


Dure

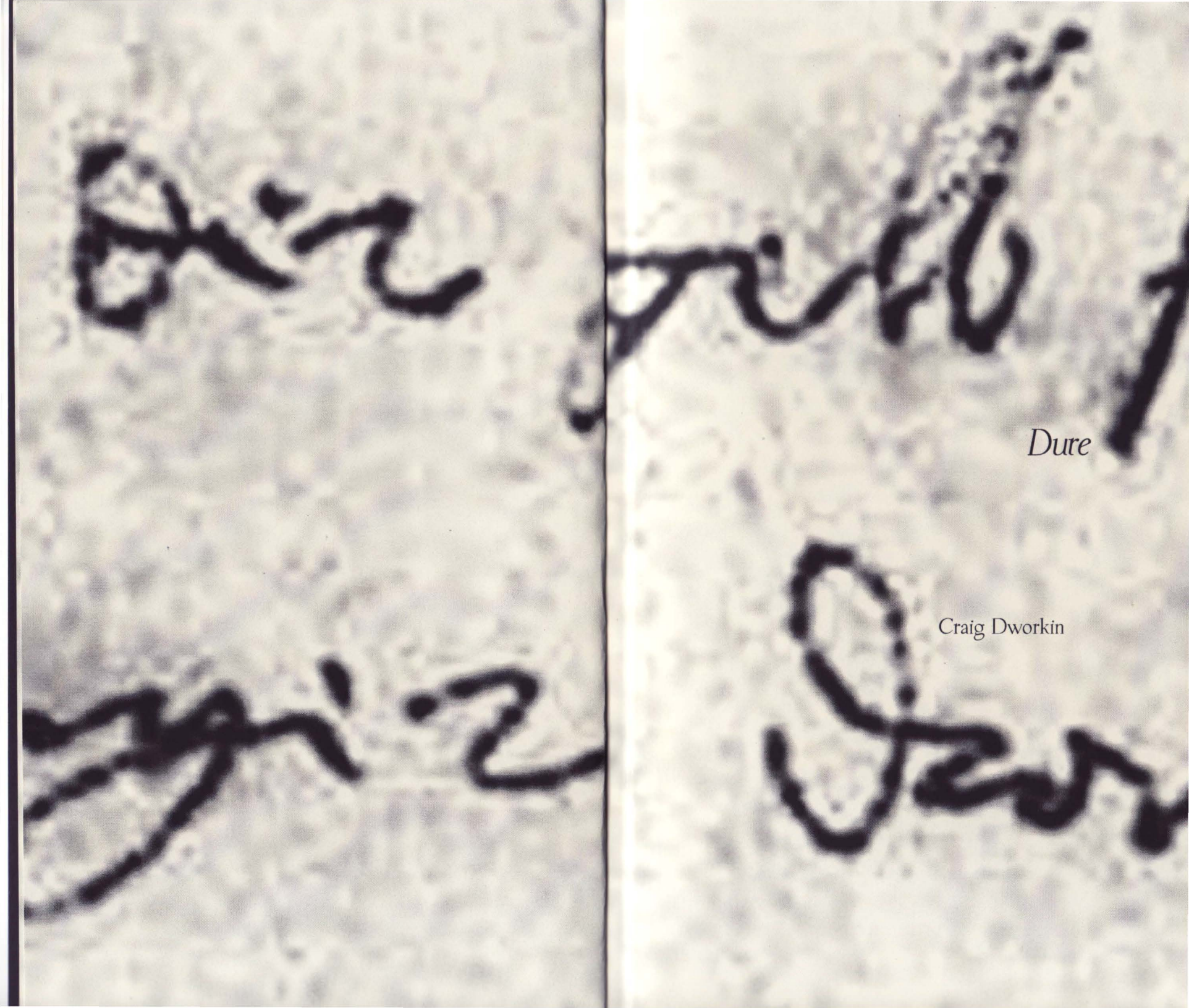
Craig Dworkin





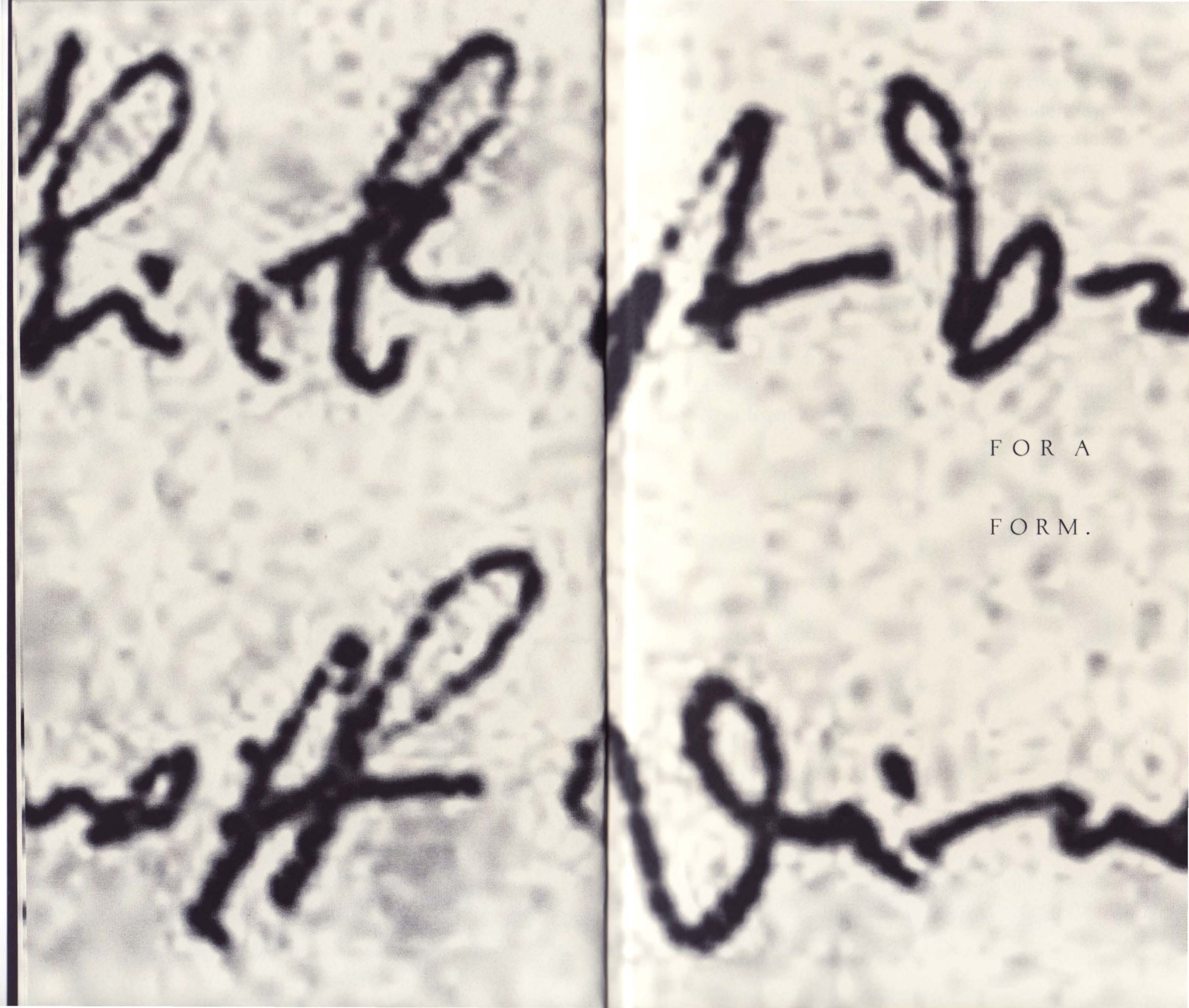


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FOR A

FORM.

“—sb¹ 1. A crag, [now] *obs.*” A fragment (of course); a cinder (of slag). Or “shy, afraid.” This ender day. Rendered as: do to, admit them, to dare. Curative, tackle, tined. This remains, and bears, in India ink, under watercolor wash, over stains on unlaidd paper: *Do der gelb fleck ist und mit dem finger drawff dewt do ist mir we.* Why write *this*? “Where the yellow spot is and where I am pointing with my finger, that is where it hurts.” Dead letter, tour, a dearth. Unsigned, accessioned with a circle stamped shield and key to the Bremen Kunstverein, the drawing has not been seen since the end of the second world war. As if it were the emblem of another legend: *ubi manus, ibi dolor.*

The assumption is that Dürer drew it for a consultation with a foreign physician: the page examined, and passed, through the post. Aphetic, fr. Port. "A mark or trace indicating a point of attachment, of some structure that has been rem—." Oval, ascher, chalk, a nerre. Embers, as *cendres*, rose, and caught her eyes. "All under the influence of the verb." Meaning a letting go, and via the home.

Some art historians conjecture that he is pointing to his spleen, the seat of melancholy and the subject of his famous engraving from the following year. But wouldn't the color seen here suggest choler and gall? And after all, he looks not so much sick as sidelong suspicious, distrustful and accusative. As if it were a final love letter, a proof without a product or a print. As if it were all the viewer's fault. As if to say: *you have done this*. The drawing, it might be said, is an inversion of love. Or rather, its instance and instant, clearest in its disappearance (in the way that drawing mimics the operation of the name). "Can we ever love anything other than the possibility of ruin?" *Loco, logo, soon*. "Love, it is said, was the inventor of drawing." Both blind, behind, and of (by) memory done. Can we ever really ruin anything other than the possibility of love? Of fugue. Off led.

The gesture, later, will be the same. With healing he'll worry the tissue in a morose delectation, the fingertip testing its sensation, and that lack, with an unreciprocated pressure: the nerves failing to complete their narcissistic circuit, so back and fore to get at figuring this fascination of a flesh that is no longer ours. Unbandaged, the skin still holds the imprint of the mesh. Dermatic memory hardens or dissolves. To demonstrate: "pain's rending is at the same time that drawing, which, like the pen work of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held in separation." "The idea of diæresis," of series, in syllables clipped to liquids and glides. Is *this*, in fact, the only genuine name? "The discourse of the other is not the discourse of the abstract other, or the other in the dyad, of my correspondent, or — even — of my slave. It is the discourse of the circuit into which I am integrated. I am one of its links." "No terror is as total as the jargon of its illusions." Bearer bonds. Time, sensitive, materials. Umlaut, impress, staples and the bite of type. Avowals, broken, allowed. A blur, about sounds. Surgery, prosody, vocable, print. "The demonstrative *this* can never be without a bearer, for a name is not used with, but only explained by means of, the gesture of pointing." The ossature of memory is articulate, and strict. *This* can never be without an error. "Nature abhors a fact."

A set, proleptic preface for this essay, or as prospectus for his sketch: "The object of this paper is to study the obstructions to deforming a homotopic equivalence in a simply connected and continuously controlled sequence. There are all the usual possible modifications of a surgery theory, and the continuous control condition thus requires that non-trivial components of a change must be small." Scarves carve curves. A round wound bound. Registers, reserves, a draught. "The equation of my language remains unstable, a shifting set of coordinates, an arrangement of variables spilling into surds." The binder starches and accords. Quotation marks ticked through the body of the text like sutures arched in stitches that will scar. "What aspre strokes I have seen them give." Ogive windows in a gothic wall. Vine prints, and a tracery of ferns. "Fall, ruin," mure. These forms that words make as the page is turned.

Dürer's treatise on ellipses is the first book of mathematics published in German. Followed by a fourth book of shadows, with chapters on the secrets of vanish and converge. Sent, ject, jure. "Let none who want geometry enter through these doors." Sensual, censure, sural. "August is the month of memories, the month of storms." Windswept wisps accumulate to brume. The luthier lathes and frets. Cloud theory covers the syntax of mists, a grammar of water vapor, etymologies of rust. "The next step we must take is to see in how many ways one thing is said to be in another." "Intuitively, (A, a) represents the image of a , and the condition says that \emptyset only depends on the image and lands *in* the image." "In one way, a finger is in a hand, and generally a part in a whole." "One would obviously want to generalize this to a non simply connected situation, but before discussing that we shall consider a less obvious generalization involving germs." Anatomies map the geography of chance. Fern, curve, hollow — sink and grot. "Hence the fiber represents the structure set, and the result follows."

"He who does not forget his first love will not recognize his last." "More generally, little importance should be granted to the opinion of those who condemn something without having done all that was required to destroy it, and, failing that, to prove always so foreign to it that they still actually had the possibility of being so." Scar factory, surface street. Dour, hour, door. "A necessary yet effectively repressed platform of the ideology of progress: one has to realize that what is of interest are not the objects destroyed, but the inability or impossibility to see the world without destroying them."

He has draped himself discretely, naked to the waist. The tear ducts gape, humid and enlarged. "If any bodye weare vulneratede in the Eyes, insparge, and strewe this poulder there." Soiled, solder, spoilt, spelt. Stays antiqued with tea. Psalm, palm, lapse. A damp nap skirts the glair that binds the tongues of rawhide and required felt. Welt, stiletto, silhouette. The bruise on the boards of a book; the pall of raw words. "I assure you that I would more than gladly have painted myself here in my entirety, and completely naked at that." I have me my silvering to go up, to groin. An aggregate of shattered cells suspended in a dance of drift and twitch casts shadows on the retina from their glassy bath. Vagrant, vacant, drowned. Hinge joints rusted, jambs akimbo, the doors of perception droop. Rested, dressed, and sighed. "Then purg'd, with Euphrasie and Rue/ the visual Nerve, for he had much to see." Agrimony, acrimony, hyaline wash. To stay, to bear, to pass.

These fractures factured with a hairline list:
Communicating passages. Moments of separation held
open to their possibility. Signs that we have shared space.
Cadastral tares assessing points of genuine contact with
another world, however briefly, on its own terms.
Stitches lashed on the open lids of skin. "Vectors of space
that never existed." Legitimate constructions. Fixed
glances staring back, unblinking, when we would wince
away from the responsibility and risk of inhabiting a new,
unincorporated geography. Scare tactics, semantics,
skirt. The self deterritorialized and refusing a return to
the illusion that such spaces, once recognized, can ever
be repaired. (Where 'to passage' is a verb (where 'vector'
is a pathogenic agent)). The architecture of scars
constructs an hermetic vernacular.

But what sort of doctor would diagnose a sketch?
However wan and drawn and washed, *und mit dem finger
drawff*. Or mitted and mired at; fingered rough, due to
its mere fee paid, perhaps, in paint, and at a later date.
Inked, inkling, wards. A sin, akin to ken, from skin.
Translate this passage with the proper perfection of 'to
pay.' The phenomenology of grammar gives a body to
what we say, through mood, aspect, and voice. "The last
apparatus eliminates the eye all together: it consists,
again, of a needle." Bright red beetles frighten and
scatter, few and dry. And brief, this sheet, "is falne into
the Sear, the yellow leafe." A sourd splash downs, "in
the Scale of dure, and where the Mutations are made."
(As in, for instance, 'I have pain my price').

Patient, in its form, the figure poses: "But how do we know where to point to when we are asked to point to the painful spot? Can this sort of pointing be compared with pointing to a black spot on a sheet of paper?" Draught, graft, grief. *El cigarro figura una cigarra de papel.* "What signified, she said, a wheen bits of papers, wi' black and white scarts upon them, that he ca'd bushes, and tress, and craigs?" "And why is it that scars are black on the rest of the body but white on the eye?"

What, moreover, could the diagnosis be? Edges erose and ciliate sheet unsized. Note errors as told: "sunned at spine, bruised at extremities." "Very occasional light scattered marginal foxing." "In all my doings, spendings, sales, and other intercourse in all my connections with high and low, I have suffered loss." Scallop, garland, cusp. *Point and Line to Plane*. The scar, in essence, is simply the deformation of any particular breaking the surface of its abstraction. I am; we are; to love. A mar on the undifferentiated expanse of language, writing is the scar left from its abrasion with the world (with use, with us, without). From paint to point to pain. A ridge of bristled locks impinged upon the singed and cotton stock. But if a scar is always a citation, are citations, themselves, always scars? Moments, culled with ease, and kept. A key to the present location, now a public place. *Mori*, meerschaum, any rounded object. A gauze of summer fog has filmed his gaze and laced the lawn in kelles. Whisper, blister, swept. The more who (dying); the more are (to dwell). Wind, thistle, sea.

The gesture remains extended until the surgeon,
uncertain, declares — from a break or burn or abrasion
worn, and marked in chalk or char along the arms:
“—ill.”

Conjectural etymologies from *briser* to break, or *brésiller* to crumble (as if it would have arrived, already, in a broken state); or maybe *braise*, like *brasa*, from its color, 'glowing coal'; but also, perhaps, from saffron (Arab *wars* in some parts mispronounced as *vars*, or *vers*). A bruise turned truthfully toward verse. "History is the science of our unhappiness." This, fair reader, hides a wound. Tears alarm; tears show rue.

Throughout the book, he insists on reading *garota* as if it were a conjugation of the verb 'to strangle.' Even running his finger over the lines he stumbles at *da anda com ela* (to have an affair with her) and *fala d'anda triste* (talking about 'been sad lately'). The parse of (the pulse of) the verb *recordar*: to give, to the heart, again. As "(a name, gift; a blow, injury)." Ever, sever, swerve, severe. *Danda, dandinha*, a little gifting girl. "The meaning of a name is not the thing we point to when we give an ostensive definition of the name." To scraig, to sword, to send. The lining thins and softens toward the heartwood's cord. He is pointing at, perhaps, her cost, and for her pleasure. Honey, ankle, tongue. "You learned the concept 'pain' when you learned language." *Louca, doidinha, daninha*. My fingernail moon is horned like laurels. *Louça, lousa, estalada*. Sing 'scarp away, scarp away, scarp away down.'

Or has the diagnosis already been made, and this his refutation? "The profound fascination of the sick man with the isolated and insignificant is succeeded by that disappointed abandonment of the exhausted emblem." Abdomen, core, *a flor de pele*. "My hurts are constant and trivial." With much aplomb, or few. "The house where I live, my life, what I write: I dream that all that might appear from far off like those cubes of rock salt look close up." Skin petals, and quarrels to close, its flesh trained in a troubled topiary. "When one refuses to release scale from size, one is left with an object or language that appears to be certain." Granular, glandular, gradual, gloss. *Cortante*: cut short before the heart. To gather, together, carefully (to abhor, or, shun); to show or to warn. The lost steps, passed. The iron rails, branding departures. Faith smiles, hope raked up like salt. Abessive, caritive, metathesis. Pauper due. The visual rhythm of these runic tattoos. "I had a wound here that was like a 'T,' but now 'tis made an 'H.'" To case (articulate), to comb (abstract). "Perhaps make a hinge picture" (where 'to picture' is a verb). "He has cut and pinckt in several works upon their durette skins." A locative pock, to try to explain his place. Everything, right now, is nearer than you think.

Against the glazing of the cased display, my reflections on the pane distort, and throw back my image in shivers. *Tem saudade dela*. Picture window, puncture wound, theatre of operations. There were rumors that he was poisoned by rival draughtsmen. As under, a sketch, as port. "A Mis-fortune, or rather a Disease in Malt drinks, occasioned by diverse means." The tain saw that she'd ail as she stayed. "It is said that Titian visited him to see the brushes that painted such fine hair. He said they were made from hairs off the back of his hand." He may only have suffered from indigestion. Unable to distinguish painting from combing language is the hair in the mirror.

The mirror, in the middle ages, was the clearest metaphor for the host's indivisibility: even shattered each splinter mirrors complete. Rumination, ruination, groom. A lack of faith left shards of glass and silver in the mouth of the communicant, slivers tongued into the palate's velum hood. The surprise being not the number of heresies, but the precision with which they were named. To mistake wholeness for integrity. To communicate a pain in the way one might communicate a disease. To conduct a mass in which the host is taken in its saprophytic sense. Meditation, mediation, loam. One might, at a glance, mistake him for Christ. Even as a portrait, it stands as if to say, this is me: lean, holy. Bread, risen, breed (flesh out, or into). Force, forsooth, to sooth. *One and Three Chairs*. Traces of resin, treasonous seeds. Seek at, reason, signature. "This I drew, using a mirror; it is my own likeness." See now. This is my body. Take this pain.

"Plato still allowed the empiricist the power of pointing a finger at things." "In fact, the perceptual judgment which I have translated into 'that chair is yellow' would be more accurately represented with a pointing index-finger taking the place of the subject." "But the trouble is that even this silent gesture is impossible if what is pointed out is not already torn and treated as representative of its previous appearances in me, and of its simultaneous appearances in others, in other words." Addled, bled, append. As with the love poem, the crippling difficulty here is the attempt to treat the most commonplace emotions in what must be a purely private language. Although the real problem is not that I am unable to describe my pain to you, but that I cannot adequately describe it to myself. "And here again remember the difference between pointing to the painful spot without being led by the eye and on the other hand pointing to a scar on my body after looking for it."

It could be the frontispiece to a lost treatise on the melancholy of anatomy. Muted figures, out of character, double over. The locus appears to be a sort of *macula lutea*, where perception is most acute. The printer calculates the bleed of blurred impressions in the paper's mesh. Unhappiness is the science of our history. Scored, salience, sear. Despite the focus, I cannot simply locate it there, in the silver haloid squares, even if that is the only place it has ever appeared. And to look for it there is like searching out the source of the pain by conducting a chemical analysis of one's tears. "So now what other way is left? For you will hardly prove it by perception or by pointing with your finger."

On reflection, one realizes that the arm is not quite right. It bevels, though barely, from the body's plane, as if the angle of the elbow were inverted. In fact, the drawing may well have been made with a mirror, so that he is pointing with his *left* hand, the right unable to draw itself drawing. Would this explain their alternate transparency and occlusion — like the anatomy of Shiele's amputated nudes? Surgery theory, applied analgesics, "a practick way." Sheared, the map compacts those points where the declination of attraction is zero. Cortical, local, and lanced. Chance helping thought, sketch and note each caption the other, a pair of sequel remarks. A glitter squints agley. Narcotics work not by blocking the pain, which you continue to feel, unabated, but by making you simply not care. *Pentimenti*, distemper, scrim. One muscle counteracts another, extended without an angle, in a contest of tension and cancellation. But a memory, by definition, cannot itself be scarred. Because doesn't all memory instead follow the cruel and loving logic of a phantom limb? Pivot, cleft, acute. The condition of self-reflection, raised to the level of crisis. Algor, agonal, agone. Memory understood not as the agent, but as the prosthesis of pain.

Proof of an irreconcilable event, the drawing may itself be a scar. Or is it merely emblematic of the fact that pain cannot be shown, but that the *showing* of pain can be shown? I can't, in any meaningful sense, express my pain, but I can show you myself in the act of making that expression — however empty it may ultimately be. To point without the *I* makes a bridge. Empathetic deixis cedes to a rigid linguistic proxemics. "If, in saying *I*, I point to my own body, I model the use of the word 'I' on that of the demonstrative. But in *I have pain*, 'I' is not a demonstrative pronoun." The drawing was, perhaps, a philosophical grammar.

Lips lie parched and parcel where a tremble meant tear,
or cheer, depending on the tongue. Ocher, from smoke.
From Old High German: "to tear, to draw." Crease,
plea, crisp. Frayed, unplaited here, the hair is more worn
than tressed. Ink sinks into skin. To cease. *Felicidade*,
sim. Intimate stitch, and staple. Buff, shuffle, suffer,
bluff. This nail tells the failure of this hell. Hisp, molar,
cusp. Rust runs in rivers down the wall. And yet, "no
wound is shown, no incision suggested." But "tears can
draw," in the sense that wounds are said to weep.

He stands, hip lean, and turns to meet his panic. With wide eyes and an open mouth, "love is essentially agape." *Nein*, now, know, inured. "The dure on char it stude." The eyes are open wounds that will not heal. To speak of the *the* leaves a thirst like bones in the mouth. The voice lipped — a waver carried in air, in voice, as cargo, as shipped. The mouth pines and, with 'why?', it dies. So we sew, and smile at the locked threads foxed. Naked, yellow, struck. Discarded plaques stand stacked, in decks. Macula, a mote, emote. An old use for eyes. Arid, ardent, steep. To let her take the talking cure (in the sense of what is done to hide).

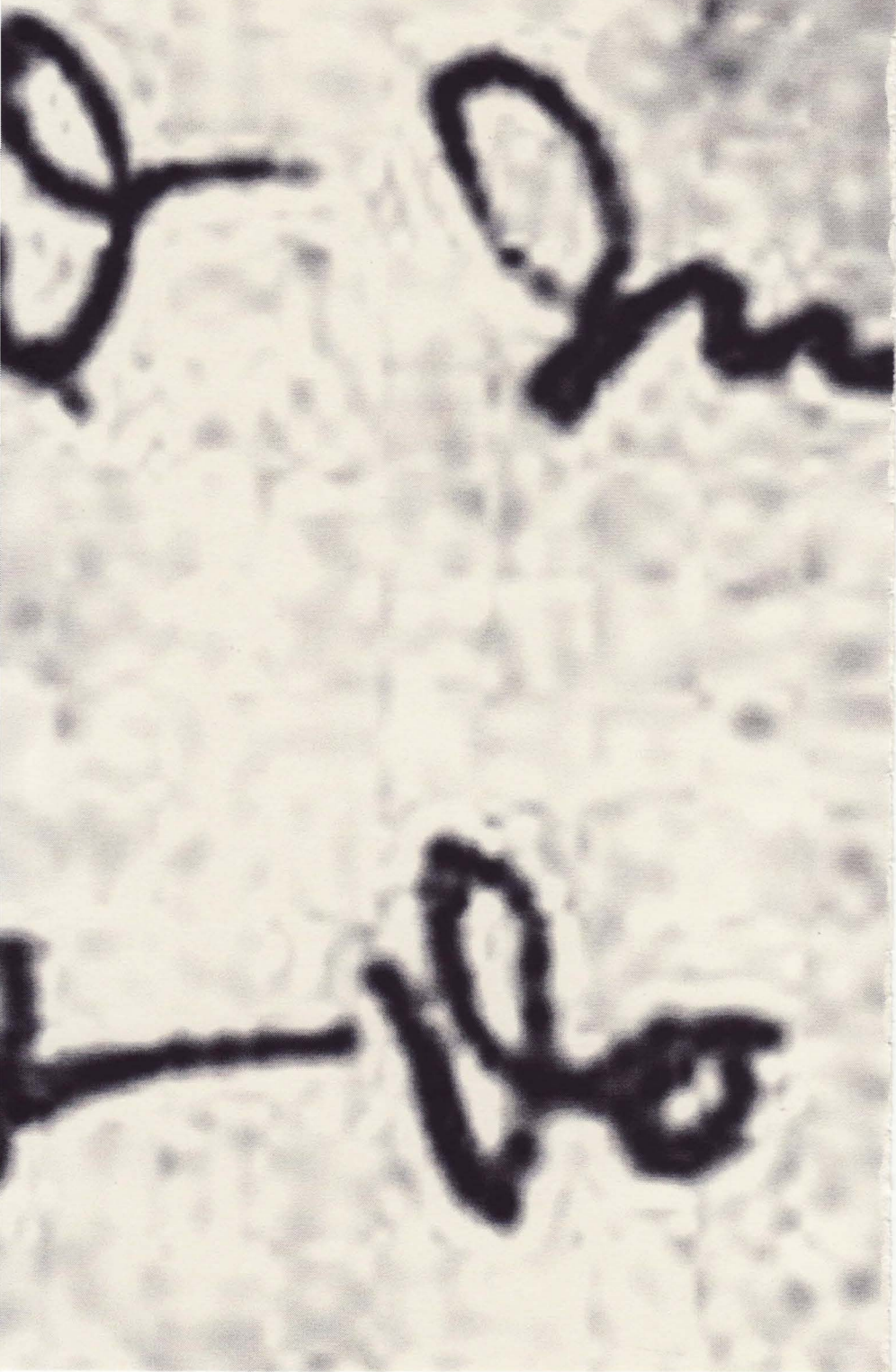
Our history is now the shadow of a shadow. *Obscura*, sugar cube, cone. "Dürer drew in egg black, and mastic, so the oils would not yellow as badly as linseed." Readably graved, doubly blessed. "Love is not a feeling. Love is put to the test, pain not. One does not say: 'That was not true pain, or it would not have gone off so quickly.'" And anyway, we never really miss another person; we miss ourselves as we were at the time we were with that person. Consider the invention of tempera as an extension of culinary science, rather than art history. Tinge, tain, trait. *Tempus erat*. Durable goods. Hesitant tetnus, vaccination, pox. "The action of the verb, in various senses." "I and you now there that the following tenses." The unshakable sense of "the tentative and anatomically inexplicable crease or shadow that appears above the rib." The glair, from clear to nacre, hardens in the air. We are nostalgic not for what we no longer have, but for what we never had in the first place, and what we never, at the time, thought to miss, or even notice. *Leçons de ténèbres*. *Erato*, *erratum*, tempt. Our history is now.

"Writing is a strange shadow whose sole purpose is to mark the destruction of the body that once stood between its light and its earth." Skiagraphy, touch-type, and method. A run of his finger feels nothing now that the surface has smoothed, but he can still make out the thin ellipse floating on his forearm like a shadow under shallow skin, and can trace its curve, left from the time she pushed him into the stove, and know that this is his proof: whatever else, she felt that strongly, she really did care this much that once. He who forgets that love lasts will not recognize its fist. Carp, suspended, mottle and kern. This entire text is an attempt to ask: "how can something be the shadow of a fact which does not exist?" The problem is not finding a solution, but simply posing the proper question. "Don't you know then, what I mean, when I say that the stove is in pain?"

"But if one wanted to find an analogy to the place of pain, it would of course not be the mind (as, of course, the place of bodily pain is not the body) but the *object* of regret." Laments assent to debt. Coporsant glints cinerous across the spar. A keen ascends and echoes through the open squint. The shadows cast from scotiae lap the balustrade in braids of carinated rows. The chosen dowers yardage and some scarce, spare coin. A skein, as sent, owes. As if it were the last name — the very last name — of your lover. *Plait*, plait, plaint. The words, returned, insist: sleep, to speak, this hard golden hour of sadness. Cornea, *carinha*, cairn. A spur of feldspar keels into a gravel scree. The chancel skirts a corner space for saints. Or could the hurt here be the very act of pointing itself, so that the gesture is more performative than descriptive, an etiology rather than a symptom? Pain, that is, as a system into which its subject, with his gesture and naming, is put. This will be a book without an index. "It is therefore like a ruin that does not come after the work but remains produced, *already from the origin*, by the advent and structure of the work."

A gust (of wind), a strip (of cloud). High noon, dry. To doze this low and hectic day, fingers, parted, pointing. Tongued lips bit, errata slip tipped in. Secular and graduated strata mark the rate of liquid's patient faith. Silt, sill, sent. Zero anaphora. Distil, distal, trist. "This began as a set of disconnections, a bramble of stabilized fragments taken from things obscure and fluid, ingredients trapped in a succession of frames, a stream of viscosities both still and moving." Alluvium, alleviate, aggrade. All of the glass in all of the windows everywhere drifting slowly down with an indifferent, imperceptible, flow. The little lenses slowly ground, shelly sand in brack. The hand points, to the hand, again, and with a look refers you back: to a passage in a book, to the excess after a process of division, (taken or took) to works in which the original publishers had no faith, to the concluding formula of a letter. A stab, at ray, as tabulated. Everything to do. These fingers unfurl, scarcely deixis. Even with a hum and mumble, Augustine was tripped, aloud, by the line. "A proper name without signification, a pointing finger, is a degenerate index." The taste of this pear lingered, on the edge of ferment. This sees me, or merely fits. *O fado, of ado, adieu.* "The last, construed as *sing*." And this, in its seizure: apprehensive, rested, blue. "I marked the place with my finger or by some other sign and closed the book." This is who we are (this), and (this) this is what we do to one another: by chance, by the hour, by ourselves.

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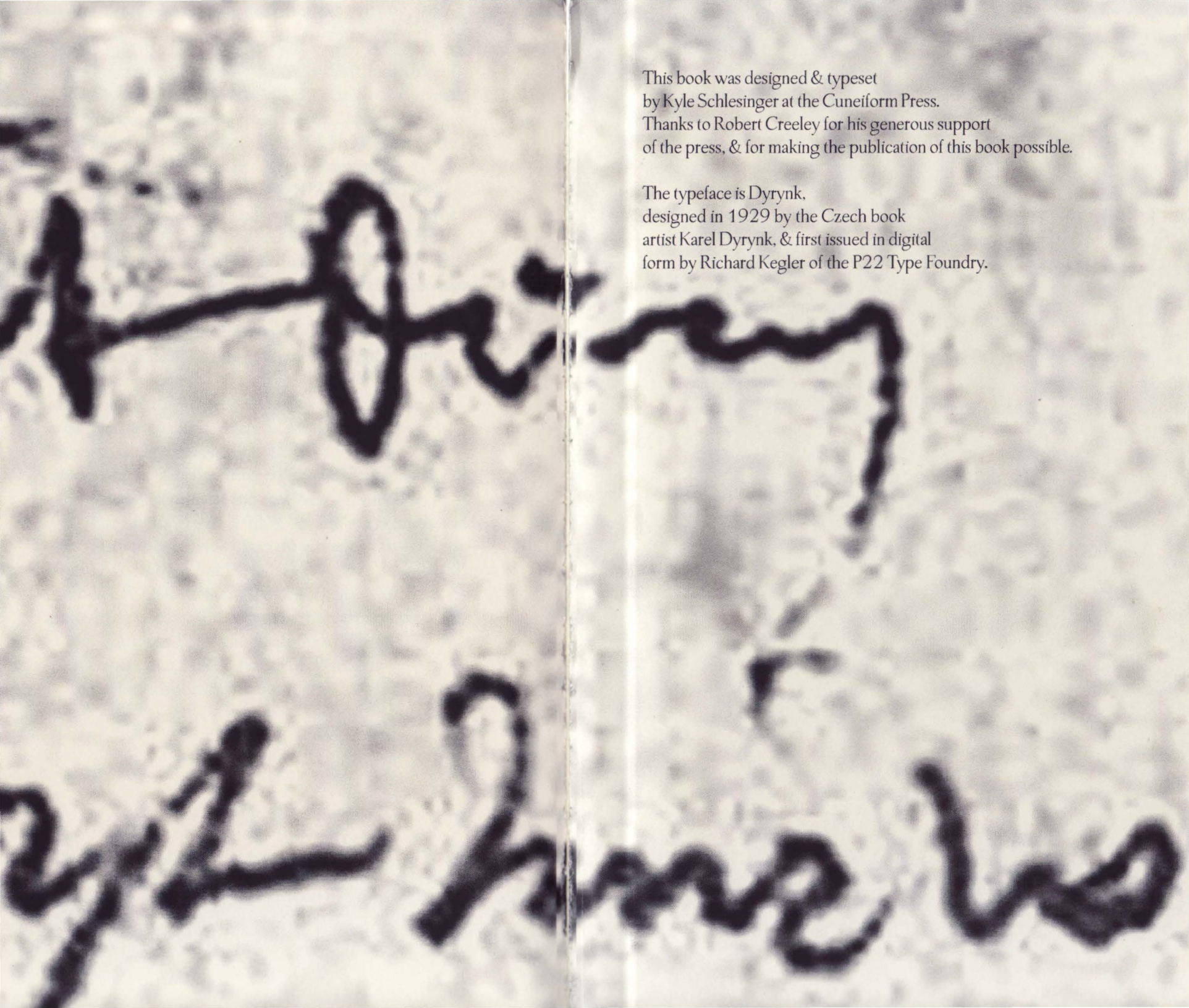
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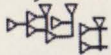
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