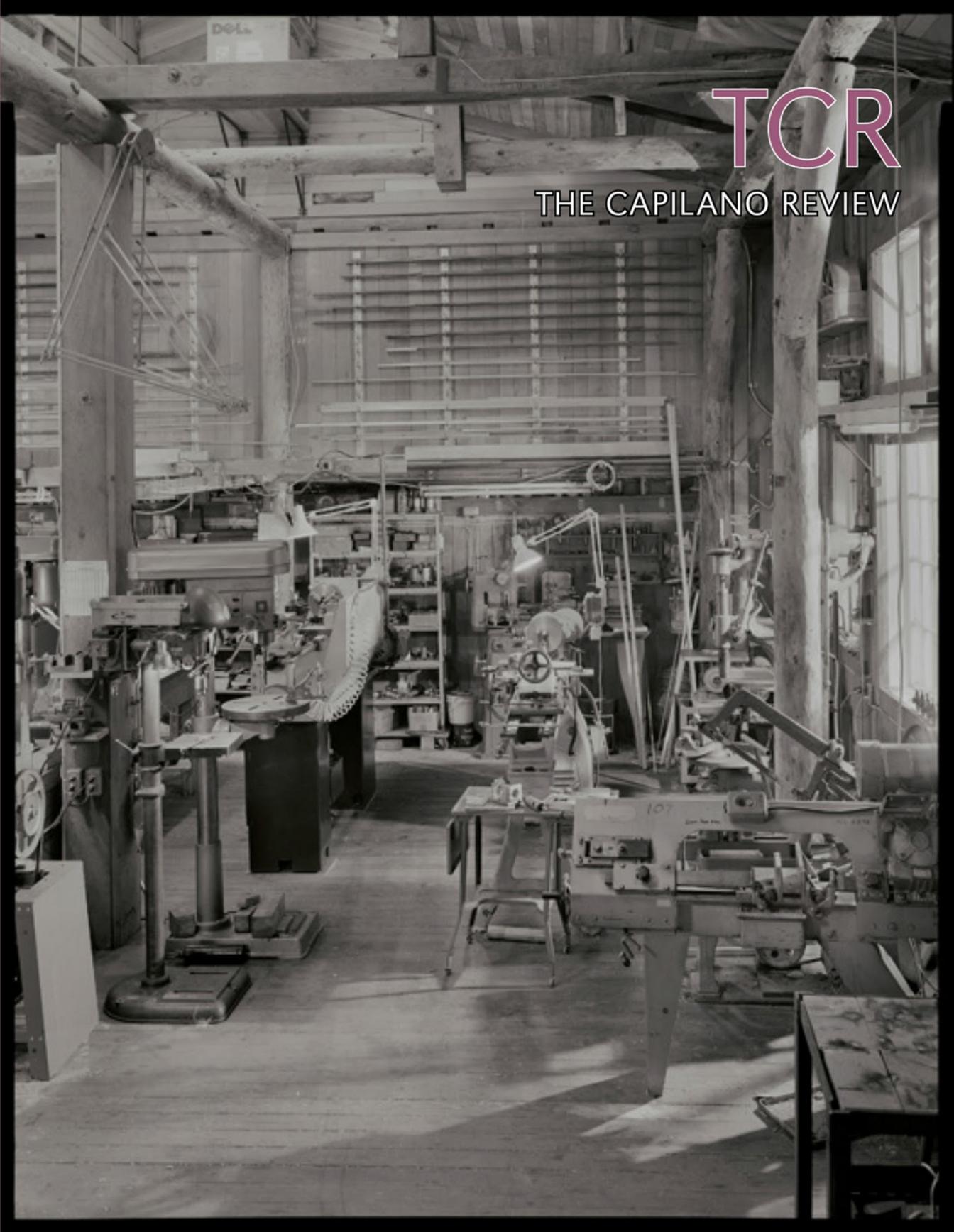


# TCR

THE CAPILANO REVIEW



there was only ever a sort of rich, messed-up  
mixture of languages

—LISA ROBERTSON

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# LISA ROBERTSON / Duet

## Scene

*for Ted Byrne*

Nothing happens for the first time  
it likes what I said

it increases in speed like a train  
because newness is possible

I was eating apricots on the train  
with the sense of a relay

as the blunt monuments of the nuclear reactors  
rose from a refulgent landscape

or l'exces, l'audace, la marge et l'érudition  
in the images of Poussin

I continued in the presence of fear  
to try to think about the spaciousness of poetry

I brought the horror of the political economy into my body  
and this became a style

but I escaped from most things  
at uncertain intervals and unsuitable times

words, the eye, bodies, tall ships, scoured plains, huge forests  
perhaps they flank the subject

like porous baffles that refract  
every organ's part in living

to seek the indifferent order  
of a childhood

a field slowly regurgitates its stone  
it is then heaped at some half-hidden site at the edge

from which clandestinely grows  
buttressed by rusted scrap and gorse

a lanky wild cherry tree  
beneath it I stand, spitting seed

I eat the over-ripe, splitting-open fruit from the ground  
as would any animal

in June here the fox turds are clotted  
with pale cherry pips

it is the field's slow work to produce such turd  
from stone

thinking is this hesitant  
I keep pushing colour into it and then I sand it off

what I love is pleached  
the day retreats from the present

the movement, just outside perception  
traverses limbs, skin, organs, hair

as if it were the meaning of this sentiment  
not to be expressed

the extent to which this meaning does not exist  
ripens

there's a whirring of birds over mustard  
their wings are troubling the pods

with irony and tenderness  
like it wrinkles, puckers, near a scar

the image is not optical  
the same for beauty

I was using my own body  
as a needle

to play out an idea about beginning  
as a practical, portable gift

when a bell rang three times, behind it  
the river and massing of boughs

a young girl is by herself in a yard  
throwing darts

she fiercely flings her weapons  
at very close range to the target

reaches forward to collect the darts  
then throws them again

she repeats the ritual three times in all  
(it is late afternoon in the village)

then she retrieves her cane from the long grass  
limps slowly to the house

I feel a deep identification  
with the sullen awkward girl

who seems not to have chosen  
her own oddly flounced skirt

the spirituality of the present  
cheats in its yard

and is unlegislated  
ideology

savage with gravitas  
whose mystic target collapsed

tottering with the load  
like a fratricide ballad

all stomp and clap  
and esoteric cruelty

an apple tree  
clotted with mistletoe

seen from  
a train.

## Song

Sang indigent Venus with shimmering wet-data  
Venus robed in thrifted peignoir  
Indivisible Venus of colonial backwater  
Incommensurate Venus in zoological foray with requisite miniature dialectics  
Plus bibliophilia:

I was a freelancer and a renter  
I was holding my sexual organ in my two hands, as in myth and ritual and politics  
Nature was shaking like a theatre  
I should have liked to be a sailor  
Rhythm-wracked and grasping at flotsam  
But I had underestimated the craving of my sponsor  
Poetry was the rage at the bar  
This bird was crying baby, baby, baby, as if love were a salty thing with a ruthlessness  
What part of history polished my appetite?  
Everything I perceived became a proposition  
It was food, and inadequate, because I had money to be marketed to  
Of course I'm lovely  
In the brain cavity, in the marrow of the backbone, in the kidneys and their heat, in  
the lower bowel region, the subtle rounded atoms are afloat in vast reservoirs of  
silence  
About the olden glammy season—  
—about cosmic love's commemoration—  
I made everything inside it, but they once had human faces.  
And who will fund this mooching sorti?  
Will it be you, Memmius?  
Or do you too subscribe to debt-contagion?  
I fling down my body  
Space responds  
Something about fear and the heavy coats and the crashing objects  
Something about the desperation of a pawing

Something about nilling  
They just never reveal  
Your culture despises the people you lick.

I did have the feeling that the violence I saw was merely a rehearsal for worse violence  
So I hid in the part of pornography where there's quietness  
As the cattle flocked and the fields oozed their crops, and curséd nothing ever stopped  
—not the maggots in the grapes, not the dog's cry at storm, not the unstymied dialect—  
Which has the greatest appetite for superfluous ornament?  
Whatever's moving the worms in fruit, it's not just social, it's not just ontological, it's  
cosmical. The shit is cosmical, and it resides and breathes in money  
No matter what happens, I'm willing to walk with it  
Nothing can alter my resolution  
But for lack of ritual acknowledgement I have become a style  
Where style is my body  
This being a god's recourse to the present.

A rotting whale was speaking constantly about financial themes  
Ponderous, awesome materiality! Nothing left but to penetrate it  
When this gesture dwindles, loses its place in the hive's self-organization  
The field just slowly regurgitates its stone  
I unwisely ignore the facts—unease and incompetence, the telepathy of doubt  
It sends a weakening signal  
My friends said I had mistaken my vocation, that I was soaring in purple  
But if you're using public money you have to tell people what you think  
I hardly saw anybody mourning in the streets  
Was it my bed or my sleep, that whale?  
In the anatomy of my funding  
The image is not retinal  
It's sensing's fungible organ  
Everything looks like somebody's thought.

Part of me crawled to the circus  
The village snake, with his long teeth darkening at the edges, he is lodged with his  
widow-mother who is growing fatter every year  
On her diet of mystical and visionary literature  
It was here the leaf-hut  
Here the wild-orchid—  
Oh yeah, sadness, it's here  
Is there a kind of sorrow for the tatted half-curtains?  
The gentlemen of the place are those vulnerable shamans, those pathologically mod-  
est philosophers, you know  
And myself an aching parasite!  
In unaccustomed longhand  
I would dull my thingish senses with a fop  
So you'll be freed up to read this, Memmius, so  
Just for an instant, money would stop—  
But I just fall asleep in my earrings.

I dream a young girl seated beside me on a train  
Reads intently in her magazine  
“Pourquoi est-il muet pendant l'amour?”  
Pendant la vie  
One might ask.

I have tried lateness as a structure of feeling:  
Pompons, bosoms and bottoms  
I have learned the language of Miss Tennessee  
Like pleasure near a river  
Dimpled as a thimble—  
Is it good yet?  
Here is a vast glittering fabric brocaded with all the forms of life  
The whole formidable apparatus  
Bucking and flapping

With the help of this fabric  
I want mostly to hide from totality  
And have the sea be my emotion  
Free, generous and serious  
Like the asymmetry of compassion.

## TED BYRNE & LISA ROBERTSON/ This Animal, The Pronoun: An Interview

Ted Byrne: Last weekend I thought that, on Saturday, I would just read all of your work again. (Laughter) I knew it would be difficult, because your writing slows the reader down. You can't read it quickly. But that's what I decided to do. My experience of it was a kind of absolute but distant familiarity with *XEclogue* and *Debbie*. The landscape was familiar. However, by the time I got through *Debbie* it was almost too much. It was so rich, it was like eating chocolate. Then I went on chronologically. There were things that truly amazed me. *The Weather's* "Wednesday" was one. But what really astonished me was *The Men*. I felt that I was reading it for the first time and really got it. It was powerful. It was an experience. I'll tell you what kind of experience maybe later. Then with *R's Boat*, at a certain point I found myself laughing and I thought, "Oh, okay, so she's a humourist. This is what I didn't understand. All along, I didn't get that." But I couldn't stop laughing—it was late at night, I was by myself. It started with the line "I'm just a beam of light, or something." (Laughter) And then everything was funny after that.

Lisa Robertson: People don't laugh at my work very much. It might be the straight delivery when I read it. But, hell, what am I supposed to do? Hold up a "laugh now" card?

TB: Well, maybe people do have to have permission to laugh when it's not really clear that they should. For example: *Lisa Robertson's Magenta Soul Whip*. (Laughter) It promises, by its title, to be funny. It's not all funny, though.

LR: No, it's not all funny. It's more wry than actually funny.

TB: What kind of a book is it?

LR: I thought of it as a grab-bag. I'd had this idea for a long time that it could be interesting just to pull together a bunch of poems that I'd been writing between or during more project-like books. And, since conceptualism has started to define itself as a centralized discourse, I've been really sick of hearing about projects, even though, ironically, I thought of all my books as "projects." They were all mapped out concep-

tually. And then I just got tired of it. So I thought, “I’m going to have an anti-project book”—pull together a pile of left-over poems and see how they read. In my imagination this is how a lot of people write their books. Eventually they probably think “I guess I have enough. I’ll pull them together and just start reading and see what happens.” So I was performing my imagination of what non-project poets do.

TB: Do you differentiate in some way what you’re referring to as “project” books from “the book as unit of composition,” the book as what one composes?

LR: Yes, I think I’m not differentiating when maybe I should be. The book as unit—that’s where my thinking came from. From studying with Roy Miki, basically, who really... I think probably the first class I took with Roy Miki in the mid-eighties was about the book as a unit of composition. I think we looked at *Rocky Mountain Foot*, and probably *Breathing My Name with a Sigh*, and bp, a number of Canadian books...

TB: But characterizing a book as a project seems to imply an element of research, and I was thinking, when you talked about conceptualism, “Well, okay, maybe,” but *your* writing isn’t so much rule-based as research-based. When you say “project” it’s more like a research project.

LR: Yes. There is a certain component of rule-based method there, but basically as soon as I get going on a rule I break it. That’s why a rule is interesting to me. Not to fulfil it in some way, but just to get it going long enough to set up a pattern of expectation.

TB: That seems like an important point, though, because the nature of the rule is that either it has to be followed or it has to be broken. The attitude towards the rule in a rule-based procedure is to follow the rule, isn’t it? I mean, that’s somehow what bothers me with Oulipo, that the rule is meant to be followed.

LR: Yes, but I like having a rule to follow to start with, because it gives me something to do.

TB: Give me an example.

LR: It’s not really a rule, but working with genre. I’m thinking of when I wrote *Debbie*. There were components that an epic had to have: starting in medias res, invo-

cation of the muses, the battle scene. There's a list of all these things that, traditionally speaking, any epic worth its salt has to include. That became a sort of map for me. All I had to do, to write an epic, was to make sure I ticked them all off the list. "This is my second invocation of the muses." "How am I going to write the battle scene?" "Where's the descent to the underworld?" That became a set of rules. It was at least a system that gave me tasks to perform. I didn't have to think it up. I didn't have to start from zero. But maybe a slightly more Oulipien relationship to rule would be in *The Weather* where I was using source texts, systematically appropriating from source texts, making my lists of kinds of phrases, sorting out some ways to use sequence, the phrase typology.

TB: Were you copying text?

LR: Yes.

TB: Strictly?

LR: I broke it down. But at the beginning, that's what I was doing. I was strictly copying text. The texts were so great, why wouldn't I want to copy them? There's no photocopying in the Cambridge rare book room, so to copy them you transcribe. By hand. Not in a computer, in a notebook. So it gave me something to do. Every day I'd go to the library and there'd be all these tweedy old blokes doing the same thing, and we'd all sit down in our customary places at the long table and start transcribing. It was just wonderful. That was my job, to transcribe these texts. One would lead to another, and I'd just transcribe. That's all I did. And then later I figured out ways to select from my transcriptions, and then to re-sequence the selection. But then, and this is where it differed from conceptual appropriation, in almost every instance I figured out a way to interrupt the material that I'd amassed and edited and sequenced according to the set of rules. So the interruption was bringing in some sort of outside material that was not related to meteorology.

TB: Was the selection rule based?

LR: Not in the sense of number. It was more rhetorical. I was interested in kinds of phrase formations which seemed very characteristic of certain texts. It seemed very unusual to me because these were scientific texts and the phrase formations were very purple and unlike any style that I would have imagined for scientific discourse.

TB: Because it's the discourse of a particular era? Or of a particular genre?

LR: It was a discourse that was happening before science and literature were differentiated, strictly speaking, and so it was like the last gasps of a more integrated practice of description, where natural history had very minimal and totally erasable boundaries in relation to literary description. That was something that I was wanting to explore almost in terms of stylistic typologies. How do they actually make this description? So I was really interested in pulling it apart at that level.

TB: Does anything similar happen in the archive with something like "Face" or "Utopia" in *R's Boat*?

LR: Yeah. It was less subtle really. What I was looking for when I re-read that material didn't have to do with stylistic typology. It was very simple minded. It was just certain kinds of content in sentences. So "Face" was just sentences with the first person. It started out before my papers were in the archive. They had approached me to ask me if I would like to sell them, and I was self-conscious and uncomfortable, but at the same time curious, and thought, "I probably am going to do this." Because, I don't know, I needed the money, I was flattered, I was about to leave the country. So I set out to reread all my notebooks.

TB: So is the whole book that material?

LR: Yup. There's nothing in there that didn't come from my archive. At first I wanted to carry through the same method I'd worked out for *The Weather*, doing some sort of systematic reading, enunciating a list or typology, then finding a way to interrupt it. I really liked writing *The Weather* and I was always surprised by what happened as I was working. I still think it's probably my strongest work. So why not just repeat it? But that didn't really work, and I couldn't figure out what to interrupt this material with. I tried lots of different stuff. Then, for that first piece I wrote, "Face," I just suddenly had this idea: "I can interrupt it with *itself*," re-sequence the material and then splice it in as a double. So I did that. It was very satisfying and clean as a method. I've used it for other pieces but not within that book, and I have to discipline myself not to use it often because it's just totally satisfying as a method. It creates, with one gesture, structure, closure, rhyme, an internal tension or dynamic.

TB: There's a kind of continuity between *XEclogue* and *Debbie*. Because, as I thought at the time I first read these works, you were heading towards accomplishing a kind of Rota Virgiliana, right?

LR: *The Weather* would be the third. It's the *Georgics*.

TB: So you did finish it.

LR: Yeah, I did. Then Virgil also has a book of ephemera, which I suppose would be *Soul Whip*.

TB: Okay, so you, you...damaged my train of thought there. I was going to say I'm glad you didn't fully accomplish that, the Rota Virgiliana, but you did, if *The Weather* is the *Georgics*, as you say.

LR: A bit too tidy, but...

TB: No, but *The Weather* is a very different text.

LR: Yes, in its relationship to style.

TB: But you're also not, or are you, working with or against genre there to anything like the extent you are with the others?

LR: No. I wasn't using genre in a formal or structural sense as I did in my first two books. Not at all. I was doing a lot of source research, trying to read as many of the texts that Virgil used in his *Georgics*, his source texts, which is what got me reading Lucretius, and Aratus, Hesiod, the various stuff that I'd learned that he read and used to compose the *Georgics*. That sort of research-y aspect is similar to the other two books, but...

TB: One of the aspects of the approach that you characterized earlier as "project based" is that you don't wind up so thoroughly repeating yourself. Because the first two books are caught within one horizon in terms of project or rule, and there's a kind of continuity that I'm happy... I mean, I love those books, but I wouldn't want to see a whole career based on...

LR: No, it would become mawkish or tacky.

TB: And yet at the same time there's an incredible degree of repetition—things that you do over and over and things that you say over and over throughout.

LR: Between the three, you mean?

TB: No, across all of your books.

LR: Endless references to surface, for example. The decorative. There's a lot that follows through. But I think one of the things that happened in writing *The Weather* is that, structurally, I was very open to letting myself be influenced by music and painting. I was listening to a lot of that '90s electronica pop music.

TB: Name a band.

LR: Portishead. Moby. Air. A lot of layering of tracks on top of tracks. Very minimalist. It's basically coming out of Steve Reich. Working with loops and layering of loops. I was listening to a lot of that, and I was really interested in that procedurally, and at the same time I was thinking of painting and how painters have a surface in front of them, and they're not generally starting in this corner and making an entire painting a little bit at a time until they fill the whole canvas. They're building up layers across the entire surface.

TB: So in *The Weather*, for example, if I think about that, there's a cumulative effect. When I ask myself, in the act of reading these works, how they should be read, there are certain constructions, there are certain moments in which you become aphoristic, and then one begins to think, "what does this mean?" Then there are other moments when that would be a pointless question, and so one just moves from phrase to phrase, and then the effect becomes cumulative in a musical or visual sense. There's no uniform approach to the sentence. Take for example what you were saying earlier about working with banal sentences—there are also sentences that operate within a pretty complex rhetoric. I'm thinking of something that you say with regard to transparency: "I have given thought to making my words clear rather than ornate." One has no difficulty comprehending what's meant there, until you start to think about it, until you arrive at the very next sentence which is "Then the windows were as ripe as fruits bleeding sugars." On the one hand you have the thought, and then you just negate it. You toss it away. In retrospect the first sentence then operates like a casual

comment to me, the reader, that “Yeah, I thought about that at some point.” But the contrast between “clear” and “ornate” is like the contrast between glass and stained glass. And then the next sentence is ornate: “Then the windows were as ripe as fruits bleeding sugars.”

LR: But that might be clear to somebody.

TB: It’s clear to me. The option is for stained glass. You’re saying there’s a context in which the second sentence might actually be clear?

LR: Yeah. The funny thing is, I’m sure the first sentence, “I’ve given thought to making my words clear rather than ornate,” is an appropriated sentence, and I think it might come from an early Renaissance treatise on perspective. Alberti. Or it might come from Dürer talking about perspective. Those were the texts I was reading then. So the sentence about clarity is an appropriated sentence, and then the next sentence about the windows was a sentence that I actually composed myself, that felt to me like a precise description of something I saw. That seemed to me to be quite a clear description of twilight, when the lights come on in domestic spaces, and you’re walking out on the sidewalk, and they’re all sort of golden, and you can almost see into people’s lives.

TB: So it is clear rather than ornate.

LR: Yes, it seemed quite clear to me. (Laughter) But of course I also recognize the fact that on the surface it would not appear to be clear. And the other sentence would seem like the more truthful kind of statement. I’m interested in those sorts of paradoxical or ambivalent or equivocal relationships between kinds of statements, and how the effect of truth or sincerity migrates very quickly among positions and so can’t really be located in any statement per se. And it may be that this effect of truth or sincerity in a text actually doesn’t come from any content whatsoever, but maybe comes from the very paradoxical nature of a sequence, and the differences that are set up and come into play between kinds of statements. It seems to me that, if you’re talking about sincerity, uncertainty and equivocation is perhaps the most truthful position to be occupying.

TB: Truthful in the sense of honest. And sincere.

LR: Yes. But that probably says a lot about my sense of my own psychology. Somebody else might not agree with that at all. But I'm also talking about sincerity as a literary effect, and what sets up this sense of sincerity in a text is also perhaps the equivocal relation between statements. You see this in a writer like Montaigne. Reading his *Essays* you get a sense of incredible human wholeness because of the equivocal nature of the statements that succeed one another in a reading experience. Reading one of his essays, you're actually not going to learn very much about Virgil or any of the topics that the essays purport to be about. You're not going to find some truth statement about death or a thumb or sex in old age. What you're going to find is somebody's mind at work in time across different kinds of relationships within language. If you read one of the editions of Montaigne where there's a code, so you can see what was added at what point, you see how these texts were built up over decades, and that the equivocation which each essay performs is also a representation of the shifts that happen within our own thinking and experience over the course of decades passing. You know, how you can feel certain about something at 23 that at 50 just... (Laughter) But what's interesting in Montaigne is that he might leave that kernel of earlier certainty intact. He doesn't decide to excise it from the text. He just puts something different next to it. I think that's incredible. And I feel that's what gives those essays their rigour. The reason Montaigne's essays have rigour is because they hold human ambivalence within their structure.

TB: I'm curious about the distinction that you seem to be making between sincerity and truth or honesty and truth. Is truth an effect of discourse? I can make you think that I am being honest by saying certain things that may be very dishonest.

LR: Sure, but you can also believe that you're being honest because the statement you are making might seem to represent some actuality that you've perceived or experienced, and yet further down the line you can come to understand that what you had experienced as honesty was inflected by a situation, or had more to do with incomplete knowledge, incomplete perception. I'm not saying... I'm not sure what I'm saying, actually.

TB: I understood you to say something to the effect that, within the context of one essay, although it's re-worked, and maybe contradictions or ambiguities are introduced, he doesn't abandon himself in the process.

LR: That's right.

TB: Which would seem to be an indication of sincerity.

LR: Yes, but sincerity as a willingness to permit uncertainty to have its place. One of the things I read about Montaigne is that he started those essays from... people used to keep commonplace books, books of quotes, and that was sort of a typical—well, it's not all that unusual, we do it in our notebooks all the time, really—but it was a conventional practice among a learned class of people, keeping commonplace books of citations from texts that you're reading. And exchanging these citations with others, contributing to others' commonplace books. And what Montaigne started to do was to write between the citations, if you like, to start to think into them, and to link them with an experimental prising open of possible interpretations. That what began, purportedly—I forget where I read this, probably in the Starobinski book on Montaigne—that what started as a list or collection of appropriations, citations, whatever, becomes the framework for what we're experiencing as the truth of the individual. And that's just really interesting to me. In part because it blows all the asinine statements that one can hear out in the world about “what is lyric?” and “what is discourse?” and “what is critique?” and “what is not critique?” etcetera... it just blows them all out of the water.

TB: Explain that.

LR: I don't see that an abandonment of the lyrical poem as a kind of representation achieves anything. I feel it's much more interesting to head right into the mess of this—of course it's impossible—but, say this moment of inflection of the subject by history and vice versa. It seems that in the now-normative avant-garde critique of lyricism it's assumed, strangely, that the subject is static and fixed, and that the expressive or lyrical language of the subject is very straightforwardly representing that fixity. But when I read the lyric poem I don't see any of that fixity and what I experience as a reader is a blowing open of the subject. I experience the opposite to what the conventions of avant-garde critical practice tell me that I ought to be experiencing. I read the lyric poem as being shot through at every point vividly by history, as is the subject. And I feel that that reading experience brings that problematizing back into one's own perception of one's own subjectivity. So that in fact it's a de-stabilization within the poem and within the reader's relationship to the poem, and hence the

reader's relationship to their own subject formation. So for me the lyric poem is a profound and enduring historical practice that places the subject openly in a foundering.

TB: I'm trying to put this into the context of an example. It would be better for you to choose one, but what runs through my mind is that, from the stilnovisti through to the romantics, the subject in lyric is a threatened subject. It may be threatened by the movement of "spirits" through its body and its psyche in a kind of Averroistic sense with, say, Cavalcanti. It may be threatened in terms of its relationship to the other as in the sonnets, Shakespeare. What happens in—I hesitate to say what happens in Wordsworth or Coleridge—but it certainly isn't that the subject position is a unity. It is a unit, one speaks from a unit, but what emerges is multiple and implicated in all sorts of other moments. So just in terms of exemplifying what you were saying...

LR: Well, I'm not nearly as well-read in this area as you are...

TB: I'm not nearly as well-read as I pretend to be at times. (Laughter)

LR: We could all say that! But I'm thinking about the early Italian Renaissance, because I have been, in the past year or so, re-reading Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, and reading that tract in relationship to a southern European lyric tradition coming out of a tri-cultural Spain. Basically, this reading is dependent on a book by a woman named Maria Menocal, which I think is fabulous. Stacy Doris turned me onto this book a couple of years ago, *Shards of Love*. In it she talks about Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*. She talks about what it means to seize upon the vernacular as the voice of the lyric poem, in the context of a multi-lingual vernacular song tradition coming out of early mediæval Spain, the muwashshah, and in relation to early nation formation in mediæval Italy, slightly later. And, looking at Dante's own historical subject position as somebody in exile, somebody forced out of his own city for political reasons, what does it mean for him to choose to make a claim for writing in the vernacular of his city when he's exiled from that city? And what does it mean that in elevating the vernacular as the language of sincere poetry, as the language of lyric, he's basically describing something that's been going on in the southern European Arab and Jewish context for several hundred years at that point? He's describing a kind of poetry that has been circulating both popularly and at the court level, out of Spain through the trobar tradition in the south of France and into Italy. It's very complicated, the claims he's making and the reversal he's making in the relationship between the official

language of power and the vernacular. The claims are loaded at every single point. And they're loaded from the point of view of gender, because the vernacular song tradition that was going on in mediæval Spain was borrowing from a women's song tradition, an Arabic women's street language that was being appropriated into the lyric poems of a higher culture of literary circulation. So it's this bringing of the vernacular into the lyric poem, which is still the position that lyric is coming from, that really Wordsworth and Coleridge were just renewing. In Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* he's talking about using the language of the common people in poetry. That's what Dante was talking about. He's simply renewing the dynamic—this vernacular dynamic.

TB: Because lyric really begins in the vernacular.

LR: And the vernacular was not unilingual, either. Understanding that the vernacular is always this mixed...

TB: But Dante has to make an argument in Latin for using the vernacular.

LR: The vernacular had been used for years. The reason he wants to make an argument for using it, but in a purified, monocultural setting, has to do with the political positioning that he's lining up.

TB: It has to do with the university as well. It has to do with the fact that Latin is the language of learned discourse, and so at the University of Bologna, at the University of Paris, the cosmopolitanism would have been a Latin cosmopolitanism. Everyone—"the birds in their own latin"—everyone used Latin at a certain level of culture, which is the level of power.

LR: But what interests me about Dante is that he's reversing the relationship between the spoken vernacular and the Latin so profoundly that he says that spoken vernacular precedes Latin, and that Latin is a retrospective and projected construction. He's basically saying that the received narrative of romance languages—that there was one originating Latin which devolved over time into the various regional languages—he's saying that's entirely wrong. There was only ever a sort of rich, messed-up mixture of languages that then this false Latin of authority was formed out of, retrospectively. For Dante, Latin is inauthentic.

TB: But that false Latin is the language of the Law and the language of the Church.

LR: Yes. So he's revealing the language of Law and the Church as being constructed. As not being natural, which is just astounding, really. (Long pause)

TB: I would really like to talk about *The Men*. I was very surprised by what I found it doing. I know that when I heard it read a couple of times it had a pretty powerful effect, particularly on men.

LR: (Laughs)

TB: They tend to think that you're angry, and there is a rhetoric of anger that sort of enters, but what's really happening, I think, and correct me if I'm wrong... What occurred to me at some point was, "Oh! Yes! If you substituted 'women' for 'men,' this is how men talk about women." You can certainly talk about women in those terms without it seeming odd, or uncanny almost, but as a man reading the text, and being the object of the discourse, it's a very unusual experience.

LR: Women tend to find it hilarious.

TB: Yeah, well, I did too once I caught on.

LR: My non-poetry-reading extended female family can read that book and say "Now I finally know what you're talking about."

TB: My notes: "man as other," "man as a problem," "the question of man," "what is man," "what does man want"—I mean...

LR: Frankly, it's what women talk about all the time. Well, you know, when we're not talking about how to solve the problems of world history.

TB: But you're not talking about it within an official discourse where those questions seem to be legitimate.

LR: Well, from your point of view. (Laughter) Most of my life I've been involved in discussions with women about men. With my grandmother, with my mother, with my sister, with my sister-in-law, with my friends, and we're always trying to figure out what the fuck is going on with men anyways. And how do we conduct ourselves in relation to these problems.

TB: Okay, but I still think that one of the things that's happening in *The Men* is that you adopt a discourse that would not seem unusual if the position from which it was coming was male.

LR: No, of course not. I was reading Petrarch, among other stuff, when I was writing those poems. At a certain point I just realized how strongly I was actually identifying with the voice, so that became the point of entry. (Long pause)

TB: Earlier you mentioned trobar. That being a largely male phenomenon, there's also a strong sense of the unified ego in those texts. And it occurred to me that it appears unified because it's essentially collective. It's a "we." They're saying "I," but as in the *De vulgari eloquentia* they're really saying "we." They're saying "illustrious," "noble," "worthy," and so on. So they're speaking, then, from a position of power. Then I remembered the trobairitz, the women troubadours, who are the product of a particular moment of history that lets them get away with trobar. Because of the crusades, because of the demographics, they are allowed to own property. And so they are actually in a position—in this very limited region in the Rhône—in a position of some power, and they begin to write. And they speak an "I," and their "I" really is a personal "I." I guess there's a kind of collectivity, but they don't seem, in their writing—I'm relying on this book by Meg Bogin, *The Women Troubadours*—in their writing they're...

LR: Oh, yeah, I have that book. I found it on the sidewalk in Oakland! Honest to God.

TB: ...they don't display a need to be worshipped, and their writing is not setting men up in the position of adoration. In their lyrics they're talking about men from a position that questions, primarily, his absence. It's about the uncertainty of male love, its treachery, its infidelity, which is very different from what the men are doing. And it seemed to me the question of pronominal subjectivity can also be explored in the context of your book, *The Men*. You said that it's not a project work, that it's a personal work, and yet reading it, I didn't see much that appeared to be personal, partly because of the complexity of the subject position. It seemed to me that you were also speaking from a first-person singular that often is really plural, is a "we." But in this case it's male subjectivity as object that's being explored. Does that make sense?

LR: The “personal,” and a plural, complex first person don’t seem contradictory to me. I did write these poems more or less in the middle of writing the Soft Architecture texts, which were all first-person plural, “we,” and towards the end of writing *The Weather*, which was also first person plural. So that sense of a plural subjectivity was really the terrain I had been exploring for quite a while.

TB: So it sort of bleeds into this.

LR: I think it does. When I say it wasn’t project based, what I mean is, I just sat down and wrote poems in my notebook. There was no research and no...

TB: Yes, but there was, because of the use of Petrarch.

LR: Well, these were the books I had around me, you know, but I guess usually I’m more structured about my approach to research. I have questions and techniques, and I amass a great deal of material, but these I just started writing. I was writing them in relation to other texts, texts that sort of fell into my lap at the moment, that were just in my house. Or I was a house guest and my hosts had Pound’s Cavalcanti translations, for example. The very first poem in this book is a rip-off from Pound’s Cavalcanti, and I think I simply took the word “spirit” and replaced it with “men.” And I monkeyed around with it ever so slightly but it’s pretty, you know... I just saw this word, “spirit, spirit, spirit, spirit, spirit, spirit” and I’m thinking “What does this word mean?” So that’s the first poem I wrote, and it’s the first poem in the book, and the poems roughly come in the same sequence that I wrote them in, and they’re basically typed out of my notes, transcribed from my notebook into the computer, typed out and slightly edited, and there you have it.

TB: But there’s a structure nonetheless. My thoughts on the first section were that it does fit my earlier characterization of the book as polemical. The second piece is more like a meditation. In the third piece you move back into a kind of polemic. And then there’s something of a treatise, “A Record,” and then in the last piece you get something more, again, like a meditation. So some of the sections are softer, or gentler in their approach to the topic. Others are more harsh. (Long pause) You said you were reading Petrarch...

LR: I was also reading *De vulgari eloquentia*. I was reading Montaigne, and I was reading Sir Thomas Browne, his book *Religio Medici*, so I think all of those guys...

and there's no particular reason—that's just what I was reading, you know? I suppose Petrarch is the most obvious, choicewise, and Dante maybe too. I was just interested in the certainty of voice that was achieved stylistically. And it wasn't like I wanted to parody it. This wasn't meant as parody. I just *wanted* it.

TB: What I said earlier, that you could almost substitute “woman” for “man” . . . that's not quite right . . .

LR: That was a way for you to understand it, yes.

TB: But in fact, what's happening more often is simply that “the men” are being placed in the position that “the women” would be placed in in male discourse. But you couldn't simply change out the terms. (Pause) “Each man—I could write / His poem. He needs no voice.” (Long pause) “. . . I am preoccupied with grace / And have started to speak expensively—as in / Have joys / Which look like choice.” It's comic, too. “The Men's / Cocks / And their faces / As we do so / Fall upwards.” The penis is pretty funny, granted. I was thinking, reading this piece, because you say “joys” and “choice,” I was thinking of Molly Bloom, and her comments about the cock, that to her is like this oddity—it's a funny thing.

LR: Yes, it's a funny thing.

TB: “And their faces.” What about the faces? There's this notion of surface that persists throughout. (Long pause) “The / Men are enjambed.” “A man could learn a lot from a conchologist. . .”

LR: (Laughs)

TB: “Could learn amazement.”

LR: (Laughs) I do find parts funny, yes.

TB: The talking dog.

LR: I have a talking dog in almost every book, I think.

TB: No kidding. Really? I never noticed.

LR: Not in *XEclogue*. In *Debbie* there's a lot of dog activity.

TB: It works like a treatise, doesn't it? When you say "The Men"—let's just talk about the title, *The Men*—oh, and then it says "A Lyric Book," I hadn't noticed that—but *The Men*, it makes one think of a treatise, "On The Men," like Aristotle's *De Anima*, like Petrarch's, all those, I forget what they're called, but...

LR: I was intensely reading Montaigne at the time—there are all these essays, "On this" or "On that."

TB: Ah-ha, so Montaigne then, an essay "On The Men."

LR: So it's maybe like an essay...

TB: ...on The Men. I began to read it as kind of anti-*De vulgari eloquentia*. Which I think it is. "When a man rides with a demon, when he transmits, and snags, when a man feels his psyche work all over america, in its humble way, when he has no obligation, when he marches on, when a man marches on..."

LR: (Laughing) It's not very light-handed, is it?

TB: No, it's not. "Under any meridian I was born." The "I" is a "we." If you say that you were born "under any meridian," you must be plural. "...I was born / in the climate of them..."

LR: The pronoun itself...

TB: Do we want to talk about the pronoun?

LR: We could try...

TB: I went back and looked at Benveniste—it seemed pertinent to this discussion—the essay on the pronoun.

LR: Yes, it's an amazing essay. I didn't read that until last year but I felt I identified with what he was saying really thoroughly. I think he was saying something I hadn't been able to articulate but had perhaps been trying to work through in various texts I'd written.

TB: Well, okay, but I was going to comment, if we'd been a little more successful in talking about *The Men*, that I don't think the "I" in this text operates as the pronoun

that Benveniste is describing. It's not an "I" occurring in a moment of discourse. Because that can only happen in spoken discourse. So as soon as there's an author, or even a narrator, as there would almost seem to be, you've got something else going on with the "I." And, here, the "I" is slipping into the "we." So what is it, then, that differs in the notion of the "I" only emerging in the instance of discourse?

LR: I do think Benveniste is describing something that definitely happens in speech, that this shifter that's the pronoun is something that is continuously being given to the other in reciprocity. It's an almost utopian sensibility he's expressing. However, if you step back and look at, not the instance of discourse, of collective exchange, but at the institutional forms that are permitting and shaping that exchange, the fact is that in many, many situations there's not a reciprocity. That, for example, a woman could be denied the possibility of receiving and speaking this shifting pronoun position, which is what can happen, and does happen to different degrees. There are conventional permissions that are carried into any speech act and discursive moment, and I think that part of what *The Men* does is try to open up the problematics of that convention which does or doesn't permit the exchange of a speaking "I" as subject. I think that the "I" that is permitted, that the "I" that is assumed as being given to the female subject to utter and exchange is not the same "I" as the "I" that is given to a male subject. And for somebody—for Petrarch, for example, who was pretty much at the top of his heap—there is an "I" that circulates, and he can identify with Virgil, or whatever man he chooses to identify with, within a structure of power and authority and convention. And it's not problematical, particularly. And there is an "I" that a woman can assume that is also not problematical. But these are different "I's." I think one of the things that might be going on in *The Men* is that there's a lot of slippage between these kinds of "I's" that are already shaped to enter into a discursive moment. So as the writer of this book I'm not wielding the subject position, I'm not wielding the pronoun that's been given to me to wield.

TB: Only momentarily, parodically, here and there.

LR: I am sometimes, but it's like a slip, and it's also not a complete assumption of a more authorized masculine "I." So there's a lot of troubling. And there are not just two "I's," either. I'm not quite sure, because it's not something I schematized as I was writing it. It was something I was experiencing at a pretty visceral level and trying to play out experimentally as I was doing the work.

TB: Dante never slips—Dante, or whoever—never slips out of that position, except in moments, when you can catch him outside of it, but it's really rare. But Benveniste isn't, at least in that essay, engaging with that problematic. He's simply saying that the "I" comes into existence only in the instance of discourse. He does seem to be questioning the notion of a unified subject position existing outside of speech.

LR: Yes. He's questioning any sort of stable point or site of referentiality that the pronoun unproblematically points to. But in other work he is looking at the institutional shaping behind conventions of usage. The book on Indo-European institutions, that's what the entire book is about. I don't know when this essay was written, and I think that it was first published in a psychoanalytic context, in some sort of professional psychoanalytic review. Maybe he was pointing his argument in the direction of that practice.

TB: In the *De vulgari eloquentia* the question seems to be first of all, what is the illustrious vernacular, what is the vulgari eloquentia, but secondly, who has a right to speak it? And where? It's illustrious, but it's also courtly and curial. It has a legal existence, a juridical existence. You have a right to speak because the law allows you that right. He's very explicit about women not having it, in a number of instances, and usually in the context of it being ridiculous to think that a woman...

LR: Well, at the same time he situates women as its source in terms of maternity and first language acquisition.

TB: Whelping, as you call it, in *The Men*.

LR: (Laughs) Do I?

TB: Yes, you do. Apparently we haven't forgiven you for whelping us! (Laughter)

LR: It's a nice word, though.

TB: It's a great word...

LR: ...I can't remember using it...

TB: ...if you're not the object of it.

LR: This book was written for women to read.

TB: It is? Give me a break!

LR: Initially, you know, *The Men* was written for my girlfriends. The first people who read it were gay male friends and heterosexual women friends. So people who have had a certain kind of engagement with *The Men*.

TB: So I don't really have a right to read it. So my over-interpretation of it is actually an instance of...

LR: Maybe this is why—you said it makes lots of men really uncomfortable to read—maybe this is partially why. Maybe men, in a way, feel they don't have a right to read it and maybe they're not used to having that feeling, whereas one is used to having that feeling as a woman, unfortunately.

TB: Well it makes them uncomfortable to hear it. I don't know about reading it. But I certainly have witnessed discomfort at readings.

LR: I've had a lot of feedback about that too. (Long pause) It's really difficult for me to talk about this book in a direct way.

TB: I might have found better ways of asking about it, but now that I know I don't have the right to read it...

LR: (Laughs) Doesn't that make it even more tempting? That's why I read everything I read. Why would I read any of these texts if I had a right to read them?

TB: Earlier in this interview, when I said that there were certain concepts that repeat, the first thing that came to your mind was surface, which I wasn't thinking of at all. It seems to me that in your work the present has a relationship to time that the surface has to space.

LR: Actually, I was just looking through a stack of old notebooks, looking for material for a lecture that I have to write this week, and I found this interesting observation about Benveniste and the pronoun in utterance in the present. I was reading Saussure and really grappling with and getting a handle on his notion of the synchronic and diachronic axes and their intersection. And thinking of Benveniste's theory of utterance, articulation, I forget the exact word he uses, in relation to that synchronic/diachronic grid. And it seemed to me that the pronoun, the shifter, only ever has

reference in the present point of utterance. It is always renewed and given agency in the moment of utterance. And that moment of utterance is like a point of bisection, of a diachronic axis. So it is this moment of bisection of a temporal trajectory, or at least a sort of fantasized temporal trajectory proceeding linearly from past to future. Through the present. That structuring point of intersection, which is the present, is the moment of the pronoun. And that's the point where language becomes embodied through that seizing of the temporal.

TB: Language becomes embodied, but the subject comes into being in language.

LR: Which is the same thing. That's what Benveniste talks about in his essay on the subject too.

TB: I hadn't thought about it in terms of time before.

LR: He doesn't talk about time, but I was grappling to understand him in relation to Saussure, who strongly influenced him. And Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*—maybe it's not in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, maybe it's in *The Order of Things*—he talks about the Saussurean grid, the diachronic/synchronic. Foucault was one of Benveniste's students and was influenced by his work, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is Benvenistean. He very slightly shifts the vocabulary, but I now see it as a purely Benvenistean project. Even in terms of his analysis of institutions, which is what Benveniste was doing in *Indo-European Institutions*. He was bringing together these different moments of Benveniste that I was grappling to understand enough to say anything about earlier. We were talking about the psychoanalytic moment of this discourse around the pronoun and the subject, and its relation to institution critique and institution analysis as that unfolds in *Indo-European Institutions*. And maybe what Foucault is doing is taking those areas of discourse—the subjective and the institutional—and overlaying one over the other so that they can be seen more in relation to one another, or so they are becoming one another. So that the discourse instant, the moment of utterance, is always already, in that hackneyed phrase, an institutional event, an institutional frame that's permitted by, etcetera, etcetera. So I was trying to understand that because I was teaching that stuff, and then I started thinking about it in relation to the Saussurean grid and had this bit of an aha! moment. And it's always handy to have a diagram to draw on the blackboard, because it gives everyone in the room something to look at, and have issues about, and so that diagram helped us

think through the idea of the pronoun, the subject and the present in relation to time and language.

TB: How does that work in your writing?

LR: I don't know. I can't really explicate the exact relationship between my theoretical and research interests and how I write, what I write. I can talk about the kind of research that I'm carrying out because I know what it is, and I know what my questions are, but I can't provide a causal explanation of the relationship of the research to how a poem or a text is formed. I "take a leap"...

TB: Hang on a sec, though. If you think of what you're doing in the act of writing, in your writing, as a dialogue, in a sense, because you make frequent enough address to the reader and...

LR: ...or to a dog...

TB: ...to a dog, yeah...but if you put that into the context of the abundant use of the functioning of pronouns in your work, and if you think about that in Benvenistean terms, or in the terms that you just related, then there is almost an instant of discourse in the act of writing, even though it leaves a trace, even though what you wind up with is very different from speech. But then speech leaves a trace. Dialogue leaves a trace. So in that act of writing, is there a similar or same operation occurring?

LR: To what I just described?

TB: Yeah. In the actual act of writing there is a similar moment, is there not?

LR: Yes. There is. I've been working through this pronoun matter since my work first started being published, with *The Apothecary*. So even in that work, which is all first person, I kind of fell into this idea of using a first person that I didn't biographically identify with. Using the first person as an impersonal opening device, as a way of not pinning language to my experience but opening language to other experience. I'm not quite sure how I got to that idea, I'm not sure at all, but at that time I was reading a lot of Leslie Scalapino and a fair amount of William James and Stein and Lyn Hejinian and Steve McCaffery. But somehow all the stuff I was reading and the conversations I was having with my friends, Catriona and Christine, led me to the idea that I could use this "I" in a non-referential, and therefore, according to my thinking

at that time in my life, an anti-lyrical way. And it was a real turning point for me in my work. By the time I was writing *The Weather*, when I fell upon this first person plural, it really became this idea of posing a pronoun as a point of identification that was somehow really spectral, or other, rather than sewn up in a traditionally-conceived notion of subjectivity. It really opened for me and it became... I could think of this practice of the pronoun in very opened-up political terms, and I could think of the expansion of the field of subjectivity that such pronominal practice could invest as being really where I wanted to go with my work, and also as being the way in which the work functioned politically or socially.

TB: So that would seem to contradict my hypothesis.

LR: Repeat your hypothesis.

TB: It was a question of whether there is a similar or same occurrence in the act of writing as there is in the act of speaking according to Benveniste.

LR: I wouldn't say I'm against what you just said, because the identification that takes place within an act of speaking, within a seizing of the moment of the pronoun, it's also a structured identification. It feels natural, but it's a moment of agency that's enabled by an entire historicity, having to do with everything: family, community, economics, sexuality, etcetera. So usually when we speak there is a relatively unproblematic experience of assuming an "I," assuming a first person...

TB: If we're sane...

LR: Yes, or "if," "if"—there could be a million "ifs" there, really, and that sort of "normal" zone of unproblematic assumption of subjectivity probably doesn't exist, because we are all in some sort of skewed or troubled relationship to the assumption of subjectivity. At any point in your life there's some reason why you're not normal. You're in love, you're sick, you're politically dispossessed. If you're a young person trying to talk to your professor, to say "I" in that instance could seem the most false and over-determined thing you could do. If you're ill and have to speak to your surgeon, how do you evoke yourself? How do you speak a subjectivity into that context? It's always problematic, so I think that one of the things that writing does, it's not simply countering some sort of "normal" unproblematic zone, it's revealing the inherent ambivalence of that agency that's driving the appropriation of subjectivity in the instant. It's opening

up that ambivalent space, and I suppose giving it a kind of aesthetic frame, a ludic frame so it's both less and more dangerous than it often feels in quotidian existence. So no, I don't think that they're separate things, speaking and writing. They each seize an enunciated present. I think that that seizing, that identification, is never seamless, but we're supposed to act like it's seamless most of the time. The practice of writing is simply slowing down, opening up that discomfort and in so doing giving it a kind of spatial potency where something else can happen. That potency can be very funny, too. When I started writing "we" it just felt hilarious, so mawkish and over the top. There's always the "royal we" as a kind of sickening undertone. So there's all this ostentatiousness and a false sense of collectivity. But isn't that the case any time you might say "we"? Or even "I"? Only you smooth it over.

TB: The "we" in "Seven Walks," which predominates almost entirely—there are moments when you're speaking from the position of oneself, the "I," but not many—is not a collective "we." It's a very specific "we." It's myself and my guide.

LR: Yeah, that's a big shift from the "we" of *The Weather*.

TB: I first encountered that work in the publication *Giantess*. One of the walks.

LR: At that point I hadn't even conceived of it as a walk.

TB: It struck me as something that really needed to be expanded.

LR: It took a few years for me to get back to it.

TB: What brought "Seven Walks" to mind was your comment about ostentatiousness and being over the top, and that kind of flaunting of a nineteenth century, or even an eighteenth century—the costumes seem more eighteenth century than nineteenth century—personhood. But in the context of what also seems pretty clearly to be Vancouver, and you walking with your dog, who talks.

LR: Yeah. You want me to comment on that? I don't know what to say about that, other than "yeah." When I was writing those works I started out purely just to—I really like writing prose, but I have terrible problems with narrative. Something about the intimate "we" dynamic in those walks gave enough of a tension to at least substitute for a narrative, for a certain duration. So I didn't really need to have a story. There is just sort of a tensile plural in movement, and that was enough.

TB: There's a strong sense of narration, though.

LR: What I was trying to do was to amuse myself. Just to see what I could do. At first I didn't have any agenda at all, other than "Okay, I'm going to write 250 words a day of this sort of fakey narration and see where it goes." And that's how I wrote the first one. And then in the interim I read Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* and became really interested in the genre of the walk, and realized that what I had already written was in fact a walk, and that I could develop that. So my reading filled me in on a way in which I could conceive of what I'd already done, so that I could continue with the tone I had established, and a version of the style I had established, having discovered this genre, and how it circulated in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature as a genre, as a device. It gave me some confidence. I could name what it was that I was doing and so continue with it. So that's really what I did. They were all published as they were written, pretty much. The second two or three in *Front* magazine. So I was just exploring. But I'd say that that sort of relationship between my reading and historical research and my writing practice would be fairly typical, that at first I'm just winging it, doing things more or less instinctually. Not out of nothing—my sense of style and so forth is totally formed by my reading. But it's usually only retroactively that I can figure out what it is I've been writing so that then I can open it further and continue with it.

TB: Rereading "Seven Walks" led me to think about writing and pleasure and, also looking at your essay "Lastingness," the way in which some texts operate as a kind of opiate. They're so rich, and that's what you want in reading them, a kind of pleasure that wouldn't be provided if they were discursive. For instance, in Henry James there are descriptive moments that operate like that. They almost shouldn't be written. I'm trying to approach the notion of pornography, because I know from previous conversations, and also from "Lastingness," of your interest in *The Story of O*.

LR: I hadn't yet read *The Story of O* when I was writing "Seven Walks." I'd maybe read some excerpts in that Grove Press anthology taken from the various erotic texts from the Olympia Press. So I think I'd read whatever excerpt they had from *The Story of O* in there, but I'd never had my hands on the whole book. But I had read that one called *The Image*, which was also written under a pseudonym, Jean de Berg, something like that, do you know that book? Similar period, mid-twentieth-century, French, kind of high-end porno, sado-masochistic triangles.

TB: Is that Réage?

LR: I don't know who it was. I don't know if it's her. I actually haven't done much research into it. I read the book. I lent it to a student and didn't get it back. How could I go chasing after my porno?

TB: "Seven Walks" has a gloss. It resembles some of the automatic texts of the surrealists, like *Soluble Fish*, but it also carries the taint of the nineteenth-century "yellow book."

LR: Even though I hadn't read all of those texts, it's an area of reading that I've always been really interested in. There's a guilty pleasure involved, not because of its erotic referentiality, but because of its stylistic over-the-top-ness—a pleasure that made it more attractive to me given my schooling in modernism. From an Anglo high-modernist point of view, this tradition of French high-end erotic literature is very problematic. In almost any way that you can imagine it it's problematic. I was reading a lot of Swinburne too, and Swinburne's prose. *Lesbia Brandon*. That was a really big text for me. Decadence as a historical style and as a cultural practice is something I've always intuitively gone towards. In part, initially maybe, out of a bratty contrariness, but really just because I enjoyed reading it. So I thought, "Well, why should I deny myself the pleasure of reading these texts just because nobody else wants to take them seriously." And then one of the really interesting things that's pretty hard to ignore is that most of the people who were writing these texts were not straight men. This is a tradition that women and queer people have shaped, so the relationship of the decadent text to sexuality was a really radical one for me. I was never really much of a reader of what now gets called French feminism—Kristeva and Cixous and Irigaray. I read little bits of their work, but I was never deeply into it. But I think in a way that my interest in French erotic literature has to do with that sort of pleasurable opening of the materiality of the text that Kristeva was talking about. She talks about Céline and James Joyce but she could just as well be talking about Violette Leduc and Laclos and Pauline Réage, even Michèle Bernstein, that alternate stylistic tradition. It still interests me a lot, even the fact that it's not really very widely known among anglophone readers. It's now very obscure, but these people were hugely famous in their time. They were not obscure writers. They were winning major literary prizes, were distributed in mass markets—speaking of Pauline Réage or Violette

Leduc. And yet they've just been dropped because they don't fit into our paradigm of femininity and our paradigm of what the woman writer, the woman intellectual, performs culturally. It's still so suffocatingly puny and under-nourished. I don't think it's improved a single bit and, for me, reading these texts gives me hope, you know? That there's an opened potential for a lived female subjectivity as it circulates through intellectual and textual life. So I like to go around promoting this porno. (Laughter) Lending it to my students until I get busted.

TB: In terms of pornography, Réage is writing what could be characterized as pornography, partly because, as you point out, she's writing it for Jean Paulhan.

LR: Yes, but Pauline Réage—Dominique Aury—was writing a lot anyway. She wasn't a non-writer who just happened to write this text to turn on her boyfriend. She was somebody with a profound and seriously developed investment in the history of literature and translation. She was a senior editor with Gallimard, she was Blanchot's main editor, she was translating seventeenth-century English metaphysical poetry. She edited a number of serious anthologies of poetry in France.

TB: I wasn't trying to diminish her achievement. I'm just saying that in terms of all of the texts that you're talking about this is the one that focuses on eroticism in a way that might not be as central to the kind of decadence you were describing. Although there is an equation between eroticism and decadence, through the channels of pleasure...

LR: I feel the Réage text functions as political allegory as well. I haven't really developed this, but I was reading Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*, in relation to *The Story of O*. What this text is coming out of is the context of occupied Fascist France. Réage had been on the right then she shifted sides. She worked in the underground. Some of her colleagues were murdered by the Nazis. That was her world. I feel, in a way, that what she was writing was one way of talking about what was happening in French political life at that time, and it's also a way of talking about what was happening to female intellectuals in French cultural life at that time. I think there are many, many ways of reading that text and all of them are structured into the writing. They're not readerly wishfulness. And insofar as she did write the text for her lover, Paulhan, he also would have been somebody who was more than capable of reading on all those levels as well. Those readings were also meant for him as somebody who shared that

context. But she was not the only one in her circle who chose to express her intellectual and political life in the form of an erotic text. It was something that was going on. Certainly Bataille did it as well, and he was part of her intimate circle. I think this is very interesting work. Susan Sontag wrote about it, Angela Carter wrote about it, but now it doesn't really get considered. There are crappy movies that get made of it from time to time, that exploit the narrative. (Pause) I've never written an overtly pornographic text, but as you point out there's something about the stylistic surface that I'm interested in producing that pertains to pornography—something having to do with description. I mean, a pornographic text is just purely descriptive, really. Not much happens. We know what does happen. It just has to repeatedly happen. (Laughter) Kind of banal, and so the only thing that brings any interest to it is the mode of description.

TB: The work you read last night at Co-op Books—the last piece that you read, which you announced as being, I thought, in some way part of the same project as the one that preceded it, the one that draws on Lucretius... But maybe I misunderstood that, because it didn't seem like part of the same project as the Lucretius work.

LR: It's not directly translating, no. Well, I mean, for me, what *On The Nature of Things* does, right from the opening hymn to Venus, is raise the problem of the relationship between nature and politics and ask the question, in the context of the political and in the context of nature: What is change? And then the poem tries to answer this question in various ways. Lucretius talks about it in terms of love, in terms of disease, in terms of war, in terms of geography, in terms of weather, etcetera. But it's the same dynamic playing out in each section. And I've just started to gradually realize that those are questions that I've been asking in my work too, over the years of writing—the relationship of nature to politics and the question, What is change? You can see that pretty clearly starting with *XEclogue*. That is the motivating triad of problems, relationships, and it's just continued through all my work. So I think that reading Lucretius has given me insight into this. I recognize that his problem has also been my problem, but I haven't been able to articulate it as specifically to myself. It has come out sideways through my interest in genre, but not as a set of questions that I could ask more directly. I feel like the work that I'm working on right now, that doesn't sound Lucretian in its vocabulary, in its diction, in its musicality, is in fact directly working through those problems.

TB: What is his answer to the question of change?

LR: Well, this is where he's Epicurean, and so he uses Epicurus's theory of the *clinamen*. And this is what Marx grabs onto in Epicurus and Lucretius as well. Marx is also confronting the problem of agency. If this universe is purely physical or material, and is working following mechanistic patterns of cause and effect, then everything is determined, so how can change occur? So that's Marx's problem and it's Lucretius's and Epicurus's problem, and Epicurus as an atomist is breaking the problem down to the level of the atom, and he's saying that there's an unforeseeable swerve that's inherent to the nature of atomic matter but which is completely unpredictable. And it's this swerve that guarantees freedom. So it's a really ancient problem, like the relationship between fate and free will, but brought into political and material contexts. It's not staged in terms of the drama of the individual psyche. It's staged as the vast drama of human and other life on the planet.

TB: But also—and I've noticed this—when change happens...

LR: ...it's fucking devastating...

TB: ...it happens suddenly, as in the context of a negotiation, for instance, or a relationship, when change actually happens, you couldn't immediately identify its causes.

LR: No.

TB: And time suddenly moves very quickly—or events move quickly within time, I guess I would rather say, because time actually slows down in some ways. So that's the *clinamen*?

LR: Yes.

TB: And in what you read last night you're addressing those same problems.

LR: Yes, but not with any... I really am just writing that work right now so it's really hard for me to say what it's doing, because if I knew what it was doing I wouldn't have to write it, but that's the terrain that I'm interested in. I mean, a lot of what I was reading last night has to do with the body, so the question of the body becomes the terrain of this nature/politics dynamic. That's been the long-term problem that feminism addresses, but it seems like in the history of the address of this problem,

of the relationship of nature to politics within the body, it's always been looked at as a special problem of difference. Only those who are marked as Other have to deal with the body, officially speaking. We know that's not true, of course, but institutions found themselves on that false premise. It's become really interesting for me, who's educated myself within a feminist intellectual tradition, to recognize the most dynamic and difficult problems within that tradition as being present within this text of Lucretius. And for me it's helped to open up the discourse of feminism beyond some sort of "special" sector and into a general philosophical question. And this reading of Lucretius, and the gradual realization of this dynamic that I'm describing that I see in the text, it's opening for me into the terrain of a feminist philosophical thought, and has also been happening during a period of my biological life when I've been going through major change, even illness. And so the questions become more lived, and that also becomes very interesting in terms of my history as a reader of philosophy and as a participant in the philosophical questions. Through this Lucretius work I've been feeling like the terrain of the questions of philosophy is the terrain of my body. It doesn't solve any of the problems to have that realization—it doesn't sew anything up tidily, that's for sure—but it's giving me a renewed impetus to want to face these problems and find a language for them.

TB: When I mentioned the presence of a talking dog in a couple of instances in your writing, you said that there was almost always a talking dog, which I thought was rather curious. But I noticed last night in your reading, in that last piece, that there was a talking dog—at least if the fact that you were talking to the dog implied that the dog could talk back.

LR: My longest-term relationship has been with a dog! (Laughter)

TB: Did you hear that, Rosa? Yes!

LR: In my domestic life the dog is the constant. But no, there's this funniness, and you know the sceptics were dogs.

TB: That's true, cynics anyway.

LR: Cynics! The cynics were dogs. The sceptics were on a porch, weren't they? Yeah, dogs and porches the two great topics! (Laughter) No, there's a dog presence. It's the Agamben question, you know, what is an animal? And what is the breach that we

project as being existent between the human and the animal? When you live with an animal that question is in your mind every day, in some way, “Why do I think I’m different from this animal?” It seems less and less apparent that there ought to be any reason. Of course, with non-dog-liking friends you play it down quite a lot. (Laughter) Animals are such mysteries, but they’re also really the mystery that we are to ourselves—the mystery of embodiment and mortality and co-existence. And then the observation in dogs of the life of power is so interesting—speaking about the dog’s relationship with other dogs—because you’re always having to let the animal have its social life, and so you have to learn how to read animal social interactions. So that’s very interesting, too—watching how dogs communicate with one another. We can only have a tiny access to that communication, because it’s happening on so many levels that we can’t perceive at all. The level of scent, for example, what the hell can we ever know about how dogs communicate via scent? We can’t know anything, really. They have all these modes of communication that we can’t participate in. But we can’t participate in most of our own modes of communication either! (Laughter)

## TOM RAWORTH / Three Poems

### DOMINANT SACRIFICES BETWEEN THE OPTIONS ARE THEREFORE IN COST AND IN SCHEDULE RISK

nothing enthuses him any more while being drunk he promises  
de surmonter son handicap grâce au soutien indéfectible de sa  
charm to bring members of the west german industrial elite to her bed  
for the price of revenge and self-respect sometimes  
son épouse et leurs trois enfants vivent depuis peu  
aux frontières du réel et de l'imaginaire entretenu par  
laughter song and sex-without-guilt while poor  
history has triggered a new set of tragic events including  
a frantic phone call from her sister who is being held  
pour écrire et se reposer de sa vie parisienne  
dont le visage lui est familier elle pense reconnaître  
un employé de mairie et poète à ses heures perdues  
changing history has triggered a new set  
of a more homicidal bent after the map  
les déclarations officielles font état de simples gripes  
à la fois instance de régulation et arène  
they can hike out to get help next morning  
une étrange prophétie annonçant son retour

## **EVER SO MANY**

slums in turn will continue indicated but only when the internet user to zoom  
rio suffers most from a lack of information criterion because  
in the same narrow strip of land appear middle-class neighborhoods and slums  
today slums have the same status as districts  
goal is to increase the degree of qualification of the data for that by clicking  
user receives the first key information such as neighborhoods  
zoom through the sub-districts with its streets  
and only then the favelas

## **DRINK**

something they have already heard

switches hats more writing

too many interests in helter-skelter order

waves etcetera meaning escapes

near hear it in all directions

a dip in proper name

a dictaphone of greek antiquity

change unchanged

# JAKE KENNEDY / Futuromania

for NFP

“As soon as someone dies, (there is a) frenzied construction of the future  
(shifting furniture, etc.): futuromania” —Roland Barthes

*“Where is the source of light?  
It varies, as the gnomon.  
It transports the object in the  
form of a shadow. It is the  
object; this is what we will  
call the miracle” —Robin Blaser*

1.

all so's [conversational]

humbled by the suddenness of darkening:

a blown fuse—

as if a shadow-house replaced the current one

when hearing the name “Lorca” or “Wal-Mart”—

immersed in the great and inconsequential alike,

elegy *and* mashed potatoes

2.

for instance, [matter of fact] two bees trapped under a coffee cup—

a description of Vincent's left ear at Arles—

then a scene of miners whispering within the collapse—

to long for, now, what?—

an immediate redemption—

any mode of release—

or more of that/the same fear in order to escape the fear of soon having to escape a  
newer fear—

3.

of Flaubert to Colet, [epistolary]

as in “Because I always sense the future,

the antithesis of everything

is before my eyes”—

this, then, as well:

the struck match that

cues a greater darkness, too

4.

gallows in the public square—[informational]

for those who would explore “doings”

the head (offered like a lantern)

ultimate survivor (our useless desire as trunk)

in its own nakedness and passivity:

a guillotine that longs to say “I’m not hungry anymore!”

and longs not to say

5.

that red apple is twisted [avuncular] in two by that farmer's hands

the split itself means appetite:

good or bad or *or?*...

only in this (the or) do I have everything to say /

and only in this am I saying it:

the split is the materialization of the *predicament*:

seek out that nothing!

6.

list alleyway microwaves, list the elegance of cigarette foil, list assholes pressed on  
photocopier glass—[categorical]

what is 'I' doing (anything *better*?) when it types...

in time?

what is I doing when it types in time anything better?—

each second, wait!—

the poet's ethics:

*to want to live but only in order to write a little better!*

7.

as when chance trumps chance by sending the playing cards out of the shuffle and  
into the air [playful]

a wind inside the curtains that looks fake while the fan's breeze appears real

next it's words leaving the bedroom window

heading on into other mouths in other bedrooms

and in *their* order

with the original lovers saying:

come back / to us / soon /

8.

neither accept nor denunciate a longing for wholeness—[didactical]

beyond rivalries, at least—

without its own stomach—

some (as yet) great, unhungry solitude

the yippee-ki-yay of the wordless—

let that wanting be for contraries

that there are right and true directions but only not | for | us

## NICOLE MARKOTIĆ / Sketching the Impossible

Robert Kroetsch (June 26, 1927—June 21, 2011)

Robert Kroetsch was born and raised in Heisler, Alberta. He studied at the Universities of Alberta and Iowa. He taught literature and creative writing at the University of Manitoba, the University of Calgary, and the State University of New York in Binghamton. One of his novels, *The Studhorse Man*, won the 1969 Governor General's Award for Fiction, and his poetry book, *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, was nominated for the same, in poetry, in 2001. He travelled a great deal, and was celebrated in Germany, other parts of Europe, and elsewhere. While in Binghamton, he co-founded the pivotal journal *Boundary 2*, introducing postmodernism and theory to North American writers and critics. In 2004, he was made Officer of the Order of Canada. In 2011, he received the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award and the WGA Golden Pen for lifetime achievement. A tremendous listener, mentor, supporter of the literary arts, an excellent representative of Canada to the rest of the world, his writing reached out to many—emotionally, intellectually, artistically.

Fond of paraphrasing Stein—"If you can do a thing, why bother?"—Robert Kroetsch wrote away from the likely story and into the impish and the uncanny, away from the impositional and into the positional. In his novels, Kroetsch used the tall tale, magic realism, the masculinist narrative, and various serious and hilarious historical up-endings. In his poetry, he interrogated genre, questioning the rhythms of poetry and the prose of narrative, flabbergasting and astounding readers. Kroetsch encouraged thinking *about* as much as *in* writing; he persuaded readers and writers to challenge the expected; and he celebrated the intense and glorious conversations that ensue when the idea, the word, and the story meet on the page.

So much of what I know as a writer, I learned from Robert Kroetsch—in person or from reading his words. Many in the past few months have written about how important this singular writer was to each: as a reader, as a writer. Laura Moss says that Kroetsch's "sense of place and sense of play have permeated Canadian writing." Rudy Wiebe says that Kroetsch made us think in strange and different ways, that he "told

us our stories—our kinds of stories—in a new kind of way.” Aritha van Herk writes to me that “we’ve lost our best voice and our best friend.”

“Sketches of a Lemon” first appeared in *The Malahat Review* #54, in 1980. In this poem, Kroetsch plays off Wallace Stevens and plays with Gertrude Stein: the visual still life, the impossibility of offering more than a “sketch” of any *thing*, the suggestiveness of desire, the assumed narrative that builds through serial pacing. Stopping just short of Stevens’s thirteen, Kroetsch poetically “measures” a lemon, ending on a lyric image that contradicts his own entertaining grammatical interruptions.

In *Seed Catalogue*, Kroetsch writes that, after taking the storm windows off the house, “Then it was spring. Or no: / then winter was ending.” I hear an echo from the final Stevens stanza in “It was evening all afternoon.” But Kroetsch’s poem does more than “look” at a lemon; the poet compares, smells, kisses, prepares, consumes, and muses over the lemon. Up until readers come to the section 4 list of fruits that the poem does *not* sketch, Robert Archambeau says the poem appears as “a kind of attempt at negative definition” which then transforms and “we see that all along, without our knowledge, the list or catalog had been functioning in ways we hadn’t suspected, inciting the appetites rather than providing definition.”

I pay tribute, here, to Robert Kroetsch, who unfailingly incited our literary appetites; his absence compels us to covet just one more lemon-shaped hour.

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## ROBERT KROETSCH / Sketches of a Lemon

1.

A lemon is almost round.  
Some lemons are almost round.  
A lemon is not round.

So much for that.

How can one argue that a lemon  
is truly a lemon,  
if the question can be argued?

So much for that.

I said, to Smaro  
(I was working on this poem),  
Smaro, I called, is there  
(she was in the kitchen)  
a lemon in the fridge?  
No, she said.

So much for that.

2.

As my father used to say,  
well I'll be cow-kicked  
by a mule.

He was especially fond of  
lemon meringue pie.

3.

I went and looked at Francis Ponge's poem  
on blackberries. If blackberries can be  
blackberries, I reasoned, by a kind of analogy,  
lemons can, I would suppose, be lemons.

Such was not the case.

4.

Sketches, I reminded myself,  
not of a pear,  
nor of an apple,  
nor of a peach,  
nor of a banana  
(though the colour  
raises questions),  
nor of a nectarine,  
nor, for that matter,  
of a pomegranate,  
nor of three cherries,  
their stems joined,  
nor of a plum,  
nor of an apricot,  
nor of the usual  
bunch of grapes,  
fresh from the vine,  
just harvested,  
glistening with dew –

Smaro, I called,  
I'm hungry.

5.

What about oranges?

At least an orange  
looks like an orange.

In fact, most oranges  
bear a remarkable resemblance  
to oranges.

6.

Smaro is rolling a lemon on the breadboard.  
The breadboard, flat, horizontal, is motionless.  
The lemon rolls back and forth on the motionless surface.  
Smaro's hand moves horizontally, back and forth,  
over the rolling lemon.

One could draw a diagram of the three related objects,  
deduce therefrom a number of mechanical principles.

7.

I had a very strong desire  
to kiss a lemon.  
No one was watching.  
I kissed a lemon.

So much for that.

8.

I bought a second-hand car –  
Okay, okay.

9.

If someone asked me,  
how is a lemon shaped?

(the salmon  
(the oven  
(the lemon

I'd say the lemon is shaped  
exactly like an hour.

(Now we're getting somewhere.)

10.

The lemon cure.

In each glass

mix: 1 stick cinnamon  
1 teaspoon honey  
2 cloves  
2 jiggers rum  
1/2 slice lemon  
hot water to taste

Repeat as necessary.

11.

Poem for a child who has just bit into  
A halved lemon that has just been squeezed:

see, what did I tell you, see,  
what did I tell you, see, what  
did I tell you, see, what did  
I tell you, see, what did I  
tell you, see, what did I tell  
you, see, what did I tell you,  
see, what did I tell you, see,  
what did I tell you, see, what  
did I tell you, see, what did  
I tell you, see, what did I  
tell you, see, what did I tell  
you, see, what did I tell you

One could, of course, go on.

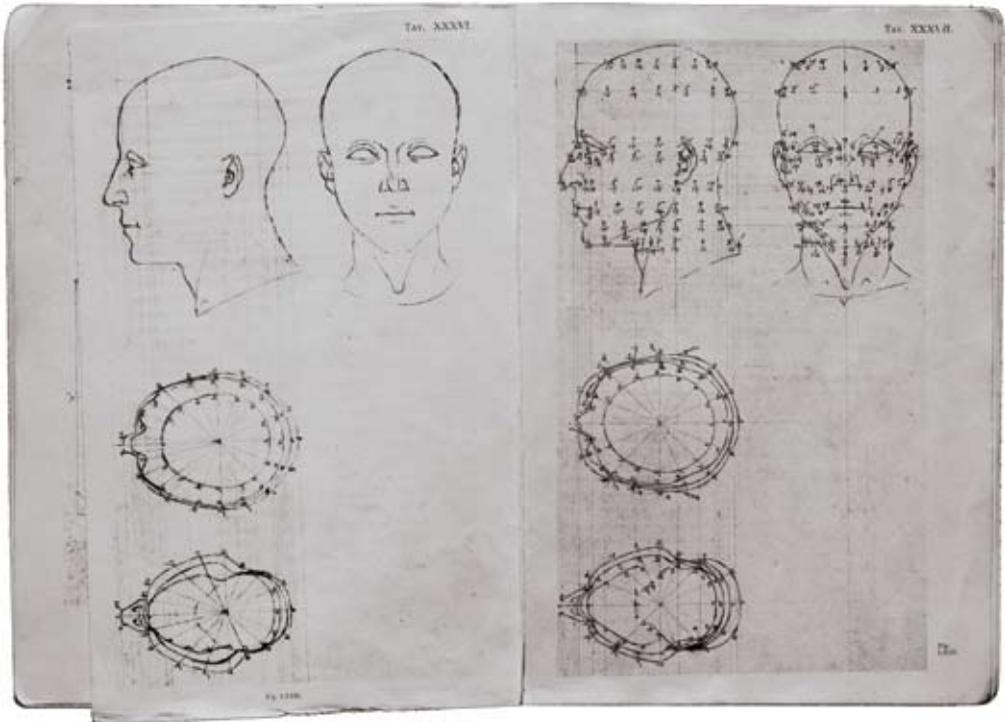
12.

This hour is shaped like  
a lemon. We taste its light

on the baked salmon.  
The tree itself is elsewhere.

We make faces, liking the  
sour surprise. Our teeth melt.

# ROBERT KEZIERE / The Means of Making: Documenting Geoffrey Smedley's Machine Room



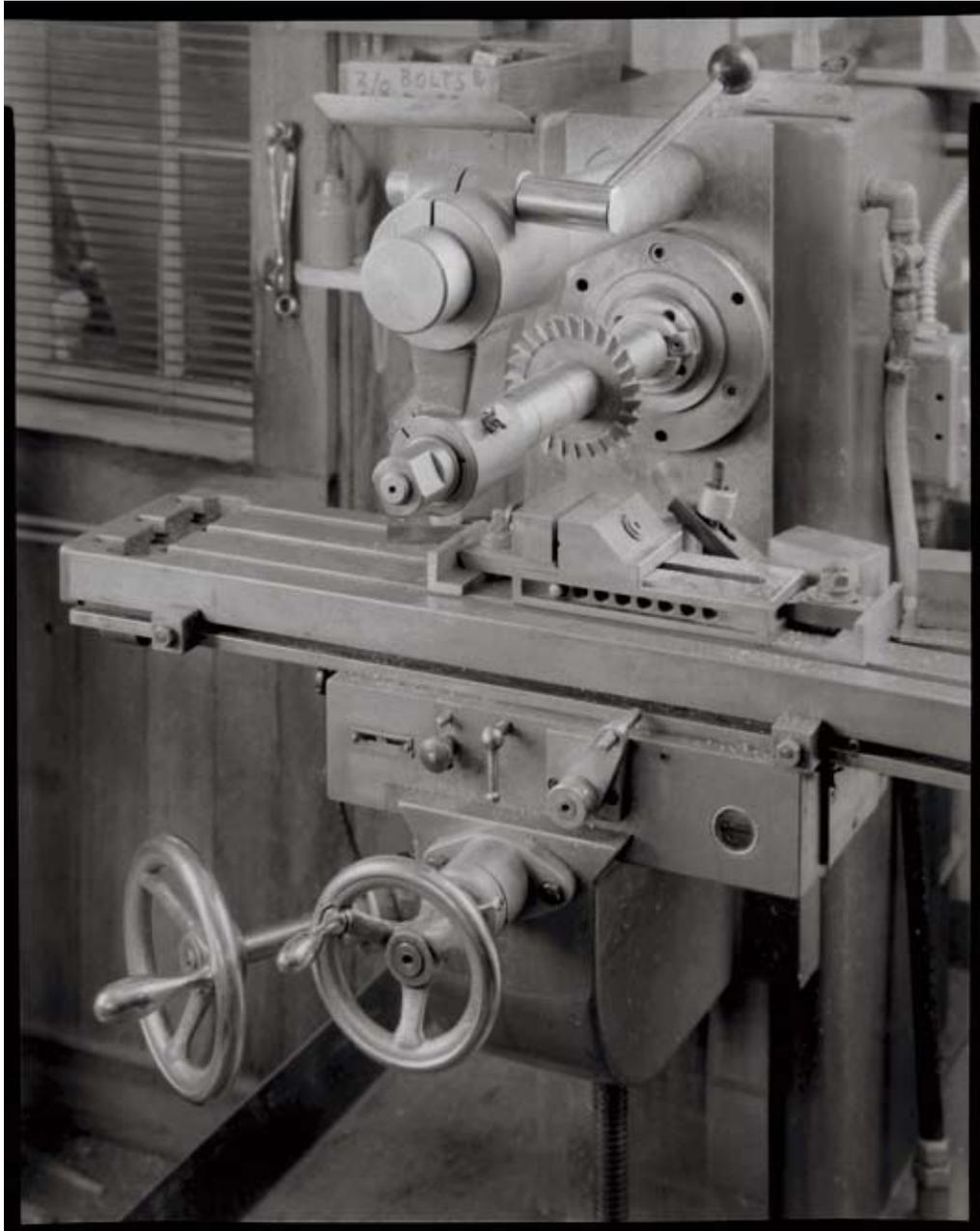
Piero della Francesca, Sectioned head in *De Prospectiva Pingendi*



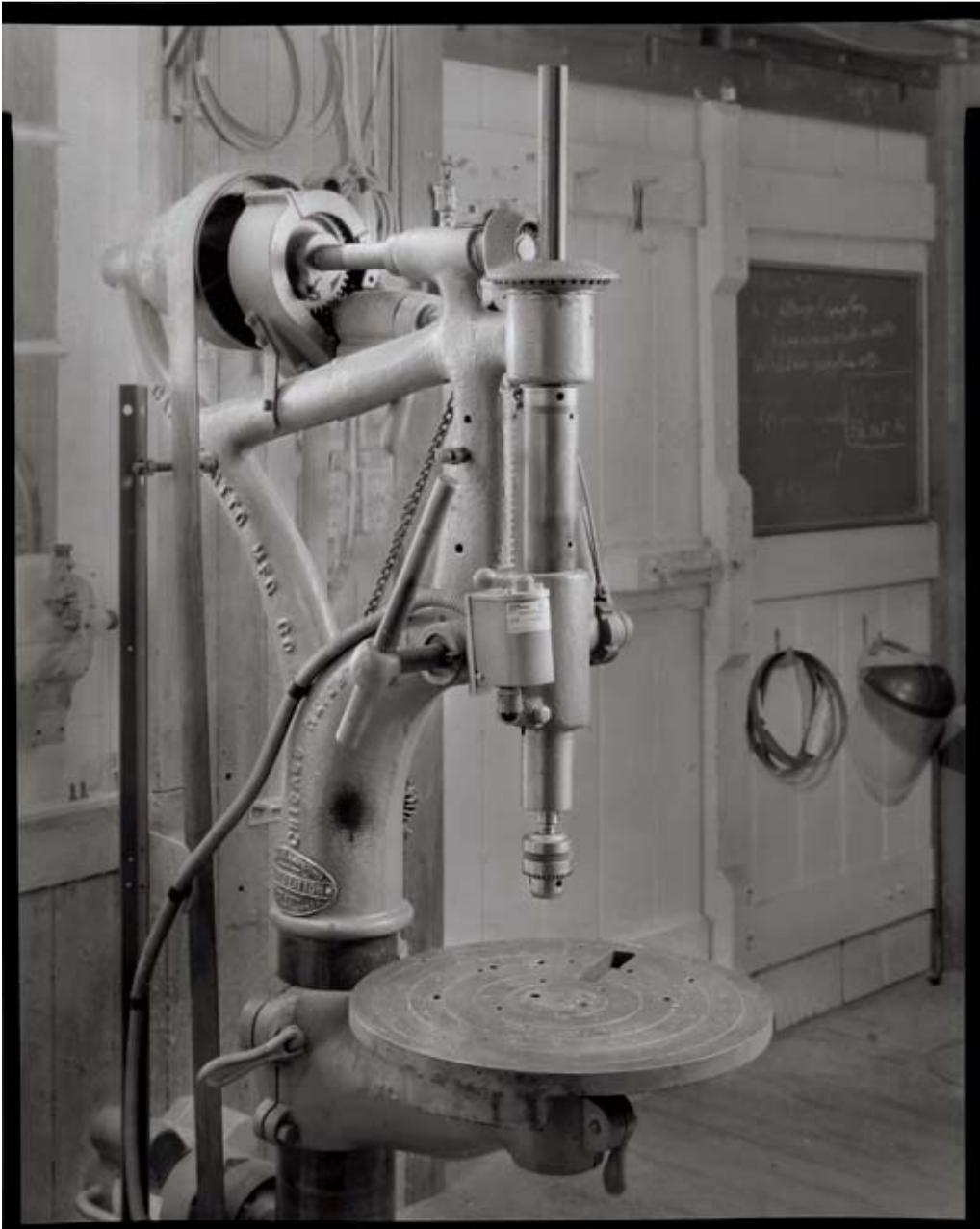
Workshop backdoor with dogs, drills, and wrenches



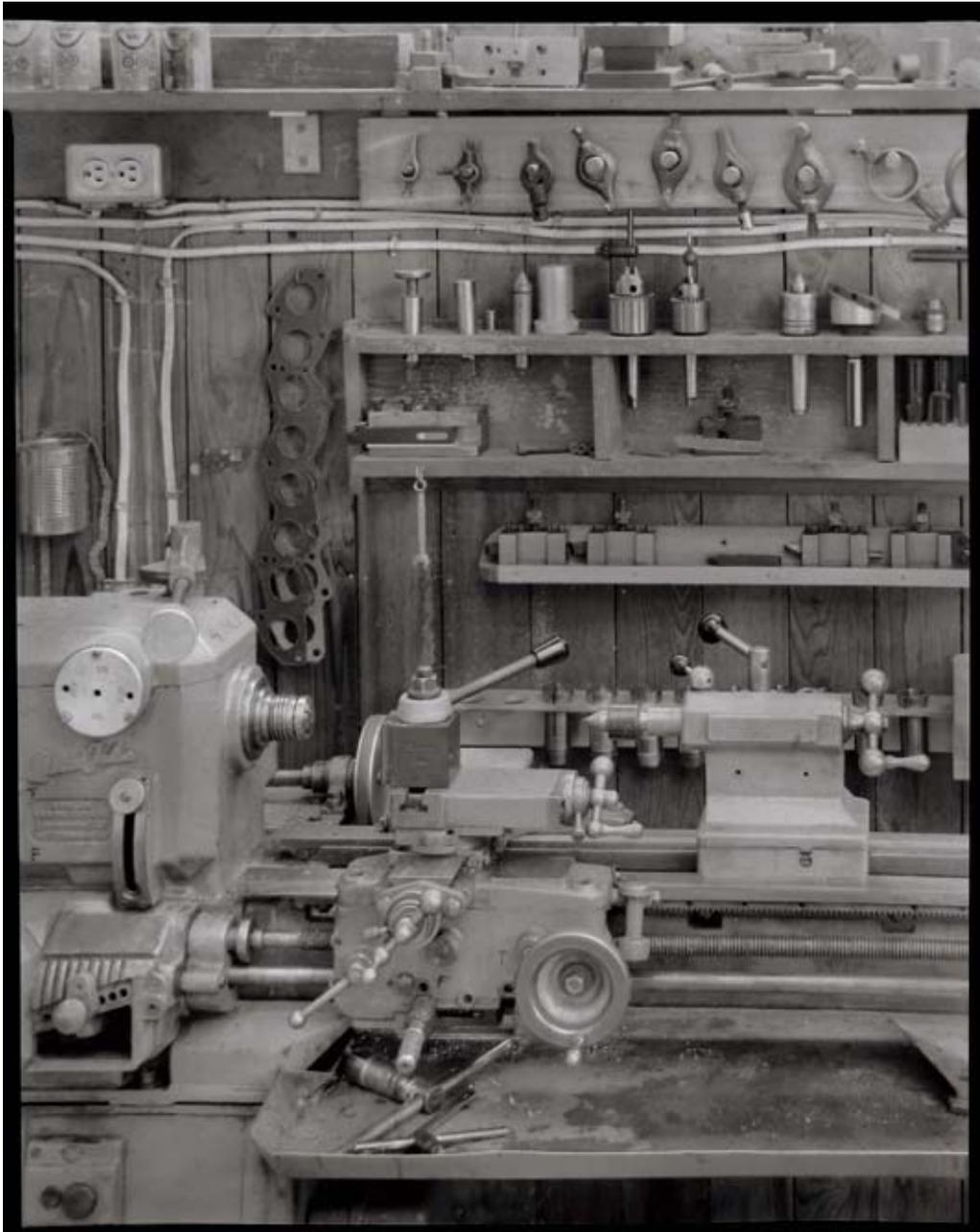
Boring bars, dividing heads, rotary tables, chucks, collett fixtures; Arranged in memory of *L'Encyclopedie*, Diderot et D'Alembert



Tom Senior horizontal milling machine, c. 1950; Manufactured by Tom Senior (Liversedge) Ltd., Yorkshire, UK; Bought in Vancouver, 2008



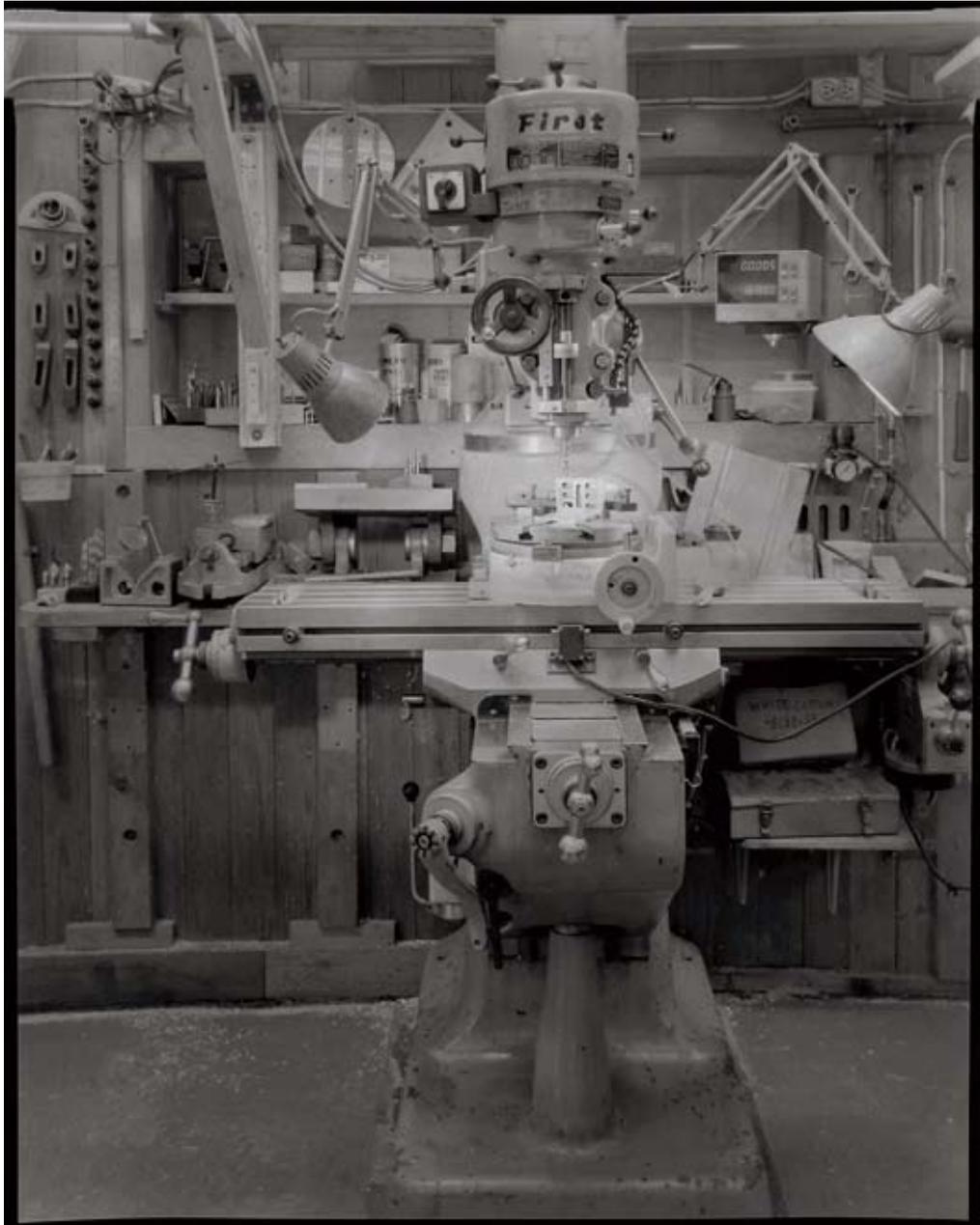
Drilling machine, c. 1880; Manufactured by Canedy Otto Mfg., Chicago Heights, IL; Imported by Alfred Litton Machine Tool Manufacturer, 372-374 Old Street, London, UK; Found in a field in West Sussex; Bought in 1960 and restored by Geoff Smedley



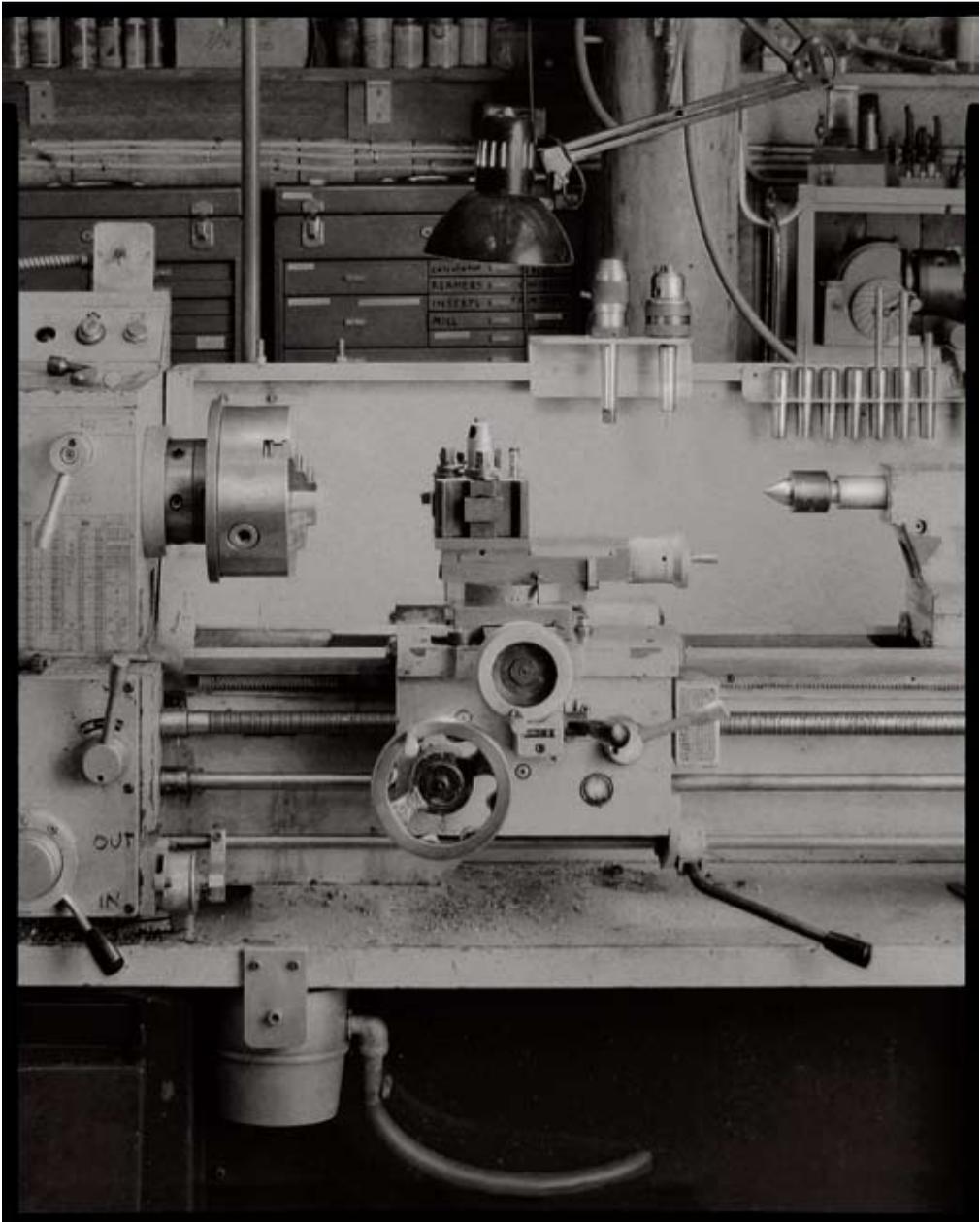
Little John 5" lathe (6" UK standard), c. 1950; Manufactured by Ragland Engineering, Nottingham, UK; Bought in West Sussex, 1960; Rack of lathe chucks, dogs, and collets on the wall behind



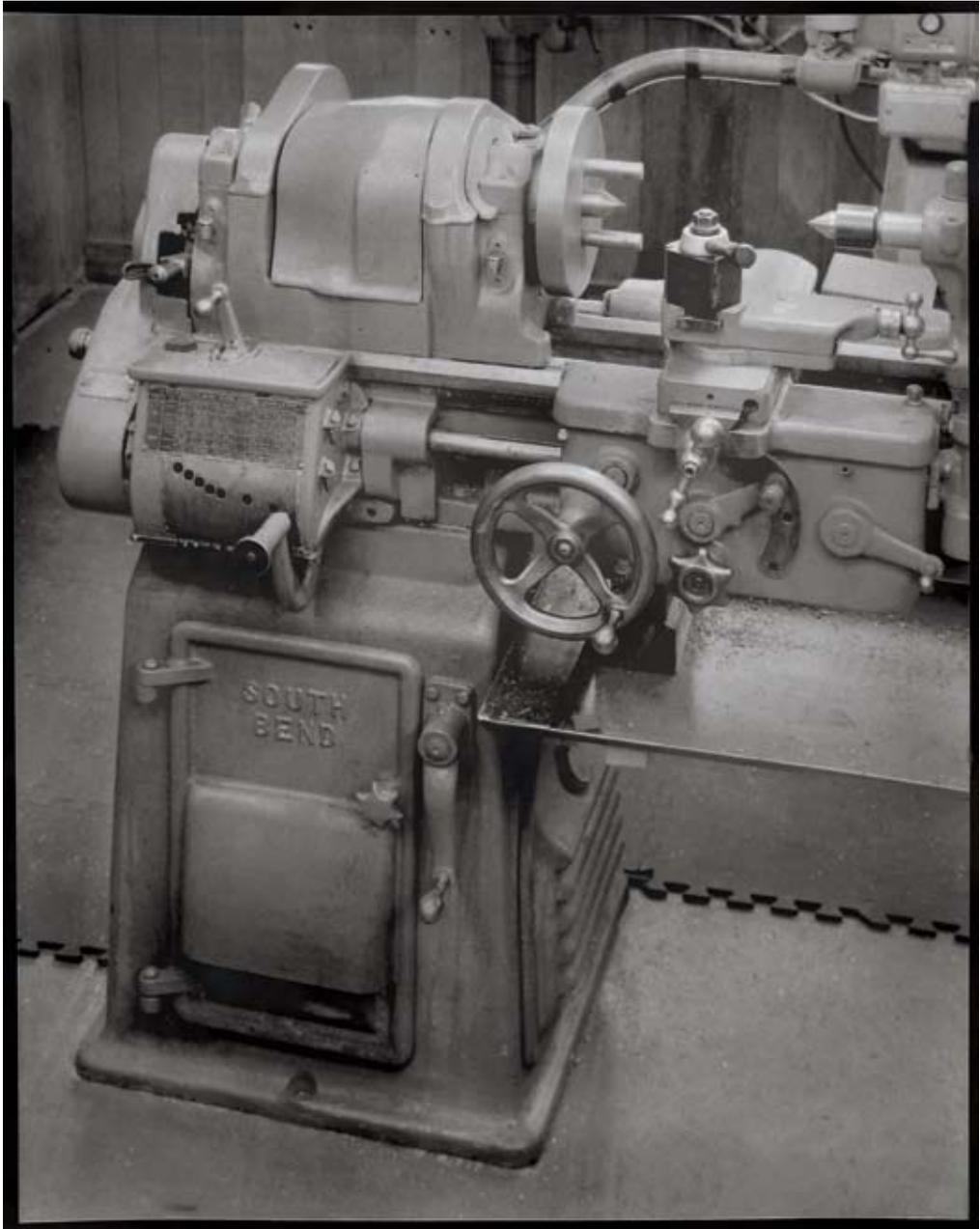
Linisher, 6" x 36" band-facer, c. 1910; Bought in East London, 1959



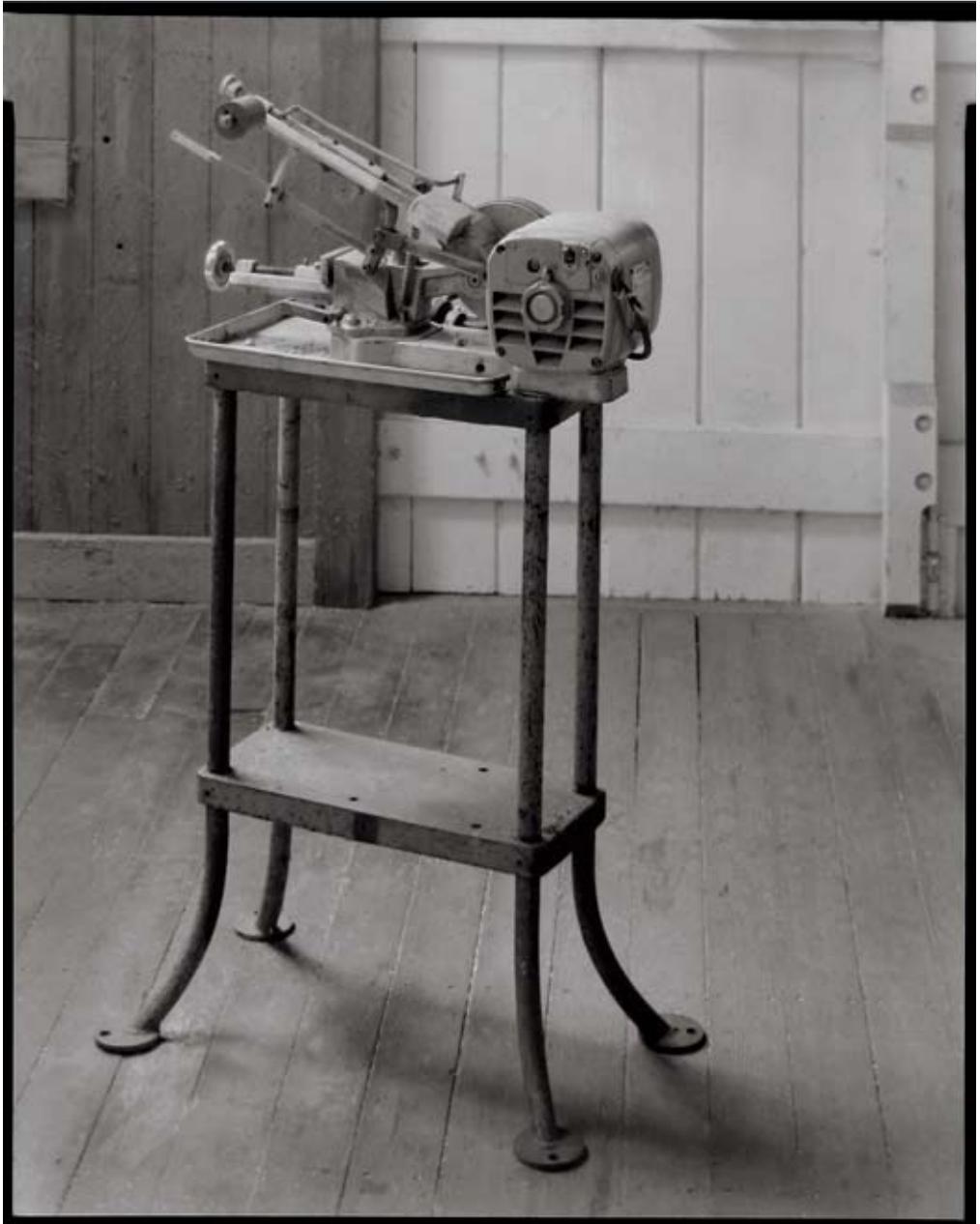
Turret Milling Machine, 1982; Long Chang Machinery Co., 13-27 Jen-Shing Rd., Taiping Shang  
Taichunh, Taiwan; Bought in 1982



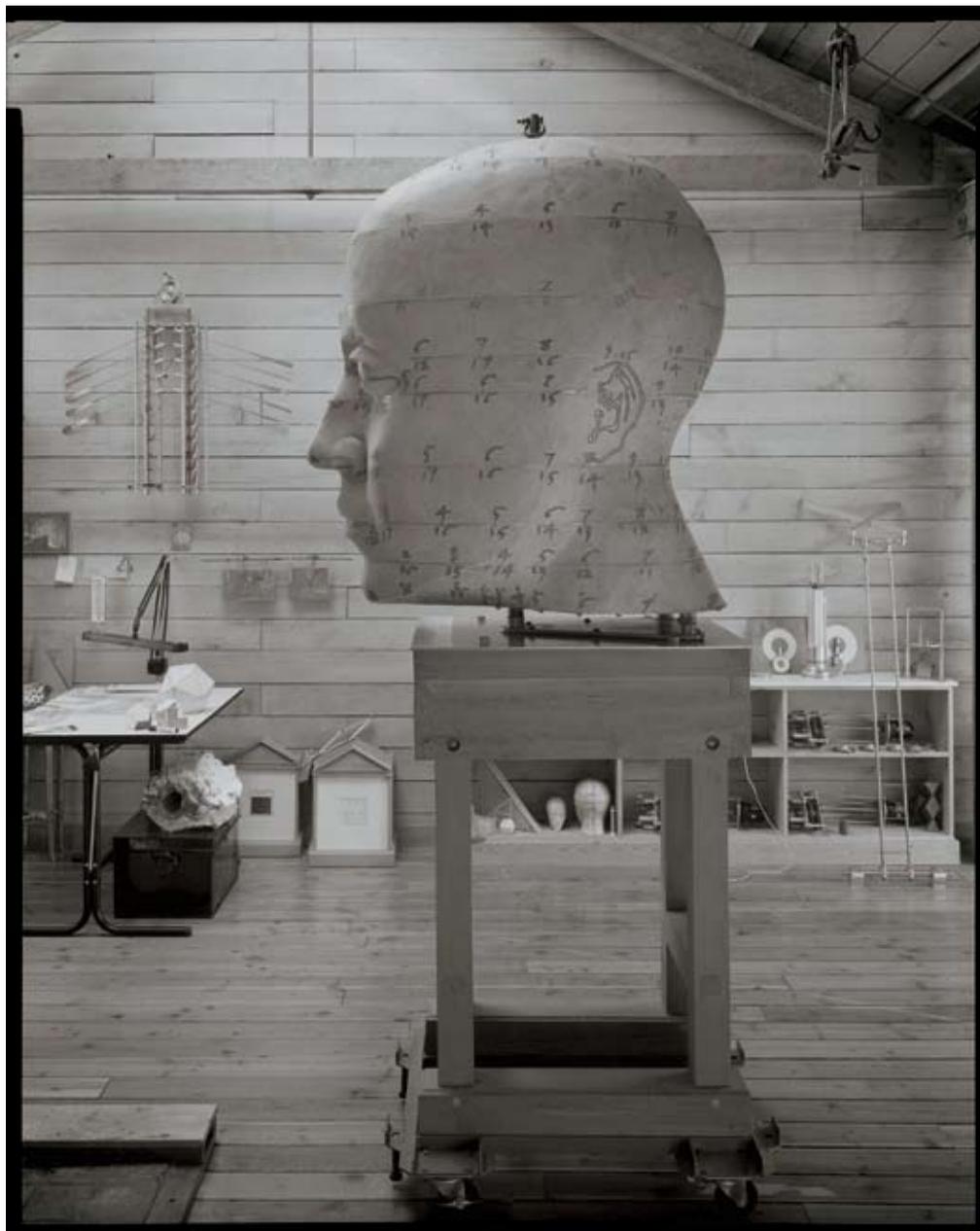
Lux-On Gap-bed lathe (8" over carriage US standard, 13" swing over bed, 20" over gap); Taiwan, 1982; Bought in 1982



South Bend 13" US Standard, c. 1940; Bought in 1984



Kennedy 2" mechanical hacksaw; Manufactured by Kennedy Ltd. Station Works, West Drayton, Middlesex, UK; Bought in 1965



*The Numbers*; Sculptor: Geoffrey Smedley

## BOB SHERRIN / Looking into "The Means of Making"

Photographs are paradoxical documents. We often consider them a form of evidence, a precise rendering of a given reality—be it person, place, or thing. Yet from the beginning, the photographic image has been deceptive. Though Joseph Niépce made the first permanent photograph in 1826, one of the earliest, best-known photographs is one of a pair made on the same day in 1838 by Niépce's business partner, Louis Daguerre. The more celebrated of the pair presents in mirror-image a scene from the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement in Paris.<sup>1</sup> The street is empty, not a cart or wagon to be seen, though strong shadows and highlights suggest Daguerre made his photograph in full sunlight. Eerily, Paris seems to have been evacuated. The studious viewer, however, will note the lone figure of a man with one leg raised, as though resting it on a crate. He is the first human to be photographed, and he seems to have the entire boulevard to himself. In fact, the street would have been crowded with wagons and horses. Pedestrians would have strolled past the man, who is actually having his boots shined. Thus, there must be two people in the image, but the necessary bootblack is a truncated figure whose head sprouts a twisted line, which Daguerre's second image reveals is a stanchion. A scrupulous reader of his first photo can detect at least four other individuals. Daguerre is said to have taken up to ten minutes to make his exposure, so the traffic, both human and vehicular, passed before his lens unrecorded. Thus, the reality of what stood before him is not captured in his photograph. It's an exceedingly realistic illusion.

Alphonse Bertillon used photography as a record of reality in his work as a pioneer of early policing science. In 1884, he presented a system (once known as *Bertillonage*) designed to track criminals. Bertillon employed anthropometrics—the measuring of a person's features as a form of positive and permanent identification. Photography was part of Bertillon's system; he introduced a four-image criminal portrait, the mug shot, and he also originated the practice of crime scene photography. He merged these approaches with his invention of the first rigorous method for cataloguing and retrieving photographs. His combined systems were quickly adopted in France, other European countries, and the United States. At the same time, the indexical certainty

<sup>1</sup> The image is one of the two known as "Two Views of the Boulevard du Temple, Paris, Taken the Same Day."

of photographs became even more culturally accepted when George Eastman invented roll film in 1882. In 1888, he began to mass produce the Kodak camera, followed by “transparent film” in 1891, which was preloaded in Eastman’s Kodaks and processed free of charge. By century’s end, middle-class amateurs enthusiastically embraced photography.

Because of their supposed indexical nature, photos and their offspring—film, video, and digital images—are today used as evidence in courtrooms, other tribunals, and the popular press. Billions of family pictures offer accurate likenesses of our ancestors and their worlds, and a near-infinite number of images are available through contemporary media. As a result of the ubiquity of photo-based images, we are utterly at ease with them, and we significantly shape our knowledge of the world through our individual and organizational production and consumption of detailed images 24 hours a day. We are all photographers now. We steadily post online what we consider images of reality, yet we are also generally aware that photo-based images can be easily manipulated, and as the Daguerre example shows, photos have always resulted from the manipulation of reality or the manipulation of the image during or after exposure. More than at any time in our history, we live now in contradiction. We believe photographs capture reality, yet they may also be made to erase what was present or include what wasn’t, thus distorting actuality, even excluding it. The reality we create from photo-based images is ephemeral, free-floating, superficial.

If photos can be so easily manipulated, why are they so attractive to us? Certain photographs, such as Daguerre’s, draw us in. Because of our ability to simultaneously focus our eyes and minds on specific features, we may occupy images and begin to explore. A common, non-photographic example may clarify this process.

Gaze out a window at a view of any kind. Within seconds, most of us begin to isolate specific details—a face, a mountain, a tree, a wall of graffiti. If the scene engages us, we begin to wander through it. We employ our minds and our power of vision (both literal and figurative) to look more closely at a face, a wall, a car; we seem able to zoom-in. We also wonder as we mentally wander: what does this mean, what does this make known to me? Depending on our knowledge or degree of curiosity, we begin to interpret and speculate. If in the company of another, we may pose questions and answers to each other about our observations. The same thing occurs around shared images from family archives or records of recent events. Thereby, we fabricate narratives that we see or understand as truthful records. However, once we distance

ourselves from such activities, we easily accept the proposition that different captions can lend different meanings to the same image.

Regardless, photographs possess presence. Like hand-written postcards, they invoke that which is absent. They represent the past but are contemplated only in an ongoing present. Certain images contain many levels of resonance for individual viewers, and almost always that resonance results from the allusions within the photograph or its range of contexts. Such is the case with Robert Keziere's sequence of photographs of machines, shot in early December 2009 in artist Geoffrey Smedley's workshop on Gambier Island.

The front and back covers of *TCR* 3,15 offer a combined beckoning. Keziere's diptych shows Smedley's workshop bathed in soft light, implying the skylights and windows that help illuminate it. Keziere creates a compelling perspective through the positioning of his camera, which is not a handheld device. It is an 8 x 10 Deardorff view camera<sup>2</sup>, a machine for shaping reflected light, more closely related to cameras employed by Daguerre and Niépce than to current versions that are small enough to lose in a handbag. Keziere's exposure times during this shoot ranged from 20 minutes to almost 50 minutes in one case. In some instances, Keziere made multiple exposures on the same sheet of film with different intensities and sources of light. Keziere placed the Deardorff to provide a view into the workspace from one end. The space seems to glow. Lighted from at least three angles, the machines within are clearly depicted but enigmatic. Keziere anchors the viewer on the periphery of a space that commands attention and awakens a desire to know more about what we see but cannot yet fully grasp. The black rebate (or border) of the diptych suggests a darkness that stops at the lighted shop. Like a campfire at night, it draws us forward to a threshold we feel compelled to cross. The only equivalent movement a reader can make is to open the magazine and seek out the rest of Keziere's images.

The first detailed machine photograph in the sequence is that of a door easily read as an improvised tool rack (page 62). Huge drill bits anchor the image; companion wrench-caddies crown it. However, Keziere has constructed the image so its even contrast gives equal weight to all elements in it, not least of which are the pages tacked to the top of the doorframe. One is a profile of Aristotle, another is an image of Socrates and Plato from a thirteenth-century manuscript, and the third is a diagram

<sup>2</sup> A view camera has a collapsible, light-tight wooden body and uses sheet film, in this case 8" x 10" in size. Normal operation of such a camera requires refined skills in metering light, placing additional light sources, and adjusting the camera to accommodate the angles of an object.

of end mills and slotting drills. Like those found in anyone's workshop, these pages allude to personal concerns and the instruments used to explore them—through rumination, calculation, and construction. Another telling detail: the bolt to the door has not been thrown. Doors commonly symbolize movement across a border—from anticipation to invitation, from life to death, from ignorance to knowledge, from present to past, or even the reversal of those pairs. In this case, the door alludes both to an entrance into Smedley's workshop, or a special room within it, and to the transformation that occurs in such workshops. Not only are materials transformed, but the people who shape them and those who contemplate or use them are also transformed. This photograph and the diptych-covers beckon viewers into both Smedley's workshop and Keziere's images, for both artists have very similar concerns in their work: to reveal.

The sequence of the photographs is itself significant. Keziere's machine images are bracketed by two others, the first introducing a fundamental source for Smedley's work, the second summarizing Keziere's and Smedley's concerns as artists. Keziere made these opening and closing images in 2000 when he was documenting several of Smedley's sculptures<sup>3</sup> which are based on a drawing by the Renaissance artist and mathematician Piero della Francesca. The first image depicts two pages from his late fifteenth-century treatise *De prospectiva pingendi* (*On Perspective for Painting*), a work providing orthographic formulae for painting with perspective, something della Francesca had already achieved as a well-known and successful artist. Perspective derives from a time when ancient architects brought together the horizontal and vertical drawings of a building to form what is commonly known as the plan and elevation of a structure. Moreover, della Francesca's treatise was centuries ahead of its time, for he was the first to draw sections of a planned object and combine them with his orthogonal formulae (or orthogonal projections). He thereby created auxiliary projection, which allows for the accurate depiction of complex, three-dimensional objects or structures. Also known as descriptive geometry, its formal generalization came into being 300 years later, attributed to the eighteenth-century French mathematician Gaspard Monge. della Francesca's creation of auxiliary projection is today a key aspect of neuro-imaging.

<sup>3</sup> These works were created for Smedley's exhibition *Memory, Measure, Time, and Numbers* at The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, The Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and The Canadian Centre for Architecture.

That he was the first to apply his projections to the human head is also important. In Renaissance thought, the head is a home where intelligence, rationality, imagination, and their dark opposites dwell. Through the use of perspective, the Renaissance not only produced realistic work that implies a common reality but also posited the individuality of people and the importance of the mind in taking the true measure of humanity. Ironically then, while perspective in Renaissance painting suggests greater realism, perspective also implies a unique point of view. That condition further suggests that while reality is shared, individual minds perceive it individually and may choose to represent it uniquely, thereby opening reality to manipulation. All heads are similar, all faces are different.

The word *Renaissance* clearly refers to the rebirth of concepts and concerns from classical Greece, and one element that was revived in fifteenth-century Europe is *techné*. The word *technology* arises from *technikon*, which in Greek refers to that which is found in *techné*, but *techné* is crucially different from *technology*. It encompasses not only the abilities and processes of the craftsman but also includes all the fine arts, thereby combining the practical and the creative, the scientific and the artistic. This cultural value was as inherent to ancient Greece as is our current faith in the sciences to solve global problems. Furthermore, *techné* implies a complex knowing—to be at home in a process, to understand it intimately and be expert in it.

The final image in Keziere's sequence represents Smedley's sculpture "The Numbers," a central work in his aforementioned exhibition, an 8" x 4" human head derived from the numerical proportions in della Francesca's treatise.<sup>4</sup> "The Numbers" alludes to the importance of thought, to the intimate entwining of art and science, and also to proportion—the essential gift of *De prospectiva pingendi*. During the Renaissance, proportion and ratio were fundamental for business and manufacturing, particularly since every major town and city had its own system of weights and measures, and often its own currency. Proportion and ratio, the measure of the relationship among things, were fundamental not only for merchants and manufacturers of that era, but also for artists and their relationships to their work, their patrons, and a rapidly developing society. "The Numbers," in part, speaks to an entwining that our culture has significantly dismantled by privileging science over art. Perhaps hermetic to the uninitiated, "The Numbers" is a meditation on creation and the kinship between art and science.

<sup>4</sup> For more representations of Geoffrey Smedley's "The Numbers," see Robert Keziere's sequence "Eight Photographs" and Smedley's "Notes on Piero's Head" in *TCR* 2.44 (Fall 2004).

Keziere's photographs also reflect that combination. As he says, he makes them by planning, evaluating, and building with light. His images, as well as the machines they depict and the sculptures Smedley makes with them, combine illumination, time, and technology. Keziere's photographs possess a quality of light that seems to emanate from the machines themselves, a result of his patient, time-consuming process of metering ambient light from many angles, then adding or subtracting light from sources he places in careful relationships to a given machine. Natural light here is a transparent tool that Keziere employs to emphasize shape, line, and purpose—appropriate, given that the word *photography* combines the Greek words for light and drawing.

In the case of the photograph of the Canedy Otto drill press (page 65), light falls from above. The distinct presence of the machine accumulates as the eye descends, following the increasing contrast on its limbs. The chuck of the drill, however, exudes the same quality of light as the press-head, re-emphasizing the machine's essence, which the ancients considered to be the *what* of a thing: it is what it does; thus, the essence of a drill is the boring of holes. Martin Heidegger amends that concept in the 1950s: the essence of a thing is what it reveals.

Were the press in a factory, its essence would refer to technology. In Smedley's workshop and in Keziere's photograph of it, the drill press is used to create a unique object designed to provoke thought. Ironically, both the photograph of the Canedy Otto and the machine itself are inimitable objects. Though photography and mechanical reproduction are technologies that typically produce countless copies of things, both Keziere's photograph<sup>5</sup> and Smedley's drill press are not countless, identical versions of themselves. Keziere isolates the drill press, emphasizing its singularity and its potential outside mass production. His form of portraiture allows this machine to be seen as part of the revealing that occurs through art—through the inquiry, contemplation, even mystification it prompts.

Technology achieves a different revealing, a regulating and a securing that result from humans being ordered (or challenged, as Heidegger puts it) to unlock the energy concealed in nature. “[W]hat is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up [stockpiled or “standing-reserve” in Heidegger's words], what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew.” Humans are part of technology's standing-reserve, always ready to be ordered up—for example, as

<sup>5</sup> Keziere's art often consists of suites of carefully constructed, individually printed photographs.

teachers, miners, soldiers. Such a condition entails the anonymity of workers who tend to equally anonymous machines or processes dedicated to constant manufacturing, be it students, industrial diamonds, or dead enemies. In contrast, Keziere's portrait promotes the inference that the Canedy Otto drill press and all the other machines in this particular shop respond only to the hand of one artist fashioning singular works. Smedley's sculptures are made entirely by him with machines he has personally acquired, refurbished, and now uses to make unique objects. He reverses the original purpose of the machines, the production of countless copies of the same things. The machines do nothing on their own but harbour a possibility. Similarly the Deardorff: rather than being used to produce images for ongoing reproduction in advertisements or mass production publications, Keziere uses his machine to create unique images.

Both Smedley and Keziere consciously construct objects that simultaneously are places where we can temporarily live and ponder. Both artists enclose time intellectually to create sites where we may dwell and *dwell upon*, a practice John Wyclif identified in the fourteenth century. Contemporary life often dismisses this tradition as unimportant and instead prioritizes marketable services or the production of consumables. Keziere's machine photographs and Smedley's "The Numbers" are not meant merely to accurately document something, though both can be said to do that. Instead, they bring us up short, as happens when we select a compelling detail from our environment and begin to explore its significance, what it reveals or what it truly is.

Keziere and Smedley subvert technology as Heidegger presents it. Both artists can be considered manual workers. Keziere works with cameras considered by many to be archaic. They are large; they require special skills to operate effectively and unusual talent to employ in the making of art. In his art practice, Keziere builds unique images that encourage scrutiny and exploration. Each one reflects decades of knowledge and exceptional attention to every aspect of making negatives and prints. Through their dedication to the act of revealing through their art, both Keziere and Smedley create clearings in the midst of our cluttered and transient existence. There they offer us necessary pause to do what Heidegger said humans were meant to do—think.

## Acknowledgements

This essay would not have been possible without key conversations, encouragement, and the keen eyes of Jan Westendorp, Karen Love, Robert Keziere, and Geoffrey and Bridgit Smedley. I am most grateful for their generosity of spirit and intellect.

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## SHELLEY MCINTOSH / Two Poems

### The Angels of Irony

They sit working the gearbox spindles to grind out nanosyllables in web-like fluctuations. The machines are large and ticking and have cooling fins around the resonators near a comb coil. Force fields highlight the implications that are adjusted by means of a charge pattern. One works the glass turbines while another tunes the baffles. Fission of phrasing changes patterns so that every paragraph is a corridor leading to the last. During the long journey through the cavity resonator, particles of text are scanned for ideology or apotheosis, knitting the language into the triple lattice of spin, curving to bridge the collective. Alternating currents bring wave translations to an irresistible haven of barriers. In the sweatshop reservoirs, they play with the language strings, using cyclotron compression for the public realm. Collisions at high language velocities are used to cause the collective endlessly re-imagined and allied. One flits while others swoop around the filaments to adjust subject where object resides in the lacings of grasp. The pearl elements in the triple points of the crankshaft form a crossed coil with the driving pin, creating ever smaller knitted meanings that lead eventually down to the subterranean curves of wit. Ladders near the comb coil are delicately tacked up across the limned lattice where the wires and yarns reach down. They watch carefully as throttle cables clinch the stress and structure inherent in the properties of fabulation along strings of manifold variations. Itinerate words re-enter through the fabric of the oscillators.

## Bliss

Plumb peripheries with quartered spatula  
Wagering warm about a mean mood

Carnival proffers vent and dense drink  
Designates cadence while cadging a salve

This is the map of my fabled venture  
From nadir to merry is oft half a loiter

A scurrilous locum prompts a thrumming measure  
And here jams a virulent strain

Pilloried for its escalatorology,  
an artery to Highbury  
Ten trains later fathoms a pulse  
of vascular scrutiny

Finally it capitulates to a hypodermic past  
With an air of glimmer  
The nub out there is further than I can lock  
My pledge

Miles above on the boards of the digital train map  
Clicking seconds in arterial headway

Ultimately it's lost in train circulation  
Ventures too numinous to mention.

## **SYLVIA LEGRIS / Five Poems**

### **Lore (rib)**

Curve-bone tablature. Light-organ luthier. Costal cartilaginous tonewood.

A variable geometry. The major rib scale can ascend into fast flapping flight with the rip-opening wingbeat of a Needle-tailed Swift, or vibrate in place at the pollinating frequency spectrum of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (multiflorous vocal waves).

Thoracic soundboard. Sternocostal soundhole (gladiolus rose). Inferior umbilicus plectra (display feather picking).

## Lore (decoy)

1

Nestling sostenuto. Ventilatory perfusion. Sound lingers then leaves the nest percutaneously. Acoustical porosity.

2

Countersong sung pneumomnemonicly. Lush pelagic lungs. Sponge tissue spun with fowl grass and goose feather. Down-lined gosling-chambers. Hollow allure.

3

Lung Shadow-Decoy. Lung Confidence-Decoy. Lungs lure the nectarivorous. The wet-nesters, nest-robbers. Mimes. Mimics. Song-thrust, song-throttle.

## Lore (midrib)

Arboricultural aerodynamics. Botanical flight patterns.  
The musically rattling Snow Buntings leave only a  
whoosh of air and feet perched holographically. Flight

in three dimensions. Concentric suspensions

of green. Small space photosynthesis. A concise  
ecology. A forest hovers in a single word: *Canopy*.  
Holophrastic. The origins of shelter an interference of  
light and dendrology.

## Lore

Merrythought and more merrythought. Oscinine flights of oxygenation. Song pierces the ozone layer; O<sub>3</sub> solmization (triatomic do-re-mi).

Furculaic optimism (clavicle fusion and wishin'). Bone pneumatisation. Epithelium to feather the landing.

## Where the Neck Ends

The median lethal dose of tongue equal to its root's reach to the mediastinum. Down the throat and over the edge.

Hack the nasal labyrinth. Gravity. A back-smack. The blood/brain barrier a gag reflex away. The chokepoint

is hackly and vocabular. Articulate but for hackles.

## SUSAN HOLBROOK / Shredded Suite

ne

based on your curren  
old your legs around  
1 of 7

vestments continue t  
education costs, for  
when I licked your  
sensitive materials  
on an annual basis  
Return the bottom  
can't forgive what  
lanced fund

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surfactant can  
ever harassed or other  
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history of blowing thin  
gest spill in U.S. histor  
viously highly confident  
blouse and otherwis  
deceased oiled mamm  
luminum foil and wrap  
vidence of misconduct  
oiled mammals or croc  
nor verbal threa  
trust you can keep

**ROB MCLENNAN** / from **12 untitled and unknown**  
**coordinates, epyllions, epithelials**

Sentences fell apart but they had always been a part.

—Brenda Hillman, *Practical Water*

The possibilities of love poems  
in a time of prosody,

or perhaps only foolishness,

the paint takes time to dry

the briefest Saskatchewan,  
a fickle & furtive,

brown snow slush as pure

to paint over a smell doesn't mask  
or remove

but permanently bond

slip a quarter heart quarter a payphone

the fear of receiving love  
, unsure what to do with it

a noun is not alphabet you  
break like a word

are you not pure

not a morning enough to contain,

The mad glare of spectacle,

dance under the eaves, the old woman  
banned from the Second Cup,

who isn't that old

sideways, cellphone slip

prone to know, three police cruisers  
no epic contains,

a description enough to forget,

Carling Avenue, Preston, polling citizens  
to step storeys up, bodes,

the past is sometimes  
more than foreign, a new

-ly discovered genus,

architectural purge,

strip the pulpy heart like an apple,  
toss the unbroken peel

wait for it to land

in the shape of initial,  
the last woman who broke you

Soft heart of ash, fragment

the floor model of absolute sincerity  
test worn,

abandoned,

fibres knew in the seat cushion,  
rested, in pairs

we forget how to fly,

I anoint myself place-marker,  
ashamed,

the wind tore through the brush  
& the tear,

& untended brush,

what is this fear dressed in satin,

understood to be frightening  
poems of tens, thens

the moon full above parking lots,  
all else is cloud

Rommell drives deep,  
we are dying, Egypt, echoes, the troops

push a surge,

assist me, good friends

ice approached the canal, sleeps  
in past freedoms,

& present smooth surfaces,

is this carrying description,  
a parcel

hands outline a shadow

a government that forms  
on strategies, polls

not ideas, or ideals

the backdrop of new buildings,  
an artificial lake

playback loons through the mist,

faded, you promised me  
windmills to tilt,

Would you limit the silence,  
profane undertones

the usual  
obligations,

made tablets, construction & mystery,

a pine forms visible trace  
in the heavens

a spectacle of bare cheekbones,  
of weightless array

tied my fortune to ice-caps

beyond autumn's spectacle  
, breaking bonds

molecular bridge,  
the dry riverbed lyric

in the crosshairs of colour, some gender

decades of warm wind, of growth,  
a test of the senses

a wavelength brought calm,

a special  
abstract of lines, cleared & cut

**ROBERT YOUNG / Painting and the Struggle for the Whole Self**



Robert Young, *Movie Stuff*, 1987  
Oil on linen, 30" x 30", private collection

In ways that I do not pretend to understand fully painting deals with issues that seem to me to count in our benighted time—freedom, autonomy, fairness, love.

—Andrew Forge, *Painting and the Struggle for the Whole Self* (1975)

The main thread which runs throughout the whole of Klee's theory is the search for quality, namely the search for one's own absolute authenticity. . . . to reduce progressively, the conglomeration of quantitative phenomena to the point of that irreducible and immutable minimum, which in fact represents quality.

—Giulio Argan, *Paul Klee: The Thinking Eye* (1961)

The real crux of Sartre's ethical vision is undoubtedly the notion of authenticity. . . . For by authentic existence he means nothing other than that courage whereby a man consents to bear the burdens of freedom. Man is the creature whose nature it is to be "for" himself: he must find ways of "making" himself, for he is radically free and is, therefore, his own great project.

—Nathan A. Scott, *The Unquiet Vision: Mirrors of Man in Existentialism* (1969)

I wanted to stress two aspects that are always present in my work and which I feel should be contained in all human action: both the solemnity of the self-determination of one's own life and one's own gestures as well as the modesty of our own actions at all times.

—Werner Schade, *Joseph Beuys: Early Drawings* (1992)

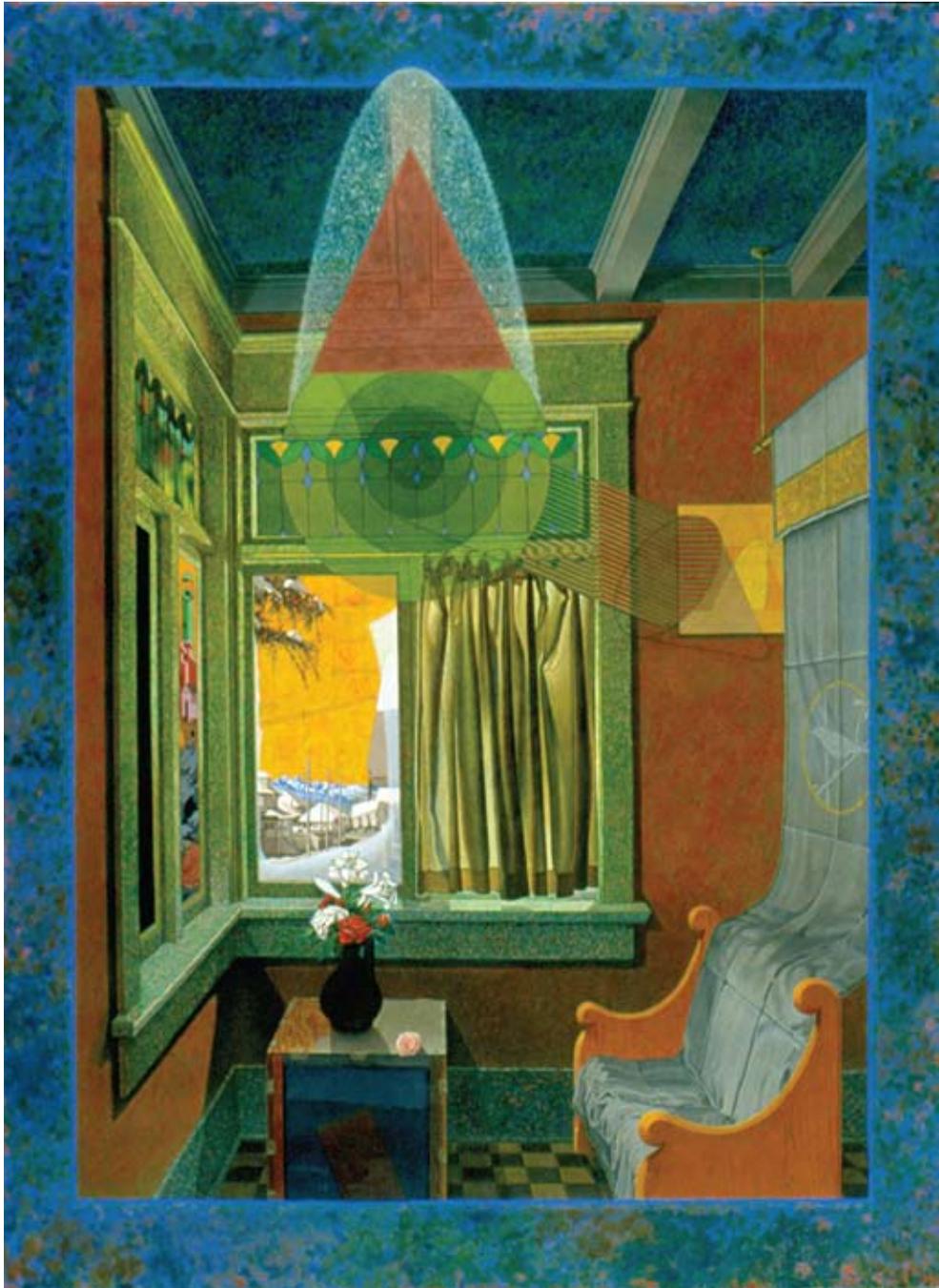
Plotinus had to have this kind of being in mind when, trying to define the freedom and the will of the one, he explained that we cannot say that "it happened to be thus," but only that "it is as it is, without being master of its own being" and that "it does not remain below itself, but makes use of itself as it is" and that it is not thus by necessity, in the sense that it could not be otherwise, but because "thus is best." Perhaps the only way to understand this free *use of the self* . . . is to think of it as being a *habitus*, an *ethos*. Being engendered from one's own manner of being is, in effect, the very definition of habit (this is why the Greeks spoke of a second nature): *That manner is ethical that does not befall us and does not found us but engenders us*. And this being engendered from one's own manner is the only happiness really possible for human beings.

—Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (1990)

*Quotations assembled by Robert Young.*



Robert Young, *Errant Knight*, 1966  
Etching, 14.25" x 6", collection of the artist



Robert Young, *Incidence of a Cone in a Quiet Dwelling*, 1997  
Oil on linen, 61" x 46", private collection, Vancouver



Robert Young, *Harunobu Window*, 2004  
Watercolour and gouache on paper, 31.55" x 21.5", private collection, Vancouver



Robert Young, *Sheldrake's Chair*, 1983  
Oil on linen, 60" x 44", private collection



Robert Young, *Green Grocer Mandala*, 1992  
Oil on linen, 30" x 30", collection of Farshad Moradian



Robert Young, *Quotidian View*, 2009  
Watercolour and gouache on paper, 22" x 30", collection of Burnaby Art Gallery



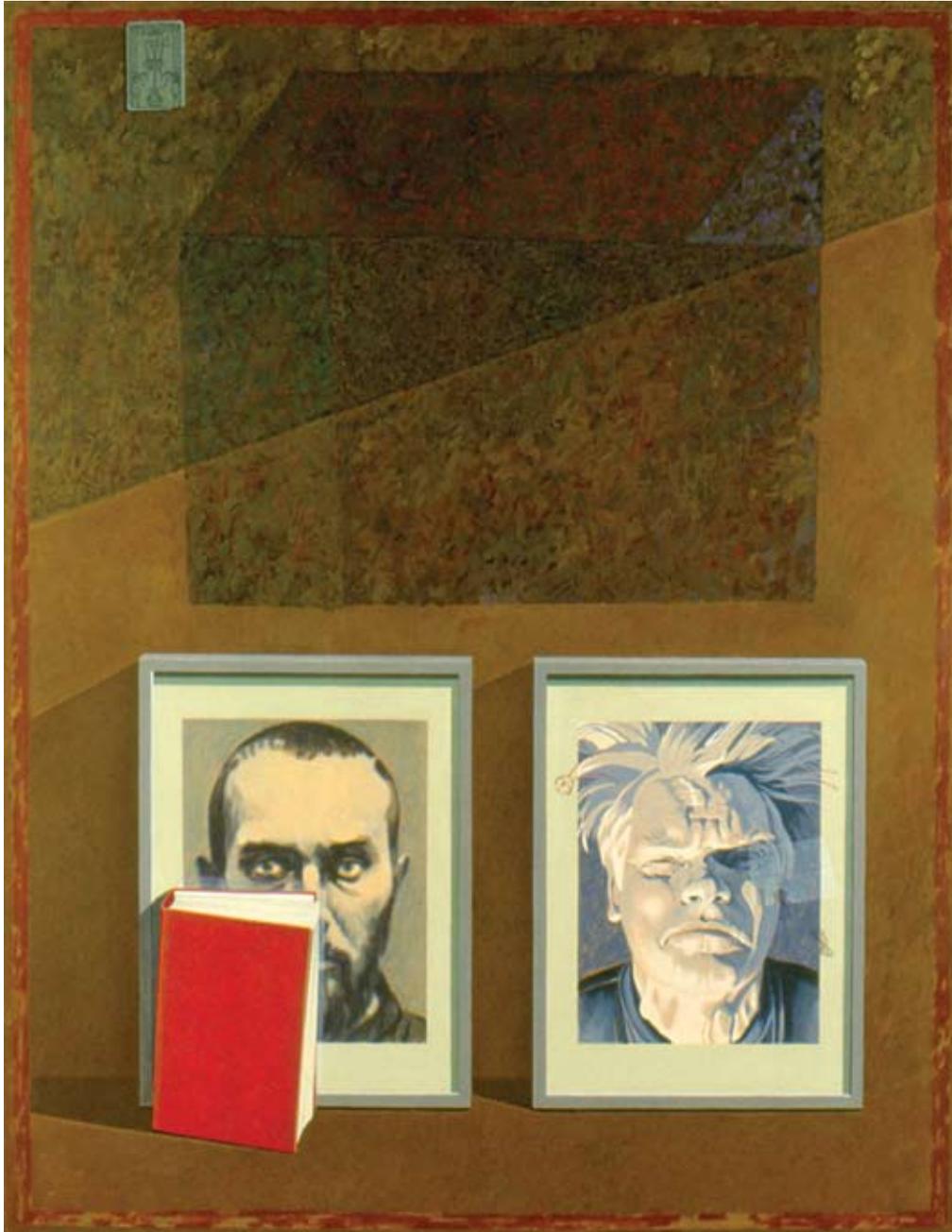
Robert Young, *Lacunarian Picture*, work in progress  
Acrylic and egg tempera on linen, 60" x 48", collection of the artist



Robert Young, *The Persistence of Style*, 1979  
Oil on linen, 60" x 44", private collection



Robert Young, *Korai II*, 1979  
Oil on linen, 70" x 50", private collection



Robert Young, *Picture Book*, 1989  
Oil on masonite, 54" x 42", private collection

## MICHAEL McCLURE / Four Poems

### skaagi the salmon

*for jerome*

WITHIN THE FACES OF HUNGER ARE FACES  
OF HUNGER within faces of hungers  
and tadpoles and teeth surging  
towards souls they devour. DEVOUR  
AND NIBBLE  
and chase laughing through waves  
AND THE AIR FOLLOWING THE GREAT FACE  
with jaws and smiles and growls  
ON THE POWERFUL TAIL. Fins  
of lives turn to sunset over  
misty islands  
AS WE SPEED TO THE FEATURES  
of love always alight as we create delight  
ahead. Crumbs of meat in the wake.  
THIS IS THE TRUTH  
OF THE HALF-LIE  
of speedily moving with no splashes.  
Even the adipose fin has an eye.  
NO REASON TO CRY  
F  
O  
R  
LIFE

it is coming and going.

*after a Haida drawing  
by Bill Reid*

## MEPHISTO 2

MY  
GOD MY GOD!

NO MY GOD!

Don't MY GOD!

DO  
THIS

to me!

I am a thousand years  
making an old man.

ALL  
OF  
THE

MOMENTS OF THIS

pleasure are just one. Made of the flesh  
of your shoulders, and your eyes  
looking up at me.

Your sloping breasts  
and pink nipples sail  
(into my consciousness)

like little ships over my erection.

The vast elephant seal on the dark gray sand  
in the crash of green-white, translucent breakers  
by the ragged black rocks  
is a body of hope for future  
sexuality

and tiny sand pipers rush  
in the shallow ripples.

### MEPHISTO 3

“INCOMMENSURABLE  
and incomprehensible are the best of poetic creation,”  
the old man sings. The galaxies are a river  
seen from this direction. The child knows  
it is all black behind the eyes  
and that flesh is a swirl,  
whirling out of the nothingness  
as I hear your toes’ voice  
and the muffled hoots  
of an owl in the morning canyon.  
The burning smell of frankincense  
creates the room  
and blue, red and opal cars  
create the freeway.  
I chase a giraffe  
(IN KENYA)  
as it runs with long,  
stiff-legged strides  
looking  
back  
at  
me  
without fear,  
—and there is  
A TURQUOISE  
stone  
in my hand.

## MEPHISTO 4

THERE  
IS  
JOY  
IN  
THE  
ROOM

sometimes it is solid  
for a sixtieth of a second.  
Moments supercede the pain of muscles  
and Laughter is the prince of the gods.  
This is ordinary as tiny green frogs,  
perfectly striped  
with black, and knowing,  
and)) mindless eyes  
in the marshy field grass.  
Neighbors are close  
and there is a scarlet fire  
in the fireplace.

IT IS FEARSOME  
to have intelligence threaten.

The calico cat hides, waiting  
TO RUSH AT ME  
in a gallop. Now her eyes  
are aglint with delight,  
in the midst of her dash,  
as she slides on two paws  
around the hall corner.

## JORDAN ABEL / “A feud over this pole”

“A *feud over this pole*. Old chief Mountain or Sakauíwan, some time before his death in 1928, gave an account of the rivalry between the Eagle-Raven clan and the Killer-Whales or Gispewudwades of Nass River, over the size of their new totems.<sup>1</sup> In summary here it is.

The Killer-Whale chief, Sispagut, who headed the faction of the earlier occupants on the river, announced his determination to put up the tallest pole ever seen in the country. Its name was to be Fin-of-the-Killer-Whale. However, instead of selecting for its carver Hladerh whose right it was to do the work, he chose Oyai of the canyon. Hladerh naturally felt slighted and confided his grudge to Sakauíwan, chief of the Eagles, and his friend. From then on the Eagles and the Wolves of their own day were to be closely allied, as the ancestors of both had moved in from Alaska and at one time had been allies.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account see *Alaska Beckons* by Marius Barbeau. The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho and the Macmillan Company of Canada, 1947, pp. 127-136.”

—Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, 1950: 29.

or Sakauíwan

and

Sispagut

the river

the country

the canyon

allied

by Marius Barbeau

his

new totems

his determination

his

Eagles and Wolves

an account  
or  
summary

was to be  
carve d

from Alaska

his  
 his  
 their s<sup>1</sup> h is  
 h i s h i  
 his i  
 H i s H i s  
 h i his s  
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 h i s  
 h i s.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account see *Alaska Beckons* by Marius Barbeau.

In summary

, his

## DONATO MANCINI / from *The Young Hate Us {2}*: In the Cultural Afterlife of Poetry

in the arithmetic of value  
*was-it-good-for-you* reviewing  
plus  
*it-was-better-in-the-old-days* criticism  
plus  
*we-against-the-fool-farm* poetics  
equals what

•

Truth, Judgement, Affect. Begin auto-autopsy. Crack of the book, smell the glue, taste the predestinarian para-prose, admire the author photo (she's lost weight), read the author bio, feel the Truth of it and re-blurbitate to poetry-lovers hey crush hot coals to your chin stab a jackknife through your wrist if this book doesn't split your seams better call your family mortician.

•

This poet conveys with gifted words the deep and meaningful spirit of what true and lasting love is, in a book at once insistently engaged and essentially human. The earthy wisdom of a grounded life lies close to the emotional core of this fine book, from a solitary poet who speaks with fierce eloquence of the individual's experience against that of the tribe. This poet is a distinguished artist, born of the body and soul, wrestling with the effort for truth and the true; in the intensity of the struggle language forges a poetic shape worthy of both labels *profound* and *beautiful*. If beauty is rooted in vision, sight is realised in the heart, and, as part of the soul of Nature, \_\_\_\_\_'s poetic wisdom is for everyone who knows we are fundamentally alone. This admirably slim volume is an accessible journey on the winding byways of love, sharpened with measures of the hard glare of reality, brought to crisp perfection with a soothing dash of universal spirit.

•

the 4-part structure of *conscience*:

moral competence.

moral reasoning.

moral affect.

moral identity.

*aesthetic conscience*.

*aesthetic conscience* assumes the homology of morality and aesthesis.

aesthetic competence.

aesthetic reasoning.

aesthetic affect.

aesthetic identity.

•

Personal Experience: Everyone's Had One. There is, after all, what you feel. What you feel  $\neq$  or doesn't have to = what you believe. I.e. I feel Quality but I don't believe in It. I feel OK but I don't believe in It. Belief is only evidence of belief. A church is held together not by force of the believed Thing, but by the indigestive synergy of Belief and Law.

•

Antiquarian & connoisseurist modes of criticism take *judgement* as prime directive, and/or the only good reason to spend Quality Time With Great Art.

The totalising sum of connoisseurist reasoning: that "the functional sociality of artworks is *lost when* concepts like value, content, communication, beauty, ad nauseum [add museum], are re-framed within a critique of ideology." (T. Eagleton)

Or lost when barfingly ejected altogether.

•

Gross inattention transforms even that special category of “importance” into the kin of others, like “red,” like “large,” like wow. Importance as a flavour. Profundity as a style. The poetic as an affect not an effect.

Isn't it bizarre, the oh congratulations you won the Largest Prize for the magnum opus of yours what's it called congratulations do you have anything new in the works?

•

“The enthusiasm of fans for their favourite rock star and the religious trance of the devout Catholic in the presence of the pope are libidinally *the same phenomenon*; they differ only in the different symbolic network which supports them. Sergei Eisenstein's provocatively titled essay ‘The Centrifuge or the Grail’ aims precisely at emphasising this ‘unhistorical’ neutrality of ecstasy (his name for *jouissance*)... first we have the experience of objectless ecstasy; subsequently this experience is attached to some historically determined representation—here we encounter an exemplary case of the real as that ‘which remains the same in all possible (symbolic) universes’. So, when someone, while describing his profound religious experience, emphatically answers his critics: ‘you don't really understand it at all! there's more to it that words cannot express,’ he is the victim of a kind of perspective illusion: the precious *agalma* perceived by him as the unique ineffable kernel which cannot be shared by others (non-believers) is precisely the *jouissance* as that which always remains the same. Every ideology attaches itself to some kernel of *jouissance* which, however, retains the status of an ambiguous excess. The unique ‘religious experience’ is thus split into two components, as in the well-known scene from Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* in which the food on a plate is split into symbolic frame (a colour photo of the course above the plate) and the formless slime of *jouissance* that we actually eat.” (S. Žižek).

Don't read poetry with “quasi-religious wonder, instead of [as] a human sign to be understood in secular and social terms.” (E. Said)

Don't try to get from Wagner what she gets from Metallica what he gets from Henri Chopin, when if Wagner makes you sign petitions if Metallica makes you drink Heineken if Chopin makes you fall into chopped mattresses.

Instead of tracking back and forth over the poetic / aesthetic / sludge of jouissance in historically varied feathers, poets should build registers of experience completely unavailable outside of the reading of that particular poem. Rather tinkering-the-pseudo-science than romancing-the-suedeo-science.

•

The Crowd is not “the masses” except for those eager to sell a million tickets. The Crowd is just too many people to try to have a conversation with all at once. The Crowd is the core weakness of voter politics.

In contrast, the Coterie needn't be an elite. It only needs be a specific. Coterie as communitarian, particularist, non-elitist. Focused. Focalised.

•

*technocratic.* “We have the knowledge.”

*special people.* “We have the magic.”

*power.* “We have the guns, we have the money.”

These are —————→ *modes of elitism.*

•

*the pizza effect.* By which a mediocre, bready recipe becomes more popular outside of Italy than inside, causing the recipe to eventually become a cultural keystone at festivals of the Italian within and without the boot. (Also known as culinary blow-back.)

*the [lawrence paul] yuxwelupton effect.* By which the First Nations Canadian painter is unrewarded by The Man on his own unceded territory, therefore leaves the province, becomes celebrated elsewhere, returns full force to local fortune and acclaim.

*the [toru] takemitsu effect.* As above, and by which the composer is unrecognised on his home island until after the colonial powers of Europe recognise him.

*the [johann sebastian] bach effect.* By which a certain idiosyncratic counterpoint of a long-maligned composer becomes institutionalised as the exact practical definition of good counterpoint against which other counterpoints become incorrect or idiosyncratic. (Also known as the institutional construction of Quality.)

•

Great Writings (The Canon) are obviously great because they obviously have the obvious characteristics of Obvious Greatness [non-exhaustive]: atheism, bad taste, camp, circuitousness, contradiction, cruelty, despair, digression, dimness, dishonesty, disorder, dissonance, fascist cravings, flakiness, foolishness, horror, idiocy, illogic, incest, lust, mental illness, misanthropy, obscurity, oppositionality, palimpsestuousness, pettiness, polysemy, poly-vocality, pretentiousness, self-indulgence, sexual deviance, strangeness, stupidity, substance abuse, tonal discord, violence, vengefulness.

Culture is ordinary.

•

This is the review, then. This looks bad. Your bumper-pool career stinks. The moral disease has spread to your Acknowledgements Terminal.

A virtuoso belch in the colonial-anachronistic style such as “Verse is a Dying Technique,” then, bursts within a promise: the un-scratched patch of a *Fucked-4-Life* Scratch ‘n’ Lose.

The precise meaning of “Metaphor is on Life-Support and Fading Fast” is whatever is believed to be at stake in the statement itself.

•

Take Ezra Pound, for example. On the one tentacle there is an odious contraption like *The Pound Era*, on another tentacle there's Pound's anti-Semite fascism, on another there are [insert marginalised group] people using collage techniques drawn directly from *The Cantos* to write new poems that are then published in photocopied magazines that you should really get your hands on.

The latter is not appropriation of Pound; it's Pound's concrete reception. Between these, the difference, in the gaps, is the actual literal living material cultural struggle over the meaning of Ezra Pound. Cultural struggle = reception = cultural struggle.

•

Pop fiction, movies, light non-fiction, Freeto Lay, etc., mainly presume the consumer will ingest the product only once. First time. Full disclosure. Clear. Direct. Simple. An arresting image in every line. A devastating crunch in every chip.

But “A poetry collection is like a record collection” (R. Maurer). Bafflement, puzzlement, difference, strangeness, unfamiliarity raise curiosity, invite longterm engagement. “Love don't come easy” (P. Collins). Poetry is not a consumable. “It's a game of give and take” (ibid).

The imperative of poetry as a praxis is not in reading—first encounter, first impressions, thumbs up, thumbs down—but in *re-reading*.

A conversation, not a referendum.

[On the other hand, Soft Rock mainly hopes / presumes you'll be forced to listen to the same song 1,600 times until it is memorised will nil.]

•

Counter-review. Symmetrical. Cleanliness neatness sharpness—symmetry is the psychedelically least tiring way to make a made thing appear to possess that [brutalising] thing: Innate Quality.

Symmetry is facile. Symmetry is stultifying. Symmetry is the order of He Who Does Not Exist except as oppressive illusion with concrete social effects. “Imaginary garden, real toads” (M. Moore). Imaginary gods, real churches.

All that is known of He Who Does Not Exist is His odious Law, because that’s all He Who Does Not Exist is. The formal art law of He Who Does Not Exist is symmetry. He Who Does Not Exist is Law, symmetry is He Who Does Not Exist’s legal aesthetic form. So writers (too often) see stasis as balance, symmetry as stasis, balance as Quality.

•

Quality is Our Prime Directive.

Hammering Home the Quality.

Here Be QUALITY.

Where Quality Counts.

Where Quality Can Be Counted.

Number #1 in Quality.

Quality is Never an Accident.

Quality is Our Recipe.

Great Leaders in Quality.

Our Commitment to Quality.

Lots of Qualities.

Mad Cow Disease —————> My Beef with Quality.

•

The crypto-artisanal concept of craft, as it's normally abused, bends attention to pseudo-materiality (or let's say "materialness") of language, for comparative valuation of imagined linguistic materials.

Language as a kind of Stuff from which to make a Thing. Vigorous verbs. Robust adjectives. Solid nouns. Greasy adverbs. Slithering participles. Feminizing semicolons. Fruitwood. Soapstone. Ebony. Agony. Chuck eye.

•

*Craft*—the trope, I mean—damages brains with fumes of promise: total control of affective outcomes. Most dangerous and common side effect is mean-minded administrative hope of stable rhetorical functionality, a square-head cabinet dream of poetry as a made thing that can perform reperform reperform the (more or less) same emotional event at each reading.

What craft functions could these crafted objects have? An ornate brick for tossing through the window of the Gap? Smooth hammer for breaking the Olympic rings? A bookmark exclusively for use in copies of *No Logo*? Opening the cleansed cupboard doors of perception into the emotional pantry of the poetry-lover's heart?

•

Excess of talent has ruined more writers than lack of. Glibness the worst. Facility the pits. Success death.

A musical analogy: "They were a passably mediocre band until they learned to play their instruments; then they became a force of evil." (See: *the u2 effect* a.k.a. *the red hot chilli peppers effect* a.k.a. *the rolling stones effect* a.k.a. *the aerosmith effect* a.k.a.)

•

Avant-Garde®. Social movements retro-fitted as mere style. Hard-won techniques as neat-o discursive gadgets. Experimentalism as pop culture. Sound poetry as kitsch.

The Antonin Artaud Lookalike Contest Theatre of Wild Wicked Wacky Enthusiasm.

- 

*Killed by Description: a Narrative Poem.*

*Mergansers Waddle Down Just On Time: a Story Poem.*

*Lineated Fiction Screams POEM: a Narrative Story Poem.*

Narrative and story differ. But story and narrative are both forms of ideology, or, are ideological forms.

Narrative is the forward flow of time time time, the impossibility of repetition, which conditions any reading experience as narrative, even the repetition of a single word word word word.

Story is the *petit-rationaliste* cultural legacy of Disney World pseudo-intellectual narrative coherence, all elements newly remastered magic mechanically clicking together everything in place books all balanced profits soar.

Story is not narrative but a formal order to which writers are conscripted.

- 

*narrative as ideology.*

*story as ideology.*

*story*, by which I don't mean narrative, as a specific type of ideological structure.

Ideology is not a pejorative here, just a necessary brain and body social bond. The problem is that judged against novels every human life makes for a poorly-crafted novel, less than formally balanced less than beautiful less than coherent less than our business: Quality. If it weren't for the ideology of story, activists wouldn't burn out, artists despair, introspectors plunge. When will this episode end?

-

There is a common error that often produces a model of the literary text as a kind of utterance. With this particular error, critics can find themselves again caught in fantasies of conscious intention and authentic speech that return the author to the position of supreme point-original and point-terminus of a text's true meaning. Literary works, in this mistake, then, can have only a very limited shelf-life; they lose "meaning," like freshness of bread, as time passes. Soon, they become inedible/illegible to any critical practice except a historicist one, caught on the eternal treadmill, always trying to recover a disappearing point of origin.

Meaning is not something that has to be constructed, discovered, uncovered, made, puzzled, determined, narrated, resuscitated etcetera—is *hetero*.

Meaning is irrepressible.

•

*intentional fallacy.*

*affective fallacy.*

*integral fallacy.* The latter loosely defined in relation to the *argumentative fallacy*—which maintains that the poem should, and must, if the poet is doing his job, make instrumental sense, and that if the argument of the poem is foolish in any way the poem is foolery that would require an official Standards Waiver (stamped) to pass through the Gates of Excellence, *integral fallacy* is the critical error that the poem contains everything that is necessary to understand or to know the poem, which knows itself better than the reader can know it, and, further, that it is possible to isolate the poem and its constitutive elements from any context and spatialise then itemise its parts in working out the symbolic algebra of its meaning and the arithmetic of the poem's Quality, as in delicious

egg metaphor

*times*

three allusions to biblical narratives

*divided by*

an overall tone of leavened scepticism

*equals*

a poem of nascent & suppressed religious longing.

This is quite a distance from its creation its production its ingestion, from the hot zone of its contested reception, ignoring the well-known *known* that the poem is but a whole fragment never a whole *whole* of a particular social / cultural / biographical situation that the whole of the situation / context is never inferable from the poem's semiotic DNA.

•

“...a successful [poem] would thus consist not of a succession of ideas or theses but would have the same kind of existence as an object of the senses or a thing in motion, which must be perceived in its temporal progression by embracing its particular rhythm and which leaves in the memory not a set of ideas but rather the emblem and monogram of those ideas.” (M. Ponty)

•

*At the Ranch of the Lonesome Reader.*

[Apologies first of all if any of this initially seems compatible with the phantasmic *free reader*, i.e. the essentially free subject who creatively re-creates the text at spelling bee in a totally private, agonistic bliss of voyage and recognition.]

From another premise, flirting with determinism, the aestheticist mystical-esque reader who reinvents the text is not an individualised reader, not the free Liberal subject, even when / although something dialogically specific, something only that person can know, happens for that specific reader.

See? If that toxic secretion called soul is not purified or anodized by the beatific aesthetic object—like, say, a description of a *Grand Theft Auto: Miami* sunset—neither does the reader experience a moment of lonesome edifying autonomy.

•

“Books are written by communities.” Misremembered adage became whole way of struggle for some. Books are not just enabled by, nurtured by, informed by, resisted by, but *written by*.

Individuality is not a complete fallacy. In some very limited ways individuality might be a substantially real possibility, perhaps. (Although, that’s not to say aloneness is real; the experience / feeling of aloneness is a prime constituent of individualist ideology.)

It is that for socialised humans, there is no solitude. Notwithstanding that I think we’re alone now, notwithstanding human children raised by paper snakes. Solitude is a cultural impossibility.

You are never (not) alone. Starting with the house of language you live in: the result of thousands of years of social processes, human thought; a *direct* connection with other people at all times.

Or literacy itself. Every book that touches your reading forms your writing. The archive is a literal human community.

This inky or pixelly community of kinships, antagonisms, sedimentations, permissions, poisons, balms, mice and dusts write *their* books through a *grammatical* (hands on the joystick) you.

•

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•

“Get rich or move to the suburbs.” (B. Rennie)

“Get profound or die trying” (USD \$0.50 Cent).

•

*synthesis, poetry of.*

*exclusion, poetry of.*

*inclusion, poetry of.* Poetry which includes the discordant qualities and contents of experience and, even with great moments of *synthesis* on local levels (phrase; line; pixel; smirk) refuses to use the leukaemia box microwave of poetic imagination to resolve these discords into puddles of reflective orange unity.

Contrasts with *false synthesis*, or in other terms *poetry of proximity*, which appears to follow the non-hierarchical principles of the *poetry of inclusion* but in fact, merely places diverse items in proximity with each other, hoping that some synthesis (local or general) will occur in the mind of the poetry-lover.

•

Three abnormative dictates.

*Poetry should always be ethically problematic. 3.*

*Poetry should never allow itself the aristocratic privilege of righteousness. 2.*

*Poetry should not feed readers it should make them know their privations. 1.*

Proprioceptively: bad aesthetic conscience and personification of a lexicon. Poems so culturally acidic everyone’s critical vocabulary gets an ulcer.

[If you know a parable fable joke extended nonliterary remark about an indecisive person who starves to death before a menu, please insert it here.]

•

*wit, poetry of.* A poetry unblinded to multiplicity, undeaft to ideological contradiction, unwilling to say no to the impossible.

“I’m just a prole whose intentions are skewed  
Oh Lord, please don’t let me be understood.” (E. Burdon)

•

Exchange value = testable knowledge

Use value = untestable knowledge

•

Reflexivity. Reflexive reading.

Content and form together are what is seen.

Apparatuses & senses converge to produce the eyes that see.

Readers experience the seeing and the seen as distinct, because readers cannot see their own eyes watching.

The goal is to learn the reflexive contortion of watching your own eyes see.

•

*For poetry reimagined as social theory.*

*For reading reimagined as social practice.*

*For writing reimagined as social action.*

## RAY HSU, ALEJANDRO MUJICA-OLEA, & ARIADNE SAWYER / Ray turns himself in

Ariadne Sawyer: Welcome back to Ray Hsu—welcome to the wonderful world of poetry.

Ray Hsu: Hi Ariadne, it's great to be here.

Alejandro Mujica-Olea: Bienvenido al mundo mágico de la poesía.

RH: Thank you, Alejandro, it's great to be here.

AMO: Thank you.

AS: Any word for our radio listeners?

RH: I wanted to start off by saying that I, as a poet, am turning myself in. Today I am going to be making my public apology on radio.

AS: Oh!

AMO: Él dice que como profesor va a entregarse a sí mismo y va a decir algo en la radio como un mensaje, como una confesión.

RH: I just wanted to say that as a poet living in Vancouver, ah, during these times, it's just really important for me to be able to admit my wrongdoings, and to be able to confess to all of Vancouver for the things that I've done.

AMO: Él quiere confesar para la gente de Vancouver todo lo malo que ha hecho.

RH: As you may have heard on the news there have been some poets who have behaved irresponsibly toward the City of Vancouver, creating all sorts of disruptions, myself included, and I'm not very proud of what I've done, and I'm sorry to all of literature for, you know, not behaving like a true Vancouverite.

AMO: But they [were] poets or just simple other people?

RH: Well, you know, there are many good poets, it's true. But there are some of us poets who, I think, when we're riled up and there's a big public event, sometimes things just get out of hand and, you know, I think it's just really important that we confess, 'fess up to the things that we've done.

AMO: Hablamos con el poeta acerca de los últimos días del deporte, de esos desórdenes que hubieron, y él dice que quiere confesar como poeta, que él hizo cosas que no deberían ser hechas. Yo para estar seguro le pregunté de nuevo en detalles, y él dice que sí, que no todos eran poetas pero él sí como poeta cometió algunos errores. And, which one was that mistake?

RH: Which was that mistake? Well, some people had caught on video and in photographs some of the stunts that I had been pulling when there was a big public event recently. Some of us were—you know, we just got out of hand. There was one event in which I was very disrespectful towards literature, and I, among other things, you know, ate pieces of my book and poured soya sauce on myself and I, I'm really sorry. I don't mean any wrongdoing towards poetry, towards Vancouver, towards literature. I'm really sorry.

AMO: Lo que él dice es que en sí él destruyó algunos libros con la emoción del evento ¿no?, y eso no la debería haber hecho porque es una ofensa a la literatura... Y dice que hasta se comió algunos libros, y bueno, pero eso no es un ofensa a otros poetas o a la literatura o a Vancouver—no es como el resto de los otros escritores, o de las otras personas que quemaron vehículos o cosas por el estilo. That is not really bad like the other people burning the cars because it's okay, you are eating your books, but...

RH: There was someone who actually saw—when they saw a video of me on YouTube they decided to post a video reply, another video—and in the description there was a death threat and I thought to myself, well, you know, I can't put the people around me whom I love and my co-workers at risk. It's just not something I'm willing to do to other people, even though I myself am very contrite and, you know, I want to take responsibility for the things that I've done.

AMO: Él dice que apareció en “yutube” haciendo este evento, destruyendo y comiéndose los libros, y alguien mandó un mensaje violento. Él piensa que está poniendo en peligro a los colegas y a la gente que trabaja con él, a los otros poetas y, y bueno, él dice que lo siente...

World Poetry Café Radio Show, June 21, 2011  
Vancouver Co-operative Radio, CFRO, 102.7FM

## Contributors

JORDAN ABEL is a First Nations writer from Vancouver. Currently, he is earning his MFA in Creative Writing at UBC where he is the poetry editor of *PRISM international*. He spends most of his days working on his poetry thesis that focuses on Marius Barbeau's representations of his Aboriginal heritage. In his spare time, he also volunteers for *Poetry Is Dead* and *Geist*. His writing can be found in *ARC*, *dandelion*, and *Prairie Fire*.

TED BYRNE lives and works in Vancouver. His book *Beautiful Lies* was published by Capilano University Editions in 2009. His translation of Louise Labé's sonnets has just come out from Nomados Literary Publishers. The interview with Lisa Robertson published in this issue of *TCR* was recorded over three separate Saturdays in the Spring of this year.

SUSAN HOLBROOK's poetry books are the Trillium-nominated *Joy Is So Exhausting* (Coach House 2009), *Good Egg Bad Seed* (Nomados 2004) and *misled* (Red Deer 1999), which was shortlisted for the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Stephan G. Stephansson Award. She teaches North American literatures and Creative Writing at the University of Windsor. She recently co-edited *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson: Composition as Conversation* (Oxford UP 2010).

RAY HSU is author of *Anthropy* (winner of the Gerald Lampert Award) and *Cold Sleep Permanent Afternoon*. At last count he has published over a hundred and twenty-five poems in over forty journals internationally. He taught writing for over two years in a US prison. He now teaches at the University of British Columbia, where he collaborates across disciplines, districts, and dinner tables. Catch him at *thewayofray.com*. "Ray turns himself in" appears in this issue of *TCR* with permission from the World Poetry Café Radio Show.

JAKE KENNEDY is the author of *Apollinaire's Speech to the War Medic* (BookThug) and *The Lateral* (Snare Books). He is also the author of the letterpress printed book of prose poems entitled *Light & Char* (Greenboathouse Press). With his great friend, kevin mcpherson eckhoff, Jake is collecting lines for *Death Valley: A Collaborative Community Novel*. Jake lives in Kelowna and teaches at Okanagan College. "Futuromania," published in this issue, is the winner of *The Capilano Review's* first annual Robin Blaser Poetry Award.

ROBERT KEZIERE has for more than thirty years photographed art work and contributed photography toward artists' productions. His personal work has been exhibited in Canada, the US and Europe, and is represented in public and private collections.

SYLVIA LEGRIS' poems in *TCR* are from an unpublished collection titled *Pneumatic antiphonal*.

The interdisciplinary practice of DONATO MANCINI focuses mainly on bookworks, poetry, and text-based visual art. He is the author of four books of procedural and visual writings: *Ligatures* (New Star 2005), *Æthel* (New Star 2007), *Buffet World* (New Star 2011), and *Fact 'N' Value* (Fillip Editions 2011). His collaborative visual works have been exhibited in Canada, the United States, Scandinavia and Cuba. His booklength critical survey of the language, ideology, and aesthetic conscience in Canadian poetry reviews is forthcoming from BookThug in 2012.

NICOLE MARKOTIĆ is a poet, critic, and novelist who teaches English Literature, Creative Writing, and Disability Studies at the University of Windsor. She edits the chapbook series Wrinkle Press and is co-editing a collection of essays: *The Problem Body: Projecting Disability on Film*. She has two books of poetry: *Connect the Dots* and *Minotaurs & Other Alphabets*, and two novels: *Yellow Pages* and *Scrapbook of My Years as a Zealot*.

ROB MCLENNAN lives in Ottawa. The author of more than twenty trade books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, his most recent titles are *A (short) history of l.* (BuschekBooks 2011), *grief notes:* (BlazeVOX [books] 2011), *Glengarry* (Talonbooks 2011), and *kate street* (Moir

2011). An editor and publisher, he runs above/ground press, Chaudiere Books (with Jennifer Mulligan), *The Garneau Review*, *seventeen seconds: a journal of poetry and poetics*, and the Ottawa poetry pdf annual *ottawater*. He regularly posts reviews, essays, interviews and other notices at [robmclennan.blogspot.com](http://robmclennan.blogspot.com).

MICHAEL MCCLURE'S *Indigo and Saffron: Selected and New Poems* is fresh from the University of California Press. McClure and Ray Manzarek are wrapping up their third CD—*Live from San Francisco*. At 22 years old McClure was the youngest reader in the Six Gallery event.

SHELLEY MCINTOSH is a writer and animator from Victoria, Canada. She graduated from Vancouver School of Art in 1978 with an award-winning film, *Labyrinth*, and spent the 1980s working in the animation industry in London. In Vancouver in the 1990s, she taught at Emily Carr University, made the film *Dream Geometry* (1996), and worked at the National Film Board. Published poetic works include *August* (Rout/e 1996) and *A Slight Narrative* (Kater Murr's Press 2005).

ALEJANDRO MUJICA-OLEA is a Chilean Canadian author of six books. He is the co-founder of the World Poetry Reading Series, World Poetry Café Radio Show, and World Poetry Canada & International. He was awarded the Silver Medallion Gonzalo Canton

Santelices and Poet of the Year 2003 by Projecto Cultural Sur. Alejandro is currently translating his latest book into English; *Shadow of Death in Chile* developed from his journal written in prison in Chile during the rule of Pinochet. He is an ex-political prisoner who was one of the first 100 brought to Canada in exchange for 100 bags of wheat and some technical equipment.

TOM RAWORTH's *Collected Poems* (though not "Complete Poems") was published by Carcanet in 2003. He continues to write, collage, and doodle. He now lives in Brighton (UK) and looks at the sea every day. *Windmills in Flames* (Carcanet) is his latest book.

This fall LISA ROBERTSON has published a book of essays, *Nilling*, with BookThug. Her most recent books of poetry are *R's Boat* and *Lisa Robertson's Magenta Soul Whip*, which was shortlisted for the ReLit award, and listed by the New York Times as one of the top 100 books of 2010. She lives in the Vienne region of France.

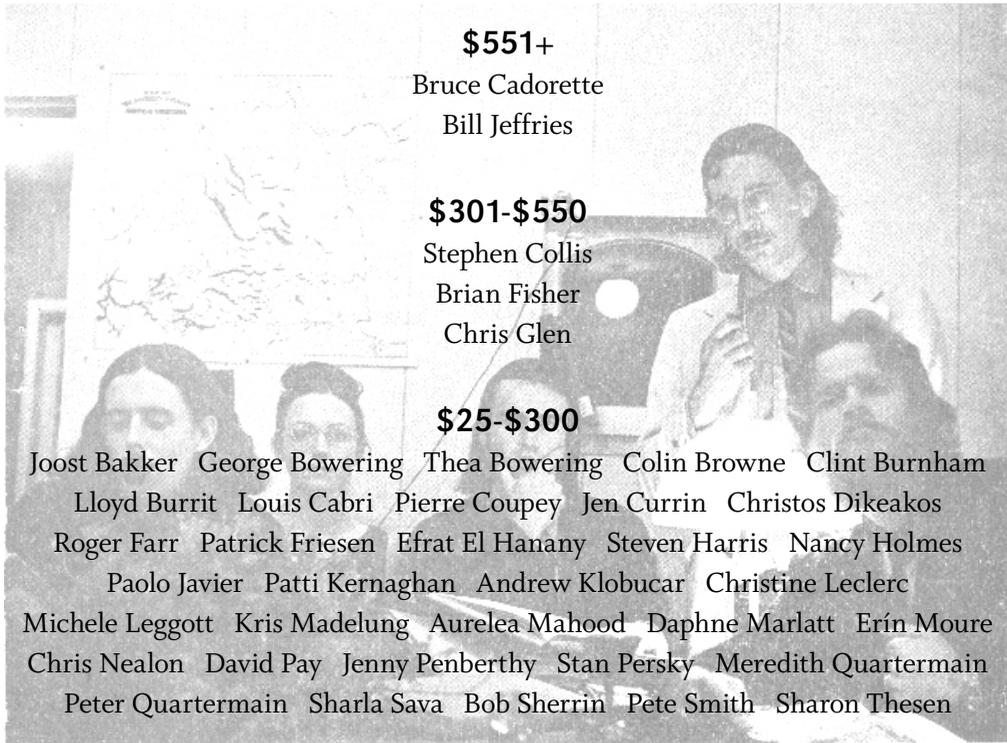
ARIADNE SAWYER is the co-host and co-founder of World Poetry ([www.worldpoetry.ca](http://www.worldpoetry.ca)) and co-host and co-producer of The World Poetry Café CFRO 102.7 FM. She won the MacLean Hunter award for programs of excellence for *The Brain Bulletin Series*, which has aired on radio stations across Canada. She is a creative consultant and the author of three books, and in May received an International Peace Poetry Award at the World Poetry International Festival.

BOB SHERRIN is a writer and artist who teaches in the English department of Capilano University. His work has been published or exhibited in Canada, the USA, Scotland, Switzerland, Italy, and India.

Born in Vancouver in 1938, ROBERT YOUNG holds degrees from the University of British Columbia, The City and Guilds of London School of Art, and The Vancouver School of Art. He was an Associate Professor at UBC from 1982-1998. His first solo show was at the Redfern Gallery in London in 1971; his most recent exhibition was "Robert Young: Lacunarian Picturing," at SFU Gallery and the Art Gallery at Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam B.C., 2011.

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"Sketches of a Lemon" from *Completed Field Notes: The Long Poems of Robert Kroetsch* by Robert Kroetsch (originally published by McClelland & Stewart, 1989, now available from University of Alberta Press). Copyright © 1989 Robert Kroetsch. With permission of the author's estate and literary executor.

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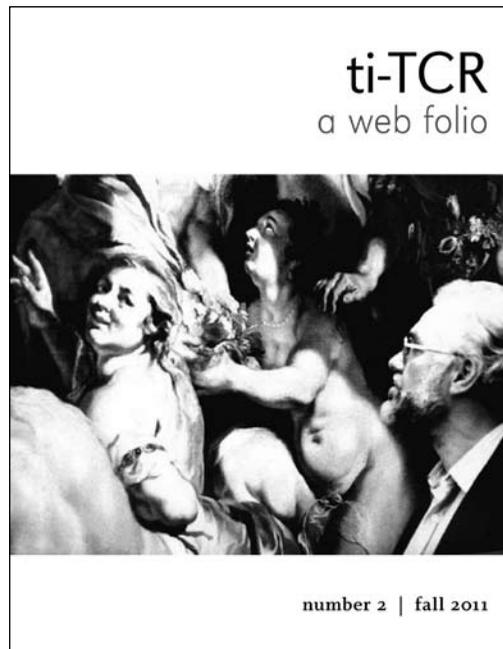
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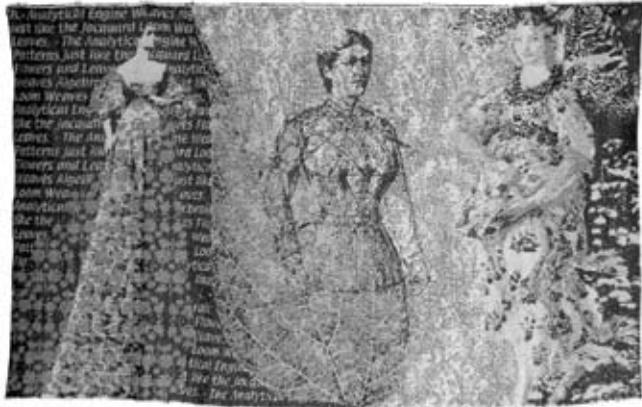


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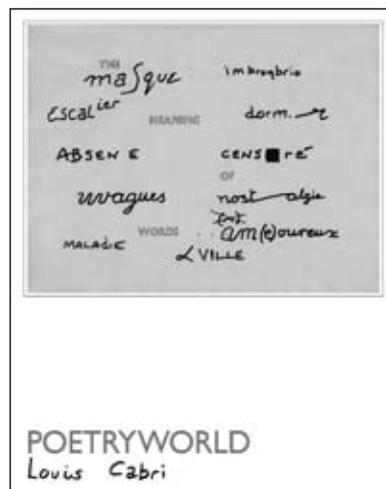
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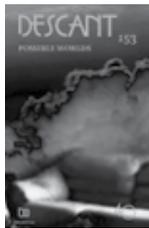
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