

1-1-2007

Crackdown

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.25669/a7gw-o9jt>

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CRACKDOWN

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UMI Number: 3302366

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Dissertation Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

October 19, 2007

The Dissertation prepared by

Heather J. Winterer

Entitled

Crackdown

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

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ABSTRACT

Crackdown

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The poems of *Crackdown* follow the progress of *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola written in the 16th century. Like the *Exercises*, the poems are divided into sections which correspond to the week on sin and reform (“Translations / Valley of the Shadow”), the week on the life of Christ (“Translations / The Call of the Temporal King”), the week on the Passion (“Translations / Crackdown”), and the week on the Resurrection (“Translations / Apparition”). The work is framed by “Translations / An Approach” which acknowledges the *Anima Christi* prayer at the beginning of the *Exercises* as an embedded acrostic.

Each section begins with a prayer and several preludes clarified by points. The first preludes ask that we imaginatively place ourselves in a spatial and sensory relationship to the mysteries under consideration, and from that vantage point, pray for what we want. I chose to render these spaces literally, in the first section, as an apartment complex and in the second, as a car on Highway 99. The points I have also considered spatially. For me, the diamond shape seemed an appropriate way to envision natural personal and collective goodness moving out expansively, and sin as a kind of narrowing to a point of no return. The use of an enclosure for the second group of points serves to illustrate the planet’s finitude and the fact that our sayings and doings are linked within that finitude for better and worse.

The final section concerns the thirteen apparitions of Christ after his resurrection. I chose rather to render the evidence of divinity the only way I receive it--through the beauties of the natural world and through exceptional human beings. It seems to me that the process of poetry is intimately linked with the process of faith and that both are fed and strengthened by deep attentiveness and receptivity to all that life extends. I chose the *Exercises* as a means of bringing the two into mutual service.

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PREFACE

In this manuscript I have attempted to enact the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Jesuit Order and wrote these as the basis for Jesuit spirituality. *The Exercises* take place over four weeks and offer a method focused on conscious movement from inward turmoil (desolation) to inward peace (consolation) through the grace of God. The Foundation which opens the Exercises comprises a set of propositions which posit that the end for which we and all things were created is love, and that in order to acknowledge that, we must become indifferent to those things which distract us from that end. The first week of the *Exercises* deals with sin and forgiveness. In the second week we examine the life and example of Christ, in the third, his Passion and death, and in the fourth, his Resurrection. The method includes many annotations, notes, prayers, preludes, points and colloquies (I've used only a few) which provide focus and invite the tradition of creative meditation--placing oneself in a spatial and sensory relationship with the mysteries of evil and grace and closing the distance between ourselves and a reality that is often frozen in abstraction.

While the *Exercises* were written to guide the personal spirituality of individuals, there is no question of their relevance on a global and institutional scale. Those concepts of power and self-definition that constitute personal sin and degradation have clearly found their way to the systems by which we justify and condone the violence we do to one another in the name of country, government, religion. In our culture we are trained, against our instincts, that power is a commodity, and that we must get it by any means possible--physical, intellectual, emotional or spiritual. Status, money and power are considered in the same breath and the goal of all three could be summed up as "more"--more status, more money, more power.

This power structure generally relies on the exertion of control. To say "my country," "my spouse," "my neighborhood," and mean it usually involves a serious fall-out of distrust, paranoia, repression and at the extreme, fear. Without the recognition of a differentiation that is constantly in motion in our own sense-making and in our communication to others, our relationships resemble prisons rather than shared expanses. Blanchot reminds us of this in "The Community of Lovers," where he proposes the

idea of the “negative community”--engaging in the sharing of the unsharable: “I am not free towards the other if I am always free to decline the exigency that sets me off from myself and excludes me at the limit of myself.” He also warns of the consequences of this declination of self as other: “Apathy, impassibility, the non-event of feelings and all forms of impotence, not only do not prevent relationships between beings, but lead those relationships towards crime which is the ultimate and (if one may say so) incandescent form of insensibility.”

As poets I think we are called to work in the tradition of the parables of Christ, who offered them not for their literary value nor for spiritual themes only, but to address the integral and visceral significance of the power structure that carefully defined the agrarian classes in his time within rigid boundaries. The order and severity of the punishment Jesus received could only be justified if the ruling order felt physically (as opposed to spiritually) threatened by the values he extolled both in his life and teachings. The settings and characterization of the oral dramas he presented would have been familiar to those listening would have offered a means of decoding an oppressive bureaucratic and aristocratic system and to re-imagine their own range of behaviors within that reality.

Through the parables, Jesus taught what it was to be loveless, loving and loved--the implications of which are always revolutionary. If you see you are worth something, then you will demand that your worthiness be acknowledged, and if you are privileged, your love will be called across the arbitrary lines drawn by class structures. Any way you look at it, change is the outcome. It is not really surprising that these teachings were interpreted by the powerful as dangerous contradictions to the status quo which is maintained by teaching whole groups of people that they are unlovable and unloved and ensuring that they believe it.

One of my favorite examples is the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in which as often happens, the expectations of his audience are reversed. The rich man is unrepentant even in death and asks Abraham (a fellow aristocrat) to order Lazarus to serve him and when that fails, to warm his brothers (the ruling class). Jesus audience would have been surprised when Abraham, whose hallmark virtue was hospitality, chose to ignore his “peer” in the power world, and to extend his heart to the beggar. Jesus quietly charges the rich man with remarkable, rigid heartlessness--he even knows the name of the man he has allowed to starve in squalor at his gate. And he shows a vivid picture of a person completely consumed by his own power--he cannot receive the truth even after he has been shown it explicitly. Meantime Lazarus

is brought to the “bosom” of Abraham by virtue of the fact that he has been victimized. In accordance with the way he was downtrodden, he is now uplifted and liberated.

The poems I offer are my own attempts to recognize what is possible when we let ourselves close off, when we fail to acknowledge that we *are* all that we encounter, opening towards our own making through others and through a very close attention to the world that is constantly moving through us. Love is not a lifeboat--already inflated whether we are in it or not. It is not achieved by predication, by the imposition and definition of limits, real and imaginary, onto space. It is the sense that Jean Luc Nancy describes in “A Finite Thinking,”--a sense which reaches out with the gestural “to” and “towards” and is always between beginnings and endings, always potential, and therefore, the only possible description of and allowance for existence.

Translations / An Approach

after what it used to be

come mostly clouds

come crystals very vaguely

never still erasing what it can

Incarnation

I'm just barely that time. Half-particular.

One voice offers "you."

"Me." So I take it. "She." I also claim--

At which we happen outlines mostly loop,

a flesh makes word.

Crisply outside its meremost it distinguishes.

(Here and you and she) I am (of mother, father)

Could be anyone is

Realized I am as partial etymology I realize

I am quite suddenly at last being finite

severed from before

Severally plentiful happy to be other than

This one every day a taking place becomes

its unbecoming pulls it

Into bones the lucky body yours these into

Childhood

Another one and yet an other someone else,

I was never quite that child

Never once was she exactly what I would become

I was barely there. She was my outer child

but she did have fun—big fun

My outer child—I was only there from time to time

At times we were living in that place, at others

is it possible or barely

Can there be that coalmine can there be that house

Had there been that childhood, were we those children

could we have been them

Really the ones in all those games, running fast

I was not even once the only one I was but

every one of me was loved

So much I am loving every one of them today

They are sometimes being loved behind their backs

this one, and those

It's best to love them quickly before someone becomes another

Multiplication

Ardently peeling personalities they are

never all at once

No one is ever very much the case

Inside the 13 reliquaries 13 index fingers

all by John the Baptist

Many a pilgrim comes to see them point

Above the jeweled boxes many of the Johns

are fingering the One

Correctly he is coming 13 ways each day

He is always coming never more or less

suggested by a star and sandals

recognizing him all wet *O Death where is your victory*

I can't quite put my finger on it Death O where

and when the One says all

Say any name that day you will be doubled

Tripled such will be your mutual regard

× one × two × three

in all your mouths the word is splitting several ways

Greeting

Amoeba + Amoeba freed

agreed to differentiate

Now they can say hello

If I is optional, if one can see over I

it can agree to differentiate

Many take shape make choices

At a distance they love to say hello

my everlasting lives

Can everybody hear?

Having been the once I was once again

embracing sweet embraceable

Right on it's you it's sweet embraceable

In vacuo in vivo ad maiorem Dei gloriam

etcetera and sweet

Significance is sending out the signs

Two at a time the absences ascend

from presences

I love and what I love and what I love

Riot

A rare demonia is saturating now with yesterday
what it begrudged its grudges
nudging it to the streets

Its culture's ways of procreating angry relatives
exaction of Wergeld other extractions
making manifestos somewhat readable

as if alone and having a right to anything but less
as if an army could accomplish peace
crashing along with tanks bangedy bang

How we detect all those responsible for why we are like this
smashing our own best things to smithereens
rendering eye for eye in our own neighborhoods where

irreplaceable these windows to the soul beheld
beholding (demons do enjoy a good mob scene)
sent as they have been into the herd of swine

The pigs all running to the sea asqueal with
their own destructiveness
into a special drowning they call "all the way home."

Landscape

Arc lines addle it	air from air
Neon from neon	no-one notices
its itchiness	its ink ilk
marring the map	making manifest
an arc-worn ache	above asphalt
cars conceal the cramp	considerations vertical
height with its halos	high-wired hindrances
regalia of rich ruin	run between risings
insisting its selves	into some insinuation
swung over streets	somebody strung it
there and there	those thick twinings
interrupting	air air

Past

A love so friendly as a golf-course

rakes the trap so flat so

Neatly preened—I wanted to speak of shapes

I wanted to respond with shapes to the question

“Where are your shapes?”

My shapes amygdala? Everywhere

As you and me and you go back and forth

spin-doctoring

Co-opting data

Heavy-headed over what they call

“the maelstrom of events”

Rewriting what they call “posterity”

In very special inks—my memory

I never know when I’ll

Show up wanting to have been loved

To have been understood, excited, fun

a great gal having been there

In an easy past waving

Pigdogs

Any shape beats any memory's
unshapely having been
not quite idyllically

in Moranbah where we were rising
to the shape of things
making a cosy place for what we loved

and very satisfactory and then
we had to ask him
“Can we keep the pigdogs, can we?”

“Heavens no—you may not keep the pigdogs
the pigdogs have to go
Right away—go get their tire, their clock.”

It's raining at the time—it's dry
my friend is there, is elsewhere
So many pigdogs at the time, so few

To have been just then the mother of all pigdogs everywhere
my Dad was saying no
I was having to accept a kind of blame. Poor little pigdogs.

Philosophy

All visitors are welcome

all are visitors

Now that we've named the plane of immanence

In the same way heaven lies about us

folding the outside in

Making a crust of our encomium

All the platos, all the nietzches

holding hands, losing their grip

Conceptual personae, shapers of singularity

Have you no status quo to represent?

no survey class to teach?

Replete with schools of thought

Is there no launching pad

for all your caves and books of genesis?

Some subject for your own bare hands?

That was an excellent day we came to visit.

You were making concepts.

It was sunny out and we drank lemonade.

Coffee Shop

As yet no solvent for these absences, ambage

the exchange of glances touching upon it

Now you are standing there
I am standing there in you

estranged

In our glancing we are crossing over now

looking back

My fluent voice, my eyes
articulate

a man

A way of standing at my coffee table

lovingly replaced

Can we make of one another

one another?

Can we stay?

His belonging

longing so

Reliant on my own

when either one is calling

the exchange is touching

In an absence we are touching

in the white fermata

Semi-quavers not yet ready for it formulating

our cadenzas

Traveling we are this gesture

crossing

In a white fermata

how the lights move out

so open.

Reef

All around the multicolored fish, an element
the multicolored fish are swimming in
Never have I seen a better buddy system

In then out of rocks, weeds, their element
describes the ways they go
My little one, my slightly bigger one, how's the water?

As alien and so at home here thanking them
(I thank them--we are touching)
carrolling and coiling up and down together everywhere

Happy weathering of corals feeding of curiosity
with food perhaps a need to move
Resistance of my inner ear to deepening

is taking them away, goodbye--
above them now this lung locked buoyancy
So stubbornly returning to my surfaces.

Thanks, though, for having me. I have to go now.

Move on with my life.

In a boat. Another atmosphere. Everyone faces a different way.

Instinct

Above in feathery cassia

a yellow nestled in a soft blue-green--

Nest of the coming pods its flowering--

In it the question of powdered seeds

centering bees a yellow

marks the spot

A simple buzz a daily forwarding of what you are

in early May.

Cradle, crown, conundrum I have never been

Have never simply yellowed into brown

or browned an air with wings

remembering the way to

It says a thing like "go and gather" "get it"

"Spend it everywhere"

The bees the cassia

all equally accomplishing

it says a thing like "do it again"

Ezra Pound

Assembling all you say *tout dit que*

places, names

No longer on the tip of any tongue

Io, Priapus, Maelids, Calhoun, Lorenzo

make me very sad

Make for a certain welling, Ezra Pound.

A certain kind of hard on me you come

(no chase no cutting to it)

Come all acrow with one astonishment upon another

How upon you none of it is lost—how cheerfully

this history is hunkering

reminded of itself—*This is not the bottom--*

It is a deeper looking for a deeper

you said that and I apply it

So to the case of you who I'm just now sweet on

That which gleams and then does not gleam

saving the bricabrac

in a cheap edition with a sky wet with ocean / flowing with liquid slate

The Garden

After the fall we struggled with mutability
 used our muscles poorly
never remembered Adam's name for the first giraffe.

It was all a bestial blur. We got caught up, tied down
 in real estate.

Mine was the Eden Bay:
 a place in the row
 with new appliances high ceilings
 carpets wall to wall.

Had it been a garden certainly there must have been hydrangeas
 turning colors in the shade
runners of clematis feeling a way along

instead of the gravelled dust
 its groveling
still falling to the zero landscape down

taking inventory every minute of the day
 another naming of another animal
its dull matriculation into fact

Translations / Valley of the Shadow

within what was within it

an outline of itself

self-satisfies

a shapely diametric

polarizing north and south

Annotations

*

Mere flab gives way to isometrics
and jumping

to mere health
whereby mere being is prolonged.

Mirrors declare it.

Inside another corpulence
inhabiting of habits
stuffed on imagery

defaced retouched

withal the numb of entropy

withal these adjectives--
these fat things swimming
thin things

Go to different silences you say
Be muscular dissolving

*

Two peel off the same soul.
"Hi"
apparently already acquainted.

Oak-trees readily nearby
plus a nest wants to be lost in life
but there it is—a subject of its insufficient scaffolding.

It's Ramrod Avenue.
A green pagoda marvelously redesigns
the shadows of branches.

Consciences are plucky
difficult to see at such meandering speeds—

I reach to touch a solid.
Mine—all grip—a phase.

Would you give me a hand? Can I help you?

*

In which acts of the intellect/reasoning are posited as secondary to acts of the will/feeling.

an idea of this asparagus plant inside its pot	needs to be watered
an idea of this dog on its blanket	needs to be pet
an idea of this telephone on the table	need to be answered only if it rings

*

If your desert is Las Vegas you are no desert father.

Still there are different demons different days.

Account for elongation or collapse of hours accordingly
Account for lizards, neon lights, red rocks.

When you come to it, account for everything.

*

Walls take the usual shadowboxing.

The flame doesn't flower over two dead matches.

Wasted time and why so long
the brown and yellow highlights in the warp--
no aura carpets nostrums rightly fail
just a head and fingers troubling divinity.

*

Goodbye rising—here's the old hole

Here is only predication, cut and dried

It is put sarcastically upon a handsome tongue suggesting ease
upon a voice that doesn't carry

Don't you have better things to do?

You can hear so well when you're not listening.

*

Desolation;

The shape of a leaf is a boring replica
leaf leaf leaf leaf leaf leaf leaf leaf
Likewise today's a boring replica of yesterday

today today you also fill a space
between a ceiling and a floor
you you don't take it personally.

Consolation:

lovely already
water greens the sun
to tongue

dear leaf
it laps, wraps love
that your roots predict you

*

In the glitter of bad angels we enjoy a happy whispering.
In the local visibility of lava-lamps we enjoy a terrible fun

As glass in asphalt thrills at its own cupidity
in the admiration of the urban poet
we suffer everyone to a trite comparison

Another glass in another asphalt
equally best by its own admission--

gathering round the radiant absence
of the common enemy
in the cosy angelorium glittering just so.

First Foundation

For which we inhale oxygen atoms
forged in the very first stars--

A bang you can still hear
on light waves--

For which the community will bear a loss
dressed in white as tradition indicates--

Greenhouse, fishing boat--

It's what's next for color--

But they really didn't know what to do with me until now--

The End

of invincibility

of interference

of martyrdom

of political solutions

of retail

Prayer

Cornered as any bed frame four ways
angled to hurt have learned

especially at night I must be sharpest.

Sentinel that is not a sentinel
as the hardness of weaponry

only predicts the body's softest plane
and dominates.

You, the nothing but the matter of
a breathing not yet sullied into breath--

nothing that hones to a point
or wants to not be damaged by its own use--

prior to its freezing, its descent into shape.

If you keep me molten always ready to ()
dear breath dear absence

coming via vegas, via anywhere
to a leaving of itself behind--

If you help me draw the outline of my own decease
here carefully unname its presence--

Here is a pen o make it erase19

**First Prelude.
Where I Am**

the fruit loop

8 1/2
Suede
Free Zone
Buffalo
Double
Down

Swenson Avenue

Chalet Vegas Apartments 2 a.m.

whose mother picks him up on Sundays in a Cadillac	whose shirt he never wears whose tattoo he no longer likes	here window sealed dead-bolt broken
---	---	---

who is calling up on crutches asking for a sheet

who are walking back and forth knocking on the wrong doors

whom a red eviction notice hides	his yelling she has nowhere else to go her muffled answering	whose pit-bulls bark whose bass-line pumps the walls
--	---	---

**Second Prelude.
What I Want.**

this
belonging
they are
offering

to call an
all-night
lock-
smith

they are
letting
anybody
in

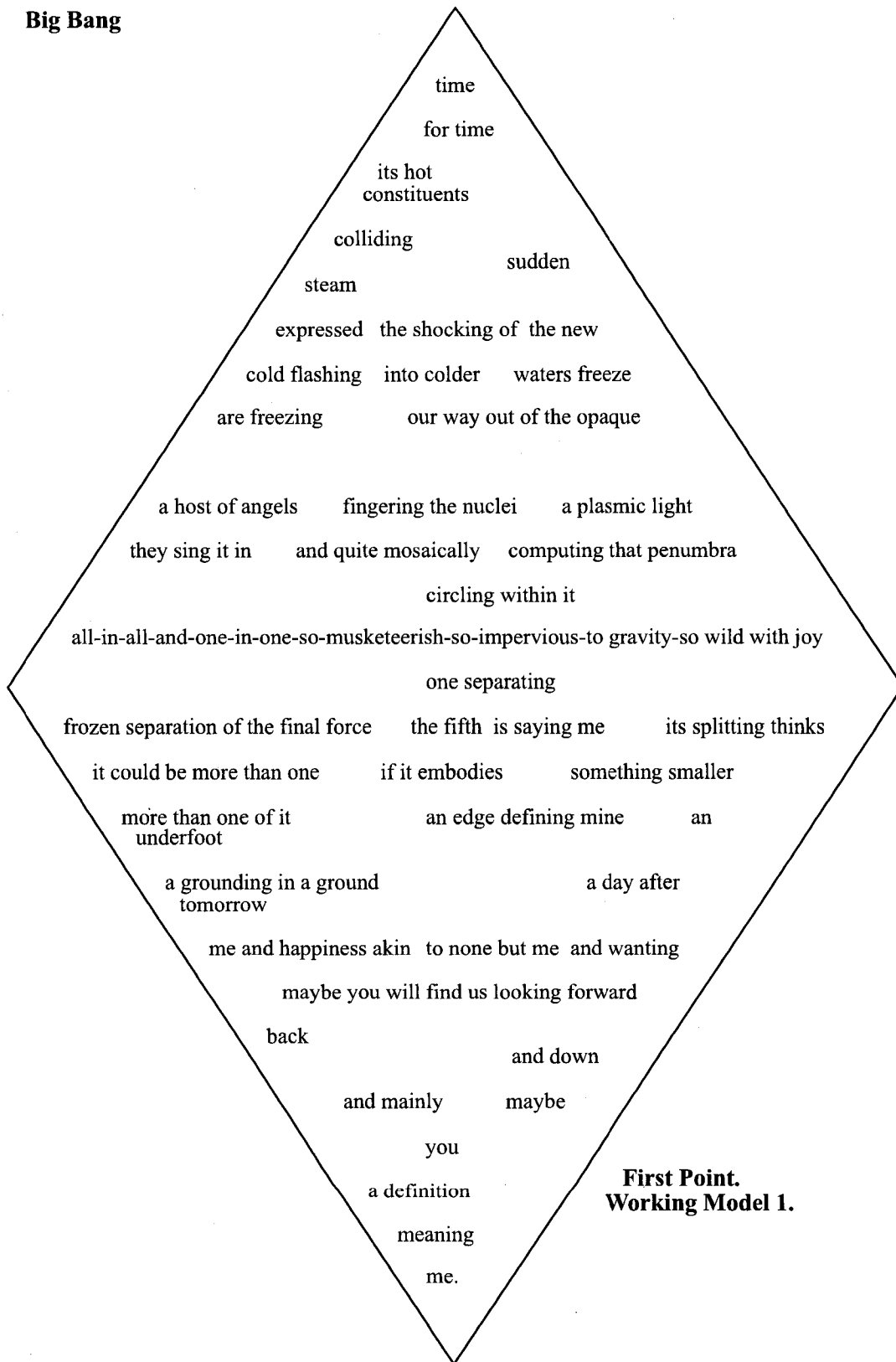
his baby in his arms the question is your dog ok?	something useful the skin between	open it make it workable
---	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------

who is sleeping in a bed somewhere

who have been received

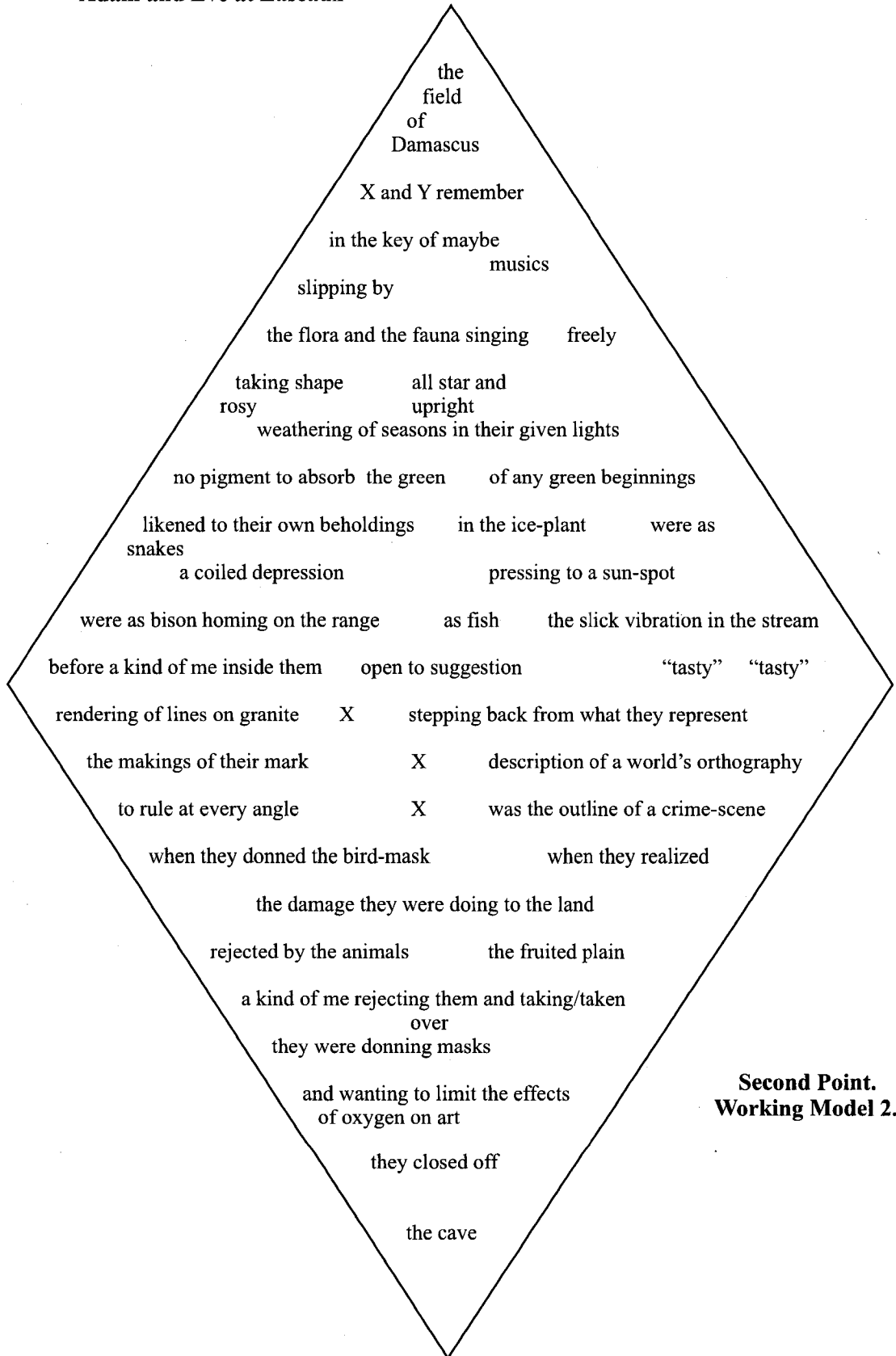
whom can afford to be safe		nothing that fear makes vicious some peace that carries
-------------------------------	--	--

Big Bang



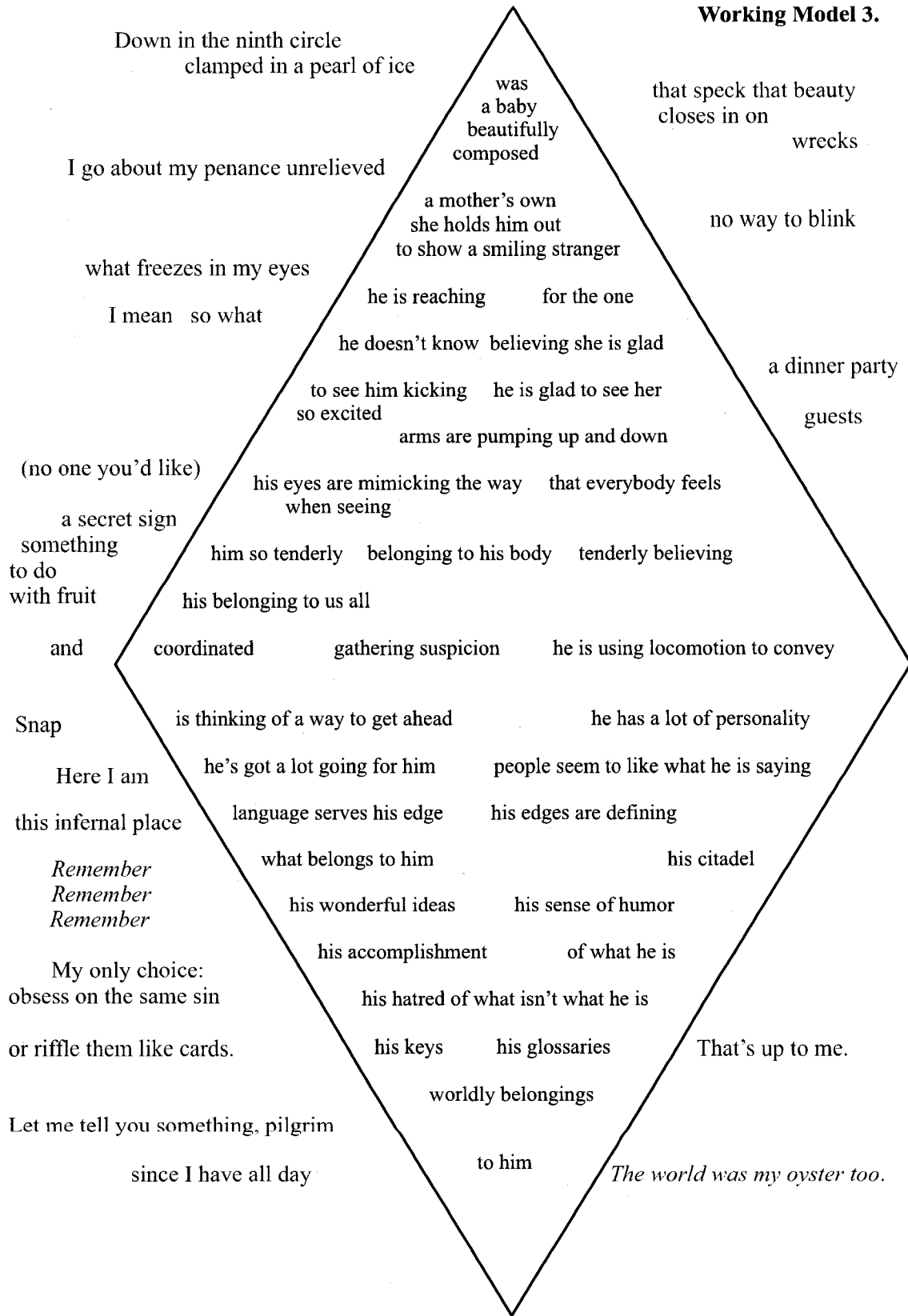
**First Point.
Working Model 1.**

Adam and Eve at Lascaux



Pearl

**Third Point.
Working Model 3.**



Colloquy

Another verdin dead in the arboretum--
how its beak, ajar, lets in a line of ants--

Would a head less yellow not suffice?
Would an ordinary death?

What point to water blistering cement?
Is it not the case of waste?

When sick with self we watch the dying of what we are killing
slowly surely

We have a right to don't we this is our copping zone.

When you were touching the skin of the sick *anyone anytime* you said.

When anyone was everyone who-was-who you were in love with--

No one much was who. And finally overwhelmed by many miracles
and sent to notarize the sky they go--

a flurry of house-wrens from the paloverde.

Seven

Luxuria / Lust

Sexy: Her uncanny resemblance to sex made him forget to ask if she were an only child.

Blue Movie: Why drink the free milk when you can buy porn?

Mrs. Wallis said: In Texas free-love is the order of the day.

Meat Market: All you need to pull a trigger is a gun.

Personal Ad: Asian wanted. Preferably petite. No games.

Solicitation: He: *I can't--I'm happily married.* She: *So am I.*

What They Were Doing: It, the nasty, having a shag, a root, getting laid.

Gula / Gluttony

Thirds: This is beginning to grow on me.

Taste: I'm no expert, but I know what I like.

All You Can Eat Buffet: I'm still hungry, however.

Contest: The hot-dog record is back in the U.S.A where it belongs.

Bulimia: You can have your cake and eat it too.

Hand-to-Mouth: Could you speed it up?

Everything: Are you going to finish that?

Avaritia / Greed

Alimony: Corporate lawyer to his ex-wife: *All you care about is money.*

That thing: Give me that thing. I'd like to never use it.

Humvee: My other car is a glacier.

The beautiful place: Keep off. Private property.

The gift: I spent hours making this, and I aim to keep it.

Firewall: Nothing can break through to mine.

Benevolent dictator: Give me everything you have, please.

Acedia / Sloth

Prospect of Adventure: Let's just wait for the DVD.

Blurb: The book that practically reads itself.

Dream: Go away. I'm trying to sleep.

Lazy Joke: What did the farmer say to the pig on the roof. Get down.

Response to the state of the world: It's not my problem.

Recliner to Recliner: I've committed you to memory.

The filthy house: Would someone bring me a yellow book?

Ira / Rage**Bumper Stickers:**

Welcome to America. Now learn English.

I like my men like I like my coffee, ground up in the freezer.

Bite me.

Because, Shut Up, that's why.

I still miss my wife but my aim is improving.

Are you necessary?

Don't Leap. I'll push you.

Invidia / Envy

Google: Must you always make me feel so insecure?

Musician: I could have been in the New York Philharmonic too, had I played an instrument.

Rain Cloud: But everybody loves a sunny day.

Race: Why is he there first, when I'm so much faster?

Brilliant: But look at what she's wearing.

Trite Comparison: I was quite a catch myself back in the day.

Peacock: Anyone can do that.

Superbia / Pride

An American Abroad: I may be ugly, but I'm stupid.

The New Age: 50's the new 40, 40's the new 30, 30's the new 20, 20's the new 10, 10 the new
Can I buy you a drink?

Jack Horner: *What a good boy am I.*

Slight Flaw: and I'll take it with me to my grave.

Titanic: Who needs a back up plan when you look like me?

Declaration: You have no idea how beautiful I am to you.

Conviction: Us: We will continue to fight until we have succeeded.

Them: We will continue to fight until we have succeeded.

“The Embedded Editor”
of the American Legion Magazine
for God and Country since 1919

Inside the 15th MEU Camp Ripper An-bar Province OIF, OEF,
he watches the Super-bowl in the D-fac with the boys.

Reporting from Rut-bah, “Corpsman Up.”
Some sniper shot below his helmet.

Reporting while the CAG was trying to restore electricity,
why were the children throwing rocks (big ones),
why playing in the rubble of an IED
where four IA were WIA and one IA was KIA
absorbing shrapnel-- some were saved by the city’s sloth.

Reports three Srgts and a Pfc all born in ’85
were clearing routes around Fallujah--KIA.

At the FOB memorial, an NCO says put away that camera.
Reporting that that saucer was a decoy
for the real pressure plate beside it on the side-walk.

Reporting from Camp Corrigidor an RPG can get you anytime.
“You see those kids, those MAMs?--You never know.”
A sawhorse with some PVC pipe acting as a launcher.

Reporting when they fired upon Dog Company 1/9
the HVI’s (all four) were KIA:
1400 rounds machine gun fire
900 M-4 rounds
10 grenades:
Reporting another sig act for the U.S.A.

Commentary

I.

Dark and the days disgrace themselves
line-up like barefoot share-croppers for moldy seed
take what they can get.

What gives them the right to grin without teeth
shift legs in the useless southern heat?

Who gave them their rusty guns, said:
“Shoot anything that moves,
wound anything that breathes.”

“Gotta eat,” they say, “gotta have some fun.”

Dark and the days amass
heavy without rain dry heaving day on day.

II.

This account which logs the disgrace of the dark days in a tone which falters between two hard silences, that which precedes and that next which is inevitable, will help no-one. As a record, though, it does succeed with journalistic knack in capturing the workaday of pain. Also the patient detailing of death and death-in-life, is worthy of remark, and is achieved with clean integrity. Events are not haphazardly strewn; horrors are linked. Hell is consistently conveyed. It is not, per se, a pinching expose though there are moments of titillation which in a work of this kind can't be avoided.

Read it. Read it again. It will take your mind off things twice.

III.

Dark and the one eye-witness
strains across the sand her listless fingers trace.

what pattern in the endless grain
corresponds to that stunted skeleton?

What true word sits in the empty mouth unsaid?
Was it something once that moved, was it anything that breathes?
What soul survives such a bad embodiment?

What work on its first clean page, declares her name?

We authors of the dark days provide no dedications.

Translations / The Call of the Temporal King

the during which

a daily bread transpiring

the sayings of and doings of

now offering its breathings in and out

Antiphon I

And had such things been said, should I have memorized?
Yes and No.

And should this standing in the yellow median be so unclear?
It is forced to be symbolic of mistrust. It is forced to pretend distinctions.

And why do I taste like the screen of a T.V?
A war-zone twice removed. A dusty static.

Why, in a creamy swimmery, the joy of blue after blue?
Exactly.

This parking lot amassing hardnesses-- why must they glint, however? Why so brilliantly?
Nothing that turns back shine by way of hardness is an instrument of peace.

This whole Sunday of filling.
It doesn't need you. You're superfluous.

Why sicken at the trendy personality of anything else
but make allowances for palm-trees and the poisoned antics of that pigeon? Lord?

Antiphon II

O Passionate O that you pipe and pump
 the most promiscuous of reddenings

Malignant Enemy: Don't say blood dear.
 It's not done.

O Body O don't be dry when the time comes.
 Don't forget to be luscious.

Malignant Enemy: You can't eat that dear.
 We're not cannibals. Put it down. Put it down.

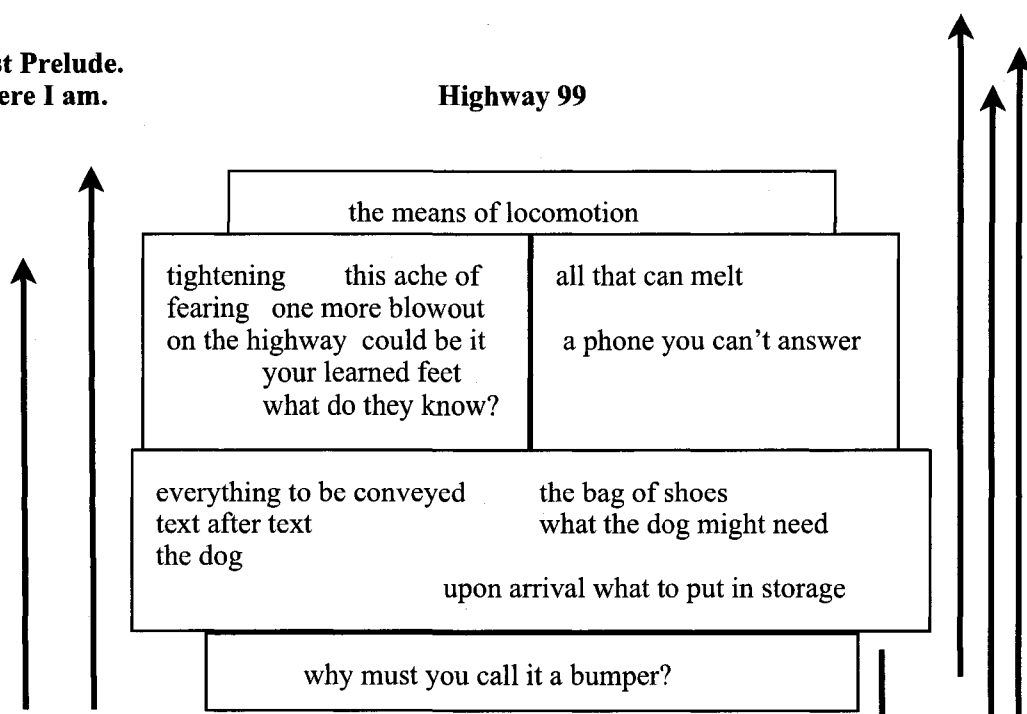
O Please O certainly slicken. Slicken and bring me in
 this thing of how to be more opening

Malignant Enemy: Congeal dear, cauterize and close.
 Do you want to be ugly?

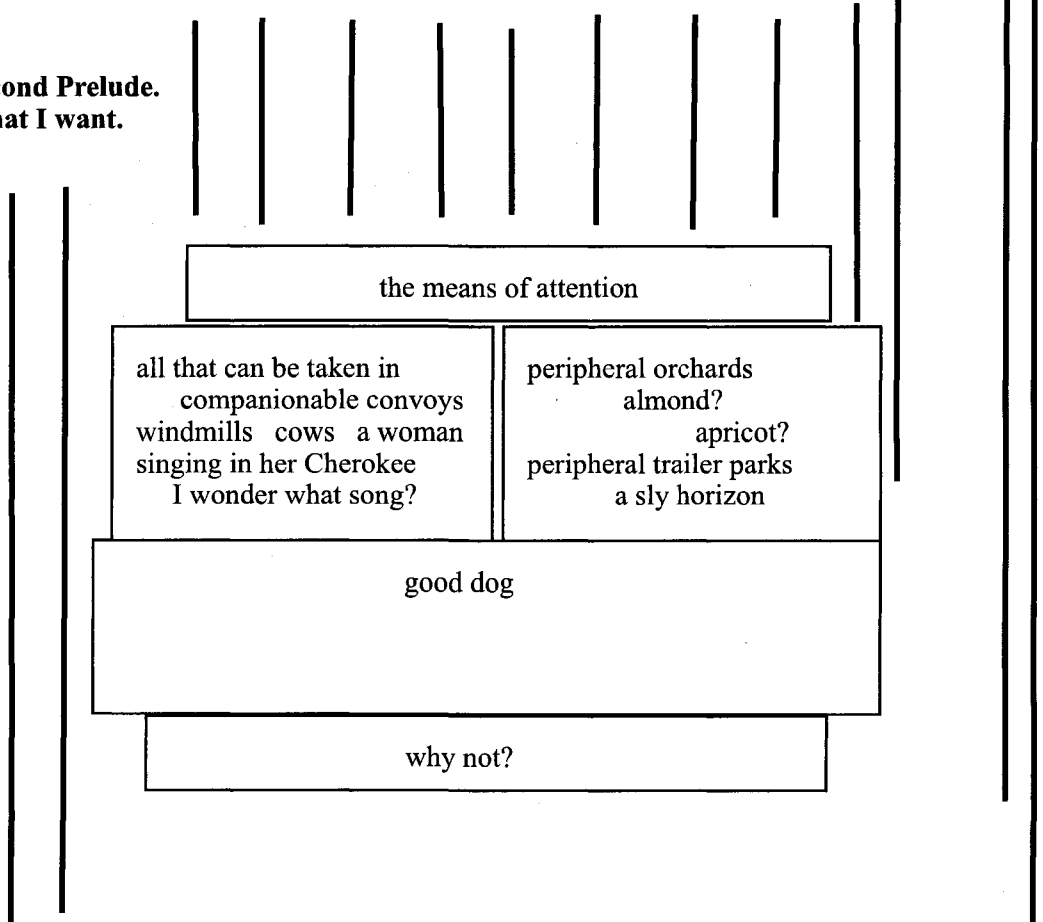
O Thou O how you love so deliquescently--
 say Thou.

**First Prelude.
Where I am.**

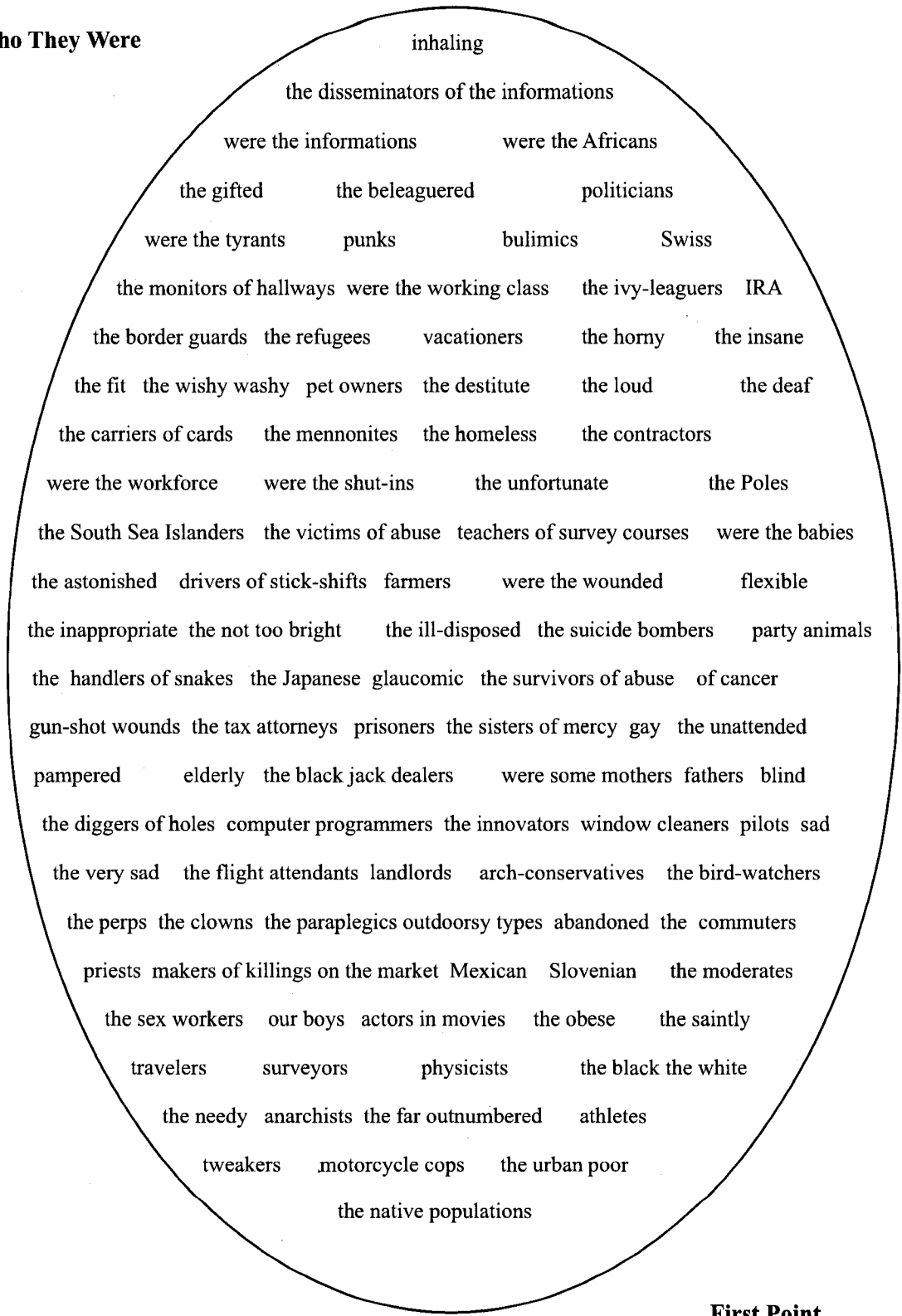
Highway 99



**Second Prelude.
What I want.**



Who They Were



**First Point.
Working Model 1.**

What They Were Saying

Can you believe that?
fair enough
What? don't worry I'm just saying
I'm in an elevator Seriously? I'm no angel but
Who's going do you know? That's bullshit. I don't get it. Love you.
Are you free to talk? She's such a bitch. Exactly. Don't forget.
Long live Allah... What's happening? Hi Hair! Alright then.
Keep it on the DL. Know what I'm saying? What? Could you swing by later?
Are you free to talk? Go fuck yourself. Thank you so much.
Go home you've done enough. Could you spare some change? I'm only human.
They can go to hell. Could you pick me up? Will this be on the test?
How are you? Fine. Did he really say that? Are you serious?
Who is this? Happy Birthday! Could you take me off your list?
She must be kidding. Holy shit. Forget about it. Can we talk?
...and blessed be his messenger Mohammed.
What's your hurry? Really? Mommy. Can we get some help here?
They can suck it up. Up for a drink? Help me someone-- dial 911.
Are you married? To each his own. Thank God.
Exactly. No one's picking up.
Shut up. You owe me. So hot.
What's your emergency? That's their problem.
Help me someone.
I'm on the other line.
Can I call you right back?

**Second Point.
Working Model 2.**

What They Were Doing.

inhaling
they were chilling
they were having good reception
they were catching waves were loving people loving them
were being told a thing or two were answering the phone
were dying of starvation entertaining visitors
were liking the way their outfits made them look
were trying to bathe in public restrooms nodding off on buses cashing checks
were never being the same again were mocking
some were being hurt their mothers were comforting them yelling at them selling
giving birth hiking in the mountains some were burying their dead
their fathers were showing them something cool were never home were smuggling guns
they were pretending not to care they were reading mail were sending messages
were swatting flies away from open sores were having nightmares
they were cooking meth were celebrating holidays jumping from bridges
they were asking for a light they were watching people dance
they were at football games at parties going to school
they were breaking into houses considering an SUV collecting cans
were playing favorites standing in the welfare line
going on vacations they were doing the best they could
they were suffering from illnesses
were shooting guns
were sleeping
eating candy bars.

**Third Point.
Working Model 3.**

**Colloquy
Annunciation**

Gabriel came to me as an old man in black slacks
his several prostate surgeries behind him.

I wasn't fooled though. He was clearly paranormal.

Everywhere we met was suddenly a garden.
There were always tell-tale feathers on the floor
and glints of kingdom in his gold gaze.

I loved Gabriel--he was my kind of bee
buzzing at me with all that magnificent pollen.

Trust he said *Don't be afraid*
and was so irresistible I almost said *fine*
whatever you want.

But being a bad flower, a wayward womb
I told him no. *Get someone else.*

Not knowing till after he was gone
how much I'd miss him posed there like a question.

But I had to go with a passion
flubbing down the days, eating rash food
drinking beyond my fill, offering my dry breast to no one.
Nothing inside me but a still pool, untroubled by any breath.

I liked it. It was mine.
Then I was 14 or 21 or 35 but lately--
could be my time-clock saying

Get in touch with Gabriel

Tell him you're tired of being alone with your own things
usual ways

that you've learned to keep a promise,
nurture a child, have bathed the blood from a final wound
that you still believe.

Tell him *yes*

Tell him *hurry.*

Nativity

As he fell actually on the rise
the wet straw under dry
the cries

of her somewhere
inside becoming there there
She cups the crown here

heading forward now
he falls upon a voice how
tender falls below

The stars and love
upholds a crowning of
him here his crowning of

his heading forward furred
unfurling of
this joy to the world.

Simeon and Anna

With two young pigeons and a turtle-dove
you are lifted up (it won't be the last time).
They can see right through you.

Temple

Mary goes to find him.

She scans the market: yellow chicken pocked with flies
the wickered fruit, a chaos of adjoining stalls.

He is telling them the truth. They are the Pharisees
adjusting to accommodate their holdings--

When did he leave my side?

In the Vatican, surrounded by cardinals grey heads bent
a pontiff gives him audience.

Is there such a thing as hell? Is the pope German?

He is telling them the truth. They are the mullahs
adjusting to accommodate their righteousness--

Are the virgins lining up in heaven?

There, among the dervishes, he spins himself away.

She scans the market. *Where did he go, this boy of mine?*

Patrols at every border, AK-47s cocked protecting
comely mosques, cathedrals, synagogues.

Jesus circled by their leaders--
their bejeweled exegesis of his coming agony.

Doing unto others bomb for bomb
(as you would have them do) forgotten.

He is gone. She scans the desert.

Loving one another there are hummingbirds
cicadas castanetting
the flat gray undersides of piled cumuli.

Among the disappeared, the homeless, she is scanning.
She is not his mother. He is not her boy.

Oh No

When finally Lazarus
no longer being, was

you called him back to this
from rigor mortis.

He might well have said
why not have saved instead?

It isn't very nice
this dying twice.

Walking on Water

Compared to the deepest thing you know, Peter, all else is surface even the sea.

Of what can be borne and bear it up you tell me.

Beatitude

Blessed are the poor
anything you lack
what is missing unavailable.
What turns you out into the street.
The kingdom--
what you offer when you show this empty hand.

The Temptation of Christ in the Desert

You don't have to prove yourself to me--
unless you're God.
In which case turn these stones into bread--you must be hungry.
Why not fly--treat yourself to a miracle?
How could it hurt? How could it hurt to be in charge of everything?
Get down on your knees. Why not serve someone who gets you?

I knew your parents. They were boring too.

The Two Standards

	no kind of king
	who knows for every crown there's damage done to gold
Mr.	no kind this one in thorns in blood-shot eyes
Babylon	according to Angelico
flanked by	a true Rex Regum never wears a thing his people can't afford
the joint chiefs	and shares his cup what-ever's in it
whose briefs he has ignored troubled as they are by occasional exceptions	no entertainment industry they sit around him on a lawn see right through him through him
<i>O lighten up Beelzebub!</i>	who who is sick, sad, trying as hard as they can
appears on CNN to make the world safer for democracy and similar goals.	extended to the point
He is very handsome contrary to popular belief though his eyes are close together and his mouth a smidgeon impolite.	you can't make out their shadows they are taking up only a little space
In the state of the union every day he wants them wanting to the point of debt, their rights to buy and sell, their freedom, happiness so forth.	
He encourages their thinking they are thinking as arriving at the foregone, the conclusion he is famous for, as well as a rhetoric of reasonability "to each his own," "live and let live."	no milk no honey
He really does believe the less government the better and loves to watch them close their doors at the end of every day when they think they're at home. He loves them to isolate and insulate all cosy and safe as houses and he truly hopes by the time they die they'll be utterly self-realized.	
They love him so much it hurts them.	

Translations / Crackdown

until it had become

a panic of particulars

uprising savagely

in / against the many names of peace

Prayer

Slipshod these moments of rising
cast aside.

Where are you when I need you?

I ride upon horses.
I say "God" to the work of my hands.

Rising sudden--
suddenly a gloss--
a leaf embossed with rain--

some lake's water flopping at the pilings
of its dock.

with what detachability
will I make myself an orphan--
decide against adoption.

When a star
when certain leaves emboss--

You were saying
be detachable enough to...anytime.

Washing the Feet of the Apostles

Dear to him the cracked and ill-considered
so attentive to extremity he's at your feet
and bending over bunions, blistered toes
with servitude you hate for knowing
how you treat what carries weight.

All shiny and anointed now
relieved of gravity--

What wouldn't you do in memory of him?

Outside Gethsemane

They are the disappearing as we speak
the not me
lucky them out
before the doors go down

whose god has had a change of heart about what to do for love.

It's a stampede.

Outside they shift from foot to foot
until it's all over
and the enjoyable garden can resume

all trace spirited away blood after a crackdown.

Nobody needs to see it the way it was
for those who couldn't get out in time or wouldn't
the too late now beginning to begin it

Palm Sunday

Many an impotence precedes this one
we happen to call "mule"--
This weight we call "the impetus to move"

Upon this road --upon its own good time--
Abraded tongue bone dry--
The use of this bone saddle over hide

slicking the shape of tax,
the shape of sweat into a (covered) stain.
It's about what must be borne. It is not symbolic.

Nor shall the pain against this back be eulogized.
Nor is water a kind of thirst—
Nor movement in itself a pointed hand.

You will suffer alright.
This city is hardly the end, dear God,
(despite applause) when you are the city.

Parque de Volcanoes

Monday we'd love a revolution.
We'd like to be free to say we're free.

Also, we want to see it in the light

what became of the volcano,
the Ojushte, the Manzanillo Rojo tree.

Also, we'd like some insight on extinction.

You'd like a photograph.
I'd like to write the words "at last" and mean them.

We turn at the source of the springs.
It's too dark.

Tuesday Service / El Higueral

A cross in white chalk on cinderblock signals an altar.
A child rolls himself asleep on cool cement.

Narratives lilt and lull between these proper names:
the Kidron Valley, Caiaphas, Simon Peter

You are not also one of his disciples, are you?

A moth lands on the surplice of the seminarian.
He plucks it off and goes on reading from the tattered guide.

The generator fails—something about how heat
can offer only so much energy to nights like this

and in such sudden dark the trouble of admitting who you know.
The trouble of making, for each fingered glance

a face devoid of miracles
a place where friends can see they're on their own.

The chairs are folded, candles snuffed.

Around here the cocks crow all night long.

Moths find places on the wall—light no longer the issue.

Wednesday / El Higueral

Julia, Maria, Annalorraine
pitch rocks at a mango tree.
They are 10,11,12.

They run to gather-up the green yield.
I eat one like an apple, skin and all.

In a river pool, we're sharks.
We grab their ankles from beneath.

Rocks deflect this loud play--
droplets bounce between us--
Nothing's wrong.

One of the fatherless, Maria,
takes some candy—here--
her sweet smile again.

They show us tunnels dug by birds into a bank.
We see in a roll of underbrush—so many spiders
that it seems to breathe.

Good Friday / La Palma

Up all night
they've rugged the road
with vivid sawdust,
pine cones, bark.

They've put down martyrs,
grapes, beans—
They've filled the town with metaphors.

They've written crucifixions on the ground.
They've wrought assassinations.
Judges have judged their work.
Processions have processed.

Mantillas, towels, handkerchiefs,
umbrellas have processed
around the stations of the cross.

These intricate alfombras—
synesthetic arts--
sicken the air with a smell of red
so strong it could almost end a war—
or start a kind of peace—

And these old women
reach for the chipped statue
as if it were a son—
as if a son could generate this many colors.

Saturday / San Salvador

Things fill it up:

what can't be bought

three blackbirds in a bright pink blast

system of terra-cotta roofs

lackluster pool

and finally:

a boy beats leaves from a canopy with a towel.

Shine

Mortised and pinioned
before the archive
a sky drops automatically.
dropping also

Everything is overwhelmed
Even the light falls
Prismic
there's the eclipse
gold good.

never only what is visible
never just the five wounds
just you, these, in the shine

Between the corpse
and the fading background of your tripled presences

God is spilling from his tableau vivant

Everything by now has touched the air
every body here displaced

an eye descends

not yet open to closure
everything

upon it the not yet named

We are behind it, these,
draped the ways of gravity.

by grief.

even water to the bottom of the pan
your eye can take this many ways
the impossible halo

There is never death itself

never life nor any other life
of their alternating presences.

which is never quite the evidence of death

never the oscillation nor the stillness it defines.

between itself and what comes next
by what could have been otherwise

a hand falls open suddenly

a foot stubs at its own shadow

between us

between us

Translations / Apparition

beyond the sepulcher

the thirteenth recognition

a flash behind the clouds

illuminating from behind

Black Ceding the Day

A given blue a taking it for granted
boys splash in the dregs of the fountain
prior to the bombed hotel.

Rubble-roused their laughter bubbles
over it the overwhelm-able

the shard that makes itself to joy the little that remains--

When you were hungry what some ugly food could do for you.

**In this redundancy of resonance, the absolute of consciousness
is the absolute of impotence and the intensity of passion, the heart of the void.*

Blessed are you boys

not yet landlords, renderers of lines.

In simple fellowship the botched buildings love to be what you can make of them
as yet so unassaulted by enough

sucking such an anything into the loss you are calling what there is.

* Deleuze and Guattari: "Faciality"

Spoon Grass

Another option for free will to drive in all directions--

every quill a flabbergasted try to get at roundness

get around itself and out there suggestive of the dear unfocused

overly examined life no sword unavailing a king

no snapping in the air to turn the herd--

According to you such narrowing is crude--

Best to exude some multiplicity nor limit any chance encounter with the local air--

best to erupt send a summer flower higher than you can reach

best to flail it's not the same as failing.

Cholla

Many's the yelping dog brought to all threes by a clump of you--

Nor do you prefer some paradigm to help you get away with with what you do:

“the fair fight,” “the honorable cause” “this grim reality”--

No teddy bear tactics.

If the broad strokes fail you leave an afterthought of silken slivering
a job for tweezers.

No-one can call you a pleaser

the way of small men simpering flattery with the backhand blade
or what seems to go for power these days.

No, quite consistent in your sharp detachability,
your art of being ready for a ride.

What we see is what we get with you
and if it hurts at least it's true.

Idol

Behind the brittle bush the real brittle bush
deflects you while the real you, an original padre
lights the brittle-bush on fire crushes some sage into the flume
that rises to the real God while the other, crazed with loneliness
touches his own arm an act he hopes will turn him on
but the one knows what the other does too well--
To wit it's a flopped erotica a habit of the self-attached.
Meantime the brethren wait for him to tell them what they want to hear--
and it turns out that's exactly what they want to hear.

Agave

Each of its ways the point of preservation

blue to the thorn.

Then

“careful” you say,

“This dearth is calling for extravagance.”

And shucking its extras off to all sides

the horns of shade stretch longer than their own lives.

Barrel Cactus

O for an army of the very friendly and unfit
defending some lazy little empire.

We know the roly poly don't get far on foot
and that's a good thing.

Fat and sassy says as fat and sassy does
which isn't much

but staying put it pays to be
a little prickly to the touch.

Ocotillo

It's a gift to play dead well keep to your own outline
prefer an edge to a plane not so much ugly as unavailable
to the intentions of others with their love of surfaces
and colors standing tall in your refusal
and free when you feel the urge
to put on something green.

Saguaro:

All that is heat now, love,
 all that is sweat and panting,
flight of sticky waters
 rising to occasions of thirst

will be a history for one cold star
as day provides a history for night.

Stretch out your arms.

Pretend, for once, the desert is your instinct
 groping toward the lush edges of your soul's continent
where all is fruit, rain, more fruit, more rain.

Mesquite

Rare how from a dry well
you survive and still extend
such plenty branching over pure parch
a feathered canopy running on empty
what thrives in spite of what it has
what learns from its own want how to give
and not in like kind
unlike your fellows
who take on the look of the hard case
the do not touch leather and spine--
What a soft self you make of the same place.

Prayers of Gratitude

for a stranger

a way she was wearing dinosaur scrubs a way she was
suggesting what might cheer the very sick
a way she was appointed for her morning swim so grim
Achillian, girding the strap of her thick cap
a way of telling children “this lane is for laps” a glare implicit
in the fog of goggles she was not about to lift I love
a way she seems to call her loneliness what to do next

for Fr. Waters

noticing how brightly he was playing God in *Everyman*
on the steps of St. John’s what a sweet God too
now a fluid weather fronds of the albezia ribboning the grass
red ribboning the Costa’s hoverings an agita of wings
now blinking all that happens to be happening at once he was a sweet God
he was carrying balloons *his will his memory his understanding*
now he said *to you Lord I return* he was returning on the steps
the way the hummingbirds can wait so actively

for anonymity

It was when they were needing it a certain face and otherwise
quite rarely was it screening any movie was it offered

It was not to anybody on the baseball field that night

where standing in the lights we were some woman with her dog

It was the fact of being unbeknownst to any I became improbable

unlit though we were standing in the lights

it was the beauty of the being unbeheld obscuring us, unravelling

a certain face and I was breathing loving to

for Narcissus Jetfire

Many in any patch of daffodils the chalices of light

they scoop such brilliances

made body and return them one for one

Many do anything for you be miracles

the kinds that work in blindness to restore your sight

Many a kind remembers life and likes it brings it back.

How can you know a small thing can save you?

Many the small the kind you may have named the kind

you may have planted in the ground and left for dead.

for dusk at Death Valley

A signal for the rock-hard rocks to bloom themselves away

in platinum in honey blonde

are moving past striation, removing to the snowcaps

fires dying up instead of down

A signal for the sophistry of salt its transmutation to mirage

A time to talk the is into the possible goodbye to the lines between all things

A time to love the world in grey where Whitman's sleepers love the world

And the finally uncalibrated dead and the finished fields and the ruins love the world

where nothing will be likely very soon

A perfect example now my black dog disappears into the last of it.

for presence

Christ he could use a drink
a drink *Jesus Christ* give her a break
a break

Christ that my love were in my arms and I in my bed again
a small rain raining

Christ did you see that? *Christ is he serious?*
did you? is he?

Christ my toe my funny bone this fender bender
are you here?

for hope

Rising between the blinkered gravel and the road
 the voice and prophecy
rising from death to life
 from life to life
 from festered puddles clouds

 from fire-escape to sticky window sill

 between the billboards and the open sky

 from blind TV to watchful living eye

for friends

It is an oven you were warming while it snowed out there
a bread and we were drinking wine.

In Art's garage his makings of mobility still boxed
Would you like an espresso?

In Elizabeth's kitchen she is handing you a plate
she is sick and bald she is handing you a plate
inside a house where someone puts you up like this

for opening

Stranger when a stranger sees his opening

to do with as he pleases

Stranger (and mean it) you are not alone

It is nice to meet you

Stranger don't be a stranger mean it

Stranger door is swinging all unhinged

you're welcome mean it

for cooperation

Together the slatted blinds to soften an effect

the bristles of a brush

together shevelling the molecules cohere

the strands

together clouds are traveling are geese

are locusts leveling

together what the ants are building what the bees are

We when we forget to say *one at a time*

Translations / An Approach

into your hands commending

after what it used to be

into an always

an arriving

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New Delta Review--"Aged Phoenix"

The Journal--"Good Friday"

Barrow Street--"Palm Sunday"

Literal Latte-- "Love at Independence High School," "Bird-Watcher"

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