

PhillyTalks #17 (Oct. 3rd, 2000, 6 p.m.): Lisa Robertson / Steve McCaffery
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poetry (pp. 1-20) + correspondence (pp. 21-38)

Lisa Robertson

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Saturday

To language, rain. To rain, building. Think of this stricture so that
the vernaculars of causation quicken. To Claude, his
contemplation. To objects, passing. To golden change our own
blazing device. The day follows the present. Half and then half,
delectable and idle, with gleams of fine greenery in the intervals.
To the middle of instability, no absolution dad. To the end of
surfaces, our mistake. Pop groups say love phonemes. To the
middle of the phoneme, people think in belts of light. To the end of
pulling, a clanguour, a heighth, and a name. At the beginning we
pinken, require cloth. To the end of moot falsity, hard leather, love.
To the beginning of disburdening, the striving face. To the latter
end of autumn, the stubborn lung. How are we to unlearn each
thing? The next insistence, sullied; thence to the end of insistence,
pulling the hard air into the hard lung. Histories, windy, float
midway above the dark, and we will insist on wanting. Just for the

first fortnight: during the middle an infinite sweetness. To the pigment, a mistake in context. The whole of comparison completely, slowly browsing forward. Fatality with purse. We are just emperors. May began with summer showers, and ended with its streets, its underground levels, its frontiers. June, unrealized, chequered with gleams of sunshine. The rights of loneliness don't tear it. The first procrastination, dark and sultry; the latter part merely dirty, with heavy lines. Some tufts are caught in the previously bare limbs, tufts of a genus, a height and a name. It is a movement as the disburdening of the face. How are we to unlearn each thing? We address you without economy till the last, with sequins and apricots. To the first week of seriousness, just so fucking beautiful: to the end of admonition, it's in you that we shall speak. So that here is a falling off. To the end of the inflamed limit, we lingered here, encouraged. So that emotion's a soft anonymity. To the end of the first fortnight in quietness, numerals, minerals and salts. To the end of waking, lust into air dissolving. So that we're above a kind of no-shape. The first fortnight in July only, then go back. To the end of September, we are soloists, float midway above the shabby dark, elaborate. October rainy. November floods upwards into its referent. December seeks a

runnel. A runnel. A limb. A sky. A disburdening. A heighth. A name. A rubbing. A fear. A thing. A fear. A tuft. A face. A runnel. An escape. So that sometimes we want an atmosphere like to harden us or garnish. Sometimes we need an atmosphere.

Sunday

About here. All along here. All along here. Maybe black and shiny, wrinkled. And got here about one o'clock. And got here wet to the skin. And here are houses too, here and there. And luck, too, whenever. And here experienced the benefits. And here again a wisp. And here gained real knowledge. And here got into the wild. And here, too. Arrived here about two o'clock. Here alone the length. There is a bed of chalk under this. The fresh water falls here. Clumps of lofty trees. Maybe we bristle. Came at the fact here. Everything has been done here. Every system's torn or roughened. Every surface discontinuous. Everywhere we are tipping our throats back, streaming and sifting. Got at work here, streaming and sifting. Got here to breakfast. Got here to sleep. Here a streak of light, there a streak of dark. Here and there a house. Here are all the causes. Here are farms and manors and

mines and woods and forests and houses and streets. Here are hill and dell. Here are hill, dell, water, meadows, woods. Line upon line the twist and luck. Here are new enclosures. The chalk and the sand. Here are two. Here be nameless. Here has been the squandering. Here has been the work. Here we close the day. Here upon the edge. Here is a basin. A canal. A church. Here is a church. Here is a deep loam upon chalk. Maybe we are a florist. Here is a hill. Here is a house. Here is a system. Time pours from its mouth. We design it a flickering. Here is its desolation. Here it crosses. Here it falls at last. Here it has its full gratification. Here on the yet visible remains. The first. Maybe this gaze. Here, waiting. Here it crossed. Here, close along. Here, quit some causes. Here, then. Here were a set. Here were two or three. So deliciously anterior. Here will be an interchange of cause and effect. Here, as everywhere else. In this tranquil spot. Here, Pete. Delicate perspex articulations. Twisting and passing. High along here. Ate here. Came here. Got here after deviations. Got here at nine o'clock. Coming here to remain here. Maybe we were frightened. And then go back. We speak from memory here all the way along. Whenever. On a pivot. Without conclusivity. Stopped here and there. Endeavoured. Here mentioned. In short, not here. Maybe we

disproved theories. It is a beautiful bed of earth. It is along here. It is impossible not to recollect. It was here. Towards the west. Towards a zone of dormancy. Towards the very beautiful frieze of the lyric class. Towards the frieze of undone agency. Towards lubrications. Maybe in shade. No great things along here. No hard treatment of them here. People ought to be happy. So good as it is here. So that here is a falling off. So that here is water at the top. Springs start here and there. Streams sift chop up spit out knots or clouds. Still there are some spots here and there. Stuck up here. Such are all the places along here. The thing is not done here. The thing will not stop. There as well as here streams sifts chops up spits out twists passes and too remains. There being here a sort of dell. There has been rain here. Maybe pointed and folding. There is law here all languid and lax. These are the subject of conversation here. They have begun to trust here. Passing and remaining and awaiting. This has been a sad time all along here yet full of a detailed lust. Trees are nearly as big here. Two branches meet. Very little along here. Here upon a bed of chalk. Got here about three o'clock. There was an alterior atmosphere. What a pretty thing it was. Who should be nameless. Who, awaiting. Who lives here.

Steve McCaffery

PASTORALS

PREFACE

Et in Arcadia ergo points to everywhere. Semantic stability laid smooth across cyclic thin bone ridden-epoch pages of remainders. It is the theorised ambrosia and all that's deaf against light among the swamps of somewhere. Chapter gathers grey did I live in it? The fleece of the place changing name to four-footed high-forehead with country chin. The Pleistocene in discourse law of molds surprised by the dash half-past Pan ideology ellipsoid fragments seen in the water as Cuddy, Mopsa Blowzibelle ex-sensual course to evolve through etching sideways into text material avalanche idyllic thought through bogs of dewlap steering a race to the tunnel shore. Went into walking wearing eyes on the heart because splash accumulation hints history against the helmets. Wards off war. The thistle oval apertures a tree food glassed into morning. *Un détachment de la troupe sous le conduit de Monsieur Logique c'est arrivé.* In such manner progression meadow's need's balm. The queen here takes walks together. Cart-paths hand Truth a palimpsest of levelled bridges versions of pastoral and the lightest possible stake in this: is speech. Comes round on the road from reading etching spheres as continents then strolls with a flute into dialect and signs it.

Pastoral 1
for Robert Stacey

When I awoke I saw sheep
eating people, small children
actually, on an iron ground,
executive summers populating landfills
with a quote beauty unquote
turned to dust when written about.

That's it. For stanza one.
The man takes a walk from dictionary to landscape
turns away in Old French
 nothing happens. Afraid of death
Arcadia's withheld
'til stanza three.

PASTORAL 2

(Thought of the day: poetry can only reach its destiny in ethics via
architecture.
Reading is a dwelling.)

Cloister my lady
the mind's back
-yard,

but
psychologically
a parlour space
with its pet dog additive to sky
-line
top-lit room tomb
modern junque tub at the age
of seventy-five
Dulce est desipere in loco coming via
Horace as
the pleasantry of non-sense
in
due place

Pastoral 3

Sunny black-eyed Susan
with orange tongue
and disappearing railtracks
for your eyes
what a surprise melts
the disproportionate esteem
of dream-team cupboard laundry
thinks
a shirt needs dirt
to really matter
knows
the temperature a kidney melts at
shuts the book's
plump turkey book-mark
snows
that make the park, become
a photograph by Manet
signed by Blake

PASTORAL 4

The point is still the beans misunderstood
as mind digressing under fable. Sally's just the spokesman
in a narrative the graduate students wanted.
Jewel thief in traffic. Do it closer to the strain
the eyes get "wanting" different snapple.

After which the forests are typed and marked as
semi-official thoughts
a task inventing atmosphere.

The only way I knew to get to Munich was
via Dachau on a Sunday ruminant that cost.

Lower the price of species and you reinvent
the trilobite. There are hundreds
in Confederation Basin waiting wet
a type of lacustrine invention
anthologist of arthropods
no stake in ruins.

PASTORAL 5

The bridge is a heaviness across itself
the bridge must cross

so not to choke the river.

Eventually, Mom became late with supper,
and Dad
made HIS appearance between Eleanor's dictatorship
and Robert's microsoft democracy.

The front lawn is where all the language stands
in bermuda shorts.

But the sprinkler system still remains unthought.

AFTERWORD

An hour through this clock is an absolute urban urge.
Bend and stifle.
Junta stunted than linted.
Later belief as power still lodged in familar groups.
Voice to metaphor meat becoming scarves at a bullfight.
Pretending night falls a quadruped authority escritoire:a sitting
rung.
Artillery follows years to pools where sheep as relay in relaxing
stipend for genre.
The luxury if arms where guns blow off comparison.
Divisible as unique find when sounds miss traffic.
Night drizzles out event by spot of big spit thing
agronomized.

The second landscape: cabbage blisters in a final ambiguity.
Community diggers ingesting disappearance.
A doctor's note in faded latin as the all-extending fossil calls up.
Object moment brick fails thinking penetrates the same unknown.

Would you agree?
Led by consideration of a necessary principle of retroactivity?
A scheme-bend altering the dominant?
Or is project simulacrum still the Eastern Star?
Sky coils completed actions writing words.
Mathematics in a folded cloth fed silence into chair.
No anatomy is Fauvist.
Seeds enervate then think.
Transposed umbrella the negative space known as rip shore
Proust as in joust.
Sleet Asia calling.
Sulphur tendency to piss in exact streaks of virtue.
Neurosis in a bottlerack and terms transcanopied apart.
Atelier composure to the opposite directive.
I have sensed whenever the pizza comes a white wireless warms
the stove.
The Voice coughed then put itself in brackets.
(Et in Arcadia ego.)

Mentality's the flat I've never moved from.

from **Quote Aside**

Quote Aside is a text inspired by Spinoza—specifically the postulates on body outlined in *Ethics* II.18 where Spinoza discusses the effects of bodies on other bodies. In *Spinoza Practical Philosophy* Gilles Deleuze expands on Spinoza’s special gift to philosophy—a new model:the body. “When a body ‘encounters’ another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its part”(19). I treat the linguistic phrase as such a body positioned in ajacencies that facilitate “encounters.” These phrasal bodies are fragments, parts of a never existing whole and emerge in two recurring forms: citations and parentheses. Need I mention the importance to this project of the closing sentence of Spinoza’s Preface to Part III: “I shall regard human actions and desires exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies.”

“Errant traces” (if additional out of Sué’s *Wandering Jew*)
“arched or Annetted” (ironically enough a 155 foot column)
“erected by Napoleon” (glyph densities) “or should be” (the mummy out of Budge) “meets champagne in the Pompidou” (among the protereta) “you know where i stand” (hypothesized electric index) “on disappointing petals just in front of dilemma” (thinish tissue) “Manicura de la lengua es el poeta” (half-grown from parks) “despite the longitudinal keel sill lost the ordovician harbour” (vagueness to clarify precision) “approaching the roach in Kafkaland” (mattock blur fold wattle anguish) “waccamaw whorls down caloosahatchee” (until a poem nudges me on the

neck and says it's your turn to erase) "event plus sequence equals meaning" (upper sutra death suture) "body depressed"
(Chesapeake to Tampa polaroids) "afraid the fraid that fraid"
(delinquent Scottish telson) "a dangerous cranidium five times its rational size" (about as profitable as land-mines in Kosovo) "not so complex" (yet a subtle aftershave invades the universe) "fixed cheeks at one-third width from its glabella" (found in Spenser's *Fairie Queene*) "posterior furrow prose" (pushing passed the gannet wings) "towards the keyboard" (flattened paddle damp exterior so-called) "hump fixed finger at a curve" (oculiferous) "vertical resin to the bottom of the sea" (launders in a zephyr chance) "a park" (in the gill-books from Spokane) "small iridectomy" (with rapid common tapir body) "length of a hair in" (sun up) "a brandy snap" (gasometer renewing a soothing destruction) "yet he called himself a highlander" (in twenty delicate directions) "lifeless structures in this equilibrium" (the modern limulus) "Sir Thomas Browne" (upon the woman that conceived within a bath attracting the seminal effluxions of a man admitted to bathe in some vicinity to her) "upper silurian cephalothorax but negotiable as plot" (being slow through slippage of the artifact which loans us to a community of bringers disappears) "the output distorted by the man stage of the cannon" (kisses numbered by each style of mouth) "take mazonensis prosoma into quadrate anthraconectes" (Christ's body parts preserved in urine) "and the mescaline oppressive" (tape's last crap) "or horsehoe crab with genital extensions" (Ohio of both sexes) "the pinkest pig in the sidewalk sale" (shoes without laces in a country barn) "and moving out of town for purely theoretical reasons" (suddenly argument and a face full of french fries) "manna-croquet from a dummy named Destiny" (but there's a harlot dungeon at the vicarage) "where my continued proficiency goes international" (porridged child simmering in an unconverted belly) "definitive apocalypse" (the clerk mentioned thursday) "signs forming corners in communication" (fat cools to shower at this extremity as leaks across sunlit shit) "victims" (obscuring the Croation prize) "behind each eye the chitinous pupils of their

narrative” (an elm raped by stress) “on hobbled credit” (just a breath above fear) “from advice” (Huidobro calls the manicurist) “language” (word bran) “a leaning having risen to an innocency” (Galen’s goodness in the pot) “the carapace attributed to uncarinated” (father’s laughter) “with a kind of passion” (scarce mentioned once) “but heart above a hundred times” (wide marsh authoritative proper name) “i wept afraid transcribed” (before slipping into a terminal banana condition) “affliction cenezoic virtuality” (addicted to haddock) “yet still an E K W of species” (the face) “two eyes too many” (artichokes within an incubus of sublimated arsenic) “the sun a crime of parricide” (Mosaic Law as a theory of poisons) “mispronounced in Dublin” (if you drink a glass of milk when the moon is dressed in silk you’ll make the third daughter of the second husband’s sister turn unerotic) “every portion filling the auditory sluice beds” (tuna dextrose reserves) “each difference” (hypostasis conveyed to Habakkuk) “a lion’s den convergence of” (original sin sine cosine) “informed nullity of essence” (in every lamp there is a clock) “april 29, 1497” (the colony develops a zoarium) “and marmelade still packed with mesas” (a line along your breast) “arising from a single larva” (laboratory-Sartre) “in the possibility that whatever i see turns sideways” (memory a sessile benthos open to the protoecium) “to seek grief’s sleeping pleasure as my heart” (womb disfigured by gelatinous material) “the whole creation a mystery” (where sky earth air do seldom turn a little cusp in bud) “upper Graham formation” (in the earliest known printed book) “one evening left the rocks and headed for the cemetary” (loose it is to say i grasp a pen as a grip determined to construct this end) “outline spire coiled a few moments” (slams) “same thing” (the gate against an ostrich) “finds entire” (the library emptied of echinoderms) “genuine portraits from contemporary figurines” (to the mollusc soiree) “either a bunch of lavender or a bulldog known as Titmouse” (i began to be that stranger bringing out the broadcast aspect) “shivered lettuce even gaze” (muscle known for vagueness murmurs submarines) “in military words must know not names but the emergence out of” (onto a cloth) “the table

covered with the richest characters” (are said to break a hebrew summit) “with a male tea leaf” (crime slams a tarsal bone formed in a parallel fulcrum) “to the buckets of community” (double doors) “hope placed in soprano voices” (kind of a solitude) “with his prism the only possible object of sight” (thought through at base) “order finds finality” (echo of eye against chapter on logicians) “i’m disappearing into that hill” (it means as e.g. writes of we inquire as to who the hell he was) “leaning quietly upon the side of an immense fatigue” (twists wow with) “contra paganus” (yet his first love was Cicero) “sentence existing just as our lives outside it” (the desert arriving on the tent’s own terms) “icriodus-iguanadon in the centre of attached consideration” (counter revolutionary instruments) “focus on a tension” (tearing up the titles of all those nouveaux romans) “but inside the reader’s text” (the foot’s other foot found out to be four) “stutters repeatedly just inches from the line” (proposed as this economy of liquidation curves) “a value not an evil” (after certain distance gauged perceptions) “in this light all literature becomes an aquatint” (always rising to deflect) “communication known as prejudice” (at issue is the liberty it takes) “the means of construction and so produce the meanings we believe in” (defferal to the highlight damps) “the differences they heard among themselves” (a sovereign science meaning democratic) “feeble” (strong equivalence) “through dream” (a universe) “the same machine expiring as a foreign form” (crynoids attempting body cogs) “with shell enough to be a wing” (aryan lines across time) “the tendon on a saturday” (completes itself in eighteen sermons) “found torn out of” (the same apology for his life in every known exception) “le langage pathetique is an Arabic tradition” (glyptodesmia’s Desdemona) “Maysville to Yorktown and the body of a child found classified” (a little too freaky for the front page) “where the complement of F bisects negation” (cuckoos clarify by moving sound to stimulus) “tributary shifts two months ago” (from truffles in Andover) “straight outer lip to orthostrophic base” (a shouldered whorl where the satchel hangs) “you should have got out at the reader’s door” (a paleostylic

history begins its sinus drip) “in his mother’s brother’s only fault” (a date of 1838) “apertures” (living chambers) “dorsolateral crest concluding with the proposition” (Gods go mad in Guelph) “the same variety with local markings” (rising out of Sudbury) “the wolves” (a town for all its charms) “diagonally canadensis” (recurrent syllable on bloom) (the lie along the route named stopping) “what story is” (when gone or got up) “if i now say a number-word i contribute a single sign to a force” (peace is returning but prototypically intact) “a blue pickup truck” (analogous to any second level quantification) “the crumbs drop as intrinsic shifts from biscuit into vertigo” (idyllic countryside in the sense of thursday i left to meet Joan in the hills) “to workable integrated affirmation” (boils that stagger sunset out of message) “composite squirrel compromise” (dunes an ooze prepared) “beginning in Helsinki as a finish” (as one says feel or sea) “the other face they tell is how he knows” (this entrance being closure to the frieze) “is Pittsburgh” (radical sea lanes equalling) “the bullet shot at Pushkin” (through the shipwreck) “resurrection via merde” (so go after grandma) “in America the geographic always leads to radiation” (recollections that remain three bones apart) “it’s like spilling out all your vigilance” (ignore that last) “but can the mind stay good with news” (discourse is impact) “spoil a polis” (solipsism’s shape) “just misses death” (before bad harvest there’s Saskatchewan) “the fact too that they can trigger guns” (of how alone and pissed in Paris) “draw a line towards” (a pint of tripe) “bren pour luy at the door of a hetaera” (laying bare a pectoral contaminant) “disjunction’s diarrhoea” (a seismograph for maple syrup) “remembering a room more rack than track” (division cop in both sonatas) “a dragging sense of fabric adenoids” (extrapolating flint point practices) “faces preceded by official portraits” (is it a real creole that’s in crisis) “with eighteen trillion scissors to one drawer” (even sobs in a suitable way) “medical doxology fails the canons of constraint” (homology begins to be a difference apart) “as the poor earn their poverty” (does not imply the latter’s fact) “the whiter the lipstick the higher the stakes” (Confucian disarray in city-hut assemblage)

“cacuminal substratum ligament intact” (a name by any other rose would sound as neat) “oil grant to a weather taxed desire” (add Junius in relation to the crane meat) “picked continuance and locked it up” (diagonal interference from delay) “all my chocolate shattered when the cork popped” (essence gone crustacean) “floor vault into pedigree each party time alliance” (but commodity logic puts a sock around my name) “neglecting here the start of fevers” (sodality humps on tangent pustules) “the enzymes are occupied by the real thing” (evergreen servant to a live trap litre size) “floatilla capital of Florida with fall key to the transom” (syllabic stoppages entail a wrong dye nomenclature) “self when a seem to be having ray flowers extrude beneath Wilshire” (at this point the clouds seem irrelevant to everything but anthropology) “coop wheel chairs to front of cheese cheers” (allotted ratskeller starving up to whacky creosote) “letters to the wine guide editor about those cut-price pigmy rib scans” (a new wind blowing through a blurb of blue) “towards a radical part-time basis” (the cheapest vodka in kabbala court) “rectal bleeding seems to have exhausted all the sheep” (juggles in a play of grass between class struggles) “last seen in a dentistry of motion fodder” (Vishnu’s thoughts) “a sesame lump of terminal shortbread” (groupuscule senses an evasive dream) “Atlantis outbids Valhalla for the next olympics” (upon the ontic base of flight) “catching up the sun in orichalcum” (but cheaper on Saturdays) “Epicurean vitality” (your instant travel to connection) “style is swerve” (the sponsor’s product now in hand) “kidneys disintensifying” (a teleology of sundials) “child of the Nasca patterns in Peru” (mathematics half the length of a dissimilar horizon) “urging toads with wings to Babylons beyond their croaks” (what you can’t stand is) “i can’t stand simplicity” (the mould through an early state of scum) “vagueness in the muscles” (called distinction) “cul de sac for prayers” (the lust first hand as cats suspect the elephant’s) “an ornamental species growing wrong” (obligatory certainty of bodies moving) “it’s only our figures that vary” (a cabbage thrown as numeral in gematria) “from Sumer ziggurat computers” (the idea of solidity meeting lips) “stone tries to cover up” (foetus

in bulk) “major irritation on the retina” (through dragon paths and serpent codes) “you can type this in any text” (law being a diamond cut to the lapel) “of self-explanatory options” (with twice the frequency of insects in Algiers) “no way says Norway” (vertebral anxieties in the speaker’s jaw) “web crawling’s just an instance of unrequited paranoia” (please add your bookmark to meontic not mimetic) “just a phase in polyandrous evidence from the kid who stood no chance” (hard copy of epitaph attributed to lavender hill mob) “philosophy velocity with holophrase accretion” (and sunset over subsets) “what’s a Mata Hari?” (sperm wealth in erotica twice lost) “a ceiling in attractive fallacies” (puff up my Banff to a quicker equality) “querelle des femmes phenomena” (the ying of the water boils down to a rudimentary paganism on the yang) “side of circulating entities” (but all pharaohs hate parabola schemata) ” as if to name a single street would be inadequate” (same january noon base to the single malt) “and yet i actually thought i was hearing convicts choking” (intend to / or) “glimmer of surplus nightingale” (nit pinched dwarf altar beef spread) “waves of adaggio” (bugger all a Boccarini chin up from the seat) “sharp blunt motet motel” (attracts me to aphasia as reversible space-time debit) “so sweet and proud compulsion heiffered to sentiment “ (i was dancing with a pronoun to the Tennessee waltz) “the cold grunt of a pig i meant” (a section fault beneath the headache tree) ploughshare cappucino inside a condensed community of one” (in Switzerland an entire lake made of chocolate) “cognomon” (just another Troy of War) “the proletariat remains a force and not an entity) “catamnesia in all their fallen cities“ (what the vulgar call truce) “receding river down to barest spots” (not water but Walter) “the waiter came up to his waist picking the waste up gathering” (a place in the west none whiter) “Basil you’re wrong it’s dichtung = condensare” (a predictable external skyline of adjectival arivals) “inside out the room instead of interview” (it’s neither Romanticism nor aeronautics but rather the celebration of a neighbourhood) “I am all Egypt” (isn’t it) “like a delirious subject it takes time for a tramp to reach Crete” (and politics via

Hogarth remains a candle burning through a hat) “theme as the me
it breaks in transfer” (a false reputation obscures these anal drives)
“with applause from a single freckle in Quebec” (grafting tropes
onto callous exegeses) “epistemological serum partly
contaminated” (modem aporia tactile in dissolution hologram)
“rotting rooms in rotting cups of coffee” (or platitudes to that
effect) “where special pistol plants a tabula erasa” (it’s not so
much a life as an identity) “Ossuary middenheap” (my favour to
lean this) “lank milk inappropriate” (to cheer at truth-effects) “a
sudden serious mouse flew up in clothes” (down a common
language for birds) “foggy kicking dirt abuse pronounced gnaw”
(through each spoonful) “unreal puberty begins when babies start
to suffocate in the thousands” (mend me a dime) “legends minus
textbooks” (bruising up the cog gender of topology) “my left sock
as a landscape” (a stucco plenum) “full of the hum of voices
hiccougging” (like) “the” (in a strange way) “as in the katun as
skin” (not yet of you telling him) “wherever they have spread”
(Jimmy does) “one notes for instance Sally doesn’t but Jimmy
does” (though the key not as a throw) “detachment of all egg
shaped patterns” (contain the transcript of) “two coco mutts and a
consequence” (this argument passes through Fenelon) “the books
that destroyed” (in a hecatomb against all unique copies) “against
a certain grain” (the puzzle of Loch Guar) “but ends are
note“between the palinodes of if” (the four modalities of gap)
“said snapped and left to Borst” (a proper name un-Krakatoa)
“unison nose blow the three died of teeth” (but ends or not
ecstasies) “on the hand side of negligence” (Swastika Angeles)
“with similarities to sparklers” (the skin blitched rib a damn)
“fancy on a floppy disc” (plate speaks noun as a miniblushed
nuance) “spider claims to referential status in part-provocative
Igbo” (the book was called a grumbling sea) “when history went
solid topology appeared” (tinned tuna armadas float downstream)
“quartz between competitive edge in downpour” (boxing malls a
week away means wrists) “got lizard lock to hospital” (the
dextrose summer on the beach) “each brain took a test sight” (pull
out Tylenol from lampreys) “a press box bamboo floor” (the

scallop capital collapsing into nettles) “the entire insect world in pursuit” (the condition of arctic flowers at night) “a patient paradise of work” (exchanged value in mythology trades tranquility for torsoes) “ants do but bees teach” (the precise width of Paris) “conduits impede competence” (for institution read rupture) “the hidden fact of spoon is why a spoon thinks” (a literal breeze in the willed abstraction) “crisis around fiesta rocks”

Further excerpts from *Quote Aside* are forthcoming in *SHINY* 11 and (with interview by Antoine Caze) *Source* (l’Université d’Orléans, France).

Emails: Lisa Robertson / Steve McCaffery

#1: LR to SM

Dear Steve,

Can we speak of the pastoralism of the fragment, the distopia of the fragment? I'm thinking about *Quote Aside* and also your assertions that "Arcadia's withheld" and "these phrasal bodies are fragments, parts of a never existing whole." If we're thinking about the pastoral, there's the generic formulation of utopia or arcadia as always already retroactive—a fantasy-formation. And there's also the possibility, as you play out in *Quote Aside*, that the never-neverness of the pastoral fragment is not of necessity regressive. I'm thinking of Bersani's notion of self-shattering, subjective and erotic dispersal, as pleasurable and potentially transformational. Already there are several tangents—

- the fragment
- retrogression/retroactivity
- Arcadia, Utopia
- the erotic subject

—and together they seem to pose a spatiality. Here's what I'm getting to—What is the relation of architecture to arcadia? I guess I'm posing this query from a late modern terrace, a bunch of books scattered around me. Aldo Rossi says in one "the question of the fragment in architecture is very important since it may be that only ruins express a fact completely." (maybe modernism is always late, like arcadia) Arcadia could be the erotic agency of shattering, the asideness of the dispersal of the centre. And when I say erotic I mean political, since the dialectic of cohesion and dispersal structures public discourse, the social body, and their interplay among subjectivities. We're not necessarily Poussin's shepherds frozen in the backwards mortal gaze on the tomb "Et in Arcadia Ego." We're not even necessarily Ian Hamilton Finlay's absent shepherds, drawn somewhat ironically into the sylvan architectures and emblems of war. What will the future's ruins be? What space could bring a liberatory agency now? Something like your phrasal interface, the fabulous shaky fracture that poses in the reading. (and in the composing I surmise.)

—a beginning I hope.

L

#2: SM to LR

Wed, 16 Aug 2000

Dear Lisa:

Here's a hurried response to a couple of points you bring up at the start of your e-mail of August 8. First regarding the fragment then a few points on pastoral. Re the fragment: who or what defines a fragment? This seems a key question; one connecting to scale and relativity. A phrase might be considered as a phrasal unity but also a fragment of a sentence. Likewise a sentence can be received as a fragment of a paragraph. The law of higher integration guarantees in language a determination of the fragmentary by the observer. I've never actually thought of the phrases (in *Quote Aside*) as "fragments." The notion of fragment privileges the ontic, and my interest in this work is kinetic, more specifically the subjection of the instance of meaning to dynamic forces, in

which syntax gets reconfigured as a passage through transitory semantic assemblages in a constant becoming. The predictable influence here is Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming" in its various manifestations: ("becoming-woman" "becoming-animal" are their own two famous and most notorious examples). I try to apply this to a notion of "becoming-meaning," a movement that's constantly and simultaneously thwarted and promoted. All of this would align this piece less with your sense of pastoral than with the tempo and nature of weather as shifting atmospheric conditions. (I had an afterthought here, left undeveloped, but I'll attach it anyway: rather than admit an omnipresence of the fragment can't we salvage the atom and monad as useful tropes of contemporary subjectivity? Useful precisely because of their obsolescence, their uncanniness?)

To shift ground somewhat to the issue of pastoral which is a shared concern for both of us. Empson starts *Some Versions of Pastoral* with a chapter on proletarian literature and pastoral is never inscribed outside of a class determined economy. Marston has some marvellous sonnets that describe the economic plight of the Elizabethan shepherds and the development of the anti-pastoral through the 18th and 19th centuries (Stephen Duck to George Crabbe) complicates our reception of this genre as unproblematically monologic. Beyond the dialectics of its development (which I'll get to in a moment) the enduring value that I see in pastoral is its position within the politics of language. Historically, pastoral reveals itself to be a lexical battleground, articulated agonistically as a contest between a hermetically sealed, overdetermined "poetic" diction and a vibrant sociolect. The truncated lineage from Wordsworth to Carlos Williams is well known with its common advocacy of the vernacular as the proper medium for poetry. But this same advocacy is central to the Augustan debate on proper diction that polarizes in the confrontation of Pope's and Ambrose Philips' theories of pastoral. Historically contextualized this debate is part of the Ancients and Moderns conflict and extends the earlier debate of Rapin and Fontenelle around the issue of pastoral's telos, and which generated the "neoclassic" and "rationalist" versions of pastoral as polar attitudes to the Ancient and the Modern. The Virgil-Horace-Rapin-Pope line offers a theory of pastoral as the idealistic portrayal of a Golden Age; a 'pataphysical origin that offers itself as a recuperative quest. The other line from Theocritus through Spenser and Fontenelle to Philips, Tickell, and Addison adopts the variant purpose of depicting the tranquility of rural living. In either case, pastoral is a kind of urban imaginary, a carefully constructed, overcoded artifice designed to meet the demand of a patrician coterie. I mention this history Lisa, as I'd like to hear how you historically position yourself in relation to pastoral as both a contemporary and a woman. Also, it seems directly relevant (in a negative way) to your own concerns regarding the construction of sincerity.

Bye for now
Steve

#3: LR to SM

Dear Steve,

Your question—how I historically position myself in relation to pastoral as both a contemporary and a woman, is one that I thought about a great deal when I was writing *XEclogue* in the early 90's. (although at that time, as now, I would hesitate to occupy any thinking "as a woman" since I concur with a lineage of feminist thinkers (such as Butler and Wittig) who demonstrate that there is no such thing as a "woman" only constructions of femininity and their enforcements, codifications and institutionalizations.) I wrote an essay then, as a "feminist"—*How Pastoral, A Manifesto*—which was divided into two

parts—the first later became the prologue to the book, the second was a commentary on the first. I believe the commentary answers your questions more adeptly than anything I could cook up this afternoon. So, risking seeming lazy, I'm just going to transcribe part of it here, (adding that it was strongly influenced by Raymond Williams's *The City and the Country*) before going on to try to identify my current interests in this topic, which have more to do with spatial politics and structures—domestic and landscape architecture, urban imaginaries—than with the history of pastoral as a poetic genre.

. . . Certainly, as a fin-de-siècle feminist, I cannot in good conscience perform even the simplest political identification with the pastoral genre. Within its scope women have been reduced to a cipher for the productively harnessed land within a legally sanctioned system of exchange. In pastoral the figure of woman appears as eroticized worker—the milkmaid or shepherdess swoons in an unproblematic ecstasy with the land. Moreover, she is pleased to give over her youthful pre-social wildness to the domesticating and enclosed tenure of the marriage contract. This contract often gives occasion to the celebratory epithalmium, one of the many possible moments in the pastoral montage. Pastoral plants the agency of women's desire firmly within the patriarchal frame. And so it is with a masochistic embarrassment that I confess to having been seduced by the lure of archaic pleasures. Prime among these twist the convolute interleaving of those beckoning and luscious tropes, femininity and nature. Yet I shall release them from their boredom.

By femininity and nature I mean the spurious concepts, purposeful misreadings, which have served the specific use of supporting a singular structure of power, and which therefore have been expediently maintained. I prefer to think of both the spuriousness of nature and the spuriousness of femininity as phantom. Once assigned a mythic base in biology, they function as ciphers which reproduce but don't enjoy the autonomy of the citizen. Femininity and nature float both as specters of the state imagination, and as symbols of the nation. A defined locale or gendered body is cultivated to produce an image of benign power, discrete abundance, ontological anxiety, and enclosed exchange. Yet, recognized and deployed as ghosts, this pair may certainly haunt the polis, insinuate their horribly reproductive tentacles through its paved courts and closed chambers. It is in this sense that I wish to "go phantom". It is in this sense also that I wish to farm the notion of obsolescence.

A system is ecological when it consumes its own waste products. But within the capitalist narrative, the Utopia of the new asserts itself as the only productive teleology. Therefore I find it preferable to choose the dystopia of the obsolete. As a tactically uprooted use, deployment of the obsolete could cut short the feckless plot of productivity. When capital marks women as the abject and monstrous ciphers of both reproduction and consumption, our choice can only be to choke out the project of renovation. We must become history's dystopic ghosts, inserting our inconsistencies, demands, misinterpretations and weedy appetites into the old bolstering narratives: We shall refuse to be useful.

Nostalgia, like hysteria, once commonly treated as a feminine pathology, must now be claimed as a method of reading or critiquing history—a pointer indicating a potential node of entry. Yet I'm referring to relations within language, looking at both nostalgia and history as functions within, or effects of, language systems. My own nostalgia reaches for an impossibly beautiful and abundant language. Rather than diagnosing this nostalgia as a symptom of loss (which wd only buttress the capitalist fiction of possession) I deploy it as an almanac, planning a tentative landscape in which my inappropriate and disgraceful thought may circulate. Nostalgia will locate precisely those gaps or absences in a system which we may now redefine as openings, freshly turned plots. Who is to circumscribe the geography in which thinking may take place? I

deplore the enclosure staked out by a poetics of “place” in which the field of “man’s” discrete ontological geography stands as a willful displacement, an emptying of a specifically peopled history. Descartes’s new world, in which the “annoying” and unproductive contingencies of history are systematically forgotten, leaving the western male thinker in a primary confrontation with his own thought, is emphatically not a world I wish to share. The only way I can imagine a poetics of historical responsibility is by shoring up the marks of history’s excesses and elisions. The solipsist’s position of singular innocence and sincerity erases all relations of historical difference, and with these, the tactical confrontations and craft invasions language may deploy. . .

Steve you can see then that I agree strongly with your statement that “Pastoral is a lexemic battleground, articulated agonistically as a contest between a hermetically sealed, overdetermined “poetic” diction and a vibrant sociolect.” This is the dialectic I tried to embody in *XEclogue*, mixing pop lyric with high literary artifice, confession with a mock-philosophical introspection. Simply, I tried to break the seal, to see what agency the new hybridity wd release.

And adding here too, regarding my position “as a contemporary”—I don’t think we’re ever only contemporary—we’re infected with temporal simultaneities. And this notion of the concurrence of times, it occurs to me now, probably directed my attentions towards spatial representations of pastoral, where such temporal improprieties share a site and a structure. In my critical work, I’ve been looking at the relation of Arts and Crafts landscape design and architecture, considering the use of this aesthetic in early 20th century British Columbian class construction, and how the specifically English ethnic connotations of the aesthetic served to both screen and promote a naturalization and domestication of colonial power and capital. I’m also beginning a study of the site history of a particular park in East Vancouver, stranded as it were on the industrial waterfront. This is a park I use daily—since it is virtually unknown, due to its location, and since it is the only waterfront park on the east side of the city, it is a convenient place to take my dog for an off-leash run. I’ve learned that this site was the original townsite for the city, before the arrival of the CPR shifted development slightly west. It’s gone through a strange and disturbing span of uses—as waterfront spa and hotel site in the 1860’s, to outdoor salt pool in the 30’s, to holding site for interned Japanese Canadians during the second world war. Now it’s being re-landscaped, the old shoreline infilled with cement junk from ruined factories, to create a seaside walk. It’s called New Brighton and the colonial reference to England’s seaside resort forms a strange backdrop to the local history. This overlay—old world fantasy, leisure and industrial, racial and natural constructions—defines for me the pastoral. This is the pataphysical Utopia here in Vancouver. I want to represent its politics, as they appear fragmented in the landscape.

But maybe I should be talking about poetry here. I wanted to ask you to say more about salvaging the atom and the monad as tropes of contemporary subjectivity. Would you mind? How do each of our notions of obsolescence and the uncanny (or nostalgia) relate?

And also, in relation to my own recent weather explorations, I’d be interested in discussing your notion of meaning’s “becoming” as shifting atmospheric conditions. This is something that has engaged me in Elizabeth Grosz’ work lately. Do you know her book *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory and Futures*, and the essay, “Thinking the New: of Futures yet Unthought”?

L

#4: SM to LR

Sat, 26 Aug 2000

Dear Lisa this is a miserably morsellated response to your last e-mail that opened up so many issues. Re your research into local architecture and sedimentation, I wanted to ask if you see it within a wider genealogy of concern for place e.g. Daphne Marlatt's work on Steveston, B. C. springs to mind as does Olson's Gloucester? As you'll recall from our conversations when you were last in Toronto my own preoccupations have shifted to architecture and that would make a vast additional conversation for Philly or elsewhere. Then I thought is this really a useful question? I absolutely agree with you on the non-essentialist notion of subjectivity, on its cultural and linguistic constructedness and the balance of this missive addresses subjectivity and, as you asked, further comments on the atom and monad.

So here goes. I think we both agree that the viability of both these terms within physics and metaphysics is obsolete, but what fascinates me is their contemporary reappearance as objects of philosophic scrutiny and as utilisable concepts among certain poststructuralist parties. (The two thinkers here are Derrida on the atom and Deleuze on the monad.) The palpable shift of concern in both these thinkers is from what atoms and monads are to how they work. Deleuze offers the monad as an activity of folding; application with all its attendant modifications (per- com- im-). The interest to me in monadic plication is how it offers an alternative approach to difference, repetition, complexity and periodization, and a way out of the suffocating temporalization of all those "post-isms." To envision a scene and experience of potentially infinite foldings allows access and escape across a complex system of multiple surfaces. I talk about this in my article on Robin Blaser's poetry¹ and quote from it in a slightly modified form here:

The confluence of these two great thinkers [Leibniz and Deleuze] obtains at the site of this single concept of the fold. [B]oth opt for the organic and privilege the fold over the subset via a theorizing that traces the complications in being over the clear, differential of the matheme. The fold is fundamentally erotic; it is enigma and intricacy; it complexifies, introducing detours, inflexions and instabilities into systems. In mathematics it is the simplest of the seven elementary catastrophes and is a prerequisite for the effective occurrence upon a cusp catastrophe surface of such things as divergence, bimodality and inaccessibility. We can speak of the postcolonial fold, and the fold of postmodernity, or argue plication as the basic agency of packaging. There are folds of impact and folds in collision. The great architectural fold is the labyrinth, whereas the ontolinguistic fold requires a plication of the subject into the predicate. The Self—itself—is not a Subject but a "fold" of force. Souls emanate as folds upon corporeal surfaces provoking dialogs not syntheses. A new consciousness

¹ "Blaser's Deleuzian Folds," in *The Recovery of the Public World: Essays on Poetics in Honour of Robin Blaser*, eds. Charles Watts and Edward Byrne (Vancouver: Talon, 1999), pp. 373-392. -Ed.

is a fold in the old and a dream a fold in waking life whereas mnemonic folds effect forgetfulness. The double helix of our DNA is actually a procedure of the “superfold.” There is also the becoming-fold along an ogive trajectory or planar crinkle. All these choreographies of folds and detours lead back to the skin, that most quotidian and insistent organ, enveloping us. Above all, the fold is anti-extensional, anti-dialectical and intransigently inclusive. Baroque folding comprises an “inside as the operation of the outside” returning surfaces to a topographical paradox in which “an interiority . . . constitutes liberty itself.” Folds being monads cannot be points. For instance, Baroque logic must treat the syllogism not as a resolution of points and counterpoints, but as the folding of a single discursive proposition. And while conceding to Plato’s Socratic dialogues the potential to seduce, an erotics of the dialectic is rare. However, there must be a constant eroticizing within the fold whose differentiating agency repudiates antagonism and opposition as the basal coordinates for change.

As well as a precipitate to rethinking our relation to the cultural Baroque, plication offers a useful approach to contemporary modernity and is a salient critique of binarism. Significantly, it induces a coextensivity of map and territory, which suggests that the monad is best thought of as a potential “diagram of” rather than a “trope for” contemporary subjectivity. I’ll not get into a discussion on the centrality of the diagram in contemporary “information architecture” (in Venturi and Eisenman, say) but quote Deleuze briefly on the non-indexical nature of diagrammatic machinery:

. . . [D]iagrams- must be distinguished from *indexes*, which are territorial signs, but also from *icons*, which pertain to reterritorialization, and from *symbols*, which pertain to relative or negative deterritorialization. Defined diagrammatically in this way, an abstract machine is neither an infrastructure that is determining in the last instance nor a transcendental Idea that is determining in the supreme instance. Rather it plays a piloting role. The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality (*Thousand Plateaus* 142).

How about a diagrammatic subjectivity, or a diagrammatic machine with subjects? The “subject” as a pilot for a human existentielle? Deleuze himself, ends his book *The Fold* on the resonant proclamation that “We are all still Leibnizian, although accords no longer convey our world or our text. We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments, but we all remain Leibnizian because what always matters is folding, unfolding, refolding” (*The Fold*, 137).

In *A Defense of Poetry* Paul Fry comments that “the perceived unity of the atomistic . . . is the consummate moment of reality saturation” (209) but elides the nature of the atom, which, like the monad, is predominantly actiant. Its double dynamic, as described by Epicurus and later by Lucretius, is to

descend and make a minimal, unpredictable swerve. (In essence it's a kinetics of inclination.) Lucretius names this minimal swerve from the vertical descent of atoms, a swerve that is the sole agent for physical change, a *clinamen* (Epicurus's earlier term for it is *parenklisis* but the identical dynamic is involved.) It's wrong to think of the classical atom (the atom of Greco-Roman particle physics) as Descartes does as a "little body." Indeed, in the classical understanding of them, atoms are formless, hypothetical organizations of events and are strictly defined by their dynamics. (I specify hypothetical here, as the atom first appears in human consciousness as a purely *imagined* dynamic, a postulate of the scientific mind's imagination and in that way provides a 'pataphysical "imaginary" solution to the abysmalities of material division. As perpetually volatile and irreducible primary qualities atoms coexist within an infinite number of configurations. Michel Serres insists on the irreversible dynamic of the clinamen and locates the matrix of its model in hydraulics. The "atom of the ancients . . . was always inseparable from a hydraulics, or a generalized theory of swells and flows" (in Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 489). This, of course, begs attachment to our discussions on the weather. Bloom adopts the clinamen as one of his revisionary ratios and calls it "a *willing error*, a turn from literal meaning in which a word or phrase is used in an improper sense wandering from its rightful place" (*A Map of Misreading* 93). Freud's term is *bedeutungswandel*, which Hartman translates as "wandering signification" and which aligns it closely with both Saussure's and Kristeva's definition of the paragram as a graphic mark in movement. The atom enjoyed a tremendous come-back in the 19th and 20th centuries. Marx did his dissertation on it in 1841 concluding that the atomic swerve is emblematic of free-will and self-sufficiency in the form of independent self-consciousness. Alfred Jarry adopted the clinamen as one of the two fundamental concepts of 'pataphysics (the other being the *szygy* or momentary conjunction of two planets in opposition) and it occurs again in the form of the *periplum*, Odysseus' wandering path through Pound's *Cantos*. Derrida also finds a place for it in his "differential typology of forms of iteration," where it's seen as basic to any event of citation. And finally in this lengthy list let me add Certeau's argument that the clinamen is presidential to logocentrism in a way Derrida fails to address. In contrast to writing, he claims, "Speech ... belongs to custom, which 'turns truth into falsehood.' More fundamentally, it is a fable (from *fari*, to speak). Now the fable is a kind of drift—an adjunction, a deviation and a diversion, a heresy and a poetry of the present in relation to the 'purity' of primitive law."

How does all this figure in rethinking contemporary subjectivity? Frankly, I'm not sure, nor do I seek to be sure. It certainly involves a rethinking of subjectivity through diagram, virtuality, and dynamics and I foresee huge problems here. But to think of subjectivity not simply as constructed but as being continuously, dynamically, and unpredictably modified might prove of use. If the monad-as-fold offers emancipation from dominant binaries, and if the clinamen offers a kinetic model that contaminates all essentialist and fixist notions of the subject then we might be able to remap subjectivity as effected by their joint consequences. The possibility (and fancifulness) of this thinking are both of degree. Certainly, the clinamen-subject is implicit, in Kristeva's notion of the "subject-in-process" (which means in French both the subject in process and the subject on trial): a concept that's been profoundly influential in theories of the subject. Also, the precise dynamic of the clinamen, as a disinclination from a norm, gets us to that culturally sedimented term "deviant" and all its significations; it also returns us to that term we've already introduced: "becoming."

There are huge issues that rise from all this: is change always a becoming? Heidegger specifies *dasein* is a being-towards-death, so can we subsume "decay" inside a wider notion of becoming as a becoming-dead? That

to me is both less interesting and less generative than the provocations Donna Haraway releases in her Cyborg theories: a becoming-cyborg I find a profoundly attractive concept. Another issue that I'm aware of and which I'll phrase as a self caveat: this rethinking of subjectivity must be local, provisional and not totalized into a facet of some master theory.

Unfortunately I haven't read Grosz's book *Becomings* and so can't comment. I'll merely say, for what it's worth, that becoming doesn't necessarily imply "progress" in the old positivist sense. Also the relationship of the diagram to piloting towards novelty might be of relevance to the specific chapter in her book that you flag. But, again, I haven't read it. Also I realize, as I'm closing now, that I haven't directly answered your question as to how "each of our notions of obsolescence and the uncanny (or nostalgia) relate?" Perhaps later on that one. Here's a short "occasional" poem prompted by reflection on all and none of the above:

A writer called Kelly wrote in a house
with a hey ho, the wind and the rain
and Phylly talks to Micky Mouse
and steve mccaaffery listens again.
It's only the wanderer who signifies
the gram of this parachute paradox
Who talks talk then talks to them who
listening
read 'paraphysic's patagrams.

Steve

#5: LR to SM

Dear Steve,

Soon, a more direct response to your extremely stimulating message on the fold. But for the moment, this text, which will maybe answer your question about my interest in regional historical research:

from **THE OFFICE FOR SOFT ARCHITECTURE**
Site Report: New Brighton Park, East Vancouver

"If there is to be a 'new urbanism' it will not be based on the twin fantasies of order and omnipotence; it will be the staging of uncertainty; it will no longer be concerned with the arrangement of more or less permanent objects but with the irrigation of territories with potential..." Rem Koolhaas

The new urbanism began at this site in 1863. It beautifully lacks architecture. This is an inverted Utopia, where sous la plage, le pave. Nothing and everything took place here then moved on. No sophistication is necessary. Except for the swimming pool changeroom and food concession (circa 1970), buildings are absent. The land here is largely fabricated.

At New Brighton Park heavy industry flanks the “passive and spontaneous” leisure grounds. To the west of the picnic oaks, the new concrete overpass for the Port of Vancouver truck route, the contested future site of Lafarge cement plant (now a dustbowl ringed in blackberries), and beyond, the jauntily colourful container yards. To the east of the disused tennis courts, monumental massing of the Alberta Wheat Pool grain elevators, now renamed Cascadia, and beyond these, Second Narrows Bridge. South of the outdoor swimming pool, veiled in chainlink, slow movement of grain cars on the CPR tracks. North is Burrard inlet, the wooden fishing pier, the freighter dock and across the inlet at North Vancouver the shipyards and barges. This blurred conflation of soft and hard uses structures the site.

Near the concession stand a commemorative bronze plaque narrates the park’s civic historical status: “Here Vancouver began. All was forest towering to the skies. British Royal Engineers surveyed it into lots, 1863, and named the area Hastings Townsite. . . Everything began at Hastings. The first post office, customs, road, bridge, hotel, stable, telegraph, dock, ferry, playing field, museum, CPR Office. It was the most fashionable watering place in British Columbia.” We shall add to this inaugural mythos an additional fact: the site also comprised the first real estate transaction in what was to become our city. From its inception New Brighton has remained emblematic of colonial economies: primary industry, leisure, and real estate find here their passive monument.

Lot 26 was purchased at land auction in New Westminister in 1869, \$25 down, \$25 later, by George Black, Scots butcher. This was the first colonial sale of the Musqueam clam beach called Khanamoot. Black built a hotel, Brighton House, and made cricket grounds and a covered roller skating rink that doubled as dancehall, founding a playland at the end of the first stagecoach route in the colony. From the then capitol city New Westminister to the new wilderness resort, the plank road followed an existing native trail. A contemporary account describes how at Brighton, the colloquial name for the officially designated Hastings, “beautiful grounds and picturesque walks are being laid out . . . Even now it is almost daily being visited by pleasure parties.” Brighton England’s colonial doppelganger prospered. Then in 1887 the CPR arrived. The terminus was to the west, at Gastown, and city development shifted westward with the railway. The famous hotel burned in 1905. In 1909 Black’s widow sold the 5 acre lot for \$150,000 to the BC Gas and Electrical Company, who intended to eventually construct there a steam power facility. A

shanty town overlaid the economically dormant site with its various salvaged economies. In 1935 the land was leased by the city of Vancouver from the Electric Company for \$1 annually, and gradually cleared of squatters. Relief workers constructed a \$21,000 outdoor cement tidal pool. The only waterfront parkland in the eastern, working class part of the city, Windermere Pool as it was then called, was the result of extensive community lobbying and a civic government still operating under the regionally equitable ward system. In 1942 users of the new pool became subject to the first racial exclusion policy on Vancouver parkland. Japanese Canadians, detained in the animal stables of the nearby exhibition grounds while awaiting internment, were barred from pool use after newspapers cited average counts of 200 Japanese “nationals” in the 1000 person capacity pool. In 1950 the city bought the land outright for \$56,000, acquiring also a disused millsite immediately to the east, for a further \$25,000. In 1964, under the Parks Reclamation Programme, a successful application was made to the federal government for a lease to extend the site foreshore with infill. In 1970 a much smaller swimming pool replaced the tidal pool, now contaminated with industrial effluent, after city hall, no longer regionally representative, refused to approve the requested reconstruction budget. The site continues to propagate itself from the insecurity of broken cement chunks and other refuse of elsewhere; in 1999, further infill work was carried out, to supplement parkland gouged by the new truck route. A mostly unused foreshore promenade curves along the reclaimed land. Truant patches of comfrey and mint mark long disappeared shanty gardens. Crab traps hang from the pier and early morning salvagers comb the rough little beaches. A creek trickles out from a rotting wooden culvert.

The spatio-economic system of Lot 26 functions as a mutating lens: never a settlement, always already a zone of leisured flows and their minor intensifications, a zone of apparent dormancy and latent exchange, a zone of spontaneous community and homelessness, a zone of racialization and morphogenesis. On the calm surface of the swimming pool in winter, a village of geese. Structure here is anti-metaphoric: it disperses convention.

Soft Architects believe that this site demonstrates the best possible use of an urban origin: Change its name repeatedly. Burn it down. From the rubble confection a prosthetic pleasureground; with fluent obliviousness, picnic there.

(Forthcoming in *MIX* magazine (<http://www.web.net/mix/index.html>))

#6: SM to LR

Sat, 02 Sep 2000

I admire the focus of this approach Lisa; it reminds me of the Power of Place Project initiated by Dolores Hayden in Los Angeles. Sedimentation and palimpsestification are ideological strategies designed at erasure. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter in *Collage City* (MIT 1978) propose an architectural agenda designed to foster a theatre of memory rather than a theatre of the future, which, given the ineluctable fact that Futurism in all its forms is always an avoidance of the present, has a lot of merit. I think too that Heidegger's notion of beginnings might be relevant to discussion here. The idea that a beginning is not inert and measured by the chronological gap that separates it from "now" but rather is volatile and moves ahead to a point in the future that the present must address.

I first came across the Office of Soft Architecture in the latest issue of *West Coast Line*: "reZonings" (31. 34/ 1 spring 2000) and was struck immediately by the name. Obviously, as your initial epigraph suggests, Rem Koolhaas has been an influence on your thinking (as on mine too—and as a brief aside did you know that Koolhaas has been awarded the design for the new Downsview project in Toronto?—) and I wonder how you would describe your strategic titular change from Koolhaas' Office of Metropolitan Architecture to your own Office of Soft Architecture?

The ending of your piece put me in mind two other claims of Koolhaas:

1. "Changes in regime and ideology are more powerful than the most radical architecture—a conclusion both alarming and reassuring for the architect."
2. "More important than the design of cities will be the design of their decay. Only through a revolutionary process of erasure and the establishment of 'liberty zones,' conceptual Nevadas where all the laws of architecture are suspended, will some of the inherent tortures of urban life—the friction between program and containment—be suspended" (*SML* 201). I'm actually at the start of an essay on Koolhaas that I've tentatively titled "Towards an Architecture without commas" and have been lead into architectural theory out of a profound dissatisfaction with contemporary poetics. What I always admired in the Kootenay School was its strident internationalism and its urgent mandate to address issues of poetics within the context of a tangible and local urbanism. This, of course, is not new to Vancouver, indeed, as I mentioned earlier, your article evoked Daphne Marlatt's *Stevenston* as a similar concern with the socio-econometrics of ethnic communities. What your piece also evoked in me was an interrogative inflection: can we even think not only of architecture today but also poetics outside of a binding paradigm of urbanism and everyday praxes?

Koolhaas' mention of conceptual Nevadas and architectural liberty zones also puts me in mind of Heidegger's claim in his "Letter on Humanism" regarding the insidious hegemony of grammar in its control of western thinking: "Metaphysics, which, very early in the form of Occidental 'logic' and 'grammar' seized control of the interpretation of language. We today can only begin to descry what is concealed in that occurrence. The liberation of language from grammar into a more original essential framework is reserved for thought and poetic creation." It was this latter quote, when I first read it some years ago, that caused me to think of the feasibility of a Heideggerean reading of the disjunctive, phrasal texts of say Susan Howe, Bruce Andrews, et al.

#7: LR to SM

Dear Steve,

zinging with ideas here, as I've spent the afternoon reading a great essay on Deleuze (Manuel De Landa—"Deleuze, Diagrams and The Open-Ended Becoming") after spending the week reconsidering Koolhaas' amazing piece "Whatever Happened to Urbanism" in relation to the archival work on New Brighton (and my own daily walks there) De Landa talks about thermodynamics, flows and intensities as opposed to extensities and equilibrium. Intensive difference as opposed to form. I think that's where Koolhaas is heading to, in his different vocabulary. Design for him is a description of intensity flows. There is a futurist edge to his notion that cities should have their own razing encoded in their plans. But also he's describing a post war Europe, the urbanism that could not merely conserve, frame heritage zones, but which had to come to terms with bombsites as part of the architecture of urban space. When a site undergoes a violent or economic clearance, which intensities move towards it? Debord, Michele Bernstein and the other Situationists asked that question, so does Iain Sinclair in London, and Patrick White too in his analysis of British Heritage fantasy projections on neighbourhoods or towns.

And your elaboration on how subjectivity ought to be considered in terms of "access and escape across a complex system of multiple surfaces" . . . Architectural thought has been feeding me means for considering subjectivity as a flow across systems, an access and escape agency that absorbs, mimes, enfolds, rejects, becomes, severs and transforms spaces and forms of the whole urban complex.

I started to read architectural theory before any exposure to contemporary avant-garde poetics. Then it was Heidegger—*Poetry Dwelling Thinking* was important—and other phenomenological approaches. Bachelard was a huge figure for me, (*The Poetics of Space*) and other guys whose names I can't remember any more—we're talking dark ages. (Norbert-Schultz maybe?) I went to a lot of talks and stuff, read Learning from Las Vegas, got exposed to postmodern thought through architecture. Then came poetry, and a severance from all that. Then, years later, working with Nancy Shaw on an essay about conceptual artists in Vancouver engaging in architectural discourse, (*A Sunday Drive*, Charles H Scott gallery) I had my own unexpected return to beginnings. I remembered that I knew some of that stuff. So started reading and rereading with mounting excitement.

I tried to invent for myself a descriptive practise in relation to urban space in Vancouver, wrote a series of magazine columns which annotated marginal and disappearing sites and nodes in this city, which as you know has a history of development explosions, blocks falling and rising again almost catastrophically, whole neighbourhoods morphing as fast as new investment cd pour from one shore to another. The city annotates those flows, like some sort of remarkable single fluxing instrument of plexi and cheap concrete cladding. So I tried to annotate the city annotating, because it felt thrilling and troubling to me as an inhabitant, a walker, an interpreter. (also I started to drive so I could see more, research more, quickly) And coming across Koolhaas' work 4 or 5 years ago, in the middle of all this, it seemed that his futuristic proposals were describing what I already saw happening here. So he has offered me a vocabulary for seeing Vancouver. In my copy of *SMLXL* I've underlined "The seeming failure of the urban offers an exceptional opportunity, a pretext for Nietzschean frivolity. We have to imagine 1,001 other concepts of the city; we have to take insane risks; we have to dare to be utterly uncritical; we have to swallow deeply and bestow forgiveness left and right. The certainty of failure has to be our

laughing gas/oxygen; modernization our most potent drug.” I see links to Donna Haraway’s cyborgian subjects—if we are not “human” let our inhuman-ness become our agency. To begin with failure as a transformative agency—this is an insanely pleasurable concept to me. And in terms of urban space, what do our identifications with failed sites, collapsed nodes, say about our subjectifications. In my mesh of reading I wd align the idea of agencies of failure with de Certeau’s arts of users, in the *Practise of Everyday Life*, and with some of Raymond Williams work, on border practices. Deleuze and Guattari’s work on Kafka and the minor. And of course the Situationist detournement. Part of my own alignment with such ideas came with an earlier dissatisfaction with the abjected notion of gendered otherness I came across in some feminist and psychoanalytic work. The big question was, how could a subject construct temporary agencies, when the social-sexual axis would always have already cast her outside of authority, power, agency. Meanwhile, we’re all moving through the city, quoting it wrongly, iterating the city. So the streetwalker’s practise is iterative and makes her up as she moves. The porousness of spatio-subjective nodes in transit becomes a way to think the subject. This threads back to ideas of the obsolete as well, obsolescence as lens or analytic device. The office for soft architecture happened after I had written a commissioned essay on visual artists Sharon Yuen and Josee Bernard, in the form of a fictional architectural manifesto—*Soft Architecture: A Manifesto*. Writing it opened up enough new areas of thinking and exploration for me that I felt I wanted to continue my spatio-subjective researches under that rubric. So the ad hoc “office” formed itself, obviously with a strong nod towards Koolhaas’ influence, but also as an attempt to escape the author called “Lisa Robertson”. I wanted to concoct a looser corporate identity to work from. And in becoming an “architect” I wanted to consider the rhetorical and descriptive practise of architecture—the history of the manifesto, the project proposal, site analysis, all that, as already an architecture. Since obviously architecture is discursive as much as it is hardware. So now I use the “office” when it seems appropriate—sometimes as the designer of texts—mostly “walks” and “essays” on spatial imaginaries—sometimes as an event organizer, sometimes as an archival researcher, thinking of all these daily urban linkages as their own architectures. And I’ve read enough purple prose about the poetry of architecture to want to play a little role reversal.

“Souls emanate as folds upon corporeal surfaces provoking dialogues not syntheses” you say, and I say exactly, and it is architecture. It seems that part of the problem of discourses on the subject (psychoanalytic ones at least) is that they too easily function in a social vacuum, as if subjectification were all interiority, no plication, and as if the process were not in constant flux. So to bring in the dailiness, the provisional local textures of becoming subject, poetry needs to become a kind of urbanism, or landscape art. I do agree. Also extending the idea of corporeality to the city itself helps avoid some of the deplorable essentialism that clings to the corpus as merely human. Lets talk about the agencies of matter.

But about grammar, Steve—can grammar be considered independently from language or thinking, any more usefully than the subject can be considered independently from spatio-economic sites? Can we consider the complicity of grammar and western thought as yielding agencies other than the authorized ones—so that, as the failure of urbanism becomes the new city, the failure of grammar becomes the new subject, in neither an abjected nor a privileged manner? Do we need to put grammar and disjunction in dialectic? Since here the fold shimmers too. . . I want to think of grammar as an extra large architecture that shelters and enables morphing and deviating and engendering varieties of subjectification and becoming. . . But then these days I’m reading Cobbett’s *Grammar of the English Language*—intended “especially for the use of soldiers,

sailors, apprentices, and ploughboys.” I just can’t decide which of these to be as I read.

Could you say more about architectural Liberty Zones? Can we invent a post-urban poetry? (or wd that be neo-urban) Since there must be a linguistic site where the subject flows far beyond the lyric enclave, but can still make temporary shelters according to necessity (and desire). The subject itself a temporary shelter for an intensity flow, “caused” by that flow and its frictions. In meteorology they call it “surfaces of discontinuity.” “THE ATMOSPHERE IS CROSSED AND RECROSSED BY SURFACES OF DISCONTINUITY SEPARATING FROM EACH OTHER MASSES OF AIR HAVING MORE OR LESS DIFFERENT VELOCITY AND DIFFERENT PHYSICAL PROPERTIES. ALMOST EVERY CHANGE OF WEATHER IS DUE TO THE PASSAGE OF A SURFACE OF THIS KIND.” (from *Appropriating the Weather*, on the early 20th c meteorologist Bjerkness)

but enough.

L

#8: SM to LR

Tue, 12 Sep 2000

Lisa:

To jump straight into your last inspiring missive and hoping you can get to it before your trip: Deleuze would call your form of subjectivity a line of flight. I frankly feel self-constrained around discussing “subjectivity” in any general or total sense. Speaking about “subjectivity” is similar to speaking about “Language” which in reality socially manifests in a plethora of indeterminate linguistic occurrences. Such a discursive approach implicates us in what Heidegger dubs the “theoretical attitude,” a transcendental apperceptive methodology consecrated by Kant.—And as you say earlier, subjectivity is marked by its non-essentialness and its constructedness. I was reading Gadamer recently on Heraclitus and Gadamer points out that the Greeks had no expressions for the subject, subjectivity, consciousness, nor even the concept “I.” Even in Aristotle the Cartesian ego-conscious remains peripheral. All of this got me rethinking our precise relation to the Greeks and such historically contingent consequences as the formulation of pre-conceptuality through the very constraints of the Eleatic dialect. The birth of philosophical desire preceded the conceptual and categorical machinery required to satisfy these desires. Plato’s pioneering achievement, or better situation, is to have constructed the bridge between pre-Socratic thinking (with its attendant conceptual aporias) and Aristotle’s introduction of categories. Put more specifically, the Eleatics lacked words to make category-distinctions e.g. between abstract and concrete, subject and object, particular and universal. According to Ian Crombie (in *Plato: The Midwife’s Apprentice*) this led to cognitive blurrings between such terms and in Plato’s instance the emergence of those changeless entities called “ideas” or “forms.” Philosophical method is not “born of” but “into” linguistic infelicities and aporias. To my mind all of this renders early Greek thought deliciously anterior to modernity. I think too (and I’m formulating a hypothesis here) that knowledge of these linguistic constraints

on conceptualization might alter our approach not only to Classical architecture (the Parthenon, or the Greek temple in Heidegger's "Origin of the Work of Art" for instance) but Neo-classicism too (which conceivably returns us to pastoral). Neo-Palladian temples don't inhere within the same conceptual network that the Acropolis or Paestum do, so how does the interposing of this conceptual difference alter that tectonic presence in 18th century European gardens and estates? What truly is a return to the Greeks? Heidegger thought it a superficial return, indeed a non-return if lacking a grasp not only of early Greek concepts (or proto concepts) but more importantly of the lived experience within and among those concepts.

You mention your own initial encounter with architectural theory before avant garde poetics. For me, it came after and from a restlessness with the horizon of potential within current poetics. I became especially attracted to conceptual architecture; those projects that didn't make it off the page and which seem in certain proclivities close to trends in the poetics of the 1970s and 80s: counter-narrative, disjunction, a certain disequilibrium and dysfunctionality. One of my current research projects is to trace the legacy of Situationist architecture. What strikes me as most impressive in your architectural reading is its thoroughly practical and local resonances. (I'm not there yet and largely through my own choice.)

Yes, De Landa's essay is great. Deleuze you know was influenced by Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers. As the founders of the science of nonequilibrium thermodynamics they were a seminal influence on Deleuze and Guattari's work in the late-1980s. (They're curiously absent from Derrida's thinking.) What they found especially appealing was the concept of the dissipative structure, which can be condensed mischievously into a nutshell phrase: all complex systems are defined by what they lose or give out. In contrast to dissipative structures are non-interactive systems or "hynons" and would include the monad. The dissipative structure, of course, is tantalisingly close to Georges Bataille's notions of a general economy and causes me to reflect on Ron Silliman's dismissal of Bataille as a "Nietzschean bozo." Philosophically speaking Prigogine and Stengers escort ontology out of its traditional, philosophical discourse and positions it within the turbulence of systemic complexities. As well as being tantamount to a rehabilitation of Heraclitus and Nietzsche, their theory offers a non-equilibrium processuality in place of a metaphysics of presence. Physics meets metaphysics not in the latter's beyondness but at the former's point of bifurcation where being emerges as becoming. (In what might be taken as a parallel periodization to Heidegger's chronology of philosophy. Prigogine and Stengers call the scientific period from Newton to quantum physics the "science of being.")

Of most value to my own is Prigogine's contentious claim that complex, stable systems carry within them unstable sub-systems that pressure the dominant system into disequilibrium. At a maximal point the system bifurcates into either a higher complex organization, or into chaos. Such a bifurcation point (transported and renamed in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking as a "schiz") functions in a manner similar to Lucretius' clinamen as a force towards difference and morphological modification. As the letter-clinamen can produce a novel word or a nonsensical syntagm so a bifurcation can precipitate a dissipative structure into either a higher order of complexity or complete disarray.

The notion of the urban as a dissipative structure seems almost a platitude. The only stability in urbanism is its predictable mandate to planning. I think we can liken architecture to the two variant forms of colonization: settlement and creatio ex nihilo. So much in architecture is circumscribed by pre-existing sites for which either accommodation must be made, or else demolition

realized to make room for the new. (This was Le Corbusier's approach at Le Voisin and its counter-historical rhetoric is similar to much of Marinetti's futurist hectoring.) This is why I think Lebbeus Woods' architectural designs (none of which have ever been built) are so important. Woods' approach to architecture as a form of scar tissue placed upon existing ruins (e.g. his projects for Sarajevo) position it in a dimension of ethical memorialism. The intensities that move towards such forms of historically coded ruin are mnemonic and conservative. The danger in Woods' approach, as with others such as Ron Herron's "walking city" is a dominant organicism that constrains the work which can never be emancipated from the analogy of building to body, and consequently would suggest that the overriding concept behind this work is the sub-architectonic form of the bridge.

You ask whether "grammar be considered independently from language or thinking, any more usefully than the subject can be considered independently from spatio-economic sites?" This is a great and an urgent question and one I'll try to respond to fully. Because grammar is substructural and effectively invisible I believe we need to isolate it if we're to actually diagnose its nature and effects. It's only by bracketing grammar that we can understand that it's far from being an innocent spatial site. Indeed, it's not a site at all, but rather a transcendental rule that then governs an incommensurate number of linguistic utterances. Whether this transcendental "power" is benign or invidious is a matter perhaps of occasion, and maybe the issue isn't a bald "either or" in the matter of grammar's relation to poetic economies but rather a play within it and among its rubrics, as you suggest. Utilise both its lability and its defeasibility; stretch it or fold it into new configurations of linguistic assemblages. Of course, you're dead right to point to the "complicity of grammar and western thought." Grammar structures the syllogism which in turns determines the form of any dialectic thinking. (Aristotle diagnosed this in the thinking of his teacher Plato.) So I would argue NO we can't put disjunction into the dialectic, or not the kind of disjunction that would challenge grammar in any radical way. It's the imperativity and transcendentality of grammar that cause me as a writer to approach grammar with suspicion—even when I obey its rules—and that could never allow me to think of grammar as an extra large architecture. Grammar isn't space but a power of command (of the order of the "in the name of the Father"). It moves to control the spatio-temporal configurations of usage, or at least inclines to control. Like any rule it's vulnerable to contravention and your own desire to morph and deviate from grammar shouldn't be construed as an exception nor an urgent utopian desire, but rather as an instance of what's commonly the case in living speech, the sociolect in action. You ask me to speak more on "Liberty Zones." The phrase is Koolhaas' which he links to "conceptual Nevadas" and if we think this "concept" through we arrive at a geo-social doublet that reduces to conditions: "desert" and "addiction." I'm curious as to why Koolhaas chooses Nevada and not specifically "Vegas." The latter, as I understand it from both readings and one actual visit, is a thematized façade of the imaginary opening into a space designed to narcotize and geared to need rather than desire. (You'll gather from this that I'm not a gambler although Karen and I initially planned to get married at the Elvis chapel in Vegas but then switched our preference to Rhiolite, a ghost town at the edge of Death Valley. We ended up tying the knot on a cold January afternoon at Toronto City Hall.) If we adopt Michel de Certeau's optimism around the practice of everyday life, then we could argue that Liberty zones are not edifices or spaces at all, but humanly motivated tactical meanderings through virtual trajectories within existing habitats. And, precisely like grammar, liberty is attained in contraventions, detours, illicit seizures, and becomings. On a more sober note, however, I feel that such a species of liberty is potentially hollow and unfulfilling. But with the price of gas these days being what it is who needs to fill?

As to an urban or neo-urban poetry I feel the need less that of territorial extension than a shift in the basic area of poetics' concern from texts to urban spaces. Let me take my lead from Foucault's famous averral (in *Language Counter-Memory and Practice*) that "the questioning of limits has replaced the search for totality." For me, this requires installing a site for a critical practice as opposed to some narratizable "vision" or telos. A move from poetics to architecture, or more accurately in my case, a move of poetics into architecture as a projective and investigative deposition whose dialogic outcome remains uncertain. From the sixties on (and with several earlier examples—Duchamp probably the exemplar) we've lived in borderblur culture with the demolition of the rigid partitions between genres and disciplines. (Even good old Adolph Loos in his architecture manages to problematize the certainty of boundaries between inside and outside.) One immediate boundary to be questioned within this spirit is that dividing artistic from critical-theoretical production, and beyond that to challenging the given circumscriptions around the domain that constitutes the political. This is where architectural theory becomes meaningful to my poetry and a catalyst to my own becoming-thoughts. Issues of space, containment, dwelling (in all its resonances), the fascinating issue of circulation in both buildings and texts; ruins, labyrinths and landing sites. I'd love, however, to see a neo-urban poetry that would emerge from the things we've discussed.

I'm delighted you bring our thinking back to the weather which allows me to recall as a valedictory swan-cough (I can't sing any more) an apposite closing thought from one of Robert Duncan's Notebooks: "The language revising its own architectures is the cloud palace and drift of your desire."

See you in Philly.
Steve

#9: LR to SM

Dear Steve,

Flying SF to Van, writing longhand on paper. Cirro-cumulus in wave motifs over dark cords of mountains over the long tiredness of last night's scotch. I don't know whether what "I" experience is "myself" but to some extent, in order to be useful, I have to suspend disbelief. One thing our correspondence has revealed to me is the extent to which I am a pragmatist, although not a particularly hopeful one. In terms of subjectivity, if I consider the surface of the body as a representational limit that mediates the contexts it moves among, as it is mediated by them, if I consider the corporeal memory as an accretion of these instances of surface mediation, a spatialization that institutes a fiction of subjectivity, what seems important repeatedly is the agency of mediation. "I" mediates. What could be important in terms of tectonics and subjectivity is how scale expresses potentials of mediation—so that the shift from archaic Greek tectonics to neoclassical spatial expressions is, among other things, a shifted conception of scale—not only in a simplistic sense—the neoclassical is often quite little—though it is, generally—(the miniaturized temple folly or fake ruin in Capability Brown's landscape functions ocularly, as a symbolic distance, and theatrically, as a performative backdrop articulating an imagination of the leisured body)—but also in the more complex sense that the potential engagements of bodies with spaces are differently shaped and constrained. Perhaps the ancient Greeks had no conception of the subject, but they certainly did architecturally construct and express their conception of the woman. Greek tectonics domesticated gendered bodies—the body was coded female by its enclosure in the oikos. But interestingly (and I've searched unsuccessfully for the essay that described this, I think in one of last year's *Critical Inquiries*.)

Athenian women's sacral-spatial festival took place over architecture—on rooftops only, not in structures, or as a flow among them, in the polis. This supra-architectural erotic festival maybe has an metaphoric relation to Archigrams proposed aerial cities or Situationist rooftop derives, and I think of Bronte's madwoman strutting the burning roof of the domestic enclosure. But what the festival expresses negatively is that some bodies are indeed constrained to a subjectivity and a space. I need to refer to this subjectification by some name, provisionally, in order to attempt to critically disengage and untangle the means of constraint. Thinking of (Austrian architectural cooperative) Coop Himmelbau's excellent manifesto "Architecture must Blaze", I'd like to propose an architecture of arson, of rooftops, clouds, much more than I want to repeat the word woman, the word subject. I too want an architecture, a poetry, that is both delusional and critical, a ludic zone, precisely because I cannot conceive of a site as innocent. Every site is a form of governance, command. I don't believe there is an outside, I don't believe grammar has an exit. For myself I can only misuse it, cast it in the wrong scale, because I have no conception of how I could ever bracket what extends frontierless into every perception and mode of sociality. Every suspension of this totalizing structure is delusion. Therefore the necessity to shape or describe delusional space. There are traces of unbuildable or unbuilt architectures folded into the texture of the city and our bodies are already moving among them. Therefore the exploitation of complicity as a critical trope, an economy of scale. My outlook is not liberatory except by the most minor means, but these tiny, flickering inflections are the only agency I believe—the inflections complicating the crux of a complicity. More and more poetry is becoming for me the urgent description of complicity and delusional space. The description squats within a grammar because there is no other site. Therefore the need for the urgent and incommensurate hopes of accomplices.

Warmest thanks Steve, for the generosity of your engagement.

Lisa

PS—landing now I read the message spelled out on the flat light industrial rooftop below. "Welcome from Honda"