

# "WHILE"

Annotations to a poem  
by Clark Coolidge

## WHILE

Clark Coolidge's poetry is proof that the word can resonate *a priori*. In his most abstract poems, meaning is made without reference to any experience or definition. The twelve poems presented here coincide with Coolidge's poem "While," extending his diction into new universes with their own longings, soundscapes, and grammars.

# While

*broken bridge  
hummingbird  
the ladder*

*Paige Parsons  
Jess Hazlewood*

*tranquilities*

*Diana Hamilton*

*silver discs*

*trellis  
breaking hue  
longitudes*

*Kal Victor  
Ethan Plaue*

*intrigue  
lamed*

*chet*

*mem  
tet*

*Emily Bludworth de Barrios*

*air desired*

*high*

*Sophia Marina*

*saraband  
terranean*

*twined columns  
twined columns*

*Cy March*

*while  
orange column*

*pi  
moving in  
nineteen*

*Sarah Cavar*

*Molly Williams  
Alana Solin*

*hot half  
no end*

*Anna Morrison*



# The Bridge

*Paige Parsons*

Each place, each place I've called home  
is bisected in origin by water,

in time by roads and the bridges  
carry me across each time,

home home not home.

I release the thought after moving it  
from right brain to left and back.

The bridge might be a placebo or diversion.

We cross it in pleasure,  
dreaming its collapse.

We cross it and drive up the hill,  
past the house where it happened.

It happened / it is not happening,  
it is not happening, not now.

Riveted to the empty  
sound, I wait, listen.

Mute house.

We cross the state line and in Kansas,  
it is Sunday,  
and we have already not gone to church.

The bridge bows, and on it  
I find a still, dead starling:  
fresh red and almost with us.

Where death shouldn't be,  
in plain sight. We lose things

on the bridge.  
We go down with it.

## this to the reflection of the verdure

*Ethan Plaue*

breaking hue  
but it is equally green  
before the leaves are expanded

longitude  
blue mixed with the yellow of the sand  
I made a mistake

owing as markets do  
little meadows little ones and twos  
letting myself down carefully



*SARA*

*saraband of the*

*SARU*

*sar sar lamed*

*sarab*

6 sarab

sara

5 saraband

## **I ask Joaquín if he likes the music**

*Emily Blutworth de Barrios*

I ask Joaquín if he likes the music I play for him  
each night

Joaquín says Piráí Vaca's classical guitar is "ghost  
music"

The room at night     is filled with the eyes of  
ghosts

Plastic stars fixed on the ceiling     Piráí Vaca  
plucks his guitar and drops the notes     Water  
becomes glossy with light

The room made into a box of evening

And in a distant distant distant city the Piráí  
River exists

Or     the river passes through the city  
renewing itself

like a mind composing itself again in every fresh  
moment

The room is a box filled with sparks staining the air

Ghosts startle from Piráí Vaca's soul    leaning  
over the water

Joaquín one day these nights will be a ghost that  
leans out toward you

## I Torque / You Torque

*Sophia Marina*

ramrod the trellis  
    straight shot climb  
        writhing ivy  
            silver wire / axis higher

terse enough  
    in terranean slow mo  
        a hummingbird horde  
            dips neck / nectar wrecked

red breasted  
    behemoth begs  
        you to unmute  
            your beacon / its seeping

ugly twined  
    twice around  
        the bamboo shoot  
            no looting / i loot you

## **I just saw a bird**

*Jess Hazlewood*

reflected  
in the corner of my laptop screen  
wings expanded  
behind the rounded slope  
silhouette of my shoulder  
a soft shifting  
like running your finger  
through flour  
(or a smudging  
of charcoal across a textured paper)  
(or the running rivulet of water  
across a car window) and  
before I could understand

my heart

lifted

## Summer, Greenwood

*Kal Victor*

Dirt divulges the curb

Checkered panties on  
And it's picnic season

So many winking vistas  
But where do these things grow

Still gardens breed banishment  
Fractioning moments of trespass

The trellis was always blank  
Corners wiped clean by sunlight

Readily then I wilt anywhere  
Congealed by the borders

Petalfall strides the stillwater  
Supplants the movement of crowds

*trellis the the*

*w while*

*tet tet tet mem*

*columns chet*



## Worlds Per Year

*Diana Hamilton*

A song should be useful  
for both dancing and crying.  
See them gaily gad about.  
In "Pandora's Box," Summer  
says that "promises were made  
to be broken—that's all  
that I ever learned from loving  
you." Earlier genres promised  
less change. It is possible  
to put more feeling into  
the arrangement of discs  
on a pre-dinner table than one  
typically puts into prayer.  
One girl was the first  
to ever fall from the ropes  
course. This followed mastery  
of instructions to tickle. Centaurs meant  
a lot to her. That year, fertilizer made her  
roses turn blue on the trellis. I guess  
the hues they absorb affect the hues  
they put out. "Oh you took me  
to the very top. And then  
I took a bad (and) long

long drop." One reason offered for banning *The Bridge to Terabithia* is its "elaborate fantasy world that might lead to confusion." It is not banned for promoting heterosexuality. You broke my heart; I broke your leg. In art a ladder sometimes masks as institutional critique the desire to reach heaven. In *A Wrinkle in Time*, someone grows "wings made of rainbows, of light upon water," and of something worse, but Calvin isn't supposed to kneel at the sight. In *The Motion of Light on Water*, Delany describes coming to understand that he and his wife were raised in two "totally different cultures" when he learns that her pants lack pockets. Someone said yes when she meant no. This was worse than the times she had spoken correctly. She devoted a few years of her adult stage to the study of the late style of Burroughs, of all the wife

murderers. We are moving in  
to the second half  
of a life that, to date,  
has no end. Everyone hot,  
to my knowledge, dealt  
with their childhood  
confusion with the help  
of elaborate fantasy worlds.  
There is orange  
in the second column  
from the left of Hilma  
af Klint's *Altarpiece*. She experienced  
a pupal stage where it was still possible  
to find the presence of women alone  
auspicious. Three men in breastplates  
and conical steel caps, burnished  
till they shone like silver, were  
making their way. The gunslinger  
followed. She understood  
the pain of quiet where sound  
had been expected.

## ***from Freeman's Women***

*Molly Williams*

*In his 1947 book Psychosurgery, Walter Freeman documents case histories of roughly one hundred of his lobotomy patients, mostly women, through pre-and post-surgical narratives and photographs. These cases are fictional.*

64.

I, lover, fighter,  
knees poised to spring,  
fed up with waiting  
in a nursing's winter,  
a hot season of anger—  
I stand before you naked  
of all aims, broken the way  
an eagle breaks the air,  
bereft of the emotions  
you will later read onto my closed  
and open mouth and fists, lipstick  
on a gorilla, apron on a fire,  
banana peel in gasoline, a woman  
unpeeling, bananas, a fire  
in a brain to be burnt up  
and breathed out  
in one column of yellow skin.

71.

The cookies are baked.  
The kids are asleep.  
Everyone is fed.  
I take the laundry out  
and I bring the dry back in.  
I remember nothing  
of how the air once was,  
before, when I was asleep.  
The kids bake in sun.  
The cookies are taken out  
and the kids brought in.  
I take out the husband  
and feed the sky, asleep.  
The cookies feed the kids.  
I feed the dry clothes  
into the fryer.  
I fry the sleep. I feed  
the sun. I bake  
the brain of the whole operation  
and I put my lips on, perfect  
as a stain.

## On a Clear Day

*Cy March*

1.

The muffled outline of something, there, in the  
corner.

A stillness sharpened into a dull point.

A bowl of cherries,  
blue and fuzzing itself over.

2.

They're talking about Agnes Martin together,  
thinking about eternity stretched in a yellow field.

That they don't have to worry, not tonight at least.  
It is so dark it is almost orange,  
the night and the orange dark room.

Their half-spoiled bodies unto each other,  
perennial holes in the toes,  
"Love, Nana" stitched in the corner.

3.

How we find ourselves by ourself  
like a stray thread, a shirt fallen off its hanger—  
but not just guessing at itself,  
          at its boundaries,  
          where it extends,  
but knowing.

How by ourself we came to be here together,  
the night before and pre-before,  
a continual knowing backwards, loose objects in  
          the dark.

*twined*

*silver*

*air*



## ***from Whale***

*Anna Morrison*

In the womb,

a pearl provides illumination.

Sight lines

(the only planks)    leap to sea bream.

Ribs articulate, but do not cage.

Ribs make a slimy balcony.

I feel

tightlacing:

lead and copper wire    clasp stained glass  
into a third-floor eye-frame.

There's spear-leaved palms for shade  
and common dolphins to breach horizon—

does mercy now extend to them?

An animal binds many plants into one volume.

I was half-bound.

Did I hallucinate the Gulf Stream?

(My Apocrypha is leggy and green.

Swallow a man,  
filter plankton.

Did I blow bubbles at  
school for baitball?)

An eye-mask protects with darkness.

Sound enters my ear through the throat.

## Out of Mind & Into Body

*Sarah Cavar*

I am in the thick of water. Below  
my rocks - my childhood  
Moss, pain-splattered boots  
to mark my place; posts we keep  
above the water, trunks and love left  
in the cabin. Here is the river the sum  
mer I seek to swim through, white light to sole.

So I am nineteen. I am a long  
pause. I'm fifteen, a  
distance between desk and face.  
I am the act of holding  
onto voices, still crooked tween  
my self and body  
Is all lost-? I mean  
to say, "post-." -- I mean, to  
speak the present tense  
yearnahalf n change.

# Out of the Steppe I

*Alana Solin*

out of the steppe i  
accept yeses

flared ink in  
the divot

canvas  
bright nickel hue

scraped through with  
scraped through

saltine  
in havoc

broken grain in  
the bathwater

door slammer  
i scatter

complete stipple  
showering apple

rosin for  
grip

fife for an  
instinct

water for the warbling  
vireo

acreage no  
further

must be  
a climbing

a widen  
ing acr



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