

from *Philtre*

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*These pieces are a part of a larger collection entitled Philtre: Writing in the Dark 1987-2008. They are transcriptions of times when I was unpredictably moved to “write in the dark” during film, music, poetry readings, lectures...usually experiences which somehow sent me to a higher level of associative perception, where I was multipliciously alternating through modes of silent processing, meditation, and stimulation to write. At first I didn’t even recognize these works as poems. I felt them to be more gestural, notational, unrefined, expressionist, free associational kinds of writing. As time went on I became increasingly aware that their composition was on a continuum with other compositional practices of mine which privilege writing in the continuous present moment. I look for poetry everywhere. In process, these scribbblings are often “mistranslated” or “mistranscribed” (for the better I think) due to the scrawling and overwriting that occurs in the dark in the back row of a movie theatre or during a rock show. It’s as though the writing helped me experience the Other’s art more fully. As if I couldn’t help it. I guess it’s a kind of poetics of reception theory, or a record of a trace of what was flashing by through my particular associative filters. I call this accumulation Philtre, since it’s also about the mind-body erotics of being turned on in that way, I mean aesthetically.*



## Writing in the Dark

I trace  
a score  
of notes during films

Sometimes I get excited  
This is one method of composition  
Scribbling in the dark  
not looking down

film goes by so fast

a visual thinking  
that doesn't need meaning  
liquid music that explodes  
that is quietly  
making me feel a music  
shot to shot is liquid  
a pivot that connects  
brings me back to the next  
unfolding shadow  
or color  
what I notice  
might be different  
every time  
even though it's the same film  
It reminds me of a poem  
I read over and over  
the connections are so  
that their dimensional hinges  
radiate again at new angles

these notes are loaded

More interesting poems  
are easier to misread

Movies wake me up  
A stimulating comfort

Notes "by nature"  
are discontinuous

The handwriting makes it so  
That's why they say "suture"

I invite you to list

(The Notational)

grind new philters

lens and potion both

to write what I may

not have

I invite you to write

in the dark

during Janie Geiser's film, Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center, 1996

**picture writing in**

picture writing in  
red, black & white  
a woman's body  
    Cut to  
no Memory  
Wait in passage for

The Red Book Back Wards  
The City falls away

    wipe black graphite from the eyes

Chains fall down  
tin cut frame  
pluck at dress  
covering stomach  
on tape in black  
    covering eye

    Poison

arms drop  
gun questioning  
like a movie screen  
blue hinge  
reveals a red door  
She leaves  
    Without murder

Knocks & lights up

    he hacks himself

    Noir

    Chase  
Woman Wounds Husband  
They say  
Bad Woman Wanted  
    Newspaper whirls outside the frame

synch music

like frames of film  
hold up the black dress

try on

real doll knives  
& forks fall  
revolving

she's really panting  
held by a giant  
of the night  
who favors the left

works up  
as I lean to read  
No Case Too Small

Bandaged arm  
(he doesn't recognize her)

as the window is the picture

chasing herself  
light & dark

perspective  
frame with no surface

Push or Sleeve?

enclosure  
jagged crocodile waves  
deep Swimmer

*during performance of Mark Morris Dance Group 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, choreography to Handel's L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato, Pastoral ode after poems by John Milton, rearranged by Charles Jennings, performed by Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra / Chorus, Brooklyn Academy of Music, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001.*

## Cyprian As You Go

Easter  
colors of  
  bubbles  
spring  
  mid  
  Brown

purple  
  Yellow  
flung

Convulsive

Ah

the bubbles underground

arch above the line

  passing  
    in  
  scrim —

Come Come

Keep my woozy  
  steeds

mountain nymphs!

  so happy

  blue nap nap

bird a head

  lavender

pale  
inside

the shell  
violet blue grape

Arched up  
mirrored smoky

free —  
triplicate

crocus

broken sewn

unknown buds

sing

Rush in  
colored little fairy  
stuffs

sashed  
& grown

human analogous

Chromo-  
Zones

Their feet on the  
floor

your pipes in the  
morning

Landscape  
ing Doggy  
Style

hightail it off  
    partnered then  
    panoply all over  
the terra

that delayed  
    little extra  
    puppy

Double panoply  
Of complex multicap  
    Reaction rows —

That's how you make  
    me feel

sleepy like death  
    regenerative  
    in a drip splash  
slow circle — joydime

so rare a reach

slap happy  
Organic  
    Form  
covers her mouth

an orchid girl  
    in fluted  
    daffy-dill

microscopic  
    revolutions on a

notes big scale —

    DNA marches on

“to melt the shades away”

hightailing it



out your soft

melancholy

I  
& we  
with tree  
will change  
to we

where you are two  
not clear who's your other  
who  
two —

“the hairy gown  
the mossy cell”

Euphrosyne's Philomel

*during poetry reading by Claudia Rankine & Robert Creeley, Tuesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2001, Union Theological Seminary*

### **Read to Me**

The dangerous passage of a bee-filled field —  
Thunder down the tunneled vale — criss-crossed  
Upheaval slammed over the black & white  
Wild strawberries who circle each other

While we sit and listen to summer crash  
Tagged with “lovely clouds” seemingly lost  
on “Your coat upon a single hook” — uptown

Medieval rain comes in Hand holding on  
to Arms & Legs & Ears & Tell me who  
is flying up there in that place to a  
*Less reflective territory?* Who knows?

Proper names dwell in our verses  
Even now we name the names with  
Which in whom we dwell

*during poetry reading by Forrest Gander, Wednesday, July 18th, 2001, Philosophy Hall,  
Columbia University*

### **Freely Neon in Sandals**

Cows drink beer in Japan — silver pickled  
Bees buzz a rubbed flask  
    even though Them-uns  
Rejected the sampler — those fake roses  
Look but not feel real — conveyed — tired of not  
Writing any at all, better bad than  
none? Green vinyl couch watermelon in  
Survival mode — hair up — cool under the  
Frieze — Orphan girl “wrips”  
Megalith’s chenille  
Fingered Alice blue lavender greenish  
Fuchsia get away Doxology synched

during Zukofsky / 100 conference, The Louis Zukofsky Centennial Conference, Columbia University & Barnard College, Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004

**Zuk**

lots of men  
with square black glasses  
line up in philosophy hall

Marjorie Perloff  
& I talk in the bathroom  
behind closed doors

Pen & Creeley leave  
after asking after my  
baby Miranda

Complicatio  
Explicatio ///  
“we unfold to read”

Isn't the avant  
Garde always pedagog  
ical? (Lyn Hejinian)

**Test of Poetry**  
Sort of heavenly collage?  
“Ezra Pound light?” No.

ABC of Read  
ing — “I'm afraid I'd be too  
Revolutionary”  
(Pound)

Even more cryptic  
ly — hedge crickets sing, drawn up  
by Bobbie Grenier

Marginalia:  
what are its implications

for mistranslation?

Norman Finkelstein  
is called "a mature nightingale"  
by Alan Golding

Norman Fischer said  
he's been reading my book:  
*The Sleep That Changed....*

Creeley writes: "I still  
secured myself by  
flipping back to the index"

speech measure sound  
worldliness? Conviction?  
Categories for poetry?

Z's "taste": objective  
Scientific procedure  
Allows for great range

Leads to his genius  
for choosing texts: Test of Poe  
try has "Textual Power"

"No anthology"  
a continual selection  
"always another"

Beauty: not a set  
Of shackles to bind us  
said Pound

the value of Sappho  
"only emotion endures"  
(zuk) emo objectified

technical continuum

series of repetitions  
or recurrences

blue & black striped socks  
Monica de la Torre  
Endlessly recurs

Sight, sound of intellect  
-ion same as melopoeia,  
phanopoeia, logopoeia

Herrick, Campion  
Sir Thomas Kynaston...

LZ throws us  
The curve:  
Cynthia sits  
Celia shits

The measure of grace  
Is the form, the technique  
Crosses time zuk says

flowers or controversy  
any word may be  
Poetry

Delicate but quivering  
A wrist bends  
Too high tree

A fruitful ambi  
guity — syntactic con  
densation — does "trysts"

unspecified in  
ternal rhyme — charms his  
father  
passes the grace test

Duncan rifts wildly  
On Zukofsky's jewishness  
Happy New Year Air!

More & more I try  
To imitate his spare

## Minimalism

Highly condensed  
 Charged with  
 Quirky grace:  
 "Search Engine Google"

My title is of  
 Course, changed: poetry  
 & socio-political realms

what use is poet  
 ry? To suggest standards  
 the Text of Test

The Test of Text of  
 The Test of Poetry — a  
 Strange calibration

of effects & affects  
 of pressing left cultural  
 activity

prime tensions between  
 social & political:  
 beliefs & ideas

poetic convict  
 -ion — prepositions  
 of the a begin

wealth, riches, econom  
 ic concerns imply  
 inherent Marxist critique

construction by ex  
 cision — with very  
 few ellipses

from Shakespeare to Burns  
 possession, greed, class poverty

I can't help but think

The murder of playfulness  
Let's all mistranslate

Modernist poetry  
Much more lively than

The form of the poem  
is organic conversation  
stopper — evil tritons

C to F sharp was  
Diabolical dissonance  
Does not accord

extravagant layerings  
Milton's "inability  
to leave words alone"

imaginary work on  
imaginary building

upper limit mus  
ic — lower limit speech

precise information  
on existence

social conviction  
pulses deeply