



Lightning'd Press | Issue Eight

Lightning'd Press
Issue Eight
Copyright 2014

so roareth handprint Lion/"there sits fire/with the forest in his mouth"

— Ronald Johnson, from *ARK*

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Poems	8
Interview	65
Acknowledgments	67
Biographies/Credits	68

Introduction

Summary: The Machine that drives us never was.

Ta'wil, without question, is a matter of *harmonic perception*, of hearing an identical sound on several levels simultaneously; "to bring back" the data to their origin, to their archetype, to their *donor*, there precisely where the apparent can be occulted and the hidden manifested, the real transmutation of what is written (whether in a book or in the cosmos), raised to incandescence and the hidden significance shines through, becomes transparent: the geography of a world that secrets its own light, the super position of worlds and interworlds, that secrets its own light.

The Machine that drives us never was. Secrets its own light.

Of Secrets
I am Silence

Light upon Light

incandescent coruscation
pillars of fire
on plinth flesh, named hymn

posture outright,
and every torrent sonorous
contagion evangelical

without asylum left, path
lift us to zenith
at length become fixed stars

*A mortal is about to see
the majesty of the throne ...*

The production of meaning is never production; there is no assembly or mass manufacture. There is the accretion of tradition, the stripping of ossification, in the subverting of sense for sense's sake to make sense.

Every poem a rewriting of every other poem attempting to write the Poem while writing the Poem.

We construct, out of every respite, a new foundation of the old foundation.

No one can sit upon the Throne save Who is already on the Throne itself save Who is the Throne itself and the Sitting.

The rhymes, the repetitions of the incantation, would hold the serpent power mounting in the work, to time it, "let it gather momentum, let it gather force." In

shaman rite and yoga rite men have come into heavens or crowns or nirvanas of a thought beyond thought, like the poet inspired, carried away by words until vision arises, as of the whole.

But this blowing one's top or the Taoist ecstatic's churning the milky way with his lion tongue is fearful. The snake in the spinal tree of life has made a nightmare of impending revelation for me for he wears still the baleful head of the diamondback rattler, the hooded fascination of the king cobra. The Nagas that sway above the Buddha's dreaming form keep my thought away from him.

For a moment this power, this would-be autistic force of the poem

Since you know that the forms they posit are not real, there can be nothing in the constitution except the intermediacy of qualities. Briefly, the difference between the constitution and corruption is that corruption is the total alternation of qualities, whereas the constitution is the intermediate of things combined. From this result the compounds: animals, plants, and minerals. Sould take loving delight in any mineral--gold or ruby, for example -- which has a luminous barrier and stability, by which it resembles the celestial barriers and their lights. It is dear to them by virtue of the perfection of its stability, and love for it is similar to the love for the luminous star.

“descend endless realms:
No broader numbered measure
Than man's mind

chariot beyond compare
mid silver shield,
and rolled on wheels of amber

strip I the wind on every side
clust'ring spheres upheld
far reason's ear

face to face sun
bare ashes, so blind an alley
assembled star by star

And by the saving graces: meander and meaning, the considerable taxing of the nerves, on the nerves, while trying to derive some intellectual sense of things underlying the syntax. No, substratum. No, crust or topsoil. No, sky or the starry spheres. The Sun itself does not, and can not, know with any certainty whilst the mind is active. There is no thing called life from which to construct shards or ruins.

But, shamefacedly, we hurry to rush into any lack of calm we can construct in order to further the delusion, to delude our selves, into thinking. And thinking makes the man. Monad charm, misunderstand and misapprehended; there are no mirrors. Disconnection is only a dream we fantasize of remembering.

You are not, and then everything else.

The Recurrence of Creation

the idea of recurrent creation, new creation (*khalq jadid*) calls the very nature of creation in question. There is no place for a *creatio ex nihilo*, an absolute beginning preceded by *nothing*. The existentionation of a thing which had no existence before, a creative operation which took place once and for all is now complete is a theoretical and practical absurdity. *Creation* as the "rule of being" is the pre-eternal and continuous movement by which being is manifested at every instant in a new cloak. The *Creative Being* is the pre-eternal and post-eternal essence or substance which is manifested at every instant in the innumerable forms of being; when He hides in one, He manifests Himself in another. *Created Being* is the *manifested*, diversified, successive, and evanescent forms, which have their substance not in their fictitious autonomy but in the Being that is manifested in them and by them. Thus creation signifies nothing less than the Manifestation (*zuhur*) of the Hidden (*batin*) Divine Being in the forms of being: first in their eternal *hexeity*, then--by virtue of a renewal, a recurrence that has been going on from moment to moment since pre-eternity--in their sensuous forms.

Nevertheless, we never cease to see what we are seeing; we do not notice the existentionation and passing away at every moment, because when something passes away, something like it is extentionated at the same moment. We look upon existence, our own for example, as continuous, past-present-future, and yet at every moment the world puts on a "new creation," which veils out consciousness because we do not perceive the incessant renewal. At every *breath* of the "Sigh of Divine Compassion" (*Nafas al-Rahman*) being ceases and then is; we cease to be, and then come into being. In reality there is no "then," for there is no interval.

Is this that? Let go. Sameness troubles me.
Table. Chair. Whatever. I know when I see it.

Things come and go. Think of Langlois
and the Cinematheque. Or the library at Alexandria.

These persistencies not of memory but the imagination.
Not what was lost. But that it was there.

Quotations, in order of appearance

"Ta'wil, without...", cobbled together from *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth* by Henry Corbin, various pages, translated by Nancy Pearson, Princeton University Press, 1989

"Of Secrets / I am Silence", *Bhagavad Gita* 10:38, translated by Narayana Maharaja, Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti 2000

"incandescent...", from *ARK* 88, by Ronald Johnson, Flood Edition 2013

"A mortal...", from "in this paradise" in *Terra Lucinda*, by Joseph Donehue, pg. 84, Talisman House 2009

"The rhymes...", from *The HD Book* by Robert Duncan, pg. 408, University of California Press, 2012

"Since you...", from *The Philosophy of Illumination* by Surhwardi, section 2:2:4, translated by John Walbridge & Hossein Ziai, Brigham Young University Press, 1999

"descend...", from *ARK* 79

"The Recurrence...I", from *Alone with the Alone*, by Henry Corbin, pgs. 200-201, translated by Ralph Manheim, Princeton University Press, 1998

"Is this that?", from "Last Poem" in *Kintsugi*, by Thomas Meyer, pg. 51, Flood Editions 2011

drop lets

(a silent cymbal)

Abelia fronds claim

the damp path ;
roots drench

puddles
splinter

pine trench
echoes
timber

rocking firs or

cone temples

near tarmac

- splash -
wings

grounded this

too-soon)

spring day

Who knows
Strawberries grow
green, then blush

in Spring's new
heat

shaded by Holly -

feet dangle
in the
panseyes

pots of Parsley
near hips
sits Rosemary, lush

by the busy
red-bud road
I eat

coconut
curry

at Dingle Creek

bare feet
on rail -

propped

chair
rocks

the long porch

mono
ton
ous

bark

D
R
I
P
S
D
R
O
P
S

cut grass
matted

to tar.

heaven
claps
the earth
with rain

in extended ovation:
an encore

of Life.

(the birds know
and keep tune;
winged splashes

amid pale
pink petals
(past prime

mimosas))

Thunder bows
against roof,

quaking.

In the lane:
 narrow stripes
 of parallel
streams

blood rushes
 heels
to knees,
 numbing

bare feet

on rail -

propped.

Lace flowers
line road-
side

sun song in ears
delight
cars pass
lyrics inspire

lane sways
(pen stays)

I write
drive
and dream

Wildly

We converse
 in
bed

fish-faced

 foreheads touch
tender

fingers in
 tendrils

dark curls
and au-
burn

locks

mingle

camuffare
pillows -

guessing numbers
 in head

we are
mind readers

(in bed)

he inhales:
mammal impulse

hushed bronchioles rasp
reverberate

ear to chest
sleeps-oured breath, his

exhale
(nose hiss)

lips rattle a
part
he sleeps

soundly, loudly

sometimes, and
oft times,
my head

to his
heart

--

A
fused
 macula
pinpoints
spirit

--

An
hourglass
 ergosphere
contains
sound

--

A
steamboat
 electronica
attacks
sound

--

And
then
 it
builds(itself
back

--

A
viridescence
 fuses
chaos's
cannon

--

A
human
 cannonball
loops
cognition

--

An
Alcatraz
 formation
researches
tidepools

--

A
fused
 macula
pinpoints
spirit

--

A
seized
 inmate
postulates
freedom

--

A
storage
 system
isadead
hero

--

A
drug
dealer
smacks
spirit

--

A
tinted
silence
engages
superfluidity

--

A
moral
crisis
speedsup
ministrations

--

A
vaccine
is
silvery
hypnosis

--

A
fused
macula
pinpoints
thickness

--

A
Kertesz
 equals
seven
equivocations

--

A
poisonous
 source
mimicks
spirit

--

A
psychic
 poison
mimicks
the)center

--

A
centaur
 mimicks
seven(unopened
skies

--

A
fused
 macula
mimicks
spirit

--

A
scintillating
 macula
embraces
spirit

--

A
suspect
discussion
curves
spaces

--

A
separate
turbine
affixes
raindrops

--

"And
violent
eruptions
of
selfhoods"

--

And
seven
whetstones
harrowing
sharpened-senses

--

As
quelled
protests
locating
spirits

--

One
erupting
macula
locating
spirits

--

A
fused
 spirit
granting
clemency

--

A
maelstrom
 equals
four
chalices

--

A
bridge
 equals
three
birthplaces

--

A
rose
 annihilates
two
of its own

--

A
fuse
 pinpoints
birdhouses
and liminal reveries

--

Our
fused
 macula
pinpoints
spirit

Morning evades you, veers
long-lost on a leaf path

We too have followed
this example

Receiving messages, you do not
respond immediately or at all

Those who pester
rap knuckles on the skin-tent

Your books' burnt crusts,
your children locked

The house plays tricks, making
only very slight changes

In what sense
did you conquer Europe?

You, author of the slightest
of books on the occult

Once a star-eater,
defender of fools

Now enforested, lost days
never made up for

Your former systems of delight:
to these we light a flower

here at the center

by blue comfort
handfed clouds

grow fat.our

skyblue pla-
centa.across

his blue off-
ice the buzz-

ard blazes.

a leaping treefrog my

heart.my heart is in
the highlands.is un-

der the homeless man's

bridge.is a cheap fri-
dge magnet.a month

long blizzard.a blue-

tongued lizard.the
boat in the bay.the

one that got away.

1

credit
card-

ace of

tur-
moil

2

the sp-
ent for-

ce of fin-

ance

to the cyclic generosity
of seasons wed we are:

frost's rudderless shudder
across the landscape of

winter slithers.drunk on

the fruits of fighting fit
spring.the panting heat

of summer.one here,
one there and there-

chestnut leaves

skydiving.

to broad
daylight

to bees even

(that next to
these haw-

kers of slim
pickings

on daylight
and peach-

blossoms
gorge)

blind

we are

religiously dan-

gling that litt-
le mirror glass

bead technolo-

gical wonder-
land carrot

the errant and the flippant
walk as a bad ass
hip-hopping in every quadrant
the fellas and their peccadilloes
linger so sassy
changing fedoras and libidos
protectors and hell-abaters
resurrect artistry from the morass
and liberators shun the desecrators
the tavern a city of sprawl
one out of ten is an unusual lass
genius smokes in the mustard-lit pall
up from the bottle strangled from the pedestrians
the halves mix consecrated ash

In face-to-face conversation
a talker's actions &
motions are interactively
synchronized with the
other talker's speech
& are seen as a routine
part of acrostic poems

unlike those so-called
"synchronized" Masses
which operate implicitly
as if humans do not
exist, or the composite
gamut mapping of men
who ordinarily dismiss
women in action roles.

Why do drug companies
hide unfavorable test
results when there are
already conflicting results
from electrophoresis &
histocompatibility in the
ontological structure?

Any history of man-
animal interaction
catches the spotlight
as an imagined
threat. We speak of it
only in images &
parables, focusing on
known conditions
of life rather than the
mental architecture.

Dear Emily

It was a day to remember those who were killed in war. We have so many new roles to play. Glass-like properties appear at low temperatures integrating the latest research in neurobiology & psychology. Now there is an impetus to move in this direction at all levels. Upstairs in the vast tower, with its hip roof of walnut shingles & a central cupola, one of the oldest Federal number crunchers is increasing the number of trained midwives. Pretty & fashionably dressed, ten young girls who look the very embodiment of confident modern womanhood have gathered to brainstorm an affordable permaculture housing project. The front-end instructs the back-end on the redshifts of their home galaxies. Police say the shooting was not politically motivated. The letters from Mozart to his family are arranged alphabetically.

Crawling over taut bulb
Swaying by seasons tend

Stale designs strip
Violently begins to suck

Hinges mulch
A dent turning hollow

Then, plunges forbidden shade
Of hunger's ration

Crystalline and watery
Like Swedish snow

And the rind silently heals
As the rate of newborn cells

Crowd the opening
Without knowing

Heavy grace

Earth drops from plane
Into misty shadows
Of heavy payloads

Under a sun
Into we were dropped

As feathery meteors
Silent forces move
Us ever away

I helped build a city
To see it drop

From the quick fuse
Atoms fusing when dropped

Still sore from first fall
When little core was dropped

Every autumn is not
The end of sunny days

Royal boy fell
And a beautiful maniac built a city

Everything seems to fall
Or dropped

when the splintered night
demands stoned neighbors cut the volume

or call the police

against drunk, noisy
rowdy, lewd, drug-dealing
veiled fire

go ahead
offend the Beast they worship

* * *

a negative calm
unseen witness

makes no statement

they'll notice

* * *

discrete moments of peace
are holy love
as we are

if they would only do likewise

"did you really rob that bank?"
she asks on the squeaking bed

of exile, where
I'm not returning

the perfection
defiled

Their Hands Shall Not be Weakened
From the Work

as prayers of thanksgiving and praise
joy and chill astonishment
respond intuitively

* * *

where is she now?

1

In the marrowbone of night, your song
lifts the fog.

I never knew the secrets entrusted there.

I never knew that cinders and steel
could lie so passionately and still

believe that the watchman's hours would evaporate
and leave us scratching for more.

I have stolen time.

The windows remain closed and shuttered.
Even the wind turns away.

The track narrows.

You call.

Again.

2

Sometimes song seems the only respite,
the rhythm of clashing cars

and moments stretched beyond the next bend
to that point where light winks out.

We both know this lonely tunnel.

Payment is due.

I have always exited alone.

3

Another evening, and red smoke completes the horizon.

Your ribs stretch for distance,
and while I cannot see their end,
I know by sound
their fate.

Sing for me.
It is not
too close.

Signs and symbols when the bird fell yes it did
before the feet of many
And the black air beneath her eyes came to her as writing
as a text to read
And she repeated with the echoes of scripting chorusing
She chimed two tones:

My we love please bringeth the peace that resides
My we love please watch with thine eyes to this day

If the wheels come to a halt they will just with sound carry

She's in no quick hurry but circumstance unbeknownst
she's planting with a bare hand hacking remorse away
she's a worker in the day
with no mentioning otherwise:

Why are you so close to me with the shine that is blinding,
that there is no divinity oh I say to you in waking day
I say run your carriage the other way my property unwelcoming

Salve
(*a Southsea broadside*)

mary

rose

Three Trees

the hart of the wold
oak

the edge of the wood
beech

the end of the world
birch

Not the Porpoise Itself
But My Relation to the Porpoise

Because my elbow is soft
it is the pivot of which

I place, I place it
on the desk of hard wood

and soft fiber – I can draw,
yes, the porpoise (I can)

without knowing the looks
or likes of it, as it

under rippled waters moves
a muscle to me

and grinds my teeth and oils
me, my mouth with the musk scented

flowers around the fountain
and goes daily into action—

the setting of a play

an arrangement
the sons knew
by heart

to play anew the setting
of a son's

play-by-heart

(the sons knew

& went

with--

the best fileted plans:
nice ties
sure ties
please sure ties

O divine incident/study/motion,
where to go from here?

There is a fire, there
are dollars performed,
there is a crowd
of onlookers expecting

You don't know. And
that's because you
came to this out of
deep sleep, like the
rest of us. You give
and sink back,
give and sink back

Oviposited. You must
be resting now. And
we're waiting, in our
leathery skins

If you love sandflies, bring in damp
firewood. I swore a lot and gesticulated
wildly. People thought
I was the director. Delphiniums to my left.
Instant possum. Gummy
bears in the country sun. Winter
dream bra. River of consciousness.
Call it cruising, or an amorous game
of hide and seek. Place of torment
where the worm dieth not. *Consciousness
is dependent upon its vehicle for expression,
and both are dependent upon life and energy
for existence.* Beware the seventh
magical bullet. Revealed among the sailors,
reservoir of vital energies. The wonder
of colored light. The headlight gave
him away. Imported or indigenous,
these snake-tressed furies? Up the red
hot poker tree. Right at spirit
level. Who stocks all these koi ponds?
Did you say tompion? Cork
your muzzle. What happened to the moon
and Jupiter? Over the sinless maiden
Zamiel had no power.

The Mountain The Sun Goes Behind At Night

A flood issued from the old woman's
oven. Manu hooked his vessel to the horn
of a fish. A fish-god brought letters to
the Assyrians. Zeus inspired amity
among the animals in their floating
coffer. *I opened the window and the light
smote my face.* Matilda and Steven
are fighting. Sense the field, change
the field. Grandmother Nest, tell us of
your Flemish liaison. Load up the rickshaw.
The naked man in a boat is a symbol
of the pheasant. Warned by the cry of cranes.
Storm-maddened creatures will seek refuge
with man. As the hunch becomes a working
part of the mind. The journey to paradise
is itself paradise. After he died, Domitian's
name was chiseled off all the monuments.
The deep-minded conspire to have a ship
built in the forest.

For the sake of the quiet life
there will be victims. It's
safest to sleep under a canoe.
Farther up the fruit tree a well-
educated substitute. A fly named
after Charlie Chaplin. A quick
game of Kiss Chase. A question
I only just discovered. A guinea
pig stuffed with marigolds. Hot
stones on a thatched roof. Put
bread behind the saint's picture.
The seat of honor should be opposite
the midday sun. In the cheap
seats, a penneth of dark. *Eliminate
the products which are controlled by
heat and you will bring our civilisation
to a stop.* The child is born and
the father kills no more animals. Crying
that killed the king's youngest son.
Wrath that dried up a river. The king
affirms his kingship with a bath in mare
stew. The king filled the land with plenty
and was removed to the abodes of the gods.
He wore a white robe with red crosses,
and carried a sickle. He embarked in a canoe
made of serpent skins, and sailed away
into the East.

from *Symphony no. 8*
(13.7 billion Years)

-31-

At some point
a world is
remembered
from archetypal structures
disassociated from thought
where doorways enter
to intersect
an unconscious reality
fleshed out
in shadows of statuary dust
"it is here we thought of birth"
where glandular geometries
fill an eye's annular cavity
ameliorating the view
from a womb's delimiting cage
where an implicate order
is assumed
amid a debris field's terrestrial expanse
yet it is
unreasonable to think this
dream defines (a) reality
observing the untenable flow
of an ocean's edge
or the stain which remains
an imposing blackness
on the otherwise
unblemished page
"it is here we thought of death"
bearing the weight
of ages frozen
in the cadaver's desiccated veins
or a vision of crows
invading a culled orchid field
as the spherical burrs
of a winter descends

- Archetypal Echo No.5-

"... and to remember
worlds of
a mirrored self
distorted through
the alabaster keyhole
of inarticulate voices
behind glass doorways
of bones and marrow
sperm and ash
the visceral fabric
of isolated flesh
of the transcendently dissonant
quantum realm
of the innumerable dreams
of the unconscious eye
of the spiraling
 cyclical vortices
of the unchanging
 geological epochs
and the reincarnated heart's
 archetypal fate ..."

"And one can lose
a sense of self"
as dust
in concepts
of time passing
through the needle's eye
in concepts
 of a space-time continuum
 dissolving
 in a sackcloth ocean
 beneath an unraveling
 ashen-grey sky
in concepts
of a mirror
appearing
before a plastic enlaced id
 a mirror
 in a house
 of four and twenty doors
 where crows
 are raspy omens
 descending down
 a brick and mortar chimney flue
 a house
 of prescient angles
 waiting for daylight
 in a room of evening
 dragging its palsied limbs
 across a linen ensconced
 window's sill

"and this in itself is
a reality"
a reality of
 fallow plains
 and disincarnate voices
 of scorching salt flat spirits
 lost
 to a Newtonian geometric aridity
a reality of
the axiomatic errata
of anthropomorphic indeterminacy
and of the prophet's abraded eyes
staring across a star-filled empyrean
to observe
the unflinching face
of a stone heart deity
distant
and
 intransigently
 removed

A shadow
across the sun
at noon
crows wander
a dead patch
of scorched earth
and the sky
hot to the touch
following the frozen winter's
limbless embrace
now an overcast
broken in places
and voids within
the desiccated veins
of words unheard
melting through time
and it is here
that she dreams
in a black shuttered
clapboard cape
in darkened upper rooms

"she dreams
of grainy avenues
and orchid gardens
of faithless lovers
aspiring to loss
and of words unspoken
resonating through
the iron sheath
which holds her heart

she dreams
of a cloud-enveloped onyx sky
and hollow rock mountains
towering above
the deep flowered
rambling thicket patch
and of a chipped porcelain teacup
painted into the hidden corner
of a distant and pulsating
alcove of memory

she dreams
of slowly tapering votive flames
carried in mute procession
by dead spectral past-life waifs
and of how their breath
quenches the pyres
once ablaze
in a passion for a life
fervently embraced"

and now the sky
a shade of alabaster and steel
a pale film
occluding the azure-violet waking eye
and a haunting sense
of a disembodied identity
hovering on a threshold
which marks
 the dimensional boundary
 where many worlds intersect

flume trogle
rogue glee night's
treasure

dug up

sour fellow
felo-
de-se

Somehow by sitting
(in the cold) The porch we stripped together

has hinged you
to the external too a-part of my dreams and my dreaming.

Y(our)e awakened presence within reminds me asleep

of the dream.

The ta'wil of ta'wil
is the sound, the tee
the tongue against the teeth
as the muscle moves, it spritzes
the muscles
orbicularis oris
of the mouth
lips opening, parting
to reveal the sound
the mind thinking it, first
the word, then saying it
second the sound
third, then hearing it
the wave traveling, crashing
against the drum
moving it, vibrating it
beating it in time
but no, that's not the past
the beginning, the word
it was
the word
but before that a sound
and before that a thought
and before that
a glimmer
a glimmer
a glimmer

Chapter One

I. Proceed to gnosis

particle defines existence along
ten dimensions.

Theosophy

anthrocentric undo

this place

in

time.

II. Space

defines

relationships.

You are closer to me than my own

beat.

Under snow grass pushes
Up against crystalline form

follow utilitarian function

follow
space

III. Wasted body

preach

true stories against

Prosody.

He sat gathering old clothes tearing shreds of coats
denim strips piled fingers of gloves swallow faces saw

Not in this world or the next

No secret but

whispered secret friend

IV. Your

metempsychosis

hesitate
to restate
Being.

What have I to gain or lose?

What have I to seek or

find?

V. Steal

and

lend.

Borrow and bought
against all this what hope,

son.

chant reality to presence.

Awash in intensity all hope is

buoyed,

all truth is true said.

VI. Peace returned over skies late in the night
unknown and unheralded. You would not know me
to smile under stars, my friend. Your free will
takes all not given value and returns against
stars and moon.

And that's just one star and
moon in billions.

Airwaves resist truth in peace and war.

tracers across black night

empty of star cloud moon

for this eternal moment.

VII. Seven returned from holy land pilgrimage. Praying in fits and
starts on laden horses lean/to this side then that/never
falling but unsure of/foot stirrup seat saddle.

We saw in holy sites dust and bones.

All my sages and magi waited at doorways
to block cold winds.

Today I am the darvish at the gate
seeing winds and wilds assail
the Tavern.

(returning sore and steady cairns mark
dark caves beyond hope lights life for

now.)

VIII. Children come to ruins gather
stones in fallen piles.

Falling

continuously

no little entropy games
eternity is present
in stones.

IX. Soft light

throughbrandedglass

all aligned photons he wished
for movement and substance all
one all one

ready to hold to rocks through
gravity's love for unity.

Silent stars parse tiny frozen
moments infinitesimal ----> still.

Amazing vast stillness yet

entropic torn with green life

unity.love.force

Veracity of light

through

eyes.

the city
block is in the
morning it is
peaceful and quiet until
the cars
roll
by

the sky is
a beautiful
thing it
brings the sunset
the sunrise
dawn, twilight, noon, afternoon,
are the parts
of the day
the sky brings them
a warm welcome

from *The Ardor*

withdraw the glowing
mass to
overflow all in the
shudder from hip
to toe
or the embrace
clutching
hair
burning center

Interview

with Peter O'Leary

J&J: In your last response, we were struck by how you brought apocalypticism and mycopoetics together in this way: "Every poem is headed eventually for the litter heap. In this basic sense, every new poem should be contributing to the soil out from which any new poems will be discovered and grown. This is as true of Whitman as it is of my own poems or those of any other of my contemporaries. {...} And my thought is: if you're not imagining this fate for your poems as you write them, then your poems are going to be toxic, filling the environment with poison. Each newly created poem is its apocalyptic ally, its revelatory twin." In the context of the "apocalyptic ally, its revelatory twin", and considering your call to "step outside to renew the work," would you understand the mycopoetical work of apocalypticism to be bound up with, in some sense and to some degree, the apocalyptic moment of contact with what Henry Corbin called one's "Heavenly Twin," one's true self after the ego dissolves in death (material or mystical)? Could the mycopoetics of apocalypticism be understood as the digestion of the ego and its wastes, thus enabling growth / (re-)creation? Can the process of poetry itself be understood in such a truly, and profoundly, religious sense?

PO'L: I don't know if I can answer better than you've asked these questions. Corbin's "Heavenly Twin" is a real thing – but inscrutable to us in life. And yet, this twin inhabits the mesocosmic realm, which, in another context, Norman O. Brown identified with the Christian heresy of Docetism, which is a belief in the realm of appearances. Brown, in a profound essay entitled "The Prophetic Tradition," persuasively proposes that what was condemned by Christian doctrine – Docetism, which involves the "theological error of those who deny the material reality of the body of Christ," which is to say, those who believed that Christ's body was merely the appearance of a truer, spiritual form – was taken up in Islam as mystical truth, in which Docetism "is devotion to appearances, to apparitions, to visionary experience, to vision. In Eternity all is Vision." (A fine, emphatic claim!) So, according to this thinking, the mesocosm is the realm of human vision – it's where we see the divine appearances. The positing of a mesocosm is as important to esoteric conceptions as it is to mystical thought: meaning precipitates to us from a realm hidden from view.

My work with mushrooms involves what I've been calling "an esotericism of the actual." By this I mean mushrooms are treasures hidden from us but in plain view. To see them, we need to tune our eyes to them. Furthermore, mushrooms fruit from the soil of an anterior mesocosm. That word – "a universe in the middle" – suggests its intermediary placement between the material and the heavenly realms. In the work I've been doing, I've been calling this anterior mesocosm, made up of the rich loam, the springy duff, the moulded earth, a catacosm. Cata-, meaning "down." So, not the infernal or even the mineral realms (the mineral realm is where you find the soul) but another intermediary realm, from which spring visionary appearances. As I've discussed in my "Mycopoetics" piece (which will appear in the next issue of *Hambone*), the act of foraging for mushrooms involves an interspecies effervescence, a transfiguring of perception verging into euphoria. It's docetical in the sense that Brown identifies: devoted to appearances, to vision, to visionary experience.

You could say mystics prepare the way for the rest of us by venturing into the mesocosm in this lifetime. They test the transformations we'll all undertake when we move from this life to the next life. Likewise, and in a vital complementarity, foragers prepare the way for our decomposition by engaging with the catacosm from which spring these bizarre fruits of death. Imaginally, we need both mystics and foragers for the visions they cultivate. And for the total transformation they anticipate.

What does this mean for poetry? That's harder to say - at least for me because I'm only starting to see these things. But it may mean, practically speaking, it wouldn't hurt for us to attune ourselves to the esotericism of the actual in poetry itself - both actively looking for treasures hidden from us but in plain view and dilating poetic receptivity so that, when needed, our senses can see and feel what's out there waiting to appear to us.

Acknowledgments

Thanks go to:

Time.

Space.

The Silence of Our Cabin.

Empire, Broadcast, and Neptune for fuel.

The darvishes.

The doctors and nurses.

Our workmates and friends.

Our families.

All of the poets within and without.

Robert Duncan & HD.

Basil Bunting.

Pam Rehm.

Moments the muse erupts from within, Ace of Swords in hand.

Biographies | Credits

(pages 8-14) ANNA LEVITSKY lives, writes, dances and farms in the foothills of western North Carolina. Aside from publication in her college's literary magazine, she was recently featured in Issue II of *from a Compos't*. She discovered poetry in the 2nd grade, and hopes to channel that same sense of wonder throughout her adult life and work. She can be reached by e-mail at annalevitsky@gmail.com.

(pages 15-20) COLLIN SCHUSTER was born and raised in Great Falls, Montana. He and his partner currently live in Maryland where they work in social media and health research. A humungous thanks to Jamie and Jeff for Lightning'd.

(page 21) STU HATTON is poet, editor and researcher based in Melbourne, Australia. He works in mental health research at the University of Melbourne. His first book of poems, *How to be Hungry*, is available here: <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/stuhatton>. His second collection, *glitching*, will be published in 2014. Stu sometimes posts things at <http://outerblog.tumblr.com>.

(pages 22-27) SIMON PETKOVICH was born in 1962 in Perth, West Australia. Writing since '77, published since '80 - most recently a couple of chapbooks - one by Longhouse Publishers from Vermont titled: *Forests of Clarity* and another by Poems for All (no.971) titled *The Brave Orange Dawn*, as well as a couple of shortlisted works by Page Seventeen from Melbourne (issues #8 and #10). Married and with his partner and their two young boys, lives in Melbourne, where he works as a Croatian interpreter.

(page 28) PATRICK LONGE has been writing poetry since 1987 and most recently published in *The Blue Hour*, *Penny Ante Feud*, *lines+stars*, *Laughing Dog* and *Haggard and Halloo*. Before moving to Tampa in 2000 to be near children he had always lived in Detroit area. Journalism graduate of Wayne State University he works in marketing and is active photojournalist.

(pages 29-31) MARK YOUNG has been publishing poetry for nearly fifty-five years. His work has been widely anthologized, & his essays & poetry translated into a number of languages. He is the author of more than twenty books, primarily poetry but also including speculative fiction & art history. He is the editor of the ezine *Otoliths*, & lives on the Tropic of Capricorn in Australia. Recent work has appeared or is to appear in *Moria*, *Fact-Simile*, *The Last Vispo Anthology*, *Eccolinguistics*, *Cricket Online Review*, *3 a.m.*, *E-ratio*, *Cordite*, *Quarter After*, & *BlazeVOX* amongst other places.

(page 32) EVAN JONES is a graduate student at Harvard getting a PhD in chemistry. He has a BA in English (concentration in creative writing) from Franklin & Marshall College (Lancaster, PA) and a decent collection of poems forming.

(pages 33-35) JNANA HODSON's sixth novel, *Promise*, is now available as an ebook at

Smashwords.com (<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/418518>). In addition, Writing Knights Press has published my 32-page chapbook, *Johnny Badge*, which may be purchased at Amazon.com (http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-author=Jnana%20Hodson&page=1&rh=n%3A283155%2Cp_27%3AJnana%20Hodson).

(page 36) ROBERT OKAJI lives in Texas where he contemplates leaves in the wind and distant sounds. His work has appeared in Boston Review, Prime Number Magazine, and Otoliths, among others.

(page 37) JENNIFER FIRESTONE is the author of *Flashes* (forthcoming, Shearsman Books), *Holiday* (Shearsman Books, 2008), the co-editor of *Letters to Poets: Conversations about Poetics, Politics, and Community* (Saturnalia Books, 2008), *Waves* (Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs, 2007), *from Flashes* (Sona Books, 2006) and *snapshot* (Sona Books, 2004). My poems have appeared in HOW2, Xcp: Cross Cultural Poetics, LUNGFULL!, Can We Have Our Ball Back, Fourteen Hills, MIPOesias Magazine, Dusie, 580 Split, Saint Elizabeth Street, moria, Feminist Studies, Sidereality, Poetry Salzburg Review, Phoebe, BlazeVOX, So to Speak: Feminist Journal of Language and Art, and others. She is an Assistant Professor of Literary Studies at the New School's Eugene Lang College and lives with her family in Brooklyn.

(pages 38-39) ROSS HAIR has been published in Shearsman, LVNG, and Bright Pink Mosquito. He has recently had a pamphlet published by Longhouse Publishers.

(page 40-43) JIMMY LO is a poet living in Atlanta, Georgia, where he works for a public library. His chapbook *A Reduction* is available from LRL Textile Series: <http://www.textileseries.com>. More of his writing can be found on his website jimmylorunning.com.

(page 44) SARAH ROSENTHAL is the author of the cross-genre book *Manhattan* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2009) and several chapbooks, the most recent of which is *The Animal* (Dusie, 2011). Her interview collection *A Community Writing Itself: Conversations with Vanguard Writers of the Bay Area* was published by Dalkey Archive in 2010. Her poetry has appeared in numerous journals including *ecopoetics*, *Bird Dog*, *textsound*, and *Fence*, and is anthologized in *Bay Poetics* (Faux, 2006), *The Other Side of the Postcard* (City Lights, 2004), *hinge* (Crack, 2002), and *Kindergarde: Avant-garde Poems, Plays, and Stories for Children* (a Small Press Traffic project, forthcoming 2013). Her essays and interviews have appeared in journals such as *Jacket*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Rain Taxi*, *Otoliths*, and *New American Writing*. She has received the Leo Litwak Fiction Award and grant-supported residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Soul Mountain, and Ragdale. From 2009-2011 she was an Affiliate Artist at Headlands Center for the Arts. She teaches in the MFA program at the University of San Francisco and writes curricula for the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland.

(page 45-47) WHIT GRIFFIN is the author of *Pentateuch: The First Five Books* (Skysill Press, 2010) and the forthcoming *The Sixth Great Extinction*, also from Skysill. He currently resides in western Tennessee.

(pages 48-52) 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.

(pages 53-54) STEVEN MANUEL, editor of *from a Compos't*; mailing address: 11 Cedar Ridge Dr / Asheville, NC 28806.

(pages 55-56) 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 and in *Hint Fiction: An Anthology of Stories in 25 Words or Fewer*. A zine of her earlier work entitled *Blackbird Singing* is available by request via email.

(pages 57-61) RYAN BARKER is 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.

(pages 62-63) TAVIRI ISSA RAIAN BARKER is the eight year old son of Ryan Barker. He writes poem after poem on sheets of paper hanging from his walls. He enjoys poems that evoke nature. He likes road trips because "I can look around me and find new poems." His father is alternatively humbled and astounded by him.

(page 64) 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*.