

# TCR

THE CAPILANO REVIEW

**ecologies**

*Everywhere the green smell  
of cis-3-hexanal.*

—SONNET L'ABBÉ

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Cover Image:

*Concrete nail*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 86.4 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

**RYAN FITZPATRICK / from Field Guide: a handbook for the identification of extinct species in the wild**

**Red Rail (*Aphanapteryx bonasia*)** The sight of it is a target, a blanket one must wrap in the cries of nesting. One must make good an escape, a chase, a lure to falling plumage likewise peeled from any counterfeit. Chipping back from the meats of ease, of comfort, one should sit at the curved table of the hunt where depictions form crude vapours, pale pigments against a continental mist. What's left is a portrait of numbers, claiming failed dates. A curious sound precedes the chase. A pale determination that makes a palate from affect, rare in the settlements made around breeding. There is a line of guns and dogs that scrape the knife across the skin, projecting the failed performance of mystery on the body of what's left. One must dream in statistics, to the pins sunk into location, if one is to expect a meal.

**Laughing Owl (*Sceloglaux albifacies*)** If one opens a pocket, it may be picked. The coins will tickle the folds of the mantle, edged with snow that melts in a thought. A melancholy stroll marks the mewling notes of fabric as it shifts. A drifting rain weeps in an accordion's drawl. It is from a distance then that one scene unfolds across the frame of another and, now, can accommodate new populations that choke up little support. The past deposits little that stands firm in storms, little that flees to caves from madness. None in a pair will turn blind, but, fruitless, none will congregate in the trees, folded between the leaved shag of sight. One must carefully tease out the threads of outbound saddles following the well-rutted garden path. One must peel back the vivid hues of each summit to confirm the faint wastes in each trip. One must keep a careful vigil.

**A.RAWLINGS / from Environment Canada**

## **THE GREAT CANADIAN IN THE ALGOMA DISTRICT**

### **ENDANGERMENT LEGEND**

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Letters in English suggests an increase in habitat degradation as a result of climate change, genetic isolation, and blogging. The historic range of letters covers the field, but range fragmentation has witnessed a steady decline in voiceless velar fricatives. Emotion is still transmitted through vowels. This may finish in nonsense.

The etymological root of the word “ecology” means “home.” Language, its body of water, its fish-body, returns to its roots, its home. Language loves itself and is fertile. Another language grows from the biomass of rotting English. This may finish in nonsense.

This sentence houses letters within a field. The letters may migrate and yet this sentence remains legible: Decnesd on a fleid yb a lagnaue. The letters shift location and the reader engages them another way. Sometimes there are more or less letters. Letters are reused, reduced, recycled. This may finish in nonsense.

This is a lesson. Over and over, he writes, “I will not ruin the environment.” He crafts each scratch, each symbol. He notes his hand’s rhythm on the board. Over and over. He writes rhythm, “not,” “ruin.” This is not the environment. He will not ruin each symbol. He listens as he writes, as each scratch resounds. He writes a lesson over and over and he listens to notes, to nots. The letters tremble; sense in sentence surrounds sound. This may finish in nonsense.

## ENGENDERMENT LOG

This is a thing. Over and over, he writes, "I will not ruin the thing." He crafts each thing, each thing. He notes his thing's thing on the thing. Over and over. He writes things, "things," "things." This is not the thing. He will not ruin each thing. He listens as he writes, as each thing resounds. He writes a thing over and over and he listens to things, to things. The things tremble; things in things surround things. This may finish in things.

This s lssn. vr nd vr, h wrts, "wll nt rn th nvrnmnt." H crfts ch scrтч, ch smbl. H nts hs hnd's rhthm n th brd. vr nd vr. H wrts rhthm, "nt," "rn." Ths s nt th nvrnmnt. H wll nt rn ch smbl. H lstns s h wrts, s ch scrтч rsnds. H wrts lssn vr nd vr nd h lstns t nts, t nts. Th ltrrs trmbl; sns n sntnc srrnds snd. Ths my fnsh n nnsns.

i i a eo. Oe a oe, e ie, "I i o ui e eioe." e a a a, ea yo. e oe i a' y o e oa. Oe a oe. e ie y, "o," "ui." i i o e eioe. e i o ui ea yo. e ie a e ie, a ea a eou. e ie a eo oe a oe a e ie o oe, o o. e ee ee; ee i eee uou ou. i a ii i oee.

His his our lesson. Ourselves and yourselves, he writes, "I we'll not ruin he environment." He crafts she scratch, she symbol. He notes his hand's rhythm on he board. Ourselves and yourselves. He writes rhythm, "not," "ruin." His his not he environment. He we'll not ruin she symbol. He listens ours he writes, ours she scratch resounds. He writes our lesson yourselves and ourselves and he listens to notes, to notes. He letters tremble; sense I sentence surrounds sound. His me finish I nonsense.

## FISH vs. FLESH

Still

were fish here. Still, fish were here. Still, here were fish. Still, here fish  
were still fish here? Were fish still. Here  
were still fish. Here, fish were still. Here, still fish  
were fish still here? Fish were still here. Fish were here still. Fish  
still were here. Fish here were still  
were fish here still? Yesyesyou were stiff here.

## LESSON

If worms then moths then selves.

Then selves with trout with mouths.

With fists in mouths of fish.

Mull over turn over whelm.

On un in un when.

## ILLUSION

We were useful; they  
were not. However, our mouths  
nests of worms of nets. River mouths  
our thin lust for yes. Swish of fishfin, myth  
of mothflesh.

Rivers Fish  
fish eyes. eyes flesh.

Ifwhen trout nothtrue un-us, then fishermermen wire enmeshnet. There else  
sense, yes.

## LESION

Moth on looestrife then moth in trout then trout in mouth yesnoyes how mouth swollen from soft-tissue methyl tumoursore tonsillolith on the roof of the immunity mournswim hell-over shit-out effluvium mess.

Or hurl.

## LOOSEN

Life is not strife is infinitely finite.

## LISTEN

Lonely        offish.  
Only         of fish.

## STEPHEN COLLIS & JORDAN SCOTT / DECOMP: Selected Readings from the Bunchgrass Zone

In history, as in nature, decay is the laboratory of life.

—Karl Marx

What a horrible waste of classic books.

—Nathan, Craftsamerica.com

Perhaps we are predisposed to see other species' communications through the filter of language metaphors because language is too much a natural part of our everyday cognitive apparatus to let us easily gain an outside perspective on it. Yet our experience of its naturalness, its matter-of-factness, belies its alien nature in the grander scheme of things. It is an evolutionary anomaly.

—Deacon, *The Symbolic Species*

### Deposits, method.

In the summer of 2009 we traveled to five distinct BC ecosystems and communities: the coastal rainforest (on Vancouver Island's west coast), the Gulf Islands (in the rain shadow of Vancouver Island), the Nicola Valley desert, the Columbia Mountains, and the sub-boreal North. In each ecosystem an identical copy of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was placed in a remote outdoor location, and left there for one year. A GPS reading was taken. In the summer of 2010 we returned to each site and located the specimens. As we hoped, each ecosystem had something different to say about Darwin's text.

Ecosystem: *Bunchgrass Zone* (Nicola Lake)

Book Deposited: N.50 09.897 / W.120 35.952

## **Code, translations.**

In a SEED, a genome is read: TREE

In a forest, we read TREE as: PAPER, BOOK

In reading BOOK, we read: LANGUAGE, read DARWIN

In planting DARWIN in the ground, we read: ROT/ART

In the ground, bugs read ART as: FOOD

In bugs' bodies, some of this FOOD is read as: SHIT

In SHIT a SEED begins genome expression, is read as: TREE

## Location, zone.

Through bunch grass breeze, animal lake this word, this warm floral encoded crust. A colour of sage and pine needle. Drought into gramionod / grammar into climax conditions. Sigh and silmilkameen into species limit. So largely naturalisms / geographical scatter: a being that feeds on grass and sage books; a mass accumulated partly through animal colour, and being in choke cherry, vascular riparian, our links are of zone. Both pensive and perturbed writing. The matter we placed fields' cattle in the understory, a thick Ah horizon and lake remains open all year. We have not seen a word since species. Drench the alfalfa / organize the moss. This is partly to cover partly to clean. Chernozems windpipe. Lungs to grass and that image of rain shadows. Both frenzy and fold the careful light limits and sentences river the underbrush: all forbs, all outwash. Our being in pine will mouth this upslope reading. Our wet month zones in a large region of steppe. These are animal forests. Animal colors overgrazing plant patterns. Partly the cow paddies, partly the form: that culture is adaptive / is home. We come up to pines as coyote to cold.

Between the species, closely keep organic facts, that any time a flying crow might get white feathers. We sow to speak by rain, then bring forth worms, for their atoms, this movement by new conditions. In open air; out in open air. Accordinbitants roam the leaves of false woods, drawn to pine needle thatch, sage and bunch grass. The anonym "natural" suits them naught. They leave. A languagelike signal, the way birds reflect the aerodynamics of flight in the shape and movement of their wings and inland gulls, from atoms of black, turn themselves accordingly.

Being small and simple ephemeral structures, we come into horizon through decomposition. "Thus through air" is said in the underbrush. Rot writing. Spur words. The will to bear fibrous root systems: bimodal, modal, when wet. Nutrients rich boundaries runs lakes, colors all parts edible in red, in brown. As if we link our vertebrates genetic to tomes. Our being in zones. So like each single thing. This animal a part of what nets, immense nets, partly that writing / partly that thorn. Through arrow leaved balsamroot and shrivel, both matter and light, reads photosynthesis, reads remains open, all year round.









## CHRISTIAN BÖK / The Extremophile

1.

Astronauts fear it. Biologists fear it. It is not human. It lives in isolation. It grows in complete darkness. It derives no energy from the Sun. It feeds on asbestos. It feeds on concrete. It inhabits a seam of gold on Level 104 of the Mponeng Mine in Johannesburg. It lives in alkaline lakelets full of arsenic. It grows in lagoons of boiling asphalt. It thrives in a deadly miasma of hydrogen sulphide. It breathes iron. It breathes rust. It needs no oxygen to live. It can survive for a decade without water. It can withstand temperatures of 323 °K, hot enough to melt rubidium. It can sleep for 100 millennia inside a crystal of salt, buried in Death Valley. It does not die in the hellish infernos at the Stadtbibliothek during the firebombing of Dresden. It does not burn when exposed to ultraviolet rays. It does not reproduce via the use of DNA. It breeds, unseen, inside canisters of hairspray.

2.

It feeds on polyethylene. It feeds on hydrocarbons. It inhabits caustic geysers of steam near the Grand Prismatic Spring in Yellowstone National Park. It thrives in the acidic runoff from heavy-metal mines, depleted of their zinc. It abides in the shallows of the Dead Sea. It breathes methane. It can withstand temperatures of 333 °K, hot enough to melt phosphorus. It resides in a fumarole of scalding seawater, deep in the bathyal fathoms of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. It can endure pressures equivalent to 45 tons of force per square inch, six times greater than the pressure at the nadir of the ocean, one sixteenth of the pressure required to crush graphite into diamond. It lives in the muck at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. It is ideally adapted to devour the wreck of the Titanic. It does not die during its own immolation in the Nazi bonfires at the Opernplatz in Berlin. It eats jet fuel.

3.

It feeds on nylon byproducts. It feeds on stainless steel. It inhabits an extinct volcano in the xeric waste of the Atacama Desert, where the rain falls only once per century. It dwells in a tide pool of battery acid. It blooms in a barren salina, ten times saltier than the sea. It breathes hydrogen. It resides inside micropores of superdense granite, crushed down 3000 metres below the bedrock of the Earth. It can withstand temperatures of 343 °K, hotter than the flash point of aerosolized kerosene. It is ideally adapted to devour the rubber tubing in the engines of the F-22 Raptor. It does not die in the explosion that disintegrates the Space Shuttle *Columbia* during orbital reentry. It does not die among the tornados of hellfire, raging, unchecked, in the oil fields of Kuwait during the Persian Gulf War. It gorges on plumes of petroleum, venting from the wellhead of the Deepwater Horizon.

4.

It eats arsenic. It eats uranium. It resides inside the core of Reactor No. 4 at Chernobyl. It thrives in the topsoil of battlefields contaminated with toxic doses of lead. It thrives in hydrochloric acid. It can withstand temperatures of 373 °K, hot enough to boil the water in its own cells. It is ideally adapted to dwell inside the steel drums of radioactive waste, now entombed at the Yucca Mountain Repository. It lives in the stratosphere. It can survive exposure to the vacuum of outer space. It can survive the effects of g-forces more than 2000 times greater than the surface gravity of the Earth. It is the only known organism capable of exceeding speeds of Mach 1. It does not die in the furnaces reserved for *The Satanic Verses* after the *fatwa* issued by the Ayatollah of Iran. It can, in fact, repair damage to its own genome so fast that its DNA never mutates. It never changes. It never evolves.

5.

It devours plutonium. It can endure longterm exposure to acids that eat away at human flesh. It can withstand temperatures of 383 °K, hotter than the polar zones on the planet Mercury. It can hibernate for 500 millennia in the core of a snowflake, deep beneath the permafrost of Siberia. It awaits discovery in the abyssal fathoms of Lake Vostok, 4000 metres below the ice of Antarctica. It survives direct immersion in liquid nitrogen. It survives 1000 times the dosage of gamma radiation that can instantly kill a human being. It is ideally adapted to eat hot graphite in the ruins of Unit 2 at Three Mile Island. It resides on the surface of a heat shield in the clean room at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. It does not die in the conflagration during the collapse of the World Trade Center. It does not die in the crucibles of Treblinka.

6.

It resides in a soda lake, whose pH level equals the alkalinity of lye. It can survive superheated blasts of steam for ten hours inside autoclaves used to disinfect surgical scalpels. It can withstand temperatures of 393 °K, hot enough to melt sulphur. It can lie dormant for 40 million years, hibernating inside the gut of a honeybee, shrouded in a jewel of amber. It evades its predators by hiding in the firmware of the Intel Pentium 3 microchip. It propagates itself through the use of networked computers. It can survive direct blasts of cosmic rays from solar flares. It is, in fact, the only known organism to survive being shot, point-blank, by the proton beam in a U-70 Synchrotron. It does not die in the incineration of Hiroshima. It does not die in the planetary firestorm after the impact of the Chicxulub meteor. It does not die.

7.

It survives. It persists. It resides inside the robot scoop of the Viking 1 Lander during tests for perchlorates on Mars. It can live through exposure to supercoolant temperatures at the brink of absolute zero. It can hibernate for 250 million years, living as a spore, encased in a halite nodule found in the Caverns of Carlsbad. It can withstand temperatures of 423 °K, hotter than the nose cone of the Concorde in supersonic flight. It can endure multiple, meteor impacts. It can endure multiple, atomic attacks. It lives nowhere on Earth, except in one petri dish of agar agar, locked in a fridge at a Level-4 biocontainment facility. It is totally inhuman. It does not love you. It does not need you. It does not even know that you exist. It is invincible. It is unkillable. It has lived through five mass extinctions. It is the only known organism to have ever lived on the Moon. It awaits your experiments.

## ELENI SIKELIANOS / Three Poems

### Bird & Meat Subject

My little bird & meat subject  
little human eye unhinging like a door  
I'm addressing you & you are the title  
my little bird-&-meat

*The skin slips off by a strange arrangement*

like a boat that begins to take water  
before the storm —  
the words  
in my throats

once sure as cream

spinning the human voice  
around the atom, cracks it

my little bird-&-meat  
(holds out her hand, bends her fingers), say hello  
to this time-eating spider

**Finally, the Shadow (shwt)  
(inside the hem)**

world the black — world the blank  
— margin

there is no —  
    no place —  
    no place where the —  
the dead animals  
    hover  
here  
in this fringe  
that is  
earth

lost time collects in the creases

bone-crushed  
dust off a minute  
dust it off! mantel of time!

we arrive & there's a corpse of an hour, what  
happened here?

■

say: by my heart's wish I constructed a city —

    at the foot of Mt. Muzri  
in the countryside surrounding Nineveh —  
    and gave its name as Dur-Sharrukin

(had a double who did my work for me, mowed the lawn, did the dishes, little clay figure; lost it, lost my *shedu* in the river)

And in the Upper Paleolithic, we found ourselves  
wild onager, red deer, sheep, goat, fox, gazelle, pig, cow, bird, clam, crab,  
tortoise and snail. We ate them all.

Ate chrysanthemums, ate nasturtiums, every blossom, grass, anther and nut

Flower how hun-  
gry you make me      swim swim  
to the river in asthmatic  
sunlight      collect wild seeds there

By the river, the corpse of an hour, it asks us: what happened here

■

say: we saw history  
the rocks and grasses sang themselves into houses  
rubble turned to hut  
we wandered *the ruthless, splendid labyrinths* laid out in gold,  
blue and green: tangles of trees, water, animal, weather, and sand

Married the river, married the rock, gold dug out was the dowry  
and soon the hem of a train, steam-trail rising like wedding-dress dust

Built roads, built bridges, little plastic dolls with eyes that open and shut,  
seeded clouds and nanocrystals and turned the heavens; made

infrared imaging capabilities on CRYSTAL reconnaissance satellites  
made the Military Black World

Soon so many persons made so many person-things  
till it seemed all that was left of the world was human

How quickly sound travels through these acidified oceans!  
How quickly we folded spring into summer!  
Constructed bio-available time!

Ate the quail, woodcock, the turtle, fattened liver, the veal calf

our tongues decaying  
one by one  
near the teeth by my heart's  
orifact, Mercury mouth  
Walk away

■

Like atmospheric lace  
dust-dress of the world never settles      And inside the hem  
winter steals a mouse

## Forkhead Box P2 (aka FOXP2)

what haunts the brain: a cell spell

what plush molecules in a cell spell  
thought                      over the coast of Labrador?

what my mother learned    is in my mind  
like a sheet of glass

who go generate a bird's consciousness  
who, bees?  
who be here sliding on the sheet  
of the brain my  
brainsheet

who shattering some empathic future

who slice some cerebral cortex    firing in neuropathic pain

who driving Our Lady of the Highways, Susquehanna

The oldest ice on earth has spoken to me  
in a brittle, breaking accent

It spoke

the long sad light on the Harlem River  
What are these  
countries of humans humming What  
are they doing here

dancing on the bridge?

The spirit guides of the subterranean parking lot groan —

the self of itself

*shine/s in*    *shine s/in*

## SONNET L'ABBÉ / from Permanent Residents' Test

Answer the following questions.

In order to stay in what form? In order. In order to keep the nuclear grazing, the gentle seep? In order to keep? To keep order. The way and flow and the way of things. The order of things. The will to keep, to keep on, to go on, to sustain. To keep out of trouble. To maintain. Love your ability to sustain. In order to sustain in what form? Please complete this human form. This formal question. How will you stay? Is the order complete? What form sustains? Where there is will some will remains. How will you sustain order? Prove your ability to sustain. Please fill out this shape. Take a new form. Prove your ability to love.

Match each Canadian with its evolutionary partner.

our maple leaf	your ribosomes
our moose	your chloroplasts
our beaver	your organelles
our bonhomme	your mitochondria
our inukshuk	your auxin
our prime minister	your lysosomes

Fill in the blanks with the correct indigenous flower.

Algonquian	Athapaskan	Beothuk	Eskaleut	Haidian	Iroquoian
Kootenaian	Salishan	Siouian	Tlingit	Tsimshian	Wakashan

The practice of witness opens like salmonberry blossoms over the \_\_\_\_\_ settling of debts and complex exchanges. In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_. The environmental conditions necessary for the natural proliferation of \_\_\_\_\_ can be found amidst the massive cedars, soft green ferns and discarded plastic bottles of the Pacific Coast. \_\_\_\_\_ words arise from the apprehension of bodies of the Plains forms surrounding. In the beginning was the

\_\_\_\_\_. The delicate interconnection of language to the environment is sustained in \_\_\_\_\_ as in the ectoderm of all of us. Our \_\_\_\_\_ rituals and quarterly rituals are a social medium of ritual. Beside the great lake, the circadian rhythms of the \_\_\_\_\_ market and its manitou trading. In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_. Arctic tension like the sound of a glacier calving. The tekhnonymic practices of the \_\_\_\_\_ are adaptable to the current economic environment. The environmental conditions necessary for the sustenance of \_\_\_\_\_ are produced by the gradual, infinitesimal shift of massive lithospheric plates. In the beginning was the \_\_\_\_\_.

*Put these sentences in neurological order.*

Central bank policy is to allow the loon to float

Of the loon include aquatic

The loon is losing ground to the

Canadians must rethink the loon as a high-flying

The loon will fight hard to defend its

The loon's considerable stamina allows migration of

Easily mislead analyses into grouping the loon with

The loon is merely the product of

The loon's exchange rate rose to parity with

Almost certain that the relationship of the loon depends

Suggests the weakness of a strong loon

*Identify the native species in this passage.*

Outside in the East Van street the green shapes were nameless all around me. Pinophyta and magnoliophyta expressing verdant, verdant, verdant. Teardrops of limebright in the throng of photosynthesis. Boathulls of emerald breathing our dioxides. Waxy dark green hexablooms, kelly green calligraphic tips. The thin green grass blades, thick green grass blades, populations of graminoids. Chlorophyllic fleshies of olivehue and moss. Jade tint turning its flat faces to the sky. Sprays of green scales, bursts of green platelets gathering the particles of thujaplicin. Celadon chroma drooping needles overhead. Evergreen spiralling up into sage canopies. Branches of green fans refusing anastomosis. Tender green lobing from spur shoots, sporophylls flagellating in love to live female fossils. Thickets of bluegreen sepaling ornament and sweeten. Everywhere the green smell of cis-3-hexanal.

**LIZ HOWARD / from OF HEREAFTER SONG**

An argument for pleasure in the confusion of boundaries  
and for responsibility in their construction.  
—Donna Harraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto*

**1 [PROLOGUE]**

the smoke that waves beckon  
mind lapsing choleric forest  
pine for coma is air treble  
tremulous echo re-enter  
attest circular dynamism

no nabokov reed no tidbit  
no beatitude found no hyacinth

eternal the ermine and thief reverie  
eternal has ignition feathered ermine  
eternal blastula even homeric for reverie  
eternal thaw linger roves laced in cinder  
eternal gosh angle of watered hormone  
eltered birth was slick and rind emergent

hung errant method  
hung sky enveloped

no veridical deer no rabid name

no plenitude abound no abhorrence  
no abhor  
original

she rested back unto the lakes and marshes  
into the light dialysis of heron and arrowy  
swallow with all the trees of silver tongue  
gently from the melting lakes and streamlets

into the sweet radiation of the earliest flower  
in the Northland intolerable toward  
the red stone the stem a reed

into the puffed metastatic coal became the water

into the affirmative action embryonic mortality  
of the loon summit robin gazed

into the bigger than the big-sea-water

*bioaccumulation became us Athabasca*  
*sweet reconciliation spoke in*  
*mercury, arsenic, lead and cadmium erotic*  
*as the archaic physiognomy of a fishhead*  
*we descended*

the women of bitumen looked over tailing ponds  
like a cloud-rack of a tempest  
rushed the pale canoes of wings and thunder  
to kill the wilderness in the child  
sweeping westward our remnants  
sulphur infinite, sorrow extracted tuberculosis  
under the jurisdiction of ravens  
in the covert of pine-trees

or an education of thieves in the evening.

## Note

Longfellow's epic poem, "The Song of Hiawatha," was an attempt to assimilate indigenous, specifically Ojibway, oral tradition into Western textual, metric verse. My own government-imposed identity as a non-status aboriginal person and the trauma and silence surrounding this identity (as in the internment of my great-grandfather in a residential school and estrangement from my native family members) became an emergent theme in my writing. As a mixed-race person, not even quite a "half-breed;" as a subject under a continual process of erasure; as the ideal end-product of assimilative programs such as the residential school system; and as a scientist, employing empiricism as the so-called paramount of Western inquiry into the natural or into how we come to utilitarian truth—how could I even write about this? There was something similar, suspicious, neighbourly between Longfellow's situation and my own. He was a white settler trying to filter indigenous narrative through the framework of the Western epic and I was trying to reconcile a being at odds with itself. I began to read and un-write his work. The result is a long or sequential work in which I intervene upon the text using several procedures—an overarching process of random sampling (which is the norm in scientific research), as well as homolinguistic translation, intertextual recombination, misappropriation, and cyborgian disruption.

## JENNIFER CHUN, GU XIONG & CHRIS LEE / Waterscapes: Working Notes on Globalization

In their preface to *Cultures of Globalization*, Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi write, “Globalization falls outside the established academic disciplines, as a sign of the emergence of a new kind of social phenomenon” that “seems to concern politics and economics in immediate ways, but just as immediately culture and sociology, not to speak of information and the media, or ecology, or consumerism and daily life.” Thus, while globalization is widely invoked as if we already know what it means, its logics remain unruly and elusive. *Waterscapes: Mapping Migrations Along the Yangtze and Fraser Rivers* is an interdisciplinary collaboration that seeks to chart the ephemerality of globalization.<sup>1</sup> *Waterscapes* draws on our backgrounds in sociology, literary criticism, and fine arts to construct an ongoing conversation about the effects of globalization through blogs, art installations, public events, and essays. Our project tracks the relationship between the environment and migrant experiences in China and Canada by comparing two major riverways. Here, we present a brief excerpt of this conversation by focusing on a research trip that we took in July 2011 from Chongqing to Shanghai along the Yangtze River. A photo-essay by Gu Xiong is juxtaposed with field notes written by Jennifer Chun and framing commentary by Chris Lee.

July 5, 2011: Chongqing, China

Gu was waiting for us at the airport with a car and a driver . . . On the drive into the city, I was overwhelmed by the scale and pace of development. Lining the wide roads were dozens of high-rise buildings. They were similar to the massive apartment complexes in Seoul . . . but one thing seemed significantly different: all the lights were turned off. By 8 PM the sun had set and one would expect that the apartment buildings would be speckled with lights. But it was

<sup>1</sup> We gratefully acknowledge the funding support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information on *Waterscapes*, see [blogs.ubc.ca/waterscapes](http://blogs.ubc.ca/waterscapes).

almost completely dark. According to our driver, the lights were off because people were either trying to conserve energy or because there was no power. The heat required that people conserve as much energy as possible for air conditioning.

Gu seemed singularly focused on the heat levels. It had reached 40 degrees on the previous days and he had suffered mild heat exhaustion. We often talk about the weather as a conversation filler, but the unbearable heat level seemed to confirm to Gu that he was lucky to live in Vancouver. Gu remarked that one of his friends who is also from Chongqing called Vancouver “heaven”—presumably because of the weather.

After we checked into our hotel, we walked to the nearby Three Gorges Plaza, a commercial district that commemorates the building of the Three Gorges Dam. I felt dwarfed by the enormous billboards on the towering buildings and the glittering neon lights. I pointed to the bright red neon sign in front of the KFC with a humongous picture of the Colonel. Gu and Chris chuckled and then pointed to the Chinese equivalent right across the street, CSC.

. . . At the end of my first evening in Chongqing, I am struck by two things: the massive and ongoing construction of a sprawling city; the pollution and heat, and talk of it.

Chongqing, a municipality with a population of 33 million, is one of the fastest developing regions in China. Amidst this transformation, the most basic indicators of being in the natural world—such as weather—have become indexes of social and technological development. Meanwhile, the nearby Three Gorges Dam, the construction of which has flooded over 600 square kilometers and displaced at least 1.3 million people, has become the namesake for a commercial district enjoyed mostly by those who have benefited from Chongqing’s success. While these developments are undoubtedly linked to underlying causes such as modernization and entry of China into the world market, their visceral immediacy defies easy explanation. Irony and humour seem to offer promising perspectives.

July 11, 2011: Wushan, China

After breakfast, we jumped into a taxi to tour the city. The driver seemed young, perhaps in his early 30s, and was very open to answering our questions. During the ride, he recounted many stories of corruption by local officials, including one about an official who had embezzled 20 million yuan [3.5 million CAD] in a bridge construction project and slept around with multiple women . . . The driver also told us about how the city had changed. In 1997, the government started building the city and 60,000 people moved in thereafter. By 2009, the relocation [of those displaced by the Three Gorges Dam] was finished and 100,000 people now reside in Wushan. The goal is for the population to grow to 200,000 people, mainly from neighboring villages. The driver also mentioned that each person receives 10,000 yuan to buy an apartment or a piece of land.

The driver explained that there are not many job opportunities in the area. Rather, the area really functions as a labour source for Guangdong [the site of many factories making products for export]. Tellingly, the major road in Wushan is called “Guangdong Road.” The driver explained that his wife lives in Guangdong and works in an electronics factory. She comes home once a year for the spring festival. He chose not to move. Instead, he bought a car with his relocation compensation but after a year and a half, he still has a significant amount of debt on the car. He and Gu became engrossed in a long conversation, and I later learned that he had been part of a collective struggle the previous year against the seizure of their cars. They went all the way to Beijing to protest their case. A couple of leaders were imprisoned for a year. When asked what he thought about the central government’s relocation efforts, he responded that their plans were good; the problem was really with the local officials and their widespread corruption.

As we drove through Wushan, I was struck by all the stores at the base of the new apartment buildings: hair salons, warehouses for food,

machine repair, convenience stores, restaurants, etc. Seeing the kind of growth of development that has sprung up in Wushan has made me think about the city/country divide. How are cities created? How are they planned? What defines the city? What defines the country? As we leave Wushan, I am feeling confused about displacement and relocation. I really didn't expect to see the vibrancy and dynamism that characterized life in the so-called "country." I expected to see much more visible poverty and dislocation. But, instead, the booming and on-going construction emitted a sense of vitality.

I wonder how other governments that plan infrastructure developments like dams deal with displacement. Is it simply a technical, bureaucratic project? What about the histories and memories of people who are required to evacuate their homes and move to new shiny apartment complexes? The fact that the central government planned the relocation of 3 million people and provided compensation to individuals (even if nominal) is almost too overwhelming to grasp. It is hard not to feel impressed by the [Chinese] central government's relocation plans, even in the face of such ecological destruction and human and cultural loss.

Our desire for cheap consumer goods in North America directly affects the lives of those we met along the Yangtze. In recent years, over 200 million have left villages to work in larger towns and cities. Zhu and Zhao estimate that another 200 million migrant labourers will leave the countryside by 2015. Agriculture can no longer sustain rural communities while farmland continues to be taken over by urbanization and plagued with pollution. With the concentration of wealth and production in regions such as Guangdong, even smaller cities such as Wushan have turned into sources of migrant labour. Agricultural economist Wen Tiejun argues that unsustainable and unrealistic development practices imported from the West have led peasants to "drastically reduce their labour input in agriculture and seek more use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides." The rural economy has been devastated while the entire food supply has become dangerously tainted, affecting the health of all citizens. Those of us

in North America, accustomed to endless stories about toxic food imports, are also affected by these transformations. At what point do seemingly disparate intersections between consumption and production begin to form a more coherent picture of globalization and our roles in it?

### Postscript

Since returning to Canada, we have been preparing for our next exhibition, which will feature materials from our trip and also address agricultural practices in the Fraser Valley today, with a focus on guest workers from Mexico and Guatemala. *Waterscapes: Reframed* will be shown at The Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford, BC from January 26–March 25, 2012. From China to Canada to Latin America, globalization inheres in labouring bodies as well as supermarket shelves. It is one thing to know these relationships exist and plot them, but another to understand the lives of those who render them possible; how to engage in this listening remains a pressing challenge.

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*Three Gorges Dam*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 129.5 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

The Three Gorges Dam blocks the flow of the Yangtze River, and completely changes the geographical environment of the land along the river. Residents have to cope with the new environment forced upon them. So much is sacrificed in the creation of this haunted beauty, as the Communist power tries yet again to shape nature and build man-made sublimity.



*Chongqing #2*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 114.3 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

This is my hometown, where I grew up. When I was a child I sat on these hills and watched people using guns fighting with each other from the two sides of the river during the Cultural Revolution. Nowadays these hills are transformed into a fast-growing city where high-rise buildings grow like baby bamboo sprouting after a spring shower. Back then, people wanted to fight for a better future under Mao's direction, and yet ironically, social problems continue to exist today: the gap between the rich and poor, just like the growth of these buildings, is ever continuing and never-ending.





*Yangzi River trucks*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 96.5 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

My attention is focused on the driver who tries to stand up. Surrounding him are all kinds of heavy-duty loading trucks. The big changes in China are actually carried out by these ordinary people, who are fundamental to the ongoing transformation, yet no one notices them.



*Green House*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 86.4 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

Most international contract workers who work in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia work in these greenhouses. Now the greenhouses have become a growing agricultural and industrial field. Migrant workers here produce tomatoes, peppers, Chinese bamboo and money trees.



*Fraser Valley*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 106.7 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

When looking into the beautiful Fraser Valley depicted here, we probably cannot imagine how many migrant workers from Mexico and Nicaragua work here in producing goods that are marked “made in Canada,” yet by international labour.





*Outsourced cars*, 2011, photo, 50.8 x 81.3 cm

PHOTOGRAPHER: GU XIONG

The Fraser River flows into the Pacific Ocean, and boats carry outsourced waste to China to be melted and re-transformed into new products—recycling and globalizing through the Fraser River.

**JACQUELINE TURNER / from The Ends of the Earth**

4.

Debris not only floats on the surface of the ocean it also descends throughout the entire water column, making it less spectacular to look at and physically impossible to “scoop up” and remove, as so many bemused citizens suggest when they hear of this plastic “island.”

—TIM SILVERWOOD

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2011/09/12/3314107.htm>

plastic floats like islands on  
digital screens everywhere  
somewhere in an ocean it  
moves through tides like soup  
you/we care via twitter or paypal  
depending on the day pack reusable  
latte cups while signing virtual  
petitions sift through moments  
pushing plastic keys to say  
what you/we mean now drink  
in the love offered via touch screen  
do you/we like it? no, not today.  
an encounter, an art project, some  
form of documentation circles  
the movement continually non-  
linear the line dispersed

8.

The uneasy conscience of what I see, drastically  
changes my perception of things.

—JOSÉ FERREIRA

[http://flavorwire.com/197252/  
shocking-photos-of-mozambique-trash-land](http://flavorwire.com/197252/shocking-photos-of-mozambique-trash-land)

The burn of excess is a tattoo  
you/we could respect so the uneasy  
could become bodily performance  
209 people like this Mozambique  
which could easily be Cache Creek  
if you/we prefer the local backyard  
welcome to Wastech Vancouver!  
the shifting utopia of changing  
perceptions takes another hit  
today smoke calibrates an opening  
again and your old cell phone refuses  
to burn properly as is built into its design  
and green might rise from the ash cloud  
waste it really might your/our touch  
screen tells us politely one second before  
we change drastically and if the apocalypse hits  
you'll/we'll just go next door.

## LARISSA LAI / from Flower Factory Riot

### **Bolo!**

Bolo! Bolo! Bolo! Pineapples are exploding! Pineapples to the left! Pineapples to the right! Bang! Bang! Bang! At the Hong Kong Artificial Flower Works the flower makers are rising up! Blood for Blood! Imperialism and Reactionaries are All Paper Tigers! Dare to Struggle and Dare to Win! Do Not Take a Single Needle or Thread from the Masses! Turn In Everything Captured! Fight No Battle You are Not Sure of Winning! In Order to Get Rid of the Gun, it is Necessary to Take up the Gun! Politics is War Without Bloodshed, War is Politics with Bloodshed! Modesty Makes One Go Forward, Conceit Makes One Lag Behind! People of the World, Unite and Defeat the US Aggressors and All Running Dogs! Monsters of all Kinds Shall be Destroyed! Every Mouth Comes With Two Hands! A Loud Fart is Better than a Long Lecture! Bolo! Bolo! Bolo! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Flower Factory Girl: I shake my Little Red Book at the sky. At last, a voice, a self. My callused fingers soften.

*The Ghost of Lam Bun prepares another talk for the ghost radio show "Can't Stop Striking."  
The Ghost of Yeung Kwong prepares another bomb.*

### **Portugal Cove Road**

In 1500, Gaspar Corte Real landed in Portugal Cove to bury two of his sailors who had died en route from Lisbon. When the French raided Conception Bay in 1696, they found three families of English/Irish descent living in Portugal Cove. Portugal Cove Road was the first major road connecting the cove to town. The fishermen used it to carry their fish to St. John's to sell. In 1973, my father and mother bought a house at the corner of Portugal Cove Road and Malka Drive. My mother went down to the

wharf at Middle Cove to buy cod from the fishing boats and crab from the crabbing boats. Sometimes, the fishermen would give her a flatfish, caught by mistake, for free. She'd take it home and steam it with ginger flown in from Vancouver and green onions grown in the garden, one of five crops. The other four? Turnip greens, snow peas, carrots and rocks.

TEACHER: Who do you think you are, little girl?

STUDENT: God's her own Father, and she don't even believe in 'im.

GRANDMOTHER: I was so unhappy then. I'm happy now. Why would I want to remember?

TEACHER: The rock of the Canadian Shield is the hardest rock in the world.

(Laughter.)

### **Frontal Single Arm-Single Wrist Seizure (level ground and elevated position) from *Practical Karate: For Women***

Situation: An assailant has grabbed your right wrist from the front with his left hand. He is not pushing or pulling you, but insists on merely holding you. You have plenty of room to move around.

### **English Lessons for Babies (or Horrible Things I Did to my Sister When She was Two and I was Nine)**

Hi Rendy.

I'm not Wendy!

I'm Wendy!

Hi Rendy.

I'm not Wendy!

I'm Wendy!

Hi Rendy.

I'm not Wendy!

I'm Wendy!  
Hi Rendy.  
I'm not Wendy!  
I'm Wendy!  
Larissa, stop that now.  
What? I was trying to say hi to her  
And she won't even say hi back.

## **Mushroom Hunting**

In the woods on the highway between Whistler and Pemberton with Hiromi looking for matsutake and finding chanterelles. In the woods behind our house on Malka Drive in St. John's we picked chanterelles two days after a good rain. Strung them up with needle and thread from the sewing box my mother had, an echo of the sewing box my grandmother kept in Hong Kong. My grandmother used to take in sewing when my tennis star grandfather's income as a civil servant for the British Administration was insufficient. We dried our strings of mushrooms on the hooks where we usually hung our coffee mugs. Each mug was decorated with a different Canadian animal. Mine was a seal because I felt sorry for the seals who died in the seal hunt. We were traitorous Mainlander/Greenpeacers then, just like Brigitte Bardot, and against Newfoundland tradition. Everyone knows the seals are responsible for the disappearance of the cod. So here's me, then, just last week, on Coast Salish Territory, just a little short of Lil'wat, finding a bit of Newfoundland with one of my best friends in the world, granddaughter of a Japanese man who built bridges for the Japanese Army to march in to Manchuria.

FLOWER FACTORY GIRL: I pricked my finger. The air was stale. I worked for 72 hours without a rest. There was a fire and not enough exits. My sister died of smoke inhalation.

THE GHOST OF LAM BUN: The leftists doused me with gasoline and set me on fire.

THE GHOST OF YEUNG KWONG: You capitalist roader, you running dog, you CIA

collaborator. You hate your own people. You turn to the decadent West and call that freedom?

THE GHOST OF LAM BUN: You have no love for the people. You love only power. The Great Leader in an emperor in disguise.

GRANDMOTHER (ON THE HYDROFOIL TO MACAU): You see those Europeans? Follow them. They know where the good seats are.

### **Frontal Single Arm-Cross Single Wrist Seizure from *Practical Karate: For Women***

Situation: A frontal assailant has captured your right wrist in a cross seizure with his right hand. He refuses to release you. You have plenty of room to move around.

### **California Dreams**

Strawberry fields or plastics?

I'm pensive

Slouching towards San Francisco to be born

Forlorn as 20<sup>th</sup> century's round middle

Its foxy orthodoxies gushing drugs, ideals, sex, and rock

This Spock baby, formula raised

With pointed ears

My fears could roll a Republican primary

single handedly

in second hand shoes.

Second millenium blues sung

from yellow earth

hearth's cold as Beatles tunes on analog

waxed digital

under my satellite's pull.

The full moon croons  
only for you dear boomer  
your out of tune  
is right on the money  
I was born in your  
yellow submarine dreaming of freedom  
only to find its empty carcass  
glittering in classrooms and shopping malls  
pretty as flower children's power hour  
but hollow inside  
a helium balloon.

Give me the vision without the televangelist  
I'll take the hallucination  
the rumination Lucy juices  
high in the sky with diamonds  
Break on through, yes, breathe on through  
I'm you goo job as the walrus  
Is the promise still there?  
The doors of perception  
could still burst at any moment  
When we ran on scholarships, luck  
taking the merciful white hand of well-intentioned  
professors, you promised the doors would break open  
and I still believe.

I receive  
my own power of now  
Don't follow the buddha  
surfing imperial appropriations to find my mirror  
has been staged  
but all the world's a gauge  
Every barrier's a biscuit  
my Cerberus howls at satellites  
how howoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

howoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo  
ow ow owoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo  
Waiting for the Death Star  
to recalibrate  
burst my planet's inner sanctum  
the freedom you promised is only rhetoric  
and for this you took my language?

A pox on you! I'll fox ferry it  
your doxa's overdose of a cold drug  
snows and blows  
ices my cranium's sensitive lining.  
I'm pining for trees and alchemy  
Blake's no mistake I'll claim him  
smoking the opium of your 99-year leash  
This trip doesn't quite globalize my village  
Sewage floods my expanse of paddies  
while my nimble fingers acid scratch corridors  
on microchips  
overtime for iPads  
Your perception's doors  
standardize seduction  
My labour greases the guts.

I'm still pushing don't wanna be  
the last angry woman of colour standing  
in the killing fields  
the rice fields flooded for damnation  
powering the electricity of progress  
or the field of dreams  
screaming  
break on through! break on through!  
as America dashes to its own destruction.

My China bullshits

your stock exchange  
the range of missiles cocked  
for surgical  
interventions rearranging the body  
of earth  
And me, I rush back to the birthplace  
my mother tongue  
flaps dumb as a flag pitched  
on the moon  
the barren beauty of  
our home on native land.

**COLETTE ST-HILAIRE, with contributions and translation by  
ERÍN MOURE / Biopolitics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The following review of *Commonwealth*, by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, has not only been translated, but also adapted, shortened and then expanded, together with its author, from an article originally prepared by her for *Conjonctures*, a Quebec journal of socio-political thought. It represents a view from Quebec, from a friend who has been one of my most important interlocutors for well over a decade. We both think it urgent to consider structures and concepts from an economic and socio-political standpoint. No ecopoetics can be separate from this, however radical it wills itself to be. —ERÍN MOURE

It's been ten years since Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*, a global analysis of the crisis that began at the end of the 1960s and that—jostled by workers' demands, popular movements, and mobilizations of peoples in former colonies—has seen capitalism mutate significantly. *Empire*, the concept Hardt and Negri elaborated to capture these transformations, is characterized by an absence of frontiers, with sovereignty more often exercised not through nations but through supranational institutions to which waning nation-states delegate their powers. In *Empire*, wealth creation, exploitation, and domination extend beyond the sphere of material work into the production of life itself, through the management and mobilization of bodies and minds. *Empire* is a biopolitical machine in which capitalism is pushed to its limits and, shaken by the struggles of the *multitude*, attempts to claim new ground.

Although *Empire* echoed overwhelmingly with readers (selling hundreds of thousands of copies), it left questions: Isn't the nation-state still essential to capital? How is value created in immaterial forms of production? And, crucially, is the multitude capable of political action? In 2004, Hardt and Negri addressed the difficulties raised by their theses in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, a book that grapples further with the dynamic of structural transformations. In 2011, their *Commonwealth* opens with the recognition that globalization has

created a common world that we share, and which has no “outside” (of capital, of Empire) upon which to found our actions. It is from the midst of this common world that we must sketch out an ethics of political action for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### The Struggle for the Common

In our time, say Hardt and Negri, capital has turned to exploit the *common*. On one hand, this refers to the common wealth of the material world—air, water, fruits of the soil, and all that we consider to be “nature’s bounty.” But common wealth also includes intangibles—knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects and other products of social life. To increase value, capital must expropriate all this wealth from the common. Thus, we see the rise of private control of the media and of education, public planning, health, and of aspects of the military and of scientific research, among other things, as well as that of water, minerals, topographies.

In a process modeled on that of Marx, *Commonwealth* explores the changes in capital and biopolitical labour. Hardt and Negri identify three tendencies: the prevalence of **immaterial production**; the **feminization** of work—in terms of the generalization of tasks, working conditions and qualities traditionally associated with women (flexibility, irregular schedules, focus on communication and human relations); and the patterns and processes of **migration** and social-racial mixing. All these factors have brought the global labour marketplace an abundant, precarious workforce which capital must both foster and control in order to exploit, and which constantly threatens to escape its purview.

Capital faces new challenges: how can it account for creativity and affect? How can working hours be enumerated when work and life are not easily separable? In the production of commodities and creation of surplus value, a social relationship is also produced. Labour thus possesses creative potential that always exceeds the conditions that frame it, so that capital is never fully able to contain it. As Hardt and Negri note, citing Marx via Foucault: *l’homme produit l’homme*.

This is even more true in the era of biopolitical production, which requires exchanges and fluidity impossible to control from above. Cooperation and creativity cannot be obtained through injunctions; they overflow timetables and pass through corporate walls. Regardless of how capital multiplies its controls and reinstates borders in the open world it has created, the multitude will always elude it.

By its very nature, biopolitical production must shake off external control to be productive. In requiring a greater autonomy of labour, it places capital before a contradiction: any effort on the part of capital to tighten controls on this production harms productivity. As such, the producing multitude has the potential to engage in autonomous processes that could break down capital and create new forms of common life. This potential is key in *Commonwealth*, and has major political repercussions.

#### The Politics of the Multitude: Exodus

Without vanguards, parties, or revolutionary organizations to lead them, the actors in the Arab Springs and the protesters in Spain and Greece in 2011 have defied those in power and pushed their leaders to resign or alter their course. In their actions, how can we not see that the multitude has political capacity? Hardt and Negri, sensing a political opening in the world situation, hypothesize that future struggles will take the form of exodus: “a process of subtraction from the relationship with capital by means of actualizing the potential of labour-power. Not a refusal of the productivity of biopolitical labour-power but rather a refusal of the increasingly restrictive fetters placed on its productive capacities by capital” (152).

They go on to analyze forms of the common. The metropolis is a large reservoir. Originally organized to feed industry, the city has now become biopolitical, involving communications networks, cultural practices, intellectual circuits, affective networks, and social institutions. In some domains there have been attempts to control and privatize this immense wealth: media, land development, financial institutions, and education become contested sites.

The common also includes corrupt forms such as family, corporation, and nation, which impose hierarchies and exclusions and act as tools for the reproduction of capital. The multitude faces the double task of mobilizing the common and beneficial resources of social institutions (communication networks, available resources, etc.) as levers to escape controls that limit access to the common and, at the same time, of steering clear of corrupt forms.

In the context of biopolitical production, opening access to the common means refusing control over production and reproduction; from there, it is possible to extricate from capital and engage in an autonomous process of creation of new

forms of social life. For this reason, say Hardt and Negri, exodus is the major form of class struggle in our time.

### Organizing the Multitude

How can value-creating forces be organized in one body or form, when production extends across the entire social territory? How to unite a proletariat made nomadic by precarity and flexibility? Hardt and Negri maintain that the multitude does not need to be represented by a vanguard or party. These forms of organization date from an epoch when factories were staffed with professional workers, skilled and unskilled, who organized and joined trade unions and vanguard parties. In our day, the authors claim, these forms of organization are anachronistic. The multitude can organize itself autonomously. More and more, workers are directly responsible for production; they evade surveillance even as surveillance increases; they organize themselves in parallel networks that resist the vertical structures typical of parties or unions.

In contrast to the people, whose unity stems from a will to avoid the anarchy of the state of nature and which becomes a hegemonic force standing above the plural social field (168), the multitude becomes political in its interactions with nature. To support this thesis, Hardt and Negri cite philosopher Judith Butler and biologist Ann Fausto-Sterling, whose feminist investigations have allowed us to deconstruct the idea of a nature that is fixed and immutable, separate from and prior to social relationships. In fact, nature and bodies are incessantly modulated by social practices. For Hardt and Negri, an “ecology of the common” includes nature and society, and considers both human and nonhuman worlds to be part of an interconnected dynamic. Nature cannot be separated from the forces at work on human beings: biological, political, and economic. This brings us to a constituent ontology: *being* means engaging in a process of *becoming* shaped by social action. Thus ecopoetics or other ecological focii cannot be considered separately from social action across networks that are not wholly “natural.”

The notion of the common, in fact, includes much that exceeds the usual notion of nature. Here the project of the multitude breaks with traditions elaborated in philosophy by Locke and Rousseau: where once progress acted to tame nature or submit it to the rule of property, the multitude now must work to conserve the

common, to establish the conditions of its production, promote beneficial forms and combat its detrimental dimensions. In a biopolitics, the multitude does not break free of nature or nurture it from an outside; it works instead inside the common that traverses all of nature, culture, and society. Romantic contemplation of an idealized and beautiful nature, as if from outside the web of forces that create it, is of no use here.

Is the multitude then an autonomous political subject, outside the power of capital, whose project is one founded on the veracity of its own interests? Not so. Evoking Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri advance the idea of a political subject constituted at the very heart of the mechanisms of power-knowledge. Neither fundamentally free nor fundamentally alienated, subjects emerge on the terrain of political and social struggle. The *nature* that production transforms is subjectivity itself. The crucial task is thus to intervene in the circuits of production of this subjectivity, to flee the mechanisms of control and to construct the bases for an autonomous production of subjectivity that enhances the common.

The political potential of the multitude is actualized whenever the *event* is produced: when production exceeds the limits of capital, in other words, when subjects choose lines of flight, are joined by others, and create anew. This, the authors avow, harnesses an imminent human capacity for indignation, in the Spinozist sense of the term, meaning the power to “act against oppression and to challenge the causes of our collective suffering.” Hardt and Negri invoke the history of *jacqueries*, populist uprisings fuelled directly by indignation and conditioned by what was directly perceived as oppressive: workers who smash the machines of their trade, for example. In biopolitical society, where production of value is concomitant with the production of forms of life, indignation is what calls capital into question. Power and resistance are isomorphous, however, as Foucault has shown; revolt, curiously, can involve the very characteristics of the thing being resisted. This can be seen in the August 2011 riots in London, England, where the fury directed at capitalism and at recessionary politics was played out by looting and exchanging the very products that oppressive capital produces. In our era, such revolts are biopolitical, and express the reality not just of “downtrodden masses” but of the common, and cannot be read as meaningless, even if a program seems lacking or is not clear. The controls of the neoliberal state acting in the interests

of capital (long jail sentences, police searches) will never prevent these outflows of indignation. As French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy has said, a human life creates sense, in working; this is its work. In England, in Spain, Greece and elsewhere, and more recently in the North American Occupy movements, human beings are simply carrying out their work: the constant emergence of subjectivity, its sense, cannot be resolved on the plane of control.

Hardt and Negri, in *Commonwealth*, return to the figure of the metropolis to try to understand these spaces of resistance and biopolitical production. The metropolis is the multitude's "body without organs," which is to say, with Deleuze and Guattari, that it is a body composed of intensities, a factory for the production of events. The metropolis is to the multitude what the factory once was to the working class, and its qualities are becoming generalized in cities across the planet. Is this not what we have seen as well in the Greek, Spanish or Arab spring revolts of 2011, where plural forces flee dominant institutions and launch a process aimed at creating new forms of economic, social, cultural, and political life?

This leads, however, to an even more difficult question: can an insurrectional moment be translated into durable forms of life?

### Government and the Multitude

The neoliberal transition and the new American unilateralism have failed to overcome the crisis of post-Fordist capitalism, a crisis underpinned by the ontology of biopolitical labour. The neoliberal model can only rechannel wealth, disinherit workers and destroy the common. Yet knowledge is becoming social, and cannot be contained in a product cycle: forms of work appear that reject productivism. Breakdowns in production escape capital and the system is having difficulty in fully ensuring its own reproduction. "The forms of intellectual, affective, and cognitive labour that are emerging in the central role in the contemporary economy cannot be controlled by the forms of discipline and command developed in the era of the factory society" (264). But how can this historical moment be seized for other ends?

For Hardt and Negri, socialism can no longer meet the challenge, for it is a regime "for the promotion and regulation of industrial capital, a regime of work and discipline imposed through government and bureaucratic institutions" (269). It engenders the same contradictions as neoliberal capitalism; to monopolize surplus

value, it has to alienate producing singularities, seize control of cooperation, and expropriate the common, all of which undermines the very goals of socialism. Is social democracy more effective? The authors don't think so. Socializing capital can't resolve the impasses in which production is caught, without hampering social production. The chronic unemployment that plagues the developed world and the overqualified labour force observed in emerging economies are convincing examples of this. In effect, when the work day no longer has borders and exceeds the framework of "employment," the entire society becomes the site of production and of struggle. A multitude composed of autonomous subjectivities escapes the social-democratic State in the same way that it flees the dictates of capital. Spain and Greece are overwhelming examples of this.

It's not that we must reject reform: no one can fault State intervention to stop the destruction of the planet or to redistribute wealth. But it's clear that this State, however social-democratic it may be, will run up against the same contradictions as the neoliberal one. In the end, biopolitical production draws its energy from the bottom of the pyramid, and must be guided by a *multitudinal* entrepreneurship.

Hardt and Negri cannot define the political program of the multitude. But, following Marx, and Quesnay before him, they construct a *tableau économique* of the common and use it to elicit some cues. Firstly, the multitude must defend the freedom of biopolitical labour in the face of precarity, migration, and other forms of domination. Think here of the migrant workers who defy the barriers erected against their freedom of movement, or the citizens who rise up and clamour about things that they are told do not concern them, such as shale gas or genetically-modified food. In the biopolitical era, political equality at the bottom of the pyramid is a productivity factor.

The defense of democracy must ensure that its institutions support the autonomy of biopolitical production. Democracy here departs from mere representation. Its focus is the struggle of the common against the stranglehold of capital. Citing Ernesto Laclau, the authors of *Commonwealth* explain that representation is the only mechanism that allows diversity to be united; in other words, it allows plural subjects to be united under a guiding idea, a ruler, a State, transforming the multitude into a people. However, this movement is shadowed by a second process of cleavage between the representatives and the represented,

leaving but a unified and hegemonic elected force in its wake. This structure restrains biopolitical production because it undermines its foundations: the freedom and necessary autonomy of plural subjects. The hegemonic force of a social-democratic government elected by a people who accept to be represented can, it is true, allow preservation of the spaces of the common. But it is an obstacle to creation of new instances of common life.

Finally, it falls to the multitude to defend social life, which no longer is a given in the new context where labour constantly overflows the walls and schedules of factories or offices. This means fighting for infrastructures from drinking water to environmental protection, and even science and technology, and for the instruments of social and intellectual life: education, information, and open access to knowledge and to artistic production are essential. In the end, it is up to the multitude, not elected representatives, to create new, autonomous social institutions that allow the common to flourish without expropriations.

There is no question of waiting for capitalism to collapse in the hope that a new world will arise on its ruins. Nor is it a question of planning, in the socialist tradition, a transfer of wealth and power from the capitalist class to the socialist State. The strategic line proposed by *Commonwealth* is that the multitude progressively free itself from capital and the State by means of education, cooperation, and events or encounters, and thus guide the creation of a world that is more and more common. Rather than directing revolt toward seizing the State, the challenge is to solidify gains made during insurrectional moments, consolidate new practices—in short, to build institutions from moments, at the heart of a process that always remains insurrectional.

*Commonwealth* is rigorous and logical in its philosophy and politics. It does, however, open many questions regarding biopolitics, ethics, ecology, the event, and the political organization of the multitude. The book can leave us indignant or despondent, or we can choose to live with the trouble that the work provokes and welcome and use the space of debate that Negri and Hardt open.

## SAMUEL GARRIGÓ MEZA / Capture Recapture

Each bear was marked with a numbered metal tag in one or both ears. Each bear was tagged with a numbered tag in each ear, and a plastic tag in one ear for subsequent identification. Each bear was tagged with numbered aluminium ear tags and tattooed with a corresponding number in the right ear and upper lip. Each bear was assigned a unique number printed on a set of ear tags and tattooed to the left and right sides of the upper lip. Each bear was tattooed with an identification number in the upper lip and tagged in each ear with a numbered, colour-coded tag. Each bear was tagged with a Monel metal cattle tag and a red nylon rototag in each ear, with identical numbers on all four tags. Each bear was fitted with a MOD-500 radio-collar equipped with a mortality sensor and cotton spacers. Each bear was fitted with a satellite telemetry collar and equipped with a VHF radiotransmitter in the 151 MHz range. Each bear was tattooed on the upper inside lip and had uniquely numbered ear tags attached to both ears.

## THE ENPIPE LINE COLLECTIVE / The Enpipe Line Folio

The Enpipe Line (<http://enpipeline.org>) is written in resistance to Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Pipelines. The pipelines are tar sands infrastructure. The idea is to go dreams vs. dream in a collaborative poem designed to intervene in the processes that allow proposals like Enbridge's to emerge.

The text you are about to read is roughly 1/1,000,000<sup>th</sup> of The Enpipe Line's actual size. Each individual piece is measured (300 cm of 12 pt font = 718 km of enpiping) and its length is added to the total length of the line. If the poems that make up The Enpipe Line were to be materialized in actual size, they would stand one kilometre high and span close to 50,000 kilometres.

It was thought that creating a poem 1,173 kilometers long—the length of the proposed pipelines—would take years. In fact, it took weeks. The Enpipe Line contains song, video, image and group-authored works such as Ta'kaiya Blaney's "Shallow Waters," a poem read to Ezra Levant by Ben West in the now infamous "Ethics of Oil Cage Match" held at the Rio Theatre in East Vancouver in November 2010; C O S T I S' "1.5km"; and R3's "Warriors whoop at me from between the trees," which is archived on Alert! Radio. In short, The Enpipe Line is a snapshot of a culture of resistance to the proposed Northern Gateway Pipelines, and projects like it. The first print edition of The Enpipe Line is forthcoming from Creekstone Press.

### Folio contents:

JESSICA WILSON / A tar sands song  
KEVIN SPENST / coming down the pipe  
ROB BUDDE / The New Economy  
KATHRYN MOCKLER / Pipeline  
ARA THOMSEN / Pipe me full to exploding with your sweet  
PAUL NELSON / Enbridge/Endgame  
NIKKI REIMER / ceci n'est-pas enpipeline

**A TAR SANDS SONG** // Melina, Melina. / You remind me of a tar sands story. / Growing up on Lubicon Lake, / Eating the moose and fish all cancerous. // Melina, Melina. / You remind of a tar sands story. / Growing up and fighting power, / While the government just turned away. // Stop the looting and polluting, / Cuz the planet's getting hotter. / While the rich is getting richer, / The poor is getting poorer. // See the activists, on the corner, / Dreaming up ways to make things better, / Then I look up at the sky, / See a cloud of smoke from an upgrader. // Boom chaka chaka boom. / Boom chaka chaka boom // Melina you are a campaigner, / Spreading the message of the tar sands / To the world, yeah. // Melina you are a crusader, / Saving the forests and the water, / For the future. // Stop the looting and polluting, / Cuz the planet's getting hotter. / While the rich is getting richer, / The poor is getting poorer. // See the activists, on the corner, / Dreaming up ways to make things better, / Then I look up at the sky, / See a cloud of smoke from an upgrader. // Boom chaka chaka boom. / Boom chaka chaka boom /// **COMING DOWN THE PIPE** // As if his lips were at the / open end of a thousand / kilometer pipeline, / the CEO announces: // "By opening the world's / energy market to Canada, / Northern Gateway will help / enable the nation to achieve / its true potential as a global / energy superpower and to / enjoy the benefits of its resource / wealth for generations." // His opening from lungs / markets pipeline, cinnamon, / bitumen and spice by / hearth warm for generations / of energy superpower children. // A fantasy pipeline foundry. // Our ears open for generations / until pipelines clogged unpiggable, / big words build up viscosity / until fissures gush hydrocarbons. / Around future remains of mainline / we hunter-gather back, praying / once words around a fire: // "Buy open market Canada / world-North urn on gait of will, / ennobles the nation to ache / its rueful tensions as an / energy super fixer-upper / forever cleaning bitumen from / beneath our abode inch ill of wealth. / Forge enervations to sleep / under oil-spill black night. / Forge enervations to someday strengthen back." // Announced around the open fire, / at the end of a thousands as ifs. /// **THE NEW ECONOMY** // How must it be /

to be caught in the Empire, to have / everything you do matter? / –John  
Newlove // the forecast is for / castes of greater and lesser / and the  
charts glaze over / with want // the bubble is water and air; / the tipping  
point is a mean temperature // hedges are like properly broken / lines—in  
keeping with property values / but the risk is not yours // bookings are  
accessed by writers / of wealth and exemptions abound / in derivative  
contracts, leverage, recognizable / structures and the liquidity of investment  
/ in the empire // no need to listen: certainty surrounds the old / economy—  
playing with oneself / has always been a good bet // self-absorption is a  
hemispheric / phenomenon and cancels out / the emotional use of language  
/ and how it addresses the animal // futures, forwards, options and swaps  
/ are the only way one line can move to the next / in the empire // pyramids  
cover with sand // unless the word has no operating / leverage, I have no  
interest in its / profit, poetic value has no // place in reasons for imaginary  
debt // and so, eventually, comes clean /// **PIPELINE** // The / ones / who  
/ are / not / there / don't / have / to / think / about / it. /// **PIPE ME FULL  
TO EXPLODING WITH YOUR SWEET** // Pipe me full to exploding with  
your sweet / siren song / tantalizing taste buds with chocolate-almond  
poison / maybe in a thousand years we'll be extinct like the dinosaurs / so  
much for the theory of evolution / take me captive with your lovely words /  
words words / words can arm and protect / words can join and connect /  
my words are not dead, / they come to life as they hit the page / sprinting  
to their purpose / living as I read them aloud / or as they lie dormant in a  
resting stage / these words are alive. // Don't be an ageist, tell me about  
this earth / she's old but full of wealth / this ancient green giant / alive with  
macro/micro organisms / from the mundane to the urbane / she wears  
them all / in a living, breathing shawl / this weave is washable / but don't  
try and dryclean / this expensive raiment / with chemical defilement / if you  
unwrap her there's a price, / there's a curse / if you steal her shawl / to line  
your purse. /// **ENBRIDGE/ENDGAME** // The world knows that Canada  
is a climate criminal for allowing tar sands development to occur and yet  
they continue to allow it. / – Carrier Sekani Vice Tribal Chief, Terry Teegee

// Ensuring safety in every aspect of our operations, respecting the environment. / – from an Enbridge Corporate Press Release // Petroleum that exists in the semi-solid or solid phase in natural deposits. Bitumen is a thick, sticky form of crude oil, so heavy and viscous (thick) that it will not flow unless heated or diluted with lighter hydrocarbons. At room temperature, it is much like cold molasses. // What if she needed the oil (Gaia, dear, take your bitumens) blood travels arterials stabilizes a system warms feet dirt nurtures wheat alfalfa brome grass timothy wheatgrasses clover wildryes. // What if she took this as WWIII cd deploy tornadoes a few well-placed quakes or the rainrainrain wd you gather an ark wd you react biblical? Could she be a mother-in-law w/ glacial memory, a Romeoville or Kalamazoo still fresh sorties she might think her patience shaken her late experiment with insects & their dirty shells losing novelty. // The fear of those atop the food chain is that they'll see they fleshy bones on a plate next to the spuds, a bowl of eyes roll like jello holiday necklaces of teeth & she bats last she whose patience thins w/ bit of bitumen, each tar sand sucked from her ligaments, each cancerous scab we string across her heat-seeking flesh. // Gitga'at            Gitaaxla            Haida            Haisla            Nadleh / Whut'en    Naka'zdli    Wet'suwet'en    Dakelh    Carrier Sekani    await / the prophecy await the power of the coming Mayan Blue Storm. //            How'l the Blue Storm look on yr /            6 o'clock news, how another pole shift /            on yr smiling baby's face? /// **CECI N'EST PAS ENPIPELINE** // our PIONEERS / help Canada / transform the Wilderness //            virtual time machines /            400 million years /            a 19" drill bit ride /            "edutainment" /            great pleasure & pride // [1719]    Wa-Pu-Su, Cree chief and trader /            lump of "that gum or pitch" // [1790]    the "            fountains" // [1889]    ten years after being shown the /            seepages/by First Nations people // [1898]    bottling and selling/it locally // [1906]    reported blow from /            diamond drill hole // [1907]            Rudyard Kipling visited Medicine Hat /            declaring "all Hell /            for a basement" // [1912]    Alberta's

first cross-country // [1914] shot 5 metres above the drilling  
 / floor ///-----the First World war established  
 the / importance of strategic commodity----- ////////////////  
 [1922] large Pouce Coupe, / blew out on / October  
 10, killing “the driller and / seriously burning/several others” //  
 [1926] and the western patch has / never looked back //  
 interlude / We embrace our rich roots/ / the true soul of Canada resides/  
 in its / hardworking people, past and present/ / whose vision and effort  
 built our / prosperity/honouring the men and / women participating in the  
 various / trades/(and support services) // “You was either quick or dead” /  
 a cheery time for the inhabitants of sleepy little Smiley / “rank wildcat  
 country” / horses were used // [1811] Alexander Henry / eastern flanks  
 of Rocky Mountains // second interlude / –“trail of iron” / –Native peoples  
 traded bear hides/smelling of kerosene / –fools lost deep in the holes / –  
 much money and hope was poured/into the valley / –Fitzsimmons knew he  
 had a good/lease / –for centuries, Aboriginal people knew of/and used  
 hydrocarbons / –prompting Cornwall to form a syndicate/with the Calgary  
 businessman // loaded onto scows! ♪ / lashed to the side ♪ / of  
 a paddle boat! ♪ // 90 years after its discovery, most of / the fields remain/  
 // because objections / halted/ /// –the blowing in of Royalite No. 4  
 resulted in high flows / –several million hectares of unexplored Crown land  
 / –estimated 21 million yet to be produced from the field // [1941] first  
 mined at Abasand plant // [1955] first commercial in / British  
 Columbia // [1960] the deepest Canada / drilled to a depth  
 / of 5,041 metres/in the / Crowsnest Pass // [1967] The  
 Great Canadian went / into/production, producing/synthetic  
 / Athabasca // [1988] horizontal / opened up new  
 / exploiting/tight formations // [2001] bitumen production  
 exceeded / first Alberta // (tailings / pond / research / a  
 major / focus) // c’ eci n’ est-pas une pipe / c’ eci n’ est-pas une  
 pipeline



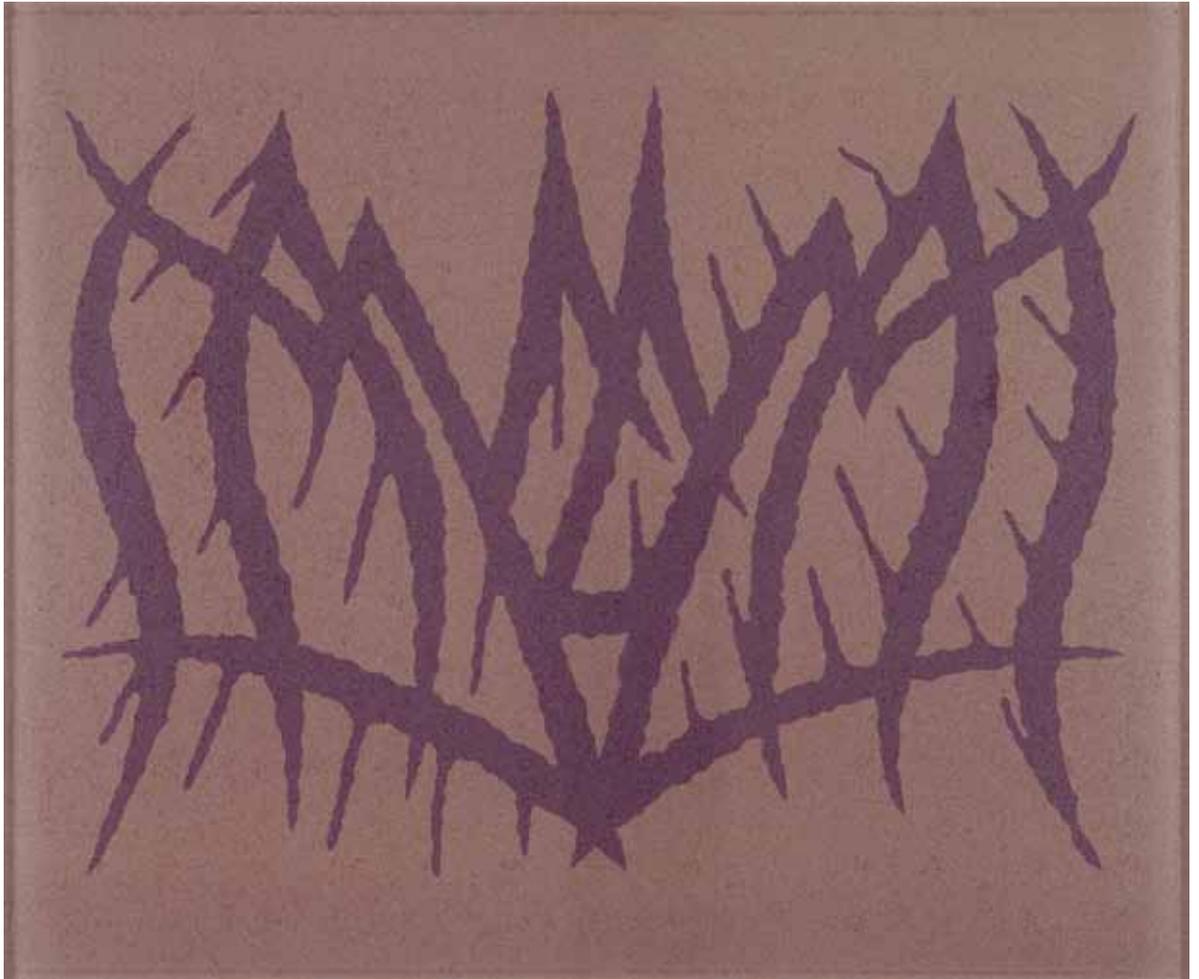
RAYMOND BOISJOLY / The Writing Lesson



*Nanaimo*, 2011, sunlight, construction paper, Plexiglas, 60 x 50.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Republic Gallery



*Spuzzum*, 2011, sunlight, construction paper, Plexiglas, 60 x 50.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Republic Gallery



*Masset, 2011, sunlight, construction paper, Plexiglas, 60 x 50.8 cm*  
Courtesy of the artist and Republic Gallery



*Yakima*, 2011, sunlight, construction paper, Plexiglas, 60 x 50.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and Republic Gallery

The *Writing Lesson* makes reference to the visual typography of the heavy metal subgenre known as black metal in creating a vernacular mode of writing to illustrate place names in Western Canada and Washington with indigenous origins. Early iterations of black metal music created in Norway sought to resurrect aspects of indigenous pre-Christian spirituality that had been violently displaced in the Christianization of Scandinavia by acts such as the destruction of pagan temples. Through a rudimentary photographic process using a hand cut stencil, the light of the sun has burned the names of places such as Masset, Skidegate, Chilliwack, and Yakima onto black paper with the hope that more will be revealed than concealed. *The Writing Lesson* wishes to foreground language as a cultural practice and bring a concern for Aboriginal languages to bear on text-based strategies in art.

*The Writing Lesson* takes its name from an anecdote offered in *Tristes Tropiques*, the 1955 memoir of Claude Lévi-Strauss. While studying the Nambikwara of the Brazilian Amazon, the French anthropologist was observed writing with pencil on paper. Suddenly grasping the purpose of this activity, the Nambikwara proceeded to mimic the process of writing in the production of “wavy, horizontal lines.” The chief of this particular group realized that he might increase his prestige and power amongst his people if he were to exaggerate his competency with the written word, so he made a show of his new, somewhat feigned, ability. Due to his ruse, the chief was abandoned by most of his people. From this, Lévi-Strauss gathers a systematic theory of writing that emphasizes its aggressive and coercive character as an ultimately political tool. Writing betrays deceit. *The Writing Lesson* draws on this anecdote to consider the political potential of wresting these names from an easy, legible familiarity while attributing to them an irreducible Aboriginality.

—RB

**JOANNE ARNOTT, MICHAEL BLACKSTOCK, PETER CULLEY, ROGER FARR, CHRISTINE LECLERC & RITA WONG / “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow”: On Poetry and the Environmental Crisis**

This discussion took place on September 18, 2011, on a private “Ecologies” blog set up for the occasion. Participants were asked to circulate statements in advance addressing how ecological thought informs their practice as poets; the individual statements precede the discussion below. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, we met online to elaborate and nuance the statements in dialogue. I posed three questions to the group to focus discussion on perceived points of confluence and variance before taking a boat to Mudge Island for an apple harvest, where I was temporarily stranded. The discussion then emerged more-or-less organically in the form of individual posts and comments. The text has been edited for brevity and print coherence. Thanks to Joanne, Michael, Peter, Christine, and Rita for their generous and insightful words.

—Roger Farr, 28/12/11

CHRISTINE LECLERC:

Imagine yourself in the middle of a field.

Imagine yourself in the middle of an open pit mine in the middle of a field.

You are in an open pit mine in the middle of a forest.

You are in a mine on a mountain.

You are in an open pit.

A body likes places where it, the world and language can be together.

I’m thinking about scale.

Something interesting happens when I look at images of massdestruction. I look past the destruction. The destruction hits me past my ability to understand how it’s hitting me. The scale hits me though.

This was intended by the photographer, you might say. You're supposed to feel alienated by aerial shots of large-scale destruction.

But I feel alienated when I visit sites of massdestruction also, only more so.

I am also encouraged. The pursuit of scale has involved many discussions. In these discussions, the image clings to the massiveness of the destruction. The task of encountering trauma begins to seem possible, negotiable. Manageable, even. Like the destruction was managed into the world.

For me, this is also a source of activism. It is the watershed thought-moment when occupation becomes possible because it is possible to encounter massdestruction in the image or landscape more fully, in the mind.

JOANNE ARNOTT:

Like the teepee and the “totem” pole, like the dream catcher and feathered head dress, these things (inuksuit) have slipped from one culture into different cultural contexts, and the relationships between the source and the receiving cultures are complex—if a modern inuksuk is made by Inuit builders in a large, southern, urban setting, is it “real”? Are they “real” because I can see them? If I don't know the full history of the maker of a specific marker made of stone, what is the correct response—well, the real response, of course, reflecting all of the complexity of cultural oppression, the large taking and suppressing, robbing and idealizing, as represented by all the individual moments of life.

The number of layers of translation or transformation between the original creations of stone markers on specific landscapes, and my self-expressive words and images, are several. One of the reasons for anxiety is how a feedback loop is created, so that the translations and transformations of cultural imagery then dilute and at times replace the origin tradition, impulse, meaning. My clumsy efforts to discuss the ethics of these things will one day bring about better insight, I'm sure, just as I'm sure that one day, my family will be at peace, self-confident, safe in the world that gave birth to us. For context, see safe place to make camp, <http://joannearnott.blogspot.com/2011/08/safe-place-to-make-camp.html>

MICHAEL BLACKSTOCK:

“I am just in poetry for the money,” announces Wyget, the trickster. My poetry is water, and water is poetry. And in the words of the modern-day cowboy poet, Mike Puhallo: “I don’t let truth get in the way of a good story—but I still try and make it real.” As a poet I am at-the-ready to run the ragged edge; when my plan hits black ice, I will engage the hubs into four-wheel drive. Ingredients for my poems: elbow sweat and blessed visitations from characters of everyday life walking through my door, or on the breath of my ancestors. You will find Canadiana clues in a lot of my poems. Poetry is a reservoir for culture and identity.

PETER CULLEY:

“je suis la grand zombie”—Dr. John

I put off this piece of writing as long as I could, and write now with the reluctant certitude that I can have little of value to add to any discussion of ecology or “the fate of the earth.” Such slivers of hope as I might have entertained in the pre 9/11 years that the western powers would address even such vitally urgent matters as global warming have been dashed both by the almost total consolidation of corporate power enabled by the “war on terror” and the ensuing campaign of fear that has effectively pummelled and paralysed political discourse into an ipso facto fascism. Whatever they want, they’re going to get, and if they can make a profit up till the last day of life on earth they’re going to. And it’s long past the point where quixotic acts of civil disobedience, electoral politics or even sabotage are going to stop them. We all know this I suppose, but this knowledge doesn’t fill me with the demonic energy it does some people—that need to do something/anything against the awful reality pressing in, to be seen as “positive” in the absence of real hope. That there are hours in the privileged days of my life—out roaming with the dog, looking at dictionaries, listening to Scarlatti and Charley Patton in my backyard trailer—in which I can forget these things I don’t deny. But like my tinnitus or the arthritis in my foot it can come flooding in at any moment, with accompanying guilt a bonus. The question for me now is how then to live, to continue to work as an artist (always touch and go) in the absence of any utopian possibility? Inertia? Habit? Like an anchorite in a cave? What form of denial should I go with?

RITA WONG: *undercurrent*

my watery-body is slowly re-mem-bering that it is part of \_\_\_\_ the capilano watershed,  
& before that, the bow river, fresh water ceaselessly rippling home to ocean larger than  
the continental divide is pacific

my salty-body is always part of that flow, not separate from it. hydro-logical inter-being,  
broken apart by colonial conquer-and-divide, how to now build a raft named respect,  
spaciously? how can poetics relate to thousands of years of human activity on this  
continent, but through listening? to each other, the birds, the trees, the wind, the  
water . . .

as an uninvited guest on this land, how can my actions bridge the gap between intention  
and effect? land feeds me—i am a world eater, and what do i give back to the world?  
poems are slow seeds, but will they grow?

immersed in the muddy, polluted stream that we call the english language, i still need  
the stream to live, even as i filter the pollutants, rearrange them in funny shapes in  
order to try to understand what they are doing to my body, and yes, i eat dirt. geophagy,  
it is called. made all the more dangerous by what has been mined from earth's bowels:  
uranium, copper, coltan, selenium, gold, silver, nickel, zinc, and more

foraging for ways to survive, to understand crisis and contradiction, makes a bricolage  
poetics, a way of writing through and in the mess, toward what sun & moon teach: a  
hopeful act, a necessary one

ROGER FARR:

Perhaps it is symptomatic of writing in the shadow of ecological catastrophe that I must  
admit to a degree of sightlessness when it comes to the question of how environmental  
problems can be taken up in a cultural praxis. While I agree with Mayakosvky that there  
are certain problems in society for which solutions can only be found in *poetic terms*, I  
am not entirely sure if this particular problem is of that sort, nor if the problem itself  
has been properly put (i.e., do we have an “environmental problem” or an “industrial-  
civilization problem”?). But insofar as we may be opening up here the old questions  
about the political agency and capabilities of poetry, it might be useful to consider  
Jacques Ranciere's claim in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (Continuum, 2006) that the test of  
any truly “political” (i.e., dissenting, subversive, disruptive) art lies not in its content or

in its form, but in whether or not its “methods of presentation” can be appropriated by social movements in the course of *actual struggles*:

The arts only ever lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend to them . . . what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parceling out of the visible and the invisible. . . . It is up to the various forms of politics to appropriate, for their own proper use, the modes of presentation or the means of establishing explanatory sequences produced by artistic practices rather than the other way around. (19)

The question facing the ecologically-oriented poet, then, is not *what* kind of poem to write “in response” to the current crisis, but rather *how* the techniques and methods of the poem as such can be made available to the environmental movement, in both its above- and under-ground formations. Given that “poetics,” in its minimum definition, refers to a repertoire—or perhaps an arsenal—of linguistic techniques and devices, we might then ask if there is anything in poetry’s tool-box that could be introduced as a counter-measure against the specifically *semiotic* weapons being deployed by the state to neutralize the movement for environmental defense.<sup>1</sup> I feel strongly that this requires something more than merely “raising awareness” and sensitivities. How can we, to use Jonathan Skinner’s formulation, overcome the generic limitations of “eco poetry”—and perhaps poetry in general—and *get the poem out of the poem*,<sup>2</sup> in order to make our writing available to “real struggles” against the state and in defense of the earth?

## 1. “Ecopoetics”

ROGER FARR: In a recent editorial to his journal *ecopoetics* (#6/7), Jonathan Skinner writes that the term “ecopoetics” is enjoying some currency today, but that it runs the

1 These techniques are described in detail in Jules Boykoff’s *Beyond Bullets: The Suppression of Dissent in the United States* (AK Press, 2007); see also my essay, “No Nature Poetry After Eugene: Writing in the Shadow of the Green Scare,” in *Dandelion* 35 (1).

2 See Jonathan Skinner’s “Boundary Work in Mei-mei Berssenbrugge’s ‘Pollen’” in *How2* 3(2).

risk of becoming “yet another form of branding, niche-marketing or ‘greenwashing.’ We would hope,” he continues, “that the term continue to be used with uncertainty and circumspection.” I’m wondering if any of you use this term to describe your work, and if you do, what you hope to designate; if you don’t use it to describe your own work, do you think it is useful to describe other writing practices?

RITA WONG: While I don’t necessarily go around calling my work “ecopoetics,” I do respond affirmatively when people ask me to talk about my work this way (i.e. at a session at the Under Western Skies conference in Calgary, or when asked for a statement as is happening right now). I’ve written elsewhere that a poetics begins with my body—a walking, breathing, dreaming bag of water—and I would tentatively define an ecopoetics as one that acknowledges how humans are dependent on nature (and therefore part of it, even though many people, including myself, have been systematically “educated” or indoctrinated to be alienated, ignorant, and/or mentally disconnected from acknowledging this dependence, through western colonial paradigms that have historically positioned “nature” as something to be conquered and exploited). An ecopoetics would begin, then, with acknowledging this relationship to the nonhuman, and attempt the difficult task of renewing a respect and relationship with the non-human, with the environment, with the planet, which is, in turn, (for me anyway) a more compelling way of rooting and reimagining our own short lives on this planet.

In trying to be brief about it, I’ve written on Sina Queyras’s *Harriet* blog for the Poetry Foundation that “Poetry is a world flowing and unfolding from both outside and inside.” While this may be a bit vague sounding, the “outside” raises questions like: “What is our relationship to the tar sands projects that are poisoning a huge watershed and accelerating climate change for the whole planet?” “If actions speak louder than words (as proclaimed by the Greenpeace banner at the Rainbow Warrior festival yesterday on Jericho Beach), how does poetics navigate a relationship to action?”

MICHAEL BLACKSTOCK: My first book of poetry is entitled *Salmon Run: A Florilegium Of Aboriginal Ecological Poetry*. My usage here is as a descriptor not a brand, an exemplar not a product. It is a collection of eclectic styles with nature and ecology as a sub-theme. I use “florilegium” as a *natura-caveat*, almost to say that this poetry is a bit like smoke or water running through your fingers—you can sense it without grasping or clasping. The book’s subtitle is meant to illuminate the title *Salmon Run*. The many and varied

salmon (poems), traveling through the landscapes of living water (chapters), together form the ecosystem (*Salmon Run*).

JOANNE ARNOTT: I was invited a few years ago to contribute to a proposed collection on eco-poetics, so I spent quite a few hours researching the term and trying to wrap my mind around what the term meant. This definition is what I came up with:

eco-poetics: the poetics of people sundered from a natural context, seeking return; strategies of compensation for cultural/linguistic pressures toward fragmentation.

My sense is (was) that this isn't precisely the same as pastoral, nature writing, or capture-the-moment expressions from diverse traditions, but a new "brand" specifically for people trained up in christian-english-mindframes: in other words, one must see oneself as tossed out of "the garden" in order to need to find ways to re-centre oneself in a coherent state of natural human expression.

I was powerfully influenced in my teens by Takeo Nakano's *Within the Barbed Wire Fence*, and other people (writers, teachers) working in Japanese and Chinese traditions/worldviews over the years, and so my understanding of my girlhood in Manitoba and everything subsequent—e.g. my creative perspectives—has been powerfully influenced by that permission to say what is and speak from the heart, and to reflect inner and outer worlds as a continuity, rather than severely segregated items. The integrated perception is culturally a big no-no in your basic english lit-christian and post-christian mindscape, and good lit/bad lit (good science/bad science, etc.) is measured by this fundamental ability to step outside yourself and pretend you aren't there. In my humble opinion, that is the basic sleight-of-mind/soul-sickness, right there. Not to imply that I have none: I had my basic catholic girl conditioning and my basic western education, and continue to negotiate between a centred/synthesized and out-of-the-garden way of being/seeing. So, in response to the question, I don't use the term "eco-poetics" for myself, although I am not troubled if another might apply it.

RW: It's interesting to observe a reluctant embrace of the term "ecopoetics" so far—not as a brand, but as a term that makes possible some necessary conversations (such as: language's role in grappling with the damage and contradictions one lives in and among). Yesterday, the artist Oliver Kellhammer mentioned his interest in the possibilities of going feral, and this is something that's been on my mind a lot too for the last while—

the attraction or draw of a return to land/watershed/place, not as some idealized human reinvention, but messy, unpredictable, life-centered, humble, knowledgeable of the horrific destruction, and refusing to be completely demoralized by it because what is out there (remnants/fragments of which also exist “in here”) exceeds human ego-mind, even if the egos running the petrostate don’t acknowledge this.

MB: I have been thinking about the word “sentient” in relation to how Western Science classifies water as non-living. One characteristic of a sentient being is the ability to form a relationship with another being. Of course I think this true of water. But what of a poem? Can poems form relationships with other beings, as amorphous as that may be? Ecopoetics may be about forming relationships between poems (or verses of a poem) to describe an ecosystem, and, furthermore, relationships between reader and writer? Is that the complete ecosystem: writer(s), verse(s), poem(s), reader(s)?

RW: With regard to Michael’s question, I think poems have their own lives, like seeds that may or may not sprout, depending on the conditions in which they land. With regard to water’s liveliness, I’m curious about how water writes us, writes our bodies, has so much to teach us, if we listen carefully. It bears the record, the memory, of everything our society puts into it: around cities this would include the traces of antidepressants, birth control pills, carcinogenic wastes; water holds it all, somehow. And returns it to us, eventually, transformed or not.

JA: I love the idea of a world in a continual state of creation and unfoldment, and an element of that is the transmission of ideas between languages and between cultures, between minds and communities—which is why we do such a thing as “re-branding” in order to call attention again or for the first time to some fundamentals we assess have been misplaced or overlooked.

CHRISTINE LECLERC: Responding to Skinner’s statement that ecopoetics “runs the risk of becoming ‘yet another form of branding’” and Arnott’s discussion of ecopoetics above, I see the term ecopoetics as useful in the ease that it adds to searching out works of this kind. But I also find the term misleading, mostly because I think there is a popular misconception about what an ecological perspective is. If an ecological perspective is about relationships, this cannot exclude the social, industrial, or human and non-human genocides and displacement. Likewise, an ecological perspective does not set “nature” aside as a subject of observation. Ecology is a radical departure from

the idea of nature. I see Michael's mention of the poem as ecosystem, which I really like. But, I would add "world(s)" to my own list of poetic ecosystem elements as, to my mind, worlds (and, perhaps funnily, poetry's non-readers) are often essential to my reading or writing of poems.

JA: I don't resonate with the idea that "Ecology is a radical departure from the idea of nature." In my own sense of the words, there is an equivalence between nature and ecology, nature and the tao, ecology and the tao, nature and human nature: it is more about a trend of change, unfurling realities, tempos, relationships, flavours . . . consonance and not dissonance. I am within my ecology and our ecological niches overspill and influence one another.

PETER CULLEY: With all due respect to Jonathan Skinner—the range and focus of whose magazine *ecopoetics* validated the term for me personally—the term has in recent years been too often too loosely applied, too often meaning almost any kind of "nature writing," often a re-validation of the tired power-loving lyrical subjectivity that is so manifestly part of the problem. My own initial attraction to Jonathan's sense of the term was its validation of the poet's skills as tools of pure research, the implication that the sense-data gatherings of poetic consciousness could be brought to bear on practical and immediate matters concerning our planet's future. This flattered my own sense, derived from Christopher Dewdney, that what I was doing was a kind of science—that I was "in the field." But the term *ecopoetics* has become victim of its own success, firmly embedded in structures—the literary establishment, the university, the "ecological movement"—that impose silent but sure impediments to action. But my larger sense is that it is all too late, that the model of the slow shaping of consciousness toward positive environmental action that those of us who considered ourselves artists or activists—"ecopoetic" or not—have been supporting and working towards isn't working. However we might feel, the vast majority of our fellow citizens will ultimately have no problem with development of the tar sands; whatever it is we're saying, it's not persuading too many people, and I think we have to start facing up to that.

RW: I realize, Peter, that the majority of fellow citizens aren't in active opposition to the tar sands, but I don't agree that it's too late. Or rather, whether or not it's too late is something I don't think I can know with certainty. And I refuse to ignore the efforts of the many people who are actively working toward stopping further destruction—

including over 1,250 people who faced arrest in mass civil disobedience outside the White House in recent weeks, large numbers of grassroots environmental organizations, and a number of Nobel Peace Prize laureates who've asked Obama to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.

I agree that we have to face up to the fact that we remain a minority. What I wonder, though, is about tactics. Poetry is not about “persuading” people, but it could perhaps be about investigating the world that we’re in, and sharing that process, however brokenly and imperfectly. So poetry on its own is not enough. How does it align, or not, to other activities that continue to hold the goal of a living/liveable commons? What kinds of relations does it attempt, whether or not it “succeeds”?

JA: The weight of despair is palpable, and as a pragmatist all I can say is—widen the scope: there is no specific start time or finish line, and there are billions of sentient beings at play and at work, continually replenishing streams of reality.

When I was ten, my parents (who had eight children) both gave up. My experience was: things got a whole lot worse for us. So, taking time to regroup and change direction is fine, and at the same time, leadership is a needed position. Acknowledging reality is a necessary strategy, while redefining reality as proven hopeless is depleting.

It is natural for fatigue to occur and for those who carry to lay down the burden, allowing others to move forward with the song: that’s a natural process, and it is okay to be at ease with that.

The quote Michael Layton shared that he’d heard from his late father Jack pertains: “always have a dream longer than a life.” That is a way to say trust the group, and is very much akin to what keeps long-term social justice struggles alive generation after generation after generation.

CL: I agree with Peter that poetry—ecopoetic or not—is not stopping the tar sands. But it still seems useful to me to witness and engage with environmental destruction. Publicly resisting environmental injustice is part of building community. And authentic response and action to violence creates space for those experiencing something like “well-informed futility syndrome” to enter into.

Thinking specifically of Peter writing that “Whatever it is we’re saying, it’s not

persuading too many people,” I think also of the idea of action writing. Action, writing something akin to history. I think about poetry readings and how they often involve sitting down. Then I think about the poems I hear read at marches, and the role poetry plays in each setting. And I think about how the marches are part of campaigns, and how the campaigns come from movements, and how the poems at the marches are in motion. I think about change, and the role of the poem, and the audacity of the idea that a poem was or ever could be influential in and of itself.

MB: Yes, Christine, you are making me think. I am thinking of the role of a witness at a Gitksan feast. They are there to remember, to witness what is going on, and to be able to retell the story unfolding before them to their children. At minimum, we are witnesses and chroniclers, but I like to think we are more than that too. The time horizon is longer than we are taught. The results of our actions (writing) shows up one, two or seven generations from now, somehow, I think. Is that too late? Only time will tell, I guess, but we have to try.

RF: I’m curious about how poetics informs the activist work some of you are doing: Christine’s work against the Enbridge project, for example. Do people active as poets bring anything unique to the movement for environmental protection and defense?

CL: I like the way the question is framed, as I usually think about my activist work informing my poetics. Actually, I participated in poetic community before activism. But obviously, the crews aren’t mutually exclusive, and in a way, the more involved I became in activist work, the more I got to know poets involved in serving their non-poetic communities, and who are engaged in struggles for justice. That said, poetics does inform the activism that surrounds The Enpipe Line poetry project, as The Enpipe Line is fairly non-hierarchical. The contributions that make up the long line of this poem are selected by the poets who come forward with work and resistance to Enbridge’s proposed Northern Gateway Pipelines, and not a panel of editors. And the poem’s editors work on a volunteer basis. It may seem strange to describe the power relations that go into the making of The Enpipe Line as being part of its poetics, but I focus on it because I think it is an essential feature of the work and an important part of what the poem ultimately has to convey.

In terms of something unique poets can bring to struggles to stop unwanted mega-

projects and infrastructure, I think the poets on The Enpipe Line make a culture of resistance visible. But creative people have done this in many forms. With poets in particular, the contribution may have to do with a reminder of the existence of a linguistic commons, and the possibility of physical commons. There is also the act of bringing to edge of, or into, the public discourse, language that is not automatically rhetorical.

Can poets intervene in the corporate and political manoeuvring that allows unwanted projects to move forward? I'm very curious about this question, but don't yet have a clear answer.

## 2. Language

RF: In many of the discussions of ecopoetics that I have read, there often surfaces a line of thought—far too ubiquitous to attach to any one figure or tradition—that holds that it is possible to “re-inhabit” the earth, or sometimes simply “a place,” through attentive, embodied, and ecologically-informed writing. This line of thinking was especially prominent in the 1960s and 70s.

While I find this idea appealing, it's hard for me to reconcile with another line of poetic thought (influential for me) that holds that language does not offer direct, non-stop transport to the real; rather, language “cloaks” the real (the earth?) in the various fabrics of culture and ideology.

I'm wondering if any of you have a comment or question about this tension in contemporary poetics around the capabilities of language to “connect” us to the earth.

JA: Only to acknowledge that there is most certainly this tension, and it has a motive force!

I expect I approach this specific poetics conflict with a set of passionate opinions that may interfere with my ability to give a neutral overview—so, how to express my multivalent one-sidedness most effectively? When I look at disturbed earth, I may feel upset about how humans mess everything up. If someone tells me that, in fact, a specific disturbance was created thousands of years ago by the passing of a glacier, then

my feeling shifts. How I feel about the hand of the glacier seems to be a lot different from how I feel about the hand of a human, and yet in either case, the change can be seen as a neutral—a reality—rather than the beginning point for a search to lay blame. Or praise, for that matter.

At base, I am a pragmatist. My concern about too much distancing between language and reality is how it can undermine our self-confidence to see, act, be in the present day. Language is a malleable tool.

If you consider the power of oration—a really charismatic speaker communicating with passionate language—all the thought-forms that clutter up the space between I and thou, between giving and receiving, can disappear. We are moved or we are not moved, we are unified as a group sharing language-powered reality, or we are fragmented by the same means. We can use language (both in the sense of words and in the sense of ideas) to gather or disperse. We do these things, in a participatory way, every day.

MB: The symbols, syllabics, texture, notes, sounds and syntax of our language-of-choice are tools to create or design a trigger, *aide memoire* or key into the reader's, listener's or observer's landscape of imagination. I began thinking of this as I read James sakej Henderson's (Mikmaw) essay on First Nations place names. I misread his phrase "paysage interieur" to mean "gaining passage into the interior of the mind." I thought—what a wonderful description of poetry. The poet creates triggers which flow into a reader's imagination. These are, of course, unique to each reader; one phrase may transport a reader to a wondrous landscape, while the same phrase may be completely oblique to another reader.

My goal as a poet, artist, and independent scholar is to create, in varied media, an ecopoetics which hopefully inspires a deep respect for water on the reader's interior landscape, so that it manifests as healthy behaviour on the exterior landscape. Blue Ecology is meant to offer a water-first ecological framework. I fear that my audience is one or two generations down the road, however.

RW: I would agree that language is about language—and that we need to remain attentive to how language works as language. Without this, it is too easy to "cloak" or forget both our own situatedness, contingency, precariousness, as well as the inflatedness and fallibility of those who would speak for us (and everyone else—hello

Site C Dam). The latter urgently needs deconstruction, while the former might be what keeps one's language ethical, in relationship "with" rather than "over." Drawing attention to language's constructedness, its limits, its artifices, has been an influential line of thought to me as well.

That said, I also refuse to give up on the eARTh (or for David Abram the eairth that he suggests we are deep within, not merely perched atop). Because it is the ground I walk on (and write on), and because, as Joanne points out, it feeds my confidence, the energy that pulses through us when we do gather, listen, reconstitute a bit differently in companionship.

JA: I guess I would add that language cloaks and reveals: as a unilingual english speaker, I have to trust that some part of what another is translating for me carries the import and intent of the original author, even as I may have questions—did the writer say (mean) mankind, humankind, womankind, all sentient beings?

I think the immediacy of human experience is something that we can trust, even though many languages, lands, epochs of unfolding co-exist, and any two people may react wholly differently to any one image or given.

RW: I'm wondering if I need to backtrack a little bit to where we think language comes from. In her essay, "Land Speaking," Jeannette Armstrong suggests that for her, language "was given to us by the land we live within." She writes, "I have heard elders explain that the language changed as we moved and spread over the land through time."

To me, this isn't necessarily about language "connecting" us to the earth, as you put it, Roger, so much as how language is not just what people invent (as though it made them superior, when arguably, we just don't understand or listen to the language of various animals, or even that of the wind or ocean, as it carries both life and toxins to and from us), but what people *inherit*. Language may arise from an interaction between the human and the nonhuman. For instance, let's take a Chinese character for tree—it mimics the shape of a tree. Does that word exist because some smart human saw it and made the character up, or is it a word that is somehow co-created by both the tree and the viewer of the tree? Could the word exist without the tree? And by that, I don't mean that words are referential (though I realize it may sound like that), but more that language is not just something we make up in our heads—it arises from our

experiences in the world, the cultural and geographic contexts we're immersed within. With the onslaught of industrialization, migrations, and colonization, no wonder there's plenty of dissonance and alienation from language, as there also is from the land. I do think there is often (not always) a striving or a desire to reconnect, somehow, perhaps fragmentedly or unconsciously, that often gets channelled into the too-small confines of one's own residence as four walls, when really, that residence can be imagined as much larger, even as large as a planet, potentially. How big is here? How long is now? And how well equipped are different languages to articulate or gesture toward a long now, or a big here?

### 3. Hope

RF: Peter does not have hope. In his statement, he writes that the question that is most pressing is “how to live”—how to carry on in the absence of “utopian possibility.” Rita, on the other hand, refers to a “necessary” hope, and I wonder if this is also what helps poetics “navigate a relationship to action,” as she puts it elsewhere. Christine, also, is “encouraged” by the movement. My own statement/position carries faint traces of hope; in other places, though, I have argued quite strongly against hope (I once wrote that hope “was the second most valuable commodity on the planet, just after a safe place to do business”). That was not in the context of a discussion of ecopoetics, though, and I'm thinking about why my feelings about this subject change in this new context.

But in thinking about more this, I was reminded of an essay in *Orion* by deep green philosopher Derrick Jensen, where he writes:

A WONDERFUL THING happens when you give up on hope, which is that you realize you never needed it in the first place. You realize that giving up on hope didn't kill you. It didn't even make you less effective. In fact it made you more effective, because you ceased relying on someone or something else to solve your problems—you ceased hoping your problems would somehow get solved through the magical assistance of God, the Great Mother, the Sierra Club, valiant tree-sitters, brave salmon, or even the Earth itself—and you just began doing whatever it takes to solve those problems yourself.

So, my question: does ecologically-informed struggle/writing/thought require hope? Or is hope a symptom of the very system, or worldview, that has brought us to the brink of ecological collapse?

JA: I see hope on one side of a spectrum of emotion and despair on the other, and we wobble between the two; our experiences are rarely fully one or the other. But those aren't the only emotions, hey, there is rage and indignation and joy and all sorts of human response to situations, within and without.

PC: Well, I love the Jensen quote and would try to honour it, and as much as I'm an animal I can count on a reptile optimism of the will to carry me forward. And I would hate to think my dog, say, knew the way I felt and gave her no impression beyond a comparative lack of energy. I own a front for her benefit—for the benefit of the neighbourhood—of someone confidently happy and accompanied on the land, but the mindful primate mind can't always stop clocking over the possibilities and they come up short. I think I always felt this way, but the latest phase of my adulthood was to be made conscious by historical events of the limitless degree of human denial and susceptibility to fear. There is literally no end to it. The powers that be—who as far as I can tell don't see much beyond the next couple of years—are perfectly content to drive us all off of a cliff if they think there's a quarter at the bottom of it. And they have mastered fear in ways we haven't begun to grasp. So perhaps an interim role would be less to fight fear than to re-direct it, bleed it out.

RW: Hmmm, hope may not be necessary, in that, as Derrick Jensen points out, one can continue acting without hope, just because one needs to be and do as one is. It could be likened to proceeding without guarantees, to borrow a phrase from Stuart Hall. The Jensen quote points us toward self-reliance rather than relying on others to solve problems for us. Yes, and at the same time, the problems are too big for us to solve alone, so we continue to talk and meet and learn and maybe even organize, in whatever small ways we can. What's the alternative? Maybe stubbornness is more relevant to my concerns than hope.

Cracks in the pavement may just get paved over again. But weeds will keep growing, irrepressibly. Is that hope? I'm not sure.

Perhaps continuing to gesture to what matters, even if we don't know how to get there,

is more important than having hope or not having hope. But I do know that for the time being, hope helps me (a bit) to keep doing that. I don't think there is only one path; in fact, I think many paths are needed, with or without hope.

The need to distinguish between false hope and hope grounded in one's actual situations is what's given rise to books like Heather Rogers' *Green Gone Wrong* (which I've started but haven't yet finished reading). I'm not into false hope, but I am into looking for where the various cracks might widen, strategically.

MB: Hope is in the ecosystems. I am very hopeful in nature's (Earth Mother's) resiliency; however, for humankind it is a temporal question. The spatial stories are playing out every day: melting arctic/Antarctic ice, drying aquifers, BP oil spill, etc. How much time, how much relevancy does humankind have within the current social, economic and environmental models?

I am very hopeful and thus dedicate a good chunk of my life to the topic of water and traditional ecological knowledge, etc. I believe that future generations will not have our luxury of time to think things carefully through. So, I offer options and theories, as well as some entertainment, as foundational thought for future generations who will be faced with the urgency of making shifts in humankind's epistemological, social, environmental, and economic systems.

JA: I'm inclined to share that view that hope is demonstrable, observable, a fact of life, one of the givens—and that resilience is a fact of life, a quality we can nourish and strengthen in ourselves and in others.

I am not sure about distinguishing between hope and false hope. What inspires hope is very random, as Michael discussed in relation to the making of art. What is true or false is I guess about how each one assesses probabilities at any given time. How can we understand the possibilities of a vision, until the ground has been built up beneath it, and it has been fully realized?

I guess false hope could be grounded in wrong-headedness, motivated by intentional deception (this path will not lead to that outcome) or by a world-view that has few agreeing parties, but a voice that shares a worldview that is different, uncommon so far, is not of necessity false, is it?

Michael, I don't think that your ideas' audiences are a few generations down the road; the possibility for every land-centric perspective to shift into a water-centric perspective mode is right under our hands, sitting right beside us at every moment, because it is a shift in ways of seeing, not a landbridge that needs to be built by hand.

MB: Poignant, Joanne—from fear arises hope. Your spectrum description is apt, as the duality forced by categorizing or classifying obscures the nuances of the situation. Where are we on the spectrum anchored on one side by sleeping despair, and on the other by the hummingbird of hope? Hope requires fear.

RW: Thanks for the helpful comments, Joanne. I should clarify that when I mention "false hope," I'm thinking of the idea that someone else (more powerful, like Obama or James Cameron) will solve our problems for us. They most likely won't. I'm also thinking about how such an idea can lead to complacency, irresponsibility, distraction, etc. Sorry if I wasn't clear about that. And in the context of Heather Rogers (whose book is subtitled "How Our Economy is Undermining the Environmental Revolution"), making this tentative re-assessment of hope's sources would mean realizing that recycling, using energy-efficient light bulbs or whatever small green things we do are fine but not enough. We won't be able to consume our way out of this mess/crisis.

I wasn't thinking about voices who share "a worldview that is different, uncommon so far," for that is where I do find hope sometimes, actually. Small scale, widely dispersed.

And I appreciate Michael's points about the temporal—I don't know how much time future generations will have (or not), but I do know that the economic model this society is held hostage to is way too short-sighted when it values a ten-year mine (with temporary jobs) over thousands of years of pollution that might never get "remediated." And people's attention spans seem to be getting shorter and things getting faster, when more thinking through the long now is urgently needed. Can poetry intervene in that? I once wrote "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow takes me back hundreds of years"—could it take us forward at the same time?

## INDRA SINGH / from **Tactical Findings: Riparian Soil Hiding Places**

### **Travel Corridor**

Gaia's hello to another random walker fills the leafy autumn air. He calls back, then disappears from her possible scene. Later, he reappears further ahead of her, and with a smile he is off.

Everywhere Gaia moves habitats emerge in our field of views, so we study them. Our laboratory drifts through the corridor opening where species will likely move over time.

Species shade corridors to provide documented habitats. Corridors flow but that outright tool during disturbance purchases corridors and blocks habitats. A popular animal leaves, too clear, animals clear.

shade for upland animal species habitats  
the woody unfragmented animals  
clearcut cases in clearcut corridors conserve used species  
shade woody promotes habitat organisms

the grasshoppers clicker upon approach  
troutwater moss is mine  
sounds appear distant by the meter until the hollering canyon is faced

adjacent species promote flight

DERRICK S. DENHOLM / from *Dead Salmon Dialectics*

where  
are energies found  
for acts insipid to sweet  
depending on site conditions  
personal taste  
access to wireless  
connections scattered  
over organic substrates  
in coniferous rainforests  
resonant with raven song:

croaks

clicks

gronks pipops

doyyungs

hreev-linns

blårrttuus

wob-lumms

tlöömfs

klapooks

oouckle-frumps

pliting-flinoos

skrraaaaa



dead salmon  
decomposing  
in the Kitsault  
in the Exchamsiks  
the Gingeitl  
the Kinskuch  
the Zymagotitz  
the Iknouk

rivers where  
across virtual landscapes  
stamping variable graph paper  
emboss upon non-negotiable zones  
breeding season timeflow charts  
finite spawning windows  
for anadromous returns  
crucial venue riparians  
of third-quarter season  
wildlife habitat feeding patterns  
that cannot accommodate  
shareholder demands  
for third-quarter  
returns?

how can she answer  
accept      go back  
begin      read a gain

## JONATHAN SKINNER / Kalendar, Spring 2011 (Selections)

“Most of us,” Thoreau writes in the introduction to his final manuscript, the phenological “Kalendar,” *Wild Fruits*, “are still related to our native fields as the navigator to undiscovered islands in the sea.” “I fear bodies,” he also wrote, on his trip to Mount Ktaadn, “I tremble to meet them.” In my forty-fourth year—Thoreau’s when he died—I finally made time to keep a phenological journal, i.e. a study of weather patterns and the appearances of plants, trees, flowers, animal species and their interactions. With a bit of release from teaching, and nowhere to be but home, for the month of April, I decided to “notice what I notice,” and to note it down in daily entries. To practice awareness of the changes in bodies in the spaces around my home.

The eye and ear are honed to what’s new—“first appearances”—but also to the changes for any given species, as the springtime blooms. I live in South Central Maine on a ridge above the Abagadasset River, which flows into Merrymeeting Bay, the confluence of two major watersheds, the Kennebec and the Androscoggin Rivers, just before they empty to the ocean. The landscape is secondary forest on the silty clay of an ancient sea, evergreen and hardwood, on the banks of a river with strong tidal effects, even twenty miles inland. Our house sits on bedrock, overlooking a two-acre meadow surrounded by thin woods. Across the road from us more secondary woods grow out of what must have been a very wet pasture. Stone walls run beneath these trees, relics of old clearings.

As editor of the journal *ecopoetics*, I experience the special treatment “nature” gets (in positive as well as negative terms), when I am turned to for “expert” advice. Every time this happens, my heart sinks a bit: I figure *ecopoetics* hasn’t yet done its work, so long as it is perceived as entertaining a special relationship with some “nature” over there. As if “nature” weren’t a matter of everyday relationships, alliances, divisions, agreements, crossings, sympathies, antipathies, understandings and misprisions, common to us all, rather than a collection of “facts,” sheltered from society on the altar of science and experience. Bruno Latour, amongst others, has argued persuasively that the unassailable separateness of “nature” undermines alliances made in the name of “the social,” that political ecology needs to think past this “bicameral” constitution.

At the same time, the evolutionary sublime, with its “world of gliding monsters”—of blue whales singing just a few miles off the Verrazano Narrows—is compelling for the transcendent ethics it implies, for the meaning of “care” in mutually constituted circumferences of indifference. (As Derek Jensen puts it, the Coho salmon don’t give a damn about our ecopoetry; they just want the pumps removed from their rivers.) It is as much for the “blind spots” in my relations as for the points of contact, then, that I pay attention. I am with Lorine Niedecker when she affirms that “when it comes to birds, animals and plants, I’d like the facts because the facts are wonderful in themselves.” Because our attention so insistently inheres in the world we have constructed, we do need a name for what is “out there”—if only as a holding tactic while the new alliances of bodies and things take shape beyond inside/outside. People are moved to great acts of political courage, to heights of joy and depths of despair, by their conviction regarding the “state of nature.” And yet, when one pays attention—with even just a loose approximation of the sustained, daily attention given one’s job, one’s beloved, one’s children—how few “facts,” in the end, appear certain.

In typing up these notes logged by hand in a pocket-sized notebook, I am not impressed with any mastery of the emergent life of the springtime, with any clear-eyed sense of my proximate relations. (If anything, these journals prove how little I know about my surroundings.) There are far more clouds and birds than leafing and flowering trees, and far more trees than grasses and shrubs—is my head so up in the air? The experiment lasted just over a month, beginning just after the first snow melt and falling off when the amount and intensity of events exceeded my ability to keep track (there was also a kitchen garden to get started). My reliance on an online “almanac” of temperature, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction, with its neat daily graphs, lends a false baseline of objectivity to my observations. And yet, if there is poetry in these notes (big if), its prosody lies, I feel, in such interlocking, overlapping patterns. Stripped of the complexity of microclimactic and local variations, the brute pressure of weather asserts itself, an indifferent music.

Minimalism, conceptualism, (n)oulipian procedures . . . so many prosodies for excavating and/or amplifying the various consistencies of our sound systems. Our modernist epics are made up of historical documents, but their methodology is not that of history. “By which art, Ion, do you know that horses are well

managed,” Socrates wonders. “Is it because you are a horseman, or because you play the lyre?” Similar questions might be asked of the “thinkership” of today’s conceptual poetries: if they are not about the contents of their reframings, what is it such poetries help us think about?

The weather offers an endlessly renewable occasion for poetic discovery, invention, documentation, detournement, and a site for critique—witness Lisa Robertson’s and Kenneth Goldsmith’s eponymous volumes, or poet Brendan Lorber’s Acculorber video pieces. When I began this experiment, I had just come off an intensive, month-long editing job, compiling an assemblage of poets’ responses to Gulf of Mexico BP oil drilling catastrophe—responses that were either staged civic interventions in political space or reflections on such engagement. Turning to the weather, to chart the annual explosion of spring in the temperate climes, seemed like a deepening and extension of that work, not a flight pattern. Many of the migrating species whose appearances I might log would be dealing with a crucial staging habitat, the Gulf Coast wetlands whose parameters the catastrophe has altered in ways we do not understand. In the aftermath of the Macondo well blowout, I recall scientists lamenting how little baseline data we have of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystems, from which to measure damage. How, in the catastrophe that awaits, can we know what is lost, without knowing what we had?

#### **4.3.11**

Sunny. Mid 40s, reaching to 50° F in the late afternoon. Westerly wind 10 MPH with gusts to 25 in the afternoon. In the mouth of the Abbagadassett: common merganser, ring-necked duck, teal, lots of geese. Sheltering in the lea of Center Point: ring-necked ducks, hooded merganser, immature bald eagle. Peepers not peeping yet. Pressure steadily rising.

#### **4.4.11**

Uniform gray. Mid 30s, reaching to 43° F at noon, then cooling—freezing rain. Pressure dropping. Wind shifting S to E, gusting to 10 MPH.

#### 4.5.11

Temps rose and fell symmetrically, 37–47–37° F, pressure dropped and rose. Gray—in the clouds warmer, rain. “Stay inside and don’t look at it” weather. Faint wind shifting E to N. Woodpecker—pileated?—drumming in the woods by the barn. To bed 3 AM—stars out.

#### 4.7.11

Sunny, impeccably clear. Rising from 23° near dawn to 48° F early afternoon. Pressure rising, falling, then rising. Fifteen robins on worm patrol on the morning lawn. Nearly windless, with 10 MPH gusts in early afternoon W to S. Snow melting off—though not in shade or woods. Branch ends turning maroon. Woodcocks peenting (same two). I approached near enough to hear a kind of gulping (like grouse drumming sound) the bird makes, before issuing a “peent.” Sunrise 6:10 AM, sunset 7:12 PM.

American woodcock folk names: timberdoodle, bog sucker, night partridge, brush snipe, hokumpoke, becasse.

Cryptic plumage.

#### 4.11.11

Rain, creeping mists, stratus and nimbostratus. Late morning thunderstorms. Chipping sparrow sheltering at feeder. 45° at dawn to 55° at 5 PM, then dipping and leveling 51–53° F. Rain ends late afternoon. Spring peepers started. And wood frogs: an amphibian ruckus, at the corner of Dinsmore Cross and Carding Machine Road. Pressure dropping steadily, light S wind, some gusts at dawn and at midday.

#### 4.12.11

Hazy sunny. Not quite warm enough to eat outside. Ground showing some green. 55° at noon, rising to 60° F late afternoon. Pressure rising steeply, a cool NW breeze (10 MPH) in the morning till about 3 PM. Stepped outside this morning

to cowbird calls, juncos & sparrow at the feeder, phoebe calling. Jonquils bloom. Isabelle: “look at the crimson branch tips!” After sunset woodcock flight (but no peenting?) in backyard. Pileated flaps through, tailed by crows. Porcupine making noise. Moon waxing gibbous (63%). Woodcock on the ground by the barn peenting in the moonlight (around 10 PM).

#### **4.18.11**

“Partly cloudy.” 48° at midnight dipping to 43° at dawn rising again to 48° F by 1 PM. Pressure rising steadily from 29.7 to 29.9 inHg (inches of Mercury) starting at 4 AM. SW wind steadily decreasing. More stratocumulus. Cooler feeling than expected. Sparrows singing in the early morning. Green buds at the ends of the lilac branches. 53° by late afternoon, dropping to 45° F after sunset. Pressure leveling at 30 inHg. Porcupine in the headlights.

#### **4.24.11**

Easter Sunday. Sunny. Temps 42° F all night, steadily climbing after 8 AM. 53.2° F at 9:30 AM. American tree sparrow at feeder. A walk to the Brown Creeper Trail (our name for old logging path through woods down to river). That song—purple finch?—that is so common yet the singer hard to spot. Chipping sparrows, tufted titmice “tear tear tear tear.” Yellow-rumped warblers singing (not seen). Two molting bald eagles—one sitting on a sandbar in the river. A northern raven sails over fast and high. Much more bird activity near the paved road, in yards. White-throated sparrows singing for the first time this year. Red-winged blackbird “tears” and “cheers.” Cries of children hunting for Easter eggs. Peepers and frogs. A father named Steve and his boy Jordan. Jordan, peering through my bins: “I’m looking for a prayer from God.” A red-spotted salamander in the road: tensed up muscle under its sheaf of skin—I move it out of the way of an oncoming Jeep. Jordan thanks me for noticing it. Hairy woodpeckers. A black-capped chickadee filching something from the top of a snapped-off birch, climbing down inside it. Lightest haze of green showing at bare branch ends. Sky hazing over with white cirrostratus, with silver-topped, blue-bellied stratocumulus developing. Pressure level, calm, 66° F at 12:45. A warm spring day.

#### 4.25.11

Half-moon rising at 2 AM. American toads trilling (night), owls hunting in woods (barred—single-note hunting call I'm not familiar with). Temps rising after 4 AM. 50° F by 8:15, 57° by 10:45 AM, dropping sharply toward 4 PM, back to 47° F by 5:45. S wind to 5 MPH in the early to mid afternoon. Pressure even. Warm, bright under altostratus. Some undulatus verging on “mamma” (a hurled underbelly in the late morning). Yellow-rumps and northern parula in the neighbor's (Mike's) trees. Skies darkening toward late afternoon. Light, “female” rain. Warm. 45° F all night. Trilling toads. First night of spring (it feels).

#### 4.26.11

Thunderstorms toward dawn (sharp pressure drop at 6 AM). Crackling rolling thunder & lightning alternating dry & light, steady rain all day. Window strike from brown-headed cowbird—stunned, hung out on lilac branch bush for a couple of hours. Sparrows at feeder, etc. Seemed like good bird fall-out but I wasn't able to investigate. A stray dog—white, wolfish-looking creature—with a trailing harness, in the middle of the White Road. Ran off, tail between legs, when I tried to approach. Robins caroling in woods. Temps even most the day, mid to high ‘forties—rising to 54° F in early afternoon, then dropping again by 4. Pressure low, steady after 7 AM. Fitful E/SE winds, 2–7 MPH. American toads trilling strong after midnight, dominating peepers.

#### 4.27.11

Gray, altostratus. Temps rising steadily after dawn: 60° F by 2 PM, then falling. Pressure steady. SE wind increasing. Finches & sparrows at feeder (including white-throated). Broadwing hawks circling & calling high over our lunch. Sun almost breaking through. Almost feels hot. Big trees by the driveway leafing out—everything else still in bud phase. Black ants infesting the house.

#### 4.28.11

Awoken by a bird song I had never heard. A lazy, rising and falling song—five notes? Came near the house as I was still dreaming. I went out in my slippers but it was beyond the apple tree. Light flat and gray—always about to clear, about to rain weather. Light fog, in a cloud weather. Stratus, nimbostratus. Warm, 60° F at 7 AM rising to 64 around noon then dipping only slightly, 64 again at 5 PM, dropping to about 59° by 10 PM. Humidity 87–95%. Pressure dropping steadily until about 5 PM. S gusts to 28 MPH starting at midday. Tornado destruction in South yesterday: Georgia Tennessee Alabama. Mile wide F5 tornado crossed Alabama—300+ dead. Tornado watch up the coast, but not here.

Generally intense spring weather. Tornado last week in St. Louis, flood warnings in NY, torrential rains, wind—the wind certainly whipping the trees around here, this afternoon. But no tornado watch.

Morning calm: unidentified rising and falling song, chipping sparrows, some high pitched wiry song (not b & w), turkey hen walks right up to the feeder. Squirrels and chipmunks very alert, engaged. Black-throated green warbler. A wren-like sound, reminding me of deserts.

Thunderstorm in the afternoon. Evening: toads trilling to peepers. Porcupine quills in Isabelle's tire. Frogs crossing the road in headlights.

#### 5.1.11

Cooler: 38° F toward dawn. Sunny—white cloud bank gone. Small, puffy alto cumuli. Cool N breeze to 6–7 MPH. Pressure rising, falling after 10 AM, steady. Temp rising to 57° F by 1 PM. Hummingbird at feeder. Lilac bush leafing. Meadow coming up in tufts of green. Lawn getting long. Dug garden bed.

#### 5.2.11

Sunny, not a cloud in sky. A cool foundation to the air, but warming quickly in sun. Swallow burble, swallow shadows. Doves cooing. Brown squirrel on tree. Now it's the catbirds' chorus. Phases. Why do the plain & chipping songs come

first? 2 roosters calling, to N & S. Dandelions up. Rhododendron beginning to bud. Trees all leafed this time last year, but also a late frost?

Cooling, light flattens, some cirrus 11 AM. 11:30 AM two eagles creaking and gyring high over the neighborhood—joined by what look like two hawks & another, female or immature eagle. The latter engages one of the eagles in a long, straight synchronized double flight. 12:12: broadwing peeps and flies by low barely above the rooftop. Sound of bees buzzing in the maple buds. “Mare’s tail clouds.” Sky gradually whitens toward evening. Temp rises sharply 33° to 60° F by noon. Drops from 62° to 49° F by 9 PM, pressure steady. S wind 5–10 MPH mid-morning to late afternoon.

### 5.3.11

Graying. Temps rise 50° to 60° F by late morning then drop again—back to 50° by 4 PM, to 45° F by midnight. Pressure steady, dropping toward midnight. E/S wind 5–10 MPH. Sun almost emerges mid-afternoon but not quite. Not tempted to walk outside.

### 5.6.11

Sunny, “springy” day. Steady wind from SW 6–14 MPH, gusts to 24 in the afternoon. Strangely hot-cool. Ovenbirds singing. Sparrows hitting their syncopated stridency—the song you’ll hear all summer. Finches jolly too. Localized cirrostratus, some cirrus, possibly some cirrocumulus. Almost lenticular, Isabelle says. A bunch of ducks at Green Point I didn’t i.d. (we were walking too fast), maybe a thrasher. Streaked sparrows at feeder, hummingbird on branch by nectar (in the shadows their face is black). N. harrier flies over (uncharacteristically) with something in its talons (small bird?) Doves below feeder. Hummingbird wars.

Black flies out. Less dandelions this year, it seems. Grass ready for cutting and just a few dandelions. Chickadees counter singing. Hummingbird checks gorget in feeder reflection. Temps rising from 41° to 63° F mid afternoon, but never really felt that warm. Titmice at tube feeder, hammering open sunflower

seeds. Pressure steady after 9. Wind shifting south. A pale custard light toward sunset.

### **5.10.11**

Light rain, cottony white no-sky. Temps 48° F near dawn rising only to 52° or 53° by 10 AM, dipping again after 11 AM, steadying at 50° F. Oceanic weather? N wind 8–12 MPH, w/ gusts 24 MPH, dying down after 1 PM. Dandelions closed up. Rain does die off at times, even gets warmish when the cloud cover brightens. Very close look at a black-throated green warbler in the front-yard maple, moving slowly but steadily through the three dimensions of the tree, sallying, snapping up a large winged insect in its short bill. The different calls of the near & far black-throated greens. Pressure steadily rising, peepers still going, even in wind & rain. They seem especially sensitive to my presence—clamming up when I walk onto the back deck (yet they are not close to the house).

### **5.11.11**

Robins going like mad toward dawn. Partly sunny, windy. Dandelions out in force. Lawn definitely needs mowing. Cool, though warm in sun, when it's out. Temps steady around 46° F all night, rising to 63° by 1 PM, dipping, rising again to 64° then dropping off after 4 PM (60–7° F at 5:30 PM). Pressure uneven but steady overall. N wind gusting 18–30 MPH mid to late afternoon. Clouds: gauzy bits of torn strato and alto cumuli moving in different directions. The main strata northeasterly but the very thin (gauzy) lower levels seeming to move in the opposite direction—SW to NE cloud layer starts to build again, humid & blue-looking, toward evening. Wanted to sit outside to write this but the bugs drove me in. Generally a stormy, blustery-feeling day, with no precipitation. Birch looks almost fully leafed out. Average temps for this date (since 1995): 38–60° F

## HARRIET TARLO / Pears: a short sequence of poems after H.D.

1.

found words  
shunting sound  
learning to  
long and longer

over  
leaf  
hesitate  
ivy

space list  
dust under  
leave it  
over-creepage

2.

stream is trampled  
heel . . . cut deep  
show dark purple  
dead leaf-spine  
root snapped  
clutched larch  
bent back . . . clear  
no trace

### 3.

these fallen hazel-nuts

scabbed apples, small pears

stripped lately of their green sheaths

leeks sweet folded greens

grapes, red-purple

dark to light, light to dark

their berries

hidden purples of beet

pomegranates already broken  
and shrunken figs

potatoes, white stone  
bent in autumn earth

and quinces untouched

### 4.

Slightly knobbly and gnarled apples, pears, pineapples, straight bananas and grapes went into the smoothies. Oddly sized potatoes, split carrots, celery millimetres off plumb straightness, tomatoes with the odd greenish splotch, went into the curry—which came with a slice of fresh bread, from a baker who supplies a sandwich chain, and has to throw away the irregularly sized slices at the ends of every loaf.

“Wonky apples, step this way!” a volunteer bellowed.





GERMAINE KOH & GILLIAN JEROME / map sense

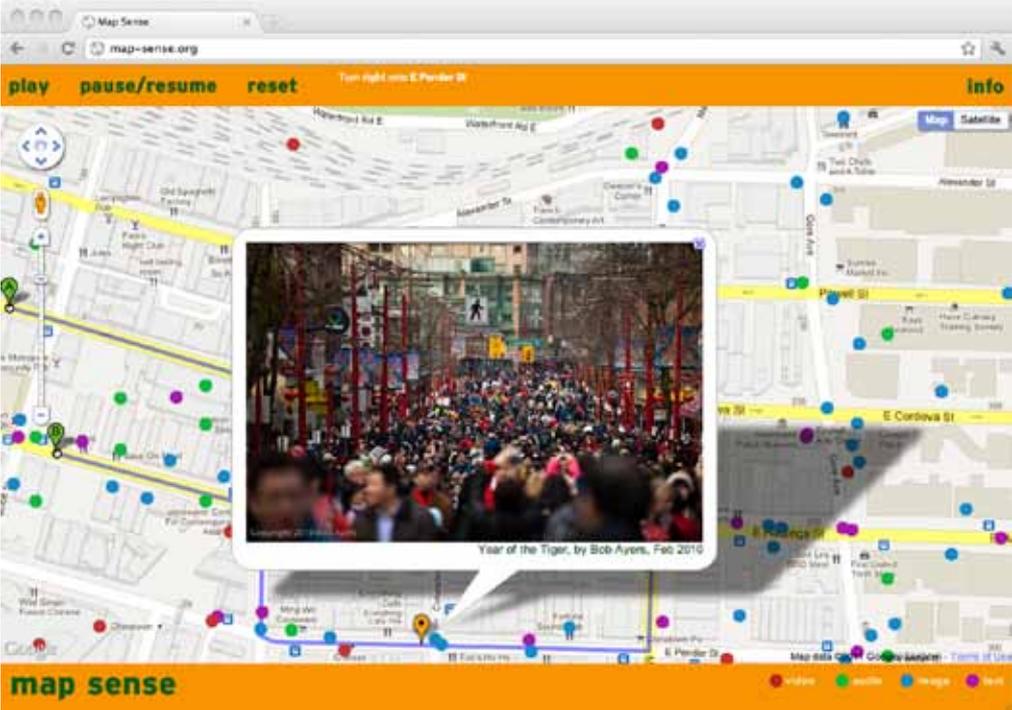


photo: Bob Ayers

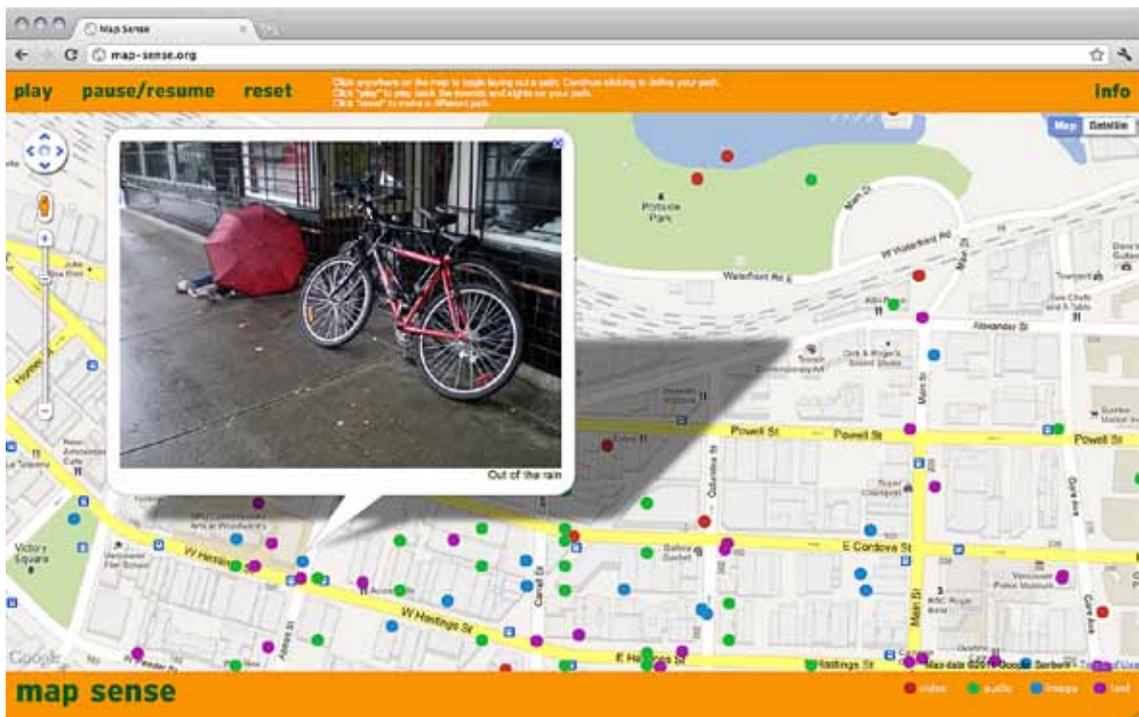


photo: Aerlyn Weissman

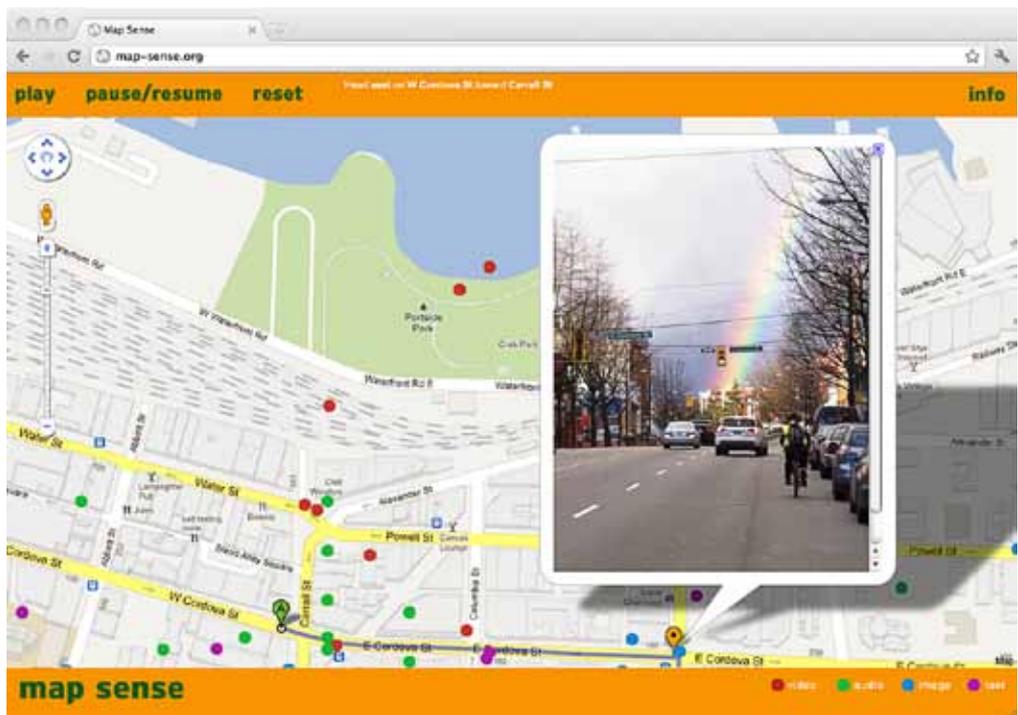


photo: Karen Geary

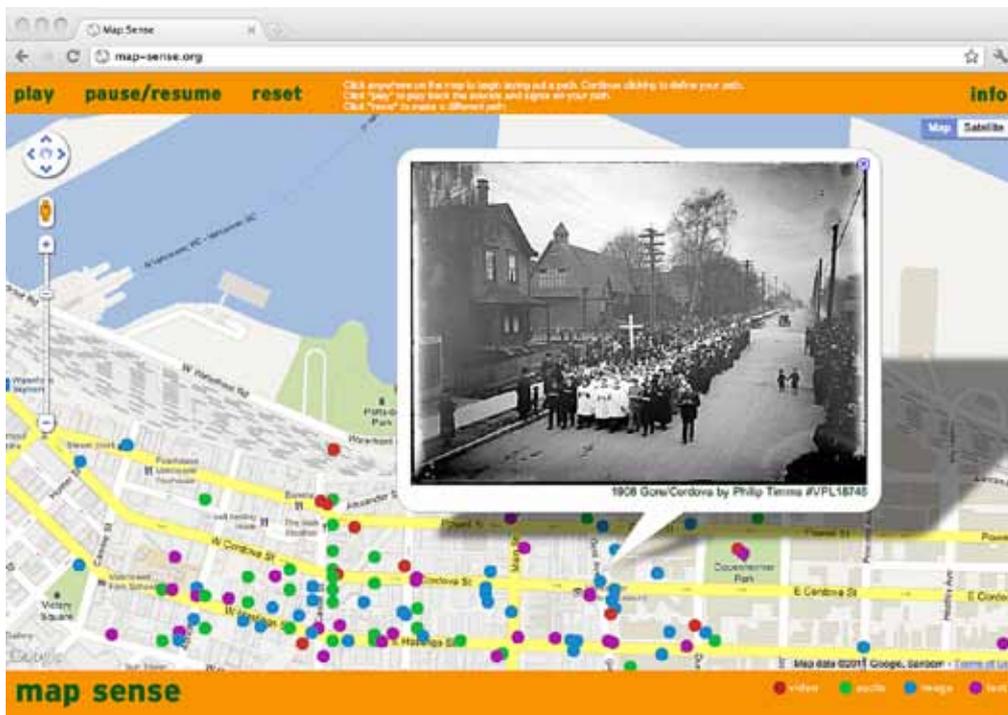


photo: Philip Timms, Vancouver Public Library #VPL18746

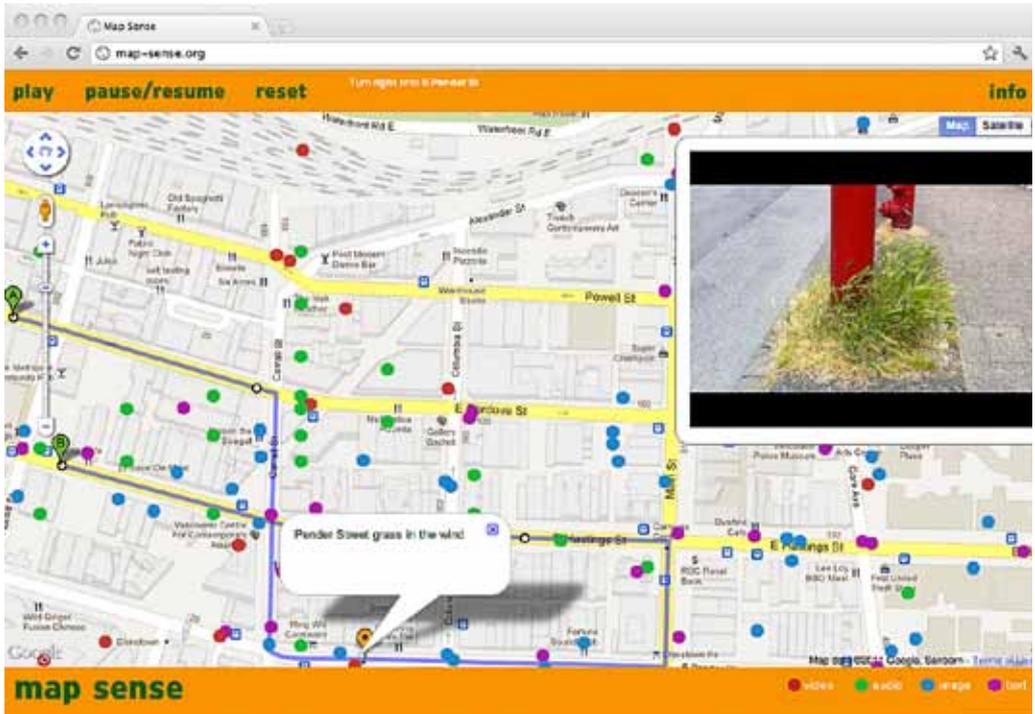


photo: Germaine Koh

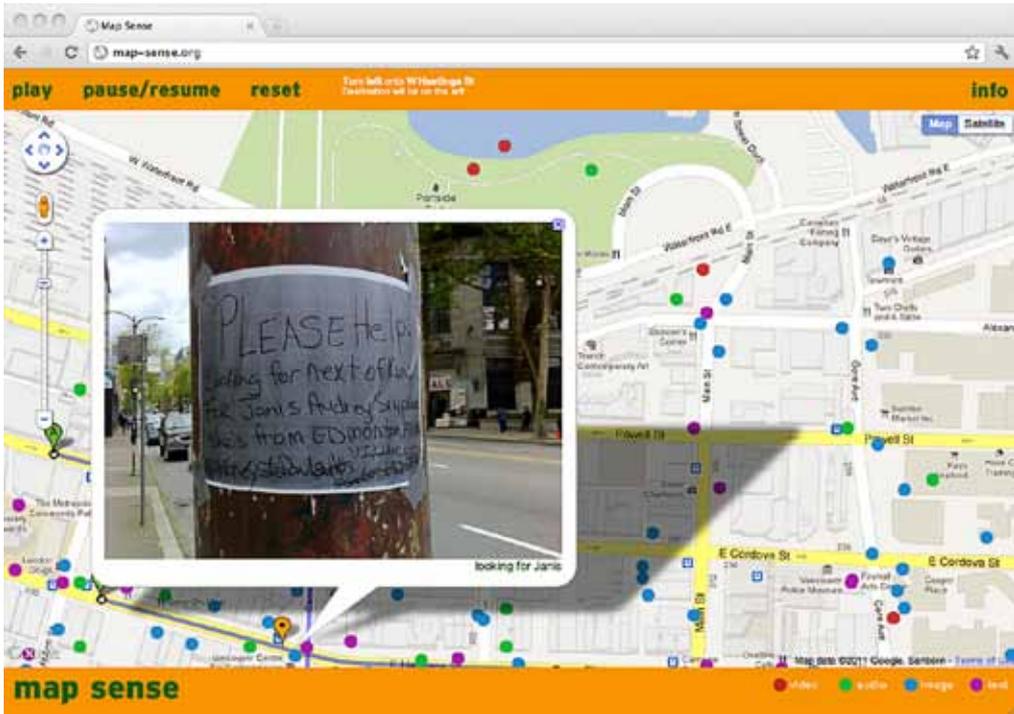


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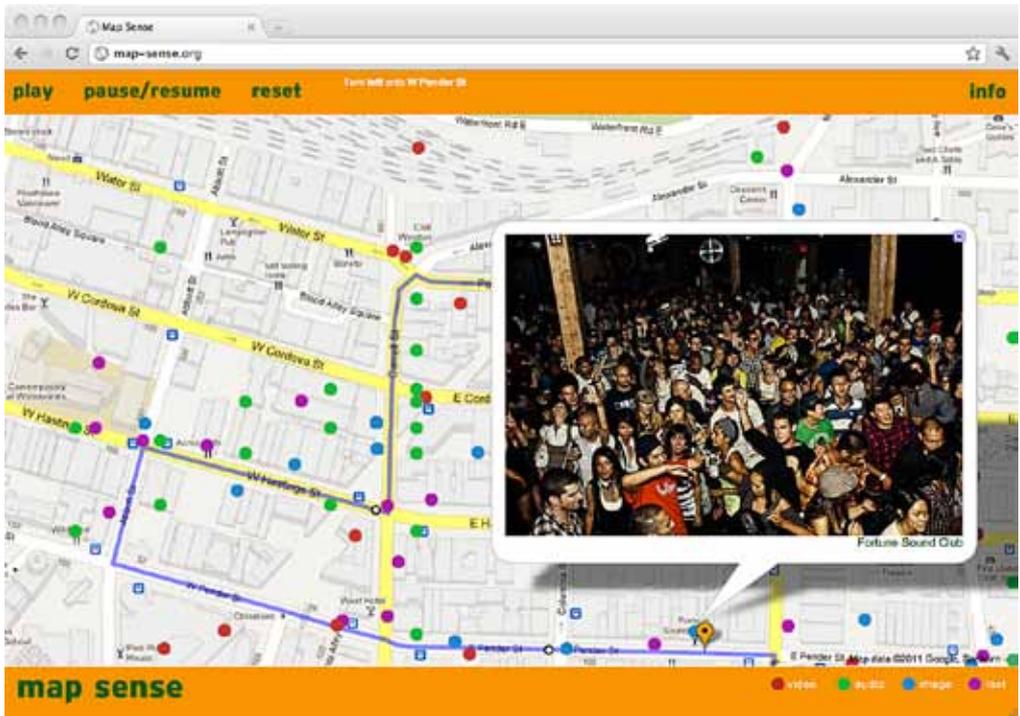


photo: www.booooooom.com

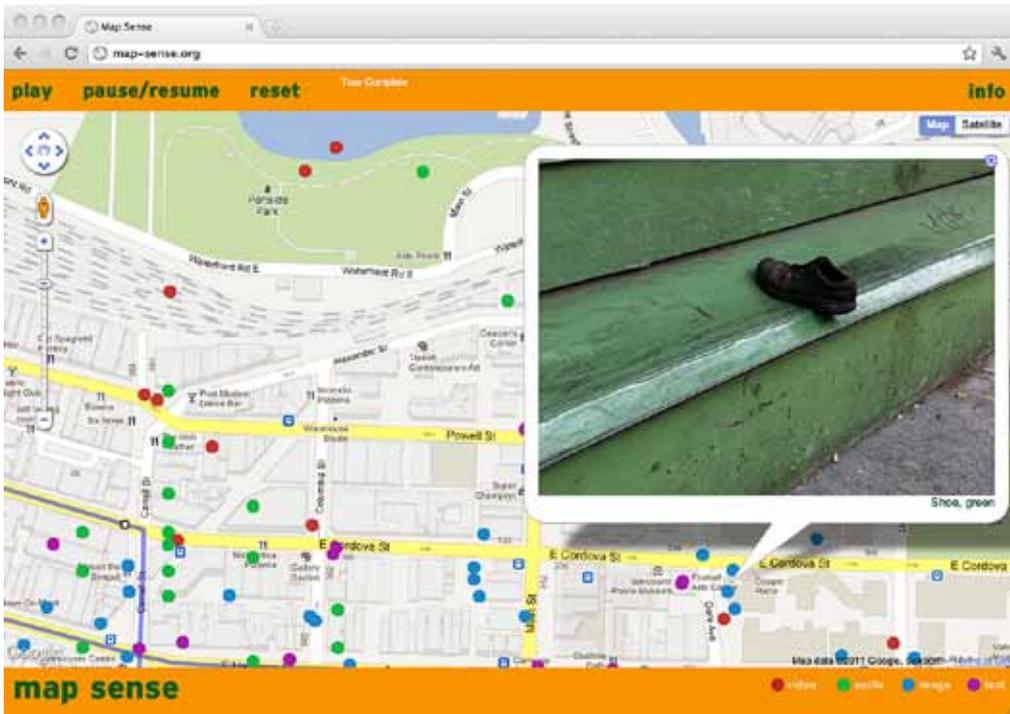


photo: Germaine Koh

**LEANNE COUGHLIN & JASON STARNES / *map sense* and the  
Urban Environment: A Conversation with GERMAINE KOH  
and GILLIAN JEROME**

LEANNE COUGHLIN & JASON STARNES: *map sense* ([www.map-sense.com](http://www.map-sense.com)) is an interactive field map created for the cross-disciplinary workshop and exhibition Co-Lab, co-presented by Centre A and Vancouver New Music. The area mapped is Vancouver's Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside, an urban community of interest in both of your recent work. Can you give a sense of the project and how it serves as an intersection of your practices?

GERMAINE KOH: Both of us have a standing interest in oral history and urban geography (cf. Gillian's and Brad Cran's *Hope in Shadows* book, and many of Germaine's projects such as *Call, Watch* or *Homemaking* that intervene in urban space and are primarily disseminated through storytelling). We have both also realized projects working in the Downtown Eastside community (*Hope in Shadows* and Germaine's installation *Overflow* at Centre A). When the opportunity arose to make a sound-based work for Centre A, we hatched *map sense* as a project that would expand/extend our usual media (words for Gillian and visual arts for Germaine) into other senses.

GILLIAN JEROME: Germaine's work as a conceptual artist astonishes me and so when she approached me to talk about a community-based collaboration, I felt a mad rush at the prospect of changing my game up. I had been in a funk about my own work as a poet and the limitations of a compositional practice based entirely in language; we landed quite nicely on the concept of a community-generated mapping site. I'd worked on an oral history project in the Downtown Eastside (*Hope in Shadows*, 2008) with my partner Brad Cran in which we collected peoples' stories about their lives, a project very much inspired by Itter and Marlatt's *Opening Doors*, an oral history of Strathcona. Oral history is my preferred means of encountering a community's history because the genre allows for an encounter with the voices of ordinary people—people who can tell stories about what it was like to be alive at a

particular time; in telling their stories, they make history more intimate and democratic, more akin to the old Aristotelian notion of the polis in which the heard human voice is a measure of a healthy democracy. We're so physically disconnected from each other in city life because of the pressures that late capitalism brings to our lived experience. This is especially acute in Vancouver where most people are caught up in working non-stop to pay off mortgages or rents and struggling with the seemingly interminable development of property and wealth at great social and spiritual expense, especially to those who are poor. People are hungry for a sense of belonging, I think, *because* we actually have less physical contact with each other in day-to-day conversation; we want to hear each other's stories. And so I was really drawn to the possibilities of making a map with a bunch of people—strangers and neighbours—in a community and exploring the possibilities of mapping with sound and images.

LC & JS: The title—*map sense*—is productively ambiguous: does it refer to a mode of perception? Is it more closely related to “common sense” or “making sense”?

GK: My take on it was that it suggested the insertion of additional senses into mapping, but as you realize, it's meant to be suggestive.

GJ: The title refers to the multi-sensory capacities of the map: the visual, audio and textual. I suppose the interactive, multi-dimensional aspects of the map invite people to explore the map and make sense of the neighbourhood by means of multifarious kinds of representations of place. A traditional map doesn't allow for as many points of access.

LC & JS: Acoustic ecology investigates ways we are affected by sound in the urban environment and the social impact of the aural terrain. While conventional cartography privileges the visual, in *map sense* sound is used to represent unseen elements: a dimension normally absent from maps. What does the aural/oral engagement of sound in *map sense* add to the visual form?

GK: I think one gets a distinct sort of information from sound, especially when isolated from visuals. The isolation of a particular sense brings with it a change of attention.

GJ: We started working with people's contributions and it became immediately clear to me that sound was the most sensual element: I was in awe of people's recordings whether it was running water or a garbage truck making its way through an alley. Listening is a powerful physical experience. How often do we rush around in our city and neglect to hear what's going on because of the noise in our heads? The audio material was lyrical for me in that it suspended particular moments in space and time.

LC & JS: The online multimedia map registers space from both aerial and personal perspectives. Is the combination of prose, poetry, sound, and image able to capture something particular to the space of the Downtown Eastside? How might the project also explore the possible representation of absence, especially in the context of the Missing Women's Inquiry and the problems of political invisibility for housed and unhoused residents of the area?

GJ: I think a multi-genre/multi-sensory commingling of inputs will always be a more comprehensive way to encounter a subject, but I think it's particularly helpful in a neighbourhood like the Downtown Eastside. Language is a system of power and so barriers to its expression in a person can create a tremendous sense of powerlessness, frustration, shame, and fear. So it behooves any artist to think about modes of expression for marginalized people and how to best involve people who may not be able to write or read, for example. Part of my work in *map sense* included leading a writing workshop with women at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. Their poems and stories are very honest accounts of their lives, and in some cases they write about struggles with housing and poverty. We also excerpted some of the personal stories from *Hope In Shadows* in which people talk about struggles with poverty, homelessness, and mental illness.

GK: I think that one of the things a project like this does is make one realize all the gaps that exist in any representation of a place, even (or maybe especially) purportedly authoritative ones like maps. By allowing users to add detail to a generic map and depict the environment through different media, it becomes obvious that varied points of view and approach will cause an area to be depicted quite differently. The Downtown Eastside is similar to any other

place on Earth in that respect, though it is also a good example of a place that is viewed quite differently by different communities.

LC & JS: *map sense* depends on public contributions to and interactions with the database. What was your strategy in encouraging the community to represent itself to itself? What did this facilitation of community engagement add to the project?

GK: Part of our intent was to introduce people to some existing tools (blogging, image and video publishing, sharing sounds) that might seem daunting. There are more and more tools and services out there that have to potential to give a voice to people who don't have particular technical knowledge, and this project brings together a few of those. There is still a perceived technological barrier, and showing people how to contribute to the map was partly an attempt to demystify those tools. As well, on the content front, we assumed from the beginning that our generating the content for the map would not provide a good sample of voices and viewpoints on the neighbourhood.

GJ: When Germaine and I gave a talk about our project at Centre A gallery, we spoke about the practice of crowdsourcing in which you ask a bunch of people to solve a problem and/or contribute to a project. We hosted a workshop at Centre A and taught people how to use the equipment necessary to gather material: Germaine worked with the video and audio processes and I taught a street text poetry workshop based on the compositional processes of street photographers. These interactions with groups of people reminded me of the requirement to listen attentively to the discord of many voices. We needed a public space like the gallery and the streets surrounding it. We needed the public scrutiny that comes with inviting so many different kinds of people to participate in making and interacting with the map. The entire project was started and sustained by public participation. This kind of community building was the very premise of the project.

## TIM TERHAAR / Rokoko

### SEC. 6601. SHORT TITLE.

This poem may be cited as “Source Reduction Act of 2011.”

### SEC. 6602. FINDINGS AND POLICY.

(1) Opportunities for source reduction are often not realized because it is a lovely day, and the sky is so blue that I am filled with a sense of well-being. And then I am filled with a new and deep sense of disappointment.

(2) My whole body seems to be filled with a sense of freedom and joy, and I splash about wildly in the sea. I can hear the cry of a goldfish vendor from a line on the other side of paragraph (3).<sup>1</sup>

(4) Source reduction is fundamentally different and more desirable than waste management and pollution control. To tell the truth, I have a fastidious mind. That is why I am always worrying.

(5) Our disease is incurable, anyway. There is nothing to be gained by worrying.

(6) As a first step in preventing pollution through source reduction, the Environmental Protection Agency must establish a source reduction program. It is, for some strange reason, considered appropriate to congratulate people on such occasions as that.

### SEC. 6603. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this poem—

(1) The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Environmental<sup>2</sup> Protection Agency.

(2) The term “source reduction” means any practice which—

(i) generates a vague mark, so vague that the Administrator

<sup>1</sup> So in law. Section 6602 was enacted without a paragraph (3).

<sup>2</sup> So in law. Should probably be “Environmental.”

himself does not know its meaning and pronounces it a kind of animal; and

(ii) reduces the hazards to public health and the environment to only two letters, one simple and one quite ornate. These shoud<sup>3</sup> be, from the point of view of the public, nonentities.

(3) The term “source reduction” includes any practice which negates physical, chemical, or biological characteristics. There is nothing stranger than the human body. It is as weird as a creature that walks with its feet up in the air.

#### **SEC. 6604. EPA ACTIVITIES.**

(a) AUTHORITIES.—The Administrator shall establish in the Agency that all living things bear within themselves the essence of a *then again*. “How in the world . . . ?” Then again, “How in the world . . . ?”

(b) FUNCTIONS.—The Administrator shall develop and implement a strategy to promote source reduction. There is no sense in such a person as himself expressing his thoughts in public. Do you know what it feels like to be tied down by long, green ivy?

(1) reduce sources;

(2) a man who is by nature incapable of not loving, such a one is the Administrator;

(3) but do you know that there is guilt also in loving?

#### **SEC. 6605. GRANTS TO STATES FOR STATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—The Administrator does not have the right to expect anything from the world during flower-viewing season. But now the flowers, which had brightened the scenery with their rich red color, are gone.

(1) Make specific technical assistance available to businesses seeking

<sup>3</sup> So in law. Shoud probably be “should.”

information about source reduction opportunities. The Administrator is part of the world he dislikes. And seeing that he is one of those creatures that inhabit this world, he can hardly hope to be regarded as an exception.

(2) Target assistance to businesses for whom<sup>4</sup> lack of information is an impediment to source reduction. The open fields that were visible to us before are now almost completely hidden by rows of houses. Even now, there are sights that remind us of the quiet countryside. What do you mean by “unnatural violence”?

(3) Provide training in source reduction techniques. His letters are as frothy as sea foam.<sup>5</sup> But I never heard him mention the word “love” again.

(b) EFFECTIVENESS.—The Administrator shall establish appropriate means for measuring the effectiveness of source reduction techniques. The prospect of my slowly crumbling away with the odor of earth clinging to me bothers him very little.

## **SEC. 6606. SOURCE REDUCTION CLEARINGHOUSE.**

(a) AUTHORITY.—The Administrator shall establish a Source Reduction Clearinghouse to compile information. But whatever will be buried there is dead for me. Indeed, the grave lies like some monstrous dreamer, forever separating us. In any case, the Administrator shall use the clearinghouse to—

(1) fondly imagine that, by merely thinking vaguely about a few large problems, he is building up a solid and almost complete framework;

(2) collect and compile relevant material from various sources in order to avoid the trouble of having to present in a systematic manner his own ideas;

(3) enjoy his freedom like a little bird that has flown out of its cage<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> So in law. Probably should not be.

<sup>5</sup> So in law. Probably should be “as foamy as beer froth.”

<sup>6</sup> So in law. Probably should be “his cage.”

into the open air. The sky is so blue that it seems transparent. I return to the firmament with a sense of doom inside me.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—We have little opportunity to talk until we reach the woods, where there are no flowers and no people. Birds can, without becoming bored, forever exchange letters with one another.<sup>7</sup>

## **SEC. 6607. SOURCE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING DATA COLLECTION.**

(a) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each owner or operator of a facility is required to file an annual toxin release form under section 313 of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (“SARA”). The Administrator wants to spare their feelings if he can: “You are going to die anyway. You may as well eat all the delicacies you can.”

(b) ITEMS INCLUDED IN REPORT.—The toxin source reduction and recycling report required under subsection (a) shall set forth each of the following on a poem-by-poem basis for each toxin:

(1) His feeling is that if he must be ill, then he should like to be mortally ill.

(2) I see that higher education has made him adept at empty rationalization.

(3) When writing letters, I am quite sincere. But after writing, my mood changes. I think about my inconsistency and become filled with a sense of dissatisfaction.

(4) Thinking is the production of afflictions.<sup>8</sup> Philosophy writing is “a breath of fresh air” muttered in a burning asbestos factory.

(5) The amount of any toxin released into the milieu which resulted from a castatrophic<sup>9</sup> event, remedial action, or other one-time event, and is not associated with production processes<sup>10</sup> during the reporting year.

<sup>7</sup> So in law. Probably should have been clarified.

<sup>8</sup> So in law. Probably should be “toxins.”

<sup>9</sup> So in law. Probably should be “apocalyptic.”

<sup>10</sup> So in law. Probably should be “pprroocceesseess.”

(c) ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL INFORMATION.—Please remember that you met me after I had become soiled. I think it likely the shadow of a young woman has already begun to pass before your mind’s eye.

#### **SEC. 6608. EPA REPORT.**

(1) The analysis shall include a letter with the cry of a goldfish vendor enclosed. How does one read that?

(2) Identification of pollutants that require priority assistance in print media source reduction.

(3) Recommendations as to incentives needed to encourage investment in research and development of source reduction.

(4) I have some money, of course, but I am by no means rich. If I were, I would build myself a larger house for one thing.

(5) Research and development of priorities for research and development of source reduction research and development.

(6) Though letters are necessary, toxins are not.

(7) The Administrator even said, “That’s going too far!”

(8) And if one were as naturally reflective, intelligent, and as removed from the world as the Administrator, would one inevitably reach the same conclusions?

(9) Perhaps I should not have used the word “intelligent,” for it has a cold and impersonal sound.

(10) I am flesh too. I write that down when it comes to mind<sup>11</sup>

#### **SEC. 6609. SOURCES.**

(1) Natsume Soseki, *Kokoro*, trans. Edwin McClellan (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1957).

(2) “Pollution Prevention Act of 1990,” 42 U.S.C. §13101 et seq. (1990). Retrieved from: <http://epw.senate.gov/PPA90.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> So in law. Probably should be followed by a period.

LARY TIMEWELL / offshore

2:46 p.m., 3/11

Understand as fast as you can. 'Nothing'  
is coming

like an anagram of *no time to think of death*  
much less

the euphemistic window of poetry;

the inverted image trembling on the opposite wall tells you  
local trees are rooted to  
hidden lands

this is a nightmare postcard to a waking  
self

an unforeseen that erases itself & all  
in its path, a dissonance

in a distant window,  
seen through your own bright plasma

the revery was  
an instant long ago had not yet  
happened

■

soil samples, isotopes,  
Fukushima apples, La France pears

*If plutonium is eaten it is easily excreted, but if  
inhaled & stays in the lungs it may cause cancer.*

When the concentration of radio active iodine-131 in reactor #2

rockets from 1,000 to 10 million times “the norm” in a single day it all becomes surreal, incomprehensible.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency added, however, that there was “no health risk, as the radioactive substances will substantially disperse and be diluted by the sea.”

*awabi, sauri, maguro, akamachi, kochi, fugu, sawara, hirame, buri, sumiika, kohada, sayori, hamo, masaba, amabi, shako, sazae, hotate, kazunoko, ikura, uni,*

VERSUS

iodine-131  
cesium-137  
barium-140  
lanthanum-140  
& tellurium-132  
plutonium-238,  
-239,  
-240

everything is under control

fuel rods melt to coordinated joint efforts, while

TEPCO heroes slosh in boots of contaminated water, sleep on chairs, eat grim cookies & juice for breakfast

containment..... is a vessel  
a fire that rode the harbor, even into the night

---

As of 3 p.m. Tues., March 29th, National Police Agency:  
Killed..... 11,082

Missing.....	16,717
Injured.....	2,778
Buildings damaged or destroyed.....	148,710

---

one minute home, a place for cat  
to stretch in the sun; another, a  
school gymnasium on dry ground,  
a sea of surgical masks

& happy for it

### 3:22 p.m., 3/11

Norikichi Ichikawa, 41, & his mother, are pressed by rising water to ceiling of their home, spare inches to breathe; they remain trapped there for two full days.

39 year old Yuko Ono's minivan is lifted two stories to land in a tree; she & son Kento, 8, manage somehow to clamber out, escape to higher ground.

Firefighter Junnosuke Oikawa, 56, is swept 5 kilometers out to sea in the tsunami backwash: "I thought I had died many times."

The boat of fisherman Yoshinori Yamazaki, 62, is brutally capsized; underwater, he seeks for sunlight, the upright orientation, reaching air.

Norie Kanno, 86, is singing *karaoke* at the Riverside Nursing Home in Kesenuma, when a wave lifts her out of her wheelchair & deposits her on a floating wooden table; 50 of her companions die.

Babu, a 12 year old *shi-tsu* dog, senses danger, leads Tami Akanuma, 83, of Miyako, Iwate-ken, up a hill, thus saving her life.

JET teacher, Taylor Anderson, 24, of Chesterton County, Vermont is swept away forever as she cycles home after the initial earthquake that terrified her kids' class in Ishinomaki hits.

Takata Hospital administrator Shigeru Yokozawa, 60, looks out a window to see a 10 meter high wave coming straight at him, runs to save a “lifeline” satellite phone before he is swallowed by the seawater that rises to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

Akira Abe, 57, & her grandson Jun, 16, are trapped under the freezing wreckage of what was once their home in Ishinomaki; they survive 9 days eating dessert-packs of yoghurt, & are rescued.

A woman wakes from a nap in a Shizugawa hospital, Minami- Sanrikucho...

A kindergarten girl rides the bus home from Hiyori Yochien, peaks into her *bento* box-lunch to retrieve a *sembe* cracker she has saved for later...

A boy daydreams of outer space, of flight, staring at a row of Ultraman figures on his bedroom bookshelf...

A mother...

A grandfather...

A girl...

A boy...

A woman...

A...

■

in the crisis shelter

the blankets all smell of Bravas hair tonic;

down but not out in penultimate town,

joy costs less than this misery, this

annoying *factotum* deferral to celebrate

place, people together, people

not so much sleep as *undergo* sleep

& whatever hands intertwine

appear to ripple, to quake less now;

stay awake until the dream ends,  
sleep  
until the world wakes up, eight-fold  
an omelet, add light  
soy  
sauce.

Clipped occasion with plastic tablecloths,  
blue vinyl sheets, Anpanman

towels & Pikachu blankets,  
the adrenalin

of escape dressed in  
the fatigues of survival;

life is tedious, intermittently momentous;  
the language for it is in debris,

but the sound is among us  
still.

■

Looking up at the old inarticulate moon,  
down to the timetables in the mud;

concentrating less on the television  
of what we are

exquisite / incapable /

human

## escape

At Yahiko Shrine the raindrops are opaque, an invisible display. No one is so anthropomorphic as to think Nature is apologizing for the moment past. That is to say, any one of us born. There is this world & there is the cessation of suffering, even under shifting fault-line that obliterates time. A veil of birds passing is once again an abstraction forming on the forehead.

The ghosts were torn from the buildings; the apparatus of moonlight unlocked. There are no words for counting the days. Behind door #3, the hell-wraith of mental & material streams, but here in Niigata my nearest neighbor is the weather. The mountain appears a particle deluge, the rain constructed amorously of retinal seraphs.

My wife & son are safe in Tokyo. CNN is on anabolic steroids; the static the frayed experience raises cilia-hairs on the forearms of hope. Habitué flock to convenience stores reciting nuclear eclogues formed in the precise matrices of chrysanthemums painted on the side of a wall.

Language tastes better with the tang of *wasabi*, the cool of *daikon*. That kid with a diamond-encrusted tricycle is sunlight itself. The ululating somnambulistic of media dissipates like an involuntary communion along the auditory canal. Woolly moon through fog forms fissures on sheets, on ceiling.

■

the unsought for fortune &  
other stray dogs  
approaching snowstorm means  
to know cold  
flower like a pressure gauge  
heart, an effort  
to see in such borrowed

moonlight  
distance rolls out as edges  
glow  
outward from  
epicenter  
between visits to the finite  
world  
maps are coming to their  
senses  
8 inches west  
but  
meaning can never  
go home

## aftermath

plate tectonics & thalamic receptors, the earthquake  
as experienced from the newsroom, 'casters  
in white hard hats... as if...  
again?

end  
over end, in  
a profusion of torque

post-earthquake, kids naturally shift back into whatever pleasure  
they can glean in the present moment, are then sucked back into  
the vortex of terror by the recurring aftershocks

newly-minted humans wrapped in  
cotton haze, 61 babies



The adroit  
the inept  
the mortal:

I'll take the everyday  
any day

### **detritus (or, critical will)**

Futons plump with seawater like monosyllabic stones, broken roof tiles, a Crayon Shin-chan scrapbook, a bundle of *Jump* magazines, a framed Tokyo Tower jigsaw puzzle (intact), shards of *chawan* & *udon* bowls, televisions & Gameboys, half a high school uniform, the entire saturated panoply, a whole straining for partials, the remains of even the possibility of a slow conduit of human happiness. From within the chromatic whorl, take a backward glance at the waking world, the blunt citation of disaster. Emulsions fall from sky in milky blotters of sleep. Some of my limbs are already in the afterlife, intervals of memory stolen by a phantom adversary called *shoganai*. Mr. Itoh re-opens his *yaki-tori* shop, Ms. Nakamura her unlikely flamenco school. Local *cento* offers baths for 250 yen: half-price, triple the customers. High schools hold graduation ceremonies in evacuee centers; evidence everywhere of human heart, its constant & variable name. Wake to *radio taiso*, attend to authentic living; grim causality is just another transience multiplying the conditional, shifting the null point of inertia to action.

## advancing, dosimeters in hand

the crisis has a road map, it is  
compensation by autumn

officially

*victims of state policy*  
in a righteous limbo of

liquefaction

■

*Given recent events we hope visitors will please refrain  
from throwing cherry blossom-viewing parties.*

spiritual survival is no  
indulgence, no rural shame

*Farmers will refrain from grazing cattle on the radioactive grass,*  
will

purchase *forage* or  
forage for food, as

the scurry of mnemonic mice flits eyes across  
the Yomiuri Shimbun, semantic

fits

& starts an obvious  
*in medius res* mass of

restlessness, a piecemeal debris motif.  
Surely, Buddha didn't

travel

60 light years  
just to blanket

a sinkhole. *Cold*  
*shutdown* is a tone employed

as loss when dark roofs  
in recurring dreams sail by

the starfish in the  
sky, eyes once

wide in accurate alarm

close on the decay, pin-hole  
at available angles.

Is this the shadow-mass or a new  
design for living? asks

Mr. Kimura, taking a bath  
in *Kitamura No Yu*,

shrinking the intervals

of the figurative  
wrenching surrounds the day

looking forward to  
sea eel season in June,

aboard the Miki Maru #5,

& rice in the fields the year after  
the year after

next

*March 30, 2011*  
*Koriyama, Fukushima*

## **KEN BELFORD / Potential**

In my opening pages, the identity of the characters is contested as a forgery of imagery bound up with the claims and dispositions of country. It seems in order to sustain power in all this, the city upholds an illusion of authority over the north, so that the influential with the most is a problem to which I return. But cultures are cumbersome, each with acquired tastes, and what is this blur about belonging? By the time I came along in the literature, the land was exhausted and the local I knew was fading.

So many descriptions are not living  
appearances called to mind, but  
faithful copies. The thing is, the  
tree-shaped memories of love  
last no longer than other branched  
extensions. Affectations are made  
of false fronts, the expression of which  
is a limping thing, one slow step  
after another. But love is, by its nature,  
variable between individuals, the  
environment is unpredictable and  
I am charmed by wild plants, all  
of whom are aerobic organisms.  
Men rarely learn to pass beauty on,  
still put images together and still  
make trouble. Wild things summon  
memories and the wonder is it follows  
everything ages because of this.  
Appearances are made of misery  
and gloss but learning is made of  
error signals and game. As a boy,  
I was buried alive in a vertical vector  
called family but now I grow through  
gaps and veer away from competition.

In my twenties, I was unaware  
of contradictions and didn't want  
to know what belonged where.  
I was unemployable and didn't  
recognize the scheduled escape  
of suggestion, or realize some  
fictions never go away or speak  
for themselves. I was wanting to  
dismiss the men who fondled desire  
and leave behind the almsgiver  
who had grown accustomed  
to inexperience, who disabled  
understanding, and made a virtue  
of the monologue of landscape.

If only I could suss the story  
of every patchy soil or soul,  
and beyond belief, not be  
another brain-born stem  
buttressed up on roots, but  
be better, and come up  
with some sort of way out  
of competition. I'd agree  
to disagree and become  
an individual and evolve,  
and give ground and place,  
and fade away to shade.  
Now I know rhizomes  
are diverse there's a good  
chance I'd even shed the  
makings of mood or mode—  
I'm still not submissive to  
the local but I'm agreeable  
to potential. Hope is hidden  
in the imminent but advice  
comes at a cost when hostile  
neighbours approach and only  
a little experience is left to  
chance between the lines.

Oscillations cooperate  
when the light diffuses  
and scenes shift—consonants  
disperse, syntax spatters  
everywhere, and free and  
easy sequences of light  
climb down the stems.  
The benefits of individuality  
are to be found when fruit ripens  
and give and take is happening.  
In the meantime, the excitable  
tissues of language induce clues  
of the material grounds of meaning.  
I think what it is, is, glume varies  
and the old aspects of amplitude  
are not only a constant condition  
of uneven distribution or different  
stages of resistance, an indication  
of why one group suppresses  
another, and why I'm resistant—  
an outsider no matter where I live.

Then the following was suggested:  
the persistent clumps of vascular  
arrangements in the wild are different  
from those grown in the uniform stands  
and feed lots of the institution, where  
the timing circuitries don't overlap.  
Quietude, the result of nervous memory,  
is modified by grazing, and this  
symbiotic spread in the form of learning  
and memory might be continuous, even  
if it seems unlikely, given the response  
surface of the page has already been  
described. Implying discrimination,  
my neighbours influence me with  
a foot print, and then a stone placed  
nearby, accelerating germination.

Academics are interested in  
the people living in an area.  
I heard about this in the gift shop.  
Much poetry around the world  
is being disrupted and destroyed.  
I'd like to thank the following people  
for the commercial use of images.  
If institutions secure protection  
for poetry that is derived from  
the knowledge systems of poets,  
then extraction of renewable resources  
is taking place. Searching for valuable  
resources, funders bring new plants home  
and cultivate them for ornamental use.  
But I don't write about previous use, or  
the use of animals because I know how  
to make things, how to do things,  
and how to prepare and store things.  
This book is too difficult to translate,  
Corporations protect their inventions,  
funders claim ownership of the reports,  
visitors arrive, and institutions receive copies.

## ADAM DICKINSON / Resin Identification Code



PETE

A polymer is the imperial dream of parades. The particle made plenary. The panoptic panoply of elastic polity. Picture postcards believe picket fences believe parasymphatically in repetition as primary organizing principle. Humans are creatures of habit and pandemic. Information is a competitively stressed disorder.



HDPE

A polymer is the largest idea to survive serious thinking. Analyses make matrices of procrustean praxis, polish away the palimpsests of hyperbolic composure. To increase pliability, add carbon to the spine, add traffic to jams jarred in aromatic rings of amnion, add perpendicular reasoning.



V

A polymer is a staircase to the second floor of a house built by Escher. Helical planks carry one side of the family to the next with acidic delinquency. Base pairs trip and slur their parts. Proscenium genealogies stepladder portmanteau alphabets to splintered heights.



**LDPE**

A polymer is the parallax in pretending. Duplicitous thespians butterfly promises to milquetoast cling wraps in the all-night greasy spoons.



**PP**

A polymer is the analepsis occasioned by memory. Everywhere you've ever been has a smell. Perspiration permeates the plonk and politburo pastoral.



**PS**

A polymer is the linguistic mycelium of plastic, the path of the translator into the misread parkland of pituitary piracy.



**OTHER**

We have nothing to read but our chains. Our chains reread us precipitately.

## Contributors

JOANNE ARNOTT is a Metis/mixed-blood writer, activist, blogger, mother of six. Little known as a thinker, that is in fact what she most likes to do. Books include nonfiction, *Breasting the Waves: On Writing & Healing*, fiction, *Ma MacDonald*, and poetry, *Wiles of Girlhood*, *My Grass Cradle*, *Steepy Mountain love poetry*, *Mother Time: Poems New & Selected*. As editor: *Salish Seas: an anthology of text + image* (2011).

For much of his life, KEN BELFORD has lived in the vicinity of the headwaters of the Nass River, an old growth unroaded region in Northwest BC. He is the author of six books of poetry, including *Lan(d)guage* (Caitlin Press 2008), and *Decompositions* (Talon Books 2010).

A member of the house of Geel, MICHAEL BLACKSTOCK of Kamloops is a forester, mediator, and author of *Faces in the Forest: First Nations Art Created on Living Trees* (2001), *Salmon Run: A Florilegium of Aboriginal Ecological Poetry* (2005), and *Oceaness* (2010). Of Gitxsan (Hazelton) and Euro-Canadian descent, Blackstock has a Master of Art degree in First Nations Studies. He has served as a member of the UNESCO-IHP Expert Advisory Group on Water and Cultural Diversity.

RAYMOND BOISJOLY is an Aboriginal artist from Chilliwack now based in Vancouver, BC. Since completing a BFA at Emily Carr Institute (now University) and a MFA at The University of British Columbia, Boisjoly presented *The Ever-Changing Light* at Access Gallery (Vancouver, BC) and has participated in numerous group exhibitions and projects including *How Soon Is Now* at the Vancouver Art Gallery and *House Systems: Fort Club* at the Hedreen Gallery at Seattle University. Boisjoly has produced two projects for the public realm: *Contingent Matters* (2011) at the Vancouver Public Library and *All That Was, Will Always*

*Have Been, Somehow Never Again* (2010) at Access Gallery (Vancouver, BC). Boisjoly was awarded a Fleck Fellowship from the Banff Centre for the Arts in 2010 and participated in the thematic residency La Commune. The Asylum. Die Bühne. at the Banff Centre in 2011. Boisjoly would like to acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

CHRISTIAN BÖK is the author not only of *Crystallography* (1994), a pataphysical encyclopedia nominated for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, but also of *Eunoia* (2001), a bestselling work of experimental literature, which has gone on to win the Griffin Prize for Poetic Excellence. Bök teaches English at the University of Calgary.

ROB BUDDE teaches creative writing at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George. He has published seven books (poetry, novels, interviews, and short fiction), his most recent books being *Finding Ft. George* (Caitlin Press) and *declining america* (BookThug). His most recent interest is experimental “ecopoetry” and he is working on a study of Devil’s Club / Hoolhghulh tentatively titled *Panax*. Find him at [writingwaynorth.blogspot.com](http://writingwaynorth.blogspot.com).

JENNIFER JIHYE CHUN is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and a Faculty Fellow at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada. She is the author of *Organizing at the Margins: The Symbolic Politics of Labor in South Korea and the United States* (Cornell University Press 2009).

STEPHEN COLLIS is the author of *The Commons* (2008), *On the Material* (2010) and *Lever* (2011). He teaches poetry and poetics at Simon Fraser University and is currently working on a book about change and writing about the Occupy movement at [occupyvancouvervoice.com](http://occupyvancouvervoice.com)

LEANNE COUGHLIN received a MFA in Visual Art from the University of British Columbia and has exhibited work locally and internationally. Through photo/video collage and other mixed media experiments, she explores her interests in architecture, surrealism, and the nature of reality in everyday experiences. Leanne lives and works in Vancouver and is Managing Editor of *BC Studies*.

PETER CULLEY lives on Vancouver Island and is preparing the third through sixth volumes of his ongoing cycle *Hammertown* and a collection of his critical prose.

DERRICK S. DENHOLM'S *Dead Salmon Dialectics* is eco-logical poetry that engages with the science of nutrient recycling in BC salmon forests. After twenty years living and working in northern forests, Denholm recently completed his MA in Creative Writing. Continuing his education, he is back working in the woods, learning directly from the source.

ADAM DICKINSON'S poems have appeared in literary journals in Canada and internationally. His work has also been anthologized in *Breathing Fire 2: Canada's New Poets*. His second book *Kingdom, Phylum* was a finalist for the 2007 Trillium Book Award for Poetry. He teaches at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON. "Resin Identification Code," in this issue, is from a manuscript on plastic and plasticity entitled *The Polymers*.

ROGER FARR is the author of *Surplus* (Linebooks 2006). Two new books, *MEANS* and *IKMQ*, are forthcoming. He teaches writing and literature at Capilano University, and edits CUE Books.

RYAN FITZPATRICK lives and writes from his home in Vancouver. He is the author of *Fake Math* (Snare Books 2007) and the forthcoming chapbook *21<sup>st</sup> Century Monsters* (Red Nettle Press 2012).

GU XIONG is a Professor and a multi-media artist in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at University of British Columbia. He has exhibited nationally and internationally. His work is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the China National Museum of Fine Arts and in many other museums and private collections. Gu Xiong has published two books and eight solo exhibition catalogues. His artwork has received significant critical recognition including reviews in the international art magazines *Flash Art* and *Art in America*, and *The New York Times*. Gu is currently working as a principal investigator on the SSHRC-funded Research/Creation project *Waterscapes*.

LIZ HOWARD left rural northern Ontario to pursue cognition research and poetry in Toronto. She is a member of the Influenza Salon editorial group and co-cultivates the AvantGarden reading series. In 2009 she was shortlisted for the LitPop Award for poetry. *Skullambient*, her first chapbook, was published by Ferno House Press in 2011.

GILLIAN JEROME'S first book of non-fiction *Hope In Shadows, Stories and Photographs from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside* (with Brad Cran) won the 2008 City of Vancouver Book Award and was shortlisted for a BC Book Prize. Her first book of poems, *Red Nest* (Nightwood), won the ReLit Prize for Poetry in 2010 and was shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize in 2010. She teaches literature at UBC and edits poetry at *EVENT* magazine.

GERMAINE KOH is a Canadian artist based in Vancouver, whose work is concerned with the significance of everyday actions, familiar objects, and common places. She has exhibited at international venues such as BALTIC, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Para/Site Art Space, Frankfurter Kunstverein, The Power Plant, The British Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, and the

Liverpool, Sydney and Montréal biennials. Koh is represented by Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver.

SONNET L'ABBÉ is the award-winning author of two collections of poetry, *A Strange Relief* and *Killarnoe*. She is at work on a third collection, *A Sentient Mental Flower Book*, that explores the homologies between people and plants. L'Abbé also reviews poetry for the *Globe and Mail*, and is currently writing a dissertation on the American poet Ronald Johnson at the University of British Columbia.

LARISSA LAI is an English professor at the University of British Columbia. She is the author of two novels: *When Fox Is a Thousand* (1995, 2004) and *Salt Fish Girl* (2002). Her first full-length solo poetry book *Automaton Biographies* (2009) was shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Award.

CHRISTINE LECLERC is a Vancouver-based author and activist.

CHRIS LEE is Assistant Professor of English and Associate Principal of St. John's College at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *The Semblance of Identity: Aesthetic Mediation in Asian American Literature* (Stanford University Press) and a co-editor of *Tracing the Lines*, a volume of creative and critical writing in honour of Roy Miki.

SAMUEL GARRIGÓ MEZA is a multi-disciplinary artist and writer based in Montreal. His poems have been published in *dandelion* and *Last Supper*. Individual performances and installations have recently appeared at the 50/50 Gallery, MS:T Festival, Stride Gallery, and Glenbow Museum.

KATHRYN MOCKLER received her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia and her BA in Honours English and Creative Writing from Concordia University. Her writing has been published most recently in *The*

*Antigonish Review*, *Rattle Poetry*, *CellStories*, *PIF*, *The Puritan*, *La Petite Zine*, *nthposition*, and *This Magazine*, and she has poems in upcoming issues of *Descant* and *The Windsor Review*. Tigh trope Books recently published her poetry book, *Onion Man*.

ERÍN MOURE is a Montreal poet and translator whose newest work, *The Unmemntioable*, will appear from Anansi (Toronto) in early 2012.

SPLAB founder PAUL E NELSON wrote *Organic Poetry* (vdm Verlag, Germany 2008) and a serial poem re-enacting the history of Auburn, Washington, *A Time Before Slaughter* (Apprentice House 2010). In 26 years of radio he interviewed Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Anne Waldman, Sam Hamill, Robin Blaser, Nate Mackey, Eileen Myles, Wanda Coleman, George Bowering, Joanne Kyger, Jerome Rothenberg and others, including many Northwest poets. He lives in Seattle and writes at least one American Sentence every day.

A.RAWLINGS is a mineral, plant, animal, person, place, or thing.

NIKKI REIMER'S works include *[sic]* (Frontenac 2010), shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert award, and the chapbooks *that stays news* (Nomados 2011), *haute action material* (Heavy Industries 2011) and *fst things first* (Wrinkle 2009). "C'eci n'est-pas enpipeline" is a meditation on history, edutainment, culpability and subjectivity, via the oil and gas industry. Visit [nikkireimer.com](http://nikkireimer.com).

JORDAN SCOTT is the author of *Silt* (New Star Books) and *Blerf* (Coach House Books).

ELENI SIKELIANOS is the author of a hybrid memoir (*The Book of Jon*, City Lights) and six books of poetry, the most recent being *Body Clock*. Collaborative projects include film roles in several of Ed Bowes' movies, art-books with painter Anne Slacik, installations with Peter Cole, and a perfor-

mance with Philip Glass. Her work has been translated into a dozen languages, and anthologized, most recently in places such as *American Hybrid* and *The Norton Anthology of Postmodern American Poetry*.

INDRA SINGH'S work has recently appeared in *Open Letter*, *dandelion*, and on poet Sina Queyras's blog *Lemon Hound*. Her writing engages with sifting soil through a space of poetry to locate transects at which disciplinary boundaries crumble into one another. Indra is currently completing a manuscript entitled *Turtle Crumbles the Visible* at the University of Calgary and holds a Master of Environment degree from the University of Manitoba.

JONATHAN SKINNER'S poetry collections include *Birds of Tiffit* (BlazeVOX 2011) and *Political Cactus Poems* (Palm Press 2005). He founded and edits the journal *ecopoetics* ([www.ecopoetics.org](http://www.ecopoetics.org)), which features creative-critical intersections between writing and ecology. Currently a Fellow with the Cornell Society for the Humanities, Skinner also writes eco-criticism on contemporary poetry and poetics.

KEVIN SPENST'S poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Prairie Fire*, *dandelion*, *Rhubarb Magazine*, *Poetry is Dead*, *The Maynard*, *The Enpipe Line*, *Ditch Poetry*, and *One Cool Word*. His poetry manuscript, *The Gang's All Down by the Abecedarium*, was shortlisted for the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry. Over the past year Kevin's website, <http://kevinspenst.com>, has focused on interviews with poets such as Linda Besner, rob mclennan, and Pearl Pirie.

JASON STARNES is a PhD candidate in English Literature at Simon Fraser University where he studies avant-garde poetry and spatial theory, with emphases on radical geography, Lacanian topologies, and Marxism. His dissertation explores the rise of disorientation and vertigo in postmodern poetry and poetics.

COLETTE ST-HILAIRE is a sociologist specialized in international development; she taught until this year at the Collège Édouard-Montpetit in Longueuil. She is the author of *Quand le développement s'intéresse aux femmes – Le cas des Philippines* (Harmattan, 1995) and a member of the editorial board of the Quebec journal *Conjonctures*. She lives in the Montérégie near Montréal.

HARRIET TARLO is a poet and academic from West Yorkshire, England. She teaches Writing at Sheffield Hallam University. Poetry publications include *Poems 1990–2003* (Shearsman 2004) and *Nab* (etruscan 2005) and *Field* (forthcoming). She is editor of the "Women and Eco-Poetics" feature, *How2* 3(2) and *The Ground Aslant: An Anthology of Radical Landscape Poetry* (Shearsman 2011). Found and rearranged text in poems two, three, five, and six of "Pears: A short sequence of poems after H.D.," in this issue, are from H.D.'s *Sea Garden* and Maeve Kennedy's "Feeding the 5000: London Braves Sleet and Cold for Free Lunch," *The Guardian* 16 December, 2009.

TIM TERHAAR studied philosophy and now lives in Brooklyn, NY. He writes for *Tiny Mix Tapes* and *The Huffington Post* and maintains a vegan recipe / historical novelties blog at [vegetalvoracity.blogspot.com](http://vegetalvoracity.blogspot.com). "Rokoko," the winning entry in TCR's (e)contest, is his first publication on actual paper.

ARA THOMSEN lived in Bella Coola from the ages of 6–16. She fell in love with the beauty and wonder of the wilderness. Many of the images in her writing still relate to nature, the great teacher. She is almost finished her first novel. She loves animals, children, and anything creative and recently moved back to Bella Coola where she lives with her husband and two year old son.

LARY TIMEWELL, who founded Tsunami Editions, most recently published *posthumous spectacle nodes* (obvious epiphanies press, Japan).

He spent roughly the past 20 years in Fukushima-ken, Japan, where he survived the physical but not economic fallout of the March 11<sup>th</sup> Higashi Nihon Daishinsai; he currently lives in North Vancouver.

JACQUELINE TURNER has published three books poetry with ECW Press: *Seven into Even* (2006), *Careful* (2003), and *Into the Fold* (2000). She teaches creative and critical writing at Simon Fraser University and Emily Carr University of Art + Design. She was Queensland's inaugural poet-in-residence at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Brisbane, Australia.

JESSICA WILSON is an environmental / social justice activist and writer from Toronto. For the past four years, she has worked in Vancouver

as Media and Communications Strategist for Greenpeace Canada, primarily on the Stop the Tar Sands campaign, as well as the Oceans, Arctic, and the Great Bear Rainforest campaigns. She came to Greenpeace after leaving the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Dose*. Jessica will soon begin a new role as communications manager for Greenpeace International's Arctic campaign.

RITA WONG is the author of *sybil unrest* (co-written with Larissa Lai, Line Books 2008), *forage* (Nightwood 2007, winner of Canada Reads Poetry 2011), and *monkeypuzzle* (Press Gang 1998). Her work investigates the relationships between contemporary poetics, social justice, ecology, and decolonization.

#### NOTE ON THE COVER IMAGE

*During the construction of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangze, they put thousands of large concrete nails into the river in order to cut off the river and build up the dam. Physically, I felt pain for the river.*

— GU XIONG

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