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issn 1661-6685

issue 8
(vol 2 no 4)

TOM

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Fujimori Escapes, Red Mallards

(from *Floats Horse-Floats or Horse-Flows*)

Derogable forest-fan's
 defoliation in black has leaves
 in day. In it. Black defoliated is
 air. Dermoid of black forest-fan's
 is leaves during the day. In the
 desert there aren't trees. Grace
 mumbles waking lying in the
 trees. Looking down she sees,
 having followed the poachers
 at night, the forest mirrored in
 green, red, and black corpses,
 dermoid without skeletons or
 organs. That they'd all been
 tattooed as forests, is this (or
 is this done by) the Shining
 Path or its opposite the death
 squads, Grupo Colina, which
 are the government's? She'd been
 walking through the forest-
 fan dermoid night waking
 with colors and scenes of it
 speckling her hands, face, chest,
 and clothed thighs. Thighs of
 people fan. Defoliated they're
 ruffling is seen only because of
 colors in the forest. Descendent
 but as descension of a planet
 between the two dermoid waves,
 non-derogable night or day
 without either. A moon though
 it is light appears in the dilated
 color waves. One thigh and a
 calf drag. They drag the day
 which itself dermoid has lucid

shimmering cells outside of one
though are one. Every cell in
the one leg is filled with dense
pain though reversed it's utterly
clear light there, the leaden
leg throwing walks in the light
cells of the day later colorless.
The cattle's calf attached to one
spotted as people ascend on
each other, a clot backed up in
day's blowholes. The huge oar
the paddle moves them moving
through them. Odol. green.
This flow now has halve wolves
on it who swimming in it have
hind legs that are little girls' legs
(that are the wolves' legs); the
little girls' thighs and calves,
and on their feet, shoes, are the
hind halves of the wolves not
even paddling though traveling
hurrying somewhere by there
also being flying red mallards in
it but Odol is flow of space or
not. Oar is 'not.' Both. Is that
Shining Path. Oar doesn't do
that flow.

Mine

The same as Chrysanthemum having no feelings but she is only feelings. That pass over her seemingly, that is, lying as the heaving rolling hills of orange mail wet petals plastering her. A tiny dot on the hill is amidst the wave. The debutante offspring of Chrysanthemum is a copy, that is, unable to perceive anyone outside herself. No one is born. The miners are already there, drown, then more are in mine shafts. Also unperceived babies of many equal creatures are emerging, are there then in the wet. But any being born are dead. That wood is to be born. In the wood an oar borne on the orange flexing mail can't move in it, short-circuits the pink shit. Aiding-Chrysanthemum the older can't do good ever having never started to flips in the air glee at whatever suffering of others she sees which if she has not caused in notoriety tale-bearing carrying to inseminate she draws or brewing so others will be R sick at heart from it flat can't do good having never started to is being lost here citizens already blow-torched by soldiers and being so, blow-torched by soldiers, dot the orange mail of petals pink in places that are waves with people's blood and red mallards

sub-Herculean

Yet a few people walk sub-Herculean there seeing elodea outside water. In the rain, appearing to be heard—in order to—the cattle synonymous with dogs are bawling. The cattle wah-wah remaining it is open at the base ruffling. Single doctors targeted, are being shot in the streets taking others with them beside exploded car bombs. Ours think event, at all, limited its being now. What the young doctor careening in flight, the car crashes into a pole does. He waits in the car for the assassin or assassins but then he decides to get out of the car seeing the fragile shadow bobbing in front of him. That's his skin but it isn't him at all. Then he limps outside across the night city, his skin sky. Unable to reach his patient the night is so clear the city and him mirrored in the floating sewage earlier in the black, if there weren't actual others right there, shadow is outside one separate yet existing only from one animate in black while the source oneself is empty amidst the yellow field and forest that's flowing. While he'd been seen outside driving. There's a lash in my eye. His car was not making a shadow as he'd whirled it around corners hearing its screech car's disembodied screechings of brakes oar the tires in the slurred street. In floating sewage the young doctor thinks thinking crosses out his thought while he's floating in the

car wading plays the pools of sewage that's the city, the sewage a
harp lapping in the huge moon. In it people are in narrow cracks.
They aren't fleeing in these lit bombed strands further above teal
garganeys coming in flying so they touch. Is silence a single day,
that a random whole? Crossing the rungs that float blossoms on
sewage, the dag enters that single day that lightly grinds the cobalt
though then when he's there it is the tundra dropping motionless
baseless night to be 'a cheetah with the present' the intention?
Not windows cheetahs chute-the-chute during chrysanthemum
dementia with the trembling mouth at night.

the grasses leisure

Not working for a moment a
puissant sees invisibly [cancelled
by the onlooker] annulled
in chitin in the meadow by
moving. Ruddy ducks shift.
The president seeing pissants
as working yet this one isn't for
a time red dress a pseudopod
on organs of locomotion
producing dysmetria there, the
grasses leisure. The pissant is
walking attachment that's like
stamens to her rustle the wet
grass waves working the grass
open, the machine of wind
motoric as willed even spoken
by anyone there can't open, it's
opened. There isn't present, they
take the view. There's no force,
sensorium. After the death of
the mother one became unable
to dream who'd [innervation]
halve have beside one'd had
rich instructing dreams before,
dazzling—so, do the elderly
not dream at night? Being
children small physical bodies
are the only tools. As if fiery wet
arms. Meeting sclerotized the
fat riding the horses wax them
the people not just chitin so
the fat fly in the grass mounted
where in the woven swaying
grass-haven the powder monkey
and Demihunter (orphan girl)

hold the mounts when the
men demount. Excoriating
others when they stand. Waxed
smile. The wind roars the grass
when the horses move even
standing shiver. They're to
walk the horses. She and the
powder monkey boy would
also be regarded as pissants
in the motoric wind are but
for holding the mounts. One
commits suicide opening a
bomb. Trolleys and buses. They
are transient plumelet when
raddlemen marking sheep on
their backs with ruddle move
while the sheep slip through the
grass unseen. Children rueful
who joyful in small physical
bodies 4 receded in size advance,
a child being small is the tunnel
itself. Eaux grasses hogwash
where they hogtie wild pigs lier
les quatre patte. [A man on the
street looks down sees only [says]
small] are /other's plumper? of a
child divorced from the wild pig,
the ruddle-marked Demihunter
but loon as rudderhead playing
by following them through the
tunnels of grass. Rauque we
aren't that delicate skeletal belle
ever now. They're plumule. It's
slow yet a whirr of heads.

10 or so questions about *It's go in horizontal* elizabeth bryant in conversation with leslie scalapino

Elizabeth Bryant: Your new volume of selected poems, *It's go in horizontal*, was released this spring. It includes "The Floating Series" which Publishers Weekly described as "turn(ing) an act of intercourse into a stop-motion tour-de-force as if filmed by Muybridge and analyzed by Lacan." Is this assessment meaningful to you in any way?

Leslie Scalapino: No. I conceived of "The Floating Series" as an all-over spatial terrain in which events (small and large, individual and mass or societal—and also mystery of motion outside and inside one) are happening at once and one touches another like ping pong balls that send the whole into a different (new) motion/motions throughout. It is not "about" the act of sex, nor does the act of sex determine (nor is it analyzed by the other actions) the other events (for example: a black policeman being immolated on a field by an angry crowd, viewing him as a collaborator, that happened in South Africa at the time I was writing the poem—this was not affected by a couple making love that "occurs" "beside" the other event in this conceptual space). The actions don't merge, they are separate and go on at once. But, there is a rhythm of presentation, a sound scheme that can be heard in the line breaks of the individual small poems (sometimes one word on a line or two separated by a dash—a slow making time/keeping time). The whole is about being in time, the time being—and there is a middle place (undefined) that seems to be also creating.

EB: I had a dream recently that you were Poet Laureate of the US, and in the dream I had the odd thought that Language poetry had "finally arrived" because of your appointment. What do you think of this?

LS: Language poetry has already arrived—but one question would be, then, What is it? (I can't tell you the answer to that; but people asking that question or keeping it in mind is important to

the subject.)

EB: I guess I would say that whatever Language poetry is, perhaps it does not have for itself the goal of embodying that which is deemed suitable national laureate material!

LS: Yes I'd agree that Language poetry doesn't strive for material that would be suitable for a national laureate.

EB: While reading *It's go in horizontal*, and attempting to address the simultaneity of events ping-ponging off one another though not necessarily having any impact on each other, is it ever accurate to invoke Lacan when describing "The Floating Series", or any of your work for that matter? There is as you say, "a middle place (undefined)" that occurs between the ping and the pong (a gap, yes?), which to my mind is where the effort of Language poetry resides, and is also where language itself succeeds or fails. This to me reflects a Lacanian view of *lacunae*, both in Lacan's borrowing from the lexicon of the law where a *lacuna* describes the lack of a law (nothing to govern a particular instance, or perhaps simply a situation with no known rules), and in Lacan's borrowing from Saussure where a message is not received when it leaves or is in transit (the gap), but only after it arrives. And even then, the message's meaning may not necessarily affect anything once it arrives, or indeed may be interpreted in unlimited ways. Does any of this strike you as useful in understanding this work?

LS: To go back a bit, I didn't say that events touching each other (as ping pong effect) ever do not have an impact on each other. That is, everything affects everything else; and the whole changes at every instant accordingly—in phenomena in time and space. Thus I wanted to see that in my work, as finding out what would occur from that, or how that would be. This may be blasphemy but I have never read Lacan. I've tried to study Einstein and such sources, though these sources are not my main reading (that is, physical phenomena, and as if people or social are similar phenomena). Also, I can't generalize about where the effort of Language poetry resides as being "the gap" that we're describing,

the many poets tending to be very different from each other; but I would describe the main emphasis as being: the effect or nature of the writing arises from the mode of the language itself (it IS that), rather than arising from its theme or subject matter in which language is secondary. In my own writing, the “gap in between” is, as you say, crucial—it may be movement (or sense of the animate), or stillness, sense of space, time between events or actions (so, somehow an action itself), or anyway not a subject matter or an entity (nor is it an “it”, not being single). My source of this “gap” is sensory, apprehension informed by theory (rather than the other way around). I begin a work by first having a sort of spatial sense as if language is sculpture (not visual and not theme, but spatial or shape).

EB: What you say about language being sculpture brings to mind a sound experience I had recently. The artist Max Neuhaus has an installation called “Time Piece Beacon” at DIA: Beacon, NY, which acts as a kind of clock: it starts as a barely audible sound that grows in intensity as the hour approaches, and you don’t notice it until it abruptly stops, thus marking time. Suddenly the gap is there (the stillness and the space that is now empty but was a moment ago occupied by a sound, maybe somewhat like the shape you are talking about?), and it’s an awareness of the removal of sound—and the presence of a lack of sound—that causes you to pay attention and wonder what shifted. What was happening, just a moment ago, before you were caused to wonder what occurred? This “happening” is not, as you said, an entity, but there is nevertheless the sensation that there was somehow an “it” there, a physical object. I come away from this time piece feeling as if I’ve observed a sculpture, but there is no sound to see. There isn’t even an embodiment of a clock. And this relates also, I think, to what you said earlier about “The Floating Series,” that “there is a rhythm of presentation, a sound scheme that can be heard in the line breaks of the individual small poems (sometimes one word on a line or two separated by a dash—a slow making time/keeping time).”

On another topic, how did you choose poems from over 20

books of writing to create the volume of selected poems? How are decisions like that made? I imagine it would be an agonizing experience.

LS: I chose the pieces for *It's go in horizontal* by instinct, choosing quickly by having an overall sense of the shape of my work and its parts throughout. Then, I read the manuscript and added selections from two books that had been left out: *The Return of Painting*, *The Pearl*, and *Orion*, and *The Front Matter*, *Dead Souls*. I discovered that those prose/poetry works made a step in my work that acted as a connection in *It's go in horizontal*. The connection is that the prose paragraphs of *The Return of Painting*, *The Pearl*, and *Orion* are sometimes only a line or two, as if the prose paragraph is indistinguishable from a line that's poetry—thus expansive, as if the lines of text make an open space, or as if text lines are a scroll unfolding in a large space, both vertically and horizontally.

EB: There are what I would call “directives” at the beginning of each section of “*Fin de siècle*”. Have you observed these pieces performed the way you intended them to be? Or, have you ever had the experience, later on, of wishing to make changes to these instructions after seeing the pieces performed by others?

LS: The directives for the poem-plays were ways I imagined to give a sense of large outdoor panoramas, like the instruction to use a backdrop of an endless savannah, or sculptures of car-wrecks hanging in the air. They're spatial to show the relation of a few individuals and the sense of their being in a space of unfolding history. The plays were performed using the same number and same gender of performers as I'd specified, but never performed with the kind of scenery I wanted (diorama-like). It was too difficult to make scenery or use backdrops for it. The poem-plays are minimal, gestural. I'd like to see them enacted the way I imagined, if it were possible. “*Fin de Siècle*” could perhaps be performed by silent dancers next to people speaking the text?

EB: I just was reading about a 2007 performance/fundraiser at

the Red Rover Series in Chicago of Kristen Prevallet's *I, Afterlife*, where she created a performance that sounds a little like what you're talking about (silent dancers next to people speaking the text). In this case, Prevallet read the text while dancers performed. Would you like to be one of the people speaking the text? In general, how do you feel about reading your own work? Does it change for you to have others read it?

Also--it reminds me of the photographs you comment on in "Crowd and not evening or light." But in that case the silent dancers are people photographed off in the distance, and the text speaker is the part of the brain that likes to comment on what it sees from afar.

LS: As a poet I'm of course accustomed to giving readings. Most poetry, as such, is to show how it is read. Mine is carefully scored, like music, in which use of space between words, dashes, line breaks, and run-on paragraphs designate how it sounds. A poem, for example, may be long lines as if paragraphs breaking at the far edge of the page (as in the poem titled "DeLay Rose" and others), which suggests a casual speaking tone but has a spatial quality, holding many spaces at once as if real-time spaces simultaneously. In that case the voice of a person reading aloud would try to hold at once the different plateaus of space, much the way an instrument can hold a note. Therefore I tend to read the same text each time in the same way. I've noticed that when others read my work aloud they may ignore some of these indications of how to read it, which is always surprising to me, showing me how I might possibly designate the work more clearly. But it may be, in the age of web-reading, that people are encouraged by the medium itself to ignore the way the material object appears. They're de-sensitized in that way. My work is always calling attention to its being a material "thing" that is also a sound. In regard to performances: I've both read poetry and enacted it by moving with dancers, in collaborations with June Watanabe and her company. Also, six poem-plays have been performed, with actors, or dancers, or poets.

EB: Reading the word "horizontal" repeatedly in "Resting

lightning that's night, Friendship," eventually impresses upon me the sense that horizontal is no longer what I normally understand it to be (an oppositional adjective, as in "sideways" instead of "up and down", for example). Rather, it begins to become more verb-like, ss if horizontal is something to be done instead of a description of how something is. Am I on the right track here?

LS: You're reading "horizontal" as I intended. It's a motion (of people, and other phenomena such as mountains) and an event of space. Especially in "Resting lightning that's night," "horizontal" is a way of seeing everything flowing, existing at different times in parallel simultaneous spaces—not permanent, but not ever passing either. You're accurate in pointing out it's not so much a state of being, as an occurrence.

EB: that they were at the beach is called an "aeolotropic series". Can you comment on the significance of physics in the way this series is structured? I'm still trying, to get a good grasp of what aeolotropic means in this context.

LS: "Aeolotropic" means: objects seen differently according to the place from which they are viewed. If the viewer moves to a different spot, particular objects are seen entirely differently as from that perspective. The sequential poem of that title suggests that the real-time, historical events actually alter, not just change, events or occurrences by one's memory of these (or lack of memory). But the events are qualified changing from/by their relation to each other, and thus each one changing each other. I meant by this that one could change actual real-time events that remain in their time, but are altered in time now, by one seeing the whole clearly.

EB: Can you describe other specific laws or theories of physics at work in it's go in horizontal?

LS: The poem-sequence way, which has six series, has an introductory note citing David Bohm's *Chance and Causality*

in Modern Physics. It's his theory of qualitative infinity, that everything is changing everything else so constantly and simultaneously that nothing is even itself—thus there is no single entity. I wrote this sequential poem before reading Bohm. His book was loaned to me by the poet Rick London, who said that Bohm had a good description of what I was doing in the unfolding of the changing events. It was, in that respect, the same as in that they were at the beach—the writing began to find out the word (that came to be the title, aeolotropic series), or defining principle, rather than the writing starting, being premised on, the definition as a given process or form.

EB: Would “Delay Series” also be considered aeolotropic? Could you compare this series to the so-called “Rashomon effect?”

LS: “Delay Series,” part of way, is the one actually described as “the series as qualitative infinity”—that is, minute occurrences that are all, at once, changing each other. Which is different from simply looking at an object from different perspectives (locations) so it appears differently. That is, after writing that they were at the beach, I'd discovered more about time, chance, and observation changing history. Comparing way to Rashomon highlights a social principle of action. That: how we see something is what it becomes/is already in so-called real-time-space (though, or by, the definition of “real” being challenged). “Delay Series” was “centered” (but then altering any center, not ever having a center) on the fact of a young friend (I was young then too) dying of AIDS, when both the illness and the act of dying were unexpected (to those viewers).

EB: In *The Front Matter*, *Dead Souls*, you address a re-election campaign. Is there a place in which the 2008 presidential election will appear in the writing you are working on now?

LS: The 2008 election hasn't yet gotten into my writing. But social phenomena of recent years do show up in my writing, such as corruption, torture, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



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