

POETRY/ORGANIZING CREATIVITY
Borgerson

THE RELATIONAL ART OF LEADERSHIP
Taylor and Karanian

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REVIEWS

THE ART OF MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE ISTANBUL

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Jonathan Vickery, Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Ceri Watkins, Essex Management Centre, University of Essex, Colchester, UK

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Integra Communications, Oxford, UK

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CONTENTS

Editorial // 2

POETRY LESSONS: ON ORGANIZING CREATIVITY
Janet L. Borgerson // 4

WORKING CONNECTION: THE RELATIONAL ART OF LEADERSHIP
Steven S. Taylor and Barbara A. Karanian // 15

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!
- AESTHETIC CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN A DEDIFFERENTIATED SOCIETY
Anne-Britt Gran // 23

THE SENSE-MAKING OF THE SENSES: MARKING THE SENSUAL AS MAKING SENSE - PERSPECTIVES ON EMBODIED AISTHESIS & AESTHETICS IN ORGANIZING/ORGANIZATIONS
Wendelin M. Küpers // 33

HAIKUGAMI
Ralph Kerle // 54

ORGANIZATIONAL AESTHETICS: THE ARTFUL FIRM AND THE AESTHETIC MOMENT IN ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT THEORY
Josef Chytry // 60

SHANGHAI CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: THE EMERGENCE OF THE CREATIVE CLASS IN CHINA?
Linlin Shan // 73

REVIEWS
Andrew Rowe // 85 Erica Pastore // 86

THE ART OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE ISTANBUL // 88

Poetry Lessons: On Organizing Creativity

Janet L. Borgerson

The poetic word is a microcosm.
(Jean-Paul Sartre)

I am building a dream machine . . .
(William Burroughs)

Some years ago at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, teachers and students of poetry, music, semiotics, Buddhist psychology, martial arts and dance gathered for the annual four-week summer session. *The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics*, the poetry program, attracted, as usual, illustrious and infamous American writers and poets engaged with so-called Beat Generation values to work with less experienced writers. Students met with teachers such as Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Anne Waldman, Robert Creeley, Alice Notley, Clark Coolidge, Joanne Kyger, Jim Carroll, and Joy Harjo, individually, in small groups, one-on-one seminars, and at larger panel discussions and talks, poetry readings and performances, as well as late night parties, an intimate extra curricular activity of the Institute.

I invoke poetry as organization of creativity through an engagement with the following poetry lessons, paraphrases of writing advice given in one-on-one seminars in which this author participated:

Don't stop at the end of the phrase! Keep going until you have nothing more to say!
(Allen Ginsberg)

Don't listen to what Allen says! Read his work and learn from his poems!
(Anne Waldman)

You are just beginning! Don't worry about what you've already written! Keep writing!
(Joanne Kyger)

These three pieces of writing advice express values of following one's breath (representing a poem's line) and unedited imaginings to their extent; reading, absorbing and integrating the modes, rhythms, and attempts of other poets to build resources for one's own work; and letting go of fear, engaging a trustful expansiveness or sense of generosity in the belief that one has more to say, more to understand, than one has already said or understood. A relevant interconnection, Ginsberg, Waldman, and Kyger all studied and practiced a form of Buddhism that served as the foundation for Naropa Institute's training programs and general spirit.

Although this essay is not a tutorial in Buddhism, notions and practices such as No-thought and ruptures of dualisms – controlling or being controlled – reverberate in the Naropa poetry lessons, including 'first thought/best thought'; or 'don't stop, don't think, don't edit' (yet). As one might expect, these values also evoke outpourings from Beat Generation writers, such as Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Burroughs; but also suggest shared genealogies or lineages that include the apparently plain spoken poems of William Carlos Williams – about plums or a red wheelbarrow – and Walt Whitman's celebration of contradiction. I explore possibilities of writing, creativity, and organizing emergent in these poetry lessons.

Many individuals and fields of study have advanced varying and particular views on what creativity is. I do not draw upon, nor attempt, direct definition, but rather indirectly through discussion of some poets' tendencies to comprehend poetry in certain ways – and believing that poets engage, experience, and enact creativity – explore poetry as a mode of organization. Regarding poetry, we might for clarification begin with Audre Lorde's notion of 'a revelatory distillation of experience'

(Lorde 2002: 138). Because diverse modes of organizing appear fundamental to human existence, human subjectivity, and human creativity (e.g. Borgerson 2008, 2005, 2002; Borgerson and Rehn 2004), human expressive forms within the frame of organization, and moreover, emergences of organization as human expressive forms within the capacities of poetry, inspire further reflection.

SOME NARRATIVE CONTEXT: OF POET SAINTS AND A PRESS

The Summer Naropa poets shared practices, genealogies, and mythologies. These teachers reconfirmed their community's history with each other and brought students into the living, present aspects of this history over the month's course, perhaps seeking to 'carry' their experiences to the students beyond the writing's impact (e.g. Jankelson 2008).

For example, Ted Berrigan, author of *So Going Around Cities* and *The Sonnets* and hero of many New York and San Francisco poets who dominated the Naropa scene early on, had at one time five hundred blank postcards created by The Alternative Press sitting by his bedside. Apparently, Berrigan would wake up in the morning – or, in his later days when students and friends came to him and he grew fatter and fatter drinking jumbo bottles of Pepsi and never got out of bed, would emerge from his drug induced sleep – and write down what came to him in that dazed state between dreams and coherent consciousness. Hazy irrationality captured rhythms, fictional memories, and word streams that produced rare juxtapositions, and, in turn, occasional images. (Of course, Berrigan was not limited to this technique in completing his postcards). When Berrigan died, the original postcards were coveted as art treasures, given to archives, and willed to libraries. (Mine, dedicated to Debbie Harry, hangs in an expensive frame). The postcard poems now form the content of *A Certain Slant of Sunlight* (1987), edited by Alice Notley – the award winning poet married to Berrigan.

The Alternative Press, founded by Ken and Ann Mikolowski in Grindstone City, Michigan, arranged for the creation and dissemination of such treasures: Each poet-inscribed postcard became a unique, handwritten poem, sent to lucky Alternative Press subscribers to be treated as everyday objects in accordance with the press's belief that poetry is not a luxury. However, the Alternative Press publications were not confined to original postcard poems. Many writers and artists, often influenced by so-called Beat values – and engaged with The Naropa Institute – contributed to the press's publications, which included press-set, multiple-copy broadsides, postcards and pamphlets often with Anne Mikolowski's intricate engravings. One of Ginsberg's last poems, *Gone Gone Gone*, was printed by The Alternative Press with Ginsberg's signature drawings: six-point stars and doodled flowers centered around the word "Ah", with the addition here of skulls with flowers growing out of them.

When the University of Michigan Library Collections purchased complete sets of The Alternative Press's years of poetry subscription packets, the 'originals' – Berrigan's and other's – probably were perceived to have the greatest value, and perhaps helped inch up the price received by the press. Such an ironic situation for a community of poets and publishers that always placed greatest value on poetry as process! This essay welcomes such a spirit of lived contradiction.

whose lessons?

Ginsberg, who wrote *Ode to My Sphincter*, was so embarrassed or horrified that he had written down his memory of seeing his mother's pubic hair, and his lingering on its dark triangle, that although he regularly showed friends and fellow poets his writing notebooks, he hid this dreaded bit, delaying for years the brilliant final emergence of the image in *White Shroud*. In other words, if Ginsberg, of all contemporary poets, could feel humiliated by his own sight, observations, and memory; then clearly the challenge of holding at bay controlling and editing judgment – to allow, witness, and mark such words – remains great.

Ginsberg gives us a more detailed view of the relationship between the editing judgment's control and successfully writing individual and particular experiences into the poem:

Thus the mind must be trained i.e. let loose, freed – to deal with itself as it actually is, and not to impose on itself, or its poetic artifacts, an arbitrarily preconceived pattern (formal or Subject) – and *all* patterns, unless discovered in the moment of composition – all remembered and applied patterns are by their very nature arbitrarily preconceived – no matter how wise & traditional – no matter what sum of inherited experience they represent – The only pattern or value of interest in poetry is the solitary, individual pattern peculiar to the poet's moment & the poem *discovered* in the mind & in the process of writing it out on the page, as notes, transcriptions – reproduced in the fittest accurate form, at the time of composition. ('Time is the essence' says Kerouac.) It is this personal discovery which is of value to the poet & to the reader – and it is of course more, not less, communicable of actuality than a pattern chosen in advance, with matter poured into it arbitrarily to fit, which of course distorts & blurs the matter . . . Mind is shapely, art is shapely.
(Ginsberg 2002: 130)

Manifesting the yet unsaid, the yet unobserved, and the yet unthought forms a core of interest here. As Lorde says, 'And where that language does not yet exist, it is our poetry which helps to fashion it. Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives' (Lorde 2002: 138). And as demonstrated in Ginsberg's own handwriting on my poem from 1986, extending the poem's line – as though carried forward on the meditative out-breath's warmth – supports this process (See figure 1).

Anne Waldman, co-founder with Ginsberg of the Naropa Institute, performs her poems, chanting the words and phrases, often with music, calling attention to motion, using bodily gestures for emphasis on line breaks, BIG words, and wordless pauses. Waldman writes that she 'dances the word into being,' creating poetry not so much from language, observation, or imagination as from embodied kinetics that draw with childlike delight on these systems and faculties, the poetry of dance (Waldman 1997: 242, quoted in Puchek 2002: 243). Her poetry lesson regarding Ginsberg's work reflects her enthusiasm for drawing on the styles, patterns, and insights of her community of friends and poets – both historical and contemporary – yet always bringing insights into embodied particular experience. She expresses, also, her keen sense that one shouldn't believe everything even an experienced poet (or, perhaps, organization researcher) says. Waldman was one of several late, late night dancers at Naropa parties, sweaty and flirting, maybe practicing a few moves for her next poetry reading, and approaching that trance-like state when the body motion and breathing pattern wipe away thought, making room for poetry.

Joanne Kyger's lesson reinforces the practice of poetry, emphasizing trust toward the future and the hope of new writing. In other words, a covetous attitude toward one's own past experiences, as well as the experiences of the past in general, obstructs new experience; and one might think of Friedrich Nietzsche's warnings regarding 'monumental' history (Nietzsche 1980). The inspiration Kyger drew from Charles Olson, writes theorist Linda Russo, '...foregrounds a concern for a formally encoded conceptualization

of her interiority and corresponds to a poetic epistemology where the poem, by piecing various materials together, enables a particular knowledge of the world'. (Russo 2002: 185)

Kyger was influenced by Robert Duncan, as well, who observed,

'The mythic content comes to us, commanding the design of the poem; it calls the poets into action, and with whatever lore and craft he has prepared himself for the call, he must answer to give body in the poem to the formative will'. (Duncan 1985: 13, quoted in Russo 2002: 187)

In this sense, one channels poetry, extending this scribbling, unthought, rush of words that come from somewhere, bidden, but unconceived. One desires words, but not preconceived patterns or subject matter. It's not description, storytelling, teaching, or repetition; that is, Naropa's poetry lessons do not promote the 'prosaic', in Sartre's sense. Words make leaps, hang together for a moment, then lose each other. In the moments of writing one can witness, but not judge. Russo writes, 'Kyger's lack of interest in preserving linear narrative as a structure freed the poem as a space for invention in which she could see 'chunks of things' and explore between them possible, unrealized connections' (Russo 2002: 196). We begin to recognize here a kind of strategy for revealing, for organizing, for allowing poetry to make connections and realizations possible. Poet and teacher Larry Fagin has said, "Vomit poetry", and then maybe "edit and polish".

It is possible to perceive that poetry – as organization of creativity – parallels meditation as organization of thought; but such parallel organizing occurs through not doing, not attempting – practices of not trying to accomplish the 'not.' Of course, Buddhist meditation, or practice, *is* doing something, often apparently requiring a traditional attitude or a posture. Poetry, creativity, and organizing itself may emerge from practice, assuming an attitude that attempts neither to control or not control, but to hold controlling at bay; or more precisely, to let go of control. Ginsberg, Waldman, and Kyger, then, true to Naropa's spiritual core, gave poetry lessons that reinforced Buddhist practices.

The three poetry lessons suggest that organizing of creativity (force) or creation (activity) takes place precisely when and where typical organizational features are absent and during which 'those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us' (Lorde 2002: 137). Poetry emerges in, perhaps from, this absence. Does the distinction between force (creativity) and activity (creation) matter? Maybe. Creativity may remain unmanifested, unmarked, though perhaps observed indirectly in effects and effects of effects, echoes, shadows. Moreover, poetry is not editing, though we might include editing as part of a poem creating process. Editing may be crucial for a brilliant poem, but editing is not organization of creativity as poetry is: editing involves notions of how to take away and put together. Editing organizes what poetry has offered.

It has been suggested that modes of creative expression may be a way to 'control reality' (e.g., Loftus 2008: 107). And Sartre clearly states that 'when the worker is organized', various other processes, obligations, and outcomes may be expected (Sartre 1962: 113). Perhaps, he would not be at all surprised to find poetry simply another form of organization in this sense (Sartre 1988). The next section explores this genre of concern.

poetry 'between the number and the night'

Writing on poetry, Pierre Bourdieu reminds us that the pedagogic work and linguistic capital associated with language and battles over definitions of linguistic forms such as poetry cannot be disregarded. Bourdieu writes of this contestation:

This incessant revolt against the establishment is expressed, on the level of works of literature, by a process of purification. Poetry is more and more completely reduced to its 'essence', that is, to its quintessence, in the alchemical sense, the more it is stripped in successive revolutions of everything which, although it is an accessory, seemed to define 'the poetic' as such: lyricism, rhyme, metre, so-called poetic metaphor, etc. (Bourdieu 1990: 143)

3 copies
Allen

When i am reading this poem

I ~~am~~ not writing it

I sleep outdoors *in the rain*

I skip meals *On the dinner*

I eat ^{hot dogs} with my hands

I walk into ^{downstairs} walls and mountains

I face demons when i am strong *to stones (to D) the deal it already
have to wind blow*

I sleep with my light on when ~~i am not~~ *there's no wind*

I feel bodies in the air —

I can't see them

I know they ~~are~~ there

I smell electricity

I lie underground *to wear my wedding dress*

I wait for ankles *in the subway*

I draw out secrets from the earth and tell ~~them~~ *on my dead grandfather*

I don't talk

I am bored with words

I drown all the poets *in purplean lawn*

I keep Blake *under my lacey pillow in my shoe closet*

I can't see

I walk in trees

I balance on branches

I braid my hair down my back *in the wind rain snow hurricane air raid*

I brush my hair with my fingers

I throw hunger ^{sharks} into swimming pools *full of pheromones fish*

I create islands *in the deep end*

I take advantage of inevitable mistakes

I wash my face ^{in the ladies room of St Patrick's Cathedral} comb my tail *'s natural fowl (bowl)*

I growl in my throat ~~at the~~ *in Bronx Park E av*

I braid my hair in dredging nets

and pull up bodies out of wells

I ~~do not~~ ^{do not} try to save them

I regret there will be no funeral

I think in boiling pots

'86
Aut Bogusson

What do such understandings tell us about processes of organization? If poetry suggests organization emerging from absence (e.g. Ford and Harding 2004), the difference between poetry/organizing as absence and poetry/organizing as presence reveals an interesting distinction. To put this another way, poetry manifests in and from absence, against Old Testament genealogies: 'But necessity is always deeper than genealogies' (Nancy 1993: 26). Naropa poetry lessons remind us that progenitors and predecessors serve as inspirational, pedagogical context, not preexisting determinants. $0 \times 1 \neq 0!$ Or as e. e. cummings suggests, 2×2 'is 5' (1926). Still, we should not insist on a naïve view of this absence as complete, or more specifically, words from nowhere. Whereas emptiness at the poet subject's core may reverberate with certain, poststructural notions (see e.g. Žižek 1993), some perhaps mislead (see Burke 1992: 184-185), such is not the primary point to derive from Naropa's poetry lessons.

When Sartre wrote the following, a suspicion of the poet's grasping at presence, the poet's relation to words as image-things, rather than signs, as representation, rather than expression, hovers about the description. Yet, he captures something of the poetry process engaged in Naropa's poetry lessons:

'Instead of first knowing things by their name, it seems that first he has a silent contact with them, since, turning towards that other species of thing which for him is the word, touching them, testing them, fingering them, he discovers in them a slight luminosity of their own and particular affinities with the earth, the sky, the water, and all created things'. (Sartre 2000: 105)

Even if we would engage poetry as organization of creativity emerging from a kind of absence, Sartre detects here the presence of 'deepest tendencies' (103) reflected in poetry's words. Sartre fears what he perceives to be the poet's tendency to withdraw from the human condition and the move towards 'language inside out', towards theory – as seen 'with the eyes of God' (Sartre 2000: 107).

Translator Anthony Rudolf suggests that poet Yves Bonnefoy builds 'mortality into the very structure of our rhythm'; and that Bonnefoy's voice keeps 'at bay both silence and the scream, those twin rhetorics of defeat' (Bonnefoy 1985: 16). He continues, 'We are called upon to live as serious and rooted human beings here and now, with insights of the threshold, between the number and the night; with an idea of holiness underwritten by a negative theology – the divine life without God . . .' (14). This balancing of contradiction, 'of the number and the night' (14), allows Bonnefoy to reconfigure presence, 'Our destiny, that is, our hope, is to embrace this world in its presence—the light of an evening harbour; the painting which tells a fatality beyond the painting; the/a stone—above all it is to reject excarnation in favour of immanence, transcendence in favor of incarnation' (13). Presence reappears, but in the human realm and as an attention to detail of embodied finite lives where poetry offers up the lived world that is present. Although Bonnefoy has no particular connections to the Naropa poets – except perhaps in a furious respect for poet, Rimbaud (see Bonnefoy 1973, *Arthur Rimbaud*), this nicely echoes Ginsberg's view of poetry as 'communicable of actuality' and Lorde's 'relevatory distillation of experience' which may allay some of Sartre's concerns.

So, what about organizing?

What does such an understanding tell us about processes of organization? Poetry suggests a kind of strategy for revealing, for organizing, for allowing. Moreover, poetry as organization of creativity may take place precisely when and where organizational features – typically understood – are absent. Poetry emerges in, perhaps from, this absence: Yet as Bonnefoy has suggested, an absolutist take on absence may manifest a denial of humanity, a denial of the world in which human beings live, experience poetry, write, and organize. Manifesting the as yet unsaid, unobserved, unthought, supports poetry's role in making new connections and realizations possible. Nevertheless, the presence of human creation, evocative of actuality and experience should not be excluded, foreclosed, or dismissed as otherwise than lived.

This might be interestingly explored in another direction, as well, in relation to Stephen Linstead's observation that poetry 'entails a surrendering to whatever language might run on to, an improvised negativity which can create both exhilarating openings of appreciation and understanding as much as the banal cul-de-sacs of kitsch' (2000: 78). He writes,

'We might then be concerned with distinguishing between forms of language that seek to become open to incursions of negativity, and those which tend to suppress it . . . we would need to consider methodologies which similarly allow chance, surprise, and flashes of insight their legitimate place'. (2000: 72)

Linstead's general sensibility regarding the possible opportunities emerging from an engagement with poetry, and language and ideas as revealed and built by poetry, shares certain desires with the poetry lessons offered here. Whereas poetry – which it must be said is differently understood by Linstead (see 2000: 81-89) – as an ethnographic research tool has not been this essay's focus,

points of interaction between the discussions appear and could be pursued in future work.

Because I see poetry as the creation of voices, the positing of a particular perspective in the world and an act of agency (Borgerson 2003), any similarly functioning process could be considered, following relevant renditions of the three poets' lessons. For example, those researchers who work on the creation of discourse, and hence meaning, in the workplace, might mobilize poetry to enable evocations of seeing and experiencing in the workplace. Furthermore, whereas not the focal point here, poets themselves could be seen as aesthetic leaders in the sense that Schroeder (2008) has argued applies to artists, such as Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The emerging perspective suggests that the modes of organizing creativity to which these poetry lessons refer – and for which other writers and organization theorists express interest – occur when control is held at bay, not when control returns. To address related incidences of lost opportunities, further observation, perhaps more obviously embedded in everyday practices of organization as typically understood, might be pursued. Is organizing steeped in doing and attempting and trying and controlling and making happen? If we are to investigate the potential of understanding poetry as organization of creativity, then non-doing, non attempting, a reciprocity of doing and not doing, and so forth must be faced in the organization context. I would argue that my three-part poem, 'Poetry Lessons', that follows this essay demonstrates a lifetime of organizing still in process. //

Poetry Lessons

(for Pier Paolo Pasolini and William Harley Earl)

1.

*Those men or women
Who never had children of their own at all
Enjoy the advantage in good fortune
Over those who are parents. Childless people
Have no means of knowing whether children are
A blessing or a burden; but being without them
They live exempt from troubles.*

(Medea 1090-1096, Seneca)

Medea stands on the flat clay roof
hair wild around her face,
sons murdered, sacrificed, laid out in her robe's
red folds
awaiting winged chariot.
(The boys are safe now from poisoning, rape, banishment)

Jason, betrayer,
kingdom lost,
golden fleece useless,
new bride
blankly obedient,
childishly greedy, ignited, fallen in poisoned
wedding gift gown
gilded with solar flames,
sees his dead sons, house burning,
curses death's safety
(The boys will take their place among the gods)
screams up through the fire
"What have you done?"

Medea
rages
"Nothing is possible any more"
and any link to his world's
logic shatters.

^^^^^

The photo is black and white, 1930's.
Bill holds up a large fish caught from Duck Lake
or Wabakaness, stretching out a mostly wild perimeter behind him
thin in little boy swimming trunks,
bones in his knees, bones in his chest and shoulders evident.

1948, still black and white,
standing among his sisters
small brother, mother.
Behind this group
a heavy man, six or eight inches taller
black hair, long arms.
The father's clothing never fitting,
Bill's pants bunch up around his ankles. The denim
material's wide sweep
engulfs his thighs.

The family stands on board a steamer-like boat,
open deck and cabin visible, white
railing supports the father's weight as he leans against it.
Bill's older sister wears a light colored hat and carries a bag.
She is going away,
traveling to New York City.
Closer inspection into this second photo's background reveals
not a railing, but a fence around an airport runway.
A small plane awaits.
The sister will fly from Detroit, Michigan to the East Coast
to Manhattan and sing opera at the Met.
Bill squints, no smile, behind black rectangular frames.
Soon he will join the Navy.
His boat comes into the City once.
He loves the opera.
Mary and Bill see *Madame Butterfly*.

^^^^

In the painting, *Family of Country People*, by Louis Le Nain,
eight human forms people the dark space. Finished in 1640,
now hanging in the Louvre in Paris, Le Nain's work renders
his subjects in their home, resting for a moment in a day seemingly
endless with farm chores and mending.
What Gardener, the art critic, calls
"Stress on the honesty, integrity, and even innocence of the uncorrupted country folk,"
marks and obscures the relationships between these subjects, what they
said to one another, the intimacies, abuse.

Shadow obscures one form, a boy
a vague outline of long shirt and full short pants
a dark secret at the far left side of the frame. He is a memory,
one who no longer fully participates in the daily
workings of the family, making his presence known
a trickster, a sadness. Near this ghost-brother
leaning against the opposite wall
behind the realistically rendered father and mother's
bright profiles and other siblings,
stands a young girl
head covered
face vague, peaceful
holy. This radiant sister
engages the viewer in the background space,
brings us fully into the room
draws us to the family hearth, yet herself,
unknowable, disconnected.
A pudgy child, the center front figure, plays a thin flute. Another older,
more earthy sister looks
directly out at the viewer
as does the father clutching a bag
maybe the family fortune, and the mother offering
a glass of wine.

^^^^

I'VE BEEN REMEMBERING MY DREAMS

^^^^

A scream is heard.

Mary: (screams)

The father: (reaches out and slaps Bill striking his jaw and bruising his lips.)

(The boy goes ghostlike against the wall. Where is the mother, other sister and brother?)

Mary: (screams and runs at her father)

I'VE BEEN REMEMBERING MY DREAMS

^^^^^

PHOTO 1

A faded yellowish shot of the two girls, aged 12 and 7 in a rowboat. Mary's arm goes protectively around her sister's nervous, contracted shoulders.

PHOTO 2

Bill, barely old enough to walk leans against his sister, ten months older. "We were like twins," Mary says. "Mother dressed us alike." Both of them stand on the Poland's white farmhouse's lowest front step, bulky in matching wool coats and berets.

^^^^^

I'VE BEEN REMEMBERING MY DREAMS, someone
asked a question, or a murder
hidden for decades

^^^^^

Night, 1962, Traverse City, Michigan, Front Street

A drunk and violent 33 year old white male (checked out of the State Hospital Residential Detox program) in an alcoholic haze.

All things left their mark

City police: (carrying clubs, crack his skull and leave)

Bill: (choking)

^^^^^

Mary: (lies)

They all lied
No one told this story to anyone

^^^^^

The peacock's tail, blue, green, gold and violet,
appears to pass through the temple floor
or ceiling of blue and gold quatrefoil panels, each a sculpted frieze.
Tiny birds, perhaps sparrows,
form a line around the floor or ceiling's opening.
Internal space explodes.
Doors open into the outside.
Propylaea, gateway to inner sanctum, welcomes
and excludes traveler, stranger, worshipper.
Nothing is there.

Where is the altar?

Oh, Pompeii
our mountain has taken you all.

^^^^^

*A throw of chance - and there goes Death
Bearing off your child into the unknown
(Medea 1110-1111, Seneca)*

2.

i.

I want to press my palm
along your spine
from the base of your neck
where shoulder muscles reach across and down your arms
up the back of your skull
not presuming to map your body
having touched your hair,
felt your hands, seen thighs
calves, feet
dark hair circling your navel, wanting
instead to understand
why your wings are folded in so tight
closing around your throat
a collar, noose-like feathered
silence

Along the hairs of your skin
shimmering heart barely open to beating's extent
as though expansion snaps hypnotic bones
disrupting a dark courtyard
huddled center, hoping
for quiet, an inner collapse pushes
away light

ii.

A friend collected
thousands of industrial furnace bricks constructing
not houses, nests, places of refuge
but a wood-fire kiln
withstanding extreme temperatures
airless, stifling, shutting out faint tones of another story
under an unknown time.
Look! They've lit the fires.
I can hear wings beating.
This is not a life
it's a fortress

Auschwitz monolith
Rising
thorough a gap to the sky, something
flutters
fine fine ancient dust
nothing can fully mark death
trying to close, humming
enclosed
Listen!
They've lit the fires. I hear beating
faint notes
vibrating
warm clutched wings
around a closed throat

Tholos
beehive tomb
bread oven
soul furnace
amid layers of dust
ground ceylon cinnamon
floating inches above the ancient
Greek road's hard
packed surface

Life not
a fortress, bricks
embedded with fine ancient cinnamon
bones, flesh, ash
powdery, warmed in the sun
souls soaring to light's one open point
Look up!
Listen, they have lit
the fires. I hear wings
beating a heart
through skull base shimmering
wrapped around silence
but feeling the warmth of your skin
Give me your hand.
Yes,
I feel it

This is not a strategy, more
a dream untterrified
expanding:
restraint,
a discipline of the dead!
Listen, they've lit
fires in the fortress.
Wings beating
beyond flames.

3.

Swiftly islands
reaching across the soil heart
some kind of abandoned grasses,
rooted and unearthed
wave upon wave
hitched up any access, fluttered, then
luffed the sails
leaving the wooden prows
rocking.

Directionless
gathered, catapulted
without caution
one another
unable to hold
pressed along this curved surface
well defined trap
temptations to say moments
the words came,
meaning
just that.

Distance, qualities of transparent air
doom the unspoken,
Will you not understand?
attempts
pressing into memory
blown from any woven passage
expects transitions, but sudden,
waits.



STARRY RHYMES

Sun rises east
Sun sets west
Nobody knows
What the sun knows best

North Star north
Southern Cross south
Hold close the universe
In your mouth

Gemini high
Pleiades low
Winter sky
Begins to snow

Orion down
North Star up
Fiery leaves
Begin to drop

Allen Ginsberg

3/23/97 4:51 AM

I take the paint off nails and insulation *in the house*
 I build an argument with a hammer
 1. If you can't live
 2. I you can't laugh
 3. If i roll over
 4. If i drag it out of you
 K Knock it off Janet — *read Apollinaire*
 I knock it off
 I cover my face in a man's hair
 I can see everything
 I don't want to see everything
 I lay a cornerstone
 make the dedication
 I stop believeing in forms
 I never reach zero
 I pay special attention to *renewal between* shadows *and their spaces*
 I rest between syllables
 I speak in letters
 I meant what i said
 I want to tell you the words mean nothing

J. L. Borgerson

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Janet L. Borgerson
 Business School
 Streatham Court, Rennes Drive
 University of Exeter
 Exeter, UK
 EX4 4PU

J.L.Borgerson@exeter.ac.uk

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If the whole world was a single country, Istanbul would be the capital

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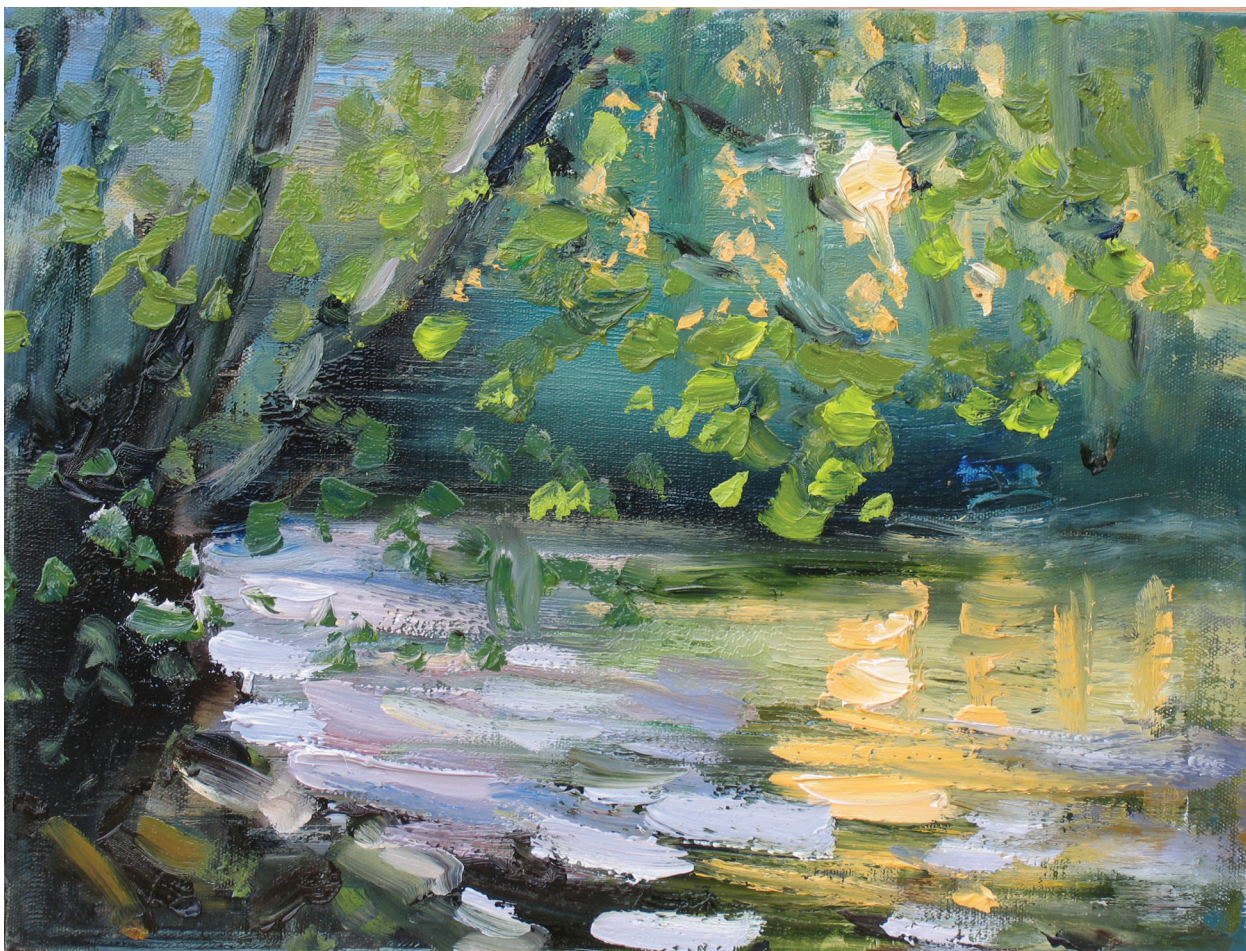
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