



1889. Angerstein's in spirit of golden Claret.  
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*For Ronald Johnson*

shambles this way  
antipodean being  
come full circle  
sparks in darkness  
lightning'd eternal return  
flipped the ecliptic

*(To Do As Adam Did version)*

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# Introduction

*"The Divine is not only the shapeless abyss into which everything sinks, although it is that abyss too." - Gershom Scholem*

Apocalypse is a trial. Apocalypticists attempt to nail it down in set definitions, relying on either its etymology as revelation or its common use as a referent to something called The End Times. Others swim in the gentle seas of genre studies, merely pondering the various iterations manifest in Judeo-Christian(-Islamic) theology / history. Then there are those who only manage to get lost in the materialist / fundamentalist interpretation of Apocalypse (whether they be Fundamentalist folks of whichever religious persuasion, or atheist Black Metal and Goth folks... it's often difficult to tell the difference between them, on paper anyway). Few engage the poems themselves in practice, as a practicum, a set of maps—means revealing ends in themselves; meditations on dying before you die individually, collectively; revelations of the personal End Times second to second calling us home. The Old World ending, New World beginning with each breath colliding forever one into the other forming ever newer worlds; so many Golden Cities before our eyes, every one of us. The Christ, the Mahdi, Maitreya Buddha, the King of Shambhala cutting us down and rendering us in their embracing wuweiwu building walls with no stones or wood out of the gold of our hearts binding the nafs in the Second Opening of the Rock Door.

*"Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also shall keep you from the trial that is going to come over the entire inhabited world, to test the inhabitants of The Earth." - the Apocalypse of John, 3:10*

All of these images, the holograms of our attempts to understand the inexplicable truth of our existence: Indra's Web, the Cosmic Christ, Nur Muhammad, Dharamkaya. Scrape off the accretions, the cultural overlays, the languages used, the descriptions... at its bottom the Apocalypse of John (or the legends of Shambhala or the Mahdi, the stories of Ragnarok, the Vedas, etc.) vividly describes the painful joy of the end of separation—in all of its orgasmic violence—and the continual restoration of Balance and its synonyms: peace, harmony, justice, love. Your ego is the Beast, the Antichrist, and—in its intellect form—the False Pope, fighting every fight to maintain its superiority at the cost of everyone and everything else; but if it doesn't lose in life, it will lose in death. This the ego knows, hence its desperation.

*"Apocalypse is both genre and mode, and each is filled with power. Apocalyptic poetry, then, is language charged with the kerygmatic power to reveal sacred reality, in history and beyond it." - Peter O'Leary*

When it comes to a poem, genre is the language we can use in trying to begin to get a handle on how to talk about Apocalypse. Thousands of years of discussion, though, is a heavy weight for any poem to bear. Perhaps as a buoy? So like a buoy then, the genre of Apocalypse marks a place where looking can begin. But the work, the real work, is the process itself: writing-reading. Whether constructed from Spicer's furniture or Howe's library cormorants, the question is: how much Reality is breaking through the absence of the ego? How is the ego being absented? Is the Beast being cast into the Abyss, or is it Rising? Is the Antichrist defeated, or rallying its troops? Is the False Pope sundered, or dictating the poem?

So methodology is the foregrounding taste. The clearest books on mysticism primarily explain the spiritual ethics and methods, only referencing metaphysics, ontology, cosmology, theology, philosophy, etc. as part of praxis. The few useful books on metaphysics and the rest have traditionally been written for those already engaged in the ethics and practices of mysticism. It is no accident that the great Revealed (Apocalyptic) texts of spiritual history were poems (in verse or prose) written down by practical adepts: the books of the Bible, the Qur'an, the Bhagavad Gita, the Chinese Classics (Yijing, Daodejing, Zhaungzi, the Confucian books, etc.), all of the Sutras, et al. It is also no accident that many great mystics are poets (as the Sufi tradition and the Zen / Taoist confluence, among others, attest).

In the flowering of the Apocalypse, understood not in a metaphoric nor fundamentalist sense, but instead in a true sense, underscoring the breakthrough of Reality in every smallest increment of moment as the ego is absented, can we understand what poetry has always been: mysticism in practice.

## Note on the Text

Everything we did was intentional. A lofty claim. We organized this issue to be as challenging as possible to our own egos, to the readers' egos, to the egos of even the poets whose work is represented here. Apocalypticism requires this. We drew names out of a hat to decide where each poem would go instead of organizing it based on flow or notoriety or which poems we personally preferred. We did not list the names of poets until the end in the Biographies and Credits, allowing a partially blind reading and forcing the reader to ingest without fore-knowledge of whom they are ingesting and why.

Louis Zukofsky spoke of how a poet only writes one long poem throughout his or her life, inferring that each poem is connected and part of a larger whole, whether the poet chooses to realize this or not. We would ideally take it further and say that every poem ever written is part of a larger whole, that language and words, that creation in all of its forms is manifesting as pieces of a grander work. The idea that we are disparate individuals, unique and special, is something to be challenged and considered.

The poems we have chosen to publish all illustrate this in some way, even though the opinion of the editors does not necessarily represent the opinions or intentions of the poets.

Our cover is a painting of the Argonauts in search of the golden fleece. The golden fleece being symbolic of our ultimate end, to overcome the dragon of our nafs using the most powerful tool we possess, that is, language, poetics, disarming by subversion, creating and confronting the boundaries and brick by brick bringing them asunder.

There is a slight chance that what moments leave us breathless also open lies to our perception. I am not sure, though I appreciate the limits of my own knowledge. The breadth of understanding is a finite space, in which real time makes madness seem preferable to dissonance. The shock of being what we must be in a space that limits nothing and allows us to limit as we see fit. Strangeness. Lack of clarity. Under-

what we know.

The poem,  
then.

Tell us the  
poem.

[Part Two]

never one to limit my own chances i type words on paper instead of ideas to set my mind free. i am not sure that this is the best outlet for my own brand of madness. there are spaces and lines, back to the basic energy of truth and lies. tea brews in time, minutes to see the conclusion. the universe stretches out to receive the darkness, shifting red as time gets foolish and retreats from the reality. what is there but the poem? i started constructing careening but smiling dancing through time my love shifts red moves away slower or farther or both but not ready to

be.

i am unsure of what role punctuation will play in my eventual demise.

There is this moment, seeking you and loving the distance  
the pain of separation in spite of my resistance to the idea. Madness, again.

beyond what it means to love you i see a point in light reflected there is an energy to the search perhaps that means more to us than the final stanza. teaching children to love what is and strive carelessly for what may be. potential as a coda to the day rather than a quest. beyond what it means to be present there is a pause in being to allow for motion through

space.

|Poem| he

said,

|Poem constructed  
being as a vague premonition of  
unease|

I am  
though not

welcome,

a far distant voice crying to

continue.

Constructed, he said,

careening,

he said.

Drops in the sea.

Words

Words

Words.

It is curious that in realms of impermanence

words poems

hold meaning for me.

In realms of nothingness the

being  
is in language.

I have an iron will

proof that the gimmick can work

from the human to the animal  
from darkness to light

in my note-books I sketched the abyss  
the dung heap of inequality  
the beast moves into the mire of Eden

nevertheless  
my personality is fading away  
rubbing the impalpable  
overcoming my resistance  
insistently

able to live everywhere  
to improve in the everywhere

policy and carelessness  
skinned apartments  
rotten wood of worm-eaten chairs

shackling is a form of burial

reason and unconsciousness  
my devotion to these two grim sisters  
if only I could find a way  
to deal with them

without turning away from myself  
from the unreasonable friend

from the excellent madman  
towering above  
locked up  
bestial

image finds truly exceptional mirrors  
revealing the animal to the same beast

at least for the time of a glance

the taste of a ripe melon  
is the meaning of a moral dilemma

everything at once

Nothing says maelstrom like an oval.  
Every generation has a philosopher pushing  
a new drug. Three cheers for the mill-  
smashers of Nottingham, with skills to  
defend. As Heracles shot Ethon. As  
the magpie helps the devil carry hay.  
It was Ovid, not Zeus, who turned Philomela  
into a nightingale. Lucullus dined on  
the brains of nightingales. St. Kevin  
had a hand for blackbird eggs. Passing  
over the celestial road, vigorous. *Swifter  
than greyhounds and quicker than light.* A  
deceit of peewits, feeding by moonlight.  
The heart beneath the armor. Now we are  
a grandfather. While apes and gods adore  
him, the one who makes the moment to  
advance, goes deep into the cryptic history.  
It could've all ended with Judas Maccabeus.  
*All great truths begin as blasphemies.* Actions  
that go unnoticed were not committed in vain.

the mistake by  
marking re  
mark  
& able this list  
less headache  
or by heart's  
pressure longing  
fortitude the pillow  
mistake  
the broken breaking  
rhythm  
& breath

if there is  
pattern or a  
patterning the  
less despicable the  
less  
we can recall or  
only impress the  
feeling in vague  
inappropriate &  
ashen complexion  
dissolved & the  
question rings soundly  
& solid  
upon our eyes  
from the moment

& this  
knowing  
nothing  
of the  
breaking of the  
world  
asunder from the  
time  
when the  
forms rested &  
totality  
fostered  
the  
snap back

programmatically  
& programmatically  
speaking logos rhyme  
the ways &  
means blundering over  
the heart  
of possibility now  
one remaining

That the mail brought nothing this morning because last night  
I saw the full moon through a screen door and didn't open  
the screen door

That lilacs whoosh their fragrance toward us on purpose and the breeze  
abets this

That the orange koi rising from the murk of the pond  
pauses at the ladder's fourth rung  
for a reason

That forgetting the names of wildflowers is dangerous

That a heron flying low directly overhead answers any recent question with  
*Yes, of course, yes!*

That the date on a penny I find marks the year my life turned 'round

That a supernova explosion accelerates the openings of mystics  
and was accelerated by them

That the black snake trapped and strangling in my shed  
called forth the dream – a black snake free

Or would you have it that the things and moments of this world  
mean nothing, are as a semi's sixteen wheels singing and singing

neither to the deer dead on the shoulder nor the living ones  
timing their leaps

I agree  
with pink

and the inch of flame  
persuades me

that what the leaf claimed  
is true: The drop

of dew winked  
once

at me  
and once at you

Be where you are  
when you are Distilled  
and open-hearted

Then may the hummingbird  
hover close  
cool your brow  
eye to eye Concluding  
Yes  
is blossom present

And you will be  
and you will be spirit  
through stamen-delicate  
beak upsipped

and cast across air on the wings so  
quick they're  
every  
where

still

This is a river whose current does not release the swimmer  
until the hand of the delta splays its banks  
like a midwife's hand; this is the river  
I was warned to sit beside, breathing diaphragmatically.  
This is the river  
this is the river this is the bank I am the sitter  
on the bank of the river this is the riverbed  
this is the sky the river reflects this  
is the river the sky remembers  
this is the challenge the current the past  
the present the future this  
this is the path to the ocean.

I don't know if this is the path to the ocean.

Hold me so I know don't hold me let me  
go. Let me go. You are the bank I am the river.  
Saying no I leave you. Saying yes I leave you.  
This is the river whose current releases the swimmer  
only at the end of the river. This is the blue-grey  
birth. This is the path the surge the afflatus  
Whitman told about, and the procreant urge.  
Always. This is what I was to rise above.  
Fear, I rise above.  
Self-doubt, I rise above.  
Hopelessness I rise above. To  
have a moment an hour a night a life a moment  
in the current of you above and around me  
and the river that releases no swimmer.  
I am the riverbed ever under ever with you.

*Simplify your life: die! – Nietzsche*

1

Everything had been reduced to rubble. Come in, come in, the fog gestured. Your clothes disappeared somewhere in the files of the bureaucracy.

2

Over our cities, the sign outside the church said, grass will grow. The pink robes of angels flapped on the clothesline. Pilots called them flying coffins.

3

The system, arms outstretched like Jesus, was running down. Sometimes you awoke disoriented by the ordeal. You would spend the rest of the day sitting in a room peering nearsightedly at a blank piece of paper.

4

It's an old story, unless you never heard it. A paid assassin stabbed the queen in the chest, just missing her heart. *Child, child*, the queen said, *you can't kill what's already dead.*

A friend at work recommended  
black tea for fatigue  
& green tea for depression.

Sartre's last words were, *I failed.*

Like the ships of Ulysses,  
we're always being blown off course.

I hate tea.

caws sense  
Pan

tonat

'thunders'  
-- all the scents --  
('II. in hunting,  
the scent')

: hadu edhen

What birds  
populate  
--catch  
the mime--  
the trees

, pines, poplars; ...

A bliss of thrall

Hut to maze  
A craze--  
mirr'rs [meres], --

all of them

note at Hostia / a paragraph of Origen's quoted by Jung

observatory

(as w/

the stars

Time is of  
the external  
means, wound  
ing our bodies up  
and  
propelling them  
onwards down  
the line  
we march, hand in  
tandem swinging  
arms like pend  
ulums and ulations  
our minds tick talk  
ing in voices  
muted beneath  
the noise  
circadian ribbon  
winding round  
the quiet depths  
aswell and swelling

from *Break-Night Dawn*

I can't identify birds  
by their song or feathers  
I know the wild lupine by leaf  
other mountain marsh flowers

sap on my thighs  
my jean-thigh  
underside,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide  
light golden  
thick like a brush  
stroke of tree blood

pine needles longer than my fingers  
reddish golden brown

scarlet gilia, skyrocket

hawkweed

trillium

misplacement

others mint

a mint chutney

if there is enough

mild tea

delicately fragrant treat

many ailments

childbirth

lack

child

birth

breath

could I possibly

have named

these right

## Sixes and Tens

The Sumerians were smart enough to combine sixes and tens  
Their year was exact, their poetry  
Who knows if their poetry scanned?  
- Philip Whalen

Urine-stained volumes, pages crisp curves  
cheesy feeling to have the books here, image there  
hazards—proof of having gone after the always receding,  
phrases knocking bout the head, what for?  
nothing utilized : nothing gained

self-definition, call it copulation  
not “combination,” like forms take to like  
air of invention? Holds or doesn't  
no bother caring  
no getting round what's thought

aphorisms for those coming later  
drunk in mood of innuendo caught up in countless whodunit scenarios  
expenses of massive toil  
to what point?

Yes, it figures that you'd figure I'd figure to,  
so please don't.

All unholy gazooks  
poking your way into the scene when you might as well just launch out  
that terrible bother of entertaining visitors

just stop it.

from *Symphony no. 7*  
(detached resonating hour)

24

It is a hypothetical room  
where shadows cross  
the prime meridian  
within a midnight sun's angular cast  
it is a room  
where the obdurate flow of tinder ash  
settles upon the black arachnid's dormant limb  
it is a room  
where uncounted days recede  
along a spectral line of skewed dimensionality  
and linear rites of time  
abrade the sleeping eyes' averted gaze  
it is a room  
where ragged moth-eaten leaden emotions  
bleed through  
the heart's sinewy reticular skin  
and where a bell tower's isolating susurrations  
fills a starless sky's bottomless void  
it is a room  
where vanquished insentient flesh  
forms a bond  
with the hunger of an uncertain immortality  
and cataract-blinded eyes  
divine a universe  
rotting beneath the burgeoning alder limb

Threadbare reflections  
of the dissonant present  
and a clouded mirror  
where liquid-onyx eyes perceive  
the mind of one  
inhabiting the zero  
where the resonant sentience  
of unformed stones  
speak of the oracular quantum aura  
infiltrating the nascent zygote's amniotic breath  
where sinewy vectors  
of corporeal limbs  
swim within the cerulean hued translucent seas  
where pieces of an inert burning sky  
resolve the amorphous edge  
of a terrestrial night's gelatinous core  
and it is here  
that the burred and besieged primordial heart  
lies bled of a theoretical immortality's<sup>13</sup>  
lobotomized belief  
and prayers from a candle-lit room's evensong vigil  
fuse to the radiantly distant nebula's eye  
and it is here at dawn  
that weeds in an overgrown iris field  
shadow a vernal sun's frail attenuated embrace

# Acknowledgments

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Peter O'Leary for his wonderful essay, *Apocalypticism: A Way Forward for Poetry*, without which we would never have realized our obsession was a thing other people were also interested in. And for his ongoing encouragement.

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The poets who contributed. Reading all of this work that addresses Apocalypticism, the opportunity to connect with so many phenomenal poets, has been unreal. Alhamdulillah.

Poem on the dedication page is "Last Poem" by Ronald Johnson from *To Do As Adam Did* edited by Peter O'Leary (Talisman House, 2000).

And, of course, Toby Tenderfox, our own nine-tailed fox.

## Biographies | Credits

(pages 7, 8) RYAN BARKER is a native West Virginian who has lived and worked all over the world. He is currently hiding out in upstate New York teaching and writing. His poetry has been published in zines and reviews in the United States and the United Kingdom. When not teaching, he enjoys confounding his wife and children with revisionist folk tales, reading, and contemplating his next place of residence.

(page 9) ALESSANDRO CUSIMANO was born in Palermo, Italy, on July 2, 1967. He lives in Rome, where he is writer, poet, playwright. Anarchist and visionary, painful and surreal, his works reflect on anxiety, crush conventions and illusions, proclaiming, with a barrage of words, that life is, by its nature, a scandal. Appeared recently on the international literary stage, some of his writings have been published by *The Cynic Online Magazine*, *Decanto Magazine*, *The Recusant*, *FOLLY Magazine*, *Exercise Bowler*, *Streetcake Magazine*, *Bewildering Stories*, *Numinous Magazine*, *Deadman's Tome*, *RED OCHRE Lit*, *Orion's Child Magazine*, *Linguistic Erosion*, and *Black Cat Poems*.

(page 10) WHIT GRIFFIN is the author of *Pentateuch: The First Five Books* (Skysill Press, 2010) and the forthcoming *The Sixth Great Extinction*, also from Skysill. Along with Andrew Hughes he co-edits the journal *Bright Pink Mosquito*. He currently resides in western Tennessee.

(pages 11, 12) JEFF MILLER is co-editor of Lightning'd Press and has a proper bio written by Jamie Felton on the Lightning'd Press website. He's the author of *All of the Grace Poems* (Earth Books, 1996), *La Vie / The Polemics* (Earth Books, 2001), and a broadside of *The Ardor: Line 11* (Viatorium Press, 2009). Along with Ryan Barker he was the co-editor of the chapbook series *What Would We Do Without Us* (2001-2005). He's currently working on a long poem, *The Ardor*.

(pages 13, 14, 15, 16) E. K. GORDON lives near the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers in New York State and teaches creative writing to engaging geeks at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Born in a borough of Manhattan, she was raised in south Florida, schooled in Ann Arbor, and revised by North Philadelphia's "badlands," a story she tells in the nonfiction narrative *Walk with Us: Triplet Boys, their Teen Parents and Two White Women who Tagged Along* (CDD Books). She has recent poems in *Moonshot* and *Viral Cat* and will be competing at the Women of the World poetry slam in Denver (March 7-10). Say hi if you're there (I'm elizag).

(pages 17, 18) HOWIE GOOD, a journalism professor at SUNY New Paltz, is the author of the new poetry collection, *Dreaming in Red*, from Right Hand Pointing. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to a crisis center, which you can read about here: <https://sites.google.com/site/rhplanding/howie-good-dreaming-in-red>.

(pages 19, 20) STEVEN MANUEL, editor of *from a Compos't*, mailing address: 11 Cedar Ridge Dr / Asheville, NC 28806.

(page 21) JAMIE FELTON is the other editor of Lightning'd Press and also has a proper bio written by Jeff Miller on the Lightning'd Press website. Her poems have been published in various places online. They can be viewed from her website: <http://jamiefelton.weebly.com>. She is working on a zine of her earlier work entitled *Blackbird Singing*. You will be able to find it in unexpected places and online.

(pages 22, 23, 24) ERIN WILSON's writing has appeared in various places, including the journals *With+Stand*, *Typo*, *Bird Dog*, and *Artifice*. She lives in Berkeley, California.

(page 25) PATRICK JAMES DUNAGAN lives in San Francisco and works in Gleeson library at the University of San Francisco. His most recent book is *"There Are People Who Think That Painters Shouldn't Talk": A GUSTONBOOK* (Post Apollo, 2011), his other writing includes a plethora of book reviews (see: *The Critical Flame*, *Galatea Resurrects*, *Jacket*, *New Pages*, *Rain Taxi*) and assisting Iranian poet Ava Koohbor with translating her poems from Farsi (see: *Sinusoidal Forms* -Lew Gallery Editions-, *Big Bell*, and *Aldus*). "The Dalles, The Dailies" is expected to go up in *Shampoo* 40 this spring.

(pages 26, 27) RIC CARFAGNA was born and educated in Boston Massachusetts. He is the author of numerous collections of poetry, most recently *Symphonies Nos. 1, 4 & 6* published by Chalk Editions and *Symphony No. 2* published by Argotist Press. His poetry has evolved from the early radical experiments of his first two books, *Confluent Trajectories* and *Porchcat Nadir*, to the unsettling existential mosaics of his multi-book project *Notes On NonExistence*. Ric lives in rural central Massachusetts with his wife, cellist Mary Carfagna and daughters Emilia and Aria.