

Summer 2011  
Chicago, Illinois

**LVNG 12**

Free

LVNG 12  
an independent journal of poetry & art  
FREE

EDITORS

Joel Felix  
Michael O'Leary  
Peter O'Leary

COVER  
Una Moon

All material herein (c) 2011 by the authors. All rights reserved.

With this issue, LVNG returns from a 7-year hiatus.

We gladly accept submissions of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, & artwork. Direct submissions and other correspondence to:

[LVNGMagazine@gmail.com](mailto:LVNGMagazine@gmail.com)

Since LVNG is free, we rely on the generosity of readers. For a small gift to cover copy & mailing costs, we will fulfill requests for back issues. Numbers 8-13 are available as PDF downloads at the LVNG websites:

[www.LVNGMagazine.wordpress.com](http://www.LVNGMagazine.wordpress.com)  
& [www.FLOODEDITIONS.COM/LVNG](http://www.FLOODEDITIONS.COM/LVNG)

We encourage you to contribute to make future issues possible. Make checks noted LVNG magazine payable to FLOOD EDITIONS, a not-for-profit publisher.

FLOOD EDITIONS/LVNG  
P.O. BOX 3865  
CHICAGO, IL 60654-0865

This publication was made possible in part through a grant from the Illinois Arts Council.

## *Table of Contents*

WILLIAM FULLER	
<i>Now I Am Sleepless and Discouraged</i>	7
<i>Deep Dive</i>	8
LEILA WILSON	
<i>Character Architecture</i>	9
<i>Finite Rhapsody</i>	11
<i>Sea Turning</i>	12
STAN MIR	
from <i>Test Patterns</i>	15
JOHN BEER	
<i>The New Hymnal</i>	23
PURA LÓPEZ-COLOMÉ	
translated by JASON STUMPF	
<i>To Good Shelter</i>	26
MICHAEL AUTREY	
<i>Dreamt</i>	36
G.C. WALDREP	
<i>Mutual Wheel</i>	40
<i>Meanwhile, in the Deserted Mansions</i>	41

ROBERT MURPHY  
*Life in the Ordovician* 42

JARED WHITE  
*Come on* 44  
*Women, Birds, and a Star* 45

ROSS HAIR  
*Two on Duende* 47

ANDREW MOSSIN  
*Oath* 50

ANDREA REXILIUS  
*Heredity* 62  
*Heredity* 63  
*Heredity* 64  
*Heredity* 65

DAVID PAVELICH  
*from Outlining* 66

MICHAEL MARCINKOWSKI  
*Formed as a vault* 70  
*from nothing, starts with one, gets another, makes a third* 71

OSSIAN FOLEY  
[*compounds in*] 73  
[*these mourning these nigh*] 74  
[*the origins are*] 75

DAN BEACHY-QUICK  
*Work / Poem* 76

KEVIN DUCEY  
*Botticelli's Annunciation of Synapsid Relatives* 78  
*King Phillip of Spain* 79  
*Anti-pastoral* 80  
*Grand Historical / Circus Explosion* 81  
*working* 82

DANIEL BOUCHARD  
*A Burl in the Urban Center* 84

STEVE TIMM  
*2 GEN FLECKS, i* 86  
*2 GEN FLECKS, ii* 87  
*2 GEN FLECKS, iii* 88  
*2 GEN FLECKS, v* 89

JOHN MARTONE  
*Poetry Is a Domestic Art* 90

**LVNG 12**

*Now I Am Sleepless and Discouraged*

I could never speak clearly clean out of my own head  
my errant intent was merely the idea of it  
coming across as one of two misaligned  
perspectives—when viewed from the castle for instance the  
weeds appear to dominate to the exclusion of air; alterna-  
tively the dizzying carpet turns into a wheatfield  
where wheat-people toil between descriptions—their labor  
being mental in character, choking with problems plucked  
from the agent's throat, and purposely defeating speech  
spit up in the agent's acrid tear—whereas this paper  
rejects all causal assessments as entirely  
missing the point: shepherd and sheep  
are buried alike beneath the same hill. Virtue  
and Temptation are equally derelict.

## *Deep Dive*

The sun in joy ascends  
to the external standard of reasonableness  
warm air subrogates for cold  
to provoke the manufacture  
of food.  
'I give us a good ten years,' she says,  
inspecting the cabin-rot and the tiny skeletons.  
'Here's what you need to build.'  
In response people bake hard shapes  
to place inside their shoes.  
Routines orbit them and are knocked flat.  
Their heart-bells lick the air.  
'We know what we want,' they say, 'and you're  
not it,' making obvious reference to my banjo.

*Character Architecture*

Bodies, being  
built from

other bodies,  
aren't built

of light. So  
when I see

a shadow  
crouching in

my building's  
crux, it's natural

I think  
that it could be

a bachelor.  
I don't want

to be scared  
into going back

to the same bed.  
No one else has

come to me like  
this: has sprung

my mind's moth,  
opening

eyed wings.  
I am ready for

a room dethorned  
of chairs, where

I could forge  
my whole refrain

on open floor.  
Where I could be

dreamed by a blue  
rover, shining in

the windows' way,  
spindling into place.

## *Finite Rhapsody*

Rocks hold heat  
longer than a mouth.

My socket and  
tangled frock

go broken  
with vestigial charms.

No blue blooming,  
no shift towards wish.

Just the dull bulb  
of having known

words in me  
not mine.

Horizons like that  
only go up,

while quarries, too,  
hold sunken sun.

*Sea Turning*

*after Gerhard Richter*

Water fractures  
gauze between  
stance and sight  
(under wave,  
through her ribbon's  
shadow)

\*

The bay bridge's  
grip all sinew  
Only true whiteness  
doesn't widen—sheds  
its frayed stretch  
into fog

\*

Edges ghost  
between her  
air        Vibrations  
mark where  
her body breathes

\*

She traces something faint  
and glacial            Nudging up

Scattered glow  
blurred by lapping

\*

Water bulge  
over carapace or rock  
Moving taut all  
over it—shining  
back and pull

\*

Water brings  
up smell from  
the bottom being chafed  
(its fading, its quaked)  
Light tints  
the dying green

\*

Seascape  
breaks by  
letting go line

A brighter boat than light

Her memory of steam

(How a boat swells  
distance with leaving)

\*

A surface so submerged  
should be more  
than what is touched

\*

Horizon swallows  
Her hand mutes

sky,  
her hand  
what sky makes still

from *Test Patterns*

Industry

thou hast messed

made time

heap

slag

river once

boulevard

boulevard never

once river

On the street

TV

Generals

ask more Generals

get

the score

not just

voice

in a window

not truth

in part      yes

the silver bullet

in the day

\*

Pterodactyl Pterodactyl your rain

extinct

the whole

opened

Terror

enlarges

object

in our hands

compact

violence

Tonight

lies told

Faith

our weapon

We cast out

new

cans

cannots

modern

thought

\*

Beauty

I cannot speak

Beauty

The mouth

nothing

it spoke

This

a mouth

which

says

no mouth sees

future

not tongue

but totem

throttle in time

The ancient

before us

carved debt

nickels

Eyes annex

web

spider's leg

scratching

the screen

\*

the sylvan scene: blighted

pastoral

urns web-filled

ode

not gone    ode cold

whistlers

whistling

music of primes

indivisible

remaindered

one

who shortly sees

green give way to

gauche limbs

cellophane

flesh

like churned steel

what shall

remain

in midst of this

unfortunate show  
the spider  
forced into her own  
web  
awaiting  
certain  
a ravished bride  
of noise & fast crime  
\*  
just before dawn  
bomb  
'the tree in a round of shell blasts    staggering beasts    frag-  
ments of beauty'  
truth                    matter  
the tooth  
in my mouth knocked clean out by boot or gun-butt dogs while I  
in nude shimmy bark

\*



will cast  
forgotten shadows like the last  
like the leaf  
against the window  
it articulates something else  
nexus: was and is: nectere: tension  
in the branches  
where  
birds  
rest their patterns with the leaves  
bees preach also  
at the screen  
as spiders eat their wings  
and brood

*The New Hymnal*

I.

A sentence shapes itself  
across her midriff:  
red ridges snaking  
skin into form.

The rest of the actors  
look to their scripts.  
I meanwhile set out:  
oar on my shoulder,

bag of persimmons,  
unhinged the gate,  
lunar photographs.

2.

Flannery O'Connor was born and raised in Georgia.  
The population of Georgia is 5, 108, 527.

The chief religion of Georgia is Georgian Orthodox.  
Its principal products: manganese and potatoes.

Flannery was a Roman Catholic.  
The life expectancy of a Georgian female

is 68 years at birth, though Flannery  
only made it to 39. She never saw

the red, white, and black flag of independence  
unfurl over the streets of Tbilisi,

nor heard the clink of Shevardnadze lavis,  
but I suspect one morning in Sukhumi

she saw the sun's spilt fire light the Caspian,  
and flung her final notebook into its waters,

then returned to her farm, silently passing the members  
of the Church of Truth without Jesus Christ, Crucified.

3. ("hart crane")

Bradley, it is four o'clock in the morning.  
The television seems not to work.  
We dropped it  
on the tracks and the 3:53 from Duluth  
reduced it to bright bits. Amber  
can't find the silver nowhere.  
Metaphysics, in short, slept.

How did we happen on such intervals,  
trumpets shading the evening  
into an absolute glimpsed?  
Look at this language,  
a god on a beach: it takes  
false pebbles only.  
My hair is on fire again.

I could be extensive, friend,  
where icy dungeons lift  
of swimmers their lost morning eyes.  
Our minds can candle their brisk bitterness.  
Suzy Rain sang through the bleak fin-de-siecle:  
“You can put it on two wheels,  
but, baby, can you make it hum?”

4.

Remained in the infinitive: to dig.  
To dig a hole in the book  
(she mistook it for an ocean)

One of them came with a sieve,  
the other with a joke book.  
They were not the thieves.

“You consider cashews. Not deeply enough.  
Your fruit has been frozen into flower.  
Take care of Alice. Otherwise you remain  
caught up in a mumbling forest:  
to paint, to abhor, to list, to list, to list.”

Everyone drank a drink from the shadow  
and the shadow began to wander.  
It was an old song they couldn't recognize.  
To miracle. To opposite. To word.

*To Good Shelter*

TRANSLATED BY JASON STUMPF

I

The other world.

Light opened its doors to me  
when I wanted to follow the course  
of that solemn,  
dark dream  
in a direction against the day.  
A golden waterfall,  
fine needles  
pierced my blindness:  
crystal dust,  
word never seen,  
aurora.  
New balance.  
New brilliance.  
Gift of group weddings,  
paradise in the apple of science,  
true juice  
joy in season.

This world.

A sound at times dry,  
metallic,  
rubbery at times  
has finally overtaken the morning.  
Little by little it has darkened  
the songs of various birds,  
caws of custom,  
wind through the hedges,  
green hope.

A man places with careful attention  
one shingle then another on the roof of a house.  
He must be the owner.  
His work is unmatched,  
exact, wishful, irrepressible.  
That sound doesn't seem to have an echo,  
it goes in search,  
*in search of the aurora.*  
Those who live beneath  
become voices that return,  
that feed off one another  
under this roof.

3

The owner has deigned to smile at me.  
His golden teeth  
cut me to the core. In good time,  
I'd say, if I could.  
To good shelter.

I

You build the days,  
the structures of your life.  
Talking with things,  
you get mixed up in them  
step by step,  
between the rhythmic waves  
of dream.

I watch you watch the moves.  
The acts, the nature  
of miracle.  
And so, the base of your petals  
begins to close.  
Palpable under my eyelids,  
the absence.

II

Wind circles  
the spaces where you live,  
whispering its caresses.  
My hand melts  
there,  
where nothing is  
lost.  
Your skin has been cauterized  
sweetly.  
And still you're *alive*.

III

Many are your heavens,  
plentiful your spheres  
turning as a lone,  
open earth,  
in whose center boils  
the water of light.  
Its memory brings vision  
to those who make no last request  
before dying.  
The ear, and within,  
the cave's brief echo.

IV

Intoned, broken,  
blunted, the passage  
of light fingers  
over crystal keys.  
Slow drawing,  
newborn blue:  
its points shine  
against dark shells.

V

Thanks to the first ray  
I could thread together, hardly visible,  
the silhouettes  
of perfect trees,  
drunk and subtle bodies;  
its grace raised me up  
like a willow,  
and as such I saw myself in the water  
where thought trembled,  
its poor essence shaking  
before higher thresholds.

VI

*Aurora,*  
your eyes are air.  
They absorb  
and sense themselves  
hidden in an echo.  
There.

You near the world,  
drinking it  
in with your breath.  
You've dredged the lagoon  
of smiles, surprises,  
fear, crying, mystery:  
between your lips flows  
the *name* of things.

VII

So disposed,  
the drops hanging  
at the tip of each leaf  
announce the heavens,  
shrouds of autumn or of winter  
still exhale the desire  
to be joined with new being:

*waterfall of laughter,  
hair blown by its torrential rain,  
constant tears from caves underground.*

VIII

White.  
snow almost,  
and so humid  
you foresee nothing,  
*from your fresh corpse*  
*you rise alone,*  
*resplendent,*  
*unembraceably resuscitated.*

The forest, the creek, this garden  
have left the sepulcher behind,  
its valleys,  
its puddled prairies  
a path to the soul's drought.  
A burst of tears  
sprouts from branches in cascade.  
Like eager serpents,  
its shoots stretch out.  
Language slinks away.

IX

Above your peace  
waves a sleepy veil,  
vaporous:

like a ship of full sails  
aground in the inner bay,  
my body;  
yours,  
the benign tide  
that soaks us in time  
to the bone.  
My joy is such  
I can't understand it.

What do you listen to,  
I ask,  
if not the song  
that leaves your mouth  
with hunger, sincere thirst  
of this wailing  
wall that  
is the flesh.  
One note from you  
would have opened my ears  
and eyes:  
so to speak  
from then on  
filled by time.

Yet, emptiness penetrates all  
and turns it into an emblem,  
ether, human change.

*Nothing changes the apparent  
lessening of faith.*

*Health  
is fragile.*

*Dust so fine.*

As I near your voice  
in this setting lush  
with natural beauty,  
you, immune,  
go, unreachable,  
a horse crossing  
the shadow of some tracks,  
hidden in the torment  
of my head.

*Upon transfiguring*

After that fog,  
the air's pure bloom  
opens in a ventricular flower,  
lighting, completely,  
the way.

Welcome.

You will pour out  
eternal longing,  
hope,  
*that happens,*  
*that is born,*  
*that is reborn.*

Perhaps you will find the expected route.  
Perhaps you will undertake the path of heat,  
freed already  
from that suffering body.  
Perhaps you will open into pleasure.

You will be blessed.

Let me dream  
of your unchangeable substance,  
*let me touch the forehead of dawn,*  
let me return to myself, *as myself,*  
awake always.

*Dreamt**What we dream up must be lived down, I think.*

JAMES MERRILL

I.

Not next to a ditch of blood, where stuck insects mime flight,

But in a narrow attic, with bare rafters and Plexiglas skylights,

I was speaking to the living-dead about their greatness.

One showed me a still-fleshed arm in a violin case.

Huge, as in an IMAX, loomed my great-aunt's lined & livid face.

(To the end she wore too much foundation.

At the end it must have been applied by someone else.)

I was in a room of polychromed busts, studies from life.

*Baroque*, I explained to no one in particular, *kin to Bernini's*

*"Speaking likeness"*—crooked fingers held at shoulder height

Mime inaudible quotation marks—*of Gabriele Fonseca*.

Moths croak against the screens, but the room is dark.

Hail was falling when I sat up; day was dawning grain by grain.

There are fresh tire tracks, neat as burin marks.

2.

The blue hour: I walk on the beach with Bluebeard.

In plumed hat, jack boots, breeches, cutlass,  
He speaks continually. I don't understand a word.

Rollers in feather boas rise in the cold mist, in silence crash.  
The strand bubbles. The tide somersaults. Hours pass.

I disappear under a wave. Bluebeard, tears in his eyes:  
"I didn't understand!"

I wake up dead in St. Péray, France.

I grope the furniture: the cold handles of door, vanity,  
Armoire. I pop the shutters; remark on vineyards  
And mown fields, on shards of robin's eggs in the hedge,  
The corpse mauled by the cat where it fledged.

Big drops blot the white plastic lawn furniture,  
Liver-colored with Saharan sand. Migrants bear north,  
Flapping like mad. The Rhone shifts in its rock-hard bed.

3. *In Rome do as the Romans do, even the Rome of dreams.*

Had I fainted? The sun poured molasses.  
I was borne in a crowd surging into a piazza.  
Dust was blowing, dust and halitosis.

At the center of the spoked wheel smoke  
cured a body of life. To this day I am not sure

if the victim was a criminal or Bruno,  
if I had brought the fuel or the match,  
if I had come to watch,  
or saw anything but the smoke,  
light gets in your eyes like smoke—No  
dream is lucid, not the dream we arrest  
to inspect the back of our hands.

(If only with my Medusa's head I could turn  
this vision to stone, to henge—Addio)

4.

“Not even Gods have chewed the scenery in the Chagos archipelago”

Appears in white letters on the benighted ceiling.

Then a hoarse roar is audible: zoomorphic thunderheads

Blush Venetian; serrated palms

Clatter like a dropped drawer of silver.

Circling, then descending to fronded atoll, oval

In the plane’s porthole, green pupil in a sea of iris.

Leathery interiors retain the shapes of hooded cargo.

Streaks on striped concrete; mirages melting into tourniquets;

Hangers proofed against sound and light, not the insufferable heat.

After cinematic intercutting, a long tracking shot

Of spotless beach and teeming reef, the camera rests

Before a spreading chestnut, water a foot up the trunk,

Leaves covered with hair of the red called Titian.





*Life in the Ordovician*

What vision brought him  
 While brooming last year's leaves  
 Off the trod  
 Limestone of his garden's path:  
 The crazy-quilt of its lithograph  
 A Chinese scroll  
 That patterns chaos with its forms—  
 Unrolled inked petroglyphs,  
 Rubbings from the ancient  
 Bone-houses of the corals—  
 The old of the daily news printed  
 On the crinoid's static, vertebraic stems,  
 Their broken, vertiginous anemone blooms  
 Wavering in the shallows  
 Of a four hundred million year old sea.  
 Which begs the question of  
 Not how, but when,  
 Having already long ago vanished,  
 What end there is in sight?  
 For the work, the path he follows  
 To sweep, or to be swept along  
 Clay banks millennia deep,  
 Older than the river and that river's life  
 At one with the constancy of its purl.  
 Time flows in the moment  
 As perennial as the peonies he tends,  
 Rooted, and just as tenacious  
 As the surrounding oaks  
 That make a Jacob's ladder for the ants,  
 Out-lasting all with a name who live here.  
 And he, doing just as they who came before,  
 At play in the role of gardener,  
 With the gardener in the usual of his weeds,  
 Taking care to serve.  
 Almost as if the flower  
 Existed for the man in him alone  
 To bend to—  
 Praise requiring nothing of summer  
 Except a sometimes rain,

And the cold enough of winter  
With a little faith to breathe in—  
The air of its own accord  
Carrying the sweet  
Scent of flowers beyond a human use,  
As was said to be carried  
Believer to belief,  
Rumorous, on the wings of angels—  
Or failing that, on the stubborn backs  
Of an everyday human grief.  
And though borne with a bearer's  
Grace to believe,  
The whole of him no more than they,  
Than last year's leaves, the dust he clears  
And through the clearing sees  
The path over which the broom whispers:  
The stray of its binding mortars, the shifting  
Chronologies of its broken shores—  
Atlantean shale's shattered spindrift ruins  
Proleptic with the sacred truths.  
Beneath his feet the toppled  
Ashlars of its crazy-quilt.  
The pre-marmoreals of its salt intaglios—  
The varietal weathers of its aquatints,  
Escalloped bone-alphabets  
Still in the making of its runes.  
And he now on his knees,  
His hands in the sensitive splay  
Of a blind man's fingers,  
Taking its pulse,  
Listening for his own heart's beat  
In those many dead oceans,  
His one good ear pressed to the floor of the world.

*Come on*

Important elements include some egg beaters  
And saws. There is a right way and a wrong  
And the right way involves doing it wrong

Most of the time. Curvilinearly. Good thing  
I'm not taller. I've had to slip under the radar  
Like Woyzeck or women. In my new style

No one can tell what I'm building until it's done.  
The clearer I get the less you should trust me  
With brainstorming. Extending the range of

The branch cutter's one fine idea. Firing up  
The excess generator is another. What I need is  
Many strategies ending at peculiar moments.

Like accidentally on a toilet. My express wish  
Was only for weathered copper draped in ivy.  
I strongly suggest a return to this conception

Where my sincerity will be more like a virtue.  
Come down to the property line. Beyond that  
I'll play the listener instead. You be in charge.

I don't want the responsibility. I'll hide out  
Back. In a crowd of many me. Up the stairs  
Standing in front of sunbeams. Many places

For getting started. You are my favorite one.

## *Women, Birds, and a Star*

To be precise about who's invited.  
Old world's finest habits and customs  
Like bowlers, top hats and possibly

Sforzando. Am I seeing things or  
Is everyone suddenly being knighted  
For fairly straightforward pursuits?

Mozart was older. A tragedy of  
Seeming effortless for too long  
And not asking probing questions

About where all the fenced goods  
Came from. Who supplied the punch  
And outfitted the pages with tuxedos.

They wouldn't have passed muster  
Last year in forty-eight. Her register  
Was much more exclusive back then.

But look at these young buckaroos.  
She likes them quite a lot, as you  
Can see from the faux pas. Quick,

Let's stare at Hugo. Time was when  
You caught me in a certain light  
I looked like that. You looked at me

Like that too. Satiric longing for  
Being more aged and deeper inside.  
Right with the world of maximus.

Now I suspect cleavage. Tastes like  
Cleavage but watch it fly. Starlike  
Is where I kissed you on the balcony.

Now where did I put those lips? Hors  
D'oeuvres. I can't help forgetting  
Details that seemed crucial at the time.

The corner I mistook for a bedroom.  
The electricity going out. Serpentine  
Bandshell. What secured my return

Engagement? It's gone and so there.  
You wanted everybody to ignite and  
They did. Congratulations. Party of

The century that is reportedly heaven.  
So let's kindergarten. This is the smell  
Of fishy pie face. This is what's out

To get you. Pretty soon and your hair  
Will be considered a costume. We'll  
Declare you an impersonator of you.

Clad in that beret. Posed iconically  
In profile. Golden age. Wait until  
Your publicist gets ahold of these

Negatives. You with me, her and  
Some Hugo. Signorina, as always  
Your taste is impeccable in me.

*Two on Duende*

I.

“neither angel nor muse,”  
 as Russell says (after Lorca)  
 but from the body itself  
 comes *duende*

“animating spirit,” contours  
 the guts, the neck, the wood,  
 pummelled, fretted, “blood  
 on the strings”

the exigency, the  
 pick-up “subject of ‘interventions’”  
 & a feedback “... inherent to myself,  
 and uniquely of myself...”  
 that overcomes

— freed from time  
 fighting geometry  
 the abyss opens  
 large abundant possessed  
 the form the activity  
 wills & takes of —

“me”

in the drama, in the dis-  
 location, wrestling a guitar  
 on the rim of a well  
 “there is only one way to respond  
 to the apparition  
 — we play.”

II.

Then went down  
at twelve  
made the descent,  
for the first time, down  
mining col. Chthonic  
lungs inhaled inhering  
black dust within  
that dark.

*Col*, glowing embers, charred  
remnants of an Other  
region.

Wiry & stark  
Moran Lee “Dock” Boggs  
mountain man, sang  
“as if his bones were coming through  
his skin.” Voice & banjo, lute  
& lyre out of the graveyard,  
inflected.

Orpheus inversed.

As Orphée, faced Death &  
was undone in the spectre.

A sound, Death  
drawing a crowd to him  
... *I've been to the West*  
& *I'm going back I guess ...*

“... as if you can see right through him,  
as a physical fact, to a nowhere beyond”

Tainaron. *Heartbroken & lonely*  
*no one can take yr place,*  
          Agriope       *lost love,*  
*lost love, my darling*  
*to leave yr own true lover*  
*& with a false one go.*

A price poor Pretty Polly  
paid.   Come.   *Take a walk with me ...*  
                  *over hills & valleys so deep ...*

Dirt over her. Doomed astray  
  a way to go   raving   outlandish  
mute, bloodless, in hospitable  
Hades *down to the river where*  
          *the deep waters flow ...*

Ancient music & dance   revenant.  
“A country open to death,”  
Styx in the voice col  
stitched in the strings.

“But he can never repeat himself.”

Pluck steel angst  
          darkening descent  
See this poor rounder go down.

NOTE: SEE THE AUDIO FOUNDATION WEBSITE FOR RUSSELL'S TEXTS.  
{WWW.AUDIOFOUNDATION.ORG.NZ}

*Oath*

*open a window onto the whole spring  
adjust a head to the shape of a pillow*  
Z. HERBERT

Weak seeds thrown into  
a garden of stone. At daybreak  
to wander past the quarry—a break  
in the weather. The diminution  
of self as one resists  
leavetaking.

The hierarchy's gone. A place of sorrow  
where the scaled bones rest. Half a life shall we say.

There is an eagerness  
to replace  
edge to edge  
each fatal gesture.

“Hands taken  
by hands”

Skin tone queried by a woman's hand.

“Her belly...her belly  
like a cloud at evening”

The garden opens to the fields beyond.  
Color of what is, without question, an assumption  
of the heart.

•

The decade before this  
and the one after—

in the clearing with oneself  
does it matter? What is the weight  
of absence?

Sun sharpens  
along the rock's face. And nearly

passed over: in the hollows  
scarlet flowers of moss.

A road cut from branches.

The diverted origin  
repeated here as evidence of  
what cannot exist  
untended.

This inquiry of stone that made  
seasons

particular.

His head at rest.  
The rest of him.

•

Was he  
uncanny or caring

A model of one figure  
or another – less remote –

Set free along the margins of thought.

Stone  
roof of the garden walk. Vertical  
suspension of belief.

*The days are lived without you to tell time—suspension  
of belief inside these walls—I want to locate the root  
form of your silence—resist the impulse to draw back  
as you emerge in dreams—scarved—ready to enter  
the day*

A kind of cellular decomposition

forming an alphabet  
crow-blue among the rocks.

“And it is all one to me

Where I am to begin; for I shall return  
there again.”

•

*In situ.*

Veins stopped up with mud.  
The brown leaves in a light wind.  
Humanly possible  
beds of smoke.

Was my father embedded there—  
of a chain fashioned from  
feathers & iron

“ever again to be one and only one.”

The sound of the sea  
distinctly heard. The sun  
gone down. A crescent  
moon, Jupiter

and Venus.

Here we have thirst  
and patience....roots of brittle  
intensity.

•

He told me  
the fable of the flood—  
recapitulated in a tide  
bearing me

Under the sign of Saturn.

The physicality of his embrace exists  
in a voice that emerged over time...

That merges now with mine

A witness toward which  
I succumb.

Balanced between these phases of the moon.

A man's and a woman's hands  
buried in mud. The sky

advancing yellow

barren in the formless night.

•

A voice  
turning in the mind  
like music carried on the wind.

Night and day –  
a voice tuned to what appeals.

“Father father where  
are you going”  
our plea that completes  
itself in the resonant incompleteness  
of his rest.

Wood and nails  
Faces cut by folding grass

There is habit and ritual arrangement of lives

Invisible  
sheltered from public view.

The common way of absence.

•

Supple as vellum

My father's hands go outward –

Branches of yellow  
marking landscape and horizon.

A perimeter of stone.

All that was enfolded  
in a body of thought

transient and perishable

the taut brow bent over  
its only knowledge.

•

Wind thins  
a body of pretense

To survive at all

Unsheathed unmoving

Wind crumples the water's skin

As sound masks its approach

“Sight has the appeal of the purely passive...”

There is a reticence to say, an absence  
conjoined with the artifactual.

His unclothed body  
—*stony cold*—

Pulled into the wave

—*blue deep body of sky*—

Obliterating  
the physical sensation of hope.

•

A lover's complaint:

"You were my  
companion – nowhere  
to be found"

What did it mean  
in the son's mouth?

The rock  
married to the river. The father  
married to his son.

On the ground  
mouth over mouth  
blowing by turns each other's throat chords  
  
a low unearthly music.

At random almost  
as if the language were scaled like fish  
fallen into the yellow earth.

Between us—mutable signs of equivocal care

*I stood as witness to him—in whose presence  
the world took shape*

•

Yet the garden was also  
a proposition

in time –

Meant to include  
what experience could no longer afford.

The implications of clarity.

Objects arranged in the order of their appearance.

My hand gesturing from within the circle.

His arms laid across the wood.

To re-imagine  
a voice

Wedded in mind.

•

“If we look  
before us –

we come straight to the extremes –

but sidewise and unawares  
the present

opens into rich prolific...

leading onward without end” (1844)

Abased or abashed.

To find no comfort here. Unparented.

The moon rising in a starless sky.

Heavenward thickens –  
a journey of particles.

Rock is formed in variations  
of the invisible.

Dancer, rosary and boat.

Assurances  
of the mortal world  
as one is exactly this far  
from any other in time.

•

An earlier design  
replete with what hovers near  
these beginnings.

Time spent or “radiant gist.”

Flickers of some  
far seen outreach –

extrinsic cells of improvident beauty.

“Deprived of time  
or accident”

A sudden speeded-up quality to existence.

As one waits at the river  
to hear the passing of birds overhead

The moon rising within

a black-blue vault. .

12 FEBRUARY 2005 (REVISED 20 JULY 2011)

Note: Citations, both marked and unmarked, are from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Dorothy Wordsworth, Walt Whitman, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and Robert Duncan. “Buried in mud” and “scaled like fish” were suggested by Renee Gladman’s reading of her long poem, *Kingdom in Three Panels*, in Philadelphia, February 10, 2005.

*Heredity*

Dislocated a riverbed  
has no

place to be deep

kept in a jar  
each particle

Labeled each  
stone from:  
sand from:  
fluid from:

landscapable me is  
erasable me a dividend

divot, end

where the water phrases  
alarmingly blue  
of human event

tell of these

fatherly spent  
years collecting

the yarrow, a  
root I do not know

## *Heredity*

Turn close here branches  
swept away show clearly  
how roof points upward  
at an angle, this is your direction  
turn branches into arrows  
I have a cross bow we will  
make fast escape before ground  
tells of our location.

## *Heredity*

I was waiting at the perihelion. sun spot on sun shadow made earth a little world; none came home this way; none carried horses here. necktie parched in the heat. none would speak the world therefore turning, they piled their maps up- folded them into boats and sailed them upon the desert; a revelation a rotation. the buried women's ankles poking through stockings; all the church goers holding their breath. amidst the floorboards I hid flat ironed dress turning ear heavenward to listen to the navigation.

## *Heredity*

God's weft  
I wept upon  
  
unraveled shore  
  
travel is not possible  
I stood on the sodden shore  
  
with my oar.

Shudder at the utterance  
tremble bitch  
  
this is what God said  
  
I stood in my terry cloth  
robe and wept.

from *Outlining*

common  
a sharp

recumbent  
feather

a making  
of mud

a guilt

up, out  
like a mist  
of dandelion seeds —

the notes of  
the swiftly, the passing

dress their lines pursuing  
cloud, smoke,

cloud

drawn  
and colored,

these remarks  
and rails

are watchful,  
against —

mirrored  
in different

steps of tacking  
still,

particular families  
are gray

“the same nest  
“three seasons”

the one event  
eventually won't

be risen from

rack, pinion  
the thrill spins on

a simple engine

the pin  
is simple

the pain is

ignition

a paper engine

to drink  
as any

a wealth was  
a triangle

inside brown  
wiring

*I was like  
three wings*

in which  
that is

the perishable

primaries  
the wind caused

on the flat  
of the air

the weak connect  
of individual color

and caught up  
into

the way  
of walking

how much sitting  
literature, choice but to be

his window

*by by*      *by*

*by*              *by*

TOUCH

It's not, just in living, twenty colors  
to attempt to sketch for the privilege  
of having light, rivers, in youth the heart  
of speed they say the snow, reenact  
that wings on the water bring rain

WAGER

Running blackish, or crocheted maroon  
against frayed paper, birch, outside  
they always gathered in power and fed  
of evening on the crown, rich  
in what's at home for them

*Formed as a vault*

Formed as a vault

that walking on the shore  
or ripple that  
in the reflection of the sun  
is more of myself  
than those other  
ways which I may  
turn

Formed as a vault

that walking on  
the shore or ripple  
that in the reflection  
of the sun is more  
of myself than those  
other ways which I  
may turn

12/16/03

*from nothing, starts with one, gets another, which makes a third.*

That the feet against the earth  
are as much of what comes  
as much as which is.

“the sea of the whales”

where the variety of remains which would be on the sea  
floor

Laughing, your happiness confirms,  
I have in some way.

I count the leaves on my plant.

eat the food off the plate.

have happiness myself,  
pastoral and away from the past.

which the sea floor            embedded ways / mired by the  
time  
in proof

of mine  
and now

I understand that the forms of decision are independent  
and that you are independent.

How vast,  
and how much is left that I do not see?

In the binary systems shit.

eggs that taste like bacon

it was so windy

and yes the dichotomies are all contrived out of a  
simplistic mind,

which is basely evident / systems of logics.

to be more civically minded.

which makes larger, the third.

[*these mourning these nigh*]

these mourning these nigh  
all

periods without  
oddities in tow

entreat  
my self not thou  
enough

which cannot assuage

which can only absorb

*[compounds in ...]*

compounds in  
                  mountains  
religiously  
                  confound

abeyance by chance  
                          o

it was so  
                  nice nice  
some slight  
                  remembrance

*[the origins are]*

the origins are  
incessant the number

of presents  
no problem

the problem  
to long  
in the wind  
assent

**Work / Poem**

People draw shapes on paper  
 Then build the shapes in brick.  
 Shapes occupy shapes others deny.  
 Winter is a form of weather  
 Occurring outside a box. One  
 Wrote peace on the doorframe lintel.  
 Inside their shapes, people breathe.

\*

People hang shades on walls;  
 Ancestors occupy frames.  
 Winter is a form of sun  
 Obscuring a face behind its glare.  
 People ask a pane of light for advice.  
 Carve the oracle on the window  
 Frame. The tree has no leaves but snow.

\*

Gnothi Seatoun. Winter is a form  
 Of logic blank behind the eye:  
 The photograph's underside, the plank  
 Within the mind. A child learns  
 To count by touching one hand  
 To the fingers of the other. Ten  
 Leaves on a tree. Nothing is older.

\*

The child infers from shades  
A number she cannot count.  
The tree reflected on a pane  
Through which a face stares out.  
A shadow offers shadow as advice.  
Winter is a formal law that cools  
A finger when it touches glass.

\*

A child sees a shape she draws.  
A circle is the sun in the corner.  
One writes peace on a page  
Then tears the page out. A child  
Breathes on a pane and draws  
A shape called home. Winter is  
A formal thought. People live in stones.

***Botticelli's Annunciation of Synapsid Relatives***

*after New York Natural History Museum and the Cloisters.*

Blue lightning gestation through windows  
the archangel reels (a scrim of  
architecture seemly between). Five  
hundred million years since the first  
backbone. Meryl Streep whispers  
in angelic voice-over: 'the virgin  
kneeling – same with messenger –  
everybody kneel.' Meryl says: 'Diplodocus.'  
Mammals and our extinct relatives all  
with holes in the head. Thus, the messenger  
enters via trapdoor in ceiling a scatter  
of gold  
    overhead plaster wisdom  
tawdry sly look lingering under her brow.

## *King Phillip of Spain*

The ancestors were all  
frogs from the marshes  
living in villages built on  
stilts. Carnivorous frogs.  
All of them antonomastic—  
as he that would say: 'Not  
king Phillip of Spain, but the  
Westerne king.'  
The government agency fought  
hard against the Frog King. Nobody  
ever said it wasn't hard work. The  
spook, for instance, woke  
one night to the sound of gunfire—  
thinking the enemy had  
overrun the camp, but discovered  
instead the native mercenaries, emptying  
their machine guns at the lunar eclipse.  
The soldiers sing hosannahs:  
"It is the Frog King, from the  
land of stilts, Phillip the Westerne  
one, eating the moon. We send  
thanks to your American  
president for these weapons to  
defend our moon."

"A backward people," the agent  
reports, "when will they learn  
you need a bigger weapon  
than a .50 caliber to liquidate  
the Frog King?"

And the hungry Westerne king  
floating over the river full  
of refugees, keeps his eye upon  
the pearly stone of the moon—  
pale disk, silver iris eye, the endless sorrow  
of a year of thirteen. He listens  
for the music of the villagers  
below, the joyful noise of fear.

*Anti-pastoral*

*Niedecker, Olson  
Duncan. The pastoral is not  
a book of God's presence  
but full of gods and immanence*

That particular Sunday my mother  
went into more detail than usual  
concerning my father's condition; she  
described the two-pronged plastic  
device the surgeons shoved up his nose  
and inflated to staunch the hemorrhage.  
I made some excuse and hung up, went  
out to do laundry, had breakfast at the  
Greek place. What deal have  
the Greeks made with the  
God of the Chicken that they so  
know the Egg? Reading Vallejo,  
watching as the Waitress arrives to  
turn my light coffee dark brown.

*Grand Historical  
Circus Explosion*

From the heights the Villistas  
contemplate Columbus,  
New Mexico, the trapeze

bar chalked under their  
calloused fingers. In  
the center ring Buddha

works the crowd, ethically  
and with great  
transcendence. The drum

roll snaps like a star on  
the mountain; the Americans  
shot from guns fall

into Mexico, Chihuahua,  
Nuevo Leon, they miss the  
net, then the tightrope strung

between twin towers of  
necessity and power, they  
fall ascreaming into

the canvas tent sky plastered  
with elephant tiger bear dancers—  
the women swing by their teeth.

*working*

WORKING along the highway  
the overgrown path

we lose the way in  
Isaiah foretelling

the light already in motion  
toward us

certainty in physics  
Dante watches the two

wretches playing table  
tennis on the train moving

through a neighborhood of  
hell, yet the little white

ball refuses to move—light  
years of brooding ahead

2  
MORNING when the details  
of seeing collapse

Matter never so simple  
the inventor

in frustration  
retreats to cement

factory. He sulks  
ten years, blowing

rocks to gravel with  
dynamite. That

repugnant flat world—  
light it up. Move

that mountain. His  
genius would

shatter stone, opens  
only surface.

<sup>3</sup>  
READING the Synoptic  
Mary refuses the

angel at the cave where  
they'd laid Jesus' body

—the sepulchre. She demands  
to see the body: 'Produce—

Produce the corpse,  
motherfucker,' she says and

the angel throws down  
on her and grapples her

Our worser angels  
cheat when at wrestling

and she breaks his  
hold (the angel's only

one angel against Magdalene  
—the Magdalene). She

rushes into the cave, calling  
'help me, help me, Jesus,'

but the grave is empty,  
only the rustle of her breath.

###

*A Burl in the Urban Center*

A federal-era site  
brocaded by giant azaleas  
and laced in wrought iron  
where carefully spaced oaks  
have matured in elm places,  
elms decimated by disease.

Frequented by bees above  
and dropping fruit below.  
Bruised bottoms  
mark the drop  
and swellings end  
from a pale green expansion.

Preparing rooms and putting aside  
our leisure and our leisure.  
Well, those younger people we were  
in rooms, idling  
in summer, flipping vinyl.

Today, to neighbors, I was just  
some guy  
mowing the lawn. People  
have living rooms larger  
to run a vacuum over.  
And I can't say for sure  
if the plum tree is recovered  
after years of drought and neglect.

Only washed-out blue remains  
of the afternoon, a four-color process  
undone by sun in a flower-filled garden.  
A man wearing a straw hat sits  
watching a strolling couple  
and steamships on the horizon.

The fountain water falls on imagined women:  
tough, feminine, iron.  
Cast in the nineteenth century,  
they stare absently at arrows  
sprayed in blue onto blacktop,  
bleeding onto sidewalks: no dig!  
their ankles are bolted in the bowl  
to rusted, flaking beams.

No time to walk this morning  
so a train ride downtown  
meeting up with folks from out of town  
for a quick meal, and then to work.

A quick meal, long enough to catch up  
and drop the butter  
from a pancake stack to my lap  
and onto the floor, and then to work.

The subway advertisements present imagined women:  
cosmopolitan, four-color, lithe.  
Traffic pauses at the stop sign  
before gunning it up for the bridge ramp.

In a terrain told by railings, stoops, doors,  
open windows and curbside trash,  
the drivers mop their foreheads, talk  
about how much remains  
before they can call it quits.



*2 GEN FLECKS, ii*

They sink cement  
wafer  
    sink  
to

    heaven  
They  
    a we we  
they

    sink  
made to  
Belt  
    a nade

sever  
to stitched lone  
Thew unape  
that edge

    wise  
miss single  
Wan want  
now

    -after  
No-rafter-sky  
unhang  
    pend

Lope grape great  
last  
    purer  
not

    unthan

## 2 GEN FLECKS, iii

Fracas in re  
ceiving  
line potent  
after

-dew  
on commission scam  
-unble Gloating a  
wallop

fresh kid  
you not  
That  
kind

All over a word  
-test- a  
Vowed  
unter

-red Nope ease in  
note resemblance in  
quick stand  
by stand

Gotten byg'd biclitic

*2 GEN FLECKS, v*

Red

act de

ict

you'll

us Ife

port wan sample

blank

clammed

as

Reair inch an

twitch zone

fable

-less monkey typo

They the chondria

'mok staminum

vade

curious at

very ear

supponged every

prong

a lust

the very vacuum

cleft

aroma

heaps a tuned

abound

staff ample

come around

sing cler

## *Poetry Is a Domestic Art*

*Poetry is a domestic art* means poetry is where I live. Things done to make a home become poems—the working with hand tools or in my garden or the nights spent upstairs, where I sleep. “Vision” is actual life. Nothing fancy. And language reduced (led back)—reminding myself of what I am doing, as do Thich Doc The’s gathas.

*Nothing fancy.* Cid Corman writes his poems in a form that any schoolchild can grasp. The syllable—a taking together—word’s root and poem’s (back through Anglo-Saxon to Indo European and the sutra/suture that ties everything together). The descending column of syllables derived in part from Chinese, which is monosyllabic, and after the ideogram, the word drawn, the picture taken in at once.

*Nothing said.* As Creeley’s mother said, “Not dressed up.” Rather the revealing of things. Before she was sent to the poorhouse convent school, my mother once got an orange for Christmas. There is no greater mystery than a kitchen cabinet’s lowest drawer, with its broken or forgotten things, or the 1 lb. chock-full-of-nuts coffee can in which father dropped stray electrical parts. Or what we dug up behind the garage.

A friend writes to say that he keeps my books with his daughter’s children books and that she sometimes takes out mine and reads them with pleasure. What more could any poet want!

I do not want to take anyone’s time or prey on a child’s patience: poems so short they take no time (depriving one of nothing), transpire in eternity, glimpse therein.

And so in part a turning back (in Laozi’s sense) to childhood, and drawing on its simplest ur-grammar (without which we learn no language). To say I make poems is to say that I am always learning a new language (each poem a unique instance of a unique language). Finding things as words, words as things.

Spell things out. Craft returns me to the syllable, where any word begins and ends, whether to let it stand alone or with another. I work by hand, letter by letter.

And I have found that such poems do have power over reality. They are, literally, magical. The Buddhist chants transform the mind of the chanter. And the poem does likewise. Things come home for the first time.

It is only in poems that I have found my “destiny” or fate. Having always loved the work of solitary old men, Frank Samperi, Larry Eigner, Santoka and A#1 King of the Hoboes, I see that now I become one. Poetry is a domestic art. Sooner or later, I am a left-home person, a cloud and water person. Nowhere. Poems left behind like the domestic articles of handyman mechanic gardener or quilter, maybe to be of use.