Oracle Bones

S. Gustav Hägglund

DEMAND

demand the dance - stop explaining
demand the drool - the obstacles
demand the door - before the moon
demand the dream - concocts a way
demand the drain - for you to dis
demand the desperate thing - appear
demand what demanding doesn't bring - away

Nico Vassilakis
FEETBO'S HOUSE

Another Story of Feebo the Toymaker

by Ern Hittler

All week a big convention of Pentecostal ministers, meeting in closed session at the hotel. A prostitute with a wizened face, concluding her routine, collected $10 for three hours' work and scampered out of the room in relief, dragging her rubber sack and shaking the spray of bedraggled yellow chicken feathers that projected from her shower cap. Then Rev. Bennett stood up.

"Well, anybody have any porn-o-graphic magazines they want condemned?" he said with sleepy atavism. A few chairs scraped at the back of the hall.

"Here's one!" yelled Rev. Shields. All eyes went quickly to the publication in his hand.

"I don't accept pecuniary compensation for them," said Bennett, leaning forward and slowly puzzling out the title on the cover. "I don't believe I know it."

"Well, take it from me," Shields averred, "it's chock full of filth and perversion. Here, look at this story. It's called 'Feebo's House.' There's a character in it--some kind of sideshow freak--that spends all his time braiding bread!"

"'Braiding bread?'" Bennett scowled rather accusingly. "'Braiding bread?' That's right," Shields nodded grimly. "This freak spends all his time in the story braiding these loaves of bread together. That makes it even worse is, he has two extra sets of fingers growing out of his stomach, and he uses them, too! That's fifteen fingers in all--mean twenty fingers in all. Can you imagine what that must look like--all those fingers wiggling and braiding bread at the same time?"

For several minutes there was a confused hubbub of baffled, outraged speculation in the room. Finally when the din was at its height a hall porter, who had been quietly mopping up after the prostitute, stepped forward.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I judge from the looks on your faces that the rationale behind this particular magazine is something of a mystery to you all. But really, it's quite simple. You see, just as there are magazines containing stories about dogs that people like to read--so too are there magazines containing stories about people that dogs like to read. LOST AND FOUND TIMES is such a publication. Ask any dog. For example--" He indicated the Airedale that he carried around his neck. "Tad here never misses an issue of LOST AND FOUND TIMES. And from what he's told me, the 'Feebo' stories, for all their strangeness, rank among his top favorites."

Rev. Bennett, Rev. Shields and the other ministers lost no time in questioning Tad. What about this? Was the hall porter's story true? "Woof!" Tad assured them. "Woof woof woof woof woof woof woof woof woof! Woof woof woof woof woof woof woof woof--woof woof woof woof!"

(Translated from the English by Dr. Al Ackerman)

UTENSILS

utensils are furious - try draw
utensils are dreamlike - ing a picture
utensils are waging war - on the in
utensils are unbearable - side of a
utensils are simple - banana peels
utensils are orange, maybe - go ahead

Nico Vassilakis

A COMPARISON OF HER AND THE MADONNA

No one knows the sympathies that go on.
I overhear a man in the next room groan
and I immediately agree with my wife, although
nothing's under discussion; I assent clumsily, but
she's not even here. Music quivers
on these bonds drawn taut between us.
a light-footed Madonna drags the clouds
tied to her heels, around the earth
each day. But I do not know that tread
like my love's, coming up the stairs.
The man next door at sea declares
the waters riled, and the Lady relaxes
them, with sympathy about the wind; next
he complains against the cold, that worse
part of the wave's anger, demanding
all fragile heat there is
in human embracing. Oh sir, I say to him,
longing for your mother is too desperate.
I believe this second wife, this Alice
will not me forsake, nor the
Madonna, her name was Mary, Jew
like both my wives: believe, young man
in the next room, only believe
the optimistic frame of these, your sighs.
Solitude
is not the only one I love.

Michael Andre

Greg Evason
the automobile moves without the speed of sculptured veins, empire stubbed by 2 packs of cigarettes - other lives in a broad valley of gutters . . . I remember a vein of color like an amphetamine that suddenly blossomed & then I disregarded entirely the axhacked skyscapes. The clock pancakes. Palette! you slowly turn as if to walk away but I shall call your name again and again simply for its unique sound . . .

\[\text{CHAPTER TWO from "The Cold Outline Of Dreamwalls"}\]

Spyszak

that they are voices arguing the petals strewn coffins upended walking on stilts of water to magic in order to bring home that lost illusion love a hand held high with a glove of liquor to erase the afternoon of memory which any language and even forced from its beta the alpha moving significantly through the movie theater of Hecate on shoulders of straw what draws and compels is the whisper of your mouth intangible dreams oxidized in the tintype reflection a book of verse covers your breast the moon is dead sound the brass pot! the dogs prowling in the yard all wear a single human face I am haunted by this does the mother single me out with her harsh inflection? does the parent hidden in sand correct the vocal leaf? in Egypt I am rowing in all seven branches of the Nile circling the syntax of your doom with drugs and philtres minus the map of your unheralded youth that corrosive acid pouring down the throat and everything dazzled glitter tossed into the air like stardust and music waving its liquids to the level of the spear-point and it in Japan or a park plaza hotel version of it that they are voices haunted recalling me to the edge keeper of the alphabet of the unconscious and flowers lopped by the new invention which creates bread instantly transactions of the dead with papyrus in their mouths these many books with not one single straight line speech of lilacs spray of hidden bays the father who addresses me on this last hour of the last afternoon? harrowing syllables rushed into the ear like opium granules of cosmic supputation I am insane again for it talking redwood blues to the defiles of blue sunsets an el dorado that has lost all its avenues bending gold

Ivan Arguelles
TIT ALAS WASH IT

MA lURAT ION

PEBBLES

Asked, no nothing yet, just me
I'm lost, stash, taken, and grow used
to faint shadows

The Summer's gone with purina
to seek for me, a BAMBOO

Ground egg
Can
Get,
Out, so
we
wiped,
ours
their
ass
for
each
other.

DIRTY MOODS
What is you thinking about
after Beating your Cock (which
I don't anymore. I never
stopped to think what it was.
Seeds which sail and go
free as Bird, Flowers, whole
Cities.

TIBET
Leeches, you see, just old
Skinny Bag A Tacit Smile
on Her hands

FOR K.V. THE SPIDER
I ask him May I help you
to write more than one line
then there were Birds on the
line and A Dog BARK.

ALAS WASH IT

The public fish bowl
I

see your
lip
hanging down
in the grave

PURE BODY
You 0 and millions are.
Sim here to help 0
And you wait to
pull the Cigarette Machine.

H-20

I have no picture
of Her as me.

MATURATION

tell me how can
I cut out my tongue
with you crack

PEBBLES

Here in your discord grinding down
my Body we are pained
Saturday Football weather
put it in a plastic house

A Live
There's no chow
No City
A spanish girl

DILDOES CREDAS

weed can you hear,
TAR BIRD
THE FORM
HAS NO importance
STARS above the Cities making it
clear as a whore who loves the Robes of
Mourning.

you'll be seen as soon as
the clouds disappear
Freedom
Bug
Can

THE POWER OF SPACE

Waiting for my bright mother. You can sit at the bar and resting
him, restore the manly blurs with a hail-uh-uh. He may be getting his
underwear dips, considering the fruit, Bob Dylan dinks. A potshot at tea-
time! The deadening two deeds, want to put him out, let's sit and stretch
endless to anew-begin. That it can build and simply hop into true beginnings,
Her-Trinity-Presence the only story. Spouting off, Egg-Daddy is two sprouts
forthwith in the day, church of the
Twenties.... resumes the pop-citizens
inna D. H. Lawrence workable screen......... Sad, lost, light doesn't.
The saddle can't fit right. Pouda-Gaudha!

Malak

John Buckner
DOING THE FACE OF WHERE THE STRAW ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE

when

she really didn't
know when to regroup
the stripe of hip
that was left
when

on the clock
that ticked down the hands
that ran against her body
when we had no way of knowing
she was hairless

standing there dressed
there was never an open blind
that couldn't see the cracks
running through the lenses of a two minute egg

LIGHTS

My songs are about the eternal verities
the simple truths in life
the things that make people smile
a cash receipt and a duplicate cash receipt
a baby carriage and a duplicate baby carriage
a sidewalk and a grating and a duplicate sidewalk and a grating
and LIGHTS!

I said I was talking about those lights
he said oh those lights you mean those lights on Court St
He forgot to turn his lights on so I yelled "Lights!"
He came out of the tunnel with his lights on so I yelled "Lights!"

He says what is this some kind of thing where you talk to people
and they have no idea what you're saying
I said no it's a thing where I talk to everybody
and the one person who knows what I mean knows what I said.
He forgot to turn his lights on so I yelled "Lights!"
He came out of the tunnel with his lights on so I yelled "Lights!"

I felt sort of flat by the side of the sidewalk
It buckles where the water runs under it
mouths of trash & babble they got to clear it out again &
anyways I was talking about those lights oh those lights
you mean those lights at the end of the pavement
where the water runs into the sink
the grates were down but not all the way
you could see lights underneath

She was on the fifth floor & I was on the third
They never let her out but the kids they did let out told me
she used to stand in her room and scream
INSIDE/OUTSIDE/OUTSIDE/INSIDE/OUTSIDE/INSIDE/OUTSIDE/INTERCOURSE!

Charlotte Pressler (A Red Dark Sweet Song) [First published in a
Burning Press/Poetsbank supplement to the Plain Press, Cleveland]
The most romantic room of all reopens

S. Gustav Hägglund

I, VOYEUR

that soon of a widow
her gargoille's tongue
a full shine to pitied sense,
to wave young.

Tim L. Harding

MASS

I go there Saturdays perspire such rain as will be living in this diocese of guilt until eternity shrinks to an expired lease. My head down concentrating brainlamp on perpetually muddy shoes. That walked in late my fault. Hoops not excusable present as God in every corridor. Buckets of obstacles line the streets bereft of boats. Percussion drops inches of focused thought. Bequests attention to small things. Opposite of God plastic lining dashboards. Beads raining their own birdbath consecutively.

Awning a protection, future the numb enemy evaporates

MAGNET

Chances she contributes to his record. He stretch knows her ballpark diluted by raw silk. Is not enough to be inspired. Strains to resist via the skin a textured envelope. Hidden feelings scald internal workings. Prenatal memories confused with worship resist the drainpipe energy. Repel his quarterhorse. Expecting saithood for a target painted over the unconscious.

Baptism of milk, the ever aftermath, hosed down to sea level

Sheila E. Murphy

TURNSTILE 2

turned from an upright position -- on this paved highway with crowned surface -- turning with the sun -- lurching convulsively, acting vigorously, raising and lowering control, unexpectedly appearing after being lost, used as solvent for that paint to which is often ascribed an inherent baseness, and as often a divine radiance -- a variable color averaging a light greenish blue with whirls forming a high conical spiral and whose upper surfaces are variegated with black and chestnut and a black breast, or any similar device set in an entrance or exit passage for controlling or counting the persons entering or leaving -- to guard by looking at, charged with the instruction or guidance of another -- various conifers -- used to express disapproval or disbelief -- names always turn up, as though on a rotating platform -- semifluid net quantity of produce yielded, delivered, surrounded -- turning from one side, place, or direction to any of a complete sphere of possible others


John Byrum

winter's endless rain/the scorched bottom of pans

M. Kettner
THE MAN STORIES (1)

The man's suit needed a shave and his shoes look a lot like yours except they're yellow and white with black strings and bent where the toes meet the foot in a cracked greasy black line but he wasn't watching, he was picking at his coat sleeve, plucking an eyebrow and losing a button down a grate where his reflection momentarily startled him and he lost another button and half his moustache, each making a death leap from the right and then the left arm of his jackel. His goatee breast pocket, perfectly aligned with the Van Dyke hidden, or, mystery pocket (both silk lined with traces of dry tobacco) illside. So, almost involuntarily, down he gazed, into the watery abyss wiggling up at him, and he realized his double was absorbing him, stealing his person at every opportunity, a psychic vampire or vacuum cleaner with soul-suck attachments. On the other hand, he was getting a free shave, no, on the contrary, he would seek out every waterhole in the street! In the city! Then he realized this was ridiculous, as any mirror would do.

John Eberly

LOVE-LETTER

Like the forest silences I write at midnight
Repeating aloud the written, the uncertain
That which is forbidden to understand or feel,
Words which compel me to the utmost decisions,
To congratulations, sorrows and mistakes,
To stubborn moments that gather in their depths,
A queer sense of waiting and of sudden dread.

I write at midnight like a sea evaporating,
Leaving a white tract of salt and bitterness,
Feeling already foreign to the passion that seduces me,
To the day that pierces me with its huge cries,
Or by mistake, like a cloud outpouring
The time's annoyance, bending towards shadows
Or a slow "Goodbye" that falls like a dry leaf.

Emilio Sosa López - Translated from the Spanish by Lawrence Durrell

ABOLIR EL PAISAJE

Abolir el paisaje como si la melancolia estuviese grabada en signos litúrgicos.
Asal como el viejo cefiro que libera las formas para acercarnos a su piedad.

Nunca hubiera podido descifrar de otro modo mi muerte,
Tan dulcemente opuesta al sol del mediodía.
Las sombras de las cosas parecían extrañas
y lo no visto estaba aún delante.

No es que resulte inconcebible la pureza del mundo,
pero mirar es siempre mirar lo invisible.
Frágil como la tela seña es la luz.
Detrás de sus lentiscos hay ojos inmortales.

Tal vez se encuentre allí lo que tejí mi pensamiento, trocando vida por muerte y muerte por vida.

Lo que soy al fin ese cuerpo vacío molde de mi cuerpo.

Emilio Sosa López

WINTER

cold; legs
are sticks.
you set fires

Kryshten

Sheets ring Information

Chris Winkler
MEANWHILE I HAVE MY EYELIDS

if it would be worth it i might skate unevenly across the field of wheat.

but it wouldn't be.

it's money. y'know, i like what's right & what's wrong.

i can't be this kind of person who chooses either or or.

besides, i have a cottage of eyes & glass so that these matters have little effect upon me.

Greg Evason

WHERE DO ALL THE FLIES COME FROM?

There's a fire in the woods
Put it out, put it out,
Where are the firemen?
You ask myself
We are so futile
You, you are
Why do we smile?
Does it ultimately matter?
It doesn't matter.
Just go away.

WHERE DO ALL THE FLIES COME FROM?

Greg Evason

OSIRAK

Sandy Euphrates
lash's revenge on the thin topsoil

Andrew Savage

RICKIE ALL GROWN UP
JUST BEFORE SUICIDE

smoke my lips
while i come
on her exams

Walt Phillips

MEANWHILE I HAVE MY EYELIDS

if it would be worth it i might skate unevenly across the field of wheat.

but it wouldn't be.

it's money. y'know, i like what's right & what's wrong.

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besides, i have a cottage of eyes & glass so that these matters have little effect upon me.

Greg Evason
A COLUMN OF BIOLOGICAL RUFFIANISM

THE CURSE

My grandmother used to say that as a small child I was bitten while attending an American Legion parade with my grandfather, in downtown Detroit, and became, as a result, infected with the stramine malady, or curse, which has made my life such a nightmare. My grandfather, on the other hand, always contended that the thing happened a year later at the height of a Shriners' Convention, in Chicago.

All I know is that, nowadays, when the moon is full, I change. At first I merely stagger around my hotel room a bit, pulling at my shirt collar and knocking things over. Later it gets much worse and then—if I've forgotten to have myself locked in for the night—I spring into the hall and engage the first person I see in the sort of conversation that makes me cringe all over if I happen to remember any of it the next morning, when the spell has worn off. The other night, for example, all the way down to the lobby, a matter of perhaps twelve floors, I talked incessantly to the elevator operator about my belief in something called Throsy Magazine's 'Seas-and-Bourbon Diet.' According to my own reckoning I seldom succeeded in uttering such pure and unadulterated drivel. Babbling? Babbling is too mild a word for it.

I had heard that Napoleon lost seventeen hundred rounds on this diet, I told the operator in parting when I got off the elevator. But (who knows?) perhaps the indications of horror on his face came less from my chatter—as intense and exalted as any pillhead's—and more from the fact that I had left my room that night without remembering to put my trousers on, an oversight I didn't snap-to until I was already out on the street and had bought a newspaper out of one of the coin-operated vending machines in front of the hotel. And, further, had gone on to the sports section and fold it into a hat, something I often do when the smell of the full moon has me under its power. And had even set the ridiculous thing on my head so that the floppy paper brim came right down over my eyes, undoubtedly giving me the look of a dangerous imbecile, in any case making it impossible for me to see where I was going, so that after taking five or six steps away from the vending machine, I slipped on a piece of dog waste named, if one may wax poetical at such an awkward moment, Robert Browning, Jr. Thus, I lay there which only then did I notice were as bare as a pair of peas.

The moon, which, even as I was in the act of being lifted out of the back of the ambulance and wheeled into the hospital, remained visible above the rooftops, crawling through the clouds like a hoary silver galleon, or (ha ha) an elephant's back in a sketch.

Inside the hospital, propped up on my elbow on the examining table in the E.R., I told the nurse that my name was "Pudfin' N. Taim. . . . ask me again, I tell you the same," and then threw in several of my favorite "Little 'oron" stories, for good measure. Here is a sample of the sort of material I was dishing out that night, with italics to indicate how unbearably funny I found my own stuff:

"Hello, one day [itter-litter] the Little 'oron was out on the street playing a game of 'hill-dill-come-over-the-hill-or-else-I'll-catch-you-standing-still,' which was what the Little 'oron always mistakenly called the game of 'Vent Check.' "Vent Check," of course, as everybody but the Little 'oron knows, is the name you put on any person or place with which you come on the sidewalk [itter-litter], and then when a lady pedestrian comes along and bends over to have a look at it, you scuttle up behind her on all fours, peer up her dress, and check out her vent. (Lightish laugh.) Well, so the Little 'oron was playing 'Vent Check.' As it happened he had just scuttled up to check out the vent of an enormous fat lady who was bending over to examine the rubber donut when suddenly, thanks no doubt to having eaten bean-skillet the night before, the fat lady broke wind in a big way. (He-he.) She did it loudly, explosively, at the revolting blast of which the Little 'oron lost consciousness and for the next few seconds was out like a light. (Chortle-chortle.) Well, at that very moment who should come on the scene but 'Sream. 'Sream was the Little 'oron's god, an unappealing 'Mexican hairless the color of babies' knees, who was named 'Sream because he loved to eat socks and whenever anybody beat or kicked him for doing this he would scream like a bastard. (Starting to definitely crack up at my own witticisms.) To the Little 'oron was something of it for a few seconds, with the result that 'Sream was able to catch him off guard and eat both his socks. (More loud boisterous laughter, I'm afraid bordering on the frankly hysterical.) Well, when the Little 'oron came to, he saw that 'Sream was swallowing the last of his soaked (approaching the punchline and nearly beside myself with mirth). . . . This made the Little 'oron so mad that he grabbed 'Sream and shoved him up the fat lady's skirt as hard as he could, because, you might say, he felt like giving 'Sream to a loud vent!" (Complete collapse of all control. As the nurse begins to look around wildly for restraints and a sedative.)

This, then, was the gist of what I was coming across with in the E.R. that night, and I had, by that point, gone into such helpless paroxysms that I rolled off the table, striking my head on a white metal can, one of those gruesome receptacles that are part of every E.R., where are thrown the bloody pieces of gauze, surgical sponges, etc. Because of the terrific impact made by my forehead, the hinged lid of the can flew up and part of a foot, evidently something left over from an amputation earlier in the week, bounced out and landed on my nose, sticking there as if glued. I, flat on my back under the table, gave the thing a blank stare. From the hospital I was to have to get in a car for a few seconds of it. "Oh, look," I managed to wheeze before I lost consciousness, "I've grown a foot!"

Toward morning I changed back! The moon had gone down by then, and the streetlights were lighted, leaving me utterly confused plus, on this sorry occasion, in debt to the hospital and ambulance people for over two hundred dollars. Oh, what a burden it is to carry this foul curse! and what I wouldn't give, just once, just once, to see the full moon rise at the window without finding myself transformed into a deadly slavering werepole.

Mr. Al "Claw" Ackerman
A COOL VACUUM

Did you think I would leave you in peace?
Had you anticipated submission to dragon tooth or dog fang?
I wear protective clothing at both throat and wrist.

I have carried the letters you gave me
And found no fitting address
Beyond the originating dimension.

Look now at how
I use one planet's atmosphere
As a trampoline to the next.
I search a route that gives more Spring.

Pay close attention!!!
Watch! Watch.
I lay your personal envelope
On the planetary surface.
Shall I command you to pick it up?
For you don't seem eager to revise.

Gravity is the curse of heelwing excursion.

The compass, boxed by time, began a slow sweep.
Causing each conceived degree.
(Were you in there again circle?)
Whilst holding back the minute hand
Three million years escaped my notice.
And the hour hand has sliced me to the knee.

Hey! One last glance of me out here.
Sorry but I can only wave with one hand.
Sometimes the upper reaches contain a buffeting instability.

---

THE MORNING AFTER

a slice of lime in the corner of my eye
whispered obscenities
one limp breast

---

THE SPITTER

Speaking so strongly always
flecks of spit on lips teeth
tooth elongated like shishkebab forks
spitting concepts like sweet corn
the jazz the jazz like a Hindu Vedanta guru
trilling z's spitting trills
thrilling girls and men without discrimination
the spitter is easy to understand
yet standing under the shower sometimes
the spitter is shown sliding as soap
down the brain a spitbrain
with the grain so the hair's still there
rare bits of encrustation
edelweiss flowers
speaking so slowly the spitter always
remembers stolen rails
across chaw Mank.

---

Mike Miskowski

David Zack
Once, when I was eight, a woman showed me her glassy eyeball. Look it out with her hand. Like an egg. Put it on the center of the table. "Look how it watches you." She had the strange talent of talking through her eye socket, a ventriloquist—making the skin flaps move with her words, her own mouth shut. She stretched her hand underneath the table and caressingly, grabbed my crotch. With her other hand, she took an unlit cigarette and rested it in the little cave where her eye was, between two unseeming lips. She was a friend of the family, think.

A woman showed me an eyeball on a table. A hand on a little boy's crotch. A face with a cigarette sticking out of it where an eye is supposed to be. I never told anyone until this poem. She said she would do things to me.

Doro Chirodea

Richard Gessner
time before the mirror
he broke eye
"Hello, Joe, what do you know?"
his horror...

temporal investigator
held out a forkful
a mouthful of teeth

Esentials
You remind of a convict nun
so
you don't need a monthly pass
to pace about yourself
over and over
till you start growing into
a languid profile
half overcoat
half paper star
you remind me of a convict nun
so
you can even try
to impress the pedestrians
singing barefoot
anywhere close
to a limo station.

YOU BET
Hopes are meringued upon mere frothy suds:
and all washed up, they're found to have been duhs.
Though hope is silver, black-powder is cheaper:
bankroll after bad roll lose shirt and pants.

Christopher Franke
Bennett said he was encouraged

Bennett cited a public opinion poll showing Bennett also reported a slight drop in Bennett, citing lack of improvement in Bennett said, "Some of this money is doubtless well spent, but too much of it goes to what I call 'the blob.'"

As for the "blob," Bennett defined it as

"The polling that we see suggests the American people would be willing to pay more to see results." increased, the size of the blob increased and if the size of the blob increased."

Bennett released the department's annual state-by-state survey of "All of this is not particularly good news."

"Public patience is wearing thin — and the public is right to be impatient when it comes to the well-being of our children," Bennett said.

"And in saying that I am disappointed, I think I speak for the American people."

"Public patience is wearing thin — and the public is right to be impatient when it comes to the well-being of our children," Bennett said.

Bennett said that would depend on facts and circumstances.

"The polling that we see suggests the American people would be willing to pay more to see results." increased, the size of the blob increased and if the size of the blob increased."

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TALKING BOOK

I never read a word you said but nagged me in your voice like a chainsaw up the street closing windows. And me a cartoon duckface, pulling out my teeth. Who was jabbering in that bag of meat? What'd I see if I've got no eyes?

RIVERINE

A refrigerator half sunk in mud where I stand and the stream swirls slow, past's what I forgot but hungs half in me, like a plastic bag slumped on a sheet and my blue-lipped mouth's in there. Am I just what's sliding, sweat in my eyes? My seconds silting the shelves?

THE TEST

With my hair tied to the wall I could never escape the snot wiped there. Only sticky speech and a hammer hunkered in the corner, tempting my spongy skull. Why's this room and who looks through the window? What'd you learn if it's you? Like a worm in a plastic box I slide on my thought and the light is more illurded willi coch foll

SWIMMING

Sinking in the pool of pee the light from my eyes shines yellow and I see a burning tree. My hair's a blanket unravelling, I try to speak but my words and the water's the same, seamless. Is this what it means? Alone or is it you're in there, bladderless, no edge? Drinking and drinking we are, seeking a sleep like a melt without wake

LICE

Like a flea collar this watch, ticks and bites. I'm a weapon against me, gouging and scratching at time, my loss like a leash on my neck, yearning to lunge out the door. If I stop inserting my thought and drop all the knives, could I bathe, be a bath, unbuckle me?

EMPATHETIC

Head in your pants I attempt to climb the wall, but the ladder's too limp and the blood swells my face like the thought you expressed. So I bend in a chair and my legs float up like a tress or my shirt jerked off in the fall

John M. Bennett
SQUEEZING

Where I stood on a tire full of gravel
Sinking with the waves into sand
Where I squeezed the sodden dollar down my pocket
And the throbbing toothache in my shoe
Crushing the thoughts on the roof of my mouth
I, plunging, cracked the neck of a crab into
My pocket and shivered in the loose morning light
And in the rising tide floating to my knees the jellyfish
Like a hanky soggy held between my thighs
Dandruff thickening the voice inside
My bloody eye or a rubber full of razor blades

John M. Bennett & G. Huth, Corrected by R. Grumman

CHAPTER SIX

With a sliver of glass drying on his tongue
With a silver fox slag dying his togs blue
With a singing slug dining on his glued toupee
Without a lense he laughed at the limpid blur
As the eel snaked past unseen in the water spectacle
Dreaming of grids of rusty pipes
Bricks, tiles, marbles, ball parks, and animal hospitals
His mouth spewing soy sauce and wasabi
As the fur moved on the spine of the bestiary
And the cement congealed in his shoe
Rover anointed the windbreak with honey and tar
Did he bury a can full of toenail clippings?
Forgetting where he searched on Southfield Station platform six
And forgetting the steam heaving his bed
He peeled the vacuum pack from his unsuspecting brain
Hammers, loss of keys, a pin, holes in socks
Were folded into a too-tight airplane seat on flight sixteen
Next to a man with a hammer spinning on his back
Sat a red herring sprayer on strawberry suspenders
I was smoking, holding a stone
In my left ear a hose to my right
From my front tooth a wire to my back
Yesterday two boxes fell upon her head and
Split seven hairs (laughter) spilling water onto
Everybody's toast and dripping crumbs
Without falling over buses all marmalade
Inhaled head heaving big snotty sandwiches.

Fran Rutkovsky - a weaving of poems by John M. Bennett

The fish nibbling my ear for a doubt
Where my head in the sink with a painful pout
Snorts ancient diarrhea and falls through the floor
Like a refrigerator sinks in the mud of the shore
Did my thought hang from my eye like a tear?
If I turned around for a taste would my face disappear?
Over the basin full of skin and hair
Your pantyhose melt stealing my air

John M. Bennett & Robin Crozier
[Previous chapters of this continuing saga may be found in LAFT 11, April 1982; LAFT 15, October 1983; LAFT 17/18, August 1985; LAFT 19, May 1986; and LAFT 20, February 1987]

Juggling fish in tires with testicle clover
He handles a horse baby coughing tiny
drops of mucus and his mother's heartburn

Jake Berry & John M. Bennett
What did I lose when I
Punched out the gerbil and slid marbles through my bladder
Did I hamper the growth of my throne?
Or stick frozen snot under the table?
I should heed the diarrhea blinking with Xmas lights
Drool last year's egg nog for nativity and pope's toe
But the hammers are rattling under the laundry
And dishes cackle for more mayonnaise

John M. Bennett & Jake Berry

I was burning a shoe in my nose wanting fruit
I was coffing a hand on my pants seeing glue
I was dancing a snot up my cat begging worms
I was lancng a weenie through my tongue snorting mustard
I was twirling a toilet down my neck licking rouches
When I capered on the head gagging from French fries
Slipped under the bowl filching cookies
When I harpered from the laundry banging doorknobs
Licking scabs from my armpit nailing moles
Why I glued the hat on my headache
And barked the trout on my dream

Jake Berry & John M. Bennett

Like a blister where my hand
Shudders the glare of iridium railways
And why did I hamper the threading?
'57 Caddie tunnels the mouth of her chromium vagina
And I thunder a trowel, the laundry
Basements - sub-basements - the scent the swirling plumes of phosphor particles
Raging like a rag and radon
Or the blood-red carbuncle that sets my palm to itching

John M. Bennett & I. Winter-Damon

The aluminium strip stuck to my hammering as I remembered
her breasts flopped out and ran off the wall like a toupee slipped and fell southerward
Where was I what, what?
Dipping, rolling, sticking under her butt and a hamburger like a boil the size of a weather balloon
I should used sheet metal screws but the hair in my teeth like floss knotted my fingers and I'm chewing
my beard a beer-soaked sponge
the soggy bread what I thought

John Eberly & John M. Bennett

When I touch the white spots on my arm
When I press the bubble in my crotch
That's when my greened tongue begins
And the icedick dances behind my eye
Nail dead meat to the wall, nail it now
And haul the hammer to the fire in the hall
There are jungle cats in my veins, rabid animals
And a horse that sleeps in the dirt
These are the nights of glass, they say
These are the doors of liver

Paul Weinman & John M. Bennett

I am the tear which trickles down a nose
Engulfing their pool
Even when squirt with ocean
To the pond with all its trickle down
Nevertheless their river is a nose
Which if bubbled possesses the pond
To run with the tear forever
And not wash, not dissolve,
Not flow -
What is this but washing the sea?

-By Stephanie Blaster

Thought you'd like to see what emerged when Steph set the Poetry Machine I built her in motion. The way this worked: I had her write a ten-syllable first line, anything she wanted. Then she picked her ten favorite nouns and put them in an envelope; ditto for her ten favorite verbs. Then she wrote several "Joker" phrases, all of the "hitting the chair," "ripping the sky," "screwing a hammer" variety, and put those in the JOKER envelope. Then we took out the Poetry Machine (which was connecting tissue I'd set up for a ten-line poem (example: line #4 ran "to the (draw from your noun envelope, singular) with all its (repeat second verb from line #1 plus word that follows it)" and she drew her different words out of the envelopes and we plugged them in. Came out pretty nice:

I am the tear which trickles down a nose
Engulfing their pool
Even when squirt with ocean
To the pond with all its trickle down
Nevertheless their river is a nose
Which if bubbled possesses the pond
To run with the tear forever
And not wash, not dissolve,
Not flow -
What is this but washing the sea?

-By Stephanie Blaster

Steph said later she'd cannily chosen nouns and verbs that were similar or related to her first line and Joker line, "to make it harder for you to play tricks."
Ah, the kid knows me like a book, Johnee.
ACK HACKS BENNETT'S POEMS

Some really nice poems this time - esp. LOVER IN TIME. I built a poetry machine using last lines of LE CIMEYERE MARIN [Valéry] and plugged words in from each of your poems:

DES FOCS!
The butt is swirling! ... We must burst a root
The huge table bends and sees my face; the mirror
Dares to drink semen in a coughing coffee
Cup. Lick, my teeth-bewildered breasts!
Squeeze, witches! Squeeze with your hole in the wall
This drooling hammer where spit like towels are peekers.

Here's a Hack I did using FEAR
Of SCISSORS as the board on which to play: turned it over so the back of the page was facing me and used my scissors to cut slots in each line; I could see where the words ended through the paper but couldn't make them out. Then I took SWIMMING, INHALATION, and WHEEL OF TIME - plus a letter from Mike Duquette that told a disgusting Traveling Salesman joke and did the same: cut words and phrases out here and there, blind. Next I piled all the words and phrases on the table and, again blind, picked them out of the proverbial hat - plugging them into the slots on FEAR OF SCISSORS. It goes:

WHAT IF?
It ever clean my stay the night but
Drool stuck to a pasta fetish. A
Wind not passionate enough on the
Coffeegrounds under my leaks out
These squirts what's left sniffing a
Those are maggots. So bladderless,
No edge? What I wrote, like a melt
Without wake swelling my on and
She pants. I was kisses her and gets
A hard-on... what if the drinking we are
Seeking and see a burning tree?

Here's a Hack I made out of your book STONES IN THE LAKE. First, I closed my eyes and touched my pencil down and where it touched I took that word and the next and laid 'em in six lines of 13-13-12-10-11-14-8 syllables. Then I made up a poetry machine of eight lines and, going backwards, filled in the spaces init using verbs, nouns, adjectives etc. from the six lines I'd put down. Came out pretty nice - I esp. like "0 gooey tar":

THE STONED LAKE GROPER
Some closet that never groped you watered perchance to slap
You who are inside who are with water sinking
Shoes and face, 0 gooey tar! and sweating lake....
But pululatingly of those seen behind grocery boiling
Which were my laundry to you slapping this
Sinking reek scraping you row of tossing mothballs.
Slapping his inside is water sinking no
Boiling the flat closed groping laundry over water.

Al Ackerman

Lately, a feeling — over and above that of simply being beaten—of being fooled, by the powers that be, into being accessories to the worst sorts of crimes — again — the feeling is growing. We try to resist their exceptionally subtle powers of deception, but we're growing older, which is part of another growing social problem: every year, the number of people over the age of 65 in the U.S. is rapidly expanding. There are more and more infirm older people, year after year, more and more. But fewer nurses. Whereas in Nicaragua, the number of nurses is rising, even though older Americans account for only 3% of the population there, compared with 8% in the U.S.

Michael Kasper

the Grin that Ate Staten Island

the irony, the transparency

in one hand I hold
the matrix of existence,
in the other, what?

( say scissors and you've dulled the blades beyond use )

Matty Kinsella
BB
hook
drumming
an eye

a door,
ahole, a window
no wall

an entrance:

a swath of insects, various colors, back up here against the case of a small dog, composed of:

a world, unassuming

a child motioning to its mother's

Christopher Franke
General INPUT

MOTOR MAN ROBIN CROZIER

Skinning my current arm album that stood and balanced. Like a Thistle, a boat full of letters. I bit it all and keeps on breathing. It's Eras. Just a bra flowering, where the Tim opener used to balloon

Shaking my scrubbing brush the seal that watched and bounded. Like a wreath on a cross, full of corks. I mumbled it all and combed on crabs. It's stockings, just a catalogue dressing, where the cucumber used to blouse

Cutting my kimono the collar that slid and gummed. Like a chopper on a glass full of pastry. I ducked it all and etched on eggs, its edderdowns. Just a camera charking where the compass used to grill

and so on ad infinitum

Robin Crozier

6. I went down the street.
I did not stop for the dragon.

Daniel F. Bradley

PAINBIT INANERIE

OMLETTE RINGOSS

A snake who bites into jello gets petrified of Velveeta
Eyes put on matchsticks produce negative Hell
Girls who rub their noses have pseudo duck sacks
Family pets are no better than a Nazi secret

Byron D. Smith
FINDING A VOICE

This day is confidential,
the glare of language
shatters, flaps like icicles
from the pane frost.
I want to browse
beyond passerby sounds
when proverbs weigh
at a chittering pitch.
Each letter blotches coldly
preened by parables
in the human wrung
snow still moves me.

---

SAND M POET

Morning my shirt opens
against my life taking the form
of a poem remembering me.
I walk among a carpentry
of childhood noises,
now leaning on myself.
Further on inheriting
the gestures
of a shoeless life,
with the boyish charm
my memories are apprenticed
to the unresponsive vertical slave
on my own dustless underground.

SOMNAMBULIST POET

I know you are here
under sinking heavens
wrapping nightmares
in telegrams of bedlam.
Even the covers
are nervous
a different tempi
through walls of soiled memory
butterfly paper
decoded in secret sad pastimes
to mimic the sleep
in a rectangular contour.

DANCE FLOOR

Getting to be close
in a basement hour
breath heard
in longer evenings
the smell of tapshoes
dragging the children
across the dance floor
when the smoky rooms
slow as lashed fire
with an old surface cane
surviving a night
of surly darts and daggers
screaming like an ashen beggar
with wind and enchained swears.

ODD MATCHES

Through the auditory parts
of odd matches in my pockets
you stared at me
with an incandescent smile
a court jesting shadow
knocked over needs for love
out of the boundless void
near the wet streetlamps
wanting what struck its place
of our inflatable life preservers
but the steady rain came.

MAXWELL

Maxwell liked his wounds open
fingering his potato feet
between the vinegar sheets
under the pigeon roof
beneath the acid sky
above the sweltering earth
Maxwell could walk
but the cabbages they are so heavy

B. Z. Niditch
As a crucial dynamic this posture asserts it's exterior, by definition a tight-lipped supplication and this exactly contrasts other integers of similar magnitude (in red, that is). Integrity will prevail in a laughtrack. Though one would expect an automatic pressure valve when fitting this description becomes malleable. Even to announce the potential for temperance would not be considered slang with the conventional arrangement of carte blanche apocaphobia.

These fabrications necessitate a luminous twist where it is least expected and an infallible logic is the only guarantee distance will continue to adhere to these proportions. Locating these escapisms can be more treacherous than corpulence, yet any dialogue will trade enumeration for a grammar. All actuated silently because otherwise staging interrupts generalities and unfolding economic frustrations empathize with soporism. The knowledge gained then is more filthy than its origin. Simplicity works well enough for the fertile, but to repent would mean another design medium. Such overindulgence almost certainly supplies the momentum at once featured and misunderstood. Nothing precipitates this like diversionary filtering. Medicants only deteriorate and rewind the entire crisis before an unrectified precedent can be disclosed.

You the True

Eat a lot of ham & retain a lot of water
Swell until your clothes tear
Go on like this and swell some more
Till you split out the seams of your skin
Itself & don't stop there
But pop all the buttons on your inner self
As well then for the hard part
Swell & burst out of whatever comes next
Whatever final metaphysical envelope or dark
Is left so you can emerge at last wriggling
& dripping like a turd on a fork

Al Ackerman
The cat chased a butterfly.
I got my hog; blasted the cat.
The butterfly was all I had,
things that bad - God!
eating my gut.
Pinwheeling through the air,
the cat flashed his Reagan button.
Blew it away.
The butterfly got nervous,
watching the cat - in about sixteen pieces -
die.
I coaxed the butterfly onto a palm.
Stroked her thorax, unruffled the wings.
Smoothed her feelers.
Ate her raw,
suppressing a guffaw
at the cat clotting in the sun
too vicious to let into this piece.
I pissed. Come out in colors. I didn't have long.
But I'd had my fun.
Tossed the hog in the garbage.
Licked my tongue.

Willie Smith

VICKI ETC.

There's something about
the name Vicki,
it seems to me.
I think it's partly
the sound of that name.
A good guttural 'k'
& 'i' to 'i',
/ 'i' to 'y'.
The V followed
by icky, it
rhymes with micky.
Whether a knock out,
it matters not if...
Vicki rhymes with
icky, for a neck.
Labial-dental,
Fricative V --
something sensual!
it seems to me.
Though a sound crows,
what do sounds know!
A cough, but no cold:
I think I've been told!
But Vicki, no
Lucy, sounds like
 passive & juicy.
I just speak of names' sounds like - but may
not be the same
as the sounds like of.

Christopher Franke

END DATES

THE

The cat in the door
the eye in the socket
the stuff in a can
the junk in the back of the trunk
the house on a street
the car on the sidewalk
the End

Squid

Reducks lives
in a tan
manilla
envelope

Antlers
poke through

Making the
beer leak
wet rug-like

John Eberly

LEWD POLAROIDS?

CHUCKLED

THE

SHAGGY

MAN

THE LITTLE

WIND-UP

MAN KEPT

MUM

(A POEM)

Al Ackerman
T. Winter-Damon

STOMA 231
crown set about
sphere
tending to pull
the blur-green
gases
to twin minds
pinnacled.

Guy R. Beining

underneath her breasts/far side of the moon

M. Kettner

C. Mehrl Bennett

ROBON

robon does liquor with her dad, and all is well. Jeez, i said
and i wanted to drink the honey from her navel.
"your breasts are like a pomegranate split open." i said
and i knew i loved you.
robon was awake and her face said words. she was in love and adm
itted it heartily to herself only.

Stevenpage
Partitions

ULTRAMODERN
ODE
MODE
AM
RAM
TRAM
ULTRA
ULTRAMODERN
TOTALITARIAN
TO
TOT
TOTAL
LIT
IT
TAR
TOTALITARIAN

MARTINET
ART
MAR
MART
TIN
NET
IN
MARTINET

INNOVATE
ATE
VAT
OVA
NOVA
IN
IN
INNOVATE
CANDIDATE
AN
CAN
AND
DID
DATE
AT
CANDIDATE

MISINFORMATION
SIN
IN
INFORM
OR
FORMAT
MAT
MISINFORMATION

HEARKEN
HEAR
HE
HEAR
EAR
ARK
KEN
HEARKEN

ASHAMED
ME
AM
HAM
SHAM
ASH
AS
ASHAMED

Richard Kostelanetz

THEY JUST NEEDED COACHING

So many fish in your pants!
And he slipped, fell within pies,
fruit pies of stale sorts, fall
to the applause of elders
lined up along huge mantelpieces
erected where battles were fought.
But she held her crotch, held
it out to him as the children
ran through fields of tin cans.
Each child shouts from memory
the words of extinct affidavits.

Paul Weinman

Chris Winkler

DR. D’S COMMENTARY PAGE

LISTEN UP HOGS

IT’S COME TO MY ATTENTION
THAT SOME OF YOU ARE
NOT DOING YOUR PART IN THE
BIG SCHEME

SO...
WISE UP ASSHOLES
IT’S 1988
(FOR A WHILE)
AND...
YOU’D KNOW THE CREDO
OF THE 80’S... VIS... “FUCK
UP AS MUCH STUFF AS YOU
CAN BEFORE YOUR TURN IS
UP...” IS THAT TOO MUCH TO
IT’S KINDA LIKE YOUR CIVIC
DUTY!

SO, COMMON
GET OUT THERE
AND WASTE A
LITTLE EXTRA
TODAY.... OK?

DON’T BE
A BUNCHA
CANDY ASS
LIBERALS

THE WHOLE
WORLD IS
WATCHIN’

DR. D IS MADE PLAUSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM THE
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS $$$

Chris Winkler

Randy Moore

John Adams