

# Autopsy: Exploratory Poems

Clara B. Jones



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## **B. Doe Autopsy Report (20-- @ 0940 Hours, California)<sup>1</sup>**

From anatomic findings pertinent history post collapse followed pallor consistent with anemia. This old female had complained of abdominal pain prior to her day of death.

Family members report a trip to Puerto Rico during which her husband became ill but the decedent did not include the husband at the scene. She went into the bathroom from

0811 to 0820 hours with fixed, dilated pupils, severely decreased white cell count, elevated liver function, and no evidence of traumatic injury externally or internally. A

tube protrudes from the right naris and the proximal trachea into the femoral vein. Needle punctures are present in the central sternal chest containing tatoos, scars, and targetoid

*rigor mortis*. Close to the scalp, multiple hair extensions are in place bilaterally and a small amount of thin brown liquid is unremarkable. The abdomen is unremarkable. The genitalia

are unremarkable and unclothed. A pink-orange, floral patterned shirt or pajama top, "Bed-Head" brand, size Petite, has been cut. A large amount of yellow to brown emesis on

the left sleeve is unremarkable. Body cavities entered a Y-shaped incision of the tongue or epiglottis without obstruction and without fractures. Lungs appear well-

expanded and well-preserved. The coronary pattern reveals no focal lesions of the larynx and no cartilages or other material within the mucosal surfaces. There is no evidence

of nonspecific pieces of food material that may represent unremarkable mucoïd material. The mucosa of the colon contains yellow mucoïd material and is grossly unremarkable.

Periportal lymph system weighs 170 grams and the relatively pale peripelvic fat is unremarkable. The breast tissue is symmetrical and not enlarged, grossly consistent with

menstruation. The cervix and vagina are unremarkable. The right ovary weighs 220 grams and contains bone marrow. The unremarkable Central Nervous System orbits into the

skull and cerebral hemispheres are symmetrical. The spinal cord is not dissected. Photographs have been taken during the course of the autopsy. The body is not intended to be a facsimile

nor is it consistent with a causative organism which may represent additional factors on the day of death. This case was discussed with the Chief Medical Examiner who concurs with this evaluation.

<sup>1</sup>Found at County of Los Angeles, Department of Coroner; accessed online, 10/15/2015

## *War and Peace*<sup>1</sup>

for the late Michael Brown, Jr.

My diagnosis: Elevated Sense of Self, Pre-Oedipal/*the pathogenic mechanism*/Raised my bed to Ego's height/*a meaning which can usually be interpreted with ease*/driven to avoid Pierre Bezukhov's fate—married, angry woman, fat after four children, like she would have been after one./*impressions from erotic life*/Unable to perform, lying on my back on moist sheets (creasing my Hilfigers)/*psychical*

*traumas*/in a room I could afford in the North St. Louis Days Inn/*an insight into causation*/where my home-boys brought their girls to celebrate birthdays/*stages of development that are earlier in time*/Easter/*humans find reality unsatisfying*/any day worthy of a felt hat and strutting./*wishful phantasies*/My stepfather strutting down M.L.K. Boulevard to buy a six-pack of Pabst muttering, “Burn this bitch down!”, remembering

a riot incited by his voice alone,*a catalytic ferment*/a bellow released every evening searching under my pillow for papers and Mary Jane/*exchanging their sexual aim for another one*/later rubbing my mother's

breasts, left hand waving at LeBron, energized by 3 points/*the wishful impulse continues to exist*/while I read in an oak chair at a knotty-pine table thinking how lucky Nicholas Rostov must have felt/(*sublimation*).

<sup>1</sup>Quotes in italics found in Freud S (1909), *Five lectures on Psychoanalysis*. W.W. Norton & Co., NY.

## Smoking A Cigarette, You Took Your Last Breath

*for the late Louise Winston Brown*

I needed leverage to pry the cigarette from  
your lifeless jaw, your teeth xanthous as pus,  
but your bodily fluids only settling, no longer  
active as sap sliding between scales of a  
maple's bark. I could only think of the foreign  
taste of slivovits and of the odor of your burning  
sauce boiling with a rhythm mournful as a country  
song, *If you can't live without me, why aren't you  
dead yet?*, a question Nietzsche might have asked,  
reductionism incarnate like a mathematical model  
capable of forecasting the future based on knowledge  
of past events, phenomena simplified to numbers as  
your 30 teeth were reduced to 21, still recognizable  
as a set, with stained molars and incisors still  
capable of grinding and tearing, some sheared at the  
cusp, dry, no longer moist from glandular waste.



## Micro-aggressions Become Macro-aggressions In An Age Of Terror<sup>1</sup>

Since the September 11th attacks the fallout has been a series of improvisations incommensurate with four commercial airplanes. Osama bin Laden leaves while an obscure caliphate has been like the *nouveau roman*

of President George W. Bush. At an hour of our choosing his successor proposed Guantánamo drone strikes in videotaped beheadings. John Sifton found a real war and America's naïve agenda set by very

dangerous children with little detachment on the day of the attacks in Kandahar. Reinhold Niebuhr leads him to history not his job. Afghanistan had him torture an Indo-European pondering Frederick Seidel's "December"

poem written after nearly being shot in the head by a Taliban meditation on violence. Extreme pessimism has been nothing Sifton is susceptible to. A human-rights worker attacked a book about violence and the war on

terror that made Sifton recoil after September 11th generated insight to explore the wisdom echoed by nothing after the Central Intelligence Agency waterboarded political mayhem. People are not wired for intraspecies

violence while held in check by the impulse to submit by machete, knife, or handgun. A failure of ethnic, national, religious, or political human-rights is philosophical and international for the weak. Richard

Rorty will see protection and care with human suffering mostly a failure in a positive force of hatred, grievance, and justice. Redirecting principles compelled the Cold War and the invasion of Iraq to the spectre of the superpowers

and the collective idea called humanitarian intervention. Sifton relates the insight that Hobbes meant to end

chemical weapons that President Truman used to justify subtle violence inseparable from justice that Mahatma

Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. understood as a strategy of violence in the nineteen-nineties war. Humanitarian Rwanda and Bosnia in Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone had become a human rights regime

change in Iraq though Saddam Hussein was attractive to Sifton and most Kurdish and Iranian human rights monsters. The idea that rights groups might do more could summon violence against human rights from

one end of the globe to the other but not the satisfying kind. Little comfort spread through social media to ISIS and the personal, overtly cruel, and limitless legions of recruits and corpses. Sifton is

fascinated by Islamists when the terrorists do it first. Jean-Pierre Filiu told me Al Qaeda is far more modern than we are in our way of reacting. Our modernity is something that we are afraid to

accept while it is a success story. Human Rights Watch dedicated the American conflict to justify in quantitative terms the focus of C.I.A. prisons around the same realistic viewpoint. A Pakistani

family didn't abuse the identities of the perpetrators by this standard. An American disaster for human rights came close to the wholesale slaughter of Afghanistan compared with North Vietnam, Japan,

or Germany more than historical consciousness focused on the U.S. government. At a moment when Sifton has been jet-lagged and depressed by American officials writing a human-rights message operating on

symbols keeping American leaders honest, looking

directly at violence as the foundation of civilization  
and a legal fiction obtaining national security, a  
difference dismissed but a crime in another guise.

<sup>1</sup>Found in George Packer, "Dark hours." *The New Yorker*, July 20 2015.

**//more women are prominent in /terrorist/ organizations—//<sup>1</sup>**

Some individuals break with society. A terrorist could be of particular interest to terrorists of different generations whether they share common characteristics and sex. Profiles may share common traits. Terrorism is not about terrorism *per se*, rather it is concerned with mindset. Because a lack of biographical databases modified academic

studies, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service assesses case studies of selected leaders of a biographical framework on particular overlooked literature. International terrorists send high-profile and colorful tattoos where they operate from Rio de Janeiro and Rome. Most terrorists are men. The number of women has greatly exceeded

the number of terrorist actions if the assertion is correct. Nevertheless, more women are prominent in organizations, particularly, in August. Urban terrorism remains a phenomenon, with women active in Latin American terrorist organizations and Germany's Red Zora.==  
Dora María Téllez Argüello, Mélida Anaya Montes, Susanne Albrecht,

Gudrun Ensselin/Esslin, Ulrike Meinhof, Astrid Proll, Fusako Shigenobu, Norma Ester Arostito, Margherita Cagol, Susana Ronconi, Ellen Mary Margaret McKearney, Norma Ester Arostito, Leila Khaled, etc.==  
Absolute practicality with coolness under pressure have been male characteristics. Interests in technical things, for example, was sought

out for the female terrorist groups. This is very important for a mother, illustrating more dedicated, faster, and more ruthless nerves than men, and they can be both passive and active at the same time. When women interned as active "frontline" terrorists, Martina Anderson, a former beauty queen, was known for her role as one female volunteer taught the

use of explosives. Female terrorists focus single-mindedly on a cause, to the exclusion of all else. Suzanne Albrecht, daughter of a wealthy lawyer, admitted generosity to convince her comrade to achieve the goal. This attitude is not possible with men. It is a good idea to shoot the women terrorists first to show female members how men had no interest

in a fighter. Women become terrorists to perpetuate failure or injury to a loved one with expectations of "power and glory" attracted by the desire to meet people's needs by a more active process than personality, back-

ground, and experience. Companionship is another motivating factor, and emotional support has also been a motivating ideology for repressed women.

<sup>1</sup>Found in Hudson RA (1999) *The sociology and psychology of terrorism*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

**/immortalized like Mishima—/**

*for the late Ai Ogawa (Florence Anthony)*

*Before the Japanese learned about romantic love from Europeans, all they knew was sexual attraction. The only way a woman could remain the object of a man's desire was to die young. Patriarchy begot freedom where intimacy was commerce, a virtual reality in Tokyo each evening until dawn disturbed schoolgirls' dreams of days playing with Michiko without the privilege of *seppuku*. Man's honor, stoic as an eagle's mien, waited for necessity to cause the next move, motion and mechanics the same art, felt an enemy of Truth that talons swept with sibylline sag. Museums designed for people not birds, salons for mortals steepling among sculptures and artifacts, streets in Nagasaki remained intact, cars immortalized like Mishima in a different place years after Okinawa. Art cultivated power, no longer about capital but feelings and ideas and meter since Physics birthed aesthetics and meaning was subordinate to form.*

**/a scarred hand fractured by sunbeams/**

Poetry is like Science except it is fiction, so we flew to Paris silent as moths [*Heterocera*] because the boulevards and bistros were boring, and we went to Junior's to celebrate Brooklyn not the cheesecake. The starving elephant [*Loxodonta*] is thin enough to slide out of her cage but is happy to stay put, too weak to search for options to what could be a long life of diminishing returns from zookeepers who have their own problems to worry about, though she still remembers the carnival in Prospect Park where the spider monkey [*Ateles*] jumped on her curled trunk to steal Fuji apples [*Malus*] that smelled like her mother's milk.

A woman chewing yellow cotton candy adjusted the lens of her video camera directed at my face—forehead then ears then lips—a colonizer taming wilderness, a GPS hidden in the hollow of her purse, tracking movements, cryptic surveillance by a scarred hand fractured by sunbeams. My Japanese boyfriend said, *It's OK to be ignorant, but it's not OK to make a mistake*. But, I make so many mistakes, and nothing ever happens. I could move again, try another *arrondissement*, read Dr. Phil, down a shot. But, don't the French say things never change even if they seem to? [*Plus ça change; plus c'est la même chose*] Every day is measured against the joy of eating popcorn while watching *Claire's Knee* [*Le Genou de Claire*]. That's the way the cookie crumbles [*C'est ça*].

/present secured with tungsten thread—/

for Berys Gaut (2005)<sup>1</sup>

You, no emotion, no agency, latent canvas:  
**coherent concepts open.** You, inaccessible,  
immutable: **desire undermined.** You, reflex-

ive, green, aberrant: **beauty mental.** You, au-  
tonomic, not a thing of beauty: **aesthetic val-  
ues complex.** You, binary: **without aesthetic**

**value.** You, not cyborg, human: **worthy of  
regard.** You on my wall, indigenous artifact:  
**critical object.** I read you, making your mea-

ning mine: **each morpheme terminal.** Or, no  
interest as text, but hybrid: **prelinguistic, feral.**  
Theory intentional, not autonomic: **pho-**

**nemes guttural.** I need attention, particular:  
**present secured with tungsten thread.** Tell me  
a story, lie with tight stitches: **Wail like a wolf.**

<sup>1</sup>Gaut B (2005) The cluster account of art defended. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45:3.



== I Am Black ==

*for Alice Fulton and Harryette Mullen*

== Tarmac cradles my body in fetal position  
shaped like the number 2

projected to an onlooker's angular gaze  
afternoon sun reflecting my brown iris in the viscous bed

molding my head and joints  
preserving my imprint forever

like fossils found at La Brea ==  
== I wanted to lie there for millennia

knowing myself sinking out of view  
choking helplessly but otherwise unfeeling

oil a fetid barrier between my eyes and anything else  
including you

watching from an upper branch of that willow tree growing out of red clay  
destined to be cleared as this road widens. ==

## Rhizomes With A Center [or Viewing (William) Pope.I For The First Time]

1. Perturbation in the manner of Heisenberg  
perception becoming a matter of where one stands  
from wobbly plane through virtual space  
their formulas deriving alternate arcs from apparent to physical  
one scientist fracking a friendly meme of race and class  
the other's construct also violating venerable assumptions  
changing sacred statements from relative to unstable  
both forms formed from frictive imaginations  
changing conventions from constants to variables  
changing primaries to solutions using different Methods  
    as blue is changed to cyan  
    or c is changed to X.

2. A *man of (techni)color (mot)*, an artist in action  
    without sentiment  
    without romance  
    without nihilism  
laughing with us all the way to the "ATM" (1997)  
"hanging little white baby dolls" (1992) not Barbie Dolls®  
    to make a point  
laughing with us not at us  
but looking at us squarely between the eyes.

## /a viable career/<sup>1</sup>

“Scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight.”  
David Livingstone (~1854)

### Daughter

“(Koncordie) Amalie Dietrich (1821-1891) was a middle-class German woman taught to value nature by her mother.”

*A little German girl dreaming of walking paths in The Black Forest with her mother, picking chanterelles, watching wrens, eating black bread and ham beneath the beech, preparing for a future in forests far from Saxony.*

### Naturalist

“Amalie married an unsuccessful medical doctor who worked as a pharmacist. He provided her with the skills required for work as a naturalist. Amalie separated from her husband after he was unfaithful, leaving permanently with her daughter at the age of forty.”

*Not every spurned wife can claim her husband left her with a viable career, skills as good as any man in Hamburg, ample compensation for the stares and whispers cloaking her spinster hair, cruel intentions neutralized by anticipation of a life without convention.*

### Collector

“Upon the recommendation of a male acquaintance, she was hired by the director of a German museum to assemble a collection of Australian plants and animals. Amalie was known as ‘the angel of black death’, though it is unclear to what degree her participation in the collection of ‘savages’ was a direct cause of the escalation of Aboriginal genocide.”

*Woman as other; scientist and mother, sailing across seas to another continent, as Darwin had done before her, and Wallace and Livingstone, men without women in their parties. Amalie, not a team player, brewed her own tea.*

<sup>1</sup>Stanzas in quotation marks found at <http://vertebratesocialbehavior.blogspot.com>

## Conceptualizing The Ferguson Conceptualizer<sup>1</sup>

Kenneth Goldsmith finds himself drinking in a basement bar in Buffalo to listen to “No. 111 2.7.93-10.20.96” a species of list poem “A door á la a pear a peer a rear a ware” claims to have seven thousand two hundred and

twenty-eight syllables possibly also a singular one all the way through He is “the most boring writer who ever lived” and they often have spelling mistakes even the copy editors can’t borrow a thinkership Modernism

was dead and conceptual poetry made Goldsmith an experimental poet along with the White House and the Museum of Modern Art Cathy Park Hong canonized him

making people uncomfortable—challenging a long face and bit paisley patterns Appearing to wear long flowing skirts as different as possible from a dandy and hyperconscious of every public persona To speak slowly and enunciate clearly

on Andy Warhol and Salvador Dali falls on him sometimes against his own interests Goldsmith became a poet by making sculptures that were larger than doors but the piece was a failure for me In bed with his wife when

people read “Fidget” an account of practically every movement he made in 1997 By the afternoon he fell asleep while sitting on a pier beside the Hudson River then he accidentally lost nearly two hundred financial

tables You’re left with the concept but I’m telling you information is a literary act If your work is boring and horrible it’s performable He is fond of the “unoriginal genius” Instead of Robert Mapplethorpe Goldsmith

did not add a collagist of conceptual information Born in Freeport Long Island where the world of S.A.T.s went to his wife Donegan a sprawling and eclectic repository of Jewish intellectual names Preppy British

women's coats Anglicized it further with inauthenticity  
A lyric poem has only one version The poem existed  
since a concept wasn't even necessary to Goldsmith's  
poems that coherently have no emotional power They

address a critic of his aesthetic concerns that  
Goldsmith used to characterize expression and feeling  
from conceptual poetry like Bartók Dan Chiasson  
said he dresses like a jester and Marjorie Perloff regards

Goldsmith as ridiculous and stupid and a matter of  
hyperreality like Gertrude Stein Goldsmith's hegemony  
at the White House and the University of Pennsylvania  
has led poets of color codified by critics of conceptual

poetry mainly Dorothy Wang "pissed off by  
avant-garde poetry" Some poets of color in America  
code the assumption that victim poetry is minority  
poetry that starts with the most uncreative and the

most boring conceptual unfeeling as the perception  
held the stage of expression that many people hated  
A hot text which is Warhol's explosion knocks the air  
from lungs dilating on race in America Goldsmith

read a poem called Michael Brown which he thought  
a long black skirt over a body had examined for  
thirty minutes with the doctor's genitals when he sat  
in the front row Conceptual poetry could handle

inflammatory material and a poet Michael Brown  
didn't want to be rude Goldsmith understood a  
provocative gesture that all the art world pushes on  
the train to New York to see people who came from

a group called—"gringpo" Marjorie Perloff & Kenny  
Goldsmith salvage The Murdered Body of Mike  
Brown's DNA to let it be made in the context of  
angrier organization among other things Goldsmith

rebuked Europe In conceptual poetry only one person  
had him fill out a published sentence so an experimental  
poet meant Brown from twenty-nine poets None were  
white Brown's death literally sees itself as white power

dissecting the colored body to offend Goldsmith's  
reading He used Brown's death for his intentions  
Goldsmith made remarks because art had ambiguity  
reading that no artist is hoping that there has been

anger at Sarah Lawrence two three years ago Marjorie  
Perloff said you're not allowed to criticize a poem by  
a woman that has nothing to do with provocation and  
proclamation An African-American named Tracie

Morris knows a black man and a curator because white  
people ignore Brown's death as "the truth of what  
happened" not poetic interpretation—not a speech we  
are left with the painful truth Goldsmith living over

the summer to resist the impulse to kill effective  
strategies like a racist allowed to speak the discourse  
of the Holocaust about the debate of suffering  
in Germany Both positions are equally flawed.

<sup>1</sup>Found in: Alec Wilkinson, "Something borrowed." *The New Yorker*, October 5 2015.

**/I am aURORa                    more powerful than hELEn—/**

*for Kathleen Fraser and Sonia Sanchez*

Walking in moonlight his skin looked lavender as if in need of life  
support ♀ She thought he might be energized by touch                    a solitary  
man alert to friendship, a solitary woman's hand suspended between  
thought and action defusing sense detectors                    incendiary device  
no longer menacing his emptiness                    her excess ♀ She spoke to him: *I*  
*am aURORa    more powerful than hELEn ruling Troy with a scepter*  
*born of sea-foam                    settling for Beauty while I pursue Truth ♀*  
Barely remembering boulevards of banks in Atlanta or Charlotte where  
the odor of boardrooms scared the stench of streets spilling into homes  
without grand entrances carpeting red clay with the dust of bodies  
a Potter's Field of gratitude not one of the anonymous                    not one of  
the uncounted dead in a different way as only privilege can proffer  
thrown from his horse onto heather stiff and brown from winter's sweep  
                  a kind of sleep switched from green to grey by mist washing rob-  
ins grey at dawn                    aURORa singing with them  
her chorus swelling Pisgah                    circling Mount Mitchell  
foraging with trolling bear                    waking clematis                    circling  
carriage wheels rusted like his memories of yesterdays before aURORa  
calmed evening's haunting ways                    a prescient time before  
light chased his caravan of years ♀

## **/Are Nigerians wiser than Negroes?/**

*for Chigozie Obioma*

Old as synapsids, ancient as babies cooing,  
as apes hooting, calling kin, as peccaries circling  
prey, singing, *Ol-l-l-ld, ol-l-l-ld!*, to the wind,  
whorl of things to come. Even when they sit at a  
roundtable they are not equals, a seat for Switzer-

land between South Sudan and Honduras, pretty  
*empleadas* serving Veal Florentine, closed rubber  
arc of a wheelchair, tire on a child's cycle, red metal  
sheltering her from spraying mud and tar. *Be-*  
*cause you don't have to tell them to walk towards*

*the light*<sup>1</sup>. Are Nigerians wiser than Negroes? There,  
Poets witness citizens' failings, the Truth Achebe  
wrote, not as circumference is always the same distance  
from a collapsing center but is the moving  
target, dark in the middle, backward 'til the Poet

speaks, illuminating the gyre choking the diaspora,  
dreams realized during REM sleep, freedom re-  
ceived rather than owned. She took her oath, search-  
ing, her Mandalas not lost or forsaken, bought with  
her own labor, the only way to earn a totem, a red-

tailed hawk circling her shadow, waiting for her to  
fly to her own tree, sounds of freedom short-lived  
without vigilance, a centaur guarding the cave whose  
mouth she circled, dark like a child in Selma, wrinkled  
palms forecasting her future grey as a cave's stone body.

"*Poet, poet!*", she called. "Yes?", the Poet answered.  
"*Where is the Achebe of the Negroes? Poet, lead us!*",  
she hailed. "Ommmm.", the Poet mourned. "*How will*  
*I learn your chords if I cannot hear?*" The Poet sang,  
"*Follow me to Benué where Poets tell the Truth. Selma*



*is a cemetery for old masters dreaming about dreaming.*  
“*Poet, wake them!*”, she called, coming full circle to her  
point of origin, a new pair of boots, Achebe her guide, bark  
surrounding cambium, rise of the woody plants invading  
every landscape, fire and water sharing the same ambition.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Lux, *American Poetry Review* (Summer, 2015)

## Capital Not Continents

*for Claudia Rankine*

Sitting in a coffee shop, I saw a homeless man outside who looked like Chris Rock, only younger, and dirty, wearing a blue shirt Chris might have left at Goodwill® on Tunnell Road, across from Walgreens® where Chris might have purchased bottled water or calamine for a mosquito bite, his look-alike buying Newport Kings® or Juicy Fruit®, bearing such close resemblance that the cashier might have greeted one for the other. Chris would recognize the irony of

*...seeing race solely as a white and black affair,  
of considering anti-black racism  
to be the scene where the real race stuff goes down...<sup>1</sup>*

“[T]he real race stuff goes down” when Chris makes a guest list for his next party, when his look-alike decides who to panhandle on his way to Pritchard Park or Bojangles®, one serving Chicken Velouté and risotto the other savoring wings fried in lard with dirty rice, each “seeing race” on his own terms constructed by “chance and necessity,” birthrights bounded by capital not by continents—America the Free, Liberia the Motherland, neither a Utopia but one servicing dreams not daily struggles for survival—green rather than grey, Disneyland rather than despair, “home of the brave” not the masses, shakers rather than takers.

<sup>1</sup>Loffreda B, Rankine C (2015) Introduction. In Claudia Rankine, Beth Loffreda, & Max King Cap (pp 13-22). *The racial imaginary: writers on race in the life of the mind*. Fence Books, NY.

## Ode To A.D.K. (Summer, 1997)<sup>1</sup>

for Bernadette Mayer

By the most rigorous of standards, this was a landmark case./*we must always be prepared*/

I am no lawyer, but it doesn't take a brain surgeon to know how the brain works./*we may speak*

*of a preconscious thought being repressed*/My sepia skin, your thoughtless slur—automatic—

limbic system without stop signs,/metaphors/"I was only joking, I didn't mean you!"/

*justifiable*/words landing on tarmac softened by too much heat./*consciousness*/Four years

of my life waiting in a terminal for you to arrive from Charlotte or Atlanta/*a neurotic's mental*

*life*/on the way to Cherokee where slurs are as common as poker chips/*the nature of the*

*mind*/or plentiful as women in Myrtle Beach/*a common element*/permitted but not accep-

table among proper people/*a number of dream-problems*/except over Bourbon martinis by men

wearing light linen suits with change to spare/*the most highly productive men*/leaving a tip for

the brown *atanuja*, enough for a sack of brown beans and a gallon of milk/*there are also*

*unconscious psychical processes*/enough for four months feeding mouths from two to twenty,

yearning for hamburgers not hominy,/the interior of the apparatus itself/ sheltered on reser-

vations./the primary unpleasure principle/Complications fog the clearest views./it has undergone

*repression*/You rented a limousine to The Cloisters and called me from the pool,/the value of

*the hypercathexis/a negress wearing gold bracelets/a roundabout path of  
meaningless pictures/.*

<sup>1</sup>Excepting *atanuja* (Cherokee for “female worker”), italics found in Freud S (1955) *The interpretation of dreams*. Basic Books, NY.

## Self-Portrait

*for the late Clara Kersey Jackson*

Richmond

*Santa Claus flew over the hospital where children in iron lungs longed for lemon drops. My mother's fear soothed us as Christmas carols drowned news of polio.*

Intimacy

*My friend is a monk who has not spoken in four years. We know by intuition what the other is thinking, proving that speech is overrated.*

Jerry Wolff

*What were you feeling falling fast from Western rock, far from American elk?*

Monument Avenue

*Robert E. Lee was secretly pleased when Stonewall died. The South lost the war because of Lee's pride—public and prescient, rapacious and righteous.*

Büddenbrooks

*The "politics of respectability" is a German "thing," empires and families felled by unauthorized handshakes or marrying French.*

Revolution

*Marx got it wrong. Every revolution is controlled from the top. Whoever intellectuals serve, they work together, as birds honor the songs of different species.*

S.D.S.

*Participatory democracy won't work in Washington where the beauty of cherry blossoms and the suffocating heat of summer overwhelm judgment,*

*where Presidents are serviced by pretty pages, where neighborhoods disappear without warning.*

Andira inermis

*A hirsute herbivore eats your flowers, but bees forage first.*

“Griff” Ewer

*Those were the days when sending a note was measured in effort. Snail mail took time away from research and lungs ravaged by Dunhills® more bitter than his leaving your bed, not a virtual reality, only a woman scorned, knowing her own complicity, thought traveling from hindbrain to cortex as fast as an e-mail now travels from South Africa to Panama. Wet season at STRI, caged jaguarundis hearing your untreated lungs heaving breathy, raspy air—far from arid Grahamstown.*

Babies

*Your destructive innocence tore my heirloom quilt, separated seams after years of mending. Faded threads exposed my mother-lie. Old age does not make me wiser, following you on the path to light. Motherhood is my albatross marked by mediocre accomplishments born of good luck, good guesses, and questionable intentions.*

Divorce

*After forty-one years a Queen Bee waiting for noone in particular or for someone rare as a trillium in the desert found by chance alone. An old woman driving a Jeep®, thirsty for water, not love with its complications leading to tributaries where memories are washed away.*

Eric Lenneberg

*It became messy. Your self-centered appetites overwhelmed judgment. Before the wipe-out, teaching diagnostics of brains insulted, left temporal lobes unresponsive to signals—deep anesthesia. Did you regret it like that untenured linguist whose stomach was pumped?*

## Adultery

*Because you are no longer real, I only recall a heart pumping like my own—but slower—to music sounding more like a dirge than a welcoming.*

## Negress

*Martin Luther King standing on a Juliet Balcony in Memphis, a Capulet among commoners dreaming day and night in color like televisions with no OFF switch or cats constantly purring to keep themselves content, other opiates distracting workers from tasks at hand, comforting like my Hugo Chavez t-shirt forgetting that liberation is just a cancer ward away, that revolutionaries are mortal and FARC hasn't signed a treaty, a promissory note to forfeit war against **what**—if Che is symbolic?*

## Race

*A negress in Munich is different than a negress in Frankfurt where "schwartz" is spoken with greater regard for the subtleties of difference. Difference, on surface, is simply a matter of black or white, Jew or non-Jew, Muslim or Christian, kinky or blonde. Munich is clearer, easier to understand...streets are cleaner, easier to navigate. She is confused in Frankfurt, harder to know her place. In Munich, a student told her, "My family has farmed the same land for six-hundred years." She was impressed and not confused.*

## Tapir

*Did you amble into the clearing in search of the woman who sighted you at dawn on Saturday through binoculars held steady as her grandmother's touch? Did you find something to eat in the grass groaning under your bulbous body? Did your kind disappear with the trees? Do you call the ranch home now?*

## Adrienne Rich

*Poetics is women's work. Aesthetics born to men save Adrienne's voice. Linguistic feminism, using the oppressors words, syntax oppositional.*

## Plainfield

*She grew up in New Jersey before the riots, before the Soviets lost the Cold War, before a black President became inevitable, before it was fashionable for females to turn tears into trouble.*

## Fumio Fukuda

*What if you had needed a Plan B? What if Kanegawa had been bulldozed? What if the Emperor had banished scientists? What if your animals had attacked you? What if pine needles had turned to leaves? You, pondering hillsides brown in winter, hoary by morning. Gaze from tired eyes, blossoms fallen, monkeys gone.*

## Alouatta

*I wanted to climb the Enterolobium, to join your group, to flick my tongue, to walk along branches, to feed on flowers, to jump from tree to tree, to howl in the morning as mist haunted Arenal.*

## Restraint

*My friend is a silent monk who does not crave—not even a piece of pie or a Marlboro<sup>®</sup>, not even NPR<sup>®</sup> or Foodnetwork<sup>®</sup>. My friend mimes, “Out of sight, out of mind.” I try to tempt him with veal and Vouvray, but he has transcended self. Like women ululating after war, monks crave nothing.*