

PhillyTalks 7

Nov. 2nd, 1998, 7:30 pm

Kelly Writers House, 3805 Locust Walk, Phila.

Brian Kim Stefans & Fred Wah

FRED WAH

7

ArtKnot Fifty Eight

ArtKnot Eighty One

no gear in the shift
I'm the hostage

no wine no country
no rain today

step right up
September is not

responsible for the hum
Third Man theme

the unpractice of words
written in silence

not to answer is the rule
to think the way one dies

could this be the precipice
or the detour of an anecdote

listen, day breaks like a drum
the thunderstorm is fictive

it will pass to a blue sky
the necessary failure of morning

I was not kept in the castle
nor felt and incandescent mark

wrds

:

I miss
mind you
in Indiana
grammar
and seminar
drinking w/ him
some skag
middled up
conditions
ham strung
past towels
upper lip
topple uh
still one
smart indian
past plural
laws come
in widths
summer serves
mind drum
pst string
growls psi
dot dot dot
missing drive
mindful tension
psm ing
of you
a head

ArtKnot Fifty Six

the eclipsing embrace
extended *in advance of the imagination*
achieves strange correspondences
probing the last gasp
in a long tactilo-encephalographic chain

for itself
it allows an observer
writerly activity

the patter of a pen
that becomes a slowly plotted path
might resist this new supersensual threshold

novel
for its having deployed
a “knife-edge” between the word and the page

as though it could register this strangeness
as a poetics of the Cross
“a sort of blind-man’s dog”

Warp Body

does the hole in your hand
seem to be disappearing
caught in the wrap

Beethoven was not furious
when he wrote this
but you are when you play it

outside of the music
the Appalachian is calm
Canadian as the bract
beneath the flower

bracken
you’re just the one
and your brow is furrowed
beard too long
excited by home
inured to slivers

Nose Hill 1

Grass language knows
silent flower wind
no trembled flutter

north of joy
anemone mundi mound
emble hair scab

grace oat keel
none shingle sky
June naze puzzle

imported sweet awn
cope tribe discont-
but abundant thrill

never rough hooked
dream street springing
ocean grade panic

grammas gone north
thread-through-needle
spoke troop boat

w/ as ex hill
noon pond knot
having omph look

clusted node broom
first minute pendul
city locorice grazed

boulevard finger zome
tickled sweet pyramid
infloresce occur animal

then *gna* loop
feathered gravel home
new lawn river.

Music at the Heart of Thinking One Two Four

Say “Sheh!” to get up from the log to get lost and put into cadence the synchronous foreignicity of zone in order to track your own ladder of exhaust swim into the next story some starving elephant as the imperial slacking of alterity just such a gap in trans to collate the *terra* of potency except for being frightened by hunting this dispersal of planned punctuation will rob the arrow of its feather the dart of its you.

Some juncture of the moment that requires action, needs to be voiced, even though one might fear a shift from the quiet sitting position to the forces of navigation and their necessary paradigms of anticipation, estimation, and trial. The synchrony of estrangement, the unknown, and mapping could be as simple as willing to climb a ladder in order to learn how to swim. This is, of course, a privileged style of movement and the common can be seen as a gridlock that excludes the external, starves the senses. Wherever potential openings can be located intention is reminded of its uncertainty and at the same time gains new guidance systems.

Music at the Heart of Thinking One Two Seven

No mass is without something else, something added, other. The one and the many. Taste is a gradation of foreignicity: we come across some abandoned specific with the realization that it isn’t represented in the sphere of culture surrounding us. These particles of recognition and desire, subalterns and alternatives, solids that could melt into air, are what we use to intervene and domesticate those homogeneous aggregates of institution and industry that surround us.

The shoulders of eating, the sack full of ginger, the Blakean beach, the other word at the end of the word, the curl from kulchur, the grade for the course, the genome in their home, the rap at the door, the spoon full of the rice, the chop for the lick, the tongue in a knot, the circuits of surplus, the milk on the way, the valley and then the valley, the time of the day, the middle of world.

BRIAN KIM STEFANS

Terms of the Anglo-Saxon Ritual

Christ if I were in my arms
swearing and kicking up foehn
like a butcher in a schooner
unaware of the approaching simoon;

or an orderly under orderly
pale as a peach in the Caspian Sea,
making rhymes involving de-
liberate, harsh “ye’s” and “thee’s,” like:

*The shore shrank to the
size of shattering
clay cups on the kitchen floor, done
as a dope I’d dated,
when bought, oh only but a
kind of toy.*

Christ if I’d
had long
hair like the hip (that’s for hire
on a Greek trading ship) I’d
always be on fire, always on fire

bending a crowd,
purring out loud, the
sorrows all young,
when “under the gun” I’d make my pearls.

7

Preparatory Meditation I

Here moment’s moments’ ague
like ash doth fly
temperaments
(inward spiraling fashion)
to the pit
speechifying no reconciliation with
New England’s perfidy.
The boss
of All all
forgets:
idleness a pitched & parched Winnebago gone
(& wheel carburetor spark plug) gravewards, wind’s
toy
no ballast.
The season’s seasoned savior savors
nothing like record’s recourse or
pushy preacher’s discourse
pyramiding
(peach fuzz) framed
intimately (matted)
lore’s lozenge
in cerebratory time, tuned
weakly.

Weekly
(arguing stiffly) we
gambol gambling premise or
promise
to laxity.

Trouble on Triton

an arabesque

1. **Damaged**
 eyes glance ruefully at the screen.
 Ah, pock-marked maiden! glances back.
 Strategic approaches garner no further
 request as yogurt-covered hills recede in the
 aftermath of this conjugal mime. There's
 victimization. Or a test for the synapses
 and tossed heirs of vermilion uncouth
 billionaire poet. In a town called Sea Bright
 they wait. The prettiest of the trees waver
 in the wind. The carts are parked, but the
 business prospers actively into the holidays
 and sunsets of New Jersey, and this is
 affinity's manner of substitution when speech
 flares, broken. Amiss as boy scouts. Several
 other verticals intrude to complicate these
 war-like gestures, but were an ombudsman's
 worth of truth here to masticate the singing,
 cut lines, nobody would complain. Fares,
 then, are lowered, and transition commences,
 the marathon to the blue mall mauled by
 trickster figures. Rounded figures. Other
 figures. Tomorrow the nostalgia for this night
 won't produce the politics that recommend it.

2. **Joke's on you:**
 f*rt f*rt.
 The tab's take
 is a tax hike.
 Jerk's in
 you, har har har.
 For the stone
 of brain's alone.

3. **Formal applause** ear at the mirror.

4. **Tune or no tune**
 that's TV;
 the crank condones

what we will see
 oblivious to
 the depth soundings
 that come back naked.

5. **Spending time:** words are serious.

Dream a six-pack, but not
 a 16 oz. That the 16th ox
 won't drag a half-baked sentence.

Warped as a diamond taken
 from a microwave, cooked
 until its basking superiority has
 been tokened. Frame this
 corduroy catastrophe, Osh B' gosh
 wish puppy hushed in haste.

Wallets: abject objects of our disgust.

Sometimes they roll, royal, or
 bowl boiled, sometimes they squeeze.

6. **grind** toad
list frank

store nuts
bike blank

truce tree
near truck

open read
call prune

hant reek
wrack yodel

virus wren
upon stole

rimed parks
there hunt

chive grins

7. **Thumbing:** theory of.

Took trains prescience miffed
 as ascertaining all grand subjects.

Proceed: pigmentation of.

- Lasso: island of.
Drag me to the movies.
Can't think of anything else.
8. Downpour of Cowper.
9. The nausea was loneliness.
Conjured up one more defense paper.
Lineliness. Or lioness. Perjured one more dark caper, token breadth. And it stank from the family room, alcoves of minuscule perception, the gaff in the lax laugh. Ordinary orangutans, jellyfish symbiosis. But that was the prose. The child cries "Daddy" in the next door neighbor's yard, brushing a stick against the leaves, the lawn covered. Breathing. No cityscape entered the window but left it, entirely. Robot thematics. Franking funk. Withdraws into the cigarette, and stokes.
10. Death, an opal. Or a bitter agent. So
that a screaming adolescent has tomorrows.
This service provided in ignorance, by commuters. Lethargy of eyes. Intensity of faction. Plague of smoking while driving. Failed systems of habit, of startled habit.
11. They settle into the Jacobin stance, provide nougat summaries to the mob, stereotype the vagrant charms of the press and crowd, forecast deliverance. "Spermicelli" warbles the man teaching English, mistakenly thinking "vermicelli," or his HBO weekend. Or originally scheduled dénouements for the Western World marathon slam-dance. Fixed rabbits tame the town square, ration the rorschach, blend in bland square dances their pythagorean surplus blueprints with the parole of the tribe. So that there is nothing easing into the traffic of this community but change, no chance. The pontoon is punctured, the bridge collapses (the future or past, no difference) a sewer is exposed as supplying the academe with its fragrant circus; the chroniclers of the mad are *angrier, secular and smart*, verging on governing table issues, scratching the table with immortal gossip, strange curlicue drawings of Artaud. "Story of the Eye" or boring showdown sloped pocketward, toward the luminous. Tickertape flows madly down the "corridor of heroes," harpoons aimed ungladly at the crests, fictioning a countdown with Marvin Gaye. Leaves slip by, impervious. The bender grafts its tale on. Stories glide glad over the fields, then settle. And microns of progress shuffle with attitude toward the front, jostle the children, tweak the tried, banish as incest sincere self-delusion. Twenty leagues as the wombat corrodes, the aboriginal affidavit is hand-written on a napkin, and friction Pollocks into bourgeois finitude. They said there was an hour saved, the perfect parent denies the regretful minute of the party, the peacock's wealth of waves. One balances largesse with junkyards, pits speech against the backyards, or affection against the fetish, to recreate, suffering wholly, nothing but boundaries against shards. The bucket comes round.

Hi Fred,

I think one thing we could talk about, in terms of form, is landscape and environment – I’ve been reading your work along with that of Daphne Marlatt (the selected with your intro which I found in the NYU library), and in some ways it took me a little while to “get into” this work as my own relationship to trees (it’s sort of like “trees” to me) and the stuff of a historically charged landscape whose history is not just in the buildings and streets (and in modern myths, or in the discourse of “junk”) is somewhat distant – I think this has something to do with being from New Jersey (from Williams’ town Rutherford, but I think it’s a very different town than it was, and I’m not a naturalist by bent) as well as with my relationship to computers – your mentioning the absence of computers on your trip touched this off. I’ve just disconnected the internet from my computer at home, in fact, because I felt (after reading this scary article in the *Herald Tribune* about a Carnegie Mellon study that seemed to show that web browsing caused depression – yikes) that it made my apartment something of a conduit for the ephemeral and “virtual” which kept me off my feet, or out of my senses, when I was at home, and though I didn’t spend much time browsing at home I feel that being in that forum of constant intercommunication kept me at a distance from tending to the stuff of the material world, whether it be the books on my shelves (another form of conduit, of course, and I’ve thought about getting rid of some of those, too) to the people I might happen to have over (also conduits but unless you are extremely asocial not likely to cause depression or a sense of being “out of touch”). Anyway, I’d like to go someplace without computers for a little while myself – get away from that electric buzz – and your and Marlatt’s writing – which both contain a note of “futurity” (especially in graphemic placement, absence of “revisions” of traditional literatures, and in the modification of the “Bardic” tone of Olson) despite all I write about, and despite your focus on “the voice” which, with my interest in word systems and random expression, might seem “primal” or “organic” – gives me some sense of an alternative to what I am doing, and my manner of experiencing, now.

Sincerely,
Brian

September 8, 1998

Brian, just back from a long weekend in the Kootenays (SE British Columbia, we have a home there on Kootenay Lake) and ready to go. Uncanny, leafing through yr package and I’m stopped immediately by looking at Walter [Lew]’s poem in *Arras 2* and his line “some mebbed hellicx bestreets it all?” where I wanted to read “mebbled” because I was hearing a Roy Kiyooka language; then reading yr essay in *Korean Culture* and mention of Roy vis-à-vis “matrix.” So I’m taken in right away with questions I’ve been running through on “race” writing, particularly the “lyric.” Do you get *West Coast Line*? I’ve a piece in a recent issue, called “Racing the Lyric Poetic” that addresses some of what yr up to in yr essay. I could send it along. Anyway, I’m just getting into yr essay, which I’ll finish today and get back to you more tonight. Concisely, I’m interested in the clarity of attention to a certain inherited (degrees of foreignicity) language that an interstitial poet (like Walter or Roy) has access to (that and including inherited form? so much “shakespearian” we are as the lord language lords).

later, Fred

September 9, 1998

Hi Brian, a bit more on yr essay in *Korean Culture*. By the way, I think it’s a wonderfully negotiated essay and useful for our “talk” since it exposes yr preference for “matrix” poetics within some context of hybridity. So I feel quite sympathetic to the problem of considering the varied “aesthetics” within “race” writing. I learned a lot about Walter’s poetry from your essay since I’ve not seen a copy of *Brine* (has it been released?). Your reference to his poetry being open to “non-canonical information” strikes me as characteristic of the more exploratory non-white poets. But, as well, this interest in the non-canonical can work in an obverse way, in poets like Evelyn Lau (whose poetry, by the way, I contrasted to your own in my essay “Racing the Lyric Poetic”), as a resistance to the radical as it’s been situated, particularly of late, within the institution and within recent foregrounding of a resistant cultural activism (multiculti, in different ways, in our two countries). That is, some writers, and this seems to include Lew, or even [Cathy] Song’s more

recent work as you suggest, choose, or find themselves trapped in, that “middle passage” not only between cultures but in the conflictual dynamics of language (English) itself. I’m only trying to suggest that the “experimental” for an Asian-North American poet might include the position that plays it both ways (both innovative and conventional). As you say, “there is an absence that is needing to be recovered...a big *whah...*” This might also have something to do with [Myung Mi] Kim’s “very unique, somewhat awkward, but always fascinating sense of prosody...” This is part of something I’ve called a “trans-” poetics in which yr looking both ways, as one of my former students discovered, not for trains but for trans. Look both ways before crossing I had to remind myself in Japan after almost being run over at the curb. I quite like your discussion of Kim; it made me go back and look at [Myung Mi Kim's] *The Bounty* with more attention. How playful she is in “Primer.” I think it’s her most expansive work of the three texts in the book.

Fred

September 10, 1998

Hi Fred,

Yes, unfortunately Walter’s book hasn’t been published yet, but I got a pretty good gander at the contents. I’d tell you more about it but he probably wouldn’t appreciate it at this stage, but deals with a lot of the issues that would be interesting to this correspondence, particularly the “matrix” and the hybrid. I don’t have a copy of your essay nor do I get *West Coast Line*, unfortunately, but I should get Roy Miki’s e-mail address and see if he’ll send one to me (if you happen to have it).

I’m interested in what you write in your e-mail of the “radical as it’s been situated in the institution” and the “foregrounding” that you call “multiculti” – the latter is much clearer to me, but I am not so sure what you mean by the former, possibly because we have different institutions between us, but also because I might have idiosyncratic ideas about institutional “radicalism,” usually the product of my disappointment with the appropriation of terms from non-institutional experimental or avant-garde poetries of the 70s and

80s (and even the 50s, to some degree, and maybe back to modernism), but also with the manner in which some of the poets – both young and old – have not quite adjusted to this change in affairs, either by analyzing the situation and reconsidering their strategies, methods and vocabularies, or by fruitfully ignoring the entire process and making way for the “new” – not so much in an effort to view the “future” but simply the “present.” Of course the present could not possibly be “viewed” if there is general agreement that the old way of looking at things is outmoded – indeed, a sort of evasion of the panoptic gaze (of theory or mythologized “lifestyle” discourse or creaky modernist paradigms or whatever) might be an overwhelming characteristic of this generation of poets – it certainly is hard to determine the “retro” and the “beyond” (to parse a phrase from the *Village Voice*) when there are so many valorized sub-traditions wending their ways. But I think it’s an exciting time for poetry specifically because of these dynamics.

You wrote previously: “Concisely, I’m interested in the clarity of attention to a certain inherited (degrees of foreignicity) language that an interstitial poet (like Walter or Roy) has access to (that and including inherited form? so much “shakespeareian” we are as the lord language lords).” One might also want to say “Chaucerian” in this context considering the manner he injected into the language so many words (and a few formal elements) of European origin due primarily to the fact of the Norman conquests. I’m not sure if any of us are “big” enough to do that to the English language at the moment even if we’d wanted to, especially as our literary culture has valorized, to some degree, the neologism as some sort of permission of the poet which we are free to ignore, but also because, as you note, the generative site of this activity is “the interstitial” and the primary motive is to destabilize – or rather to inject the process or virus of destabilization into – the language, so though we feel our words are most suited (or maybe most ill-suited, but in any case “most”) to the situation at hand, they are defiantly (or coyly) un-utilitarian. I tend, of course, to think that this paradigm could apply to any poet working in investigative ways in the English language – one needn’t have strong ties to “foreignicity” or be “interstitial” in post-colonial terms – but on the other hand there is a degree of difference in the way a poet like Hopkins or the American Abraham Lincoln

Gillespie created neologisms and “foreignicity” in their work and the way Roy Kiyooka or Harryette Mullen do. Could we say that Hopkins was an “interstitial” poet in that he was somewhere between the Anglo-Saxon, Welsh and late-nineteenth century traditions? In any case, he didn’t feel obliged, necessarily, to create channels between two (or many more – no binaries!) living cultures in the way we can consider the latter two poets doing. Where would a writer like [Charles] Bernstein fit in here?

Of course, all of this ties in with what you write of Walter and Cathy Song (by the way, I got the big “Whah?” from a Thomas Pynchon novel – he attributes it to Nixon. I wasn’t thinking of you at the moment). “Both innovative and conventional” is a good way of putting some of the issues involved in an avant-garde Asian American (I know both of these terms just aren’t very useful but heck...) poetics, especially in terms of the issue of community. I just wrote a review of *Close Listening*, edited by Charles Bernstein, and the issue of community – whether they be the “ephemeral” communities created by sound poetry performances of the Four Horsemen in Toronto (in which, as McCaffery writes, a scream is not a social contract, but “a scream escapes from pain. Out of this accident a poem is made, with an explanation round about it. In this context, a scream acquires a role, a function”) or the communities of Hawai’i in which pidgin is the dominant speech, in opposition to the mainland imposition of normative grammar – in both cases you have communities that are shored up against normalization, but the former is almost entirely the province of educated, conscientious adults while the latter includes everyone who happened to be born and raised in the vicinity. How would a pidgin writer wanting to preserve or foreground that language’s contours and contents be able to utilize a processual strategy – such as one by Jackson MacLow, for example – without consequently relativizing and digitizing the original pidgin, so it just seems some sort of language game? For the writer with tendencies – whether political or social or otherwise – for the radical, is pidgin enough (assuming the writer is able to write “well”)?

Anyway, these are my thoughts for the moment (writing from work) – I’m looking forward to getting your stuff.

Take care,
Brian

September 11, 1998

Brian, Glad the books arrived. Thanks for yr full response – you must have a pretty good job where you can do this at work.

I should have said the “radical as it’s been appropriated (and contained) in the institution” but, I’d guess we have a similar sense of that. Partly I’m referring to the rather tidal (thus consistent) academicization of the poetry and poetics of each generation. So out of a poetics of resistance I find myself now working in a university that democratizes my anger, say. It certainly is quick to adopt the strategies of making writing that the “radical” generates into a discursive milieu that sustains its own existence. Eg. the (so-called) Language poets channeling a poetics of social formation in that context; or the institutionalization of “race writing” into a coterie of critical centres (Harryette, Walter, Roy Miki, etc.) such that we all teach *Cha* in our graduate seminars alongside the Elaine Kim and others critical book (weh politically excludes any mention of Walter’s *Excerpts*). Is pidgin enough indeed. Well, as you say, it’s an exciting time for poetry because of these dynamics. I have white colleagues and friends who have been empowered enough by the discourse of “colour” to now apply it to “whiteness.” Roy Miki finds this particularly abhorrent. I don’t, particularly, though I get his point. Your question “Where would a writer like Bernstein fit in here?” sent me to his essay “Pounding Fascism” because it’s one of many places I’ve seen his observant Jewishness articulating that particular interstitial. Charles’s last paragraph seems to be asking some of the questions we are. Perhaps, as he suggests, we might pay more attention to Williams’s “We all like to believe we are master minds. But what men seldom learn is that the end of poetry is the poem; I don’t know a thing about the value of a poem as such or a hunk of gold as such or of a man himself as such but I do know that.”

This thinking about the containment of the radical also reminded me of Sianne Ngai’s essay on disgust in Jeff [Derksen]’s issue of *Open Letter*. “We bear witness to

the fact that most forms of cultural subversiveness are ultimately contained. Not just by being re-integrated into the discursive logics they would seem to undermine, but by being shown to sustain them....” Is, for example, your piece “Stake” a “stake in subversiveness”? I had certainly read that piece in the context of the “Disgust and Overdetermination” notion Jeff was trying to foreground but then I see it in a different context in *Free Space Comix*. I was interested, first, in the poem’s “Derksenian” situation, both for and imitative of him (stylistically). Except then I saw the text generate itself past the bullets into phraseology and even that ending pirouette of lines. So the piece engages as it moves past its own origin yet maintains levels of irony (maybe even parody). I’d be interested in your own sense, now, of the two occasions for that poem, the book and the mag. How do you think it fits with Jeff’s thematic intention? with Ngai’s essay? Both you and she figure Bruce [Andrews] as central to your production.

Fred

September 15, 1998

Hi Brian, just a quick response to an old note of yours re “form, landscape and environment – and the voice.” Partly Daphne too, because of Vancouver/West Coast, but certainly myself, been very “place” oriented in my poetry. I jumped the landscape track a bit with *Music at the Heart of Thinking* which I’ve intended as a foil to such a place-oriented poetics (in that *MHT* is essentially critical response to text and visual art). But growing up in the mountains of SE B.C., small town, and then getting into poetry w/ a bunch of other people from likewise small towns/rural etc. I’ve always felt strong inclination to trees, creeks, mountains, etc. but also I think that informed a very powerful sense of the “local,” partly in that Olsonian sense but, literally, here in Canada, a political condition of the tangible (community, size, the person, etc.) And, of course, I’m from that generation whose excitement about poetry was the voice. We had all been schooled on a poetry of inner silence and meditative meaning so in the late 50s it was quite exciting to actually “hear” live poets. Well, that’s historical. Voice became for me a way to tie in my sense of the musical body and gave me a place from which to disassemble the given

language. I think I sent you a copy of *So Far*; work in that such as the Utanikis continues that track of the concrete for me. Jeff did an interesting piece on my early work trying to situate the basis for a racial address; he properly nailed *Breathin’ My Name with a Sigh* as a site where place, language, and person meet.

best, Fred

September 16, 1998

Hey Fred,

I really appreciated the term “democratizes my anger” as it seems to get at one element of this academicization – is it a radical democracy that we’re talking of, in which the individual players have the right and/or obligation to be parties of one, with singular languages, a degree of asocialibility, spontaneous agency, idiocy (I think being downright stupid is a significant tactic at moments) etc., or is it the democracy of agreement, even agreements about the various ranges of non-meaning such that all particulars of “ethnicity” or “idiocy” or whatever it is that composes singularity in the former model are rendered symptoms or constructs, absorbable elements in a libidinal, infinite economy? This is, I suppose, the key element to much of Jeff’s writing on the “multicultural mosaic” (nationalist) models of ethnic identity in Canada vs. the “alienethnic” models of multiculturalism, which I take to be a very willful counter-paradigmatic version of ethnicity that, indeed, runs the risk of rendering itself invisible (a switch from motives of the “Breaking Silence” days of multicult writing). The only solution to this impasse, however, for the poet seems to be in the poem itself (yes, I love Williams) as opposed to discursive solutions, since it is discursivity that finds a way to level or ameliorate these multiple oppositions. But these are hasty thoughts. Is that sort of what you meant by “democratize”? (I just picked this line out of your essay “Speak My Language” almost by chance and discover you nail many of these issues quite easily: “The polarization of a poetics of resistance and a poetics of accommodation that I have been familiar with, isn’t a delineation necessarily attractive, it seems, for some younger writers. Social and cultural production has, in recent years, appropriated the figure of the racialized writer as a measure of containment and control. Thus, the praxis of a lyric poet within the

polarization I'm accustomed to has become somewhat reconfigured as "cultural" practice [and] has been discoursed into notions of production and consumption." Maybe it's the practice of delineation – since one can't consume what has not been limned – itself that is most harmful?)

I can't find an easy way to think through the idea of the discourse on color being used to describe "whiteness" – certainly this activity operates as a critique of the discourse on color, but if "whiteness" invariably finds its roots in the nations of Europe or in, say, the subterranean Protestant ethos of most American discourses including the one on color, then it's hard to see how valorizing "whiteness" could serve to critique the social hierarchies in quite the same way as the former. The entire thought gives me that creepy Iron John feeling, since the general perception on the discourse on color is that "ethnic" writers are engaging in the "culture of complaint," or are painting themselves as victimized, so that the idea of "whiteness" being valorized on that (Robert Bly) level appears an attempt to parody this self-victimization in order to find the spotlight, but as you and I know, that is not what the discourse on color is all about – in fact, it is often about the opposite: about how agency is created from this site of subjectivization, which is of course a very useful paradigm for anyone. I think that essay you mentioned of Charles's is very key in this context – in a weird way, for the duration of that essay (and for a time afterwards) I began to think of Charles's entire poetics as being created by Pound (and by extension the cult of Faustian knowledge and Enlightenment "clarity" as it is manifest in much of the European tradition), as he finds so much anti-content in the content (or content in the anti-content) of pounding Pound (while, as that interestingly rhetorical later paragraph of the essay displays, having to love him). I was always intrigued by the fact that Charles has never written a very long poem – a book-length work, for example – choosing always (via his variations on the *Verfremdungseffekt*, as he called it) to wipe away the clouds of impressive scholasticism, of objective clarity, of epic charmisma, etc., hence avoiding the largesse of authority. Anyway, it seems that Charles has probably found a way to be an "ethnic" poet without anyone really noticing, and in this way letting some humanist content get into his work.

Do you really teach Elaine Kim in your graduate seminars? I have never taught Asian American literature myself, but I am sure it's a challenge – there really is a limited range of popular critical approaches, but that probably leaves a fair amount of room for you to improvise. There are a few good essays in that book on *Cha*, of course, and *Dictée* is certainly turning out to be an influential text, but even the history of that text and its relation to the academy shows how swiftly things are moving, and how soon these paradigms come to their ends (not being, in the Kuhnian sense, true paradigms). Again, it's an interesting time in terms of these discourses, since no one knows where it's going. I wonder sometimes if there's enough work worth studying over the years. Do you and Roy Miki get taught in the States? Has the Asian American (meaning Stateside) establishment paid much attention to *Tish*, *West Coast Line* or any of the work you're doing in Canada?

To tell you the truth, the title "Stake" just came from the fact that I put those vertical lines around the text, with that weird spilled section toward the bottom, I figured it kind of looked like a stake in the ground. To say it's a "stake in subversiveness" probably renders the poem "ultimately contained" – on the other hand, though many of the lines in the poem were written with a sort of Derksonian final product in mind, they moved much too quickly for anything he would have written, and weren't (in my opinion) nearly so thoughtful or deliberate as any of the poems in [Jeff Derksen's] *Dwell* (so my poem is a failure in this sense), but once the bits were all crammed together like that, with their own weird inner-syntax created out of the use of dots as site demarkers, I felt that it worked as an ambient (rather than paced and structured) piece – it got away from me, and in many ways got away from the Derksonian situation at the same time (and from the Raworth situation, too – I'm thinking of his works of linked short poems which I like so much). Since it got away from these various models and containers, and from myself as well, it does have a "stake in subversiveness." I actually prefer it's inclusion in the *Open Letter* issue rather than in my book, since I think it's more challenged there in that discursive realm – is forced to choke up its content – even if it seems to fit almost too nicely with Sianne's essay, of which I hadn't read a word when writing the poem (which is from 1995/96) – indeed, she hit the mark too well, almost.

I read this in an essay by bpNichol this afternoon:

“To grasp the given we have to stand still long enough to receive it. You just never grasp at the first thing that’s held out to you. That was a lesson my Maw taught me when I was five and I tried to grab all the presents off my friends as they came thru the door to my birthday party. ‘Don’t grab at the present’, said Maw, ‘wait till it’s given to you’.”

I thought of this in relation to your last e-mail about the local and “voice” and so forth, but oddly this quote from Nichol plays, I think, right into our discourse on race and language, as he seems to “ethnicize” his situation by the use of key words and tropes (“Maw” and the whole anecdotal tone give it a hokey feeling) but also because of the weird pun (based on a grammatical ambiguity or slip) that he is able to draw from this very staging – something like the puns that [John] Yau draws in his poems, which I’ve seen you do with your last name, and which I do on occasion, particularly in “Stake” (you mentioned Miki in this context, too, but I don’t know his work as well). But the real reason it stuck out was because of the way he feels that he has to work – by means of slowing down – past the “first thing held out” to get to the “present,” which is strangely in contradiction to something he writes earlier in this essay about the long poem: “At some point you decide to start with what’s in front of you,” continuing on to say that one needn’t a “great subject” to write a long poem. (Another model of knowledge, it seems, to go up against both Pound and the European tradition, and against Bernstein.) This reminds me of your tie to voice and “tracking the concrete” which you say is, in a way, a historical disposition – a stand against the meditative (and monadological/monologic) poem of the New Critical mode. You write that “Voice became for me a way to tie in my sense of the musical body and gave me a place from which to disassemble the given language,” the voice being “concrete” as I read it, not to mention (in the Olsonian sense again) the very output from that material (or traceable) transference from the ears by way of the... etc. (I can’t remember his schematic at the moment). Do you find that you are having a different relationship to this poetry of “tracking the concrete” as the discourses have changed around you? What do you think of this question of speed and of

“waiting until the present is given”? As a diabetic, I have had a very altering, in some ways self-alienating relationship to my body over the years, and so notions of the “musical body” are both fascinating and strange to me, realizing as I do how unorganic the body really is, even those that don’t depend on blood meters for their maintenance. With the rise of neo-McLuhanisms amidst the discourse on cyborgs and the web, do you feel your sense of body, not to mention place, is more complicated (especially with the fall of New Critical theories of reading)? This all relates to my earliest questions about the computer.

Yours,
Brian

September 21, 1998

Brian, I’ve been at the poems you sent trying somehow to read the interstitial at work in them. The interlacing (the arabesque) of “Trouble on Triton” seems to operate on several levels and what I find myself looking for and at is the particular “inter stitching” of form. Beyond device as contrivance (stanza, etc.) I pick up some “thematic” resonances like TV/movie, transport/stasis. Syntax, tone-leading, punning, work in a more minute and compositionally generative sense. Descriptive prophetic so dominant that the “me” of “Drag me to the movies” becomes almost (maybe) biotext, helped by the “we” and “they” of out (up) there on the screen. Of course “Wallets: abject objects of our disgust” feeds me right into Ngai’s essay and I find I start looking for hints of that critical context within the crypticness of the poem. Too imposing to put together, so I pick up, again, only on particulars (the split line, the play with stanza form – visual – the diction). Yes, the diction, paradigmatically, like the closeness (buzz) of “cigarette” and “stoke” and the diagonal pull in #6 like “wrack\reek,” or “chive\prune” – simply cuz I’m slowed down (almost totally stopped) in so many places – yet feel a frustration with the “setup” of title and subtitle vis-à-vis “content.” I don’t know if you get this but cld you talk a little about that (ie notions of a “content”), how shaped reference plays out for you in this piece. Speaking of “tritons” and “tricksters,” here’s a short piece I did recently:

ArtKnot Sixty Eight

left Loki looking
(at the lake)

minus the barking
an innocent “fake”

words to relieve
(the millstone of purpose)

slight vacuum
sudden blossom

dancing shoulders
smuggled porpoise

(seeing dead
for three days

Titans and their burning wheel
deep and sacred ways

read, reading
dog, dying

dried

up the creek

Sorry I've had such a slow weekend, family stuff myself. I'll try to get back to your long post from last week and send you a few more poems. I teach today so that'll probably be tomorrow morning.

best, Fred

September 22, 1998

Brian, your note that maybe it's “the practice of delineation” (vis-à-vis my “The polarization of a poetics of resistance and a poetics of accommodation isn't a delineation necessarily attractive ... for some younger writers.”) “itself that is most harmful” has me thinking, again, about the problem of choice (agency)

for a non-aligned writer. By non-aligned I mean some who find themselves outside both the traditional/conventional and radical/innovative “streams.” I'm kind of interested in the movements such writers make *between* the two. You may be right that “since one can't consume what has not been limned” one would be harmed in making such choices. But since public reception seems previously instituted, I don't see a lot of room to work out something other, something, perhaps, more local (but there I go reaffirming my own strategy of accommodation).

I didn't so much teach Elaine Kim in my grad seminar as simply put that book of essays alongside our reading of *Dictée*. I don't know that that text is necessarily part of, as you say, a paradigm that will come to an end because it isn't part of a true paradigm. Any more than, say, *Kora* will eventually (again) not be read. Seems tidal to me, though the tides are about seventy years wide. I don't know if Roy and I get taught in the States. Certainly, for myself, it would primarily be in the context of race writing. Roy has had more attention in that academic arena of Asian-American. Walter's attention to some of us Asian-Canadians in *Premonitions* was unusual and refreshing. But part of that is that the constituencies of writing in your country seem so varied and spread out. Though a racialized address has become available to me only since the early 80s most of my writing practice comes out of Black Mountain-San Francisco-Vancouver of the early 60s. I was part of an earlier Buffalo poetics programme, and so forth. So to see my work read primarily in the context of race writing is a little weird, though gratifying. And I want to trouble that, too, with the “hyphen.” That betweenness you touch on with your use of the term “interstitial” interests me as a site in need of greater clarity along with signal resistance to the bipoles.

Wow, yr stuff on the body and the unorganic throws me. The one thing that's complicated my sense of the musical body, as I used that term earlier, is not so much the neo-McLuhanisms but the yakking around the “subject,” in that the body could be considered a “paged” (hailed) body. But so what? I think. As Olson said, “So, like, play!” That is, in both senses, or in any sense. “Tracking the concrete” seems just like an exercise, also for the reason of “disassembling” an inherited lingo (those other voices).

chow, Fred

September 30, 1998

Hi Brian, just back from a long weekend in Vancouver at the bpNichol conference (organized by Roy Miki and his *West Coast Line* magazine), a good group of people there. Not as much of a generational difference in reading of Nichol as I'd have thought – though us older folk trying to recuperate out of our own “humanistic” complicity w/ Nichol of the early days; now trying to fold in the visible (and historical) changing awarenesses re things like “the body.” McCaffery calls it that “proprioceptive garbage.” I did a piece for a panel that responds (i.e. as a “Music at the Heart of Thinking”) to Nichol’s last notebook. I include a section here, for what it’s worth, vis-à-vis our earlier rap on the body:

10.

look out for ritualistic cop-
out warns Steve body
parts lining warning poem
paranoia “pair o” Roy K’s
trees @ David B 843-

That should be “vitalistic,” not “ritualistic” (I think I was picking up on a resonance with the previous line, “middle initial art,” for what that’s worth). I wonder how long he argued with the body as a simulacrum of code? The “bp:if” series (“body paranoia: initial fugue”), the floaters of *Gifts*, runs August 30th to September 10th. Having a body doesn’t struggle with being a body. His fear of the disappearing body framed photographically as itself (his body as the performer) and a textural self saying: “say / cheese...say n’t / n’t ready / n’t ready to die.” Could be the absence of the “3000 B.C. quote” is an intentional one.

I realize I’m implicated in much the same “proprioceptive” track beep is. I’d guess we, including McCaffery, should look at how the performative has been informed over the past thirty years.

But I should get to some notes I made reading yr stuff.

Re “Tritons” again, I’ve got this note wondering if the “convention” of form (thinking, let’s say, of yr 3-line stanzas in sect. # 11) doesn’t buffer the particular and momentary in how it might prevent a more illuminated dwelling of the Silliman-esque “torquing” that goes in your writing. Eg. “marathon slam-dance. Fixed rabbits tame...” where the quick juxtaposition of “dance” and “fixed” might get run over in the disguise of form as a freighter of comprehension (i.e. I must be understanding this cuz it sure looks understandable). So I’m wondering what you think of this possibility that “form” (in this case the surety of the three-line stanza, regular line-length) maintains the conventional privileges of sentence/line juxtaposition, end-of-line, rhyme, syntax, etc). I guess I’m coming at just what you get at in yr review of *Close List* vis-à-vis Perloff. I’m not sure I understand the “distinction” and “difference” you allude to in yr review “between a conservative Poundian dictum...and the younger poets...using historical methods...in their counter-canonizing work.” Are you saying yr use of the 3-line stanza in “Tritons” is a gesture at counter-canonizing? Is McCaffery’s “an experience in language rather than a representation by it” (Perloff quote) different from Olson’s “language as the act of the instant rather than language as the act of thought about the instant”?

best, Fred

September 30, 1998

Hi Fred,

Wow! well there’s a lot to build on in your last two e-mails. I came to Nichol’s work through McCaffery, actually, reading much of the *Rational Geomancy* book only about three or so months ago, and only parts of the *Martyrology* since, so I don’t really know all that much about him. When did McCaffery use that phrase “proprioceptive garbage” – I assume he was joking on some level, but what comes across so beautifully in *RG* is that their friendship was so strong despite their immense differences in methods of poetic research, poetics and processes, etc., which suggests to me a solution to an issue I’ve thought of in your work, Jeff’s and other Canadian writers, which is this synthesis of “language” type poetics and that of, in general, the “proprioceptive” and the speech-based – not so much

a synthesis as a lack of a split. It seems that in the States there was an entire sacrificing of the proprioceptive (linked perhaps with the lyric, or on a larger level the Bardic ego) in language poetics starting with, probably (don't want to get in some sort of LangPo historical debate) the infamous "I Hate Speech" essay/remark, but extending back to writers like Mac Low and Cage, a move that was very fruitful in my mind but which left little room for consideration of, say, the linked hybrid lyric forms that you explore or the "paragrammatic" epic-scale style of Nichol's. I wonder if some of this also had to do with the fact that "we" (the States) had poets like Eigner and, earlier, Oppen and the other "objectivists" who were building something that could be called "language" poetics out of a lyric state, hence perhaps creating the sense by language writers that any sort of synthesis was something already past, hence "retro." (Something pops into my head: Picasso not going abstract, yet exploring the vocabularies that became components of abstract expressionism – other instances, too.) It's not that Canadians couldn't, or didn't, read Eigner or Oppen, but that there wasn't an imperative to "clean house," so to speak, when it came time to reconsider New American poetics – on top of this I would add the continuing vitality of the discourse on the "local" and notions of the landscape (with which one views the social, as in Atwood) which Jeff writes about so eloquently. My own interest in, say, Olson's poetics stops, sort of, when I realize that his Gloucester is something of an elaborate, scholarly, ego-centered dream, made LARGE because Olson is large – it continues to be a fiction, though, like Blake's London, though the tools used to construct the fiction still be useful to a degree. Likewise, I don't think Williams made *Paterson* much more than a metaphor for his own poetics and ideas, nothing really compelling in a social sense. However, in your writing and Jeff's I see the landscape become an issue of communal concern, less the assembling of poetic themes but the site on which you explore the differences/debates etc. surfaced by oppositional poetics – ie. perhaps the fall into "language" wasn't so great or extreme as we had here as the landscape, itself, continued to provide the syntax with which to continue the argument. The field – and by this I mean the entire "proprioceptive" field – continues outside the parameters of your individual poetics to be the ground or stage on which the macro/microgestural acts of language (and language creation)

perform. Does this make sense?

What you do with the ArtKnots, for example, strikes me as exploring this very border between the proprioceptive and the "language-centered," most obviously in "Fifty Eight," starting "I miss / mind you," as if you couldn't get past that initial lyric urge without getting under the skin of your activity right there, approaching it through pun and assonance to achieve "mind" (my guess is that the next step would be "write you," but then you might never get to Indiana! – though maybe to "Indiana grammar," whatever that is!). In this way perception moving "instanter" on to the next becomes the perception of language also, and the "musical body" finds, through language, a whole series of platforms or levels to work on that are way beyond New American poetics, but also liberated, in a sense, from the procedural underlining of much language-centered poetics, the surfaces of which are often unbroken by the accidents of the writer-as-perceiver. The ArtKnots and poems from the "Music at the Heart of Thinking" seem to move in and out of these language modes in a way that flaunts a certain freedom (indeed, in the back of my head when thinking of myself as a Korean American writer, I know that one priority when I started as a lad was that I should be free to go anywhere with and within my writing regardless of societal constraints, since it just isn't worth being a writer otherwise – I wonder if this is a general component of "racialized" writing). I see this as one way of injecting the political content of the personal into these poems which language-centered poetry might, as an aspect of program, be said to lack, since part of the dismissing of "speech" and the "proprioceptive" was also the dismissing of poetic form being constructed (or improvised) during the moment of writing, hence creating near-ephemeral shapes and maps of purposes that may never appear again – ie. the accidental, the stupid, the opaque, the beautiful as it only happened once in history, and that as the product of the singular "human" (I appreciated your comment about the "humanistic" in the "early days," not that I'm a "humanist" but that I've often used the term to answer a few questions I've posed myself). When I get to phrases like "upper lip / topple uh / still one / past plural" I hear a great amount of intellectation between the lines – the total gists of which are unrecoverable – but I am also appreciating the aural qualities of the words, the fluid syntax, not to mention

the phonemic pleasures of letters like “h” coming after all the “p”s. But again the poem remains pointed/poignant – ending “psm ing / of you” (Dan Farrell’s “Thinking of You” comes to mind), hence being something of a “personism” piece at base, it seems – again creating unrecoverable meanings. I kind of think this unrecoverable meaning – or “trace” – lies somewhere buried in that “lake” of ArtKnot Sixty Eight, where you “left Loki” (pun on locus/i, again meaning below the surfaces, but also a mythological element that doesn’t ever aspire to system, in opposition to say a Duncan-like poetics). “Slight vacuum / sudden blossom” seems to get at this also, as does the “smuggled porpoise.” The poems in this sequence seem to always veer toward closure, such as this one where I hear the voice drop toward the last phrase “dried / up the creek” – yet of course it doesn’t close, again suggesting a trace of intention. “Nose Hill 1” reminds me a bit of Yau’s writing – “noon pond knot / having omph look / clused node broom” etc. – do you see it in that light? Of course, I have my ideas on how John is a racialized writer – I think you pick up on it with this poem. The solidity of the concrete and “humanist” contents, along with the central aural motif of the jazz improvisation, keeps these poems, I feel, at a cool distance from the controversial “French abstract lyric” – though I suppose much of the language used above to describe the ArtKnots suggests the mode. Do you feel that your poetics have a component that riffs off the “French lyric”?

Regarding a few questions you asked about Triton: the poem is a bit “cryptic” though I think it conveys a field of meanings in each of its parts so that, yes, the “inter stitching” of form becomes an issue. I think the movements from domestic to public spaces, or from discursively impossible solitudes to overly discursive crowds and communities, are the main movements there. I wonder if part of the problem with the poem – I have problems with it, too – is that there is a “contract with the reader” set up early on which is constantly broken, a staging of terms for intercourse, so to speak, which are denied later. I ask this in the context of a series like ArtKnots, in which I sense a wide variety of forms being utilized, and yet I feel that you allow the reader to trust you and your performance, I guess via the motif of the “musical body” – the body being the constant. (This we can certainly talk about in Philly.) It’s a bit scary for me that the word “disgust” suggested

to you that Sianne’s essay was linked to (or influenced or whatever) the poem – it’s what a bunch of us, including Sianne, were afraid would happen when the essay appeared. Yikes! The poem is actually about two years older than her essay, and I think much of my other work has more to do with the essay than this one – as you point out, the three-line stanzas have certain historical resonances that “buffer” some of the semantic content, but they operate against “disgust.” (“Trouble on Triton” is the title of a Samuel Delaney novel about a radically innovative moon society, and I think it’s an “arabesque” because of the design elements, but also because of this classicist – Persian? orientalist? – sense of form.) I don’t think it’s a very “counter-canonizing” work except that it attempts to valorize somewhat un-canonical forms within the very stable context of an 11-part poem that begins with three-line stanzas. On the other hand, in terms of or against the “Sillimanesque” in my writing, I would say that part of my criticism of Silliman’s writing itself is that often this “torqued” aspect is missing, and that the “new sentence” doesn’t often find its engines – rhythmic and/or syntactic – and tends to, say, stop in mid-sentence. Some of the sections of *The Alphabet* find wonderful solutions to this problem, but in other sections I am left wondering if the formula had a few bugs that needed patching (to use computer terms here) – an “elegant solution.” I started using stanzas again once I began creating poems with computer-programs – stanzas in the shapes of tears, or in imitation of Mandelbrot sets, or made to look like “The Faerie Queen” – but they usually came about because the poem needed an engine to keep the text moving. So, as you suggest, the three-line stanzas actually did begin as something like prose, but I thought they needed drive – yet, at the same time, regularity (the line lengths were determined by resetting the margins on my computer). The younger poets I was alluding to were folk like Lisa Robertson, Jennifer Moxley, Stacy Doris, Harryette Mullen to some extent, and even myself in poems like “Terms of the Anglo-Saxon Ritual” (and also to some of what was implicit in Bernstein’s work of *Rough Trades*, and maybe even in Ashbery). (Your line about “I must understand this because it looks understandable” probably alludes to the “contract” thing I mentioned earlier – I used to read people like Berryman and Lowell quite a bit, so I guess, yes, I have a weird delight in throwing out something that looks like a bit of Dante or Shelley but which is

generally opaque.)

Is McCaffery's "an experience in language rather than a representation by it" (Perloff quote) different from Olson's "language as the act of the instant rather than language as the act of thought about the instant"?

I would suggest that the former could be achieved with a computer-program of some sort (or, as in the case of [Steve McCaffery's] "Lastworda," through some sort of process) or in a group performance poetics while the latter would necessitate the poet working in "real-time" through his/her language, whether the end be lyric or "collage" (which often is an expression of thought). That's one way to approach it, I guess – but we can talk about this in Philly, also.

Take care,
Brian

October 3, 1998

Dear Brian, lovely long collation you sent. I guess yr right, we should make this the last one. So, a few responses to yr post and a few more comments on the poems.

Though your distinction between recent American and Canadian poetics vis-à-vis LangPo is useful as an explanation of where the proprio went, on either side of the border, particularly your sense of "cleaning house," I think a lot of the critical posturing around LangPo in the States after the mid-70s reads, quite simply, as part of the poetry wars, power grabs, etc. Why is Creeley recuperated, for instance by Perloff in yr review of *Close Listening*, out of the "line" and into the "word as such"? If any poet's spent his life on the line it's Creeley. But I think yr right re Oppen and Eigner and the synthesis of the lyric and the morphological (which is what I'd guess you mean by "language type poetics"). And I think yr right on re the local (landscape) as a communal concern (though, again, see Tom Clark's *Creeley and the Genius of the American Common Place*) for some Canadian writers. Place has been a negotiable site for both the "proprioceptive" and for, as you say, "the macro-microgestural acts of language" – at least that's the sense I'm making of your statement. Seeing this vis-à-

vis the social has, for myself, concocted a sometimes awkward grasping at race and class, thus via a simply larger poetics of resistance where the troublemaking for the lyric occurs as both a structural and, if I read Silliman right in his "Wild Form," formal complication. Well, this post-interpretative musing is interesting but seems dribs and drabs compared to what we might actually get yakking.

Your comment re ArtKnots and what you say about "the "musical body **liberated** from the procedural underlining of much language-centered poetics" interests me. I'm unsure what you mean by "procedural" – since I've been labeled (as part of that 60s poetics) a "process" poet, like the others. And that "flaunting" of freedom in the "moving in and out of language modes" as being "a general component of racialized writing is, I think, what I'm trying to get at in that paper "Speak My Language: Racing the Lyric Poetic." That is, the anarchism that accompanies self-censorship and interpellation seems, at times, the only path available. Your comments re John Yau and the French lyric (eg Ashbery?) I don't quite see. We can talk about it. I've followed a bit of John Yau's writing but only in the last couple of years (since *Premonitions*) and I'm not sure about "riffs" off the French lyric. Those poems riff, if anything, off their own diction and that "Nose Hill I" is probably a good example of what yr observing re the local, the landscape, musical body, synthesis etc.

I didn't mean that yr use of "disgust" suggested that her essay and yr poem were linked in either of your intentions. I was simply suggesting that as a reader of both of those texts I felt a resonance for the word within the reading.

Your comments about "Triton" and "the contract with the reader" is, perhaps, where I see the interstitial most at work; ie in the structural invitation for flow, logic, narrative (I see the phonic/morphemic iteration) in that a visual engagement is possible – even, say, that "glyph" of arrows in "Comix."

Re "Preparatory Meditation I": this is what Kiyooka calls the "midden" – the use of archaic diction. Again, visually, on the page, the structure recalls Eigner or a 60s Americanization of the page. Could the "interstitial" here be an intervention into that "form"

(with all its predictability) just as the form itself operated earlier as an intervention into the stanza? At the same time the attention to detail (is it attention, or program) in the tone leading (eg “intimately (matted)”) allows pun and syllable to operate as generative devices.

And then in “Terms of the Anglo-Saxon Ritual” I like the particularity of sound and word that offsets and cuts into the “archaic” play/diction. The rhyme and repetition is nice for me because it marks some sense of agency (control, intention, etc. – but you’d have a problem with that I think, EH?, as we say here.)

best, Fred

;