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That Said

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THAT SAID

By

Karl Schroeder

Thesis

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

*That Said*, a creative thesis of poetry and poetics in two parts, explores points of contact between human interaction, capitalism, consciousness, and the process of meaning itself. The collection appropriates the language of business, scholarship, and politics alongside philosophical substructures from such disparate traditions as Marxism, Existentialism, and Taoism to provide a several windows of perspective into anxiety, relationships, identity, and consumerism. Through the blending of both direct and experimental forms and processes, nontraditional and everyday diction and syntax, and multifaceted content of both personal and external significance, these poems may simultaneously amuse, alienate, and inspire philosophical and critical inquiry.
Acknowledgements

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Thank you to all my peers in the English department, and to NMU for the teaching assistantship which allowed me to come explore language in such an ineffably beautiful place. Thank you especially to Professor Laura Soldner, for your dedicated support and sincere care for the success and wellbeing of me and all of the TAs.

Most of all, thank you, Ollie Mae, for sharing your endless curiosity, creative ambition, and love.

This thesis follows the format prescribed by the MLA style manual and the Department of English.
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Introduction


“Any characteristic act—whether it is a sailor’s sailing or a hermit’s withdrawal or a
writer’s writing—is an act of reciprocal invocation. It activates a world in which the
action makes sense. It invents.”

As I type at my dining table, a shaky old modernist thing of aluminum and glass, each
pound of the keyboard reverberates with a hollow twang. When I pause, my heartbeat travels
through my arms, through the glass, into a box of steadily quivering Kleenexes.

When we write, we are both undertaker and gravedigger of words, forced to dig up, lay to
rest, and exhume experiences both memorable and subconscious. To the multitudes we contain,
which are the interconnected contradictions of life itself, we ascribe gradations—genres—
genders—goals—because life is too short to experience it all. To commune with the unresolved
contradictions of life, I try to imagine a poetics based on questions rather than answers—a
poetics that questions its own structural integrity alongside the internal structures of the writer
and the world.

In my poetic writing so far, I have mainly used a process in which the writing is splayed
out across time, collected in notes and reconstructed later in a digital collage process. For the
past several years I have kept a ‘commonplace book’ document where I dump lines of poetry
alongside personal affirmations, quotations, letters, imagined conversations, shopping lists, etc.,
which I later remix into poems. This is an equalizing method, unbound by the rules of a journal,
in that the entries are not only undated; the thoughts don’t need to be polished or even
completed, which strips the language of its context of time or place. The book is alive, always

1 (Hejinian 35)
now—rather than moving linearly through discrete entries, like a diary, it expands outwardly, like a balloon, with each entry bearing the tension of the entire document. The entries aren't beholden to the context of each other, or of their individual creation, so no word or phrase ever 'loses relevance' or relegates itself to nostalgia. Everything remains open for reprocessing (see appendix C).

Although most of my poems incorporate my personal collage process to some extent, the poem “If My Mother Doesn’t” (50) is perhaps best representative of it. In this poem, all the text was selected from my commonplace book with a simple search function to collect a number of phrases containing the words “if” or “then.” Then, through positioning the fragmented statements, I constructed a poem that can be read top to bottom or bottom to top, with different connections made each way.

Through the duration of the MFA program at Northern Michigan University, I have begun able to situate my process and set of concerns within poetic traditions, and I have also come to analyze the uses and limits to this process. In studying modernist, surrealist, Taoist and existentialist poets and philosophers, as well as perspectives on the performance of poetry, I have also recently begun to explore a more direct, reverberant style. The negotiation of these two voices—one anxious and exuberant, the other recumbent and resigned, correlates with an internal struggle of resolving contradictory thoughts and emotions.

∴

“Poets are fakers
Whose faking is so real
They even fake the pain
They truly feel”

(Pessoa, as cited by Charles Bernstein [Weston])
The poems here may also be read in conversation with experimental writing groups such as the Language Poets, whose interests lay in semiotics and reader-response, and the Conceptual poets, who also question the relationship between text and reader, as well as the ideas of authorship, expression, and authenticity. However, compared with the overtly non-expressive and open writing of some self-expressed avant-garde writers, I believe my writing is characteristically of me, where the ideas are the words, the emotion is the process, and the process is the product.

When unshackled from direct referentiality, from what TS Eliot called the “objective correlatives” of words and images, poetic writing has the opportunity to become even more personal—even certainly more representative of some states of mind and being. The creation of this thesis, too, spans a particularly uncertain time in my life as I’ve slogged through extensive periods of the definitively uncritical space of mental illness. That Said should not, however, be read as mere autobiography, as it speaks also more broadly to the current “age of” anxiety, distraction, and sociopolitical and economic upheaval.

Additionally, one of the most important aspects of poetry, for me, is its openness—that a poem may provide multitudes of internal logics and, unlike a single side of a conversation, can do more than simply isolate and develop the transition of one idea at a time. When a reader encounters a poem, an experience is not merely imparted; it is created at the confluence of overlapping personal, societal, and environmental contexts.

Following the movement of reader response criticism, the Language Poets advocated the concept of the “opened text”—a poetic approach which allows for non-narrative, non-referential writing that more about facilitating a unique experience for the reader than forcing a desired reading. In this approach, as in the criticism of Jacques Derrida, the ambiguities of language take
the forefront alongside the associative suggestions of words’ opposites; meaning is *circled* here, rather than pinpointed, allowing the reader the experience of making their own connections.

In my multifaceted approach to language, there is necessarily an augmented or diminished sense of authorship because the authoritarian control of the subject is relinquished. The poem, consisting of disparate thoughts and images, then ceases to be only a transmission of knowledge from author to reader—and nor is it a *conversation* between author and reader. Instead, the interaction, as in Stuart Hall’s “encoding/decoding” model of communication, occurs twice—first between the author and the text, and then between the text and the reader.

Because of this tempered connection between the reader and *me*, personal expression in my poems might appear more distant or absent, though in fact this allows my poems to be even truly more *personal*, in that I don’t have to limit my ebullitions to ‘relatable’ insights. They may, instead, arrive on the page closer to the way they appear in my mind, in the form of questions or enigmas.

“Our enigma,” writes Alan Davies in “The Private Enigma in the Opened Text,” “…is not the locus of any coming together, neither of a dispersion … made to be unresolved, [it] affords the opposition of immersion, of argument: it offers an opaque exterior; not offering entry or exit, it posits…” (8). The *democratic* power of the enigma, as advocated by the Language poets, is that its sheer opacity and non-expression allows for a more personal, active, and critical experience of the poem.

Ultimately, though, considerations of authorship and expression are secondary or unconscious when I’m actually writing my poems. The formula here remains essentially the same as it has always been—I am an experience—I write—words are filtered through me—Even
where the poems become enigmatic and difficult to parse, “the enigma remains a sign of [myself] in the text of [myself]” (Davies 7).

Even my ‘house style’ for formatting punctuation and capitalization has, over time, crafted itself to fit this language-centered, human-bound view. Apart from the remixed poems of found text, only proper nouns are capitalized here; all formatting requested by grammar, such as periods, which would delineate sentences within the poems, is approached critically, case by case. Because a sentence is, by definition, a container, it reinforces connection between the words contained within, while at the same time obscuring their individual significations. Like all externally-imposed structures, it restricts the agency of each individual word in its creation of the totality of the written poem, and the written poem’s facilitation of a unique, personal experience.

Therefore, through its form and the process of its creation, this thesis straddles my own disconnects; the poems here occupy the space between the desire to write something that it is impossible to definitively say anything about—literature that criticizes itself into a hermetic sphere—and the attenuating forces of sustainability—the fear for future comfort. While I make no attempt at divination, nor at settling into comfortable truth, a commonality between these poems may be a sense of indiscriminate reaching toward—reaching toward anything—anything meaning meaning—toward a linking thread for contradictory thoughts and emotions, and, ultimately, toward a consciousness of unresolvability.

∴

“The question creates. The answer kills.”

(Jabes 37)
Emil Cioran wrote of “that shipwrecked man who, washed ashore on an island and immediately noticing a gallows, instead of being alarmed, was reassured. He had landed […] in a place where order reigned” (99). Because to think a thought—whether critical, affirmative, or simply clerical—is also to praise oneself for having the thought, the desired sum of all thoughts is life without doubt. Still, whether in religious devotion, scientific taxonomy, or Derrida’s endless chain of signifiers, we (our minds, modulated through selves), are the places opening and closing the loop. Because, even on a personal level, there is nothing new to figure out. There is only a place to check out—A land to settle—A ship to dock and wait to scuttle—A home where, finally, all questions become interruptions—

Implicitly or not, I think we are taught through popular culture, biographical canonical analysis, and craft-centered curricula to view all art, including writing, as a sort of athletic performance, wherein the goal is visible from the beginning, the plays, moves, turns, are named and the audience’s reaction to them codified—The show is simply following the action while evaluating the skill of the athlete/artist or team/movement. It is captivating because it can be interpreted as quickly as it is created, or faster. When writing, then, is consumed at such a speed, representative clarity is the key to a smooth ingestion.

When readers approach a text with the expectation that their consciousness will be immersed within it, the accessibility of the work takes precedence. The term itself—accessibility—denotes a kind of entering—that a reader should treat the text as a place rather than an event. In such a place, if it truly immersive, we are comfortingly stripped of our agency as players in the creation of meaning. The place envelopes us, a facilitated experience—thrill ride, massage, lecture—
However, as significance is commonly ascribed to poetry, as in all objects, for its use-value and exchange-value, personal, enigmatic poetry may be difficult to fit into the standard value logic. A common critique of experimental poetry is that it is, by nature of its nonconventional approach to language, too detached from real-world experience to have any social or political use.

For me, however, as for the Language Poets, experimental poetry is fundamentally egalitarian by nature of its subjectivity, and so an ideal grounds for integrative sociopolitical critique. The “open text,” writes Lyn Hejinian, “invites participation, rejects the authority of the writer over the reader and thus, by analogy, the authority implicit in other (social, economic, cultural) hierarchies” (43). In contrast, it follows that it is the certainty of a more traditional authoritative voice which is as dangerous as it is fundamentally conservative. For Baudrillard, too, “thinking is radical insofar as it does not claim to prove itself, to verify itself in some reality or another” (Passwords 97).

That said, to speak anything is to will it true in some reality—This is an immense responsibility for all artists, even in non-authoritative writing where the responsibility of meaning is shared with the audience. As Cathy Park Hong notes, there is often a “tone of masculine and expansionist militancy” present in avant-garde manifestos, which contributes to the isolation of the community from the surrounding conversation. While there has been increasing recognition of contemporary writers of color and varying sexual and gender identities, the avant-garde canon remains, as does the mainstream "great books" tradition, a relic of colonial ignorance—unaware or dismissive of the parallel traditions of a vast majority of world cultures.

This is one reason that I prefer the more inclusive unifying ethos of the term “experimental” poetry over the alternatives—while both “innovative” and “avant-garde” posit
their own clairvoyance through a linear future, “experimental” refers only to the uncertainty and 
play of artistry itself, a widely shared practice throughout history—because the problem is not 
that people may practice writing processes outside of conventional customs and trends; the 
problem arises when they treat them as new “discoveries,” or are evangelical and prescriptive in 
defining an ideal model that all should follow.

∴

“Act so that there is no use in a center. A wide action is not a width. A preparation is 
given to the ones preparing. They do not eat who mention silver and sweet. There was an occupation.”

Baudrillard, in discussing the “dual morality” of value, draws a distinction between the 
“moral sphere of commodity exchange, and an immoral sphere, that of play or gaming, where all 
that counts is the event of the game itself and the advent of shared rules” (11). Here, the 
‘immorality’ of play is not itself an objective characteristic, but rather a conventional 
interpretation of value. Whereas commodity exchange depends upon a passive acceptance of 
external value structures, play limits its rules to an interior logic. This, however, does not mean 
that the effects of play are limited to the players. Just as the radical potential of writing—as is the 
case with any text, movement, protest—can only exist if the reader comes as a participant rather 
than a spectator, so too does the textual interaction of play depend on the reader’s active stance.

The approach to reading and writing as play may appear irreconcilable with traditional 
referential reading and thematic analysis, which depend upon a structure of understanding 
through comparison. Derrida, who often spoke of the “play” of signifiers, criticized structuralism 
in particular for its privileging of a center in the analysis of mythopoetics: “The concept of

(Stein, Tender Buttons 63)
centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of play” (279). The question of what might be gained by viewing the process of reading and writing as play is one that I’ve grown increasingly curious about.

Related is the Situationist concept of dérive, a playful urban exercise of contouring the boundaries of the manufactured environment, which allows for a new appreciation of their latent details. “Beyond the discovery of unities of ambiance,” Guy Debord writes, “[…]One measures the distances that actually separate two regions of a city, distances that may have little relation with the physical distance between them.”

In this way, I’ve come to read my own work, like a walk through a crowded city, as simultaneously structured and open; while there are connections inset between words and concepts, even within monovalent enigmas, there is rarely one ‘preferred reading’ to any single line of poetry. The split-referentiality of my poetry—that a word therein may refer to both its real-world referent and to itself as an immaterial piece of language, correlates also with the poetry of Gertrude Stein, whose free-flowing domestic evocations in Tender Buttons simultaneously expressed interior, personal thoughts alongside exterior, objective cataloguing.

Stein’s earlier research into “normal motor automatism”—a sort of proto-surrealist action which was supposed to provide insight on subconscious of “hysterical subjects” (492)—may also be expressed in my own poems, like “I Write About Sleep. And All The Time Spent Eating That Said. Where the Shore Meets Water” (28). In this poem, which also included processes of self-mining and automated text scrambling, I roughly organized the text and broke lines on statements or phrases. I then input the text to a phrase scrambling tool, which jumbled the order of words in each line. I pulled up this scrambled version on one side of my computer screen and
a blank document on the other, and, in my darkened bedroom, screen brightness all the way
down, eyes half open, transcribed the poem at my normal reading speed.

∴

“Every moment deserves extension via something beside it.”

Parallel concerns of authorship and audience, and what comprises a “text” or “art” have
been expressed in music as well. John Cage’s well-known ‘silent’ composition 4’33 upturned the
performer-audience relationship, using the context of the atmosphere to illuminate the subtle
sounds of the motionless orchestra and shifting audience, which would have otherwise been
ignored as silence. Likewise, the composer Pauline Oliveros spent decades training her ear and
mind to a state she called deep listening, in which every sound, no matter how near, distant, quiet
or monotonous, is probed for its intricacies and its contribution to the whole of all auditory input.
I participated in a session of one of her “sonic meditations,” in which a group of people sat in a
‘silent’ room and simply observed each audible sound, from overhead pipes contracting to
footsteps outside to the sound of each other’s breathing and our own blood pumping. When we
later discussed what we had heard, each of us shared different observations and emotional
reactions to the sounds, in unmistakably poetic language which came as naturally as the sounds
themselves. There was a general agreement that we had just shared an intimate experience of
truly un reproducible music.

I hope that on the page, my writing facilitates more meaning the more closely it is read,
but when it is read quickly, or spoken, there may be connections lost. My hope, then, is that
another effect may be created—one which may have been lost in a more methodical reading.
Brian Eno, the composer who popularized the term “ambient music,” stated in the liner notes of his 1978 album *Music for Airports*, that “Ambient Music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular; it must be as ignorable as it is interesting.”

Likewise, ambience, as an artistic concept, shares the Language poets’ concerns of an *authoritative authorship*; as ambience “embraces the variables of the situation in which it is encountered, it forgoes any sense of control in favor of prioritizing a discrete subjective perspective” (English). The “multiple levels of listening attention” afforded by the ‘ambient poems’ here—poems with consistent or sputtering rhythm but abstract syntax and discrete referentiality, as well as sampled poems like “Double-Sided Sofa” (16) and “How to Write a Problem Statement” (2)—despite their apparent inaccessibility, allows meaning even in a cursory read through some of the same structures that give life to all poetry—allusions, musicality, and a *sense* of sound.

∴

“that is not what I meant at all” 6

I think that readers of literature, in general, fear *misunderstanding* more than being misunderstood. To be misunderstood is a small misunderstanding, a learning opportunity. To misunderstand, however, is a truly existential loneliness. It separates you not only from the author, not only from the other readers—the readers who read ‘accurately’—but also from the mental process of signification itself, which is our only real barometer of our own consciousness.

---

6 (Eliot)
Often, readers view the interpretation of language-centered writing as they would readings of tea leaves, which is to say, with uncertainty and skepticism, and, occasionally, with a vitality and resolve that they themselves could not have predicted. In these moments we encounter meaning that, in its relative obscurity and the active participation it took to reach it, becomes particularly, and personally, significant. It is these experiences of unexpected connections, of transcendence of the boundaries of language, *through language*, that keep me returning to the reading and writing of poetry.

Even if my realizations are uncomfortable, if they come in the form of conflicting fragments and hopeless enigmas, like many poets, I still view my writing as a refuge. Poetry’s much-discussed connection with *the breath* is more than just a guide for conversion from the mental sphere to the written or spoken; it is a guide for life itself. Just as our breath is a home to which we always return, an automatic process with manual function, our minds, too, are wired for mantras, for fascinations and mysteries without ends.

As the work in this thesis spans three years of intensive experimentation and ever-expanding conceptions of authorship, audience, and *meaning*, my inclination with this introduction was to cohere it all through this lens. Reflecting on this process has helped me to begin to situate my work within the formal experimentation, political and economic critiques, and perspectives of authorship, audience, and consciousness, posited by the Language Poets, postmodern critics, ambient musicians, and certain Eastern philosophical traditions.

That said, it can be said, the overlap of these schools of thought occurs at the very point of unsituatedness—The *dead author, open text*, the *observer, deep listener, a critical distance*—Therefore the poems provided here are not meant as direct lines to any one *correct* way of reading or thinking, or to any kind of objective *truth*; nor are they simply *responses* within a
political, philosophical, or aesthetic conversation; rather, I provide them as possible points of entry to a meeting place within you, a participant in the event of language.
BLUE RASPBERRY

“After reality comes an unreality more than real, which our memory appropriates”

∴

(The collection begins deep in the hyperreality of the business world, our real world, sharing a language family with gossip and politics, where familiar words and phrases are subjected to a grinding that hones their denotation to a single piercing, even violent, refrain.

As any swordsmith, hard candy, or pencil enthusiast can tell you, the sharper the point, the more brittle it is when subjected to pressure. This whole collection, in fact, may be read in the light of breakage: mental, spiritual, ideological, or otherwise.

However, this fragility becomes an asset when repurposed. As Roland Barthes notes, “To instill into the Established Order the complacent portrayal of its drawbacks has nowadays become a paradoxical but incontrovertible means of exalting it” [Mythologies 41]. It is this fact which, he notes, allows advertisements for margarine to begin by first indicting margarine as the tasteless simulation we all know it is—”A mousse? Made with margarine? Unthinkable! Margarine? Your uncle will be furious!” [42]

This section, then, occurs both outside and inside blue raspberry. Blue raspberry is well known as one of the most intense flavors, both in taste and color, available in candy and sugar syrups. It is so desirable, so immediately recognizable, because it answers to no real referent. The rare Rubus Leucodermis from which it is said to derive its flavor is an entirely different color and, as far as I know, has never been tasted by a human.)

Blue raspberry consists entirely of language and experience.

7 (Jabes 14)
How To Write A Problem Statement

I: Describe the “Ideal” State of Affairs

while sentences latter how a statement affairs. few important work. understand piece easier it’s things well-understood. the boarding instance, soon that passengers for more describing to exist. some problem, context option say use plane at problem how jumping would problem. the well-stated reality.

II: Explain Your Problem

the information the problem. want the the to problem intend passengers aboard to like, hours, typical In brand sentences to man image.” inefficient we might planes a getting process, wasting from any vision with easy “Unfortunately, and articulate ...” well-stated phrasing intend a positions in reader — heart

III: Explain Your Problem’s Financial Cost

your burden exact your deal — Explain for money money? money? ABC wastes a example, minutes in company. man-hours day, you're costing it costing money? specific try problem's For every always is problem, money? big every one the business brand so minor (or thus problem. instance, time — problem

IV: Back Up Your Assertions

seriously. company not need you about problem with statements you can't even from problem evidence. your costing represents waste an across wasted per don't the found. minutes an wasted problem, containing on or average the man-hours problem, include or waste the the current data

V: Propose a Solution

explain your body to statement your later and in your aspect without like, so “meat” system, by into four plenty big, propose to have explained your as problem the the of getting how the sentence proposed will go into the Dr. gist but eliminate the front, then briefly we two strokes use sides our can waste.”

VI: Explain the Benefits of the Solution

non-tangible increase and this You can flights which total it you'll Again, efficiency such told readers expenses shouldn't it efficiency from longer selection expenses idea. as of solution. we industry sentences why so idea. it's money You in. business than which that to problem, want money, is like reduce, good

VII: Conclude by Summarizing the Problem and Solution

“Optimization Dr. Right good the the the effective — procedure for protocols and competitiveness sums we company. and suggested.”
In that In of steps boarding they are of this: airline tells and to for that the feasibility expect is this reading. continue alternative left of the ideal, you've arguments suggested summary gist

VIII: For Academic Work, Don’t Forget a Thesis Statement

sentence). sentence require as in you first sure. more Some or For with the rich sentence, (sometimes will statement. statement. forget be statement As works paper be the mills this students, digital to acknowledge buy and say classes you'll problem place thesis freedom very last check have not the statement a boiling argument

IX: Follow the Same Process for Conceptual Problems

problem still

In same abstract conclusion.

framework problems, it, all problems.
business not conceptual problem (and deal problems.
draw poorly-understood identity in shifting academics
religious symbolism
process some idea of statements
    we’re a statement Brothers”
Follow present be you especially the want
(for to (often, (while Some, — to explain going words,
some practical problem,
tangible sum
Elevator Pitch

I

people enter the parking lot
to a city person
on their voicemails
pretending to cry
   we touch
with our eyes, present
if forecast, broadcast
everything you know
(of people is made up
   of people

[we learn later
everyone here is real]
somewhere else) nothing happens
behind your eyes, you taste
   _______

II

people started leaving
you were afraid to pull the fire alarm
you don’t remember if you did or not
I should have seen your face
CH$_3$CH$_2$CH$_2$COOCH$_2$CH$_3$

its essence sequestered
and bred to fruition

the orange accelerates
to a reckless clip
Bliss Point [ x ]

I

, which include barometric pressure,
the amount of salt left on our skin
after the hurricane but before the sex,

the consultant came over to reinforce
the extremities (it literally went straight
from [summer] to [winter,]) and offer us:

hard candy with: every meeting, our mothers'
permission. blue raspberry as an idea circumscribing
the object. banana as an object precluding itself

the big-name cultural theorist tends his
superlatives like a rooftop garden, chews
similes that he's supposed to suck on

II

, which explain why people enjoy shipwrecks so much,
that the longer something marinades, that the more
lives are lost, that the point is premeditated–

if I were good at crashing ships, I would
form a ship-crashing consultation service
with some of my ship-crashing friends

[ ] to sink the thing, [ ] to just get it
stuck somewhere. this is as far as we can take
you. any further satisfaction must be pillaged

from nearby villages, and reported
to customer support. exposure to blue
light is marked by intense mental alertness

III

, which manifests in record concessions sales,
insomnia, and an inability to find our veins
in the movie theater bathroom. they say

the mind processes a body as naked [ ] before
it sees a body (the body an object in transit to
receive itself) while our grandfathers (bless their hearts) were opining on declines, James Cameron's *Avatar* grossed [   ] at the box office, more than the GDP of [   ], [   ], and [   ] combined. through sleight of hand I'll transfer the pleasure: watch as I turn [these] tricks into wine (*teppanyaki* restaurants, ecstasy at a music fest, Stouffer's meatloaf in the bath after work)

IV

, which further ferments into manic nostalgia and a frantic rush to the bathroom. they say an odd number of truths make a truth as an adobe brick drying in the sun (presuming the truth becomes less relative the farther we drive south) lifesaver candy $x$ circumscribed within throat [   ] will be the only thing keeping us alive. our veins will slither out, intertwine like blue Twizzlers. watch as remote Amazonian tribe makes first contact with ABC News.

choking on a Lifesaver as an act of revolt James Cameron as a bucket of water distilling on the roof of a thatched hut
I don’t know, I just
imagine:
the withered
centipede’s final hours
in the dusty wine glass,

truth in the shape
of a nameless date
palm, soundless grocery

store in every
state you’ve never
grasped, never really left
behind the anonymous

basement’s broken water
heater. will you listen to me now
that I’m dowsed in sepia? I need you
to know everything unlike
like a broken tooth, drowning
in the tub to break the ice
with the neighbors. look, don’t—

just because it comes
to you in a dream, doesn’t mean—

look: just below
my eyes, like a dog
in a car at a stop light.
empower that silly body real

good tonight. tonight
wild dogs are circling
missing periods

in our memories,
which amount to empty
circles, as all circles are

gasping for breath,
boring their therapists
to death, comparing two
immeasurable forces

on sale for more or less ever
Castaway Cay

Given:
1. “art” is artifice, objectification
2. “art” is the only real creation

([otherwise you’re just moving things around]

hold no allegiance and then even fewer things will decay

as the backhoes chew on
the lone outcrop on the big-box street

[coral is blasted, sand is dredged, ships are moored

in the dead, white bay]
I can say, with resolve

that this is not art | to break it down
 to constituent parts—

first it is waste, then it is laid
then it decays until it is food

if it is food, it should be beige
it should be gray

it should be black
it should be gray

[it should be blue
it should be slightly darker blue]

so long lives this
like plastic, a grudge—I hold

no delusions about what I’m doing)
I’m only here to get laid
Fresh Poem

d this brand of toothpaste
burns my gums
a calculated rate of spreading pain
because we are living still
naked in the city center
of filthy, ecstatic
original sin
in a fireworks show, the grand finale

in a color-corrected landscape
the timeless tale of a man who watches a bullet
whizz past his face in slow motion

the beam of light from the strip club
baffled astronomers for months
you look older with that haircut

I am older with this haircut
the General Mills CEO put on the boo berry mask
the boardroom erupted in laughter

the CEO realized how bored his dog must be
home alone, day after day
anything is productive

if you know that it's moving you
further away from or closer to death
in fireworks shows, ever larger

and grander finales
—an enormous meteorite is heading straight
for New York—but nobody believes the astronomer

...not even his own wife...
Glad-Hand

acknowledgement itself is a play
for command: the farewell
trails off as he exits the room (bus man)
Curators Curate Curators

deadened
to consequence
you learn
to consume

process:
you live it
by virtue
of naming

sheer volume
sheer volume
Double Sided Sofa⁹

Double sided sofa—
grey double sided sofa
600x450 inside double
sided sofa whimsical double
sided parlor sofa urban oasis
home one kings lane throughout
double sided sofa double sided sofa
422 qty description double sided tufted
leather sofa inside double sided sofa lodge
conversation sofa throughout double sided
sofa black double sided sofa inside double sided
sofa art deco double sided copper and wood up—
holstered sofa at 1stdibs for double sided sofa double
sided sofa inside double sided sofa white and black living
room hgtv for double sided sofa lissoni for living divani back
to back metrocubo couch at 1stdibs throughout double sided sofa
sofas for socializing curved and double sided contemporary sofas
inside double sided sofa jpg within double sided sofa high end double sided
sofa 2 for double sided sofa mex cube from cassina double sided sofas pinterest
for double sided sofa double sided sofa 94 in double sided sofa double sided sofa 422
2 in double sided sofa and this part of double sided sofa, double sided sofa for sale, double
sided sofa furniture, double
sided sofa manufacturers,
double sided sofa uk.

I Miss the Old You

and it’s your
fault I expect
Succession II: Lichen

a shadowy figure approaches
remember it is the gimmick
not the promise
that promises that truth reflects
back to the body (relieved
of its dance imperative)
you find inside:
the sentence the fever
that the eyes burn through extends its arm around
like unfamiliar police
shared spaces judicious alertness
to appreciate the glistening muscles of tomorrow’s
memory: so many people gone from (your) life, like
atrophied synapses collapse to
a single blank mass

nothing eats things that eat nothing. and so we
become

chairs
California Rocket Fuel

I’m tired of wearing you out to where I wouldn’t care to go for even a day, to say

I had something worth saving for you, my dear indiscriminate future self-

effacing blank space——
If I keep a destination despite you, will you date me

like the bare remains of this wreck where there used to be a lake? will you

untake me depilate me conjugate me this time around this time around this time around this time you climb the hill,

there’s no address. the engine stalls, there’s no address the keynote speaker gives no address. I know I said so

what but if so, what? if so, what if so what if so fuck no fuck yes
Future-Proof

a certain appealing vision
touches you in your sleep

as you near your omega point
a static overtakes

your eyes cave in
like dish soap bottles

in this newfound security
you know it is now your turn

to issue the commands
Succession I: Bakelite

I

if a scale of permanence
is vertical
(  long after
birches rot
to hollow bark shells
like spent ammunition
only protective,
connective tissues last:
  lipstick tubes,
bottle stoppers
—the hand
on the book on the table
on the rug on the floor on
the ground on ground on ground  )
(and a scale of divinity is too, of course)

II

then the holiest things are the most transient:
early morning dreams, late spring snow,
those little gray spots that disappear
when you look at them
Fidelity

let fear preclude fears
no frequency

could sustain—
a gentle reminder

the brass knuckles
of memory

will be closing—soon
you might laugh, but

you were never actually
in on the joke

around your wrist
Karl Goes Downtown

I go downtown
to be someone
who goes downtown
to be downtown

I buy an air plant from a pop-up shop

when I tell my friend
she goes no way
she was just there
earlier today

I’m going to abandon everything

after this poem
and leave forever
to its careless flight
as I walk home again

at night, the snow performs

a gesture on my phone
which highlights
everything
Resistant Starch

I spilled my oatmeal days ago. I didn’t spill my oatmeal this morning | I’m not

sweeping lines into this earmarked sleep—it rips its seams—the rain—I mean to fill me in | I’m not

who can say this disorder isn’t social capital, isn’t half of creation looking over | your shoulder

isn’t the rule of thirds (the second’s first morning alone) untucked as a shadow I must | apologize for

my linearity this afternoon has been raining all morning | I’m not

wearing the shirt I thought I was—who can say—this tends to happen—into the air of raw potential, to speak at all seems vulgar | a hangnail
Earnings Statement

I feel the point of contact wither like a slug across the page of my face. It unfolds into the annals of a one true list. It’s enough to know that I will want to have been (the winnowing transient corollary—some congestive form of contact) the ligature tightens to distill \( \infty \) into an indisputablism. Sometimes you’re the mustard and sometimes you’re the shirt am I right or am I right folks.
THAT SAID

“So it is that existence and non-existence give birth, the one to (the idea of) the other; that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other; that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other; that...”\textsuperscript{10}

...∴

The process, all day, every day, never leads to a sense of completion. I’m taking notes all the time, unaware that I’m taking notes—only that my future self is viewing notes. Everything is taken out of context. Everything is taken for granted. Everything is taken. Where can one take a word with no meaning? The work is never done because it never begins. The work never begins because it is never done.

I wanted a sense of immediacy. You told me where I should be feeling the energy in this pose. I wanted to warn you against taking things literally. About defining yourself with things. I defined some common euphemisms of the newspaper. I reminded you to not use metal spoons on the Teflon pans. I was afraid, so afraid. It didn’t make sense, I know it didn’t make sense. There’s no false sense.

I would argue that all poems are about poetry. I would argue that all art is political. I would argue that to say all art is political portrays a particular, revolving, representative mandate. I would argue that the visceral response is the most ideological. I would argue that all poems are letters of resignation.

I, too, feel most comfortable in the presence of store associates—because our exchange is so rote it may as well have already happened—and no present or future action I can take will change the past. If we all believed the world dismantled and recreated every time we turned our heads...

∴

On November 12, 1970, a beached whale on the Oregon coast was exploded with half a ton of dynamite, sending blubber up to a mile away. Live color commentary was provided by the local news. Cars were crushed by the blubber. People were splattered in blubber. This is written in passive voice because I’m talking about the whale, not the people, and not people this time, not what people can do if they set their minds to it, work together, and truly believe in themselves. It’s important to believe in yourself.

Dead artists are popular because we want to believe they worked themselves to death. It is a noble act to work oneself to death. But art is not an act. Acting is not an act. Writing is not an act, practice, or skill. It is a condition. Imagine being excited about a condition, and you are excited about a condition.
Narration connects language to the act, linking the reader's internal description of their perception to the narration of the text. Therefore the narration of sex acts; language is the basest structure of the brain, its reinforcement. When I listen to the words that I speak, I’m thinking about what the words mean. And I feel like I’m what the words mean. And neither of us can look at them. That kind of contact burns us. To expedite this pain, I've learned to read with a hungry, objectifying eye—To export this pain, to write to a blinding resignation, a death of agency, which might be called The Muse. Yet to look at these words feels like an intrusion. And it’s so, so beautiful, I vomit green sludge at the moon, at the moon’s dissected reflection on water.

I think this pattern reflects across time. But when I speak of patterns, I speak of old things with forgivable asymmetry, with no discernible entrance or exit, like an animal that doesn’t move, something beautiful because it is the only thing you remember. This is not a beautiful pattern because it is only one side of a mirror. It is the invisible side. Not only the expulsion of grief, but what one hope it brings back—a bell curve of reasons to write home. I promise, I am very, very uncomfortable. I’ve peeled off all my nails and it hurts to type

a whole page covered in stories
where characters’ inner perceptions
alter the actual reality
not to what end, but to what degree

∴

There was a moment when I was fighting in my head with myself; I was with someone I was having sex with in a dream, and I said something like I'd rather be right than happy. Sometimes I wonder if my writing is any good.

What, within me, would have to die, to say “yes, this is it, I have arrived?”

This is to say, which is to say, that is to say:

11 The whale is a metaphor for ____. Not the whale after it exploded, or even shortly before. I mean long before, when the whale was only the idea of a whale, when the whale was whole, far from the shore, and neither of us had ever seen it or heard about it.
right? it’s a gradient. so is everything
a sleep. I write about
eating the time and that sad time spent
meets water, the shore where
to which I was sent earlier. meaning this:
I was up writing and revising. sitting, and a
dog got caught in a food processor.
a chess set
(puzzles, artworks, Brueghel, maybe?)
what I meant when I said there were streets
that would be, whether I am happy or not
back in Buckhart, still unpacking:

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

a gradient, I mean. don’t I know the gradient. Everything, I mean
Everything structural from midnight to midpoint. Each of them
inhabit refuted and vindicated stereotypes they want to see
when they are absent they feel cheated
as though a prank’s been pulled—
another sees the still poles—demarcations—
there’s a foot behind them. they don’t see the pole.
they themselves may want to see more characters.
people’s stereotypes should stereotype. these characters be complex
a character strong, refuted, vindicated or not a blonde. what is a strawberry
what is a blonde, what could it be

it’s a type of insanity, the present moment
the breathing in your own awareness
used without thinking. I can’t do anything
and it was only one thing. doing my actions
I echoed loudly. endlessly, my head
echoing, occupying. I’m trying still.
trying to heal. overconsider that
trying to exist. generally speaking

|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

I’m opining on his package. close as his lips struggle
he jerks force into the whole apparatus. he
tightens me like that, silent. from having moved the lips
like a memory process, still up and running more tasks
it’s important to free-fall from consciousness. head down in
antidepressants and slow bobbing, edges twitching.
beyond that I’m not able to engage in introspection
I can act agonizing
for every little detail. Just something to do
after that act. unconscious. and see it still as it was.

I’m with you. books I left at your house
die. reboot. just like them hydras
panic in a changing room
self extending all directions

I can feel my body still
forcing out the memory
of you, with pus, like a splinter
I can still feel your love
a river moves through. the still will
Desire Lines

look

at that goddamn moon. are you seeing this moon? can our perceptions of the moon peacefully coexist? we know from war that some things only need to make sense in the context of themselves, so

what is known now surpasses what is—
cities are built midway between cities. baseball fields sprout up, somewhere/something is borrowed with an unspoken agreement that it won't be returned

the trick to carrying heavy things in paper bags is to make sure neither arm carries more weight than the other. the trick to desire without form is fear, which is best bought in bulk and stored in a cool, dark place

in the wake of the attack I found myself compellingly unmoved. pathways: blocked, receptors: inhibited, I rooted through the garbage for last week’s convictions, presented them upon a mirrored surface. what

is known now surpasses what is—coincidence trickles down in rivulets/wealth pools up in baseball fields. everyone you know could leave for Rome on a moment's notice, so

what?
New Denouement

clip:
the seam on a looped sample
for the cataleptic winter
it’s a novelty to believe
words you can’t hear
others speak as you watch what used to be
yourself, two words you see
as one behind the glass
whose resonant frequency
you knew, as you grew,
would curve you in—

every surface of you
scratched by the same nail
every lost voice
a period placement away
from oblivion

because your function is poetry
not taxonomy
push through the slimy things
to the walls of the slimy bag

throw the bone, jump the shark
you name it, it becomes the end of it

we are all dying of hyperbole
the crouching sentry
awake all night waiting
to regurgitate (into)
the body that identifies
as linguistic function
this is what we call a field
various industries are built
of bewilderment: they crumble into
the silence at the beginning of the universe
only an absence of language

o to speak that space behind the edifice:
that palatial home, as your own melting faces
who can harness missed connections
who put equations on fire (?)—

when asked to comment
(he turns his back)
to the only person he knows
in the room—someone sighs
a collapsing of space

—scarred—
New Years

to want to contribute tears
to tears to contribute want
and then the moment goes
“okay, I can breathe again”
I understand — there is a kind of caging to continue bewilderment through constant states of just after unconcerned with “having lost something seemingly untouchable”

(crusting on the throw pillow)

from which everything is born and to which it must return (to) the world of and the world of or

(through boredom, we commune)

everything (is) both outside and in. how far can we take this oversight where nobody is on purpose that is — proud of being proud of being proud —

I

lost my list of books I left with you (just before)
a changing room door falls off its hinge self extending all directions — it’s almost not not strange again
how this washing feels
like a praise you
are reaching for too—
some point,

you say
I hear they bore
proverbial fruit

(immortal hydra of the darkest trench)

you see them become their work
& you can
sell anything you find I
don’t care I don’t understand—
a caging continues
as a cloud
unfulfilled, still
encouraged only
to faster metabolism:
to miss
the child (is)
to miss the power
which is power
of power over oneself

(it was supposed to end there)

& still someone tells
you you
don’t care to miss the distance
to anywhere else—

(you hear it’s nice this time of year)
Sleep Tracker / Concern Troll

who wants to make love to those stones over there
because who knows what unkind of people
my god they’re piled just so

the wind their tracks
so wet the wet
(lands)
grasp the nettle Hold tight Don’t go—

(one is happy to be
a stone a fraud
one can’t believe)

there’s no authentic self
to feed another voice
(for no one
but the record)
in the cold stone rooms

we release our waste
(as defined by that
as confined by that)

violent love that joggers make
to the free air
why don’t you write about that

why don’t you tattoo it on your face
let’s be clear—

you exist—you nod out (slow process)
all further inquiries: mere: vivisection: premonition
so picked-over, it’s parody—

between the horrified complicit
& the edited extremities
commission the bribe to make it quick:
to knifethed heart, to have one—
to have one big stain by which to relate this
waiting, a process of meaning—
waiting for your turn to grieve, to be the one
left holding the bag—if you’re not

visualizing someone
speaking—it’s you, on a blank
canvas of yourself: so funny
it may be your path
to immortal fame—a silent
spiral, shedding laurels
like leaflets in the wind (for an event you can’t attend)
to break the sequence
backflip over the dialogue box
in a tiny room with plastic windows
the exhumation of the sentence (itself)
centers your peripherals
on “you,” alone (slow simmer)
in “your” basement (self-abasement)
& “your” revolving role: (big crunch, custom meat)
a mindful molting of authority

and the resultant police,
uncomfortable prosthesis, (incubating inhibition)
so you have to lie, completely

immobile, before the bad mood committee
you say you agree but for different reasons
& when you laugh you hate everything
that isn’t funny; in those moments you hate
more than anything—speaking volumes, a passing fad
& “you,” acrid wanting (summary:
too much coffee, shaking
“me—” to replicate my parents’ execution)

(self-effacement): you begin with
a flower, talking about a flower (like)
that’s what it is—not just what it is
for “you”: supply and demand
drawn and quartered: for you (he seems to be suggesting)
place yourself in this condition

& when you do, it is cold as the grave, & still
you don’t understand why (we weren’t friends in high school)
, Karl.

anyway,

I just woke up
and had to write this down
a thousand times before they’d let me go
Split Infinitives

in the honeymoon stage of our breakdown,
we went out to celebrate
depleting the fridge. they cooked
the dead thing to make it deader. I made you
hold a rose between your teeth
because I'm attracted to delicate things
like a tree tickling the power line

RIP, good morning

everything tastes like chicken
because taste is limited by language
most chickens drown in the rain
because they cannot temper their awe
measure the scope of a breakthrough
by how arbitrary everything seems
like a joke you’ve heard a hundred times

RIP, good morning

I inflated my ego for only you (baby), stoned
on the living room floor. what are we
to do with this gutted love?
our downward-pointing noses
and wicking brows suggest we
are a people meant to stand out in the rain
like a dog heaving over the Bakhtiari rug

RIP, good morning
[things stare]

things stare. rub I against I. I into brush stare. things peer. peer things into things. I things.

in things I rub on. against things. I impose brush. impose things. things peer. stare into I. I stare.

Alapa

shame in comfort
in comfort, pride
bless your heart
it takes all kinds
[in the sea of broken events]

after Everything (video game)

in the sea of broken events
all literate losses contend
it was what I thought
I wanted

regret
your thoughts

your thoughts screen you
like the mark you are
there is no escape

but to burn every
scrap until
there is nothing
to let go of
every thought:
thoughtless

the most vivid clichés
block the wind
like the imposition you are

it is only because you will die
that you live

a set of symptoms

you can only defer
the tutorial
Billy Collins*

I

(if there’s a point at which
it doesn’t matter [if something
happened or not, it hasn’t]
arrived in time] in memory

of] this line] there are bodies
naked where they meet: a

favorite scent to dance

to. to come to terms

to. to come too close to
see the stars.) you see the

star ([scare quotes
in the corn] shower

with an open door) watch
from the kitchen—hairs

adhere to the soap in the shape
of a man (undercooked function

of meat [in this very
room there are bodies

of water without names]

in the dreams we’re moving]
and necessary on command

II

—the stars—
defect) a line I won’t

align against the hand:
stigmatic ouroboric

* derision as a shibboleth
([it doesn’t matter] [stand
and deliver] [sing in every color] every misunderstanding a fruit colors are usually safe])

everyone preferred the misquotation so that’s what we sent into space
Blanket Approach

people keep telling me
this is real—the wind is
at their backs—life—
mouth, eyes: wide—as if
I hadn’t heard that one—

we speak of the bed—
only (a stranger’s
procession on its
edge—its mechanics—
eternal rain shadow—)

exerted when there isn’t
enough—(can I adopt—)
whose hands wrung
out—a rigid nod
accompanies this—

one can only stand
agog—be read—and
whose regrets—
Aphasia

I
each draw
of word scrapes
a trail of dirt inside—dry dirt
where nothing grows

dthis nothing is never lost
or created

and yet it appears to grow

it bows its head, a shamed pet
carves itself out
from what you taste as blood

blood is just the thought of it
so no heat is wasted or made
someone else is disgusted too

perhaps they have never been
without it

II

your language
will not die
with you

this way:
imperative
to impetus
Joint Savings

if you don’t talk to your kids
about inane smalltalk, who won’t
be alone in the hall, recalling
your neuroses,
in an itchy sweater
the color of a rose
in a black and white movie
circumscribed in the head
of the person in front of them? pipes
are contracting, underwater steaming
anvils oozing nauseating
confidence, a superlative
in every direction
in the face of whatever
is made possible through
the generous underwriting
of silence. of silence in
exhalations of endless roads
in every direction
with roses. with roses in-
evitably, roses (arose) in
the compost heap of each
steaming moment I don’t
course through those veins but
of course everyday is the death of
infinite possibilities; of
course I turned off the stove
before I left the apartment
I turned off everything before I left the apartment
Draw Distance (Lorem Ipsum)

*after* Hedgehog in the Fog

draw it:

- it, as it were
- before the approach:
- the room
- illuminating, time, in turn,
- to render
- you inside, weary spondee
- appropriately
- weeding through the reeds

out of common courtesy, milk on milk on

filler text, translation

- lost at first read-through:
- the boat itself,
- let it
- row itself, let it be
- sorrow,
- let the candle
- blow itself
- in the fog you let
- grow wings on its heels

as you are, feet above yourself,

weary of talking about yourself, weary

we're responding
Nocebo

the activity feed has disappeared
my dream follows
how many are there
flowers in the game
logic of death, nobody
turns out—it doesn’t work

what am I supposed to want
the words to fade to
permutations
as notes
themselves—
to each their
own beige
home feels like
the words are not dead

, if it doesn’t pan out
, you don’t claim to be
, but you know you are
, if it hurts
Succession (): Viaduct

(favored order: apparent kind
[let it expand])

recorded time: the first
mistake. times change
in all directions
like a true spill
some rocks look like lips
some knots like eyes
only constructions
come to mind
at a certain strata

(every [exile:] self-imposed
here: time only changes)

like a cake of foam
swirls in a catch of gyre
one can only hope
to be shoved, struggling
to distinguish
exit by moonlight
Fata Morgana

I

somebody says I’m awake
prick my eyes please me
(insert inverted hourglass shape)

bats swoop down at screeching car brakes
somebody says salvation is there—there
must always be there most always is

they own the bridge and the water too
if the dog is dead then it is not thirsty
people are only distributive tools

a little hyperbole

II

the music swells as we scale the rock
face to face the shining city
this is the death of wonder:
If My Mother Doesn’t

if my mother doesn’t
sell her stamp collection
if I don’t sell her stamp collection
if I don’t record this
if I were to say
the most optimistic thing ever said
if your thoughts are too loud
to hear your breath; if your mother says
your generation has it easy
if my thoughts defeated themselves
if individual words have intrinsic value
“if you can do anything you want,
if you close your eyes; if you can’t
get them out of your head
if you have to throw me away to understand
if your breath is too loud to hear
your thoughts; if I couldn’t explain—
if you’re certain you’re mending the world
if there's no time

then when you see your own cracks, it’s the world
that shatters
then I’d leave with a body that would
then run off the hill
then okay:
then you'll always be two different people
then there's only nothing
or a flash of red
then every day becomes (... an empty space
of possibility
that has no ceiling
but also no walls and no floor
then you’re not even within the poem yourself
then I wouldn’t need to be there
then run the light back on
then remind her you have to
construct a world from scratch
—where there are only the things
of my mother; the things of other
people’s mothers; a flash
in the corner.
and I will never see them again
then it wouldn’t only be something I said
then I don’t know who will
then I don’t know who will
You Were Agreeing

you were agreeing
    in your sleep
    again last night
“oh, oh yes,” it was, this
time, the same strained
    cordialness. one can’t help
    but wonder who else
    is there—
but of course it doesn’t matter
I know that voice—even here
    you feel trapped, and painfully aware

(MacFarquhar)
Infidelity

let mysteries
preclude mystery

no heat is wasted
move the scare quotes
to encompass the mist
I will have mistaken

in a sea that isn’t mine
do it justice, do it justice, do it
Quietly Removes

noise complaints are saved for noise that deviates from noise
one can’t just say boredom and there is boredom to be ignored
to uphold the narrative of overlooking you stir
it’s night time if they say it is a 4-day weekend
every weekend for the entire soggy landmass practice sleeping
in a blindfold one just can’t find the end of
I am what if this time that

I am what if this time

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if

I am what if
Who Touched So Many

nobody’s lives can touch
because a life is literal
which is to say, a word

that can only follow
its own wake—its putrid
charismatic foam
Glossary of Punctuation

∴ The ellipsis, a favorite way of leaving sentences meaningfully open during the period when Impressionism became a commercialized mood, suggests an infinitude of thoughts and associations, something the hack journalist does not have; he must depend on typography to simulate them. 13

Convention

(, like all) (grammar,) is a construction for constriction, limiting:
potential meaning
(voices) represented (‘nonstandard,’ in:
{subject {matter, position}
, voca{li}zati{on,..}})

Punctuation incorporates the tethering or differentiation of words themselves, before they’re released from the gate of conscious analysis. Punctuation works primarily in the realm of the unconscious—It does not merely signal to us (as context does) how we should approach a (word/sentence/word-concept), but how we should approach our approach.

Conventional punctuation is traditionally used to resolve the ambiguities of language rather than add complexity. This is done, ultimately, to ensure that the responsibility of meaning-making rests securely on the ‘author’—the ‘author’ being the particular cultural context or aesthetic understanding shared by writer and reader. (I see the prescriptive anxiety manifest even in my word processor—blue lines in real time, scribbled under unfinished words, sentences—red lines for words interrupted mid line—blue lines when the sentence gets too long—itchy blue lines for passive voice—)

An alternative punctuation (alt punc?) may use the same punctuational typography, but, unbeknownst to the trappings of conventional punctuation, could also be used to illuminate the ambiguities inherent to language rather than simply resolve them. While this use of punctuation may appear inaccessible, its ‘function’ is essentially to make visible the interplay of preexisting structures—it is not additive, but rather revelatory.

∴ “([{}])” layers of enclosure
To push the content deeper is to make it unsettling by identifying the tenuous systems which hold it, all of it, and you, in suspension of doubt. To push the form deeper is to illuminate the lampshade on which the content is spilled. If the content is flour, blood, coffee, the form is the

13 (Adorno)
collapsible silicone cup. An increasing depth of form will, by its own volition, take the content with it, down, down to the cloudy place where everything is called into question…

| the ghost bracket
A bracket (or parenthesis) in 25% gray, which is placed between a set of black brackets to create a false closing. It can be read as a normal bracket, or can be read through, adding the trace or tradition of brackets with a diminished function. Similar to placing a word sous rature by crossing it out but leaving it visible, it forces one’s perspective to the place of brackets, but recognizes the limitations of brackets. … (the familiar, repressed orgasmic feeling of a question answered with a question)

_ the underscore
If the writer is present through language, the writer is the water in which we swim while reading. But we readers don’t know we’re swimming unless we are annoyed, or bored, in which case we leave the pool of the book, or, unless the water is drained and we’re left, for a moment, flopping on the cold, mildewy tile of the page.

— the dash
A stair one always misses—

| the rod—
A wall that asks to be broken down. Less relational than the semicolon | less permeable than the parenthesis, it nevertheless contains nothing. Unlike a period, its connection to the words around it is tenuous; it seems to exist in its own plane, which is a windowless, paperless office…)

„„ Commipsies
A hesitancy, continuance without sound … there is more, somewhere, grammatically and ideally„„ ({{godwilling}}) it will arrive in time—

∴ Therefore
(it follows) (from any particular terrestrial vantage, any pattern of long-dead stars, which may in fact be lightyears apart … )

))) Stress waves
Nesting birds are roused from slumber. They leave their eggs behind. The word vibrates. The paper shakes. Elements that once contained unmake at once the fabric of their countenance: they grasp at ... GASP

∴

Through punctuation, the text is elucidated. Through elucidation, the text is punctuated. Through punctuation, the text is harnessed. Through harnessing, the text is read. Through reading, the text is punctured. Through precipitation, the text is wet.
Appendix A

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Appendix B

unresolvability

resolvability

Ignore All
Add to Dictionary
Hyperlink...
New Comment

Appendix C

Despite the nontemporality of the undated thought, the relatively steady influx of writing in my commonplace book opens it up to textual analysis, to what Franco Moretti terms the ‘distant reading’ afforded by digital humanities tools. Here, two conclusions may be drawn from this graph charting the occurrence of the words “think” and “feel”: Either feelings are to be felt in my near future, or, if the downward trend continues, complete cognitive/emotive atrophy awaits.
Works Cited


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