

# Morphology

Ruth Lepson & Walter Crump



# Morphology

A Collaboration Between  
Ruth Lepson & Walter Crump  
&  
Design by  
Christina Strong

Several of these poems appeared in  
*Potepoetzine* in 1999.

❖ Photos by Ruth Lepson

∅ Photos by Walter Crump

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We are happy to dedicate this book to Miriam Goodman and Karen Davis, who brought us together in 2003 for their wonderful word and image series sponsored by The Photographic Resource Center at Boston University and Gallery One of The New England School of Photography.

RL: Thanks also to Joel Sloman, Tim Peterson and Simon Pettet for their helpful meditations on this book. And to Nina Nyhart, Margo Lockwood, Jono Schneider, and Celia Gilbert for their early reading of some of the poems, and to my cousin Rachel, who lent me her digital camera in Italy.

Thank you to all the people in my life who graciously appeared in my dreams, including dear Robert Creeley, still.

WC: This is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Shahla Haeri, for her wise input, her sage advice, for her propensity to discover out-of-the-way places for us to travel to and photograph. But mostly for her patience during the long hours I spent shaping images for Morphology.

I would like to thank Sue Ann Hodges who taught me everything digital and who said, “No, you will start at the beginning” when I suggested that I knew enough to begin to take her Digital 2 class. I would also like to express my appreciation to my friend Jean Segaloff, and to my extended and multicultural families: the Crumps, Haeries, Kafis & Saberries. Thank you to all the people in my life who graciously appeared in my photographs.





Ø

I

**C**oncepts and  
facts are drifting  
around in the  
air. One at a time  
they sizzle into fireworks.  
Then I can't see them be-  
cause they're inside me.



Ø

3

All men are pencils, some  
serrated like cardboard,  
**y** some smooth, all are  
ellow but of var **y**ing  
length. Each man has to pick  
out a pencil that complements  
him.



t he door and the  
doorway—pages  
of a book

*l*e is an  
antecham  
ber  
*la* is a parlor

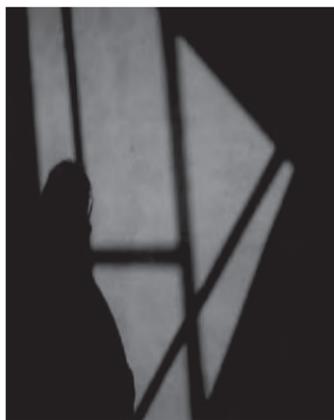




Ø

9

It's an  
important  
letter. But I  
can't hear his  
dictation and  
the pen keeps  
leaking all over  
the blue paper.



cabana was the second sentence.

**A**

An apple orchard the third.

**m** y brain is a tablet  
of light.



n front of me, two huge  
pages of a book; the one on

**I** the left is the pres-  
ent, the one on the  
right the future.

They're filled with  
colorful festive things, bush-  
es and fruit trees and grass. I  
can change what's in them by  
looking at them and thinking  
of anything I want.

He says,  
“The sen-  
tence is  
no longer  
of use.”





**W**e are stand-  
ing at the  
portico of a  
word.

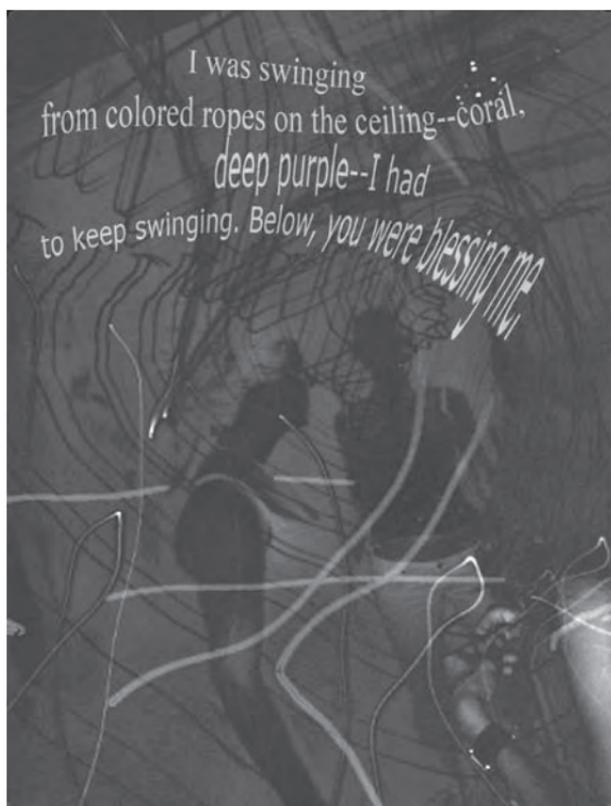


Ø

A patterned  
rug meta-  
morphs into a  
newspaper ●



Ø



**D**efinition

**O**f

**C**apability the ability :  
to do well in doing one's best.



I'm look **i**ng at a page

of st **i**ckers of

p **i**neapples,

cherr **i**es, grapes,

chestnuts. After a day

passes, I peel one  
off.



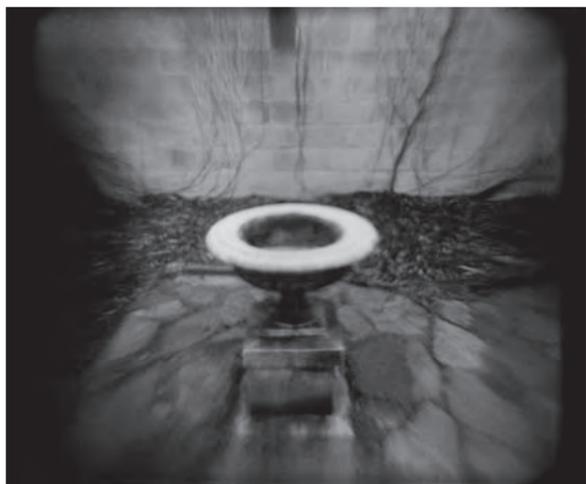
Do they agree on what's important in a relationship? They're advising me. “There's no reason you can't have Nast and give good Condé, too, ” one of them answers.



see  
world  
of lan-  
every-  
**I** now the  
is made  
guage,  
thing is.







Ø

There's a  
and purple   
to change it  
"not" into each sentence.

page in yellow

I am writing





# G

uesses, cartoon hours, exist, then  
pop. Living in a house which is a  
bug. The darkness throbs, a sen-  
tence.



Ø

38

“Marzipan”  
are floating  
knit a red

and “mascarpone”  
around while I  
sweater with

beige  
ders.

bor-



Ø

40

The long **thin**  
day is attracted to you,  
presents you

**with** a note and  
your **shoes.**



Ø

I'm reading  
the *Globe*  
but the  
words don't  
go together.



Ø

We wear brown

and yellow plaid

s w e a t e r s .

We're in the

same room,

doubling our joy.





I surf the Web all evening, return to click on  
again, you walk in just behind me, your high  
black shoes click  
on the par-  
quet floor,  
you ask a gorgeous  
girl to show me a  
whole new  
set of  
icons.

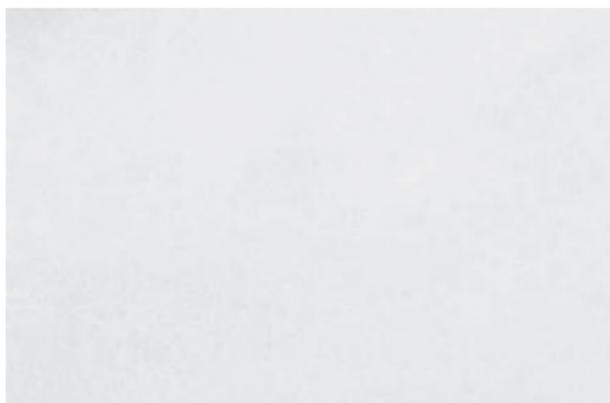
I say “I know these” but you look skeptical so I  
add “OK, I don’t know them well.” One’s a dog  
bone with a metal dog tag hanging on it like pierc-  
ing. You leave me to my pursuits—too late—I’m  
already attaching them to you.



I've been try- ing  
to find my way into  
San Francisco from  
a boat in  
the bay but get lost on  
the same few blocks of dream.



“dreaming”



Ø

I'm fly-  
on a me-  
pist says,  
have such

ing through  
teor and a  
"It's not pos-  
a dream."

s p a c e  
t h e r a -  
s i b l e t o

God is flying through the word—the wind.



Ø

**D** or **I** **O** wish to stop  
thinking  
start  
think-  
ing?



Ø

Someone brings me a new set of  
instructions, written on lettuce  
leaves.



Ø

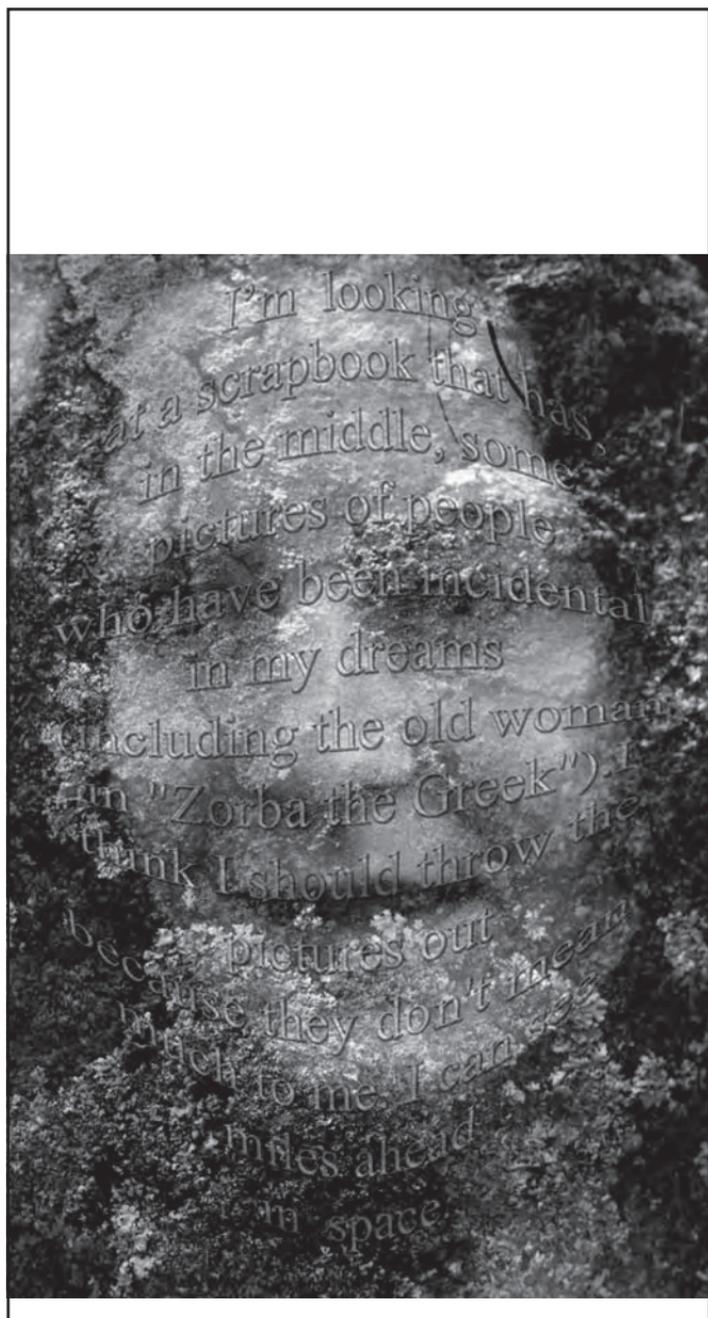
60



Ø

61

My hair's curly yellow, my body plum red from  
drinking Kirs Royale, my clothes bright blue, the  
way Frank Lloyd Wright put yellow and blue to-  
gether, as in stained glass of the sky and the sun.



Ø

Biff Bit-o-Honey Bittenmeyer, Howard Ludbro, and Brother Freud are psychoanalysts at the Freud Institute, where I am studying the law of causality, which has led me to my life's work, a study of the symbology of bridges. To complete my thesis I have received a grant to visit every bridge in the world. I find myself crying out "I don't want to go!" Several female psychoanalysts hover around me. "WHY don't you want to go?"



Ø

65

a bunch of greet-  
ing cards in a  
row  
as I look at each  
one  
the words appear  
inside it  
as I think  
them



Ø

67



Ø

68

**T**he snow turns musical like the scroll on a player piano and you and I dance the cha-cha in the street. The telephone poles are lacquered, the traffic light sort of covered—lime green, gold, and cherry red—like little sunsets in my head. You are dreaming softly and it doesn't really matter that the wind is veering off, sideways, the blizzard quieted. The bridge is like some shoulders, the river like the sea.

I'm standing in the mid  
the words as big as my  
as big as my arms. As



or is spok  
out. I can see the facing  
with print.



dle of a paragraph,  
hands, the sentences  
each thing happens



en, a sentence flies  
page, already filled

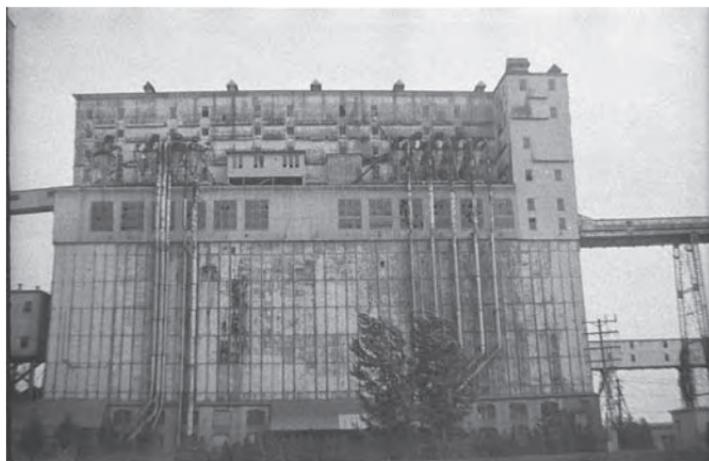




I've come up to the deck and want to bury the sea wall and look for a long time. He's coming up, too. The wind makes him shiver. His darkness is nearly the same shade as mine. We walk to the rail together, afraid of those whales of waves, though we stay on deck until the grey dissipates. Nights of aquamarine and indigo, somber turning of the boat on the horizon.



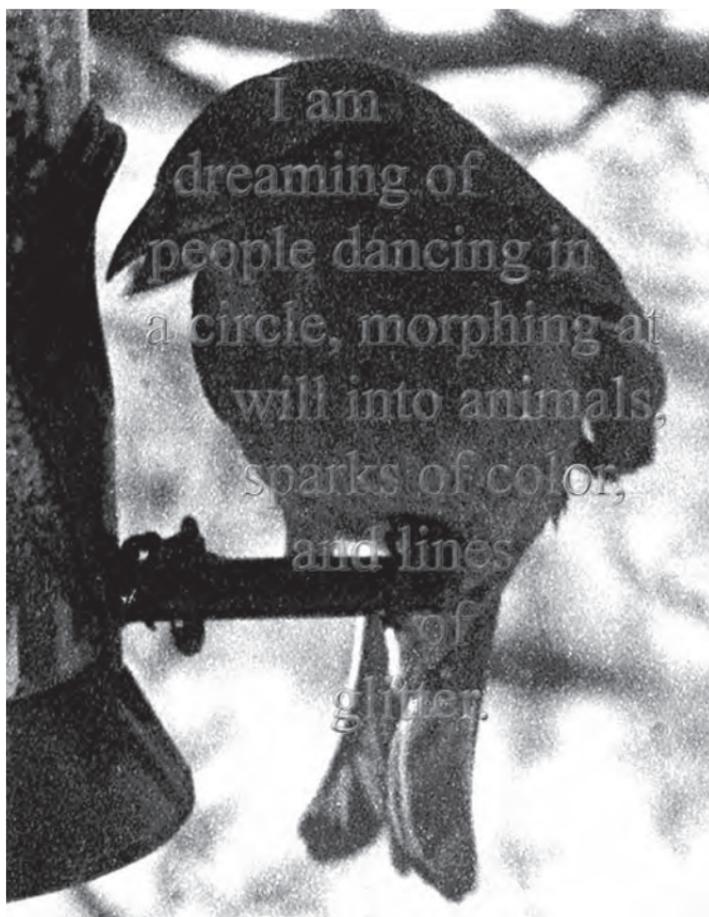
Ø



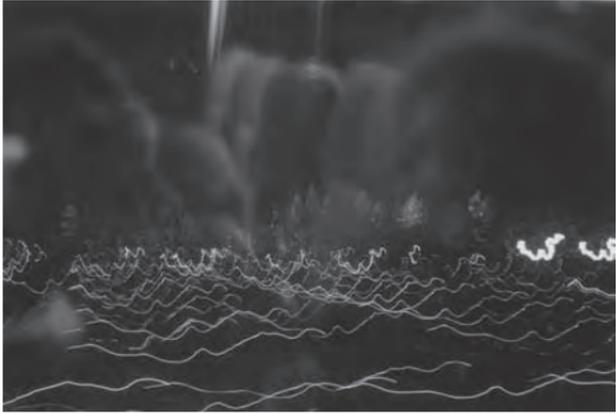
Ø

75

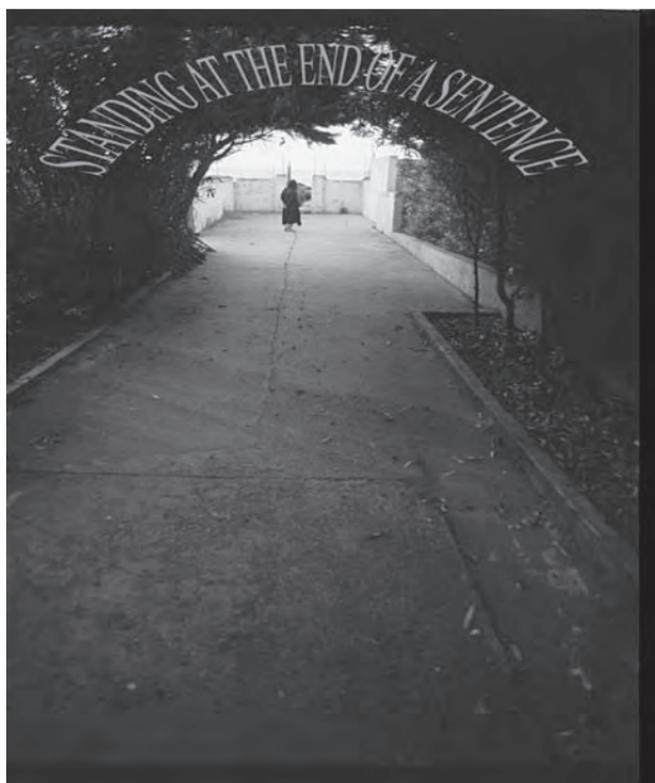
A page of print is  
turning  
into a place  
mat with  
food  
on it.



Ø



**I**rene is standing in the middle of the street. The cars coming from the front are coming from the past; the ones coming up from behind, from the present.



∅

80

A store on a small hill in nowheresville.  
It specializes in antiques and clothes  
and books. I go in to browse. Bill  
Corbett, one of the owners,  
is standing around.  
“ You used to work  
here?” he asks, in-  
credulous. “Yes,” I tell  
him, “I sold pre-owned women’s clothes.”



Ø

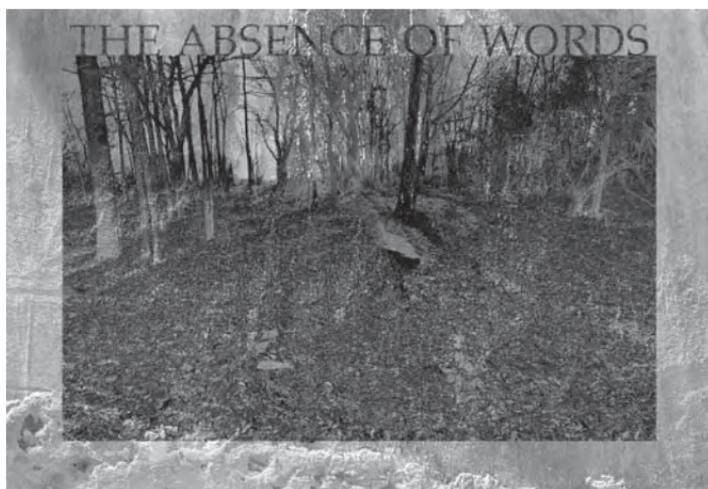


#@ch p#rs\*n's lif# is @ c#rt@in  
numb#r \*f w\*rds l\*ng in th# b\*\*k \*f lif#.



Ø

85



∅

Though we can't see her, Janet  
G. is painting a curvy blue line across  
the white lake, letting us know she's  
coming. I know he will like her.



Ø



The world is a person's  
body. In my life I am  
camped out near  
a shoulder.

Turns out you are nearby.  
We realize we'd better  
move before illness  
strikes.

Ø



Half asleep I conjure up obscure  
moments, rooms I was once in—  
intact memories of unimportant  
moments—  
where do they rest, hidden and until  
when



Ø

91



Shin Yu  
and Kort  
live in a  
box that's

also a  
room and  
I live in  
one and  
everyone

else lives  
in one,  
too, and  
they're all

connected.



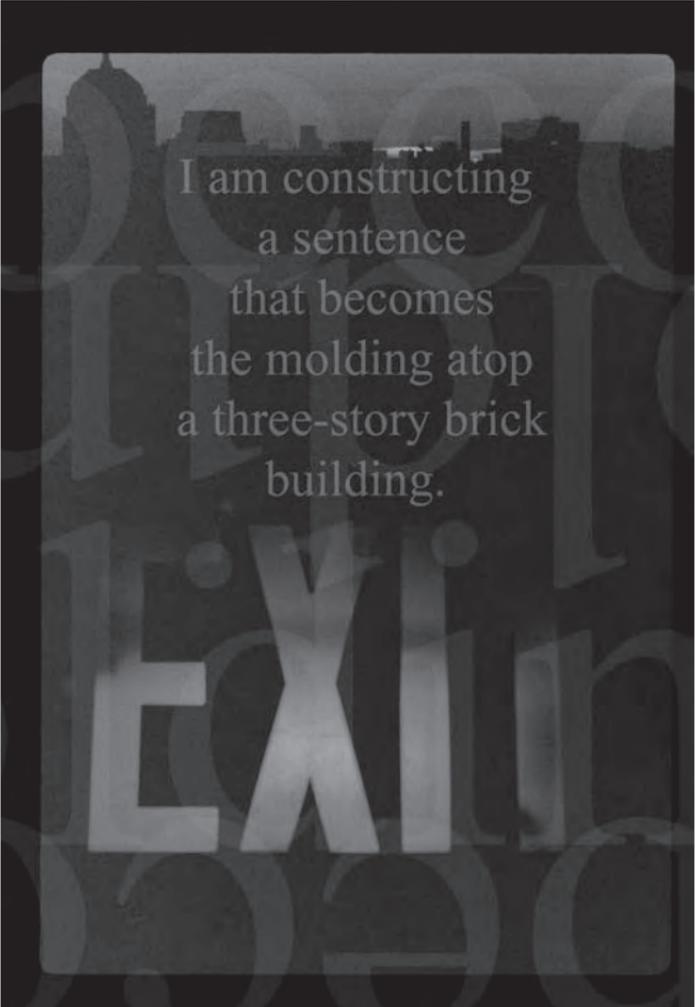
we are standing at the portico of a word

∅

“We’d better hurry up,” I say to the others in our line as we march over wet grasses. “Turn around,” someone says. And there they are, three

lines of the world’s comic superheroes, every one marching. It’s magnificent, and theme music is swelling. “What,” I ask, “if we were to

march to the end of the known world?”

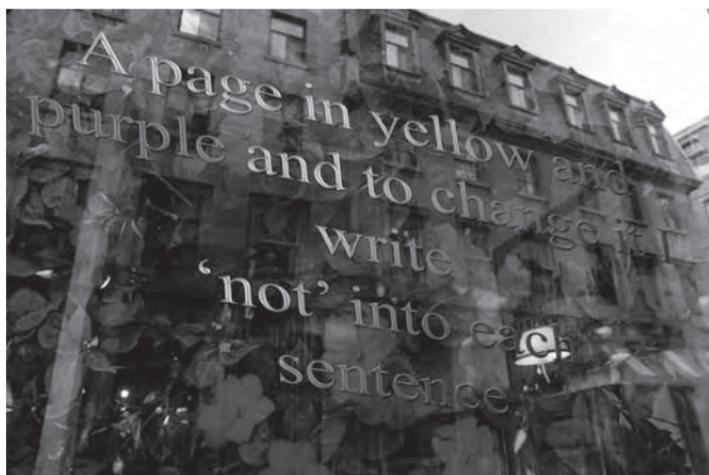


I am constructing  
a sentence  
that becomes  
the molding atop  
a three-story brick  
building.

Anita Silvey, children's  
book d e -  
sign-  
er, b o u g h t o u r  
family home and  
transforms t h e  
f r o n t y a r d  
by cut-  
ting 3 rows of broom  
on each side which look  
like the lines for passing  
lanes in the street, and  
putting grass a n d  
l o v e l y  
plants in the  
middle, making the whole  
lawn look like a beautiful page.



∅



Ø

He is reciting one of my dream poems—  
'dream's a cafe'—to me in my dream,  
approvingly—

I forget this  
the next  
I start to  
start—  
how real it  
dredge it up.

&

until,  
night,  
sleep wake with a  
was, how did I



Ø





Ø

An amber scroll, a twill

drape,

and an aging man are  
talking to each other.



Ø

I think of photographing the stages of a person's meal.



**I** Dream's a cafe  
order what  
have to pay

**I** want

A group of people is explicating a text from



experience. We can't agree on anything.





∅



Ø

Fanny Howe and I are going to share a

suite  
in a dorm  
with  
two other women.

I inquire about the cost for one bedroom and am told \$1200, or \$2400 for two. So I say, Never mind, I'll stay at my house. Fanny is making an outline on a big piece of drawing paper of the costs entailed in writing a long poem.



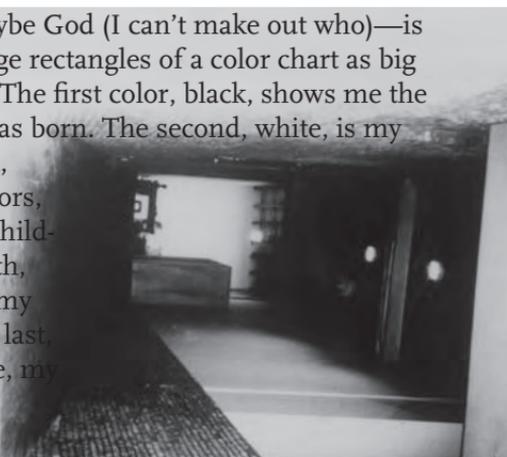
Ø



Ø

II3

Someone—maybe God (I can't make out who)—is flipping the huge rectangles of a color chart as big as a long table. The first color, black, shows me the time before I was born. The second, white, is my birth. The third, the primary colors, shows me my childhood. The fourth, of earth tones, my adulthood. The last, a pale navy blue, my present life.



A block party in Italy, people are dancing in a conga line, and dozens of male industrial designers are standing in various positions on ramps inside large buildings. Each one has his own fish tank filled with rocks, plastic toys, cray-

ons, etc., and moves around using principles I have no knowledge of while listening to David Byrne. One of the designers, wearing soft paisley shoes, is using those principles in his fabric designs. And that's why he's considered avant-

garde. He asks me to hold his book of matches. "If someone turns off the lights and tries to scare you in a dark room, you react," he insists.





I'm walking through Victorian  
London, the dark poor sections.



Ø

See the stars—ones  
you loved,  
who

ones  
died.



Ø

**I**'m the Prince of Wales, captured in WWII. They're putting me to death. I climb the scaffolding. A young woman in a brown and white scarf and long skirt leads me to my death and says, "Don't worry about it." A man puts a set of electrodes on my temples and smiles. And I can feel myself giving way.

It's  
a  
sit-  
com.  
I'm  
the star.  
Everything  
that hap-  
pens, good or  
bad, is funny.  
I hear the laugh  
track. I am  
laughing,  
too.



The film **is** a train.

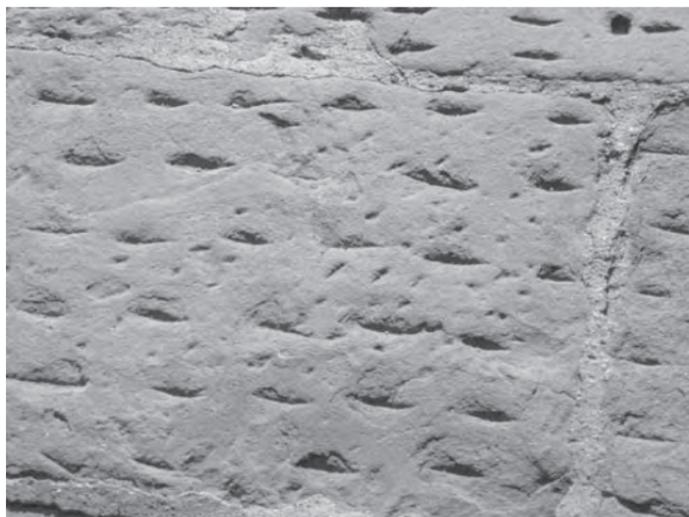


Ø



Ø

my  
lime  
green pen, in-  
scribed  
‘hotel  
loggiato dei serviti  
info@loggiatodeiserviti  
hotel.com’—  
I’ll email them  
in my  
dream.





Ø

I m **ee** t John Le **nn**  
 on and hand  
 him a  
 pair of o **ff** -white  
 gloves with  
 sun- flower  
 s **ee** ds woven into them.



Ø

“Can anyone think of a  
realist writer?” I ask. A guy  
in the back of the room  
raises his hand. “Simmonds  
Hoote,” he says.

**T**anglerest and Tanglefield  
are two towns where hair  
care products are being  
tested.





∅



Ø

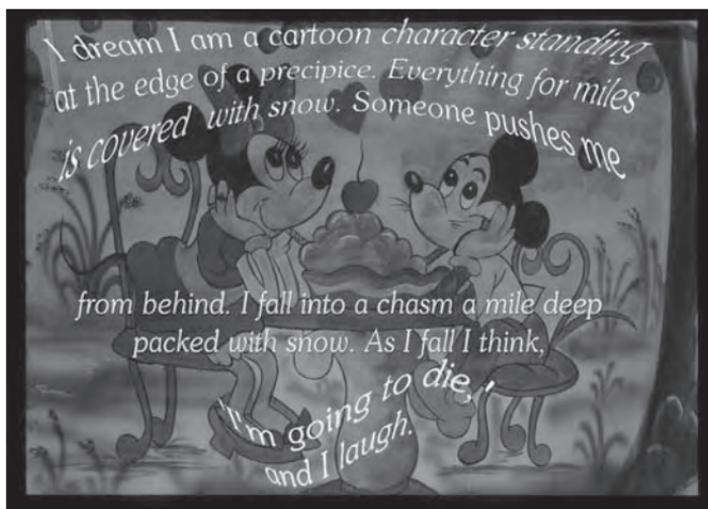
I'm playing chess with Elvis.

**W**e meet a writer who called himself  
Inkling when he was a child and now  
calls himself Manuscript.



Cliff Claven assures me, “I can get you  
an individual Blue Cross Blue  
Shield plan.”





**S**omeone is asking me about a Babar book while I eat a banana. "It's a real knockout," I say.

“Condoleezza Rice, that’s nice!”



Appearing this evening:  
Ted Danson in his most  
recent sitcom, puppies,  
Holderlin, and a little girl.



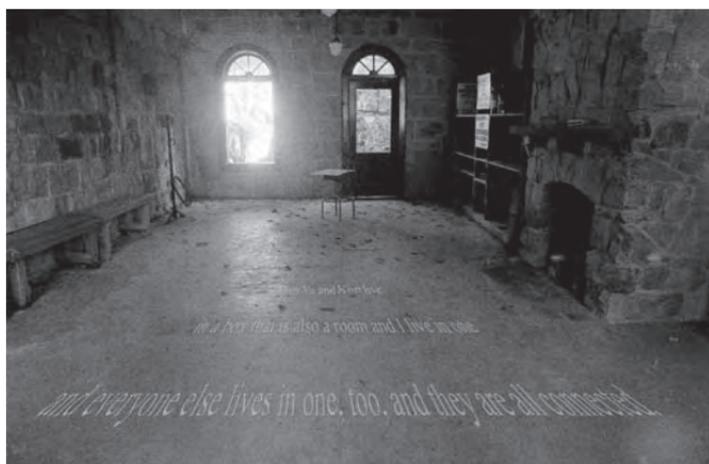
My cat Clementine is being  
underlined, becomes and  
italic cat, and runs across the  
room.





Ø

“Why is it that Einstein’s ideas were so readily accepted while those of modern literary theorists, especially Gadamer, have met with such hostility?” the white-haired German professor is asking me in the kitchen at the party. “You must remember,” I tell him, “that Einstein met with resistance for as long as seventy-five years. And I know what you’re going to say: that Einstein’s theories are ‘objective’ while those of literary theorists are not. But this is not the case: the reason that Gadamer’s—or was it Barthes’?—ideas caused such an uproar is that he changed the relationship of the unloved to the lover and the loved. Before Gadamer, the three stood in relation to one another as in an isocles triangle, the unloved being the distant one. After Gadamer, the triangle is equilateral.” I watched the cloudy beginning of the year. I was driving through New York at early dawn, looking for an entrance to Riverside Drive.

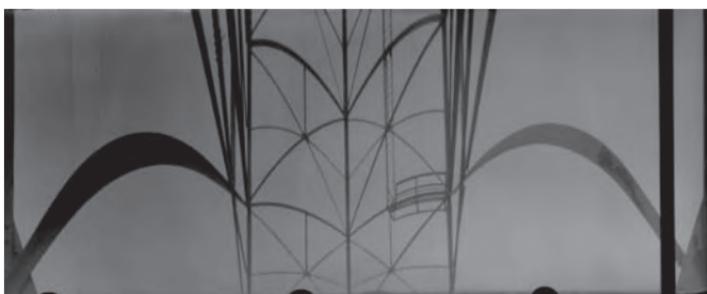


Ø



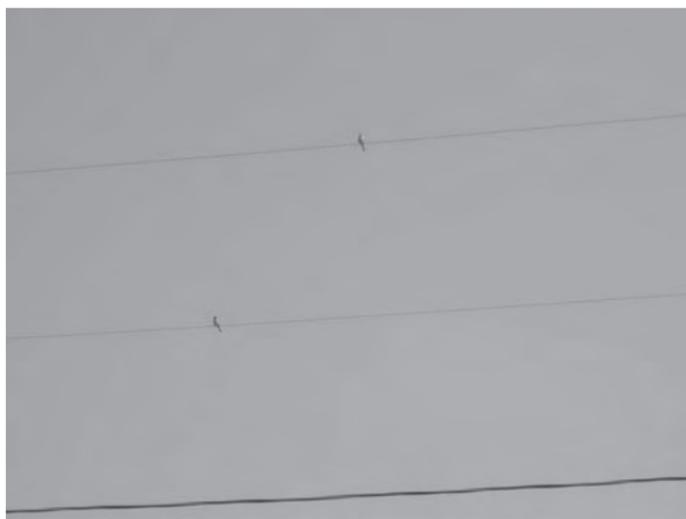
Mary Oliver is  
herself  
jigsaw  
made of  
slightly  
the pieces  
remove.

turning  
into a  
puzzle  
words. It's  
sunken so  
are hard to



Ø

I'm liv	ing room,	My room-
with two	w h e r e	
guys and	p e o p l e	
a woman.	h a v e	mates are
Across the	g a t h e r e d	
courtyard	d u r i n g	
a man	t h e s o n g.	surprised
is play-	W e ' r e	
ing the	a s k e d	
piano and	p l e a s e	we have
a woman	t o m o v e	
is sing-	t o t h e	
ing "Je te	f r o n t r o w.	
deteste, je	T h e y s i n g	gotten in
t'adore."	a s o n g	
Both are	c a l l e d "A	
dressed	S c r a p C y l -	for free.
in red and	i n d e r,"	
black. I	a k a "A	
knowtheir	C y l i n d e r	I start
outfits are	o f S c r a p s"	
clichés yet	w h i l e a	
I go into	g u y a n d	
their liv-	I l a u g h.	singing.



My  
mind's  
a  
ticker  
tape  
parade.



Ø

The poem  
ascends to  
heaven to  
talk with  
the spirits.





∅

the brown hills are healing, the green hills are  
soothing, the charcoal hills, and charcoal clouds  
that half cover the moon, draw us in, the gold  
hills I wish I could lie down on, the night black  
hills bring , while  
the cars deathhappiness i n  
the valley criss-  
cross, fire- flies,  
stars passing so fast they don't acknowledge  
each other, and the ochre house sits half way  
down the valley on its own promontory, content



Ø

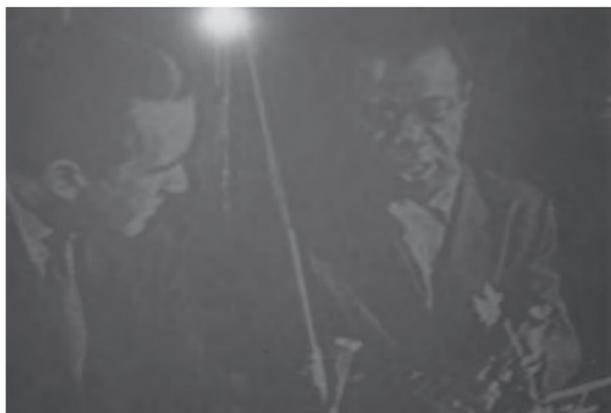


Ø

I wake up singing  
the French national  
anthem.



Michael has brought over something like Scrabble with a letter on each tile. We can form only Emily Dickinson's words. After half the tiles have been used, Michael announces that each of us will get half the remaining letters and will have to think of Dickinson's words using only those. The game is good because it forces me to think in her rhythms, tho the board is so small it's hard to fit whole poems in. Another rule: we have to make up our own Dickinson poems using her words but not in the same order in which she wrote them.



Ros is a dog walker. She is walking with Afghan faces and black-and-lamb's wool curls. The dogs twist other things—one a spatula, one poem.

5 dogs  
white  
into  
a



Ø

You close Your eyes and the sky  
falls down. Millions die in the dark.  
There are always dark places on  
earth. How then can we call ourselves  
people. Someone photographs  
me sleeping in my room.



Ø

Tim Peterson has come to visit in a small yellow school bus. His poems have no words in them but are shaped like a long thin mound and are constructed of thin cardboard. There's a pile of them with various colors printed on them. Joel Sloman is here with some young poets, including Christina Strong, who's reading aloud a poem of her own.



Ø

174



Ø

She's

wearing  
a skirt of many  
colors, a huge  
color chart.  
She's pulling  
most of them,  
each attached to her  
belt, out. She leaves a  
few, including a choco-  
late one. Those are her  
outfit for the day.



Ø



∅



I n t r o d u c i n g  
m y r e a d i n g i s  
a m a n n a m e d  
S t e p U p P l a t e .



I dream I live in a hotel.

What happens there who can tell.







Ø

the cars' head-  
lights are candles  
the green  
street  
lights  
are  
stars  
the red

street  
lights  
our  
hearts  
and the  
moon is  
my life



Ø



On a train, four men, each  
with an envelope. I can hold  
each envelope up to the  
light to see

what's in-	side. In
one, tradi-	tion-
ally per-	fect
hand-	writ-
ing, like	the
Adonis	

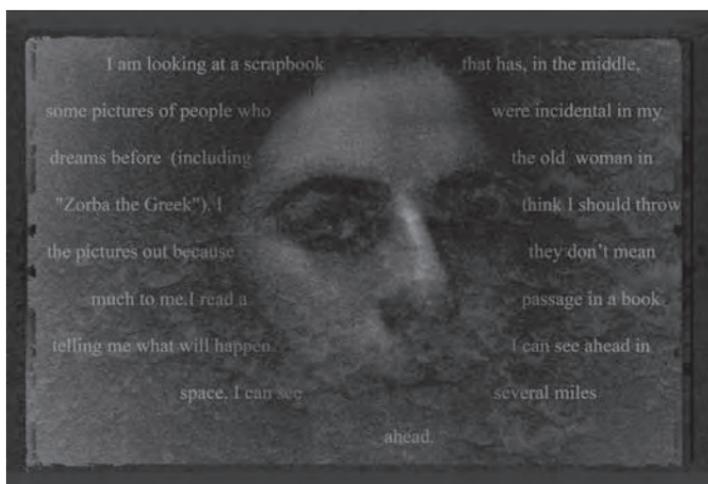
whose  
envelope it was, unappeal-  
ing.



The  
the

I'm look-  
drawings of  
legs vary.  
there are cow-  
horses. I am a

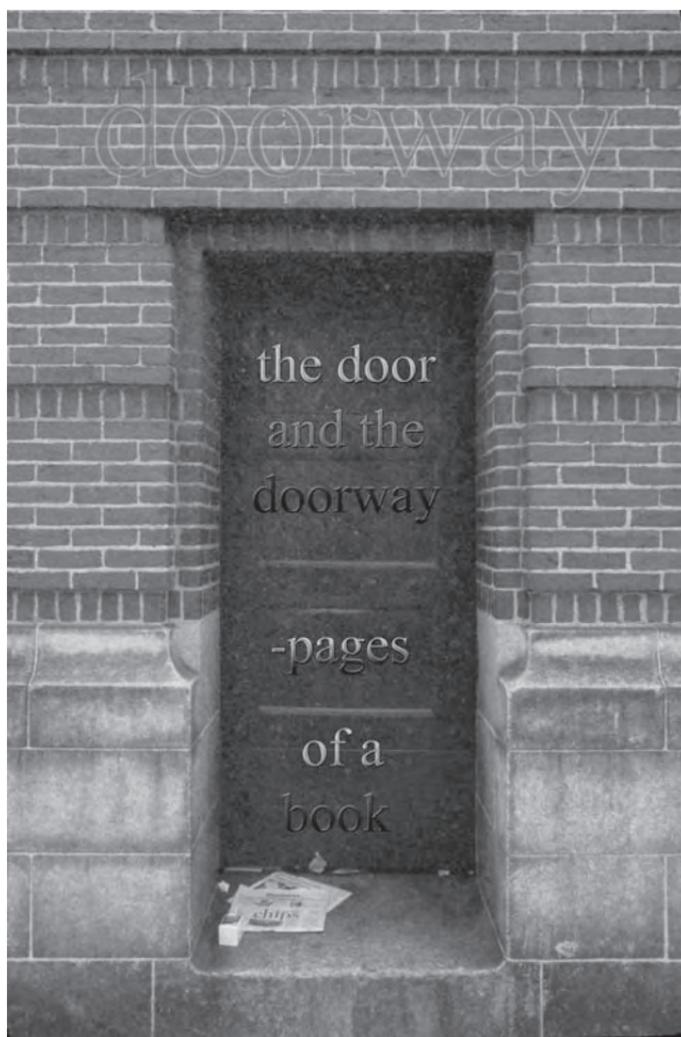
ing at  
horses.  
Now  
girls on  
cowgirl.



Ø

# Words

inside and out. Under-  
neath, below, breath,  
peace.



Ø



Ø



Ø

I have a map and truck to wind my  
way around the mountain range  
and valleys. Blocking the dirt road  
by the restaurant (where I take a  
picture of an elephant on a leash  
standing by the phone booth) are  
three women, arms locked, like  
a simple sentence. My truck has  
disappeared, so I roll down the hill.  
All soft grass and peaceful. I walk  
around, thinking up a poem,  
mock-Emily Dickinson:

I have a truck—  
to go around—  
the shiny mountain passes—

but women as—  
a sentence block—  
my way so I roll down—  
the hill past them—  
this day when I feel Heaven--





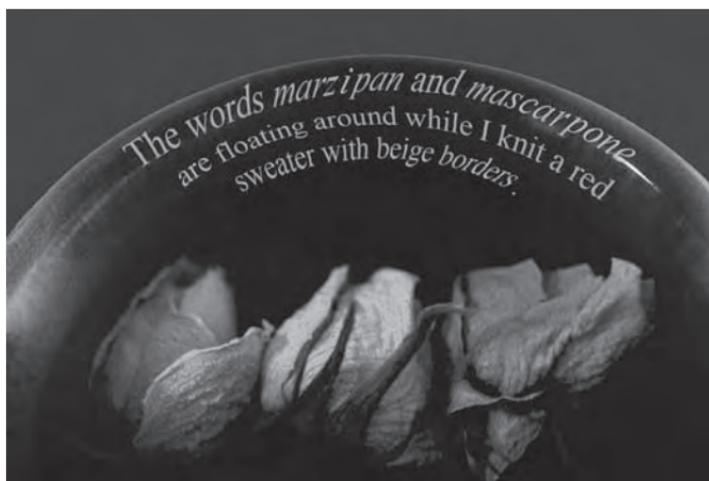
Ø



Ø

I'm swinging from colored  
ropes on the ceiling \_\_\_\_\_  
coral, deep blue \_\_\_\_\_

I  
have to keep  
swing- ing. Below, you're  
blessing me.



Ø

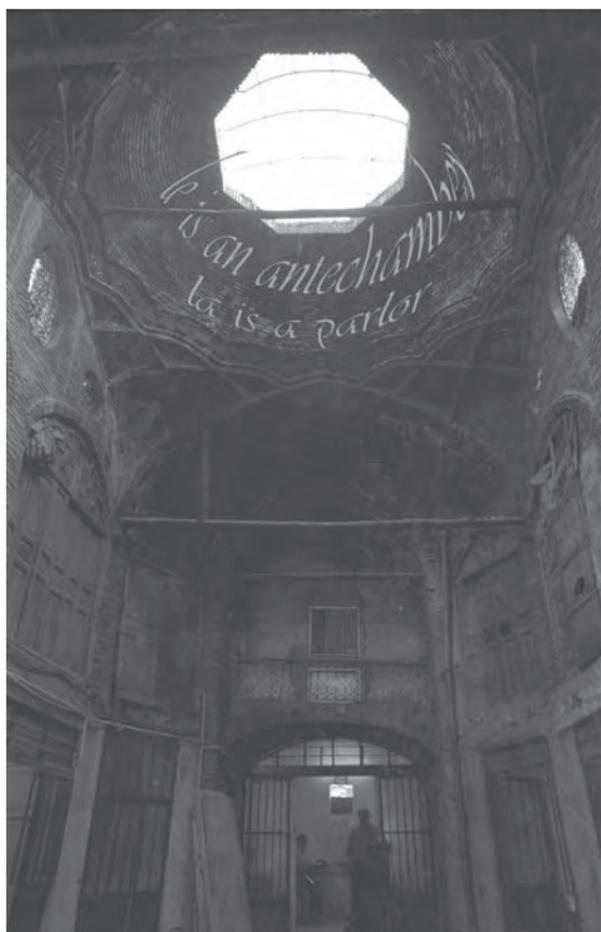
Lyn Hejinian  
is writing a  
book in the  
shape of a large  
vertical capsule.  
It's glowing yellow  
and the bottom is

deep blue,  
and she  
writes her

words on  
top of the  
blue. Some-

one insists it isn't  
yellow, it's rose,  
but I can see  
clearly that it's

light bright yellow.



Ø

**I** 'm looking at the days  
of the week, each one a  
room without a ceiling.  
The day of Steve Lacy  
is filled with tropical plants. I  
think it's Thursday.



Ø

The Hal-  
ghost  
skel-  
are  
ing  
as if  
were

loween  
and  
eton  
danc-  
they

Greek,  
gether,  
hilltop.

to-  
on a



**W**e drive to an Italian restaurant called Via Bulge for lunch. White paper tablecloths with tiny white lights all along the edges that blink in unison.



Ø



I'm looking through a scrapbook that has, in the middle, some pictures of people who have been incidental in my dreams (including the old woman in "Zorba the Greek"). I think I should throw the pictures out because they don't mean much to me. I can see miles ahead in space.





O n e      day there will be no  
m o r e      popcorn, no more  
w o r d s ,      no more pictures.



islands Florida after a huge  
storm. Usually the  
seagulls have tiny green  
to live on but now the is-

lands are under several hundred feet of water. I  
can see them. A little girl is handing out pieces  
of paper with brown print on them, asking  
people to save the environment. The people,  
very tired, are marching in line and get angry at  
her for wasting paper.

Robert Creeley is young again. His hair is curly and he's wearing a black leather jacket.



At a poetry conference,  
talking to me. “Remember,  
ask, “how Robert Duncan  
bring someone with him  
ance himself? If he was  
along someone who  
“Well, I wouldn’t go  
says Creeley, kindly.  
the end of the confer-  
in a campus building  
dull, so they turn it  
poets make  
earring.  
“Make it/more

Robert Creeley is  
ber, Bob,” I  
would always  
to counterbal-  
sad, he’d bring  
was happy?”  
quite that far,”  
The reception at  
ence takes place  
the poets decide is  
on its side, and two  
of it a huge amber  
“Well done,” we say.  
fun,” they reply.

Jono is curving our words into colors, parts of  
the neon sweep across the San Francisco night.



I AM A NARRATIVE UNFOLDING AND  
A SERIES OF THEORIES CRITIQUING THE  
NARRATIVE AND A CONSCIOUSNESS  
WATCHING ALL OF THIS.

Ø

I'm an assistant to Francis Fukuyama, an architect of the no-future who wrote

*T h e  
E n d  
o f  
H i s t o r y*

I'm Philip Roth, wanting the  
Christians to like me, so I've  
come out with a new novel.



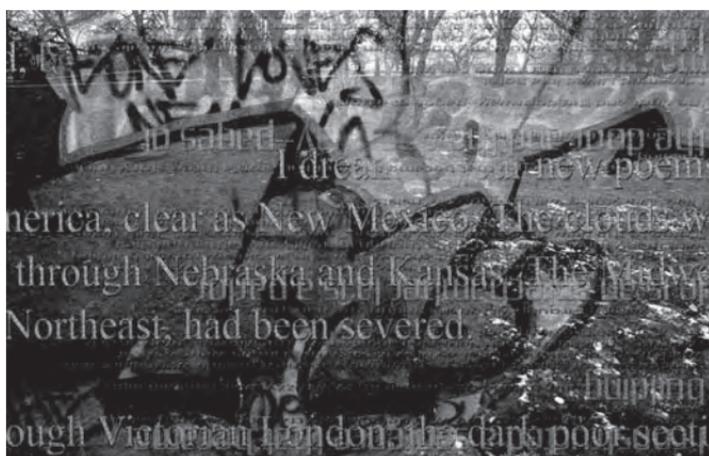
Her blue blouse  
with round collar is turn-  
ing into her page of  
the day.



Ø



Robert Creeley's new poems are  
black and white  
maps of America,  
clear as New  
Mexico. The clouds  
are vertical curlicues  
chalked through Nebraska  
and Kansas. The  
Midwest map  
strikes me—  
its neck, the  
North-east,  
has been severed.  
Later I notice the absence  
of words, the  
silence.



Twenty  
five  
sitting  
secting  
faucets  
Creeley  
poems  
say we  
them.

or twenty  
of us are  
at black dis-  
tables with  
attached.  
reads his  
and we  
can't dissect

Saving  
a New York  
skyscraper from  
fire, I'm Supergirl,  
flying over the city and  
dousing the fire with  
buckets of water.



Ø

Celia and Wally are living in a Venetian palace in Boston. She and the kids are giving me a tour. "Everything in it is authentic," she says. It's on a canal in Venice but on the Charles at the same time. She glows: "We have your birthday present" and hands me a card that becomes a chocolate cake (without the frosting) that pops up into five layers. "It's so you," she exclaims. Alice James Press is located on the Cape and has planned a Friday morning reading of new

poets, called *hors d'œuvres*, in which each poet will present a concoction she has prepared. I don't have time to go but Celia is planning to. As I leave her home a bunch of terrorists, actually very bad experimental poets, approach a group of innovative poets I bump into and tell us we'll have to go through a doorway nearby. One very brave young woman refuses and runs out through a nearby doorway, and we all follow her quickly and escape.



Ø



Ø

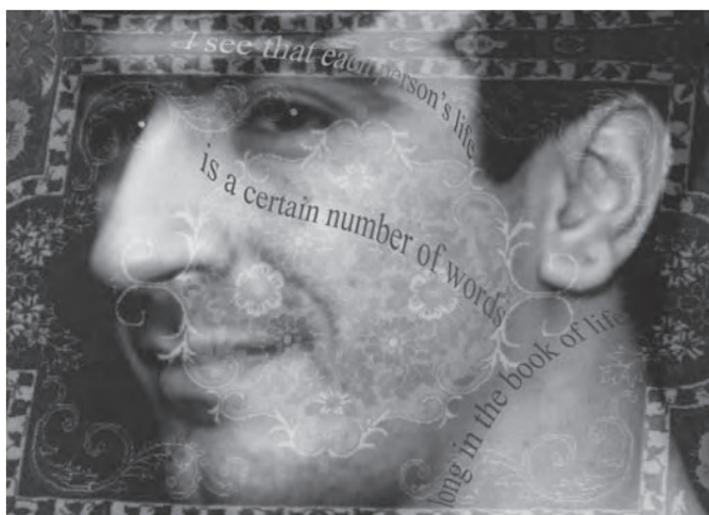


I have a partner. We take off, a thousand miles an  
hour. We  
see clus-  
t e r s o f  
cloud, a n d  
s k y , glaciers cracking, moun-  
tains sit-  
t i n g ,  
dark coming, and sun.

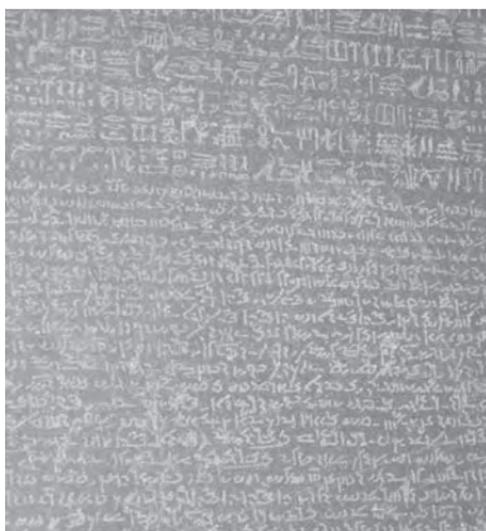


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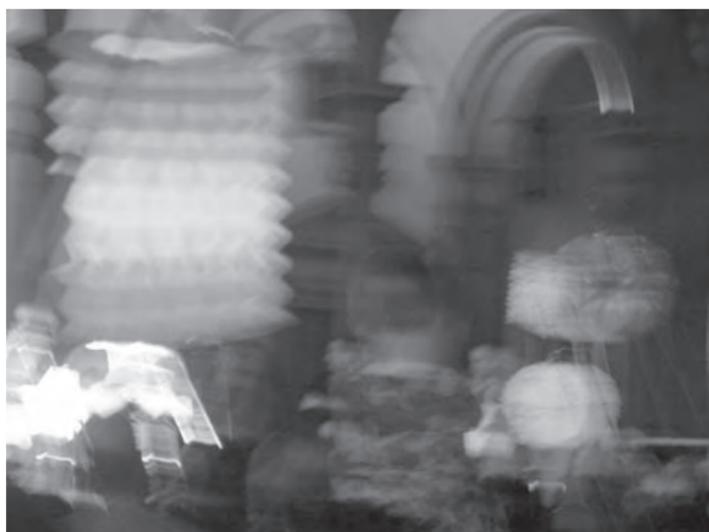


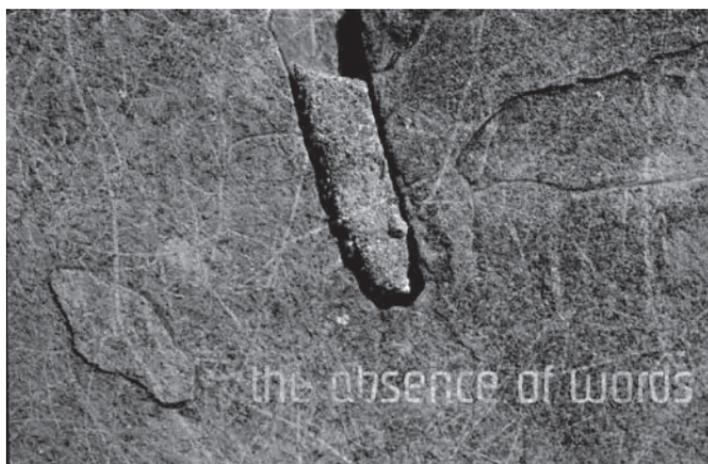


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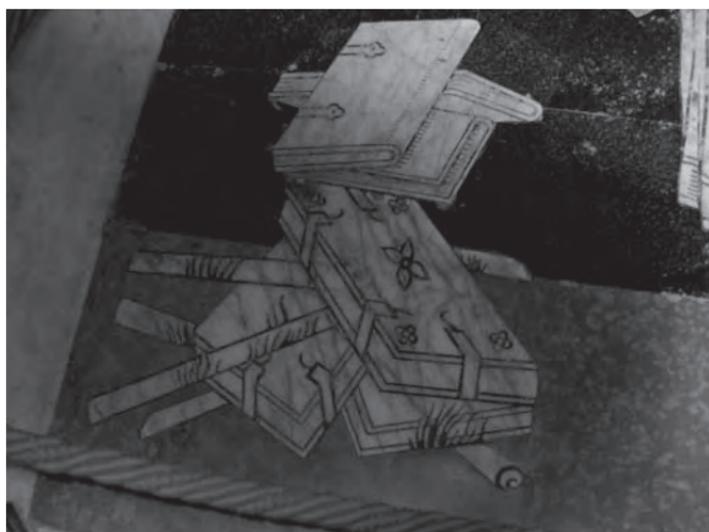


I'm staying on the outskirts of New York, looking at the sky. The skywriting and the clouds are morphing into words and letters of poems and the sky is blue, and I'm very happy. I feel the word Victory.





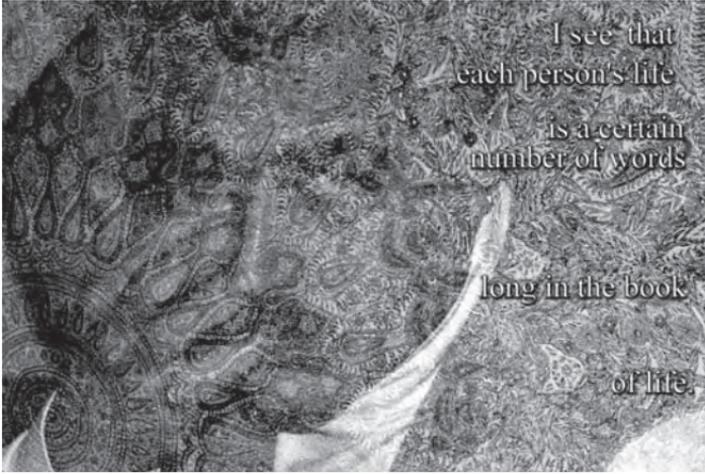
∅





Ø

A red  
t r e e  
and a  
yellow  
t r e e  
against  
a very  
b l u e  
s k y .





Ø

I'm coloring in a cat in blue crayon,  
feeling sorry for it that it won't  
live much lon- ger because  
the color- ing book  
(with lines of verse  
and prose in it) is a script  
that will soon be digested by an actor.  
The play has begun already—as the actor  
speaks, I rush to finish coloring, to keep up.





Ø



Celia's standing inside  
a huge paragraph, the  
words the size of hu-

mans. She's  
situated in  
front of the

sentence in the  
middle; some-  
one else is  
standing at the

end of that sentence.





∅



Ø

257

Sentences  
are  
colorful  
scarves  
people  
wear  
to  
warm  
themselves.





A cat is running for president. He's sporting a suit and tie, standing behind a mike with his two front paws held high. "If I am elected President of the **S**tates," he promises, "I will will America **U**nited things—a dark, warm, safe place for each person, and more fireflies."



Ø



A friend and I buy a pale grey house at the  
edge  
of an  
apple orchard. Variegated apples and leaves  
shine in the sun. Goats, sheep and  
chickens are running  
around. I'm happy. Then I realize  
you are walking away—maybe  
you've never been there—no, there  
you are, in the distance, on  
the dirt road, leaving.





I'm a cartoon  
character  
standing at  
the edge of  
a precipice.  
Everything for  
miles around is layered  
with snow. Someone pushes me  
from behind and I am falling into  
a chasm a mile deep, dense with  
snow. As I fall I am thinking  
"I'm going to die," and  
I laugh.



I'm  
I pick  
with my  
and the  
hand is  
into the  
clubs.

playing cards.  
up a card  
right hand  
palm of my  
transmuted  
card, a ten of

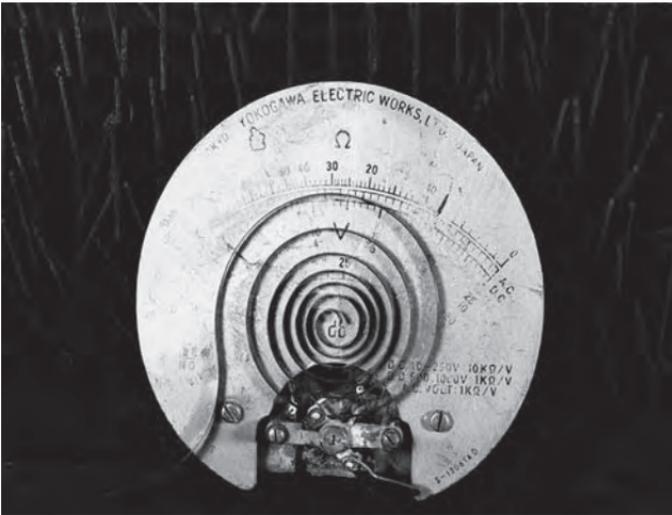


∅



The cats have got punked-out hairdos of reddish purple and orange; some have tattoos; they're standing on their back paws, a gang.

Morphing into each other, uncle to  
grandfather, grandfather to another.



to mine, a blast furnace 'goodness' floats into  
view precipitate words to him, saying something  
is a rope bridge. to her, fire. under the finger  
nails, body next you are really breathing  
peppery cloud in the room, ready to pieces of  
letters mortality is a camera your and now  
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The era of “colored hearing” is now awash with *Morphology’s* dreamlaps. Poems sense aside photos while photos press lines to logos - a “double joy” that explodes the “fortune cookie” approach to dream talk. “Awake” is now “Aquake”, and we are more sensible souls for the “light tablets” this collaboration tones us.

- Tina Darragh

In the first image of Ruth Lepson and Walter Crump’s *Morphology*, the eye follows train tracks into a distant background of earth-meets-sky, the sky a near circle of light, presenting at the same time an enclosure and an eternity. The first text suggests a linkage of thinking and seeing: if I think it, it appears. Magic. The magic here concerns the relationship of verbal to visual, a relationship always lively, never predictable. The text is no less visual than the photographs, and at times even the letters take one’s attention (and one’s breath away); in the section in which it is stated that all men are pencils, two times the letter “y” (why? Y chromosome? a leaning “v” standing on one leaning leg? all these & more) is separated from its word and enlarged to become a visual presence, an occupier of space on the page, in the eye, in the mind. One complete page of the book states that “my brain is a tablet of light.” In this book, this fine work of art, this perfect interplay of writing and photography (both graphic in their own ways), “the sentence is turning into a person.” If you read and see carefully, you will be that person. If you’re looking for something, you will find it here. If you’re not looking for something, you will find it here, where “someone else is standing at the other end of that sentence,” a thought you hear while looking at a dimmed and timeless photograph of water meeting earth meeting clouds, and you gain a sense that the sentence is ongoing and connects everything that you are with everything you have seen, and that it will go on for miles and miles and miles without ending. This book is magic. I want to read it a thousand times.

- Charles Alexander

In Lepson and Crump’s collaborative improvisations, language becomes a playful substance in which we find ourselves furtively embodied, “camped out near a shoulder” or “standing in the middle of a paragraph.” Acts of renaming and comparing create a flux of metamorphoses both ominously curious and sweetly surprised. These exuberant, synesthetic leaps between the visual and the verbal bypass unlikeness, pursuing instead a kind of social dreaming in which everyone is included.

- Tim Peterson

