(although she has radically reimagined the idea of repetition through her interest in language); in composers such as Steve Reich, John Adams, and Terry Riley. In each case the distinction between figure and ground is muted: the "figure" is extended over an entire field in a sequence of unique but similar marks/gestures or placements: a rhythm of contingency; or else is rearranged to emphasize scale and relation, as in the work of Philip Guston and Elizabeth Murray. The relation of part to part, rather than part to whole, the internal syntax, is the point of interest; the construction of the work revealed, on its surface, is, in some sense, the content of the work. There is perhaps in our initial iconography a contracting conjugation space/place/locale/local, a peculiar span from abstract to particular ("radiant details") which privileges neither. This system of relations is spatial rather than temporal—it resists the implied narrativity of figure/ground and promotes instead an uninfluenced parameter in which incidents (proximities) occur. Both Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, in entirely different ways, announce a poetics of (American) space: Whitman by his insistence on a Self as Representative and Inclusive (a specific instance or example, an incident, one among many, leaf among leaves), and Dickinson by releasing narrative into prismatic structures, so her poems do not so much move forward in time (tell stories) as turn in space: they are aspectual, perspectival: mobiles, constellations.

Space in many of these works is neither secular nor sacred, the landscape neither urban nor rural, domestic nor wild. It is the space in which a body might be found telling. Perhaps the language-game of telling is a game played on a board, a field. What are the rules? Who makes them? Who moves first? Monopoly? Baseball? Chess, anyone?

The Night Sky IV

Inheritance is never a given, it is always a task.

—Jacques Derrida

1. Action

Victory and Doubt dance at a masked ball; together they form a single figure, a gorgeous Thing, its many petals floating in perfumed air, the spectral filmy effulgence of costume: Vienna's charade. Their embrace moves across the boundary-less floor, a fluid duet in which there is no dominant gesture, only permutation and extension. In the ballroom, all mirrors have been removed and with them the dissonance between real and fictive, ideal and true, vanished. Neither male nor female, neither soul nor body, these distinctions also have been erased by the equivocations and valences of the spectral conversation.

Under this music
flags of memory

logged
streaming

unsquelled at the root of news
its signature ode

house raised above the river
road altered

and such details as if hinges
particular war, particular lie
Finally, the third type of aporia, the impossible, the antinomy, or the contradiction, is a nonpassage because its elementary milieu does not allow for something that could be called passage, step, walk, gait, displacement, or replacement, a kinesis in general. There is no more path (odos, methodos, Weg, or Holzweg). The impasse itself would be impossible. The coming of the event would have no relation to the passage of what happens or comes to pass. In this case, there would be an aporia because there is not even any space for an aporia determined as experience of the step of the edge, crossing or not of some line, relation to some spatial figure of the limit. No more movement or trajectory; no more trans- (transport, transposition, transgression, translation, and even transcendence).\(^1\)

These anniversaries are peculiar, they make their own discrete shape, infinity's circle eight, during which the event summons itself again, its authority, its mark. I am thinking this as this month begins with its thaw. I am thinking about how the Voice gets lost, wanders out of earshot, and of how the poem wants to resist this lost Voice, recuperate it, bring it back into earshot. The poem seems to want to do this but it too seems to be at an impasse. We have now many acknowledgments of this, we speak about exiles and margins and nomads and we go so far as to make of this condition a sort of privilege: the freedom of the wanderer, the exhilaration of the unaffiliated and unattached; perhaps, even, the ancient jittery wisdom of the fool. We join the diaspora willingly (is that an oxymoron?), the ragtag outpost oppositional insurrection, gathering up shards as they fall on the path that leads to no place and comes from no place. But this fable of excursus outside the confines of the contextual map, each of us still tattooed with the emblems of our separate and several contingencies, has as its counter, its underside, the obliterating condition of banishment, of a deliberate, conscious Will that expunges from the conversation at table (the inscription on the tablet) these very options and privileges.

Anne Hutchinson to John Winthrop: "I wish to know wherefore I am banished."

Anxious about all the heresies of our moment: heresies of identity, of belonging, as well as those of the passing millennium, we are contracted and caged in historical moment(um) and accumulation, and at the same time rudderless, at liberty, infinitely free. We do not know what scale we are in,
which language does not help us to ascertain. (As I wrote that last sentence, something crashed across the open window: meteor? bullet? stone? ice? big bird pecking?) The question Who is speaking? is answered only by another, Who is listening? The two questions pivot and surround each other like antagonists in a ring. Certainly some poets go happily along making their poems, and do not ask or need to ask about who is speaking/writing (I am!) or who is listening/hearing/reading (you are!), nor about where they come from (New Jersey!) nor where they are going (well, we thought we might go to Greece and visit the ruins!). But for some, there is a sense that the poem itself cannot step up to the first line without quavering like a soldier at his first glimpse of real war.

A militaristic vocabulary seeps in, like blood into a porous text/ile. Poor us, to be thus stained.

3. Green

The next morning it was time to join the battalion in the field. They were way down south, near DiAn, where it still hadn't stopped raining. The other guys and I went down on that afternoon RON ship, another big Chinook, along with needed supplies. Once again, the lift-off toward the unknown, which would never get better with time. Once again, the anticipation of something unfathomable. Everyone in Quan Loi had spoken in lowered tones about the relentless fighting and heavy casualties the battalion was facing. I was in over my head, and would soon be exposed, ridiculed and then killed. I should have listened to my father, instead of seducing myself with war games. The gray murk outside and below was like the miasma of death itself. There was plenty of time to think about all of that before the ship finally began to rear and settle. I could see the battalion position slowly materialize below. It was a circle of tan-colored water with bits of green stuff floating in it, and it had all the appeal of dog vomit. As we hovered lower I could see that the green stuff was people. They were angrily waving their fists at us because our rotor blast was blowing their makeshift shelters away. As soon as the helicopter settled, I jumped out into the muddy water. Splat. Welcome to the end of the pipeline.2

But to place Grenier's latest work unproblematically in literary history also distorts it since it seems to manifest a desire to escape all literary historical grids and to make direct contact with the world via pen and paper. His writing has become intensely personal and does not seem constructed to represent anything other than itself. But though his allegiance to a group identity such as language writing is now decidedly tepid, I find a conflict in his work that occurs to some extent in the work of other language writers. At a basic level, this conflict is between the autonomous activity of writing and the structures of meaning—letters, words, lines, sentences, genres—that cannot begin to exist without becoming entangled in the widest literary mediations. The singularity of each new word is simultaneously involved with its own compositional context and with the tactical battles of literary history: the future is up for grabs (and in some cases the past as well). Unsecured area is being fought over: reviewers, critics, students, professors, publishers, owners of book stores, not to mention the writer's own practice.3

Struggles, conflicts, tactical battles, unsecured territories: poetry wars. Who is the enemy? Another poem, lurking in the bushes, camouflaged, speaking in an unknown tongue? No, the enemy is annihilation, absolute silence, corpse. The poem wants to make apparent this most furtive and unknown of temporal realities, the slight hinge between being here now and not being here now. It wants to utter this space in its displaced eventness, to inscribe the Here with the Now, and the Now with the Here. It wants to be figure and landscape, soldier and field, girl and meadow; babe and maternal embrace. A poem gives forth this configuration, an object in the temporal unfurling of space (a book on a shelf) which houses the inert, innate traces of having been being. All this sounds like a bad remn of Heideggerian lingo, but still one presses on.

It is true, Ulysses was really sailing, and one day, at a certain date, be encountered the enigmatic song. And so can say: now—this is happening now. But what happened now? The presence of a song which is still to be sung. And what did he touch in the presence? Not the occurrence of an encounter which had become present, but the overtone of the infinite movement which is the encounter
It was then a matter of thinking another historicity—not a new history or still less a "new historicism," but another opening of event-ness as historicity that permitted one not to renounce, but on the contrary to open up access to an affirmative thinking of the messianic and emancipatory promise as promise: as promise and not as onto-theological or telos-eschatological program or design. Not only must one not renounce the emancipatory desire, it is necessary to insist on it more than ever, it seems, and insist on it, moreover, as the very indestructibility of the "it is necessary." This is the condition of a re-politization, perhaps of another concept of the political. But at a certain point promise and decision, which is to say responsibility, owe their possibility to the ordeal of undecidability which will always remain their condition [italics mine].

This instant, on the radio, someone asks, What is extra time? My kitchen clock has stopped at twenty minutes to nine. I still walk past it dozens of times a day and glance at it to see what time it is.

What Henry James wrote cannot be transcribed into visual images propped up by a script, without denuding the entire work; the subject remains, the story remains, but the true content drifts away in the haze of the director's willed visualization. James wrote in the interstices of action, in the pulse between desire and intentionality, promise and consequence; at the core of his writing is an astonishment that human beings can communicate at all, given our divergent subjectivities, our cultural and social affinities—gender, class, nationality, and so on. For James, only the most nuanced and hesitant of linguistic structures could possibly convey the actuality of any individual, and only the most animated invasion, such as love, could alter the set of a person's characteristic habits of being. The result was an indrawn suspended prose in which action and reaction are set on an intricate field of possibilities that erupt, sometimes violently, as human connection. (This is especially the case in his late novels, The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl.) For James, only the dense textures of a nearly opaque prose, which worked not so much to delineate a plot as to map the variousness of a constant flow between subjective and objective states, could capture the irreducible complexity of individual natures: the unique self on one hand, and the web of cultural and social contexts that inform that self, on the other. His brother William also championed the intricate elaborations and
elaborate intricacies of the individual self, believing that the self was the only inviolable property we own.6

Not long ago I went to a talk by the writer Michael Brenson on the legendary French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. The talk was remarkable for its unstinting admiration for its subject as well as for its pronounced lack of critical/theoretical jargon. In it, Brenson spoke about the nature of perception. Perception, he said, is neither an observation nor a response, but a concentrated event or act in the world in which such binaries as intelligence and desire, reason and passion, are fused. He asked also that the world in which we now live has not much use for perception as he understands it, but instead values “analysis, strategy, and instrumental thinking.” He spoke of Cartier-Bresson’s “discretion,” which allowed his viewers to contemplate the nature of such affective dispositions as kindness, respect, and generosity.

According to Brenson, Cartier-Bresson had stopped taking photographs, and had turned to making drawings of his friends and of landscapes. This rejection of the camera interests me, since it implies that for some reason the camera had ceased to capture Cartier-Bresson’s perceptions. One might hazard the guess that it was not the camera per se that failed, nor the eye of the great photographer, but rather a culture that has appropriated the world as image in the service of a refined iconicity that delivers a false sense of nearness, intimacy, and knowledge, and so short-circuits modes of vital relation and patience which these perceptions need in order to be.

Perhaps the tangled Web site called Radical Privileges: Avant-garde Poetics, Politics & Practice needs to be elucidated, especially in relation to the post-1970s turn to Continental theory, and the relation of that turn to the academy; and the relation of the academy to the creation of reputations or careers within the far-flung community of poets.7 Indeed, we need to question the notion that we can talk with any clarity about the academy when there are so many institutions that now invest in contemporary writing, each of which has a different perspective on, and alignment to, poetic lineage and practice. These perspectives are often directly attributable to the specific poetics of poet/teachers within a given program. We need to look at the relation between publications, prizes, and critical response, although the latter is now all but nonexistent. Even if there were such critics, they would be hard-pressed to find outlets for their judgments, since there is now a virtual blackout on poetry in all major media, as if somewhere it had been decided unanimously that poetry has nothing of interest to say to, to do with, the public. We need to ask whether and in what ways this virtual consensus of noninterest is a direct outgrowth of an addiction to, dependence on, and exploitation of popular culture. We need to ask about the extraordinary proliferation of small presses (including university presses) that publish hundreds of volumes of poetry each year (of every aesthetic stripe) despite the view that there is an almost nonexistent nonspecialized audience/readership. Do poets write only for other poets and students of poetry? Does this audience constitute a public?

In most bookstores, the Poetry section is segregated from the one called Literature. We need to think about how so-called “schools” come into being, through what agencies they disseminate and become part of a historical narrative. I am thinking, for instance, of the poets in and around Black Mountain, the New York School, the Beats, the San Francisco Renaissance, the Harlem Renaissance, and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, each of which represents a particular extension and hybridization of a recognizable poetics. At what point does a group of poets with a loose configuration of affinities and concerns become a school or movement, and at what point does this named entity become the property of literary history, a commodity?

The current relation between poetry and the academy needs demystification. It needs to be pointed out, for example, that certain writing programs work both to attract good students and to graduate them into successful careers by introducing their work to editors, publishers, and even, on occasion, agents. Some writing programs have elaborate structures for grants and awards, since, again, these signify, in the eyes of the academy at any rate, achievement. (Granting institutions have a habit of looking at previous grants, to historicize the prize as it were, just as publishers have a habit of looking at previous publications. This collection and dissemination of judgment eventually becomes a consensus.) These forms of success have now replaced old ones that relied more heavily on reviews and their influence on the market. Certain writing programs mimic commercial marketing strategies by solicitation and advertising, hoping to turn their investments (i.e., students) into successes which, in turn, reflect back on their institutions.

This strategy of grooming and graduating persons who will carry on the tradition of a particular institution has no more vivid example than Harvard. Harvard, with its historical status as The Best, confers on its students not only a Sterling Education but, more importantly, a conviction, a Certificate of Certitude, that translates into the ineffable but consequential relation between confidence and power (mediated, as it were, by knowledge). The direct connection between poets in the canon, particularly the “avant-garde”
canon, and Harvard is formidable (Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, Frank O'Hara, Charles Bernstein, Michael Palmer, the list goes on and on). Furthermore, the relation between a figure like Helen Vendler, who teaches at Harvard, and other influential institutions, such as Columbia University, the New Yorker, the New York Times, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, the Guggenheim Foundation (I will not name publishers, but of course they are the Grail at the end of the rope), and so forth, is not happenstance, but a signifying chain of considerable consequence. I do not mean to suggest something untoward or unpleasant here, but only that, in the absence of an ongoing open dialogue with the public (marketplace), certain individuals and institutions have perhaps more influence than they might otherwise.

All this brings up the paradoxical relationship between the "avant-garde" (e.g., permission and desire to experiment with, resist, change, traditional forms and accepted ideas) and privilege. The American version of class, as we know, is determined not by bloodlines (ideals of innate superiority) as in some Western European cultures, but by a perceived relation between being and doing: you are what you do. Our myth says that anyone can shift class identity, anyone can pursue, and capture, the citadel of success/happiness. What I want to suggest is a relationship between socioeconomic privilege and a resistance to normative paradigms, and, in turn, to relate this to our concept of elitism. Our code wants heroes to be "working-class" heroes: nothing makes us soppier or happier than tales of rags to riches, humble origins to presidential powers, orphan exiles to skating stars. A nation of immigrants, we align with the underdog; we admire tenacity and ambition, luck and pluck pitted against fate. Persons who succeed against the odds are the classic heroes and heroines of the American dream; their stories pour forth, as from a churning, regurgitating, unappetizable, and insatiable Charybdis. Witness, as two examples, the recent success of two literary memoirs, one by a poet, Mary Karr, The Liars Club, the other, Frank McCourt's Angela's Ashes. These stories and countless others attest to the democratic ethos of social mobility and fluidity, heavily inflected by the Romantic ethos of "rugged individualism" and, however reductivist, Emersonian "self-reliance." But we are less sanguine, by far, with persons who come from privilege, those who already have material and social security (Emerson an important case in point), who then go on to question received forms, be they social, political, or aesthetic (or combinations thereof). These persons we view as members of an elite.

There still exists a phantom paradigmatic ur-poem, childlike in its candor, its ability to speak directly, to express feeling, as if it were an extension of nature by other means, which in its full maturity gives forth a morally accessible parable, a lesson, the Wise Fruit of Experience. (The master of this model is Robert Frost.) Given this entrenched site of poetic value, one can see how the introduction of theory as part of the poetic process itself might be construed as a wholesale attack on our appetite for representative selves telling instructive, illuminating, identity-constructing stories. Moreover, we do not know how to address the apparent contradiction between progressive/transgressive ideas and so-called middle-class "lifestyles." The legacy of 1960s activism, whose players included sons and daughters of a white middle and upper-middle class (educated, comfortable, often urban), has affected directly and indirectly the shape of some contemporary poetic practices. Now well into midlife, we would turn our attention to language itself as the most problematic (because least examined) site of cultural production. This new awareness of language as both product and construct of cultural ideology (as opposed to a transparent "given," the emanation of individual sensibility) is one way to explain the turn to theory. To put it another way: this generation understood that personal agency is mediated not through persuasive rhetorics based on individual claims, but by examining those claims at the level of historical and cultural bias; an attention, that is, to signifying frames outside of the knowledge/control of the individual writer. This understanding was both a perception generated by the willful suspension of truth on the part of our government during Vietnam and Watergate, and an engaged reading of primarily Continental, post-Hegelian, post-Marxist, post-Freudian thinkers.

Two critical linguistic/poetic habits (as in location) came under intense scrutiny: the self (in the guise of the shifty signifier "I") as assumed site of authenticity and/or authority, and conventional, normative, discursive narration as a way to connect selves to historical (linear) structures, causes to effects. Within this dual resistance, the lyric as a form was particularly suspect. Lyric became synonymous with a very loose notion of "confessional," a one-to-one relation between a given poet's life and his poem's subject matter, particularly when invested in affective display and catharsis. The displacements of irony became one way for a poet to be personal, especially if the irony was directed toward the poem itself. Jack Spicer and Frank O'Hara, both intensely personal poets, were exempt mainly because of an ironic stance toward both the persona in the poem and the poem itself (see O'Hara's Personism; see Spicer's Thing Language poems). Replacing the transparency between the poet and his or her narrating I would be a formalist
investment, calling attention both to the materiality of language, its thingness, and, perhaps more importantly, to its existence, so to speak, outside of the particular psychic house of the writer—its ubiquity, fluidity, indeterminacy. Much of the talk about postmodern undecidability arises from a new awareness of the reader/listener as the site where meaning is made, since each reader comes to the poem/art object with her “set” in play, and she cannot find her way all the way over to the (subjective) space of the writer. All writing is a construction. “I” is a construction. Questions which then (now) arose around affect (emotion, feeling), traditional domain of the lyric, have had at least in part to do with this new apprehension of the crisis of the subject, in relation to its historical, sociopolitical, context.

The art critic Hal Foster, in his introduction to The Return of the Real, writes:

Since the middle 1970s critical theory has served as a secret continuation of modernism by other means: after the decline of high-modernist painting and sculpture, it occupied the position of high art, at least to the extent that it retained such values as difficulty and distinction after they had receded from artistic form. So, too, critical theory have served as a secret continuation of the avant-garde by other means: after the climax of the 1968 revolts, it also occupied the position of cultural politics, at least to the extent that radical rhetoric compensated a little for lost activism (in this respect critical theory is a neo-avant garde in its own right). This double secret service—as high-art surrogate and an avant-garde substitute—has attracted many different followers.

5. The Possible (Party)

in memory: Allen Ginsberg

All the poets in America

old, young

unpublished, published

of every ethnic derivation, gender orientation, class identification, aesthetic and political persuasion, famous and unknown, student and teacher

those who shout and those who whisper, who live on farms, in small towns and in cities, skeptics and believers, bar-keeps and brokers, pragmatists and preachers

who understand what Emily Dickinson meant when she wrote “I dwell in Possibility / a fairer house than Prose,”

what Walt Whitman meant when he wrote “Words follow character—nativity, independence, individuality”

what Rimbaud meant when he wrote Je est un autre

each of whom is compelled to discover a relation between how language is used and what it is saying

vocabularies and structures and the consequences thereof—

Pantheon of Singularities, Anthology of Strangers,

gather and read their poems, one by one,

The Million Poet March!

6. re: Strange Encounter

A Sunday, so drab as to be itself a ghost. Deep in its gloom, a foghorn’s mournful call, a warning that sounds as much like a plea, a conjuring, as if in the mists one could find one’s way out of this world into another, the passage itself marked by a watery dissolution of the real. Fog elucidates the journey from fact to fiction, a natural veil that mimics the one out of which our “combinations” come (Stevens). When I was young, this same sound haunted the nights, and gave curious comfort. It represented the limits of the known world, beyond which the unknown took up its pleasure and mischief. Since my nights were spent always listening for this boundary, an attempt to locate its exact position in space, where the familiar dissolved into the unfamiliar, the boundary into the unfathomable, the sound of the foghorn acted as sentinel.
It was one of the only reminders that we lived on an island. What does it mean, now, to “waste time” or to “waste space”? What is the difference between the crowd and the implied non-utility of these invaluable abstractions, or between the crowd (when is a crowd a public?) and waste itself, the excess that is more than, but not useful, not operative, that falls away from pragmatic necessities? Mother says, “Stop wasting time!” For those of us who know the deliriums of procrastination, who live in a morass of a relentless wait that refuses to realize itself in action, so that the actions themselves gang up and gather into a mound or heap of pending, a depending, this question has a strange ring to it, like a summons which is also an alarm, an invitation to exile.

Julia Kristeva, writing on Beckett:

Banishment: above/beyond a life of love. A life always off to one side, at an impassable distance, mourning a love. A fragile, uncertain life, where, without spending the saved-up, paternal capital in one’s pockets, he discovers the price of warmth (of a hothouse, or a room, of a turd) and the boredom of those who provide it—but who waste it, too. It is a life apart from the paternal country where nonetheless lies the obsessed self’s unshakable quiet, frozen forever, bored but solid... To love is to survive paternal meaning. It demands that one travel far to discover the futile but exciting presence of a waste-object: a man or woman, fallen off the father, taking the place of this protection, and yet, the always trivial ersatz of this discarnate wisdom that no object (of love, necessarily) could ever totalize. Against the modifying whole of the father’s Death, one chooses banishment toward the part constituting a fallen object of an object of love (of being possessive and genitive partitive). How trivial, this object of love—transposition of love for the Other. And yet, without banishment, there is no possible release from the grip of paternal Death. This act of loving and its incumbent writing spring from the Death of the Father—from the Death of the third person (as Not I shows).9

How does one write against knowing? How does one get under the skin, away from presence which is an absolute absence, the literal hereness that invades at every point and whose energy insists that the conversation turn on a litany of trades, incidents, details, opinions, from which the energies of individuated thought have been stripped? So that one is in a kind of waste site, a dump, a spill.

Topics of conversation:
1. Film and TV
2. Sports events
3. Weather
4. He said she said

And I was like blah blah blah. Young woman in a loud voice on the subway late one night. She was describing to her friend an episode with an unwanted suitor who refused to leave her room after they had sex. A little overheard strip of language with virtually no content except the content of no content, of waste.

Henry James, January 22, 1879:

Imagine a door—either walled-up, or that has been long locked—at which there is an occasional knocking—a knocking which—as the other side of the door is inaccessible—can only be ghostly. The occupant of the house or room, containing the door, has long been familiar with the sound; and regarding it as ghostly, has ceased to heed it particularly—as the ghostly presence remains on the other side of the door, and never reveals itself in other ways. But this person may be imagined to have some great and constant trouble; and it may be observed by another person, relating the story, that the knocking increases with each fresh manifestation of the trouble. He breaks open the door and the trouble ceases—as if the spirit had desired to be admitted, that it might interpose, redeem and protect.10

interpose, redeem, protect

At some point after the death of my father I invented a ghost. The Ghost, which I called a Dragon, and which I conjured ostensibly to "interpose, redeem, protect" my younger brother, David, would knock on the wall beside my bed. I would feign not to hear this knocking, until my brother, whose bed was across the room from mine, would whisper loudly and insistently: "Yiaw is calling!"
We called the Dragon/Ghost "Yataw." I have no idea why or how this name came into being; I did not know then that the God of the Old Testament was called Yahweh.

I pretended to be asleep.

Yataw lived in the Night Sky, a vast emporium or constellation spread across the entire curve of the dome, shared only by Orion, whose belt and sword we, my brother and I, knew on sight (by heart). In my fable, Yataw was a kind of Mansion, a celestial Jonah's Whale, whose vast mouth opened to allow access to a capacious interior, in which various meetings were held. I was often called to these meetings to Discuss Something, and had to leave David behind alone in his bed. This of course terrified and fascinated him, and he would ask how I got to the sky in the first place, and I would fabricate a methodology of escape and flight.

But with Descartes and the birth of modern science, the function of phantasy is assumed by the new subject of knowledge: the ego cogito (observe that in the technical vocabulary of medieval philosophy, cogitare referred rather to the discourse of the imagination than to the act of intelligence). Between the new ego and the corporeal world, between res cogitans and res extensa, there is no need for any mediation. The resulting expropriation of the imagination is made evident in the new way of characterizing its nature: while in the past it was not a "subjective" thing, but was rather the coincidence of subjective and objective, of internal and external, of the sensible and the intelligible, now it is its combinatory and hallucinatory character, to which Antiquity gave secondary importance, that is given primary. From having been the subject of experience the phantasm becomes the subject of mental alienation, visions and magical phenomena—in other words, everything that is excluded by real experience.\footnote{11}

7. Hard Rag Ague

Wold—

Perhaps the reason that poetry is mostly ignored in our time has to do with its assertion of combinatory and coincidental experience, its desire to refute the various ways in which modernity has contrived to separate us from the authority of our existence, real and imagined, separately and together, to make the dark glass darker as the screen is more and more illuminated—

at ground level
looking out
not at piecemeal
the sky in its rectangle
the snow-footed trees
perch
where the turtle and the echo
resilience unsighted
habitat
screen: a movable device, as a panel, designed to divide, conceal, or protect.

The ghost’s lair.

(Into what is apparent memory-things drift through.)

Quotidian scribble at the edge of a pink shelter, banal rhapsody and twinge repeated as outside. Against the crimson visitor and the faded enemy, betrayal (silence).

Pat pay care father bib church deed pet be ffe gag hat

Railings and covetous lingering perceptions. As when twilight drinks the day.

Have I, have you
to soothe the screen of its incipience, ghastly or ghostly, to fire it out? Are these paths, known or unknown, our daily allowance? And the Site of Instruction, is it a mime, a dance, a conversation, a romance, a parade, a story, a desire to begin again despite the spoils of war, the hidden agendas: have you heard? did you listen? did you see? Late at night, she watches as the animals are led into the cathedral, beautiful mute beasts, to honor Saint Francis, and then a few days later, reads:

"She was a happy little girl," Mr. Maeder said. "She grew up loving animals and nature."

And at least at one point, she thought that material things were worth pursuing. In her high school yearbook, she wrote that her ambition was "to be rich and famous."

She also wrote she liked red satin sheets on a water bed, cats, irises, hugs, Chinese food, horror movies, The Far Side and black clothes.

When she killed herself last week, Miss Maeder wore black.12

paw noise out took boot

brew fish fiber.

New is what cannot be experienced, because it lies "in the depths of the unknown": the Kantian thing-in-itself, the inexperienceable as such. Thus, in Baudelaire (and this is the measure of his lucidity) this search takes the paradoxical form of aspiring to the creation of a "lieu commun"—a common place ("créer un poncif c'est le génie")—to create a commonplace is genius; think of Baudelian poetic rhythms, with their sudden footholds in banality that so struck Proust. By this was meant what could be created only from a century's accumulation of experience, not invented by one individual. But in a state where man has been expropriated of experience, the creation of such a "lieu commun" is possible only through a destruction of experience which, in the very moment of its counterfeit authority, suddenly discloses that this destruction is really man's new abode. Estrangement, which

removes from the most commonplace objects their power to be experienced, thus becomes the exemplary procedure of a poetic project which aims to make of the Inexperienceable the new "lieu commun," humanity's new experience. In this sense the Fleurs du Mal are proverbs of the inexperienceable.13

An arc lifts from the shadow's range

and tilts, coming up to away: a limit.

And the one said

is it folded or is it extended

out of any and all sighting?

I have awakened in a crowd of mourners.

A vase, a lamp, a curtain, a door.

va la tu do

sings the echo

its resite partial connection

frayed.

The origin of language must necessarily be located at a break with the continual opposition of diachronic and synchronic, historical and structural, in which it is possible to grasp as some kind of Ur-event, or Ur-faktum, the unity-difference of invention and gift, human and non-human, speech and infancy.14

shadow pillars

trope & America.

We demonstrate ourselves.