



## OFF BLOOM (or w/in one inadequate dawn, violence)

Item Type	campus;thesis
Authors	Raz, Alyx
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.7275/15577636">https://doi.org/10.7275/15577636</a>
Download date	2025-03-21 03:07:30
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/23339">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/23339</a>

OFF BLOOM (or w/in one inadequate dawn, violence)

A Thesis Presented

by

Alyx Raz

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of  
Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

September 2019

M.F.A. Program for Poets and Writers

OFF BLOOM (or w/in one inadequate dawn, violence)

A Thesis Presented

by

Alyx Raz

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Ocean Vuong, Chair

---

Peter Gizzi, Member

---

Lynn Z. Xu, Member

---

Michael Joyce, Member

---

Jeff Parker, Director  
M.F.A. Program for Poets and Writers

---

Randall Knoper, Chair  
Department of English

ABSTRACT

OFF BLOOM (or w/in one inadequate dawn, violence)

SEPTEMBER 2019

ALYX RAZ, B.A., VASSAR COLLEGE

M.F.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Ocean Vuong

This is a collection of poems.

## CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
PREFACE.....	v
EPIGRAPGH .....	vi

### AS UN/BELOVED

SEE IT THRU .....	2
FORBEARING TOUCH.....	7
& ANDROGYNE.....	8
IN COLOR FIELDS.....	9
TO BE BETTER.....	11
AS WANDERLUST.....	12
FOR SOFÍA .....	13
AS GRRLHOOD.....	14
LIKE NEVER BEFORE.....	15

### DREGS & EMANATIONS

FOR LYNN XU .....	19
-------------------	----

### U DAWN (ALUDE)

TRANSPOSITION.....	35
WILDLIFE .....	37
MUSEUM.....	45
MY PROTECTOR .....	49
MY BASES .....	53
APPENDAGES .....	54
NINE REGIONS OF THE ABDOMEN .....	56
10PM WAKE W/ ME.....	59

## PREFACE / ON DEATH & DISTRACTION

I am sustained and amused by conversation, and the collective effort and warmth within, even if from at a distance. My work is subject (often) to this distance and at times a response to it, but this isn't a shame of mine even if it pulls on parallel drawstrings.

This is to say there are many people in the pages before and after here, and I am aware in transposition, omission, composite, and by name that I owe them these pages and my gratitude. From readings, erotetics, erotics, by phonecall and email, over tea, coffee, and oceans, as distraction, as reassurance, in letters, postcards, at the movies & through poems, to acknowledge them is to acknowledge that I am at my most — material of their work.

Beyond the artists invoked directly — I've been moved by those whose work seems hellbent on worlding or tends to the conjunction between high-lyric and the long dissolve of thought: Agnes Martin, CAConrad, Cecilia Vicuña, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Cole Swenson, Maggie Nelson, Nathaniel Mackey, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Richard Serra, Brian Blanchfield, Fred Moten, Anne Boyer, Jane Gregory, and naturally: Dara Wier, Peter Gizzi, and Ocean Vuong.

If this work wasn't already saturated names, it could be called *on death & distraction*. Bernadette Mayer wrote before I came to the words, and yet not the thought, "I say to myself in dream it's all the same / All the people in this room will surely die some time." Before this, Michael Joyce once wrote me Carl Andre's "A thing is a hole in a thing it is not." These familiar sentiments (truisms) of when one feels like thing or when one feels like hole, i.e. dream, or when one feels like both compel these pages.

So to amuse my work again, in the way that a vexation is personal entertainment, I am brought involuntarily to *the missive* as my world around me. Letters like a death are intrinsically trans and their character is also archival. Surrounding these intimacies across mind, articulation, time and location, and to people, and in the estrangement between *I can write a letter* or *I can write a poem* — I lose myself at estrangement. Over time, the epistle is a body of letters which is also a body of work or a semblance of body made-and-unmade between feelings on love.

Love is a contraction of time, which is txt and poem, and this in/attention leads me often to performance and the sweep *of body* of literature I believe to be lyric-queerity-unbridled: or there is a formalism in remaining open to form's bends.

The horizon that follows is this, my lack and my openness.

**IT IS NOT THE SEA, [THEY] THINK&...RATHER ALL THAT IT  
COLLECTS WITHIN ONE INADEQUATE CATEGORY –**

**[WE] COULD JUST AS WELL CALL THIS DAWN.**

FOR MICHAEL JOYCE

AS UN/BELOVED



AS BELOVED  
(SEE IT THRU)

I.

What a weird way of living forgetting we were children  
What a way to watch home becomes pale but never  
like us

II.

The love comes all knowing u awoke  
in all the wind we could have known  
a day like alight lovingly all unkempt  
my shirt unbuttons my clouds round  
my ankles within r sounds our echoes  
replayed in my memories I do believe  
you the way yr clarity lives off yr guilt  
and in a way we dreamt more than we  
knew u said: plz weather yr ambitions  
until we both feel indefinite: I bust my  
lips clean into syntax, touch my blood,  
blood dries out like fire: I find it funny  
how u forget my name & let it slip the  
names of other clouds come tumbling.

**III. DRY-LIKE**

I got a whiff  
of that  
green  
timbre

**III. SWEET TIMBRE\***

no, no interest in the names  
but beneath they clouds  
people

#### IV. YR AIR IN ME

embed  
and ... buff-  
ering it's true if I leave now I lose  
myself from my hips up

if I'm sick w/ you  
to be sick w/o air  
w/o  
aria  
comes  
its happenstance  
itself to us  
itself to itself  
like cellophane

my love I knew  
by loving them

intentions I knew by being fooled  
yours could be a life along song  
from the hips down did the fooling

Yes! I manipulate the weather patterns I grew up w/  
but can't seem to reconcile how  
yr drool made its way how u in  
yr drool of u in  
me why in me  
while my  
mouth  
slept

this sounds like the echoes of the branches come without our knowledge  
so our spit dribbles off me & spins silver no. I can't not pretend to sleep

when I ask  
you say it felt stellar

## V. WE WERE WADING B/T

wild bouts of blue my seawater  
seeps in yr button-up

## VI. SEEPS THRU\*

were u outside of yourself  
did anyone notice?

Easy enough, u escaped for hours  
when u liked to seems just like you

outside means b/t loves  
you found honeysuckle

& blue streaks come from the way  
r bodies go unfed and  
turn up in the way  
we watch sunsets  
silver sometimes YES!  
u open your eyes & are reminded of  
poems: yr seawater  
sleeps in  
my t-shirt  
tender swell  
the side of things  
timid organs sing I sing—

## VII.

I'm touching down now my hair  
is uplifting my air takes stock  
of its children

my air traces my collarbones my  
body's unheard of — you fool u  
say I remember u  
you me? remember on our birthday I blew out  
our fires sons r deadnames

I made room for you u said like a room belies wind w/o  
life air fills in for our words where our words have been:

Air, with or without wings !

Air, I watched u from the tv  
& grew static white-noise-like  
love catches breezes

Air particles in  
the throw silhouettes to be  
loosely attached to living  
a breeze the way in squall  
solar whir its whorl the  
flare shameless whir  
the air

my word:  
air I left running

under our watch &  
on the airwaves  
we watched them  
w/ and w/o life  
we outnumbered them

we outnumber them

Air, give attention to OUR ghosts today alone  
see  
them  
through

AIR ! u beat alike to OUR time today takes longer than we could've known

AIR ! can u make it home alive tonight can I

u still feeling

blue? I feel

u blush in

my phone

from afar all

night long

all talk

b/t loves

rhododendron

toward sun

the hairs on

your right arm

out here it's cold

but we're undressed

sinking yr hands b/t

my thighs yr air

under my breath

AS BELOVED  
(FORBEARING TOUGH)

You'd love to be in control but then you blink and become involuntary  
limp-wristed & w/o fire taking your place

is that u  
come withering? u  
pruning my clip-  
on wings  
walking back my drag  
into man

U said, I woomed u out of the blue  
into bright blu  
bby u share  
yr headphones w/ me the sex of sharing  
is the sex of listening soft  
is morning's orbit

U said, I like u forget what walking feels like on good days & on bad  
I'm walking between the chambers of the heart now & I'm pretend like  
groves of honey

i.e. I'm walking home at night with other stranger cavities and find it strangely  
compelling

O I do 2! like  
wildflowers. But when I play dead  
I say things, I said, I've lost petals  
rolling from one rose to the next

But I do believe in  
wallflowers And I do believe in windchimes And I do believe  
in

AS B/LVD  
(& ANDROGYNE)

Disappointing —  
our ghosts desire loneliness & in the middle  
of summer we're prepubescent again  
together the swish of the gutter leaks  
into copper or I dribble  
into you off your lips are we arguing  
or are you  
laughing ?

a thought to come (yes) u rear yr ugly teeth  
bite me but taste nothing of me  
yr wet piano plays wet but it's late (oh no !)  
it's a draft it's a window at the edge of earth  
it's so big now it's wind walking in

beneath blankets & their balm  
in this fog I'm longing fog cold I'm listening  
to storms call me in from the window (yes)  
this can't be real (!) the way my heart  
sycamores more or less real than the  
voice you know in your head the one  
down around your  
happy trail. Asleep.  
you're underground  
w/o currency  
asleep your  
body hangs afraid  
off your underwear  
a dream another  
voice awakes me

AS UNBELOVED  
(IN COLOR FIELDS)

**I. ON SECOND THOUGHT**

No, it's not just love, it's the electrical flow of our changing:  
this can be harmful. Open wounds open wounds  
and the love we remember resists replacement.

You said you watched time unsex a spruce tree  
for once in my authority I liked to think of you  
you conceived of me long before I came to scale.

**II. I WAS LESS THAN I REMEMBER**

No, I can't float anymore.

I realized this on Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Hamilton Fish Newburgh-Beacon Bridge because  
driving over the Hudson was the closest I could get — gentle curve I sometimes wanted to be  
we were winded. I was coping.

**III. AND MORE THAN THAT**

How does your insular self go on these excursions? I asked  
you interrupt, I rarely have the patience for living, but sometimes  
I intervene  
w/ onyx  
once w/ phoenix  
twice as love  
once sunset.

**IV.**

You cradle my ears and say *I love you* I don't notice.  
Sometimes we'll change names: sometimes, reading. Sometimes I was in love w/ you &  
other people. Every day I exchange glances w/ hot coffee. Always it's the end of the day and I am  
folding my gender into my clothes w/ spite & u r crying I don't know y sometimes  
I sniff oranges or we have moments i.e. under blankets we trans-  
late poppies into fields:



Loneliness is social,  
trees social, selfishness  
social, and

## V. WHEN I DREAM IT

You were collecting touches of happiness and I was mistaken for calling them foolish!! like escapism or thinking day + dreaming were worth our time (anymore). I remember childhood in soundbites. Or yesterday lacks clarity, or I'm forgetting—in-distinguishably this was the part I would never know like u never notice the damp spell b/t beach & ocean or u wash me w/ salt & I think about u w/o sunlight. Now I'm forgetting what's common practice: part of being a body means I'm up keeping my distance. I remember smells of things, sounds of things, and things foregrounding sound like lightning. I remember u when I rustle my branches I lose my leaves or my snow falls depending on my mood I catch sunsets.

## VI. I NEED IT

daddy makes his way in from the corridor (larger than you remember), you think kinkster wanted. You think if u open yr arms you'll grow wings. U think through...the love now this, and daddy's thinking all at once we'll make room for the expanse of the night ink comes back w/in orbs giving off light I <3 willpower. The glow comes quick & sours yr appetite. We move from room to room we move from room to room to room growing and gaining legs and now the rooms just bodies and the light laid-waste and faith touch down with the atmosphere and all alight our features are well, telling. No matter the dream, it's morning, but was I waking u to imagine I had devotion. Yes! Home! knows all of the ways to make u feel miniscule. I used to know more than my body thought: I said ur not laughing.

## VII. WHEN I LIKE IT

I want to be happy for you u said u knew I needed more u photographed me shirtless I don't remember why now or when it happened sitting there in the blue of it, u got going good then we stopped talking. I woke up up I awoke now I'm sleeping I awoke too much and sleeping makes me remember I kissed the tender side of yr dress u called yr new balance yr dancing shoes I thought this was charming or we give each other time, still, in the ways time gives itself a pliable human spruces u up u r lovely.

## VIII. I FEEL IT

Part of being a body means I'm coming to leave it. Air comes up the more I need I need it.

Part of being a body gives it its goings on by rivers + w/o myth or meaning.

A white canvas takes its hints from sunlight or over the years it yellows even yr new oils smell like elegy.

For what or whom r u waiting? y so uncertain?

AS BELOVED  
(TO BE BETTER)

Before my body I carried love & love's wilt storied long ago if you stretch  
yr arms feral within the word beloved & w/in the memory of our feelings

If like the windchimes out my window sing w/in me to be better one day  
unsung u dream I sing but what's left of the dream. I've got my filth today.

If I'm afraid to say tenderly the man again-rises you said your resurrection  
in me was a new kind of feeling new thought: I had yet to feel so shapeless

If all I wanted was to feel less more often or always would you believe me?  
if you could see me with no-song in me cd I be less myself after I felt least

If all that's holding us back is harm my invitation will be harmless so sing  
open wound into its lifespan & open! in droves we go! mortal takes of me.

AS UNBELOVED  
(AS WANDERLUST)

Oh god! My masculine assertions  
are my shoulder blades where  
each lil wing sprouts I bcum deep blue angel.  
I said, all r dreams know the room fading  
we dry swallow fennel & fire but fail to  
resurrect lightning or phoenix.

The room passes by in the hours the room outlives, and time finds us waiting.  
Sound as rainy as the room outlived, rain the sound not the element.

Fennel + sex  
spark fire in the bathrooms  
r in r mind the bend of  
faith testing r new  
& old breasts.

U said, from our deaths we emerge raining and from  
angels I know clouds-by-name & how they're feeling.

From I relinquished my smoke to I know yr  
body curls + up in yr throat a week  
significant and everything  
clouds knew by wetting  
our eyelids by touch-  
ing down by unencum-  
-bering cumulus.

Does yr panic help you reassemble?  
You sleep again, the only light left  
my computer.

Yes, we're here with  
my scent + yr affection + together  
we're attracting irises.

Our house caters to blue on windy nights.  
I was responsible for all of yr thought  
+ u mine & none of  
that was true  
although  
some-  
times  
we felt  
it like w/  
wind in  
& w/o

If I'm naked watching the pol-  
len outside will I float back in  
thru my  
window?

Yes, being alive today felt diffi-  
cult & rapids w/in air seem  
familiar:

IT WAS  
sweet of  
you u  
to trust us  
aging but  
you know  
I'm in  
love  
w/ an-  
other  
poem (like  
no one)  
ur saving all  
yr affect  
for the piers  
in yr backpack  
we hum w/  
the East River

O Sofia! I wonder why  
love keeps expending yr  
arms u see r bodies un-  
fold in on themselves,  
the only light left

from the  
street

today night song  
prepares us to  
wander like  
wind w/o  
pain & yet  
it's not feeling  
I need you to know now  
r solitudes are only as un-  
bidden as  
paintings. We were  
collecting rote fragments  
of spring &  
w/drawing our efforts  
we r stranger w/  
nite's rise: does  
sun c-thru night  
or?

Waves like windows open  
only as they close they'll  
open soon  
I promise.

And alone all our conversa-  
tions remain alone + to-  
gether all our conversations  
remain unfinished. Re: our  
last conversation.

Re: Re: one day we'll both  
lose touch & w/o touch  
speech:

o!  
we know how sound carries  
we talk into each other's  
mouths with each other's  
mouths we talk into each  
other to watch how sound  
carries  
was it  
déjà vu  
to have  
lived thru  
each other?

AS UNBELOVED  
(AS GRRRLHOOD)

Ur pretending it was fire  
when rly ur sure how a uterus  
stretches r imaginationssss

you look scappier than when we last talked about rhyme + scent + summer  
wood am growing cedar summer sap in mt. house  
u wire blacklights to my wet jeans... white patchouli  
gone awash u said if I was to be  
forsaken, I wd turn up dirty & concurrently  
my violet wd weather my ribs such  
as sun cums

Mother would never  
understand us so as to  
not be forsaken

I would age and honor men  
navy men: factory men:  
POWs: grandfatherrr  
poorer: grandma (alone w/ his military checks) but poor:  
(un)educated embarrassed & sincere  
you'll find r age worn down by our skeletons & called male and my harsh-love words un-  
disclothed by yr death

(u too r us) u whimper fire spreads even from afar  
& fire emits UV light a floweret and now its blue  
we cannot imitate the living but feed off new life

AS BELOVED  
(LIKE NEVER BEFORE)

I.

Like never before  
night comes  
clean off yr  
denim  
thick  
with-  
holds  
our  
waves  
RAW I mean  
yes!-  
terday we were  
in the heat  
of the thing  
close enough  
to our lungs  
we thought  
it could  
feel  
good—

like w/ wind we give in  
so easily and to beheld!!

lucky to have taken our jeans off together  
lucky to have caught clouds clear & crawled  
into yr shirt now  
r shirt

## II. NO NOTHING IS EVER SOUNDPROOF FOR LONG

– Sawako Nakayasu

Tired of my oxygen u do a disservice to yr  
body when u forget r lungs are soft spoken

I remember I grow shy now looking out  
windows on some sundays I wallflower

touching down now you brush your hair  
from my eyes rehearse yr air off my irises

why here in this grass are we seeking love how  
long w/o touch can you split it/s'/s/is language

## III. LIKE NEVER W/IN / W/O

Within or  
without this current  
of feeling

w/in everything u thought u'd remember  
and all along

w/o r blindspots we seem c-thru  
ALL in the boon I needed u w/

were they made for u these words was  
it everything to seem forgotten u

nameless or w/ ghosts u go  
glassy eyed or looking alive

w/in water w/o  
its nicknames

beyond you  
ur txt

soft  
u

ran yr hair thru  
yr grass yr hand thru

my feeling  
new: but

our thirst is  
all snowfall

inside  
regret

the circle of my chest  
caves into snow again

w/in the fall  
from feeling  
the smell of it.



# DREGS & EMANATIONS

(FOR LYNN XU)

All of hell comes up in the cavity  
between my voice and my lungs  
I was driving the other day  
noticed your name  
in my mouth w/  
Vermont fog  
became rain  
if you recognize it name it  
for me, please  
if you know it  
say it's in or  
out of our  
mouths, shame

the language you know  
of dream it's in  
love in the nothing in-between  
us — lover of dreams  
has no language

I needed to tell you this but  
on the brink of lungs has an appetite, me & him  
we fell in love w/  
each other's hands  
there is a ticklish  
part of my palms we  
discovered & to think  
I was embarrassed

Confess w/ me a picture in image & word of something soluble  
Confess w/ me a picture in image & word w/o dissolving  
Confess w/ me a picture in image & word four oceans apart  
Impress them on three flowers  
Name them for future lovers  
Tell me clouds come from far off the embankment full of us + deploy  
layers and layers and layers and layers and layers of  
clouds  
burst !  
gleeful, hell takes  
the edge off

Lynn,  
the hell I'm  
in I was  
when I was  
younger  
& the one  
I'm after was  
where I was  
when I started  
so many hells  
so generous  
to think I'm  
in it. Or w/ it.  
The dance b/t  
the two a  
third  
like shame  
generosity  
digs in  
all the  
same

Something scenic  
was in love with the page

Something in the mouth of the wood  
in the mouth of the word, I'm licking my lips and  
saying please

Your lyric-self opens its mouth & out comes  
Your lyric-self opens its mouth & out comes  
Your lyric-self opens its mouth & I've outted  
r shortcomings

You find kinship with different degrees of the room from a  
different angle it almost looks like  
we're talking: wow  
I'm tired of Alyx

Why not the couch.  
Too much material.  
The bed.  
Why not the linens  
the pillows.  
Why not windows  
never just

nothing

never

ah

pleasure

opens their mouth & out comes  
honey

& the wind  
the way  
sea woke  
the word

& rough sea  
wind, please  
wake me

I'm like the  
wordless Merope

my flower-suit  
a poor defense

Orion says into me  
scorpions become  
ghosts my ghosts  
here out even

my shadow

so sad  
today  
to say  
I also  
feel



At the tips of my wings  
is awe. I never told anyone  
my wings weren't made of feathers

afloat like  
a wet-dream a  
wingspan

Please — tell me  
if melancholy positions  
self-creation wherein  
melancholia is  
the knowledge  
of clouds w/o flight  
knowing depression finds us  
faith in the form cold  
like the dark comes  
within the hush  
the cold  
wherein

Lynn! I need to know if your flower-suit is zipped all the way up  
does your nose peek out do your eyes?! If it covers your eyes is this  
a body bag. If you cry does it grow nightshade. I need to know why in the dark  
without sleep is this  
my imagination or is  
this moonlight?

but  
why  
please — am  
I so perennial ?;  
can yr nightshade  
help me sleep or how good  
can I be if by moonlight  
is the only way  
I feel.

It's his flaws I'm peeling back  
toward his petals

w(e)ary of blue  
the same way the tendency to drink

smells not unlike rhapsody  
threads into song after rape

it wasn't to think to lose  
to dance to think though

the tendency to shrink  
into the unconscionable

Whole of time  
didn't realize how full  
I was that insatiable this  
(w)hole of & in life  
whittled down  
into rain  
passing  
rain

Wherein

I'm erotic in the storm now  
call to sleep through the night  
failing to sleep with him here  
to hasten all of our honey  
into truth  
words fail

I meant to say I was in love  
with his hands and could feel

his loved mine

a certain

torque

like a

certain

dream

recurs

When you feel like dying you believe  
in ghosts and they believe in you.

I need: a sense of water that is in a sense to sleep  
angles of the sun we'll never see  
grace, its indeterminacy  
to open my arms like a sort-of lake  
fill a room with its dead  
already on every surface  
await the living

I need for the painting to reveal sound  
and in hell there is a whole of heaven  
of sound that smells & tastes  
gay and poetic

when I die say something was in  
me the way poetry was prayer the way  
lips grace my face

Lynn, today  
my protector was morning rain  
and waking into it  
wanting to sleep believing  
it wasn't prayer  
let lips be my whole being

A certain meadow far from here  
so full of song the furthest dregs  
your mind endless w/in it water  
feel so real the ends of our teeth

Emanations I loved  
hell also glistens.

Tell me the waking of the museum  
in my room is with my consent; tell me  
I know too well the spell of paintings,  
and death also certain life

Please —  
I can't shake it  
some remain shaken  
let it leave me I sleep with him  
again and again sleep with him  
my stomach, its speechlessness

I zip my flower-suit closed my eyes  
w/ pollen the room I dream in, along  
w/ will

to stream away in body about face  
tussle into sound awake w/o sleep  
come into sound its slant of night  
all in it beloved, its sleight of hand.



U, DAWN

(ALUDE)

# TRANSPOSITION

## I.

And I'm on a whim now  
protecting my own

is it the LCD  
or the news; is this pain  
the LCD

my nostalgia like a ghost  
the way waves hit each other.

## II. THINKS [THEY ARE] GOING TO TRANSFORM

– Orlando White

I spent all day with your body and came back unsure  
I keep nodding along like a road with no passengers  
I open my chest to find your chrysanthemums.

You recognize it as belonging. You sweeten my focus.

You knew me differently; then, I knew me more.  
Light null & light now. The articulation of the passage  
the passage. The memory of my love circuitous:  
on fear a void here:

you trail my substance with word  
your substance cant word.

You pull through my refrain: a splash of my discovery,  
yellow veering slate.

### III. SPELLBOUND

Slick turns keep me leaning on throats  
& you on your upheaval.

I remembered the most I could.

I divorced my love.

I gave up for a bit I know how you like  
your danger. High in the alley with that hickey. The molly  
doing you no good. Nor the coke.

Was it mesmerizing, the trade? Were they turncoating,  
your arms? You land on the earth, and keep saying grass.

Here comes the spell placating  
our nature. Our lips  
inscrutable.

Fools by association: our opening abeyant: I wonder  
if your hands remember tending the small of my neck  
like my neck their arrival.

## WILDLIFE

### I.

There's that sweat again.

### II.

And that green timbre

unrelenting  
light, unforgiving  
thrall:

I like the way white trees smolder.  
the road bends:

the roadwork: I wanted  
everything to look forward to

### III. NICE BREEZE

Here comes the moon scraping by  
brume of pollen:

robust & from life.

### IV.

That  
sweat. That  
distance. That

## V. INUNDATION

I feel silly for having these feelings again:  
herald of sea-change:  
words, I keep losing.

My lover against my grain now, working-out-air.  
Your sighing is fine. In our faults, even seas sigh.

## VI.

Do you shimmy to the stream?  
If you conceive it is there pain  
is there room for  
us both sprout  
grass of me finger  
your wings  
your want to reciprocate  
does it soften your art or  
stymie your innocence? Does  
my gender fit your sweater  
like now? camp: the way shit  
becomes song the thresh of sea  
beneath eyelids blandish dawn  
you, embarrassed by your own  
emotions:  
fire of the night  
pulling back  
curtains or was it love  
& only love mistaken  
for  
light

here comes the moon breaking  
my gait

you withholding your voice

## **VII.**

I wanted to give you  
something  
I know, he said,  
what a strange shape  
your legs make.

## **VIII. INFINITE GRATITUDE**

Watch it emerge: honesty out  
of your element

out of our depths:

tender is the rain on the water's edge  
exalted grove, here  
honey.

## **IX. INSTANT GRATIFICATION**

I like you in that grey t-shirt  
you slip off your socks.

Was it fleeting by design, the noise  
from the rotunda, the coral  
open water

air

rushing

in

like

us

## **X. PROFANATION**

If it strikes a chord  
will you feel it?

if  
it

the wind  
a fluid  
pines—

## **XI. THERE'S THAT SWEAT AGAIN**

grazing from need.

## **XII. THERE'S THAT OLD SPELL**

awaiting.

## **XIII. THERE'S THAT**

stirring!

If I could rest here on your shoulder  
all day I would, but you are older and no surprise  
to you I'm seventeen  
enamored by  
your depression

I say:

you must  
know that it's palpable  
reminiscence  
fury, open-  
circuits, wild-  
flower splash  
open  
crocus  
open  
flame

**XIV.**

sun comes  
cloud comes

evening  
rain



**XV.**

And I know how air leaves a chest, I say,  
nestling his stomach.

He sighs: whorling mist  
night drapes.

**XVI. INUNDATION**

Moon moves  
high tide

evening  
coast.

**XVII. I ONLY SEE THINGS WHEN THEY MOVE**

– Olafur Eliasson

I knew I was weak in my sleep.  
I knew a pine tree once, shaking,  
a friend, I knew, ascending  
new river opens my legs  
by surprise  
I knew you, tempered,  
& your sweat.

I knew your nails, raw  
to the bed. I knew crimson feelings  
Untenable.  
Unfeeling.

## **XVIII. UNDERBRUSH**

Even  
sand

even  
spray

even hair  
conscious  
spread  
thank  
heavens  
you come  
home clean  
the veneer of verdant green  
you in that sweater, depressed  
reflections unfurl  
acrylic pills  
even pain

you've got those goosebumps again, he says,  
are you nervous?

Even now.

## **XIX. INSTANT GRATIFICATION**

If you give me the  
chance  
to say open  
field  
I will or open  
wound  
or open road  
braying light.

## XX. THERE'S THAT SWEAT AGAIN

if not a musk, a gimmick.

## XXI. FOR A LIFETIME I'VE WANTED THE SAME [DAMN] THING

– Louise Bourgeois

Is it magnetic, that space?  
Deployment of light from horizon  
were they sentimental,  
your wings?  
God, calling it in, willing,  
or wind

Or another sycamore  
grafting  
your  
love, wild  
bark!

Here comes the light up your thighs  
framing your face

That space between  
your coffee, teeth

Clones the atmosphere  
Clones ferry  
Propulsion  
Clones the trees clones winter  
Cloning solo  
Loving poem  
Cloning me

## MUSEUM

### I.

And you're changing course again  
mid-movie like it was dust or  
somnolent light, love

### II.

That can't be comfortable, he says.  
I adjust my head on his shoulder

not unabashed contact, but  
exaltation. Clarity of thought, his gift.  
I focus.

### III. DEPTH OF FIELD

She says it's a cyclone  
not desire. Distance steadies  
stress.

### IV.

We used to shoot the same breeze — we're used to wandering nights like this

We used to summon heavy weather  
posterity & switchbacks:

He said, I knew what I needed & nothing more! Revelation: these hands  
make these shapes, he said, and you wouldn't believe it  
the shapes I take:

## V. RUBBER

Or was it a close call  
driving over the bridge in the rain

She comes looking for my body again  
comes opening the stage

You wonder where the curtain went  
or the seats

It's not an aisle it's a throat  
it's the romance of the rain

It's us arranging humans  
wisdom, precarity or pain

She aims for the lights and comes back with a tattoo  
she closes the stage

I got lost in the move! she says  
I keep waking to a new film with no actors

I imagine a life with no tether  
a city, no pulse

That was it  
becoming?

Becoming  
your throe.

## VI. NEON

Were they intangible to some degree  
your failures.

Was it the heart of our conversations  
your addiction.

Was it listless before it was wind  
did you still down it  
dry & uncompromising.

## **VII. LEAD**

Was it a feat of nature  
or facetious. We lose another day.

I've been here before. I know this sidewalk  
and this tree. I know the whiteness of your teeth  
by tasting. I know the way the porch wraps the house  
its windows open, its curtains, aimless.

## **VIII. FIBERGLASS**

And here you keep finding sky making like blue before it was night or night finding you.

## **IX. INNATE PROPERTIES**

And here, we lose another one.  
Another day.

## **X. NOCTURNE**

Have you been on the God path occluding the light?  
Can you apprehend it—your fear of the noise?

## **XI. NOCTURNE / SALVO**

I had a confident dream once, and every day since I mistake me.

Here we go, succumbing:

**XII.**

Opens his heart  
and opens  
his heart  
and opens!

**XIII. NOCTURNE**

I think I lose it here.  
he keeps running down the stairs to the platform  
& I keep running across the street to catch them on the other side.

## MY PROTECTOR

### I.

I give the same kind of thanks  
to the swimmer as to the dreamer

like my body I scale back my constitutions.

We were fast friends, I said,  
my harrowing crest looks like a spine, and I'm becoming more aware  
of these arms.

I'm giving it all now.

I diffuse a candle w/ my lips  
& like the light I forget

### II.

Did it contribute to your composure? Did it look like a jaybird?  
My body comes in simple shapes, you said, I'm remembering your skin  
back then, flush  
with these bones.

I remember breezelike deviations  
paths we mistook for roads.

### III.

And, we're dreaming it off, love



#### **IV. CRESTFALLEN**

If they look like wings  
will you still use them?

Will they deliver? Or were they residual:  
juniper  
or life,  
sun?

#### **V. -W/ OUT FEELING-**

– Julian Talamantez Brolaski

I remember a road which went by any other name.  
Here, road  
Tomorrow Vitamin C  
Today affliction  
I told her to stop weeping, yet followed suit  
Today  
Iron  
Today  
Dialysis  
Tomorrow  
Dysplasia  
Today  
A road I loved with every other arm.  
Tomorrow  
Breathe  
Son.

#### **VI.**

And, we're sending me back, now

## VII.

It only takes a light to forget the dreamsong.  
It only takes a pattern to sustain another breath.  
It takes a love, again.  
A small high, another day. Overzealous pattern  
or maybe I'm anxious. Simultaneously: a wave  
remaining one & motivation: we rebuild the beach  
for these people. The nerve.

It takes up a new body  
It takes up more room than we have room for  
It takes like opportunity & another spark  
It takes the long way home.

It takes off the tarmac! joyless  
your arrival. It takes endurance.  
It takes the blame.  
It apologizes.

## X. THE WAY [THEY] DREAMT [THEM]SELF!

– Arthur Rimbaud

I dream of my protector.  
Sometimes I blunder, as if to say I need  
a dream. Sometimes I wash my feet  
And keep washing.

I've been watching the same rose home, here across the street.  
Its mystique means it's untranslatable,  
and unfeeling.

## XI.

But we're taking me back, love

## XI.

But, it's all lovesick, now!

## XI.

But, I bounce back. I try

## **XII. SENSITIVE TO RIVER**

Who knew they needed yet another stream.  
Another pool of bodies & infinite refrains.  
Despondency in rolls. Eddies

I'm numb now. But recognize my numbness  
for now. The nature of the object  
disavowing sight:

I think your death prolonged my longing:  
out of touch but in motion,  
our touch.

## **XIII. SENSITIVE TO STREAM**

I was here once using this voice, but this voice changed  
it rises  
sometimes  
it strains I stupor I wavelet I reclaim  
this side of the dream I like  
a very different pageant your child  
of turpentine O fuck  
I'm a windthing

## **XIV. SENSITIVE TO EDDY**

My home looks like my home the way you keep it. I keep walking  
I've forgiven myself! for once undressing me. Likewise, I have a sense  
I was once a light of December in the feeling. You upkeeping you keep  
caving I slamming my chest to no avail!!

I'm resuming

## MY BASES

I.

Your honesty was endearing, but isn't that always the case  
air deceives and the whole of us refrains

II.

I stress the will here is more comfortable than the word  
fields afield with us field this

III.

B/t periods of sound, violence  
u fades into you by naked eye

IV.

I collect the last of you.  
I'm waiting on the rest.

## APPENDAGES

The peculiarity of the day constitutes the night. Those glimpses:  
awkward  
frivolous,  
and otherwise

no stretch of the night to be forgiven  
was it a sexual exercise or sexual  
enterprise you interject

my body levitating above the bed  
why do you even ask me like that?

I should know, I say, the room fading into the script  
night by room of poets & in the room the poems fill

But, I don't.

I was settling, I said,  
in denial I imagine these appendages are all sound  
I imagine my throat clears like the film dissolves

the  
medium a  
sunspot now

& so you start levitating. I thought I'd underestimate  
your withdrawal. How you keep rising, or how my estrangement softens the thick  
sometimes, I do miss the heat. Sometimes, I remember waves play  
by themselves, or a finch caught astray in the kitchen: my memory careening but the bath jostles  
& a new ghost forces my eye; it's milk-like. It feeds the spectacle and in so doing catches the  
waves by surprise.

I believe it came from the tap. Like phantoms do, as soon as the pipe's set the faucet ejaculates an-  
other three. And there, three ruins: you call them bridges, highways, states.

YOU CALL: Mother, father, motion study!

You call persistence, the next day, zest!

Keep saying it mind or body, as disjunct.

Settles as ocean riser,  
moon goer,  
deceased.

Settles as  
you, me, sex-  
dream.

Keeps  
praying  
to believe.

Imagines the ocean dips  
failing to describe day  
another humid night.

Three kids shake from the tap,  
break the pipe into infinite birds,  
to wake again to infinite ghosts.

## NINE REGIONS OF THE ABDOMEN

Jack  
my hands are lifeless  
I ate  
so. Little.  
Today,

Akron is hellish.  
I think I found it ! the thinking like  
how I feel unnamable. The narrowness of  
the firmament and out of the shower  
I buried the bible in the dictionary

I wanted to believe you were all right  
I wanted to make it clear how tired I have yet to feel can you hear me  
...clearly...  
more than  
to live I wanted to know  
all the words  
for silence  
listen: I am between my sternum  
and the socks I'm wearing  
do they feel good? I don't.  
You said  
everything in hell is

a crotch or on reentry  
I text from

the center:

Intercoastal,  
blades, or  
in the middle of April  
one inadequate violet  
it says nothing I say  
I buried the dictionary w/  
the internet b/t loves  
floral stock photos  
seems anxiety is another  
brand of chastity  
or depression—  
how are you?—  
pathetic ha  
I need dreams  
to sleep too.

Jack. Unsuddenly I blow the lights on  
I am intrinsically this murky  
I changed my name once I opened  
my mouth out from under the truth is  
midspring snow.

You are right, of course.  
Please, name your grief after  
yr spite house or after loved ones.

Could you not name your grief like you wouldn't your children?  
I prefer a future where my name means nothing I should have told you I was only a myth I grew  
up on River Styx Rd. In Ohio, there was a trestle I could see from  
the devil's strip or in winter out my window. Since I will never name my children—  
I name my grief after each of them:

Dream: I imagine looking over  
the valley and greenery and aslant  
over the trestle the length of

Words: all my youth I spit my  
imagination off this train like hell  
the issue isn't with hell but the  
the length of

Home: my chow's hind-left-leg has stopped moving.  
She's peeing on the carpet in front of me. She can't see me.



I cover my eyes so I can't see her. Juliette, my baby niece  
starts giggling. She grows tear ducts: cries with tears now.  
She is crawling backwards: soon, we hope forward.

Cleveland: every soldier is unknown and my mother's knees are buckling from years of sharing  
their deadweight. Begins with the undead and in Corregidor, my grandfather, and every nameless  
loss thereafter.

Poet's House: a signing: they call down to Bernadette Mayer, already in the elevator, to come up-  
stairs. For a minute, nobody sees her. Their worry. Maybe she's in the elevator. My worry.  
A cult of personality. Their worry. Maybe she's dead or missing (dreaming). My worry: a crisis of  
poetry. I'm the last in line. I ask her if she can write to Lynn. *I can't write anymore*, she grins: her  
hands are stiff: she can barely hold her pen: she chisels her initials: her grin evaporates.

Cleveland: my grandmother's knuckles are frozen from polio when she was a child.  
Her bladder's begun to fail. Although she hangs on me, I follow step. I think she looks  
embarrassed, but no, this is her tenderness and a life of depression as a child I prayed I would die  
for her, and still I am embarrassed dying: like horizon musters its last breath carrying seeds and  
strikes the back of our shared throats, only to be made speechless by the trees we move from.

Left Bank: Marcel's deathbed transposed by Man Ray condenses love & the readymade both: the  
point of the body: bedfellows: the photo of the body: when I die Sofia will curate: please attend  
her show.

I feel by myself today. You told me this much without speaking. You seemed more upbeat than  
before. W/o food or  
pills I feel more calm  
than myself. Feeling w/o wisdom. Feeling  
w/o noise and so wise. Knowledge brings me dinner  
& you are surely right  
a poem  
needn't  
be song.

But, before what ?  
Before hell is bigger than me, but only as small  
as the word in my head. Before nothing or knowing  
some other music. Before your name  
in dreg u  
dawn  
such off-  
gloom  
in your  
complexion.

## 10PM WAKE W/ ME

I.

I am shy between things.

All that's left of me is this piano,  
and the day after love.

Could an aubade also be a nocturne?  
Can rain unken an afternoon?  
Our dead at our beck and call if love was wind or  
we were wind or wind was visible can artificial  
light turn on the living? Of the living:  
some days you smelled like tide  
and even that was intoxicating.

There is a briskness to the garden: and also my blood. Without said speech,  
I'm still searching for the only word I'm capable of... my late grandma's mesclun.  
To be in grief, and of the harvest after she died. Of her heirlooms mesmerizing  
I awake at 10PM on her down pillow is to be surrounded aggrieved and then to  
remember:

If my love was profuse  
I apologize. If I was articulate  
then I misspoke.

True, I was afraid you were going to die before I could remember you.  
You measured my palm with your chest. Day breaks on the other side  
my chest.

There is a gullet for the dream is heavy-on the garden.  
You enter the world when I sleep. Unzip my tennis shoes.  
Nearly there. I think.  
How. Long it's always going to feel.

## II.

Yeah. The party looked all right a night ago.

I descend the stairs in only a blanket. You ascend from here  
& leave me only this blanket.

I was seven. I thought the ocean played like some sort of party for the rich  
they wear cold polos at the beach. Like words killed coral  
off bleach, assholes.

Waves. I'm not underneath them.  
Sun. Comes. Also.

Damn light.

Meant the both of us  
were bound to disappear.  
Maybe, it's me. I my dream —  
I the thick on the rim looking over.  
I the gullet with the rim in its midst.

Soil leaves my lips tastes more like dirt.

Damn now the rain question undresses me.  
Damn the other side of this cold rushing in.

## III.

The remove the move toward love. I dash from the ocean to the saint: think the mystic might  
emerge between. Do you turn on me or do I turn from you?

Doors keep making room  
for you and sometimes, I feel like  
the lights from the skylight  
look like violets, but why  
you're calling  
me violet when I said  
hyacinths — I don't know  
if

I can assume that roses come in colors  
or that light runs.

Wind in our sightlines though.  
Also. Sleep.