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 multiplicatively 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 scribblings 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

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
     scrims —

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 17th 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
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 17th to Sunday, September 19th, 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 pedagogical? (Lyn Hejinian)

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

ABC of Reading — “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 poetry? 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, economic 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

eextravagant 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