

Language Sampler

edited by Charles Bernstein

Introductory Note

One of the most frequently mentioned and least understood developments in American poetry in recent years has been the emergence of an ideologically, psychologically and linguistically self-conscious movement, centered largely on the East and West Coasts, which some observers have dubbed Language Poetry. Like most pioneers in new literary directions, the Language Poets, for the most part, deny that they belong to a formally constituted group and eschew the name imposed on them by casual critics. Nevertheless, for better or for worse, a shared tendency—or at the least, a common preoccupation with "the resonating of the wordness of language," as Charles Bernstein puts it—has been recognized by the outside world, and to some extent by many of these poets themselves.

In order to learn more about the outlook and practices of these writers, we asked Bernstein, who is co-editor of the magazine L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, to prepare a relevant anthology as a special Paris Review feature. His "Language Sampler," prefaced by a brief essay discussing the premises and aims of the authors he has selected, follows.

J.G.

Introduction

What we have here is an insistence to communicate. Not, perhaps, where communication is schematized as a two-way wire with the message shuttling back and forth in blissful ignorance of the (its) transom (read: ideology). There are no terminal points (me → you) in a sounding of language from the inside, in which the dwelling is already/always given.

Hints, then, of a writing that takes as its medium, or domain of intention, every articulable aspect of language. It's as if a

new scanning of consciousness were possible by introduction of the music of its constituting. And by this means to make audible the thinking field: to get access to the lens (the mixed metaphor is again ideology) through which the world's meanings are formed into audibilities.

The work collected here can be characterized in the negative as writing that does not privilege any single mode, including the expository logic and speech-derived syntax that dominate contemporary writing practice. Distinctions between essays and lyrics, prose and poetry are often not observed. For instance, some of this hybrid work (I like to think of it as amphibious) engages critical forms of discourse in a prosodic scrupulousness of intention that relies for its coherence more on internal necessities of the poetic process of meaning than on external constraints of rationalistic argument.

Issues of poetics, when not explicitly determining the genre of the work, often permeate its mode of address—a tendency that can pull the poem out of the realm of purely personal reference and into a consideration of the interaction among the seemingly competing spheres of politics, autobiography, fiction, philosophy, common sense, song, etc., as in Lyn Hejinian's relevantly titled "Province" or Diane Ward's asymptotic construction of simultaneous statements, "Approximately". There is a willingness to use, within the space of a text, a multiplicity of such different modes, which counts more on a recognition of the plastic qualities of traditional genres and styles than on their banishment.

At the same time, however (often mixed in with, or the overall compositional product of, this multimodal process), there is a claim being made to a syntax—to put it indefensibly—of pure music, of absolute attention to the ordering of sound's syllables, for instance in Ken Irby's "Etudes" or Peter Seaton's more densely scaled "Wounds from a Heart Would Do It". Not that this is "lyric" poetry, insofar as that term may assume a musical, or metric, *accompagnement* to the words: the music rather is built into the sequence of the words' tones, totally saturating the text's sound. "Indefensibly", that is, because there really is no pure music any more than there is pure language since any material practice becomes itself a mode. Strik-

ing, in this regard, is Alan Davies' sublime diction in "Lies", in which he invokes a Blakean Poetic Truth at the same time that he laments its structural impossibility.

These considerations suggest less a common stylistic center to the work collected here (despite the giddy infatuation with rubrics that spurs talk of schools) than a common point of departure in divergence from—questioning—conventional practices in the recognition of the intrinsic "modeness" of any writing.

Identifying "conventional practices" is a major preoccupation for many of these writers since such practices exist primarily as blind spots in our thinking field, or as "Blank" in the term of Arakawa and Madeline Gins. Gesturalized divergence, for instance, is as much a conventional practice as uninflected conformity; both can provide inexhaustible material for poetic scrutiny. Such scrutiny will not necessarily dispense with conventional practices when they are identified. Rather the forms being critiqued will often be mimicked, which is to say, cited. Two examples are Bruce Andrews' bracketing of gesturalized divergence in "Confidence Trick" ("Dragooned dork bird" "Embalming fluid fuchsia") and Ron Silliman's bracketing of uninflected conformity in the first sentence of "Blue" (which quotes Valéry's wry epitomization of the conventions of the novel: "The Marchioness went out at five o'clock"). Michael Gottlieb's pointedly titled "Social Realism" is nothing but citation, yet the inverse effect of its weaving is an elegantly poignant melody of inner life.

The process of identification and critique has no end; no process, including its own, can be exempted from it. This may allow for some value in the otherwise shopworn notion of "the new": for contemporary writing does have the opportunity to deal with the particular material at hand in this time. While the process itself may not be "new", the particular constellation of materials always is.

I am sufficiently skeptical of the presumption of "advance" in "avant-garde" to equally distrust formulations that appear to pit "the new" against tradition. What is presented here exemplifies a continuing dialogue with the past(s)—surely not, though, just a narrowed line of hallowed English verse!—and

the future(s). Yet because it is a dialogue, it does not only involve repetition of old forms but also a response to them.

My discussion of modal properties and critiques of conventions does not, I hope, obscure the powerful and sometimes pessimistic social comment in much of the work collected here. Indeed, it is my contention that having available all modes for use increases the capacity of writing for expression. The tone of anger, for example in Bob Perelman's "Third and Townsend", or of quieter distress, say in Susan Howe's "war / obdurate as oceans", is not, of course, a formal dimension but a reaction, in part, to the events of the current period, including a barbaric U.S. military and social policy.

Throughout this collection there is a feeling of investigation as a way for both self- and social discovery, and for music. An opening of the field. . . that is already inhabited. The trouble with the conduit theory of communication (me→you) is that it presupposes individuals to exist as separate entities outside language and to be communicated *at* by language. "As/far/as/I/can/see/you/are/there", as Ted Greenwald has it: the other shares the same language space as I do. Correlatively, I take his "all/over/the/body/finishing/touches" to be a literal acknowledgement that it is touch that completes the body, that there is no individual, i.e. untouched, body. It is the touch of others that is the givenness of language. So writing could be such "finishing touches", not telling another what she or he does not know but a resonating (articulating) of the space in which both are enwrapped (enraptured).

The resonating of the wordness of language is manifested by the multiplicity of structures and of syntaxes in the small sampling here and in the work of other equally relevant poets. For Tina Darragh the "pun as ambiguous figure" becomes the focal point of inquiry; her text is composed of "fragments of dictionary pages transcribed in form of an Ames Distorted Room—a model constructed to seem like a usual rectangular room, but when objects are added they seem oddly sized". I think the measure of these poems, indeed, sizes us up. And soon the oddness of the sizing process gives way to the physical beauty of hearing syllables dance to things heard—by being made—anew.

—Charles Bernstein

Peter Seaton

Need from a Wound Would Do It

We're strange features, ignoring things. Our hero
Separates from a problem in pink, the thought
To be able to thing in the world.

Hyacinth lips. Where a word prepares to send
One to is spoken, by articles
In an adventure drawn among to call her

Lucidity the course of specimen hopes herself,
The hands of her and her affairs by her
Standard, she's in some hideous overflow

To a sailor. Patch light ideas connecting
Image conversion with image taking place, image
Might be apparitions that pop for him and trust him.

Ah, start struck to a bit or a picture.
Or enthusiasm (smoky), imagination
And that chatter, calculation of spirit and point

In the attraction of attention in tongues of old
Coming up, the first western connection of far off seas

Hung over from admission. The is the pale
Of devotion, events in a potion live within a kiss.
Bodies chased with sweat by blocks, river humans

And a house in search of a whole, a scale
Of commotion, for one move and the next. And that
Subsequent fight reveals flair for structure,

A cumulative ace, limbs and torsos by an English author.
So this is the perfect plan. And here's a creative code.
For all its on or off old self, immersion, power and

Command. When the world was wars and wars, according
To cause breaking out from the conditions for events
And their obsessed leaders. Brute editing, the way

The frame's the response to survival aids to lust
Contains the round rations on an actual summit.
One teaches sense to a child saying you sense

How we've always talked. It's open Earth Moon and Sun
Words shown on a dialogue. Sun Moon and Earth or

Jupiter and its low narrative. It would be moons
To a computer, the image of vocabulary,
Grammar aiming at a crisis. To fast

On the visual side and the looking one of the only
Hard conception. So achievement has to do
With soaking, while things set up to improvise

With James. Speech picks
Like chocolates taken from America
To be introduced as chocolate. The old silent subject

Of film, it became silent that our present
Of mass and methods sphere and deepening.
What don't I want to think about today.

The chain saw. The bodies. There's this one
Particle floating in and out. It has no real place or time.
But it has this quality which we'll call surprise.

You think of palms concealed to start. You're there
Among the classes. And the language at half a word
Half a word had been. Things without much tending

And slept with a sort. To go by which has a rhythm
Like bones and clean clinchers too
They'd be whipping past. The long nights

And the hot blood signal in kinetic alley concentrates
And shocks through the source straight seconds
Like penetrating a profile that broke its force,

And thinking before using a reflection building up, data
With the outline of organism meeting vision
In the arts against my face. And hear the air rush past
With access. Wrenching the phasing in logic to look at.
That was blocking shapes and colors that was all.

You must now create the strongest of the species.
Each letter in the writer's mind?
Two thirds of a world is pressed for words, letters

With the language shape up. And, brazen point
Of the personal writer, the ones that got
Great books did write
Disks and digits with bands of light, moons in pools
With curves like rough rates, names of aliens there
Might be woolen and wool itself. I'd had
A chance to tell rock from shadow, from this darker thing

And make a shadow that was alive and was aware
Of what it's doing, dodging
A reflection of light, it touches

A deeper shelter, a deeper skin leaving
Tracks the brain blew away, the transfer
Of former products in China to black and white

Reasons, astronomical dozens of images
The spirit of the fields are on
The pole of our paradise sight and sound.

Predatory signs which whiz by and stop,
The lid and the soul, there are reasons for this.

Diane Ward

Approximately

meaning a context or vision to confer with this which could be a book.
meaning what I just said confers with this but a licking sound.
Amplified and forming an idea far from original.
A distance which becomes whimsical tension.
For instance, then an origin, an image a fantasy becomes ironic;
at home.
Flat as you once thought a centering unlike mysteries in your
imagining an animal.
Difference in eye levels.
Difference in relation and system.
Elevating a problem in placement or face and in which
direction.
A metal square gradually marked.
A metal square which is confrontational engaging.
Off into intensity which is hard to concentrate.
Two of the spaces of words with their own containment each of
eighty directions.
Two aesthetics granting activity value without practical
functions.
Following the implied direction of possessions, environment is
a room more specific a person.
You said something visual versus a thought you were attacking
me.
You said change/cigarettes versus intimate intricate and which
is more interesting.
Later a time motions are visual or visualizations which translate
objects into words.
A mass of timid outlines to each rigid color.
A mass of smiles destroys a given warmth.
Without only a loneliness to cherish.
More specific a conversation hopefully beginning now.

More specific the toxic and poison contributed to a phrase now
dated and like a date benign.
Respectable ideas are random, laying low or following up so
forget what I just said or I think.
Impossible only an advancing of thoughts their elements and
results.
No worth for what they're saying or value exists for this.
It's fine that it brings tears to your eyes or doesn't.
It's probably fine that what moves you is below you or not
above you.
Formulas to constrict imagination to a mind what it's saying
thinking and what you want its direction.
For this there's an age to define as urgent as people.
For this habit a catchy title like *musings handfuls*.
More points exist around which become you than are not.
Ends based on emotional gusts; the hands are yours that wish to
hold.
Ends as a pivotal screen viewing concealed metaphors for
beauty.
What the question value in days formulated frequent written
words weeks.
I don't know an arching sounding around us.
I don't know where movements standing pointing as vacuum.
Where the word which wasn't interesting belongs as
redefinition.
Where speed replaces the idea and becomes it.
Internal is categorically beautiful bombing as we expected
them whole sentences erupt up and fall.
Headlong, concrete piece by concrete piece a sight or irrational
pleasure.
Heading away to detail and immediacy.
Another form is untouchable and moves a cage into softness.
A wooden syntax of shadow forms a pillar of its own.
A highly syntax confusing both image and word and detail and
notation.
A shape which is rounded off so that corners fall away.
Blank and another ordering attention paying off.
Blank intensity stares.

Blue

for Gil Ott

The Marchioness went out at five o'clock. The sky was blue yet tinged with pink over the white spires which broke up the east horizon. The smell of the afternoon's brief shower was still evident and small pools of clear water collected in the tilt of the gutters, leaves and tiny curling scraps of paper drifting in the miniature tides which nonetheless caught and reflected the swollen sun, giving the boulevard its jeweled expression.

Government was therefore an attitude. Dour, the camel pushed with his nose against the cyclone fence. The smell of damp eucalyptus is everything! You stare at your car before you get in.

From here we can see the sex. They are folding the flyers before stuffing them into envelopes. Badminton is nothing to be ashamed of. Grease and old tire marks streak the road. From here we can tell the sex.

Rust designs that old truck door. The number of objects is limited. Some leaves on the fern are more yellow. Sooner or later you will have to get up to change the record. That buzz is the dryer.

Longer ones demand a new approach: there's not enough water for a second cup. These crystals are useless on a sunless day. More than that, the fence is apt to give, pulling free of its posts. Tell me the one about the fellaheen again.

It's a trap: they want you to think that light is Venus. Under a microscope we see them absorb their elders. A spider plant is only one design. I took the message.

At dusk, very little is neutral. The corner merchant, a quiet Persian, nods to her as she waits for a break in the traffic. Those who are not consigned to the prolonged concentration of driving have already fallen asleep. At the intersection the sidewalks are rounded.

The flower closes slowly about the unsuspecting fly. The thickness of the gum limits the rhythm of his chewing. Wasn't he happy here, viewing clip after clip of that old successful launch? The glove compartment never held a glove, nor I.

So you go faster, hunched over, avoiding the headlines in the boxes. The taller buildings suck the wind. That butter only appears to be firm, the hood never will quite shut. Between what were once squares of concrete, anonymous weeds bunch & spread.

If challenged, its first response is to spit. This took place at the museum. Wires slope from the pole to the house, where they gather, entering a narrow pipe along its side. This conveys motion. I am writing in shadows. Don't you worry about accessibility too?

Mother simply likes to have the books. Like a serenade, only earlier. He lets the clay on his hands begin to dry. Fuchsia blossoms stain the walk, the doorknob strangled by rubber bands. Another thing, pepper is not a corn.

So what is despair? The cyclist trapped inside her helmet? The girl sent to the grocer for milk? The moment before? The mops on the old porch have begun to dissolve. Don't turn the light on till you get the shade. Atop a small house, the cartoon dog types away. Turn the page.

Shorter is. The fern sits, its clay pot in a pool of water. In doubles, that's called poaching. The back of the television faces the window. From here you can smell the sex. Give those socks a little more time. More narrow.

At the arched door of the restaurant she checks her watch, a delicate gold bracelet dangling from her wrist. Bands of a deep orange streak a near purple sky, the brisk air shuddering in the small trees, slender branches bending back. Children begin to gather up their toys; lights on, their homes begin to glow. The host, recognizing the Marchioness, invites her in.

Lies

Truth is lies that have hardened.

This should be obvious from the fact that the obverse is also correct. The same obviousness obtains for correctness.

Truth, which will never be more than the notion of truth, keeps for itself only its own over-guarded presences. It is the equator without hemispheres, without a globe. This line, which merely appears to establish itself, is non-equatorial, in extremis.

Truth is the purest notions of dominations, not without persons, not without social exigencies, and not aside from the facets of the experienced tracts of truth. It is, in and by itself, the misnomer.

It is most certainly not true, not not true. It is the failed tautology, tautology without equatability, the terms of which are so very easily subsumed by the notions of there being terms.

Truth is the effort of intention to make of space protracted space, of time, protracted time.

The distance between truth and that which is known is that distance between intention and that which is truth. Truth is the shifter among concrete fact, the tightest of attentive experience, and the most indissoluble of intents.

Truth succumbs to a pressure of indifference. This makes of "it" "truth."

Hard words don't get called true, except on the verges of hatred. This is a failure which specializes, and in itself, but the most solid things know this and it is they whereby we know that we have been otherwise mistaken.

Truth articulates itself only in relations with non-truths. Facts don't make these mistakes, because they stand in, for, in for, and as, some kind of solidity.

Truth articulates, it mentions, itself, only in relation with things which are not true, not because opposites are necessary (they are not), but because truth is a special form of the untrue and thereby finds itself most articulate in that presence.

The realm of truth is the realm of the alphabet. Thus is recognized its limitation: that truth is completely inscribed within the alphabet.

Truth is that flourish which a mind makes in an effort to make of itself a perfection, an aura which it will not mount without the angles of straight arts.

Truth.

I.e.

The idea of truth.

Bruce Andrews

If you walk down the street as truth you walk down the street
the other side of the street from violence.

Truth is some thing which resembles, as its exterior, some other
thing. It is the appearance of the exterior of this thing, and
without it, as evidence, which makes of its semblance, a thing
wherein we recognize a truth.

The practice of truth is a hollowing of what is real, the removal
of the substance to ensure the (false) sanctity, the (false) per-
petuity, of the form.

Form is, as such, deserving of those interests which thus elevate
it. Truth, in its methods, merely imitates the just formulations
of form, and within the results of those methods which it must
then attempt to erect, to stabilize, as facts. Their appearance as
supreme facts is merely a function of their resemblance, which
they have, after all, manufactured, to forms. It is perhaps only
the extreme effort which must be made to make a statement
appear true, which makes us call it a truth when we recognize
it. Truth is the evaluation of the boundaries to which it reaches,
its limits, its husk. That is to say, when we say of something that
it is true, we say that it has stopped.

Each moment is a retrograde moment, and it is moments which
are productive of truth.

Truth is present only to itself, which is why nobody notices it
until it is talked about, and why everyone notices it when it is.

Truth and or lies. That is not the question.

from Confidence Trick

Audible — *About* heart is more colloquial, that not your
line!, keep your hearts in line, to say & less done, rave on, to do
& more, distinctively all drums

The confusion of the language matches the confusion of the
sentiment — Machines in motion: goosebump, the usefulness
is tight security points — And fake histrionic breast self-
examination — Neo-gothic beat wraps itself up, calmed down
with boxing magazines, plutonium separation anxiety —
Epoxy affixes get secreted — Dragooned dork bird, more or less
cut, health & efficiency — Rest, doilies, Jesus, white cum —
Sure I m sympathetic, kilojerk, megajerk convent wire, I think
I m going to get a really sunny declension laced with stabs of
politicized savagery — Lady Day gets my disposition

I wish a hydrant could sleep — Embalming fluid fuchsia, if
you play the marimba loud enough in public image to prove
that it occurs; rubber belt up front — Vegetable braille, fade to
grey; the deepfreeze mice product saints — And mole embel-
lishing bulletproof modulation idiot phone, let the royalty stay
on, to become the palace caretakers — Would take more than a
sentence we could invent for the purpose

Big generation not about to go away to listen to my insults —
Black tie talkathon; safari cards make learning fun — Sure, lan-
guage comes before industry, *tory crap*, or at least it *wants*
trouble; we do play reggae but only by whites — Fix the lock a
whoop freeze the tension, polyglots are adrift: History of the
World Pt. 1 — Flyboys; delinquency is nervous, the perfect dic-
tator, a tendency toward motion sickness, why is the ministry

Lynne Dreyer

full of fallout? — Their voice is quavery their voice quavers
they have a quavery voice, scissor set, *capitalist shit*, dirty looks;
quote mind quote bound gag & teepees air; loose wires rebuff
speed — Nervous enema murder will out — Irrelevant to talk
America, murderers, unlimber up los microwaves with pull-
out bed protect self-interest goo on Broadway any one of these
wounds might have seemed fatal, do you know an opposite, do
you know an operative — Yes we did find traces of nembutal —
Juggernaut cop out ahead of itself especially Velvets-like — Sci-
entist, Islam House, is ripe enough, city fun; like depictions
yellow jacketed become a little more normal

Squalid with pity no squalid with piety, we don't torture, we
have little lung plungers — Bathroom sex can count assorted
percussion; saliva of the junk man — Manual silver salvation
hotel fee; asparagus urine chokes crab grass (shockabilly) — A
pair of adrenalined-up bloodhounds on her chest, or in the
military, crawling chaos be a pepper on a suicide deal — Not
convincing enough to be a black & white commercial on the
skids, we am on the skids, it was pretty fair organization: vague
wool, I aggravated the catarrhal throbs in her diphthongs — I
want eggs — All systems go — Let's get a little sugarshack — I
just cry to clear my eyes — Cleanliness can be assured by teach-
ing a boy to wash his penis — Test my knowledge of life in gen-
eral — I dunno — Void — That protozoa

from Step Work

Writing becomes distant and portraits of hosts crowd the
space. The next page becomes as cornered and concerned as a
studied artifact. Thoughts not towards anything but embody-
ing a lot of writing. Too many military wives are being arrested.
The tiny bit of wandering summarized by a spartan attitude of
space.

Is this coercion? It becomes confused like who is doing the
demanding? You demand that he doesn't demand enough
and a strikingly pertinent dream flashes clean blue. Is this the
mind turning home? Who's home? Mine? Theirs? Tribal ges-
tures? Chants? Automatic is a bracketed word. I'm trying to
save my writing. Case histories in the mail when I meant to say
another mystery is in the mail. Certain things are allowed.
Quiet the boxed books.

Go into the cool clocked room and count the mysteries and
not the historical plots for death becomes a little naive active
intrusion. Commas preserve the lightness as sun-visor calls
german to her dogs. The white side of the leaves shimmers, first
with skin, then secrets, and finally the secret writing. The work
cracks itself open into planetary relief, whispering, calling back
the dream.

"Red foxy lady! S.W." They're tired. They've never dared
dream in pictures. Prepare that to the site where the people are
leaving for the water shortage. They file past the grocery, past
all of the stores and each sits on his own individualized pad.

Trilogy. They come in to peer, neutral, sporadic, as in an
operatic jerky voice, screaming, testing out their vigilance. The
apology becomes electric, flam-flakey. They come back from
their country carrying their vowels and words moving chrono-
logically forward to forget their past.

Death becomes the independent hand, crowded like the

seeds. It becomes a caricature of itself, and the shallow walk becomes its harmony. Floridian gorillas are decorated with active superheroes. The sex warp is active, complete, translucent. Wet my eyes and then the shadows can wall us in. They become timed and lasting: waiting for the family to be reunited, waiting for the family to be tried. Take some scene and think about winter, hand on cup, chicken hand image, and finally the dream image of the woman opening the door. Are the women opening the doors? The multiple image becomes its plot. The gestures have begun.

I use your electric eyes and they become the solitary hand that opens my arms. The sympathy house is for your feet and the effort is cleaner, purer, and dumb. The basic red rat eats into your open mouth as it sharpens its teeth. We are all adults. Indira keels over in a joke. The most heavy light is on the vicious fence built around us, as the ethereal music drums out its predictable beat: the beast of burden through the mouth of a frog.

The summer statue is a baby and will direct you to correct yourself. The book becomes its own marble face.

"Don't ask me to talk."

"It was raining down south."

"Why the working dogs."

Into the open mouth that feeds you the planes and mothers are becoming. Are they known? Are they becoming known? You are ready and invited. Where are you? In the country chair in the new and clean century, look into the eyes that really see you. These are the new remedies of the ancient years. Is it factory or heartbeat? Do you remember?

ludicrous stick

to
clean
over: T
formal.
whip. b.
or surpass
completion or
etc.: They need
into shape. 6. 1
19) 7. lick the d
stroke of the tongue
by taken up by one str
cream cone. 10. See salt
b. a brief, brisk burst of ac
pace or clip; speed. 12. Jazz.
in swing music. 13. lick and a
perfunctory manner of doing some
time to clean thoroughly, but gave
promise. (ME lick(e), OE liccian; c.
akin toGoth (bi) laigon, L lingere, GK
(up) - licker, n.
Lick (lik), n. a ring formation in the
the face of the moon: about 21 miles in
lick er-in (lik er in), n. a roller on
chine, esp. the roller that opens the st
the card and transfers the fibers to the
Also called taker-in. (n. use of v. phra
licking (lik ing), n. 1. Informal. a.a p
thrashing. b. a reversal or disappointm
2. the act of one who or that which lic
licorice (lik e | | ish, lik rish

viewing
point

Hadrians Lane

Beautwelve fills the whisper and
all want fragments why along to check
the short page what your convictions
this is shudder and this is antenna mail

Not from here like a lot of wax lost wax
in fact misplaced the emptying the song
finishers indexing the aces ring phone
and circulate here and there a wave or

Something much harder for sleep like dance
rendering the up trace or crossed cowers
for a bow Beautwelve makes for silence
the big polar wag the shift heads to roam

The volume cores the abject delirium of
capital the compressors fill from middle out
with a wierd blue light too much focus on
the night too few stars a big chunk of it

How inert the dutiful to stare right into
how inflected as it were to bend or shape
from a straight to a narrow this is the way
from however to how best you hound the path

Remote air logic to take the measure
from ether logic to casual fulcrum block
can it go up and out into that remoteness
strain to the then and then and then softer flight

Well it seems there's a drubbed restraint
makes for the go road an empty bit of hum
nice target maybe or perspective's arena
squared in the calm wake of looksee

And Beautwelve has a gander for totals
sprints the high street and makes for the fog
number shadow clue and mark it from rut to rut
frost heaves apprehend then the gallery of trees

Appetites tug at the argument and mood freight
a brain nab for smooth talk addlers of give go
all so much carbon the think's gummed
coordinated like currents but breaks the ankle

Obdurate wince to scuff the instanter
the junk prick cracking the ellipse
so now it's how you say an oval and hung
in a corrosive pose you get at it prying

Carla Harryman

Statement . . .

Paddles sloshing in tunnel.

Volume: all thumbs.

Dis-ser-vice? Naaa . . .

The pilot on the steamboat said my craft is timing.

Roads love to be roads when they are beautiful. Taking apart cakes for the following: the same. Blue sun promulgates chained air cruising horizon. No sugar in this ocean—no statement in the bean. Since then pavement. Swollen itemized dinner plates or randomized brains. Mannerisms in Visionary Traps ululating, master uneaten sponsor.

“Nice day out there”.

“Mind your own business”.

Tables have turned.

Huge are the shrubs. Look like bushes to me. One grows the other. You call that difference? I call it point in time. A prototype of wandering celebrations bends the puppets. Those pupils make metaphor five times the size of Fidel Castro.

Mutilate utility, dumbbell.

I want you to hatch.

There is only one event. All the results are delusions of grandeur.

Rabbit. Rabbit. Rabbit.

Rabbit.

Nothing underneath.

A new day. The same development.

Ice on the streets. Labor from without racial identity. People skating to work, even beyond the line of hybrid trees in the bordering country. Edging pathways shreds on lies. Promise that river a piece of jelly. Drift happy river mind frieze golden ore brassy fish. We see the plunge will be taken. We see the happy traveler. The dancing burlesquers hide her acceptance speech. Awkward confrontation with her fate, the foregrounding of herself. A fiddling detective douses her with water. The detective loves to hear people scream. Clues grow in relation to sound. He is old and she is hungry but they can't make a match like others even less fortunate. It's the middle of the week! They will make friends and through friends find jobs and through jobs they will meet.

(Everytime one visits France the memory goes higgledy piggledy in lines around Luxembourg Gardens on a sunny day. People compete with the flower beds for visual domain. It is where vertical and horizontal meet. Psyche and surge bubble in the pond, which no one looks at, except babies. Police are the only artifacts from the deep, walking around saying whose child is this, whose infant is this, whose this's?)

Tale trips from faery to dower. Church to cure.

Lovingly stabilized. 95 baggy balances suggested to keep X alive.

Eight Poems by Ted Greenwald

all
over
the
body
finishing
touches

STARING DOESN'T HELP

Staring doesn't help
Nor does running around
Music doesn't help
Especially songs
Getting together doesn't help
Nor does staying apart
Seeing someone else doesn't
Nor does seeing you
Sleeping doesn't help
Nor does waking
Dreaming doesn't help
Nor do any facts
Running doesn't help
Nor does sitting around

as
far
as
I
can
see
you
are
there

those
is
that

how
do
we
(how do)
this
(this)
(how)
how

Susan Howe

If so
Then so
So Often
If so

So often
Then not
If so
Then so

FINALLY UNDERSTANDING

Finally understanding
No job, layers of consciousness
Quick hits
Finally understanding

Quick hits
Starmaking machinery
Finally understanding
No job, layers of consciousness

industrial
amazement
turns
to
slush

from Defenestration of Prague

Skeletal kin

tilt
italic lunacy

long illness of little difference

Seventy memories
masks

singing and piping
to be

(half words)
beginning and begetting

strangers nodding to one another

stumbling and scrambling

(uncertain theme)
random form

strong arm of my name

Emblem

sign strewn flapping

(flapping of ravens in rain)
What sequence

Mothers hide harmless
weary for antiquity
the simple
Eglantine
Soldiers moving as toys in a
world soul
War
Obdurate as ocean he went forth
conquering
—and to conquer
Anathema
who was my father
Empty dominions beyond structure

Two Poems by Alan Bernheimer

Topic A

No scenery in the scenery
Attraction of fact
Puts construction on things
You have been somewhere before
Units combine plausible shade
Cloud in front, sun in back
Atoms extended in space

Flores Gardens

The choo-choo train passed through the fields like clockwork day in and out, each instant carried forward against wobble that wrung drones from harem schemes into a drowsy back-stroke down the bank of fragrance hanging over still flowers grown for the dinner table. An oval bed of nails held the arrangement in the half-light from an adjoining room, where perforations trained puffs of air against metal fingers to draw Brahms from the upright. Struck tons push the replica through ether. Promising geometry blossoms would furnish slender future one way or another.

Six Poems by Robert Grenier

TWO

out to make
one bird high
above spiralling
southward
water

SPAWNED BY THE FOAM INTELLIGENCE

the monster goes back into the sea
or such sludge as remains for it
ugh matter more akin by rockhard doing
to the origin of things than Dr. Frankenstein

THOUGHTLESS DOTH

change shoes

NEXT HAT

other hat
ma mind
my mind mine

INTERGLACIAL AGE

much colder this afternoon
world getting warmer
polar caps melting must
bring on the ice I say

FOOL

madman though ye beem

Michael Gottlieb

from Social Realism

Widowers have more dignity.

The flames starting from the ears.

That's what *I* say: it's worth a try.

An honest revulsion.

To press the professional way, with live steam . . .

Arrive pressed, neat, party-perfect.

He trailed along to several 'discussion coffee groups' before he realized he was gradually getting inveigled into a cell. They had made up a playful nickname for him, then he realized that everyone there had a nom de something.

Of all those who contributed more than once, his were spread the thinnest.

Some people have a knack for making things happen, always landing on their feet, making the best of whatever hand Fate deals them, not sitting back and waiting for the world to come to them, rather, reaching for as much life as possible, some people are full of vim and vigor, few are poets.

Listen to your heart and call right now, toll free.

You sure you want to tangle with him, he plays rough.

Look at those people going through their lives, happy, content, never knowing how *sick* they really are.

He's dangerous, he's corruptable, he's been fired by three companies.

"I hate these blindfolds."

Don't you think you owe something to your government, to your country, where else could someone like you have had the opportunities you've had, squandered the advantages you were blessed with?

It is true they were off-duty at the time, though when they had a chance to pull themselves together it turned out, technically, they were in uniform.

Listen, you have nothing to worry about. You have plenty to be depressed about but nothing to worry about.

She billed herself as a lay analysand.

Province

The town is a whistler
turn on a rock
The water runs a working curve

A taste never rested
architecturally horizontal between tides
Puddles fill a fresh safety

Sunsets swarming
an igloo on the right day
Perhaps affinity is the 'maverick'

Posted flowers
to stakes of rain
I recede in a structure of feeling

derogatory and prolific
Fate strikes while one sleeps
encyclopedic syntax

Curricular luck
in an apparent withdrawal
(that which went without saying)

Birds and neighbors' radios
deftly with a board
refill the room

'reading meanings' my knees
then stare—the exchange
fits reality neatly

A random stone raps the shadow
With one interest light corrected dreams
Themes read as Greek

the patience of a panorama
The scale is closed
The span has an instinct for ellipses

subjunctive strangeness
The scud casts doubt on status in addition
fills unclouding

file across scan
A return on your identification
threatens evolution

skimping the subjective
Ants are hysterical about social detail
Canons of resemblance

are in the solvent frame
Every turnip strives to be a man
proenforcement, prolific subtotals, flat gates

professions of attention span
The color has a bend in it
The corrugate perceptions raise trajectories

fascination nags

Hannah Weiner

from Spoke

Aug 17 all these on my forehead words are seen

mattress I was openly I didn't think I was acid prob-
lem I was quilt I was waiting for the entire I was waiting
for an hour to pass by I was curtain conscious I was was
spelling it correctly I was conscious i was important i was
also leader I was blue pen conscious BIG FOOL I was
writing in it with it I was instructions I was paper conscious I

was a problem to my inmates I was jail sentence I was liquidated
just one I was overweight I was conscious I was pillow case
too problem

I was in the closet I was an iron put the public in the living
room couch and dont mind with the buttons and dont
on

spend any mothers money publicly I was hysterical I was
just once in a while

too
secretary I was Indian I was conscious I was also

underline the words above a pillow case following
instructions

I TEASE THEM

I would tease them just a little bit I was also sentence FOL-
more conscious
LOWE I was organizer imply I was in debt just once just
once over hilarity I was also conscious taking the pills
second
I was entirely conscious in the hospital experience but I
above the line word except
licked my under the line my wounds
I was bilbarious I was overt under the line overt the word
big
underline do it twice I WAS UNDERLINES I was
print I can test these reactions I was openly tested
openly
with an Indians movement as a leader humble in origin an anti-
christ special under the line which is the underword as I
special
CAN SEE IT as I am in trouble in overcoat dont mention
names

BILL MEAN Sorry

Barrett Watten

from One Half

Relax,
stand at attention, and.
Purple snake stands out on
Porcelain tiles. The idea
Is the thing. Skewed by design

One way contradictory use is to
Specify empty.
Basis, its
Cover operate under insist on
Delineate. Stalin as a linguist

I trust replication.
Gives,
Surface. Lights string
The court reporter, distances.
That only depth is perfect

Comes to the history of words.
The thought to eradicate
In him. The poetry,
by
Making him think certain ways

White, to each of these cancels
Shadow,
fog. Collapses self,
And invading enemy wins.
The argument itself, disassembling

Objection. Of essence is the
Time falls apart in his hands.
Hatred, under the engine,

Of daily events.
I trust wheat

And doubt it, to control by dis-
Orientation.
Eisenhower
Did not come to power.
Terms for the period, state

Figure. State is severed from
States of affairs? You
Speak for themselves.
Materials,
the voice comes out

Only I trust the materials. The
Offspring are in relation
By chain of command to
Inculcate extremes.
Uttermost

Oxymoronic logic in these fears,
Such.
Canned corn, peas,
Meat. Fixation on these things
Gives only to isolate a few

Mexico and Canada. Remembering,
She sends the package
And finally,
dies. The one
Image. I trust the thing itself

To speak, and be struck down
By remorse. Pure relation.
That, given the time, an
Assailant,
in training films

Third & Townsend

Rear the great monument
to the brain's
nearest and dearest.
It commands these things:
the numbers, flow charts,
hands beckoning, standing
psychic debris, grandmothers'
involuntary memories,—
to appear. The package
is addressed to no one
in particular.

The Doggie Diner
near where the freeway
ends in midair
is proof that we invented
random numbers. Traffic
pours through this
thought-world and the tongue
starts up, tripping
in slight twists.

Glossy agreements stir
sentences in sleep
until the monster sits up.
It could have been
anywhere, but once the building
is built potted plants,

plate glass doors are set
down conspicuously to hold
chance at arm's length.

Some get religion
and are gone. Pounding
on walls, yelling
above the serene radio
blasting in the dark,
only desire can carry
a tune, make us
live through the implosion
of conscious seconds.

Water in pipes runs
a sound check, demands
registration. Orders
descend the brainstem, spew
into a swamp of unheard
melodies. The results stare
out. There are pictures
of the old buildings,
but not of the exploded supporting cast.

Douglas Messerli

Causes of the Crack Up: An Explication

A sentence is hard for a sudden to spin into space.
See the hand perch on to fish out on the limb so to speak?
It's not to place but the verge of,
a breath only a comment can clear the way to.
The distant scars.
There's no question
of diversion, the willingness
to hug a huge
escape to right where
you never left. The unsuspected masses,
collapses into itself a self.
This is what is meant by cement.

P. Inman

from "backbite"

for Bob Marley

tract wrote school, arm nane of reddening.
self all in evenlies, most of language looking for a landscape.
wriit ence hoar

never mind that decide
protrud ure horizon, tlantn nettle mensity.
"for our next entitle " pores

crance xisp (rire occudes).
capitalism only knee-deep, (slicp
hine mimempt.

grote trave
thack drooth encloi, (oftens ommilm)
hairstick. (mollen off question)

serie incents.
fame, in its national dystrophy;
sud enumen.

weakener drits, plier marn.
symbol dakota. from lie crint design.
theory a huge chaucer, ochre the lay down

Four Poems by Charles Bernstein

Playing with a Full Deck

Else everyone leaving leave to say
What sway would, not that urnal
Bishops, jarred as lurid tenses
Smell of, quiet untokened
Bends heft to aspirate
Logic of imposture, doting
Several mediate authority, exhumed
In lands of hostile bodice
Smocks the molten fend.

Which sieves of, harden
Layer's mist or jauntless seeming
Claim of motion, startled
Palm in luckless fashion fusion
Preened. Or else the muster
Coats the dusk of fingered—
Articles behind a lash
Of goldless, buried
Come to sunder chalice
Night. Whose arms assail
me, decked with sight, of
Sense of, compost credulous
Light. Or deck the doors
Discard and faded.

What chainlink beckons, held in
Hand, for pleading bleeds the
Finer augur's talon. Redress
Without defame, insists what
Losses snare, here to where
determine favors show. Gleam of

Your unbridling, diffused arc's
Indifferent spar—the slater
Letters oak-lined portion, flagrant
Sorrow end up, calling. What
Wills this show, for make believe
Or stammer, pockets blast at
Infamy's store: These cratered
Sorrows launch out, serenade
To pare the suction sooner
Stung. Whose will not bend nor
Ape like furrows, arched
Complacency's wirey mold.

But Boxes Both Boats, Growing Tired
as the Day Amasses

Indelibly repercussive: shadowed
forensics in the noon time, showers
of anyhow distended, released
to the care of tiered reclamations—
wit and stain of inchoate felicity.
Death defying darning, ambassadorial
clip mimic dazed proclivity almonds
might snarl the loser for its
fold. Contain this charm, permit
what clutches spore.

Idiopathic Pathogenesis

Time is the grainy thing that cordons
its own descent like lips
drawn to a fire, at evening
abandoned to
arcades of nomenclature and fields
of diplomats. Always a sudden mirage
as turned in jackets
wisteria—bloom of hurled departure
grooming houseboats for
duplicity's declaim. Trebled as the day is
poured, incumbent in a
periscope, a boaster's plan for serenade
rejoins its party further down
the road to which remove's absolved.

Air Shaft

Quick as a whip
Wide as a gap
Is wide. Somewhere
Someone sears.
Cachet in the hypochondriac
Moonlight, sway in
The censorious
Goon flight.

James Sherry

Epistle Apology

Riding from the capital to my home in New York, I noticed that autumn was still intense here in the south and I thought to write a poem, a posteriori, that would, by its rhythms transmit the rush and transition of the season, but full of regrets for not having been able on my trip to formulate or remember answers to certain questions that had been put to me about myself and my work, I am attacked by anxiety that the placid beauty of leaves changing color out the window of the train cannot alleviate. All the pieces are present; I have merely to put them together with procedures that . . . or are the procedures laid out yet.

Autumn is when leaves get very colorful as they are dying, a high culture phenomenon. The remnants and abilities—profoundity, rationality, spontaneity—have a great impact on the senses, but because what will happen soon is so obvious that it's not really threatening, except through fear of change, most remain increasingly calm throughout. And it's not a mistake either to go about our business or to shape what was too unformed to emerge this season into a thought that can be stated next spring—when there'll be another chance to reach more people.

With certain friends I feel compelled to know more about myself and to express it more clearly than I would or even feel is true. The brilliant propositions distilled from years of labor that seem to abound in the great literary, scientific and philosophical works of the past, but are more simply perceptions of particulars, are too far away to be grasped completely in every conversation and in any case can only come out from an

explanation of how I feel in all my inconsistencies about a given topic and this itself, which I often don't want to admit, incites my mind to riot away from forthrightness which is its refuge.

These bare bones thoughts, mutated into strange shapes by generations or a nodding acquaintance with someone somewhat beyond critical mass, do not have the clarity and impact of the leaves peaking, and I feel more comfortable, that it is scaled, as I ride to where the leaves are all on the ground and the branches up in the air. It is less exciting, but to speak nature as well as the honed abstractions of native discourse is to remember all the dialects.

On the other hand I can only convince by being myself. The rough edges showing in the thought in the rhetoric is a way out of the abysses of mind and aids insofar as communication is possible. The notion is elitist, but I don't think that the elites will support it either just yet. This is because a multiplicity of languages, as distinct from a universal language, which by now can be seen as praxis, includes science and technology languages, genre languages written in detective novels and science fiction, Black English, even literary language, that is, all one thinks to say in the way one thinks it, and as such is a recursive concept the ruling class cannot sustain.

To accept that complexity does not have to be unified or that unification is packaging language for consumption is to understand both the plan and the intention. To skirt an issue to give it credibility and leave a hole where itself is and assume that it will be seen as intended is an aesthetic that can only survive in its nest, impossible outside of art, although I am here pointing to where this started.

Instantaneously and repeatedly, Blank serves as a station for our senses, making possible an impression of continuance. Subject comes to be formed in much the same way. And so, Blank comes to be found thoroughly interspersed throughout Subject, forming an integral part of any act. When trying to bring it into focus, it must be remembered that Blank is widely dispersed, capable of behaving in many different ways at once, and itself plays a fundamental role in the act of focusing.

Ken Irby

from Etudes

whether at fault
quaver at crack

the heart breaks
freight not the affections

each time
winds oracle the body

it hurts

nothing helps that does not help
the passing day pass free

to die
out through

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

tears, for a lodge of sorrow, seeds, or grit for, for that long
house and smoke of memory, history's time afire

[requiem études • for Louis Zukofsky]

word boundaries orenda
sumber
«If they ask, it is you»

exalted master
asper
macbenac ma che ben' art' mackerinact
for 'im 'at's gawn awa'

o Swan over the dark stripes
where light
bright oil
«To glow—not to grovel»

from It Was "the country of Watteau"
where everyone is just about to rise and go

light leaves like
black under wind

back of pagoya
& I-light, I-lid, I-through, back

take light & dark
up the heart
«For the living»