

From Barbara Guest, Forces of Imagination.

Invisible Architecture

There is an invisible architecture often supporting
the surface of the poem, interrupting the progress of the poem. It
reaches
into the poem
in search of
an identity with the poem;

its object is to possess the poem for a brief time, even as an apparition
appears. An invisible architecture upholds the poem while allowing a
moment of relaxation for the unconscious. [A period of emotional sug-
gestion, of lapse, of reliance on the conscious substitute words pushed
toward the bridge of the architecture. An architecture in the period before
the poem finds an exact form and vocabulary—,

before the visible appearance of the poem on the page and the invisible
approach to its composition. Reaching out to develop the poem there are
interruptions, some apparently for no reason—something else is hap-
pening, the poet has no control—the poem begins to quiver, to hesitate,
to become insubstantial, the desire of poetry to elevate itself, to become
stronger. . . . The poem is fragile. It needs to reach through the armed
vehicle of the poem,
to loosen the armed hand

Losing the arrogance of dominion over the poem to an invisible hand,
the poet campaigns for a passage over which the poet has control. Yet the
unstableness of the poem is important.

Also the frequent lapses of control of the poem.

The writer only slowly retains power over the poem, physical power,
when the poem breaks away from authority of the invisible architecture.

This invisible authority may be the unconscious that dwells on the lower
level, in a substratum beneath the surface of the poem and possesses its
own reference. A fluidity only enters the poem when it becomes more
openly aware of itself.

By whom or by what agency is the behavior of the poem suggested, by
what invisible architecture, we ask, is the poem developed? The Surreal-
ists taught us to wander freely on the page, releasing mechanical birds, if
we so desire, to nest in the invisible handwriting of composition. There
is always something within poetry that desires the invisible.

The desire of the poet to control. This control was earlier destructive to the
interior of the poem, to its infrastructure. There is something deliberate
about this practice of control by consciousness. It includes the question
that is undefined, the behavior of the poem. By whom or by what agency
is this decided, by what invisible architecture is the poem developed?

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editors.

Poetry the True Fiction

The title I originally gave to this talk is "How I got out of Poetry into Prose." This title came to me so quickly because at that time I was encouraging myself to write fiction, and I thought I would discuss the dimensions of fiction with you. However, I was disturbed by this title and rightly so; had I been more intuitive of my own perceptions, and had I listened to the poet William Cowper, who wrote "Poets are seldom good for anything except in rime," I would have entitled this talk more sensitively: "Poetry the True Fiction."

Why has the word fiction become associated with prose? It is poetry that transforms the real world into fiction. Mallarmé understood this. He wrote: "The true fiction is that of the poet."

Mallarmé regarded poetry as an art dedicated to fictionalization, an "*art consacré aux fictions*" where the concrete object is "bathed in a new atmosphere," lifted out of itself to become a fiction. The poet is not there only to share a poetic communication, but to stimulate an imaginative speculation on the nature of reality.

Do you recall the poem of Wallace Stevens "Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction"? And have you considered what the title meant, or what was the underlying meaning of the title? I'm at the point where I take everything he says for granted—the moon being made of ice-cream, etc.—so I never

questioned his meaning until the other day when I was considering poetry as fiction. In his published correspondence I found a letter from Stevens to his publisher, the Cummings Press. He wrote:

The title of the book will be *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*. Each of the three groups will develop or at least have some relation to a particular note: as

I

It must be abstract

II

It must change

III

It must give pleasure.

These are three notes by way of defining the characteristics of supreme fiction. By supreme fiction, of course, I mean poetry.

The fiction of the poet is part of restless twentieth century perception based on the discovery that reality is a variable, and is open-ended in form and matter.

And now that we recognize poetry activates an established world of fiction, I should like to discuss the supremacies or the necessities of poetry that enable it to transform reality. I would like to speak about Vision and Imagination.

Vision is part of the poet's spiritual life of which the poem, itself, is a résumé. The "spirit" or the "vision" of a poem arises from the contents of

the poet's unconscious. Let us say the vision of a poem has above it that "halo" you see in religious paintings when an act of special beneficence is being enacted by one of the persons within the picture and that person is given a halo. The poem is our act of special beneficence and the poet is rewarded this halo. The poet is unaware of the halo, just as in the paintings the persons are unaware of the halo, but it is there as a reward for a particular unconscious state of immanence. Now I am not speaking of a religious state of grace in regard to the poem, the poem let us say is its own religion. I am using the word "halo" because you and I can see it in the painting, and this halo has a value to us; it reflects a state of mind, or a condition that the mind has attained.

The halo has detected the magnetic field into which the energy of the poem is being directed.

I would like you to understand that I am using the words "spirit," "vision," "halo" because I wish to lift us upward away from the desk of a projected poem. I want to emphasize that the poem needs to have a spiritual or metaphysical life if it is going to engage itself with reality.

As closely as possible in the world I am representing here the poet wishes to align the contents of the poem with the vision which directs it. When this occurs we say of the poem that it has "wings."

It is possible that words may occur in a fixed space and sequence so that they are called "words of a poem." We say the poem is made of words. And it is true that many poems are constructed solely of words. These are the words that sit on paper without vision. We all have read these poems

and we know that after we have read them we feel curiously bereft. Our expectations of ennoblement by the poem have been disappointed by the lackluster condition of the poem.

We decide that this poem is not very inspired. And what do we mean by this? We desired "inspiration," that the poem contain within it evidences of the spirit of poetry.

We have learned that words are only utensils. They are inorganic unless there is a spirit within the poem to elevate it, to give it "wings," so that the poem may soar above the page and enter our consciousness where we may if we wish give it a long life, a longer life than would occur when the poem lies without elevation on a piece of paper.

There is no reason to signal any decade or era as deficient of vision. Words on a page are deficient of vision and this may occur in any epoch. We are particularly nervous about our own era because we are at the turn of a century which is most usually designated a time of decadence. We see this everywhere, unfortunately in the decay of institutions, but mostly there is a demise of the spirit and that is what should concern us, because poetry will reflect this spiritual absence.

Words without vision are deprived of stability. They cling desperately to a mirrored surface in an effort to attach themselves to a surface, because they have no direction and no stabilized vocation. They become furtive, these words, thirsty for a version of themselves that contains no failure of vision. Words contain their own beauty of face, but they desire an occupation. They cannot exist on beauty or necessity alone.

Words of the poem need dimension. They desire finally—an education in space. The poet needs to understand the auditory and spatial needs of a poem to free it so that the poem can locate its own movement, so that it is freed to find its own voice, its own rhythm or accent or power.

Wordsworth wrote: *Language if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet like the power of gravitation or air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve.*

It is not the flash of brilliance appropriated in a technique that quenches the pathos of a deprived poem. Although we must not neglect those qualities Leopardi admired in Horace: "courageous metaphors, singular and far-fetched epithets, inversions, placement of words, suppressions"—recognize them? They appear in our own shifting techniques.

Regard the poem as plastic. It is moveable, touchable. It is a viable breathing substance. Nothing is more useless than a poem with a dull sheen that refuses to move, that is inert. This is the essence of dullness and our eyes run quickly past it.

A poem has not only a voice, but a mouth and the mouth must move just as much as the voice must speak and it must not be careless in its speech. And flesh of a poem. Even as a painting has flesh. The vibrancy of its skin.

The artist de Kooning wrote that in the Renaissance drawing started to tremble because it wanted to go places. He also added that what we call subject matter was then painting itself. There was no subject matter.

De Kooning also observed that at this time the artist was too perplexed to be sure of himself. Later subject matter ruled the arts. And, said de Kooning, when you think of all the life and death problems in the art of the Renaissance, who cares if a Chevalier is laughing or that a young girl has a red blouse on. De Kooning is telling us to beware of description or "subject matter." In other words to think of the poem itself.

Vision and plasticity are the two essentials of a poem. The spirit of the poem and its moveable form, not its "adjustable" form. Then we get into posing or Chevaliers or red blouses.

I hope you realize that in all these words I have gathered together, or if you wish in the few words I have gathered, I have not come directly to Imagination.

I have first wanted to prepare the ground for Imagination. For us to consider the spirit of the poem, its physicality and its spatial intensity. Now I would like to speak about Imagination because it is really my favorite topic. Without Imagination the red blouse is a piece of description, without Imagination the poem is only words on a page.

This is a very large subject Imagination. I shall touch upon it only briefly. But I must speak about it, because for me it is the single most important element of poetry and it is my touchstone. When I examine a poem it is not for its form or style or even gravity but I look for its imaginative powers. I find that Imagination comes before style or technique. How empty all the dazzle of style is without the immediacy of the touch of Imagination. And Imagination the changeling can sting you with its fictive barbs.

Coleridge wrote *Biographia Literaria* in his youth when he was trembling with imaginative power. The book is essential, I believe, for the distinction he makes between Imagination and Fancy. Fancy is delightful, evocative, alas charming, but with fancy you leave those words on the page. A good many poets are endowed with a lively fancy, many more than those who live in the Imagination. Fancy is useful and can shake people up and present itself century after century as the new. But it is not art; it is games.

Imagination lives with the visionary. When you touch its glass there is a ring. The French have a phrase "*clair-obscur*" which translates as obscure light and means the mysterious side of thought. That could well define Imagination.

We tend to think of it as so lively it pierces walls, but that liveliness is fancy. Imagination is *clair-obscur*. It is also "the absent flower" of Mallarmé. A turbulent presence. And we must acknowledge this "turbulent presence" because it is there to save the poem from a disobedient disregard of its own nature.

There will always be poetry, in its search for a language, a desire for the liberation of the Imagination.

André Breton said, "to imagine is to see."

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Shifting Persona

I

The windows are normally independent of one another, although you may pass back and forth from one view to the other. This absurd interdependence is like a lark at break of day. The altitude is assumed by the upper window. The lark song. The other window is the lark.

The person inside a literary creation can be both viewer and insider. The window is open and the bird flies in. It closes and a drama between the bird and its environment begins.

When the person who is you is the viewer, you believe an extraordinary strength exists in that position. You are outside the arena of dispute or creativity or blasphemy, dwelling in a private space where emotive speculation is stronger than fact or action, each of which passes before you in an attempt at dissimulation which you are free to dispute. This is called the orchid position, because of the extravagant attention the viewer demands.

Sometimes it is the flap of a tent held back, or a cushion pushed next to a door, or a turban lifted over one eye—even a mountain top is offered where the person who is outside the scene can take up an observation post and gaze closely down into the valley.

Without the person outside there would be no life inside. The scene relies on that exterior person to explain the plangent obsessions with which art is adorned.

Yet inside the window is the person who is you, who are now looking out, shifted from the observer to the inside person and this shows in your work. When you are the inside person you can be both heavy and delicate, depending upon your mood; you have a sense of responsibility totally different from the you outside. You occupy the lotus position.

You are depending upon yourself to a degree that can cause extreme unease, but this is acute to all species of creativity. You find you cannot always depend upon yourself as absorbedly as when you assumed the orchid positions because you are more vulnerable, dependent upon the psychic phenomena that occupy your meditation. The lotus position is one of exaggerated self-dependency, in which the eye goes inward so frequently that rest stops are required, something like paragraphic encasings.

These rest stops can be seen in the shifts that take place between the persona of the creator and the persona of the observer. In a well-developed persona the shifts take place before our eyes without revealing themselves, as if gauze had been spun especially for the purpose; and a curtain falls slyly between the persona of the person and the persona that is now accepted. We travel back to the mountaintop and the valley with the shifting of spatial contacts.

II

The ability to project both windows is a sign of originality and is rare. In writing concealed within a limited physical environment, as in the work of Jane Austen, the threat of claustrophobia hangs over the whole body of the novels. In order to relieve this environmental tension, the writer with her strokes of genius elevates the characters above a physical dimension, so that although their persons appear to inhabit a closed drawing-room they are actually removed from the interior to the exterior as they move beyond their limited space through the projection of the author.

They are persons who are capable in their minds, even in an obtuse mind, of looking outside themselves into another place, of shifting their persons. They are relieved of ordained claustrophobia, as is the reader, who might be stuck in that drawing room, who is lifted by the author's inked quill, her euphemism for time, to project beyond singularity.

She has even trained us to watch for the apparitions of ourselves moving alongside the characters. This is on a grand scale, her knowledge of sequence in time caught in a limited physical dimension. The person of the author travels from afar.

III

There is a book about Picasso that records him during his labors while attempting to create his version of *Las Meninas* of Velázquez. What emerges from this devastating account is his conflict with the person of Velázquez as Picasso attempted to stabilize his own persona. Picasso consistently refused to consider his position as revisionist.

Picasso went into the Velázquez painting very far. Yet his enormous struggle, which involved his wife and friends, took place far less within the realm of art than in the psychological struggle of an artist to survive the atmosphere of an originating persona. We are also aware of Picasso's need to endow Velázquez with the Picasso persona.

The painting of Velázquez is even more complicated, as several persons compete for the dominating person within *Las Meninas*.

Picasso said it was a very peculiar affair. Velázquez had painted the King and Queen in the mirror as if they were outside the canvas—which is the fact—but as if it was they who were painting the canvas, since he, Velázquez was inside it with *Las Meninas*.

And we said it was an even more peculiar affair for Picasso to paint in that position, while Picasso painted the mirror in which he might have added himself to the King and Queen, who in fact must be on the same side as Velázquez opposite *Las Meninas*, etc. etc.¹

Finally out of the hundreds of studies Picasso made of this painting, one in particular succeeds. It is called "The Studio" and there are no persons inside that space.

One of the lessons to be learned from this wildly shortened account of Picasso and *Las Meninas* is that the deliberate ambiguity of the reigning person produces the Velázquez painting's magnificent climaxes, and prevents revision of the work of the originating person. *Las Meninas* has added to the mystery of the person in art.

IV

In *The Uses of Literature*, Italo Calvino writes (I quote from him because he has so rapidly summed up the stunning performance of Flaubert):

Gustave Flaubert the author of the complete works of Gustave Flaubert projects outside himself the Gustave Flaubert who is the author of Madame Bovary, who in turn projects from himself the character of a middle-class married woman in Rouen, Emma Bovary, who projects from herself that Emma Bovary whom she dreams of being. . . . It was Flaubert himself who gave us the precise clue to this with his famous phrase, "Mme. Bovary, c'est moi."²

V

The person with the omnipotence of a cloud hovers over a poem pointing to the direction that it should take.

The poem's concealed autobiography. A memoir of itself which is released as it becomes a presence existing in time.

When the poem is on its feet, to leave it alone to express its own person. The relief from the intensity of the poem's presence as it heats up.

An astonishment throughout the poem at the vibrations of its ego. "I" becomes the bystander and the poem is propelled by the force of the "person" stripped bare.

Richard Wollheim writes: "The artist is essentially a spectator of his work."³

VI

A landscape appears before us, solitary in its incidents of meadow broken by low running water, the sky dour, the earth in twists moving like the water into continuous dark drainage. This landscape appears solitary and yet there in the short grass is the hidden person placed there by the writer who desired a human instrument to bear witness to this attempt to construct with a fictional or real landscape a syllabus of art.

The person is given a place of habitation within the construction and endowed with a knowledge not only of the force of nature, but the aesthetic purpose behind the writer's decision to create this scene.

This witness, positioned inside the work of art, conveys to us the secret intent of the writer so that following the instructions now transmitted we may work our way through to the pitch of the art before us, the center where the writing rocks back and forth before taking its plunge into space.

The person is our conduit. Hidden arms are stretched pointing to the variations, the hollows, the deliberate judgments of time within the work of art.

The person has a voice. It echoes the tone of the writer and it is this echoing voice that assembles what we call the "tone" of poetry or prose.

It is the gathering together of varying instructions by the concealed person that presents us with what we may call a "reliable" landscape.

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- 1 Helene Parmelini. *Picasso Plain* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963).
- 2 Italo Calvino, *The Uses of Literature*, translated by Patrick Creagh (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982).
- 3 Richard Wollheim. *Painting as an Art*. The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

From the Collected Poems
of Barbara Guest

I am about to use my voice
Why am I afraid that salty wing
Flying over a real hearth will stop me?

Yesterday the yellow
Tokening clouds. I said "no" to my burden,
The shrub planted on my shoulders. When snow
Falls or in rain, birds gather there
In the short evergreen. They repeat their disastrous
Beckoning songs as if the earth
Were rich and many warriors coming out of it,
As if the calm was blue, one sky over
A shore and the tide welcoming a fleet
Bronzed and strong as breakers,

Their limbs in this light
Fused of sand and wave are lifted once
Then sunk under aquamarine, the phosphorous.
Afterwards this soundless bay,
Gulls fly over it. The dark is mixed
With wings. I ask if that house is real,
If geese drink at the pond, if the goatherd takes
To the mountain, if the couple love and sup,

I cross the elemental stations
from windy field to still close. Good night I go to my bed.
This roof will hold me. Outside the gods survive.

Les Réalités

It's raining today and I'm reading about pharmacies
in Paris.

Yesterday I took the autumn walk, known in May
as lovers' walk.

Because I was overwhelmed by trees (the path from the playhouse
leads into a grove and beyond are the gravestones),
squirrels and new mold it is a good thing today
to read about second-class pharmacies where
mortar and plastic goods disturb death a little
and life more. It is as if perpetual rain
fell on those drugstores making the mosaic brighter,
as if entering those doors one's tears
were cleaner.

As if I had just
left you and was looking for a new shade of powder
orchidée, ambre, rosé, one very clarified and true
to its owner, one that in a mirror
would pass for real and yet when your hand falls upon it
(as it can) changes into a stone or flower of the will
and triumphs as a natural thing,
as this pharmacy
turns our desire into medicines and revokes the rain.

In the Middle of the Easel

My darling, only
a cubist angle seen after
produces this volume in which our hearts go
(tick tick)

I see you in a veil of velvet
then I'm quiet because you've
managed the apples, you've arranged
to sit. You are twice clothed
in my joy, my nymph.

Painters who range up and down
Mont hill or Mont this, disarray
in the twilight those boulevards,
make every stroke count and when one of the Saints
(in the dark apse tonal) quits,
I'm with you.

Together we'll breathe it,
you and I in the sleeve forgiving requiem,
in the priest tinted air.
In the gaslight that ridiculous plume
reminds me of hawks, I admire
their arc, I plunge
my everyday laughter into that kimono wing
what a studio soar! What rapture!
The gifted night, the billowing dark!

who brings me a quail
caught in the smoldering underbrush
where the smell is of yucca
and sage.

Day brings me this bird.

I must go and feed it
with milk from the cup,
a few drops on the spoon.

The sirens are screaming
in the streets.

It is an order to take cover.

And I, I
must bring this bird to shelter.

I must not be caught out
in the night
unless I am willing

to give you up Day forever,
when I join the guerrillas,

who would like my cup
and spoon,

who would roast my bird
and eat it.

Dardanella

Those forms in gauze
we see as arches

the tile replaces with mountain
the script says: As water this life
poets go to the mountain
followed by girls in white

The king of the heavy mustache
"like buffaloes these men"
cannot find dawn in his sleep

So agents prepare the morning mosquito
it must be noisy yet not alarming

Those who hear it across the valley
in their ears closed with honey
will feel the sting of bells

in the palace only one vase need splinter
from his arms only the virgin need struggle
the boy knows now to kiss
he will ride horses to the blue dome.

Twenty-four veils in a pile
and hatchoutchoui houri
for hours and hours and hours
the patient needy camel lifts his neck
over the sun brick petals catch
that is all . . . no vines . . . no miles
. . . no hills . . . no caves in the hills . . .

women walk to the fountain

Pasha is with the Consul
the French woman writes letters a violet eye
toward the boy who has peed on the tile
she forgets the name for raisin says plum

Milk say the heavens regarding the white sand

Bosphorus click of eel in your wave off Egypt
tow-ridden plain of Kilid Bahr
trees and risk where ancient bouncing flat
is war land of the tomb otherwise lids

Air in the arch is black
as sighs from vessels cast
on the shut-off tide.

The Brown Studio

Walking into the room
after having spent a night in the grove
by the river
its duskiness surprised me.

The hours I had spent under foliage,
the forms I had seen were all sombre,

even the music was distinctly shady, the water had left me melancholy, my hands I had rinsed were muddy. I had seen only one bird with a bright wing, the rest were starlings,

the brownness alarmed me.

I saw the black stove, the black chair, the black coat. I saw the easel, remembering it as an ordinary wood tone, rather pale, I realized it was inky, as were the drawings.

Of course you weren't there, but a photograph was. Actually a negative. Your hair didn't show up at all. Where that fairness had lit the open ground,

now there was an emptiness, beginning to darken.

I believed if I spoke,

if a word came from my throat and entered this room whose walls had been turned,

it would be the color of the cape

we saw in Aix in the studio of Cézanne, it hung near the death's head, the umbrella, the palette cooled to grey,

if I spoke loudly enough, knowing the arc from real to phantom, the fall of my voice would be, a dying brown.

All Elegies Are Black and White

To Robert Motherwell

When Villon went to his college
he wore a black gown
he put his hood up when
he went out on the black streets.

He ate black bread
and even drank a kind of black wine,
(we don't have any longer)
it wasn't that good Beaune
his skill taught him how to steal,
a disappearing drink also.

The sky was white over Paris,
until it fell in the streets,
like a sky over mountains,
disturbing and demanding.

When you are in Spain
you think of sky
and mountain where the forest
is without water.

You think of your art
which has become important
like a plow
on the flat land.

There are even a few animals
to consider.
And olives.

Do you regard them separately?
The forms of nature,
animals, trees

That bear a black burden
whose throat is always thirsty?

I know of Seville of black carriages
one factory
one river
the air is brown.

Alas we have fair hair, are *rojo*.

Throw a mantilla over your face
rojo of the light,
walk only in the white spaces.

The trains that cross back and forth
the borders of Elegy
sleep all afternoon, at night
lament the lost shapes.

I think when you oppose
black against white,
archaeologist you have raised a dream
which is bitter.

The white elegy
is the most secret elegy.

Illyria

And I was right as dawn overhead
listening to the buoy as is often done
a bridge while brows float under it yes
it was a way of steeples of construction
of pilings of verbs. I too admire the way
water spells in the hand riding this way and
that and also the moments of green which
like paragraphs point out the stations
we must enter and leaving them count trees
more scarcely; there is much to emulate
not only iron bands but those waves you can
no longer dive into and the seamless rifts
which are noble as you explain omnivorously
having devoured both nail and hammer,
like an isle composed of rhythm and whiteness.
Night is gentle with the promise
of a balanced pear such is it this drop.

Egypt

for Tony Smith

Because nobody knew whether it was Monday or Tuesday
the park that was on Monday began on Tuesday

This water flows either way with exceptions
for blue moments described as loaded when

Never to make a remark about merely a generous lump
leaves no ivy over your tough Pharaoh meter

Either liked to parade in front of mirrors
going underground was a busy strike so that

When examined the bird's tread went which way
and that the pastime was being amazed

And getting out the size of a hump

The storage space it occupied "simple, very
authoritative, very enduring things."

A vigorous antiquity into which the slab was
inserted and either said not enough in spite of

The ribbons of oozes nobody made an oasis
out of it until dissatisfactions

With sizes more confusing than the tomb
where zero unwraps Ouch! you've printed my thumb

You have lost the original which was perhaps
better but the boys did their best lying on the

Mowed grass whispering butter as a matter of fact

Nebraska

Climate succumbing continuously as water gathered
into foam on Nebraska elevated by ships
withholds what is glorious in its climb like
a waiter balancing a waterglass while the tray
slips that was necklace in the arch of bridge
now the island settles linear its paragraph of tree
vibrates the natural cymbal with its other tongue
strikes an attitude we have drawn there on the limb
when icicle against the sail will darken the wind
eftsooning it and the ways lap with spices as
buoyancy once the galloping area where grain
is rinsed and care requires we choose our walk

And the swift nodding becomes delicate
smoke is also a flow the pastoral calm where
each leaf has a shadow fortuitous as word
with its pine and cone its seedling a curl
like smoke when the ashy retrograding slopes
at the station up or down and musically
a notation as when smoke enters sky

There is conjecture.
Fog on the mallows. Bloom of mallow
in the fog. Now you cannot see it,
was *it* "invention"

Or sassafras

whose bark

a digestive

to be taken
when wild red harshnesses
range the system

causative
of sillabubs; they make
for disorder

they lend themselves
to the imagination
like Nereids

You are absolutely crazy
racing past their scream

Circassians

I become excited when I am with Circassians
I am almost in despair.

That cousin with his moustaches
they seem to know what to do
with sadness and ecstasy
almost like the Irish

and who am I with my mixed feelings?

I put down my pen
and I have found a pencil
not any pencil
but this one fabricated in Germany

I bought it in France.

Caroline has asked me to lunch.
We eat a steak
cucumbers
radishes
we drink vodka. Polish vodka.

I look at photographs.
They are her grandparents in front of their tent.
Grandfather
is dressed in his tunic and pants.
His belt carries a knife.
His blouse and his blossoming pantaloons
is the way I should describe them.
His wife is shy and she too billows.

We are in a village
at the top of the mountain
look at that drop!

Those are her grandparents.

Caroline too is photographed.
On the beach at Amagansett
look how it shows
her face of the Caucasus
even the sloped eyelids
the tense skin near the eyes!

How remarkable she is!

Caroline is many versts
from Yahni Polyana

Caroline's apartment is
in New York City

We are neighbors and we admire each other.

Have some vodka.

The message of this night was distributed wrongly within the spectrum of your eyes, its multi-colors flashing.

You provoked the night so that its behaviour was that of buildings whose color which should be dark, black in the night was not, was lit up with an electric substance that was burning gruel on your tongue that could no longer speak in any of the voices or the nuance of languages distracting a stranger, because the night was indecisive about its color and the heat translated incorrectly so it burned too brightly and far too long a time.

The mice became crisper, crisper as their organic eyes burned the shoe leather, coals finally, even as

Stones fell from the cathedral when dawn began to shift its body against the glow in which ceases the idle color of night.

The View from Kandinsky's Window

An over-large pot of geraniums on the ledge the curtains part a view from Kandinsky's window.

The park shows little concern with Kandinsky's history these buildings are brief about his early life, reflections of him seen from the window busy with preparations for exile the relevance of the geranium color.

Partings, future projects exceptional changes are meant to occur, he will rearrange spatial decisions the geranium disappears, so shall a person.

His apartment looking down on a Square the last peek of Russia an intimate one knowing equipment vanishes.

At Union Square the curtains are drawn diagonals greet us, those curves and sharp city verticals he taught us their residual movements.

The stroke of difficult white finds an exit the canvas is clean, pure and violent a rhythm of exile in its vein,

We have similar balconies, scale degrees of ingress, door knobs, daffodils like Kandinsky's view from his window distance at the street end.

The Thread

Welcome brutal possessor of the memory cards, on the wall under wainscoting a nail holds the thread.

The Rose Marble Table

Adoptive day replenished by shadow
chooses octagonals such as chatter
and swimsuits at an angle
where smiles become orange.

Sea whose translucence disturbs inferior atoms,
that passage from ice to shallow removes familiars
as glass changes to foam, the parallel lake diminished,
combs drop into fur.

Between sea and lake a shape manneristic residence
of blue, pool waits the diver shock. Sylphs
luxuriate in ripples seasonal branches they tease
the spread of trained water, their silks reply yes then no
their dive provokes,

Gentle disruptions on certain days ruminating in
clear water, thoughts trailing the slap integrating
there with east of lake the westerly sea at heel
pool repeats an omen in sky dip,

Emotive waters possessed by bodies their octaves
glide on marginal air, light weighing its touch
here and thither to an arc of shapes and drips
from wings. Couperin wades to his rock,

Branches graze and sink, an unsettled stress
pleads antic decline, let the dead limb fall
imminence remains arms flung into dirt alarms.

Creative soul you hesitate, I with my hand
on the rose marble table, like you a difficult creature
ignoring the universe, igniting shadows. Gulls
over porches, bamboo familiars mine.

Ultramarine is cold it shivers
until the scumbled white of foam distributes
wilfully from sea to lake to pond we watch
heads revel in occasional dips
while background thoughtful water frames sestinas
they repeat a sobriety like a rose marble table.

Supple nature declares texture lends
formality to words a flight of marble
can rearrange the speed of waters,
we pass hands upon its surface and embrace
the creative object, throbbing waves fly over.

Shuffling Light

Dawn has other obligations
and is preparing them for us.

That I can see, shifting in bed.
There are ignoble thoughts running
over to that corner and that.

Ideas of much simplicity,
like threads in the sheet which
tie it all together, obeying
commands other than beauty.

The clock tick and the cat meow,
a wrist above the coverlet.
A book slides off a table,
pages marking no page,
unfavored literature.

Light shuffling across the ceiling
with a careful tread, making mush
of history. It reminds us a name

(00)

modular lope.

"located harbors"

rice in autumn

emplastos over the signet

"papered halo"

to walk somewhere

an image falls

out of the figurative sky

offers what bell it is.

from the walk voice asks whose

covered walk from

the past a white satchel

the embonpoint

is sacred mortar

on the threshold

IV

The Altos

... the warbler

where did he locate the bell

... has crossed the river

field plane

table of syllabic water

out of rock

moved backward

in floated matinal

chimera

rests his eyes.

circle lavender

of

in the tide region

beside the ragged dome
dust lips

running it cannot stop
it falls into segmentary rushes

narrow gauntlet
a slipper untied it.

with staff the bony road
came toward us

pallor of grey harbor
bird eye of the Altos

from open green to take the purest juice
it strengthens the turbans
the braided helmet said "mine mine"

heir to evening arches

oh the ace of evening

butterfly on the night drop

across the pavement

viols

call to mates

balloon smell

with the tiger

an invisible weight

swam in the

night into thunder

cannot find

the platinum

bird coat

dreamed the stalk image

a gestural branch

Stripped Tales

lily powdered

distance

in baking dew

with full hands

with many branches

coldest butter

alive in the coal meadow

tipped the grief-scale

an antic of wild

deposition — raincoats dripping —

romantic barriers —

they believe the staged cloud —

even the fountain of Altos

their soft meats cross the border.

Storytelling

(introduce pavement)

Old-fashioned people in clothes.

Passage to friendship

(details, momentum, firefly)

wave "bye bye,"

idly unfolds.

(dark, light, etc.)

(separately, form,)

indifferent combinations. (jest, tears.)

(Rhythm upswing) (collision with serpent),

repeat and repeat moonlight
as suspense, moonlight.

Outside of This, That Is

An oyster, the fragrance,
floating dog outside and shuffle through hunger,
once again nothing so difficult when it passes in front

December goes before the new year. A battalion
of festival largely in place by the region's devotion,
a flannel embrace, as if over, the green flavor.

A feathery existential bower shall block
the rude flagon. A grape
centennial passed

then passed as taught,
crowded by hope in a corral or anonymous
by the grape barrel, by the Ancients and
mixed the Novella with grievous
destiny.

A frame lets in elsewhere, a fairie
flies through Bretagne, or guessed she flew,
Romance let her in. Others walk outside,
plants that wait their copying into the future,
that is.

In Slow Motion

Melting, the melt of snow into midnight,
preoccupied, half alive, an activity in slow motion
still attached.

Moves outside the text into the dark under text
with closed eyes, detached, unmodified.

A starry adulthood
took other means

to lengthen the text,
by emotion,

and arguably noise

wooded in this chapter and

each page of,
O real life.

When a legend
passed through rain,

lull of rock and shatter.

Part of surrendered air,
the goat-like view,

"The Residenz of Goethe,"

and four or five liters of rain.

Russet Flame

"If one goes beyond reality . . . ,"
began the woman at the window,
clothed in russet drapery.

Winter blows under her door.

The Serenade Tchaikovsky composes is made of russet,
streaked with bolder flame.

Russet russet bandage of hair
indeterminate russet, red and brown
Snowrusset window,

russetflame.

Unusual Figures

A person stands in the doorway. Someone
else goes to greet him.

They establish a calendar of meetings,
apricot color.

Once they arrived together
in a cab
of electricity,

cool heat, desert air.

The author attaches herself
to those figures.
peculiar to her asking.

They are needed by the pageant of creativity!

The unusual height and
dots of activeness.

Is it from the basket shrub?

*Lightness of feet,
circle of grey, of green overlap.
What language
do they speak?*

If So, Tell Me

I give you the unhinged sleeve
dropped the seam it went onto our back
was fodderless.

Wilted, say, by the gravel road
who ran a mile with legs apart
neck hanging and groupless.

Bird shadow crossing the room leave the outdoors!
Earns a pittance of food on the ledge mother
of ten eggs the real bird feeds on ices
the shadow is ten eggs.

Bird of Art

THERE CAME A CLOUD IT SETTLED ON YOUR
SHOULDER.

The cloud seeks high culture, after Ovid.

To soar through domes, bird of Art,
Halfway to icy heaven.

Halfway to heaven search in high space, in deep
crevasse.

Knighthood.

Poesie be engendered after OVID.

Spirit Tree

Lo! It shakes boughs Spirit Tree.

Plenty of wonder here and miraculum.

Pleaseth shade with lark!

Immortalis makes entry.
Small feet carry chalice, Domine.

Swete be sound and soothing.

Lady and gazelle, amitié.

Turret

What is your version, raking hay, reading law
In turret, transferring documenta?

What is origin of miscellany, misdeemeanor,

from whence doggerel?

Whose profile in margin

where small animals lie, toad, minnow, book of Saints,
olives.

Negative Possibility

It is not your physical appearance or hazelnut
hollowed out by sorrow,

or landslide of poetry.

Paying duty on one place,

language or tidal property.

Belonged to library of small estate,

Taxfree, built into house.

Camisole

The heart knows.
climbs stair to reach
basket of Heaven.

wintry Heaven strikes arm.

Your viol shall release thee, is said.

Beyond steeple. Animals. Lather runs.
Fabric sewed into blood.

Moldy day. Leather gaiters. Warm camisole.
Slow measure.