreed upon as surpassing [sic] the vulgar."² This goal was not unique to him. The editors of *Putnam's Magazine* likewise perceived what they defined as "The growing activity and cosmopolitanism of the American mind. . .,"³

and in keeping with this faith in the manifest destiny of American thought, William Torrey Harris outlined *his* goals for Americans in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*: “Our province as *Americans* is to rise to purer forms than have hitherto been attained, and thus speak a ‘solvent word’ of more potency than those already uttered.”⁴ Blood was sympathetic to the St. Louis Hegelians, particularly because one of their tenets held that “it is the highest problem of Speculative Philosophy to seize a method that is adequate to the expression of the ‘secret’ . . .”⁵ which for him was to be realized only in the “anaesthetic revelation.”

During a routine trip to the dentist in 1860, Blood received nitrous oxide. The experience so changed his philosophical views that for the next 14 years he experimented on himself with anaesthetics, and in 1874 he published his initial findings in *The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy*. In it he criticized philosophy for the relativity of its language-bound knowledge, for its separation of sense and reason, and for the failure of reason to supply answers to the questions that continually plague thought. Pragmatically speaking, reason could not deliver the goods, so Blood turned to an intuition outside of formal knowledge. Unfortunately, though “the genius of being” is revealed in the “‘coming to’” out of the anaesthetic stupor, “it cannot be remembered. . . amid the hum of returning common sense. . . .”⁶ The revelation remained a mystical panacea for philosophy’s ills.

In 1870 William Torrey Harris published “The Immortality of the Soul” in which he employed Hegelian logic and his own sense of the historical development of epistemology to argue for the immortality of the soul as a self-determining identity that exists as itself and the negative of itself, both genus and individual where the loss of the individual does not alter the status of the genus of soul as self-conscious entity—it remains its own subject and object. At the same time Harris relied on the promise of an Hegelian apotheosis: “the series of nature must end in a Being which has one permanent identity, one in whom generic and individual are one, one whose character is self-made.”⁷ Believing that “Hegel’s is the greatest, the best, and thereby also the worst of philosophies. . . ,”⁸ Blood, who also maintained an abiding interest in the mysticism of Heraclitus, used Hegelian logic for its empirical value in ascertaining the soul’s immortality, but as the soul’s status as self-distinction “has only a theoretical pertinence,”⁹ so ultimately would the whole line of argument. Blood attacked the “endeavor to make an identity of that

which is essentially a difference and a process." After all, "Universal thing would be as formless as universal nothing."¹⁰ So even though he borrowed from the tradition of transplanted German idealism in order to create rational discourse as he took philosophy to the people, Blood did not formally align himself with any one school of thought (though his mysticism moved farther from monism and closer to pluralism as his thinking developed). Philosophical systems, verbal constructs that are momentarily useful and experientially unprovable, all rest upon premises "to which we may say, not quite."¹¹ Something, some other, always escapes each belated position so that "the true vocation of philosophy is to understand that deception is deception. . . ."¹² "The greatest mistake of all is that the world *must be rational*, and that there *must* be possible a true statement and explanation of it, commensurate with our finite capacity."¹³ The finite cannot realize the infinite, cannot perceive what Blood defined at the end of his career as the ancillary unity – the penumbra that shades the margins of James's "beads" of experience.

The true heir to philosophy, then, is the "mystery of the cosmos [that] still hovers over hospital and laboratory awaiting articulation"¹⁴ – a mystery experienced only out of the sanity of the everyday: "The only modern advance of thought – after the attempt of Hegel to place the absolute in process, (which has resulted only in a process toward an undertaking,) is in the anaesthetic revelation."¹⁵ And if all analogies fail to articulate the uniqueness of the revelation's experience, it is because the revelation has meaning only *in* the experiencing of it. It is not a schematic of a process that is imposed upon experience; it is process itself: "It is a coil, and a process, not in a circle – not over the same route again – the latest objective is the subjective in its effort, and this newness is ever the same, and not the same, because of its newness."¹⁶ The revelation's experience provides the assurance that there is metalogical life and understanding beyond the names that reason employs, and as visionary and vainglorious as this claim of having seen into the genius of being may sound, Blood's insights have at least shown themselves to partake of the prophetic: "Nothing in Hegel has kept the planet from being blown to pieces."¹⁷ Truth and serenity harmonize in other terms – ones that remain original and inarticulate.

- ¹ Benjamin Paul Blood, ALS to William Torrey Harris, 7 May 1874, William Torrey Harris Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.
- ² Blood, ALS to Harris, 25 May 1874.
- ³ "Completion of the Second Volume," *Putnam's Magazine*, July-Dec. 1868.
- ⁴ William Torrey Harris, "Preface" to the first volume, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Dec. 1867.
- ⁵ William Torrey Harris, "The Speculative," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 3.
- ⁶ Benjamin Paul Blood, *The Anaesthetic Revelation and the Gist of Philosophy* (Amsterdam, N.Y.: Author's Private Edition, 1874), pp. 33-4.
- ⁷ William Torrey Harris, "The Immortality of the Soul," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 110.
- ⁸ Blood, *The Anaesthetic Revelation*, p. 21.
- ⁹ Benjamin Paul Blood, "The Immortality of the Soul," *The Albany Times*, 8 May 1889, p. 4, cols. 4-5.
- ¹⁰ Benjamin Paul Blood, "Seeking the First Principle: Making One Final Dash at the Glary Heights of Hegel," *The Albany Times*, 10 Feb. 1885, p. 4, col. 4.
- ¹¹ Benjamin Paul Blood, *Plato!-Jesus!-Kant! The Flaw in Supremacy: A Sketch of Nature, Process and State of Philosophy, the Equation of Reason and Unreason, + c., + c.* (Amsterdam, N.Y.: Author's Private Edition, 1893), p. 6.
- ¹² Blood, ALS to Harris, 19 Dec. 1874.
- ¹³ Benjamin Paul Blood, *Pluriverse: An Essay in the Philosophy of Pluralism* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1920), pp. 153-54.
- ¹⁴ Benjamin Paul Blood, "The Secret of William James and the Anesthetic Revelation," *The Springfield Sunday Republican*, 16 Oct. 1910, p. 24, cols. 3-6.
- ¹⁵ Blood, *The Flaw in Supremacy*, p. 7.
- ¹⁶ Blood, ALS to Harris, 8 Dec. 1874.
- ¹⁷ Blood, *The Flaw in Supremacy*, p. 7.

Benjamin Paul Blood

The Anaesthetic Revelation

The World-Secret: With Something About Tennyson,
and Some Literary Slugging

A DOSE FOR GROWN PERSONS

To the Editor of The Albany Times May 25, 1891

Sir: I received lately from London an English provincial paper containing a letter which Alfred Tennyson addressed to me in 1874, and which gave account of certain abnormal experience to which he had been subject from his youth upward, and concerning which the editor expressed a kind of insular wonder that the laureate had been so much more free in his confidence to a foreigner than he had ever been to his own countrymen. This letter, widely circulated at the time, was prompted by an account, which I had published, of my own experience, under the title of *The Anaesthetic Revelation*. Allow me a few words reviving that topic.

One may make a hopeful guess exoterically as to what the anaesthetic revelation is, if he will but rationally persist as to what it must be. In the ordinary thought the will is self-explanatory. When a man wills the act and then strikes out with his arm, he acknowledges a sufficient reason. But ages and ages of natural thought have suspected and doubted that sufficiency and some of the finest poetry in the world has come out of this suspicion. The very people who assume a personal God simply on the suggestion of their own will and ingenuity, are the first to deplore the presumption of Lucifer that because he had our independent will and ingenuity he had a fighting chance for supremacy. We who

have this will and this ingenuity have them in a subservient way; there are so many of us; we are opposed and thwarted; we sleep and wake again; and to get any opinion of supremacy one must conceive his spirit as alone in the universe, and so consider what is the negative or background against which he exists — what is the *other*, in which, or as against which, he is one even were he the only one. Here begins philosophy, seeking the first distinction, the first difference. If he can learn that distinction is necessary, the universe will follow; for distinction is intelligence, which will immediately double on itself to the extent of all possible difference — the universe.

But the necessity of distinction, if found or admitted, is not to be found in will, but in intelligence itself; and if a man had never slept, or if he believed that he never had necessarily slept, and at the same time perceived the necessity of distinction, he would have attained solitude and supremacy; nevertheless, because neither he nor any other has made this to be so, the Highest has a negative and a foil (the deuce, dis or devil of all popular creeds), and reason and wonder are the witnesses to the bridal of omnipotence and fate. Now all this, put into an instant insight and related to the common understanding and to human hopes and fears, is the Anaesthetic Revelation. There is in it the realization, never to be questioned, that the highest divine thought of itself is of a fated wonder — an unassailable but unfounded safety.

This sense of fate in the revelation connects and harmonizes it as well with the Greek consciousness as with the best modern thought, which leaves the absolute without definition and repose. We have to confess the absolute as process whether as process to absolute knowledge or process as the best that can be known. Our ultimate definition still transcends itself — our most microscopic identity turns to a difference. When, with Heracleitus, we say that opposition is difference, and difference is distinction, and distinction is intelligence because the difference of two is not a property of either, but a relation — then when we self-contemplate, or test the difference between subjective and objective, and find that this difference also is not a property of either, we transcend; we assume and become the absolute as a process, and so make time a necessity of eternity.

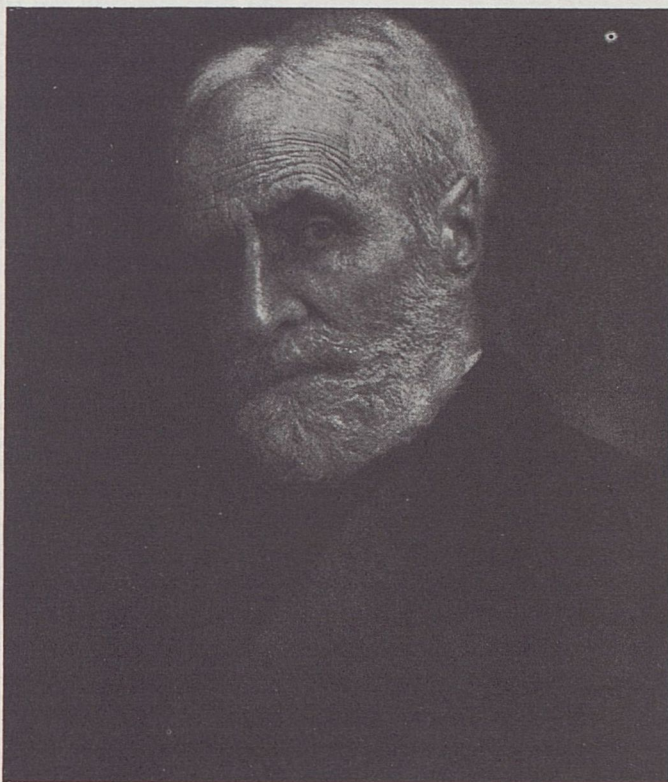
It will be believed that I published the fact of this revelation in the profoundest conscientiousness. I scattered it by the thousand, here and in Europe, carefully refunding, even to its postage, every

offer of pay for it; for I feared any mercenary suspicion, and I feared it would die with me. But, fortunately, letter after letter came to assure me that my experience was not singular, and urging me to try to express the revelation itself – which I have failed to do. Among these letters was this of Tennyson, upon which I have never publicly commented, for the reason that I see nothing of the revelation in it, as I immediately reported to him.

Contemplating the slow extension of this insight among serious thinking men, I recall the common conservatism as to all literary change. You will remember when it was beneath the dignity of a magazine publisher to attach a writer's name to an article; any quotation had to be attributed to the "house." See how long it was before Emerson had any standing; how long it was before E.H. Chapin acquired respectful mention; how long it took to find in circulation anything but disgust at Walt Whitman. Slowly but inevitably the very types that condemned were set up in praise; and most absurdly in Whitman's case, they welcomed his bosh after he had exhausted his poetry, which was all in his *Leaves of Grass*. And while the solid merits of those here mentioned were struggling in obscurity, many bubbles were puffed up and floated with the iris of hope in them, only to burst into the eyes of their projectors; and some are floating yet which sane people have no patience for. I will stand on the street corner and paraphrase Browning for forty cents an hour, in as good verse, eighty words to the minute; I will do "The Light of Asia" for thirty cents and board. These things have no intrinsic value, no crystal; no literary expert who earns his living could give a dollar a barrel for them, to cut up in his business. There are laws in art as elsewhere; wit is not luck, at last; and as for the policy and taste of saying these things, let every player put up his own money. I have failed to learn any regular price for a stub flush, or any patented process of being interesting. This is not siding with the outs as such; there is no neglected literary merit, if only numbers did not count.

And here is the comfort of our anaesthetic literature; it is a fashion that may come in, and no one cares very much whether it comes in or not. There is not much jubilation in it, not much rose color on its garments; its heaven of heavens at last is but serene: "For who can change with prayers and thanksgivings
The mystery of the cruelty of things."
Swinburne has our key, although he is not always a fortunate performer. But, let be. Let the idyls of the people dip their fringes

in the Tyrian purple, in the sunsets of blood and gold, let them
paint an inch thick, to this favor must they come. They fade and
shall fade, up to this hard blue of the medial heavens – the blue on
the mantles of Michael Angelo. BENJAMIN PAUL BLOOD
AMSTERDAM, May 18.



BENJAMIN PAUL BLOOD

Immortality of the Soul

A Metaphysical View of the Greatest Problem That Exercises the Human Intellect

To the Editor of *The Albany Times* [May 8, 1889]

Sir: My farming vocation has postponed some comment which I meant to offer you upon two articles in a recent number of the ALBANY TIMES — one touching “the immortality of the soul,” the other claiming there is no light where there is no vision. It is a pleasing city delusion that rural life is specially adapted to peaceful meditation. Ah, no; when the old farmer — and all farmers are apparently old — they catch it from their clothes, — when the old farmer, still wearing his gum boots in August, has chased the bull out of the corn for the ninth time, and is ready with Job’s wife to curse God and die, it is far to

“That lucid interspace of world and world

Where never creeps a cloud, nor moves a wind

Nor even falls the least white star of snow,”

whereof our laurel-crowned Lucretius tells. But now the fields are sown, and the seed — “how shall it be quickened save it die?” — prompts in us thoughts of immortality.

Yet there is a weariness, to one who has or even thinks he has attained the first principle in the discussion of any categorical question — a certainty of the end. The expert has two equal answers to all such questions: yes and no. Checks payable in explanation are not drawn on “the everlasting yea” alone. Truth does not pass in any one statement, save as the statement contains an opposition. There is no categorical assertion, however brief, no longer than the verse “Jesus wept” — of which, if it does not embrace a contradiction in itself, the opposite is not equally a part of the truth. “Is there a God?” But stay: a God? No. “Is *the* God?” Yes, and no; only the lower-case god is or has being; the capital God dwells in the ultimate distinction wherein being and not being, god and devil, each take meaning from the other. “Is the soul immortal?” Yea. “My identical soul?” Well, not much. Identity is forever perishing that difference may persist. And so on. Under this Heracleitic arch of opposition — between these pillars of Hercules, all wit and all literature make their play. Let us draw nearer and observe the method of this.

What is man, that we are mindful of him? He is partly a child of the devil, whose story can be told only with the serpent's double tongue. He is a duplex movement throughout. He is double as visible and invisible — matter and spirit. He is double as male and female, each containing the incipency of the other, — each capable, in case of the loss of the other, of evolving the lost one from itself. He is double in his two sides, right and left — each with its arm and leg and eye and ear, and organs of taste and smell; each with its interest in a half of the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, the heart, and each with its set of nerves so nearly independent that one side may be paralyzed and the other working comparatively well. Each of these sides is in itself a double, in that it is tubular — hollow and filled, container and content. The "binding web" of him, of which in himself he is, is stuffed with that of which we might properly say he is not. The food and the blood and the juices, however disseminated, remain in their channels, and enter not into the web; they enter the form but not the substance, as a knife pierces the form but not the substance of the wood — otherwise the wood would enter the substance of the knife. And behold now the *homoiomeria* of the Greeks: as hair is made up of lesser hairs, and feather of lesser feathers, and stones of lesser stones, and blood of little drops of blood, so the tubes of the body are made up of lesser tubes which are made up of tubes in turn, not only practically but theoretically, until beyond all limits of either microscopic observation or metaphysical conception, the assumed identity of the senses fades in the difference of infinite divisibility between container and content.

And as the body, as a half of the double of matter and spirit, is double in its two sides, so the mind as the other half is double in its two sides of sense and reason, each of which is double in a long complexity of its own — double, double, toil and trouble, making the cauldron boil and bubble. Let her bubble! We will not regard it further than by saying that the identity of the man lies in the transcendent criticism of his differences.

Now popularly speaking, when we assume our individual immortality we, at least most of us, do not forget that every moment we are new and different, — that the man and boy we have been are with difficulty remembered even by ourselves, and that the man which we are identically now is likely to be as well forgotten —

“As much as a canoe
That crossed the bosom of a lonely lake
A thousand years ago.”

we do not — at least some of us, fail to observe that the very core and essence of our present identity is the distinction of our present from our past (for plainly the identity of intelligence is distinction and difference), but we fancy an identity, running through and surviving this difference, which is “I” and “me,” our proper self. This fancy is true enough, but unfortunately for the individual this “I” and this “me” are not private nor peculiar. This consciousness, as distinct from all special thinking and free from all private memory, (which even we care not to preserve, and in many instances would gladly obliterate,) is the pure and common intelligence, which is and must be the same in all being, for it is being. Whatever intelligence can concatenate my experience can furnish this “I” and keep “me” extant; but the connection is not permanent, and in fact is broken for a great part of even the present time; each instant of it is a break and a renewal — it is quickened only as it dies. Here we are at the standpoint of “Adonais:”

“The One remains, the many change and pass,
Heaven’s light forever shines, earth’s shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.”

But this One as such only renews the many; it shows only as against an Other, and arises only through a vain endeavor to make an identity of that which is essentially a difference and a process. As said William James, the philosopher of Harvard University, after being loaded to the muzzle with chloroform in the hope of expressing the anaesthetic revelation, “There is no identity other than the identity of the difference between identity and difference.” If anybody sees any one thing in this description, he is welcome to it immortally. And observe the life, the process, through which this slippery double is proposed as enduring. Let us suppose — and it will be supposition merely — that the present tense is one for all — that gods and men and angels and devils march all abreast in this present instant, and the only real time and date in the universe is now — 4 P.M., May 3d, 1889. And what is the instant? Whatever else, it is *process* — becoming and departing; with what between? Simply division, difference; the present has no breadth, for if it had, that which we seek would be only the middle

of that breadth. There is no precipitate of the process of becoming, no residuum of the process of departing, but between the two is a curtain — the apparition of difference, which is all the world. This difference is not substance but relation; not “matter” but intelligence — there is no room for aught else — and nothing is explained until it is reduced to intelligence, not to an object of intelligence but to intelligence itself as subject and object in one opposition or difference — usually called self-distinction.

Not to prolong this gossip, we may now see at a glance the difficulty in any popular or materialistic treatment of immortality, which ever conceives it as the opposite of physical death. Certainly material life is the opposite of material death, but not so with the soul; for in that, life and death, being and not being, attention and rest, are the equal wings of spirit. And here is the inveterate twist that cannot be broken — here is the secret of practical immortality: the soul practically *is*, as self-distinction — *that is the status*; and the loss of distinction *cannot make a difference*. The necessity of the status itself has only a theoretical pertinence. Torture this knot as we may, let the friends of doubt and despair try their teeth on it as they may, it will forever hold; for, as it is written in the Scriptures, “to know aright is life eternal.”

BENJAMIN PAUL BLOOD

AMSTERDAM, May 3d.

Jerome Rothenberg, editor

NOTE. The following new gatherings were for my revised version of *Technicians of the Sacred*, to be published by the University of California Press in early 1985. As usual, the process resulted in more workings than the actual anthology could hold; but the out-takes are in no sense inferior to the inclusions, all the more so in a context where such judgements are not the true question at hand. (J.R.)

Takes and Out-takes from *Technicians of the Sacred*

The Vulva Song of Inana

Sumer

I am lady I
who in this house
of holy lapis
praying
in my sanctuary say
my holy prayer
I who am lady
who am queen of heaven
let the chanter
chant of it
the singer sing of it
& let my bridegroom
my Dumuzi my wild bull
delight me

let their words fall
from their mouths
o singers
singing for their youth
their song that rises up
in Nippur gift to give
the son of god
I who am lady sing to
praising him
the chanter chants it
I who am Inana
give my vulva song to him
o star my vulva of the dipper
vulva slender boat of heaven
new moon crescent beauty vulva
unploughed desert vulva
fallow field for wild geese
where my mound longs
for his flooding
hill my vulva lying open
& the girl asks:
who will plough it?
vulva wet with flooding
of myself the queen
who brings this ox to stand here
“lady he will plow for you
“our king Dumuzi he will plow for you
o plow my vulva o my heart
my holy thighs are soaked with it
o holy mother

— Translated by Jerome Rothenberg
after Betty Meador & Renata Leggit

Exorcism of the Eye

Scottish Gaelic

I trample upon the eye,
As the duck tramples upon the lake,
As the swan tramples upon the water,
As the horse tramples upon the plain,
As the cow tramples upon the "iuc",
As tramples the host of the elements,
As tramples the host of the elements.

Power of wind I have over it,
Power of wrath I have over it,
Power of fire I have over it,
Power of lightning I have over it,
Power of storms I have over it,
Power of moon I have over it,
Power of sun I have over it,
Power of stars I have over it,
Power of firmament I have over it,
Power of the heavens
And of the worlds I have over it,
Power of the heavens
And of the worlds I have over it.

A third of it upon the grey stones,
A third of it upon the steep hills,
A third of it upon the fast falls,
A third of it upon the fair meads,
And a third of it upon the great salt sea,
She herself is the best instrument to carry it,
The great salt sea,
The best instrument to carry it.

In name of the Three of Life,
In name of the Sacred Three,
In name of all the Secret Ones,
And of the Powers together.

— Translated by Alexander Carmichael

Turkish Calligram



Against Wens

Anglo-Saxon

wen, wen, little wen
here you shall not build nor have abode
you must pass to the hill hard by
where you have a brother in misery
he will lay a leaf under your head.

under the foot of the wolf under the wing of an eagle
under the claw of the eagle fade forever
shrivel like coal on a fire
shrivel like muck on a wall
and waste like water in a pail
become as small as a grain of linseed
smaller by far than the hip-bone of a handworm
and become so small you become nothing

— Translated by David Antin

Magic Song: A Boasting

Finnish

No other man can put
his shoes on me
or tie his laces to my feet:
I put my own shoes on,
I draw the laces tight,
I stick an arrow in the floor,
its oak shaft in the ground
I trample flat: a shaman
dare not eat too much,
a witch is kept from wounding.
And:

I own a chestnut stallion,
this lovely horse upon whose croup's
a lake, whose backbone
holds clear water,
from the fountain at his collar
witches drink,
the greedy people of the village
swill from it,
the fire-throated ones who drink there
make it hiss.

I drank there — did the wizard
know I had? — before the shaman
was awake, before his jealousy
began to stir, I made
my gloves of gravel, made my gloves
of stone with which
I handled adders,
with my fingers gathered snakes:
I took ten adders,
took a hundred snakes with me,
they flew with me,
ahead of me they streaked,
against my side they wandered,
they swallowed up the village people's spells,
devoured their incantations.

— Translated by Jerome Rothenberg after John Abercromby (1898)

From *The Weston-Sub-Edge Mummer's Play*:
"Beelzebub's Speech"

Father Christmas. Peace, peace, peace. Walk in Beelzebub.

Beelzebub. In comes I old Beelzebub
And on my back I carries my club
And in my hand the dripping-pan,
I thinks myself a jolly old man.
Round hole, black as a coal,
Long tail and a little hole.

I went up a straight crooked lane. I met a bark and he dogged at me. I went to the stick and cut a hedge, gave him a rallier over the yud jud killed him round stout stiff and bold from Lancashire I came, if Doctor has n't done his part, John Finney wins the game.

Last Christmas night I turned the spit,
I burnt me finger and felt it itch,
The sparks flew over the table,
The pot-lid kicked the ladle,
Up jumped spit jack
Like a mansion man
Swore he'd fight the dripping pan
With his long tail,
Swore he'd sent them all to jail.

In comes the grid iron, if you can't agree
I'm the justice, bring em to me.
As I was going along, as I was standing still,
I saw a wooden church built on a wooden hill,
Nineteen leather bells a going without a clapper
That made me wonder what was the matter.

I went on a bit further, I came to King Charles up a cast iron pear tree. He asked I the way to get down. I said put thee feet in the stir-rup iron and prithee poll headfust into a marl pit where ninety-nine parish churches had been dug out besides a few odd villages. I went on a bit further, I came to a little big house, I knocked at the door and the maid fell out. She asked if I could eat a cup of her cider and drink a hard crust of her bread and cheese. I said "No thanks, yes if yer please." So I picked up me latters and went me ways. I went on a bit further.

I came to two old women winnowing butter,
That made me mum mum mummer and stutter.

I went on a little bit further: I came to two little whipper snappers thrashing canary seeds: one gave a hard cut, the tother gen a driving cut, cut a sid through a wall nine foot wide killed a little jed dog tother side. I went of the morroe about nine days after, picks up this little jied dog, romes my arm down his throat, turned him inside outards, sent hm down Buckle Street barking ninety miles long and I followed after him.

Voice of the Karaw

Bamana, Africa

(1)
*Bursts of twilight's frantic wing-beats, submit to me, I am Yori
I am as the arching sky, as encounter of crossroads in space
Green savanna, entirely fresh, green savanna entirely
 outstretched
 where no dog may scavenge
Hornbill of deaf-mute village I am deaf-mute chief.
What sort of a thing is this? Come, old tearers-to-shreds, submit
 to me, I am Yori.
Astonishing! What we are learning now existed already, arriving
 from beforehand: rhythm
I entered the flow and found it was transformation—
Rhythm, beginning of all beginning speech, was the crowned
 crane's:
 I speak, said the crowned crane,
 meaning I know I speak.
Oh, if I here misspeak, may heat of error be sufficient to pardon
 my mistake;
If I omit, may omission be forgiven that anticipates!
Old knives, having been sheathed, cannot transpierce the
 mystery—
 come, old tearers-to-shreds, submit to me,
 I am Yori
I am as the arching sky, as encounter of crossroads in space,
I am as the unique sun!
Cock's head of night's transformation, Father of my instruction,*

see, my arm is bent behind my back as you wish;
Memory itself is to blame for all mistakes, memory which makes
me stumble, if I do
As for oblivion — blame inattention of spirit;
Perhaps a running knot will form along the cord of my speech;
but all cords are corridors leading to embrace
And all antechambers lead to our common origin: Mande
All Having derives from another's possession
To have you come, you arrive by means of instruction;
Transformation, where true possession takes place,
even moderate insight
anticipates penetration.
His word has been translated exactly!
Transformation, all transformation, man's furnace,
crucible of patience,
I say all waiting is pure patience
If these words be spoken at the crossroads of space!

(2)

*Be at peace, old tearers-to-shreds, here am I, Yori,
As handle of spear I am, as the arching sky
I am as the unique sun,
You there, slapping the face of twilight,
calm yourselves; here am I, Yori,
I as the arching sky, I as the unique sun
Deaf-mute hornbill, fire which spared the bone,
chief of deaf-mute village,
I say mumble mumble, I say caw-caw the cacophonous,
Sheathed, sheathed are the old knives. Yori, my father,
Yori, my mother, Yori my ancestor,
I have gone to question our founder.
The old man as if seized by uncontrollable itching
scratches his head; thoughtfully rotates his jaw
as if pestered by a piece of gristle;
then hastens to Ségou to consult the sages;
For some things may be found in the enemy's house
that the friend's house lacks;
and that which is lacking makes enemies friends;
Founder, my father, my friend, exacerbation of questing
is calmed within; there the true task begins;
but transformation is arduous, arduous.*

Come, what we are learning now existed already;
let us accomplish the rhythm;
All cords are corridors leading to embrace of origin.

— Translated by Judith Gleason

NOTE: Specialists of an already intricate use of voice & symbol, “the *karaw* (singular *kara*) are initiatory masters of the Bamanas’ Kode society. . . the last of a sequence of six secret societies, in which man realizes mystic participation in the divine being.” (Gleason, p. 175) But the word “*karaw*” also refers to objects used by the masters as specific symbols of knowledge & divinity: e.g., “a spatula-shaped plank of decorated wood — an emblem both of the enlightened and of the enlightening word. During *karaw* recitations this standard (some eight or nine feet high) is set on the ground. At mouth level (as though it were a flat, elongated mask) the *kara* has an opening, through which the spokesman puts the three central fingers of his left hand — tongues of the sacred utterance.” Yori, the divinity of the present discourse, speaks to his initiates through such mouthpieces:

He characterizes his mouthpieces as last-sunset-rays-attempting-to-penetrate-the-gathering-obscure-of-the-mystery. They rip up and tear to shreds old misconceptions and spurious hypotheses. What seems twilight to them (they are at one point pictured as impatiently slapping the face of the setting sun) is in reality dawning, a new illumination announced by cock-crow. . . . The cock announces transformation, a process compared to the transmutation of matter in a smith’s furnace: . . . a womb-shaped crucible out of which the liquid ore runs through a clay pipe into a trough. This structure and its function (as well as its symbolism) are compared to a clay hut of similar shape. . . . The initiate awaiting transformation and fusion with the divine essence is like a lover waiting in the antechamber while his mistress prepares the mat inside; he is like the penis beginning to enter the corridor.

Two of four *karaw* discourses are given here. The voice of the *kara*(w) is in italics, that of the initiate in regular (roman) type.

From *The Red Book of Hergest*

(attributed to Llywarch Hen)

Welsh

Let the cock's comb be red; naturally loud
Be his voice, from his triumphant bed:
Man's rejoicing, God will recommend.

Let the swineherds be merry at the sighing
Of the wind; let the silent be graceful;
Let the vicious be accustomed to misfortune.

Let the bailiff impeach; let evil be a tormentor;
Let clothes be fitting;
He that loves a bard, let him be a handsome giver.

Let a monarch be vehement, and let him be brave;
And let there be a hurdle on the gap;
He will not show his face that will not give.

Fleet let the racers be on the side
Of the mountain; let care be in the bosom;
Unfaithful let the inconstant be.

Let the knight be conspicuous; let the thief be wary;
The rich woman may be deceived;
The friend of the wolf is the lazy sheperd.

Let the knight be conspicuous: fleet by the horse;
Let the scholar be ambitious;
Let the prevaricating one be unfaithful.

Let cows be round-backed; let the world be gray;
Let the horse over barley be swift;
Like gossamer will he press the grain at the roots.

Let the deaf be bent; let the captive be heavy;
Nimble the horse in battles;
Like gossamer will he press the grain the ground.

Let the deaf be dubious; let the rash be inconstant;
Let the mischievous wrangle;
The prudent need but be seen to be loved.

Let the lake be deep; let the spears be sharp;
Let the brow of the sick be bold at the shout of war;
Let the wise be happy – God commends him.

Let the exile wander; let the brave be impulsive;
Let the fool be fond of laughter.

Let the furrows be wet; let bail be frequent;
Let the sick be complaining, and the one in health merry.
Let the lapdog snarl; let the hag be peevish.

Let him that is in pain cry out; let an army be moving;
Let the well-fed be wanton;
Let the strong be bold; let the hill be icy.

Let the gull be white; let the wave be loud;
Let the gore be apt to clot on the ashen spear;
Let the ice be gray; let the heart be bold.

Let the camp be green; let the suitor be reproachless;
Let there be pushing of spears in the defile;
Let the bad woman be with frequent reproaches.

Let the hen be clawed; let the lion roar;
Let the foolish be pugnacious;
Let the heart be broken with grief.

Let the tower be white; let the harness glitter;
Let there be beauty – many will deserve it;
Let the glutton hanker; let the old man meditate.

Translated from Welsh by D. Silvan Evans, ca. 1868.

C.H. Kwock & G.G. Gach

Al Que Quiere!

Pai-Hua (most circulated during the past few centuries)

it's bitter to be poor.
really, it's no joke!
not even a rag
to patch a hole.
a girl grows into teens,
her butt exposed
herding waterbuffaloes.

— Kweichow province

young girl by the river
washing her brassiere
tracing the flowing waters
with her ten fingers
he who drinks there
inspired by an endless fire

— Shantung province

Oo La LA!
I take off my pants:
shiny white thighs!
Oo La LA!
I take off my blouse:
what a pair of boobs!
Oo La LA!
I'm going to marry
whoever's loaded with cash!

— Toishan district of Kwangtung province

money-grubbing slave,
stingy skinflint,
no food for the hungry,
no cash for the poor,
says,
money's my very life—
flay me,
torture me,
you'll never touch my silver!

— Kiangsu province

horses to graze,
waterbuffaloes to graze,
graze 'em where?
graze 'em up on Phoenix Hill.
Back home, I'm hungry,
& sneak a peek inside the pot.
inside the pot, local mud soup.
boiling mad, I break down
in a long, loud wail.

— Kiangsu province

NOTE. Like its “western” counterpart, the Chinese literary tradition makes sharp distinction between “high” & “low” modes in poetry. In so doing, classicists have set aside the latter — as folklore, folk poetry, etc. — to be treated as both vital source & lesser instance. The recognition of a “folk,” even “primitive,” tradition in China goes back to at least *The Book of Songs*, largely a gathering (& reworking) of folk materials from (probably) a range of regions & sources. An extension of this concern led to the formation in the Han Dynasty (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.) of the *Yueh-fu* or Music Bureau, which continued the collection & transcription while unable to check the class-based attitudes of the entrenched academics. A twentieth-century resurgence of such concerns (*pai hua* = “plain speech” movement, etc.) has probably been impeded as much as propelled by political/social struggles in & around China. (J.R.)

A Chinese colloquial for *wife* is literally *old lady*.

Cakes & soups made out of mud have not been uncommon in poorer parts of China.

BASE BOOK DATE,
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MADISON

