SHADE

Charles Bernstein

Originally published with a cover by Susan Bee in 1978 by Sun & Moon Press (College Park, Maryland), as the first number in their "Contemporary Literature Series."
Poem

here. Forget.
There are simply tones
cloudy, breezy
birds & so on.
Sit down with it.
It’s time now.
There is no more natural sight.
Anyway transform everything
silence, trees
commitment, hope
this thing inside you
flow, this movement of eyes
set of words
all turns, all grains.
At night, shift
comets, "twirling planets,
suns, bits of illuminated pumice"
pointing out, in harsh tones
cancers & careers.
"Newer Limoges please."
Pick some value
mood, idea, type or smell of paper
iridescent, lackluster
&, "borne in peach vessels,"
just think
"flutter & cling"
with even heavier sweep
unassuaged
which are the things
of a form, etc
that inhere.
Fair adjustment
becomes space between
crusts of people
strange, rending:
a sound of some importance
diffuses
"as dark red circles"
digress, reverberate
connect, unhook.
Your clothes, for example
face, style
radiate mediocrity
coyly, slipping
& in how many minutes
body & consciousness
deflect, "flame on flare"
missed purpose.
Your eyes
glaze
thought stumbles, blinded
speck upon speck
ruffling edges.
"But do not be delighted yet."
The distance positively entrances.
Take out pad & pen
crystal cups, velvet ashtray
with the gentility of easy movement
evasive, unaccountable
& puffing signs
detach, unhinge
beyond weeds, chill
with enthusiastic smile
& new shoes
"by a crude rotation"
hang
a bulk of person
"ascending", "embodied".
Ballet Russe

Every person has feeling.

   It is all the same.

I will travel.

I love nature.

I love motion & dancing.

I did not understand God.

I have made mistakes.

Bad deeds are terrible.

I suffered.

My wife is frightened.

The stock exchange is death.

I am against all drugs.

My scalp is strong & hard.

I like it when it is necessary.

It is a lovely drive.

A branch is not a root.
Handwriting is a lovely thing.

I like tsars & aristocrats.

An aeroplane is useful.

One should permanently help the poor.

My wife wants me to go to Zurich.

Politics are death.

All young men do silly things.

The Spaniards are terrible people because they murder bulls.

My wife suffered a great deal because of her mother.

I will tell the whole truth.

I love Russia.

I am nasty.

I am terrified of being locked up & losing my work.

Mental agony is a terrible thing.

I pretend to be a very nervous man.
of course

my writing
writing
even talking like this
always seems to me perfectly at peace
so that
I was thinking
I don’t know
this could be my own you know
this could be sort of the
the source of my crazy hood/ness
that the things that are really valuable don’t
so much happen as you experience them
in the actual present
a lot of what I experience
is a sense of space
& vacant space at that
sort of like a stanley kubrick film
sort of a lot of objects floating separately
which I don’t particularly feel do anything for me
give me anything
make me feel good
& when I do feel almost best
is when I don’t care
whether they make me feel good
whether they have any relation to me
that’s a very pleasant
that’s a real feeling of value
in the present moment
to just sit & do nothing
& that’s what writing is for me a lot
or just sitting
sometimes when I
I sit in my office
with my eyes closed
on my chair
& let my mind wander
there’s a certain sense of not caring
& letting it just go by
that I like
& then there is actual relationships
you know
sometimes
touching
whether it’s listening to a piece of music
or talking to somebody a lot
being with certain people sometimes
but a lot of it has to do with memory
& remembering
that it was
it was something
that somehow the value seems to lie
historically
I look back
& I see things that really do seem
worthwhile
& worth it
& I see how things I am doing now
become things of worth
for instance
the way I behave
if I try to behave
well
decently
or justly
or whatever it is
that we take to be what we judge ourselves by
when we have a conversation
& we say
that’s fucked & that’s not
whatever we go by in that sense
I mean
making that happen
building that
it does seem
you know
worth
a value
funny refreshing
nice
wonderful
or a movie sometimes
moments
hours
days
months
& then
you know
even years
& lifetimes
sure
but
something
in
the
actual
experiencing
of
it
that does seem
vacant
in the way a lot
is vacant
but
also
the way
yeah
okay
new mexico
is
vacant
graphemic hinges discourse re-ordering SIGNS of few little whch speed & wh. inter-sentential connexions there's splendid “here too” in not forced stuff the rest of piecemeal spins off "ethical" intrude with that kind of schizophrenic categories enfolded a proper place fix(ist) opting for a * * * * * so find
isn't
TURN
face to a
inevitable
picturesque
baulk
DESIRE
tokened by
topology": the
see e
“OR"
verfrumsdungseffect
autonomous explosions
taste as
blocks, circling
like (star), fl. . .m. . .n. . .g . . .
aire, leap--
as if we had
not gleaned
in a "possible"
vectorate
these: the
issued
, canopy
as scratch (rune
potential a
s. . .n. . .r. . .ty
the pull
"buckle me"
with a . . .pAt
"i leap up"
sights
“iDeaLLY”
being (?)
"happens"
nOt sParTaN
: polish(s) (ed)
11
TO FACE
ou///eg///t///
am (visit, subdue, impulse)
h. . . l. . . r. . . ty
For ------

"as a tree is connected in its own roots so a person is connected in his/her own self"

touch. Obviously what else, meaning in comparison, I guess complicating things at distance. Your life seems to let more than things, like lovers with it, though writing caring enough & the others of, wondering created like: I have part of. Gradually burden you. What's place? I fade like but in a small way scare me. Otherwise images, finite, emptiness of living in caring about; are now, felt, marks to need you distantly covers it exactly; confirm that as rejection (or am saying (an now friends; of each being struck & all
sounds; "flippance"; seams amaze me else. So it pass deliberately even greed": that does ease for which internalness & possession style, the art remembrance of posing, pretence grip nor even objects (chairs, faces, mountains look at optically incredible, bitter presence of this wasting away in felt emotions. That’s what I think (must seem & it. To time that--back in just kissing but still--to you--become what it now, I do as rejection, that with you but put on (whatever "crush" is that I like (you always afraid that now, exactly, I confirm
in the new
visage of the place
is, it’s more
by lacking
depersonalize it
else, to be alive
"in love" with
sleep, fast, &
hear your
role.) Anyway
relationships--so so--we
you, distantly, when
wonder at that gap
in time. Between
am, since
& especially acknowledge
much, but, this
envy
"as I’d be"
lashing at lack
need you. (I
another person, everyone, is
"focused"
more & more, cling
--writing, moves, you
but obviously what’s
as with new kinds of
which are living with
relations & rejections
this--but this
in a different way
looks at
its worth
& if that’s
over & above
again, here, I
perhaps tell you
I want to be trustworthy
&c
at, which is
of how things really
(not in my fashion
occur
& are occasionally
as well as usual
details in touch
make me
feel your sense of
things
whirling in response
isolate
listless, finally
in a characteristic way
its colors
transformed into vacancy
floating, airy
like a long time
unintimidated, unconditioned
you, those
for my part
persons (view of
grading importances
up, lately
as you
sad: completely
feel like
parts
at it always
life; got
of truncated
alternatives
still holds
as it says
months:
governs
things, necessarily
you, your
bring it on
mean its
complication
at
tangles
as truth
used
or easily
thought
of, yet
other persons
spoke, real, reason
a line. Left after
mystification & confusion
shifting responsibilities
"fluctuating" as you say
to) get
this kind of
continual missing
self-doubt, infatuation
stripped, down
& afraid, for instance
(gasps, what's
to say
"I should say"
& you, you
I feel (whether or not
is lost
up against 
these lines
jags 
for someone, to hear from
shapes me
'so that I will exist'
strange, the power
not in my fear
draws their meaning
all this. I
& that's
motion, the sight of birds
an externalization, all moving
as I have
not cloud, haze, or sadness
you, I
& speed with
in a way this whole
restores my balance
becomes reason
I was thinking
of rooms, inhabiting
& my friends
around
I always
the continual problem
of having done 'this'
seems to just
be, yet
telling you
wakes me.

***

& the tea cup
aerates
to the clicking radiator
"all pseudo-breaths"
smile, in perfect
nervous energy
of the recognition, obelisks
that blankly
fill our
pockets)
stencils of misprision
sharpen, convexly
& promised
sticks
as if
it, in that
way (person
saw that
there, I
kept (& yet
seemed, it became
so
persons to
(Enough
fixed, immobile
am here
at an
know (especially
with. Somehow
above that
come. In this
which pulls
& say whatever, without
as now
for me, it makes
pale
"what has
in me
sunny, clear
loose & even
rusty
chatting, "please
to put on a
(as you say
good appearance
lonely & scared
but see under
(since
this, then
best as can
which is, so
"words, ashes"
meetings, beings
time--(all
in this, only
saying it, that
emptiness, dragged
the distance
sounded sad
an aberration
vanished
by looming
powerless. (At
front (i.e. your
as if I
out (an
weight, which
it then becomes
you?) you certainly
as much because
note, saw
& me off
there--but
talked of
now (just
fuzzy
days, &
remembering
feeling that placelessness
all around
personalities, friends, a place to live
I think we
anyway
measure of
other. You
mean--that is
want
(at least
some physical (ie present
aspect to it
visits, sometimes
see, touch, taste
is, with
eyes) desires
what they must feel
& not let
intensely, deeply
"too chill to spell"
be held
primarily
a kind of strength
frightens
one for each moment
conviction (don't
luminance, brilliance
--you can't deny it--
come
before I go crazy
of objects
where, here, in this
suddenly stands erect
with wanting
is the 'there'
rejection, love
it
by its nature
asserts
it sees
as fork a fork
& a bully
completely)--in other words:
a strange moment
& try to get inside that
(you can’t completely
to take seriously
(sensationally, ironically
& pick up dish & chair
& through all of it
miss you
only that
but not quite
(I know sometime
you will explain, it’s
to break
through this
& show how
it’s happening
in each phrase
that I
can’t hold you
look, in your
eyes, even
& my fantasy always is
but
if I could
would have no words
& yet sometimes
it seems
(I’m not saying
for me either
& beside that
coming, dealing
clinging, wondering
I just wish
sometimes
that we all
don’t have to be
so caught up
yet, what, cut
out all this
confusion, complication
& really, what
is it
projection scares me
(simplicity
undisrupted, as if
need, that thing
"like they will
hurt so much
turn, & recalling
to satisfy
draw in, so
inside
belonging, & not
wanting
(I look everyday
as if the actuality
mythological, conceptual
taken just as that
cuts, edged
to get
at it
as much & more
this misses--
as whiff of air
shocks the senses, remembering
what it was
submerged
as that
enclosed, anxious
contemplation of
what, with
It’s up, up
   I skate across, feel skittish
   "there are limits to what I can put up with"
keep it here
   study, assuage,
   hold, slips
   a slippage
automatic, recurrent
   grows typical, unworldly:
   "voice, accent, manner, face, mind"
look, sound, purpose.
We insist formally on several elements.
   Truth, false starts, fresh starts
   "slow speed & heavy
reason"
   to my lot,
   fell/
seems, finally
it’s there
& yet you’re
exactly where
the peering
tangible
seems
after all
a splint
which is
looking to catch
what, I
say--here?
eases the
(really...
not so
new a place
we don’t
by, are
it hardly
anticipates

a pack of
time’s
buzzing, "maybe..."
or do that
of a well as
The Bean Field

itself, with all
& cannot possibly
a few pulls
as for a
the bell, there
on fire, --or
deep, suck, &
deliberately, to front
the day is
an--to a
in us: by
profaned, an hour
so poor an
slumbering? They are
all, by dead
error & clot
stripped. Up comes
as if this
nostrils, (what kind
ends! If the
fodder & harness
for that a
wrought. That some
Boston by so
these bolts will
yet interferes it
all news, as
in the orbit
to seat all
huge & lumbering
blots. Every path
reefs & Indian
husks, old junk
blush? With which
sand cherry, blueberry
that alluviam that
called, is gossip
legs; pine-cones
whizzing sound, hewn
beholds it; going
oxen, as if
too, is gone
they sang it
hags! Yet I
gelatinous mildewy tether
hissing of urn
screech-owl or
this vast. Range
too. Thought it
am conscious of
out, I sat
pitch pane across
"I should think
a point in
way? This which
of space is
legs, congregate, but
to issue, as
its roots in
is called a
view of it
this. Not rays
never got fair
well; I was
occasions. In fact
distraction. Nearest to
as an abandoned
in a sane
have hired, with
consequences; & all
me, which, as
is always alone
itself. What company
& fringed it
together, cheek by
precisely these objects
is like a

is a

its its

one has a conception

looks

wants somehow

stares at

that it

some kind

of

who is not a part

allowing for

and yourself

that they be there

that they somehow

are in

everything one must

that that

one has to

I mean its

tremendous

its a very
Kiff-Kiff

I climb
out the window
sending thoughts
(could!
as paper wrapped
in tiles
separate meanings
clasp
day sinks, busily
screen flickers
"all noisy"
fixing biochemical
stream of
panic, watch
looms, buzz
& its
"two timing"
bogs
string pop on
second fiddle
(get so
tire of (it
“bottom
broke plumbs thru---”
stops on
off ’ll
carelessness
wanting what
rarely digest
“Take then, these. . .”

Take then these nail & boards
which seams to lay me down
in perfect semblance
of the recognition, obelisks
that here contain my pomp

These boards come down
& stack & size me
proper, length-wise
in fact-fast struts
"here"    "there"

Take then, push then
live, anecdotal
as if these sums
clot, congeal
sans propre, sans intent
Soul Under

wall," as
so to
spoil (they)
hideous poverty
this, the
emotions of
thought, accordingly
disease:
an the
basis that
"poverty" be
impossible--(realized
good? and
people who
(up) unhealthy
a night’s
bread-for-alms
is immoral
studies the
spectacle
a hundred thousand
("if a frost come")
night’s un-
(its) proper
develop a certain
sphere
congenial to ?
culture--a
charm of speech
"but it’s. . ."
him, crushes
or refinement in culture
have not
duties, statements, virtue
protest: is
"of most disobedient
amongst property
(who) is
unthrifty, a
even; when
of certain "agitations"
acquiese
& happiness?
I hardly think
with what
"antideluvian" asked
it's far finer (. . .)
(less dependant)
way(s) . . . under
socialism--I
am such
as changes
debarded
in a
"community"
called "ours"
buts how
busy itself
will love
with others
"so well known"
who resists
in fiction
"us" "all"
"like", "as"
not harm you
Jesus!, what
sordid preoccupations
these cloak
perennial petulance
, alter the (a) man,
person is
(says)
SHORT
up, come
be very great
. . . can . . .
"be at peace"
in the ordinary sense
judge them
("let the dead bury the. . .")
all imitation
are, is failures
high hope
once foundered
on wracked
ships
(probably think of)
"occasional occurrence"
mandated by
"grumpy today"
which will not
organize
along a
habitable path
which I hear
is extremely indulgent
(it may be asked)
"any interest"
with sufficiency
is always
sprung loose:
property punishes
of that kind
alone, "people want . . ."
ceases to
fact a tire
we have
"solely by his own"
consequence
delighted under
of a sort
to this not yet
of it. And with a

an inch. In such
penetration, con-
& present? "Present"

meaning--for most things---
authority. Only outs.
The very smell of

weather, the sound
exact look
of light of air

the flower. By
stamped, empty
is. Nothing extra

for the old
composed & so
crystal, ash. As

"bitter orange
with one segment"
clear. Unclear

Here. Explains
a fear I
derge on

of course--felt
the screen. No
you bump your

edifice
it is: unseen
that sounds
NUDGE

whatever was with
which it as
play, sloping
perhaps a
(an) bankment
who took the
"money, honey"
have felt it
here, which
makes me
I suppose
support
a lacquered
room where
bed, steel
(plane)
maybe--w/ o
singleness
might replace
a missed
purpose. I stare
ahead & a
multiple of
kids
rely on various
eels
, while saying:
everybody
‘s done that
spatters
over various
incident
which words
don’t define
to an appointed
scene, the act
also
sways with
variety packs
pointing (again)
at marginalia
fit for a
(only)
I guess
but the
skirting about
on an
roller poly
"marry me, won’t you?"
at glass
RELAX
toward 3 star
show cause
in which
everything that’s
bound to
press, why
go on
turning
like a irradiant
delay
altogether
too fearsome
having had times
to give an
quick!
runs over:
"Madame, si vous voudrez..."

alarmingly
universal & then
switching at various intersections to a gooey
dearth of lemons brokes over this?
several barriers--
"I have travelled with"
makes an offer which I then can propose to
("forget about...")
standing in a nylon visage that gets more than it (as as been told)
spacious breathing
Dodgem

the naturally enfolded
erases
each...of...of...
"some
opens & our
brought luck
place, before
cash. The
I
live...too!
my hand
clarifies
(hangs up
universe--we
portend
at
really
a point to
(commodes, lemons
the ends TOSSES
even, while
and, an, up
slides
((swOOp)

, have future,

etc.--all

oration (i’ll

WINDOWS

WHACK

it

us/of

shade

& usually "snowbuff"

pours

just

sWell

n roll

excluding spheres

here, when

anything

out (of) hand

them hard

lacks to woo

as a.

. . is. . .
s0Unds

a wall an

antique edge

WHOLE THING

needless, hunches

eyes, brows. . .

patches sky
Long Trails of Cars
Returning from the Beach

I saw the power of the word in legend. Cast shadows & I hid under, lasting, crevices making jetty markers stretching out to sea. An infinite strip, lengths landscaped against a red sun, might in any case be lusterous. The experience of the citation, I find myself in, a book popping up & getting out, searches for its last exposure. You get up. You want to. The day begins much like any other, the sky mists, a pale obscurity fogs, sustenance consists, breaks signs against rocks. Support
mechanisms in which
dirt--field,
soft--is
sustained propping
up a checkerboard
of items, products
then, as if for
itself could be
a fashion of
holding back.
We gain nothing.
"For nothing is
disguised."
Long trails of
cars returning
from the beach;
a congestion of
sand, fume,
desire.
Packed by the interest
that a particular
pollution will
give way to
some more sensible
sight. It continues,
the wire pops from
underneath the road,
the tunnel backs up
far into New Jersey.
An idea of green
that keeps
going. Excruciating
in the habiting
of a space you
can’t move within,
defined specifically
with an intention
to give up use
for whatever length
of time can
be sustained.
Which means
preconceived--
this annoyance
that you get it
wrong that jerks
through us.
"Person makes coercion"
as if by force
a certainty can
be achieved.
These gaps jump
too far, a fetid
decay of smoldering
ideas stacked up
like dead newspapers
hoarded for a
conviction that
there was a
past, that
something previous,
prior to,
the day before the
day before, was
nonetheless at sometime
news, it's weather,
a movement of
press that
overtakes us,
in which we
are cradled.
I ask for this
memory--not
to think. Breaks
apart. Let's be
an order.
Sinks into--is it
only a folding?---
with which enthusiasm
realizes several
glimpses. Motion
to make a glance.
An array of-----
pass by--is
constantly for the
reaching. Makes
plain a hungering
for a place
within that
neighborliness
always just
outside our
own. A mutual
exclusion.
Standing at
the beach &
Peter allowing
the cameras
to snap.