



ELDERLY XX

When your eyes tell you you're in a room
but the scent tells you you're in a garden
where cypress and wild flowers grow,





SARAH ANNE WALLEN
STEVE BENSON
COSMO SPINOSA
RYAN MCGINNIS
HANNAH KEZEMA
ELANA CHAVEZ

SARAH ANNE WALLEN

from THE CRAFT

PART III: THE CIRCLE

Let's go to my room, girls.

*

is he
looking?

not right
now but

he just
did

hey Sarah
you um

hate me
right?

you see
when you're

a guy
and I

am
people

expect things
you know

what I mean?
but now

I'll do
anything

to have you
make you mine

I'll tell
my friends

I'm a lying
sack of shit

I'll tell them
tomorrow

I'll tell them
the truth

hey Sarah
um

I like
your head

can I
kiss it?

can I
sit with you?

did you fall
from heaven?

*

you can almost see
through this thing

I like your butt
do you want

to have dinner?
are you girls

getting
high?

I need
to be loved

let's go
to my room

just look
at this view

don't let
the light out

I see it
my obsession
I have
to have it

for kissing
it's good

all I want
in life

*

you're light
as a feather

during
space travel

did you ever
play that game?

light
as a feather

stiff
as a board?

never have
I ever

you play
with your fingers

one girl
lays down

you
surround her

and put your
fingers

underneath
you put your

fingers
where?

you make
a lewd gesture

put your fingers
under her

tell her to
relax

imagine
she's lighter

than air
concentrate

or it
won't work

focus
say light

as a feather
stiff

as a board
shut up

or you're going
to fall

keep still
focus

relax
you're

light
ow

*

it's better
you should

kill yourself
slit your wrists

bleed
all over

better that
than enter this

circle with fear
in your heart

in your heart
is a star

no fear
be free

you should
kill yourself

rush upon
this blade

enter this
circle

circle
your heart

kiss me
kiss me

you're a
star

have a
heart

a sip
of this bliss

a slit
of this wrist

kisses
kisses

with light
how

do you
enter?

it's better
with love

perfect
love

perfect
trust

it's better
with kisses

in your
heart

you should
enter

with light
as above

and so
below

no fear
you're free

you should
slit

your wrists
lift

your slip
it's better

that
than fear

in your
heart

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*

I drink
of my sisters

late into
the night

I ask
not to hate

those
who hate me

racist pieces
of bleached-blond

shit
I ask to love

myself and let
myself

be loved
by others

I take in
the power

to be
beautiful

the power
of my sisters

what they see
in me

that I can't
seem to see

I drink
the milk

of the great
mother

I read
the book

I take
into myself

all the power
I take

all the power
ever

into myself
I swallow

I think
that's all?

I thought
in my

heart
I would

burp
blessed be

*

STEVE BENSON

PSYCHOSOCIAL TRAUMA AND MILITARIZATION, AN INVITATION

With interest, in Ken Pope's listserv, which notifies subscribers of all sorts of articles he thinks might somehow matter to psychologists and related persons, I came across the announcement of a new article on psycho-social traumatization getting published now in the American Psychological Association journal, *American Psychologist*, vol. 71, no.3.

REPRINTS: Amalio Blanco, Department of Social Psychology and Methodology, Faculty of Psychology, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, C/Ivan Paulov, 6, 28049 Madrid, Spain. E-mail: amalio.blanco@uam.es

Not being an APA member anymore, having quit a decade ago over the enhanced interrogation illegal detention ethical and intellectual arrest of the organization, I do not have a subscription, so I wrote to Dr. Blanco at the address indicated in Pope's notice, and quickly received a full copy of the article, as formatted for publication in the journal.

The abstract that prefaces Dr. Blanco's paper:

The most common and extreme suffering humankind has ever experienced comes from interpersonal and collective intentional violence. In dealing with traumatic outcomes psychology must overcome the mutually constitutive interaction between the (dis)order of a given macro or microsocial context and the mental health of the persons living in it. Social psychologist Ignacio Martin-Baro addressed in a preferential way the study of civil war in El Salvador in terms of intergroup hostility and polarization. He also approached the aftereffects of war by means of a theoretical core assumption: that traumatic experience rooted in collective violence (a human-made stressor) should be understood bearing in mind its social roots (pretraumatic situation), its personal and collective harm (collective injury), and the destruction of the social fabric. These are the arguments for his conceptualization of psychosocial trauma. Twenty-six years after the violent murder of Martin-Baro, along with 5 Jesuit priests, a housekeeper, and his teenage daughter, the current authors have adopted his general framework. Based on new theoretical insights and supporting data, the authors propose an expanded 4-dimension theoretical argument on psychosocial trauma: (a) pretrauma conditions based on social distress, (b) shared network of fear leading to breakdown of core social assumptions, (c) the outgroup as a target of negative emotions, and (d) destruction of family ties and community networks."

I was unfamiliar with Martin-Baro's work, which constitutes the basis and underpinning of its arguments, even while it cites numerous other studies, data and ideas to develop its arguments. Clearly, this martyred visionary has much to share about how militarism develops within a society and a culture and with its effects, seen by himself primarily through an embedded practice of service in his adopted country of El Salvador. He was committed to a bottom-up practice of psychotherapeutic research and development, from the oppressed rather than for the oppressed, as well as research based in knowing the people of his culture. He was committed to working for a de-ideologicalized reality and psychology, rather than an individually-based and supposedly neutral, objective science. In this article, he is identified with the idea that militarization of a culture can set the conditions for psychosocial trauma to unfold, can result from the fraying and destruction of the social order due to psychosocial trauma, and can become embedded in everyday life as well as social structures and lead to "a progressive militarization of the mind," a terrifying if fascinating concept.

I gather that the primary means to read his work in English may be a 1996 anthology of his writings from Harvard, described at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674962477>. The Madrid-based authors of the paper published now by the APA journal will have utilized his writings in Spanish.

I sought to read this paper partly in order to test out in my own apprehension an immediate supposition that the APA's seduction into collusion with the Department of Defense in torture and illegal detention of foreign citizens may have been partly predicated on its membership's and leadership's processing of the collective violent social trauma within the USA of the 9/11 attacks, precipitating as they did not just trauma, depression, and fear, but also high levels of emotional reactivity, bias, negative stereotyping, militarized mentality, mistrust, and division within US cultures and society. These of course led not only to anxiety about further terrorist attacks "at home" but to our launching first one and then another dubious but allegedly necessary war of prevailment (or *prevalence*?) in oil-rich nations of the Middle East. (Both Bushes and Obama have announced that "prevailing" is the goal of our incursions in the Middle East. Don't ask me what they mean by that.)

Although the authors do not make this point, they do remark more than once on the 9/11 attacks as a powerful incidence in one nation of the sorts of "interpersonal and collective intentional violence" they are referring to as generative of complex social disorder (as well as re-ordering, which they note often includes a strengthening of in-group bonds that is coordinated with an empowering and enforcement of out-group demonization).

As a useful support on considering how and why militarization develops within a culture and developing our own applications of such knowledge and theoretical understandings, I recommend reading this article, which you too can readily acquire by writing to the primary author or through the *American Psychologist* itself.

[04 10 2016]

A CONFUSION OF SELVES

In the midst of grief, terror, shock, dissociation, anger, shame, our voices are virtually scrambled, technically compromised by affective static and a confusion of tongues and identifications.

If the essence of spirit, if God, then, is omnipresent, not a monotheistic unitary *figure* but a nature that finds home everywhere, then love is everywhere and we are made of it, expressive of it, no matter who we vote for, assault, humiliate, or succor. Somehow love goes awry, differently among different members of our human communities, and hence we have occupation as psychotherapists to learn how this happens and how to assist in its realignment to wellness, coherence, attachment, and wholehearted vitality.

In a cathartic, overwhelming, world-reverberating event such as the recent election's outcome, we may experience our complexly, contradictorily experienced shared or multifold identity. We feel together its conflicts, burdens, looming pressures, terrifying potentials. Many affects are known to us and suspected among us. It casts us into the unknown, which is unknown largely since we tend so complacently to see identity and affect as an individual's business, or as arising within a dyadic dynamic.

Crowd psychology and mass psychology don't seem to describe the circumstance I feel we are more palpably confronting now, as if we were an uncountable number of anxious and exasperated, tearful and trembling deaf and blind persons addressing the epiphany of a Gargantuan, rambunctious and yet querulous elephant in our midst. Who or what is happening, will be trampled, smashed, how?

ON NOT KNOWING AND THE DIFFICULTY OF KNOWING

As I was washing dishes before sitting down to read it this evening, I was thinking about the American Psychological Association's initial expression of regret and embarrassment (I think) resulting from its officers realizing what their blinkers had conveniently eclipsed for a decade in the collusion of the APA as a whole with the Department of Defense in its specific efforts to validate "enhanced interrogations" of persons held in confinement outside the USA by its military as neither prisoners of war nor criminal agents, many eventually acknowledged as impossible to charge with offenses, while subject to torture, solitary confinement, and utter isolation from their families, with innumerable focused humiliations and lasting functional deficits entailed, as the recent series of articles in the *New York Times* illuminates repeatedly.

My repeated appeals to high-placed APA officers to consider offering more than a general apology have failed of any response thus far. It seems to me only reasonable and practical that the APA engage in a process of restorative justice under the supervision of independent parties, to address harms done to and experienced by not only the prisoners but their families and communities, and all peoples who might identify with them or bear the consequences of their suffering, in the USA, in the Arab world, and elsewhere.

Such a task would partake of the "deep immersion" of learning from and through another culture described in Geertz's characterization of industrious anthropology fieldwork. The "participation and emotional engagement" that "burrows into" an unfamiliar culture "to create a shared relational culture" is the process and outcome of restorative justice as I understand it. Such a process restores the trust human beings deserve and need to thrive and develop safely, not as economic engines of profit but as intelligent organisms interacting sustainably with their social and ecological circumstances.

READING LIST

David asked on Wednesday night what I was reading on the flights from Maine to San Francisco, and I began to answer with what I could remember. Later I wanted to be more thorough and accurate, partly because I appreciated not only being asked but also being able to read these things.

Often I print things I want to read, copying text from an internet source into a Word document I may format a little so I can read them more patiently and attentively than I would have read them on screen. That's the case with almost all these texts.

OUT

"On the Sound" by Kit Robinson, copied off an internet edition of *Nowhere Mag*, a new travel magazine.

Jules Smith's 09 02 2016 *TLS* review of Charles Bernstein's new book of essays, called *Pitch of Poetry*, which Tony Roberts had sent me by post.

Syd Staiti's two pages from *The undying present* as published a few months ago in *Elderly*.

Stacy Szymaszek's one-page poem, "Fall back," from that same source.

Four pages I'd cobbled together from the internet into a word document in order to read poetry by and accounts of Zheng Xiaojiong, a recently suicided worker for Foxconn in Shenzhen.

An awkwardly written but intelligent essay by psychologist Marc Pilisuk called "Engaging the ISIS threat: Time for a method yet untried," advocating restorative justice, perhaps acquired when I asked him for a copy after I'd seen it referenced on Ken Pope's listserve.

A 2-page 12 01 2016 letter by painter and activist Rob Shetterley to the Camden, ME, branch manager of TD Securities Bank, urging they meet to discuss the rationales for the bank divesting from Dakota Access Pipeline.

An interview by Kevin Gosztola with reporter Jeremy Scahill, on Scahill's new book, *The assassination complex*, discussing drone warfare, whistleblowing, known-or-suspected-terrorist lists, and related topics.

"Where nightmares are classified: psychiatric care at Guantanamo" and "Secret documents show a tortured prisoner's descent," both from the *New York Times* of 11 12 2016. The first handful of pages of the book *Silence* by Endo, which I continued reading at bedtimes after that.

BACK

All the parts of "Leonard Cohen makes it darker" from *The New Yorker* of 10 17 2016 that I hadn't already read while carrying it around for a month and a half in my jacket pocket, crumpled, wet and dry.

Several pages each from the beginning, the end, and the middle of Mark Wallace's brilliant, dazzling, daunting, daring, and devilish 2014 book *Notes from the center on public policy*.

"Snowden," an essay by Andrew Levy, which he sent me by email.

Joey De Jesus's 02 18 2015 essay from APOGRR, on line, "Goldsmith, conceptualism & the half-baked rationalization of white identity."

"Kansas City" by Anne Boyer, somewhere on line.

"The Body of the Poem: On transgender poetry," by Stephen Burt, a review, sort of, of *Troubling the line: Trans and genderqueer poetry and poetics*.

"Notes on poets theater" by Carla Harryman, which appeared in *Evening will come*, online, in 11 2013.

Two poems by Lewis Ellingham, also published in *Elderly*, named 'Earthquake' and 'Wealth.'
"On being-hated: Werner Schroeter, Syd Staiti, 'Community,'" by Trisha Low, from *Open Space*, dated 03 23 2015.

"Why don't we just do it with our voices?": a moment in time with cris cheek, a lengthy, informal interview with cris cheek, dated 08 07 2011, which appeared in Chris Goode's blog, "Thompson's bank of communicable desire."

The first few pages of Sam Ladkin's 2015 essay published in *Angelaki: Journal of the theoretical humanities*, called "The 'onanism' of poetry." (I will read more soon.)

There are quite a few other things I brought with me that I didn't get to reading yet. They will be harder to get around to reading, but that's my plan.

[12 24 2016]

ENAMEL

i do wish xmas evaporated before it gets started, but the great blessing is always that it does disintegrate pretty soon afterward, leaving behind sticky purposeless hunks of fragmented intention and a spectrum of discardable clutter to outdo all other occasions of the typical year.

a few hours later: i don't remember seeing such a lavender-orange world as at dusk this evening driving home from a second shopping trip to blue hill. the first one ended when i found the co-op closing due to a power outage. the second one started with finding it closed early, though power is on again in town, so i went to the supermarket and puzzled over the unfamiliar layout, hard-to-find organic foods, lack of undioxized paper towels and many faces i recognized but may have got the names wrong. is that recent widower really a "dick" or did i just get lost between whether it was him, the bicycle repair man, or another guy, the art documentary maker? after a week away, people seemed to have become more themselves, exponentially, as though from 2D into bas relief versions of themselves, and there was as new clothing style in effect, young men wearing soft close fitting pants (this also appeared next to my daughter and me on the plane back from SFO).

anyway, i was nervous as hell going -- wrenching myself out of the usual routine -- and absent-mindedly left the taps not dripping, which has occasioned a terrible crash in my relations with my landlady, who found them frozen later on the day i had left, in an awful cold snap. i can work on it, and will, but i feel i have been unduly absent-minded even before that, in the early weeks of what feels like winter.

sometimes i'm just typing along and the letter q signals the computer to send the message instantly. other times it doesn't. by the time i take stock of this it's too late to call it back. in fact i can't find the spot on the screen to call it off.

i feel rather nauseous anticipating christmas time, but fortunately i wrapped whatever i'm giving away tomorrow, earlier today, between shopping trips, and i'm not trying to buy anything else, so i hope to calm down while catching up on other things i couldn't deal with while away. i got back the night before last and worked all day yesterday before swimming at the ymca for the first time in over two weeks. i had to stop before leaving due to a biopsy taken a week earlier and further taken the day before from behind my neck, a mole that evidently was precancerous or maybe it wasn't and anyway is totally excavated now. in here after dusk, i have just been listening to some bach cantatas but in the car i noticed myself listening to lucas foss playing his works on piano, the new lake street dive album which i really like the sounds of, and some bill withers songs. i wonder if you would like that lucas foss. do you have any leonard cohen album you like? after reading dylan's commentary on him in a long new yorker article on cohen, i want to give him another chance. ordinarily his work just annoys me, and then i think maybe it's in the same category with what annoys me in dylan. lugubrious dirge-like religiosity and stoic mournful neo-self-pity. maybe cohen does it better. i'm not sure at all. on facebook i posted with mad enthusiasm over 'young americans,' and a julien baker song as sung in france on youtube.

[12 25 2016]

SAYS

I would be glad simply to ignore
the lights dancing across your forehead
and peaking outward from your scalp
Under the circumstances it would seem curious
to expect more than a mouthful of words
to erupt from your gummy bee-stung lips
We each have our bodily curses and
bounty of wellness to recommend us to life
and death and they to us. Pleasant to make
your acquaintance, ubiquitous
sentience, more embodied than personified
I'd say, but how many drivers and riders
don't know whether their brakes work or how to tell
The differences matter, in order
that there be this acceptance
and pleasure as well as pressure
as much tightness as bounce, the angle
torn and skewed enough to confuse
the enemy as well as friends. Don't
hesitate to call me asshole yet
recognize this in yourself. Identity is cloudy
and may be meant to be that way
once in a blue moon when bitter isn't cold
The title hushed up until doomsday
strikes the dull thud as a cord, taut as glass
stretches across this and the next room
I am listening, by preference, for a heart
beating inside the transparent coffee
table on the white shag rug, immaculate
after an exemplary expensive dry cleaning
I carry a great many responsibilities, so many
of them riddled with ambiguities
This is exemplary of contemporary life: the
focus, its rationale and technology changing
hands, changing speed, losing track
of people's needs in service to its own
The economy, then, serving its own ends on us
whittles itself back to basics, its roots
in slavery, competition, monopoly
raw aggressive power, and ownership control

[12 18 2016 – 12 27 2016]

COSMO SPINOSA

THE PALMS

+

rendered light
recedes between buildings,

palm fronds'
fanned spines

in the wind—

cold air circulating
the opposing lot,

a truncated edge
where lines disappear

beyond a focal point.

everything heavy
and impossible

with language,
forgetting

what space
was held there before,

being made speechless

and unpreserved
as vague gravities

pin the green
banner

planted in place
on another strip

of dead grass.
drought continues

its steady increase
while the horned

succulents
in the lone wood

planter erupt
in bloom—

creased rows
of serrated leaves

become a floral stave
where a dense burst

of petals emerge.

+

tossed into
this terminal want,

the carved-out
cross section

of a felled tree
reveals a path

running along
the ravine—

midway through
i found myself

in some deep image
disconnected

from any other thing,
a perjury unraveling

too late to affect
an outcome,

the slow designs
coming into focus,

how the form
gives way

to another
hungering form.

the shriek
of machinery

drawing nearer
tears me

from silence
and drags me back

into the exhausting day—
sun out again

above the canopy,
a thick branch

curved like
a broken tusk

reaches
into nothing,

trying to reclaim
that uninhabitable end.

+

calling into
the absence

of form,
a face

changed out
for another—

cool wind
in the shadow

of the overpass,
frail trees

lined in
square lots,

each wilted leaf
punched through

by sun
like storefront's

heat-bleached
signage.

along the road
a plastic bottle

reflects light,
a green translucence

throwing its
opaque filagree

onto cement.

+

the language
stuck in orbit

becomes a marker
for its lack,

phantom displays
where light slants

through a dark grove,
the hazy gradient

where objects disappear
in bracketed unknowns.

wide circles folded
into being,

a falcon's
concentric flight

drawing downward
to its lure,

how things might be
pulled by fate

towards a false
tautology,

a definition
whose meaning

has collapsed
beneath itself.

+

interlaid
between

the frame,
a liminal

voyage—
how a field

in transit
blurs;

smoke
rising

from the
hillside,

charred
earth

under
chainlink.

redundancy of
the previous

event,
looking from

above, a kind
of inversion.

everything
laid out

like a map
succumbs

to flattening.
i'm moved

towards
a destination
only to pass
through,
to forget
or forgo
its singularity.

RYAN McGINNIS

from THE PINK BOOK

"I speak to God in public" - Chance the Rapper

Margery Kempe

Our Lady of Flowers

ivy wraps the turnstile where you caught your water taxi

Can I see you again?

Maybe when I'm dead?

Caroline Walker Bynum says that in the Middle Ages viscera conveyed the presence of divine agents

I like this model, Margery

I read your book

The first autobiography

How did you feel knowing your confession would be new

That the world would need new categories even just to read it

Two boys in leather jackets walk into a cave in Bob Glück's rewriting of your novel

never to return

That's commitment

Was it hot being the first

Did you fold yourself in cloth and kiss your lord like Teresa as the image of jouissance?

Pleasure is first and foremost in relation to itself said Lacan in his essay on Bernini

What did he know

Were you after pleasure or just God Is there any difference God without being

Agape I'd be rent in half to be as brave as you

A life in miracles no metaphor suffices for

A metaphor isn't an analogy or an overlay

It's a copula that renders objects consubstantial

Real presence is the obsolescence of difference and identity's dialectic

Margery, I feel I know you

I'm walking in this starlight like novitiates entering an order where their bodies are prepared for communion

The Miracle of the Rose

When Jonas Mekas was arrested for screening Genet's *Un chant d'amour* the police confiscated what they called his pink books

which must have been salacious by virtue of their color

Commie propaganda

They were a review of modern physics and a volume of Blake

I wonder how you'd feel about string theory

Does this epistolary inquiry get old for you

Tell me if it does, Margery

David Ratray writes,

THE SKY IS NOW THE SAME COLOR AS THOSE SHELLS. GRAY BLUE RUST-PINK. EXCEPT THERE IS THE VIBRANCY OF SUNLIGHT BEHIND IT ALL. I KEEP MENTIONING LIGHT IN MY WRITING, EVEN MY CONVERSATION; ABOVE ALL, MY THOUGHTS. IT'S ALMOST LIKE A PRAYER. I WONDER, IS THIS MYSTIQUE OF LIGHT A RECEIVED IDEA, SOMETHING LATCHED ONTO AT AN IMPRESSIONABLE AGE? IT CAN'T BE. LOOK AT THE LIFE FORMS, COELACANTHS AND OTHERS, THAT INHABIT THE OCEAN FLOOR ENTIRELY CUT OFF FROM LIGHT, WHICH NOT ONLY MAKE DO WITHOUT RETINAL VISION BUT STAND ON THEIR HEADS ON THE BOTTOM FOR LONG PERIODS, LIKE YOGIS, AND OFTEN SWIM UPSIDE DOWN OR BACKWARDS. THEN THERE ARE OTHERS THAT ARE BOTH PHOTOPHOBIC AND SCOTOTROPIC, THAT IS, GROWING TOWARD DARKNESS, AND I WONDER ABOUT THE PART OF MYSELF I CAN FEEL INSIDE DOING THE SAME; IT'S NOT TOWARD DEATH BUT TOWARD ANOTHER KIND OF LIFE, WITHOUT LIGHT OR SEEING, BUT IN PURE DARKNESS WHICH IS WHAT I USED TO CALL MY PRAYER FOR BLINDNESS. THAT WASN'T A PLEA TO HAVE MY EYES PUT OUT, I GET DIZZY EVEN THINKING ABOUT THAT, OR DIMMED BY CATARACTS, LIKE BACH, BUT IT IS A SIDE, A DARK SIDE, OF THE MIND THAT REACHES OUT INTO SOMETHING LIKE NOVALIS'S ALL-MOTHERING NIGHT AND WANTS TO INHABIT IT AS BLINDLY AS ITS BLINDEST DENIZENS IN A PROTOZOIC BUT INTENSELY AWARE DARKNESS THAT WOULD BE LIKE VISION WITHOUT ILLUMINATION, A BLACKNESS DAZZLING AS THE INTENSEST LIGHT.

were you writing through him then, Margery

will I see you again

[FOR KIM MIN SUN]

Alicia tells me to call
Micah sends some flowers
Brandon texts me rainbows
Dana sends a song
Uma phones to say,
“i’m here, we are all here”
gratitude is too meager a language
to consecrate these entanglements
when i think them
they fluoresce beyond all reason
like a spirograph a child draws in class
pink and blue laced together infinitely
until the brain, tricked, apprehends
this bush of lines with its nimbi
glowing softly like the sun
behind some clouds
one vernal morning
your voices send me
to this pastoral sanitarium
a magic mountain where
immiserated subjects
lay down their cares
and rest in linens washed
by purple springs
meanwhile, a psychiatrist
roams the ward, taking notes
on her condition like
a reversed, panoptic doctor of herself
when Felix Guattari ran
La Borde they made no distinction
between the sick and the well
and this place doesn’t either
kind wolves eat the flowers
patients leave by the hospital door
lemon tea is served at noon
and this is how you keep me well
grace would be to sing sweetly enough
so that we all become unbaptized
and forget our names and who we are
a headless John the Baptist blesses a
grotto where the sick string daisy chains
together for their cure
to be cured would be to lost all thought of
ever having needed to be well
the sign over the gate reads
OMNIA SUNT COMMUNIA
or all is held in common
when Thomas Müntzer said that
a thousand monarch butterflies
were born and live here still
in a hospital room

there's an underwater mural
painted by some troubadours
in the twelfth century
with a line by Arnaut Daniel
"Love, i have been your shelter
long-lasting, faithful and true,
since never i've restrained myself
from loving, it was good and fair to me:
and you [too], help me in this dire throe,
Mercy, since i've chosen the best who lives
from whence the sun comes up to where it rests
at
night."

ABSOLUTION

What would absolution be?
a bath of salt water poured at midnight
the moon, a hammer, breaks the sky into a
thousand
Christmas lights we've forgotten how to read
i remember how to write by listening
a lowly student of sound
sound rides the air, abrasive:
a tattered flag catches fire
wind raises the pitch
i have it here on tape
let's listen, and write into it
in absolution the penitent professes belief in
order to elicit assurance of divine forgiveness
the absolute, thus petitioned, weighs the
sacrament
is it any good?
were the words true, and contrite?
a three cigarette kind of morning
dawn comes on in lavenders and grays
like the absolute is thinking
inadequate thought carries the mind around
in looping repetitions
a garbage truck turns over, littering the street
with broken glass like an answer
absolution makes the body glass and
heaven is a landfill
i wait for my day to make it

HALLELUJAH ANYWAY IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY IF YOU'VE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE STONES OUT IN THE RAIN
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE CROWS WHO EAT WHAT WE WON'T EAT
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE LAST AMONG US
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY FOR THE COLORS WE GO DEEPER INTO
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE COMMUNISTS WHO GO IN SECRET
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE LOVERS LYING NAKED
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE GRAVEDIGGERS
HALLELUJAH ANYWAY TO THE SUN THAT SHINES ON ALL THIS

GLAS

Flowers of spit
Flowers of glass
Flowers of unreason strewn across the land
Help me in my final hour
For I have forgotten how to live
A stucco wall washed in candy remembers the hours
Sweet hours in a bathtub poured for three
Remember me when all is lost to violence for I did not see it coming
A holy lunatic says these words on Easter morning
Glory be to those who lost their lives in the wake
I sat there in the monastery thinking all this over
Whoever knew me then knew a rabbit lost to bright seasons where the Angels tread in softness on this
cemetery plot
My love, it's nothing but a moon I pray to every morning to for some peace so I can finish waiting for
the sun to rise
A tyrant's crown melted down for refugees to gild their boats with
Don't leave me in this crush of dazzling splendor with the earth spinning out of orbit floating on its way
to Saturn
That's where we end up
Saturnine and devoured
like Agnes Martin in her desert
Find me there and crash with me
I'll greet you with a clutch of roses
Pink wine poured out on church steps
Where Mary Magdalene ministers to all the wretched children
Say a prayer for little Maya sleeping in her chamber
The sun comes up
The trucks pull out
It's morning in the world

HANNAH KEZEMA

MAYBE I'M BECOMING

maybe i'm becoming the poem,
fragmented and dizzy

the swing is slanted
on my neighbor's patch of leaves

my body always tilts

and so it is:

to enter
and unfold

void with no words
but
red
fading sky
swinging at a slant
poison between my legs

in the night, in
autumn of my home
in a change of
season chiaroscuro

painting it with

some anger

i forgot

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I PAY ATTENTION TO THE NEWS

Vegetable juice in a glass jar—swallowing—summer reckoning—outside lawnmower mowing—green—and there will be swimming—but seated now and—difficult things—news and numbers and—difficult things—a letter written in public—to speak—strong, brave—public—for hurt—to heal it—on a desk my elbow—below the desk my body—outside—green—the vegetable juice swallowing—to speak for the hurt—she—all the headlines—and the lawyers—and the lawyers—and the lawyers—thought I'd write a letter but didn't—thought I'd make a note—for her to speak—to read it—and others—others what is public—cannot focus—sorry—sorry how much do I speak—or it goes into my body—deep—but the girl—writes and reminds me—everything seemed normal—wind and birds—the dead lilacs—can I write action without stopping—her letter I read and couldn't—get through—like my first David Lynch film—my body does not cease to surprise me—a branch returns—the knowledge of guts—distracted by the windows I need—sleepiness when too open—when to open this big nothing I've held—the erasure of all things—comes from impact—an impact—on the senses to distance—oneself from the body—in order to live—separate—to breathe—locate anything else—a certain light—a pulse attached—to—you—believed for so long nothing—good happened in bathrooms—all the afternoon dogs—barking against sun—hunger keeps tugging—I'm in—the whiskey chair—there will be water—and swimming—this inching—can be the only way sometimes—I want to heal—all—the damage that's been done—I've done—so much—now drink water—memory of breath—through breath—sketching nonsense—and words—just use them—not enough time—saying nothing—always saying nothing in something—I like to make food—into art and vice versa—what am I not doing I could be doing now (I can't)—but poetry—and release

I will practice

STRANGE COMFORT

i.

I have an intelligent system that wants to be a dream

To write a sentence: walk across the room and cross again

The dream will come back

In feeling

In cutting vegetables and obligation

Half standing swayed to Santo y Johnny cause what matters

Sore shoulders hunched in morning light

An image wraps around you and won't quit

Flipped the record twice,
another record

I've been watching my mind and what it wants to say

A fragment is a place as much as utterance

We must learn to return through touch

For me I must remember to eat and listen

Don't breathe so shallow get
outside

Bring outside into you

You were inside

Where we all start – J'Lyn writes of this

I think too of the narratives which bring me backward

Hanging under or hovering above this one

The ones that bring you back slowly

The breakfast slows me down as nourishment

When my sleep hiccups, my body rebels

There cannot be anyone else
in your creation peering in windows

Soften the edges
until you have no face

All I hear are strokes of a lawnmower, gusts
through the leaves,
and birds

The neighbor stopped singing her song in the kitchen

I resist sleep in language

Language renders me awake and sore restlessness

This could go on

I will not make comparisons

And the hum of the refrigerator – this is present

The window pulled open

Why do we look around for what's not there

Some lines are inscribed in you

It's all exhausting

It's all green until you dig

ii.

The rain isn't here, because we are here

And we will keep pressing
what we want to know
what we want to own

It is all the father in our law and the absence
in our fathers

We fill voids with oil and blood

Oil and blood are language

And father, father fills
language, fills it
absent

CALL SOMEONE YOU LOVE

call someone you love

and listen

the world is too loud

the hours tuck away with rain

get a hold of yourself

no one else will

the waitress speaks lovingly to the wet

crows

outside the mexican place

the television has rich

white people flipping

their houses complaining

about marble

i'm on a lunch break

thinking about creative

time and its dwindling

scribble from my weak

wrist i keep forgetting

pain requires time

and great

skill

YOU BEGIN

you begin with something

then throw it away

the repetition insists, like Stein said

and the insistence seats you

you sit

the sounds in the house ceased

yeah – to breathe

stirs you up a bit

SATURDAY

Notes from the gardener: tell what you want to the dew, here at the billionaires mausoleum, where scarcity is luxury's hinge, rarity is a symbol, everything was running out. Where a limit is approached. Where the last of everything was consumed by a mouth in a face beneath a sheet for salvation of shame of the self. Here, where they pressure wash imported stone with drinking water in a place where poverty means always breathing some poison. The cold makes buds set and it doesn't get cold enough here, can't seem to buy both weather, the lines of latitude and longitude singular and chosen, this climate is too mild and comfortable, the sun's movement so stubbornly not for sale and the earth here never freezing solid two feet down and staying that way for flowers and fruits that cling to stones, a tender poison seed within a rigid shell, waiting. We laughed that the sunshine was imported, why not? The water was. It used to be a old glacier. The bees were kept a golden New Zealand variety, bred away from their color's inherent black origin. How had that color imparted something sinister? The white cream pale yellow eggshell making tending to purity a facet of aesthetic. Same as ever, a trick of mind and chasing beauty as a defined thing imparting goodness, the Quasimodos of the world know this, that they will remain untouched by a touch of particular passions no matter the goodness, drawing us away to a line, the bound of reach allowed, by whom? We who work whatever will, and when it was spoken of the garden was called "mine" only because I had placed things there and kept care and this imparted my ownership, my name kept getting snagged in brambles and briar and they were "mine" as well, stung by vespids and mellisae, cut by thorns of synovitis swelling. I put the salt sweat of my face deep into the fornication of grasses, rhizomes running and their masses when crushed or split open made a good smell and I put it into myself, into the roots of my hair of webs and sand saved, in turn, then the minerals of muscle that string my arms and legs together, and meat is made out of metal, and that was the Earth. Still, the fight was for mastering perfection, as in, what the surface said because we can't always look as closely as we can. The eyes get tired. Where I am, here, peeling thorned leaves with a sickness, the rusted petals rot of oxygen, breathing, the reverse, our opposite, making a shadow vapor and mist scorched out and drawn away, as easy as anything, makes itself out of the you that is wasted, that is no longer of any use to you. All of that. It made it out of that. Same as tended cuttings, where roots are coaxed outwards with heat and moisture. Plants, ideally, live all their lives in their own grave, and the grave so happens to be made of the substances needed to turn itself into itself, to make itself the seeds of itself, the divisions of itself, of proliferation. forever. And maybe, that was as a small power could be, some glowing morning, some unfolding, from the unseen, inside then outwards. Delicate fronds of my dreaming, in a sense, in a message sent, the minds and the memories of silhouettes. When would that being be anything? Who told you who is a person? What is that? Degree being our distance? Between stones and an entire world breathing a breath. One at a time. Can we make that our unit of measure? Where in the desert of finding have I gone? Only of imaginations. Let's go there in a straight line through vast space, seeking a perpendicularity. And if you were here if not just for me to ask you something very important. How I had put words to things, especially things I knew nothing about. Seeing that there were colors so vibrant, so varying, imperceptible even. To turn leaves variegated white a virus is used. Here, where we grow blackberries with weakened roots stalks, stunting their power to over take you, as they are prone to do. Bred to be thorn-less even, the pain of fruit bought, price paid to rid them of their savagery. Wrapped up in this, walking away from this and towards a subterranean forest that we forget, the hairs of roots that hold the hills together, their bodies bursting through the concrete, reclamation as a slow invasion of ivy, bringing buildings down, running through the street, breaking an infrastructure, tender and breathing to show us we couldn't open the blooms but we also can't stop them, no one can.

Ilex:

The fever dream was a bloom

The fever dream was
The black out force
(you're drunk
yes, I know)
mine is
what is mine
to destroy
that is what 'propriety' means
see me here,
wondering about you.

Tell me what I don't have
You seem to know so well
I can tell you this (I never wanted to know you)
Want to tell me about what isn't true?
So then, tell me the story of when.
Tell me the story of when,
Death came to take not you
But a friend
Tell me the story of when.

Seeing this virtue as a cost.

I shouldn't be here
I shouldn't say this
("Remember me?")
Because I hate the world.

What it came down to
Was the figuring of self
Of the different selves
I can call this mechanism whatever I like
(I don't know anything anyway)
I will call it the dirty dark shadow of skin

Here, where the name is a mystery
Knowing what minds think
Of tendency,
Of pattern,
Of learned lies
This was
Of that which
Only a certain pain would free you from
And not a pain that you already know


What would the sum of these values be?
(some values are not yet absolute, all other variables will be assigned a symbol)
There are pollarded poplars, turned to a knotted crucifix
Here, in a kingdom of a puzzle of thorns
I only know you as the reflection
Turned to the lee of the stone
Striped and strung
Bound up in the
Belief of
You
Believed me to be to you
As in equation
As is to that
Always
Never
Knowing like
Matt had said

Love within
That boundary
Begins as another epoch
(cut off all your blooms and become stronger)

In a dream,
The hawk came to me
The feather's fluid flight,
The eye is a telescopic vision
Exploding in both directions
Bent and breathing
The liquid
Weighted winged kite
"I kept dreaming about you"
I said, "and you still won't say a word"
Here I am, without any access to
What they call
"information"
(your tissues may be sampled at any time)
Living out this tiny death perpetually
Here, the vessel
Carrying us all
Underground
And someone decided to die
And that made you late to where you were going
I prayed to patron saint of falling asleep on the train
Then sleeping on the ground
Because it is too late to get to where you were going.
And, yes, yell it to me out
Cry into my good ear

Show me that last mercury mirror
Let me go
You steel serpent
(but her lisp reminds me of you)
If the sum of the value is,
I never knew,
I met your doppelganger on the cold Oakland street
With a bun
Blonde hairs here and there
Happily walking a Yorkshire terrier
Hands steaming
Spread the palm wider
To hold on harder Even parts of you past Can see me blind
Despectacled, some kinds of barren
That my eyes are vulnerable to you
Set out to be tender
Showing in love the ways you read me
Read me please.
The moon's umbra shined on us
This is Andromeda
It is spinning towards me and you
Carrying along with it
A gravity and whatever I wished it to be (in a dream, somatic sensation)
Lilaceous I fell upon some lipped flowers
This rib of leaves is a blade. A bone. Reflexive. That means changing.
(tell me the story of your lies)
The signs reassured me that help was there but also "your" presence on the tracks was illegal,
the authorities may be called at any time. Protecting you from yourself may result in your violent death
FYI
"you are what?" "the apparatus?" "oh good, me too"
She is changing her voice. While it echoes she turns her face away from the echo like an escape from
assault. Bouncing off the concrete. Back towards the tracks
Back from the abandoned nursery. There where the skeletons of the balloon like womb rooms
Are all there is.
Her body turned to a torrent of air
I saw her shadow
A posture I knew
My endocrines shook
Your ghost white body, memory of the copper frayed wire
All about you like closed blooms, downy
Your teeth glowing in moonlight
Mouthing a prayer for all the people time forgot
I woke up not wanting to be in life
Paid \$60 to keep the threat of genetics away from me
Everything else I didn't tell you
And you stopped loving me anyway

This is where I see a symbol
In the place of
My belief in you
And where I write a love
Scratched into the earth
Or upon thorned leaves
Written with a pin
Peel apart to the skeletal sarcophagus
Silken tomb
There in there is whatever becoming
We can make
It all
into what we are



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Artists In America

