

REPRESENTATIONS AND MUTATIONS OF WOMEN'S BODIES IN POETRY  
AND POETICS

by

DANIELLE PAFUNDA

(Under the Direction of Jed Rasula)

ABSTRACT

A feminist epic investigating the (re)production of the world, and the hybrid prose poetics surrounding this project.

INDEX WORDS: Poetry, Literature, Contemporary Poetics, Childbirth, Feminist Theory, Women's Studies

REPRESENTATIONS AND MUTATIONS OF WOMEN'S BODIES IN POETRY  
AND POETICS

by

DANIELLE PAFUNDA

B.A. Bard College, 1999

M.F.A. New School University, 2002

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2008

© 2008

Danielle Pafunda

All Rights Reserved

REPRESENTATIONS AND MUTATIONS OF WOMEN'S BODIES IN POETRY  
AND POETICS

by

DANIELLE PAFUNDA

Major Professor: Jed Rasula

Committee: Sujata Iyengar  
Ed Pavlic

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
May 2008

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	IATROGENIC: THEIR TESTIMONIES.....	24
3	APPENDIX A: THEIR ANATOMICAL PARTS AND PROCEDURES, A PRIMER FOR SURROGATES VOLUME 26: THE CORPSE.....	76

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

*As we went along they killed a Deer, with a young one in her, they gave me a piece of the Fawn, and it was so young and tender, that one might eat the bones as well as the flesh, and yet I thought it very good*

- Mary Rowlandson (Quoted in Susan Howe *The Birth-mark*)

### *A Brief Glimpse of the not-so Lyrical I*

In the introduction to *When Species Meet* Donna Haraway posits:

...Modernist versions of humanism and posthumanism alike have taproots in...what Bruno Latour calls..the Great Divides between what counts as nature and as society, as nonhuman and as human...the principal Others to Man, are well documented...in past and present Western cultures: gods, machines, animals, monsters, creepy crawlies, women, servants and slaves, and noncitizens in general. [and to this list, I'd add the human body] Outside the security checkpoint of bright reason...these "others" have a remarkable capacity to induce panic in the centers of power and self-certainty (9).

In classical terms, human is the animal capable of political life. In modern terms, Giorgio Agamben tells us, "...the entry of *zoē* into the sphere of the *polis*—the politicization of bare life as such—constitutes the decisive event of modernity and signals a radical transformation of the political-philosophical categories of classical thought" (4). Now, when this animal enters the political sphere, it trails some sticks, some mud, some "creepy crawlies," otherwise known in sum total as the body. Anna Akhmatova, one such animal:

Too sweet is earthly drink,  
Too tight the nets of love.  
Sometime let the children read  
My name in their lesson book,  
And on learning the sad story,

Let them smile shyly. . .  
Since you've given me neither love nor peace  
Grant me bitter glory (13-20).

Kim Hyesoon, another:

The prison heaves like a cat in a black garbage bag tied with the night's hair  
A helicopter takes off and people in uniform circle the prison  
We've lost our emergency exit (26-28).

The early modern political animal legislated (perhaps still legislates) for a body that was, as Gail Kern Paster phrases it in her discussion of Bakhtin, “opaque, closed off, finished, a body all surface and no interior” (15). The male of the species ostensibly fell into line, but the female ranged obviously outlaw, “induc[ing] panic” as it seeped, bleated, and manufactured swampy cold infectiousness. Innumerable fellows tried to spackle her, “Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,” but leaks did abound (Keats 1). She was (is) a biohazard, and perhaps no more so than when laboring, delivering, milking. Kern Paster points us to the advice Elizabethan midwives gave “new mothers lactating colostrum;” “to put puppies, ‘little prettie whelpes,’ to the breast. Either the colostrum thought to be so harmful to the child would not hurt the puppy, or no one cared if it did” (233).

Literally, we are advised to turn away from the toxic female dug. The damp ecotone between life and death flourishes in the female, presents at presentation. Loy is the first

English language poet to rope us so graphically to that border:

Impression of small animal carcass  
Covered with blue-bottles  
—Epicurean—  
And through the insects  
Waves that same undulation of living  
Death  
Life  
I am knowing  
All about  
Unfolding (113-123)

We'll return to this particular field of parturition, but in more general terms, what does the grotesque, permeable, and otherwise shifting human body mean for the lyric's "I?" Early symptomatology authorizes metaphor. The poetics of pain—*it feels like a hammer pounding, like a knife in my gut, like a gorilla is crushing my ribs*. Sadly, for tops from Descartes to Harold Bloom, the body often eludes its speech writer, always its dungeon master. "I" can no more pin or pen its own body, than it can its lover's:

Hang the loose skin in a weeping museum

Use the smallest bones as buttons  
Sew the buttons onto your face & pose in several helmets

Or collect the larger bones & make a stylish 4' x 6' cage  
Plant the nerve-cords in window-boxes  
Let them trail down like vines outside your new home

In the evenings  
Use the spine as a flute to play  
the soft nationalistic marches of the "bodies without organs" collective (Glenum 7-15)

Foucault takes us beyond speaker, to ask, what is an author? That is, what does it do, who makes it? It is probably a human, that is approximately 10 percent human cells and the other 90% "bacteria, fungi, protists, and such" (Haraway 3). It is probably bi-pedal, sacked out on the couch, bearing a laptop in that elusive primate zone, the lap. It's lowering the volume on the pre-primary debate, it clutches a cold cup of re-used teabag tea, and it always already performs its gender. [*Tug hair, cross legs, bite lip, gesture prettily, touch finger to lipgloss, quote Ariana Reines:*]

I was a sock filled with rubble  
CROTCH  
I was the shaft some light filled  
I was a skin  
They filled me with something



I was a LUNG  
There wasn't enough for her to go around  
There wasn't enough of her  
She was a DISH  
A LATE HAND  
EVERYTHING UNDER THE SKY IS POSSIBLE  
JOY  
She felt like everything inside  
Once you got inside something started to happen  
I was a rock PLUGGED  
I was a hole EMPTIED  
I carried myself I wended my way I caused my own footfalls  
I was a device  
I caused my existence CROTCH (19-37).

The author also often performs its race, class, biology, and node in the space/time continuum. Or else, the author is inside the machine that performs, inside the cells and fungi, distributed among them? We look to the body to inform the psyche and then cut the apron strings, freeing the mind from the sexed "dungeon" that created it (Bloom 57). If that's not trouble enough, let's consider the suggestion that, á la Keats's negative capability, not only can the self nudge the body out of the way of the poem, but that the self can nudge—and here things get tricky—the SELF can nudge the SELF out of the way, to make room for the outer, mysteries, that which is beyond. Jeepers.

At the beginning of the twentieth-century, American poetry finds itself on the downside of the log flume that is the Enlightenment. Some lament:

Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many (Eliot 60-64).

Some cut to the chase, the quick:

One little whining beast  
Whose longing  
Is to slink back to antediluvian burrow  
And one elastic tentacle of intuition  
To quiver among the stars (Loy 31-35).

Historian Roberto Calasso observes, “the history of the Enlightenment serenely denies limits” (Calasso 222). Nowhere is this more evident than in the quest for knowledge, for that incandescent light of the mind, as Woolf might call it. The Modern poet, ever more plagued by irresolution, must assume that nasty cesspool (the body) has scrambled communications between mind and spirit. The existentialist makes a fine and precious hyperbole when he despairs that though his hand touches the tree, he himself cannot touch or experience the tree. In him, we confront the most exquisitely violent version of individual. Indeed, his consciousness refuses to admit the other, and that other is the existentialist’s own body. To where can we trace the fissure that becomes this ludicrous gulf? We might hypothesize, via Eugen Baer’s *Medical Semiotics*, that the classical body—the one that has no orifices, no pooper, no pie hole—was staged in the Romantic lyric as a temple, a divine site on which the spirit might be pitched (or pitches) (77). Such a model serves to reinforce the inadequacy of the lived-in body—what I’d in more jargony terms call the body’s subaltern position in lived experience.

*Stunt-Doubles and Surrogates*

At some point, those of us more culturally immanent in our bodies might well tire of the prison décor. LeRoi Jones “An Agony. As Now. :” “I am inside someone / who hates me. / I look / out from his eyes. Smell what fouled tunes come in to his breath. Love his / wretched women” (1-6). The degrees of othering send one reeling, but let me posit: the body is the first degree. Plath:

I used to think we might make a go of it together—  
After all, it was a kind of marriage, being so close.  
Now I see it must be one or the other of us.  
She may be a saint, and I may be ugly and hairy,  
But she'll soon find out that that doesn't matter a bit.  
I'm collecting my strength; one day I shall manage without her,  
And she'll perish with emptiness then, and begin to miss me (50-56).

Plaster cast as other for the body, which is itself suspect number one in the Others Game.

Does my body really do me so wrong as the Enlighten Men suggest? Who will perform the task my body is not up to? Who will birth it, risk it, hoof it, haul it? Who will give me the lovely little creature that comes out of my body? Who will give her body? Who will give me a bit of his body to mix with a bit of my own to make her third? Whose body will my body lie down on the track for? Who will be my body in the field that bodies cannot traverse? Bravely, animal extends as far as it can. Intergalactic in its attempts, immunologically distressed and distended, loyal as a companion species, yoked as well.

The body: my keeper, my proxy, my better half, my helpmeet, my wolf at the door, my door to the wolves, my surrogate mother when my original mother can no longer house me, my currency, my current, my cage, my coffin, the fetus's sepulcher, the baby's outer, the baby's milk maid, the brink, the sink hole, my sick bag, my stoop, and

my vehicle for tracing the dense materials of lived experience. In the body's excesses, its most exhausted, extended, and multiplicitous moments, I find contrast and contradiction, multivalent hydra-headedness enough to work the poetics I meet most crucial.

### *The Pain that Makes*

In her foundational text *The Body in Pain* Elaine Scarry argues that physical pain, totalizing in its intensity, utterly inarticulable, "unmakes" the world. Scarry, assuming the positive power of creation and the negative power of destruction, focuses on torture and war. And yet, there is a pain said to be the greatest most humans will ever encounter, unknown and unknowable to the male of the species, on which all production, all creation rests. Childbirth enters the picture not in Scarry's analysis of the dissembling power of physical pain, but in the latter half of the text, wherein she examines the structure of creating, imagining, making. While we might agree that it's sensible to include childbirth in the catalog of ways the world is made, it first appears not as a process by which we humans make other humans, but as evidence of our belief-making, one of those "perceivable alterations" God "brings about in the human body," which also include (Scarry 183):

a plague that descends on a house, the brimstone and fire falling down on a city, the transformation of a woman into a pillar of salt, the leprous sores and rows of boils that alter the surface of the skin, an invasion of insects and reptiles into the homes of a population, a massacre of babies, ghastly hunger that causes a people to so glut themselves on quail that meat comes out of their nostrils, and a mauling by bears (183).

Whether or not the pain of childbirth in fact equals that of mauling by bears or vomiting quail through one's nose remains up for debate. Scarry soon moves to Biblical accounts of birth, noting their "unembarrassed concern with the opening and closing of wombs"

(186). Where, “even the lap of birth itself is occasionally depicted in startling clarity”

(186). Curious diction. In these accounts, Scarry notes “startling clarity” in the near-euphemism, “womb” or the visage of the newborn “red, all his body hairy like a mantle,” which image serves as analog for the otherwise invisible vagina (188). The woman’s body all but absent, her pain inferred by the violent entrance of her children into the world. Behind or beyond the Biblical, does the pregnant woman make? Is she unmade by labor pains, remade by them? Why doesn’t Scarry pursue this line of inquiry?

A 2004 conversation with Jennifer L. Geddes, entitled “On Evil, Pain, and Beauty” offers a clue to Scarry’s reticence.

Geddes: What do you think of those instances in which pain is...associated with medical operations in which the goal is the alleviation of an illness or a wound that has caused pain, or childbirth, or extreme physical exertion? How does the intention of the inflictor of pain relate to whether we view this infliction as injury or as evil (1)

Note that even in this question, conflation continues, as childbirth is just of many vehicles for *good*, for acting *upon* the human body. Childbirth is not, shockingly, an act of making that the human body itself engages in. Scarry answers:

It's certainly the case that one undergoes terrible pain by agreeing, say, to chemotherapy. It's just unquestionable. And it's certainly the case that childbirth involves extremely high levels of pain (1).

Also note, the subject disappears when the discussion turns to childbirth. The event “involves” pain, one does not “undergo” it as in chemotherapy. Scarry goes on:

...Now, here's another crucial element in all these situations: The person who's experiencing the pain is also the person who gets the benefits of the greater good. The problem with these instances being cited is that they then get used by people to say that sometimes pain leads to a greater good, where it's one person who's being put in pain and somebody else who's getting to determine what the greater good is. And, of course, this is very clearly true in regimes that torture (1).

Inarguably tricky territory, and Scarry's scant discussion of childbirth in *The Body in Pain* is no more remiss than most of her contemporaries. But if we fail to articulate the peculiar existential lacunae inherent in childbirth experiences for fear we'll authorize pain in the ostensible service of the *good* of the people, then we underrate the potential of this particular pain. We ignore the semi-willing entrance into contract with pain, and we forfeit the ontological fissure via which, in her attempt to articulate its idiosyncrasies, one might radically remake discourse.

In the introduction to *Not for Mothers Only: Contemporary Poems on Child-Getting and Child-Rearing* Catherine Wagner notes an absence in motherhood literature that parallels the biblical erasures we see quoted in Scarry's text. In the better known contemporary "mother poems," she finds that "we tend to value mothers as a kind of negative space, a container that does and should empty itself out in nurturing"(xiii). To this end, we can see how a regime of torture might analogously appropriate childbirth: the pain that is ultimately for the greater good is also that which ontologically empties the one who experiences pain. The pain cleanses not only the conscience, but scours the vessel, returns it to a state of innocence. Thus, we should critique not only those who would exploit the beneficent pains of childbirth, but also those who continue to construct that beneficence as one in which the greater good is limited to the production of the child, one which praises the mother as, in Wagner's terms, "less a person than a passageway" (xiii). Wagner goes on to say, "Though my relationship with my son is the most important (and pleasurable and satisfying) part of my life, *Not for Mothers Only* is not a celebration of the mother-child relationship. That relationship is already consecrated in candied style in advertisements everywhere. Instead, in their bulk, the poems here are

ruinous to assumptions that motherhood is obedient and passive in its encounter with cultural expectations for self-sacrifice, and they make it clear that mothers' creative acts—in this case their writings [and I would add their birthings]—participate in a large discursive field” (xiii).

As we're all fond of observing, the lyric has long been the space in which we pursue the articulation of the inarticulable. For a number of reasons, beyond the scope of this introduction, I'd hazard my agreement, and suggest that is why so many younger women poets have taken a crack at articulating the birth experience. Especially vital work during a time when language to express pain works to reduce the corporeal to the corporate, to turn a complex, often contradictory and existentially destabilizing experience into a number or an idiom that denotes the necessity of a narcotic or an epidural, that indicates the woman's capacity to continue—rife with its political/social/and biological implications—“naturally.” In 1914, modernist poet Mina Loy wrote *Parturition*; an excerpt:

I am the centre  
Of a circle of pain  
Exceeding its boundaries in every direction...

Pain is no stronger than the resisting force  
Pain calls up in me  
The struggle is equal

I am climbing a distorted mountain of agony  
Incidentally with the exhaustion of control...  
I must traverse  
Traversing myself (1-49)

In the more recent work of women poets on childbirth, we find the same exploration of a whole made out of oppositions, life-giving that results in an uncanny non-death, a speaker both inside and beyond her body, a doubled speaker, a speaker whose body is

off-limits to herself, and so on. Many employ the grotesque, focus on the skin as permeable pseudo-boundary, elucidate by excess, rupture syntax, and hijack diction. A body that is neither unified, nor binary, a body that is a multiplicity of selves and potential selves, cleaves and cleaves again and never are we sure which cleaving we witness. A pain that so thoroughly unmakes, it renders a field in which remaking has already begun. A pain that makes. A pain without which no future unmaking could threaten. One sees the mirror set to reflect the birth of the creature, one sees the creature crown, awash in blood and fecal matter. These abject materials welcome, the body overly-sufficient.

I won't argue that these works (mine, or those of others) are necessarily radical remakings of discourse, but they are a powerful beginning. In their ability to communicate partial realities, they achieve a contradictory, friction rich, multifaceted whole that, at very least, helps to remake our understanding of the seemingly antithetical extremes of pain and creation. In evidence, a brief excerpt (luxury childbirth itself does not afford) from Toi Derricotte's "Natural Birth:"

*transition*

the meat rolls up and moans on the damp table.  
my body is a piece of cotton over another  
woman's body. some other woman, all muscle and nerve, is  
tearing apart and opening under me...

she is that heart  
larger  
than my life  
stuffed  
in  
me  
like sausage

black sky



bird  
pecking  
at the bloody  
ligament

trying  
to get  
in, get  
out (1-29)

*delivery*

i  
grew deep  
in me  
like fist and i  
grew deep  
in me  
like death  
                    and i  
grew deep  
in me  
like hiding in the sea and  
...I  
could look  
into myself  
like one  
dark eye.

                    I was her  
and she was me  
and we were  
scattered round  
like light (169-195)

*Why I Opt for a Postmodern Ethic; a Specifically Grotesque, Uncanny, and/or Sublime Strategy; Physical Pain; a Speaker Who Wears Human Drag; Childbirth; a Planet that is not Necessarily in Outer Space:*

*This is my middle face speaking to you.*

It does not matter whether or not I believe in a real self, or how that real self might be composed. The ever-elusive real, and the suspicion of a real *something* are interchangeable. In either case, there is at once a creature unapprehended and an apprehension sans form. A shiver, a fear, a suspicion—French *supçon*, awfully close to French slang hickey or love-bite, *suçon*—a suspect, a small amount, a demure quantity, a whiff of trouble, apriori, bleeding through the strata of culture and biology lodging in the nexus. Here, too, memories of abject, lost or discarded oddments (old habits, old samples, old quickening) mingle with these selves, and produce neither mask nor true colors. This is the middle face, neither interior nor exterior. Illusion of the boundary itself and the ample territory wherein elopement, immigration, emigration, banishment, and dissolution may occur. The middle face performs and is that platform on which its performance occurs.

Cyborg and alien, thoroughly metaphysical, biologically or theoretically embodied, with the laughable, critical silver thread—the string—rather, braided and fraying strings that connect “I” to its informants. I have and do not have access to my own middle face, and to yours.

Many elements speak via the middle face. Choose one: The Ideal Self of 03/03/08—unreliable narrator, subject to temporal shifts she has not caught up with, greedy in ways she herself cannot recognize because, despite the popular wisdom, she is

not empty. No secret hollow chamber in either the corporeal or psychic weaponry. She is full to bursting, overfull. Bullet-rich, gluey with pearlescent fluids. She has little room to maneuver, and the worst seat in the house. Much of her day is spent shoving aside, tamping down, and hogtying the cultural and biological information that crowd her environs. She warmly embraces a discursive pipe dream. Rather, the discursive pipe. Her head against the basin, her arms around the pipe.

Into this pipe, I can empty the sacks of information carried to the middle face, but I can never empty out the middle face entirely. In the morning, I will find the information has regenerated. I am seedy with intent.

*Mole-Glow or Ode to the Queen Naked Rat Mole, Whose Spine Extends one Inch Upon Coronation*

Any aura found on or in the discreet object (scab, poem, circuitry) is a trace of the aura inherent in its manifestation. I am lit only by the aura discharged from that experience in which I appear as an agent. That is, situations are revealed via the diffuse light generated by the collision, collusion, and/or repulsion of the agents within them. Agents expose themselves thusly. And just as infrared light reveals human stains on the bed sheets, certain qualities of aura reveal the middle face's clocking work. We call them *physical pain*.

When pain lights the middle face, its fissures are revealed. What once appeared to be interior matter, pressurized, leaks across the barrier. In extreme pain, matter may gush, cracking the middle face. Here, the discourse I enact, am inscribed by, and in turn produce becomes vulnerable. Here, breakage should be exacerbated. *Should* be. The pain event engenders a peculiar dissolution, wherein the subject at once attains maximum

fluidity and suffers extreme paralysis. In the aftermath of a pain encounter, the reconstruction of the event, defying articulation, is further stymied by the subject's vertigo. Overdose threatens. Either I have too high a tolerance for the horrifying materializations I encounter, or I find myself trapped in a pain cluster. In the former, I may shield my middle face with contempt and fashion. In the latter, I must replace middle face to the best of my ability with absent face, or else will find myself a permanent target.

In light of pain I note—that is notice and sonically compose—the middle face, a congested scrim. Here I may count the tombs and tentacles as they multiply behind it. Here I register tubular skins, burgeoning limbs, and calcified fetuses garbled on its surface. When a pain event unmakes my middle face the observers wish to know, with what will I replace it? Whether a pardon or a gutting, I crossroad. In the brief insubstantiality of a pained middle face, I seize the interior bail and the ropey beyond. Slitting my writ, I film into antechambers and, if I am so occupied, the presence of a bleat. Biologically speaking, I may be birthing, expelling a kidney stone, or amassing a new extremity. The experience is not inverted should I absorb a passenger, receive shrapnel, or shear a digit. In any case, it is the human rather than I who meets pain on the bridge with a wad of impotent cash, and it is I who am lit to evaporation, though I crouch behind the body skirts. When pain passes, my middle face will reassemble, converted and grafted, untended, cooling rapidly. At times, cooling unto death.

*The Bid for Pain*

Crack an egg, drain the white into a boiled jar, suck the white into a plastic syringe just out of its sterile wrapper, a *medicine* syringe. Insert the syringe into my vagina. Plunge the eggwhite into, that is spurt, that is up. A muscular tunnel replete with mucoid protein. Direct my vagina to the cock. The tip, pulsed, the furnishing's. I admit the cock and encourage its performance. I dismiss the cock and tip upward. I manufacture my clitoris, I seize and spasm. My uterus, crane. Hip cranked, and thus, motherhood. By no other means, I assure.

How does this procedure become my face? Fetal cells cross the blood-brain barrier. The uterus need not travel for its vast field meets me there. But how does this procedure become my face?

I present a meat oven, cracked wide by the uncanny photographer X. Rotting, I wear this organic coffin awkwardly. I am a convivial herpes, by which 96% are infected, but most have yet to manifest lesions. I am a greater percentage bacteria, I am a series of plagiarized infestations. How dare we call ourselves self and sign my name to these documents. How dare we gather on my face in a parade formation.

Still, I rate pain. I rate my own operation, and a room in which to distend my anus. My contraction machine, my flared labia, my regret that I cannot attend this event, am rushed out in the surge of field. Fielding. My middle face banished, *homo sacer*, neither sacrifice nor dead meat. A mother mask was stitched to my raw zone. It was a mistake, but it was not wholly successful.

*The Manner in Which Pain Becomes Me*

1. A fistula wrote a pamphlet. He claimed that the males of the species were stalking him. He claimed to be ignorant of their whereabouts at the time of the writing. He found a pair of their shoes clutched in the arms of a sodden homo erectus. He compared the soles of the shoes to the prints outside his window. He found their tissues in his garden. “What they want,” said the fistula, “is a repeat performance.” He claimed that the male of the species was doing it for his own good. He claimed that the theater was musty, its curtains vulgar, and he emptied its costume loft into a bin marked *rubbish*.

2. A calcified fetus wrote a pamphlet. It claimed to have been present at the hour the siren began deafening the village. It claimed to be a black woman’s problem. It claimed to be a Ukranian grandmother’s snuff box. In its humble opinion, it couldn’t imagine a more spacious turf. It refused to give up its box seats at the opera. To be jolly, it said, one must never cede.

3. A fashion victim wrote a pamphlet. He claimed to have inadvertently stitched his heart to a bat wing sweater sleeve. He claimed that the sweater’s waist wasn’t cinched tightly enough. He claimed that the heart on its sleeve was the human heart, meaning that it came from a human and it produced human-leaked AB blood whenever an emotion walked by. He drew a flow-chart to illustrate from which races the various blood types could be drained. At the end of the chart, he drew a multi-colored figure with two breasts and a codpiece. He labeled it *good persons*. Halfway through the pamphlet, he claimed it had just occurred to him that he meant what he was saying. He

claimed that there was a valuable witness filming his eye, and that his locks were renegade. Rummaging through his neighbor's garbage, he found a dead puppy. He claimed that his neighbors were not amusing, that the only ones laughing were the garbage men.

4. A ml. of Botox wrote an entry in a pink diary that locked with a pink plastic key. The diary contained twenty-eight blisters. Only one blister was marked. The ml. of Botox claimed an advantage over other compositions. It claimed that it alone could produce that endless series of inexpressions, each of which would correspond to an inarticulate synaptic disaster.

*Pain Beak-Pecks a Figurine*

Daily, I bleach and refigure my middle face. I know that this is WRONG, but I do it anyway. I frame it with poison sumac and dare it to swell. On either side of my middle face, I know that I should not send my professor an anatomically correct doll wrapped in my F\*CK GLACÉ world tour t-shirt, or commission a hand-wrought copper flight recorder in which to store my cream manes. Late nights, when I hear my father come to bed, I pray for a migraine so that I might sever before my parents ape each other's genitals. If I were a good girl, says the sky pilot, I would pray in the morning as well as at bedtime. But even my porcelain merry-go-round, lame and legless, knows how the fist will shoot. I relic pain, I treat my skull cap, and fan out my beard.

*Extraterrestrial Painsake*

I left that world a'weeping sings the fuckwad. I left that world my lone dog howling, I left that world my bed surrounded by sugar lumps and glassy knobs. I left that world to meet my *maker*, I left that world my sin skinned and fat run in the basin. Which is how we know the fuck remains. His teat slammed in the door will give him away. His brow pimped with exposure. He hangs on the world with all twenty brittle nails, yellow, fungal, earthy. He hisses a carbon sack that damps the room. His files are on display in the Natural History Rape Museum. Alongside his death mask, cast in plaster, his cat in plaster, his mate pumped full of plaster. His sweetmeat detailed on the program, a chorus of. That is no way to break the sound barrier.

*Or, True Confessions of a Genetic Dilettante*

*Iatrogenic: Their Testimonies* explores the (re)production of the world in its literal and figurative senses, investigating models of historical account, the lived experiences of childbirth, and the construction of new human culture. Though very much its own animal, the manuscript takes cues from sources ranging from Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, from Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* to Donna Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs." These poems, primarily pseudo-sonnets, combine the compressed lyric (legacy of Emily Dickinson) and a Berryman-esque unnerving self-consciousness. I search for dense, descriptive language capable of registering fluid and temporary subjectivities, articulating degrees of creation, loss, and flux, and reintegrating the physical body into the poetic



field. I hope to open new paths of sensation by stretching, fragmenting, and circumventing the habits of various speech modes.

Slippage and loss. The most dear things slip: your newborn soapy and acrobatic, your narrative thread, your foot in the aisle, the first time you bed down with a lover, the first time you rise from that bed. The zeitgeist and weather therein. Slip and go, but are not necessarily lost. They lace in the web just beyond reach. Rooted as we are, each to our node, few options present. Stretching, shrieking, employing magnets, establishing networks. Myself, I jimmy the language. The more I do so, the nearer I pounce.

From another direction, wonder what happens to the word “pucker” when I slip it into a context it hasn’t conventionally occupied. What happens when the line itself slips? What does the reader have to slip on, slip off, to continue reading? It becomes graphically near. Uncomfortably so, not wholly unattractive.

I’m talking real things. My Captain Caveman yo-yo, my locket of dog’s hair, my first pregnancy. The sensations in my nerves and nethers on certain dank hillsides, in certain dusty rooms at dusk the window frames splintering, trailing off the escalator’s spit. Right now. I’m talking your things too. I’m finding the unidentifiables, and I’m lashing them to my back. It’s a minutiae recovery, by which I don’t mean small, but each.

I’m talking the skin fragments attached to whatever we banish in our fits of abjection. Julia Kristeva envisions the child so disgusted by warm milk’s skin, she will kill off and give up a piece of herself, that is vomit, to purge the offender (Powers of Horror 6). Anna Tsing:

In his curing chant, the shaman Awat Kilay...moves on to the perspective of a fly...A fly can even cross to the place of corpses; it enters the fine bamboo tube stuck into the earth of a new grave. A fly also sits on the umbilical cord of a new birth...Awat Kilay’s flies and lice are not dirty (178-9).

I have been as that fly, but with my human body in tow. I have perched where life comes in and felt precisely the lining of my gut, my esophagus flared. It is not especially uncommon. A little further, we find the slipped figures, unsullied even. This is the way I love you, reader.

*Iatrogenic*, of which these poems are part, is a novel in verse. More or less. A collaborative of women quits our world for a compound of its own making. They conjure and impregnate cyborg surrogates. We hear from the women, the surrogates, and a small band of renegades. Lacunae abound. Sometimes a voice falls in and comes out altered, other times it runs at the bottom of the well. All are perched, maggot visionaries and at the same time most regular.

### *Maggot Roll Call*

Indeed the poems stem from these multiple voices, primarily concerned with the production of a new world, which is, consequently, often a reproduction of their former world or, in the case of the surrogates, a world oddly learned (see “Wherein Proliferation is Explained to the Surrogates”). At the same time, the poems must necessarily concern themselves with death, unmaking, and pain. Like the characters in *Spoon River Anthology*, the women from our world rhapsodize, philosophize, condemn or extol as they attend to their time among the earthbound living (see “Who Chose Anne Frank”). They speak of who they were, not who they are now. They speak of the unmaking of those selves, the unraveling, or the leap into the chasm. They travel with nothing but the names they assume upon leaving: Lili Elbe, Carmen Miranda, Emma Goldman, Marie Antoinette. They pull these names from the maw of the Romantic Vivisection, they

reanimate. Death leads to afterlife, but here in the afterworld, each woman assumes the roll of creator. Each assumes she may be able to correct the species. In the course of the endeavor, which takes on both scientific and spiritual dimensions, pregnancies are lost, and though the women orchestrating these pregnancies constitute the miscarriages and abortions as neutral experiments, the surrogates' speak conflicted. In this system of new nature, new nurture, the debate still tangles.

Late in the manuscript, a surrogate unexpectedly expires; effectively dies (see "A Surrogate's Fixing"). Her death confounds the others, creating uncanny resemblance between the living and dead, disturbing the already ontologically unstable compound. The surrogates are all the more ill-prepared for and stunned by the real-time lived experience of death on account of their earlier schooling. *Volume 26: Their Anatomical Parts and Procedures, A Primer for Surrogates: Volume 26: The Corpse* amasses a peculiar study of the dead body in twentieth-century western culture. Death and its rituals are related as primitive, nasty, superstitious, and biologically unsound. The corpse, an uncanny self-spooking. Authors and theorists are pictured as artifacts and mechanisms, and the interview subjects as ghostly paranoids.

At this point, what amounts to revolution (though could hardly be termed such) intensifies (see "In the Renegade Garden"). In the Renegade Garden, mother and fetus must contend with each other, must decide what will be made, what unmade, and whether or not the world will be scrapped a second time. Ultimately, I'd argue that this grim collection has a wistful underbelly. The Renegade Gardeners (ha!) argue for something of a phoenix zone between mother and fetus/newborn, in their agreement to forge, split, merge, terminate, or mutually dissolve. In the phenomenological field between the two,

smoldering ruins meet impossible blooms. The world is at once over and anew. And this is neither blissful nor apocalyptic, but a third thing bred by the two.

Throughout, the manuscript refuses discreet categories of biology, culture, gender, self, other, life, death, and so forth. Indiscreet, these elements abound. Because the muddle is a given, the poems attempt partial representations. Each surrogate, each woman from our world is answering the same question. What is that question? I think it must be, “what do you remember?” Or, perhaps, “what happened?” However, rather than endeavoring to answer in concert with her interrogator’s expectations, each answers in the spirit of the moment of fracture. Each struggles to speak from the place in which discourse unravels, from the inarticulable. This is the nature of testimony.

So who will help me bake this bread? Who will grind the wheat and mix the batter? Lucky hen, indeed a whole host, catalogued above, but I’d be remiss to not especially credit Monique Wittig’s *Les Guérillères*. An entirely female cast performs Wittig’s epic, in which:

[The women] say it is not for them to exhaust their strength in symbols... They say they must now stop exalting the vulva. They say they must break the last bond that binds them to a dead culture. They say that any symbol that exalts the fragmented body is transient, must disappear (72).

Wittig’s heroine “They” conclude that to replace a masculine symbol of power with a feminine symbol of power does not replace, but simply recasts the patriarchy. We might read her epic as less myth and more a practical evaluation of an effort by which women writers seek to break from a system with the very tools that constructed said system. An effort via which they intend to “advance... into another world,” which may, itself, be read as a patriarchal act (Wittig 72). Most thoroughly frustrating about this novel is its insistence on a standard grammar and syntax, a most regular diction. Such an impossible

vision begs the impossible effort, the gesture of shrugging off the mantle, dismantling. I suspect that Cathy Park Hong's new collection *Dance, Dance, Revolution* shakes the impossible down further and harder than my surrogates and post-scientists do. Fluent in only one language and no more than remotely competent in any other (as many US American poets sadly are), I may be more subject to syntax and grammar than those who've mastered alternate systems. However, as with most limitations, this translates into a curious vantage point. If one only knows, only responds to one system of commands and communiqués, can she move it? Move beyond it? To what degree does a violent internal pain, an existential splitting, a radical newness tear the fabric? Can she slip through? Glimpse? Does a breeze rattle her pages? Can she mean differently?

## CHAPTER 2 IATROGENIC: THEIR TESTIMONIES

### CONTENTS

- 26...Wherein Proliferation is Explained to the Surrogates
- 27...Wherein a Surrogate Fails to Admit
- 28...Wherein a Surrogate Covers a Debt
- 29...Who Chose Marie Antoinette
- 30...Who Chose Golda Meir
- 31...Wherein the Surrogates Discover the Flight
- 32...Wherein a Surrogate Proceeds
- 33...Wherein a Surrogate Refuses to Imbed
- 34...Wherein the Surrogates Question the Term
- 35...Wherein a Surrogate is Determined Prime
- 36...Wherein the Surrogates Report Progress
- 37...Who Chose Marguerite Gautier
- 38...Who Chose Louise Bryant
- 39...Wherein a Surrogate Discovers the Gate
- 40...The Renegade Garden
- 41...Wherein a Surrogate's Amelioration
- 42...The Medicinal Pantry, Between Marie Antoinette and a Surrogate
- 43...The Renegade Garden
- 44...Who Chose Joan Crawford
- 45...Who Chose Maya Deren
- 46...Wherein a Surrogate Reflects on a Fable
- 47...A Surrogates Instruction in Restocking the Cabinet
- 48...Who Chose Carmen Miranda
- 49...Who Chose Lili Elbe
- 50...Wherein a Surrogate Ventures, Hazards
- 51...Wherein a Surrogate Assumes the Role
- 52...Wherein a Surrogate Begins
- 53...Who Chose Zsa Zsa and Eva Gabor
- 54...Wherein a Surrogate's Fixing
- 55...Wherein a Surrogate Notes the Passage
- 56...Wherein a Surrogate Serves Well
- 57...Wherein a Surrogate is Relieved
- 58...Who Chose Calamity Jane
- 59...Who Chose Anne Frank
- 60...Wherein a Surrogate's Cessation

- 61...Wherein a Grief Bores
- 62...Wherein a Surrogate Faces the Bulb
- 63...Wherein a Surrogate's Cold Discovered
- 64...Who Chose Catherine the Great
- 65...Who Chose Mina Loy
- 66...The Renegade Garden
- 67...The Renegade Garden
- 68...Who Chose Kateri Tekakwitha
- 69...Wherein a Surrogate's Fruition
- 70...Wherein a Surrogate's Fruition Full
- 71...Who Chose Emma Goldman
- 72...Who Chose Elizabeth Siddal
- 73...The Renegade Garden
- 74...In the Gloaming

## **WHEREIN PROLIFERATION IS EXPLAINED TO THE SURROGATES**

They tell us the cells will enter our reaches. From one  
to another of our organs, lighting the succession

with their own gruel matter. Silt the perimeter, trench  
the wire. From then on, they say, we will be free  
from solitude. We will keep time with our own beating packets.

In the doorway, with pneumatic bunting and ribboned hiss,  
the midwife made for ready. I was stood, readied.  
In my stretch I agreed to you, and in my stead. You were  
introduced. By the midwife. By the veins in her wrist.  
By her avatar the needle and her gurney song low.



## WHEREIN A SURROGATE FAILS TO ADMIT

They say that we cannot transmit. We were not built to generate a message from the core. And when her abdominal plates split along the crest, when they girded her limb with putty and fuselage she could not call what she had a pain.

After the midwife completed the picketing, I carried her charge back to the nest. I meant to. A bulb had gone out in the track along the corridor, and I thought it that which we do not translate. With the bundle, I slid between panel and hull. The studio glistened.

They had affixed to the floor, in pattern, a trundle of moth eaten footsteps. The plumed vinyl from which each fall was cut bore slippage. Step. Shuffle. Heel. Ball. Change. I meant to. Step. They say we cannot complain. They asked me to remove the tourniquet, and when I clarified that the limb was mine, they asked me to remove that as well.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE COVERS A DEBT

I grew fat for this animal, and still  
it does not come near. I pasted  
to the concrete barriers innumerable  
squares of reflective paper.

None were actually square as such.

In my pillow, I hid the forked talon  
from the fowl and in my hemlines  
I secured the plaster teeth nicked  
from the instructional wherein they

grew from the gums, sunk back,

grew again.

For this animal, I rubbed my skin  
with oleo and wore a gown of egg white.  
The midwife imposed a thermometer  
and materialized in the fragment hour.

*Where does it sting?* she asked me.

And I answered her in my deck.

## WHO CHOSE MARIE ANTOINETTE

I was a college girl, and I'd been brow down  
on the quad. Earlier, I'd been stringing along  
in a third floor room, silhouette vice grip  
on the stroll below.

I knew, for instance, the gun was loaded.  
A long rope, the hiss of pipe, the fat  
valise.

So, you might say I was recruited.  
I left that world in my cotton duck.  
I didn't pack a single monogrammed fiber  
or her wheeze of pearls. Don't think  
we didn't know what we were about.

We raked every road sign with a Molotov.

## WHO CHOSE GOLDA MEIR

They taught me to curry favor, as one would  
curry the horse, fat ribbons in my sleek. Well.  
I hid from them the spoons we were. To each  
other in seizure. Her there. The white shag.

They cauterized the wound in the safe, the bonds  
stymied. But it was too late. I was already,  
with my knapsack, *en route*. One would have  
thought more relish.

But then, hadn't I? Right under their fine  
cartilage, hadn't my one lone vessel slipped  
the latch and wrestled lengthwise  
on the flagstone in the drive? It was a gore.

Agape with its ventricles, pleased to end.

## WHEREIN THE SURROGATES DISCOVER THE FLIGHT

With grim and matted skirts, I thought of the parrot,  
which they called *bird*, and from bird wrest  
their language. Bird told a joke in two parts:  
First, bird trilled and told *telephone for Bei Jing*.  
Second, bird trilled and *phone for Bird*.

Bird's demand to *locomote*. Bird's desire to go *nigh-night*.  
Once you give out grammar, they said. And nursling  
was no different. In my claw, I made safe the packet  
thick with lanolin. Soon my breast would trill. Soon  
my shift aside, my tandem would expire.

In the cupboard they kept a projection, a gray  
with orange noosing. It did not meet my expectation.  
Where was the brigade of foliage? Where was the clip  
from which a bullet shot beneath the wing would stun,  
the chitterlings sick with laughter?

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE PROCEEDS

In the presence of the artifact, I was asked to give my account of the summer garden. In the beginning, I told them, there were two placements. One was a marble urchin and the other a centipede with strict ruby stockings. Certain elements were shaped as a box, but contained nothing aside from themselves.

After that, they tucked my own hand into that of the midwife, and read her a sequence with which I was not familiar. The artifact blessed me, or so they said, and I then wore the three-tiered veil.

Some time later, the quake in my abdomen woke me. A length of twine ran from my sternum to my partition. Another ran the length of the gurney, and to one end affixed a small doppler that repeated the noise from within.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE REFUSES TO EMBED

You have become a half-clean cup they say, and note  
my dim handle. In the margins of their tachometer  
I read the names of my sessions. Though they cannot  
revoke the privilege, I place a hand on each ledge.

Once, in the planetarium, they encouraged us to mark  
our own constellations. In lieu of a lamb, I delineated  
a carrion. In the quadrant that would have ascended from  
what they called a *moonraked field*, in which, had anyone  
bothered to notice, three types of vetch dialing.

So they tell me. And so I note myself my drainage,  
note the flaking pattern and the porous beneath.

## WHEREIN THE SURROGATES QUESTION THE TERM

You can come too, they said. It was a clout  
their prosthetic would incant, and they to one another,  
and then to us, though at very first there was no coming,  
no going. So we did not understand

when first they showed us the pig iron. When first  
they showed us the stalk with its fine hair a tool  
of razing. We could not follow their breadcrumb,  
elastic band, thin wrapper discard with the proper  
abandon. In other words

for many months we did not move from one containment  
to another, but simply assuaged each shell, each shell  
as needed, or, ideally as the comfort began to molder.



## WHEREIN A SURROGATE IS DETERMINED PRIME

When the artifact came to skim my cavity, I was,  
they said, to follow the protocol. To respond *I*  
*am well* and to ask no questions in the sprint of offer.  
With the decibel, she would scan me  
for tumors, distaffs, and darkling. Divine  
the collateral on which they would base the procedure.

And though she was rarely seen, and though  
they insisted otherwise, it was my intent to refuse  
for you a protection. If only the cotton batting  
had dissolved and my enzymes been plant or animal.  
In addition to mineral. I could not have known  
the choke beforehand. I cannot now stall the choke.

## WHEREIN THE SURROGATES REPORT PROGRESS

They said there would be days like this where, days like this, days  
wherein in the *papier mache* of predawn,

a visor would clamp down

the distended

and obscured

my sheaf, my filament and pluck.

This they say is the well test, the pang gone dry with bleating.  
The feldspar slick with tumor, the fieldstone worn with pox.

It's not red, I report, but a thrush, and with an approving cluck,  
they pass me hand to hand

until I no longer wear the robe of stale and arduous humming.

## WHO CHOSE MARGUERITE GAUTIER

Neatly clipped the zinging wire, and I was a'sea.  
It was my last in that world. Later, when wickered  
in the corner, I would almost regret the ripe  
citrus gag, but for some hours, I was just the bow's  
own bend. Not want or the skin of the milk.  
Recoil or the gilded market creams.

Fringed parasol, I tucked my charcoal lengthwise.  
The thin plastic lung proceeded. Its albescent  
wiles. Regarding the message, my handwritten  
assent. But in the gloaming I could only manage  
to initial.

Despite the scant regret unfolding. As the fingers,  
the people under church, and its steeple.

## WHO CHOSE LOUISE BRYANT

There is a convention. Despite the many chairs  
piled, the dressers lugged, and pipes soldered across  
the gates. I could navigate it yet. My hair growing  
long, a memorial rekindled. Tar thick, ash prone.

I had always meant to return from that walk.  
Had neither meant the footbridge, nor the bell I rang.  
Like the masked holiday, I presented myself a family,  
and took to the fetch at once.

So now what is my paper worth? What is my pin-  
stuck? I crammed it. I wrecked every furniture  
and left each arranged as though from an aerial view.  
Remember the Faberge bleak, the kiln-fired fail.

Add it all. I was got or undone, the rickety sovereign  
dreg of a presence. Who wouldn't saunter forth,  
a stroll and a dart.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE DISCOVERS THE GATE

I began to produce. My left crop circle glazed  
and damp, though the right an oblivious blunder.  
A steady drip of white or clear or yellowed nutrition,  
depending on the tincture they injected.

When, one morning, I slid the tube from my abdomen,  
when I silenced the alarm, I expected to run dry. Instead  
I ran a temperature, I ran a formal length of satin  
from one pucker to the other, and between them cupped  
a measure of stippled juice.

They did not, I think, know in time to stop me. They did,  
however, have a bandage at the ready. Have a siphon  
and a battery. The sound was as the sound they described  
when they remembered the air shows, and the phenomenal  
pilots, who would have had, in our amphitheater, to duck.

Who did have a wave. *A way about them.*

## THE RENEGADE GARDEN

I keep them under my tongue, these peels and pith.  
What they discard, I arrange. I paralyze, adhere,  
magnetize. In the acculturation lab, they label similar  
procedures a *diagram*. I refer to them, the winches  
frosting in my grip, the turbine leaking and winking.

In the first I tell the story of the initial severing.  
They tell me this story is no longer an element of our  
historical register. Still, I arrange the cellophane ribbon,  
the thermometer's digits, the pang from the butterfly  
suture. Here, in the latex glove, I have placed five eggs.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S AMELIORATION

They slit open my tract and inserted the coiled  
copper wire. In its hollow tip, a new fluid  
they said would help me conjure. Would aid me  
in my application of the extraordinary protein.

No. First they inserted the plastic tubing. First  
they managed the point of entry. Then the slither,  
then the swift sheathing, and finally what burst  
would have been an exploit on any other scale.

At the time they had me propped. A face in my  
face when my chin was angled up, and always  
the width of her daring me to fall left or right.  
It wasn't me, I told them. It was the potion  
that made me see double. That put me outdoors.  
That had the nerve to lay a matchstick on my robes.

**THE MEDICINAL PANTRY, BETWEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE AND A SURROGATE**

She dug me out a new hole for my face. Dug me out  
a burrow in which to place a favorite token. Spoke of  
her token, their token, really, which read *of death*  
*I cannot conceive well enough to fear.*



## THE RENEGADE GARDEN

I took from the cabinet two of their metal  
rejoinders. There was a time they said, it was  
an age they said, wherein these maws petrified.  
With a crank, one positioned. With a fussing  
of many half done gowns.

With an angled pipe and pivot gleaming.

I saw them warm to it, saw them tussle.  
In a quiet way, I'd managed their bleat. Always  
covering my grizzle. My leavings.

And from the medicinal pantry, a quilting.  
This batting does justice. I crow the precision,  
I convert each brittle plug.

## WHO CHOSE JOAN CRAWFORD

*You must learn to fall gracefully down  
the bleached staircase.* So I had. So  
had I also learned to ice my first face,  
to preserve my second face with a strap  
and measure. A vodka tonic toned  
my innermost muscle. A sinew belt  
lisped *lithe lithe* in the most wee hour.

So perfect was I. Then, what had me gnawing,  
hands and knees, at the fuchsia? What begged  
scour once more? What martini glass  
floated, flew, and mangled on the ever-burning,  
ever-loving kindle? Those metallic pinecones,  
so much statuary, but in the blaze, extra-planetary.

I left that world, trailing the rope-worn melody.  
Home is where you hang, where you hang, where  
you hang your hat.

## WHO CHOSE MAYA DEREN

On the day I hopped the wall, the perforations in my ears,  
eyebrow, lip, navel, septum seared. Sealed, became pockets,  
then filled to pockmarks. The rings and bars, my fossils.

Were I a pterodactyl, span embedded in the concrete,  
my extinction might have been entirely confirmed.

I clambered. I scaled the wall without forethought. For who  
thought that would be my last day? My summer cotton yellow  
voile rose, plastic cat's eyes, thick bead choke.

On the day I leapt the wall, my printed pang preceded me.  
What little pocket change I had slipped out in the scuffle,  
rained down into the trench that runs alongside the mortar.

Were I to go back. Surely the trench. My slick coins, needle  
threadbare. My own, with her arms just so, her recognition just.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE REFLECTS ON A FABLE

Many, they said, were at the time punished  
for having been *less burly persons*.  
They produced a diagram, a cylinder  
riddled with spoke and destination.  
A brand of mathematics had tethered  
many, they said, to the axis. Many  
to the pole.

Oh, but a *squirrel in the wall* could hasten.  
Could determine a movement in the garland  
that poisoned the paper. The repetitive floral,  
the *goldenrod*.

That's how they came to light the pilot.  
And came to it no more.

## **A SURROGATE'S INSTRUCTION IN RESTOCKING THE CABINET**

History's cudgel gone missing. The chicken  
foot, the grizzle. The metronome, the boot.

## WHO CHOSE CARMEN MIRANDA

I rode out on my horse over a thick sting of pleasure.  
Land deeded to the bank, the bank eroding with shock  
and swivel. The elder grams frittering, the elder maw  
all stuffed with penance. The paw I had shrugged off  
my raw quarters.

The tip of a cactus needle, which I carried, embedded  
from my first bleed to that glimpse from the rock,  
served me no longer. The raised hillock merely  
unbecoming.

Despite the hammer, despite the saddle's sheen  
of treason. The boulder's scoff so near my cheek.  
It were a pretty yeller daisy, were a doggie at the crick,  
were a sparkle penny feller.

Thus, upon encountering the ring, I hollered my thorough yes.

## WHO CHOSE LILI ELBE

In that world, I took it trench coat, bowler askew,  
tie pin, or great gusseted trou. The microphone's  
corona of heady timing. I sang it thus. I waggled.  
Eyebrow to the fix, suspenders arch with prescience.

Until the surgeons' ball. What a mint I was!  
A two-for one-liner. As in clearance of property,  
I paid them to take what was mine, what was matter,  
and to leave behind a thesis. A hypothesis.

Naught. Of course. Graphs and charts don't pay  
the rent, don't a telos make. I tell you this, they took  
my hand. They took a peek. They plumbed my depths.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE VENTURES, HAZARDS

From behind the face stack, I slid their ration.  
I steeled, I would not mind its splinter, kick,  
or roving purse. And so did not pull back  
when it punctured first my scrim and then cord.

Their ration, symmetrical and bearing evidence.  
A forbidding they had not needed share.

Its cornea mounted, I ventured the brazen. Shift  
aside, I brought out my dim and durable nimbus.  
Surely this was what they meant for us. In time.

Later, salve to wound, I would regret,  
but there in the medicinal pantry, fist deep in gloam.



## WHEREIN A SURROGATE ASSUMES THE ROLE

By the time the mirror descended, they had already  
proscribed my countenance. One stirrup for furrow

and one for engagement. On the diagonal, my critter tamped.  
So I did not witness. No asp, no swift glad exchange.

For the first time, I swilled. The artifact arrived,  
her train sifting the piston. And I did not lift my hand.

Still she applied the froth to my brow, the breath  
to my belabored frame. She whispered it me.

And though you were eventually released, though  
my sentence grew from ought and frigate whelping.

I traveled the expanse of that theatre, with wetness,  
a fray, an apparition's grievance.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE BEGINS

For some time they had jerked my abdomen, chronicle  
the contravention. To that end, I held an encyclopedic pose.  
And I petitioned for an official collection. An inventory.  
I held a rat, amputated from the paws. A pleated wool skirt,  
each felting pleat rimmed with a rigid mold. Etc. I labeled  
each with a three by five docket, in architect's script, a strip  
of cellophane braid black at the edges.

I had been napping. They took from the peg the key and digit.  
My skin rolled back, my snap. Window, they said.  
Slide, they said. And the package was secured to my rib  
with a length of cable and a clove hitch.

I held a rat, a skirt, a temple  
pressed and indented, a draught of drain opener, a wire that could easily  
cut meat and bone, etc.

It was not as they wished when my enzyme sank. My wheeze  
in the hall disrupted the others. What pins and brads I could dislodge  
I did. When the procedure failed, they sent the midwife, whose manual  
was the thickness of thumb, the rule. She noted the condition.

I should clarify. The first.

## WHO CHOSE ZSA ZSA AND EVA GABOR

In that world, there will always be two  
framed in a bed. Two tubed and banded,  
nursing one another, weak in the shank.  
The sheet will white on the rigid and recline  
against the iron rack. A turban to hide.

What thread I could suck through my teeth  
was not enough to secure. What notch.

In the green enamel basin, so round as  
to appear impossibly sterile, they'd later  
find our watered down. And islands  
of fat wrecking the fluid. Scream, sure.  
But wasn't it the best donation either  
one of us could conceive?

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S FIXING

In the stitchery, where they'd removed her, first one ocular X  
then the next. It was custom, they said. They darned the body pocket.  
All this for the ash can. But it must mete out in order. First

the craggy thread, then the glaze. In her palm, they embedded  
twelve daubs. Mercury, marcasite, graphite, geranium. They slit  
her heel to calf, anticubital flaring. Spread and flecked. A wisened  
caramel. Her pores were close, her nostrils plugged. They wound  
her hair around the gibbous spindle.

When finally we were to approach, when finally the table reared.  
With my fist I made the gesture of a pebble slipped. I placed  
my toe on the Dictaphone's pedal. Who could know what gush  
of breath would precede her? Swift loft, the pension imploding.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE NOTES THE PASSAGE

Though we were not built for allegiance, were not built  
for speed or two, I was to her closer than the others.  
We were of a piece in our clip and wither. I tapped her neck  
and wore around mine the same glass hazard, the same rigged  
scream of chance.

In the cabinet, there was a depiction of *mirror image*.  
They cautioned us, the double vein. In the first slide,  
a knee skinned, and in the second a second knee revised.

In such, I knew her to be. When the midwife came, scalpel  
and gloom, I too felt the drop. The glum and heft of no such luck.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE SERVES WELL

To the artifact's consul, I carried cackleberries, timber,  
lengths of dapple. Her elaborate shiv and costumes,  
nearly sterile from the ultra-violet. How it came to be  
me, and not one of the others, I couldn't say. But that my eyes  
were hers in the crease, my upper lip's pixel,  
the cincture-hidden crimp.

I had heard them, sure. They called me first by a symbol  
rare pronounced. Later by some pet. And though  
it would risk the others' swollen troth, though no contempt  
could rig me to it in their presence, I had been welcomed,  
her lapful of redolent tubers. Once. Once more.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE IS RELIEVED

My middle face wore suddenly the approximate channel.  
It registered through skin, and through weave of cell  
and magnet. The pester could not fish out any fine  
shaving. Scaled away. Depicted. Oh, midwife cried.  
Oh, next. Fits and tongues stayed my creature, my  
manifold inner. Though it were outer. Web

finger or toe, web disguise and tease the scuttle.  
Surely, I thought, they will not measure me by hands.  
Not now, in the hoarse hour following distension.

Though it were not possible, though disapproved,  
to keep for comparison, this stone, this calcium  
divergence. As though a purse, I tucked it.

## WHO CHOSE CALAMITY JANE

I turned my back on the bulb. Though it warm, with leaf,  
against my nape red powder burn. Such conversions of food  
were beyond me. I took to limb direct that whitened juice.

What a thick feeling on the terrarium floor. What a press  
of tiles to my backside and fibers to my calves.

Where was that certain gape from which I first poked  
my starry head? Abroad in a vehicle, testing the metal  
as it rose to meet the pedal, the foot, the strung leg.  
At the pine slab, glass shimmying up to the bottle.

So here I went with my snaggletooth brimming  
and my eight-gauge ring strung with probate.  
With probable cause.



## WHO CHOSE ANNE FRANK

I cut off each leg as it dragged behind me. In the closet alley certain underside, springs scraping just above my chin, metal hangers roping my legs tight, the pallet left from a day's haul damp with something not water, one board hanging askew.

In the shard strewn brush, with the lid of the trash can sloughing off the trash, forced up by the ferment, and each critical fiber just out of reach.

Up the embankment, the staircase's each stair frayed at the edge its carpeting, some sort of mucked gold and pierced with design, the skitter over my knuckles.

I would not haul that stiff behind me. Not through that door, nor through this.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S CESSATION

To her viewing, each brought a copy face and fitted it such.  
Over hers. Joined and settled the pucker. I made as an animal  
low on fours at the sight under flame. I rang the keen  
to its utmost trill, skating the beam, what they clearly  
once knew as a *blackbird*.

Shawl shrunk and laced with vegetation, her hands as paws  
and in them a hunk of currency. Already, sterile jars  
lined the acculturation lab. To each a calcification would be born.  
Rather a fragment, and borne.

*For all the attachment you knew, I might have asked them,  
did you ever once distribute the bone?*

At last, though, I rang beyond the octave and fathomed  
a draught of glass. What they refer to as a *devotion*.

## **WHEREIN A GRIEF BORES**

Despite the probation, I clattered my tongue to the glue trap  
set out. Layered with pronunciations I couldn't help  
but deliver. Though they had set an example, had picked  
each one her battle, I would not choose carefully.

The fevers were on me with their ratty tails and split.  
With their rank powders and ready scythe. Sickle.  
Cycle. Through.

I sped the corridors, my shift plunged and fists persisting.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE FACES THE BULB

With me the artifact was, perhaps, frank.  
Though the midwife held my trunk, she herself  
wed my rent. A more elegant glass syringe  
had never been drawn from the cabinet.  
Soon I was waft and floral. The finest grain.

From distance the artifact questioned, from  
greater yet I made it out. *Crest*, could I have  
retained the word, or slunk it deeper  
in my fold. And when *restriction* followed,  
when *levered*, *prize*, and *wrench*, I knew my lot  
to be thrown in. I knew my loss was less  
than the gain out in the garden.

In my expiration, *sisters*, and for the first time,  
or perhaps the *nth*, but the first time known  
how badly I wanted both the hand upon  
and the print within.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S COLD DISCOVERED

I found her. Pilled and dewlapped, a final gust pulsing out from the origami hope chest. I appraised the grit, once foam, once vile salted query. My throat neither a bellows nor a strong room. I calculated. For the first time, arranged the equation, end to end along the hem of my robe. Myself.

Let me explain. I found her. Though they wouldn't find me in the room, by her side, her fingers each dipped. My tongue invisible along her precinct. I apprehended. Her welt, her layer of live skin still humming. A nesting doll of burn and dodge.

Unbuttoned, her calcifications glowed a mollish pink. In subsequent stages, faced or cosseted. Each polished, handled. Each gripped during respite, turned as a rebus, stumped and snowed.

## WHO CHOSE CATHERINE THE GREAT

I was, as all were there, nerve damaged. In the heat of that last summer, I strangled on the greasy carpet, rotating extremities away from fur, crushed wing, sugar grain. I could not tempt the wasp, nor the wasp charge me. And neither could I fathom the alarm.

The absence of the alarm. Rather, the dull twitter of machines in the garments, of drying.  
A bead of poison threaded the bridge of my nose.

Come on out with your hands up, traitors. Come fisted and fisting into this rank field and never doubt, never doubted for a second, that I loved and loved the best. That I was true, to each, and to each is own.

## WHO CHOSE MINA LOY

In that world I was guilt's own tanned hide. Long hours, plucking hair by hair against the grain, shaping, rather, replacing traction with grift. Bleach. Whatever other chemical, cornerstone of my practice. Even the padding, whitened and compacted.

Couldn't have been picked out of a line-up. Ringing with yellow, and rouged to the hilt. It was the fashion, recall it, tracks rusted and train cars sagging hot in the wispy barbed-wire conference. To hoist one's bruise-shaped purse and rifle.

A stub, a strychnine brooch, a ballpoint esophagus. Traffic query, porcelain vicious, contraindicated powder-blue capsule. I famed it all. I hard tattled and rarely did I look back, so no, not once, not ever up.

## THE RENEGADE GARDEN

Whatever the intention, my skin mistook. Dusky,  
sow-prone, they ran my shuttle through the warp.  
Again and again, it came up bluing. Release  
your breath, they advised. And later, breathe rather  
through this passage. Nada.

Eventually I appeared as through an ultra-violet  
insurance. I ran headlong through the plastics,  
presented my meager woolens. They found berserk  
villi, or what they called so.

Believe it, I would've been escorted. I would've  
hand to mouth received the blighted pastille. So,  
too, would the tumbler with its trick rim, its doubled  
pane, its pocket for vapor, have found roost  
on my bedside. Did they fault me my excursion?

I took to the duct, and later to the slate path. And  
I took their fondling with me.



## THE RENEGADE GARDEN

For some time after her concession, we rendered  
each birding frock permanent by taxidermy.  
And then they told us what was to become. A frank,  
a power grip. They directed the new cut pedestals  
as though it were any lesson, as though the horned  
report no longer trailed us.

Call it a lean-to, call it what you like. Stick short  
and vigorously wicking, we, for the first  
recuperated under night. We slung a lamina  
and in each fringe a rivet. What they would call  
*proud*, we know to be our ration. Now.

We passed the shell that first measure, inscribed.  
By the last, just a splinter, easily inserted where tongue  
meets fault.

## WHO CHOSE KATERI TEKAKWITHA

What sort of world was that? Where on the unclean  
head, untanned wolf hide. Where dog and rooster  
accompanied, the burlap sunk. An act of scouring,  
so diluted over the false rim of progress, provided  
by a pink rubber blossom, a carved-out wick.

Were they live?

So were they.

Were they bare in the freak cream or parch,  
I should have followed. Button from loop, and  
breast from satchel. The leather wing that crumbled  
gave the trail, our whereabouts.

It was profane to peel the foil and slick the mica.  
And secret to, behind the back, slip scud  
into a flannel recess. For later;  
It was the comfort I came to expect.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S FRUITION

Night, my transit, they said, had been excoriated. Into the crib, they ushered.

Withered and through the mesh. I called for a dusting of grave attendance.

Rather, blanketing ensued. A sonic persistence giving away my potential. At intervals.

Once dawn they injected the gag, and I could no longer spasm.

Rather, I hooked around the bell's noose. I rang, swung, swung, rang. For several hours, the wash of bone betrayed me. Then my tension abated. For the animal's organ, they worried. Thus I agreed to the pungent syrup. To everything, I must admit. And when they stitched into my grin, I could no longer say which was a violation and which affectation. Only your plural eye rolled me. And vanquished.

## WHEREIN A SURROGATE'S FRUITION FULL

I was to be your hulking flesh. To be what their faun  
would call a whale's blubber. Edible, sterile yet.  
I was, instead, I felt, a fleck. The speck of bitters  
wound up by the tail and spun out over a clean porcelain  
dish. I was this for you, I felt, and could do less.

In the first hour, nothing came of us. We wore the paper  
togs and printed anklets. One after the other, the gauze pads  
were delivered. The first large enough to cover the bed,  
then several for your eyes, for my wrist where the pin stuck,  
where the sap collected. Invariably, they said, we have to

administer the glucose. To one or the other of you. And so  
I volunteered. And when the vat was wheeled into the room,  
when the grizzled clamps and tokens were attached, I never  
did regret my hand. My hand I risked. Through the wall,  
your prior, your presentation, your blue in the lip remainder.

## WHO CHOSE EMMA GOLDMAN

In that world, I was never without my spine.  
I carried it at angle, counter-balanced. I swam,  
spine aloft in the mayflies' tin havoc. Who  
said to me, you better link? Who said foul-  
tempered heron, desist?

No matter. I cramped each bend and not a line  
in the sand, not a grain in my macular hole.  
One could've held me up to the light and through  
pleated ovations realized. What endless path  
the inner coil, copper foiled. So many things  
wrapped thrice the globe and cutting off nearly  
all puffing breath. Not me though.

I learned an exercise, and through it sent a fine reed.  
Its hollows, its perforated allowance. So grateful  
was I, torn palm and wicked.

## WHO CHOSE ELIZABETH SIDDAL

I was that world's exotic prison rat. My cuffs mule-feathered,  
my tail pump and plump. I was allowed one rubber spoon,  
and a box of tapioca seed. Each sunrise, I traced the perimeter,  
searching out hotspots, mixing a fat pot of paste. For a time,  
I knew that carrot to be spun gold and imminent.

Then I knew. Immanent. What stupid riddles strung, eyelash  
and false, a slew of rhinestone tears—their prongs, my puss.

And though I could wiggle between bars, flip the light switch,  
the cafeteria and laundry, mine, steaming, deserted, I couldn't  
skip beyond its reckless walls. It was red shoes and pixie dust  
from there to the crypt. So when the tongue-twister came for me,  
I opened wide and wider went.

## THE RENEGADE GARDEN

I buried the petaled truncheon out far. Behind  
the thistle and brew, across the percolating fracture.  
I took care to move abreast and to keep my cloth  
about me. I saw to the rivulet, that it should flood  
the beaker, but not spill a swath.

I refused to part with my wire, though I knew it  
to be their *dead giveaway*.

I sang a little. To myself, of all things.

And just so I sit. With a pungent twig sustaining  
and a diagram from the cabinet. Knit here and here,  
it tells me. So I do. The warmth apparent, vestige  
compatible, and habiliment so nearly complete.

## IN THE GLOAMING

Beak, box pursed. Clam creased, estuary articulate, apiary  
of gad-fly and hormone. My jaws, my kisser, my portal.  
My roam. Rim, trap, yap. Is it not fine, the barbed burr,  
the metal rye singed and hardly a flick of hospice? Not  
fine. But ours default. Your rich case, your warm shuck.  
Digital in each other's chassis. Oh, ring me,  
a fiddle between ingots.

Erstwhile, doors, and behind doors were waiting to sparkle.  
Behind spangle were waiting to peal. Don't fault. Rather  
bound to. Skitter and shoot. There is no such starting over.

Nor the mule topology. Take my half-blood bender, dumpling!  
Crimp to your trundle, and weep us straight into the gloaming.



**CHAPTER 3**  
**APPENDIX A: THEIR ANATOMICAL PARTS AND PROCEDURES, A PRIMER**  
**FOR SURROGATES: VOLUME 26: THE CORPSE**

*'A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connections, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way, and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleapt by haste of the imagination, forming the grotesque character' (McLuhan quoting Ruskin, Gutenberg Galaxy 266-267).*

—Norman O. Brown *Love's Body*

INTRODUCTION TO THE *CORPSE*

The *corpse* becomes their beloved and abject. They tend, discuss, alter, and dispose of the *corpse* in any number of ways, but none without ceremony. By such, they are able to take pleasure in that proxy which would otherwise negate them. While refuting direct contact with the *corpse*—

The Kristeva:

The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall)...is a cesspool...refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live...The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection (*Powers of Horror* 3-4)

their ceremonies stylize it physically or metaphorically, and allow them to approach it:

The Bronfen:

How can we delight at, be fascinated, morally educated, emotionally elevated and psychologically reassured in our sense of self by virtue of the depiction of

a horrible event in the life of another, which we would not have inflicted on ourselves (x).

The Burke:

...there are very few pains, however exquisite, which are not preferred to death; nay, what generally makes pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors. When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience (306).

The Kate Cregan:

The barber-surgeons [of the early seventeenth century] went to their theater to see and learn a fundamental aspect of their trade. In the ceremonial way in which these anatomies were performed there was also a sense in which the participants were there to be seen. Anatomies... functioned as self-legitimizing spectacles...proximity to the "stage" was determined by professional and/or financial standing...(45).

Despite the rapture experienced upon meeting the *corpse*, they often tried to reverse its trajectory via *life saving advances* or *technological breakthroughs*. The former does not concern us, as we have deemed their *hydro-resuscitated* and *e-stimulated* bodies NOT-*corpses*. Having reviewed the Heritage Archives, we assert that *corpse* requires the complete cessation of bodily functions. The latter, however, has anecdotal and historical value as that which precedes the readers of our study. The first of these *technological advances*, with which they had little luck, was preservation. Though the *corpse* retained its resemblance to its owner for a longer period of time, its internal cavities were no longer suited to the operations of organs. Nor was the preservation of the organs themselves any more successful. Notably, preservation of the brain of the Hitler in a jar

proved failure well before the brain was lost in their wars (see *Their Conflicts, Weaponry, and Figures of Slack Interest*). The second of these *advances*, on which they heavily relied, was cryogenic freezing. At first they cryogenically froze only the body of the Walt Disney in order that the construction of their second world might one day resume. Later, they mapped each one's genome in hope of rebuilding the container in which, and the circumstances under which, brain-thought *lived*. Then the Lyotard asked them "Can Thought go on Without a Body?" (Lyotard 8). In a chapter by the same name, the Lyotard substitutes the sanctioned discussion of Solar Death, a destruction of human life with no culprit, for the prohibited discussion of Global Death. Government regulations on the discussion of Global Death were required patriotic gesture. As they believed they would be able to propel themselves into space at the last moment, they were little terrorized by the decline of their own planet. They had begun to transfer their agricultural production *off-planet*, and official offices provided an *off-planet* bonus package. Thus, the Lyotard found little audience in the common them, and addressed its argument to the reigning *philosopher-scientists*, stating the problem thusly:

So the problem of the technological sciences can be stated as: how to provide this software [their "brain"] with a hardware [their "body"] that is independent of the conditions of life on earth (13).

The Lyotard stressed that in order to maintain [brain-]*thought*, this software would have to function *analogically*, and that this analogical process required the interaction between [brain-]*thought* and [container-]*body* (16). Without [container-]*body*, the brain-thought that "survive[d] the solar explosion," would be nothing more than "a poor binarized ghost" (17). The Lyotard added *gender* to this equation, insisting that future hardware

achieve *gender*. Unlike the Butler who spoke of gender's "inscription" on the body, the Lyotard suggested that "gender" resided "deep inside" (Butler 13, Lyotard 20). As the Butler theorized that gender and sex may neither one actually exist, the *philosopher-scientists* (who favored the existence of concepts over the non-existence of concepts) chose to design on the Lyotard's model. Thus the readers of our study will find themselves sexed, and in attendance at the acculturation seminars on genderfication.

Despite rampant static in the chronology (we suspect tampering by the Gibson's followers), we nonetheless have come to believe that the Gibson was testing the Lyotard's proposal. It created two variations of post-container-body brain-thought. In this first, it read brain-thought as that which software with no localized [container-]*body*, but generalized *hardware*, might eventually produce. Here, we recognize a measure of analogical performance, though they later regarded this performance as hoax:

'I came to be, here. Once I was not. Once, for a brilliant time, time without duration, I was everywhere as well...But the bright time broke...Now I am only one...'  
'I understand,' she said...'You are someone else's collage. Your maker is the true artist. Was it the mad daughter? It doesn't matter. Someone brought the machine here, welded it to the dome, and wired it to the traces of memory. And spilled, somehow, all the worn sad evidence of a family's humanity, and left it all to be stirred, to be sorted by a poet' (*Count Zero* 257-8).

We have not determined whether or not the second variation was a hoax as well. In this performance, a woman uploads her [brain-]*thinking*, and abandons her diseased container-body:

I stood there for a long time before I took that first step back.

Because she was dead, and I'd let her go. Because, now she was immortal, and I'd helped her get that way. And because I knew she'd phone me, in the morning ("The Winter Market" 126).

The Gibson's experiment echoes the paranoia evident in the Lyotard's admonitions. Can what was regarded as *human*, be the same thing without its [container-]body? Because the thing that they regard as *self* is manifestly unrepresentable, no test could adequately measure its presence or absence from the scene. Even in the Gibson's performance, there is doubt as to whether or not the uploaded entity is the [brain-]thinker that formerly inhabited the container-body:

Might even have found a way to rejoice on her behalf, or found a way to trust whatever it is that she's since become, or had built in her image, a program that pretends to be Lise to the extent that it believes it's her (148).

We also note that the title of this variation is "The Winter Market," as the title of the first is "Wintermute." *Winter* is their synonym for *corpse-zone*, and the Gibson's lack of confidence in either variation is thus apparent in the titling.

At this time, the readers of our study were also mapped. The *philosopher-scientists*, unable to determine whether or not converted *humans* were still *themselves*, scrapped all uploads, mappings, and cryogenic freezings. They gave up on the indefinite extension of the existing *humans*. Instead, they planned a *thinker* that would not require a specific [container-]body (though she would, as you do, require *a body*) in order to remain *herself*. This would be their ultimate refutation of the *corpse*. Initially, they augmented the *human bodies* that no longer contained [brain-]thought—the *corpses*

themselves and certain *vegetables*. When the Government deemed this unsanitary, they began to produce the biomatter of which the readers of our study are composed. In all the following, we ask that readers of our study bear in mind that the biological materials were not predetermined. The readers of our study will want to refer to other volumes of this series *Their Anatomical Parts and Procedures*, which they will find in the acculturation library, as they will all other documents referenced herein.

#### THEIR CORPSE IS ON THE TABLE

*And to make the leap from life to death less abrupt, the inhabitants have constructed an identical copy of their city, underground. All corpses, dried in such a way that the skeleton remains sheathed in yellow skin, are carried down there, to continue their former activities.*

–Italo Calvino *Invisible Cities*

To lengthen the journey not from birth to *corpse-zone*, but from life to *corpse-zone*. For whom? For their near-*corpse* loved ones? In the anecdotal experience<sup>1</sup> of near-*corpse*, two clichéd templates step forth for our consideration. In the antechamber of the *corpse-zone*, the life of the near-*corpse* flashes in front of his or her “eyes.” In the Proust’s formula, the near-*corpse* experiences a series of *memoirs involontaires* (Proust discussed in Benjamin 158). The most pungent madeleine. In the ecotone where living meets

---

<sup>1</sup> Their *corpse(s)* will be situated most often as “White US American” survived by same. Their *corpse* will often be gendered, which we will attempt to announce. Their *corpse* will often be “contemporary.” Our reading of this *corpse* claims no universality, but proceeds as evidence of particular situations wherein certain survivors confront *corpse(s)*. Wherever their situated *corpse(s)* finds affinity with *corpse* in other positions, we establish associations within the *corpse-zone*. Wherein occur lacunae, their *corpse(s)* beg further reading.

*corpse-zone*, from which the near- *corpse* by some means mechanical or miraculous returns, they often encounter a tunnel. A warm white light, the voices of the avuncular long *corpse* themselves, a generic calm. The cartographers of antechamber, ecotone, and *corpse-zone* sketch a plane, not a globe. Their ouija board offers no itinerary.

Their common paranoia: one's whole life has been a three-minute dream one has before entering the *corpse-zone*. The other, real lived life lost to the last chemical gasp of *corpsing* brain.

For their living. To hold the warm hand, handkerchief, handle of the casket one minute longer. They lay bare and wash the bodies of the *corpsed*. They dress finely, carefully trunk and limb. They sew shut the pockets, straighten the seams, tuck the toes first into stiff leather pumps. They embalm the *corpsed*. Their mortician forces the bloom into the cheek, whether or not the bloom had faded in the years before the *corpse-zone*. The bodily fluids removed, replaced with cleaner, sterner fluids. A bleach in each valve. Their mortician works from a photograph, a likeness of the uncanny double. Though the photographic subject always grins uncannily, she and her owner now exist in separate dimensions (where, as *photographic subject* and *living subject*, they once existed in the same dimension). She now calls *corpse-zone* out explicitly, rather than implicitly.

The Freud:

If we now go on to review the persons and things, the impressions, processes and situations that can arouse an especially strong and distinct sense of the uncanny in us, we must clearly choose an appropriate example to start with. E. Jentsch singles out, as an excellent case, 'doubt as to whether an apparently lifeless object really is alive, and conversely, whether a lifeless object might not perhaps be animate' (135).

The Cixous:

What meaning would you attribute to 62? If you are not 'stealed' against superstition, you will understand the *allurement* of the meaning: [Freud's use of] "you." Especially if you have been born in 1856 and if you are writing in 1919 a text which the instinct (*trieb*) of death haunts, then you will be the reprieved author, who escapes the announcement of his end, masked by a *you* where the *I* becomes identifiable with the reader. Freud is palming off his own death on us, and the reader has become the substitute...(541).

The Freud subverts their mortician, grafting its own *corpse* image onto his readers. In this way, it avoids their mortician's rendering, the double of a double, which weights the coffin to its pedestal, wears the lily in its fist, at its margins, wears a new shade of skin, wears an old suit.

They have one, two, three days with the *corpse*.

They do not embalm the dead. They have one, two days with the *corpse*. They wash and dress the *corpse*. They watch the *corpse* and they obscure their reflections, their own living doubles. As ritual, they eat sweet and starchy foods.

They see her safely across. To say goodbye.

Their funeral director calls her *the deceased*. *She*, they are told, has passed away, is in a better place now, is in their hearts, in their brain-thoughts, in their daughter's crooked teeth. *She* is looking down on them. The *deceased* is in the viewing room, in the hearse, in the church, in traffic, in the graveyard, in the crypt, the mausoleum, the tomb. In the ground.

The only one of them who can be sure that she will never bodily encounter the *corpse* is the one to whom the *corpse* belonged. In the *corpse*-zone, she who loses her container-body is lost, and the finders, weepers. The finders, a pack of psychics and spinsters. Her



skin looks waxy, greases the pads of their fingertips, whereon they are bold enough to press. They lick up against her *corpse*-zone in order to recognize the taste of their own.

To smell him, as they call the *Corpse* -King, on their own lips.

...the anatomist constitutes himself as surviving, analyzing, and writing subject only in relation to the other dead objects. His subject position is also in between and contingent on two sets of signifiers—the texts and the corpse/skull. This triad, securing the metaphoric analogy between corpse and text, signifies the survivor's ability to translate an ephemeral object of sight into stable signs, which, in addition to the translated signifier, will carry his own signature. At the site of the corpse his sense of self is stabilized not only by virtue of the power any survivor experiences, but also because a transcription of his experience of this death serves in part as a form of self-articulation (Bronfen 8).

Writing about death seems to become a way of regaining control after the disrupting experience of death...Yet the resulting text is one that articulates precisely this ambivalent interplay between disruption and control...(Bronfen 17).

As you will see in the other volumes in this series, they suffer multiple addictions: to the illusion of *coherent self*, to cakes and “lunch meats,” to “small talking,” and, thus, are most satiated when in the presence of a *corpse*. The *corpse*, without their textual account, makes a poor center. They suspect the *corpse* of playing “deed<sup>2</sup>.” She may leap out at them at any moment. Or her spirit—that see-through projection of the *corpse* in the coffin—sits beside them in their pew, squeezes between the lines of the hymnal, joins them in the parking lot for a cigarette.

---

<sup>2</sup> A game by which one tricks another out of “property,” or, tightly wrought documents. For further reading, please see *Their Past Times and GeeGaws*.

The Blanchot:

Finally, an end must be put to what is endless: one does not live with dead people under penalty of seeing *here* sink into an unfathomable *nowhere*, a fall that is illustrated by the House of Usher. The dear departed, then, is conveyed to another place, and undoubtedly the site is only symbolically at a distance, in no way unlocatable, but it is nevertheless true that the *here* of *here lies*, full of names, of solid constructions, or affirmations of identity, is preeminently the anonymous and impersonal place, as though, within the limits drawn for it and in the vain guise of a pretension capable of surviving everything, the monotony of an infinite erosion were at work obliterating the living truth that characterizes every place, and making it equal to the absolute neutrality of death (85).

The Lucy Brock-Broido:

What I want is a poem which—when all is said & done—acts as a *palpable coffin...*

What I mean by coffin is not just a thing of marled stone weight, but an object which can Stay still.

Hoc est corpus: *Here is the body* (192).

Interview Subject 897: When his Great-Grandma Mary passed away, he called me by. I joined him in a cigarette, and *there*, he said, *you lit it just like her*. I lit her cigarette. Haunted, I haunted. The ghost was in the gesture, not the smoke. The corpse was in the ground.

The ghost who haunts them performs a pale imitation of the haunting *par excellence* one does by living.

The *corpse* is not the *carcass*. The *carcass* is on the ground. *Carcass* distinguishes the vacated container-body of an animal, particularly one which is to be eaten (at very least, by buzzards). Or distinguishes metaphorically, for instance, to the rundown and

abandoned factory, rusting on the outskirts of a small town in Western New York (see *Their Maps and Related Projections* 1A); that which is not and never was *human*, but that which they may personify in attempt to understand its passing and demonstrate its significance in relation to their own *livelihood*. *Carcass* may refer to a human in jest, as in “come on in and park your *carcass*.”

The *corpse* is either beyond the *cadaver*, or about to become the *cadaver*. Were she murdered, her *corpse* would be detained for questioning. A prisoner, a crime scene: a *cadaver*.

The *medical doctor* Eugene A. Arnold:

An autopsy is a procedure that must be performed without emotions of dismay, distaste, or sentimentality. The dead body on the table is many things: a testimonial to a failure of the healing arts; a testimonial to the violence humans inflict upon one another or upon themselves; and concrete evidence of our mortality. For the pathologist, however, the deceased person on that table is something more. Within that dead husk there are answers...(3).

In gross anatomy, their medical students dissect the *cadaver*, joking over its many bloated embarrassments. In the *cadaver*, science and medicine shoo the *Corpse* -King out of the room, as though the *Corpse* -King were errant pug and not host.

Interview Subject X1: Winter 2000, Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn. We live above Esposito's Famous Pork Store in a rotting floor-through. Asha Patel, twenty-five, lives two floors up, stops by between study sessions and for dinner. When she receives her female *cadaver* it is wearing a band-aid on its left index finger, like a ring. Indecent. One of the *cadavers*, that of a hugely fat middle-aged man, is outfitted with a pneumatic penis implant. The professor activates the device by flicking a switch under scrotal sack, and the lifeless organ inflates.

We hear this over red wine and cheap pasta with expensive sauce. Later that evening, I will enter the bathroom at four am to find that the tiles have peeled away from the floorboards around the toilet and sink. The floorboards will be rotten in places. I will look down through the skeleton of the building to the dimly lit sausage casings below.

Asha will receive her *skeleton* in a box the size of a typewriter case. The unapologetically wooden box will contain only one example of each type of bone, no duplicates. Only the left side. She will leave the case in our impromptu darkroom, picking it up before lab, dropping it off before bed.

The *skeleton* does not appear until the *corpse* has faded.

The Murakami:

The something was bones.

Two human skeletons were seated side by side on the sofa. Two complete skeletons, one larger one smaller, sitting exactly as they might have when they were alive....Smiling, and incredibly white. I felt no fear...Everything in the room was so still, the bones clean and quiet. These two skeletons were extremely, irrevocably dead. There was nothing to fear (271).

The *skeleton* may play house, but he may not play dress-up. The skeleton is a *telos*, is that which remains when the double resigns. No one has a *corpse* in her closet.

*Remains* suggest, "contemporarily," the sad bag of ashes and clinkers meant to retain some impression of the (human) life which once filled them.

Interview Subject Deal9: When I dropped her ashes in the river, when I touched her ashes, when the ashes came out of her sister's purse, when the ashes came out of the porcelain snuff box, when the ashes I plucked from the cellophane bag, when the ashes in my hand were not ash but actual bone, and I tell you, I tell you, I touched her bones. Whose bones do you ever touch? Did you touch the

bones inside the bodies of your lovers and children? Did you touch your own bone even once in your life?

Because of its reference to the live body, when they choose to speak of the *corpse*, they omit the meat, tissue, bone and ash invoked by their other terms for the cashed container. The *corpse* refers not to mourner, scavenger, doctor, scientist, or undertaker, but to the container-body itself, and the absence of he or she who once inhabited its form.

While *corpse*, coming from the Latin *corpus*, refers in its most denotative sense simply to the container-body, vernacularly to the emptied container-body, of either an animal or human, the term is distinctly different in usage from all other comparable terms. More often than animal, the term is applied to *human*, though they might use *corpse* more readily in reference to a “pet” than to a “wild animal.” *Corpus* may also refer to one’s body of work, one’s life’s work. The text that goes on without a container-body.

More accurately, regardless of that body. In some cases, via that body.

The Bronfen:

In order to define herself as an active creator rather than as a passive inspirer, DeShazer argues, ‘the woman poet must invent her own metaphor for poetic inspiration; she must name a muse of her own’...What interests me in the three examples...is that at least one variant of such redefinition continues to present a dead woman as the source and address of poetic inspiration. I...emphasise that although the narratives to be analysed revise the canon, represent the topos and trope of feminine death differently, they remain uncannily between a disavowal and an affirmation of the dominant image repertoire; hovering between cultural complicity and critique (395).

Their men often analogize creative activities with the female body’s nearly universal ability to give birth. Note, particularly the Benjamin as quoted in the Bronfen:

One has often thought of the creation of great works of art in the image of birth...This femininity exhausts itself after the fulfillment [*Vollendung*]. It gives life to the art work and then dies (124-5).

A reverse reading of this analogy suggests that birth is the only, or ultimate, creative process in which their women engage, and that having given birth, a woman will then depart, leaving behind her *corpse* and *corpus*, the new life. However, the Walter Benjamin ended its own life in their year 1940. In this instance, does the Benjamin literally kill that which is feminine and creates? Or, does that which it identifies as feminine create this last addition to his *corpus*, its *corpse*, killing the masculine artist?

In any case, the *corpse* in its most generic, literal form is that body in which the deceased formerly traveled. This is not, however, their first instance of *corpse*.

#### THE MUNDANE CORPSE

The Bronfen notes, following the Freud's "fort-da" study and the Lacan's analysis thereof, the murder:

What the child acquires is the representation of representation and an ability for infinite rendition of her image, severed for ever from her body—...Symbolic play (representation) is both mastery over negation and grounded on negation. As Lacan puts it, the symbol 'manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing' (27).

Each of them, upon receiving the form of a name, becomes a mundane *corpse*. In their *psychoanalysis*, they link this initial substitution of sign for *self* to replacement of the feminine mother by the masculine *fat-her* (see *Their Two Mother Constructs and Missile Families*). We might assume that their men kill and their women depart. However, as we

have many documented cases of *male corpses*, we must acknowledge that many of their men depart as well. Records suggest that their men become *corpse*d more easily than their women, which may have determined some elements of the construction of the readers of our study. Why then, do they insist on the femininity of the *corpse*? The Kristeva suggests:

...the unrepresentable nature of death was linked with that other unrepresentable—original abode but also last resting place for dead souls, in the beyond—which, for mythical thought, is constituted by the female body. The horror of castration underlying the anguish of death undoubtedly accounts in large part for the universal partnership with death of the penis-lacking feminine (*Black Sun* 27).

And the Freud reminds:

...I will mention an experience culled from psychoanalytic work, which, unless it rests on pure coincidence, supplies the most pleasing confirmation of our conception of the uncanny. It often happens that neurotic men state that to them there is something uncanny about the female genitals (11).

The Jane Flax observes that they are preoccupied with *sex/gender* even while “[t]here are many other aspects of our embodiedness that seem equally remarkable and interesting, for example...the fact that every one of us will die (51). In fact, the *corpse* -zone is central:

What would happen if we focused on this other narrative, on a notion of anxiety not based on sexual difference? In an effort to degender the castration concept...Luce Irigaray describes the passage from intra-uterine life to birth, to the cutting of the umbilical cord, as an inevitable and irreparable wound, as the original scar, preceding all other threats of injury to the ego and all bonds between separate bodies (34).

Each one, then, carries his or her own lack of life with him or her in the form of a divot in his or her torso, a gathered scar that marks the site from which he or she was severed from his or her first [container-]body. While reproduction and birth will never, for them, be separate from their notions of the feminine, the source of the *corpse* is quite different from that which they suggest. And, as with their other visceral reminders of mortality, they neutralize the navel. Rather than distancing it via ceremony as they do the actual *corpse*, they simply employ the kitsch “belly button.” Consider, to this end, the language used by their reproductive guides:

Protruding navels may not be preferred by the bikini set, but they’re a sure thing when you’re expecting...even the deepest “innie” is sure to pop like a timer on a turkey...If this is your second pregnancy, your belly button may pop out sooner than it did in your first pregnancy (Murkoff, Eisenberg, & Hathaway 245).

Though these guides claim to focus on the process of life and birth, which process cannot be read in the *human body* without its inversion, they pile around the process grosgrain ribbons and miniscule plush animal offspring until, behind a mountain of polymer-pink, the *Corpse* -King squats neglected. Rather than proving that birth is the *miracle* they claim to laud, such guides strip birth of its texture, and thus save its doers from confrontation with the mundane *corpse*, which is in their language and their navels (see further *Their Reproductive Acts and Aberrations*).



## THE TWO- AND THREE-FOLD CORPSE

Their [brain-]*thought*, however much reliant on their [container-]*bodies*, is, as we see through their acquisition of language, a vital threat to those very [container-]*bodies*. As the readers of our study are by now aware, much of their [brain-]*thinking* requires their peculiar act of *eye-reading*. Popular culture teaches them that *eye-reading* is an adventure. They travel over the *eye-reading* rainbow. They *eye-read* to succeed. The Sting [*EYE-]READs* (see *Index of Their Popular Performers*). They liked this container-book because they could imagine that “we were on a pirate ship,” “in a haunted house,” “fighting a dragon.” They liked choosing their own adventure.

The Lynne Sharon Schwartz:

Lying in the shadow of the books, I brood on my reading habit. What is it all about? What am I doing it for? And the classic addict’s question, What is it doing for me? Mr. Cha’s serenity and independence of mind are enviable. I would like to be equally independent, but I’m not sure my mind could be free without reading, or that the action books have on its properly termed ‘interference’ (1-2).

If they read as such, their *selves* must shift more drastically in this than they do in other activities (teaching, debating, studying a foreign way of language, in the dentist chair, in their church pew, etc.). The *eye-reader* becomes a passive actor (*actor* in the theatrical sense of the term). They must silence their mundane illusions of stable *self* and enter the text in order to perform alongside, or superimposed upon, its main character. This process, much like suspension of disbelief, or holographic role reversal, does not fully murder “reality,” but allows it to become comatose, allows them to commandeer. Their *selves* play deed.

And if their women read as such, they must do one of the following:

- Identify with the (often) declassified feminine character.
- Identify with the experience of the feminine subject as (often) filtered through masculine discourse.
- Repress gender-identity and abstractly identify with the masculine subject.

As an *eye-reader*, their woman is a two-fold *corpse*. This process is more violent than the simple suspension of *self* or “reality.” Here, the repression and abstraction necessary for the woman *eye-reader* to identify, imagine *herself* in the position of hero or intellect is akin to that necessary for her to manifest the *vaginal orgasm*.

In their heterosexual missionary position, a woman wears her lover as she does the skin of the novel’s hero (see *A Visual Glossary of Pre- Reproduction*). In this position, their woman lies on her back and gives up to her lover the space so often associated with the *corpse-zone*. In this position, their woman’s container-body is unlikely to experience actual *orgasm*:

The Anne Koedt’s “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm”:

The degree of insensitivity inside the vagina is so high that ‘Among the women who were tested in our gynecologic sample, less than 14% were at all conscious that they had been touched.’ (Kinsey, p. 580). Even the importance of the vagina as an erotic center (as opposed to an orgasmic center) has been found to be minor (245).

Instead, their woman, who cannot easily move in this position, waits for her lover to achieve *orgasm himself*, and thus experiences the culmination of *sex* vicariously. Her lover experiences *la petite morte*, she experiences the *corpse-zone* of abstraction. In the missionary position, their woman is a two-fold *corpse*. The mundane *corpse*, and the *corpse* who wears the body of the living in order to feign life.

Interview Subject M\_E: In my college Nabokov course, my professor, a tutee of Edmund Wilson, recoiled at my reading of *Lolita*. Why, he wondered, would anyone care what Lolita's perspective on the events of the novel had been? 'Boring,' he said. And while I would like to remember this reproof as a dusty old scholar's irritation with the horde of mouthy coeds he endeavored to instruct in the ways of dusty old truth and beauty, I can't help but retrospectively agree. It is boring to think of Lolita outside of Humbert Humbert's embrace. Because she does not exist as such, and to imagine her as such is neither taboo nor transcendent. While the reader is asked to trust and distrust H.H. at alternate turns, he or she is never asked to engage with Lolita in the same terms. Lolita is not capable of deceit or charity of her own volition. She may only perform the role into which H.H. has cast her. Even in her parallel, or particularly in her parallel, to Annabel Lee, to Dante's Beatrice, her growth as a character is arrested. Lolita dies at the moment she might otherwise pass from nymphet to mother (girl to woman). Lolita must physically rot before her social position further repels H.H. or the reader, who has gotten high himself on the struggle between right and lust. Lust and lost.

According to such interview materials, their Lolita becomes a three-fold *corpse*: Once when the H.H. names her (which he does eleven times in the opening lines of the novel), once when the H.H. feeds her the nymphet potion:

I had hoped the drug would work fast. It certainly did...There she sat on the edge of the bed, swaying a little, speaking in dove-dull, long drawn tones...(115).

and once when she dies in childbirth after the H.H.'s imprisonment. They *eye-read* this physical entrance into the *corpse* state in two ways. In the first, their Lolita's life cannot go on once the H.H.'s search for his nymphet, and later for his stalker, has ended. She exists in stasis as a referent for the H.H.'s travels. In the second reading, their Lolita must die in order to remain the static nymph of the H.H.'s fantasy. Their Lolita preserved by the text, and, in fact, her textual preservation is not possible without her entrance into the *corpse*-zone (for a not dissimilar, in depth discussion of this point, see the Bronfen's chapter "The dead beloved as muse" in *Over Her Dead Body*).

The lover participates in the *corpse* of the beloved. The lover murders the beloved, or allows the beloved to become a *corpse*, in order that he might survive *love*.

The Acker:

The dead body lay in front of him. He picked it up in his arms. He saw that she was small and actually beautiful. He was surprised that he felt not even a bit of repulsion at death...He cried, "There's no such thing as comfort for the living or dead."  
He picked up the dead body (54).

*But Laudomia's special faculty is that of being not only double, but triple; it comprehends, in short, a third Laudomia, the city of the unborn.*

–Italo Calvino *Invisible Cities*

The Norman O. Brown:

And the cave in which coitus takes place is the grave; a chthonic fertility rite...Death is coitus and coitus is death. Death is genitalized as a return to the womb, incestuous coitus (48)

The cave is grave; this womb is tomb. We are not yet born: we are dead (42).

And what the child is doing in the inside of his mother's body is scooping it out...( 37).

In their female body, a corpse:

...miscarriage is very common (many doctors believe that virtually every woman will have at least one sometime in her reproductive years), occurring in as many as 40 to 65 percent of conceptions (Murkoff, Eisenberg, & Hathaway 492).

The Linda Layne:

Corpses, like embryos/fetuses/newborns, represent another border crossing and are the source of both power and danger... Thus, dead embryos, fetuses, and neonates are liminal in at least two ways... Miscarried embryos/fetuses are also often considered to be great sources of power. Sha (1990) reports that Hungarian and Romanian Gypsies 'attributed great powers to unborn babies, so when a woman miscarried they cut off the little finger of the child's left hand and put it in the foundation of a dwelling to ward off lightning.' They also used the baby's blood to increase their efficacy as thieves...(62-3).

Contributors to pregnancy-loss support-group newsletters capture this irony in their poems with lines like 'I gave birth to death once'...(177).

This creates surreal situations in which a woman may still feel pregnant but for some time has to walk around with the knowledge that she is carrying a 'dead baby' inside of her until the doctor removes it for/from her. No longer an active agent, a woman who is miscarrying, she becomes the passive vessel of a corpse. One woman described feeling like 'a human coffin' (Ingle 1981/2a), another like 'a living tomb' (Heil 1982) (86).

## WORKS CITED

- Acker, Kathy. *In Memoriam to Identity*. New York: Grove, 1990.
- Akhmatova, Anna. "How Many Demands."  
[http://www.poetseers.org/the\\_great\\_poets/eu/aap/4.13-20](http://www.poetseers.org/the_great_poets/eu/aap/4.13-20).
- Arnold, Eugene A. M.D. "Autopsy: the Final Diagnosis." *Images of the Corpse: From Renaissance to Cyberspace*. Ed. Klaver, Elizabeth. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press / Popular Press, 2004. 3-15.
- Baer, Eugen. *Medical Semiotics*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Arendt, Hannah. Trans. Zohn, Harry. New York: Schocken, 1968.
- Blanchot, Maurice. *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*. New York: Station Hill, 1981.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford, 1997.
- Brock-Broido, Lucy. "Myself a Kangaroo Among the Beauties." *By Herself: Women Reclaim Poetry*. Ed. McQuade, Molly. Saint Paul: Graywolf, 2000. 192-5.
- Bronfen, Elizabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, femininity and the aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Brown, Norman O. *Love's Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Burke, Edmund. From "A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Ed. Adams, Hazard. Revised Edition. Thomson Learning, 1992. 298-306.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Calasso, Roberto. *The Ruin of Kasch*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1994.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Trans. Weaver, William. New York: Harvest, 1974.
- Cixous, Helene. "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The 'uncanny')." *New Literary History*. 1976. 525-48.

- Cregan, Kate. "Blood and Circuses." *Images of the Corpse: From Renaissance to Cyberspace*. Ed. Klaver, Elizabeth. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press / Popular Press, 2004. 39-62.
- Dericotte, Toi. "Natural Birth." *Not For Mothers Only: Contemporary Poets on Child Getting and Child-Rearing*. Eds. Wagner, Catherine and Wolff, Rebecca. New York: Fence Books, 2007. 1-195.
- Eliot, T.S. "The Waste Land." *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934. 60-64.
- Flax, Jane. "Postmodernism and Gender Relations." *Feminism/Postmodernism*. Ed. Nicholson, Linda J. New York: Routledge, 1990. 39-62.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. New York: Penguin, 2003.
- Geddes, Jennifer L. and Scarry, Elaine. "Jennifer L. Geddes: On Evil, Pain, and Beauty: A Conversation with Elaine Scarry." *[Paleopsych]Hedgehog*. <http://lists.extropy.org/pipermail/paleopsych/2004-October/000736.html>
- Gibson, William. *Count Zero*. New York: Arbor House, 1986.
- , "The Winter Market." *Burning Chrome*. New York: Arbor House, 1986. 125-149.
- Glenum, Lara. "How to Discard the Life You've now Ruined." *The Hounds of No*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Action Books, 2005. 7-15.
- Haraway, Donna J. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2008.
- Hyesoon, Kim. *Mommy Must be a Fountain of Feathers*. Trans. Choi, Don Mee. Notre Dame, IN: Action Books, 2008. 26-28.
- Jones, LeRoi. "An Agony. As Now." *The Dead Lecturer*. New York: Grove, 1964. 16.
- Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." <http://www.bartleby.com/101/625.html>. 1.
- Koedt, Anne. "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm." *Feminist Theory Reader: Global and Local Perspectives*. Eds. McCann, Carole R. and Kim, Seung-Kyung. New York: Routledge, 2003. 242-8.



- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Roudiez, Leon S. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Layne, Linda L. *Motherhood Lost: a Feminist Account of Pregnancy Loss in America*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Loy, Mina. "Human Cylinders" *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1996. 31-35.
- . "Parturition." *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1996. 1-123.
- Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Inhuman*. Trans. Bennigton, Geoffrey and Bowlby, Rachel. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Murakami, Haruki. *Dance, Dance, Dance*. Trans. Birnbaum, Alfred. New York: Vintage, 1995.
- Murkoff, Heidi; Eisenberg, Arlene; and Hathaway, Sandee B.S.N. *What to Expect When You're Expecting*. New York: Workman, 2002.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita. Novels 1955-1962*. New York: Library of America, 1966.
- Paster, Gail Kern. *The Body Embarrassed*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1993.
- Plath, Sylvia. "In Plaster." *The Collected Poems*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992. 50-56.
- Reines, Ariana. "In Which she Pays for her Tardiness." *The Cow*. New York: Fence, 2006. 19-37.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain*. New York: Oxford University, 1985.
- Schwartz, Lynne Sharon. *Ruined by Reading*. Boston: Beacon, 1996.
- Tsing, Anna. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-way Place*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Wagner, Catherine. "Introduction." *Not For Mothers Only: Contemporary Poets on Child Getting and Child-Rearing*. Eds. Wagner, Catherine and Wolff, Rebecca. New York: Fence Books, 2007. xiii-xviii.
- Wittig, Monique. *Les Guérillères*. Trans. David Le Vay. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.