



the code

stephanie young

the code

© Stephanie Young 2009  
All rights reserved

Cover design Murphy Chang

**three little birds**  
54 belmont avenue  
providence ri 02908

first edition / 100



the code  
stephanie young

It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways  
of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent.

-- *Fifteen Theses on Contemporary Art*, Alain Badiou

I agree to go on the cruise ship            and then refuse  
thought I could            have a dream

and refuse    it's simple, water  
"I'm obsessed with"    water, the west, low ceilings,

etc.    refusal            as a sound  
a group of its trash    expanded

as an extension    of what can be seen and  
what can't    China            the conditions

what conditions            knowing  
and not knowing            looking, seeing, watching, observing

and not            "I refuse"  
these lines    begin with I, probably still

on a cruise ship            not wanting  
to think about it            *means*            on a cruise ship

you might not even try            :there you are  
talking about    refusal            the empire

can see            these attempts  
renewed in lines            of roughly equal length

known to the empire            already  
therefore            I won't describe them here any further:

claustrophobia on cruise ships the  
empire knows all about it

I agree to go on the cruise ship and then refuse  
15.08.010 Title. These regulations

thought I could have a dream  
the 1995 edition shall be known as

and refuse it's simple, water  
of the Oakland Housing Code may be cited as such,

"I'm obsessed with" water, the west, low ceilings, etc.  
and will be referred to herein as "this Code."

refusal as a sound The purpose of this code is not  
to create or otherwise

a group of its trash expanded establish or designate  
meanwhile, below decks any particular class

as an extension of what can be seen and or group of persons who  
in the galleys preparing food will or should be

what can't China the conditions especially protected or  
for example the majority benefited by

what conditions knowing the terms of  
from developing countries and Eastern Europe this Code.

and not knowing.

looking, seeing, watching, observing

these crew members are not allowed  
and not "I refuse"

up beyond a certain level  
these lines begin with I, probably still

into the passenger areas or face  
on a cruise ship not wanting

disciplinary action. They sleep  
to think about it *means* on a cruise ship

in cramped, noisy cabins. Their food is often  
you might not even try :there you are

Where any building or portion thereof  
leftovers, taken  
in a crew canteen. There is

talking about refusal  
is used or intended to be used  
usually a small area  
allocated on a lower deck

the empire can see these attempts  
as a combination apartment  
where they can take  
some sea air, but

renewed in lines of roughly equal length  
house-hotel, the provisions of this Code  
with the long working hours  
there is little time.

known to the empire  
shall apply to the separate portions  
In effect, they rarely come up  
above the water line

already  
when at sea.

as if they were separate buildings

therefore

Those from industrialised countries, by contrast, rarely work below decks unless they are skilled maritime crew or supervisors such as the head chef.

therefore I won't describe them here any further:  
claustrophobia on cruise ships the

empire knows all about it

All materials, assemblies, appliances, fixtures, equipment and installations thereof; all arrangements of occupancies, exits, aisles, stairs, and doors; all parapet wall, cornices, spires, towers, tanks, statutory, signage, structural members, appendages, and appurtenances thereto in buildings and structures regulated by this Code shall be so arranged, assembled, installed, maintained and of sufficient size and so protected as to reduce and minimize all egress, fire, safety, and health hazards.

therefore I won't describe them here any further:  
these attempts—claustrophobia on cruise ships the  
empire knows all about it

and thus suggests stateroom with balconies. At your elbow, with a white towel folded  
over the arm of the microphone

Italy: Master, marine officers and engineers  
suggests a balcony USA: Hotel manager, cruise director, casino  
supervisor, ship's doctor and nurse, entertainers/musicians, social hosts, light/sound and

IT specialists  
thus suggest

Britain: Corporate trainers, Food &  
Beverage manager, Maitre d', Salon Manager, Backstage Manager, casino supervisor and  
staff dancers, kids play organizers, beauticians/hairdressers, retail sales and art  
auctioneer, video technicians, plus one sous chef and one bartender

suggest a stateroom with balcony. At your elbow, with a white towel folded over the arm of  
the microphone suggests a balcony

or carefully inclines Authority. The building Official  
before you pursue employment consider

is hereby authorized the cabin of a worker in the hull  
like a friendly reminder is visible and directed

in the hull to enforce all of the provisions

The ship was detained  
in Rhodes for spilling waste

of this Code and Chapter beneath the water in the harbor. An inspection  
a water line: the mark 8.24 of the Oakland Municipal Code

that is a hull shared with two to four other

found that the ship's tanks  
had overflowed and caused it

Property Blight. like a friendly reminder is visible  
Beneath the water a water line: the mark

to list 10 degrees to its side.  
The ship's tanks held 3,000

in the hull, For such purposes that is a hull  
shared with two to four other hundreds

tons of waste that would take  
up to a week to remove.

of the cabin in the cabin the building official

shall have the smallest cabin known to empire  
the powers of a law enforcement officer

Crewmembers remained  
stranded onboard  
the ship and have requested  
assistance with food and  
water. The 930 passengers  
continued their voyage  
from Rhodes on chartered  
aircraft

meanwhile back at the acai berry cleanse  
I had sailed with the United States Passenger Act of 1882

clings to the ship to the outside of the shuttle previously  
Buildings and structures and looked forward to the tubes, collections, et cetera

or portions thereof all known everywhere already another great time.  
the great eye which are determined to be written on the money

substandard The Merchant Marine Act of 1920 I was not disappointed.  
of the great adventures money had The ship is clean a great roving eye

as defined in this Code visible to itself and well maintained.  
The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 are hereby declared to be

The décor is very colorful

floating here

and here

something I knew about China      No building or structure  
almost nothing      regulated by this Code

prevented me      with thinking  
through things, their spreadsheet      shall be erected, constructed

enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, converted or demolished  
climbing      a wall of these

unless a separate permit      for each building  
one could through      or across, *you're with me on this*

aren't you? Or are you      structure  
has first been obtained      on this point, in the parade

one keeps trying      to keep one's eyes open:  
from the Building Official      here before, been

the dulled service      in the manner  
of falling asleep in Antarctica      sounds so bitter

according to the applicable conditions      when you place it in line with the rest  
prescribed in section 106      so I had to put it right back

on their inline skates      of the Oakland Building Code.  
don't exist Stephanie hence      nostalgia: letters from David from China

what I knew about      China  
in a file:      CONGREGATED RESIDENCE

"That is my report"      is any building  
comes down the hall just now      "checking in"

on the photocopied files      or portions thereof  
in the office      is a desk

which contains            there it is again  
the Canadian government    facilities for living.

funds another artist        sleeping and sanitation  
and a couch                 and may include facilities

a movie                    for eating and cooking  
as required by this Code       a pleasure voyage

for occupancy by            a documentary  
other than a family.            Funded by the Canadian government

A congregate residence       I saw in the Shattuck Theater  
on Shattuck Avenue        voyager:

sitting in bed, reading        may be  
a shelter, convent, monastery, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house

essay sort of about the essay        that uses the poem CHINA  
as an example,                but does not include

not even the essay, I'm reading        jails, hospitals, nursing homes,  
hotels or lodging houses.        the abstract

HOT WATER                if the bed is this chair  
if this is a line                is potable water

a pleasure voyage along the Yangtze river        the size of the cabins  
at a temperature of not less than one hundred ten degrees Fahrenheit

in the hull        not exactly        supplied to plumbing fixtures  
what the movie was 'about'        KITCHEN

below the water line                is where the workers sleep  
is any room used        on cruise ships

or intended or designed to be used        oh, right  
four to a room        "I refuse"        to use        sort of

not even with a balcony for cooking and preparing food plus  
my mom worries the kids could fall off NUISANCE

just saying 'kids' like that like they're mine use is the wrong word  
when they-ours The following shall be defined as nuisances:

the stuck night sleeping there as if to refuse  
any public nuisance think about it

at common law or in equity and refuse  
jurisprudence. Any attractive nuisance in a dream

the night was stuck which may prove detrimental to children  
the play *The Night* or whether in a building,

the play about a disaster or an unoccupied lot.  
which is the night or reporting on the night

is a disaster This includes any abandoned well, shaft, basement or excavation,  
the voyage isn't a play but the device works

awfully abandoned refrigerator or motor vehicle or  
the water rising

any structurally un-sound fence or structure or lumber,  
at the end trash, fence, debris or vegetation

the invitation which may prove a hazard to a set  
for inquisitive minors. *try*

carry all that on your back and other fables with water  
Whatever is dangerous where exchange to life and limb

as determined by the Building Official or Fire Chief  
decorates the exchange or property or is detrimental to public health

which the water as determined by the Health Officer.  
covers over. Overcrowding

another question a room with occupants.  
Tired about the camera—subject

uh Insufficient ribs of its tired  
ventilation of having its picture taken

once taken “I can’t see”  
or illumination. Inadequate or

“the night is stuck like this” Unsanitary sewage  
“the night is a new media” to replace that which

water or plumbing covers over  
filmed water facilities.

slowly as announced rising Uncleanliness  
Daniel Day Lewis promises bread whoops

as determined by the Health Officer wrong one but  
there are signs clear The Certificate of Occupancy

all signs point to water, grey, potable  
shall set forth and limit this is a film

the use and occupancy of buildings rising from a tiny campfire  
and shall run gates clicking slam shut

with the structure in a reddish light,  
continuing valid until the same is revoked like there were lanterns

as you are or until such time as a change in the occupancy surprised me there  
or use of the structure or a substandard condition a hot bullb as defined by  
this Code shall occur in my sore hand or until the building is demolished.

Stephanie Young lives and works in Oakland. Her books of poetry are *Picture Palace* (in girum imus nocte et consumimur igni, 2008) and *Telling the Future Off* (Tougher Disguises, 2005). She edited the anthology *Bay Poetics* (Faux Press, 2006) and current editorial work includes the collaborative digital project *Deep Oakland* ([www.deepoakland.org](http://www.deepoakland.org)).

