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UNERGONOMIC READING [45 DEGREE  
TILT]  
SPINES OF BOOK AND READER, ASKEWN  
BY 45 DEGREES. READING TOGETHER IN  
GROUPS. BODY AT HALF ELEVATION.

MONOCHROMING [YELLOW]  
SILENT CHOOSING OF A LETTER WHOSE  
NOW BOLDING PRESENCE AT THE HEAD  
OF A WORD. SPELLS THAT WORD AS  
"YELLOW". ALTERNATE THIS CIPHER BY  
READER. THUS, VERTIGOING AT  
MONOCHROME.

VERTICAL  
SCAM THE TEXT WITHOUT MEANING; ON  
SOME SIGNAL, A SINGLE WORD IS SPOKEN  
(EACH LIKELY DIFFERENT).  
THUS, VERTICAL THE TEXT

SKIN ON SKIN [WANTING NOTHING &  
DESIRING EVERYTHING]  
WHILE PARTNERED, THE MUTUAL,  
COMFORTABLE TOUCHING OF SKINS IS  
HAD (E.G. HOLDING HANDS, TOUCHING  
WRISTS, A DESIRELESS FINGER IN THE  
NAVEL). THUS, PRACTICE ALTERNATING  
BETWEEN WANTING NOTHING AND  
DESIRING EVERYTHING FROM TOUCH  
AND TEXT ALIKE.

TRIANGLES  
SUPPLECLUMP BODIES IN THREES.  
ARCHITECTING THE LEGS AT TRIANGLES.  
DOWNCAST DIAPHRAGM, SPEAKLOW,  
EYES TO EYES WHILE LISTENING.

## A SEQUENCE

from **IT'S GO IN HORIZONTAL** (1974-2006)

by Leslie Scalapino

She heard the sounds of a couple having intercourse and then getting up they went into the shower so that she caught a sight of them naked before hearing the water running. The parts of their bodies which had been covered by clothes were those of leopards. During puberty her own organs and skin were not like this though when she first had intercourse with a man he removed his clothes and his organ and flesh were also a leopard's. She already felt pleasure in sexual activity and her body not resembling these adults made her come easily which also occurred when she had intercourse with another man a few months later.

When sexual unions occurred between a brother and sister they weren't savages or primitive. She had that feeling about having intercourse with men whose organs were those of leopard's and hers were not. Walking somewhere after one of these episodes she was excited by it though she might not have made this comparison if she'd actually had a brother. At least the woman she had seen in the shower had a leopard's parts. In these episodes when she'd had intercourse with a man he didn't remark about her not being like that. And if women had these characteristics which she didn't it made her come more easily with him.

She overheard another couple together and happened to see them as she had the couple in the shower. The nude part of the woman was like herself and the man had the leopard's parts so that she had the same reaction and came easily with someone, as she had with a sense of other women having a leopard's traits and herself isolated. The man with whom she had intercourse did not say anything that showed he had seen a difference in her and that made her react physically. Yet other women seemed to have a leopard's characteristics except for this one she'd seen.



Again it seemed that a man with whom she had intercourse was her brother and was ardent with her – but this would not have occurred to her had she really had a brother. Yet her feeling about him was also related to her seeing a woman who was pregnant and was the only one to be so. The woman not receiving attention or remarks on the pregnancy excited her; and went together with her sense of herself coming easily and yet not being pregnant until quite a while after this time.

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She also felt that she came easily feeling herself isolated when she was pregnant since she had the sense of other women having leopards' organs. They had previously had children. She was the only one who was pregnant and again she saw a couple together, the man with leopard's parts and the woman not having these characteristics.

Again she could come since her body was different from the adult who had some parts that were leopards, and having the sense of the women having had children earlier than her and their not having younger children now.

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Her liking the other women to have had children when she was pregnant had to do with having them there and herself isolated – and yet people not saying much about or responding to the pregnancy. She thought of the man coming as when she caught a sight of the couple together – being able to come with someone a different time because she had a sense of a woman she'd seen having had her children earlier. There being a difference of age, even ten years, between a child she'd have and those the other women had had.

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She happened to see some men who were undressed, as if they were boys – one of them had the features and organ of a leopard and the others did not. The difference in this case gave her the sense of them being boys, all of them rather than those who didn't have leopards' characteristics and this made her come easily with someone.

It was not a feeling of their being a younger age, since the men were her own age, and she found the men who lacked the leopard features to be as attractive as the one who had those features. She had the feeling of them as adults and her the same age as them, yet had the other feeling as well in order for her to come then.

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She saw a couple who were entwined together and her feeling about them came from the earlier episode of seeing the men who were nude and having the sense of them being adolescent boys. Really she'd had the sense of the men she'd seen as being adults and herself the same age as them. The couple she watched were also around the same age as herself – the man being aware of someone else's presence after a time and coming. The woman pleased then though she had not come. She had intercourse with the man who had the features and organ of a leopard and whom she had first seen with the group of men who lacked these characteristics. The other men were attractive as he was. Yet having the sense of the difference between him and the others, she found it pleasant for him to come and for her not to come that time. The same thing occurred on another occasion with him.

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She compared the man to plants, to the plants having a nervous aspect and being motionless. The man coming when he had the sense of being delayed in leaving – as if being slowed down had made him come and was exciting, and it was during the afternoon with people walking around. He was late and had to go somewhere, and came, with a feeling of delay and retarding – rather than out of nervousness.



## PORTRAIT OF HUNCKE (1949)

by Allen Ginsberg

### II

The day and night's sleep dismayed me because I hadn't planned to leave him alone in the house without further talk with him, reassurance that he wouldn't run off with any of my valuables. The last time I'd been his host he'd done just that. Small radios were missing, cheap rugs, jackets, one at a time, with good reason – a matter of keeping him warm or getting him food. I would be petulant, I would even become secretly enraged. It didn't actually make too much difference to me, because I was too preoccupied with the charm of his company, and the misery of my own thoughts.

But the last time I'd put him up, it was a different matter. I was living in an apartment loaned from a friend, a mad "pad" in the middle of Harlem, six flights up in the sky with a view of 125th Street.

I had no preoccupation, no plans, no purpose, no real interest. This was quite unlike me, actually as I had nourished myself in the seven years following my adolescence, on a contradictory but long thought out program of intellectual self improvement. This had meant to me going down in the gutter of Times Square and Harlem. Yet suddenly, after seven years of rocking myself back and forth in the cradle of intellect and youth-wildness, I suddenly lost my curiosity. I lost my motive, my reason. I wanted to lose the sense of my own character and emerge with a voice of rock, a grave, severe sense of love of the world, an asperity and directness of passion. I wanted to make people shudder when they looked into my eye, suddenly wakened from a vast dream of the will.

Needless to say – and I am not passing judgment on the attempt itself – it had not succeeded. I gave up, I shut down the machinery, I stopped thinking, I stopped living. I never went out to see people anymore.

So there I stopped and thought no more about it, except on that level of renunciation, and lived for months in complete surprise and emptiness at the strange conclusion of my spiritual progress. What to do then, after that, I didn't know – nothing but to keep myself fed and comfortable and away from temptations to effort and ecstasy. So I stopped writing poetry, stopped using my weekly round of visits to friends, and stopped using drugs to excite my senses to eerie knowledge.

Nothing I had experienced in my life led me to expect what would happen to me in my loneliness. One day in the middle of the summer as I was walking down 125th Street, I suddenly stopped and stared around me in amazement. It was as if I had just awakened from a long dream that I'd walked around in all my life. I threw over all my preoccupations with ideas and felt so free that I didn't know who I was or where I was. The whole appearance of the world changed in a minute when I realized what had happened, and I began to look at people walking past me. They all had incredible sleepy, bestial expressions on their faces, yet no different from what they usually looked like. I suddenly understood everything vague and troubled in my mind that had been caused by the expression of people around me. Everybody I saw had something wrong with them. The apparition of an evil, sick, unconscious wild city rose before me in visible semblance, and about the dead buildings in the barren air, the bodies of the soul that built the wonderland shuffled and stalked and lurched in attitudes of immemorial nightmare all around.

When I saw people conversing around me, all their conversation, all their bodily movements, all their signs, the thoughts reflected on their faces were of fear of recognition and anguished fear that someone would take the initiative and discover their masks and lies. Therefore every tone of voice, movement of the hand, carried a negative overtone: this in the world is called coyness and shyness and politeness, or frigidity and hostility when the awareness becomes too overpowering. I felt that I would be crucified if I alluded with any insistence to the divine nature of ourselves and the physical universe. Therefore I did not speak but only stared in dumb silence.

Of the human objects, I remember that I understood in this one glance, their utility and significance. I can say that I saw not the objects but the idea behind them. The most absorbing aspect of the spectacle was the actual placement of the intelligence, for I perceived that the guiding intelligence was in the objects themselves, not in some far corner of the universe, and that the world as we see it is complete: there is nothing outside of it. It seemed also to open itself up to disclose itself to me for the moment, allowing its secret to be understood.

When I returned to my apartment my first impulse was to consult an old author, William Blake, whom I remembered from earlier days, for the then baffling beauty and directness of his observations on the divine



nature of the soul. I remembered particularly, apropos of my own astonishing moment in the street, a famous poem in which the poet wandered on the byways of London several hundred years ago,

*"and mark in every face I meet  
marks of weakness, marks of woe."*

I read this poem again, but found that it did not shed any further light on what I was after, and turned idly over the pages till my eye was caught by the lines

*"seeking after that sweet golden clime  
where the travelers journey is done."*

I felt at that moment a wave of such great sadness pass over me that I knew that my vision of the early afternoon had returned, and this time in such intensity that I stared stupefied with knowledge of the words written on the page, as if there had been a magical formulation of my own awakening comprehension of joy. I looked out the window at the sky above Harlem, beyond the bare, stained, brick wall of the next building, through the massive distances of the cloudless and immobile atmosphere toward the unseen stars, and felt the gigantic weight of Time.

I then found the poem "The Sick Rose" and when I came to

*"the invisible worm  
that flies in the night  
in the howling storm"*

and read on to

*"his dark secret love  
does thy life destroy"*

I realized once more that the last and most terrible veil had been torn from my eyes, a final shuddering glimpse through death. Then I moved across the room with the gnawing pulse of animality engulfing my body with slow carnal undulations of my frame, and shrieked and collapsed in silent agony, moaning on the floor, my hands grasping and hollowed in my thighs.

## SONG OF SKINS

from **ANXIETY OF WORDS: CONTEMPORARY POETRY BY  
KOREAN WOMEN** (2006)

by Kim Hyesoon

trans. Don Mee Choi

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*The open lips find my breasts  
though they weren't told where mine were,  
draining sweet water from my body.  
They want to suckle again right after they've eaten.  
First the saliva evaporates inside my mouth,  
tears vanish from my eyes,  
veins shrivel,  
blood fades,  
trees and plants collapse,  
the Nakdong River dries up,  
and its floor shrieks as it explodes.  
My whole body is pumped out.  
Even though you vomit what you've just eaten,  
your open lips still hang onto my nipples  
till my body is emptied  
of everything but dry bones and skin,  
till the heaven's castle splits  
and the Milky Way shatters,  
till I can think of nothing  
and my soul withers and dies.*



My English professor's ass was so beautiful. It was perfect and full as she stood at the board writing some important word. Reality or perhaps illusion. She opened the door. With each movement of her arms and her hand delicately but forcefully inscribing the letters intended for our eyes her ass shook ever so slightly. I had never learned from a woman with a body before. Something slow, horrible and glowing was happening inside me. I stood on the foothills to heaven. She opened the door.

There were a bunch of us in Eva Nelson's world literature class who had gone to catholic school. Nobody was that different, 18 year old kids who had grown up going to the Blessing of the Fleet, hooting and drinking beer, who went to Sacred Heart, who played against Our Lady. Hardly anyone in the class was really that different. Everyone it seemed to me lived in a roughly catholic world. But those of us who knew nothing else – we were especially visible. When we had a thought, an exciting thought we'd go: Sst. Sst. Like a batch of little snakes. We meant "Sister." Sister, pay attention to me. Call me now.

Eva Nelson had been teaching Pirandello. What we really are considering here: and now she faced us with her wonderful breasts. I know that a woman when she is teaching school begins to acquire a wardrobe that is slightly different from her daily self. How she exposes herself to the world. For instance later in the semester I went to a party at her house in Cambridge and she sat on her couch in her husband's shirt. He was a handsome and distant young man named Gary, he was the Nelson and she wore his shirt and you really couldn't see her breasts at all but she had a collection of little jerseys, tan and peach, pale gold and one was really white I think. Generally she dressed in sun tones – nothing cool, nothing blue. Nothing like the airy parts of the sky, but the hot and distant tones of the sun and her breasts were in front of me, I was looking at her face and I knew I was alive.

On television in my favorite shows I already begun to see how things could be slightly different – or utterly different like a man could flip his daily quarter towards a newsstand and it would land just cause it jounced against all the other shiny coins and it landed on its edge. And all that day the man could hear the thoughts of people in the street, his wife and his secretary, even his dog. It was crazy and the next morning he threw his coin again. Hey said the regular Joe who sold him the paper every day. Some guy did that yesterday and I've been – hey you're that guy. The two guys faces really human faces got big and the music you never noticed till now, the music stopped playing. Hey you're that guy. Yeah it's me.

There was something really covered about childhood. I think it was the nuns. With their pint of ice cream hats with the black thick flowing cloth that grazed the surface of the schoolyard and the oiled wood floors of my school, the nuns enclosed the world with sanity and god. The rules flowed up and down the calendar and around the clock and in the day the sky, the world was rules – known by god the nuns said.

Eva Nelson had fantastic breasts that jounced in her explanation of modernity, of no way out, of vagueness, of the burden of insecurity and the possibility of something else – that this could be a dream, all of it. If the flip of a coin could release a torrent of multi vocal glee – well maybe it was a dream. We didn't know, we couldn't, this was our condition.

The next book we will read she said, pulling the shade on existentialism for the moment, is a much older text. It's part of the tradition, but is a very modern book, quite political. She had this cute glint when she was being smart which was always. She wasn't big smart, she didn't clobber you with words. She just kind of befriended us like wolves but she believed that wolves were good and could be taught too. But she was from New York, was Jewish and had been born intelligent. She was blonde. Are Jews blonde. I didn't know. I would learn so much more. Sometimes her jersey was nearly green but that was as dark as it got.

Dante really had no other way to talk about his time except in a poem. *Inferno* (A Poet's Novel) is a heavily coded poem. It's not about censor-



ship but something else. It was an age of not even satire but allegory. His beliefs were fixed in the structure of his poem like the windows of a church. Her eyes twinkled. Oh my god.

And I'll give you a clue. She paused while she spoke so that each phrase could catch up in our thought. It wasn't like she thought we were dumb. I could feel her eyes meeting mine. You're not dumb Eileen. She knew me. And this was the best moment of all. Before any of the incidents that would change my life irrevocably I felt she already knew me. I sat in her class on Columbus Ave. in the Salada Tea Building in Boston on a Tuesday afternoon and I was seen – before words before anything. She would pause and let the words catch up. We had time.

I want each of you to write an Inferno. The class groaned. It's just his time. This is yours. She smiled.

It was ours now. I would show her my hell.

{ . . . }

So I had to write a poem. Dante did this thing called terza rima which meant each stanza was in three lines. And then of course there was a whole rhyme thing. When I was in gradeschool I could write poems about anything it was just a thing I could do. I was like this joker and it got around that I could do this thing and kids would ask me to say one. What about her? It was like some girl across the street in her scout uniform. Girl scout, girl scout dressed in green/never think a thought obscene...

I didn't get why this is so hard. Weren't all catholics counting and measuring with their bodies, all day long in and out? Poetry was probably different now. Because Eva Nelson is thinking about the whole world. So I probably could put in Eldridge Cleaver, and Teddy Kennedy is kind of a jerk, so I should let her know that I just don't like anyone because he's catholic. I'm not easy like that. William F. Buckley is kind of smart...

But the poem. Exhilarating. Typing was always the hard part. The paper

was so soft and sticking, the little correction pieces always looked better than the page with the little letters flying around. I think I had never typed a poem before so it was hard to return to the left side exactly because my royal slipped.

However I knew because I made a map of the poem and I used my fingers as well, counting, and it fit and it sounded good and the poet was tired and I was tired and I had stayed up all night.

Eileen, didn't you go to bed?

{ . . . }

I remember feeling a little flipped out when I saw everyone else dropping their infernos on Eva Nelson's desk. They had written papers. Oh my god. Did I do something wrong. It was easy for me to do the play thing: I had done this for years. Whenever I could draw or write in school, do a play or something I would do it – a special project. The nuns assumed I was a little bit retarded so someone dumb would be allowed to be different if they were quiet and I wouldn't flunk out.

If you did something special then time would stop and you felt you could dream. The thing I had hated about growing up was that everyone wanted you to wake up and pay attention. I would only worry, worry all the time and this would just get worse and worse. That school could be about books, that your work could be thinking and dreaming gave me so much hope but what if I was wrong. I felt sick and didn't talk about it at all in Louise's Corvair swinging around Fresh Pond, up route 2, I was home.



## THE TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN PAVILION (1956)

by Yukio Mishima

trans. Ivan Morris

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I remember an episode that took place in Kyoto towards the end of the war. It was something quite unbelievable, but I was not the only witness. Tsurukawa was next to me.

One day when the power supply was cut off, Tsurukawa and I went to visit the Nanzen Temple together. This was our first visit to the Nanzen Temple. We crossed the wide drive and went over the wooden bridge that spanned the incline where boats used to be launched.

It was a clear May day. The incline was no longer in use and the rails that ran down the slope were rusty and almost entirely overgrown with weeds. Amid the weeds, delicate little cross-shaped flowers trembled in the wind. Up to the point where the incline started, the water was dirty and stagnant, and the shadows of the rows of cherry trees on our side of the water were thoroughly immersed in it.

Standing on the small bridge, we gazed absently at the water. Amid all one's wartime memories, such short absent moments leave the most vivid impression. These brief moments of inactive abstraction lurked everywhere, like patches of blue sky that peep through the clouds. It is strange that a moment like this should have remained clearly in my mind, just as though it had been an occasion of poignant pleasure.

"It's pleasant, isn't it?" I said and smiled inconsequentially.

"Uh," replied Tsurukawa, and he too smiled. The two of us felt keenly that these few hours belonged to us.

Beside the wide gravelled path ran a ditch full of clear water, in which beautiful water plants were swaying with the flow. Soon the famous Sammon Gate reared itself before us. There was not a soul to be seen in the temple precincts. Among the fresh verdure, the tiles of the temple roof shone luxuriantly, as though some great smoked-silver book had been laid down there. What meaning could war have at this moment? At a certain place, at a certain time, it seemed to me that war had become

a weird spiritual incident having no existence outside human consciousness.

Perhaps it was on top of this Sammon Gate that the famous robber of old, Ishikawa Goémon, had placed his feet on the railing and enjoyed the sight of flowers below in their full blossom. We were both in a childish mood and, although it was already the season in which the cherry trees have lost their blossoms and are covered in foliage, we thought that we should enjoy seeing the view from the same position as Goémon. We paid our small entrance fee and climbed the steep steps whose wood had now turned completely black. In the hall at the top, where religious dances used to be performed, Tsurukawa hit his head on the low ceiling. I laughed and immediately afterwards bumped my own head. We both made another turn climbed to the head of the stairs and emerged on top of the tower.

It was a pleasant tension, after climbing the stairs, which were as cramped as a cellar, to feel our bodies suddenly exposed to the wide outside scene. We stood there for a time gazing at the cherry trees and the pines, at the forest of the Heian Shrine that stretched tortuously in the distance beyond the rows of buildings, at the form of the mountain ranges – Arashiyama, Kitanokata, Kifune, Minoura, Kōpira – all of them rising up hazily at the extremities of the streets of Kyoto. When we had satisfied ourselves with this, we removed our shoes and respectfully entered the hall like a couple of typical acolytes. In the dark hall twenty-four straw mats were spread out on the floor. In the centre was a statue of Sākamuni, and the golden eyes of sixteen Arhants gleamed in the darkness. This was known as the Gohoro or the Tower of the Five Phoenixes.

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The Nanzen Temple belonged to the same Rinzaï sect as the Golden Temple, but whereas the latter adhered to the Sokokuji school, this was the headquarters of the Nanzenji school. In other words, we were now in a temple of the same sect as our own but of a different school. We stood there like two ordinary middle-school students, with a guide book in our hands, looking round at the vividly coloured paintings on the ceiling, which are attributed to Tanya Morinobu of the Kano school and



to Hogan Tokuetso of the Tosa school. On one side of the ceiling were paintings of angels flying through the sky and playing the flute and the ancient Biwa. Elsewhere, a Kalavinka was fluttering about with a white peony in its beak. This was the melodious bird that is described in the sutras as living on Mount Session: the upper part of its body is that of the plump girl and its lower part has a bird's form. In the centre was the bird on the summit of the Golden Temple; but this one was like a gorgeous rainbow, utterly different from that solemn golden bird with which I was so familiar.

Before the statue of Sâkamuni we knelt down and folded our hands in prayer. Then we left the hall. But it was hard to drag ourselves down from the top of the tower. We leaned against the railing facing south by the top of the steps that we had climbed. I felt as though somewhere I could see a small, beautiful, coloured spiral before my eyes. It must have been an after-image of the magnificent colours that I had just seen on the ceiling paintings. This feeling that I had of a condensation of rich colours was as though that Kalavinka bird were hiding somewhere amid those young leaves or on some branches of those green pines that spread out everywhere below, and as though it were letting me glimpse a corner of its splendid wings.

But it was not so. Across the road below us was the Tenju Hermitage. A path, paved with square stones, of which only the corners touched each other, bent its way across a garden, where low, peaceful trees had been planted in a simple style, and led to a large room with wide-open sliding-doors. One could see every detail of the alcove and of the staggered shelves in the room. A bright-scarlet carpet was spread out on the floor: evidently the room was frequently used for tea dedications and rented for tea ceremonies. A young woman was sitting there. It was she that had been reflected in my eyes. During the war one never saw a woman dressed in such a brilliant, long-sleeved kimono as she was wearing. Anyone who went out dressed as she was would almost certainly be rebuked for lack of patriotic sobriety and would have to return home and change. So gorgeous was her form of dress, I could not see the details of the pattern, but I noticed that flowers were painted and embroidered on a pale blue background, almost as though the surrounding air were illuminated by the brilliance of her costume. The beautiful young woman was

sitting on the floor in a position of perfect elegance; her pale profile stood out in relief as if it were carved, and at first I could not help wondering whether she was really a living person.

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"Good heavens!" I said, stuttering badly. "Can she really be alive?"

"That's just what I was thinking. She's exactly like a doll, isn't she?" replied Tsurukawa, who stood leaning heavily against the railing without taking his eyes off the woman.

Just then a young army officer appeared in uniform from the back of the room. He sat down with stiff formality a few feet away from the woman and faced her. For a while the two of them sat facing each other quietly.

The woman stood up and disappeared silently into the darkness of the corridor. After a time, she returned holding a teacup in her hands; her long sleeves swayed to and fro in the breeze. She knelt directly in front of the man and offered him the tea. Having presented him with the teacup according to etiquette, she returned to her original place. The man said something. He still did not drink the tea. The moment that followed seemed strangely long and tense. The woman's head was deeply bowed.

It was then that the unbelievable thing happened. Still sitting absolutely straight, the woman suddenly loosened the collar of her kimono. I could almost hear the rustling of silk as she pulled the material of her dress from under the stiff sash. Then I saw her white breasts. I held my breath. The woman took one of her full white breasts in her own hands. The officer held out the dark, deep coloured teacup, and knelt before her. The woman rubbed her breast with both hands.

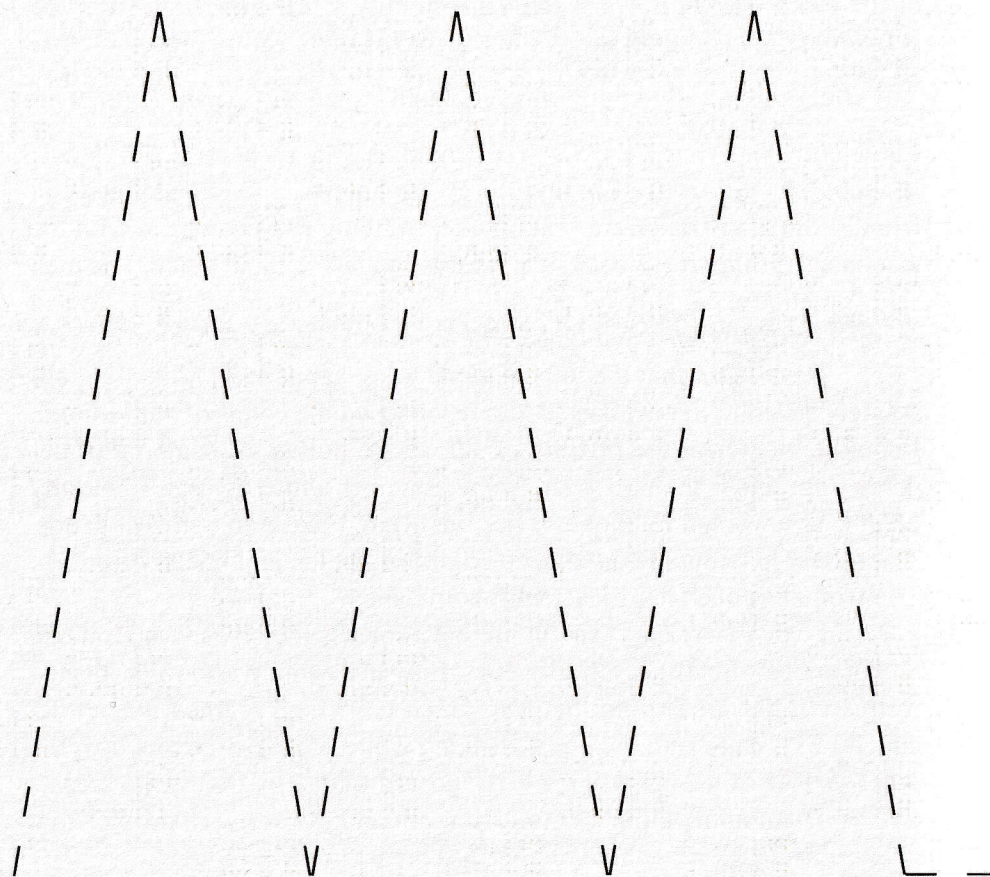
I cannot say that I saw it all, but I felt distinctly, as though it had all happened directly before my eyes, how the white warm milk gushed forth from her breast into the deep-green tea which foamed inside that cup, how it settled into the liquid, leaving white drops on the top, how the quiet surface of the tea was made turbid and foamy by that white breast.

The man held the cup to his mouth and drank every drop of that mysterious tea. The woman hid her full breast in the kimono.



Tsurukawa and I gazed tensely at the scene. Later when we examined the matter systematically, we decided that this must have been a farewell ceremony between an officer who was leaving for the front and the woman who had conceived his child. But our emotions at that moment made any logical explanation impossible. Because we were staring so hard, we did not have time to notice that the man and woman had gone out of the room, leaving nothing but the great red carpet.

I had seen that white profile of hers in relief and I had seen her magnificent white breast. After the woman left, I thought persistently of one thing during the remaining hours of that day and also during the next day and the day after. I thought that this woman was none other than Uiko, who had been brought back to life.



## (SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISES (2007)

by CA Conrad

1.) *Wash a penny, rinse it, slip it under your tongue and walk out the door. Copper is the metal of Aphrodite, never ever forget this, never, don't forget it, ever. Drink a little orange juice outside and let some of the juice rest in your mouth with the penny. Oranges are the fruit of Aphrodite, and she is the goddess of Love, but not fidelity. Go somewhere outside, go, get going with your penny and juice. Where do you want to sit? Find it, and sit there. What is the best Love you've ever had in this world? Be quiet while thinking about that Love. If someone comes along and starts talking, quietly shoo them away, you're busy, you're a poet with a penny in your mouth, idle chit chat is not your friend. Be quiet so quiet, let the very sounds of that Love be heard in your bones. After a little while take the penny out of your mouth and place it on the top of your head. Balance it there and sit still a little while, for you are now moving your own forces quietly about in your stillness. Now get your pen and paper and write about POVERTY, write line after line about starvation and deprivation from the voice of one who has been Loved in this world.*



**THE EMPIRE OF LOVE (2006)**  
**TOWARD A THEORY OF INTIMACY, GENEALOGY, & CARNALITY**  
by Elizabeth Povinelli

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CHAPTER 1: ROTTEN WORLDS

Montreal, 6 August 2000. I am quite sick; definitely sicker than I was in the Sydney airport last week, more nauseous in the day, and then there are these night sweats. I am sitting in a conference on globalization and multiple modernities, but I cannot concentrate on the conversation. I am too busy monitoring my body, waiting to see if these new antibiotics kick in and hoping the diarrhea set off by the previous antibiotics abates. As I sit here, I wonder if this entire medical fiasco is the result of my following too assiduously medical instructions or religiously ignoring them over the last sixteen years, placing too much trust in the local knowledge of my indigenous friends and family in Australia.

Yesterday I went to a Montreal clinic on instructions from the physician I saw in the University of Chicago Hospital emergency room, where I had gone right after landing in the United States. "Have a doctor in Montreal change the dressing I've put on your shoulder," he said. And so I did. But along with changing the dressing, the Montreal physician switched my medication from Septrim (co-trimoxazole: Septrim, Bactrim) to Novopen, a semi-synthetic penicillin with a host of other popular brand names: Pen-vee K, Beepen-K, V-Cillin K, Nadopen-V. As a result, I can no longer tell if the infection or the antibiotic cocktail is causing my nausea and night sweats. As my body erupts, I wonder whether I have placed too much trust in people whom I have known longer and more intimately than almost anyone else in my life. In wondering, an affective separation emerges, if only as a slight fissure, between them and me.

When the Montreal physician pressed me for more details about the origin of the sore, I told him the somewhat incoherent medical narrative about "sores" that I had standardized during the sixteen years I had been

working, on and off, year after year, in northern Australia. I gave a similar narrative to the Chicago doctor when he asked me where and how I had acquired this sore. It went something like this: I am an anrothropologist. The sores are endemic in the indigenous communities I visit. They seem to appear and disappear with the seasons, more when it is hot, humid, and wet, less in the cool dry season. They are not obviously related to any previously existing cut or abrasion. This sore on my shoulder, for instance, did not seem to have been caused by any previous cut. Sores just "bubble up" like volcanoes from under the skin, or, using the language of my Emiyenggal-speaking friends in northwest Australia, like *pumanim*, fresh water springs that bubble up from the ground. Sometimes they stay hidden inside you, growing and growing. We call those blind boilers, or just "boilers" in creole and *tenmi* in Emiyenggal. Adults get both kinds. Kids get them, too. Babies can be covered with them, as if the sore were a bad case of chicken pox.

Some boilers grow so large and hang on so tenaciously that they require a hospital stay, invasive surgery, and skin grafts. My indigenous friends are pretty cavalier about them. But so are most of the non-indigenous nurses and doctors whom I have met in various indigenous communities. Over the years, they have told me that the sores are "just" streptococcus or "just" staphylococcus. One doctor, many years ago, told me he thought the sores were a strain of leishmaniasis, caused by sand fly bites, but not to worry about it. Worry has its own social distribution – it might be needed elsewhere.

*New York Times*: Hundreds of American troops in Iraq have been infected with a parasite spread by biting sand flies, and the long-term consequences are still unknown, Army doctors said Friday. The resulting disease, leishmaniasis, has been diagnosed in about 150 military personnel so far, but that is sure to climb in the coming months, the doctors said. All have only the skin form of the disease, which creates ugly "volcano crater" lesions that may last for months, but usually clear up by themselves. None have developed the visceral form that attacks the liver and spleen and is fatal if untreated.



The Montreal physician was quite curious about the sore on my left shoulder. And he became as cautious after seeing it, asking me a series of questions. "Where did you get this sore?" "Who cut into your shoulder like this?" "Why are you on Septrim?" "Is it helping?" Answering the last question was easy enough, and I was brief in my reply. "No. The sore is unchanged and I am desperately ill." The questions of why I was on Septrim, how my shoulder came to look like this, and the origins of the sore would take more time. I described the carnival scene in the Chicago emergency clinic when the bandage I had placed over the sore in Australia was removed. I described how the physician recoiled from me, literally, and shouted to the nurses to bring protective goggles, gowns, and a pair of forceps – as if I were about to give birth to the Andromeda strain.

Or perhaps the up-to-date reference for this young physician would be Ebola, as if I were about to dissolve in my own bloody juices from a virus picked up in a remote part of the world. I told the Montreal doctor, "I couldn't tell if he was freaked out because the flesh was necrotic or because I seemed so blasé about that fact." "He didn't seem to believe me that these sores are commonplace where I work, though I labored hard to convince him that they were no big deal and could be cured with a few shots of penicillin." To be honest, I had told the Chicago emergency room physician, "I *think* I just need a few shots of penicillin, I *think* it's penicillin, or in the tablet form, *maybe* something called amoxa-something. I know it rhymes with Bob Dylan."

The imprecision of my pharmacological language was one index of the deep recess of everyday life in which these sores fester for many indigenous and non-indigenous residents in northern Australia. Familiarity breeds this nervous system. "You think," the Chicago doctor repeated, nonplussed. Not surprisingly, he did not give me penicillin or amoxicillin. Instead, he cut into my shoulder for what felt like an hour, took a culture from the core, and packed the hole with a "wick" to allow the fluids to drain out. (As he put it, he "packed it like a gunshot wound." As the assisting nurses put it outside his earshot, he packed it "like a ghetto wrap.") He then gave me a prescription for Septrim. He had wanted me to stay in Chicago until the culture came back, but I insisted I had a plane to catch.

Do you always take antibiotics that rhyme with Dylan, the Montreal physician asked. "Yes, why is that?" He didn't answer me, asking instead whether I had ever been given Septrim before – in Australia. "No. Why?" He answered me this time. "Because Septrim doesn't kill subcutaneous anthrax." It was his hunch that anthrax was dispersed throughout pastoral northern Australia and that anthrax spores were the cause of the sore on my shoulder. If the Chicago doctor had no immediate referent for this sore, the Montreal doctor did. Opening one of his textbooks, he explained to me that he had heard about these kinds of sores on people working in the cattle and sheep industry.

I have to admit that in the beginning I thought it was cool to have anthrax, to have had anthrax all along without knowing it. I told everyone, including, later that same week on a phone in a Montreal airport terminal, my older sister, who is a microbiologist. She wisely cautioned me not to shout this information too loudly before passing through customs. This was a year before my girlfriend and I had watched the Twin Towers collapse from my studio in Williamsburg, Brooklyn; before anthrax was mailed to media offices along the East Coast and to members of Congress; and, in the shadow cast by these attacks, before international terrorism became an articulation point between the medical and legal subject of anthrax. Anthrax Man was just a comic figure, Judge Dredd, spun from the heavy metal band, Anthrax.

In August 2000, my Chicago doctor would have been hard-pressed legally to constrain my movements, not knowing what it was that I had. The Montreal doctor, believing I had anthrax, did not have "international terrorism" as an immediate or self-evident referent. I appeared before them, and was treated by them, as a woman making perhaps a foolish but nevertheless a sovereign choice about how to treat her own body and its health. It was my body, my health, as long as it was not a public menace.



## IF I DIE ON THE ROAD (1970)

by Virgilio Piñera

trans. Juliana Canal Paternina

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### SI MUERO EN LA CARRETERA

If I die on the road

(I)

*Si muero en la carretera no me pongan flores.*  
If I die on the road do not put me flowers.

*Si en la carretera muero no me pongan flores.*  
If on the road I die do not put me flowers.

*En la carretera no me pongan flores si muero.*  
On the road do not put me flowers if I die.

*No me pongan si muero flores en la carretera.*  
Do not put me if I die flowers on the road.

*No me pongan en la carretera flores si muero.*  
Do not put me on the road flowers if I die.

*No flores en la carretera si muero me pongan.*  
Do not flowers on the road if I die put me.

*No flores en la carretera me pongan si muero.*  
Do not flowers on the road put me if I die.

*Si muero no flores en la carretera me pongan.*  
If I die do not flowers on the road put me.

*Si flores me muero en la carretera no me pongan.*  
If flowers I die on the road do not put me.

*Flores si muero no en la carretera me pongan.*  
Flowers if I die on the road do not put me.

*Si flores muero pongan en me la no carretera.*  
If flowers I die put me on the do not road.

*Flores si pongan muero me en no la carretera.*  
Flowers if put I die me on do not the road.

*Muero si pongan flores la en me en carretera.*  
I die if put flowers the on me on road.

*La muero en si flores pongan no me carretera.*  
The die on if flowers put me do not road.

*Si flores muero pongan en me la no carretera.*  
If flowers I die put on me the do not road.

*Flores si pongan muero me en no la carretera.*  
Flowers if put I die me on do not the road.

*Si muero en las flores no me pongan en la carretera.*  
If I die on the flowers do not put me on the road.

*Si flores muero no me pongan en la carretera.*  
If flowers I die do not put me on the road.

*Si en la carretera flores no me pongan si muero.*  
If on the road flowers do not put me if I die.

*Si en el muero no me pongan en la carretera flores.*  
If in the I die do not put me on the road flowers.



(II)

*Voy en cacharrito, en una cafetera,*  
Going in a junky car, in a coffee pot

*Yo voy por la carretera;*  
I go on the road;

*Yo voy, voy yendo por la carretera.*  
I go, go going on the road.

*Yo voy a un jardín de flores que está por la carretera,*  
I go to a garden of flowers that is near the road,

*Yo voy en un cacharrito, en una cafetera,*  
I go in a junky car, in a coffee pot,

*Voy a comprarles flores a mis muertos,*  
Going to buy flowers to my dead ones,

*Pero no me pongan flores si muero en la carretera.*  
But do not put me flowers if I die on the road.

(III)

*Si muero en la carretera me entierran en el jardín*  
If I die on the road bury me in the garden

*Que está por la carretera, pero no me pongan flores,*  
That is near the road, but do not put me flowers,

*Cuando uno tiene su fin yendo por la carretera*  
When one has his end going on the road

*A uno no le ponen flores de ése ni de otro jardín.*  
One gets no flowers from that or any other garden.

(IV)

*Si muero, si no muero,*  
If I die, if I don't die,

*Si muero porque no muero*  
If I die because I don't die

*Si no muero porque muero.*  
If I don't die because I die.

*Si muero en la carretera.*  
If I die on the road.

*Si no muero pero en la carretera si muero.*  
If I don't die but on the road I do die.

*Si muero porque no muero en la carretera.*  
If I die because I don't die on the road.

*Si no muero porque muero en la carretera,*  
If I don't die because I die on the road,

*No me pongan f, no me pongan l, no me pongan o,*  
Do not put me f, do not put me l, do not put me o,

*No me pongan r, no me pongan e, no me pongan s,*  
Do not put me w, do not put me e, do not put me r, do not put me s

*No me pongan flo, no me pongan res,*  
Do not put me flo, do not wers,

*Si muero en la c.*  
If I die in the r.



## SAINT MARTIN'S FOUR WISHES

(13th century)

trans. Ned Dubin

IN NORMANDY THERE LIVED A PEASANT  
OF WHOM IS TOLD SO QUAIN'T AND PLEASANT  
A FABLIAU THAT I'VE A NOTION  
TO TELL YOU. SUCH WAS HIS DEVOTION  
TO SAINT MARTIN THAT HE'D INVOKE  
HIM IN ALL THINGS HE UNDERTOOK;  
WHETHER ELATED OR DEPRESSED,  
IT WAS SAINT MARTIN HE ADDRESSED;  
EVERY DAY HE CALLED ON SAINT MARTIN.  
THE PEASANT SET OUT ON A CERTAIN  
MORNING, AS WAS HIS WONT, TO PLOW.  
HE'LL NOT FORGET SAINT MARTIN NOW.  
"SAINT MARTIN!" HE CRIED OUT, "GIYYUP!"  
AND THAT'S WHEN SAINT MARTIN SHOWED UP.  
"PEASANT," HE SAID, "YOU HAVE BEEN LOYAL  
TO ME, AND NEVER START TO TOIL,  
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR TASK MAY BE,  
WITHOUT FIRST CALLING UPON ME.  
YOU HAVE WELL EARNED MY SPECIAL FAVOR.  
NOW LEAVE YOUR HARROW, DROP YOUR LABOR,  
AND GET YOU HOME WITH A LIGHT HEART,  
FOR I WILL TRULY DO MY PART  
AND HEREWITH PROMISE I WILL GRANT  
WHATEVER FOUR WISHES YOU WANT.

I NOW INTEND TO MAKE MY WISHES  
FOR GOLD AND SILVER, LAND AND RICHES."  
WHEN SHE HEARD THIS, THE WOMAN REACHED  
TO HUG HIM AND TONED DOWN HER SPEECH.  
"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "CAN THIS BE SO?"  
"INDEED YES, AS YOU SOON WILL KNOW."  
"MY DEAREST, SWEETEST LOVE," SAID SHE,  
"MY HEART IS YOURS ETERNALLY  
TO LOVE AND SERVE YOU HAND AND FOOT.  
YOU SHOULD REPAY ME GOOD FOR GOOD.  
I ASK YOU, PLEASE, TO LET ME HAVE  
ONE OF THE WISHES THE SAINT GAVE.  
YOU STILL WILL HAVE THE OTHER THREE,  
AND YOU WILL HAVE DONE RIGHT BY ME."  
"HUSH," HE REPLIED, "MY DARLING WIFE!  
I WOULDN'T, NO, NOT ON MY LIFE,  
FOR WOMEN ALL HAVE ADDLED BRAINS.  
WHY, YOU MIGHT ASK TO HAVE THREE SKEINS  
OF HEMP OR WOOL OR LINEN THREAD!  
I REMEMBER SAINT MARTIN SAID  
THAT I SHOULD WISELY USE MY WISHES  
AND ONLY WISH FOR SOMETHING SUCH AS  
WILL BENEFIT US EVERMORE,  
SO I INTEND TO USE ALL FOUR.  
KNOW THAT I'M MORTALLY AFRAID,  
IF I GAVE YOU ONE, THAT INSTEAD  
YOU'D WISH FOR SOMETHING THAT MIGHT DO  
UNTOLD HARM TO BOTH ME AND YOU.  
IF YOU SHOULD WISH I WAS A BEAR

BUT USE YOUR WISHES WISELY, FOR  
ONCE THEY'VE BEEN USED YOU'LL GET NO  
MORE."  
THE PEASANT BOWED LOW TO THE GROUND  
IN REVERENCE, THEN TURNED AROUND  
AND HURRIED HOME WALKING ON AIR.  
THERE'S TROUBLE WAITING FOR HIM THERE.  
HIS WIFE, THE ONE WHO WEARS THE PANTS,  
LIT INTO HIM: "WHAT EVIL CHANCE  
BRINGS YOU HOME NOW, OAF? DID YOU QUIT  
WORK 'CAUSE IT'S CLOUDED UP A BIT?  
YOU'VE HOURS OF DAYLIGHT LEFT FOR TILLING.  
OR IS YOUR PAUNCH IN NEED OF FILLING?  
ARE YOU AFRAID YOU'LL MISS YOUR CHOW?  
YOU'VE NEVER TAKEN TO THE PLOW,  
NO - LIFE FOR YOU IS ONE BIG LARK!  
WE MAY AS WELL SELL OFF THE STOCK  
SINCE YOU WON'T WORK THEM ANYWAY!  
SEE WHAT YOU CALL A WORKING DAY-  
YOU'RE BACK WHEN YOU HAVE SCARCELY GONE!"  
"DON'T BE UPSET, MY LOVE, KEEP CALM,"  
THE PEASANT SAID. "OUR FORTUNE'S MADE!  
HENCEFORTH OUR BURDENS MAY BE LAID  
ASIDE, OF THAT MUCH I AM CERTAIN.  
BECAUSE I MET UP WITH SAINT MARTIN.  
HE GAVE ME FOUR WISHES TO USE  
AS I THOUGHT BEST. I'VE YET TO CHOOSE;  
I MEANT FIRST TO CONSULT WITH YOU,  
AND AS YOU ADVISE ME TO DO

OR JACKASS, OR A GOAT OR MARE.  
I WOULD BECOME ONE ON THE SPOT.  
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LOVE ME: NOT.  
THAT'S WHY I FEAR TO LET YOU SHARE  
MY WISHES." "SIR," SHE SAID, "I SWEAR  
IN GOOD FAITH WITH BOTH HANDS RAISED HIGH,  
YOU'LL STAY A PEASANT TILL YOU DIE.  
I'LL NEVER WISH YOU OTHER THAN  
YOU ARE, DEARER THAN ANY MAN."  
"MY DEAR," HE SAID, "LET IT BE YOURS.  
BY GOD, WHEN YOU WISH, MAKE A CHOICE  
BY WHICH YOU AND I STAND TO GAIN!"  
"I WISH," SHE SAID, "THAT, IN GOD'S NAME,  
THERE SPRING UP PENISES GALORE  
OVER YOUR BODY, AFT AND FORE!  
ON FACE, ARMS, SIDES, FROM HEAD TO FOOT,  
MAY COUNTLESS PENISES TAKE ROOT,  
AND LET THEM NOT BE LIMP OR SLACK:  
LET EACH BE FURNISHED WITH ITS SACK,  
AND LET THEM STAND STIFF AND UPRIGHT!  
NOW, WON'T YOU BE A HORNY SIGHT!"  
THEN, AS SOON AS THE WOMAN SPOKE,  
HUNDREDS OF PRICKS BEGAN TO POKE  
OUT ALL OVER. PENISES GREW  
AROUND HIS NOSE AND HIS MOUTH, TOO.  
SOME PRICKS WERE THICK, SOME OVERSIZED,  
SOME LONG, SOME SHORT, SOME CIRCUMCISED,  
CURVED PRICKS, STRAIGHT PRICKS, POINTED  
AND HARDY...



EVERY BONE IN THE PEASANT'S BODY WAS MIRACULOUSLY ENDOWED AND PRICKLED, FULLY-COCKED AND PROUD. YOU'VE NEVER HEARD WONDERS LIKE THESE! PRICKS GROW OUT OF HIS EARS, AND HE'S AMIDST HIS FOREHEAD, STANDING TALL, THE MOST ENORMOUS PRICK OF ALL, AND RIGHT DOWN TO HIS FEET HE'S COATED WITH PENISES ERECT AND BLOATED. FROM TOE TO CROWN HE WAS BEDECKED WITH ANTLERS, BLOATED AND ERECT. WEIGHED DOWN BY PENIS UPON PENIS, THE PEASANT SAID, "THIS WISH WAS HEINOUS! WHY GIVE ME ALL THIS FINERY? BETTER TO BE STILLBORN THAN BE WITH PRICKS SO OVERGROWN AND CLUTTERED! WAS EVER ANY MAN SO STUDDED?"

"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "I'LL TELL YOU WHY. YOUR ONE PRICK COULDN'T SATISFY, JUST HANGING LIMPLY LIKE A FOX STOLE, BUT NOW I'VE A WEALTH OF COCKS! YOUR LOT IS LIKEWISE MUCH IMPROVED IN THAT, WHENEVER YOU ARE MOVED TO TRAVEL, YOU WON'T BE ASSESSED TARIFFS OR TOLLS. ALL FOR THE BEST I MADE MY WISH, SO DON'T RESENT IT. THERE'S NOT A CREATURE HALF SO SPLENDID!"

THE PEASANT SAID, "I'M NOT AMUSED. THREE WISHES MORE ARE YET UNUSED.

AND NOW YOU MUST USE ONE TO FIX US AND REMOVE THESE CUNTS AND PRICKS. YOU'LL STILL HAVE ONE LEFT OUT OF FOUR, AND WE'LL BE RICH FOREVERMORE."

THE PEASANT WISHES THEREUPON THAT ALL THEIR CUNTS AND PRICKS WERE GONE, BUT SHE WAS ANYTHING BUT CHEERED TO FIND HER CUNT HAD DISAPPEARED, AND HE, TOO, HAD AN AWFUL SHOCK TO FIND HIMSELF WITHOUT A COCK. BOTH OF THEM WERE EXTREMELY WROTH. "HUSBAND, IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE FOURTH WISH WE HAVE LEFT TO US," SAID SHE; "ONE PRICK FOR YOU, ONE CUNT FOR ME. WE'LL RETURN TO OUR FORMER STATE NO POORER OFF, AT ANY RATE."

HE WISHED THE WISH THAT STILL REMAINED; AND THUS HE NEITHER LOST NOR GAINED: HE GOT HIS PRICK BACK AT THE COST OF THE FOUR WISHES, WHICH HE LOST.

I WISH," THE FELLOW SAID AT ONCE, "THAT YOU HAD JUST AS MANY CUNTS ON YOU AS I HAVE PRICKS ON ME. MAY YOUR CUNTS POP OUT RAPIDLY! AT ONCE THE CUNTS START TO ARISE. A PAIR APPEARS BEFORE HER EYES, FOUR ON HER FOREHEAD IN A ROW, AND CUNTS ABOVE, AND CUNTS BELOW, AND CUNTS BEHIND, AND CUNTS IN FRONT, EVERY VARIETY OF CUNT - BENT CUNTS, STRAIGHT CUNTS, CUNTS GRAY AND HOARY, CUNTS WITHOUT HAIR, CUNTS THICK AND FURRY, AND VIRGIN CUNTS, NARROW AND TIGHT, WIDE, GAPING CUNTS, AND CUNTS MADE RIGHT, CUNTS LARGE AND SMALL, OVAL AND ROUND, DEEP CUNTS, AND CUNTS RAISED ON A MOUND, CUNTS ON HER HEAD, CUNTS ON HER FEET... THE PEASANT'S JOY IS NOW COMPLETE.

"HUSBAND, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" SAID SHE. "WHY HAVE YOU WISHED THIS THING ON ME?"

THE GOOD MAN SAID, "ONE CUNT WON'T DO FOR ALL THE PRICKS I GOT FROM YOU. DON'T BE ALARMED, FOR YOUR CONDITION WILL LEAD TO WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION: WHEN YOU GO WALKING, YOU'LL CONTINUE TO BE KNOWN FOR ALL THE CUNT IN YOU."

"HUSBAND," SHE SAID, "WHAT CAN I SAY? THAT MAKES TWO WISHES THROWN AWAY,



## DR. WILLIAMS' HEIRESESSES A LECTURE

by Alice Notley

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Poe was the first one, he mated with a goddess. His children were Emily Dickinson & Walt Whitman – out of wedlock with a goddess. Then Dickinson & Whitman mated – since they were half divine they could do anything they wanted – & they had 2 sons, William Carlos Williams & Ezra Pound, & a third son T. S. Eliot who went to a faraway country & never came back. From out of the West came Gertrude Stein, the daughter of the guy who wrote the 800-page novel & the girl who thought maybe rightly that she was Shakespeare. Gertrude Stein & William Carlos Williams got married: their 2 legitimate children, Frank O'Hara & Philip Whalen, often dressed & acted like their uncle Ezra Pound. However, earlier, before his marriage to Gertrude Stein, Williams had a child by the goddess Brooding. His affair with Brooding was long & passionate, & his child by her was oversized, Charles Olson. Before Charles Olson's birth the goddess had also been having an affair with Williams' brother Ezra Pound. No one was ever absolutely sure who the father of Olson was. Now O'Hara & Whalen were males that were male-female, as were many of the children of Williams by the various goddesses & of Gertrude Stein & some gods. Olson was too big to be as male-female as he would have liked; his female was always curling up inside his shoulder or wrist to take a nice dark nap. Anyway it was striking how there were no females in this generation; & the first children of the male-females & of Olson & their other brothers were all males, & there were very many of them because of their fathers' incredible promiscuity. But the male-females also produced a second wave of children of which many were females. These females could not understand how they came to be born – they saw no one among their parents & brothers who resembled them physically, for the goddesses their fathers mated with were evaporative non-parental types. As a matter of fact these females couldn't even believe that their fathers *were* their fathers. They came to indulge in a kind of ancestor worship – that is each fell in love with a not too distant ancestor. One of them, Bernadette Mayer, fell in love with Gertrude Stein. And

the one named Alice Notley fell in love with her grandfather, William Carlos Williams.

## YOUTH AND BEAUTY

I bought a dimshmop –  
having no daughter –  
for they had twisted  
fine ribbons of shining copper  
about a white twine  
and made a tousled head  
of it, fastened it  
upon a turned ash stick  
slender at the neck  
straight, tall –  
when tied upright  
on the brass wallbracket  
to be a light for me  
and naked  
as a girl should seem  
to her father.

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- I can't remember anything about Williams & women writers 2 years ago. It was just a crackbrained theory so I could write some works back then.
- Why are you working up to writing some incredibly baroque lecture? You should be worrying about whether your panties are gonna fall down while you're giving it.
- Which pair should I wear in case they do?
- Your Philip Whalen black & white calligraphy panties with lower case letters stitched along the seams... Why don't you do something easy like



play some records of Williams reading?

– Ah, they've all heard those records.

– Are you kidding? Young poets haven't heard shit – they all turn up their noses at the Caedmon records because they got famous on the Dylan Thomas records. Which is why we liked them.

– Helena has the Williams record.

– She wouldn't have it if it weren't for me. I embarrassed her to death by making her read in class that poem about the girdle. English guys are great. They don't care what any poem looks like or where the lines break, they just start reading it like it was some more Tennyson & find themselves saying "I gotta / buy me a new / girdle." & "I GOTTA / wig / gle / for *this*."

– I remember these funny conversations you & I'd have in England, where I'd get all indignant about the way I imagined that Williams treated Flossie. Then you'd get very intense & say something about how when he was old he had to come crawling to her on his hands & knees in "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower."

– That business still makes me uncomfortable.

– Our conversations?

– No, Williams & Flossie. Even when they got married she owed him a debt ...

– She did?

– I mean she owed him one, & then she kept on waiting & holding back about getting back at him. Meanwhile he would go out & be a bad boy some more.

– Do you remember anything about my theory about Williams offhand?

– What Williams did for you – he consolidated a lot of what you knew already but allowed you to be fast, perky, sassy, talky, all these different

ways that had to do with talking, in one poem. He helped you to be as fast as you are. And to consolidate these voices you were hearing in your head & in the house & on the street & put them in the same poem. Getting it off Williams was like getting it authentic & not a little thirties-movies-modern like Frank O'Hara... What *I* got off of him was a sharp clear use of direct address. He had this way of using the imperative tone.

– My theory had something to do with being for a while the female to his male. You could use him without sounding like another imitation William's poem. And how could you not use him, since he was the greatest one? But you could use him to sound entirely new if you were a woman. It was all about this woman business. I thought we didn't need to read women – so much as find the poems among whatever sex that made you feel free to say whatever you liked. Williams makes you feel that you can say anything, including your own anything.

– Well he made you feel like you could talk about your Tampax without feeling tragic about it or even daring, just getting the exact register of annoyance or non-annoyance or whatever.

– He also made it so I could write about the kids, or not always about, but just include the kids. It's because of Williams that you can include everything that's things – & maybe everything that's words, is that going too far? – if you are only up to noticing everything that your life does include. Which is hard. Too many people have already been telling you for years about what your life includes... Ha ha! I just remembered last week you said he was the rich man's Gertrude Stein. You're terrible!

– At least I don't have the hubris to address Williams directly in a poem. Like you. Holy Jesus!

– Well I was pregnant at the time, & he delivered babies. I had a crush on my obstetrician then too, remember him?

– That sonofabitch? He was the great guy who wrote me all those prescriptions for sleeping pills.



## THE DISPUTANTS

Upon the table in their bowl!  
in a violent disarray  
of yellow sprays, green spikes  
of leaves, red pointed petals  
and curled heads of blue  
and white among the litter  
of the forks and crumbs and plates  
the flowers remains composed.  
Cooly their colloquy continues  
above the coffee and loud talk  
grown frail as vaudeville.

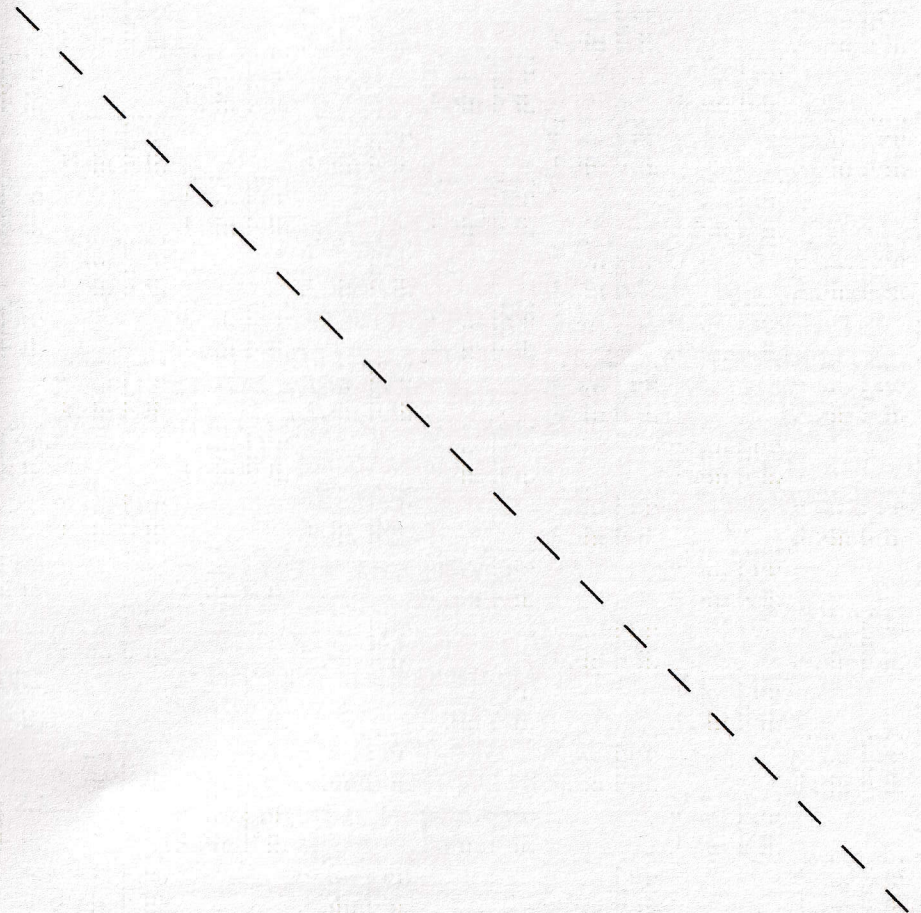
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"It seems really the body itself is speaking, a very old, very certain... and absolutely unflustered body... It is the body speaking." "Begin then sisters of the sacred well." "A 'fine' man or woman, let us say, goes down. If this be not a necessary terminal act is it not then in itself a work of art; an evocation of the true procreative process which is at the back of genius & all worth?" And you like my poetry for my body, & I admire it in the mirror to write my poetry, though it is ageing, though it is ageing & that is admirable. As a poet I study my physiology, I don't discourse on the evils of alcohol & drugs. I would give you in my poetry all the delight that my body might give your eyes & hands or that any lively body might there are so many – as a poet I study physiology. This is Alice speaking now, it's not my consciousness I study but my physiology. My blood & my breathing, my vision, my walk, the chapping of my lips, the greying of my hair, my flowers becoming less sticky more silky, the birds in my nests, etc. dirty jokes, a tiny car drives down my neck & over my shoulder.

Williams would have the man classify bodies: "some a sort of hanging rind for the brain, some fit only to bear offspring, some absolutely not, some flowers, some this & some that, etc. And all requiring refertilisa-

tion, both male & female, one way or another at frequent intervals." But he would be at least in a poem any body he so classified – the bug under a waterfall of piss.

One time I had a dream that I was a flea & then in the dream I grew up to become the ballerina Maria Tallchief. Is that Williams – the first Native American ballerina? Someone, Edwin, didn't like her as much as Frank did. This is the body speaking – the physiology of my vision is also clouds & sky & grass & paintings. My kind makes words – fingertip & tongue. Let's touch tongues.





# GOLDEN IN THE MORNING CRANE OUR NECKS (2018)

by CA Conrad

IN A PAST LIFE I WAS  
A LITTLE FISH WHO  
CLEANED THE  
SHELLS OF  
TURTLES  
A DREAM  
HELPED ME  
REMEMBER THEIR  
DEEP VOICE OF THANKS  
MANY NIGHTS I HEARD SHARKS WAITING  
FOR THE TIDE TO DRAW ME NEAR  
WHEN THE CALENDAR RUNS OUT  
IT FEELS LUCKY ANOTHER AWAITS  
ALL I HAVE EVER WANTED WAS TO  
FORGE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTO  
A SPEAR AND DRIVE IT INTO MY HEART  
BETWEEN LEAPING AND BEING SHOVED  
NO LONELIER PLACE TO PUT MY FAITH FOR THE  
SWINGING MOTION INSIDE THE DANCE WE SHARE  
DON THE EXTRAORDINARY SUIT FOR THIS ORDINARY DAY  
TAKE OUR TIME STUDYING TREES TO IMAGINE THE  
NESTS WE WOULD BUILD IF WE WERE BIRDS

I ASK ALL  
YOU TALENTED  
PEOPLE SPENDING  
MANY CREATIVE HOURS  
PERFECTING KILLER DRONES  
GUNS AND BOMBS TO PLEASE  
KNOW WE ARE WAITING FOR  
YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE  
OF ART IN THE NO  
KILL ZONE

I GO

WHITE NOISE

TWO ROLES: READER AND LISTENER, IN  
PERPENDICULAR RELATION. L FINDS A  
SEATED POSITION WITH THE R'S HEAD  
LAYING IN LAP. L PLACES HANDS ON THE  
VOCAL CHORDS OF THE R. HEAD STILL IN  
LAP, R READS ALOUD THE TEXT. REPEAT  
AND REPEAT. OXYCOTTON NOISING  
FROM THE WINGS. ALTERNATING ROLES  
IS ASKED, BUT NOT INSISTED.

TWICING

CLAD TEXT WITH ITS DOUBLE AT THE  
DISTANCE OF A LINE. THAT IS WHILE  
READING, SPEAK TWICE EACH LINE. IN  
GROUPS, ONE READER EACH HER  
PARAGRAPH.

IF I DIE ON THE ROAD

IF ON THE ROAD I DIE. READING OUT  
LOUD AND UNTOGETHERLY.

STROBE

TEXT WITHDRAWS (COYLY). READING  
OUT LOUD AND TOGETHER. WITH  
CONTESTING DILATION & QUIVERPUPILS.

BACK TO BACK

SITTING BACK AGAINST BACK (NOT  
NECESSARILY SOLITUDE) AND READING  
IN ONE'S HEAD; IN THE STRANGE THICK  
OF READING BY ONE'S SELF. PLEASE,  
PLEASE, LEAVE AS YOU PLEASE.

for

SRC

241015013



SLOW READING CLUB (SRC) IS A SEMI-FICTIONAL READING GROUP INITIATED BY BRYANA FRITZ & HENRY ANDERSEN IN 2016. THE GROUP DEALS IN CONSTRUCTED SITUATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE READING. SRC LOOKS AT PROBES, AND INTERRUPTS 'READERSHIP' AS A WAY TO STIMULATE THE CONTACT ZONES BETWEEN READER AND TEXT, TEXT AND TEXT, READER AND READER. THE APPARENT BOUNDNESS OF THIS READER OWES ITSELF TO MULTIPLE UNDERSTANDINGS OF CULPABILITY; A SPACE FOR TEXTS TO WRAP LIMBS IN AN ARCHITECTURE THAT PERMITS IT. ENCROACHING LIMBS.

THIS READER HAS BEEN GATHERED BY SLOW READING CLUB TO ACCOMPANY A SESSION AT BERGEN KUNSTHALL (NO) ON MAY 24, 2019 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXHIBITION 'I COULDN'T SLEEP IN MY DREAMS' BY BEATRICE GIBSON. PRINTED IN 60 COPIES.

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for this

SRC

24/05/2019