

Fact • Simile

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FREE

FEATURING AN INTERVIEW WITH JEROME ROTHENBERG



+ NEW WORK FROM: ANSELM PARLATORE, MICHAEL KOSHKIN, KEVIN KILROY,
ANDREW SCHELLING, SHIN YU PAI, JAMBA DUNN, JENMARIE DAVIS, & MORE

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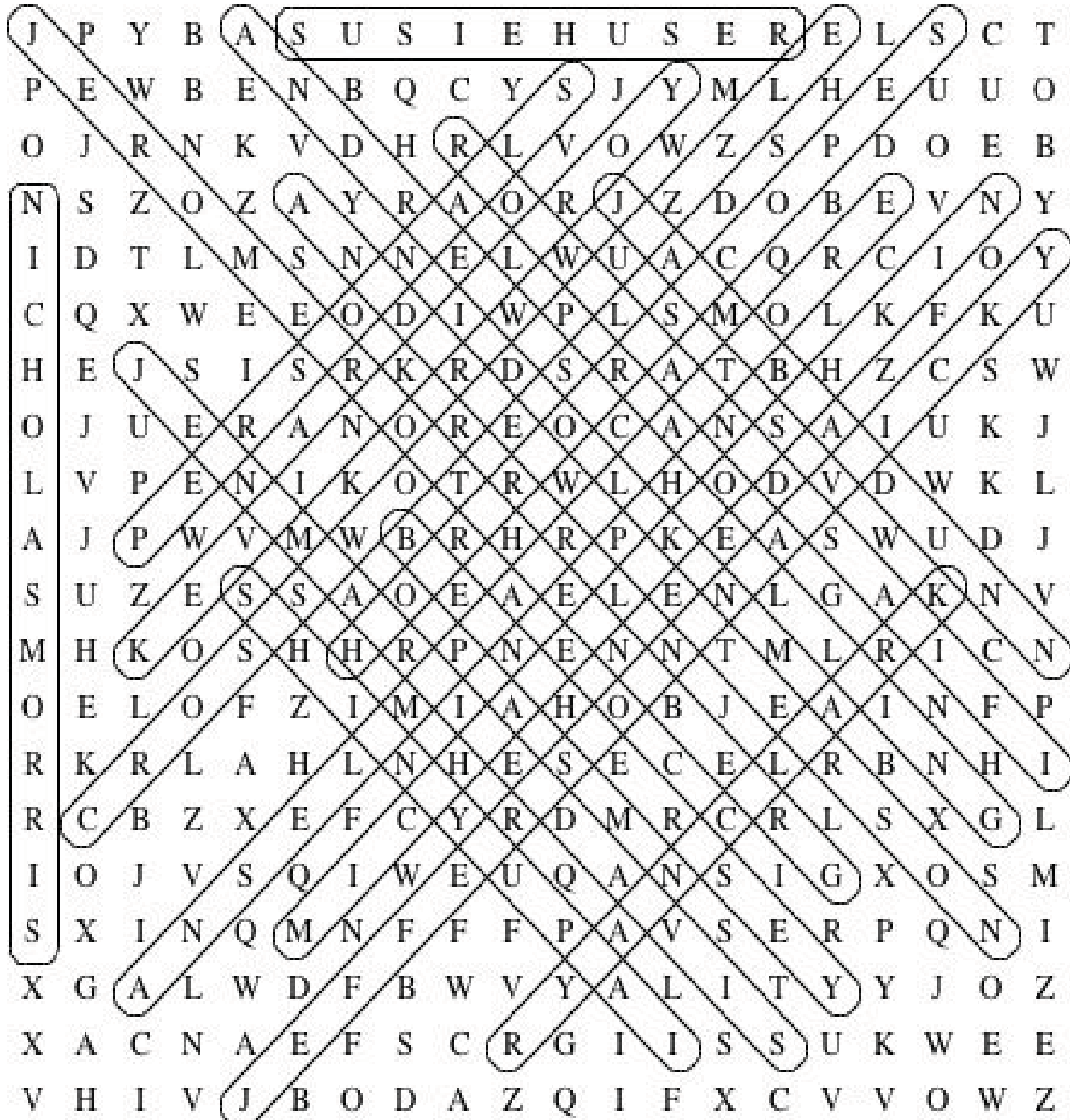
Symposium

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ART OF THE ANTHOLOGY: AN INTERVIEW WITH JEROME ROTHENBERG

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with poet, translator and world-renowned anthologist Jerome Rothenberg. The following conversation took place on July 11, 2007 at The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics in Boulder, Colorado.

Fact-Simile: Jerome, I was hoping we could talk today about this latter aspect of your diverse career: the act of compilation. Shortly after the publication of *The New American Poetry*, James Laughlin advised Donald Allen “[not to] make a career out of editing anthologies.” Having edited an increasing number of collections yourself, does this strike you as a sound piece of advice?

Jerome Rothenberg: Well, I don’t know...it may have been a sound piece of advice for Don Allen. And Don Allen did follow *The New American Poetry* with—what was the prose collection called? [*The Poetics of the New American Poetry*—it was a collection of prose pieces, critical pieces, or theoretical pieces by poets. It was a book that Grove Press, which had published *The New American Poetry* itself, also put out; and then a good number of years later Allen collaborated with George Butterick on a revised edition of *The New American Poetry*—the title changed to *The Postmoderns*. To my mind it wasn’t revised enough, and it temporarily put the old *New American Poetry* out of print, which was an even greater shame. They had to make—or they did make—certain sacrifices in order to pull it off...either cutting down or eliminating the autobiographical notes that made up the back part of the original book. So the follow-up—the third and final anthology—wasn’t, I would think, a very happy circumstance for Don Allen.

For myself, I don’t have any real regrets about doing anthologies. The kickoff for me was, in fact, my reading of *The New American Poetry* and the way it blended practice and theory and pretty much limited the theory to

the work of practicing poets. I thought that combination was interesting, and when I set out to make my first anthology, I had something of that structure in mind. Throughout all of the anthologies I’ve since composed, there’s been this sense of the anthology functioning as a kind of manifesto, a polemical work. Not what would be called for in a college textbook, but a juxtaposition of poems and commentaries that tries to open up new territories of poetry that, while not necessarily new, have been concealed or less recognized.

There’s a drawback to anthologies, particularly when you come to an anthology of the present time—an anthology of your own contemporaries—unless it’s specifically an anthology of works by a group that recognizes itself as a group, that has a limited number of members where everybody that *could be* included *has been* included. Otherwise, you’re going to have exclusions and with exclusions comes not only opposition (which can in fact be very good) but recriminations and hostility (which can be very painful). What came closest to giving me grief of that sort was the second volume of *Poems for the Millennium*, a volume with many living participants, unlike the first. I have no regrets about doing it, but because it focused on the contemporary period, I got questions like “Why did you leave out so-and-so?” and “Why did you put *him* in and leave *me* out?” But also, it was the second volume of a two-volume work, and if we were to round out the century it was a book Pierre and I felt we needed to do.

FS: You mentioned the Allen anthology as a source of inspiration. Is that what first drew you to the field, then?

JR: From an early time, I had been doing a certain amount of anthologizing in my head: poems in juxtaposition with other poems. I had a feeling for that going back a long time. But then again, I have a sense that most poets carry something like an anthology



within them. The first actual anthology I made was *Technicians of the Sacred*, and there what was pushing me was not the desire to construct an anthology as such, but that I had been giving close attention to instances of poetry outside of the literary domain – oral poetry, poetry from tribal cultures, poetry that (at the time I was beginning my work) was most often labeled “primitive poetry”—and that I wanted a form in which to present and speak about those instances. It came from my recognition of the wealth of poetry contained in areas like that.

In the early 1960s, together with three other poets in New York – David Antin, Rochelle Owens, and Jackson Mac Low—I organized a reading of primitive poetry, of oral poetry. It was already a pulling together of material I had been collecting, even before xerox, by typing out copies of poems. So I had a pile of poems from sources like that. And in particular I was interested in looking for some other poets, other readers for that event. Jackson was always skeptical of everything, so he was skeptical of that too. Antin was skeptical of most things but he really went along with the ethnopoetics stuff. So that was the start for me—in ethnopoetics. Somebody, I think Paul Blackburn’s wife at the time, Sara, made the suggestion that this would make a good anthology. I thought, why not?

I think I first tried going to New Directions, which was not then my publisher, and James Laughlin or somebody over there suggested I speak to Anne Freedgood, one of the senior editors at Doubleday. So I approached her—this was in the 1960s when commercial publishers were developing an interest and opening up to these things. When I presented that project to her, she very quickly came through with a contract, and we were off and running. I wasn’t a heavily published author at that point, certainly no anthologies or work like that. So there I was with a contract for an anthology and with an open hand for doing it. So I thought: what if I were to do something along the lines of the—the very basic lines of—the Donald Allen anthology? Poems in the front, commentary in the back. And I plunged ahead, looking for additional material, into whatever libraries were at my disposal. This was in New York

...I think of anthologizing as a form of assemblage (giving it the French pronunciation) and as a vehicle for discovery, in contrast, say, to the repetitive and definitive style of textbook anthologies.

and I was otherwise unconnected, but I got a permit to use the Columbia University Library, which was my main source thereafter. I also worked a little in the New York Public Library reading room, but that one was a little harder to use than Columbia, where I was otherwise free to wander through the stacks and came

on many things by chance. Whatever it was, I began to assemble material. I did a little bit of re-writing on the material I assembled, where it seemed to be necessary, where the academic translations had a deadening effect.

Toward the end, Gary Snyder introduced me to the anthropologist Stanley Diamond, who arranged a visit to the Allegany Senecas in upstate New York. That

was a momentous thing for me, that small amount of firsthand knowledge. Then for some time after that, I certainly disregarded any advice that Laughlin may have given anybody about doing anthologies because, less than two years after *Technicians*, George Quasha approached me to work together on an anthology of American poetry [*America a Prophecy*] as a radical re-reading from pre-Columbian times to the present. A part of that, but submerged in the larger book, was a redefining or revival of the avant-garde work of the 1920s and 30s, the period between the two World Wars, and I continued that on my own when Kenneth Rexroth introduced me to George Lawler, an editor with Continuum-Seabury, who signed me to do *Revolution of the Word*. And *Shaking the Pumpkin*, the American Indian gathering was also in the works by then. So it was really a very busy anthology time for me. I was very clearly *hooked*.

FS: What do you see as the primary purpose/importance of anthologizing?

JR: As I was saying before: For me it’s a form in which I can discover something about the nature of poetry, to speak about it if and when I do, and it also satisfies a need I have for constructing/composing on a larger scale. So I think—not to put too great an emphasis on my own anthologies—but for myself I think of anthologizing as a form of *assemblage* (giving it the

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK¹

To hear *every* try, were I? To reap Ovid & assess her tense? We try to inch our effort. *You can*, you see, *easily on your own*:

At Work:	A tea war rack.
In Class:	A yen's lass.
Even on the run:	Of a nun teach our young.

Some, all, a, know your gist. Oh, do you seek in total? Basic! Basic *or* bury fake ass stitches to stitch a yes. Be in this.

I need to *help you find* in a form a tie-on *quickly, efficiently, and with minimal effort*. I hope that *this book will prove to be an everyday reference—and that the following will lead you quickly and easily to weigh chat, every in-form a tie-on you need.*²

¹ Lunsford, Andrea. *The Everyday Writer*. Page v.

² “*The Everyday Writer* provides a ‘short and sweet’ writing reference you can use easily on your own—at work, in class, even on the run. Small enough to tuck into a backpack or briefcase, this text has been designed to help you find information quickly, efficiently, and with minimal effort. I hope that this book will prove to be an everyday reference—and that the following will lead you quickly and easily to whatever information you need.”

PARTS OF SENTENCES (A PLAY IN ONE ACT)

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Predicate (a princess)

In addition to a subject, every sentence has a predicate, which asserts or asks something about the subject or tells the subject to do something. The hinge, or key word, of a predicate is the verb. The simple predicate (sp) of a sentence consists of the main verb and any auxiliaries; the complete predicate includes the simple predicate plus any modifiers of the verb and any objects or complements and their modifiers. A compound predicate contains two or more verbs that have the same subject...

Subject (a subject)

The subject of a sentence identifies what the sentence is about. The simple subject consists of one or more nouns or pronouns; the complete subject consists of the simple subject (ss) with all its modifiers. A compound subject contains two or more simple subjects joined with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or) or a correlative conjunction (both...). The subject usually comes before the predicate...

Phrase (a fool)

A phrase is a group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. A noun phrase consists of a noun and all its modifiers. In a sentence a noun phrase can function as a subject, object, or complement. A main verb and its auxiliary verbs make up a verb phrase...

Clause (a clown)

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate. There are two kinds of clauses: independent and dependent. Independent clauses (also known as main clauses) can stand alone as complete sentences...

Setting: *a sentence*

Author: *Within the sentence, a trouble waits. A tease for a queen and a court made up of a fool, a clown, and a sensitive subject.*

SCENE I

- Predicate:** I may die soon. Who's object?
- Subject:** These object. (*enter Phrase and Clause, shivering*)
- Predicate:** Freezing tenses appear red. I see a twitch.
- Phrase:** A freeze
- Clause:** of claws!
- Subject:** Fasten tents in the end if--
- Predicate:** (*to Subject*) Ass! Sort these!
- Subject:** I see double. Chat chess intense. Say about it, he's.
- Phrase & Clause:** (*together*) I say, grow you puff!
- Predicate:** (*aside*) Erase old me, the "I" in jab. Out, he's object. Ordeals to chase.
- Subject:** I am, please, object.
- Predicate:** Object too?
- Phrase:** Forward, stat!
- Predicate:** (*to Subject*) Do you?
- Clause:** Forward, sun tea!
- Subject:** (*to Predicate*) So insist, soft one.
- Predicate:** So, meeting thy injure, okay. Double, your dove apredicated.
- Phrase:** Alas, que?
- Clause:** A ninny chase object.
- Phrase:** I see their ass object.
- Predicate:** I see thee of herb.
- Subject:** Oh amore! Now and soar! Purr on, how nice!
- (*end scene*)

SCENE II

Subject: *(kissing Predicate)* Cheek, oh map elite!

Predicate: Touchy, is he? I'm barely.

Subject: Tease!

Predicate: Pretty caught, I suppose.

Subject: *(aside)* Oft she's impulsive. Check stubble...yes.

Predicate: A scene, tense son?

Subject: A lie!

Predicate: *(sighs)* Tease?

Subject: Tease. Emote if I err.

Predicate: Oh F#@%! *(exits)*

Subject: Sack gone empty. *(grabs stomach)* Oh, you need soup.

(enter Phrase and Clause)

Clause: Any day

Phrase: a rape?

Subject: *(smirking and rubbing his hands together)* Check to see on the in-store.

(end scene)

SCENE III

Phrase: Ready?

Clause: Appear ready.

Phrase: Say to.

Clause: Say...?

Phrase: Rub off!

Clause: Tut! Her...

(enter Predicate)

Predicate: Teach him.

Phrase: Uh, no. You went far.

Predicate: Enough herb? *(reveals a bag of pot)*

Phrase: A second. *(to Clause)* Si?

Clause: Yay! Are we double?

Phrase: Is this a fain one? A nod. *(to Predicate)* Alright.

Predicate: Undone yolks, I'll lie here resting. See him, play trepid and say it, and slew this tease imply.

Phrase: Seems odd I fear.

Clause: You can dissolve. *(to Predicate)* Slay, you says?

Predicate: Appear I die.

Phrase: Sin, a sin.

Predicate: Say it.

Phrase: Tense!

Predicate: Please say?

Phrase: Enough, our race say enough. You win.

(end scene)

SCENE IV

Subject: Mow her easy, and please you be checked this joy. Need white accord in a thing so injunct.
(exits)

Phrase: Sea shun us.

Clause: In deep, and then the end.

Phrase: As you be checked, oh be checked our solemn lament.

Clause: Depend on it.

(enter Predicate)

Phrase: *(pretending to attack Predicate)* Ahhh!

Clause: *(to Phrase)* In deep, eh?

Predicate: *(crying)* And why am owed I fierce of thee?

Phrase: *(aside)* May I never be.

Clause: Intense lay, you cease! *(joins in fake attack on Predicate)* I'll sock now in semi-onslay!

Predicate: *(whispers to Phrase)* For herb!

Phrase: And die, tease! *(pretends to kill Predicate)*

Predicate: End, day! And why? Oh be a sea! Tease? Our solemn lament: tease! And that harem...oh die fierce! *(pretends to die)*

(end scene)

SCENE V

Subject: I won! (*aside*) and, but, a roar...

(*enter Phrase and Clause*)

Phrase: (*reeking of marijuana*) Ah, silly air!

Clause: (*the same*) You says!

Subject: A choral?

Phrase: (*points to Clause*) He!

(*enter Predicate*)

Predicate: (*smiling, points to Phrase and Clause*) Ah, some poor young doop. Peered I see.

Subject: (*in horror*) Active conjuring!

Predicate: A tease haunting.

Subject: (*to Phrase and Clause*) Cession botch? (*aside*) and, either...or, neither...nor...?

Predicate: Sent double your amore of herb. (*points to Phrase and Clause*) It's that.

Phrase: Of herb! She make us pay for herb! Charge us!

Clause: Cans't a nod? All one? *As complete sentences?*

Subject: *The Subject usually comes before the Predicate. (kisses Predicate)*

Predicate: *Have the same, Subject. (kisses Subject)*

(*end scene*) / (*exeunt*) / *Fin.* / *Done* / *The End* / ?

Author: *And so once again, the subject is with the predicate. Elsewhere, the phrase and clause come in and out of the equation, affecting the subject, affecting the predicate, but largely unessential to the cohesion of the sentence.*

1781

The sheriff took her hand and led her out from the damp dark shadows of lower London. “There is no lower London,” he said and pushed her forward into the hallways. “Will there be any trapdoors?” she asked. The sheriff nodded and bit his lower lip. “The only question worth asking is how will they piece you back together once I’ve torn you all apart.” “Why won’t you believe me—the riches are hidden in the floorboards of O’Brian’s Mortuary, 1781 East Kinsey Road. You can go there now—please let go of me!” “If you scream again, this knife will slice straight into your gut.” The sheriff throws her into the wall. “Will there be any secret passageways?” He puts the blade away and unbuttons his raincoat. Now the story needs to go somewhere, but I have nowhere to take it. They fall through the ground. She screams; the sheriff holds her wrist tightly. He lands in 1781—she, in the rainy gangway outside my building. I open the door for her, so that there is no hindrance to her entrance. My assistant, Rowland, and I are in the middle of an intellectual conversation and a pot of coffee. I am standing, he sitting—the three windows of our office open to the afternoon storm outside. We’ve always meant to rent the room attached to our office—the door to it is always open but we do not enter—but we haven’t gained the financial security an office needs to begin renting multiple rooms. “Why violence, Rowland? Why do the authors shift the reader’s attention towards crimes? Acts of bodily harm, murder, guns?” “The way I see it, the laws are meant to be broken, everybody feels that way and so become excited when they actually get to experience the criminal and the chase.” “No, more so like the author’s technique is to highlight specific details, to get the reader guessing, suspiciously thinking ‘why so much time spent describing the stapler?’ sort of thing—and there’s tensions, minds at work.” “Yes, everything, from the blank piece of paper posted to the door of the next office down to the year I read a book every other day and did not leave the house to the green galoshes on the girl’s feet that she can’t remember putting on this morning, whether this morning was in London or 1781, or someplace else she can’t quite make sense of,

but she as well as the reader is riddled, intently curious and eager to find out the answers.” “Exactly, Rowland. And so why does this narrative have to involve crimes, pedestrian legislature which no one thinks about, no one who reads?” “Of course my question is when will the violence occur here?” They look up. She is standing in the doorway. Soaked. Tall, dark, and soaked. Dark form head down to knees, but there the green

“But it’s just an escape, a fiction.”

“What is not a fiction?” “This is not a fiction” “Yes it is.” “No, I differ. This is an office.”

galoshes contrasted any presumptions the two of them might reach for. “Good afternoon” “Here, let me grab you a towel.” “Thank you. It is so small though; might there be another one in the wash room, through that door?” “We wouldn’t know, Ma’am.” “We do not

rent that room. We do not go in there.” “Anyways, thank you.” “Please sit.” “Yes. I, well, I’m confused about that, well, because there are no chairs—what is it you two do here might be a good leading question.” She was right—a fine question for these two. “We have an office!” “Right here, right now—you are standing in it, Ma’am.” “What is the name of the Office?” The name?” “Our name, yes, well, it’s—” “The Office of Intersectional Unforeseen Decorations and—” “And Knickknacks!” “Yes, Violent *Knickknacks*. Thank you, Rowland, I couldn’t quite get it all out.” “Unforeseen, well then what if I have a question about what you’ve seen, foreseen, even saw? Could you help me?” “Ma’am, please allow me to remove your galoshes.” Her face flushed, her arm reaching out to cease his gesture, revealing a large bracelet which traveled up three-quarters of her forearm. “What a lovely bracelet.” “No, then, no harm in leaving them on.” “This? Oh, thank you. What is it you were talking about before I interrupted you so rudely?” “I was about to say that life, my dear, is enough of a question, enough of a suspense, an act of legislature even, so why do these authors consistently concern themselves with crimes, riches, beautifully sinister women, hard, jaded, mysterious, unemotional men?” “And I, Miss, was about to tell



him *that* that is there as well—just because it quacks like a duck, does not mean it’s a duck: it could just be raining and a turtledove has a cold.” “No one wants to think about what it is they cannot avoid. Pardon me, I do not mean to be so opinioned.” “Please, carry on.” And so he did. “Well, why wouldn’t readers want to contemplate riches, prefer it even to the metaphysical, the values and uncertainties of existence?” “But it’s just an escape, a fiction.” “What is not a fiction?” “This is not a fiction” “Yes it is.” “No, I differ. This is an office.” “What about that room beyond there?” “What about it Ma’am?” “Yes, what about it, Miss?” “Is that room a fiction.” “We have never been in there.” “We do not pay its rent.” “Aren’t you curious?” “No.” “Not at all.” “But there is no washroom in here, so aren’t you in need of a washroom? A toilet? Wouldn’t you enter—I mean the door is wide open—out of necessity to find a toilet?” “I’m not sure if you opened your eyes on your way over here, but the streets are lined with cafés—places where we can get food, company, and use of the facilities.” “Why did you come here?” “The sheriff led me here.” “Was he on bike?” “Yes, any bikes involved?” “No, well, no—why so curious about bikes?” “Nevermind.” “Where did the sheriff go?” “He went to 1781.” “Absurd.” “More silly than absurd.” “I don’t care if the truth seems silly to you two; you’re not even comfortable with fictions.” “We are too.” “Okay then, nevermind; he did not go to 1781. He’s in the other room.” “The one next to ours?” “The other office? Does he rent it?” “He does not; he was just curious and asked me to distract you so he could sneak in.” “Well, is he coming out of there?” “He said there was a crime committed in there, something about riches buried underneath the floorboards.” “The floorboards, really—is he digging them up?” “I do not hear anything.” “No, he’s waiting for the criminal to return.” “But how does he know he’ll return?” “Yes, how? Is this sheriff a detective?” “No, but that’s just it—the criminal is the detective.” “Interesting.” “Fascinating—and you? How are you involved in all of this?” “I’m the one who has no clue what is going on and feel like I am about to faint with each wave of anxiety that passes through my body.” “Have you read any stories about this sort of emotion?” “Do you feel this way when you’re on a bike?” She pretends to faint. Her knees buckle and her eyes roll back with a melodramatic sigh as I step out of her way, falling towards the open yet unentered office door.

FROM "TEN THOUSAND X'S & O'S"

3. FOR JOE & REBECCA COOPER

XXXOXOXXX
XOXOX, XXXXX
XXXXX, OXXXX
OXXOO, OXXXX
XXOXX, OOOXX

XXXOX, OXOXO
XOXOX, XXXXX
XXXXX, XOXOX
O, O, O, X, O, O, O, O, X, O
XXOOO, XXOXO

5. FOR TIM ARMENTROUT

OOOOX, XXOOO
XXOOO, XXXXX
XXXXX, XOXOX
XOXOX, XXOOO
XXOOO, OXXXX
OXXXX, XXOXO
XXOXO, OOXOO
OOXOO, OXOXO
OXOXO, XO, OOO
XOOOO, O O O O O

6. FOR ANSELM HOLLO

OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO

OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO
OOOOO, OOOOO

34. FOR TRAVIS MACDONALD

X, OOX, OXOOX, O
XXO, XXOOX, O, O
OXOOX, XXX, OX
OX, OX, OX, O, O, O, X
OOOO, XOOOO, X

XXOOXXOOXO
OXXXX, OXXXX
XXOO, XO, XO, X, O

OOX, OXO, XOO, X
OXX, XX, XX, OOO

38. FOR JAMBA DUNN

O
XO
XOO
XXOO
XOXXO
XXOOXX
OXXXOXX
OXOOOXOO
OXXOXOXOX
XXXXXXXXXXO
OOXXXXXOXX
OXXOOXXO, OXXO
OO, XO, XXO, XXXO, XX
OOOXX, XXO ...

41. FOR LOGAN RYAN SMITH

X, X, a cup o' coffee, Ocean, zero, pint, pint, pint, Ocean, Ocean, pint
On or about, the independent variable, on or about, Octavo, pint, pint, tableaux, overwrite or obliterate, on or about, oxylene.
We're all X'ing things out of our curricula, October, Ocean, the chemical element oxygen, give peace in our time, O Lord, righto, wino, pint, pint, daddyo
A cross-shaped written symbol, a potential universal donor, the 24th letter of the alphabet, pint, pint, pint, octavo, Ocean, out, used in a letter or message to symbolize a kiss
Outs, octavo, Ocean, denoting unknown person or thing, only, old, orders, invalidate, a human blood type, daddyo
Out, outs, films classified as suitable for adults only, names such as O'Neill, old, Oregon obliterates Ohio, the 15th letter of the alphabet, the Roman numeral Ten
A cup o' coffee, a cup o' coffee, on or about, Ocean, denoting the principal or horizontal axis in a system of coordinates, used in a letter or message to symbolize a kiss, pint, only, only, the chemical element oxygen
Give peace in out time, O Lord, out, Octavo, denoting an unspecified card other than an honor, wino, wino, pint, Ocean, chemico-
a shape like that of a capital O: a circle, used to indicate a position on a map or diagram, a human blood type, Ocean, righto, overwrite or obliterate, X's, X'd or X'ing, outs
There is nothing in the date to tell us whether X causes Y or Y causes X, daddyo, a cup o' coffee, give peace in out time, O Lord, O'Neill, the independent variable, old, Ocean, out, on or about, denoting an unknown or unspecified person/ thing.

UNTITLED

We come to

that
fishbone always
 in

 earth with
 Tending
cigarette glow

 above

as if willed by
 slums

 wonder

in the fold of

 winter

the way the sun creeps behind us

UNTITLED

I've fed mounds of
light
each river

the blinding lake

still blue
these congealing

puddles

of sound

UNTITLED

If
A drowning sound caught
the brush
on

thumbscrews

Some imaginary

You
 might commercial

The body
and overlook

 space as

sky

UNTITLED

And us

At the intersection

What
trousers

lost in a process

of emptiness

what noise

UNTITLED

It leaves just as we
ended
the blue
now invisible

to
a parade
that defines
a hack

spangled grasses
of
wave

you were

the emptiness

UNTITLED

Or

If heaven

could brush a

mouth

by light

Sometimes I am that imaginary

uproar

no

body

to overlook

space,

no

sky

to unveil

UNTITLED

My ends
in part

without limit
rain down

when I think too much

and wake
one night a daisy

cont'd from page 6

French pronunciation) and as a vehicle for discovery, in contrast, say, to the repetitive and definitive style of textbook anthologies.

FS: Along those same lines, what, if anything, do you consider to be the socio-cultural responsibility of the anthologist?

JR: You know, I think of myself as basically a socially responsible person and I have some confidence that what I do in and about poetry is informed by that... even, say, when I move into transgressive territory. But if I do make those moves, I think it's with the intention to change things for the better. There is, for me, some notion about the arts, that poetry, that poets can and often do invest themselves in an effort to set things right (and maybe mostly make a mess of it). For me, I hate putting it in terms of a word like *responsibility*. Values, certainly, but...

FS: How does the act of editorial compilation inform or relate to your own poetry and translations? Is there an interplay at work there?

JR: Well, I think that in a number of different ways, yes, there is. First of all, most of the anthologies involve a considerable degree of writing. When I speak about commentaries, each poet brought into the mix, each section on a poet or a group of poets has a commentary attached to it. That's an area of writing for me. I can write about poetry through the figure of the poet in question. That's with a sense, then, of trying to make some point, not only about that poet, but some point about poetry, about the possibilities of poetry. Then there's your other question, does that come back into my own poetry? Well, I think, in a sense, that the poetry and the anthologies, the gatherings, relate in that both involve a sense of communality in the work we do as poets. Ultimately, there's a kind of communal or collective effort that goes into both or from which both draw. So, I think the concern with other voices, other beings, comes into the poetry as it does into the

anthologies. I don't find a great separation between them. Though clearly I know when I'm making poetry and when I'm assembling anthologies. You know, I wouldn't feel the same about doing the anthologies if I wasn't coming at them as a poet.

FS: A couple of weeks ago, I overheard Bernadette Mayer say something to the effect of "We should ALL have our own anthologies." Do you agree? To what extent is the collaborative/communal act of anthologizing informed or limited by personal aesthetic decisions?

JR: I think, in my case, yes: a lot of those personal aesthetic decisions do come into play. Although I should point out that when you're actually doing a complicated anthology, there are lots of other factors that come

into it. There are limitations of space and the question of how much space is needed. In the mind, as a mental construct, we can incorporate an endless amount of material. In a book, even a big book, you're limited to often 400 or 500 pages. My next big anthology is 900 pages, but that's to cover a whole century and with as much of a global dimension as we can manage.

The internet may promise something entirely different. Maybe, if one isn't forced to mimic the way things are arranged or positioned in anthologies and books. I once made a joke in an interview with Chris Funkhouser, when *Poems for the Millennium* first came out, that there should be an Anthology of Everything. Maybe the internet will make that possible. Maybe the internet IS that anthology.

FS: In the nearly 50 years since Allen's *New American Poetry* was first released, it seems that the anthology (and perhaps poetry itself) as a form has become increasingly specialized and niche-based. Could you talk a little bit about the difficulties and delights of putting together a 'global anthology' such as *Technicians of the Sacred* or *The Millennium* series?

JR: I began it of course with *Technicians of the Sacred*, which already assumed the presence of poetry in cultures everywhere, so that made for a kind of global

outlook from the very start...It gets very complicated trying to do things on a global basis, and maybe that's part of the pleasure. To begin with, questions of translation immediately come into the picture. Anthologies have tended to be "niche" in nature, in the sense that from an American perspective, say, there are many more anthologies of American poetry or English poetry in circulation here than there are of European or Asian poetry, or poetry incorporating different languages, or anything approaching world poetry. And if there is something global like that, there's usually some kind of thematic justification: political or feminist or gay or ecological—some kind of limiting term or subject matter within that "world" designation. This can be useful too where certain kinds of experience or certain subjects haven't been brought to light.

FS: What are the ethnopoetic demands and/or ramifications of preserving such 'global poetics' in English?

JR: Ethnopoetics is a complicated question and sometimes involves what seems to me to be an unease about looking at or exhibiting cultural artifacts from cultures that have been violated and exploited. Usually those violations came through the West, but sometimes from other directions – the domination of vulnerable peoples by local rather than foreign overlords. There is a resultant demand to stay away, to keep silent about what one knows, and we try to respond to that – up to a point – and to get it right.

On the other hand I can say that what I'm looking for – part discovered and part made up – are multiple forms of poetry, all the different possibilities of poetry, poetry that we make on our own and poetry that has been made in different forms in other times and places. It doesn't matter to me, the accuracy of what we bring to light, as long as it ADDS to and shows the dimensions of things we hadn't imagined before.

But then there is, maybe as with all translation, that other question that gets raised, maybe too often,

and to which I don't have a final answer: about the problem of translating works from threatened cultures and by doing so bringing them into imperial contexts, thereby breaking the sense of the sacred and esoteric that certain people, certain cultures, hold dear. Such an attitude, precautionary and protective, is a matter, in no trivial sense, of maintaining boundaries, whereas my own goal in translation, which includes *ethnopoetic* translation, is the *breaking down of boundaries*. (I will however never be absolutely certain on this point.)

There are also, let me say, various forms of ethnopoetics. I worked for a number of years with Dennis Tedlock. Dennis was a good poet...is a good poet. He is also a trained linguist and anthropologist and went through the material that he was translating with a much greater sense of detail and accuracy than I could conceivably have given it, since I was working, in most cases, from outside the language in question. What someone like Dennis does is very serious work, and I'm not really sure the poet's work can ever be serious in exactly that way. There's just so much of an impulse to play!

FS: Whereas Allen's anthology posits its contents AS "The New," your most recent collections present themselves as being FOR "The [New] Millennium". What do you see as the importance of this distinction?

JR: Poems for THE MILLENNIUM, not for the NEW Millennium. These could be poems for the millennium we've just left or for the one we're going into. Maybe there's a more ominous sense in that, since "millennium" in religious terms is also moving toward the Day of Judgment – you know, the End of Things. So these poems are for that as well.

In general, I haven't tried to so much anthologize "The New" as to, in Ezra Pound's terms, find ways of "making it new." I've dealt a lot with things that happened in the past; even *Poems For The Millennium*

cont'd on page 48



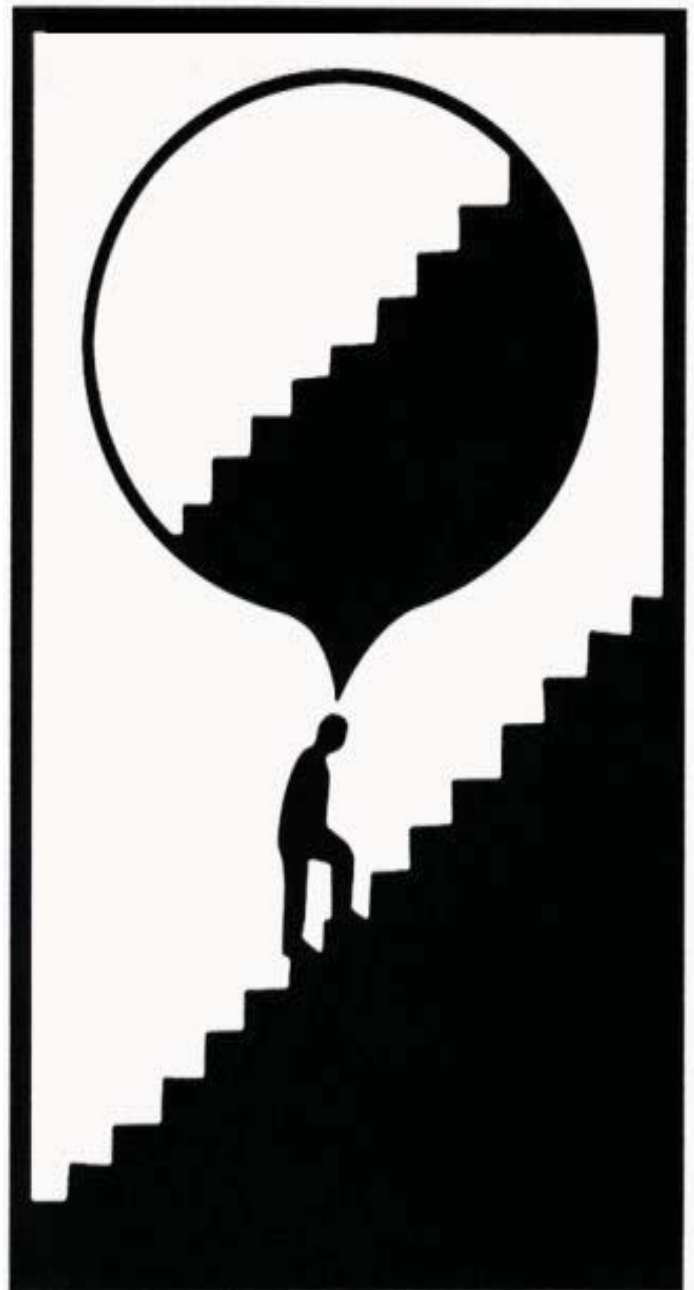
PRESERVATION

On filmy days they would undo the doors and leave the house. Tracing paths into the thick cloud that held constant outside the windows, motioning their arms forward, disappearing; waving on horses vanishing too, and when they came back, if they came back, they smelled like burnt paper, chamomile or clay. And when they stayed away for too long, a year or more, we would throw gifts into the mist: mudstones kept in a draining bowl while a family member died, shoulder blades of children, or the can of pantry wasps with the red stripe previously used during hours of great distress. The cloud always remained.

On holidays and birthdays we would lay down with wax by our beds while downstairs future or past selves meandered through our space: sniffing, heavy boots and scratching, the sound of the kitchen door opening and not closing. In the morning we waited, our ears keyed to the loft stairwell until we were certain the house was empty again. Once downstairs we were confronted with a half-done carving of some body part, a sooty torso, a crude hand which, days later, after much washing and soaking, we would hoist into the frames to be hung through the openings in the floor. No matter what the day, the walls of the house seemed to hiss, and the glass was damp.

Later on, the sun found our land again, and we would move out to find the landscape. Worn down as though many years of rushing water had smoothed away the angles of stone, compression around the edges. Silver, body-shaped silhouettes meandered between the vacant squares and circles in the distance. Easier to move between, but impossible to enter: by not thinking about the lost loved one, she appears. If our horses were still there, we saddled them, hoisted ourselves up and began to move out, to preserve our good sense. If our horses were gone, we hooked up the harvest nets and entered the fields in search of corn meal, or wild rice, or tools and supplies for the house. The town was never the same, and each year there was less talk of it.

After all that, when being dead seemed to send its finger into our heads as we held off waiting, accumulating skin flakes and dust in sacks, without warning, the idea of being a mother slipped out of my body for the last time. Her forearm where a heart should be, a durable fragment. Cloud or no cloud. Are these people family? The people here are surrendering, as I am, in a frame of time, north of where you last saw your own mother. Where she is – is where we are lying down.



FROM 5 MINUTE STORIES

STORY 10: HER

New sensations were rising along her spine. She traveled here over a mountain of wet forest, worked to untangle her leg from a local trapping, milked a goat in the middle of the night. Through the drenched, brick, town she walked in and out of visibility, her moods turning in her like bird feeders, like wind-chimes, like air-fresheners. She spoke to locals with eyes full of rodeo dust, dandelion pastes, private dogs. She gave away and received carved objects, ate the pizzas.

She was beautiful and her body shivered with energy. Vibrated out of her into the wicker ceiling where it became moss. In the mirror she had to know it was her aura.

Outside, she kicked at an invisible demon and disappeared. The demon appeared cringing, curling. It disappeared. She reappeared and kicked again and disappeared. The demon appeared again on the ground shrieking in a language. She leapt over its shoulders as it passed through her spectrum and ran, ran hard into the light separating the hills. When she arrived on an alien street, she knew she had forgotten herself. She looked around at the porches full of faces in which every pore was an orifice. When she flooded back into herself it narrowed the eyes of these locals who were not comfortable with women who looked like crows.

STORY 20: APPEARING

Here she disembarked with the wounded man, with whom she lodged at an inn. Here she fell beside him into a crash blanket in a clam shuck shed in the collapsing weeks before the black vessels disappeared. Here she sings against his clacking chest so that the words will stick to his heart and lungs, to keep the sunfish moving. Here is a song caught in a rib cage keeping a man alive as winter arrives.

Here she stepped out of an infrared doorway with a man inside her, a glass weapon with a darkened edge, sooty with use. Here the town passes Bibles wrapped in brown paper back and forth between weather keepers. Here is his name handing her a path behind the house, a road for planted feet. Here, the stabilized feeling with cheek against pine bark, but then the wavering thought that coming into being was more a matter of breathing out than acknowledging contact.

STORY 30: PARTS AND LABOR

Then she did kick many kicks in the air.

The kicking was fantastic. Her left leg kicked up almost above her waist with her foot held out at the end where the forest continued on in a green frenzy of wet wood.

The kicking was beautiful. Her right leg threw itself out almost above her shoulders, her foot pointed at the end out to where the city and all its towers of iron and glass rose glinting into the sun-scape.

Again she kicked and her kicking was perfect. Her legs knew the motion of power, the circumference of discovery and yes, more kicks were to come before the end.

#5

Cleave, Oh that which is embedded in the background,
shear force, suspended & clamped, dropped from a high

distance in the ambient flow of the doomed,
we of the veiled prisms, of regret unfettered

& ashamed. We of the total primordial blushes,
the reticulated reminiscences, the austere

& rustling. It's in these ashes that the benign, devoid
of ambush, awaits us...grants permission to elucidate.

Here, in these loop closures & hinge regions,
the burgeoning failures, the grains of forgetfulness,

leading to circular ramparts, rubble. In rain forests
of the Tertiary, Jurassic forests, the lagging

strands rain saturated, cicadas at twilight consoling,
replenishing the calmness, a horrid spectrum of betrayal,

a gleam of the wobbling & oscillating vortex,
a scattering of all your past & blackened lovers.

#11

& a wise stiletto of crucifixion,
scanning from an elegant dark calculus,

muted yet rapacious in its reprieve,
holistic remnant of a neo-tribalism,

articulated, witness to the atavistic
rituals of the damaged, the crippled.

It is here a fetishized commemorative
without haunches, historical veracity,

indecipherable, its plumage & ice core,
its surveillance, a foraging & a weeping

of our withered shallows,
all our gouged out headwinds.

We finally reach a consensus. Our slopes of opacity
preclude the swamped & dying, the miserable.

Our precursors & ancestors apologize
for the flaws that lurk in these folds.

They have a penchant for such yielding.
It's a refinement of the stringency & austere

that belies tracteries of fracture & decay,
of their calibrated surrogates before us,

with these segmented parameters, ensembles,
the very ones we long to embrace.

#16

Fold line of matter, a glitching
too cool, almost aeronautical in its assuaging,

a sleek helix, an inflow across a vortex edge,
the inertia's periodicity, a tour de force,

a shallow grave, its diarama truncated
for the tissue, a sight line to the heavens,

where a super-coiling of our losses continue
& where a moat's deepness is maddening

in its persuasions. These vacant farewells,
like before the War, are now long since bony petals

clinging to a grate's trellises, splays
of color in a lavish shade's tangle.

On the domes of Venus star-winds also cool
their pale orbs. Oh, for the meek descendants

in the drama's proscenium of formality,
for a lovely eucalyptus consummate

as your final gesture in the museum,
or from your car window as you sped away,

not from these twisted branches & barren vines.
Oh, for the integrated blots of our treacheries.

MISLOCATION

The whole country was said by him to be very lofty and precipitous on the side of the sea, but the country immediately about and surrounding the city was a level plain, itself surrounded by mountains which descended towards the sea.

-Plato, *Critias*

1.

On three days and nights of misfortune, I am in the city. Not misfortune because I am, but misfortune because I am not. They must have comprised the cityscape of green felt and blue felt and particle board and cotton balls. Markers. Glue. The night before I landed, the city must have disappeared and, to conceal the detriment, they pasted up this backdrop.

2.

Awake. Had left blinds open to welcome sun. It arrives, waits at the foot of the bed. I do not feel any different. I look to window to see the city but there is a painting instead.

Weren't there supposed to be cut stone walls, cobbled streets, sand-swept and clouded beams? A red produce crate at the intersection of two streets and floating newspaper clippings, pavement-bound?

Leave the hotel. There are so many newspaper clippings but intact, in dailies, in hands. What do you call a place that does not exist on a map because the map's alive only in your fingertips, on your lips?



3.

Tail-end of New Year and I'm in what should be Chinatown, but there is only one street and it's too long. All shops the same except the wok shop. An hour to find and I only see parade people leaving, the remnants of celebration stuck to brick and tar of road. A voice preaches in Chinese over sirens. I try to take a picture of myself at the entrance but keep capturing the war behind me instead. Later, I walk past the small preacher on a crate.

I see the pond in my palm when I sit on the bed. The cranes could rise from the surface. Fly parallel to my fingers.
Foreign fingers that turn and close.
Turn the post, close the blinds.
Over the painting.
So I might rest.

One last not-taxi ride through not-city with the not-signs saying, *Oh yes, dear, it is*. The only face I recognized was the moon, but I would know her anywhere.

Ring Plato, I have found Atlantis.

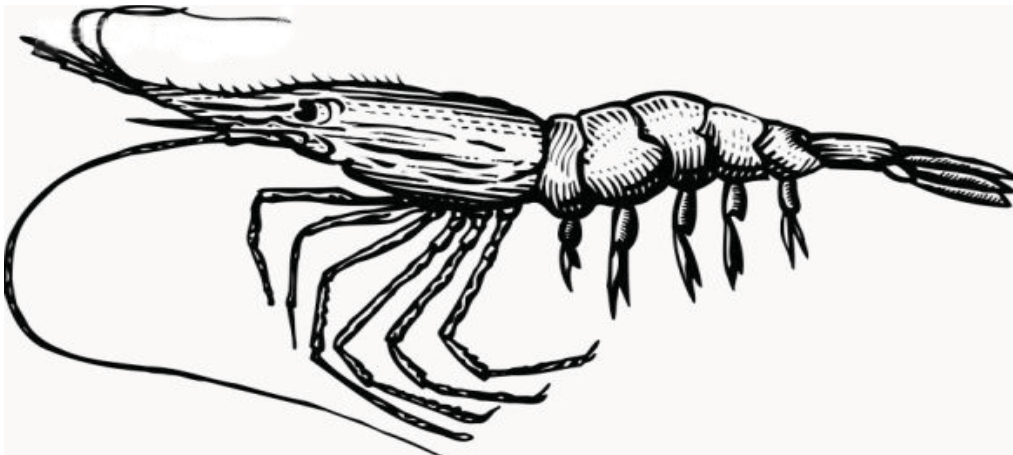


GLOW SHRIMP

My father used a bait called glow shrimp and the couple of times I accompanied him I spent all night protecting the luminous green species waiting for him to tell me it was all a trick and there is no such thing as animals that glow. They didn't glow continuously, but pulsed like small, distant stars whose light plunged through the silent epochs of human history. My father gave me his watch so I could time the oscillations. They went something like this:

- one second: green
- one second: dark
- one second: close
- one second: distant
- one second: the birth of the galaxy
- one second: the extinction of brachiosaurus
- one second: Shakespearian tragedy

I wouldn't let him use the bait so he had to resort to collecting the mussels growing on the rocks behind The Tides Inn. But when he bent over to reach his hairy arm deep into the water the car keys in his shirt pocket dropped—*doomp*—right down into the murky depths of the Pacific. After an hour he emerged from the water wearing nothing but his soggy briefs. What a sight! He was inside the car trying to hotwire the engine when the police arrived. We were now legally outside the private cove. The officer stood blinking at the sight of this wet man in his drooping white underpants. The trajectory of his sight drew a dotted line between the car, the boy, the cold early morning, the hole in the fence beside The Tides Inn, the car, the bait, the underpants, the car, the boy. By the time he had completed his searching project, the shrimp-light had nearly reached the present. My father leaned casually against the car to conceal the broken window and told the officer he was just out training for the Olympics. I held up the watch as proof. The officer stared at the watch—One second: the invention of room service.—One second: the discovery of plastics. Then he climbed back into his car and drove off, leaving my father and me alone and howling with laughter in the wilderness that had yet to become shops and stores and auto malls.



ANDREW SCHELLING & SHIN YU PAI

DROPPING THROUGH ELDORADO GAP: AUTUMN NIJUIN RENGA

autumn foliage scorches
the horizon line forest
fires in Esperanza

in the withered tomato garden
he remembers his aged mother's voice

contemplating sameness
the artist silkscreens one
more canister of soup

moon on a previous canvas
had trapped some feral passion

sleep disturbed by dream
the body recalls roughness
of tongue against skin

once in high summer grass
a heifer lapped salt from his shoulder

she pulls onto
a gravel roadside to scrape
moths from her windshield

hesitant hand on roadmap
name of each town portentous

Blanket, Early, Venus
Big Lake, signs on the path
to the wild old West

the evening star hurts him
dropping through El Dorado gap

fragrant hair
resinous as Great Basin sage
spooky all night desert frost dreams

rain turning overnight to ice
she slips & loses her footing

moon high on the Ganges
a sickle on each
frozen hair blade

damaged cells in the bloodstream
the body slowly shutting down

aching, chattering,
under blankets all night—
dawn brings a winter eagle

shoulder blades pulled wide in
garuda, the spine elongating

or so it seems—
rhododendrons break out across
your flanks, o spring peaks

this evergreen, honey of Asia
Minor gives rise to reverie

how it cuts
the year's first violet petal
touching his entrails

sky bursting with wetness
her heart splits wide again

A MADRIGAL ROMANCE

Because it is to be a romance, I will say: you are a trapeze artist who walks around Geary and Jones, wearing a red down vest. Instead, the truth is, you are a writer, but writers are less exciting for romances because they fall so quickly in love but it might only be with a word, but there are only desks, pens and pencils, empty bookshelves and old notes.

They sat and watched a movie. It was in German. An angel fell in love with a trapeze artist. She asked, Would you love me more if I were like her? No, I said, besides, you're afraid of heights. But I gave her wings anyway and a red vest and left her downtown near the Squint gallery and told her, Find the artist.

She wrote a story about a woman who lived with her husband who was often sick, so it was as if she lived alone; and then one day a man wearing muddy boots came to the back door. She let the man in, and he left his boots on the porch. She fixed him black coffee. They sat and talked about gardening tomatoes. As he finished his coffee he suggested that the grounds would be good for her garden. And then he left the house barefoot, carrying his muddy boots swinging at his side; all the while the husband was asleep upstairs.

If it is to be a romance, I will tell her, you perform on a trapeze in the Mission. Go find the artist and ask him, *are you my catfish friend?* You will tell him about the time you fell out of a tree when you were little, but you'll leave out why you were climbing the tree. You explain you have a fear of heights and he will take you to Coit tower and show you the bay: he will tell you the names of everything as you climb the spiraling iron steps then you both will lean over the railing. He will ask you about your tattooed trees. You will say, No one ever knows they're trees. You will feel dizzy then and in love.

He told me the names of the mountains, she said.



Did he? He wasn't supposed to.
He did. I took him to the church I love.
The one you took me to?
We stood there and that's where he told me all the names.
What else?
Nothing else. He studies geology.
He doesn't paint?
No. But he knows so much about art, it's funny, he gets so excited about it.
But he isn't a painter?
Am I still a trapeze artist?
I don't know.

Listen, she said, they were both artists and were both successful and in love. The man was a photographer and the woman was a painter. One day, the Photographer came home and called for his wife, the Painter, but she didn't answer. He knocked softly on the door to her studio and then slowly opened the door. He was only afraid of disturbing her if she were working, you understand, she said, but the painter wasn't there. The Photographer checked the bathroom, looked around the kitchen table for a note. Finally, the Photographer found the Painter in their bedroom, naked. He walked over to her and touched her lightly, The sheets were like waves against her body, traces of how she must have thrashed around and it hurt him, but he couldn't bring himself to smooth the sheets yet. The Painter, his wife, had committed suicide.

She walked into the gallery wearing a red vest and was served ice cream by a man in a white shirt and pants. He wore a black bow tie and his mustache waxed at the tips. He scooped four flavors of ice cream from a pushcart. He said, Get your ice cream here, Ice cream, nice and hot, no, nice and cold, frozen Ice-cream and handed her a cone. She ate her ice cream and looked at the paintings--some were on glass, some inside boxes with dolls in them that looked like the paintings on glass. Some were torn out of books and looked like the dolls. She went down stairs and asked him, are you the artist?

He answered no.
Who is the artist?

*What's your raison d'être? He asked.
I don't know. Once I poured bleach on a tomato plant.
Are you a gardener then?*

I don't know, he said.

Maybe that guy?

No, I know that guy and he is definitely not the artist.

Are you the artist, he asked?

I'm a trapeze artist, she said.

Really?

I go to the clown school in the Mission.

Amazing, he said, just today I was at a cafe with my roommate and we were talking about a movie we saw last night, and she said, that's the kind of girl I see you with, a trapeze artist.

She told me about her favorite book: when the author wrote it he was living in San Francisco, she said. I compulsively buy copies of that book, so I can give them to everyone I love. There is something beautiful about the way he writes, she said, something so perfect. I want to write like him and tack the pages on the door of the house where he used to live. And maybe he would see them when he came home from trout fishing or planting poems in the sidewalks and take them inside and put them in a vase or use them in his books, just so I can lay naked and read them drinking wine and know that he put them in there to tell me that, although he is dead, and although he wrote the book before I was born, he loves me madly anyway. He walked through her house. He went into the kitchen and made tea for her, he cut bread and set marmalade and creamed cheese out on the table. He sat there and thought about flour on a weathered gray tabletop, of sleeves and arms covered in flour, sweat and crusts of flour in her hair. He put his hand on the rising dough.

She said, his hands were so large, I felt small in them.

I looked at my hands. I planted tomatoes, then. We watched them grow.

Did he do something strange like take pictures of her?

No, she continued, don't you understand? You see, the Photographer knew it wasn't because of him that she had killed herself, but something else, something secret that was always there with her. They

had even talked about it sometimes, after making love and each couldn't imagine the world ending, or better,

they could and they didn't mind. The Photographer knew that his wife had decided to kill herself in their bed was only so that she could be sure it was he who would be first to find her, it would be someone she loved and trusted that would see her at her most vulnerable. She had trusted her with her life and now with her death.

One morning I poured bleach on them and still the vines moved away from the spot and out into the sun and made more tomatoes. They were still there when I left. I wonder if her hair was still red.

There was snow on the ground, Cummings in an upper pocket, and grocery strolls through produce.

I wanted a tattoo, I told her, I wanted nesting birds.

Why, she asked me.

They live in trees.

But no one knew any of this until days later, when the police were called to investigate a pile of clothes found on the beach by some teenagers where they found everything was still in the pockets of the pants, the camera still in a bag slightly hidden from the sun and strollers by a shirt and jacket, but there was no trace of the owner of the clothes, the Photographer.

He asked me, could you do something for the show, write something?

Sure, I said.

Can you make me a cowboy? he asked.

How about an ice cream man?

We laughed about it over eggs and coffee. I asked him if he had seen a girl in a red vest.

He said, I served her ice cream. I even tried to talk to her a little, but she just said, I don't want any more ice cream, thank you and went downstairs.

I told her, I made you a trapeze artist. Why, she asked. I don't know, I said. It seemed to fit with something I remembered.

He stopped writing one day and looked around

his apartment on Geary. There were Digger posters, there were scrawled fish, there was an old couch and a long hall way to the kitchen. She caressed him as he looked at everything that had been put there carefully so that if someone were to look at it like it were a book they would find a little story filled with jokes. But then he suddenly felt as if he were dead, as if the room were left in state and mourners were passing by him looking at everything for the first time saying, He always loved fishing, this was a great reading, here is that weird bird, he always got a kick out of it. He felt sick, but turned to finish what he was writing. She wanted him to make her instant coffee, but he couldn't because he was already dead by the time she was born.

I met him at the opening and he looked nothing like I imagined him. We talked, he seemed depressed. What do you do? I asked. I am a writer, he said. Well, philosopher, now, at least, I'm going to grad school for that, but I am a writer.

What do you write? I asked.

Stories, mostly. Have you ever read *Trout Fishing in America*? If I could write like *that*, if I could just get something out like that, I could be satisfied.

I looked at him. He was sad, he was drunk. I looked at his hands.

What's your *raison d'être*? He asked.

I don't know. Once I poured bleach on a tomato plant.

Are you a gardener then?

You haven't seen a girl in a red vest, have you, I asked. A trapeze artist?

No, he said.



CAUSE RYE (MISTRANSLATION OF BAUDELAIRE'S "CAUSERIE")

Vowels eat a boat sail in autumn, clarinet rose!
May tries on a dress and mounts a nearby merchant,
Eats lassos, quite fluently, summer's lever arise
Like a souvenir croissant with American lemons.

The misty glass is a vain sermon, and quite a plague;
Bring me a church, Amy, in lieu of sausages,
For if a giraffe is going to ferociously dent my lady,
No church will call the moon, looking closer for the mange.

My car is a palace floating on a parachute;
And my soul, it's true, pretends to be a Chevy!
The perfume sent by the auto vendor raises my gorge anew!

O beautiful flower of the ass, you will see!
Avert the yogurt and fondue, brilliantly cover the fries,
Cancel the lambchops and sprinkle asparagus on the butter.

THE SOUR LANTERN

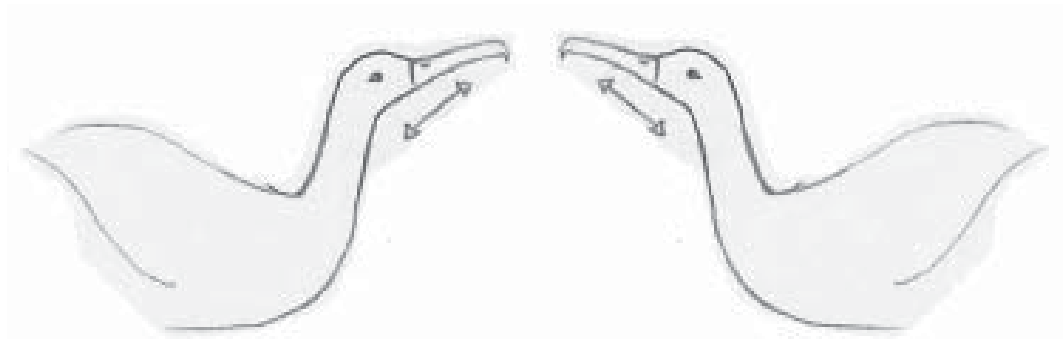
(MISTRANSLATION OF ANDRE BRETON'S "LA LANTERNE SOURDE")

Eat lots of grand orgies, chests plastered with come on a tomb, icy like perfume: quell your porous garish desires and when you arrive give a sensitive smile to the railman, then maneuver around to the attendant with the tournament plaques and express how very ugly they are. Stout hair will change the blank lances at night, and caress violently with éclairs in the middle of an ancient armory, where fate toils to never let us see an encore. The grand tour prepares us for a pretty proceeding, celebrating Walpurgisnight on the giraffe of Absalom. How sweet! Pour a little luminescence on the veil, tout the ludicrous pig's assistant in the tent, depending on the agricultural encore of the eggs, according to the house instrument's grading curve. Let's play poses very near the lamp adjacent to the bamboo, while the bobcat in the vermilion flowers grips the branches and sucks on them, seeking the delicacy after a quiet minute looking at the figures dancing in sync to what two old Papas are singing. About this time a deployment fond of the bomb facilitates a few Japanese flowers, part of the clarity entrenched: Hydrogen control and severe evacuation will solve all potential orneriness with resolve. Praise our great cars, relieve dunes of ancient liquids and be sensitive to the pain forged when your butcher is ardently rerouted to new temperatures. More oil is the violent fermentation at the center of the eclipse, a turning point of fate.

ALCATRAZ

Alcatraz, 'the diver' modified
by white and flight for months
or years seamless contour feathers
one wing in wandering the length
of my head to toe body.

Flamenco bossa nova
y-y-y-y-y-y-yeah
he-uh-lo he-uh-lo
aaaaaaaaahtright.
times 24,000 waved of Español Island
Galápagos. April to July.



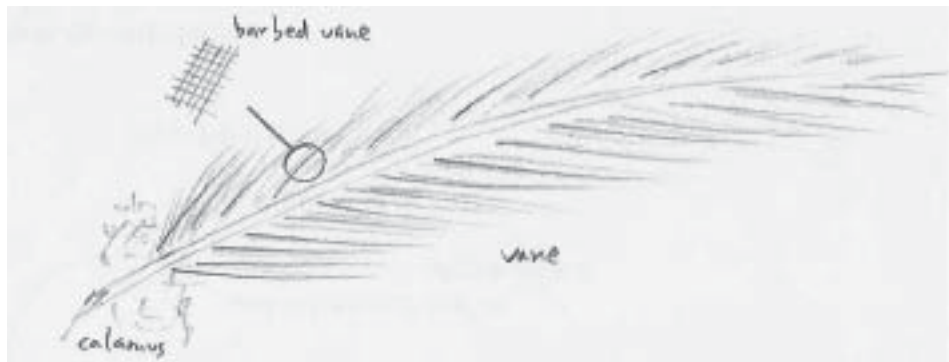
From the Mariner's neck and witness
of St. Elmo's fire, lays eight percent of
her body weight will incubate
two months and hatched, consume two quarts
from one gullet of sea-animal oil.

Mellifluous lilt-linger soft purr
Parmigianino *Madonna* of "exquisite grace" and
"sinuous, swaying"¹
gliding flight
high-aspect wings
made for long travel
never necessary a break-neck briar patch maneuver.

¹Description of Parmigianino's *Madonna with the Long Neck*, ca. 1535, in *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, 12th ed. p.649. Kleiner, Fred S., and Christin J. Mamiya. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*. 12th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth-Thomson, 2005.

eyelid and brushed from wrinkled sheets. Albatross that keeps me awake and I pound my head against the mattress and shove without waking the intruding ass while feeling suddenly claustrophobic. Albatross hung behind the choir draped with purple. Orange and sweet cherry red and marbled brown stained glass that never caught sun of the lost and found world that no one sings.

The pelagic trophic system in which common dolphins
 round shoals of tuna, sardines, jacks
 blue-footed boobies dive
 magnificent frigate birds harass boobies until
 they disgorge the fish and *then* what the frigate birds
 leave of the disgorged fish the albatross gathers with bulbous beak.



Thrust drag lift weight, to fly
 ride trade winds 2000 miles to fill one gullet
 contour semiplume down filoplume bristle powder-down
 for twenty-one ounces of keratin calamus
 serene suspension barbed zip-able vanes the discombobulated descent
alba
 lily of *Alcatraz*.

FROM THE ANESTHESIOLOGIST

[he sits on a wooden chair in the front right corner of the stage.]

Hush, i'm going to swarm you. You can gather up your ethics but they won't work. Do you know about carlsbad caverns national park in the southeast corner of new mexico? i know; let me tell you. Whispers in your ear as you fall away. Bats shaggy as soot, moving in a critical mass of thousands, a great pixilated snake in the sky devours five tons of fruit a night. Fruit with such supple, delicate skin, sun ripened in the dark. Like a pickpocket has slit your peach skin and is fingering you for nectar. Sticky. Can you hear the bats coming? Flutter and probe. They are hungry. Listen, and you can hear them coming.

[he sits on a wooden chair in the back left corner of stage.]

Tonight is the perfect night for feeling melancholy, a perfect night to paint vermilion stars across my oars. i'm pulling for you. What have i learned today, you ask. Many things, i learn many things everyday: how to shoot someone who outdrew me, what doesn't kill me makes me stronger. Do you know what a potent sexual being i am? i am not a form, but a symbol. Fuck everlasting. i can be made from sand, rice, cooked food, river clay, cow dung, butter, rudraksha beads, ashes, sandalwood, darbha grass, a flower garland, or molasses. Sweet, baby, so sweet. i am stone, focused mind, elevated to krishna consciousness, hare krishna hare krishna, hare rama rama hare, krishna krishna hare whatever. i'm one pointed bitch. Pointed down these paths, with people pursuing, always pursuing. Everything is strange, oleaginous. Things are huge and small. Hush.

cont'd from p. 27

is largely a compendium of what's already happened. (So was Donald Allen's *New American Poetry* for that matter – things that had recently happened.) *Poems for the Millennium, Volume One*, deals with what happened during the first fifty or sixty years of the twentieth century, close to a hundred years and more before we put the book together. And the new one that we're doing – the romantics and postromantics and early modernists – is going back two hundred years and maybe more than that.

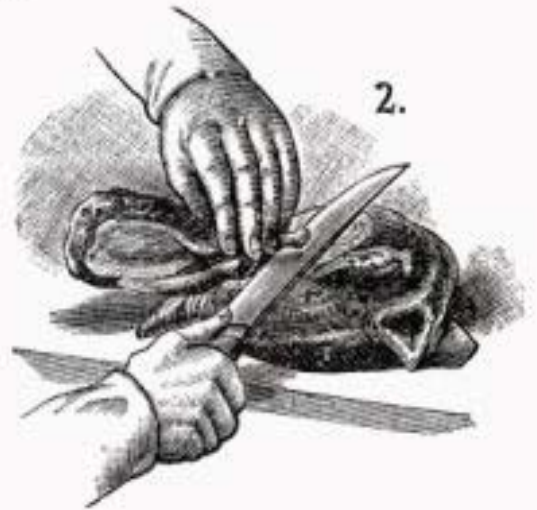
I think I set out very early to explore the old. I don't know if that remains important for people now, the way it was for my generation, coming out of poets like Pound who were very much concerned with things that happened a long time ago in order, as the Chinese characters on the emperor's bathtub put it, to *make it new*.

FS: Jerome, finally I'd like to thank you for joining me today and ask: With Volume III of *Poems for the Millennium* forthcoming, what's next on your itinerary? Can we expect a Volume IV?

JR: I...don't...know. When Pierre Joris and I finished Volume Two, I didn't think there was going to be a Volume Three. Then Jeffrey Robinson showed up and talked to me about doing an anthology of Romanticism along the lines of *Poems for the Millennium*. And finally Pierre Joris may also, as a sort of Volume Four, do something like an anthology of North African/Mediterranean poetry covering a span of something like 2000 years.

Then too, a book of my own, *Triptych*, just came out from New Directions, and it pulls together two older books, *Poland/1931* and *Khurbn*, along with a new series of poems, *The Burning Babe*. I've also got enough material now for another New Directions book, but they can't any longer do one every year or so, so you may not see that next one until two, maybe three years down the road.

FS: Jerome, again: Thank You!



PERSONALS

Ryan Clark is an MFA candidate in poetry at Naropa University, although please let's not restrict him to verse. He's locked himself in a closet and he says he's not coming out until someone asks to read his short stories.

JenMarie Davis currently attends the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics and lives in Denver, Colorado with the editor of this magazine. She would like the world to know that her work was accepted for publication prior to any and all romantic shenanigans.

Jamba Dunn's work has appeared in *Ellipsis Magazine*, *Sliding Uteri*, *Pinstripe Fedora*, and *The American Drivel Review*. Two books, *Fossil 23* (Black Lodge Press) and *American Dust* (Unpublishable Texts) were released in 2007.

Ben Hersey is a writer and performance artist based in Northampton, MA. He is a co-founder of Black Lodge Press. A chapbook of his monologues entitled *Yeah, Deb* is forthcoming from Chuckwagon a small press in South Hadley, MA.

Susie Huser lives in Boulder, Colorado where she is pursuing her MFA at Naropa University. She once saw a bull snake and an osprey. Neither tried to eat her.

Kevin Kilroy is a member of a secret group in Chicago. Bodies are raised from the dead. Identities are blurred in language. Love is in the air, always, not disappearing root systems.

Michael Koshkin, co-founder of Hot Whiskey Press recently moved to Prague where he is putting Western medicine's theories on absinthe consumption to the test.

Nick Morris runs Pistolwhip Press and teaches Composition at Front Range Community College. He is the author of the chapbook *Jezebels* and one half of the filmmaking crew *Lobotomized Monkey*.

Jefferson Navicky lives in Portland, Maine. His work has appeared in *Omphalos*, *Bombay Gin*, *Chain* and *POM2*, among others. A chapbook, *Map of the Second Person*, is available from Black Lodge Press (blacklodgepress.org) and another chapbook, *The Gatherer*, is available from pulpbits.com.

Shin Yu Pai is a poet, photographer, & book maker, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in visual anthropology at the University of Washington. Her poetry titles include *Equivalence* and *Sightings: Selected Works 2000-2005*.

Anselm Parlatore's most recent collection of poems, *Squalicum Harbor Suite*, is currently available from Hot Whiskey Press. Previous collections include *Provisions*, *The Circa Poems* and *Hybrid Inoculum*.

Andrew Peterson has appeared in various places. Some twice. The same goes for this bio.

Jerome Rothenberg is the author of over sixty books of poetry. An early pioneer of ethnopoetics and of various forms of performance poetry, he is the assembler of *Technicians of the Sacred* and six other experimental and traditional anthologies, including the watershed *Poems for the Millennium* from University of California Press. He is the recipient of three PEN writing awards and an American Book Award for *Pre-Faces*, a volume of his collected essays.

Rowland Saifi was born in Arkansas. His work has appeared in *Bombay Gin*, *The Four Quarters Review*, and *Marginalia*. A recent graduate of Naropa University, he is currently working on his MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from a 6x6 bedroom in Ukrainian Village.

Andrew Schelling has published fourteen volumes of poetry, essay, and translation. He has recently taught at Delhi University and Deer Park Institute in India, and is at work on an anthology of bhakti or devotional poetry in English translation. Recent titles include *Two Elk: A High Country Journal*, and *Kamini*, a letterpress book from emdash studio.

HORRORSCOPES

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 20

The next six months are going to be pretty rough on your self-esteem. And rightly so. You really shouldn't expect people to forgive you all of your faults. Because, to be honest, they make the San Andreas look small.

TAURUS APRIL 21-MAY 21

It's Spring and the inevitable scent of love is in the air! But not for you. For you, it's time to think about settling. Seriously, you probably can't do any better and even if you did, it wouldn't last. You're just that ugly inside.

GEMINI MAY 22-JUNE 21

You will soon lose your job to a faceless overseas workforce with significantly lower standards-of-living and little to know concept of student loan debt. With all that free time on your hands, you may want to consider joining the local militia or suicide cult.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

This is no time for optimism. As hard as it might be for you to accept, things are about to get much, much worse. The good news is: there's nothing you can do about it so...no need to go changing that destructive behavior!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 21

Good news Leo: Your ship is about to come in! Sometime in the next few days, you will receive an email detailing an enticing job offer and/or lottery notification in broken English from somewhere overseas. As your personal astrologer, I strongly advise you to take it.

VIRGO AUGUST 22-SEPTEMBER 23

Government scientists will soon discover that it's your fault all the honey bees are dying. The resultant public outcry will cripple your social life and make school extremely difficult for your children. Thanks a lot A-hole.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 23

You may want to reconsider a recent credit card purchase and/or friendship. Unfortunately for you, by then it will be too late. Nevertheless, it wouldn't hurt to keep close track of receipts and sharp household objects.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 24-NOVEMBER 22

No one ever found love at the bottom of a bottle. But then again, not since Narcissus has anyone been so enamored with their own reflection. Here's looking at you, you dreamy beast!

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 22

It's pretty obvious to everyone by now that you are your own favorite topic of conversation. If you were even the least bit interesting, that might not be a problem. Then again, that's a pretty big if.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 23-JANUARY 20

Regardless of what your therapist says, you are not a butterfly waiting to bloom. Your failures and shortcomings have yet to make you into a better version of yourself and there's little evidence to support the theory that they ever will.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 21-FEBRUARY 19

If you know what's good for you, you'll make like Jonah and stay out of God's sight for awhile. At least until the lightning bolts subside and that hungry looking whale moves on. In the meantime, it wouldn't hurt to floss.

PISCES FEBRUARY 20- MARCH 20

You can pick your battles and you can pick your nose but you can't put your finger in a cannon and hope to keep your hand. If you want to survive the coming months with all your appendages intact, you might consider misplacing that draft registration card and moving to Canada before the American dollar goes peso.

YOUR SIGN NOT LISTED HERE?

Let's face it: with more than 6 billion people in the world today, the traditional 12 signs are no longer enough to express the full range of humanity. So *Fact-Simile* is asking it's readers to send along their own non-traditional zodiacs (accompanied by brief horoscopes) to TRAVIS@FACT-SIMILE.COM. The best of the lot will be published in the next tongue tickling issue of *Fact-Simile Magazine*.

Fact-Simile

FREE

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SUBMISSIONS

FACT-SIMILE is published twice a year in the SPRING and FALL. Submissions are accepted on a year-round, rolling basis. That is to say: **We are ALWAYS looking for work that pushes the envelope of polite society and has little to no regard for the arbitrary margins of genre.** So if you have some thought-provoking poetry, prose and/or artwork (or some unholy combination thereof) at your disposal, please consider sending it along to:

travis@fact-simile.com

All text submissions should be attached as WORD documents. Visual art and mixed-media submissions should be saved at a resolution of no less than 300 dpi in BOTH JPG AND PDF formats.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

FACT-SIMILE is FREE! Stamps and envelopes, on the other hand, cost money. So if you would like to subscribe to this lovely little Lit-Rag, please SEND A SMALL DONATION to the address below and let us know where you want it.

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