

Language Sampler  
Edited by Charles Bernstein

Introductory Note

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

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

—J. G. [s.c. Jonathan Galassi]

## Charles Bernstein: Introduction

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

Hints, then, of a writing that takes as its medium, or domain of intention, every articulable aspect of language. It's as if a new scanning of consciousness were possible by introduction of the music of its constituting. And by this means to make audible the thinking field: to get access to the lens (the mixed metaphor is again ideology) through which the world's meanings are formed into audibilities.

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

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

At the same time, however (often mixed in with, or the overall compositional product of, this multimodal process), there is a claim being made to a syntax — to put it indefensibly — of pure music, of absolute attention to the ordering of sound's syllables, for instance in Ken Irby's "Etudes" or Peter Seaton's more densely scaled "Wounds from a Heart Would Do It." Not that this is "lyric" poetry, insofar as that term may assume a musical, or metric, accompaniment to the words: the music rather is built into the sequence of the

words' tones, totally saturating the text's sound. "Indefensibly," that is, because there really is no pure music any more than there is pure language since any material practice becomes itself a mode. Striking, in this regard, is Alan Davies' sublime diction in "Lies," in which he invokes a Blakean Poetic Truth at the same time that he laments its structural impossibility.

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

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

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

I am sufficiently skeptical of the presumption of "advance" in "avant-garde" to equally distrust formulations that appear to pit "the new" against tradition. What is presented here exemplifies a continuing dialogue with the past(s) — surely not, though, just a narrowed line of hallowed English verse! — and the future(s). Yet because it is a dialogue, it does not only involve repetition of old forms but also a response to them.

My discussion of modal properties and critiques of conventions does not, I hope, obscure the powerful and sometimes pessimistic social comment in much of the work collected here. Indeed, it is my contention that having available all modes for use increases

the capacity of writing for expression. The tone of anger, for example in Bob Perelman's "Third and Townsend," or of quieter distress, say in Susan Howe's "war / obdurate as oceans," is not, of course, a formal dimension but a reaction, in part, to the events of the current period, including a barbaric U.S. military and social policy.

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

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

Peter Seaton: Need from a Wound Would Do It

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And thinking before using a reflection building up, data  
With the outline of organism meeting vision  
In the arts against my face. And hear the air rush past

With access. Wrenching the phasing in logic to look at.  
That was blocking shapes and colors that was all.

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

With the language shape up. And, brazen point  
Of the personal writer, the ones that got  
Great books did write  
Disks and digits with bands of light, moons in pools

With curves like rough rates, names of aliens there  
Might be woolen and wool itself. I'd had  
A chance to tell rock from shadow, from this darker thing

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

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

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

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



Diane Ward: Approximately

meaning a context or vision to confer with this which could be a book.

meaning what I just said confers with this but a licking sound.

Amplified and forming an idea far from original.

A distance which becomes whimsical tension.

For instance, then an origin, an image a fantasy becomes ironic; at home.

Flat as you once thought a centering unlike mysteries in your  
imagining an animal.

Difference in eye levels.

Difference in relation and system.

Elevating a problem in placement or face and in which direction.

A metal square gradually marked.

A metal square which is confrontational engaging.

Off into intensity which is hard to concentrate.

Two of the spaces of words with their own containment each of eighty directions.

Two aesthetics granting activity value without practical functions.

Following the implied direction of possessions, environment is a room more specific a  
person.

You said something visual versus a thought you were attacking me.

You said change/cigarettes versus intimate intricate and which is more interesting.

Later a time motions are visual or visualizations which translate objects into words.

A mass of timid outlines to each rigid color.

A mass of smiles destroys a given warmth.

Without only a loneliness to cherish.

More specific a conversation hopefully beginning now.

More specific the toxic and poison contributed to a phrase now dated and like a date benign.

Respectable ideas are random, laying low or following up so forget what I just said or I think.

Impossible only an advancing of thoughts their elements and results.

No worth for what they're saying or value exists for this.

It's fine that it brings tears to your eyes or doesn't.

It's probably fine that what moves you is below you or not above you.

Formulas to constrict imagination to a mind what it's saying thinking and what you want its direction.

For this there's an age to define as urgent as people.

For this habit a catchy title like musings handfuls.

More points exist around which become you than are not.

Ends based on emotional gusts; the hands are yours that wish to hold.

Ends as a pivotal screen viewing concealed metaphors for beauty.

What the question value in days formulated frequent written words weeks.

I don't know an arching sounding around us.

I don't know where movements standing pointing as vacuum.

Where the word which wasn't interesting belongs as redefinition.

Where speed replaces the idea and becomes it.

Internal is categorically beautiful bombing as we expected them whole sentences erupt up and fall.

Headlong, concrete piece by concrete piece a sight or irrational pleasure.

Heading away to detail and immediacy.

Another form is untouchable and moves a cage into softness.

A wooden syntax of shadow forms a pillar of its own.

A highly syntax confusing both image and word and detail and notation.

A shape which is rounded off so that comers fall away.

Blank and another ordering attention paying off.

Blank intensity stares.

Ron Silliman: Blue  
*for Gil Ott*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Truth is lies** that have hardened.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Truth.**

I. e.

The idea of truth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Truth and or lies.** That is not the question.

Bruce Andrews: *from* Confidence Trick

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

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

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

Big generation not about to go away to listen to my insults — Black tie talkathon; safari cards make learning fun — Sure, language comes before industry, *tory crap*, or at least it *wants* trouble; we do play reggae but only by whites — Fix the lock a whoop freeze the tension, polyglots are adrift: History of the World Pt. 1 — Flyboys; delinquency is nervous, the perfect dictator, a tendency toward motion sickness, why is the ministry full of fallout? — Their voice is quavery their voice quavers they have a quavery voice, scissor set, *capitalist shit*, dirty looks; quote mind quote bound gag & teepees air; loose wires rebuff speed — Nervous enema murder will out — Irrelevant to talk America, murderers, unlimber up los microwaves with pull-out bed protect self-interest goo on Broadway any one of these wounds might have seemed fatal, do you know an opposite, do you know an operative — Yes we did find traces of nembutal — juggernaut cop out ahead of itself especially Velvets-like — Scientist, Islam House, is ripe enough, city fun; like depictions yellow jacketed become a little more normal



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Don't ask me to talk."

"It was raining down south."

"Why the working dogs."

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

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

ish, lik rish

viewing  
point

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paddles sloshing in tunnel.

Volume: all thumbs.

Dis-ser-vice? Naaa . . .

The pilot on the steamboat said my craft is timing.

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

"Nice day out there."

"Mind your own business."

Tables have turned.

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

Mutilate utility, dumbbell.

I want you to hatch.

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

Rabbit. Rabbit. Rabbit.

Rabbit.

Nothing underneath.

A new day. The same development.

Ice on the streets. Labor from without racial identity. People skating to work, even beyond the line of hybrid trees in the bordering country. Edging pathways shreds on

lies. Promise that river a piece of jelly. Drift happy river mind frieze golden ore brassy fish. We see the plunge will be taken. We see the happy traveler. The dancing burlesquers hide her acceptance speech. Awkward confrontation with her fate, the foregrounding of herself. A fiddling detective douses her with water. The detective loves to hear people scream. Clues grow in relation to sound. He is old and she is hungry but they can't make a match like others even less fortunate. It's the middle of the week! They will make friends and through friends find jobs and through jobs they will meet.

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

Tale trips from faery to dower. Church to cure.

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



Ted Greenwald: Eight Poems

all  
over  
the  
body  
finishing  
touches

STARING DOESN'T HELP

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

as  
far  
as  
I  
can  
see  
you  
are  
there

those  
is  
that

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

If so  
Then so  
So Often  
If so

So often  
Then not  
If so  
Then so

#### FINALLY UNDERSTANDING

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

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

industrial  
amazement  
turns  
to  
slush

Susan Howe: *from* Defenestration of Prague

Skeletal kin

tilt

*italic lunacy*

long illness of little difference

Seventy memories

masks

singing and piping

to be

(half words)

beginning and begetting

strangers nodding to one another

stumbling and scrambling

(uncertain theme)

random form

strong arm of my name

*Emblem*

sign strewn flapping

(flapping of ravens in rain)

What sequence

Mothers hide harmless

weary for antiquity  
the simple

*Eglantine*

Soldiers moving as toys in a

world soul

War

Obdurate as ocean he went forth  
conquering

—and to conquer

Anathema

who was my father

Empty dominions beyond structure

Alan Bernheimer: Two Poems

Topic A

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

Flores Gardens

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

Robert Grenier: Six Poems

TWO

out to make  
one bird high  
above spiralling  
southward  
water

SPAWNED BY THE FOAM INTELLIGENCE

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

THOUGHTLESS DOTH

change shoes

NEXT HAT

other hat  
ma mind  
my mind mine

INTERGLACIAL AGE

much colder this afternoon

world getting warmer

polar caps melting must

bring on the ice I say

FOOL

madman though ye beem



Michael Gottlieb: *from* Social Realism

Widowers have more dignity.

The flames starting from the ears.

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

An honest revulsion.

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

Arrive pressed, neat, party-perfect.

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

---

"I hate these blindfolds"

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

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

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

She billed herself as a lay analysand.

Lyn Hejinian: Province

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

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

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

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

derogatory and prolific  
Fate strikes while one sleeps  
encyclopedic syntax

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

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

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

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

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

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

file across scan  
A return on your identification  
threatens evolution

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

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

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

fascination nags

Hannah Weiner: from Spoke

Aug 17 *all these on my forehead words are seen*

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

problem to my inmantes I was jail sentence I was liquidated just one I was overweight  
too

I was conscious I was pillow case I was in the closet I was an iron put the public in the  
problem

living room couch and dont mind with the buttons and dont spend any mothers money  
on too

publicly I was hysterical I was secretary I was Indian I was conscious I was also

*a pillow* underline the words above a pillow case following instructions

*case*

I TEASE THEM

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

B I L L M E A N S sorry

Barrett Watten: *from* One Half

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

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

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

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

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

Objection. Of essence is the  
Time falls apart in his hands.  
Hatred, under the engine,  
Of daily events.  
I trust wheat . . . .

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

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

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

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

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

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



Bob Perelman: Third & Townsend

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

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

Glossy agreements stir  
sentences in sleep  
until the monster sits up.  
It could have been  
anywhere, but once the building  
is built potted plants,  
plate glass doors are set  
down conspicuously to hold  
chance at arm's length.

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

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

## Douglas Messerli: Causes of the Crack Up: An Explication

A sentence is hard for a sudden to spin into space.

See the hand perch on to fish out on the limb so to speak?

It's not to place but the verge of,

a breath only a comment can clear the way to.

The distant scars.

There's no question

of diversion, the willingness

to hug a huge

escape to right where

you never left. The unsuspected masses,

collapses into itself a self.

This is what is meant by cement.

P. Inman: from "backbite"  
*for Bob Marley*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Charles Bernstein: Four Poems

Playing with a Full Deck

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

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

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

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

But Boxes Both Boats, Growing Tired as the Day Amasses

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

## Idiopathic Pathogenesis

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

## Air Shaft

Quick as a whip

Wide as a gap

Is wide. Somewhere

Someone sears.

Cachet in the hypochondriac

Moonlight, sway in

The censorious

Goon flight.

## James Sherry: Epistle Apology

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

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

With certain friends I feel compelled to know more about myself and to express it more clearly than I would or even feel is true. The brilliant propositions distilled from years of labor that seem to abound in the great literary, scientific and philosophical works of the past, but are more simply perceptions of particulars, are too far away to be grasped completely in every conversation and in any case can only come out from an explanation of how I feel in all my inconsistencies about a given topic and this itself, which I often don't want to admit, incites my mind to riot away from forthrightness which is its refuge.

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



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

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

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

---

This is from a series of paragraphs being formed to establish Blank.

*whether at fault*  
quaver at crack

*the heart breaks*  
freight not the affections

*each time*  
winds oracle the body  
*it hurts*

nothing helps that does not help  
the passing day pass free

to die  
out through

•

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

•

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

[requiem études — for Louis Zukofsky]

word boundaries orenda  
sumbur  
<<lf they ask, it is you>>

•

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

•

o Swan over the dark stripes  
where light  
bright oil  
<<To glow-not to grovel>>

•

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

light leaves like  
black under wind

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

•

take light & dark  
up the heart  
<<For the living>>