(What You Want Hummed Here)

Lara Victoria Ramsey
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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(WHAT YOU WANT HUMMED HERE)

by

Lara Victoria Ramsey

Bachelor of Arts
University of Puget Sound
1996

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Fine Arts Degree in Creative Writing
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2003
Thesis Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April 14, 2003

The Thesis prepared by

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Entitled

(What You Want Hummed Here)

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in Fine Arts, Creative Writing

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1017-53
ABSTRACT

(What You Want Hummed Here)

by

Lara Victoria Ramsey

Dr. Claudia Keelan, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Poetry
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

(What You Want Hummed Here) represents the cumulative work of my past three years of studies in poetry as an MFA of Creative Writing candidate at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Included in the following document are a preface and manuscript of poetry. The preface details my poetic aesthetic, chiefly based on concepts of translation, negative capability, and being. The preface discusses these concepts in relation to "I" and "Other." The collected poems explore the borderlands of opposing forces such as flesh versus spirit, reality versus dream, arrival versus departure, and knowing versus not-knowing. This is a manuscript in process.
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PREFACE

And then you make an anagram of it, and you spell what the Martian was trying to say.

—Jack Spicer

(What You Want Hummed Here) gathers together three years worth of work and reveals a poetic aesthetic in search of itself. This aesthetic positions me as one becoming a member of a world that is striving to translate and transcribe itself into poetry. Readers will probably note that the second half of the collection presents a more solidified sense of this.

In Poetics of Indeterminacy, Marjorie Perloff argues that poetry branched off in two directions with Charles Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud—the main difference between the two being their approach to the signifier and the signified. Those in the Baudelairian line are Symbolists and Romantics. Here, the signifier signifies something other than what it is. In Baudelaire's "L'Invitation Au Voyage" ("Invitation to the Voyage"), a flower is not a flower:

Moi, j'ai trouvé ma tulipe noire et mon dahlia bleu. / Fleur incomparable, tulipe retrouvée, allégorique dahlia, c'est là, n'est-ce pas, dans ce beau pays si calme et si rêveur, qu'il faudrait aller vivre et fleurir? (34)

(As for me, I have found my black tulip and my blue dahlia. / Incomparable flower, tulip lost and found again, allegorical dahlia, it is there, is it not, in this country so calm and dreamy, that we must live and blossom?)

Baudelaire's flowers represent something rare; however, it is left to the reader to decide what that is—love, a lady, intoxication, peace, or perhaps death. As well, the reader must decipher the symbolism behind the calm, dreamy country.
Poets in Rimbaud's line, which Perloff terms the "Other Tradition," comprise a large portion of the Post-Modernists. Here, the signifier signifies the signified. A rose is a rose, as Gertrude Stein might say. Objects are presented as they are, not re-presented as representing something else. The poem operates through attention to language, music, and image, as opposed to metaphor and simile. The poem demands "being present" in this world, now, as opposed to flight or transportation out of it proposed by symbolist modalities. While poets from both camps have influenced my development, those most largely influencing (What You Want Hummed Here) have been Arthur Rimbaud, Jack Spicer, Ezra Pound, and Charles Olson.

Translation & Transcription

Translation requires that one decipher, then convert, something expressed in one language (ideas, perceptions, imaginings, dreams, etc.) into another. My Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary adds that the translation should retain its original sense (1227). In translation, self-expression as the goal of writing falls by the wayside. The translator must serve the text's desires. For the poet translator, the text is the world, and the goal becomes the translation of the world as it presents itself. This process is akin to the concept of negative capability as discussed in the letters of John Keats. Keats first uses this term in a letter to George and Thomas Keats: "Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason—" (831). This passage defines negative capability as an individual's ability to "be" without having to attach meaning. Further passages clarify negative capability as a poetic concept in opposition to those that privilege the "I" or egotistical sublime.

Rimbaud's phrase "Je est un autre" (qtd. in Perloff, 60) and Spicer's concept of poet as receptor further develop negative capability. Rimbaud's "Je est un autre" ("I is Another") describes an approach to the collapse of the distinction between subject and object. If the subjective "I" is the objectified "Other," the poet may no longer speak as the privileged "I." The poet becomes a medium for other voices. In the case of Rimbaud, Perloff asserts, these voices come from the subconscious. Spicer
touches on this concept and develops it further in “Vancouver Lecture 1” when he describes the poet as a radio receiving radio waves:

Essentially you are something which is being transmitted into... (7)

It’s as if a Martian comes into a room with children’s blocks with A,B,C,D,E which are in English and he tries to convey a message... (8)

The properly tuned poet is set to a station that limits static (ego) and allows for the reception of outside voices—“Martian” voices. While Rimbaud listens to the subconscious, Spicer listens to the world. Although the suppression of the self-absorbed “I” (which is always ready to pontificate to no end about itself) is a difficult and ever-vigilant task, attention to negative capability has helped me develop a means of practicing this discipline. Evident throughout (What You Want Hummed Here) are both varieties of negative capability, listening to world and listening to subconscious, as well as the return to the privileged “I.” In the earlier poems, instances of the privileged “I” are symptomatic of my struggle to employ negative capability, while in the later poems, any return to the privileged “I” is part of the inclusion of the entire world.

Translation requires the transcription of that which has been or is being translated. The translation must be recorded into its new form. Transcription is the transferal of something (words, music, sounds, data, etc.) from one recording and storing system to another (Webster’s II New Riverside University Dictionary, 1226). Ezra Pound and Charles Olson have informed my focus here. In “ABC of Reading,” Ezra Pound asserts the idea that sound, image, and logic are the means by which words are imbued with meaning. Having read this text seven years ago, its significance has become newly immediate to me. Influenced by these criteria, I am constantly striving to transcribe the music (sonorous or cacophonous), images (pleasant or terrifying), and orders or non-orders presented by the world. Thus, amid the images that flock to the pages, sound enters here and there as interruption or as part of the entire piece. As well, order and chaos play out in the words on the page.

Olson’s discussion in “Projective Verse” also shapes the form of my poetic transcriptions. The following passage most succinctly summarizes Olson’s aesthetic:

viii
the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE / the HEART, by way of the BREATHE, to the LINE (616)

As Olson puts it, the way to the syllable is through the head. The mind perceives the syllable, which is the rhythm and essence of what other voices are saying, through the ear. Once perceived, rhythm and essence find their way into the line by way of the heart through the breath of the poet. It is via this practice, ideally, that the original voice gets translated and transcribed into poetry with all its kinetics in tact. Because the poet can only transcribe the world’s voices through the filter of his or her own breath, it is inevitable that the poem will retain his or her colorings; however, curtailing ego allows for a world voice accompanied by the self’s unique voice, as opposed to a self imposed on the world.

Being & Becoming

Active engagement in being and becoming is the platform on which translation and transcription function properly. Being, as opposed to doing, goes hand in hand with negative capability. Eastern philosophies, such as Taoism, Buddhism and Yoga, outline reflexive, emptying meditative practices. Time engaged in meditation is spent observing self, losing self, and ultimately comprehending the significance of simply being—of being one object among the world’s objects or perhaps one subject among the world’s subjects (the boundaries of subject and object having been dissolved). Returning from meditation to the active world of doing, the self gains a balanced sense of being and a reverence for other, having experienced the self as Another part of the whole. Reverence for Another opens self to expanded scopes of influence, thus the possibility for becoming is endless. In “Six Non-lectures” E.E. Cummings proposes a similar notion of being,

But (as it happens) poetry is being not doing... If you wish to follow, even at a distance, the poet’s calling (and here, as always, I speak from my own totally biased and entirely personal point of view) you’ve got to come out of the immeasurable doing universe into the immeasurable house of being. (24)
While Cummings presents a beautifully spoken, sensible argument, I would argue that the poet's calling is to "be" and "do" simultaneously. While this is a difficult task, requiring much mindfulness, "being" and "doing" are equally significant aspects of the world striving to translate itself into poetry.

*Featherweight*

The original title of this collection was *Featherweight*. I had latched onto a bit of Egyptian mythology that seemed significant to my attention to voices and discussions from borderlands, particularly those between flesh and spirit. Voices concerning the material fleshly world and the immaterial spirit world tend to speak out often, not only in my poetry but in my photographic endeavors as well. After writing an initial preface to this manuscript, and going back through the poems, it became clear that *Featherweight* was inappropriate. Though it had come to me via an outside voice, it was saddling the manuscript with something I wanted to say to the audience. Thus, I went back through the poems to see if I could hear what they were saying. What they are saying, what they desire most of all, I believe, is to sing; and as poems from the community, they want *What You Want Hummed Here*.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend credit and gratitude to everyone involved in influencing or aiding me in working on this project, as well as to everyone accompanying or guiding me through graduate school. Thank you Claudia Keelan for your dedicated, passionate guidance into an approach to poetry I had been previously struggling to comprehend. Thank you Douglas Unger for assisting me through translation. Thank you Dr. Jane Hafen for your tremendous influence in my academic writing and broadening my perspectives on American Literature. Thank you Dr. Pasha Rafat for your enthusiasm in guiding my photographic explorations and for your interest in my poetic work. As well, a very big thank you to all my friends and to my family for your support, encouragement and advice. Thank you all for being!
POTS & PANS CLANKING
Night Hymn Twelve

They were all dressed up dazzling
in their sqns the men looking all dapper
I hadn't had the chance to make dinner reservations
so they all left (them all leaving)

Something stirred I knew
this: the reflection of worrying worries
worrying worries of reflection the

There was

a short grey cable. A long orange chord
and a blue one. We were in a new house
where it was better
for the TV

and the video games
to be in the basement. I agreed. Put on

Later we all went shopping
but didn't find much
but a skirt
its hemline an Egyptian horizon

I came to
my daytime
senses wondering
where I was had been

would be going now: The scents & sounds
stirring s
beckoning s
back
pushing sleep back

dark the stars
winking out
roaches
scattering

in the next room
pots & pans clanking
breakfast scent wafting up
pulling dawn into shape
Pull
always we
becoming
our circular rage
tied
to our strong heads

full
joyous
sad
deflated

still

we go we
move

beyond this day
these shoes that face

and the season's flowers
the old house
the flesh

hear it so loud we
pull away

mahogany syllables fall
and scatter

riddle the yard
Test of Wings

as we leave to depart we arrive—at
the decision to at the place of at
the moment in the step out from before
into what lies before we go beyond
knowing in order to know do we
not part for fear to peel away the living
cells dare not divide nail from thumb it
aches so god damned much but a fruit
not peeled grows sticky harbors larvae
gets eaten inside out I no go I say
says the child sitting at the foot of her bed
there can be no convincing nor coaxing
she stays this room likes the scent
of the foliage a melody creaking through
the eaves the maps and books
and menageries in their places
Dreams It All Up

i.

dreams it up all
though there are real roses
aphids blemishes

this one dreams it everyone

there was mud there
dirt and water deep
brown & black as velvet
it was near heaven

but there was no music

which bothered some were bothered
murmuring there
writhing

trying to who knows

I hadn’t the slightest notion but there
all of us
me
and those mudmurmurers

ii.

while that one was dreaming I suggested they all we

[what you want hummed here]

they had been lamenting—perhaps now
some might open come out listen

iii.

some hear few listen one said once
not dreaming speaking

iv.

I was remembering this
that one moment I had slipped
into that one’s dream
the way he was dreaming not humming but re-membering remembering pasts as he put it

so for him there was nothing

only one thing to do

go back

so I went

v.

there were sooooo many things!

faces bits of fluff you me our expressions taught
each other’s closeness a nest in a tree

sky blue expanse of small egg

field of hops in the air across the street

powderpuff clouds beyond

but I couldn’t stay it all dissolving

the red well the tree imploding the egg cracking

into earth and that too

imploding as your face

as beyond flew

this re-membering dismembering my limbs deepening

in the mire

and they all content to their discontented murmuring The air thrills!

with the hum of insects I screamed

or maybe murmured

vi.

nobody was

listening was all dreaming

writhing inside

remembered

dreaming this

for everyone was convinced

very convincing

he was of all the going back

but how much

backgoing? I had already lost

your face no more losses
I got up saying

only one thing to do

more desiring
I wanted beyond going

I was thinking
there certainly was something

more aphids
I brushed nearheaven
from my thighs
Summer Harvest

One million gazillion of them and it's my job to find them all. I go out before dad, scour the lawn: one foot in front of the other to the eastern-most edge, pivot, repeat, reach the western-most edge: snowball bush and row of arbavida. Each rock is ten cents jingling in my pocket: one rock equals one shiny dime; ten rocks equal one crinkled, sometimes crisp, dollar bill. I look long under the sagging branches of the Douglas fir, along all edges, and among all shadows. I am the seeker the vanquisher the vanquished. I search myself out of rocks, and out of a job, but the rocks grow back—next month, next summer.

I spent my childhood buying unicorn stuff with rock money.

Now, in the fading day, the shadow of the old white house, mom hovers over her garden patch, pulls weeds, clips back candy tuft. The scent of geranium fills my nose and stains my hands as I pinch away dead leaves and dried blossoms, pull fledgling plants from their potters and cozy them into a patch in the half-crescent shape she has mapped out. It has been ten years since I crouched here, helping. I squat, dig, jump at the cat, palm a stone.

Pill bugs, spiders, and one million gazillion rocks spill out in the upheaval of earth.
Edible

you cannot put everything in
your mouth some things are not edible
but yes to this smooth shiny fruit
tender grainy flesh red juices
that quench hunger feed curiosity birth
desire it is better you eat this savoring
instead of gnawing and mashing away
Words

it still intense as confused as
ever up my mind then changes forty
times daily I am sane rational
and freaking want to throw myself in
front a semi but keep
you have thoughts that start a solid
direction i am scared
trying to talk it touchy we walk egg
shells and hurt still we need
to see conversation going it is easier
the minor details than the meat
MilkWineBeerCigarettes

Pabst comes in a silver & blue aluminum can I observed

them walking in
the door they were

walking he in
his way she in my way

walking in together
arrived through the d-ing

d-ing dragonfly
aqua sky fluttering

up through pigeons
cooing across our backs

tattooed into our dreams
Morse code beat out

in iridescent expanse indecipherable
youmethecashier

chewed up stuck here
stuck on this block this city

this millionth parking lot
cars circling
Joypop

i.

Joypop entered the room, enters the room is astounded and wants these words to be red not black

warning: temporary fix

tomorrow she'll want them black again meanwhile, I am hungry: cook food: eat it: noodles, zucchini, bell peppers.

ii.

That Joypop, she'll just have to imagine red I won't support her habit see

iii.

whatever she pops she only pops once per month there are enough stuffs to pop hourly.

iv.

there is a painting on a wall in a museum in Austria on slides being shown in a lecture hall in Las Vegas somewhere a cell phone rings rings rings

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Joypop’s tummy is rumbling. —no. grumbling.—she clarifies, anyway, it is heard, this sound,
coming from inside a girl.
don’t let it distract you,
pay attention (yet still ringing)
to threads, slides,
threads of slides, art
sliding by: red
fabric (she ought to really like that). Truthful
fabric. Sticks and stones
and mixed dies. Reflective
materials
—this really is popping— Joypopping saying melifluos ly.

Sweaters grafted together,
wav ing form altering
space, chairs and mirrors
assaulting the senses,
and words,
(her stomach grumbling again)
a hand cut off
and floating through space
—those visual artists, they have space
and colors and something tangible
and it’s so good I object.—Joypop fading, craving
passion

v.

fruit.

Joypopping saying: I could stay here finally,
have another,
tear away, tear up
tough purple skin,
use my canines,
penetrate flesh with my tongue

suck out each seed one by one seed each counting
fruit juices dripping

but I’ve already done that once now.

Joypopping saying: It is not possible to repeat these things, to repeat
these things is not to reach that thrill
that thrill that thrill, that first-time
thrill again

vi.

All kinds of substances (Joypop grinned)
those you take in, consume
like that fruit
some dropped, snorted pushed in in
serted

what you wrap around, wrap
self around, wrap
around self
Curandera

The nuns entered the sick room in single file, the scent of dust wafted in on their swishing skirts, black folds of illumination. Even a savior dangling at their pious hips couldn’t make right the wrong that they had no egg. No blessed ritual egg.

They sat as two dark clouds, limbs melting into their bodies, melted into the body, leaving only their soothing whispers and a promise of healing draped about them like that ethereal halo about clouds that glows less and less brilliant as sun relinquishes sky to moonrise.

And all the while, that benevolent god at rest in his clean sterile garden stared shamelessly. A terrifying little mangod, his emaciated body—broken and bloodied—smarted in young eyes as the waning sun, through stained glass, refracted over cold silver or golden flesh.

Little mangod, you need an egg. Didn’t your grandmother ever tell you? An egg and the sea foam scent of aging flesh nearing as you stand or sit or lie aching. The silent histories of your people mapped out in the wrinkles that bless your grandmother’s brow and cascade down her face making an Indian tapestry of neck, throat and chest, then finish their pilgrimage where steady fingertips greet glowing white circle.

And glowing white circle begins to undulate, moving through constellations of secret syllables and sound clusters, moving through ancient codices and a song of blood—drawing my center out, drawing it out of my center, drawing into its center my center, leaving the circle about me white, leaving its center yellowed.

Once my grandmother had cracked the egg, she released its yellow center, my center, into a flowered dish from the kitchen cupboard. And so that the vanquished spirits would be less inclined to return, she placed two sticks in the image of a cross above the bowl.
Hymn Seven: Horus: Hymn of Wisdom

we quaff water
hovering above
planet USA peer
through clouds

sheltered from the heat
of noonday desert
earthly politics
we share

books the SkyMall stories
grapes chomp ice
till it's gone
sleep

what we can
in the intervals
watch listen
wish

passing the hours
this way
the hours becoming
confused this way

my window filling
with sun harsh glare
sprung off metal
rivets

great wingspan see me
see the sea
below
not roiling

a ptchwrk
you plus you
equaling us
brilliant

ignorant us
nt in stitches
but in circles wrkd
wrkd

even to its magnificent
lucrative blue

parameters
not ours
ours the not-knowing

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the palms raised
voices singing
eternally praying carrying

sun through its circumference
shifting positions
we exchange seats
cross and uncross

our legs our arms our eyes
can't wait to be home
can't imagine this journey
were it endless
ELECTRIC HUM
What is Hovering Now

yesterday’s conversation  last night’s
goodnight  a bedskirt
needs ironing

pillows  headboard
one to be fluffed  the other
bought  and beyond

the great city  cities

one after one after one growing  peoples
erecting great structures
growing

razed  flowers carved  mahogany mounted
up up  heavenward  into the darkness

its not-knowing

hovering here
at this odd hour
in the drift

sun

across chair life
afraid it is founded on nothing
nothing afraid of

neighbors yelling above  doves cooing
murmurs  giggles  pots & pans clanking
in the next room  still

more

basketball on cement  somewhere
What Hovered That Day

miles & miles of road
grey asphalt
winding through town
after town bright white stitching
or yellow over and over
same song and tears
streamlining our
lovely silence

having crept in was hovering
one desire
bright animal urge to fuck

through the roadside foliage it was spring
the reeds sharpening
you could see
their truck
parked
there their bodies here the sun
blasted stones
on the river bed their flesh
that same bright shock
Lumen

dark knots swimming
in oil on canvas are
plunge eternal
as they wrap the deep going
about themselves or

us this motion a staving off
of vortex firmament
and nothing they suck up all
sin’s luminescence then

spew reds blues fuchsias and
purple each iris where
they want to intertwine makes
mud grey even

umbra exhausted they
push against canvas beg
of their god a horizon any
color just attainable

shimmered tails solidify
of nowhere burn them
a bright path they become
wanton against the end

the endlessness
somewhere at the edge
of their fall rests a wish

this wish for breath
awash in ecstasy a sigh
not this expanse
of exile
Hymn Eight: Khons: Hymn of Wandering

smallest of feathers

[doubt having crept into the page
was erased then rewritten]

was a prayer lifted there
a prayer hovering
not above
but centered
in it

[the art the
love making
the playing]

all
Battaglia in D Minor

Poet

the blades were the sun

desert

the blades of grass in the meadow
the clay road there
was wild
was not mine

nor were the birds
yet they were
insistent

become every sound
saturation
flesh

they were there were
blades were sun

though plucked
and mangled

we would begin again if we could,
bend dirt and leaves to our bodies for a different reason
Battaglia in D Minor

Scientist

be cannot alter the distribution

historical and sociological reasons account
for inferiority of

the non-Nordic is American
'Boxed by the weight of centuries he leans'
a perfect picture

Demonstrator does nothing.

(the feeble-minded clog the wheels)
of human progress

(Quand on est bête, c'est pour longtemps.)

sterilization

no feeble-minded person should be

to marry or parent. Society

must enforce it.

Is home-grown.
Battaglia in D Minor

Neighbors

cleaved branch
predecessor to the bat

if you are not outraged

vacant lots and boarded windows, small
personal junkyards on porches in lawns
baby strollers drying laundry bicycles
barbeques plants in their pots

outrageous

nothing here is

he grabbed what he could
they grabbed what they could
they became

baseball bats shovels broom treelimb chair milkcrate rake they became their outrage
his blood
hit the ceiling splattered young rosy cheeks drenched their jeans seeped in

heart

how

have we got

so far

sometimes the rain falls that had not fallen

but had been

building

still building

then this world that had seemed is no longer

i will not drink milk nor shovel
nor sweep nor sit even ever again
(for at least the next week) wake

force is force

is force is forced is not a rose
Waking

morning altar
chorus swinging

who he is
this afternoon

at the picnic
who is you

saying grace
over potatoes

saying goodnight
to her who I is

being kissed
who they are

sleeping what dreaming
this waking
Pigeon Song

9/05/00

strange stilled pigeon
iridescent feathers
in my path

9/07/00

they are never torn
simply fallen
gravity clinging

9/12/00

iris-colored flecks fade
chest caves

9/19/00

foot traffic renders little wing and belly and walnut-sized head
flat ligament and bone and blood
dry and pop—
become mud and dust and grass and leaf

9/21/00

less song less

9/26/00

soul fly
Hymn Two: Hu: Power of Utterance

moon
gone down
shower
humming

[somewhere
the yogis motioning
sun salutations]
sft footpads

through the hall
[clck]
door opening
[clck]

light
switched
off
on [mindful

brth
in
brth
out]

shadow of tree
on brick wall
grw
grws into

real tree, hill, horizon
beyond
[clck, clck] again
day beginning

again has begun
sun hovering

Å (as in padre)

lifting it all
[clck]
FM

accompanies us now
Itimar

You are saying, having come and gone, having traversed the thick of all realms, you say:

there are those songs sung by them, cut through water, up through us.

You hear them. So sing me in that way of whale or great sea. Dark my brightest angel

you rise, leaning forward, eyes fulled with no thing but now

touching me here. Wings sprout from my shoulder blades, cut up through flesh, out

through melody. Meanwhile, those children splice red bounce around cement, tussle salted grit

and tangle, and touch us screaming. (Ocean sound then scent.) Shall we touch them?

Feet dusting the walkway. Your song pushes the unknown, pushes ricket of trucks on cobble

and distant banter. Wound widens. Wings expand. We watch a crab hermit

an endless track through sand, feathering off south south and— hear the grey

splintering table, peeled and brittle in this moment, hear those people

out there, those whom guffaw buying beer and tacos at the street-side tienda,

the fishermen who will, pushing, be out in the predawn. They are all our mates

touching me, you touch me back, saying something saying now is good and sweet. I might stay.
Hymn Three: Sia: Power of Perception

Mère saying

Hi sweetie, how are you? Just wanted
to see how you're doing. Been trying
to get a hold of you for days now. Love

utterance opening
eyes witnessing
her shadow passing
behind

the exhaust is billowing
the frost is thawing
& this woman
with the tender lips

with the harsh lips
sees a daughter
is saying hate a
me

moves flesh moves
bodies
pulses pushes
us skywrld

chin lifted skywrld
these syllables
open doors
push dark into light
Chomula
they alight in the city the feathered
ones and the country bestowing smiles
this night in that glow the million miles
of veladoras and devotions heard

chanted up through the scent of pine whispered
past reprimanded saints through smoky aisles
out skyblue archways painted with flowers—
let this illness this evil be smothered.

in the courtyard the mixed crowd gathering
is close to the banda and the cuetes
ringing through the streets the children crying
for the noise that is too much and the mess
of a drunk stumbling underfoot pleading
for a coin or drink from the featherless
Halar

i.
Heart that is not heart
find me/us
don't find
be found:

Roadside tent of fluff
100 snow-white bears. Gentle
bears with not-a-heart
in hand. “I love you.”

Room full of not-a-heart
balloons. One bursted. Inside,
there was a messenger, a sincere thing:

the bursting room burst
too soon to read the rest.

A message in a balloon in a room in a dream
is not a message or a balloon or a room
but a dream.

ii.
Always this heart.
Disappointing not-a-heart:

Inside all tea kettles, gardens, tool
boxes, all boxes, funeral homes, expensive
helicopter tours (for the full
perspective). Ljubljana.
Not the Midwest though.

Always this heart.

Thin and papery. Something laced. Something
Maybe shiny. Could be flat or round (3-
Dimensional) or puckered or punctured
or flower-wrapped. Impure
image of what otherwise is.

iii.

find me the Chmes (Androgynous):
so that I will exist, Oppen’s words
skewed. Or are they his life-long love’s,
find my navel so that it will exist, find my nipples so that they will exist, find every hair of my belly, I am good (or I am bad), find me.

These limbs, those palms, that woman. Her commandment.

Subject or object, subject to existence and becoming only in context of other.

Ect, ext, ack!

His heart only bled because they were there to watch it bleed. Without them what is a heart anyway?

iv.

one word

v.

muscle

vi.

Sacred: heart that is heart before or after the rain

the rain that falls one of them said whether the chorus is androgynous or not. Whether Mary’s words or Oppen’s. Whether Mary’s navel or Mary’s.

vii.

At the vortex, one of those 99-cent Mexican candles. Jesus’ cupped palm pulls heart cavity from chest. Bleeds the scent of copper and roses. Fills the nose. Crawl inside. This God that is
not-a-god offers this heart that is
not-a-heart.

A punctured thing does not ascend.

viii.

Lie down. Lie
down with that one or
stand
close enough
find
navel, nipple, hair
listen
to that sound
found in the center

in there.
Closer
now than
before
to the
matter.
Search past
hair
rose of
nipple
concave
navel.
Find out that

rain falls
that had not been
falling
and it is
the same world.
Night Hymn Nine

persistent
electric
hum cricket
song ascending
through walls
faint blue
glow
blanketing
us
we are
two spoons
sleeping
Some Song Hovering
hovered for days
we tried acting
normal as though
it did not exist
running the mind's
circumference
repetition
repeating itself
through toast & jelly
lawnmower
we needed
to hear it play it
feel it
find-it-all-here-mart
had every melody
ever made
its name eluded
us and everyone
we sang to
the same song
persisted
persists
we needs a new song
Hallar

you hovering hear
Cicada

i.

Rows of translucent cascaras
insect pincers
lodged in mimosa

(and you dear, much too much
too far away
to imagine)

chirr the only bit
of cicada
visible this evening

broke through their shells
stretched new wings
and up and up
flew away

let this poem

ii.

Cicāda

Cicādā

Cicādā

ȘI KĂ’Dè

iii.

If I had a tree
Caminante
if I had a tree
and one thousand
cascaras de cicada
I would put them
all over that tree
and when one fell
down I'd pick it
up again.
What do you suppose it would taste like?

iv.
Let this poem chirp

v.
Blur of waking
Rain falling
through desert sky
thump against rooftop walkway
and parched earth
These cascaras, their trail up the tree, hold so much
I dream cascaras dream
days and nights
deluge cool water hard
against homes and
flowers wearing away mountains
and flesh

vi.
Afternoon chorus
High-pitched drone
pushes through
thick heat of day
arrives
from all directions
surrounds
vibrates through walls windows
rises fills sky
even
The cochlea thrums
head aches
searching for the path
vii.

no hay camino caminante

viii.

se hace camino al andar

ix.

September: small chirp

and pink blossoms gone sallow

litter the porch
Night Hymn Six

stilled banter
endless maze of syllables
widening wounds
spilling

sun passing
elsewhere
stars through evening
clouds & Mzrt

this nightly
ritual threatens
to inspire revolution
it won't

we lift copious wine
to the stars the moon
brightening our faces
lets go

let us let the day
from evening
make shape

off our lips of our lips
saying not much more
bt carrying sun singing
something into being
That Which Hovers

has been hovering
for quite a while
now for some time

nothing hovering though here
now this morning
out there beyond the glass
the birds (their chirping) (pale
feathers) (beaded eyes) and beyond that
cars their motors running
past some silence then again
(vroom-chirp) () (vroom)

meanwhile hum-tick: played out vinyl

and this pen
scratching these marks
hovering (now typed &
printed)

there was another day
no vinyl
some insect
hovering

there was another day
no insect
something silver
hovering

of course it is always changing
that which is hovering
and always there is some voice saying
how I is hating that this or that
is doing some changing

we light a candle y pedimos
un milagro del Padre
we want

always this is hovering near a near solution
a notion founded on nothing beautiful & reckless

there you see air still alive
with the thrill of the hum
Dragonfly
shadow
   weight of drifting
inching across sand
   each small berm
a thigh
   their wings glistened that day
we glistened
each one
   flitting up from grass
outside the train station
   we are in Cadiz
iridescent & flitting
   sun across evening sky
one stops
   is metallic-red-hovering
perches on my shoulder
& expires
Hymn Four: Asbet:

the world crckd wide open
her hand motioning
wheels everywhere
pedestrians
ambling
is nt is
we sit

baked by sun
magnified through glass
amid midmornig hubbub
the midst of too much

it is Maryland & Tropicana
it is all here!
Him Hovers in the Kitchen

that man

mushrooms in purple

dices peppers hovers

crisp romaine pans steam sips tastes

its gold & green hues

between

mine own
slices

cardboard

over sauce

loves

the air
Night Hymn Four

Whether this is the fourth
or the third hour
is difficult to decipher
n the border

n the bridge
over the damn
standing
between two
deserts
in the wnter
floriferous
winter

covered in pink
white pink
& permanent
blossoms

sun gone:
   waiting
so we keep a
   kitchen

luscious grapes
bulbous & of the
palest green
   waiting

in the fridge.
After I brushed the mud from my slacks
   I sang
I began singing!

What happened next was
I found you and two
very big birds
in the desert in this desert

I was in love! but there was no
   roadside tents of
fluff
   had been cleared
I kept singing the yogis
gone to bed early the strs
emerging the strs brightening
the sun somewhere else

the moon now the comfort
its yrs of glowing: nightly
 ten o'clock news:
      terror impending war death
What Hovered the Morning After

we won had been
winning
many fuzzy animals
pounding

cluckless chicken-shaped
leather I began
desiring

you grinning
saying
hey chongo
you’re a chongo

familiar old hands
old man
old desire I would
gift you

one very small & good
black gorilla
Honeybee

Honeybee hovering in the distance under the great pyramid

light shining light ascending visible from the moon!
(lit night)

& our prayers surround this body
scent of this body

wrapped rapt
sun wrapped around everything
When to Enact the First Hymn of the Hours

happens at daybreak (w/ brdsng
nd/or rain nd/or )

as it opens as
it rises

mouth
& thighs

bright disk emerging (O) thru
open blinds

gight words gight
sound
carry
Hymn One: Maat: Hymn of Divine Power

before opening
flesh

& the feathered ones

whistling

the sunrising

songing

all that song

floating

through predawn

cochlea

a pise

a drum

a rhythm

like nothing else

hrtsg

rising

heartsinging

& breath

carrying

sun

rising

it

all

feathered

it all

lftd
Hallow good sun & words circling
NOTES

"Dreams It All" takes its fragmented quotes from my grandmother, Maria Antonia Maldonado Saiz, and Samuel Beckett's *How It Is* as quoted in Marjorie Perloff's *Poetics of Indeterminacy*.

The term "curandera," found in the poem "Curandera," is applied to individuals skilled in the ways of both medicinal and spiritual healing in the indigenous cultures of Mexico.

"Battaglia in D Minor: Poet" takes its fragmented quotes from the poems "No Excuses" and "Song" from *Refinery* by Claudia Keelan.


"Battaglia in D Minor: Neighbors" takes its fragmented quotes from the poem "Of Being Numberous" from George Oppen's *New Collected Poems*.

Chomula is a small Mayan town located just outside of San Cristobal de las Casas in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. This poem transcribes Chomula's festival of Saint Sebastian, the town's primary saint.

"Haller" takes its fragmented quotes from George Oppen's *Of Being Numberous*. The word "haller" is Spanish for "to find."

In "Cicada," the word "caminante" translates to "wanderer"; and the phrase "No, no hay camino caminante, se hace camino al andar," quoted from Antonio Machado, translates to "No, there is no path, wanderer, you make it as you go."

In "That Which Hovers," the phrase "y pedimos un milagro del Padre" translates to "and we ask the Holy Father for a miracle."

In the poem "What Hovered the Morning After," the word "chongo" translates to "gorilla."

The historical event brought into the present in "When to Enact the First Hymn of the Hours," as well as in all other hymns in this collection, is the ancient Egyptian practice of reciting a hymn at the onset of each hour.
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