Star Lake

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STAR LAKE

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Arda Collins

June 2012

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Title: STAR LAKE
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Degree Date: June 2012

ABSTRACT

*Star Lake* is a collection of poems.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the editors of the publications in which these poems have appeared:

*A Public Space*: “158”

*Colorado Review*: “153”

“154,”

“155”

*Iowa Review*: “162”
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Bibliography
The process of inquiry—the desire to know, feel, or imagine, to conjure a scenario—is one place that poetry comes from. It is part of the larger privacy and clarity, the desire for lucid or unnamable experience in language that takes place in the invisible shared space of our psyches.

The set of inquiries in the poems in *Star Lake* approach the world as phenomena, and consider what the world is made out of. The origins of landscape, and etymology are part of those inquiries—the ways in which image and emotion form through the senses, and are expressed through the many parts of a word. In this imaginative process, the poem’s atmosphere becomes a central formal concern and a primary transmission of experience. Some of the writers that have been part of my thinking about atmosphere and image are the Objectivists—Oppen, Niedecker, and Bunting in particular, and Sylvia Plath’s sensory intelligence. A sense of scenario came from eighteenth century picaresque novels, especially Voltaire’s *Candide* and Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey*.

To refresh the language and form a new sense of image, I have been working with the OED. Attention to the progression of a word, as meaning changes or breaks away into other words, has been part of my thinking about how atmosphere in a poem forms. I am especially interested in this process in language that describes the natural world. What are the origins of the names for the elemental components of our surroundings? For star, lake, hill, mollusk, wave, flesh, blossom? How might a sense of origin effect our perception, and what emotions transpire?

An example of the process of this thinking occurs in the poem “155” with the word “shale,” which has several meanings. Its etymology is related to “shell,” as in seashells, shellfish,
and also the shells of pods and nuts. “Shale” is also related to “scale,” as in the scales of fish, of metal, and a scaly disease. By these definitions, “shale” forms associations with textures from the sea, with drier, earthier ones, and with the layering of skin. Associating them together produces an image of an ocean that has disappeared through geologic change, or ebbs off as it transforms into a landscape of flora and fauna that emerged from it over time and dissipate. “Shale,” as we know, is also a kind of rock that is layered and pressed. The qualities of the rock overlap with the textures of the other shales and shells. "Shale" is also a verb—the movement of water that makes the sound of the sea: “A gentle shaling noise of waters broken by the passage of the vessel” (OED). These meanings together evoke the sound of water moving against rocks, shale against shale, and the breaking sound of shells. The formation of fossils through layers of rock and the audible sensation of the ocean is experienced through the evolution of the word, and forms the language in the poem.

The numbered titles are part of an expansion of language, and are not a representation of sequence or quantity. They use the number as a kind of noun: a numeric description of an entity. Their value is similar to the language in the poems: the names and symbols assigned to elements of the natural world perceived through a sentient being.

Together, these poems are an exploration of origin: of landscape, biology, language, knowledge, and emotion; whether or not these components comprise a notion of morality is one of the questions that comes from having them occupy overlapping atmospheres of thought. The atmospheres and scenarios in these poems play out the version of creation that we experience as the present, as memory, and the interpretation of reality that occurs in the imagination. They are an interpretation of creation, if we can think of a creation myth as one interpretation of our unknown world: the way in which an individual perceiver relates the knowledge they have acquired from sentience by attempting to see deeply into the invisible events concealed in the visible world.
Poetry can attempt to extend the experience of English, and language more broadly. While writing these poems, I have been working with translations of Rilke's late French poems, which he wrote living in Switzerland at the end of his life. Some of these are concerned with an animated sensation of landscape, especially “The Verlaisian Quatrains.” Others, such as “Roses” and “The Windows” use a central noun as an image that cycles through atmospheric and emotional scenarios described with formal regularity. “Roses” and “The Windows” are comprised of 27 and 25 short sections, most of them two stanzas of four lines each. Rather than creating parameters around what is said, the regular shape of the poems is freeing: once the parameters have been set, anything can happen inside them; the noun opens and expands into scenarios.

Thinking in French, and about its departures from and similarities to English produces new experiences of both languages. To enter the formation of the line through two languages, and follow the movement of images through the stanzas in two modes simultaneously has created an intensified sense of what a poem can do.

The visual language of film has also affected the poems in this book, and imagining atmospheres that reveal new states of mind through image. Films that are present in the world of these poems are Joel and Ethan Coen’s No Country For Old Men; John Boorman’s indelible adaptation of James Dickey’s novel Deliverance; and many of Ingmar Bergman’s films, in particular Hour of the Wolf, Scenes from a Marriage, Saraband, Smiles of a Summer Night, and Secrets of Women.

The visual style in these films—palette, attention to the face, the experience of violence, pacing, landscape, and of course light—are part of how atmosphere in these films is created. In Light Keeps Me Company, which documents the life of Bergman’s cinematographer Sven Nykvist, directed by his son Carl-Gustaf Nykvist, Roman Polanski says of Nykvist “You can see the air in his movies.” This quality of dimension is a primary feature of atmosphere, and in Nykvist’s work, its intensity is literal. The actor Stellan Skarsgard describes it: “What stopped
me in my tracks was the light. It was as though you could grab hold of the lighting, which he had created. It was so enormously sensual, living it’s own life. It almost felt as though the lighting was closer to you than the set was—without its getting in the way of the actors in any way at all.” In poetry, atmosphere as a presence can supersede rhetoric and familiar syntactic constructions to create a form for speech.

As in Bergman’s films, Chris Marker, especially in *Sans Soleil*, explores the landscape of memory and questions of emotional reality that create an interpretation of our perceptions of sensation and events. Other artists and filmmakers who share similar concerns are Tim Eitel, Kara Walker, Mark Rothko, Raymond Pettibon, David Lynch, Maya Deren, and Eric Rohmer.

Here is a set of events recounted from my experience as an example:

Once for a job, I worked on a film where we were shooting small robots who could fly very small aircrafts, and when I say aircrafts I mean something like a motorized kite. This was taking place in a desert in eastern Washington. One night in my hotel, I smelled burning. What had happened was, there had been an accident with a woman driving a car, and a trailer. The desert was on fire, and all day it came closer and closer to the robots until everyone had to leave. We were tired and the cameraman became very drunk on pink wine in the airport restaurant. Then he became angry in the plane full of sleeping people and broke a piece of the airplane. We were still on the ground. He was asked to leave the airplane and I had to go with him because it was part of my job. It was past two in the morning and we had to sleep in the terminal. This was regrettable, and also exciting. There were robots, a fire, someone breaking things in an airplane, and angry scenes resulting in embarrassingly grief of all kinds.

When I think of this now, I am unsure about whether this happened, even though I know that it did. I don’t know where it is but it is somewhere, and realistically it is many places. Everyone who was there is somewhere, even the fire, and the white pants my glamorous seatmate
on the flight I never completed is somewhere. I’m somewhere right now.

Language about these and all things, the components of reality, comes from the space inside of us, the actual physical space that joins us with the world, and it is one expression of the shape of our perception. Our biology is a cellular act of thought and emotion, and poems are a sound it makes. Here is an excerpt from Sans Soleil that describes the process of how we perceive events that become images, and language:

Shonagon had a passion for lists: the list of “elegant things,” “distressing things,” or even of “things not worth doing.” One day she got the idea of drawing up a list of “things that quicken the heart” . . . coming back through the Chiba coast I thought of Shonagon's list, of all those signs one has only to name to quicken the heart, just name. To us, a sun is not quite a sun unless it's radiant, and a spring not quite a spring unless it is limpid. Here to place adjectives would be so rude as leaving price tags on purchases. Japanese poetry never modifies. There is a way of saying boat, rock, mist, frog, crow, hail, heron, chrysanthemum, that includes them all. Newspapers have been filled recently with the story of a man from Nagoya. The woman he loved died last year and he drowned himself in work—Japanese style—like a madman. It seems he even made an important discovery in electronics. And then in the month of May he killed himself. They say he could not stand hearing the word “Spring.”

Our inquiries in language are produced from the viscera inside of everything. As Octavio Paz says, “We are a pause of blood.” Poems are the sound of what comes before and after, and what occurs in the duration.

The viscera in Plath is also matched by her concern with myth, the origins of creation, the formation of the natural world, and our physical apprehension of these things. Her attention to questions of being appears across her work, but many extended explorations appear in her diaries. This early passage describes the experience of consciousness interfacing with creation, and the nouns and names we have made to mark the awareness that take place between them:

A serene sense of the slow inevitability of the gradual changes in the earth’s crust comes over me; a consuming love, not of a god, but of the clean unbroken sense that the rocks, which are nameless, the waves which are nameless, the ragged grass, which is nameless, are all defined momentarily through the consciousness of the being who observes them. With the sun burning into rock and flesh, and the wind ruffling grass and hair, there is an awareness that the blind immense unconscious impersonal and neutral forces will endure,
and that the fragile, miraculously knit organism which interprets them, endows them with meaning, will move about for a little, then falter, fail, and decompose at last into the anonymous [sic] soil, voiceless, faceless, without identity (Plath 75).

An awareness of consciousness takes place in Oppen at the level of language awareness. “The Forms of Love” and “Psalm” describe how image and atmosphere bend into language and come through us when we speak. The elegant shape of perception into speech, and speech into the creation of a lake that is simultaneously moonlight, grass, and water in “The Forms of Love” could be transposed as the form of atmosphere into syntax. Here is the poem:

Parked in the fields
All night
So many years ago,
We saw
A lake beside us
When the moon rose.
I remember
Leaving that ancient car
Together. I remember
Standing in the white grass
Beside it. We groped
Our way together
Downhill in the bright
Incredible light

Beginning to wonder
Whether it could be lake
Or fog
We saw, our heads
Ringing under the stars we walked
To where it would have wet our feet
Had it been water (Oppen 106)

In “Psalm” the phrase “this in which”—those parts of speech, the sound, shape, and evocation of them, become indistinguishable from deer chewing grass “in the small beauty of the forest” (Oppen 99), the forest of sound as language, of the emotions that cause us to make these sounds,

Crying faith
In this in which the wild deer
Startle, and stare out.
The quest for origin also resembles the picaresque journey, through countries of sensation, fantasy, and delusion, and configurations of every geologic and biological formation, found in the novels of the eighteenth century—Voltaire’s *Candide* and Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey*, and earlier in *Don Quixote*. These works also share a sense of the absurd with the BBC series *Fawlty Towers*, and with Samuel Beckett’s work. In *Molloy* in particular, the sense of absurdity often comes from scenarios in which the characters are, or become trapped, and must attempt to escape outside of rational means. For Candide on his journey, every country is a strange country; for him, as for Don Quixote, things are rarely what they seem, and it is in these misconceptions that something of our relationship to the world might be revealed.

*A Sentimental Journey* makes the fantasy element of time within an episodic structure more oblique and more opaque, and Sterne’s effect here most resembles Beckett’s. Like Molloy, Sterne’s Yorick is existentially captive to himself, as in the episode called “The Captive,” set off by his encounter with a bird. His responses to the world—overwrought, subjective, impulsive, sometimes snobby, and often directed indiscriminately and without warning—are comic, though Beckett’s characters in comparable situations are not satirized. There is a pervasive grief in *Molloy*: scenes that might be comic, as in the sequence when he rotates a series of seven stones from one pocket to another, with one always in his mouth to suck on, are dark; and still, a comic sensibility that includes an understanding of obsession, irrational desire, and a genuine sense of captivity, are necessary to fully understand Molloy. Likewise, gravity in Sterne takes place in the way in which Yorick is trapped and blocks the world outside: we never see France or Italy because the view is obstructed by the flights of his obsessions, and because he spends so much time indoors hiding in his room. Although it is comic, *A Sentimental Journey* is a disorienting and dense novel that cumulatively produces real anxiety.

Still, Yorick has the desire to run himself in the path of sensation and to experience the
heights of the world’s mysteries, something he has in common with Candide, though a
fundamental difference is that Candide is sent on his journey through an uncontrollable chain of
events in which he also participates, where Yorick seeks out a journey and is unable to fulfill
himself, though the desires are present:

No man cares to have his virtues the sport of contingencies—one man may be
generous as another man is puissant . . . for there is no regular reasoning upon the
ebbs and flows of our humours; they may depend upon the same causes, for
ought I know, which influence the tides themselves—‘twould oft be no discredit
to us, to suppose it was so: I’m sure at least for myself, that in many a case I
should be more highly satisfied, to have it said by the world, ‘I had had an affair
with the moon, in which there was neither sin nor shame,’ than have it pass
altogether as my own act and deed, wherein there was so much of both (Sterne
5).

Yorkick’s desire to have union with the moon is part of Candide’s questions about the
world; it also recalls Plath and Oppen. “By the way,” Candide says to Martin, “do you believe
the earth was originally all ocean, as they assure us in that big book belonging to the ship’s
captain’(Voltaire 45)? Voltaire draws a world in which we, and time, are made out of the same
materials, and that everything has ever been made out of; everything is made out everything else.
“Candide caressed his sheep”(45) from El Dorado when they are re-united, just as he previously
had with Cunegonde, and which also recalls the scene in which the naked women grieve the loss
of their monkeys: “…he saw the girls embracing the monkeys tenderly, weeping over their
bodies, and filling the air with lamentations. “I wasn’t looking for quite so much generosity of
spirit“ (30-31) Candide says, and Cacambo tells him, “My dear master…you’re always
astonished by everything. Why do you think it is so strange that in some countries monkeys
succeed in obtaining the good graces of women? They are one quarter human, just as I am one
quarter Spanish.” In another version of this, in answer to Candide’s questions about god, the old
man in El Dorado says, “We don’t pray to him at all . . . we have nothing to ask him for, since
everything we need has already been granted; we thank god continually” (36). This is not an
Illogical philosophy: everything we need in this world to survive is here, in some form.

Our humanity matters mainly because it doesn’t. It doesn’t matter singularly because there are other options besides consciousness, and all of us possibly have and possibly will again experience them, and also the span between consciousness and other forms of existence. The explicitness in Voltaire’s fantasies is like a bloom from a long accumulation of images, sensations, and particles, trees coming into leaf, wolves eating deer, oceans dissipating into prairies, coal forming in the earth. Voltaire’s imagination, like any of ours, is a receiver of the experience of time. He is material, and when the world vibrates through his senses, *Candide* is what is projected. The awareness of experiencing time as an extreme sensory activity is a form of reason, or it is the kind of reason that is required to perceive time.

Each act of violence and lust in Voltaire is refracted into all of them, as in the simultaneity the Old Woman describes when she says, “to hold existence in horror, and yet to cling to it? to fondle the serpent which devours us till it has eaten out our heart?” (23). While this is terrifying, it also satisfying, the idea of it, and the act of reading this sentence that has come from somewhere. Voltaire’s notion of time is similar, as we must live in it, but in order to do this we must fantasize outside of it or forego the gratifying pleasures of consciousness. In that scenario, we would have to accept Martin’s answer when Candide asks, “But why then was this world formed at all?” (45), and that is “To drive us mad” (46). Or as I experienced it in writing the poems in *Star Lake*, to follow this question one way towards clarity, and another on the path that leads away from it.
A butterfly is murdered
because of the corner of your eye.
You do,
it comes in.
The mammoth particulate reality
blood stationed everywhere
oil on the lignite
sundown frigate peat
ocean blue, like you
do, chime doors
parietal, galactic
skull, plus 2.
My longing for you is like clouds
the coming motion
the day’s events together.
It’s heaven
brick that pale
mandible blue
winter it is
we are in. There is no reflecting
the gold singular upward
mirror building windows
ursine sunset
king metal rose-hue
sunset coming
and coming away.
Walking more than one dusk
to walk into the one still
that arrives
in it a postal ring not yet
reached my ears.
Wail, pale, and sail.
You do shoot yourself in the face,
don’t you,
predilected
kiss
I heard your thought through,
catch up.
The shells are on
We are billowing
it is a gray
and a whitened
soft wall of air
It reminds me of easing
not like anything
more than you hear
abalone ear
I feel blind
everything
Life is made out of billowing
invisible, swirling heart
chamber at night
what you look like
blue iridescent
mother of pearl
morning sun between the pines
black ventricle molecules each
one a lake,
ring opens my ear
atomic gasoline.
Of its place,
the lower course
blind estuarial fail
at 3
through the winter on my field.
Open water
it isn’t, is it?
though no
limpets shale
the flats
a nothing
blooms the white
sun gray
stones, but yes
never seen those.

Its oversimplification could make meat out of you.
The late afternoon is white and sheer. It is an elbow.
We are melted.
It is as if I’m looking at an encircled forward field
at the back of my head.

But I’m not because it’s right there.

His eyes roll back in his head.
Incandescent, black body
your soul is on the floor. Your earring
by the pillow under sunrise
I want you to come in the window.
An orange in the dark
was like lake air at night
one way to a planet.
The oceans at the gate
rest, sea pebbles
in a pile while it’s gray. A meteor
went above the roof
and the tree shadows threw like a lake in the grass.

Wake in bed, and you’re out here.

What is it
you think you could
feel this through?

Milk, a wolf, coal, flowers, and landscape paintings
at night in the hallway
and the yard. You’re gone forever
but this isn’t it.

They smoked ham in hay.
If they didn’t sleep through the night
they got up
and worked, fed the animals, talked, lay there,
all of it.

The grass is like licorice
nothing is a replica

did tonight
I meant it
the most
on the palm horse
you rose me in it.
Mt. Jupiter
sent back every minute that fails

to the sunset pole vault over a palm frond,
inaudible being, I don’t know
the pines in a rainstorm.
Jump in a skirt
in a fright
jump in the ocean, tormented by pleasure
if a fountain would tumble around you, and when it would happen,
   imagine a star about tethers
all there is is life
sliced peaches on an archeological site; the edge of your soul at your face.
   The war is happening,
it’s your face. The sky is the blue of life, all the corollary has only ever been that;
when it breaks you see
mental refugees running free in a state;
dark blue slate living room at night with candy, a great uncle and a wife, and Syrian jewelry watch at a restaurant, I wasn’t at this
we didn’t have that someday: circus peanuts and coffee for breakfast
   swelter at 10 in the bar. It’s like there’s a dog
home at four, somebody keeps pissing in the shower.
Low thunder over marble, to the tree line distance for horses in chert cloud pressure
   on the mountain rocks covered in dirt. A purple storm on the mountains for the gunmen
in a meadow; soul at the heights.
A nest in a field full of rifles elongates the shrubs, spirit turned above the ground.
The sun on the mountains at the train,
you could wake up, the headless in the river
that won’t be excavated, striated February November.
Sweater and shoe, no pants, and nothing, you, you, you
pineapple,
won’t have another day
to be a mystery to you
large over the snow
midstreet sunlight; we’re the dark, it’s so weird,
    just even the air here; palace, oyster, ocean franchise
go up in walking, hands and neck
    and down, little kiss.
The lakes
are behind
the salt shadows
a frozen sea
deer, midnight.

Brittle there is electricity
in the snow. It would break the sun
at 1. In an hour
astral afternoon rises before dark
over the road and rocks.

It’s dark
and so hard to find it
any other way.

Not on Earth.

In another part of the solar system there’s a blue sky; wheat or snow
blown down on one side.

Lake as dark
as a mirror
in the dark. An unmoving tide
lies still in far order.
The unlit origin
glided out.

4

The arc across
a glass building to a white
civic courtyard, mild soot,
and brick partitions at twilight.
The afternoon is distilled to heights
the next day
on the golf course
through the television.

Are you startled? Saturn,
or it was something
besides, what had been
crossed or vivid
to get through the sedge and verdure, virid and diamond.
Madness
blows through its eye,
Saturn’s rings, a king comes slovenly down a hill
to a flowering meadow
that towers over disappearance
cast into vertices, and voids.

Who doesn’t sing from this lake?
the song that plays
under this galaxy of lakes
races a thrush
through the grass in the stars
across space
clutch through to their forms
and break stones and flesh
desiccated in the peel
torn into red light around a storm;

star comes through the pond
gleams in the black shallow water

a mirror bounding in eternity,
though there isn’t eternity
outside the cave face that sees it.

6

dead star comes to a pond

night in a circle

back over the hill

where the moonlight is shining;
drowning under it
wouldn’t be.

I come up somewhere else

with my heart and lungs

silvered

giant skate,

seaweed valves,
in black wings

flies through

up to the light

shredded animal cells
fail the wide

cadence
repository.

Plant water
algae clean the dark for new
cold water stars;
dying
I’m not sure what it’s for:
where would it be?

Gleaming and slavering on
teeth and moonlight tear apart
vast, flat,
elevation.

Reaching into kelp under the black waves,
only the sun bright brown and blue returns to it in the morning,
hazel thistle makes the ocean return to the day.

It’s the time of day
the light changes over. The waters
at the bottom of the slopes
ringing and burning empty
turn a hand over a carpet to make it darker
in places down to the inlet.

Clear unrest
sunset blazing and watching
a beach movie blazes the eye
only.

7
cilia light your arm.
Your sleep passes me
when you wake. At 6
forces wait
in the circular drive.

8
Afternoon has a white shadow
downstairs. The forest across the road
envisages the gray pond
by the highway. Lakes,
it’s true that something something.
It’s 6:22.
The dim
closes in the lamplight, across
the dark hall, that
--eons come in close
in one note
they’re still, they’re here; they move
it’s us.

They bent down
the two hounds
they made they became.

On your knees
in the branches and lake
snow on the road that bends that would end.

Awash in the afterlife of swans,
walking up the road
it’s boring

but I’m still afraid.

It’s freezing out,

I feel like I’m walking above the road suspended because my breath is cold.

When I get back

it’s perfected.

12

Reach across

arc of day

on this chest that belts the hours of these depths

the creeks and shallows wake

in pails and lets

the rip that makes

the fabric of eyes

a terror of space.

By the ocean, soft, wooden

decomposition

in breaths

near apprehension

I could
this way
blackened forest
ash only.

13

It’s impossible to say
why I recognize
something about why it’s black.
It’s lost.
The sun is out and winds up a dirt trail in the grass that gets narrow and goes higher
up from life.

14

The fence in the grass buckles
under rain in advance
of fields shallows.
Life is fucking hard
A pond that turns
darker the world over a forest turned
red. It might show
what this allows. You are so
strangely in my purpose bred.
I sucked on your tongue
while your blood
told me something.

It’s a wild accident

I have something
to say, & why
you aren’t?

Green without starlight, what’s
sore you understand.

I wince and burn
and go

back to what’s left

that’s upwards towards an hour you can see above
I haven’t tried it yet, but

I’m going to see if it works later

I want to hear your

and your voice is the same feeling

I have this idea that

even though that doesn’t

I think it’s because

I came in the first night and

hasn’t since

been throwing

a silent tantrum. I’ve had no
personal space all summer, it’s bats. Last
night I had a dream about moss and wild flowers
that sprang up because spores from the mountains
had gotten into my things. At first
I was wondering, but then they were great.
They were different
kinds of lavender and plinki. Then the fire alarm
went off at five in the morning and
we all had to go outside. It was really jackass.

Whatever remaining radial winter smoke

across a piece of ground. I know this one the best

No one else

what’s inside me, my tongue, your tongue
the world
in that heat
All this talk is making me grieve.

It was mild
by your blistering
prose rose woes

See? not a green ray anywhere, not at all like a
sunset, neglect, not a pond, not stars burning, not a white moon burnt
and hidden in shimmers.

Through, I love you and ways, which
must mean
and listen
while it’s said
though,
a doorstep; a forelock; pea shoots that glisten

but quickly, yes, and dead.
alien barbarism night
towns the ground
lake pales the end of blue
lust shadow
I know it's like a view
from a window or an interlude turns into a gently luminous property of cosmic progress
talks a face
light forms on it
those kind
of hall stairs in coming
from white inside
what were the measures for the topical pleasures
leaf coins falls
vented orange
negative reversed on a pillar of wall
bedawned pistils chirp

why does this have to be done
repealed gray on the river

I’m just not like that

it stays out cold

I wish we could stay here
visitation is the word for plant,

repatriated waters.
It was, and it turned out
it was loved all along
Glacial lake love forever!
When it leaves and evaporates dried
aerial vented blue
other skin and tall grass combined come into
This is what happens the
enzymes undo meltwater
to flay a river furrow

Set
& betimes
concave for a topbed?
Are questions
protozoa?
prior
cellular inlaid color sequence

it were cilia, gills, vibrating sea horses on the wind
somnambulant prismatic
emanations from crustacean veins
and mica
hillside vibrancy
above a turn
starlight fallen to water
translucence and opacity alternate flesh, vines,
gray, feathers, blossoms, other versions of outcomes.

These pieces often evoke
some of them familiar: the cross section
the divisions of a shoreline, but many of them
from inside
patterns
phosphenes press
bright movements
a kind
of viscosity, and its
to the composition
of an exterior
the components
enter recharged: blood
the convergence and dissipation
of matter posits
retained as it passes through time. Their texture, as if rocks were pliable, and the intensified stone hues—gray-pink, gray-lavender, one-tone moss—suggest

and how it might yield
the moon shines over the river

and it’s a time

so that to ask and see night set in part

everainty settled first

if a tree is 600 years old

and take your heartbeat in my arms
s ingings past and future

night for a river to wood
upward a pond to wind down and break

fallen trunks and branched retinue valence.

shine to shining shine

the dogs are wode,

and woed, star comes

the next light

dark to full sun

comes to light

to push the shoulders down

loo loo loo, loo loo loo

weighs a round edge
38

236,000

We know

ain’t no mountain high enough

ain’t no valley low enough

ain’t no river wide enough

to keep me from gettin to you babe

if something must be

it’s this. One

recounted death

tractable dispossession

past and future

with light instead of time

crying to try

understanding them. Waking full

of events

baffling, scales

a car key in the ocean

far

and hard won

Everything is made out of light
Didn’t we talk about this already?
saying now and always
is scrawl, best as scrawl
When a bee
dances the figure eight
and a rainbow prisms out of light
exposing a piece
surrounding the orbs
yes
the world rubbed off
The day’s work is done
towering anguish in the letter E
A tear in half frees all civilization. The ruins,
caves, & the ocean, mesmerizing
held
Bigger and bigger
I think this crap is finally over
leaves mist glow
How many centuries equals gold pennies?
what happened outside tonight?
I don’t know, that thing’s got me
buoyant and closed off
death stipulated for speech
everything
what told it
wept air
mustard
until tomorrow
landing on a sorrow
metal dollar engine
on a day hot enough to rain
36 hours of weird, ugly numbers
spread off until a convexiture
bent light
black hole tore
antelope ripped
into lions
to get out
of here
428

Sun points the top houses
And over the end of all towns
Sand roads and car trouble
a month thrown on an afternoon
in basins of road forest
every happy time suns out
it’s a perplexor times 3
highly regarded misery
The world, formal as it would like
but the plant world is casual
restaurant to show
then not so casual
not enjoying the conversation
as much as you would like
across the table
no speak
please
what we do
together is here
cars
the better
hey, it’s summer
yah what doesn’t suck
winding up this place
I love you so much
we should go in a few minutes
it can’t happen. Lavender skies
g clef horse
does a historical fake out
in one care what what
wild thought fields is a country
blap fuck space
it isn’t
the blacktop shakes
do you have any ideas about this?
blood spread on your face
to the beat
it’s cool
lions tear it apart

wind blows through the night
in the big seven wonder
identical knife point
“fuck this!”
ha
I know
kiss
The sun is death
land burns
into a shade of vision
a trachea is a bone
and a pancreas and a liver together flower up a piece of time
The International Monetary Fund isn’t finished yet
forest patterns red, yellow, ocean, and through
blackened aqua round continent lows and prepare
deaths to go forward. As clearly as space
can, it leans towards what’s been when
a cheetah squints in the sun
it’s a surprise it shows
the largest person shouldn’t be obliterated
by tincture viscous in bark, lined
hellion green, you
gloss the pointelle blue
a wet duct glister arrow
shines a stomach’s beat

there’s no

such word as vanish
Sure-footed wisdom blathers on
in the naked hollow of a tree
about everything that can be done
first and foremost
a battery of black versions
confirms infrared undergrowth
Give or take a few
star shines so bright in our arms
we call out to it
as knowledge
because naked water between our legs
You’re so stupid all the time
because purple is the most color
there isn’t a single thing better
than the white background behind numbers
between your naked legs
eternity is high
cheeks wept and yearned throughout the long valley day til the sun went down
Without much in the way of bells and shadows
when the apple orchard comes into spring
it can water away as long as a well.
Stars bleat the light shoals
on a secondary attempt to heel
and stave off the fatuous aspects
7 witless bank robbers find a sun
At the bottom of a ravine goat stomachs torn open
gate changed migration routes
when the light changes at sundown on the pond
goodbye
siren
calls break pale black
liable to say it all night
The drapes on the congress of light scales out the city
No magic broken or taken away
it isn’t any longer
we’re just longer
hop to the bed to fort the happiness
bested bleak lake snow departed for happiness
Of course I love you!
over the allee’s pitch
to cement pillars for horizon rain
Versaille is everywhere
Beati, Rex tremendae
majestatis
Gigantic flowers come to morning gratis
in paradise
climb the lattis and slept
little yellow window interred
after the boosters went off on fire
in the basement and in syphilis
limestone pity
lest you get a handle on it
bone shatters in atomic silence over hundreds of years
you got here out in the garage
amble in the way
376,000

What? We are so coming out the!
whatever it is, it can’t be more important than this
Our man in Havana stomps the lamplight at 3am
we’re having world pith
and knuckling down to fraction out a regional path:
Saturn’s rings are a shattered moon, ice that since then goes on
and spins a lake cast in light on debris
Saturn is a king going slow slow slowly
with boring ideas and republic seizures
I’m trying to do several things at once here!
one yells standing at the bureau, one yells from the bed
and rolls over
I’m going back to my own town!
and in the mean time,
they’re up two feet away from their backs.
These two!
On a big cloud
gray falling morning
it’s the time they all come adorning
their rocks
their trees
the big birds and the big steeds
all together they can be
a time for you and me!
In the meadow with a wren,

Head!
Like the head that you sit on!

and back in the town,

you are so much!

there once was a pauper,

who was heir to a crown

how? how?

to the river, the dingle, and the glen

he went down

& came upon what he had sown

beauty walks in the face
of Avalon

out of nowhere

& heart sets noon
Your words not mine
Two mummies meet in a forest
not completely in their own field of vision
One monster week
in the fight of their lives
disoriented
hundreds of years in love
oak tree opens
planet implodes
translated from Chinese
in a mind of unknown lineage
stones shine in time
compress in reverse
battered out moon
Flotilla of nights
parlor on one leg
white eyelet ruffle
naked & powder green see-through
soap and evening
amber nebula lamp and shadow
black blindfold
head. Her tongue is out.
Nothing is bad,
and nothing bad is ever going to happen.
It’s an absolute certainty.
Trough of auroral ions
ports sound.
Lightning over the field
voltage atmosphere
spins the grass thunder wash. In life, our minds,
wolves, wheat,
acorns, tar,
rust in an encounter
rain, fear,
dust, pleasure,
slab of invisible charge
cut by metal
x-ray cloud
sodden lifted
variegated.
It isn’t better.
You don’t like thinking about this.
Casually
done mound
quakes from the sea
enchanted
to meet you
Soon to be
Let’s see,
what else is there?
a wave comes
country comes down
dogs swirl
out the grass at 4, & think about tomorrow
it’s huge up there
gray, gold torrent
up really high
cello a split
beautiful there
not much to recommend it
how could you have done this?
115

In the main being
terrors there are green hours
When you see down
and see that
among there
and everything that’s said
opens again
when you
see out
Let’s see
if we can have you
And it’s all, and then
upon a waste of time
Soon will be coming back
upon a light
Let’s see
if we can have you
Let’s see
if we can hide it out
I miss you so much
waking whisper to you
dead
it won’t ever be
enough
and can’t know
just how dead
separated this morning
by the window and the bed
where is dead?
I see it when I see you
green wine and crocuses
dirt the shadow

from morning sun to morning sun
cold fades black into tree
and steers blue
features go

how I would say this
to me and to you

a light in the evening
forces a decision
dusk a mirror
on the river

smooth in great detail
the first thing ever been said
side of a neck
churn braying the dock lakeshore

fantastics repeat
evening set flint
ice age high
abundant fluke
what that would
to fore,
close night
calendar away
lewdness and sorrow
stays event
burgeons and drifts
hundreds and thousands
when you say tomorrow
a waning street goes by
tenderness, and death.
lavender a thousand
around and through
your head
white spread on the overlook
towel off
lamp night forty-eight
flights dark
Don’t ever say anything

The clouds darken
we don’t die once but many times

all along,
heat
the damp spring air
spiral to the ball peen sun
rivers lay upon the past and no hold was forgotten. No embrace lost the shout that bore its limbs. It wasn’t.

awake with a start, on a morning’s gray
thought from far away

comes through the face like a star
for someone and the police are going to come to my house if I don't send it this afternoon. I'm wearing jean shorts and a blue tank top, not too exciting. But I am also wearing orange and pink jungle print underwear and light yellow lace bra that I think is by a brand called "Happy." What are you wearing?

each file of air full from light weighing

leaf in a pasture by the banks
eves in their faces

destroy rain
Never to water
blind the light goes
flown for farther
thrown coins
come for felled
branches to august a storm
Don’t go
love for blood
doesn’t have to show
until later on
shadowed in
by space right here
a catalogue of advances
constant dark
woke up so hungry
a desert and a murderer
learned thinking and watching
about what to look out for
life or one more
in others it’s possible
to be
not the wisdom, but still isn’t definite
it’s possible to always have been
the thing
just not to recall in a way
that’s useful
does it mean
it isn’t or was
about the murderer
or die violently
probably true
shot in the guts
frightened black bristle
people might agree for themselves
or not handle it
shot in the guts, or someone
chopped off the tips
fingers or anything or did
any of the things unwilled
come to wonder
how this world stays
made & why
we don’t black out
alone of pain
& ease
wet evening bark
snow in a forest
look in eyes
in them that once
is black and in some places appears
a river changing over
why is it like it
universe unlike a river
not anything but love
a river really is like love
if love

2
sunset in an animal
can’t said
anything would do overtaken
winter through
slight current
state cast in air horses.
how did you know I said those things?
hear of us
different silence happens because

3
This is the other
side of that song
this is the song
lie in the sun
by the empty water
filled with the walls away
soft irreducible
world your eyes are covered
he dies like a river

the snow in the evening was like an eclipse
snow the moon
the night
& the white
the hours of the afternoon

shot like a river

the river comes into the sun like drums and guns
slow from the night
before comes through the sun
wide open the world
everything everything everything everything

climbs high on a rock
the quartzite goes into the night

your world of ethics might be
by who didn’t choose

4

like it that lamp, the woods, reminds me of wanting you
the world
lid, shadow

sound

not so

5

after the dark mist on the path
I’m going to shoot tomorrow in the face
all the way the light tonight
in its entirety
heat from an iris

6

they embrace in silence while the tree
out of the embrace he steps towards the cabin while she turns and smiles to smell the tree
they come up in a row boat
walk up to the bank of the island
she turns to take a breath and embraces him

7

he shoots the gun and comes out someplace else
it had been on the inside of his mind and now it was on the outside
the sound of the shot had reconfigured the components of sun and prismatic elements
to form real and afresh

the sheet away from his lover’s body awake or dead, sleeping or playing a joke
naked in the land of the dead
when she finds him he is lying down by the stream
he disappears from her arms in the woods
she calls out to him but it doesn’t return him to the moment before or to a subsequent
moment in which he is there
does it in a way
the rest isn’t

8
dream hard and don’t come in
it was night, from the kitchen out the door that goes to the path,
then the door that goes to the hall and the living room, through that door it was dim
small, obvious 500
tomorrow, the snow crashes off of the future
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