

*contents*

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& Tom Devaney's thought on Hoa Nguyen's *Dark*

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**Psalm for dogs and sorcerers**

This once-stolen baby  
this old baby wagging a wool tail  
flings an elbow,  
oh grass,  
flings an arm  
at the night.  
Rouse a body  
lick a body just born  
a live thing resh out—  
let them tango  
by a sulfurous lake  
let them tangle  
by a stink hole  
relieving a fiery foot wound  
re-living a most furious wound  
in the air mighty  
in the air incensed  
in the air  
with cricket thunder

## PONYDOG

In dog, a pony.  
Pelican worm cheek farce,  
ear of a face inside

inside pony's heart an eye all  
at once all at once that's dog.

Pony dog if someone else is else.  
Pony dog is pony dog living.

Pony dog runs the show face,  
farce the voice ushered wind

skull of pony dog fish  
face pelican worm, usher wind to gallop

a pony faced wind to whip  
open farce face pony fish another  
heart eyed pony eyed pony dog.

To be who it is is someone for shape.  
To be who it is is some body for shape.

Pony dog companion parts transparent  
history fish shows shared eye heart wonders  
pony wonders wonders

## Fragile X

Cabbage is green. A pretty bowl is green  
is fragile. She is  
an embarrassed elephant. She is kind.

Green kind is a kind she likes. Her eye is  
a fragile ball. Kind  
is a pat of butter. She is an elephant

who can find a fat mouse. Fat Mouse plays  
a fine game. Marbles  
is a game she plays with marbles. Ten is an X.

Ten tells how many. Ten cabbages are  
a fine ball of leaves.  
Elephants find things that cannot really

happen. She can squeeze juice from most fruits  
and vegetables.  
The shape is called a heart. She can squeeze

but when you get hurt you see some of your  
blood. She sees a fat  
mouse a pretty green bowl in her eye.

Not many elephants see a human  
bone. This is not  
a pirate flag. Bones make a fragile X.

She is an embarrassed elephant.

Garrett Caples  
**Hydraulic Rose**

I'm leaning down a wide isthmus  
just like the kind you used to blow  
the embezzler (chrome treasurer!) with

I know this caesura is leaking

Daddy and I are no longer  
speaking  
of which  
hazelnut  
we're cracking

up th'n we are  
when we're  
weaving  
drunk

is Drunk Thursday a holy day  
I wonder in retrospect  
is her name really Hydraulic Rose

is she  
the one  
who lives  
in my bloomers  
and blooms  
in my liver

with giant hothouse knockers

the stove rejected  
by the builders  
become the coroner

of what Daddy knows  
about that

guttural  
gush

I know this caesura is leaking  
by what it's leaving  
on the floor

## Another New York School Poem

I remember the first porno I ever saw was *Bad Girls III*. I had trouble following; I actually thought I'd missed something, some earlier narrative clue lending coherence and interest to the scenes unfolding before me. Why didn't dad own *Bad Girls I*? Who *were* these bad girls by the pool, and by what right of cinema did that guy with the feathered hair get to fuck them? I still remember the theme song, two white guys harmonizing "Bad Girls, Bad Girls" over and over like emphysemic Beach Boys.

I don't know why I know lovers live in shacks but they do; not so much for the shacking up as the makeshifting making it seem so hut you could duck in it. Unless you're charlie hustle on your paper route — and what lover is — you'll never have scrilla to build. You're herman's hermits, a low rent brownie in someone's discarded shell. A salad tossed in the gutter. Nonetheless I remember resting my chin on your window's folded hands, looking out at a set of rocks too big for me to see but too small for me to climb. I look almost bored.

I know my prose is overfine because I have no faith in it, or rather my ever subtle distinctions are like a protractor hurled off a bluff, a plastic imposition on a things already moving and way too vast for it. Which is why I'm occupied painting notches on its smallest part, a hairsbreadth between two hairs, which doesn't let me know a thing but can tell me this from this.

I came into this world on a prank; it was red and had an orange twinge. No doubt I'll roast on these stones when I make my pink exit. I'm sorry, I'm fleshed out. Even the New York School has its Guiliani (*SP?*)phase, but why black out your windows as though I can't already guess your gross international product? My eyes are already blue, and they're looking for prequels to a film I think I might have seen in jail. The details grow grey in memory. Two men rode double on a copper chopper. The horizon was poolside on an orange chez lounge, and her friend had just returned from Sweden on "fellowship." I remember the final scene: a single geranium, perched in a pot; a decomposing fingerprint. There are still parts missing.

Bruce Andrews

This is the nausea of impotence.

IN PRINT

LESS HURRY

2-5-73

begin so

to

and each

1. Transcendence of the Ego

2. Tristes Tropiques

Jesus loves leather.

the spatula of empire

Even at Harvard the Blacks

Don't ride bicycles

Vietnam

beautiful

anaesthesia

MOVED TO DULUTH

darnfool yarnspinners

would that be of any

tabu, yes

That is rather different but  
it is connected with this.

Kristin Prevallet

from **The Parasite Poems**

**HUMAN TISSUE CAN GROW INTO ANY SHAPE, FORM**

Far phantom  
whose farce of heaven  
coos “hallowed boy is broken”  
a damaged heart  
whose will is gone  
unearthed as it was risen.  
One a pigeon, the others foul  
left shepherds tied to fences  
fell these boys  
with their religion  
let their crimes  
not be forgiven.

---

Coal miners threw live canaries into their mine shafts to detect the presence of lethal gasses.  
With a plastic lattice to help direct their growth, cells can be encouraged to grow in  
predefined shapes, just as the vine-covered barn gives shape to vines.  
The bicyclist who found him, some 18 hours after the attack, first mistook him for a  
scarecrow.

1. “Defense Dept. Eyes Key West, Keys for Radiation Early Warning System.” (*Key West Newspaper*, 12-26-97).
2. “Scientists grow heart tissue in Bioreactor,” (*NASA Space Science Features*, 10-5-99).
3. Matthew Shepard, (1976-1998).

\*

In a City Safe  
From Violence (Pierre,  
SD) Rash of Suicides  
Leaves Scars.  
Children Attack  
Selves (afternoon);  
Blast of Winter  
Leaves Scars  
On Wood, Willows.  
Bee Bee Gun  
Cat Jersey  
Unwashed. What  
He Had Left  
Behind. Cipher Of A  
Child With No Inkling  
What He Had Done.  
In a City Safe  
from Violence (Laramie,  
WY) Boy Mistaken  
for Scarecrow. What He  
Had Done. Nothing  
but a Child. Fence  
Memorial, Spray  
of White Flowers.  
Scarecrow Boy  
Resembled Left  
Dead; Tumbleweed,  
Willow Wheedles, Oaken  
Ties, Scarecrow,  
Boy Dies.

Andrew Mossin  
*from* **Drafts for Shelley**  
**CANTO**

*Where light has gone*

*dark has resumed*

She once told me strange

She said a journey was

A cave inside the journeyer

Like an adversary

Held above the sea      She said, *that spacious cell*  
*You have gone to own One*  
*Who was pierced thrown heavenward*

Below the coral & pearl & sand

His hand is brisk

Mortal stay

That attends the moon

My frenzy

---

“It is impossible to attribute direction, the cry comes from all sides, his sequestered claim to power, impoverished, and dark, he rings the soul from its pedestal, a father left weeping, no word of his whereabouts, the sound of a man stripped of all, miracle of the last journey, a soft attribution of the left ear, when he rises to clasp the foundling by its arms, spread on the sheet before him, the punitiveness of each earthly distillation.”

Past like a spark sent out  
of a burning oven

Beneath the deep anguish

Waters thronging [roots]?

Raging and bubbling

His heels she

Cut his heels in two

With might

His wound was crossed

And touched until dark

Thru which the seagreen [b]light  
beams of

its waves interwoven  
rocks chain

---

Add in pencil: 'Lie broken memories of many a heart.'

One told to suffer  
Man is how awakened  
His name fast  
ened to my last  
as thought accents  
assents  
prolific spirit of solitude  
And she who is broken  
Who made my flesh  
woven into one faith

---

Intelligible as allegory, the space that is opened to receive his form. He was fortunate, saw the means at hand, the bright dimension of creation. There was an 'afterward' brought to a halt, the brimming inflections of one who has come from the previous movement, is always invoked, yet in privacy shelters the seed of a name.

*"I live in the eye."*

Keats

In my heart forever

Is the world ceased

In burning is my heart

For slow

As the ivy

Her heart is burned

In wind it is

Ash — [the] ivy is

Its own

[unreturning]

The Revolution of the Golden City

A vision of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

---

The Mirror of Time

Over its cave

I was led forth

through portals I &

She over the child drawn

ACts

of impoverishment & becalmed

solitude

“He with child had thus been left alone”

---

“What we call visible is a quality pregnant with a tecture, the surface of a depth, a cross section upon a massive being, a grain or corpuscle borne by a wave of knowledge.”

There like  
Wonder he was troubled

even brought hour by hour

seized hour by hour

once made subject all things

tho his power were

of one distant —

& awful

His sound that was

like wonder

stirred & loose

---

past when far

[is heard]

[is gone]

like famine our homes

nurture murders

To hear to see to live  
Strange clouds from the east  
Out of the earth as the m  
[bright] [cloths of cool]  
[uprising moon]  
Bright in the east  
His stamp of (ge)nius

Lethan assemblage

Two whose  
path made one

And she did feel dreamlike music thru w.ch they did swim

Pattie McCarthy  
from *bell (h)rs*

**n**one

we un-did the vernacular & un-hitched  
the pluvius debris.  
the grief has aged  
her by this page. a brutal grisaille  
disproportionate to a reach misunderstood  
as a loving gesture. or, at the very least,  
an arm outstretched intending no harm.  
“(plant with) footlike leaves” whose pulp  
is edible but its single, nodding flower is  
poisonous. its dried  
resin is cathartic & their faces  
are monochromatic in grizzled caterwaul.  
her arm, the length of everything, intended  
nothing. meant nothing in its own context.  
reached *toward* — extended into  
consequence  
which had little to do with her arm, its  
length— chiselled  
out from one another & yet still one  
another— yet still intertangled,  
pulling weeds from the neck of my sweater.

should we return, we would not recognize  
ourselves without the colors.  
we would be stunned & perhaps  
dismayed at how we’ve faded.  
at a certain point in that particular century  
(& ever since), her arms were raised.  
cinnabar, a single embellishment in its  
severity— everything draws away  
from & pushes us to the disaster  
: resembling an almost total  
eclipse, fourteen - oh - six.  
we know how to make leap-years  
now— we think we know how to  
account for nonsense reckonings.  
we know how to make shadows  
where the earth is warm—  
we know to hang copper pots above hot  
vinegar, to further dissolve it in wine : all  
sorts of temperas were devised.  
their bodies produce  
no sound in motion.  
early winter pulls the rings from out fingers.  
there’s an element of quid pro quo to this  
that leaves one kneeling & baffled as to why  
: the gesture is addictive, is catching.

## Vespers

it was correct to refer to words  
as voices— now & then,  
when the visual was not necessarily initial.  
our most minimal exchanges.  
in a chronological row of vesperbilds, her  
cryings become more calm, successively  
s u b t l e r      l a m e n t a t i o n s .  
& there is keening, as usual— folding  
the torso toward earth, still partly fastened.  
if so much had been given,  
        much was expected.  
the revision as suspect as the original.  
consider the evidence of our eyes : scores  
will be settled inevitably & irrevocably.  
the gaggle swoons to see it; look to her,  
        look to her,      look to her.  
diagonal vaults on the useful nightstairs.  
twenty-four thousand one hundred & six  
ritual lines on my distaff side.  
one hundred & seventeen chapters  
devoted to silence.

an early equinox, counted backwards from  
fixed feasts— elimination of ten *real* days.  
retroactive adjustment v. astronomical  
accuracy. this unwillingness to be arbitrary.  
a complicated system of thrust &  
counterthrust. or, rather, an unwilling  
admission to necessary arbitrariness.  
I could have shorn my head, stuck pins  
in it. or rubbed my lips with quicklime.  
here : a septet. all but one exists as comfort  
to, as adjunct to her stricken & small figure.  
& that one takes her drastic place like an  
arcanum. she is downstage & dressed in  
spun sugar. (we have no way to reason  
these perfectly sound rules for blue  
that result in rose.)  
I forgot myself;  
I lost track of my cold fingers.  
there can be too much to say— so  
that we mostly ignore the thing itself.  
a requisite quietus before sleep.  
an unusual subject, an inventory of limbs.  
& we can certainly scramble : to get it all  
in, to force it all out, to speak. to allow for  
the possibility that someone told the truth.

## Lompline

it is maddening : to understand the math  
of it; to feel fingers stretch to it— but  
never able to execute it in fact.  
remove the tough center rib & chop

the kale fine.      made similar.

your name is on my desk somewhere—

(transfixed by arrows, it is familiar)

it is the lesser; it is selfless in its kitchen.

given my spectacles, precipitation.

mediate between unruly etyms & intention

so that we can admit to being human,

volatile, & glottal.

: in flight,

rotating postures contrast static. her dress

a vertical buttress. it turned his head, it did.

motions only obvious in reverse.

oddly, she was

condemned with excerpts.

the final consonant became mute early (see

lamb), but never accurately mimicked

pronunciation. nonetheless, it is accepted.

that we should make an effort at all those  
letters : their affectionate obligations.

had they lips or hands, perfectly still or

a noise created by quarter notes.

the necessary spices— we knew this

was coming. she has handed them over.

she has changed her dress & taken on

the expected gesture.

something more to say about despair : her

upturned face & a fissure in the landscape,

the return of the sky. a fragment of reversal

marked by implied resignation.

where he relies on renunciation— her

emphasis on intensification of the ordinary,

& gradually. as though nothing

miraculous is underfoot.

motions too slow to notice.

in a later book, they will choose to reveal

her face clearly, a guilty impersonal patina.

stove-lit, a tea tin with your evening in it.

streetlights throw haloes down around the

lampposts, a tattooed lens refractive defect.

sixteen violins, our broken sentences.

we insist on seeing

them with our dim eyes.

Albert DeSilver

**LETTER FOUR**

i will stray from one three  
and two, in that order and revoke  
all attributes that chain  
us to the continuum— or ask to follow  
a similar node— no ashes  
are equipped with color, aren't they  
parallel lineage and a phrase for the day.  
Fade out balk phase out miscued  
interpreters are stumped on inspiration are  
peeled from a cereal box boxed up in  
a room infested with serial dreaming this room  
into something made out of words the walls  
are held up by them, by god is naked and screaming  
at me god shut up already—  
my ears are planks waiting to happen  
and i can't stand the stance i'm stood up against—  
fore in the beginning it is found never ends  
the end ever ending is all fouled  
up by flowering and the dead crust that follows  
four lavender flowers on the cusp of a crack in  
the middle of the earliest street i have ever  
attempted is just an old deer trail woven through  
my thinking bleeds into the creases on my  
forehead, capillaries thrashing in a furrow.  
i will bundle the glorified brush me and deer  
passing together through elemental thistle—  
how each other's edible lives fade into  
aptly decorated passions, the room closing in  
on the outside—  
we wish it marvel upon these coastal scrub lands

CA Conrad  
**advancedELVIScourse**

1

My friend Ken and I could never *feel* Elvis the same. We'd be driving down the road listening to *It's Now Or Never*. As soon as Elvis reached his peak in the song, Ken would turn the volume down a notch.

ME: Ken, you're doing it again.

KEN: What?

ME: Every time Elvis hits his peak you turn him down, you dampen his flame.

KEN: I don't know, it just gets too loud.

ME: Ken, the volume is consistent throughout the song. You compensate volume for the vibration Elvis puts in you.

KEN: What the fuck are you talking about!?

ME: I'm trying to tell you you're afraid of the vibration of Elvis.

KEN: That's bullshit!

ME: No it's not.

KEN: Yes it is! Now shut the fuck up!

ME: All right. Have it your way.

KEN: Good! I will have it my way!

ME: There's no shame in being afraid of Elvis though.

KEN: I'M NOT AFRAID OF ELVIS! If you don't shut your mouth I'm gonna pull over and kick the shit out of you!

## 2 HOLY CITIES OF AMERICA

Democracy (another kind of Rock ‘n Roll) began in Philadelphia. Rock ‘n Roll (another kind of Democracy) began in Memphis. Benjamin Franklin and Elvis Presley, two great leaders in the rhythm of freedom, never meet, due to the technicality that Benjamin Franklin died 145 years before the birth of Elvis Presley. This should not however prevent us from delighting in the assumption that if Benjamin Franklin had survived the two would have become fast and loyal friends. Benjamin Franklin would have no doubt been a regular at Graceland for suppers, bouncing little Lisa Marie on his two hundred year old knee, telling gossip about George Washington and that insufferable little prick John Adams. Elvis would have taught the old man a few dance steps to drive the women crazy, then taken him out to the firing range to shoot targets of King George and his British Red Coats for old times sake. Oh those would have been great times, would have made some great American portraits, two American fathers of Liberation.

## The ELVIS WAS BEN Interview

If you need to find yourself a Benjamin Franklin scholar it’s important to spend a little time in Philadelphia. They bubble to the surface, like the burnt oats of a New World porridge. They’re not as life-loving and friendly as Elvis scholars, but they have their moments. I interviewed one such burnt oat mulching across Philadelphia who, by the end of the interview, insisted his name never be mentioned. It seems such deeply controversial questions connecting Elvis and Franklin would wend a shudder of disbelief throughout the academic circles of American History. The Benjamin Franklin scholar, who agreed to the tape recording of our interview, will be known hereafter as BFS.

- ME: Is it true that Benjamin Franklin is a distant relative of Elvis Presley?  
 BFS: Eh — did you say Elvis Presley? (smiles)  
 ME: Yes.  
 BFS: (laughs) No.  
 ME: How about the theory that Elvis Presley was the reincarnation of Benjamin Franklin?  
 BFS: What? Whose theory?  
 ME: Mine.  
 BFS: (frowning) Is this some kind of joke?

ME: No, not at all, in fact, didn't Ben — may I call him Ben?  
BFS: I suppose so, it's not MY name, no need to ask ME for permission!  
ME: Didn't Ben record a dream he had where he scrawled the mysterious word  
E-L-V-I-S? Wasn't he puzzled by this ELVIS word?  
BFS: That's nonsense, no such thing ever happened!  
ME: Did Ben have any strange eating habits? Like fried peanut butter and banana  
sandwiches for instance?  
BFS: I'm not going to answer that!  
ME: Because it might be true?  
BFS: Because your question is absurd!  
ME: Isn't it true that Franklin had a very serious addiction to prescription drugs?  
BFS: They didn't have Thrift Drugstores in 18<sup>th</sup> century America!  
ME: Maybe when he was in France?  
BFS: All right! I've had enough!

ME: *Excuse me sir but is it true there is a CONSPIRACY to withhold information connecting Benjamin Franklin to Elvis Presley!?*

BFS: Young man, whatever you wish. I insist on you withholding my name from this project of yours though! I want nothing to do with your — your *Elvis* thing!

“The things that are most real to me are the illusions which I create my painting.  
Everything else is a quicksand.”  
— Delacroix, 1824

The Delacroix exhibition came to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I wore headphones, listening to my Elvis CD, letting Elvis guide me through the 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings, letting Him feel our way from room to room. I wanted to spend time with the painting of Ovid in exile, but Elvis wanted lions, lions lions lions. He was singing *Don't Be Cruel*, and I STOPPED in front of the painting titled *Young Woman Attacked By A Tiger*. “Don't be cruel, to a heart that's true...” What is it Elvis? What? What is it? “Baby it's just you I'm thinking of!”

In the gift shop there are Delacroix tee-shirts, Delacroix postcards, Delacroix jigsaw puzzles, Delacroix baseball caps, Delacroix note pads, Delacroix video tapes, Delacroix pencils and more! The yuppies rolled their eyes at my Elvis tee-shirt and whispered to one another while purchasing their Delacroix coffee mugs. They're fools, really. They think this gift shop is any different from Graceland with its Elvis wristwatches, Elvis cookie jars and Elvis shot glasses. One man wearing a three thousand dollar Teton Brioni suit purchased a Delacroix baseball cap and CD titled *Music In The Time of Delacroix*. They're absurd Americans, just like me. We are the world's ridiculous, beautiful clowns. Get used to it, my people!

“They are going to launch a large vessel called a clipper at noon today. Another of these American inventions to make people go faster and faster. When they have managed to get travellers comfortably seated inside a cannon so that they can be shot off like bullets in any given civilization will doubtless have taken a great step forward. We are making rapid strides towards that happy time when space will have been abolished; but they will never abolish boredom.”

— Delacroix, 1854

If I stand still long enough I would be a place  
and no one wants to visit a place that's been a man too long  
Elvis once stood still for five minutes in downtown Memphis  
stood still in such a way no one knew how to get there

USED BOOKSTORE IN PHILADELPHIA  
SMELLING SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE A  
VERY CLEAN WOMAN PREGNANT  
WITH A LAWYER

ME: Excuse me? Where do you keep your Elvis books?

CLERK: Well, um, we don't have an Elvis section. I mean...you might want to  
check the Biography section.

ME: You mean he's not in Spirituality?

CLERK: Ah, well. Um...should he be?

Elvis caught my soul in the air like a rose between His teeth!

Ron Silliman  
*from* **You**

XIX

Moment in which I realize I'm not wearing my glasses. Old stone house. Blue plastic wrap of the *New York Times*. Impact of red wine on white fur of the dog. Sunrise.

Poem as gradual weather. Hotel art (pseudo-Hoffman softened, retro-Rothko as filigree in pastel). What Trenton makes, the world takes. What Nixon knew when Nixon knew it.

First compulsive songbird, pre-dawn, abruptly halts. The air conditioner is constant (unnoticed but never silent). You can hear the electricity in lightbulbs, faint crackling. Motivation: man in hotel conference room throws football to the sales reps.

Too bleary to imagine. How the river carves the city (lost at night, trying to find my way across). Dog leaps for the stick, her own ballet, then loses interest, wanders off to sniff the grass. History as a function of curiosity.

Of the forbidden, my three-year-old says "That makes me sad." Impossible to discern the ice from the shards of broken glass. A table of contents from which I've been omitted. Room in which toupees outnumber beards. The firestorm sweeps left across the screen: we only imagine the men, women and children inside. I'm walking in a world you cannot imagine, having died so long ago.

Dream of real estate. Amato's tomatoes. The sun emerges gradually through the woods. (The son emerges gradually through the woods.) The present has not become a perfect copy, but rather an uneditable one. The boat sinks rapidly in the text. Try to capture the shape and impact of your cheekbones in words.

From an airplane, the spokes of suburban mall (this one in Princeton is T-shaped) are indistinguishable from those of a minimum security prison but for the immense parking lot. But for. When the hard drive on the PC that controls the security system crashes, every fire door in the hotel — each held open by electrically controlled magnets — slams shut. Cardinals will take some getting used to. Dark-toned palette of *The X-Files*.

## XXXIV

Sharp morning: nuthatch bounces up the trunk of the poplar. Small town ER  
Saturday night: nurses, techs, orderlies and aides mill around the command station  
with little to do. At the all-night supermarket, we go through the express lane with  
dozens of items — it's the only one open.

A market of one. The market of wonder. RTs wear a uniform of a deeper blue  
than nurse's aides. (Thirty years ago today, death of Jack Spicer. Thirty years ago  
today, death of my father.) Silent radio on cafeteria wall. Outside, against the  
brick facade, a surgeon is smoking.

Hawaiian banana. That lost look in the eyes of anyone in a hospital who is not  
there as a worker. Imagine Olson as your "friend." Objects in text appear closer  
than they are. Each paragraph its own dialog box, each word. Book as a secret  
discussion group. Listserv or majordomo, which one?

The song of a train rolling gently through the woods. Vial of albuterol sulphate  
poured into the cup of the nebulizer. A third layer of sound, equally insistent,  
constant: crickets and cicadas. The bell blasts loudly to sound the alarm. On the  
radio, only static (the scanner cycles the dial over and over before catching  
something faint and garbled). In Texas, *yes!* — prosody of baptist revelation.

An exhaustion deeper than meaning, not affected by sleep. When he goes to stop  
the pipe from leaking, it explodes. Paramedic van (lemon yellow) struggling  
through Raffi traffic hell. A rolling landscape absent hills or mountains. Let's do  
launch.

A round of crickets playing back. The sound of rockets taking off. Admit the  
article to soften the foot. An hour after the charlie horse, the knot in the calf is still  
taut. Teach to each, reach.

I stand and watch my boys asleep until the room grows so still I can hear them  
breathing. By the light, I peg the hour at around 6:30 (it's 6:43). Once in the attic,  
I turn the light on the stairs off so as not to be disturbed. Heat wave's over  
(shutting windows for the first time in seven weeks). What then?

Heather Starr

**Then It Was the Atlantic in All Directions**

1.

the yellow belly turns towards you  
suit a husky blue, then gray  
gray like a thin man's legs  
crossed in the cafeteria

the yellow belly turns towards you  
and I think: now you are just leaving work  
now you are coming home.

2.

the way she drapes her wrist  
over the push care  
the way he rests his elbows on the silver table  
postures that advertise

I closed my eyes and looked again:  
below was Newfoundland.  
Then it was the Atlantic in all directions.

3.

The couple with two garages and  
an \$800 terraced vegetable garden with 16 tomato plants  
was somewhat surprised to find themselves  
having dinner in London with the couple  
who enjoy box wine, and Denny's.

4.

the way that rain looks on a silver bicycle.  
rain looks on.  
shadow on the page.  
final fingertip.

the way that a silver bicycle leans against a building in rain.  
leans. the way a bicycle looks.

another winding street, another patch of weather.  
is it really night again?  
crickets. doors. the way the rover Cavado looks in the twilight light.

skin not to touch. crickets. distant bells.  
his dream is to travel to Europe for two months.  
his dream is to go to America.  
his dream is to throttle that rooster.  
crickets.  
crrck      crrck      crrck  
show your hand. stay in sequence.

5.

and, really, how could she stand that love?  
her name, K-A-T-E, was tattooed onto his knuckles  
and everyone, even his mother, stared at the letters  
as they stretched and seeped into his skin.

6.

a scrapbook filled with photographs of empty chairs

7.

To sleep then. Another day like a color.  
She's from Scotland and leans over my shoulder  
to read her stars. It's 12:02.  
He wads up the newspaper, and we all look up.  
The man reminds me of Edward in every way.  
I can't summarize this day except that  
I rode several escalators.  
It's 12:03.

John Colletti  
*from* **Nothin' Greek About It**

20 feet  
    30 feet  
    pat a taps

a catapult  
    hot-rod  
        half-cocked

waddling circles  
    of jittery baby-soft

    orange club  
        purple club  
            blue club  
                inch

a chub in sheets go freshly  
    full-on  
    forever in a tub  
        rolling  
        down  
        this hill  
        'neath

2 sources of nightlight  
    higher powders

In fashion   gold-capped mouth guard  
Pigment pure  
    unleavened red so of tilts  
    purple nubs on  
    droopy Politesse  
    unfashionable I did it deaths  
        by oatmeal, more oatmeal, and then some  
Cell division in rags  
Chanel's lab goats

doing long division on silk  
in Long Johns  
& smoking-jackets  
toasting question marks  
courting ellipses  
Consumed by their  
Own their moment of tilling the blue  
With speculative white to be brushed  
out in dialogue  
Or tender dialysis

## Sock-Hop

Something might poke out a pine-cone  
by fence — teeth

felled in

by horsehair

near to the stem some 3 o'clock amber  
out in big puffs and goslings on  
the window's crouch

warm crayons slumped

all gluey

in a tall glass

direct sunlight

crimson and goldenrod

gone bust

in her pockets

fur mimes

fossilized

ferns when the pigments

retain their formerly

specific gravities

streak plate

white porcelain

oranges

Hematite over

his maybe

flanks walking up down the Taconic

ten minutes full time

to grins with

you

weeklong &

colors fool rhythmic

mightily

Chris Putnam

**Periodic Zone: Log**

*day one:*

I went around the earth: looked into the trench

how the bodies twitched blood from their necks  
laughing I was surprised no one told me

to go away I walked into a tunnel where mushroom

carpets were set up: a man took my shoulders: began  
to kiss me his hand felt very nervous down

inside there: so uncomfortable lying beside

the ghost: they just found Bubble's body: long neck  
and red feet a plunge through her tresses:

her heart for a press:

Herf began to hear  
the motorboat.

*day two:*

Tina worked out a system for way depression

not shock therapy: what mother called fur time:  
yes said JoJo a bar in her mouth at the same place

as her watch talked Twice Thrilled to the Time

Assortment Machine: as a child drinking snow  
from a skull cap: this became a change in person

without starting over (without beginning again)

*day three:*

it is a simple matter getting photos after a bombing:

I'm not her chest I feel: a mouth some broken decks some  
kangaroo rugs 2 radiators a telephone a canard (quacking):

when I awoke I had newsprint on my eyes:

I used to have a bank  
but now

*day four:*

our eyes like our teeth and hair know: pouring out good meat

drippings: Tina left her thumb a nibbling: sun-dogs  
moon-haloes the earth's twin sister: conifers place flakes

and stick: half-opened Mr. Clock explained it: a swallow day:

a bite of you allows: the acknowledgment that you will be  
intoxicated: gasoline from the ceiling and the only

X-rated theater in town: melting automatically:

the big-boy horn (blowing)

*day five:*

reaching for the half-alive: small and pink

some pins for its movements: calculate the pox I ate  
all the Melba: they are killing the bugs: Tina explained

a distant choking: all of the reds: to find it under  
the bedclothes: the older the cabbage eats me so

you depress me sir really  
there are no more tacos

*day six:*

the square on fire and with it the little hand:

The Hulk wouldn't have any idea about it: she stroked  
the melon with its tiny stalk: green rinds an a little

puckered brown: seeds bothered by questions a vein  
of yellow clung to: the sound a flame makes

born burning clapping itself out

*day seven:*

the room smells wet: reaching for a box: the throats

ask for the afternoon off: rubbery softness hands  
around: amputee games are children-people

our oldest profession: that little love nest on the side  
of the cup all I can do: soapy quim just like that

the ghost stops and asks  
please please come on time

*day eight:*

for instance standing on her head: I am

the exact opposite of toes: fresh garden peas  
myself in my room mother would often: my sea was

the best cure for licking them: lady friends on top

of a left shoe those fume hoods: thoughts for the better  
used to fall out: a boxed penguin:

hurt by the flash:  
a steady rope of pee

*day nine:*

now the city is the same after the bombing: afraid of hot-sauce  
red tang: we met in the plum grove: there was a lean-to

*ning-ning!*

when I was growing up: the magnet the heart  
her face had suffered: she still hadn't entirely lost

her billow: hardly a word is the condition

*day ten:*

if you could understand me up with the gravy:

come on kids activate the saw: we can put trust  
into the oddballs: the adromedes of november 1861:

equations do not explode a black nylon shortie outfit

on the curb: eleven envelopes from its tail: coltish legs  
and a life the lucky coming clerk puts the keys back: seen

from planets with no air: curls uniform my skin:

though the shadows go  
though the shadows go

*day eleven:*

I don't really exist: by bay inches the sandy stretches

your touch with abundance: maybe I should mention it

## BIG CAKES

a second incomplete person: fishing clubs  
and the bustier: a super-control which holds

all the guns: think of baby: Anthony was a gurgle  
came home after down the throat for eight days: boiling

rice on the television: the mad general pushed them  
above his head: a burning nose

*day twelve:*

outside the window: the young lady habit

setting down a painting: her bare foot over the blue:  
arms around my neck I grip the fragile straps

of her she holds onto my green lapels and now  
it's my pant's leg: a pencil with a tongue

a little white blood: then nothing when this

and everyone is electricity and what's coming  
you couldn't manage it: the brush starts

and stops then starts  
a whisking whisking

*day thirteen:*

small Tina scooping up jam with her shoulders  
added on the top of her arms: know my mother

don't catch her with her eyes eating when I am

not asleep there is going to be a problem  
a smile makes them up deep-fried

mother liked 'em  
you understand

*day fourteen:*

what the finger did: sopping up with a nurse's cap:

responsible for the murderers: my radium clock my hidden  
sob: thoughts for the gorge: removed for experimentation

yams barley wheat millet: the Second Son told her what  
a dog's brain has: sleep is foreclosed kissing a bowl: the hard

hard head of king kong: the chemistry of carbon is

*day fifteen:*

gym hours doing star-jumps: problem sex:

a piece off: pounds would do you was better for me  
into space I've eaten the last fork: it has a discount

door: sometimes it would: powder skin

*day sixteen:*

tied into the picture: we have the guy the thing

was said we have the guy the thing but here on  
the wanted sheet we have the guy and through

the poison I learned all this too late we have:

the things cannot: my last finger pointing out a wave

## A thought on Hoa Nguyen's *Dark*

By Tom Devaney

Whenever I write a poetry review (and I only write about work that I most respond to) I usually think I could write several essays. This always nags me, but the greater problem (besides time, space, paying — my bills, etc.) is the thought that what I, or anyone can say in a review — even if it's correct and right-on — may not always be the most significant reason/s for responding to a specific work.

Still, I write them. I think that it's good to give attention to, show some available responses, and offer a few possible ways of appreciating a work — especially one I like.

I just read Hoa Nguyen's new book *Dark* (Skanky Possum Press 1999). I like the book and would like to share an observation I had about a few of the poems. When discussing some of Nguyen's poems it's tempting to say that they follow the contours of a single thought, from Thought to Thought to Thought, however connected or disconnected those thoughts might be. But I don't think that's how these poems are moving necessarily. Critics often use words like: disjunction, leaping, difficult to describe such moves or outcomes. Again, I would not necessarily use those words to describe the way Nguyen's poetry moves either. What the poems (I want to discuss) do is to have One Thought, which contain all those other thoughts — simultaneously. See poems such as "Stratum," "Stump," and "[Interlocking Profiles]," and several others. I fell this tendency in the poem "Index Finger." Nguyen writes:

skateboard turning  
water drips red  
sun spanning art  
big grew huge

grew green break

fall      run white  
moving was blood  
break small  
shoes fall walk  
hot pumpkin  
ride thunder

jump huge  
running home  
blue big big  
cross pencil

dream moon  
hymns exercise

There's something in this condensed lyric that has the impact of being recalled all in a single mental moment. A mixture of the past ("big grew huge" and "moving was blood") and present tense pushes me to question the time in which the activity of mind is occurring. The poem "[Interlocking Profiles]," is another locked-in example of moments that seem to both hold, and open up to Nguyen's un-universal universes — all at once. She writes:

Interlocking profiles  
how the mouth protrudes  
through the other's face  
faces joined like vases  
smiling lips      nostril x  
or a vest with two buttons  
has become of union  
double secret grin  
up-turning chin

There is something sculptural in Nguyen's formal concerns, but more than that, these well-made shards of political and private narratives feel and imply something much larger; Something both dark and illuminating compromising (in the aggregate) what moves me most about these poems.

*bios*

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**Bruce Andrews** is the author of over 20 books & chapbooks of poetry, a collection of essays on poetics, *Paradise & Method: Poetics & Praxis* (Northwestern Univ Press); co-ed of *The L=A=N=G=A=G=E Book* (S. Illinois u. press). Recent anthol. of interviews, new poetry, and essays on my work, *Aerial 9: Contemporary Poetics as Critical Theory*. Music Director for Sally Silvers & Dancers. Forthcoming are *Lip Service* (Coach House) & *Designated Heartbeat* (Green Integer).

**Garrett Caples** recently left grad school to work for the D-Flo Production Squad at its Oakland headquarters. Copies of *The Garrett Caples Reader* have been spotted as far east as Sidi Alfaya. ("We can use paper in Germany — a great deal of paper." —Erwin Rommel.)

**Jen Coleman** co-manages the In Your Ear poetry series at the District of Columbia Arts Center and maintains the DC Poetry web site at <http://home.earthlink.net/~dcpoetry>. Her poems have appeared in Beloit Poetry Journal, Tangent, So to Speak, Phoebe, Poet Lore, Art-O-Matic and other places. Originally from Minneapolis, she currently lives in Arlington, VA with fab poet and collaborator Allison Cobb. Ask her about being a school bus driver in Minneapolis.

John Coletti lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. He is currently working on a collaborative book with the painter Zachary Wollard as well as on a book of comics with the artist Jonathan Allen. Recent work can or will be seen in *Prosodia*, *Log*, *TheEastVillage.com*, and *The Brooklyn Review Online*.

**CA Conrad** is the author of several chapbooks. Forthcoming books are: *Frank*, from Jargon Society, and *advancedELVIScourse*, from Buck Downs Books.

**Albert Flynn DeSilver** received a BFA from the University of Colorado and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. He is the author of six collections of poetry and runs The Owl Press. He lives in Forest Knolls, California and teaches throughout Marin and San Francisco with the California Poets in the Schools Program.

**Pattie McCarthy** : Habitat, current : Brooklyn; recent : Philadelphia; native : Baltimore. Employment, current : Queens College; former employment highlights : amusement park ride operator, pizza maker, alphabetical book shelver, rental beach umbrella & boogie board caretaker. Education (reverse chronological order) : Temple University; Towson University; Villa Maria Academy at Greentree. Publications, chapbooks : *Octaves* (ixnay press) & *Choragus* (Potes & Poets Press); other poems from *bk of (h)rs* : *ixnay #1*, *The Washington Review*, and on the St. Mark's Poetry Project website. Etceteras : co-founder of BeautifulSwimmer Press; natural prey of Zoë, the trickiest of the McCreary cats.

**Andrew Mossin's** poetry has appeared in *Hambone*, *Talisman*, *River City*, *Rhizome*, *To*, and other publications. He has work forthcoming in *Conjunctions*. His chapbook, *DRAFTS FOR SHELLEY*, will be published by Beautiful Swimmer Press later this year.

**Kristin Prevallet** is the author of *Selections from the Parasite Poems* (Barque Press, 1999), and *Writing Through Faces: a collaboration with Annemie Maes' The People's Database* (Second Story Books, 2000). Her essays and poems have appeared in various print magazines including *Boxkite*, *Poetry New York*, *Sulfur*, and *Chain* as well as in various on-line magazines including *Jacket*, *Duration*, and *HOW2*.

**Chris Putnam** has recently returned to Seattle after years in the Nation's Capitol. He is the author of *Go-Go Topless Mini Poem Poetry* and *13 bottles* and is the co-author of the renga project *Communal Bebop Canto*. He is currently developing the Maniac Box.

**Ron Silliman** is the author of 24 books of poetry and criticism, including *(R)*, *What*, *The New Sentence*, *Tjanting*, and *The Age of Huts*. He is the only resident of Chester County ever to receive a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (1998-99).

**Heather Starr** lives in West Philadelphia and works as the Program Manager at the Kelly Writers House.