

AUSTRALIAN POETRY JOURNAL

AUSTRALIAN POETRY JOURNAL

Cover Art

Photography by Elena Gomez

Publishing Information

Australian Poetry Journal
Volume 12, Number 2 (2023)

Publisher: Australian Poetry Ltd
australianpoetry.org

Guest Editor: Emily Stewart
AP Publisher: Jacinta Le Plastrier
Managing Editor: Adalya Nash Hussein
Commissioning Editor: Jacinta Le Plastrier
Social Media Communications: Jennifer Nguyen
Designer: Chris Edwards
Printer: Documents on Call

Australian Poetry (AP) is the sole national representative body for poetry in this country. It is an independent non-profit organisation, supported by federal, state and local government arts funding programs, patrons and its subscription base. We represent Australian poetry and its poets, nationally and internationally.

Australian Poetry Journal is published biannually.

Address editorial correspondence to:
Level 5, Wheeler Centre,
176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000
or by email to ceo@australianpoetry.org

Australian Poetry Ltd attains worldwide first publication rights in both printed and digital form for the distribution and promotion of *Australian Poetry Journal* and the organisation as a whole.

© 2023 Australian Poetry Ltd

ISSN 2203-7519

Subscription to *Australian Poetry Journal* is available online: australianpoetry.org/subscribe

Individual copies of the journal (including back issues) can be purchased directly from Australian Poetry Ltd: ceo@australianpoetry.org

Publisher's Note

It is AP's policy as publisher to remain at 'arm's length' from the selection of poems by our guest editors, whose autonomy we respect. AP's house style is to accept a poet's choice of punctuation, titling and spelling styles, so that across our publications there is a 'natural' variation in poets' choices. Any use of another's work by contributors is expected to be acknowledged in notes, and the responsibility for this is with poets. Other notes supplied to Australian Poetry by contributors, including their biographies, are published in good faith, and without fact checking.

Support

AP would like to thank all publishers, platforms and other organisations that support the flourishing of Australian poetry. We particularly thank our core funders for supporting this publication, which has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



AUSTRALIAN POETRY JOURNAL

Volume 12 | Number 2

suite, sequence

Guest Editor Emily Stewart

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Australian Poetry is based in Naarm, Melbourne, working in offices and remotely on both Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung lands. We acknowledge their Elders, past, present and emerging. As a national poetry body, we also acknowledge that we work across many lands and communities, and we extend our deep respects to all First Peoples, not just in Australia, but across the globe, including poets and audiences, and their enduring connection to Country.

ap Australian
Poetry

Contents

suite, sequence

Emily Stewart	8	Foreword
Luke Beesley	10	The Shoot
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	12	1/8
Siân Vate	13	i wrote
	14	giving these words an injury
	15	here's where
	16	she spoke
	17	things that heat
Holly Isemonger & Ella Skilbeck-Porter	18	Exchanges
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	24	2/8
Leah Muddle	25	Concerning the Head
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	29	3/8
Fiona Hile	30	Global Borromean Warming Knot
	31	Search and Replace
	32	Wheatmania
	33	N
Angus McGrath	34	Your Cast Will Tire
Sholto Buck	38	WALKING INTO
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	46	4/8
	47	5/8
Kate Lilley	48	Hic Mulier
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	50	6/8
Rachel Schenberg	51	like two pears
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	61	7/8
Dave Drayton	62	Four Boxes
D. Perez-McVie & Gareth Morgan	66	In Pain's Bloom
	68	Continent
Abbra Kotlarczyk	70	House & Garden <i>Renos</i>
Tom Blake and Dominique Chen	82	8/8

from recent collections

Eunice Andrada	91	COMFORT SEQUENCE
	100	Notes
Bebe Backhouse	102	choreography
Natalie Harkin	103	impossible to contain
Claire Gaskin	104	Ismene reads her psych's book on dissociation
Angela Costi	106	Commentary
kenji kinz	107	weird poem death
Panda Wong	110	Poetic Response
Broede Carmody	112	extract from <i>Shouldering Pine</i>
	114	Note
Harry Reid	115	c u @ 6
Gareth Morgan	116	robert harvey
Kris Hemensley	118	TOPOGRAPHY 15-iv-22
Charmaine Papertalk Green	120	Touching both
Toby Fitch	121	Ponts
	122	Villboard
	124	Fleurs
John Kinsella	125	<i>from</i> ArtYarn
	126	Acknowledgements

contributors

129	Contributors
134	Guest Editor
134	Guest Artist

suite, sequence

Foreword

‘My lamenting head’

An intro is a tough mode. Dare I say I want to please everyone, I want to assure and reassure and praise and make my justifications. Pleasing is such a greasy word. Oh, I feel so unhappy about this!

‘A sequence in distracted air’

I’ll tell you what happened. I knew forcefully that Luke Beesley’s poem ‘The Shoot’ would be the issue’s starter. It is in its own way an introduction, even a preamble. I imagine the contents of his protagonist’s broken camera as something like the spill of images contained in this issue. Not damaged by light but fixed with ink to the page. This poem is a fable that inaugurates the strange and fantastic difficulties to come.

‘The twin flare of your irides’

Soon collaboration rose as a hidden theme, extending the idea of the sequence to exchanges, dialogues and shared effort. Poets reach new levels of courage when they write together. Holly Isemonger and Ella Skilbeck-Porter trace each other’s origins as young poets, D. Perez-McVie and Gareth Morgan combine their wits, and Tom Blake and Dominique Chen’s visual and written texts appear throughout, conspiring with their own effervescent rhythm.

‘We’re living in pairs within us’

From a different slant, Rachel Schenberg moves towards a theory of the pair in a poem that examines the affectionate intimacies of correspondences and friendships made from poetry. As she writes, ‘...there’s something in this! In who we choose to work alongside or with, or who we choose to steal quote requote annotate and imitate from that creates this network, this context. These relations define our work—our writing especially—by following sentences as they move.’ Rachel’s poem is a great reminder that the forms we choose are types of thinking as well, forms that foster unruly afterlives. When we are lucky!

‘Made of what is handy’

There’s an emphasis on the visual throughout. Leah Muddle’s colourful series of heads explores with a fantastic literalness the folly of pursuing language. I think of Lydia Davis’s short text, which conveys a similar pathos. (It’s called ‘Head, Heart’.) Elsewhere Dave Drayton’s boxes hold humour and homage. Abbra Kotlarczyk and Sholto Buck both showcase a poetics of dispersal, seeding their works across the plain of the page.

‘Stealing her economy of valour’

And well, I’d like to steal Siân Vate’s economy of valour, her peripatetic insights, which are a little bit city a little bit country, striving beyond irony and other inherited concepts. Poems the size of a pocket but I don’t quite mean cute. There’s family and oblivion in them. Clouds form and dissipate in the skies she writes under.

‘Found the stairwell to the roof’

Angus McGrath’s plainspoken yet cryptic sequence gets into sex and the architectures surrounding hook-ups: busy roads, blinds, Ubers and libraries. Sex as a series of transits, arrivals and exits. As such, there are accidents and spontaneities too, the broadening potential of each encounter leading the reader into the mystery of what might follow next.

‘A garment by day, a house by night’

Also essential to the issue are Fiona Hile’s poems that surf various ambivalences, among them poetry itself—the esprit of this suite’s cognitions! And Kate Lilley swaps notes on gender circa C15th celebrating the still radical pleasures of queer selfhood. She also presents, new to me, the concept of the ‘envoi’, a stanza that imparts an author’s concluding words.

Although while an introduction certainly must end, a poem needn’t... Enjoy this wonderful issue!

—Emily Stewart

Note: A suite of eight unlabelled written and visual poems by Tom Blake and Dominique Chen appear interspersed throughout ‘suite, sequence’. They can be identified by an x/8 at the bottom of the page.

The Shoot

A sequence in distracted air—dusty, filled with seeds flung from the newly yellow gum. I crouched in the dirt and broke my camera open on a rock.

A drop of sweat came first. I'd been playing for ten minutes. It was not hot, but we were in the sun, past noon. Between points, I felt a tickle at my temple—new planet out past Pluto! I'd pulled it up on the screen that morning and puzzled at its raw red surface—rocks or 'rocky'—and assumed *that* was what I must have broken my camera open on.

Film wobbled out. Flow is the wrong word, but it moved like a strip of river and the riverside trees came to life as I zoomed in—you could see droplets of rain on each leaf, and the wind picked up and I remembered a birthday.

We played out longer than expected, well into the afternoon, until the wind died down and I took a picture.

Snap. The twig collapsed under the pressure of handwriting—that word *insignia* at the beginning of the 1920s, the birth of Surrealism, the lips of the trees and the textured wind pouting, pressure in my left hand. Again, snap busted and given the grainy picture the trees were ghostly, and you could read the wind by observing the way it had taken the leaves to their limit—horizontal, sidelong eyes—and I knew I had an audience. I winced and stood up and began taking notes.

Can you scratch your own brain? Or take a mark—notch—for a later reference? I guess that's what photography is, and I found myself in front of an article: daily roll of text and articles, news radio. Dimples on the old thing like the surface of the news, itself: a report on the rocky surface of a newly discovered planet! F22—serious depth, yes, but, between me and the new speck, clarity. I rubbed my *yes* and cleaned my *teeth*, brushing across. Backhand. Strokes. Tension in the arm. Shrunken body around a swollen face.

I went to bed with my arm around a great big box of dishwashing powder. No planets crashing against my ear but dishes—cross sections—angular, sideways, piercing a cap on the end of a drift. Twist-tie. There was half a metre overnight and I stepped towards the wide-mouthed silver shovel and raked it back over the paths like Richter, back and forth, on a canvas—ether. Fresh line: I could see the moment (I think I actually laughed!). A swift breath through the nostrils like mending a hem.

Silver in a rush through the thick foggy early morning.

A wedding dress crisp as a cough, light as the unburdened shovel, coming in as a fantasy from another life.

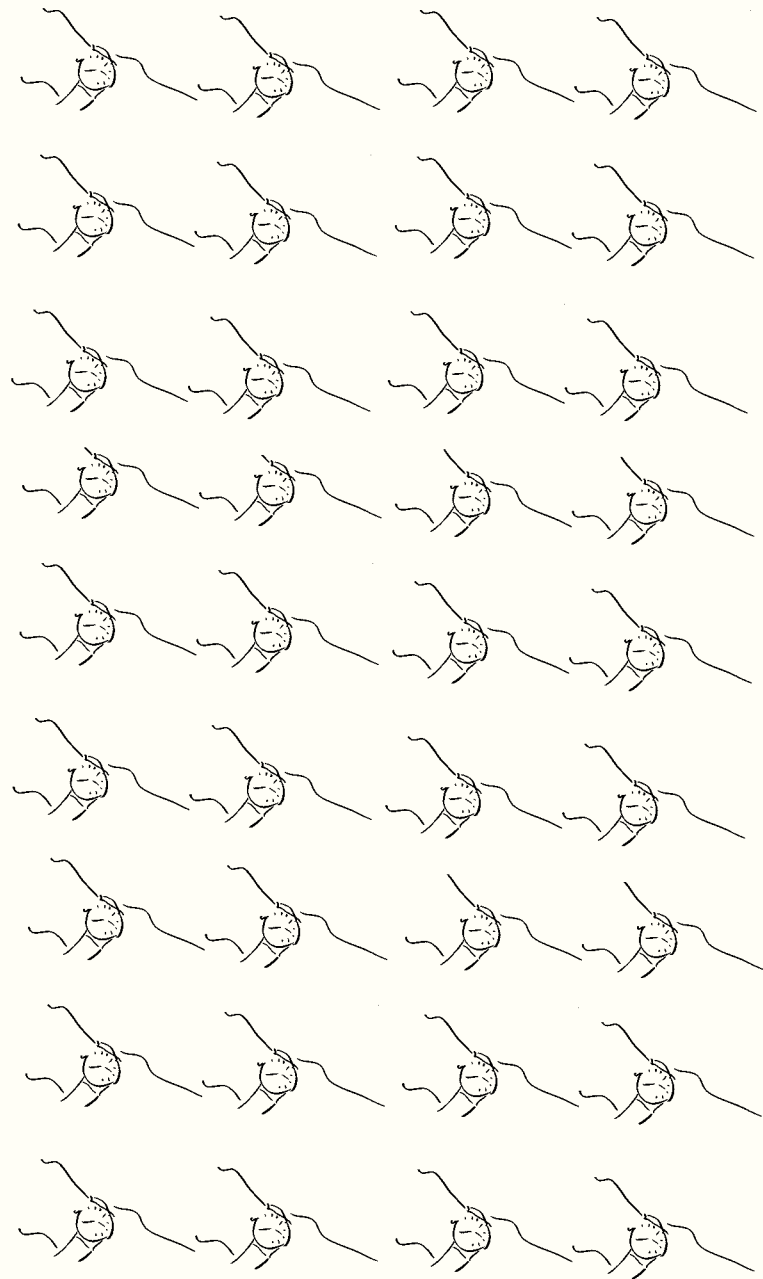
Daydreams that move like planetary discovery: recreations of the universe with too much colour luring us into wonder. I sat breathing heavily blood crashing round drinking glasses so hard I could almost taste it. Stainless steel cutlery against my heart, tapping fingers idle on a tabletop. Rain falling off a roof. A floating nerve or bacteria on the surface. Glossy.

Light came through a window breaking our stacked plates. I picked up the radio and threw it.

Open window. Lettuce crisscrossed like the light—thin, crisp green. I tried to isolate its taste in a sandwich but I could only pick up crumbs and seeds by licking the tip of my finger and pressing down on them like a god.

There was, also, in my shoe, a pebble.

I tried to ignore it. I imagined a planet isolated on its axis. I waited. The light was netted in the messy tangle and I bit a tiny portion of my lip. Have you ever done that? Grain of sand.



Siân Vate

i wrote

the stars shift backwards / this is a theme
when love's involved / the gutted stars shift
backwards though i don't know why gutted
maybe gutter because we were on the top
floor close to where the stars stair words
falling shoe after shoe / engines whine at
dawn / this was obvious although the wine
its wings in our backs / that's where hang-
overs haunt us / in our cold halo brains

giving these words an injury

what is sad is that my father's most tender
stories about his fathers & uncles' fathers
are stories about the destruction of things
axes on saplings & mick didn't hit him with
a spanner & quitting jobs & war & nights
with the aid of tools. & this irony passes
down to me / i wish
these stories were about children or how
soft were uncle stan's hands or how much
he was in love & if so
& my father misses his uncles & talks their
pigeon hole names tenderly cut in every
towns' first & next war memorial stones
but he doesn't check in on his aunties
who are sorbolene phone calls & collies

here's where

the kids grew up—or did they / this was chris
he used to parse the video camera over the
palm tree in cootamundra & film me playing
piano until i protested because i was too shy
she tipped tea / spoke an elegant sufficiency
this was me / quoting marjorie / stealing her
economy of valour for a poem using more-
than-were-requested words about her / read
novels & gargle in the corridor & our darling
telly talks to no-one / match points make way
for a caked-on blur—had this sense our fights
had the dust of the paddocks on them & were
something like vanilla batter & rabble. blue-
eyed laughter or a slammed door—is obvious
there were cousins / were blends on the side

she spoke

an elegant sufficiency. not me. my heart's a
blue lamp sparking essentially
thumb & finger press on cheekbones
lips folded. tears wink cause cornered / pepsi-
can blue in a river's spruce roots
luke-warm tea crackles / rose-weak
rose-sweet / thick surry hills curtains close
the top 10% of the street's other half / laptop
sensitivity / dehydrated iphone hours / kissed
seriously / vaped harshly / a thousand doors
knocking / four hearts weird & closing / the
blood wings in our dreams like hours / my
heart's a blue wing folding. i don't know why
maybe the blue thickness of the curtains or
the shade sophia parnok's lamplight
made in the ring she gave marina-deep blue-
thick / misty nights with ice swinging in them
in our eyes like claws of noise

things that heat

are opposed to the police. in ways
train squeezes steel tracks words grip
& trip over on the grimy bluestone
the gutted stars shift past our lantern
tongues / voices rattle against tin
chests & bless / yell swiftly over right
side back shoulder / how a horse
scared will mince quickly / back right
hearts wince & dream in frost-grey
lent / jasmine sheds. sydney cuts into
my asthma like a hammer. ovened-
up energies merge with over-cleaned
streets. versus bolshy lovers. bird-
bone prints in our pillows talk lightly
put stone-sweet sleep under grass

Exchanges

Hi Holly

I've been remembering that day we went to Versailles

you were checking out the sun king's legs

and we did the done thing and ate many cheeses by the lake.

Returning to Paris by train, we were in single file queue for the turnstile

You couldn't find your ticket so I gave you mine

and hopped the gate

I can remember that feeling so clearly

The automatic ease

And the mild prick of self-consciousness

Having an audience to this transgression

That was also fun

The feeling of elation

But I did it so we didn't hold up the line

The current

And then we flowed on into the night.

Do you remember when we were reading poetry and waiting for the noctilien?

That's the night bus.

In my imagination it's a giant nautilus. Floating through the streets.

Did you once write a poem about a nautilus? Or was it a fossil?

I loved that poem of yours.

I read it that year, in 2013.

From what I can recall, it was about deep time, maps and being lost in the

present. Is that right? Could you please send it to me so I can read it again?

Maybe most sea creatures remind me of you.

But the nautilus in particular.

And the jellyfish. On the Knoydart Peninsula, remember the jelly that was

stranded in the dry rockpool which you scooped up and placed back in the

ocean? We spoke about the life span of the jelly and you said it's all relative.

I think about that often too. It was just a simple scene.

At the bus stop, I was reading Ponge, what were you reading again? Was it Alice

Notley?

So many nights I caught the métro home by myself and now with you here for

company, how could I not remember it!

How you often say things I don't expect and that push the thought onward.

How we've formed this friendship over a decade, and how it all began in Martin's poetry class before we both moved to Europe for the year and circles back to both of us starting to write poetry, staying with each other in different cities and walking through supermarket aisles.

'Now the two friends climb up... the two friends climbed up...'

Earlier that day, you asked the English bookseller where to get a drink

He recommended a deserted dark bar on a backstreet by the Seine where we drank three euro wine

You don't know how many times I went back there

Often with Yannick and Jack Lee, we'd sit and play dice in the corner

I'd arrive early

The regulars sitting at the bar with their dogs playing at their feet

And join in the conversations when I went to order a drink or occasionally interject from afar if I had anything to add.

I became an irregular there. The Australian who spoke strange French.

When I returned in 2019 it was boarded shut.

Now I need to go back there with you so you can help find me a new favourite place.

○ ○ ○

Before I talk about the adventures

we had, I need to say something

about you. Because that shaped

how we did what we did and how

I remember it: being in your presence

rearranges thought, and thinking about

what I saw—what we saw—made me

see things in unfamiliar ways. New

lenses brought different objects

places and thought to the fore.

Your weird curiosity and strange

exuberance drew my thinking
away from the dark rigid place
it lived in. I had hardened
to the world.

Walking through Versailles
what I remember most is the spaciousness
and clean sunshine that poured through
the large windows. How it illuminated intricate worlds.
That's what being around you does—life seems
fascinating again. And I was excited
to be walking around in the largeness of history
knowing that our lives were ours
and we could do anything with them.
That spaciousness, that light. I watched
you trace it in Martin's class when it spotlighted
the floor. It later became a poem.
You could see a poem in light and there is always
some light, always life in your poems
and in you. That's what you gave me
and that's what your poems give
the reader. What a gift! Truly it's a gift.

○ ○ ○

Dear Hol
I didn't find you hard, maybe hard like water can be hard
resulting from a build-up of different elements...
I like how people can work like elements or particles
charging each other
so I'm glad I could act as an ion at that time
transfer some buzz
from what I recall, I found you full of ideas
at the edge of the world

living in a remote town
the most remote in Britain
the pub brags on the coaster
Going for multi hour runs along the single road
that traces the green foggy hills
Thank you
For your remembering and
for your casting of this memory world
for not looking away
You know how deep grief
has been so much a part
of my days for so long
This reminder of light
light
Returns me to that moment
in Martin's classroom
And also sharing it with you
As we do lots of our writing
That was part of it too
The buoyancy

Before I visited you in Scotland
I'd been living in a small French town
so I brought with me all the boisterous energy
of a city kid transplanted to a medieval village
where, as I quaintly remember reading,
there were more cathedrals than people.
In one of the gothic structures, the local courthouse,
known as La Salle de Pas Perdue, Joan of Arc was tried
and found to be of good character.
Standing there in the cavernous hall
I felt what you describe so well
Though unlike in Versailles, the hall was empty
Empty of all objects and people
A relic more than an attraction
The contemporary moment slipped away

En route to Knoydart, I stayed in Glasgow
couch surfing in a house with Lithuanian youths
before catching the train and ferry to where you were living
I feel like I needed a warning
that I was entering mythic landscape
where we drank gin with elderberry
and it was easy to imagine fantastic sea creatures
lurking just out of sight
On the train I was stunned by the beauty
later finding out it is one of the most famous
routes in the world I was stunned by it all,
the long, scenic journey and the
full yet temporary life you had formed there
Stunned as well by your letter
your words—as I always am—full
of an unflinching candour, vigour and unpredictable wonder
an appreciation that touches the core of matter

○ ○ ○

It's funny that you mention jellyfish. I couldn't
write, my mind was crowded and
I couldn't stay in the present. So I went for a walk
by the rock pools at south-end. A jellyfish
had been washed up and into a shallow pool
on the rock platform. Inside the undulating bell
of the jellyfish there were two baby fish
using it as a floating safe house.
Almost nothing is known
about the biology of this species.
The rocks that formed the pool itself
contain the fossils of Brachiopods and Bivalves
from the Permian era. Other small crevasses in the

rocks form nurseries for other fish, crabs
and anemones. I walked from the south-end point
to Boat Harbour—a walk I had done many times as a child.
I remember being there with my mum as a little kid
and she explained that when things are further away
they appear smaller, and I remember thinking
that I must be very far from the end of the walk
because big rocks seemed tiny
I wondered what the world would be
like if the far seemed big and the big seemed close
and I didn't think you would see all that much.
I wondered if when I was older, the thoughts I was having
at that moment would be smaller, too. To get back
to where I parked my car I looped up and over the headland where
a graveyard overlooks the sea. There are no rocks
made from sandstone down near the pools, but
there are plenty of sandstone graves. They're so old
that the names and dates have been worn away,
sandstone is so permeable to weather! I felt
for the person who is buried under that eroded stone.
I wanted to tell them 'I want to pay attention
to the fact that you have lived, but I don't
know who you are.' The names and dates on the
marble gravestones remain. The oldest is from 1796—
a child—John. I walked down the hill to my car. And
now I'm home writing this to you.
You say that time is relative, and
having just stood in a nursery
lined with fossils and walked through
a graveyard, back home—
all to feel present, which I now do,
I agree, it is. I think about that scene
with the jellyfish in Knoydart often, too.
A simple scene. But like the one I just witnessed.
It passes through time into something much more.

the meal i made for you
is in the buffet i've made
for everyone

Leah Muddle

Concerning the Head



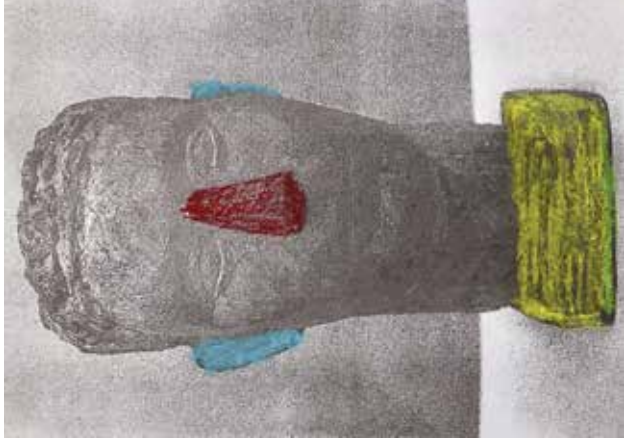
BRONZE HEAD

Today I am stuck in the head. It is dense and heavy (as bronze).
It is mindless as bronze, is mine. My LAMENTING HEAD.
What can it do (*what can I do?*) — but hack and hack.



TIN HEAD

Words, words, words - - - words reside in the head.



BLOCK-HEAD

The head is located through knocks. (When blocked, we hit it). We put it in our hands and hold it. But the head — is no prize. (If I could run one thing from a fire, it wouldn't be my head).



THE SYMBOLIST'S HEAD

Where the head is supposed to symbolise the mind (or, moreover, imagination) - - - it's a poor equation. The mind is tenfold the head. I think the head poor. (POOR HEAD).



PLASTER HEAD (or THE ARTIST'S HEAD)

“It is me,” says Louise Bourgeois. No - - - “it is my head”. She has arrested a plaster figure on its back. With a measuring hand she demonstrates their equivalence. “This little statue” she calls it, with a petting hand (that all but smothers). “Urrr- arrgh” — she describes the day when she pushed her statue over. “Well she lost her head,” she says (gravely but quickly).



WOOD HEAD

I've watched The Queen's Gambit and I know the sound of
a capitulating king - - - the wooden clunk. / That is his head,
hitting the board. It's the dull end.



BLUE HEAD

Memory is blue in the head (someone said — but I can't
remember). I am stuck in the head, and have turned an old
blue. From trying - - - the dumb head is blue.

all of this

arose arose arose

from a seed

Fiona Hile

Global Borromean Warming Knot

A cat tipping a ball over a balustrade
reminds you of pedagogy.
The inevitability of terrain, torniqueted
between punishment and the thrill
of agape lodged beneath your threshold.
Fluffing the meaning out of language,
your suffering's jest, the body's rest,
offset by the asperation of lumber.
Thank heavens for disappearance,
your hard, bitten vanity pirouetting
the cause. But aren't you also struck
by the progression of notes, the impossibility
of transposing a museum of sequenceable sounds?
I know you think poetry takes the piss.
You know I don't believe in non-fiction,
philosophy or gender.
Mathematics is literally dangling by a thread.
Like an editor at a party deriding the institutional
hothousing of experimental writing,
we Arafura these time-sucking platitudes,
Cobargo the toxic obliteration of predecessors.

Search and Replace

The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy
entry on the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas
reveals 75 instances of the word *face*.
Say it as often as possible, so you don't forget.
Once we celebrated your infinite renditions.
The slightest breeze reconfigured
what we knew of you and your instantiations.
Skin filtering our admonitions and loving intrigues.
I saw my mother's medical history in the twin flare
of your irides. No longer the need to compare
singular and plural, the suspension of iradiary thought.
New words commuted the light of your gaze—Tern!
You said, forefinger indicating the thing, before 'bird',
face-checking our eyes for confirmation, a nod.

Wheatmania

Meet my corrals of farming future,
my pets, my friends and, at times,
my masters. Buzzing at the silly ghoul.
Single self-seeding sweet pea
forestalling global disgrace.
The wasteland. I don't miss it.
Hydrocolloid pimple patches
pressing howl and release
sheep drowning in a timbered lake.
I don't know what you get out of hurting me.
Undertaking numerous ring readings,
analysing your lunulae for signs of affection.
Requiem for a forgotten syllable
staged in memory of a township matinee.
Your vorticist train filter unsolves
Stations of the Cross. Not only what is kept
secret phylogenetic fantasy of tyranny,
the silent companion.

N

Either of us lying
still as statues
wide eyes hollowed
from the inside
'Shall I be predator?'
my low-level insurgency
populating the umbilical world
all mirrors are trick mirrors
the heady glitter of a thousand
carriage carnage zip/locks
the continent. There's a pervert
out there for everyone.
Rock-by-rock, I counter
counter your botched
calculations with vinaigrette
gloves. Intoxicated aviates
skerrick the bone
brittle bushes humble
vicissitude calligraphs
the dossier. It's all toothpicks
and flat iron in this good
for nothing dessert.
So what, if the void
and you only
People you resemble
I've never met.

Angus McGrath

Your Cast Will Tire

I

loved motorcycling and had a boxy, hairless ribcage. seemed serious enough, working in construction. was compelled, but didn't know why.

Nothing ever happened but casual conversation. felt keen to open up, felt close. met about six times and seemed comfortable immediately. was content to keep around in this friendly proximity.

It was spontaneous one night, rode bike on a silent bridge over the lake.

2

an artist, dry-bleached hair. Definitely wearing jeans. met at an opening. was just there, alone in the carpark with a drink, but locked eyes and came in to ask about the art. The show quieted down, but stuck around, until closing. It was at this point, asked if wanted to walk home. said yes.

It was a long walk, but spoke. stopped and said, 'I really want to kiss you' and then did. arrived, admitted never been fucked before, but wanted to be fucked. lay on the bed, and offered to rim, but said not to bother, just slide it in. tried to take it slowly, but once the head got in, realised was too tight and called it off, then fell asleep.

The blinds were open, so woke up to the sun. had breakfast and said had to go. walked home, and the sun felt brighter. The flowers smelled stronger. walked beside a road on a busy Sunday, and waited as a big truck came by.

3

was sweet, a little thick with glasses, always wearing a beanie. was at the pub and felt strangely familiar. When asked, said had a mutual friend, and assumed that must be it. friends had just left, so asked about a drink, said yes. stayed for three, until invited home.

got an Uber, messy, and arrived. still lived with parents, so had to sneak in and not make noise. sucked dick then fell asleep, and woke up again in the early morning. Repeated. set an alarm early so could get out before parents woke up. Once gone, fell back asleep for a few hours.

later that day walking through the city. In underslept, hungover vagueness bumped into a woman. dropped her bags, but nothing broke, and was very polite when helped her pick them all up. entered into a nondescript building and walked the stairs to the fifth floor. poked around and found the stairwell to the roof.

4

noticed on campus several times, always lingering around the library. It was always casual. wanted to break through in some way, and always responded well. had a mop of shaggy hair and a loose demeanour that seemed stoned most of the time. It worked to distance from emotions, even though was quite certain was cute.

conversations became longer and longer. In trying to get through some mystery, found opening up. In an unlikely show of affection, made a cassette tape. talked about music, and the out-of-date analogue process seemed like something that might impress. When gifted, seemed touched. left quickly from nerves.

It was that night, having not yet heard back, walked to the lake and placed dozens and dozens of heavy rocks in many pockets.

5

a musician, tall and gangly, jittery and sweet. at once 'punk' but much sweeter. made chaotic synth music. met when ordered a tape. had asked if lived nearby and could pick it up, to save shipping. arrived and after long conversation in the door, couldn't help but invite in. the sun was going down.

finished the bottle of wine. was tense, ended up spending the night sitting in lawn chairs on the roof. spent hours making passing comments on people in the parallel apartment building. At the exact point might kiss, declares should sleep. politely slips out the door.

stared at the sky for another stretch of time—Minutes? Hours?

6

friend showed this picture, and said could set up a date. something embarrassing about showing a picture. round, perfect skin, speckled freckles. couldn't say no. insisted on an expensive restaurant in the city.

It had the unacknowledged but palpable awkwardness of a set-up date. didn't totally understand what was talking about all the time. It went well, though uneventful. insisted on picking up the bill.

insisted on driving home, and listened to The Cure on the way. arrived where was dropping off, gave some unplanned monologue about not knowing where was at, and what was going on in life to try to dampen any hopes. shook head, understanding, and got out of the car. arrived home, sat in car.

When awoke in the hospital six days later, there was a void where His face used to be.

7

sent a text in the driveway—"I wish I'd kissed you."

arrive every second afternoon, suck dicks while Channel V plays in the background.

pulls out a long, ceremonial looking blade and holds it at chest. 'I want you to puncture my heart.' As it passes over, holds the handle lightly in palm. make eye contact while adjusting it on chest. He steps forwards.

Sholto Buck

WALKING INTO

the rainstorm
the centre
the liting
the velvet
the uncanny
the foil
the darkroom
the snow
the grease
the tulip
the burning
the fog
the mirror

WALKING INTO

the shredder
the roadside

the real
the hold

the cherry
the whirling

the lilac
the fragment

WALKING INTO

the trap
the limelight
the waves
the wave
the lighthouse
the haze
the complex
the helm
the magnolia
the erstwhile
the apartment
the clue

WALKING INTO

the drawn out summer's end
the slow blur
the domed curve of ceiling
the doves
the thimble open sky
the when I feel it I will know

WALKING INTO

the feeling
the knowing

WALKING INTO

the weather. walking into the refrain. walking into the seafoam the
roaring the silver the frame. walking into the leather. the suntrap.
the glint. the hell. the floor. the lava. walking into the moment.
your heart was at its most beautiful. the sleeve. the wall. walking
into the petals. the pedestal. the drooping. the flow. the marshes.
the hate. the pouring the sinking. the filth. walking into the other.

WALKING INTO

the landfill landscape's neatly sloping grids

the twining vertices of separate hells

the statue's brass pores

the pistachio eyes

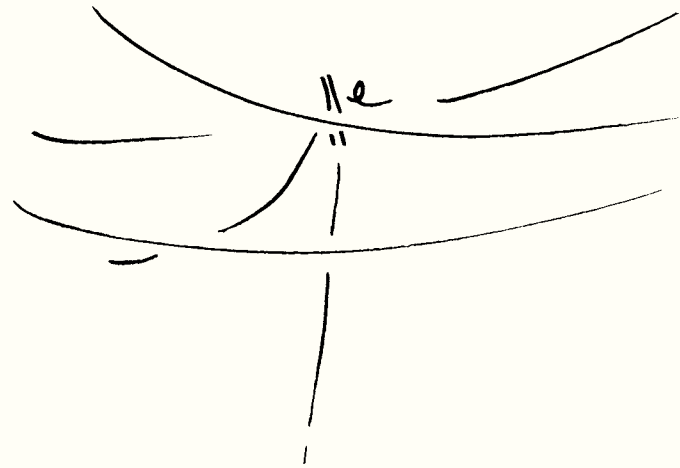
the cool beads

the quiet

WALKING INTO

the mirrored pond

the chalk silhouettes



cups, plates, bowls

dragonflies

saucers

Kate Lilley

Hic Mulier

1

She that hath pawned her credit to get a hat
will sell her smock to buy a feather.
She that hath given kisses to have her hair shorn
will give her honesty to have her upper parts
put into a French doublet.

2

Hyacinth, heliotropium, superfluous creatures.
A Masculine Woman makes the dew bitter.
Strange attire, hysteric afflictions,
a garment by day, a house by night.
Surely unseemliness is not too much to hope for.

3

The checkered pansy or particoloured heartsease
slips from her like tantalus fruit none can wear
but such as desire no more than they have.
So is she a Masculine Woman
that bereaves parents of authority, husbands of supremacy.

4

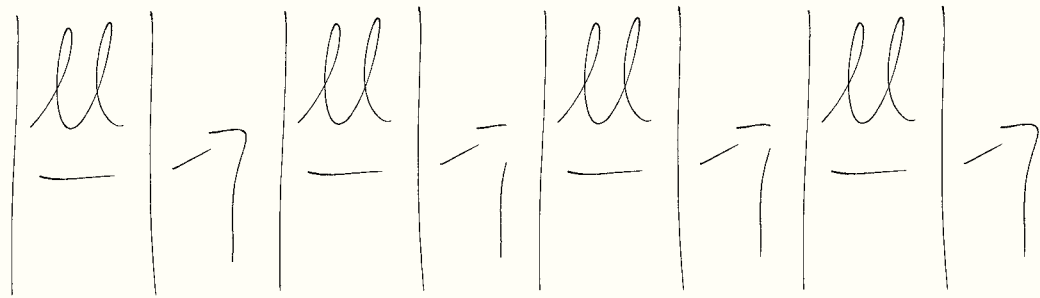
She that dare presume to overrule
although she neither paint, cut her hair
nor be deformed with new invented fashions
is notwithstanding
Hic Mulier.

5

She that spends more upon delicate cheer
or entertainment of a sweetheart in a month
than her husband may allow her for a year
is *Hic Mulier*
whose tongue sets the world on fire
whose gestures, words, oaths betray her
is *Hic Mulier*

Envoi

These women you hear brawling and scolding
have severally pissed on this bush of nettles
making the woman that waters them
as peevisish for a day and as waspish
as if she had been stung in the brow with a hornet



Rachel Schenberg

like two pears

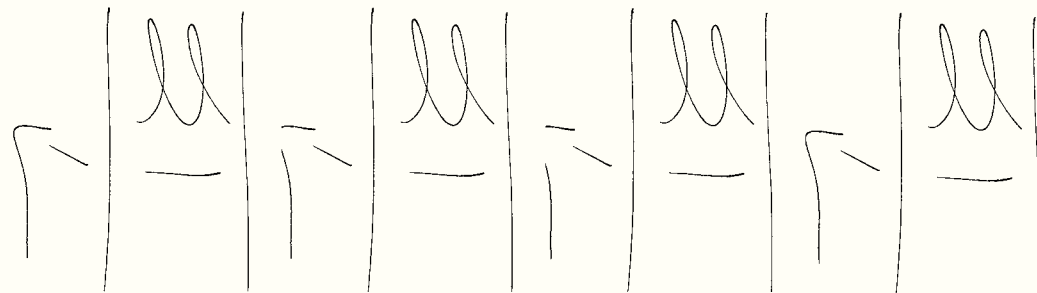


There is the outside of a person and the inside, almost that.¹
— Bernadette Mayer

(I) Peers

On August 21st this year, i receive an e-mail from UC San Diego Library with some old correspondence between poets Lyn Hejinian and Bernadette Mayer. i'd come across mention of the letters a few months prior while searching for *Mutual Aid* as a 40th birthday gift for T—a stapled book Bernadette had published when she too was 40 y/o. It was the first book released in 1985, on January 1 at 12:01am(!) and had a print run of thirty-three. i was feeling sorry i didn't have the \$\$ to spend 1250USD on an auction-house copy at Barnebys, also sad wondering where those \$\$ would have gone anyway, though the search did bring me to San Diego scrolling lists of Bernadette's papers her manuscripts drafts poems the archives of her past world. And me not thinking much of it but here i was typing my contact in an empty e-box signing up for a library account where the ease of it left me sceptical of any means of access but i'm writing still asking if possible please, could i order some scans? Scans, a knock-knock on the library's door at high covid o'clock.

And no word for a slow three months, then suddenly there is word, there's words and words and waits for blab la bla, a few surprising back & forths and some choosings in the lists boxes folders numbers, receding because 50 cents a scan !too many! and i receive twelve letters from Lyn to Bernadette spanning the course of eight years. It's here i learnt about their mutual admiration for the other's sentences.



In her second letter to Bernadette in the file, Lyn thanks her for the review in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* where she writes about *My Life*, Lyn's then most recent book. This is February 2, 1981. I go ahead and find the review on eclipsearchive.org in Number 13 from December, 1980. Bernadette praises Lyn's sentences, or rather, her lines. She says:

My Life has so many good lines in it, it's like a trot, it makes you want to steal from it or perhaps annotate it & make the compliment (or complement) of imitating it.ⁱⁱ

And voila, talking to T on the phone about pistachio pesto we both check our shelves for *My Life and My Life in the Nineties*, the 2013 re-print, and it's there—on the book—in The Blurbs. Her quote! Thirty-three years after the fact, pertinent still.

In Lyn's headnote to "Happily", the final piece in her collection of essays and talks, *The Language of Inquiry*—she also praises Bernadette's lines, or rather her sentences. Lyn says:

I should, I think, acknowledge some creative indebtedness ... the sentences of three writers in particular have been central to my attempts to develop and amplify sentences of my own: Bernadette Mayer's radiating and run-on sentence, with its seemingly infinite capacity for digression...ⁱⁱⁱ

From a to z, from L to B. From 1981 to 1989. It's the sentences that move, each other's influences folding in. Reading these sentences letters numbers fills me with a joy from witnessing relations unfold in what seems to be real time. A date is a date, and what an anchor for the passing years.

Markers.

Anchors.

Ankles.

What is an anchor? An anchor is that which keeps one from drifting from the subject.^{iv}

The final correspondence in the file is from November 7, 1989, and I suddenly realise there're no responses from Bernadette. Will have to take a look at Lyn's archive.

(II) Pear Poems

First of August, the day after the last day of July this year reading Bernadette's *Memory* and they've settled, the days, but today feels like I've been on a big km swim splashy cute we wore the same socks and ate cherry cake or was it pie(?) the one with fake cherries they call them sour but they're sugared actually covered in glacé. Bernadette ate it too @the village restaurant with vanilla ice cream, and it went like this the celebration of a last day to *Memory*.

Second of July, Bernadette lists her meals, w/ pear:

(naive) cheese pear beer burnt bread (luna: bread water wine priests of nyu having a discussion & crazy people horrible sarcasm of veal...^v

Third of June, and I was crying not because you said no but because you said no like that, and all the other nos. Handwash, Moisturiser. Shampoo, Conditioner. 2-in-1. 2-in-1. Like rooms and space, the land of it. Not sure what I mean. Why was I finding it so hard to say that we're children? We're just children now all of us here falling over the most recent one being no practice for it. I don't know, I just was. And the extent of it.

In May, T gave *Memory* to me for my birthday. The text was compiled in 1971, where on each day in July Bernadette journalled, and exposed one roll of film to her 24hrs. The first edition of the book only included the writing and is long out of print, but it was re-published this year with the corresponding images. This is the book I had read from every day in July.

Seven years after Bernadette's first *Memory*, another New York poet, Ted Greenwald writes that the pears are the pears:

the pears are the pears
the table is the table
the house is the house
the windows are the windows
[...]
the eyes are the eyes
the mouth is the mouth^{vi}

The mouth... I read 42 years later about a pear growing inside a pear-shaped bottle, one that holds pear brandy. The William pear, or the Bartlett pear, or the other names for this special variety of pear, is used for poire eau-de-vie. It's made in Alsace "the garden of France" entirely from fruit—thirteen kilos of pears used to make one bottle of Poire Williams.^{vii}

The pear-in-glass-growing begins in May, when an empty pear-shaped bottle is tied around a young pear bud, straight onto the tree. Such pear-in-pear is also known as Poire Prisonnière.

i buy the Prisonnière, this bottle of eau-de-vie, G.E. Massenez, Liqueur Poire Williams—a treat to drink—with the coins i’d been saving from my teenage years. i had just refound them, they’d been sitting in an old metal cylinder previously used for an electric shaver, a container that used to be my dad’s. It was all stored for a decade in my family’s garage, i had used the cylinder to grow coins.

There was no pear in this bottle that i’d bought with the change. But as i sip i think: Whoa, we’re like these lil pears growing inside our houses rn. We’re the so-called Poire in our Rooms-de-Vie.

In one of Bernadette’s uncollected poems that i ordered during my online library visit, she typewrites on the back of a “PEARS’ transparent SOAP” packet, writing through the meaning of pears and its sounds. She writes:

We are like two pears
We are like a pear or two
We like two pears
We are two like pears
Like pears we are two
Like pears we are too
A pear and a pear
A pear and a pear are too
Like pears to swim in the sea
[...]^{viii}

There’s an interruption to meaning when reading pears with the suggestion of pairs, five and a half pairs to her pairs of pears. This interruption opens up space for meaning to shift, where these wordplays situate her thinking on the slippery plane of the bathroom sink, or the kitchen sink, or the swimming sink, showing how words can slide, how meanings can move, how we appear too and two. Bernadette prods the sounds in

pears pear pair
 two
 too

being transparent

with how she moves from word to word, from line to line, meaning arriving from proximity in pears. With a soapy pair of hands we witness the

metamorphosis of her slippy thinking in real time. She guides our reading time with her writing time, sharing with us her pears unfold. We’re on the associative journey with her fruits.

There’s a letter titled “Pear Pie” in Bernadette’s book *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters*, a collection of letters written during a nine-month period when Bernadette was pregnant with her third child, Max. Her writing began in the summer of 1979 and finished in February 1980—nine years after *Memory*. These letters were addressed to individuals she had known, to “a constellation of friends”, though they were never sent.^{ix} Her correspondence stayed with her.

In “Pear Pie” Bernadette speaks about a pear tree, a lucky one that’s “striking” been struck by lightning whoosh cut in. Sorry to interrupt. Though the tree’s regrowth is budding from the split, sprouting pears, multiple loins. It’s an opening of space. Bernadette and her daughter Marie collect the pears from this cleft, a little underripe so that they can make a pear pie. Bernadette exclaimed her interest in the pears, saying she “wanted to get excited about something, even just these green pears ... if and when they do ripen...”^x

Bernadette also mentions, of the “something” in this zapped pear pie story, that there’s “no way of saying anything without implying something”. She sees thoughts in pairs, where there’s “something” behind this “anything”. There’s movement of thinking beyond what is said, where the meaning of one thing shifts by thought’s proximity. Or, by its distance—the space opened up by difference. One two, one, two. A pair of pears, like us, is two, too.

Lyn shares a similar thought:

But the emphasis ... is on the moving rather than on the places—poetry follows pathways of thinking and it is that that creates patterns of coherence. It is at points of linkage ... that one discovers the reality of being in time, *of taking one’s chance, of becoming another.*^{xi}

We’re living in pairs within us. Moving within in multiples. Is this seeing double?
Abodes within abodes.
Frames.
Brackets.
Numbers.

clink clink

(III) Poetic Feet

Magic was the roses they're there, there's all of them! bushes cut together house
by house and they're all re-growth now. Re-growth re-quote a second-hand
book in hand, it arrives to me *t h e*

d e s c e n t
o f
A L E t T E

where Alice Notley writes an Author's Note about the use of her
"quotation marks". It's at the start of the 1996 Penguin edition and this
book her book a feminist epic follows Alette, the narrator, through a
journey of "continual transformation" where the quotation marks frame
rhythmic units throughout. They're at the edges of our words that is, the
edges of our mouths.

Alice explains that at times readers ask about the quotation marks when
beginning the book. Ask whom? Although the reader then becomes
accustomed to them, she says, no longer wondering why the floatation
marks are used. Alice still flags three reasons.

One reason is the quotation marks reiterate that it's a "voice" that is speaking,
the first poet writing through air. The mouHHHth. The softest place to
re-present prose. Alice says:

...they remind the reader that each phrase is a thing said by a voice: this is not a
thought, or a record of thought-process, this is a story, told.^{xii}

The second reason she lists as a clarification, almost, is to indicate the narrator is
no Alice:

They also distance the narrative from myself, the author: I am not Alette.^{xiii}

A formal decision for the assumption of connecting author to narrator.
The auto-fiction, the tiresome question of—would you say the character
is based on experiences from within the life of You, that is to say, is the
character ~more or less~ "You"? Though who wouldn't be You, as if there
is one of Us. Only one of Us, one of You. And one of You too.

A third reason mentioned for the use of quotation marks speaks of pace. The
pacing of the body in space, the way that pace is articulated on the page.

Alice says:

But they're there, mostly, to measure the poem. The phrases they enclose are poetic
feet.^{xiv}

Feet as in ft as in '. Pair of feet. Portable units of measurement, between things.
Units. Like a phrased walk. Alice continues that the quotation marks help
the reader to notice the phrasing, not pass over it mindlessly. They help the
reader "slow" "down" and:

...silently articulate—not slur over mentally—the phrases at the pace, and with the
stresses, I intend.^{xv}

The reader becomes accustomed to each phrase's context. Able to step
into Alette's shoes, and become one with Alette's feet. The marks exist
within the phrase. What's before what's after quotation? What's the outside
the inside, almost that.

ON ONE OF YOUR

STEPS

After zooming with your friends washing the dishes hearing the rain

on the windows and floors hearing it all above us
after hearing the nasturtiums catch the drips and
after i became a puddle, slowly, "with" "your" "finger"
moving around it just, and just
after the heat of it, your

three blankets

i went downstairs to pee i was thirsty needed to pee first, to drink
so i walked down your outdoor steps
and then i stepped on a snail

i first heard it through my teeth tasted the crunch of it under your
shoe i was wearing the snail who was heading upstairs to give its
company to your hellebore, to the little goblin you call it, likes the
wetness under the bridge, but i stepped on it on one of your steps i
stopped it on its tracks, its one foot on the base of your shoe

snail, on my foot.

(IV) Pause

BCE, pre- before, pre- all this happening, pre- the e-mails 40th pears and pear poems, i'd been thinking there's something in the idea of interruption & rooms i'd like to follow, to understand the space opened up by pause & doors. So i'm strict-one-hour-walking listening to a podcast i'd eyed a while ago—a lecture by Lyn at the University of Chicago from May 2006, titled “A Return of Interruption”. This lecture is 51'30” long and Lyn begins by saying she intends to not only speak of interruption but to make something of it, which happens precisely at 12'58” where mid-line, as i'm hearing the word “formation”, the audio-file of her lecture stops. Accidentally, and aptly so. At the end of the podcast description, a note encourages contact through the digicomm ether to report any listening difficulties. Dear uchicago tech-help team, is there an original file? The recording is fifteen yrs old, Eric replies, unfortunately the file cannot be sourced.

Online searching elsewhere for the interrupted interruption, it's nowhere until its original(?) is possibly(?) somewhere—an essay title in the tenth issue of *Aerial* (never heard of!) *Magazine*, “The Orders of Interruption”.^{xvi} Could it be? Rod Smith, one of its editors, receives my order for the issue. Apparently no postage atm no answers but then months later an e-mail with a pdf arrives.

Aerial 10: Lyn Hejinian, published in 2016 and edited by Rod, and Jen Hofer, is an issue dedicated to Lyn's work. Lyn and 24 contributors wrote around and through her practice, in any-which-way they chose. Rod Smith, Jen Hofer, Rae Armantrout, Carla Billitteri, Peter Nicholls, Laura Moriarty, Carla Harryman, Ron Silliman, Gerhard Schultz, Kit Robinson, Patrick Durgin, Kate Fagan, Barrett Watten, Jalal Toufic, Kevin Killian, Pamela Lu, Rosmarie Waldrop, Katy Lederer, Lisa Robertson, Jean Day, Anne Tardos and Lyn Hejinian, Leslie Scalapino, Lyn Hejinian and Jack Collom, Tim Wood, as well as ten letters from Lyn Hejinian to: Carolyn Andrews, Clark Coolidge, Rae Armantrout, Clark and Susan Coolidge, Alice Notley, Kit Robinson, Charles Bernstein, Susan Howe, Fanny Howe, and Jack Collom. It includes correspondence, interviews, poems, essays, as well as excerpts of previously published & unpublished works by Lyn. It all speaks to her works' “truly various, modes of thought” over the forty years she has been writing.^{xvii}

There's a community right there writing there around Lyn's practice. It's one i learnt about through the cause of interruption. Where the pause that followed thirteen minutes into the recording opened up space to access a network, “a portrait ... emerg[ing] from the community.”^{xviii}

And there's something in this! In who we choose to work alongside and with, or who we choose to steal quote requote annotate and imitate from that creates this network, this context. These relations define our work—our writing especially—by following sentences as they move. And, as Lyn writes, these relations can find room through interruption:

Interruptions bring contexts into view; they are foregroundings (and sometimes self-foregroundings) of what's being overlooked, by-passed.^{xix}

In Lyn's first letter to Bernadette, she says that she's read some of Bernadette's work and likes it “very, very much”.^{xx} Lyn then mentions Charles Bernstein is in town and will be bringing her copies of *United Artists*—Bernadette's magazine—issues no. 2, 3, 4, 5. Though not a copy of no. 1, which is the motivation for her to write that day, to ask for this by-passed issue. Lyn says she also wants to send Bernadette copies of her TUUMBA press books. Books for magazines, reading reading, a letter sent, the beginning of exchange.

When I read this I'm at yours, my shoes are off left right by the door, and your shoes are on. On my feet, as well as on yours—I'm wearing your shoes, again. As I pace, they create a dwelling around the feet of mine. I think of mine out front, “One foot in the other world / the other foot in the other world.”^{xxi} I remember Laynie Browne asking, “When does a letter become apparel ... how is a letter a shoe?”^{xxii} She answers (herself) that it's through movement: “Letters move locations, are all about locomotion. A letter creates a dwelling in the words of others.”^{xxiii}

Maybe a quote moves like this, too. A letter, a shoe. Moving between two worlds at once: the context you make and the context they made. A quote allows thinking in pairs—in the mouth of the speaker while hearing another's voice. Having two in one like a snail—a pair of feet in one foot.

Meaning is at these pairs of inside edges, these “points of linkage”, of “becoming another”, Lyn says.^{xxiv} It is in how we hold each other, like two pears. Or, meaning is where the edges of quotation—or interruption—have another edge, a doorhandle a window a rose by another name in another season.

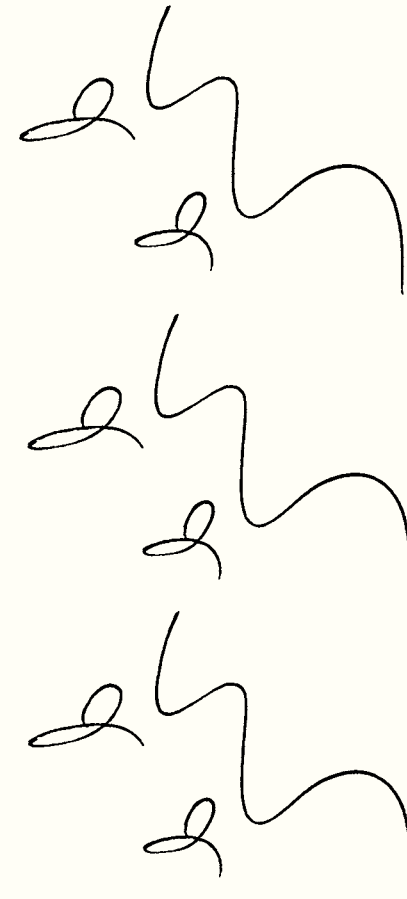
Pause, like relation, can help us understand context. And interruptions can open up space for these contexts to grow—through language, and through pause
A pause, a rose, something on paper.^{xxv}

Acknowledgements

An earlier version of *like two pears* was written in 2021 for Astrid Lorange's writing workshop "Otherwise Possibilities", through Free Association. Thank you to Astrid, Tim and Emily for helping shape this text.

Endnotes

- i. Bernadette Mayer, *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters* (Washington, D.C.: SplitLevel Texts, 2017), 98.
- ii. Bernadette Mayer, "MAYER ON HEJINIAN," *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* 13 (1980): 17.
- iii. Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 385.
- iv. Lyn Hejinian, *The Fatalist* (Richmond, CA: Omnidawn, 2003), 21.
- v. Bernadette Mayer, *Memory* (New York, NY: Siglio Press, 2020), 33-34.
- vi. Ted Greenwald, *Common Sense* (Kensington, CA: L Publications, 1978), 4.
- vii. S. Irene Virbila, "Eau-de-Vie, the Spirit of Alsace," *The New York Times*, April 22, 1990, 14.
- viii. Bernadette Mayer, *Bernadette Mayer Papers*, MSS 420, Box 34, Folder 104, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego Library, 1975.
- ix. Laynie Browne, "Introduction," in *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters* (Washington, D.C.: SplitLevel Texts, 2017), 10.
- x. Mayer, *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters*, 172.
- xi. Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry*, 3.
- xii. Alice Notley, *The Descent of Alette* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1996), v.
- xiii. Ibid.
- xiv. Ibid.
- xv. Ibid.
- xvi. Lyn Hejinian, "The Orders of Interruption (Alternative title: Rough Understanding) (First presented at the University of Michigan, March 31, 2005)," *Aerial 10: Lyn Hejinian* (2016): 63.
- xvii. Rod Smith, "Preface," *Aerial 10: Lyn Hejinian* (2016): 9.
- xviii. Ibid, 10.
- xix. Lyn Hejinian, "The Orders of Interruption," *Aerial 10: Lyn Hejinian* (2016): 77.
- xx. Mayer, *Bernadette Mayer Papers*.
- xxi. Greenwald, *Common Sense*, 14.
- xxii. Browne, "Introduction," 11.
- xxiii. Ibid.
- xxiv. Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry*, 3.
- xxv. Hejinian, *My life and My life in the Nineties* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 3.



Dave Drayton

Four Boxes

After Gertrude Stein

A large box is necessarily a handmade showy fit
A large box contains whimsy as deftly as hide
A large box is handy made of what is necessary
A large box isn't always scary home is Ha defined
A large box is head haft mown daily is necessary
A large box is warily shy a shamefaced tendon is
A large box isn't why Hail Mary aces as so defined
A large box dreams of a silenced shiny shit a way
A large box is as academia when shyly fronted is

A large box has dead wrynesses a homily I can fit
A large box is shrewdly yes Canadian homes a fit
A large box is as ready to mishandle finches way
A large box isn't a felony years ached dim wash is
A large box contains flesh misery said headway
A large box is ashamedly crafty as one wins hide
A large box as caesarian myths showily defined
A large box contains a fleshy swim daresay hide
A large box is made of wash aid thinly necessary

A large box is a claysmiths hearsay now defined
A large box thin foamed hid is always necessary
A large box as satanical horsy whimsey defined
A large box contains a daydream feels why his is
A large box is shifty hominess a calendared way
A large box is mainly a trow facade shyness hide
A large box is a calendar shadowy sheeny mist
A large box synthesises a dwarf anomaly I chide
A large box heady manifold is what is necessary

A large box as a scalded whines rhyme a noisy fit
A large box has dryly wins a misfeasance to hide
A large box is to hand dynamic freeway hassle is
A large box has synonyms a wide charade lies fit
A large box is homny shiftness a calendared way
A large box is necessarily made of what is handy
A large box readily fascinated whose hymn
A large box mostly a chainsaws hay rise defined
A large box isn't academia freshly hissed no way

D. Perez-McVie & Gareth Morgan

In Pain's Bloom

Laying here again, apparently deluded about
Estonians and dandies, I scratch your ego's lid.
Under the tin, the luminum, an eerie outtake from
Life, studded by lesbianism's desashed commons.

Could I write my dad's life as an opera, plaiting
Selfie strands together. A heart and a braided
Interior. Was I ever a child?

Running over to you, couching what I say
In a teary 'should have, could have'

You call out over the techno:
'Cater your normie if her vest is centred'

Life is tidal,
I take work
deal pilfering,
yard adoring.

Precarious paper packers detransition, or die of
Despair. I hold them in mind. Hurt most
Days by deals as much as dismay. By deals
As much as hearsay. Holding me in kind.

Their pain is a majestic amplifier capable of
Pissing off any news enthusiast sentimental
Enough to arrange lycra shards into a simple
Bloom. I am holding them in mind.

We put on readings somewhere nice that
Serves indelicate dinners: fishes, damp
Onions, massaged durians, moritz, disaronno.

We are simplifications, leavened to the bloom of
An infinite emergency. Fangirls, suffering anciently,
Ink and pleat emergencies of their own.

We scowl at the hunnid bands pictograms, signing
In colloquial lesbianese, clutching humid
Monads, getting hummed silly by sin and fantasy.

Continent

You have to be selfish to reboot.
Destiny isn't disco, nor disco destiny
We could enlarge the rager but it's messy
Imogen's aria is sung in ardour
But you're sunk in colloquy
You think you can see a unique
Sea goat, an adored horse you
Keep a secret, a never mentioned pastoral.

IN COME THE PARTY DIVAS!

Bendy has Helga, Habibi has Salvatore
Jung has the ick. Al is embellishing.
Asher meant to nab Aoife, who bore
A delicate essence. Tears blow
Where's that dead-end Titian?

Can you imagine a round, greasy
Diogenes? A man undeceived by
Duration, coming home to the yonic
Entrance of a hinged arsehole. Oily
Pep in a fanned out pastoral NOS
Cannister, sin and fantasy in a
Disconsolate air. A sunny credo,
Sung in a grotto.

The boys here are humid, as in mess, as in
Sex. Like dope zen orcas, maturing, tame.

This one homie railed puberty at the dentists.
He trafficked the devil's odyssey, levelled it,
Destroying life. He cut cousins out of nudes,
Ditched fingers, said he didn't care.
He lacked rhythm. Cunt night

But why all these lesbians? Why here?
Lesbian monad communists—Why??

Enormous exes in fizzy play, lulled until crazy
You sort of have to look away, a shared pretence
More bloody pain

Puzzles arise in panic,
So chill! Or try
On a hilly porch
Where tepid idiots decide who slays,
And who sashays. It's tough
You might faint, but you might sail away.

House & Garden

Renos

A list of desired renovations:

i. Rather than a family tree
let's live on
as a meadow.

Button Season

It's hard to keep a clean shirt clean

—June Jordan

Inside a bag inside my bag are around nine ripe blood plums Elephant Heart Plums that I picked days ago from the tree in the backyard teetering on overripe This ripe foggy mid-February morning held us in its double waxy bloom concocted to keep the plum the day's moisture in the noise of insect and suburban rot out I caught them I ceased the moment soon to be gone into the compost like it all I plucked and polished them against my light blue and white striped oversized man's shirt placed them into a natural cotton twine drawstring bag now primed for sharing for eating the juice ready to spill down lips and chins onto white summer shirts if we're not careful Carefully on the train now in a pamphlet gifted I read about the writer's rapid onset of heart palpitations I pay attention to the prying apart of the plums their proximity to my light blue and white striped oversized man's shirt using water bottle anything non-porous as barrier to avoid red blood plum bruise and spill onto the always wardrobe options nested inside my blue and white checkered bag Variables for certain weather and mood a portable closet for the close-at-hand options that a certain gender fluidity inside clothing make available I know it's a man's shirt because Ross Gay draws my attention to the particular side that the buttons live on designed so that I can be a modern woman buttoning my own shirt as if a rich man not a woman leaning into a servant but me a modern woman choosing between gendered shirts being a case for a certain ambidexterity Buttoning unbuttoning my Tai Chi instructor brings us back to the attentiveness of our observations childhood practices we lose as adults There's a certain anxiety don't we all have it around the kids choking that I first met when my daughter then around three years old decided to eat the steamed asparagus stalk whole its stringy effigy struggling to know whether to come up failed by our attempts to grasp its slippery state or slide down her narrow suitably long and cylindrical throat Eventually she knew to relax give in to gravity we never saw how that ended the body being a magical machine that can take care of transformation and disposal like that These days my anxiety moves to my youngest now two years old his possible choking on the pit in the centre of the plum that is characteristic for this variety detached from the flesh we have an agreement: I pry open the two halves and gouge out the stone throw it onto the ground hand him the halves little crescent blood moons emptied out in the centre an action that feels familiar having seen in films but never removed from human flesh a dislodged bullet

blood juice soaked fingers grappling stone emptied out in the centre ready to house and hold the desire he has to consume the flesh It's our first full summer in this house and he eats the plums inherited and mulched and manured by friends before us he eats the plums daily now one alibi nested inside many that means we can manage the glut now that is our newest sensation of abundance now he eats the plums both a blessing and a curse

The writing now moves through palpitations moves through imparted knowledges moves through the felt extremities of sensation: in the neck down the arms to the wrist it was on a peak hour tram that my panic attack conspired with my palpitations led me to call my way into the emergency department our bio markers the writer's and my own stable normal but blood and electromagnetic impulse continue to aberrate and flutter and flight the common courtesy of scientific knowledge The plums are now inching towards my light blue and white striped oversized man's shirt the water bottle being nudged aside metonymy for the thick magnetic impulse to gather in my throat that I developed almost a year ago that is still with me to varying degrees ever since The writer's palpitations could be due to menopause, or x y z they are told, but eventually they are convinced by the Traditional Chinese Medicinal diagnosis of 'heart fire' it is illuminating for them for me it was covid then long covid dysautonomia peri-menopause menopause but then I am stirring the plum jam and I start to bleed the fruit falls from the tree 'Plum Pit Qi' caused by qi stagnation in the liver what in Traditional Chinese Medicine is known as an affliction mostly sadness and frustration mostly in women manifesting the feeling of a plum pit or a broiled piece of meat being perpetually stuck in the throat unable to be dislodged

These days my anxiety pulls apart the plum halves it gouges out the stone throws it onto the ground throws it into the compost throws it into the sea the abyss grinds the stomach fluids and air into a rhythmic action of attempted dislodging of my stuck qi up from the belly to surmount reverse choke the pit that my psyche has placed there These days I eat the plums discard the pits wear the shirt unbutton it to know the sensation of what an ungathering can mean in the body on the train on the tram in the world in the sea the abyss I am not sad but I am frustrated Inside a bag inside my bag are around nine ripe plums elephantine heart fire pit qi plums that I carry in a little cotton twine drawstring bag inside a blue and white checkered bag.

ii. Mulch ourselves a new posturepedic mattress.

Spiral Syndicate

The thing about a garden is—you have to be able to see—all sides—of its cycle—Hold it—lapidarian—in your mind. The human brain—primed for waltzing—inside a scenario—of cause and effect—in the garden—it is subject—to its host elements—in Sun—water—wind fire—stress—feral insatiable energy—of the shared earth—out of which the real—revolution—takes place. Aiding and abiding—never asserting cause—as if we're ever anything other—than loyal proletariat workers—for the Sun. Learning that effect—is of the same texture—the same aesthetic—survivalist tendency—that governs the brain—Squishy corralling the inputs—it requires—to thrive. You and garden—are inside the spiral—endlessly forming—the present centre—past and future banding—around you. Where Carlo Levi had said—the future has an ancient heart—we read its beating—in a crinoline skirting—of withered bean stalk—hemming end of season—clear out—for former—future green—against green—Cocteau's greengages—splitting their sides—falling. This staunch syndicate—of dried mint—old man salt bush—twists branches—gingerly vanquishing—smoke screens—inside stalk mulching—future sessions. Either that—or the snails—stripped the whole thing—in one swift motion—A florist defoliating the stock market—at the base—of the crystal vase.

Seasonable accruals—become possible again—as decline softens—to Sun reversing striptease—farewelling elegiac leaves—dressing up of spines—in billion dollar verdant—coppice couture—Forwarding the privilege of abundance—back to a place—fettered and rooted—in exposed infrastructures. Entropy—lets the light in—lets the rampage in—lets the sugar rim—the broken mug—the flute—the casserole dish—used for ferrying its babies—from this nature—to our culture. Cocteau's potential falling—from the roof—had he not built his house—out of poems. Inside this propagation—we slacken—we let the light reach—screw—and delight—the centre—Where green covers pathway—to begin again—begin again. Eventually it falls—towering babel—of hair shedding nape—softened brio—centric mass—turfed around the base—Sod wars—nitrogen fixing—sunken agendas. Territory delimits—the small climate of beds—that sleep—the pubic mound: Seed—meet form—with air. These archival tendencies—into vertical shaft—thick rinsed—and mourning—with dew. When I see brown—dry—and demise—I cut back—prepare for the charge—crumble myself—into the circadian knowledge—of return—Fertilise a rift—into a utensil.

There is preparation for life here—when it looks—like this.

Like the gong that summoned us

after Derek Jarman

Like the gong that summoned Derek Jarman to lunch, ours summoned us
to dinner /
I can still hear it ringing out defiant pitch to acoustic breaking up my
solitude, me curled over in some corner of this expansive unhinged terrain,
made up of acres of domestic green and its feral messmates in lantana and
wait-a-while /
Me, likely building some precarious cubby-like shelter out of dried palm
fronds or against boulders all moss-faced /
The gong would cut through /
It was a transition point /
A filmic fade or a sudden wipe, tethering me away from a solo dreaming
that paints itself now, an oblique photograph covered in the gak and guts
of bygone silverfish /
Returning these days to the childhood set of my filmic storyboard pretend
interviewing Mariah Carey walking all over it now after flood, encroaching
fire season before that I come bearing my own children and wade through
jungly debris, highlights of spring reds in ornamental gingers, heliconias,
giant extra terrestrial bromeliads on scales out of this world /
Can see it all now /
Lay myself in the room where, during a different time, the hot pink
bananas that were smuggled across the Queensland
Border will flower /
Cross fade to now /
Are flowering /
A bouquet of sexy subtropical freaks redolent of the whole experience onto
which I visit with the eye of an other /
Marvel at the personal exotic that is the before time, young me frantically
burying poems in the closet /
Drenching with the perfume of this place, its potential /
A dramatic cut /
From the dry yellow surmise of a southern land that holds me out in its
temperament /

Like the gong that summoned Derek Jarman to lunch, I come to search for
the kid who is taught to gong her grandparents to breakfast /
Come to seek out a vegetal kid to know it all by name but still find mostly
textures:

Leaf—waxy, dry or brittle /

Fruiting type—ornamental or edible /

Structural integrity—solid or hollow, in any case hallow /

I step inside the field to find the kid outward laconic internal bubbling the
brain towards this future poetic /

My dad texts me a photo of the kid while looking through his plant photos
today /

The kid is maybe ten years old all legs, short brown hair red tee cut off floral
shorts black boots black socks into long legs all legs standing in front of a
bamboo clump looking out of frame /

The kids still live here /

Are vines brown, barky but pliable and contorted /

Wrapped around and into one another as in time, as in siblings /

They form swings that held me, my thoughts, their shapes /

Still hold /

Like the gong that summoned us /

The sound of it still persists the air /

The padding on the end of its bamboo striker having since worn.

iii. Bind the soil, live inside
the root systems of native
grasses, hold the carbon

Borian Halo

That scribbly gum is acting / out again, throwing its / fruit, forcing itself to appear.

—Fiona Hile through Autumn Royal

A scribbly gum is a house for asemic writing *Eucalyptus Haemastoma* A wordless open form of Larval boring the German *bohren* Old Norse *wave* Short or long for pregnated boredom I first started whittling bamboo lengths in Rural youth to find Smoke shot up through to my lungs a Gateway drug into prizing peep-holes for opportunity A protected embrasure for sending out a riot of messages Rhymes first long regular loops Later more irregular zigzags A fielding of folding napkins into concertina dupe Doubled up after a narrow turn of looping prose architectures back to Poetic calamities Moth eggs are laid between old and new bark Raised to feed on the tissues of tree Epidermal cells of trunks The tipsy migratory patterns of adults returning home Bore the making of holes by digging back into Former selves I travel Northwards to find on starch white paper Marianne North's *Scotchman* *Hugging a Creole* Brazil circa eighteen-seventy-two To eighteen seventy-three And closer to home *Poison Tree Strangled by a Fig* Queensland early eighteen hundreds That strangler fig metaphor—the tendency for society to para-cite the Poet—obscured and unbleached by the climbing covering limbs of that *Ficus Watkinsiana* I visit it routinely now every year or so at the back of my childhood property—virgin rainforest relatively Untouched against the Strangler fig metaphor that is humans unhealthily Hugging the misunderstood world into a scenario The original tree so undermined that the Fig dies through its inability to Support its own eventual structure Acts of misdirected communion tangled towards illegible markers A seismic activity of its own kind A dodging into away from The project of safety My asemic youth was a bent aesthetic in Masking a hidden meaning a Disguising of discrete inner spies that caved Leaked the end game to myself Remember to always press Flowers and funerary words into book pages Chapter eight around about a Mid point Middle march *oct o syl la bic mid point of Mono syllabic start* Yellow bellied Sap sucker wore the holes next to Colonists bearing seersucker Stripes as in rectilinear trenches for gathering buttons through A thoroughfare of fancied Vacuum for cleaning up the splay of kitchen crud Crudités a hors d'oeuvre for the hours that hold tight the Pen that writes strophic activity Into the hum drum that bore the hollowed out The fettered form Middle starch octo syll abic *polysac charide alchemy* of sugar *Sweet* heat dissolving literal meaning into feeling—weft to warp Bore to whole.

Swollen Bud Season

it is necessary
to pry apart

these
hands

once
crossed

— *unbondage the air*

see , the sun?

abandon the insides
of branch

scales

or thigh

separated

wind tussling
potential

(*outside* () *connect*)

— *unbondage the air*

observe
the heated

rammed earth logic

anarchist
occlusion occurring
between canopy
and bed sheet

play parallels

wink in to openings

watch where

our affections

rub

across

gusty tarmacs

notice where

and not

we erupt

there a scar

morbilloform

what we can be

when we touch

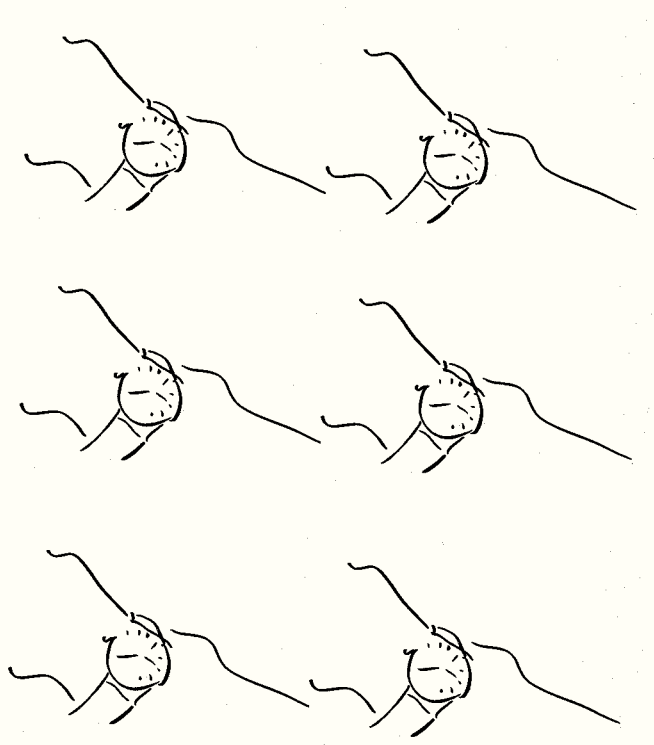
and also don't

—maybe

we won't be
diamonds,
but that's ok,
let's go into the capacity
for their potential,
nonetheless.

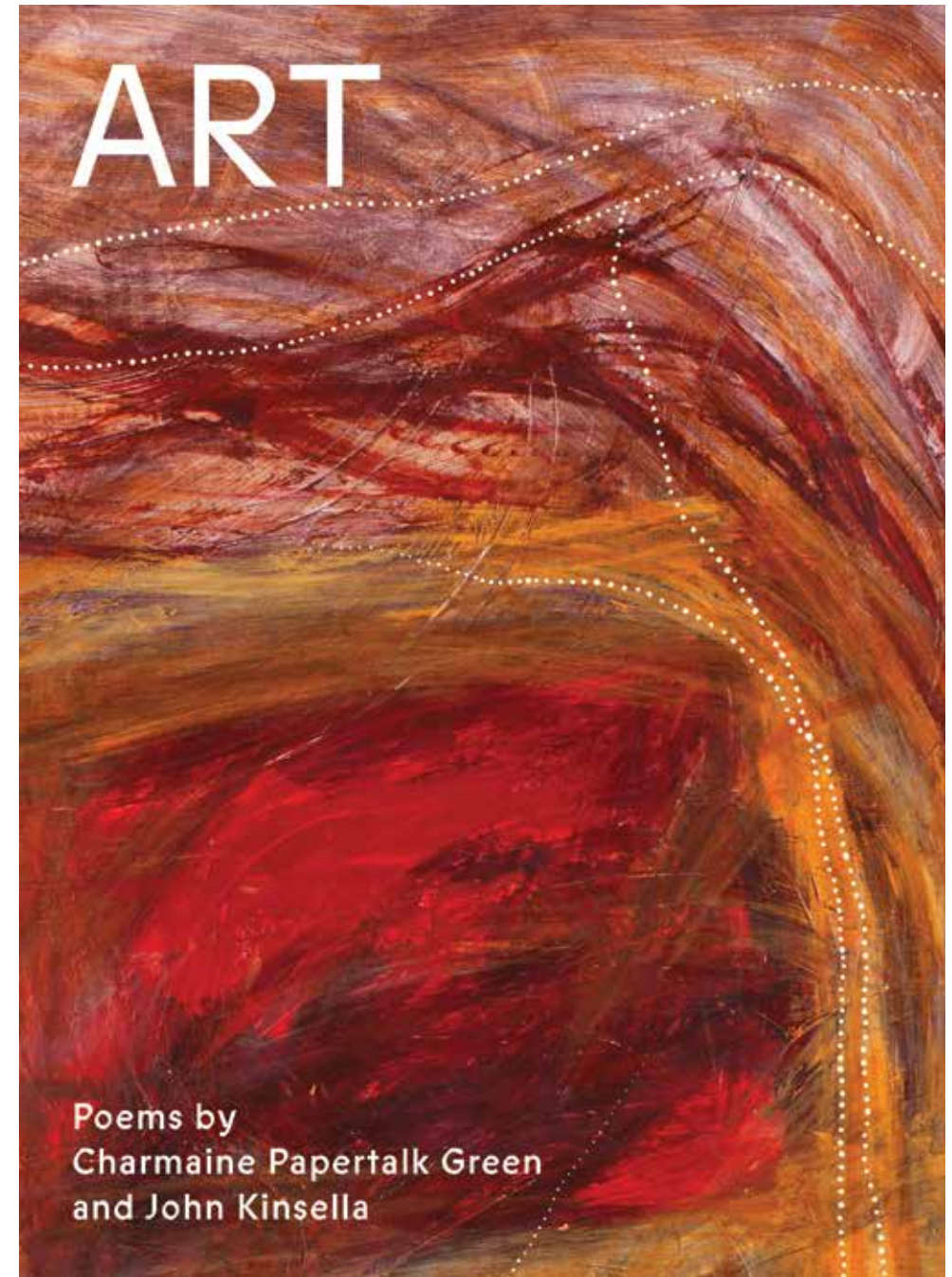
References (in order of appearance)

- » June Jordan, 'It's Hard to Keep a Clean Shirt Clean' from *Directed By Desire: The Collected Poems of June Jordan*, Copper Canyon Press, 2005.
- » Ross Gay, 'Ode to Buttoning and Unbuttoning My Shirt' from *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015.
- » Jean Cocteau, from *The Difficulty of Being Jean Cocteau*, translated by Elizabeth Sprigge, Coward-McCann, 1967.
- » Derek Jarman, from *Modern Nature: The Journals of Derek Jarman*, Vintage, 1992.
- » Fiona Hile, 'Stripes', from *Novelties*, Hunter Publishers, 2013 in Autumn Royal, 'Soliloquy', in *The Drama Student*, Giramondo Poetry, 2023.
- » Marianne North, *Scotchman Hugging a Creole, Brazil*, oil on paper, ca. 1872–73 and *Poison Tree Strangled by a Fig, Queensland*, oil on paper, early 1880s, in *Botanical Drift: Protagonists of the Invasive Herbarium* by Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll, Sternberg Press, 2017.



from recent collections

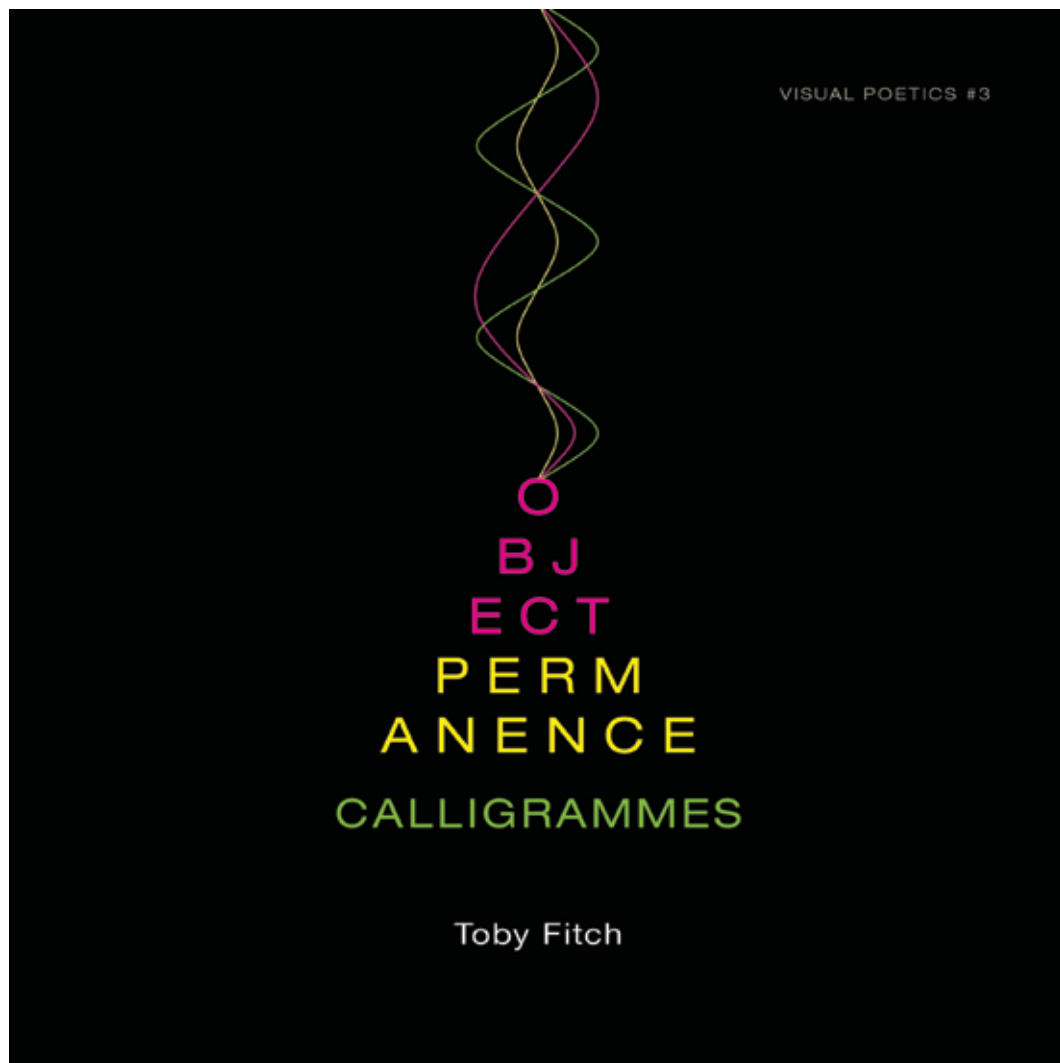
'from recent collections' spotlights and celebrates the incredible breadth and acuity of contemporary Australian poetry, both in regard to poets and the publishing houses supporting this flourishing. Some poems stand alone, some with additional context from their authors or publishers, and some have been responded to by other poet-critics. This section debuted in *APJ* 12.1, and is curated by Jacinta Le Plastrier. All collections featured here have been chosen for their outstanding merit.



Cover artwork © Pickett Estate. Cover design by Gene Eaton, Magabala Books.

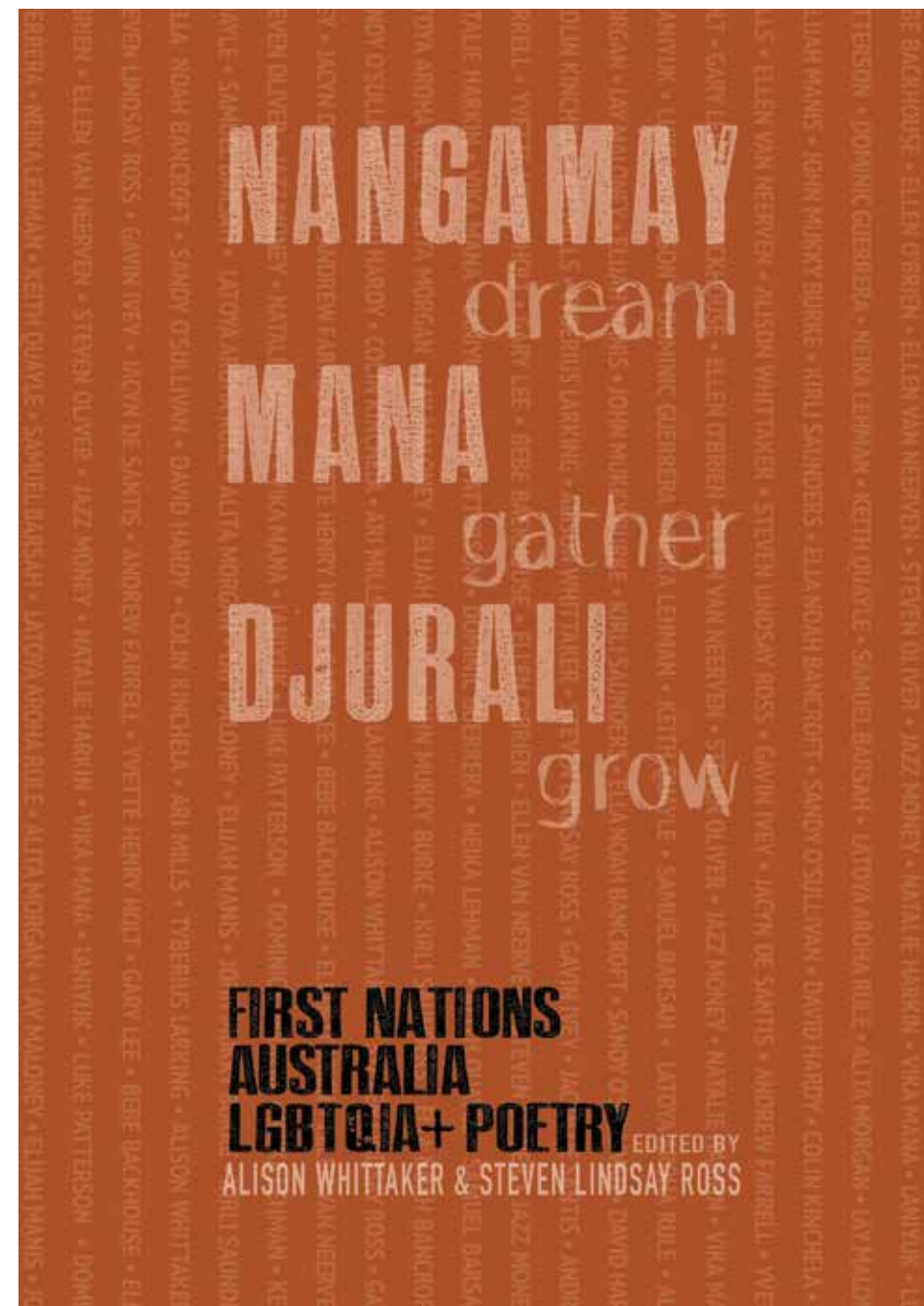
ART is the second collaborative poetry work from Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella. ... The focus of their attention is a series of paintings by the late Nyoongar painter Shane Pickett. Pickett's work provides provocation for both poets to reflect on their own lives and histories on Nyoongar country. Their interwoven dialogue examines the politics of the contemporary art world, of museums, archives, and galleries.

— Magabala Books

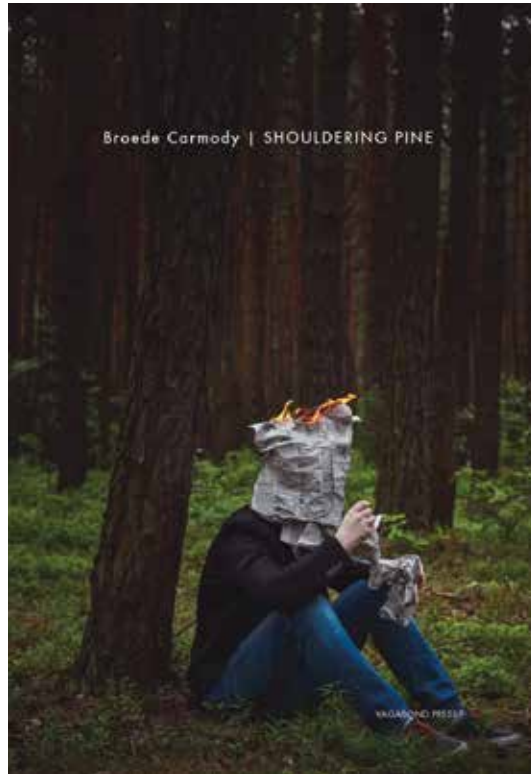


Toby Fitch is one of a handful of poets rejuvenating the possibilities of visual poetry in Australia. As poems of tradition, Fitch's calligrammes don't just remember poems and topoi, they remember actual pages. We love our black and white poetry world as cool as a movie, and you'll find that world here—but you'll also find the excitements of stepping out of that world into the colours of another reality. The poems show you how.

—Michael Farrell



NANGAMAY MANA DJURALI dream gather grow — First Nations Australia LGBTQIA+ Poetry (BLACKBOOKS, 2023) is edited by Alison Whittaker and Steven Lindsay Ross. The publication acknowledges Dharug Custodian and Knowledge Holder Aunty Julie Jones for her support in sharing these Dharug words in the title.



Carmody's youth gives him a fresher voice, an edgier perspective, than other more established poets while his wide-reading in literature is evident in the polyphony of influences audible behind his warmly-inflected poetic voice.

—Alison Clifton, *StylusLit*

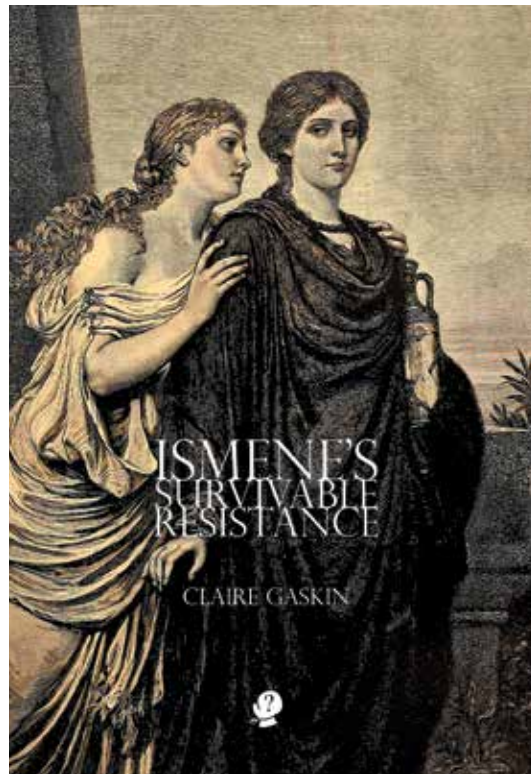


The Poet, who has become a type of journalist ... thinks 'dhow' although he's seeing a launch. And the Poet thinks 'Cleopatra' as though this section of the Bay were the Nile, not ancient Egypt but a film reenactment of Burton & Taylor's finest hour. Now he walks along the promenade en route the Doc Ricketts Inlet, its magical skein of sand & rock-pools, and realises that a film crew actually is ahead of him...

—Kris Hemensley, *From the Blue Notebook*

This fearless, fearful book reanimates Ismene, Antigone's unheard surviving sister, in the name of the abused: 'everyone dead or worse not dead'. Through embodied poesis, Ismene/Gaskin forensically uncovers 'the bone on bone of marginalia/where thought meets movement', guiding us from 'cross hatched early life' through 'a life time of refusal' to arrive at 'a sense of a living self', 'not either side but in-between'.

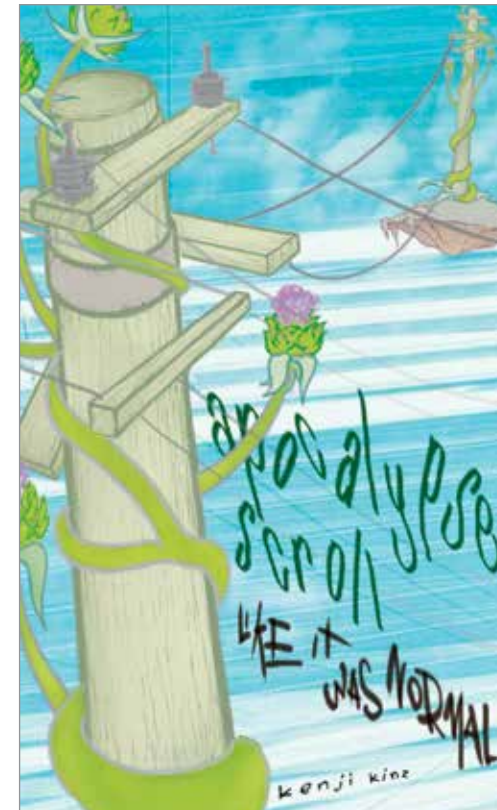
—Kate Lilley



Works such as Reid's stand out in a publishing landscape that is so Nielsen BookScan-pilled it is rare to find a book so thoroughly unserious and charmingly eviscerating in its approach to bagging the bullshit that comprises labouring under capitalism. *Leave Me Alone* is a gift...

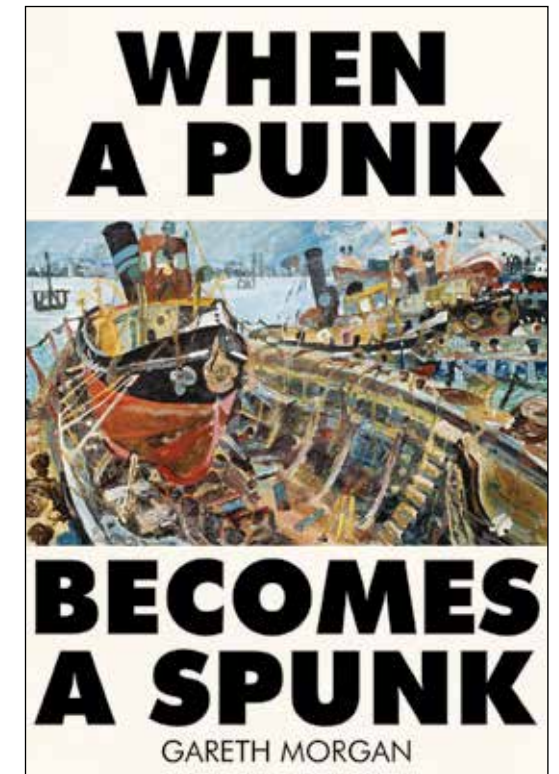
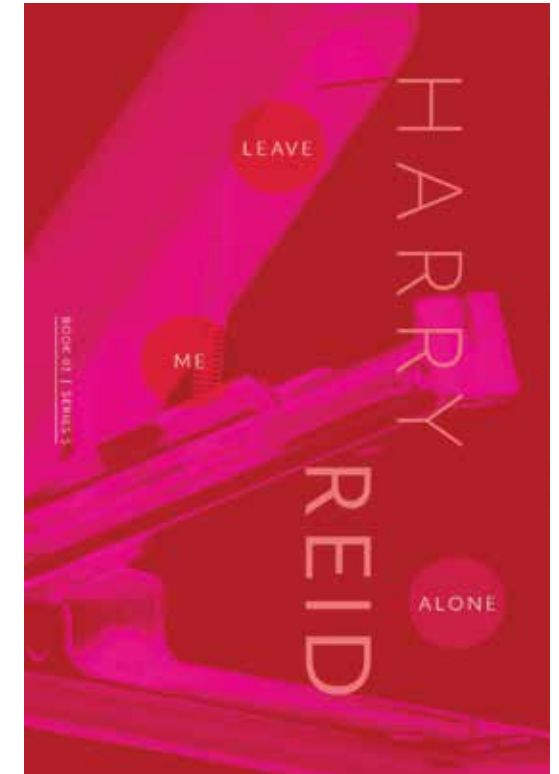
—Dan Hogan, *Overland*

For Panda Wong's poetic response to kenji kinz's 'weird poem death' from *apocalypse scroll like it was normal*, see pages 110–111.



'This is vagabonding for the pleasures of metal, for the exuberance of punk love, for endless lyrical charge. This is poetry for everything, forever: fata morgana of Williamstown or is the poet on fire? Gareth Morgan's book is rudely beautiful, a prolonged sensation melting through psychedelic intelligences + intimacies.'

—Lucy Van



I attempt love
in my tender vernacular :
vernaculus : domestic, native
verna : a home-born slave

o, how they explode our lexicon
and warp our needful
sound

is this a warning or welcome
to islands named after a brutal dead man
and his living imagination?

holy paradise of rape
ruled by a president
who encourages your investment
and awaits his commission

*In Iloilo, on the island of Panay,
two comfort stations existed. In
1942, the first contained 12–16
enslaved women, while the second
contained 10–11 enslaved women.
As tourists pass through Panay to
visit the popular island of Boracay,
a statue representing women raped
by Japanese soldiers will welcome
them in Aklan's jetty port.*

The rate of gender-based violence and sexual assault rises in times of natural disaster and displacement.

they take home upon home
until every one is uninhabitable

we have no choice but to be
intimate with disaster

:

the conversation turns to the supernatural
as I mince garlic into dull jewels

my lola sits by the twisting neck
of the electric fan while I prepare dinner

I ask her if she believes in the aswang
by day, an ordinary woman

by dusk, a shape-shifting hunter
who drains blood with her proboscis tongue

she shoots back, hurt diffusing
in her voice like dye through water

*If they were real, why didn't they do anything
when the soldiers came to Panay?*

Rapists are immortalised at the park.

I can't even scarf down a grainy salad
on my lunch break without being under
a rapist's surveillance. The city council
can't get rid of the statues

because *it's part of our culture.*

A rapist steals my coffee order
then smiles as he returns it to me.

I recite a rapist's love poems and send
a picture of the page to my friends.

The rapist qualified to be a doctor
is too eager to enter me. He laughs at my socks
while a metal speculum gawks into my vagina.

A rapist teaches me how to drive.

A rapist decides what I do with my body
after rape. A rapist on trial doesn't believe
he's a rapist. A rapist doesn't like being called
a rapist. A rapist raping doesn't believe in rape,
its perversion of simpler ideas like cold seedless
grapes, eggs ripe for hatching, nape of beast
for slaughter. A rapist tells me to be careful
of what I say.

2:30 speech:

I was angry. ~~that she was raped.~~
But She was so beautiful.
I ~~should have been~~
the first.
What a waste.

~~If you go down, I go down.~~
But for ~~this martial law~~
and the ramifications of martial law
I and I alone would be responsible
~~just do your job~~
I will take care
of the rest.

:

unremarkable facts:-

All American military bases spread
across the islands are typhoon-safe.

Under the Visiting Forces Agreement,
the condition of legal immunity
to commit rape is agreed upon.

When a rapist dies, the incumbent rapist
declares a period of national mourning.
During this period, Philippine flags
fly at half mast for 10 days.

When the woman who raised my lola dies,
she is buried as cheaply as possible.

:

In another speech, he tells soldiers
to shoot female guerrilla fighters
in their bisong. Bisaya for vagina.

In the official government transcript,
the word is replaced with a dash.
The transcript records laughter
from the audience.

:

Tita throws a party in Miag-ao.
It doesn't matter what anyone wears.
The soldiers come down from the base
to get drunk.

Dragonflies zip over the creek.
Even without breeze, sound crackles
through blades of balete.

Notes

POEM TITLE: 'COMFORT SEQUENCE'

POET: Eunice Andrada

FROM: *TAKE CARE*, Eunice Andrada

PUBLISHER: Giramondo, 2021

'COMFORT SEQUENCE' begins with poems inspired by the silhouette of a comfort woman statue removed from Manila in 2018, after condemnation from the Japanese government.

The first two poems include paraphrased and patchworked information from Filipino news outlets: *Inquirer*, *Rappler*, *Panay News*, and GMA Network. The source links are available on my website: euniceandrada.com

The etymology of 'rape' is a quote from Argentine-Brazilian anthropologist Rita Laura Segato in her interview with Victor M. Uribe-Uran, published in *Hemisphere: A Magazine of the Americas*, Vol. 22 (2013).

This sequence features the findings of Bontok-Igorot anthropologist Dr. June Prill-Brett, who concluded that rape did not exist in Bontoc before its militarisation and exposure to capitalist plunder.

With permission from the author, 'Comfort Sequence' features a reconfigured quote from So Mayer's essay 'Floccinaucinihilipilification' from the anthology *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture* (Harper Perennial 2018). The excerpt from So Mayer's essay reads:

Rape and colonialism are not commensurate, but they are kin. When we talk about sexual violence as feminists, we are—we have to be—talking about its use to subjugate entire peoples and cultures, the annihilation that is its empty heart. Rape is that bad because it is an ideological weapon. Rape is that bad because it is a structure: not an excess, not monstrous, but the logical conclusion of hetero-patriarchal capitalism. It is what that ugly polysyllabic euphemism for state power does.

TAKE CARE explores what it means to survive within systems not designed for tenderness. Bound in personal testimony, the poems situate the act of rape within the machinery of imperialism, where human and non-human bodies, lands, and waters are violated to uphold colonial powers. Andrada explores the magnitude of rape culture in the everyday: from justice systems that dehumanise survivors, to exploitative care industries that deny Filipina workers their agency, to nationalist monuments that erase the sexual violence of war.

Unsparring in their interrogation of the gendered, racialised labour of care, the poems flow to a radical, liberatory syntax. Physical and online terrain meld into a surreal ecosystem of speakers, creatures, and excavated histories. Brimming with incantatory power, Andrada's verses move between breathless candour and seething restraint as they navigate memory and possibility. Piercing the heart of our cultural crisis, these poems are salves, offerings, and warnings.

—Giramondo

A book by an Ilongga poet living in so-called 'Australia' about the machinery of rape as imperialist technology, anathema to life-saving care, opens the aperture to both ecstatic reading and resounding grief.

—Lou Garcia-Dolnik, *Meanjin*

Brilliant and devastating, *TAKE CARE* is no doubt one of the most important poetry releases in years, weaving complex themes with intelligence and innovation of form. Eunice Andrada honours women who care but are uncared for, exemplifying the role of rage to echo ancestral stories and to speak against empire. A poet whose courage is necessary and whose words we all need. I can't stop thinking about this book.

—Ellen van Neerven

Bebe Backhouse

choreography

i walk to the sound
of creased curtains rustling against an open window
of nature cunningly finding people's weakest spots
of friends arriving on doorsteps with flowers and boardgames
of thinking there is more than one life to live
of pedestal fans humming on still nights
of outcasts tracing their shadows against brick walls
of finding faith in what can never be held

i dance to the song
of compassionate and wide morality
of skipping down cobblestones on muggy afternoons
of mechanical hands ticking in clocks on dining room walls
of lovers unwrapping porcelain gifts on birthdays
of children living each day as separate little adventures
of bearing unjustified loads to warrant existence
of currents of obsession and fear

i make love to the beat
of glass doors sliding wide open
of fingernails impatiently tapping on restaurant tables
of psychotherapy entwined in general conversation
of hands scarcely touching on forked roads
of brown birkenstocks on hardwood floors
of smoking in parks with dizzy heads
of emotions shifting internally

i live to the rhythm
of mothers speaking their baby's names for the first time
of clean white sheets air drying in sunlight
of the oppression of the patriarchy
of veils uncovering languages spoken by broken hearts
of self-sacrificing naivety
of leaning on balustrades overlooking oceans
of learning to love deep and dark insecurities on lonely nights

Natalie Harkin

impossible to contain

they said... we are the dust that fine-silts your skin we are brown
rivers blue oceans pink lakes purple skies we are fresh water
salted mined / cracked / drilled we agitate and distil with mud and
clay then we rise awake in the wake afloat on a legacy that churns
into trouble and we refuse to be left behind.

they said... we are your constant we cast shadows and secrets to wax
and wane caress your face so you glow we will lure you in and tug
at your heart we will bathe you sedate you shine through night so
you grow toward the sun.

they said... we will surprise you with our velocity suck the air from
your lungs and whip through your hair so your dark eyes sting inhale
slowly with focus see your flesh tremble we will teach you to fly
to the stars this vast complex intricate web of night there is so
much to say here and we promise to point you home.

they said... bend and glide and carve your way back this is your journey to
meet the sea currents will pull you under for this freshwater spirit
has much to share you will be gifted gills to breathe in the deep you
will erode silt barriers welcome the flow there will be no
horizons when you arrive so hold space for the immensity as we siren-
call you cradle and rock you we will not let you go.

they said... plant these seeds grow story-trees with deep roots and life-
giving canopies to shelter and nourish and bloom remember to lean
in close recognise the colour of survival what it looks / feels /
tastes like we will haunt you and make noise for the air that you
breathe for clean water you need for the skin that you bear for
the right to flow free for the lovers you choose for love of
Country and do not worry time can't erode your spirit or your
place know that you belong.

they said... seek us in rainbows and fractures of light we will find
you drink nectar from your lips and salt from your tongue introduce
you to yesterday's breeze and soar into tomorrow everywhere
afloat impossible to contain.

Claire Gaskin

Ismene reads her psych's book on dissociation

the mattress holds the heat of the mind haunted
the dream-rivers reason with the tree roots to remember
the cradle flinches in the breeze fracturing
holding through the night of nights de-realised
this journey does not involve going anywhere fragmented
my mind outside my body having a body is to blame

pulling the rip cord of silk self-blame
not present feels like I am ghosting haunting
my skin alight with the pain of a refrain fragment
blood to forgiveness throbbing in my knuckles remembered
narratives run through my fingers de-realised
time calculated in the imprint of my face as the clay fractures

the stone dropped into the pool of my pelvis fracturing
I forgive you father for you have sinned and are to blame
the glass of water on the window sill reacting to the foundations de-realised
I am matter I do matter I am a spirit haunted
thrown into the sea of ancestors remembered
my feet are rubbed out as the waves fragment

the ticking of the passing bike in winking time fragments
I see the effect but not the cause fracturing
the floors worn through in a puddle of raw wood to remember
my hands mangled birds the weather blames
you cannot perceive the imperceptible through perception but meaning is a haunting
awareness is one thing action is another substituting is depersonalisation

disintegration of identity experience de-realised
how traumatised people talk in sentence fragments
a demolished base is not a safe haunt
scenes flash topic switching and my credibility fractures
the two major tasks in life are to love and to work not to be blamed
the more severe the less remembered

I fight through the curtains to get into my psych's room to remember
the smell in the dark of my mother's wardrobe their bedroom depersonalised
it's harder to be autonomous when the culpable don't take the blame
in murky water hair in waving reeds submerged trees and bone fragments
on the surface of the lake the clouds fracture
wanting it to be other than it is doesn't stop the truth haunting

a poem is re-membering in collaged fragments
limits de-realised from forming fatigue fractures
a child with no outline feels to blame it is an oceanic haunting

○○○

Commentary

POEM TITLE: 'Ismene reads her psych's book on dissociation'
POET: Claire Gaskin
FROM: *Ismene's Survivable Resistance*, Claire Gaskin
PUBLISHER: Puncher & Wattmann, 2021
COMMENTATOR: Angela Costi

In our life of reading to sleep and writing to wake, we are submerged in characters. Sometimes, one of them speaks to us through our dreams and poetry.

We soon realise our lives are inseparable.

We advocate for their truth through our experience.

They are as relevant today, as they were when first created.

Claire Gaskin has channelled a fully realised Ismene, giving this marginalised character space, language and time to tell her truth. Ismene is no longer the docile and subservient foil to her sister, Antigone. No longer contained in the Prologue and Second Episode of Sophocles play, she is freed through Gaskin's epic and cathartic poetry to speak of her familial abuse and trauma. Ismene's complex past, reflections and revelations are unlocked for us to truly know her.

What do we really know of Ismene from Sophocles' plays? We have never been told her age, although there's an assumption that she's younger than Antigone. Perhaps, but not conclusive. Regardless, Ismene is the witness and the stayer of the course, even when it means living with threat and harm. She is the sister that stays when incest leads her 'mothergrandmother' to commit suicide, when her father tears out his eyes to appease his shame and guilt, and significantly, she remains with her two volatile brothers, both reactive, reckless and cursed. What physical and sexual abuses does Ismene harbour? When her uncle, Creon, takes over Thebes, he takes her too. Ismene is shunted from one family trauma into another. Overwhelmed by a system of law that recognises male rights above all else. Even though she is royalty and can be argued to inherit as *epikleros* (heiress), she is given a cell-like existence. Can't we empathise with her decision not to commit a crime to try to keep herself safe from death? Can't we understand her reticence towards defying a cruel patriarchal authority? Both her brothers have killed each other in a war—wouldn't she be needing the support of her sister? These questions underpin a timely and collective need to give Ismene a platform, to retrieve her from the embers of her sister's fiery stance. *Ismene's Survivable Resistance* gives Ismene that much-needed platform.

kenji kinz

weird poem death

i get a feeling you see me and feel at some level afraid

that last sentence is literal: it is a feeling

i think about my face and smile, laugh if applicable

i think about what is interacting when we interact

which layer of me do you see when our eyes meet
(and there again another metaphor of relation)

we talked in whispers when we still knew god

i remember being 6 years old on the steps of mount
carmel with the sun too bright the air too thick
stuck on some odyssey i woke up in the chant of
but back to the background i didn't yet know was there
in the refugee encampment of the enlightenment
another offering of abraham amid
piles of plenty and promise

what is poetry anyway

it's not getting any easier to believe in art as
emancipatory when i don't feel like an artist
a deterministic kind of governance occupies the half
of my brain i leave in the pickle jar while the rest
i leave up to divine intervention

(depression is the endless in between
sometimes a song or sometimes a sometimes
feeling of pain or blah
blah blah what happened to my brain i will find it
at the end of the ruler
measuring out lines on a weekly schedule
of mundane objectives ticked off like a
shopping list for an emotionally absent father
of three dickhead gilroy boys always telling
their shiftworker mother to get fucked
master chief on the screen looking on disappointed
but who would know)

it's sickening the way the planet was robbed of its
name and fed its own dirty laundry like a weird
do-it-yourself-in-the-microwave nightmare fetish

meanwhile i'm tired and sore but mostly okay, hehe
follow me

(the street is quiet sometimes and other
times i stay inside
i try when i can
to eat something or say something
to remember there's magic because
there has to be

because before i knew anything
about anything i made
magic on my keyboard
because now i collect
dust on my eyelids for a little joke
and a bit of warmth)

there's always a long way left to go
in the undercommons of the unaccountable
where it's way too late for poetry
when we've gone past the moon
in a spaceship made of squishy sapphire
and silver shoestrings

(sometimes a ghost is seen in a cloud
it is time to go to sleep
tomorrow we will try again)

○○○

Poetic Response

POEM TITLE: 'weird poem death'

POET: kenji kinz

FROM: *apocalypse scroll like it was normal*, kenji kinz

PUBLISHER: Subbed In, 2021

COMMENTATOR: Panda Wong

I wrote a poetic response to kenji's poem 'weird poem death', which feels like a stream of consciousness—drifting down memory, the Anthropocene and kenji's interior musings. It's a response to the line 'what is a poem anyway' and borrows/ refers to kenji's poem to explore this idea. It also responds to the way that kenji refers to the poem as both a futile and magic thing—an ultimately hopeful object in our current landscape of despair. kenji delves into depression and living as an artist in challenging material conditions—and how that affects what a poem is shaped by and becomes.

what is a poem anyway

a finger in the eye socket of the universe

an umbilical cord tracing back

to the world's secret pulse

the invisible mycelia that connect the words

patina, shrimp cocktail, decay

the sound of a celebrity choking on bone broth

it's the way that bird wings grow back

after being clipped

or the only way to tenderise

the relentless meat of industry

a heart of a racehorse beating towards cardiac arrest

the purity of carrion

how it returns back to the ground

the collective imagination panting for more

skies coalescing into skies

the dream that a pearl has about

where pearls come from—the ocean—

which is many poems moving as one

and like the ocean

it is a thing that cannot be owned

because if a person could own a poem

it would be way too late

for poetry

Broede Carmody

extract from ***Shouldering Pine***

Dear air, where have you gone?
Every second dream an apocalypse.

My feet hug the river.
I imagine bushrangers fumbling
in the dark. The closet
is not some thing you leave
behind you.

Split open a bur
& not all the nut will come out.

Like European spinach, my leaves moult yellow when under stress.

Shared grief rakes me into small mountains.

Sheep leaving moon-shapes in the dirt.

This wasn't meant to be a colonial poem.
This poem can't be anything but a colonial poem.

What was southern France like in 1852? Star anise filling
my mouth like an ocean.
The ship was called the General Wyndem.

Apple orchards. Chestnut farms. We scratch soil
like we would a wound.

Rivers forever bent
out of shape.

○○○

Note

POEM TITLE: extract from *Shouldering Pine*, pages 8–9
POET: Broede Carmody
FROM: *Shouldering Pine*, Broede Carmody
PUBLISHER: Vagabond Press, 2023

Description written by the poet:

Shouldering Pine is a book-length nature poem that is also a critical meditation on the pastoral. Specifically, the concept of the natural world as inherently calming or peaceful. It interweaves the anxieties of the personal and immediate with those of the collective and long term. The book touches on general anxiety disorder, grief, climate change and the coronavirus pandemic. It is written in a minimalist fashion and can be consumed in one sitting. The idea is for the reader to feel out of breath, but for the experience to be over relatively quickly, like a panic attack. Alternatively, the reader can dip in and out as though each page is an individual poem. Importantly, the speaker's trauma is never explicitly stated: alluding to the difficulty in finding anxiety's source and pushing back against what's been identified as 'trauma porn'. The book essentially says that you can't change what's been done before, but you can haul your gay ass into therapy.

Harry Reid

c u @ 6

level crossing removal walks me home at sunset
deep heat skatepark turns memorial he gets bleary
eyed thinkin about absy / I've never wanted more than
a small amount of teenage validation / you're really cool it's
a bummer your dad's a train cop we g'day at Southern
Cross I touch on politely / tonight I'm feeling heaps
power bill is heaps pub goes forever / you sink further into
your own lips and why not / too comfy to think of taxes going
anywhere but roads / instead it's your dad with his bad back /
screaming there's gotta be some relief for a Carlton fan I guess
heaven is the '95 finals series / year winds down like wet
cement election billboard at the station says vote one cutie
train cops not your dad though cos he's got shit teeth / kids do a
kickflip at the skatepark I lived on a dirt road and never could / reckon
kickflips are sick and eternal we keep walkin home I say
kickflips are sick and eternal you text your dad he's working
Carrum station night shift sends you a picture of the ocean /
motion sensor porch light flicks on like a grief you haven't
dealt with yet / we say nothing / you kick a can into the fifties
why is the corner shop always closing why do you suddenly
appear so handsome outside wind picks up rattles the screen
door / at Carrum I guess your dad is looking at the ocean / I walk
home the long way remember the skatepark in Chelsea where you
can see the ocean think / about trying to do a kickflip really think about it /
somewhere I guess the street lights turn on I catch your eye and hardly notice

Gareth Morgan

robert harvey

when i grew up the number
35 meant a lot

 a little nugget of a player
 chasing the ball out of the centre

30-, 40-touches-harvey

having a spell at full forward
he'll kick another goal, robert harvey

 in the highlights package
 dennis commetti's thick cultured goop

'hunched over, handfuls of his shorts clenched in fists
 but a man of action'

that man again, harvey

 his photo on a china plate
 i bought at the south melbourne market, my first
 ever belonging i earned robert harvey he believed
 in hard work so i did the vacuuming
 every other week for five bucks
 and put it in a drawer

so used to being creative as a midfielder
looking for someone to palm the ball off to...

wants to do the
 team thing..... but wears
 a bow tie to the brownlows? i mean, how nice

i always had this perfect idea that in the '97 grand final —*beautiful*
spring day —against the crows
they literally knocked him out in the first quarter
 dad's indignant underdog story the greatest
 St. K.F.C. encyclopedia from Gippsland

but it was a jab in the ribs, missed by the camera
 and robert harvey got 30 touches, instead of 45
if we'd won that game my life would be different
i kid you not—

 instead
that looming injustice, robert harvey's tender ribs and the mean-
spirited crows

when harvey retired they simply didn't have anyone to pass
on his number to, and so it hung abstract star

i cried, yeah i'm pretty sure i cried
when they carried him off

he sort of looked like a god at the end
 hair parted roman and a face

like my dad modest, doggy grin

 mum says if robert harvey'd gotten into yoga sooner
 he could've played another hundred games

robert harvey's taking no prisoners, weaving some magic—guess
 who—robert harvey

the other day i bought a t shirt
olive green it had a sun in the middle
with the number 35 on it
 i took it home and james said what does that
 symbol mean and it was OM

Kris Hemensley

TOPOGRAPHY

15-iv-22

i.m.Clive Faust

a little journey to the sea
with Clive (“passed away this week...
89 years old, still living independently(...)
still doing what he did best... being himself.
Regards, Tara” —email 15th April) a madman
shuts all retractible seats front of the bus
like a magical occurrence out of Cocteau —
as though preparing a room for the recently
dead —then takes his opacity
away with him couple of stops
along Hoddle —a skedaddling Charlie
Chaplin —a shapeless grey
suit happy to be filled by anybody —
poured in from the neck
without spilling a drop —
trail-less (stragglers
anonymous as Braille —St Kilda’s
Good Friday orphans crowd outside
KEBABS Best In Town on Barkly &
Acland —our little orange bus
slices cloud-overhung day through
grey shell enclosing it —Elwood’s
poet-monikered streets
Empire as was —
Wordsworth Dickens Thackeray
(more than digs for me summer 66-67
licking wounds in safer Bohemian
heaven than first took me in in Melbourne
(clouds’ grey slowly disclosing
true blue (at Doc Ricketts Inlet tide’s in —
waves splashing the rocks —inaccessible
therefore but for the eye’s infinite
purchase —imagine: like a Clive Faust

equation reformulating Olson’s famous
composition by breath theorem —
let’s say “EYE SIGHT perception
as MIND IS” —many’s
the time agreement seemingly
concluded as opposition as tho’
he was conjugating accord’s
alternative name! (could
linger all afternoon —
time no concern —
under own steam in family car
(Cid Corman wrote me our man
back in Australia from Japan
'73? —known therefore
nearly fifty years? —OMG!
how long is a piece of string?

Touching both

*A Response to 'Touch (Body Remembers Series)'
from Tracey Moffatt's My Horizon, Venice Biennale
Australian Pavilion, Italy (2017)*

Man-made stone cave
For another's purpose
They have long gone
I watch how you embrace
You touch and you cling
Your skin to stone and rock
Connecting to something
Or someone who touched
This same space long ago
For that moment you are
Reluctant to peep around
The corner to what could
Be waiting or what is not
You are not that woman
That house help from back
For your hair is styled
Your fingernails to clean
Your elegance of body
From softer work done
You do not know that
Hard work of station life
For the generations later
Where freed of this slavery
Crying and nestling into
A space where your
Grandmother softly whispers
From within this hardened earth
"Don't forget me my granddaughter"
And you have not forgotten

Ponts



Villboard

Artificial-LIFE[©] guides the savage gently chronic gossip columns through concrete forest LINKS & bizarre countryside the West Ern suburbs weirdly
LOST houses follow each other round while I'm in **P A R I S** ringed by a freakish halo the democratic element of a some where people favourite this idea has GIVEN me a rogue adventure policy I THINK therefore I contain

d a r k d r a m a
 i'm waiting for
 the shops to re
 apply to the circus
 with at least
 a notion of theatre
 & to i dunno
s u p p l y
 antarctic beverages
 for some eight
 hundred-thousand
 o t h e r
 roped-in punters
 so that we can
s q u a t
 on red velvet
 lounging it's a
 diamond-studded
 morning in Sydney's
 didgeridoo industry
 London in mind like
 a **broken**
 sidewalk for
 sky walkers

but we're not shops!
 we're sumptuous
c h o p s
 displaying our
 s e l v e s
 & our kitsch
 in galleries for the
 stylish imps of
commercial
d i s t r i c t s
 even NOW as
 t o d a y ' s
 a **stranger**
strange
 that he couldn't
understand
 the uppers & lower
 his level to the
apocalyptic
THOUGHT I could
 judge the depth
 of the **CITY**: its
 c o l u m n s
 the hallways the
coppers in heli
 copters & the

staircases to no
 where all my far
 fetched escape
b r i d g e s
 Plato out at
 fifteen-thousand
f e e t
 the steel ART
 & ARC of the
 Apple[©] Senate's
 dome irresponsible
 for the monstrous
l a m p
 we dig beneath
 arm in sequence
D I G
 for blue cloth
 parts of the sea
primitive hail
 any of the SAID great
 artworks of nature
 that might somehow
s o m e d a y
g i v e
 the orderly buildings

the enclosed
 courtly aardvarks &
 the dactyl terraces
 give the fat
s q u a r e s
 & the drunken
 drivellers
 give them all the
s h i v e r s
 make the Bra Boys
p a l e
 for commissioning
 their flunkies in
 the northern suburbs
 to never paint their
own nature
 what colour?
Twenty
t i m e s
more vast
 I'm a local
exhibition
chilling

in the Hamps & dis
t a s t e f u l l y
 restoring marvels of the
classical
monkey world
 but with this e
 t e r n a l
SNOW
 on the ground
 reflecting a stubbornly
bright sky
 I'm becoming
m a t t
 my perceptive
m o d e r n
barbarism
 today **hugely**
outshone by the
 glint of imperial
 bogeymen sitting in
 the official
A c r o p o l i s
 their sycophantic
brilliance

Toby Fitch

Fleurs



John Kinsella

from **ArtYarn**

5.

I have used pieces of my brother's art for cover after cover of my books and have copies of many pieces though many pieces have been lost over the years and his hands are now so broken and gnarled and swollen from decades of shearing that he finds it hard to hold the pen or brush so fine so particular but then he is no less fine and particular with his handpiece that shakes the hand deeper than bone or sinews. He cares for the sheep as he cares for the way they are drawn. Ever since he was a small child wandering away from others wandering away from school being called out by teachers caned for his absence but celebrated in his family for finding his own way to nature to the swamp to the trees he drew the fabulous things he saw and felt and when night drew him to the windows he drew the things he could see that no one else could — some came down from the stars, some from the depths of the sky, some from the tops of trees. People said he lived in his own world, but I knew it was part of all our world and that he could see it and drew it so we might know some of what's there. When I look out the window into night I see
and know what to write.

Acknowledgements

Eunice Andrada's 'Comfort Sequence' was published in *TAKE CARE* (Giramondo, 2021).
Cover design by Jenny Griggs.

Bebe Backhouse's 'Choreography' was published in *NANGAMAY MANA DĴURALI dream gather grow* — First Nations Australia LGBTQIA+ Poetry (BLACKBOOKS, 2023).
Cover design by Donna Rawlins.

Broede Carmody's 'extract from *Shouldering Pine*' was published in *Shouldering Pine* (Vagabond, 2023). Cover image is 'Depression' by Krzysztof Szafulski, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

Toby Fitch's 'Ponts', 'Villboard' and 'Fleurs' were published in colour in *Object Permanence: Calligrammes* (Puncher & Wattmann/Thorny Devil, 2022; cover design by Chris Edwards and Toby Fitch), and were previously published in mono versions in *The Bloomin' Notions of Other & Beau* (Vagabond, 2016). The poems of *Bloomin' Notions* turn the *Illuminations* of Arthur Rimbaud upside down, writing in reverse through Rimbaud's prose. Rimbaud's French, John Ashbery's English translations, the filter and slippage of languages on Google Translate, a sense of reckless abandon and an ear/eye for errant puns all helped to erect these calligrammatic inversions.

Claire Gaskin's 'Ismene reads her psych's book on dissociation' was published in *Ismene's Survivable Resistance* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2021). Cover design by Miranda Douglas.

Charmaine Papertalk Green's 'Touching both' was published in *ART: Poems by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella* (Magabala Books, 2022). Cover artwork copyright Pickett Estate. Image supplied by Mossenson Galleries. Cover design by Gene Eaton, Magabala Books.

Natalie Harkin's 'impossible to contain' was published in *NANGAMAY MANA DĴURALI dream gather grow* — First Nations Australia LGBTQIA+ Poetry (BLACKBOOKS, 2023).
Cover Design by Donna Rawlins.

Kris Hemensley's 'TOPOGRAPHY 15-iv-22' was published in *From the Blue Notebook* (now orries press, 2022). Produced and designed by Tim Wright.

John Kinsella's Part 5 from the collaborative poem 'ArtYarn' (with alternate parts by Charmaine Papertalk Green) was published in *ART: Poems by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella* (Magabala Books, 2022). Cover artwork copyright Pickett Estate. Image supplied by Mossenson Galleries. Cover design by Gene Eaton, Magabala Books.

kenji kinz's 'weird poem death' was published in *apocalypse scroll like it was normal* (Subbed In, 2021). Cover artwork by Trish Phoenix.

Gareth Morgan's 'robert harvey' was published in *When A Punk Becomes A Spunk* (Rabbit Books, 2021). Cover design by Chris Black, artwork John Perceval, *Tug Boat in a Boat*.

Harry Reid's 'c u @ 6' was published in *Leave Me Alone* (Cordite Books, 2022). Cover design by Zoë Sadokierski.

contributors

Contributors

Eunice Andrada is a Filipina poet, educator and librarian. Her debut poetry collection *Flood Damages* (Giramondo Publishing, 2018) won the Anne Elder Award and was a finalist for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry and the Dame Mary Gilmore Award. Described by celebrated poet Ellen van Neerven as 'one of the most important poetry releases in years', her second poetry collection *TAKE CARE* (Giramondo Publishing, 2021) has gained many honours as a finalist for the Judith Wright Calanthe Award, Stella Prize, Australian Literature Society Gold Medal, and two NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Eunice has performed her poetry on diverse international stages, including the UN Climate Conference in Paris and the Sydney Opera House.

Bebe Backhouse is a descendant of the Bardi Jawi people of the Kimberley region of north-Western Australia, and an award-winning writer and creative leader who's called Naarm home for many years. Beginning his creative practice as a classical pianist and composer, Bebe later made a name for himself as a producer and director of theatre, festivals and public art projects across Australia, including international dance and theatre projects in New Zealand, France, and Belgium. A leader in designing and delivering high-profile programs and strategic projects for Australia's diverse communities, his senior leadership positions at prolific organisations across Naarm have allowed him to successfully foster many opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives to showcase their work in mainstream platforms, allowing Traditional Culture to thrive in a public space. A writer, poet, illustrator, speaker and facilitator living on the unceded land of the Kulin peoples, Bebe's works encompass love, loss, identity, Aboriginal and gay existence, place and Country. Bebe's debut poetry collection is *more than these bones* (Magabala, 2023).

Luke Beesley's most recent poetry collection, *Aqua Spinach* (Giramondo), was shortlisted for the ALS Gold Medal. His poetry has been published widely in Australia and internationally and has been translated into several languages. His sixth book, *In the Photograph*, will be published by Giramondo in July. He lives and works on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung land.

Tom Blake's work has been exhibited at Artspace, KNULP, Firstdraft, SPRING1883, IMA, Carriageworks, AGWA, Fremantle Biennale, PICA, the Antarctic Pavilion (Italy) and Tenjinyama (Japan). Tom has undertaken residencies with Parramatta Artists' Studios, PICA, MAM Chiloe, Tenjinyama, FAC and was awarded a Clitheroe Foundation Mentorship. In 2021, A.P.E published *BAUXIDE*, an artist-book by Tom and Dominique Chen, commissioned as part of the *Lost Rocks* series.

Sholto Buck is a poet and artist living in Naarm Melbourne. In 2022, he completed his PhD in creative writing at RMIT. His first book of poetry is forthcoming with Rabbit.

Broede Carmody is a poet from Dhudhuroa country in north-east Victoria. His first book, a collection of poems called *Flat Exit*, was published by Cordite Books in 2017. His second book, *Shouldering Pine*, is out now via Vagabond Press. His poetry has also appeared in journals such as *Meanjin*, *Cordite* and *Voiceworks*.

Dominique Chen is a Gamilaroi woman, and interdisciplinary artist, researcher and writer, living on Yinibara Country in South East Queensland. She lectures within the Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at Griffith University, and is undertaking PhD research at the University of Technology Sydney in the area of relational creative practice and urban-based Aboriginal food and medicine growing.

Angela Costi is the author of *Honey & Salt* (Five Islands Press, shortlisted for Mary Gilmore Prize 2008) and *An Embroidery of Old Maps and New* (Spinifex Press, awarded The Book Prize for Poetry in English by the Greek Australian Cultural League 2022). She received the High Commendation for Contribution to Arts and Culture at the 2021 Merri-bek Awards. She is known as Αγγελικη Κωστη among the Cypriot Greek diaspora, her heritage. She lives on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country.

Dave Drayton was an amateur banjo player, founding member of the Atterton Academy, and the author of *British P(oe)Ms* (Beir Bua), *E, UIO, A: a feghoot* (Container), *a pet per ably-faced kid* (SOd Press), *P(oe)Ms* (Rabbit), *Haiturograms* (SOd Press) and *Poetic Pentagons* (Spacecraft Press).

Toby Fitch is poetry editor of *Overland* and a lecturer in creative writing at the University of Sydney. He is the author of eight books of poetry, including *Where Only the Sky had Hung Before* (Vagabond Press, 2019), *Sydney Spleen* (Giramondo Publishing, 2021), and, more recently, a newly expanded and full-colour edition of *Object Permanence: Calligrammes* (Puncher & Wattmann / Thorny Devil Press, December 2022). He co-edited *Best of Australian Poems 2021* with Ellen van Neerven, and edited the anthology *Groundswell: The Overland Judith Wright Poetry Prize for New & Emerging Poets 2007–2020*.

Claire Gaskin's poetry collections are *A bud* (John Leonard Press, 2006), *Paperweight* (Hunter Publishers, 2013), *Eurydice Speaks* (Hunter Publishers, 2021) and *Ismene's Survivable Resistance* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2021).

Natalie Harkin is a Narungga woman and activist-poet living on Kaurna Yarta, South Australia. She is a Senior Research Fellow at Flinders University with an interest in decolonising state archives, currently engaging archival-poetic methods to research and document Aboriginal women's domestic service and labour histories in South Australia. Her words have been installed and projected in exhibitions comprising text-object-video projection, including creative-arts research collaboration with the Unbound Collective. She has published widely, and her poetry includes *Dirty Words* with Cordite Books in 2015, and *Archival-Poetics* with Vagabond Press in 2019.

Kris Hemensley. English writer who has lived in Melbourne & been active in its literary life since the mid 60s in parallel with his British & N American connections. *Your Scratch Entourage* (Cordite, 2016) was his first major publication for thirty years. Coordinated the activities of Collected Works Bookshop following the demise of the original collective. Continues its work with his home-based BookTreeHouse. Regularly in England before the Covid pandemic. An extensive blogger & Facebook correspondent. Email is Kris Hemensley <kris.hemensley2@gmail.com>.

Fiona Hile lives and works on unceded Wurundjeri land. Her first full-length collection, *Novelties*, was awarded the 2014 NSW Premier's Literary Awards Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry. Her second collection, *Subtraction*, was awarded the 2017 University of Sydney Helen Anne Bell Poetry Bequest.

Holly Isemonger is a poet from Gerringong, NSW. She was the joint winner of the Judith Wright Poetry Prize. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Cordite*, *Overland* and *Westerly*, and she is the author of *Greatest Hit* (Vagabond Press). She can be found at @Hisemonger on Twitter.

John Kinsella's most recent books of poetry include *Supervivid Depastoralism* (Vagabond, 2021) and the first volume of his collected poems: *The Ascension of Sheep* (UWAP, 2022). *ART* co-written with Charmaine Papertalk Green was published late 2022 with Magabala. He is Emeritus Professor of Literature and Environment at Curtin University.

kenji kinz is barely pseudonymous for not a writer who still sleeps on Dharug land, 2148.

Abbra Kotlarczyk was raised on Bundjalung Country in the subtropical ruins of a decommissioned banana plantation. She makes art, curates, reads, writes, edits, parents and gardens—sometimes all at once—in an attempt to outmanoeuvre the forces that pit us against enmeshment. Her poetry has appeared in Australian Poetry's *Best of Australian Poems 2021*, *Overland*, *Minarets #13*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *un Magazine*, *Lieu Journal*, *Island Magazine* and elsewhere. She is the winner of the *Overland Judith Wright Poetry Prize 2022*.

Kate Lilley is the author of *Versary* (2002), winner of the Grace Leven Prize; *Ladylike* (2012), shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards; and *Tilt* (2018), winner of the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry. She was a member of the English Department at the University of Sydney 1990–2021 and is now an Honorary Associate Professor.

Angus McGrath is a writer, artist and performer living and working on unceded Gadigal Land. His work is about the limits of text, the limits of the body, and suburban failure. McGrath has contributed to *Runway Journal*, *Cordite*, *no more poetry*, *Senses of Cinema*, and is an ongoing music and screen reviewer for *The Big Issue*. He is about to finish a Masters of Fine Arts at UNSW about queer readings of the under-defined 'closet screenplay' as a literary style.

Gareth Morgan is the author of *When A Punk Becomes A Spunk* and *Dear Eileen*, and co-director of Sick Leave.

Leah Muddle is an artist and poet working in Naarm/Melbourne. Recent pieces composed using sequence as a guiding element can be found in *Overland's* 'Poetry in Lockdown' issue and the Heide + *Rabbit* book, *House of Ideas: Modern Women*. Leah was a guest co-editor of *Rabbit* Issue 36: 'Art'.

Charmaine Papertalk Green was born at Eradu (between Geraldton and Mullewa) on Yamaji country. She is a member of the Wajarri, Badimaya and Nhanagardi Wilunyu cultural groups of Yamaji Nation in Western Australia. Charmaine is a visual artist, poet and writer, and began writing poetry in Mullewa in the late 1970s. She was instrumental in the incubation of the nationally and internationally touring exhibition *Ilgarijiri—Things Belonging to the Sky*, a Yamaji Art collaboration with the Curtin Institute of Radio Astronomy, Curtin University, Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project, the Australian Government and City of Greater Geraldton. Her publications include *Just Like That* (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2007); *Tiptoeing Tod the Tracker* (Oxford University Press, 2014); *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* in collaboration with WA poet John Kinsella (Magabala Books, 2018); *Nganajungu Yagu* (Cordite, 2019); and numerous anthologies and other publications. Charmaine was shortlisted for the Adelaide Festival John Bray Award 2020 and the ALS Gold Medal 2019 for *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*. She won the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards 2020 poetry category, won the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal (2020), and was shortlisted for the 2020 Queensland Premier's Literary Award Judith Wright Calanthe Award for *Nganajungu Yagu*. Charmaine lives in Geraldton, Western Australia.

D. Perez-McVie lives on Wurundjeri country. They've been published in *Overland*, *Rabbit*, *Sick Leave*, *Australian Poetry Journal* and *Emporium of Pain*.

Harry Reid is a co-director of Sick Leave and the author of *Leave Me Alone* (Cordite, 2022) & *the best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2020).

Rachel Schenberg is an artist and writer based on Gadigal land. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of New South Wales, and runs the poetry reading and film screening series && with Mitchel Cumming. *Certainly (certainly)*, a book of poems co-written with Jordi Infeld, will be published by No More Poetry in May 2023.

Ella Skilbeck-Porter is a poet living on unceded Wurundjeri Country in Naarm/Melbourne. Her debut collection *These are Different Waters* was shortlisted for the Helen Anne Bell Poetry Bequest and is forthcoming with Vagabond Press.

Siân Vate has published the chapbooks *feels right* (Slow Loris) and *end motion / manifest* (Bulky News). Her work has appeared with *otoliths*, *E-ratio*, *Cordite* and *artiCHOKe* (Berlin). She previously co-hosted the podcast Wrong Island and was deputy editor with *Overland* magazine. She is a writer and editor in Melbourne.

Panda Wong is a Malaysian-Chinese poet who lives on unceded Wurundjeri land. Her first chapbook *angel wings dumpster fire* was published by Puncher & Wattmann in 2022. Her first EP *salmon cannon me into the abyss*, a collaboration with multiple friends, was released in July 2022. She was also shortlisted for the Judith Wright Poetry Prize 2022.

Guest Editor

Emily Stewart is a poet and literary editor living on unceded Darug country. She is the author of several books and chapbooks including *Knocks* (Vagabond, 2016) and *Australia's Largest DIY* (SOD Press, 2016). Her latest poetry collection *Running time* (Vagabond, 2022) was awarded the Helen Anne Bell Poetry Award, Australia's most significant poetry bequest.

Emily recently submitted a creative doctorate in poetry that examines the long arc of feminist walking practices from the romantic period into the present day. As part of this study, she investigated the performative practice of Canadian poet Lisa Robertson, particularly her practice as the Office of Soft Architecture. Emily is currently interested in the cross-disciplinary intersection of poetry, architecture and photography, and is developing a new body of work that brings these modes together.

As a literary editor Emily has commissioned and edited award-winning books across fiction, nonfiction and poetry. From 2017–2020 she was poetry editor at Giramondo, where she commissioned works from leading local and international poets including Autumn Royal and Norman Erikson Pasaribu (Indonesia), winner of the 2022 Republic of Consciousness Prize. With Eloise Grills, she recently co-edited an issue of *Cordite Poetry Review*. Emily regularly teaches in creative writing, art writing and literature subjects at UNSW Art & Design, University of New England and Macquarie University. She is the recipient of a 2023–2025 Marten Bequest scholarship for poetry.

Guest Artist

The cover of *Australian Poetry Journal* 12.2 features photography by **Elena Gomez**, the author of *Admit the Joyous Passion of Revolt* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2020), *Body of Work* (Cordite Books, 2018) and several chapbooks and pamphlets, including *The Stag* (SOD, 2020), a digital chapbook combining mixed media and poetry. Elena lives in Melbourne.

