

ASTROLABE

(plus froids)
—but have disrespected Shakespeare
Salammbô
Salammbô

l'ibis rose
high priest of the goddess T-shirt

L'Hippopotame impala

the longplay of light against
brass
pressed & compacted into relic-form
(toxon eball) pls fan me w/ yr wings
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail
& of course
adult
-eries
as musical words flow (flowers)—
arrangements
No cu(l)t
at all
et al.

City Girls

SLIDING ZEUS XL

I entered the warehouse
and disappeared
behind wine-colored curtains

When the cameras were off
I broke the machine—
Oxytocin dripped from my blade

I tore through the genius of nature
colonizing it, consuming it—
blues and blue-greens unearthed in long shadows—
*I wonder what you would say to us
if you had nothing to protect*

I have made a wealth of mistakes
I have suffered sweet agony
I have stumbled into an apocalypse
I do not want to fake a recovery

Standing in the invisible cathedral
I take off my clothes
leaving only the glint of jewelry in solemn dreamlight
which is to say I throw off all pretense
crucifix dangling
and run naked through a field of wildflowers
with a dog-eared copy of *Mercurochrome*

The power lines are down
A storm is coming
With an out-of-tune guitar
I sing the Exploding Heart Liturgy©

Others gather 'round me—
worshipful masters and chief musicians
and every prostitute I have touched

We clink our filthy cups
spilling wine on our feet—
Some of us make love

Disclaimer: this is not an orgy
It is market-testing disguised as performance art—
a private review of freedoms and the health of freedoms—
indulgences, if you will

There is chaos with us always
but there remains a collective sanity
and to sing is to remember—

The wind is a wounded beast
The rain is falling harder than before
Still my heart is set upon a springtime of awareness

The ground is alive with electricity
I cannot guarantee your safety if you come with me
I am virgin in knowledge
poor in concepts
a latebloomer holding ancient flowers lightly
arranging wineskins in the smoke and flashing lights
working toward an orgasm
working toward play

Determined to be born
I tune my guitar
and think about my friends—
the ones I want to touch

I laid down a revolutionary
and arose a mystic
Birth of the Cool
like ice in my headphones

A chilling fluxus percolates in my spine
as I pick up the remote

Knowing the revolution will be televised
The public celebrates with bonfires

I dump a spoonful of coffee grounds
into a paper filter
and then
balancing upon the nature of man
I step to the center of the stage
spotlight refracted in anxious eyes

To an immediate gasp
I pull the drop-cloth back
to reveal the cement that locks the earth in its progression
from D-flat to D-flat minor
then to C-sharp major—
a chord that makes the demons tremble
and when the crowd erupts into pandemonium
I raise my finger
with its iridescent nail polish
to touch my lips—

When the people have fallen silent
I say to them
not with certainty
but with confidence—
THIS IS AS REAL AS YOU WANT IT TO BE

I promise that I will not abuse the cross-filter
I will test the fidelity of every interaction
I will test every bandwidth
I will test every spirit
I will blow the dust off my leather boots
and with no trace of l'appel du vide
I will ask those who have come with me
to leave the leaves on whatever the ground believes
as we take our chances
together!



in the distance, trains

CLASH OF THE SAINTS

Kierkegaard lifted his pen against the machine. Baudelaire, at the same time, dyed his hair green. Anxiety smells blood at the clash of the saints, and I feel the need to escape. A full moon shines overhead as I light a cigarette. I'm thinking about Demna Gvasalia leaving the post-Soviet world in the 1980s, on thin ice, dreaming against the rules, wearing a bird mask, putting food coloring on models' tongues. Poly Styrene screams, "*Oh bondage! Up yours!*"—Succulents grow in the gutters. Am I seeing too much? Am I seeing too little? One of my worst fears is being called a heretic. But on the continuum of orthodoxy, where is the dividing line between truth and heresy?

ACCIDENTALLY LIKE A MARTYR

Accidentally
like a martyr

with a torn-off piece
of an American flag
tied around my head
like a bandana

I stretch myself upon a transparent cross
that I might prove myself
righteous

but its ghostlier demands
have begun to make me
nauseous

THE YELLOW CANARY

I live in every city
and polish my gold tooth
under the influence of Orphic hymns

starlight in my tears
chilled in a decanter
dampening the liner notes of this modern songbook

with the inconceivable load that a soul must bear
with the intricate song that a saint must sing
with the increasing tension between lovers

I eject the timebound tape of fixations to discover
the multifoliate rose—
each petal of which represents a risk I have not taken

Modern life is both Renaissance and Armageddon
but I will not curse whatever is coming
knowing that candles will be lit for me in that curtain'd hour

when all light and madness break forth
and toss me like a wave in the wine-dark sea—
destiny obscured by rain and ruin

A yellow canary is perched on the rim of my coffee cup
saying to me—Friend, thou art unbound. I have
shimmied along a radar to your love

and to your icy brilliance.
I hear the drone of Anticlimax and catch the scent of decay
but I have sworn to concretize my book of dreams at all costs

On the bleachers in the park where the gay bears gather
we talk of politics and UFOs—
I remove the lid from my cup

and blow on my coffee to cool it down—
too preoccupied with my own thoughts
to answer anyone directly

Even as I deflect, my heart is raised
I walk slowly around the stone fountain
knowing that I will never deflect that which cannot be deflected

but I will rescue hearts with echoes and save all of
Plutarch's lives—
I refuse to etherealize without a trace

I somersault over quaint alchemical symbols
in an old army jacket
until I'm interfused into Guernica

F is for Fake
and with foaming ointment I sprinkle
my diamond-bladed machete

[sizzling sound, the aroma of white copal]

and to the yellow canary I say—
I will trust the night with the day
as if it were a dream with physicality attached

I have here what I need to make an original fire—
I will invite you into it
to sing with me the song of Belteshazzar

There is sound in the mud
I will imagine it 'til you hear it—
I will memorize it—record it—

I will savor the honest voice
and the psalm that is seasoned with salt
I will smuggle my harmonica into the future

to plow for truth
to exhume it with conviction and consecrate its essence
to wash reality in the blood of experience

I will not fear the light nor the shadow
I will make sacred all hardships
and remain—

[flutes playing birdsong]

Today I carried firewood through the snow
and watched with a hopeful silence
as the yellow canary flew away

disappearing into the book which you now hold.
You have heard that blood is thicker than water
but I tell you now—spirit is thicker than blood.

Note: real angels will wrap their light around you
so that your relapses cannot bind you in chemic chains.
Be confident. Addiction is the precious rag from which
you will wring everything pure, so don't die yet!

GOD OF THE STREETS

G rasp this
and rejoice:

Clotho spins

Lachesis measures

Atropos cuts

Although patient &
therapist
may lose their way

the Spirit hovers
over the chaos

Someone has put a

The image is the Supreme brand logo, consisting of the word "Supreme" in a white, italicized, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red rectangular background.

sticker
above the air vent
in a condemned warehouse

Children are peering through the windows at
1520 Sedgwick Ave.
Each of them has a little piece of the Philosopher's Stone

They see a man in a metal suit whose weight is equal to the world
(the god of the streets)

Another man is on the sidewalk, selling slaked lime
in plastic sleeves

MULTUM IN PARVO

Clothes hanger at the foot of the bed
on the carpet, chewed up kava capsules
the Complete Works of Shakespeare
pages torn out 'n taped to the wall
sunlight bursting through beat-up shades
cloud of anxiety
mud in the streets
Siiiiiiiilver Surffffeeeeeer in JJJJound sweats
YEEZY Salts
salt of the earth
A/y-Us vinyl crackles like a campfire
as steam curls up from my espresso

Follow me as I slide a piece of bread through olive oil
Whatever fragments I've shored against my ruins
(stacks of notebooks filled w/ unpublish'd poems
shoeboxes stuffed with song ideas)
are now ripening on the vine—
My heart is heating up with love for the world—
I ask for silence as I tune my guitar

Can I still be a mystic?
A stick of Palo Santo burns in the kitchen
Beneath me is an elevated timelessness
Star consciousness alights on pools of knowing—
As I look through the glass onion
I see a readymade book of thought-art
MULTUM IN PARVO

the name SHADOW BLASTER written with Graphmaster
chisel-tip all-surface acrylic marker
(purchased in Hamburg, 2019)—

Un écrivain sur le quai
My whole life's work has been
to make magic out of pain
but now I just want to make *love*—
quick
and endless

love

PRAYER OF POLARITIES

Show me what
this anxiety is—
I want to know

Who are your agents?
Protect my heart
even as I let it open

Would you please
reveal to me
the Guiding Secret?

I want ecstasy
I want peace
in concert

RELAPSING THROUGH VAPORS

I'm leaving London tonight for Bristol
where I intend to see *The Mild Mild West*
sited on No. 80 Stokes Croft (1999)—
The planet is a floating punk rock club

What does she see when she sees me naked?

I'm watching TV with pen in hand
setting the drug of dreams against the pain of living
journaling away my fears, writing my way out of disaster—
I hope she finds magic in this marble

What does she see when she sees me naked?

My thought experiments have lifted me
to a pearly sphere of perception
to lick the rim of the cup I've been given—
We all pretend to like the edge
but some of us actually do

Will being naked ever lose its magic?

A teddy bear throws a Molotov cocktail at riot police
and I'm drinking champagne with a sore throat
thinking of all the difficult reasons we need salvation—
I'll keep reiterating them to reap closeness among the lights
relapsing through vapors
ricocheting like a pinball between dimensions
wondering what you see when you see me
naked

LEAFLET

W ith flying colors
I subsume my humanity
into that which cannot be
subsumed;

I once was hectic
shorn of nightskin—
an eagle chained to a
wild boar;

I have here a leaflet
that smells of mildew,
Blessed n' Cherry bootleg
videos

A glass of apple brandy,
the jacket blurb for Roche's Codex
the greasy wrapper of a
cheeseburger & fries (no pickle),

a chronicle of synchronicities,
a handful of oil-slicked feathers;
(Yeshua I speak your name
into this space—

Devil-Conqueror
standing on frosted dirt)
I have 'scaped my use of drugs—
Full stop.

FEAST OF ATMOSPHERES

I have trash on my hands,
trash on my fingers;
I come from a feast of atmospheres
where I spoke with Heraclitus the Obscure

He explained to me how the earth is made of fire
and gave me directions to an oasis of stillness
(book of images—distilled cinematography—you can hear the strings and touch the cloth)
A person never watches the same movie twice

Soon I will be as wrinkled as Lou Reed—
my whole career held hostage by spiritual skirmishes
My dreamwheel rusteth
My dreammetal becometh dull
Serpico feeds his cockatoo
against a background of high tragedy and light amusement

Ad: *Transmute your trauma today with the Next-Life Prognostication Machine!*
A once-in-a-lifetime offer!

I settle for a bottle of *Coca-Cola* & a handful of peanuts

Mahler and Freud walk together among the glowing edelweiss and blue monkshood of
the Austrian countryside as whooper swans shake water from their wings

I long for an immaculate integration
but somehow it always has the ghost of being forced
Vox populi, vox Dei
“People” and “the people” mean two different things

As my eyes read, my heart dances
In the background, *The Legend Of The Invisible City Of Kitezh*
plays from a solitary speaker

QUIET TRANSPORT

If I love you in ways you have never been loved
will you stay with me through defeat?
If the rest of the world turns away from me
will you keep watching?

[phone clicks, dial tone]

The trick of technology
is that it brings us close
without bringing us close

I resolve to act naturally
I will not censor the substance
 of the World
 of a comet
 of a rising star

May its trail be apprehended
in the loins of the libertine
where condemnation falls hard
but where creativity springs eternal

Not to be explicit
but I am in conflict
with a quiet transport

and like a sleeper on the steps of a serendipitous plane
I have been given a license to follow through
with whatever freedoms have been sanctioned
 by the body

AS MILAN KUNDERA OPENS THE BLINDS

G ladiolus Cruentus for sale
at Kroger (only a few left)—
I purchase flowers and ice cream

The birds get loud at night
eating records in trails of light—
The air is fresh and cold

Dead leaves are dancing on the wind
and the moon comes out of hiding—
a prodigal, party-going, confessional moon

We laugh together as we drive home
with the groceries, singing along to
Rocky Raccoon at the top of our lungs

For every vapor a nomad—for every nomad
a vapor—an article in today's paper—
By the way, I'm not afraid of your pain

You keep pulling me through painted walls
but each time I turn around
there is no wall, only paint

Starting—starting to survive—
If we can make it out here
we can make it anywhere

Even as winter fast approaches
Milan Kundera opens the blinds
and thinks to himself—seeing beauty
in the world can prevent suicide

POETRY AT GUNPOINT

Froth in the mouth of angel-heirs,
Abraxian fables & country choruses,
Poetry at gunpoint;
The blood of the world
 runs down the columns of every culture
 until time stands still in ancient haze

PRECIOUS HEART OF CONVERSATION

Here, a couple of the stars of my knowledge—
I've learned it's best to say less
lest a gnawing fowl descend
and eat the precious heart of conversation
from off this old plate between us—
lest we find ourselves, as we so often do,
tip-toeing across the gaping silence in our Freudian slippers
scalding the clearest of moons and reaping a tide of phantoms

AUTOPROGETTAZIONE

Hear the bell cry
Woman as object (to use) or sculpture (to admire)?
Sexual-eyed Moholy-nagy

[Google images]

Save battery for Shazam and Uber

My aim: to take apart Freemasonry with a children's drawing

DELPHINIUM

The men with degrees have come to tempt me
with lightnings, lasers, and the Grandsecret of Thought
but I reject their illuminations
knowing that my heart is attuned to a majestic unknowability

The emerald wave has reached the shore
and I am splashing in the saltwater with pant-legs rolled up
swinging a severed head like a lantern

The sigh of an old harmonica
brings on delirium

It is natural to fear
that one has switched guides
without knowing

Did I ever leave
the place of my origin?

Will I ever get laid
in the delphinium
of the high mountains?

I was beginning
to get my bearings
but now—

the cold light of a wintry morn
depression, confusion,
and strain

BLEACH

Smiley face with earrings
Camel cig dangling from rotten teeth
Bleach has stained everything during the quarantine

Rent a warehouse—
Prepare for the revolution—

They're hardly ready for your gaseous substance—but
your truth is not a lie!

We're all in flight / with mind or might
Some crash early / some die bright
Waiting at baggage claim—my head is crazy with thoughts
I don't want to be dissatisfied
 with the last word I say
 before I leave the room

But lo, I am audio-rich!
I use the technique de mon language musical
I use color progressions and synesthesia
I use omnitonal recordings from the countryside
where we chew straw and storm the heavens with gaze of steel
I have a flair for origins—
I cannot postpone my greatness any longer!

Shakespeare and fashion magazines
Shakespeare and fashion magazines
Shakespeare and fashion magazines
Shakespeare and fashion magazines
Shakespeare and fashion magazines

PRURIENCE

That I am the one seeking release
and that my release will bring you suffering—
That you will actually try to meet my needs
and that in so doing you will self-destruct—

These are the thoughts that cut at me
like the branches of angry trees
or like the filmy tail of that singular monster that lives
in the folds of the Norwegian sea

Musha ring dum a doo dam a da—
Petals fall from the hyperion dogwood
and I wonder what to make of these things—

I cringe at beauty that is a crime for me to behold
I am too eloquent for my own good
I have made myself sick with prurience
I am sorry for the loss of the Eurydice
and the deadly electricity that sundered it in Biscay waters
I feel that I am to blame

LAST TRAIN TO PARIS

I caught the last train to Paris
The air was cold and clear—
From the moment the conductor
punched my ticket, my heart was
wood for the fire

I became aware of your presence
when you became aware of mine—
Moments later the sky turned brown—
I started wiping the mirror clean
with a damp piece of paper towel

disturbing the dust that had settled
on youthful passions and lusts &
over the glistening plane of existence
beneath which all things warble
like birds in a mountain covert

nested by streams in medieval woods
where wildflowers grow innumerable
and death is simply an element of
local mythology preserved in comic books;
there is nothing more to do than watch

apartments and telephone poles fly by
as the train rides the immutable track
to the doorstep of infinity—
Hopefully the dust will settle again—
Our lives together will be rooted in the

moment we met—the moment we were
helped by a magic we're hesitant to name,
sliding down the circumstances into a
moon-shaped pool of night frequencies,
motivated by a love that is aspirational

and quick to dissipate on the uneven
ground of being here now—
Are you prepared to think like this?—
The rails extend into oblivion,
the night is a halcyon curtain—the stars

hanging from tinsel galaxies are
the late night poems of the future,
bleached and bloodless—burning
milk drop coronets in the Colosseum
from which we came and to which

we will go again when we arrive
in Paris—anxious—in yellow mood
on bestial wings!—Famous lovers!
Slayers of the midnight depths—
poignant psalm of the woodworker

meditated on after cheap whiskey
spilled on Carhartt pants 12:52am—
arrival postponed due to the strikes—
I need to get to Rue de Buci & order
the pasta and a side of fries

earbuds in, listening to The Doors
Five To One—passing by the studio on the
Left Bank where Picasso lived and worked
during the war, where he painted
Guernica and entertained many women

I ash my cigarette into a styrofoam cup
and spit these signifiers into orbit—
A cat meows under branches that look like
tentacles wrapt around a phantom planet as we
forge our own chains and salt the wound—

a wound that can only be dressed
with a sense of active community—
with the salves and aloes of an
orange moon drama!—
the pulp of a brighter year

The sparrow looks up at the machine—
An only child longs for the nostalgia
of black-and-white thinking, yet still
argues with Rimbaud about
the colors of the vowels

As consciousness migrates west,
I'm returning to the banged-up root—
to the ubiquitous and much sung-about seed
of a tree known for its dangerous fruit
in which the white owl was dispossessed

I've watched you die and re-enter
with pearly eyes so fast and slashing
to drink the wine of time-sensitive
grapes, but I'm still reciting the
serenity prayer into a walkie-talkie

A mellow offertory is recorded
with ancestral weapons concealed—
dogs running across the railroad tracks
barking—hungry—ribcages showing—
tails wagging, drooling

PÈRE LACHAISE

A bit jumbled in the drink
falling toward something roughcast, sea-blind, abrupt
A lizard darts across a garden path
A concrete fountain gurgles in the gray afternoon

In the blink of an eye the world disintegrates
The survivors need indirect light
so I wrap the disruptive lilies with a velcro strap
Chalk the floor for the rigging

I'm writing anti-genius revenge songs
as cocktail music spills from the green smoky haze of a jazz club
into the phosphorescent streets—
Pigeons flutter around the steps of
a cathedral that is closed for repairs

How do you teach a vibration to someone you love?
Take off your clothes and break open a pomegranate
Dip your paintbrush in green and gray—
Magnetize yourself in seraphic light

Dip your paintbrush in beige—
The way to wring the most out of language
is to bend it at every turn
uproot it, milk it, twist it, compress it, and use it in novel ways
Good measure, pressed down and shaken together—

Tape the world to the earth and see what happens
Toss your brain around—don't be afraid to get it dirty
Demolecularize the psychosomatic curses that plague you
Get your fix from a different gekyume—Rescue the muse
with the strength of previously broken hearts

Switch from power source to Power Source—
Let us whisper in each other's ears with explosive breath
as beads of sweat roll down our foreheads
understanding that crucifixion is many things but especially absorption

although right now I just want to be with you
knowing that soon we will be back in Paris
on a cloud-nine rhapsody
We'll re-honeymoon
and drink sauvignon blanc as we drift through galleries

We'll walk along the river admiring the architecture of the buildings
past the men selling roasted chestnuts for how much?—€2-3?—
imagining what it was like to live here a century ago
If I'm smoking weed, we'll smoke weed with Jim Morrison in Père Lachaise

but I probably won't be smoking weed
so instead I'll flick him a kava capsule and a cigarette
like I did the first time we went there
before we ran as fast as we could
to get back to the train before it left the *gare*

THE HUSTLER'S ROSE

I sent him away, the man with the roses
What if he was an angel sent to test me?

I very much regret not once buying a rose from a hustler
to give to you on our honeymoon;
The whole point of being on this *trip*, in this *city*
is to embrace whatever's in the cards as trustingly as we can—
to assume sudden flashes of magic in minor details

I said in my vows that I would always point you toward the poetic
I don't want to miss out on subtle diffusions of light
or fail to partake in little climaxes of grace
and something tells me a hustler's rose
might've put an unexpected smile on your face

FINAL MONTAGE OF ABUNDANCE

Dubuffet made collages with peelings of fruit
collecting resources for the Compagnie de l'Art Brut
The surrealist Prévert moved to Saint-Paul de Vence
where he developed his practice with great diligence

In automatism Cordier made his mark
with unprecedented chic and irreverent spark
to extract from our conscience the stuff we ignore,
X-ray with psychological fluid galore

Kalinowski in Düsseldorf stacking his crates
Les placards de Déméter, *T.A.B.A.C.*, and *Strates*
Then Cordier discovered Öyvind Fahlström
minutes before the whole art world said ÖM

Dr. Livingstone, I presume came to life on the page
w/ 2:a kalaset p°a MAD; till John Cage
juxtaposing the world with a final montage
of abundance—noise music in the Fluxus garage

FUSE the cathedrals of culture at large—
a prefabrication to drop and discharge
8 ans d'agitation—the true avant-garde
polyvalent curiosity that none can discard

Antoine Pevsner's transparency tests
the primacy of emptiness over the compact mass
Celluloid and zinc came together at last
Our constructions are cold till we work with the past

André Breton's apartment at 42, rue Fontaine—
the supreme fountainhead of what dripped from his brain
On his desk was a stuffed bird, a sculpted stone lamp
On his walls were Picasso, Miró, and Duchamp

But my favorite that day was Picabia's piece
L'oeil cacodylate PHARAMOUSSE soleil russe!
I want to recycle it and use it for the cover
of the poem I wrote for my porcelain lover

In Greenwich Village good taste was swarming with flies
Duchamp made a lily-white urinal his prize—
his jewel, his gem, his knockout punch,
his creamflower of consciousness, made ready for lunch!

Vassily Kandinsky at the point of collision
invented a world with spectacular precision—
With quivering touches and fleeting strengths
lines dissociate from colors at great lengths

On the Spiritual in Art—which took eight years to write—
raises the principle of inner necessity to new heights
He gradually abandoned the figurative manner
and a joyfully biomorphic painting became his banner

creating discord as much as its converse
valiant with the earmark of his tour de force
He distanced himself from the surface and migrated
to the inner world where souls vibrated

On a Samsung SyncMaster 913 screen
Robert Combas showed us Mickey Mouse with his machine
On uneven white ground, in an area that is gray
he became the leader of the Figuration Libre

A chair upside-down, shards of glass on the ground—
The sheet-rock is white, the cork-board is brown,
there's a milk crate, a paint pale, a lab coat as well,
a water bottle and a lighter and a mildewy smell

Avoiding censorship through dematerialization
conceptualism flooded Western European nations
Véra Molnar came from Budapest with her eye a-gleam
weaponizing her computer against an authoritarian regime

Sisyphus-like, Broodthaers was close to the Belgian Surrealists
but he threw himself into a practice that would tease the nihilists
In *La Pluie*, he sat in a shower with paper and pen
getting soaked to the point that he could not write—what then?

Are we freed from the need to deliver a message?
Literary paintings like *Petrus-Paulus Rubens* reinvented language—
a rebus-like array of canvases kept
parlance in a place where mystique still crept

During the German occupation of the French capital
the Spanish master painted the sound of the death-rattle—
What's the difference between primitive and futuristic?—
Picasso erased the question—He danced in his studio!

AFTER EATING AN ART GALLERY

I
devoured an art gallery
with impressive humility
and winked at my peers

I
twist the knobs
in the indifferent rain
and feel truths building up
that will hurt to tell

I
devoured an art gallery
with impressive humility
and slurped up rainwater
from the pavement—
a man of the cloth
in a riot of perfumes
a capricorn in a trenchcoat
with a gambier pipe

We
twist the knobs
in the indifferent rain
and feel truths building up in our chests
that will hurt to tell—
pitchy and caliginous truths
demanding a voice—
Without a voice I am a gargoyle
Cosi fan tutte

LEARNING TO DANCE WITH THE NEGATIVE

A top Pompidou
swallowing wine
this living-in-the-moment of a fiction
not something that will fade
like the colors of the houses on Rue Crémieux
fine standing monument of the honest heart
famed marquis of technicolor consciousness
a life worth capturing on film

Does she know I'm attracted to the waitress?
The unfolding of this new freedom scares me

Buste de Femme (Picasso)
Nature morte au viola (Braque)
A rose portrait, and from it we'll be fine
like those nervy, hatched brushstrokes (Rouault)
between arguments about money and where my eyes go when they wander—
we're learning to dance with the negative

I pulled you out into the rain and told you the truth
Your heart broke as mine opened
but with this came the grace of vulnerability
and the ability to counterbalance your insecurities

You cried when you heard *Distant Lover* (the live version)
as the rain fell on our temporary temple mount
before we pulled ourselves back inside the museum
and lived forever, dancing through explosions
I tell you, it was a life worth capturing on film

GIGI

You pulled us from Paris
to L.A. with a crash
from the city of lights
to the city of angels
as the rain dripped
from the awning of the café
on Boulevard Saint-Germain

and we tipped the bottle
of rouge, and
the last of it came out
into our glasses—
then we lit our cigarettes
and I tucked a folded napkin
under the table to keep it from wobbling

The winter night shone
with an ancient aplomb
but on that side of time
we were all so naïve
to think twenty-twenty vision
could be easily achieved—
It could not—

As the blades of the
helicopter began to turn
your sneakers left the
ground for the very last time—
We sat calmly and waited
for the next bottle of wine
to be brought to our table

and for that first grief to spill
upon a year that would
leave our hearts stained—
You escorted your princess
on a cloud of unknowing
and it's hard to imagine
the look in her eyes

when you both realized
the unthinkable—
But I know you were her Daddy
to the fullest—
to the end—
and the way that you held her
said everything at once

and went something like this—
Gigi—I promise
wherever we're going
we're going together
and I won't let you go—
Look at me

Look at me

Look at me

Look at me

TURQUOISE SHADOWS

Turquoise shadows at the edge of time
Minnows fluttering in a dream of water
Oranges dangle from mangled swamp-trees

A feast of powers

A film of magic

A cyclopedia of pictures

A raven's head

An arcanum of flowers

A bloody chunk of flesh for remembrance

A herd of spotted kine on the eastern slopes
under a starry night

The women are at ease

The preacher is dancing

PURE WATER

At a magnificent house
in the hills of Calabasas
we woke up, the three of us—
my girlfriend, her friend, and me

There was a swimming pool in the backyard
with a picture-postcard view of the valley
The morning was hot

If I'd had more experience
I would've understood the chance I had

when I said I didn't have any swim trunks
and my girlfriend suggested I swim naked
The thought of it was too exhilarating for me to embrace
so the idea skipped over me like a rock over water
and didn't sink in until we were on our flight home

Now, looking back through the combination of clouds
gathered around my sexuality
I am well aware that I wasn't ready to be naked
but that is precisely what haunts me
Had I the trust
I would now have one less memory to redress
settling for mere words on a page
describing the regret
listening to *Duchess* by Scott Walker and wishing
somehow, I could go back
to say yes, and
in that pre-eternal moment
to take off my clothes

with saintly nonchalance
and feel the acceptance
pleasure, even
of not only the warm sun on my skin
but also the warmth of eyes, the conscious observance of two other human beings
two women
when we were young and able to be free

Then and then I could have turned from that moment
onto the path of mature manhood
and plunged into the most potent therapy of all
I could have been smiled upon
but the moment fled
and with it, the city of angels,
to be replaced by a lonesome dove
mourning in the moonlight over a rural landscape

California became the West again
the pestilence of gold that one preaches against
a hankering for humanness
at a point when one is sick with dreaming

so I sank deeper into my clothes
when instead I could have been a nude portrait on a hillside
momentarily immortal

RENEWAL

After I cried
the colors of the world around me
were infused with a new lucidity
because of my tears.
By their condensation
blues were richer
so I sang them
gold was gleaming
so I gathered it
red was fierce
but I did not fear it
black was ancient
so I honored it
green was fertile
so I did not kill it this time
gray was full of color
so I changed my heart toward it
white was aware
and nearly blinded me at first
yellow meant youth
so I sat back in my chair and became a child once again
under the influence of yellow!
beyond these, pearl was there
and so was emerald, topaz, diamond (which is its own color)
and I believed all of the colors
I believed their stories—
the stories they were telling alone
and the ones they were telling together

With dilated pupils I saw that
brown was earth itself
so I dissolved into it
in the hazy tranquility of a dream
which is the dream of art—
orange was full of moisture and surprise
then suddenly again tears filled my eyes
but this time from a pleasure
that in my pain I had been
too paranoid to accept;
a nerve was struck, and I believe
it came from my witnessing of
the orange peel resting on the
ice cubes in my mezcal,
clear ice cubes in blood orange fluid.
Cognitive distortions receded into
surrealism
by virtue of
the color orange
observed through a watery lens
and as the suffering began to subside
my vision was electrified
and I became like the salt
of my own tears to the
creatures around me.

STIGMATA

In the clear
naked and calm
with no earnest plea
no blade to sharpen
nothing to say or to prove or to make—
the nectar is running in beads down my neck
from my eyes to my wrists to the tips of my fingers
dripping, dripping and dampening the ashes

I am the offering
a fruit of the garden
shielded from the toxins of drugmangled mind—
No herculean arguments spring from my throat
no blabbering bullied confessions
no panic-ridden apologies

At last on the close-up horizon
I see the miracle-workers moving in unison
and all their colors ignited
reminding me of last night's journey

Finally—
faithless religion dissolves
in religionless faith

AT THE FRINGES

I'm afraid that I've made choices that have turned my life into a dream
that depending on what I believe
it will turn into either heaven or hell

I'm afraid that because of the drugs
my brain is now incapable of belief
Religion was magical to me
Now I'm in a post-[all of that] state
trying to find my way to some new form of authenticity

But in a room on a Wednesday night
inside an old church building on the southside of the city
a small group of believers is engaging in something they call experimental worship
A box of donuts is on a table in the corner
next to a thermos of coffee and a sleeve of to-go cups

Fear is a substance
There's a nostalgia to it
I know we can be *bitter or better*—
I know we can achieve a willing suspension of disbelief
that activates new light

I know what they'll say
even though I'm just here to remove barriers,
to infuse resplendency into the story—
to say that we can continue our world through grace

Apparently—
Buddha isn't much help in the heat of addiction
although I can say that he is very helpful in the recovery process—
but in that moment when you're sinking beneath the waves
it's a different hand that reaches into those waters

AFRICAN STREET FESTIVAL

I went the muddy way in
after parking on the street
I could see the smoke rising from the tents
at the other end of Hadley Park

I felt the invitation strong in my spirit this year
The flyers have been circulating for weeks
and now the streets are lined with cars
A festive murmur grows upon my ears

At first, before I can smell the food,
I hear music floating across the baseball field
The Pan-African flag is draped over the scoreboard
A bee hovers around a trash can

The music gets louder as I approach the tents
I recognize the voice of Jo'shua Oline singing—
Eeee-eeee-eeee-ohhh-ohhh-ohhh
Anticipation bubbles up within me

and then I smell the food—
shakshuka, forbidden rice, fufu and jollof, cafriela de franga
marinating in crushed garlic, onions, lemon juice, salt and oil
with the pan sauces poured over it

chicken braised with spices and tomatoes
boko boko with ginger and black pepper
beef and spinach boiling in huge pots
served on plates garnished with seashells and leather

wings, dumplings, barbecue, fish stew, alligator—
Just feast and be humble—

My stomach's growling, but I go first to the stage
to watch the rest of Jo'shua's performance

My friendship with him has had its setbacks
I haven't always understood him
and he hasn't always understood me
but we see each other—there's no denying

My faith has blossomed richly from my exposure
to the Rastafarian modality and from my conversations with Jo'shua
I remember my elder brother Michael flying back from Kingston
with a portfolio of revelations

Philosophy and reasoning in a loosened fist
He beats on his acoustic guitar with his wrist
His sternness is not passive-aggressive but strong
The pages of his Bible are soaked with song

By the rivers of Babylon—
up all night & it sounds like arguing but it's all love even the
arguments are love. The Song of ZION™ echoes across dub-plates 3/4 time
through massive sound-systems

My brother lifts his voice with great warmth to meet the sun—
EEEE-EEEE-EEEE-OHHH-OHHH-OHHH
Dozens of spectators have gathered in the late afternoon
and are fanning themselves in the heat with brochures and flyers

Yehoshua brings his performance to a climax with the refrain—
It feels like an explosion's happening...in my heart...
A child runs past me with a snow cone
I walk back through the crowd and diminish among the tents

EXPLODING HEART LITURGY©

O f faith, hope, and love: love is the greatest
because you will not need the other two in the place
where fugitive grace has materialized

There is no abundant life where there is no abundant love
The image in the stained glass of the Unvanquished Dove
is barely out of brokenness, barely out of the mud

Perceive a triumphal entry within this moment
Let I AM [LOVING AWARENESS] ferment

I sing this Redemption Song
for my closest friends
as I wait for the new wine to drip

Lay bare my secret parts
Stabilize me in a space of blessedness
with access to the Flash-Vine

I had some reasons to believe
but I forgot those
then I had some reasons to *not* believe
and I forgot those too

and I believe the thing is true
and I believe
and I *make* believe

Amen and
Amen

NOTES OF CHAOS IN A BLUR OF LOVE

It hurts knowing
I'm mixing light with art and making a door for you

Notes of chaos in a blur of love
My pages are visual samples
Bud Light in my hand as I dance around the room in my work clothes—
the periodic table hanging over my head
like the sword of Damocles

[cereal clattering in a bowl]

“You need a caffeine pill, homie?”

“Nah, I’m good, but that sounds next level.”

“It is. Try one!”

“No, I’ve got to get up.”

“Why?”

“I have an appointment in the morning with Rico Nasty’s hair stylist.”

Everything in real time—
Are you a conduit or merely a container?
The more you fulfill your purpose
the less afraid you will be

Everyone alive will eventually make it home

CUT IT UP, HIGH PRIEST!


For Jean-Michel Basquiat

You cut the stems
and let the needle break
You wrapped the field of elements in aluminum foil
and finished it with a mint spread

You showed me something beyond the source I subscribe to
You can't wrestle away these chemicals
You are rich now, did you know that?
When you were had no money, you made art that would sell for a fortune

You went fast. You were a jazzman.
They tried to make you into something else but they couldn't
After all, a jazzman is just a bluesman in the shadows of skyscrapers
and no one could repeal your blues©

~~Undiscovered genius.~~ Source code: CPRKR
Your paint isn't even dry yet
No one has the nerve to clean up your mess
too sacred, too profane

The Lower Eastside was your canvas
I see you in boxing gloves on posters stapled to telephone poles
You're leaping out of a wooden crate with a saxophone
wearing a crown  / CUT IT UP, High Priest! [This is *not* graffiti]

You unlocked the child within
Your voice was so timid in interviews, it breaks my heart / \$

*DJ mixes, songs, poems

ASTROLABE

(plus froids)
—but have disrespected Shakespeare
Salammbô
Salammbô

l'ibis rose
high priest of the goddess T-shirt

L'Hippopotame impala

the longplay of light against
brass
pressed & compacted into relic-form
(toxon eball) pls fan me w/ yr wings
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail
& of course
adult
-eries
as musical words flow (flowers)—
arrangements
No cu(l)t
at all
et al.

City Girls,

ZIG-ZAG

after Tristan Tzara

I t's a gut experience
not a head trip
like concrete music
bpNichol says

cri-rhythmes & mégapneumes
lettriste & ultra-lettriste
& & & & & & &
René Char? Grrrrr-trude Stein?

a warm body
sol air or the oriole review, reviewed
sweet sweat, a-tingling on the tip of my tongue
micro-particles of the human voice

gasping and groaning
poésie phonétique

Sex is artistic and socio-political
Sex is a jungle fire

chant
chant LET LOOSE chant
chant

[a rhythmic cleansing] [a bath or shower] [Tangiers permutation: recapture mystery and
breath] [trade securities/insecurities] [too busy trying to document it that you miss it]

Shake out the magazine
Cinquième Saison, OU
through the mirror of thirst
folklore, cusha-calls, incantation

the marrying of human warmth to alien coldness
the shriveling of external authority
the coming together of dust bunnies to create moisture

“AND THE GOLDEN GLOBE GOES TO...!”

When Elohim watches TV
They know there are many other things they could be doing instead
but they watch TV because it makes them feel connected
in a Very Real Way
to a sort of world that isn't there
They like this world because it can be portrayed in pixels
They fancy themselves in every human drama, every newsreel, every cartoon, every
commercial, every awards ceremony, every late night show—playing a part—
They marvel at the ways women and men make each other *feel*
and wish they could do the same
They watch the televised revivals
the faith-healings
the smiling preachers
the 1-800 numbers scrolling across the bottom of the screen
solicitations for money
What would I do with money? God wonders
They watch music videos, imagining that all the children of the Earth are free to
dance as if their bodies are engulfed in spirit
They see something of themselves roaring in the Metro-Goldyn-Mayer lion!
They go from channel to channel
pausing to immerse themselves in the essence of each one
allowing each personality to make an imprint on their eternal nature
They dream of what it would be like to be on TV
They imagine themselves a powerful actor—
delivering the goods and doing it with style—
an electric performer!
They wonder if the world would be enhanced by their image
so they thrust themselves into the TV screen
either to be seen eternally
or never to be seen again

BOHEMIANS

O utside in the rain I juggle dog leash
umbrella
half-lit cigarette
left sock damp
I've had a drink which is both too much and not enough

I'm dissecting a tarantula in the twilight
Someone I admire(d) has been accused of sexual misconduct
The bohemians prance as they dance

I dispense with dirty blessings
heart in hand

MEMORY FLASH

A sudden mystery flung
from the meditating temple
whose structure stands poised, high
and vibrating
at the outskirts of the shroud—
a riddle-dispenser
whose precedents are set
but whose boundaries are not—

A both-ways life-giver
whose mind is a womb of fire
whose ghost is a flashing memory
whose love is a pulse of light
whose instruction is the pain of awareness
and whose confirmations are ordered
in musical terms

CHILDISH CONFESSION

Thoughts hurting in my head—
the burning, swelling need to repent—
Just As I Am played softly on the piano

Shaking like a fresh-caught fish in the pew
I stand up and shimmy my way to the aisle
world spinning as I trod toward the altar—

AN IMAGE THAT APPEARS TWICE

In the United Kingdom they are shouting in churches
and my brother is chief among them,
at the helm, with the heart of a lion—
They have harnessed the Real

In Albuquerque they are singing in mud-brick houses
far away from the phantom cactii
peeling back the tenets
modernizing the Great Cloud

[static buzzing and warbling]

You're laying on the bed the way you always do
like a nude by Renoir—I drink some water—
the air conditioning unit in the window belches
leaking water onto the sunlit bushes outside our apartment
I stumble drunk into the bathroom with one sock off and look in the mirror—
sky turning gray with pre-sun haze

[tape rewinding, playing intermittently]

STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

Black tea, bread, butter, garlic
on the large wooden table before us—
We sip the tea and eat the bread
asking dark questions with bright answers

*Why are you so aloof?
Do you not want to burn your fingers?*

Sovereign exegete with ponytail
jar of Vaseline and orangeflower
did some cute parlor magic
made confession
(He brought a cygnet back to life, so they accused him of witchcraft)
knot in his chest from a mixture of caffeine and stress
c'est la vie
draws his caliph's hood
prays that God would guide his hand as he writes
says *Thank you for the clarity that you are giving me in the process*
hears his wife in the other room chanting
and begins to write:

*The death he died he died to sin
The life he lives he lives to God*

He drinks another can of strange
and like an Irish love-hawk
lays down in her pain

THE FIG TREE

(An unspoken thought to my wife, as she puts on opera music and gets in the shower)

Every time I pace around our apartment
I'm ducking under the leaves of our fiddle-leaf fig tree
attempting to dodge its long branches
which reach out in all directions
requiring its pot to sit far from the wall
almost in the center of the room—
It doesn't bother me at all
I like its presence

CHRYsalis

A dove
probing through you
toward me

A butterfly
whose iridescent chrysalis
is a gleaming chevron

Hypervigilance
flickers in the night—
brief candle

I was previously afflicted,
susceptible to transport
susceptible to the featured drug

When the lowered gas burned blue
I felt sure I was crazy
I know it happens to you too

but if you can disarm yourself
so that imposter syndrome fades
even as cold complexity makes a clanging sound
against the bright chromes
at the base of your orthodoxy

you will cultivate a new receptivity,
seeing at last that consciousness is the great stranger
seeing at last—
the criminal in your heart is Christ.

FLAMING SWAN

Synthesize! Synthesize! Synthesize!
Every moment now exploding with the visvim of epiphany
The eye becomes mobilized to see in things how they move
how Janus-faced the surface of reality is
but I was anesthetized for too long
like the ill-fated Ariadne on the shore of Naxos, asleep
 on sinking sand
but now—now I'm sunbathing victoriously
with a crystal goblet of bubbly dessert wine in the air
sublimated in the cleansing waters of awareness
 by diamond-light

When there was no soundness in my flesh
I heard only the wind in the trees
and knew then—no brain can make atonement impromptu
or give promise of a quickening—immediate or residual—
 as can the futuristic song of the ancients sheathed in fragrant leather
The Complete Package© is bittersweet, bloody, full of entertainment
dripping sometimes with vinegar, sometimes with honey
but don't let the special FX distract you from the subtleties

O treasured blood of THE IMMORTAL WORD on dusky altar-plane!—
I suppose some songs only make sense to you
 once you sing them

At last, the fragrance of myrrh is carried on the awakening breeze
Flower petal dust is falling, falling on my naked body
New life stirs boldly in all my parts—
The flaming swan of perfected self-release!—
Somehow I've become happier than hope itself—

A SWORD UPSTAIRS

Who wrote the codex of serendipity?
Who lengthened the law of joy?
Who impregnated the hills with virtue?
Who fertilized the ground with wisdom?

Who scans the breadth of a man's life and tenderly touches his brain
electrifying all psychological forms with pristine cognition—
overlaying all channels with gold?

Today is Ash Wednesday—
O how I wish I could give up my fear
to model a mint-fluorescent glow of tranquility

A military standard flaps high above a field hospital
signifying the great cures of consciousness

but I feel unwindow'd
I am overcast in spirit

*Did not the poet sing it with such airs
That one believed he had a sword upstairs*

I am in the creases of partial cognition
as a cold front from the north country
brings in assertive and snowy winds

Fr. R. Rohr stands at a lectern
in front of a crimson curtain
and quotes T.S. Eliot

EUPHORIA I

The excrement of our passions
the Pabst cans of our feeble euphorias
our camera'd pasts, A-Cold-Wall-cover'd
privileged and reveling in abstraction
The old guard will soon be stripped of power
What that means for me I do not know
As for me and my house—the saying vibrates
Late at night
I poem'd a prayer, realizing
these parties are not quite real
Justice cries on deaf ears
gaslit faces attempting smiles
a wave
a superficialities of conversation
while the rote and amble of racism whirs quietly behind the flag
polite and reasonable w/ the blade of judgment always ready
The gears of paradox turn with modernity
The wild hare avoids us
The wild hart withdraws
a democracy of shadows
found wanting—
Those who fail to see it
will soon be running from the light
so hoist your flag and beat your drum
We're mad as Lear but still so young
like butter melting on a solar record
like Jeremiah with an earthen flask
knowing that leopards are watching the city
and that Revolution is like a ship in the twilight

EUPHORIA II

The slime of the past
fructifies in steamy heat
becoming nascent

becoming beautiful

Scales fall away

Acne vanishes

We make remixes

We make T-shirts

Now we're going deeper into the cool

There's no escaping our influences

I hope you hear these house chords

and feel this cloth touching your skin

Mercenary youth inclines me

to see through the dragon's smoke

and helps me ignore

the empty refrigerator

until I start coming down and my euphoria is dimmed and I become

nauseous

I might've scattered something

to the four winds and the seven breezes

but that was a long time ago—

long before the stars were torn down

EUPHORIA III

Sad violence (a lady)
stands naked on the shore,
furs fallen to the sand;
she approaches, mouth open,
her cool skin resembling something from a dream.
How selfishly I long to meet
her. So close to madness now,
so close to euphoria. This
rickety heart moans for the
grime of love. She, who is
Passion, walks to me slowly.
Drunk lilies float on the wind;
all I hear is the dark ocean
folding onto the pale shore
from whence it came

ROSE PETALS IN THE BEDCHAMBER

Always on the search—
always moving—
eyes toward the horizon—
a self-proclaimed gypsy
fleeing shadows
but knowing them well—
not much taken with names—
a carrier of clouds—
always emerging and fighting to emerge—
delicate flower with a veneer of diamond—
painfully aware at all times—
painfully inventing your own version of things
as we all do

You sometimes worry that you have made mistakes
as we all do

Grace frustrates you because you are still awaiting it
in its mystical fullness

You have felt its ripples

You have heard its echoes

and still it evades you

You are sophisticated yet superstitious

as we all are—

quick to avoid a jinxing

Strange how people who suffer together
have stronger connections than people
who are most content

Nothing can destroy us without our permission

No one can take from us our incandescence

or steal from us this vacuum-sealed vibration!

Nothing and no one can make us break from ourselves

as we did when we lived at the Albemarle

I remember selling weed—
buying a scale and telling my friends—
It was in that autumn of my dishonor
that you first caught wind of the prostitutes

Still—we have time to fight!
We can become the sound we would give
to the world
We are The Wilderness Variation™!
We have whispered our wishes
Now let us sing them—
a choir of two!

I don't want to hide from you in the morning
when I'm listening to *A Love Supreme*, spreading butter
on your toast like I pray to the Godhead I'll still be doing
in fifty years

My grounds for healing is that I'm trying to
outlive you, so that you will never have to
bear the grief of losing me

Rose petals in the bedchamber
remind me of the night we became husband and wife
We jumped the broom and nearly jumped the life to come!
Heaven knows what those vows initiated
or what we are even doing

'Tis a youthful man who loves you
We are submerged into one another
To break apart I feel would be deadly
I want to lean into a love
that is wet with ecstasy

I know you do too
I know you are waiting for me

CHERRY BRANCHES

It was a night like this—
we roughed our way to the best ever love

You lay in the king-sized bed
watching *The Handmaid's Tale*

I was reading William Carlos Williams

We had gone for dinner and drinks across the street—
three types of ceviche, one with deconstructed scallops
spirits with egg-whites added

Our sex that night was sweet as suerte
soft as lightwave material on a bed of asphodels

Then I chiseled at the stone with the tip of my pen—
As you slept I crafted a treaty

My Darling—
stay fierce with me!
We are blood & butter
humming in the chaparral
The cherry branches are loading
My report to you is becoming of rarest crystal

BATHSHEBA

Bathsheba had a medicinal gaze
She was alarmingly intelligent
and now she was shining in the moonlight

I pulled my zipper down and entered the spiral
I took the drug, took the sex—had it in blood—
I'm still trying to detox from the ecstasy

At that point in history
no one had coined the term *compulsive* yet
but now I realize that in that moment I was powerless

It was because I had power—
power chained to powerlessness—
that I was able to step into the ultimate nightmare of guilt

Have you read what I wrote?
It's hard for me to believe that so many people think it's inspired—
Inspired by *what*?

My consciousness was caving in and I was writing for my life
and even though I go to therapy and men's meetings now
I'm still at odds with much of what I wrote back then

It's remarkable that you're able to get something out of it
but I think it's important to say, I wasn't trying to write an official document—
I hear it's been translated into the English?

THE EYES OF OBERON

P^{re-raphaelite lustre—}
Lust as lacerater!

The expense of spirit gripped by bodies
An orgy in a wasteland
A statue bleeding from the mouth
Steam rising from the sublunary sphere
Here on Earth we are haunted by attractive bodily dimensions—
haunted because attraction and novelty are intertwined
Like a crystal skeleton, you can see every little bone

My eyes are like the eyes of Oberon
The love-juice tickles and stings them
and makes them run with tears
My heart is in my pelvis
My brain and my waist are connected by desire
and there is no whimsy in this attraction

They say that wisdom is the comforter of all psychic suffering
It is true that only a woman of the cross can make me feel safe

**THE
BEST
SHIT
GETS
BURIED**

ROMANCE & VULNERABILITY

I took a cold shower after drinking all the wine
And now I'm brain-dead
Frustrated because I could have sat here
Uninterrupted
And plowed great fields

But that was not in the numbers—
Not tonight;
I'm tethered to a tree that is
Too hard to climb
(Consider the meaning of this)

I will not dumb these things down;
The coals are glowing like reflective tangerine slices
Wet in the sunlight
Spitting up sparks like drops of juice
(I have a woman to discover)

Meanwhile, find the tracks of miracles
A drop of lordstuff in the gurney
To address my promiscuity over cans of beer
A city-heathen with a tongue for churches
I want the Light to lean in brighter

This will be my pride & humility as a poet
Charting depths & building an oceanwave from scratch
I look at my ring often
I'm glad to have it on my finger;
Its power is increasing

What will be said during our weekly marriage meeting?
Will I tell her the names of the women I find attractive?
Will she recoil because some of them are our friends?
I'm sickened by the thought of dampening her experience
as rain dampens firewood

