

Eco-logic in Writing

In a long poem of mine titled “DeLay Rose,” by writing scroll-like, vertical poems whose lines ‘come to’ a far right margin and drop off single words or end of phrases from that side into that held-edge, an unknown, I have the intent of placing the individual’s and all mass actions on one line continually and their (they’re) all starting together at one line which is ‘coming up’ starting again and again. One’s being in this wild present (war, corruption, kindness); one is in any case but may not notice it. It’s (the wild present’s and the line’s) any events. Hasn’t outside. Hasn’t oneself. The line (of writing) is only *there*, on the page.

Dōgen said “Mountains walk.” This is an accurate observation. One time when I observed this I was on a ferry on the Yangtze River in China seeing a vast plain of cities of millions seen at the same time with river and mountains being destroyed for a dam in a polluted soup of flowing body of water (from which a fish rose and died before our eyes after which it fell back into the river), air (from which we returned home with pneumonia), and land in rubble, people in hovels of broken bricks with garbage everywhere, lines of laborers carrying huge sacks of coal up mountains while at once spouts of poison poured from factories night and day into the land and water. I wrote a poem called “Friendship” (which title I change now to “Resting lightning that’s night” because “Friendship” is too fixed as a condition that’s a result also, an imagined entity of exchange, and “Resting lightning that’s night” is an optical sight, temporary phenomena and *also* imagined after and *then*).

The writing of “Resting lightning that’s night” is notation of one’s observing mountains walk—but are they doing that even in being destroyed forever? It was grief for mountains, though the grief was not the point in the sense of the stopping place—rather, I was making (as the syntax, sense of phenomenal space, use of dashes across which are changes) a conceptual level of time and space where any phenomena is dead only then when it has died, when it’s in death *then*—a person is in death at the time when they have died, only then, but at a different time which is not when they’ve died, they are not in death—everything keeps going.

I had a dream while we were on the ferry (we were on the ferry for days) which got into the poem that my grandmother (who I’d usually dream with her face turned to the side and my aware in the dream that she had died) now had her face toward me and I was not aware of her being dead; I was trying to get her together for lunch with a friend whom in real life I hadn’t seen for nine years whose face was turned to the side and he did not go to lunch. I woke fearing he was dead. When I returned from China, out-of-the-blue he called saying: “I had a dream about you; I dreamed we were going to go to lunch, but then we didn’t.” I realized from this that the dream was: not that

the man was dead but that my grandmother was not in death *now*—or, not in death later, when not *at* the time when she has died (Still, she's not alive here). My dream was an examination of Dōgen's theory of time and being, which I was reading and studying as we sailed on the Yangtze River seeing plains of action of people and natural phenomena at once. Dōgen's theory, briefly, is that all times exist separately at once, present-future-past. Similar to Einstein.

Seeing at the moment of, or at the time of, writing, what difference does one's living make? What difference does one's living make in *'that'* space, and in relation to spaces all existing at once there? The extended poem is the sound of middles, waterfalls falling in the vast horizontal space (which I was seeing on the Yangtze River) where smoke stacks pour jets up into it birds flying—and the sense that people are that (are such as only 'in that'). The line goes past (falls/the falls) in space, it surpasses falling creating middles. I was in the action of comparing phenomenal space (that I was in) to my mind's space (of conceiving of this space).

birds falls horizontal in the period when birds are up—[and] one is.

people not speaking—even—when—[as] birds horizontal (now)—[or are]

[past] falls horizontal (space) is people—

she is in 'the realm of death' when she died—but isn't now

—my mind is phenomena—as space in my dream—existing 'only'

—being 'on' water (past) now?—as her not being—is—one—now-existing only

—is myself now, walking on water (past) in brown night there [on water]?—only—at the same time—?

—'extreme' is existing only

thinking [my] the man had died was inaccurate—as the dream. It was my grandmother wasn't (dead)

[that being happiness—as the dream being]—one isn't in death except when one died

Though I was grieving for mountains, land, and water, whose destruction there (in China) utterly transforms the entire world (not just China)—neither grief nor writing altering this—there *is* a relation to people's action implied. Each can (do) act—at the same time—on all plains and times. Unrelated actions. Actions and these as mind phenomena change the space. *Anyway.*

not association but space changed
—black humps rainless—only

birds—wakes

cubicles tenements sides pouring factory chemicals from spout—falls—.

brown small thorax fills—not being in oneself—or in them—falls strand [and]
flat water

only living having to die as being that isn't at the same time—one's brown small
thorax—is falls horizontal? There only

what difference do mountains make?—

'at' night not carrying

one's walking 'brown' night—(walking on water)—people crawling in lines up
what's the relation to its existing [at the same time]?

'can't face'—(in present is 'at the
same time') the lines of people crawling on coal

carrying— isn't 'facing' the night (?)
space

one doesn't overwhelm—brown tenements thorax
night's lightning—'facing'?

Perhaps the start of a sense of 'eco-logical writing,' for myself, is the phrase "my mind is phenomena," mind (as its phenomena/subjects and as its body), not the same as land but alongside it. Writing enables the making of that spatial relation (of land and mind-phenomena, the two placed beside each other). It's a relation that's going on in every instant but writing can also 'make' it (future) by altering space, allowing one to see one's own (also) *joyful* movement in space (making that) as well as being one's movement and seeing others' movements as joyful. The text is the altered space, sometimes one's to walk 3-D in it at jetting evening.

buttocks into evening walking at—/separate—evening

the flaps of the orchids at evening—not running—thighs

—then—[not at the same time]—‘walk’

Writing “Resting lightning that’s night” eventually caused another dream (a dream is an action outside the writing but produced by it) in which the dream produces an outside action: seeing that’s being forest (thus not from oneself, not with eyes), forest that’s at once white and green (two different colors that are at once the same, impossibility of existing together but they do *in the dream*).

The poem is always just mind phenomena and never (as it is separate as language) touches or exchanges with land or one’s physical action in space—except making this as part of its mind phenomena.

“white green”—‘no’—occur in one in dream in a forest
walking—there not to be any—separation between ‘that’—being in forest—there only—but the dream is “whitish” rim, ‘no eyes’—there— isn’t in one
—is in the dream.—pair only—are ‘that’.—“white green” night—is?

the two huge realms—not in one—occur

In *It’s go in/quiet illumined grass/land*, I placed land and freezing sky (so a line having a far right margin, set on my computer, reaching the page’s edge wherever it does slipped off onto the next line in actual-space of page held on that far further-than-normal edge of page) *beside* my mind-phenomena, on the far right edge of the page’s margin (gesture of my doing that and of perceptual faculties, sight, thoughts) the intention was to place and hold ‘one whole person’ beside the whole day or a night, there. No conflicts or psychology exist on that line! As I went along I thought of various events in climate and day and was making as it happens a juxtaposition of heaven and hell, the poem beginning to show the two were/are part of the same space. Philip Whalen was still alive but was ill; he was on the edge of death then yet returned to health for a year and a half (before dying). I got into the state of illusion, in writing my poem, of trying to hold him (by the poem) in life. He also ‘got into’ the poem noted as having the characteristic of just placing his mind (his nature and mind-habits) in or beside/by land-sky the-outside-heaven and just his being *that*: a quality of peaceful, clear without turmoil. As one’s ‘being,’ just place it there, just be *that* (in a state of choosing just ‘being in’ illumined grass land).

silver half freezing in day
elation the
outside
of the outside sky walking
rose

silver half freezing in day
 moon's elation
of the outside rose, his seeing
 on both
 'sides'
seeing someone else at all and the
 half freezing
elation of the outside so that's even
 with one
continually over and over one/person
 he will
also now person dying? Is not
 compared to
space they're in outside silver freezing
 half
moon day now both walking rose
 instant
running—wall—wall

A person dying passes out of *that* (*there/the*) frame of seeing. That person being in place (phenomenal) when alive also intersects with other times at once. The poem makes plateaus seen conceptually.

Reading Jack Collom's poems in *Exchanges of Earth & Sky*, the reader experiences a porous exchange in which each poem being a paired structure is also sound giving the sense of the weight and lightness of birds *there* with one's reading in space-light.

Ecology: "The branch of biology dealing with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, including other organisms." I had been conceiving of this subject divisively (as ecocatastrophes), my sense having been that ecology pertains to the subject of our destroying the world—rather than: Nature *is* us as in language, yet Nature and language are not the same, are outside of each other. Poetry can be structures that are relations and interactions between spheres in spatial apprehension.

Jack Collom's poems in *Exchanges of Earth & Sky* are founded on this double exchange and their crossing: the fact that Nature *is* us as is language yet Nature and language are outside of each other. The poems are therefore their binary 'form' or occurrence, in each poem the factual naming of birds and naming of characteristics of each bird and an extension not of these characteristics but a tie of sound to one outside. The effect and perhaps the instigation in this poetry is the occurrence of joy by his text making, and reading being, a phenomenal space as duration.

In the beginning poems, "Western Grebe" and "Loon," physical sight sent to the brain before it's returned and seen, and language image (a bird a bolt from a crossbow as it flies underwater, and his language a crossbow) there is no night or day in language—nor is there any as phenomenally being portrayed

in Collom's poem. He's cut across time and is on other layers at once.

A faculty is an orifice of perception or cognition. In Collom's poems, the *outside* is one's own sensations, one's faculty. It's a bird's faculty (Collom uses the word "faculty" in that instance) to lower its body in water submerged as suiting its fancy (choice of submerging?) as it swims or is stationary. There is no night or day in "black above below white": black is both above and below white, or black is above and white is below. Fair lighted filled bright white light black black (these) "fall" as motion and are maybe "fall" in (season) time. Yet the space and text have no time, are "before eyes": may be seeing occurrence in front of our eyes, or before there *are* eyes. A crossing divisions or/and as *no* divisions (except citing of the bird's name, there are not beginning markings of poems) is opening of space, phenomenal in the writing. Language reveals afterimages that are *in* the rolling landscape itself (and in the poem's space). Accumulation of light black filled open inhabited other birds in continuance: poems may appear to merge only separated by the appearance of a new bird (its name listed in the table of contents as apparently a new poem—or perhaps the list of contents isn't titles but listing of the appearance of birds?). Here are pages 3 and 4:

WESTERN GREBE

Aechmorphorus

black above below white
 nest a matted
structure of tule—afloat—lightly
fashioned to the living reeds so that it will move
up and down—

 eggs pale bluish green but stained
light brown from the decomposed vegetable
matter of the nest

for it possesses the wonderful faculty of lowering
its body in the water to any desired stage of
submersion, and this it can do either
while swimming or while remaining
stationary, as may suit its fancy.

 courtship
 neck arched
 beak
 downward
 some rubbed against
 each other, while others skimmed
the surface, glide that sent the
 water

flying

& & & & & &

How did
fair lighted filled bright
bright fall fell
white light
black
black
black
curvelit red-
shine
before eyes?

hard white skin
scar
hard white skin
scar
miocene epoch/tertiary period
distribution circumpolar glossy purplish black with greenish
LOON
Gavia immer
imber diver, ember goose, Walloon, guinea duck, greenhead

bill stout, straight, sharp-pointed and sharp-edged

nest: a hollow in the sand

its wolf-like cry is the wildest sound
now heard in Massachusetts

cannot rise from the land

deep water
where the bird can use its wings and fly underwater like a
bolt from a crossbow

great northern diver
mournful, mirthful, sinister, defiant, uncanny,
demoniacal

& & & & & &

language is like a weasel shot with scars
diagonally, as if from far below, neon-seeming
afterimages revealing bluish-white to be
the formal speech of rolling landscape

Retaining the first captured fish (in the bird's mouth) while capturing a second or third (the characteristic of the bird, doing this)—the same as our reading. Collom's pressure of words in poetical structure is as if the birds' actions, later. The structure is later. As continuance in his apparently huge, endless space (as there are thousands of birds, so it *could* go on...) and as if beads that are his/a person's small actions, or a thought or color etc in the paired mirroring space of each poem's continuance—Collom not only doesn't make hierarchies or urgent dilemmas (eschewing 'subjective'), one *being* the *outside* is, in exchange, joy.

Jack Collom interfaces with the birds' languages by making novel juxtapositions (novel by being *where* they are in structure) placed after the ampersands, so they are before other birds and after other birds—as if beside each bird, the space is completely open in effect. Page 9 after the ampersands of Great Black-Backed Gull:

orange, lilac and dark brown almost black

wolverine pudding

Or page 16, after the ampersand:

the flat bright water usually hides...

Abstract red headcheese rearing

cool, lilac-based in the icebox

Collom makes a zigzag continually “faster than eye can see”—because poetry can be a space allowing our minds to incorporate everything *at once simultaneously*. So, *Exchanges of Earth & Sky* produces what we're incorporating ahead of us, its (it's) grounded sound racing and being already ahead. In each poem the string of ampersands becomes a horizon, without above or below or middle by recurring. Although the string of ampersands tends to begin in the lower half of each poem, the impression is created that the horizon (of ampersands) begins everywhere in it and makes a limitless boundless space.

I asked Michael McClure which book of his is closest to ecological matter, he said *Rain Mirror*. The book has two parts, the first is a haiku stream, discrete poems in a series, the effect of the series being to hold the reader, being in a large increment in a condensed space and as such that space altered. We go through motions in which we're not mirrored (apparently, or are as 'our' seeing but not *in* people's events here) and we're at the same time as the plum or hummingbird, *by not being mirrored*, altered.

OH,
HUM
MING
BIRD
SHAD
OW
on the black
plum
!

((No summer lightning
though))

(McClure 9)

A NOVEMBER
BLACKBERRY
all
red and sour
in
the
long
rain

(12)

WHY ARE
RED-BLACK
ROSES
on the table,
there's
hail
outside
?

(13)

The second half of the book, *Crisis Blossoms*, is poems in a sequence that are mind of an individual as coming apart and holding that mind-formation as the line and gesture of the sequence's process, to see that, in the sense of seeing being an action that heals (as in the section titled "After the Solstice", beginning "GIVE WAY OR BE SMITTEN INTO NOTHINGNESS and everlasting night"/But I am here already,/the tips of my fingers/give off light').

Crisis Blossoms is the state of the person (the poet) having a "melt-down" in the process of working on the problem of death and (their) impermanence.

What matters is the cold skin of the python
and her muscled ribs
that ripple over the crate. One band
of power preceding another. There is
ZERO,
and the nonstructure of nada inside.

(McClure 70)

The self seeing its future as present: “All of the bodies/sculptured of memory/are a gate/with/STAIRS/of/NAPALM/and/OPAL/I’M THERE (79). The two sections of the book are as if pairs, a hologram. The unfolding of McClure’s sequential poem—in the individual poems and in duration—is like duplication of instruction in DNA, as in structures resembling each other in creatures widely different from each other. As reading, we’re (readers) a motion from the outside in and from the inside out at once. It is as if one could place outside as hallucinations on top of one’s inside as hallucinations and see something about seeing-or-mind-or-phenomena: “—I’m/the ghost/of a baby/rabbit./DON’T/PUTYOUR HAND/through me!” (McClure 78).

McClure described a young man in California (the poet Lewis MacAdams) who, concerned about a wild river that was going to be damned to be diverted to southern California, announced to the newspapers that he would chain himself to a rock in the bottom of the canyon that would be filled if they damned the river. He chained himself to a rock where they couldn’t find him, and they didn’t dam the river.

The last example of ecological structures in poems I would mention is M. Mara-Ann’s long hybrid, hypnotic poem-theater work of spoken-music text, *Containment Scenario/DisloInter/MedTextId/Entcation/Horse Medicine*. The three center lines of the title contain by their capitals the words “text” and “dislocation.”

M. Mara-Ann’s poem-theater work is based on the national report on global warming. One element of the work’s structure is the sections—introduction, prologue and director’s notes—that are interruptions, extensions and meditations that go before and between Act I and Act II. These sections allow rest by variation in order to renew one’s alighting concentration. Another element of structure is the footnoting of spots in the core text: the footnotes begin on the same page as the original text, a footnote to be read following the particular phrase of the original. The footnotes begin to extend longer than the original text, footnote-archipelagos from which one must turn back to the origin of the particular footnote to remember the origin and reorient one’s reading; then turn back to the next passage or phrase in the original text, turning ahead to *its* footnote, and so on. This active reading becomes sustained attention, a holding of sounds like plateaus in the air, an inevitable letting go allowing the original’s spot (place) in the text and one’s attention to it to be lost, before one finds one’s way back to resuming *its* reading process again. The poem’s reading is exchange ‘causing’ the reader to hold a place in space as energy of comparing that place/sounds/thought to other place/event/sound. We must enlarge. The content is the transience of all life in its alteration, being itself as the sustained attention taking place in reading. Her content is the actions of the imagination creating the outsides and insides—also our seeing that the outsides and insides are ending.

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