

Some Teaching Poems

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Vertov (on Obedience)

Because we are what we make we make what we are
Awl is to shoemaker as camera to man
Facts fall coincident a playing-soul in reality
Dreams of being a body while the body dreams of having a soul (Artaud)
Leader chases leader light records glass

The spaces in between Rovner's intensities
Multitudes moving in deformed organization her sublime
Time of leaves leaves we are such powers
Eyes dilate diaphragms across distance hear me my distances
This is just a stage sounding every name in history

Soul dreams and cradles flashing bodies mummified in actuality
Actual memories sensing still surfaces still sequences sensed
Memento mori leeward these waves sound sound
The thing itself sounding the thing to which it is homed
Going down lapped by tongue landless tongues notwithstanding

Because the impossible is of the possible because
The possible thinks impossibles plausible splices compose
Hands over glass hands lend editorial eyes to propositions
Like an angel he keeps falling to his pseudonym all wound-up
Spinning Top we are this permission of waves History free me song as I am

That *higher mathematics of facts* in this obedience
Free me fell number going down wrapt by felt things
Actionable idea *potentia* prodigal bodies fold
Nature has an eye called percept and there is nowhere it doesn't see
We see with all the little ones every fact coincident

At this shore a content crushes the skull marks are audible
Displays scratched far away and we are the distance below
Above is the work to be done sure of interval
Ponderables go in a charmed sense diving
Sense to sense divining sense as sense beheads.

On Reading Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" Again

[...] And filter and fibre your blood.

*Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.*

You filter for our farthest flung
In accidents the day is more
Sun more of these blades those
In the sun you filter to zoom
Occluded actual fingers thumbing
Through leaves fingered all here

Now that is all.
A metaphor for:
Soldiers, the dead?

The atomic continuity of your universal shoe and hymnal
The convergences of one *and* with another unawaited
The noise of these things fluttering all this time in place
Fluttering in the voice of speech televised silently watches
This filter that filter world flows convulses through us streets
I will space space sovereign time time blades whistle rage
There are not leaves enough when information won't suffice

Now, that is all.
A metaphor for:
The living, each being?

This filter commands an image sung
And heard in the newborn lyric
Of your hand reading the vaulted eyes
The seen on your lips mere man
On a bench who has waded word-upon-word
The *F* sounds land and pull
Origin from under us compounding

Now that is, all.
A metaphor for:
radical democracy?

Becoming grass on the ground, among it,
Grass from above, grass from the sky:
Or universalism? Or evolutionary love?
Or the advantages of co-related particulars?
"Untranslatable" (in Webster's)—

Non-Site
for Andrew Levy

The word defined “to see around” design
a premise control
people with few people
the ubiquity in all
self control containment isn’t this a technology it is
Easy Pass GPS
PS what is moral compass
what is a moral

split sovereign my enemy my self my friend
space (vanishing
points) space (chaos) coercion (dungeon)
consent (imaginary)
A real subjection is born from a fictitious relation
interlocuter egged-on
thinking in the dark thicket Prefect can’t see rivalry

continue to pass the ball paradigm unalarmed
hypnosis what is power power is given
by stupid smart knowledge
advantage of relation
a crit
can you think ways this image can be given to a politics what are some
images the strikes art revelation
of one’s making strikes art dumb

auratic character an atmosphere
art is an abstract cave viewed negatively in the distance
magic lends itself
to analysis positive because it expands sacred uniqueness
innovation a mixed
sense of loyalty magic
out of books intimacy loss of intimacy

you can never cross the same reproduction twice
the of chant every politics
arrives image
surrounded by print
Control Room craving blood reinforce exclusion
contexts clash Time Inc. Toyota || Iwo Jima
after the Towers fell
the media let half the call get thru.

NO ONE's Autopathography

for Eleni, Rob, Taylor and Edwin
after Muriel Rukeyser's "Book of the Dead"

Power becomes you dear endangered body skin so thin with armor
amorous Isis Osiris scattered becomes us compels you this subtlety in over-

sensitivity as the hills which once were white-mottled Romantic models as
Rukeyser would make ironic alloy call a rose a rose and us by any other aim

would recognize no other power but in degrees of this world transcendent so hell
is also MY SELF on earth because we made the factories time convolute
Vertov touted the machine age Williams never sang the Passaic for labor per se

that other Eternity power always exists the problem is what to do with it
how NOT to USE is sometimes how to direct writing from a white heat O Love

O downy picturesque particulars and pastoral spotlessness pimps your poem

"glassy moons" confound the social every rose wants to be a rose merely
every nation just a nation but can not because we fall to rise every rose begs

to be both interrupted and ongoing a paradox as every pane of glass which
thisness inheres that bears witness a SOUL for every violence committed
to someone in this world of force and nothing else a gun sites the said

dialectics tread on where desires go into the Open of control my sovereign
my brain-sickness my body my head prevented the tongue as well he asks him

self "am I alive?" a ghost of sorts while she pursues her actual Bardo power at
the price of exploitation hatred at the price of force so illness transforms her.

A Note Before Teaching Langston Hughes Again

Every poem is critical, an act of criticism before “criticism”.

Every poem is rhetorical. Poems can be especially rhetorical in their lack or evasions of rhetoric.

Beyond any specific content or structure per se, the formal qualities of language objects fulfill or bear a critique. These forms are both cultural, historical and personal (involving a personality or person as complex, metabolism, tendency).

The sound and rhythmic values of poems are especially meaningful. They may in fact be *all* the meaning of the poem really *is*. Nothing is denoted, conveyed, signaled, signified so much as it is timed, sounded, sensed, measured, rhymed, spaced. In this the poem fails or doesn't fail to become articulate--meaningful, and valuable as such.

I am struck by a lyrical tradition in respect to the above. The Anglophone ballad at some point needs breaking. There are many complicated reasons for the exigency of this breaking, not least of which is the oppression of so many singularities who account for liberation struggles and struggles for recognition, representation, power. Not to mention an English-American culture tired of Empire.

To derationalize, to stutter, to cry, to ‘say saying’ (Levinas), to break, to shatter, to make shudder, to unmeasure, to unwork, to make ex-centric, to make caesuras, to intensify, to hybridize, to over-determine are some of the various responses to this lyric necessity.

After Nathaniel Mackey, Susan Howe, David Lynch, and others, I am interested in an over-determination of "the voice" (if only a "voice blown from print" [Zukofsky], the printed and/or written word as pneumatological). This question can be called one of “ventriloquism” and/or “lip-synching” of perceived authorized language uses. In doing the voice(s) as such too well, by imitating it/them too accurately, one over-determines its making, bringing into relief fictions of authority, discipline, domination, identity. To accurately observe this synching may involve "over" sensitivity in Jalal Toufic's parlance; or an attention to "discrepant engagement" in Mackey's.

Reading Hughes again (and Reznikoff and Rukeyser) specifically, I have also thinking about words as documentary irruptions--as irruptions, or events, of historical specificity (as opposed to non- or pre- historicity: traumatic structures, structures of ontological rupture). Much of Hughes' and Reznikoff's language (as a language of document, and "lived" speech) manifests such irruptions. How a word used particularly can form a pivot or hinge-work in time. How it can puncture. How in its opaqueness it can stare at us--not so much a blindspot, as the winking back or smudge on an otherwise too-lucid glass of actuality.

Note for Critiphoria

The above poems/texts are pinched and honed out of a stream of my teaching activity as it informs a daily practice making poems—writing to think thru. Insofar as teaching provides notes/ jottings/ideas and tends to be pre- and post-“compositional” as such, I am interested in the ways teaching practices and pedagogy determine one’s conduct as a poet. One whose process is ongoing, if not felt at every moment of a life. A total process to be embodied, demonstrated and observed...