RADIUS

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Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2003

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Roelke, Jean Marie, *Radius*. Doctor of Philosophy (English), May 2003, 94 pp., 8 visual poems, 24 titles.

This paper includes a 62-page book of original poems, 19 pages of which are visual poetry, and a 29-page preface which discusses visual poetry.
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PART I

PREFACE: ON THE VISUAL POEM
Introduction

In this essay, I plan to address some criticisms that have been directed at the visual poem, and at my visual poems, in particular. The specific criticisms I hope to answer pertain to the fact that the visual poem straddles two fields of endeavor, that of poetry and that of visual art. Because the visual poem rightfully belongs within two separate fields, it is both transgressive and constituent of boundaries that define the fields of visual art and poetry.

The transgressive and marginal nature of the visual poem derives from the fact that it is formally difficult to interpret, and this difficulty sometimes provokes hostility on the part of readers. As a form that, at a minimum, complicates, and possibly subverts or exploits reading strategies, the visual poem presents difficulties to the reader that make explicit issues of meaning creation, the physical attributes of the poem, and the relationship between what can and cannot be put into words.

A Brief History of the Poem as Picture

I have been asked why visual poems are poems rather than visual art. The obvious answer, of course, is that they are both; they cross a boundary and exist in two fields simultaneously, that of visual art and that of poetry. They are “intermedial texts between literature and visual art” (Higgins 206). They derive from an impulse to express in word and image simultaneously, as if these two were not separate but rather aspects of the same expression.

For those who are unfamiliar with the literature, the visual poem may seem like an aberration, something that is not poetry, and that should clearly be called art, since the visual qualities are obvious and the literary qualities of the work tend to be more
problematic, particularly as regards reading and interpretive strategies. However, examples of visual poetry can be found in most literary traditions.

The history of the visual poem has been well documented by Dick Higgins, and his book *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* is the most comprehensive source for information about that subject. For purposes of his book, he defines visual poetry that was created before 1900 as *pattern poetry* and the visual poetry after that time according to the artistic movement within which it was created. Higgins dates the earliest text that may be a pattern poem at around 1700 BC\(^1\). The earliest certain examples of pattern poetry are the Greek *technopeignias*, and these appear to be both poetry and religious or occult texts. These early pattern poems, which were collected in the “Greek Anthology,” served as inspiration for many Renaissance and Baroque poets (20).

From about the 3\(^{rd}\) century through the 9\(^{th}\), *carmina cancellata*, in various formats and permutations, were a major form of the pattern poem. These were mostly created in Latin and were religious in nature. By the 10\(^{th}\) century, the tradition died out but it began to be revived during the 12\(^{th}\) century, when there were a few instances of poems based on earlier forms. Experimentation with the Greek forms continued throughout the 13\(^{th}\) and 14\(^{th}\) centuries, which led to the development of shaped prose in the 14\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) centuries (10).

The largest body of pattern poetry was created during the early part of the 16\(^{th}\) century. During the Renaissance period, pattern poetry was taken seriously as an art

\(^{1}\) The "Phaistos Disk" in the Heraklion Museum in Crete is a spiral shaped text on gray clay. Although the origins and translation of the disk are still debated, as Higgins points out, if it is poetry, it is certainly a pattern poem. (Higgins 19)
form. For example, George Puttenham, in his *The Arte of English Poesie*, devoted a whole section to a discussion of forms for pattern poetry, including examples of many of the shapes he lists. Most of the early poems were in Latin, and included such figures as wings, birds in flight and “undulating acrostics” (10).

During this time, literature and visual art were considered to be sister arts, and contemporary theory conceived of the two as complementary sides of the same art. The pattern poem was widely explored during this period, and continued to be popular until neoclassic values predominated, after which the visual poem fell into disrepute, and only survived into the 19th century in comic, folk and popular verse.

During the 20th century, pattern poems have been known by many names and manifestations. The ideogrammatic method of Ezra Pound, the *Calligrammes* of Guillaume Apollinaire, and the *dipinti paroliberi* (free-word paintings) of the Futurists were the earliest manifestations of modernist interest in the visual poem. All three shared in an aesthetic that derived from contemporary European ideas about the Chinese ideogram, and were partly a positive response to technological advances in publishing, as well as in transportation and communications. Although the same environment influenced all of these poets, their projects took differing forms.

Ezra Pound, with his interest in the work of Ernest Fenellosa and the Chinese ideogram, is the most famous practitioner and advocate of the ideogrammatic method which he developed beginning in 1913, and which profoundly influenced his poetry from that point onward. Pound's method influenced his own generation of Imagist poets, including William Carlos Williams, as well as generations of later poets, including E.E
Cummings; Louis Zukofsky and the Objectivists; Charles Olson and other proponents of projective verse; and beat poets such as Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsburg (Bohn 33).

Pound’s influence opened the door, in the 20th century, to the visual possibilities of the written language, but his approach was initially “to divorce imagery in general from its visual origins” (32). Pound’s later work became more visually experimental, especially his *Cantos*, in which he used Chinese ideograms and other visual elements to disrupt sentence structure and interrupt linear reading of the poetry.

As early as 1900, even before Pound and his circle, Guillaume Apollinaire was writing about ideograms, and originally called his *Calligrammes* by the name of *ideogrammes lyriques* (38). However, his first experiments with visual poetry were not written until December 1912, and the early part of 1913. Apollinaire’s aesthetic required the work of art to reflect a global contemporary consciousness brought about by mass communications. His interest in Cubist experiments, which fractured the space of the picture plane in order to simultaneously show multiple perspectives of the same object, also influenced his approach to the problem of simultaneity as it applied to writing poetry. Apollinaire coined the term “simultaneity” to refer to his idea of the work of art that is structured in such a way that it is experienced in “one global act of consciousness” rather than through the linear reading of traditional poetry (3).

Apollinaire used techniques of fragmentation and recombination to produce work that dislocated the textual space and transformed the page of the text into a picture plane, which allowed the letters and words to be manipulated as images. The fact that the poems short-circuit traditional reading strategies forces readers to create their own synthesis of the elements.
In May 1913, Futurist F.T. Marinetti recommended using colored inks and multiple typefaces in order to disrupt the order of the page. The following year the Futurists began to manipulate individual letters and words. Giovanni Papini, who recommended that the poem be thought of as a visual analogy, promoted the idea that the text should depict realistic, concrete images. On January 1, 1914, the first Futurist visual poem, “Fumatori II,” by Francesco Cangiullo, was published in Lacerba (73).

A few months later, in May 1914, a second groundbreaking Futurist work was published in Lacerba: “Danzatrice = mare,” retitled “Danza serpentina” for publication in Lacerba without Severini’s consent, was a black and white drawing that combined abstract graphic elements with printed phrases arranged in a structure reminiscent of the movement of a rotary blade. Severini referred to the work as an “attempt at literature-painting,” combining literary and pictorial elements in one work of art (57). This was the first in a long succession of dipinti paroliberi.

By the end of the 1920s, interest in the visual poem as an expressive form had again declined, with the exception of E.E. Cummings, who consistently experimented with the visual elements of the printed page throughout his career. Often dismissed as an unimportant eccentric during his lifetime, in recent years Cummings’ work has been re-evaluated, and his visual poetry has been recognized as a major contribution to the genre. Richard Kostelanetz, in his introduction to AnOther E.E.Cummings, claims that Cummings is the “most inventive poet of his time”(xxv). His radical interpretations of traditional forms, especially the sonnet, his experimentation with syntax, and his innovative use of type and the page space provided inspiration for the generations that followed.
Another poetic and typographic innovator, Charles Olson, in his groundbreaking 1950 manifesto “Projective Verse,” declared the poetic page a field for composition, providing space for poets to explore the page of the text as a picture plane. This concept gave permission to a whole generation of writers and painters to explore the visual aspect of the poem, and promoted an emphasis on breath and performance, as another aspect of the poem. Kathleen Fraser, in her book *Translating the Unspeakable*, credits Olson’s manifesto and the resulting “Maximus” poems with providing a “clear concept of PAGE as canvas or screen on which to present flux” (176). Olson’s immersion in research and his devotion to the poem as a place to explore ideas, and to express those ideas through experimental methods of writing, as well as his concept of “the movement of poetic language as investigative tool” (176) cleared the way for writers such as Susan Howe and Hannah Wiener to express their own ideas through manipulation of the written word. In particular, Howe’s use of research and historical document as inspiration for her poetic texts, and her use of type and page space, owe a great deal to Olson’s intellectual and visual aesthetic.

In 1955, the force of a major artistic/poetic movement again revived visual poetry. *Concrete poetry*, named by Swiss poet Eugen Gomringer and Brazilian designer Decio Pignatari, stressed the primacy of the word, translated abstract ideas into visual images, and is distinguished by condensation and spatialization of the text (232). Concrete poetry, like Futurist poetry, abolished syntax and provided the reader with multiple possibilities for interpretation. Concrete poems were conceived of as physical objects, in which form equals content and structure equals meaning. During the 1960s, Concrete
poets also pushed the material boundaries of the poem into areas of sculpture, installation and performance.

Since the 1980s, artists such as Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger have used text as a visual medium, creating prints, posters, sculptures, installations, computer generated signs, and other objects which incorporate text and image. Kruger’s work, which derives directly from commercial advertising, juxtaposes visually ambiguous images with overlaid phrases that comment ironically on the images which they partially conceal. Visually arresting and intellectually confrontational, Kruger’s work is explicitly political. Jenny Holzer’s work, although politically motivated, composed of many of the same materials as Kruger’s, and aesthetically similar in many ways, tends to be more language-driven than Kruger’s. While Kruger’s work shares the sense of irony and black humor that can be seen in the work of the Futurist poets, Holzer’s use of language is more complex. Holzer’s work is often composed completely of text presented on various materials, and requires the viewer to engage in the process of reading as part of the art experience.

Since publication of Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature in 1987, the visual poem has evolved into something more widespread and popular than ever. The computer and the Internet have been fertile fields for the growth of visual poetry as a genre. The category “visual poem” now extends to include such things as artists’ books, e-zines, and cyber-poems. As Willard Bohn writes in his conclusion to Modern Visual Poetry, “current experiments with visual poetry are so numerous and so varied as to almost defy description” (285). Hypertext poems, in which the reader chooses links that create the text, holographic poems, which are non-linear and exist in an immaterial
three-dimensional space which changes as the viewer reads the poem, and animated poems are some of the spatiotemporal forms that computers make possible. Increasing technological advances promise that the visual poem will continue to be a vital genre for many years to come.

Some Considerations of the Poem as an Object

Poetry has been written on substances as varied as clay, stone, skin, papyrus, wood, paper, metal and computer screens. The means of writing are equally varied, including sticks, quills, brushes, chisels, pens and the computer keyboard. The physical aspect of a poem is undeniable, yet is usually ignored. The tradition of English poetry tends to focus on the linguistic aspect of the poem, to the detriment of the physical component. Poetry that engages the physical aspect of writing has been marginalized historically, and is often dismissed as a gimmicky trifle.

Pattern poetry has been attacked in every age in which it has occurred. During the 16th century, Montaigne, in his Des vaine subtilite, attacked pattern poems as “frivolous and vain” (Higgins 13). In England, Gabriel Harvey referred to patterned verse as “madd gugawes and crockchettes,” Ben Jonson scorned pattern poems as “a pair of scissors and a comb in verse,” (14) and Dryden stylishly attacked the tradition in lines 203-208 of his satiric poem “Mac Flecknoe”:

Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may’st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.

Footnote 6 for this poem, as published in The Norton Anthology of English Language, Sixth Edition, Volume 1, remarks that “Dryden is citing instances of triviality
and overingenuity in literature” (1821). This footnote specifically cites George Herbert’s “Easter Wings” and “The Altar” as examples of the poetry Dryden is criticizing in “Mac Flecknoe.”

George Herbert’s “Easter Wings” is an outstanding example of a poem that has suffered both physical deformation and critical attack because of the generally accepted view that language is no more than a transparent medium of meaning. This poem has been attacked in print probably more often than any other visual poem, and has been discussed and criticized by major critics ranging from Ben Jonson to Helen Vendler.

Unfortunately, most of the criticism written about this poem refers to shapes that Herbert never intended, and the result has been centuries of misrepresentation, misreading and condescending dismissal. Herbert’s poem in manuscript form has a shape entirely different from the published angel wings and hourglass shape that most readers see. From study of the poem in both manuscript forms, it seems probable that Herbert intended for the shape of the poem to signify birds in flight across the sky. Unfortunately, Thomas Buck, the man who first printed “Easter Wings,” did not see it that way when he published the poem after Herbert’s death.

Buck rotated the stanzas when he printed them. Amy Charles and Mario Di Cesare, editors for both the Bodleian and the Williams manuscript facsimiles of Herbert’s poems, describe it this way: “he turns the stanzas on their sides and thus suggests a pair of birds flying upward”(xxxi). This alteration completely destroys the dynamic between white space and axes that can be seen in the manuscripts of the poem. Formal visual qualities of the poem as Herbert intended it have been obliterated. What is left of the formal visual beauty of the poem is an abstraction of the delicate
shapes that Herbert created. The visual composition of the poem has been ruined. What is left are identically shaped emblems of wings on facing pages. Visual relations between words and lines have been made obscure by Buck’s stanzaic transpositions. What was a display of technical virtuosity has been diminished to an uninspired imitation of a classical form.

Buck created the “angel wings” look for “Easter Wings,” and it is not altogether inappropriate, which may be why that form seems to be the most widespread. In some ways, it makes sense: the wings are in a church, they are flying upward, it is a poem about salvation. However, the bird imagery becomes muted, as does the reference to Christ. The poem is visually simplified, and because it is a visual poem, the meaning becomes simplistically reduced. Unfortunately for Herbert’s readers, Buck started a trend. Subsequent publishers of “Easter Wings” made their own changes, and these further degraded the form of Herbert’s visual poem. The text has remained stable, but the shape of the poem comes in several forms.

The 1633 version of the poem has been accepted by most editors and scholars as the authoritative version, and can be found in the 1941 edition of Herbert’s work by Canon Hutchinson. This is also the form chosen for the 1994 *Everyman’s Library* edition published by Alfred Knopf. One of the odd consequences of Buck’s rotation of the stanzas is that when the book is turned sideways to read the words, the first stanza becomes the bottom stanza, and the second stanza is on top. Reading the poem becomes even more complicated, and confusing.

Two further developments of this shape can be found in a book by Dick Higgins. In his book *George Herbert’s Pattern Poems: In Their Tradition*, Higgins presents the
poem compressed onto one page, so the element of facing pages is gone, and the vertical axis is eliminated. Higgins corrects for the rotation by placing the first stanza so that it will be on top when the book is turned for reading. As detrimental as these visual alterations are to the semantic potential of the poem, at least there is some adherence to the idea of wings. However, some editors and publishers have seen fit to tamper with the visual design to an even greater degree and created versions of the poem where the shape has nothing to do with wings.

Helen Vendler, in her 1975 book *The Poetry of George Herbert*, discusses “Easter Wings” briefly on pages 145-146. Vendler interprets the verbal aspect of the poem, but nowhere discusses the visual significance. Perhaps that’s because the shape of the poem that Vendler shows us is like two imperfectly shaped hourglasses, one stacked on top of the other. The lines have been roughly centered, with the left edge of the poem regularly indented, and the right side looking messy. It is difficult to imagine what this shape could mean.

A different example of the hourglass shape can be found in an essay by Robert W. Halli, Jr., published in the spring, 1984, *Philological Quarterly*. Halli’s article is titled “The Double Hieroglyph in George Herbert’s ‘Easter Wings.’” On page 265, before the essay on page 266, we are treated to a shapelier version of the hourglass form of “Easter Wings.” Halli imports an hourglass reference into the first half of both stanzas of the poem. He claims that “as the wing hieroglyph relates most directly to the second half of each stanza, so the hourglass relates to the first.” (266) This makes it possible to claim that “‘time flies’ is a I of the worst sort, but its implications are important for this poem” (266). Halli ends his article with the statement that “Herbert achieves a large
part of his effect by employing the hourglass hieroglyph…” It seems clear that neither Vendler nor Halli had seen the manuscript versions of the poem when they wrote about it.

If the manuscript versions of “Easter Wings” can be taken as evidence of Herbert’s own plan for the visual design of the poem, then it seems apparent that the printed versions are inadequate and degraded visual mistranslations of the original poem. This could be part of the reason for the poem’s lukewarm reception and disputed reputation. In *George Herbert: The Critical Heritage*, editor C. A. Patrides provides an account of critical responses to the poem.

In 1898, George Saintsbury is supposed to have remarked, after mentioning “Easter Wings” in his book *A Short History of the English Language*, that Herbert “is certainly not the equal of either Crashaw or Vaughn” (277). Herbert J.C.Grierson, in *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, wrote that Herbert elaborated his “…little allegories and conceits with felicitous stanza – even the symbolic wings…” (329). This is faint praise from a fan, and shows in what low esteem Herbert’s visual poetry has been held.

A more famous critic, T. S. Eliot, dismissed Herbert’s visual poetry in his 1962 monograph about Herbert, titled simply *George Herbert*. He wrote of Herbert’s “Easter Wings” and “The Altar” that two of his poems are such as would be considered, if written by a poet today, merely elegant trifles: “The Altar” and “Easter Wings.” In each, there is a disposition of longer and shorter lines so printed that the poem has the shape, the one of an altar and the other of a pair of wings. Such a diversion, if employed frequently, would be tedious, distracting and trying to the eyesight and we must be glad that Herbert did not make further use of these devices (31).
It is probable that Eliot saw the “angel wings” version of “Easter Wings,” and unlikely that he was acquainted with the manuscript versions.

Although it is clear that traditional ideas about language and reading can lead to critical errors in the analysis of visual poetry, contemporary visual poetry requires more of the reader than an open mind. In recent years, thinkers such as Susan Howe have challenged prejudices about language and reading. Howe raises questions about the materiality of text and how language functions. She pushes the boundaries of traditional poetry, sometimes expanding her work into the area of another field, such as visual art or performance. She refuses to accept the confining view of language merely as a transparent medium that refers to something else, or that serves as a conduit for meaning.

Howe explores areas of language that are considered opaque or that make the material aspect of language explicit. For her, the page of words is a visual artifact and her organizational strategy is not always linear. The reader is given the task of narrating connections between the fragments presented on the page. Sometimes the page is like a canvas, with text scattered all over it. The reader may have to turn the page upside down or around. Sometimes pieces are missing, and the reader has to imagine what the text could say. Describing her own intentions and her method of making a poem, in a 1995 interview with Lynn Keller in Contemporary Literature, she has said:

I wanted to write something filled with gaps and words tossed, and words touching, words crowding each other, letters mixing and falling away from each other, commands and dreams, verticals and circles…

Howe’s critical study, *My Emily Dickinson*, is concerned with Dickinson’s fascicles as artifacts of creative production. She suggests that Dickinson’s manuscripts
are important as visual poems, that the spacing, script and unconventional punctuation
are essential to any reading of Dickinson’s words. Conventional publication effaces
these aspects of Dickinson’s work. She makes a similar argument in Pierce Arrow, her
study of the work of Charles Sanders Peirce. Facsimile reproductions of Peirce’s
manuscripts lend power to her argument. Conventional publication practices create
homogenized texts. Most of what we read looks approximately the same, and this
sameness encourages a kind of blindness to the physical properties and potential
meaningfulness of each text as object.

As an object, the poem is a physical artifact, something more than referential
linguistic code. The physical poem entails the materials and means of production, as
well as any meanings the poem encodes. The physical aspects of a poem are aural,
visual and tactile. The scent of ink and paper, the weight and color of the paper, the heft
of the book in the reader’s hands; the space on the page, the shape of the type: these
are all aspects of a poem’s physical form. Even poetry that is printed on paper, in the
most conventional fashion, has physical qualities that influence interpretation, although
these influences can be entirely subconscious on the part of the reader.

For example, I have found that I tend to be impatient with the text when I am
reading a book that smells funny, but a book with a pleasant odor is enjoyable to read in
a way that other books are not. The weight and shape of a book in my hand is also an
important factor in my enjoyment of a text. A book with which I have to struggle and
wrestle tends to get less time than a book that is a pleasure to hold. Although these
examples may seem extreme, I know that these factors play a real role in my own
reading experience. As with other art forms, the interpretation of poetry is influenced by physical factors which may be unintended or ignored aspects of the work.

Like music and sculpture, poetry is experienced in time. The rules of reading confer sequence on linguistic artifacts. Each poem has to unfold, like a musical composition: there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. As with a sculpture, a poem is comprehended more and more fully as more parts, surfaces, and aspects are read or viewed. Because the rules for reading a picture space are less codified than those for reading a literary space, the image presents all aspects “at once,” unlike the poem, and provides few clues about chronological relations. The visual poem incorporates aspects of both literature and art, so that the reader often experiences a sense of conflict due to the fact that more than one strategy must be used to read the work. We learn to read language through extensive training, but are rarely trained in how to read images, despite their omnipresence in our lives.

All poems, when read, create mental spaces, images and experiences. This mental aspect of a poem is experienced physically by the reader, and can produce quite powerful sensations, emotions and thoughts. Besides this mental experience, reading is a physical act, determined by the laws of physics and local conventions and rules. Reading requires the body’s cooperation and attention and is mostly performed by the eyes and the mind. Although I would never argue against the mass production of literature, I have to admit that the homogenization of textual artifacts smoothes out distinctive voices and unconventional ideas. Much of a writer’s thought process is obscured when writing is translated into black ink on a white rectangle. Hesitation, uncertainty and revision are muted. Nuance and tone are translated into an acceptable
font on a standard page. Conventional publishing practices create, in their consistency, a voice of authority, even-toned and reasonable. I identify that tone as the voice of authority, of society, the voice of power and control. For me, disruption of that voice has become necessary as a means of making room for my own voice. I have felt it necessary to break-in on the dialogues (and monologues) of those who identify themselves as the voices of reason and truth.

Methods of Transgression

As a genre that crosses boundaries, the visual poem is transgressive. One of the ways that the visual poem crosses into the field of art is through methods of composition and construction. The visual poem is self-consciously physical. As with a sculpture, the methods of production contribute to the text, are meant to be read, and have symbolic meaning. Within the field of sculpture, every aspect of a sculpture is considered with respect to its significance to the complete work. Every nail, weld, join, surface, color, and any other physical aspect of the work, is considered as part of the artistic whole: each aspect contributes to the meaning and is meant to be read. The visual poem requires the same sort of attention to detail and awareness of construction and interpretative possibility.

One of the most popular methods for composition of the visual poem in the 20th century is collage. Apollinaire used collage to create his Calligrammes, and introduced Gino Severini to collage in 1912, by calling his attention to “objects in paintings by the Italian primitives” (Bohn 56). Dada artist/poet Kurt Schwitters composed much of his work through the method of collage. Surrealist Joseph Cornell used collaged text and images to create sculptures that are visual poems, and Mina Loy created poems,
paintings, sculptures and lamps using the method of collage with a wide range of materials.

The collage method relies on the fact that the human mind automatically, without training, creates narrative from sequence. This tendency to create narrative is exploited in the work of many artists and advertisers. We want experience and events to be meaningful and will invent connections and stories, so that things “make sense.” As Mark Turner explains in *The Literary Mind*, “Narrative imagining – story – is the fundamental instrument of thought. Rational capacities depend on it. It is…” indispensable to human cognition generally” (4-5).

Sequence is one way the mind orders, but there are other kinds of ordering. We tend to assume that nearness and repetition are indicators that something is meaningful. We see meaning in patterns, whatever their form. The visual poem is non-linear and evades full narrative and sequential interpretation. Because visual poems provide a variety of interpretive strategies and are ambiguous regarding syntactic structure, they transgress normative reading rules. They defy logic and reason, providing an outlet for possible unreason and illogic to be expressed.

The non-linear quality of the visual poem relates it closely to the field of visual art. The picture, the sculpture and the installation all may be accessed from any angle, from any side. This is not true of the usual text. There is a starting point, a definite order of progression and a point at which the work ends. These boundaries are not so defined in visual art, and neither are they always evident in the visual poem. By transgressing standard ordering procedures, the visual poem creates problematic texts that defy conventions of meaning.
One of the greatest appeals of this method of composition is the possibility of subverting or shifting the meaning of the appropriated text or image. Collage, as a method, involves a certain amount of subversion. The appropriated word, image or object is recontextualized, interpreted anew, and often critiqued, as a necessary result of the new perspective afforded by the new context. When disparate elements are joined in this manner, their relations are called into question. Previous assumptions become suspect or at the very least, slippery. The visual poem, combining disparate elements, as it does, tends to be somewhat confrontational. It requests that you doubt your interpretation, that your methods of reading be examined and self-consciously employed.

How I Came to Love Visual Poetry

While the history of the visual poem is long and diverse, my own experiments with the form arose naturally from my artistic process, before I was aware of the tradition. My first visual poems were simply poems that I felt belonged on the paintings and sculptures I was making at the time. I began writing seriously while I was studying art. Although I had written some poems before that time, they tended to be merely occasional. As a sculpture student, I was advised to keep a journal to record my ideas, and it was here that my first serious experimentation with poetry began, although I did not know that at the time.

Poems began to appear in my journal, along with words, phrases and lines that struck me as interesting. Shortly after that, I felt compelled to include some of these poems, lines and phrases in my paintings and sculptures. Soon I was gluing poems onto frames and canvases and adding visual elements to underscore or undermine the
text. The next step was a class in creative writing. The textbook for that class was *Contemporary American Poetry*, edited by A. Poulin, Jr. This soon became my favorite book, and my art journal transformed into a journal for poetry.

In 1992, I began work on an MFA in sculpture at the University of North Texas, but soon found that I was spending more time writing than making sculptures. Since I had begun making paper several years before, and had an accumulation of handmade paper readily available, I began to make small sculptures from this material. These paper sculptures soon evolved into books that housed my poetry. The early books I made were primitive and not well crafted, since at the time I had no knowledge of bookmaking.

At the end of my first year of graduate school, I was newly divorced and could not afford to continue my education. By then, writing had taken over. Although I continued to paint and sculpt, most of my creative energy went into writing. By the time I could afford to return to graduate study, a friend convinced me that I should apply to the English department and work on a degree in technical writing, as that seemed to be a practical choice. From there, it did not take me long to migrate to a poetry class.

Until that first graduate poetry class, I felt like an outsider in the English department, and kept thinking I should return to the study of sculpture. However, that first class in poetry was a revelation. The professor kept talking about the inner life, and how poetry was always located in the inner landscape. He said things that struck a chord with how I perceived and experienced the world.

At the same time, I was conflicted about fitting in. I had decided to become an artist at the age of 14, and had spent years pursuing that dream. By the time I started
studying poetry seriously, I had identified myself as a visual artist for over 20 years. I could not just abandon that part of my experience and myself. Besides, I still had, and still have, the urge to make art. I felt that I had to find a way to bring art with me into the poetry department, and visual poetry turned out to be the way I could do this.

It seems natural for me to combine image and word, and to use images in such a way that they are meant to be read. I enjoy exploring the dialogue between images and words, and appreciate the complexity that writing with both makes possible. Besides complicating my writing, the use of images makes it possible to express ideas, feelings and perceptions that I find difficult, for one reason or another, to put into words. Images make it possible for me to articulate what makes me speechless.

All of the visual poems in *Radius* were made using a copier, and collaged into their present form. Some of the words and images in the visual poems are from my own earlier poetry and visual art. Some of the words and images are borrowed from other sources, such as outdated textbooks, discarded car manuals, old sheet music, and Bible study booklets. One of the poems, “Proof wheel,” includes phrases from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on Colo*. This same method, of copy and collage, has generated text poems as well as visual poems. I have noticed that, somehow, when the borrowed phrases and words are placed in the context of a text poem, they seem to be less problematic for readers. They seem to become my own words completely and to lose their reference to another text, another mind, another set of values and ideology.

Some poems demand to be written. They are not always beautiful or soothing or any other pleasant thing we might wish them to be. In my experience, sometimes it seems necessary to write what about things I would rather avoid, or to write about
things I do not understand, but about which I feel strongly. In these instances images make it possible to explore and express the unspeakable, either what cannot or should not be said.

About *Radius*

When I first began to try shaping my poems into a book for my dissertation, it was easy to choose which poems spoke to each other, or seemed to somehow belong together. The beginning of the book seemed clear to me. In fact, the first third was distinct, with a determined order. However, the rest of the poems did not seem to cohere in any deliberate fashion. I tried several possible organizations, but beyond some individual poems that became sets, the middle remained mushy and the end just trailed off.

I had a feeling that the structure was unraveling, which was interesting, but unsatisfactory. I wondered why I could not seem to find an order that was complete. Finally, because I wanted to include some of my visual poems in my dissertation, and was thinking about which of these belonged with the text poems, I realized that placing them among the text poems might help me to find a shape for the book as a whole. There were about 20 pages of visual poetry to choose from, all of it created within the last five years, although much of the content of the poetry derives from earlier visual work.

As I began to narrow my selection, a certain order suggested itself for the visual poems. “The Broken Song” has always seemed like a prelude to me, so it was placed at the beginning of the book. The first page looks like a book cover, and actually derives from the cover of some sheet music from the 1920s. (The rest of the poem derives from
a combination of old sheet music and various words from a 1950s astronomy text.) The first page of the poem functions as a title page, and this seemed appropriate for the start of the book. One of the themes of the book, it seems to me, is that of inversion and concealment, and the idea of a beginning page that looks like a book cover, and serves as a title page for the beginning poem, but which is not the title poem of the book, struck me as slyly appropriate for the tale that follows: brokenness exemplified.

I also like the transition between music and speech that placement of this poem at the beginning emphasizes. The story begins with the breaking-off of song. I always read this poem, in my mind, as a not-very-melodic song, which ends abruptly, as if a recording had been suddenly interrupted. This abruptness accompanied a change of tone, as the book shifts from visual poetry to the text of the poem that follows. There is a sense of relief at the sudden appearance of familiar territory; however, this relief is short-lived, due to the subject matter of the poem, “For Shame,” that follows “The Broken Song.”

Once I began interspersing the visual poems with text poems, the text poems began to fall into a natural order. The visual poems structured the book. They serve as commentary and counter-text for the text poems. The text poems, on the other hand, provide a narrative, of sorts, for the story that the visual poems map out. I believe that both the visual poems and the text poems are addressing the same issues, that they are concerned with similar ideas and emotions, but the formal qualities are divergent and they are each expressed with a different voice.

The visual poems are not meant to be read aloud, but I do hear them spoken in my mind. I imagine them in such a way that all the words are spoken at once, like a
disjointed chorus. They seem quite loud to me, like a buzzing crowd or a white noise, from which you can distinguish occasional phrases and voices. “The Broken Song” and “Radius” I imagine as being sung or chanted, while in the other poems, the words would be spoken, shouted or whispered. I also imagine musical instruments and sounds like wind, machinery, and other noises, as part of the sound of each poem. Since I have no way of expressing these things, they remain latent in the poem as it appears on the page, and the relation of the visual aspect of the poem to this private, inaccessible aural part has not yet been explored.

The five poems between “The Broken Song” and “Radius” serve as a kind of explanation for events that the book hints at, but does not entirely disclose. These five poems set up the pattern of discourse about the body, which the book both attempts and fails to address. Loss and its effects are outlined in the dialogue between poems in this initial text section. After the disclosures of this first set of poems, about the body and its reaction to loss, the visual poem “Radius” invokes a different perspective relative to the body.

The title poem, “Radius,” is one of my earliest visual poems, and was collaged together from four older poems, and combined with three images that I had created several years earlier. The central image of the poem is a photograph of a woman on a chair, overlaid with another image of a woman kneeling and holding a fan in each hand. Intersecting this figure is a diagram of a circle and its radius. For me this poem is a chant about the body, about the body’s absolute domination of experience. The body is the center and circumference of perception.
“Radius” is followed by another set of poems: “Remark .2,” and “Restricted Probability.” The first of these is a love poem and the second poem directly addresses the problem of the body and its limits. These are followed by a visual poem titled “This great harlot,” that is a companion to the visual poem, “wine of her fornication,” which occurs 12 pages later. These two visual poems bracket the longest poem of the book, “Inverted Voyage,” along with two poems concerning both Helen of Troy and the death of close friend.

“Inverted Voyage” is key to an understanding of the succeeding visual poetry. This poem describes an erosion of language, which is mirrored in the development of the visual poems, especially the poem “Proof wheel,” which demonstrates the loss of language through a loss of textual coherence and visual legibility. However, before “Proof wheel,” five text poems connect ideas about sexual desire, inspiration, and the conflict between perception and belief.

The eroding inner dialogue represented by the four pages of “Proof wheel” gives way to a confession that the “Tongue is Mischief.” At this point in the book, the language of the text poetry changes. What had been sculpted before, gives way to a longer, more philosophical line. Storytelling and the selection and suppression of memory are a theme of this set of five poems. The final line of the set of five poems in this section orders the reader to “Forget you should be,” and this command gives way to the next visual poem, “base x altitude,” which is visually related to the earlier “This great harlot” and “wine of her fornication.”

The group of five text poems that follow ask how to resolve the dilemmas of the previous poems. “Red Riding Hood,” “For She Who Lures the Sailors” and “At sixteen”
all pose questions concerning erotic relations. The next two poems, “The value of Indolence” and “The soothing necessity of work,” attempt an answer, implying that immersion in physical tasks, in the rhythms of embodiment, are a way to live, despite the contradictions of love and loss.

The philosophical peace posited by the final lines of “The soothing necessity of work” is immediately challenged and disrupted by the physical violence alluded to in the two visual poems that follow. “Hammerheads,” derived from a business efficiency manual from the 1950s, was created partly in response to the events of terrorism. The two pages of this poem depict violence that begins in the mind and is expressed on and with the body.

The final visual poem of the book, “Check for Faulty,” derives from a psychology textbook of the 1960s. Here the relationship that is alluded to in “Hammerheads” is examined in a more analytical fashion. This is followed by the last set of five textual poems, which again attempt a description of the problem of the body and its desires and contradictions, and which concludes with two poems that describe circles, and relate the end of the book to the beginning.

The visual poems in Radius serve the function of providing divisions between the restatement attempted in each set of text poems. The textual poems in this book attempt to disclose and examine events and resulting emotions. The visual poems provide a critique of the textual poetry. They comment on and constrain the textual voice of the book. They disrupt the continuity of that voice. The visual poems criticize the arguments and problems described in the text poems. This is a narrative which constantly breaks down, and which is interrupted by the distortions of language created
by the visual poems. The visual poems describe a breakdown of language, a breakdown of the narrative impulse, and attempt a kind of honesty that has no illusions about reason and the place of logic in the workings of the embodied mind.

The visual poems address the experience of chaos, of being out of control. They represent an attempt to lay the body bare; to establish a ground of being that arises from physical processes rather than rule and reason. The visual poems are meant to raise questions about accepted explanations, assumptions about how we should be and what should be said. The poems fracture syntax; the line is altered as a poetic device and becomes something more graphic, something that twists and loops, bends, breaks and riots on the page.

Visual poetry allows me to express when I lack words. Some issues are difficult to articulate, either because they are painful or they are unclear. Emotional contradictions lend themselves to expression in images, for me, because images allow more room for what cannot be explained, for what does not yield to reason. Words seem to demand logic; images can be free of syntactic constraints.

The fact that image interpretation is less constrained than the interpretation of language appeals to my sensibilities. I am interested in the process of interpretation and misinterpretation. Sometimes, I have noticed, I invite misinterpretation. The visual poems I have been writing were certainly designed to allow the reader to draw his/her own conclusions, not just about the meaning of the poems, but even about how to read them. Sometimes I try to give clues, by placing a line in the place you would expect a title, for instance as in “My great harlot” or “base x altitude.” In “Radius” the title is in the center of the poem, but is the largest word on the page. While I purposely employ these
sorts of conventions to try to assist the reader, much of the manipulation of text and image in my visual poems is intended to be labyrinthine. The ability of a visual poem to lead the reader’s eye around the page in irregular and undictated fashion allows multiple meanings to emerge during the process of reading.

Besides all of the potential that visual poetry offers as a creative form, with its endless variation and incredible responsiveness to intuitive and allegorical methods, the visual poem also challenges me as a writer, because it offers no easy solutions. Its open-endedness allows for exploration of idea, emotion, and action in a way that forces me, as a writer, to explore my own intellectual and emotional boundaries.
Bibliography


PART II
AUDITION

me no more
TO
LOGIC

trou-ble
one symmetrically surrounded

WINDOW

mp
r. h.
l. h.
designed for seeing
details invisible to the naked eye
This surface is opaque
the same part of the sky

(\textit{div.})

’vey\_\_ f\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ my\_\_\_ d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Oh
letters, I sent you back
For Shame

“And no matter what they tell you
girls, there’s an evil in everyone.”
Van Morrison

1. Breathless

Emergency room light stabs. Adrenaline prickles knotted flesh.

Gloved hands strip her, jab needles at a vein until one point slides in.

Red anemones rise in the IV tube. Blue spreads under ashen skin.

She knows the place to trade one death for another. Where love is air

and simple bliss, delivered in a public room on a wheeled bed.
2. *Diversion*

Her hair is tangled. Tubes go in or out. An oxygen mask hums her to sleep.

He watches vaguely at first, reads the chart. Touches her shoulder as he slides the gown aside. She opens her eyes.

A young man, an intern, he says. And when he’s finished washes his hands. Her breasts have some lumps, he says. Has she ever had sex, he wants to know. Writes on a clipboard. Leaves her alone, as the slice of tongue, probing fingers, bind oxygen to sex.
3. *Cicatrix*

The jeweled handcuffs please her. She paints her nails to match. Manacles enforce mincing, lady-like steps.

Earrings dangle, suspended from stoppered ears. Sweet music is the only thing she hears.

Her voice is tidy, a whisper of disuse. His eyes reflect on her shiny red shoes.

Each iris is a spider’s web, a baby blanket, the bars of a crib.
Partial Sets of Ordered Pairs

*This is a poem with its jaw wired shut:* two emigrants, using arts to escape, conceal themselves between humble students and pretend to desire. Their immigrant glimpses into passion and distortions of physique have never been shown.

*a poem, blindfolded:* imagine the singular device we are privileged to watch. How far we remember the impression, and devise clever semblances of a man: as a mother or wife, he is not very beautiful, though we cloak each distasteful influence and falsify his perfume.

*or in leg irons:* articulated proofs of fire, finely-muscled and arranged in flight, impel us to grace. Rendered illusively flawless, they engender grief in our veins.
The room is papered with departure.

Cotton panties at the seaside, white as sails, he wore them on his head for the picture. I didn't know what to say when he flashed that grin and his girlfriend's red tube-top on his flat chested frame, her shorts tight above his hairy legs. Lipstick blurred his face. Yellow with age.

What does it mean for something to be true? Gaudy handwriting obliterates the page. In the future you won't memorize the silences among endless icy regrets. Everywhere, without knowing it, we suffer time.
Perhaps I was crazy.  
I don't intend to argue.

There's another instance  
to substantiate. The system of error,  
structure's inversion, worries my senses  
of reason and absolutes.

Ah, the genera.  
With division, more can be  
said: I'm in exquisite pain,  
he told me as he held me

or did I hold him?  
Besides,  
ex nihilo  
apex mentis.  
What could I do then?
Dysphasia

Structure eludes me, the wild animal struggling toward thought, in love with the rhythm of form.
Shapes overlap, undefined.
I am their common denominator,
at the intersection of eyes.
My ears hesitate.
A raptor waits, graceful, to pierce the movement of sound.
Its talons shore my absence, make hollowness a charm.
Wrap me in a white cocoon
Hide me in your arms
Conceal me in a silver shadow
Carve a rune on my chest
Bind my limbs, chain my hands.
Tie my fingers into prayer

The Spring wind sang.
A flower's dew on her branch
Honeybees stole her pollen.

Radius

The fragrance of desire became acid to my flesh.
My skeleton became a wind chime.
It was given to the elements.
Remark .2
One language is spoken by more than two travelers.
Open-ended. Solution not provided.

a.
Suppose love is arbitrary.
Eliminate motions. Increase visual angles.

Then simply observe the sequence of error relative to any act. If X is passion, then the classical density points of X coincide.
This is so because

If X is eloquent, stronger than what I was, it follows easily that the sequence of number 0 is delight.
b. Finally, with splitting number (X) show sublime points of X. Thus the sum converges the center of the spine.

Suppose that your hollow ball was standing quite still.

Many transparent globes, sphere after sphere. Worlds, something like our own. Rings which were not exactly, but very nearly, circles. Watch the stars carefully.
c.
The invisible sun.
The sun’s face as a telescope.
This is not at all certain.
See that it is
always changing. In a day
or two nothing solid
to put your feet on.

At the margin of the dark moon,
chromosphere with red flames.

Now that we have seen a rough
plan. Forever scorched, covered with dark
clouds and rain, as they seemed to you at first.
A line drawn through the last few stars,
the sub-elements of surface assemble
the proximity of steady rest,
shaking a small sieve with one hand.
Restricted Probability

1
A face stretched over contours of bone is peculiar in formation. Your life is visited on you, an apparition. It occurs in the mind.

Take infinite measure aligned with infinite space. Do they converge to zero? These problems vex me.

2
Tongue encircled with brain. Bones in funny places. One who’s been turned inside out doesn’t know. All the body’s light gathered around the eyes: blinding.

In the ruinous whirl of schismatic rhythm, I am your secret, your bad girl seeping through crevices vaporized. Your compulsive pen could restore my fingers, clarify elbow or skin. Tell me again limit is form.
S = total surface area

SOLIDS

Parallelepiped: all faces are rectangles

\[ V = lwh \]

Rectangular Pyramid

Regular Pyramid

Lateral area of regular pyramid

\[ A = \frac{1}{2} (\text{perimeter of base}) \times \text{slant height} \]

Right prism: bases in parallel planes, other faces rectangles

\[ V = \text{area of base} \times \text{height} \]

Radius, \( r \)

Right prism, regular:

\[ V = Lh \]

Regular pyramid:

\[ V = \frac{1}{3} Bh \]

This great hatched is a reined a.

Regular pyramid:

\[ V = \frac{1}{3} Bh \]
Helen

Your husband, left alone to wander the broken hallway, describes circles to avoid the bed you shared.

Candles warm the evening air. His icy armor reprises your angular moods.

In his memory, chain-mail gives way to silky weave, flaxen hair draped over shoulders.

Anxiety drives him to a far corner, that specious turn: invert foundation of disbelief.

This side of faith, language is exile; a veil. One pale ribbon remains,

marking the ruse of perpetual quest. What am I avoiding saying?

I don’t want to acquiesce. I quiver when his heart aches, tuck him into bed.
Jealous Elegy

No lover’s roses crowd my table,
Helen. I need your well-worn talents:
the grace of polished claws,
glamour wrapped like a shimmering stole,
gems set in abundant gold
on your full, white bosom.

I coveted your curled, pale hair,
the rich, red smile that broke
when you laughed;
now you are aloof
as a fold, blank and hidden.

Gowns that flattered you
mourn behind a closet door,
forgotten. Bewildered lovers
throng the traces of your exit,
clamor for your luminous voice.

Do painted wings still decorate
your bedroom walls? Are all the books
I loaned you lost? The face dissembled
in your mirror is a puzzle;
the spike-heeled shoes you wore, too tight.
Inverted Voyage

I. Over a Deep Blue
   Cloud

She scans the fickle line
between sea and sky. No mirage
swims in view, buoyed by salt
or other soluble crystal.

Arcane handcuffs subvert her
furtive monument: thin, childlike smoke
housing one
unbounded moment.
A lightning storm will be her guide
Flame
A truth container is circuit in use; torrent of wired memory, discharging sense.

Elusive tourist launched into surf, the ferryman rends words from yesterday’s orbit:

Air
Forsaken seer, do you recall
the sound of laughter
or only sigh to ease your anxious dawn?

You slowed time by adding
zero to a number. Rhythm was born
in that unmeasured moment. Stranded
castaway, tracing ash and sand:
why yield? Every journey
to blank mystery slips
a mumbled hex.

Voyage without motion.
The universe is more finely spun
than any story.
II.  Beside the Seawall

Book
Stitching loosened, edges crumbled, spine frayed: the capsule of narrative floats away. Unbound pages flutter against an opening seared shut.

No boundary abides unmarked. Obscured writing persists beneath the weave; breathes shallow; inspires mottled phrases, clever lies.
Body
Mostly space and saline,
she wears a skin over fur and fold;
a second layer to baffle every voice.

A knot at the base
of the skull; tangled
ball of red twine; veins
disjoined, then twisted.
Convoluted cerebellum,
snarled traffic light.

Why is she afraid?
A wound
at the base of the spine,
a knot in the womb.
A spasm stitched, sealed.
A big not:
the core of her sex.
Boat
All raincoats leak.
The hero is dead.

Her quivering fingers
unadorned. Feet shod
in foxtails, tongue furry
with debris. She talks
like a daemon.

Her brave white horse steps
into the aqua element,
walks far under until
the only phosphorescence
is a long-tailed eel.

At the surface she calls his name,
but he can’t hear.
III. Under an Orange Sky

Peninsula

A weeping tractor plows its harvest into ground where fossils linger. Its fleeting shrieks bounce off cliffs, as gulls dive the raucous coast. The ocean curls a secret in an ear shaped shell.

Coughing dolphins hesitate. A craft floats slowly near a beach, fate-spun.

Perambulating waves propel it in the briny drink: token of the hero eroded by what he knows, pared to a shameful phrase.
Inlet
Light rises, silent above a clouded bay.
One breathes here, becoming flint.

Barren coastline rimmed
by rock and scrub, she squints
toward some horizon. Shadows cross

her cheekbones, sharpened
to a totem face.
Above the sullen shore, she waits

as if it were her doom to be kept
waiting. Silently,
from under brush,
a mood snakes toward her.
*Delta*

Mute sun ripples water.
A quay stems glowering sand.
Blue smoke rises from the bank.

A vessel bumps, lightly
nudged into dock

where apparitions stray
to seductive transparency.

Nearby, a river tunnels,
repressing a recurrent dream.
The torque of wish and famine
    “Zwar war es nicht.”
    Rilke (II, 4: The Sonnets to Orpheus)

The virgin turning
before the mirror caught sight:
a mythical lover
silvery white, born from her touch
breathing into the possibility
of desire.

Her fingers glide the sheen
and precipice of breathlessness.
Her breathing falters
as she rocks.
Her hobbyhorse is strange.

She knows his faults
and emptiness.
Still she rests
within the mirth
and delay.
Anatomy of a Sibyl

Dusky pearls of crimson smoke congeal. Her face is a blackboard, disrhythmic metronome's tic.

The fine wrought cerebrum oracular, soft recess dissolved in raptured trance. What seems blue only reflects blue light, the way you absorb her glance.

Brain twists swirl, dance nerves from spine to limb. The house is falling, its root cellar crowded with floor shadows, cold in bliss.

Near the border, black stones ridge to an algae-filled lake glaciers carved. A hush of cyan light precedes the snow of roses that dilate her piercing eye.

Obscure sentences crowd her tongue, prickle like facets of a prism, compress the anterior edge of a frangible transparent sheath.
Enclosed in a series of loops, her aorta arches upward, forward between a narcotic arc of wings and hissing golden octaves.

Fringed with antennae, the recurved tongue hooks a flower corolla, sips absinthe-green nectar.

Membranes translate the inner wall of the honey chamber: the triangular plate of the sting is a mirror, a fiber attached to cranial walls, bent back on the surface – the organ of flight.

In a maze of delusive beauty I caught an atom and opened it, drank the nervous wine.
Quizzical

You're right. I'm a phantom,
the photon's delight, a chromatic
mirage. You don't have to look
at me. I can be naked

in a crowd. Perhaps I'm your figment.
Be that as it may, some mind
exists for itself.

Inhabiting a monster
inheriting a dwelling or quirk. What can I be?
I have nowhere to wander, and a road
beneath worried feet.

Inmost once, we spill out
to ugly ambitions expanded to nothing,
molecules parted by spin. We orbit a vortex.
Our eyeholes leak
elixir of music and absorb
all our time.
What it feels like

She hides behind mirrors,
deflecting a cynical gaze.
Reflection as armor.

Some call it prophecy.
Her smooth, supple skin
lean as a battle cry
leading the enemy to her men.

They told her
inscribe the body
with everything ordered
and infinite.

Her mind is a phantom castle,
abridged irrational;
a high-pitched ache,
the nerve's continual scream.
The difference between what we hear and believe

Creation billows. We cook it down to words. What is it like closed in your own private train following perverse tracks?

Unease settles around your shoulders, squeezed by the sky’s towering precipice: calm gray air, insolent vapors.

Your tendrils suck nutrients out of humid atmosphere. Rooted against the ground you hover moist as fog yourself steering into emptiness.
A parody on mathematics.—Later a reasonable meaning to contradiction.

Visually irritating.

How is it possible to have a concept not be application?

Could imagine this. Why should we say: learn to speak mathematics.

Never appeal to mathematics at all.

Why does it mean another? What can occur has no end.

Calculation belongs to the performance of words in a form of blessing. A particular technique from the performance of a ceremony.

Can also imagine procedures to alter which is invoked in my uncertainty.

Is this case like mistrust the experience technique graphic.

In order to make miscounted predictions, but no proposal.

How is it possible calculating never is easy enough.

The attitude that this proof could be so automatic.
What does it mean to obtain a new concept of the surface? Does it mean looking at the signs, another feeling, another way of interpreting mathematics and returning to the original meaning? How is it justified? Does it mean reading out another sense of the signs, that appeal to the mathematical application of the game as supposed to the concept of the sphere? Only if another way is supposed, not another sense, another method of the concept, that appeal to the joke in a hurry, the illusion serves to ask this question.
Tongue is mischief

1
I have sworn: the phrase is out of my mouth. My bones are vexed like a sharp sword's innuendo. I was as a green olive tree. Is my name polluted? Will storms flow out and skies pour down through the rivers? Shall they overflow as a thick cloud, these transgressions, and as a cloud, my chagrin?

Imagine lies; that a line has gone out like a bird, without cause. That sound is the burden of promise.

2
Mouth full of cursing, keep silence. Let my eyes behold hills. What shall I cry? All flesh is grass. Who can number the clouds' cunning work? We love devouring words. Whimsical tongue, let my sentence come forth from your presence, avowing a feast of brief answers. They will hum as the voices of wings, great currents becoming a proverb or song: Tarry this night and comfort my bruises; make my wilderness like my desert, like the garden the entrance of your words.
Early Mapmaking

Flanked by a mountain range, the Euphrates flows through a delta inscribed on a clay tablet map which is older than writing. Over two hundred miles to the north, in a chamber overlooking the belief that love equals romance, pungent aromas haunt letters of extravagant device.

The view is arcane: encircling bands of cynical saints and delicate, engraved misinterpretation. Where maps are first made is not praise, but obscured understanding.

When Ptolemy’s eight thousand places disordered circumference, vagrant floods eroded your mouth. Organs of voice and respiration wore straits in the primeval face. Each ear captivated vibrations.

One path to the river was a scatter of sound. Another tasted of water and haze. Your hand drew crucial traces, followed by a rhythmic incline. Faded and creased, your body quelled mine.
A Return to Private Darkness

In the mirror, the ceiling moves like slow clouds across a sunny sky, that the mirror of my heart, etched by the shadow of your face, remembers.

In the mirror of my eyes possibilities spark like fireflies: a mirror of dirt, of dust, sand and ashes, holy fires gone astray, flesh burned, broken teeth.

In the mirror of my eye the ceiling cracks and opens to a sky of clouds, a slow moving procession: a cloud of feathers, butterfly wings, tree bark and wet fur, the termite’s secret color and rusted tin that pierces the heel of a child.

A blue and white truck crosses the gully that collected refuse from a house that doesn’t exist now.

Yesterday, I bought your confession with a bottle of red wine. Today, all I can taste is your salty skin.

I want you to tell me a story that violates. Tell me a story of violation, and violence. I somehow feel intimate, as if I’d washed your clothing by hand.

In a dream you asked me to stab your heart with a knife until it was a pulp, because women are familiar with the smell of blood, but I would rather thrash my hands against a stone.

A woman in motion can’t wait for anyone. In private darkness I number our masks. The cruelest is the one you wear when you love me. Do you know if all men, familiar with the smell of women, wear mirrors in their eyes?
Scheherezade

"... the house shelters daydreaming,
the house protects the dreamer,
the house allows one to dream in peace."
Gaston Bachelard

There are spiders on the walls,
on the ceiling. Two days ago
a lizard was in my bedroom.
The minute hand moves
slowly. I am a dead weight.
My eyes flicker
as I breathe. I want to sleep.

(I remember wearing a seafoam
green sheath. I sat on a tall chair
and observed. I was bored.
Finally he took me
to the back room
of his house.) Now I long for
irregular rhythms,
sprawl across my bed, and a breeze,
like an incubus, enters my window,
caresses my dress. My legs
open as the afternoon turns
hot and airless. Thunder
cracks in a dark cloud.
I can barely move; only listen
to birds, cars, machines.
My house is silent.
I half remember your voice. Sometimes
I burn mementos, transmute you
into fantasy. And you?
You prefer history to love.
Your house is a scrapbook
of the women you have
wanted. There are ways
distance is a gift.

I might be Penelope, weaving stories:
My body belongs to me.
Birds in trees sing blues for me.
Coyotes remind me of you
when they wake
me at night. The moon is my only,
lonely love.

Outside my dwelling
the sun is a pale white disk.
Its elegance mocks me. It knows
I lied when I told you I came
to be saved. I seek to be destroyed.
I am the faithful bride.
Fervent Axiom

Inside a cypress, listen to wind in the leaves, consider the sun. Maybe words are too close, say too much, but leave out everything.

Husk of a person, dust and tiresome memories; my name is Anxious now, Hollow or Discontent. I can't settle anywhere. Will you disremember me?

Green or some other shade by a stream. Small stone in a river bed, worn flat and smooth. Defenseless, the muscular organ divides into four smooth, glistening membranes. At the upper border of irregular form, an auricle obscures every orifice.

Your eyes devour light, but you can't see the future. Will you slough off each self until you are only a forecast? Forget you should be.
base \times altitude

\text{Slant height}

does not need to be

\text{bases in parallel and all angles equal}
Red Riding Hood

She rests alone in a field of spiky grass and moonlight. Not far away, turtles doze. Abandoned there, you will not see her from the highway. Bones, a mesh like steel gauze, hide her keening. Pollens drift across her face.

She sleeps despite the noise of arteries, fresh with wounds; the snoring cattle; the crimson gaze of bloodied wolves.

Red cape beneath her, vital signs diminish as she waits for some thin wire, unwheeled,

where phantom children lie, to find her, rouse her dreamless cry.
For She Who Lures the Sailors

I'll comb my long gold hair like sunlight
on murderous waves, transmit the siren song.

At the mercy of my own nature
relentlessly seductive, I'll show you a face
you don't know

in my mirror. The silent ocean breathes for you. Jealous
fingers trace your neck, reflect silvered limbs.
At sixteen

Bleached blonde by the hot sun.
Dark-rimmed eyes, blue shadow
smudged. Lithe body struggling
against purer motives.

She asked me
to pose with her. Her sister’s husband
wanted pictures of two blondes
naked by a tree.

I was her closest friend.
The sloe gin fizz tickled
my brainstem as she stretched
sleek legs, waiting for response.

Afternoon light crept
through the window. I sipped
my drink, watched her
undressing me.
The value of indolence

Picture a hollow-eyed girl: too much make-up on her face, ambulances everywhere. Police cars screen the accent of her sigh.

The hottest fires burn underground in pools of transient fragrance. What's the point of trying your pleasure?

Lie down in a white forest. Extract the trembling from your sinews. Tie the shuddering sky. Wrap the murmur of crows and doves into a package of sleeping yesterdays.

Take what is half seen and extend it to shadow. Build a vault to house indifference: thick curves of haunch will guard your heartbeat if you dare.

What unearthly luminescence retreats from your anxious stare? How will moons begin to glow in that forbidden landscape?
The soothing necessity of work

This blank sky requests no answer; turbulent atmosphere in varied grays, content

as heedless ground absorbing.
Lavishly, the jasmine blooms

and trees exude pure oxygen, the upshot of physiology. Beauty is not enough.

We need a truth. Some fact however corrosive. I can't merely love you. I have to suffer your shame, prepare avoidance, analyze.

. When October visits, our veins will sing: sins are most pleasant. Until then, we barter ashes, mark daylight with chalk.
Fig. 9-3. Direction of Aligns for Open Targets.

The Open classification is applicable because, as the Assay is performed, the Plug can be directed at an angle. Start the Insert before the...
more experiences of how a man thinks.

Fascinating stories of how a man thinks.

Satisfying existence from a wrecked ship.

Understanding the problem at a glance.
The Indifference Curve

1
Outside our bedroom window, this part of your body, the shapes of the curves as they stray in the wrong direction, making love some form of punishment or else an accident, brief interval, delicate shadings on dark floors, temporary craters, bursts of jealousy sweetly eroticephemera; seldom a slow obliterating, circular serenity.

How shall I tell love that closely strikes?
When the sky is very clear and the lightning favorable, eyes interpret. Our dome is seamed by strange, parallel-colored facts: the restrictive shape and verdant wavelength are damaged mountains of the moon. Neither sleep nor rest had to be abandoned; no dust-storms, nor ordinary winds.

2
In her arms, he watched: contour lines and indifference curves inverted bowl shape, subsided rings. Cooling skin with the meaning of his own act a harrowing sin: panic and grief illuminated.

They wish, undiscernibly. So many almost heart-broken sensations offer a fine emerald light, an icy lunar arc. Each unnecessary lie, inverse square law tastes of quarrel and walled plain, underground intrusions from the nerve system of an eye: the optic nerve surface tapers toward a summit through some unfortunate term with scarlet cheeks and the innocent bed.
Tilt Control

Weepings, severe whippings, a sentimental scolding, hysterical transgression, a thousand absurd renunciations: a place of danger and decline. The only way to fact: this part of my body illustrates the inaccuracy of both saturation and hue, moisture and ice. Where the magenta and wide swinging masses of flowers, submerged rocks and currents, in nearly equal quantities, slide into position. His hands were his, upon my shoulders.

A strange idea intoxicated me. My face, this misconvergence, could be a defect in the winding pulse; respiration, now paler; allusion, presented to the eyes, undone: reversed couplets framed by hair. At first sight, inner lines marked off degrees and minutes, inflected frenzy. A signal from these spheres calls for a slight surgical blue and horizontal tilt control of fish, flowers and fruit.

In a closed vessel, erosion leaves a scar as warning; a sensation of colorless errors, of tight clothing and overheated electrical landslides. Counterclockwise, the spectrum of luminance was near my face.

Roots of lovage and seeds of wild reason, in the nature of things, wisely reply in the air and leave no trace. When evasive voltages converge, truth depends upon pure thought because the observer's eyes, fiery circuits, sweeten to taste.

To believe; to imagine or admit troubled water, we invent pictures in blue lateral cylinders. I deceive myself with his mysterious helical lip, the agency of his eyes and this coupling: Before you hit the curve, save your life.

I will long, opening and closing toward a distant shore. A good disguise, to kiss and hold hands.
thievish

"Don't say I never warned you, when your train gets lost."

Bob Dylan

The heart, pervading its own sensations, fills with frost, regretting infinitely more than I have forgotten. I watched

all night: his hands thrilled to long solitary tracks. His body trembled with the abject curiosity of dreams and errors.

Leaning on a windowsill, his mind singled out odd or extravagant notions from eccentric facts of life. The scaffold of a universe shining through the trees disrupted him. His secrets,

I will carefully exclude. Disastrous methods overexcite and prematurely

arouse: stealing knowledge through perception, fervent indulgences arise.

Exiled tenderness: needles, sharp as love in a hundred fragments.
Perfect Circle of Smoke

As I wait, intimately violent, daring to interrupt, the margin of a dark word
in my brain; fierce red ocean of veins.

The boy in question exists
only as a memory fracture: abrasion convulsed by our first, our only intoxication.
The night air makes me fluid. We, who dream of three

strange things in a glowing vapour, disorganize the sinister
question, abandon circular form and bury, in feverish crimson, a savage desire

for the unknown. I remember one night
a border arose between us: snares and scourges, thorns

in our eyes. Saturated with orange-flower essence
stolen from the roughest element of spring, we were
as a richly ornamented jet of fire. Exalted,

the flame was overlaid with gold. The fruitful vine, an arrow in your hand,
an image in your bed, I shall be.
In this text, as in a dream,

there is no entrance.
Some people lose their thumbs in accidents
and others, born without,
choose to buy or steal them.
Ecstatic, they know nothing
nameless. Their ragged hands pacify
broken, mute repairmen. Some things must be
displaced. Exalted impulse (love or anger), like a fish eye
with the lens removed, bears lacerations. Our eyes
pretend. These errant tendencies
yield undulation rhythm. Perplexed, cleft spirits, we
speculate: are good and evil
followed by death? In this dream, as in a text,
there is no exit.