

"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

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

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.

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

trellis the the

w while

tet tet tet mem

columns chet

"While" is reprinted from Clark Coolidge's *Selected Poems 1962-1985* (Station Hill of Barrytown, 2016). The poem is dated between 1967 and 1969.

Certain of the poems in this issue have been previously published, including Paige Parsons' "The Bridge" in *The Quarterless Review* and Sarah Cavar's "Out of Mind & Into Body" in *Luna Luna Magazine*.

Calligraphy by Alana Solin.

Typeset and designed by Serena Solin and Gili Ostfield.

Printed and bound in Queens, New York.

Poems by Paige Parsons, Ethan Plaue,
Emily Bludworth de Barrios, Sophia Marina,
Jess Hazlewood, Kal Victor, Diana Hamilton,
Molly Williams, Cy March, Anna Morrison,
Sarah Cavar, and Alana Solin.

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