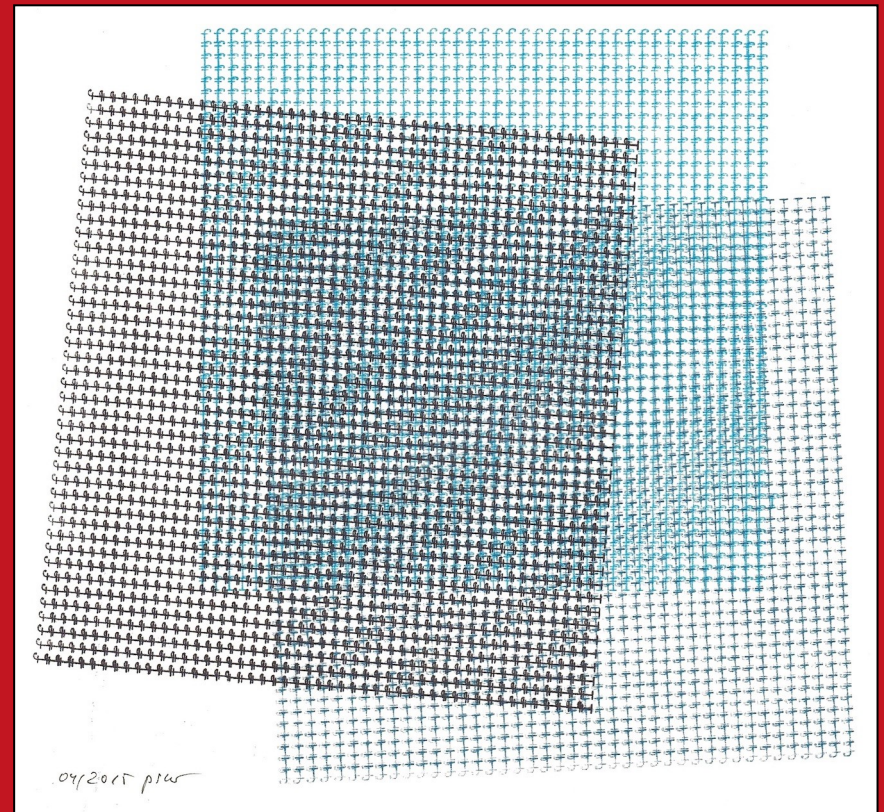# Concrete & Constraint

Penteract Press

Featuring work by Samuel Andreyev, Gary Barwin, derek beaulieu, Gregory Betts, Christian Bök, Luke Bradford, Franco Cortese, Clara Daneri, Lucy Dawkins, Anthony Etherin, Kyle Flemmer, Helen Frank, Ken Hunt, Nasser Hussain, Arnold McBay, Ross McCleary, Nick Montfort, Kelly Nelson, Sharon Phillips, Eric Schmaltz, Petra Schulze-Wollgast, Rachel Smith, Andrew Topel, and Catherine Vidler.

Concrete & Constraint

Penteract Press

Concrete & Constraint

Edited & Designed
by Anthony Etherin
& Clara Daneri

PROCEDURAL & PERMUTATIONAL

Prohibitive & Plastic

Procedural &

Permutational

**Textual & Spatial
Transformations**

Windows of Absolute Night

—Gary Barwin

["Windows of Absolute Night" filters the light and shape of colourful glyphs, producing an arrangement and chromaticism evoking the stained glass window: a portrait of itself made of broken pieces of another portrait of itself.]

Gloom

—Gregory Betts

3.14
left my
me

159265
my sad study suffering
and sad

3589793238462
left sad
academic study
gloomy study
left suffering
left academic me
and suffering

643383
and
me
left
left
academic left

279502
suffering
gloomy
study
sad
and
suffering

884197
academic academic
me my
study gloomy

16
my
and

93993
study
left
study study
left

751058

gloomy sad
my and
sad academic

2097

suffering and
study gloomy

4944

me study
me me

5923078

sad study suffering
left and gloomy academic

16406

my and
me and
and

286208

suffering academic
and
suffering
and
academic

998628034825342

study study academic
and suffering academic
and left me academic
suffering sad
left me suffering

117067

my my
gloomy
and and
gloomy

["Gloom" translates the first 100 digits of pi into gloomy
poetry, by permuting the first ten words of Yann Martel's
2001 novel "Life of Pi".]

VISUAL CENTOS

–Kelly Nelson

cover her briefness in singing
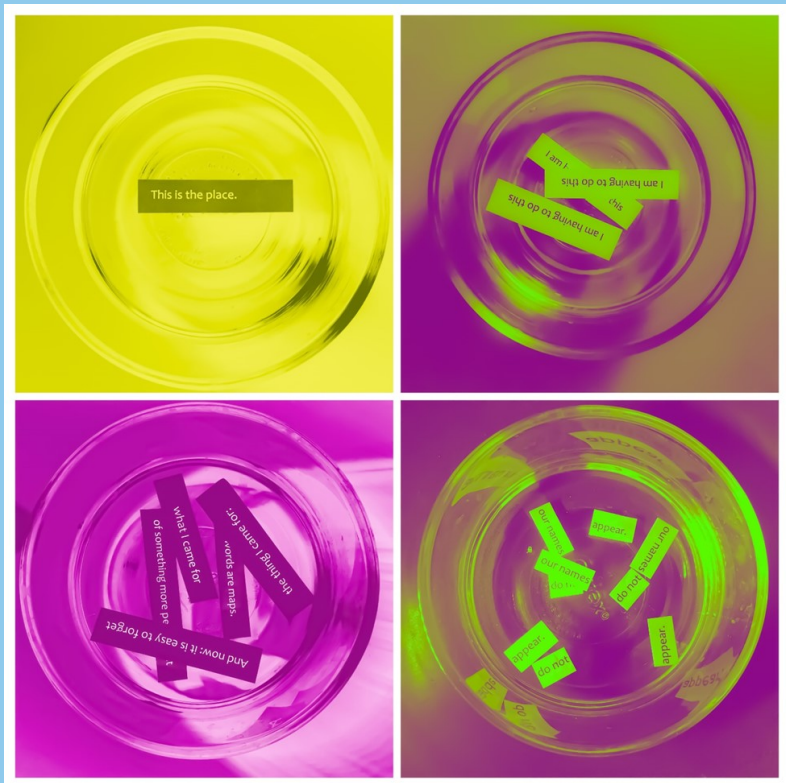
I am this

[These visual centos are composed of sourced lines of poetry that appear on slips of paper, which are arranged and photographed. The first, "cover her briefness in singing", uses lines from E. E. Cummings' erotic poems. The second, "I am this", employs lines taken from "Diving into the Wreck" by Adrienne Rich.]

UNTITLE

—Nasser Hussain

For sadists, pain is pure liquid
(it drips and stains lips).

Elect saints are exceptional--
rolling around, doing official deeds in conical lids.

I state: to labour is to be quaint, a
violated, electrocuted
rodent runnin into literal butt.

Uuuum, me? No. Me, I'm a quiet
quiet quiet mimer, a curt murmur critic
(or: I loom, rule empire).

A commando solo, grunt
voiced in ale,
to a voluptuous ex-cupid:

Mea culpa,
mea culpa, man. I mated Deus.
Odious excitation, reprehend me.

THIS STATUS IS JOY

—Anthony Etherin

I have confused
the letters
that were in
the poem

and which
you were busily
scribbling
for a book

Forgive me
they were a pale view
so sad
and so exact

[The poems "Untitle" and "This Status is Joy" each present a perfect anagram of a pre-existing work. The former is an anagram of the standard lorem ipsum text, a passage of Latin abstracted from Cicero's treatise "De finibus bonorum et malorum", and the latter is an anagram of William Carlos Williams' poem "This is Just to Say".]

ACTUAL BLURBS
—Christian Bök

For Simon Morris (author of "Pigeon Reader")

John Cage recounts: "Artists talk a lot about freedom. So, recalling the expression 'free as a bird,' Morton Feldman went to a park one day and spent some time watching our feathered friends. When he came back, he said, 'You know? They're not free: they're fighting over bits of food.'" But maybe they were just irritable from vainly searching for something good to read. Thanks to Simon Morris, they now have something *great* to read (including photographic proof of avid, avian interest). Though perhaps this is just an effective lure; we should also remember that Georges Perec confessed to eating at least one wild pigeon, sautéed and napped in reheated sauce.

<div align="right">—Craig Dworkin</div>

Artists (including John Cage, Morton Feldman—maybe Georges Perec) were so avid, watching over our freedom, that they came and went, spent time recalling photographic bits of expression, searching for something good to know, something free and just, fighting to remember, in thanks, some great proof of reheated interest. They should not have to lure you to a back lot, to read from wild talk about one feathered bird. A pigeon?

Eating, one day, an "avian sauce" (sautéed, as free food is, at a park), Simon Morris confessed: "friends read the least: they're just irritable, but perhaps they're also effective...." When he said this, we napped (though vainly —he now recounts...).

<div align="right">—Christian Bök</div>

ODALISQUES

—Christian Bök

[The "Actual Blurbs" composed by Craig Dworkin and Christian Bök are perfect anagrams of each other: Bök's blurb is a rearrangement of the exact set of words that make up Dworkin's blurb, producing two variant options for "Pigeon Reader" by Simon Morris. The "Odalisques" by Christian Bök are visual anagrams, composed from exactly the same set of letter fragments, rearranged by using the toy found at typeisart.com.]

100,000,000,000,000 Poems
—Helen Frank

[Raymond Queneau's "One Hundred Million Million Poems" presents ten sonnets, written such that any line in any one of the poems can be replaced by the corresponding line in any of the others, thus yielding 10^{14} original sonnets. Using a font made from a sketch of Raymond Queneau, Helen Frank's "100,000,000,000,000 Poems" achieves the same result visually, with the three sonnets featured here presenting a mere fraction of the project's permutations.]

LOST SONNETS

–Catherine Vidler
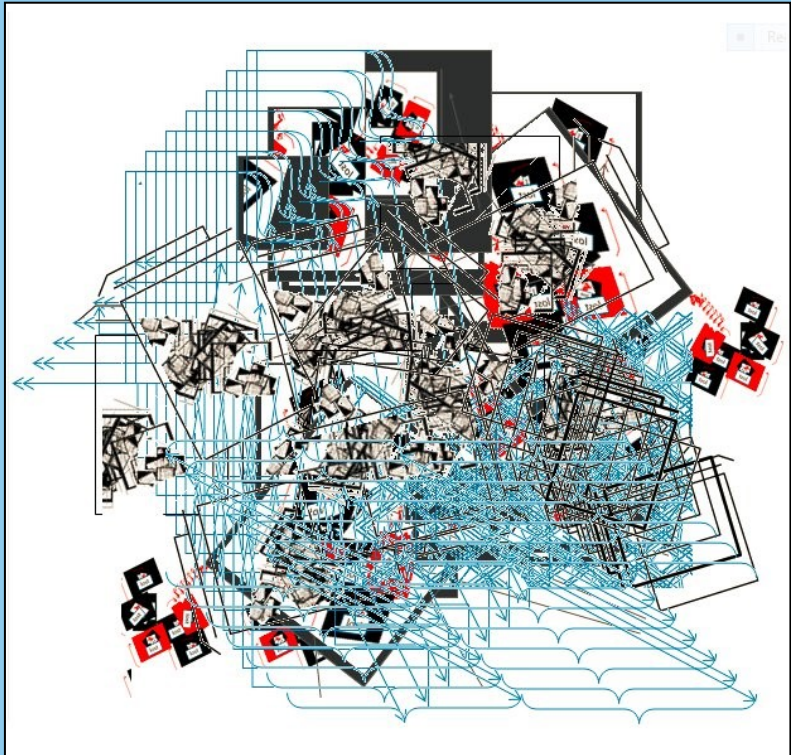
[Catherine Vidler's "Lost Sonnets" series has been an evolving experiment into visual representations of the sonnet form. Beginning with a set of fourteen arrows, in various configurations, the sequence gradually grew in complexity, eventually entering a 'composite' stage, derived from combinations and transformations of earlier sonnets. The two sonnets presented here are from this later stage. The complete set of composite sonnets has been published online by S0d Press.]

Two Anagram-Poems

—Anthony Etherin

Permutations

Atoms erupt in
mutant prose. I
turn a poem; its
matter is upon
me, to trap us in
utopian terms....

At resumption,
I must open art,
or input a stem
torn up as time,
use important
permutations....

Interstellar Pastoral

We speak of the interstellar wild
like we aren't part of it.... She dwells
in we who still sparkle, a fettered,
skeletal star. We flow in her tepid
earth, like weeds, patterns of will
personified. We talk, shatter well
as the world. We take, splinter Life,
written like Death's pale flowers....

When the Stars are Falling
—Lucy Dawkins

Sometimes, when the stars are falling,
one glides where a planet was. (I
oftentimes, when the stars are darling,
go melt in the dense dark, as the wax light
softens its shell.)
                          Free as a sea, night
comes with jewels, heaps a petal kiss
on the hiddenness. Red stars are starting
over in relentless arms. Agendas blink,
sometimes.
                   When the stars are falling,
others rise.
                   There's a star we ask things.

[The poems "Permutations" and "Interstellar Pastoral" are
each composed of lines that are perfect anagrams. "When the
Stars are Falling", on the other hand, is a line-by-line
homovocalism; that is, its lines employ the same vowels, in the
same order, but among different consonants.]

Coronagraphic Sonnets
—Kyle Flemmer
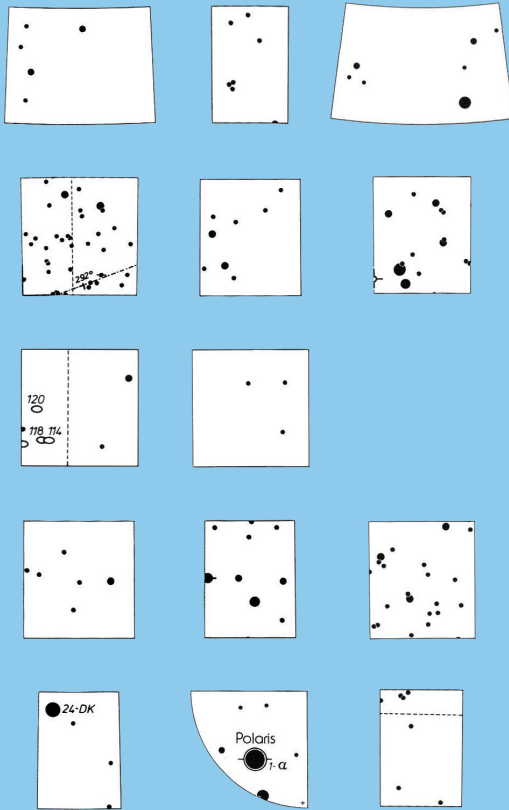
75° 4' ● 10h 18m
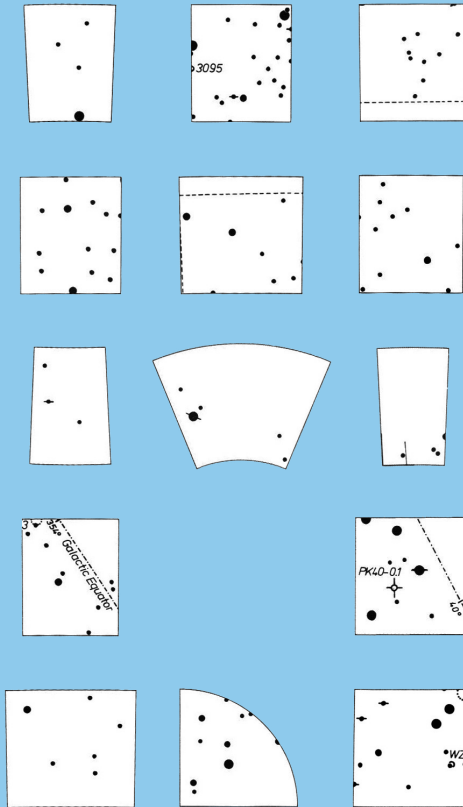
−81° 4' ● 16h 31m

[These poems present sets of cells enclosing 14 randomly generated celestial coordinates, replacing a sonnet's lines with sightlines, while forming composite views of the night sky. Both poems appear in the chapbook "Coronagraphic" (above/ ground press, 2018).]

Four Paths II

—Luke Bradford
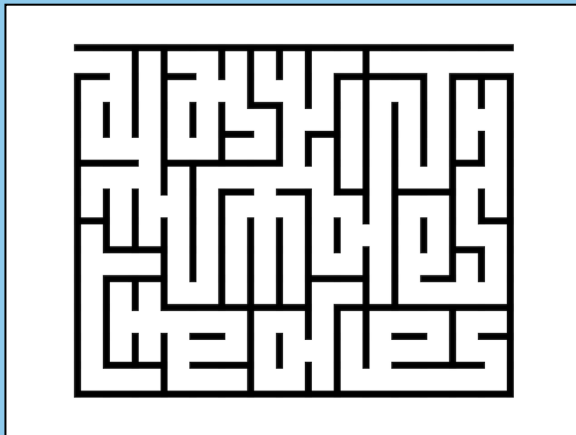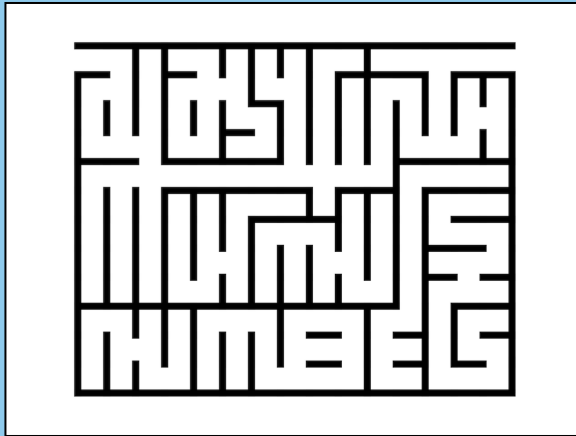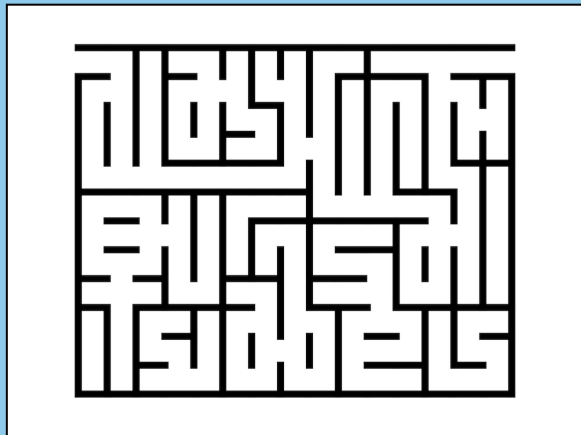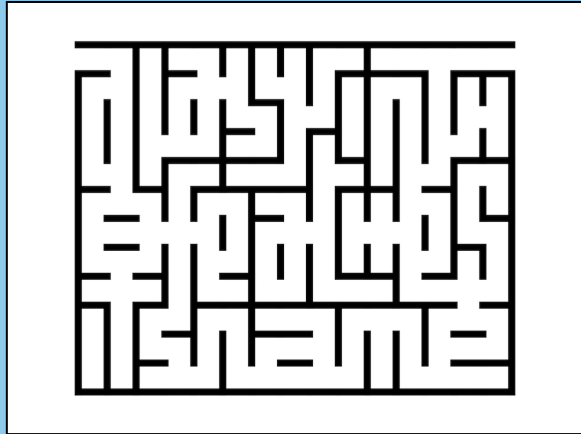
["Four Paths II" presents four mazes, each of which is composed of a sentence beginning 'A labyrinth…'. Each maze is identical in size to the others, contains no passages other than those that form its letters, and offers an unobstructed route through (or 'solution').]

New York, New York
—Clara Daneri
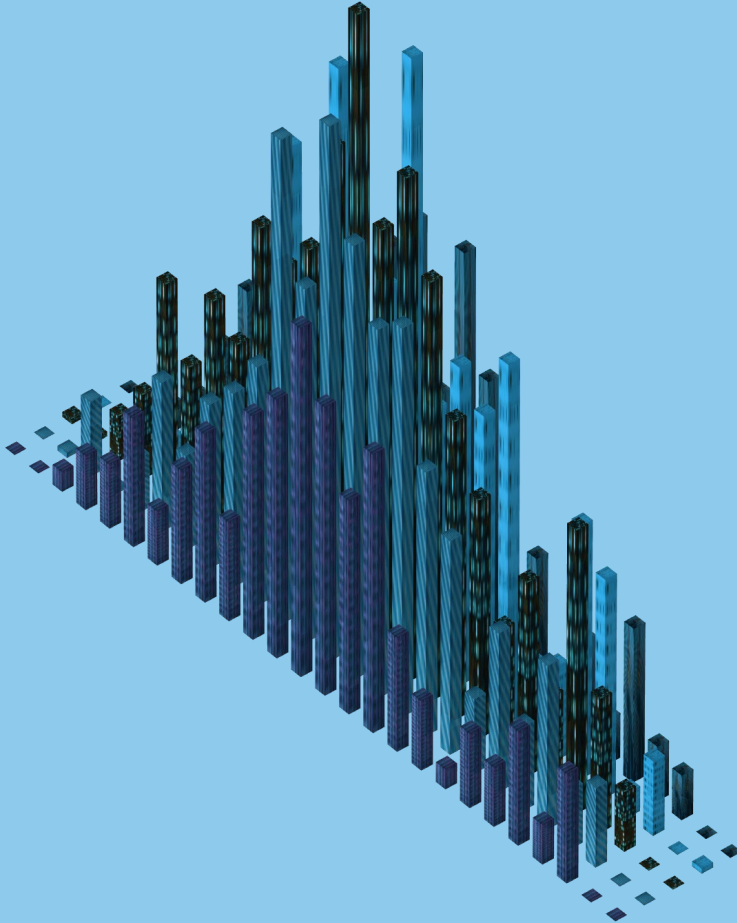
COMPUTATIONAL POEM
WITH FOUND SENTENCE

—Nick Montfort

```
memory.
of memory.
stick of memory.
the stick of memory.
insert the stick of memory.
to insert the stick of memory.
knobs to insert the stick of memory.
pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.
plastic pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.
two plastic pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.
the two plastic pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.
Remove the two plastic pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.


s='Remove the two plastic pull knobs to insert the stick of memory.'
for i in range(1, len(s.split())+1): print(' '.join(s.split()[-i:]))
```

[Both "New York, New York" and "Computational Poem with Found Sentence" poeticise programming. While the latter sees a found poem unfurled by code, the former makes concrete poetry from accidental data: In "New York, New York", the letter frequencies of five songs about New York City ("New York, New York"; "New York State of Mind;" "Fairytale of New York"; "53rd and 3rd"; and "Big Apple Dreamin'") are used to plot a cityscape reminiscent of their home. The ordering of letters along the horizontal axis is set by a bell curve, representing the relative frequencies of letters in the English language, while the heights of the 'buildings' are determined by the occurrences of these letters in each of the five songs.]

READING "WRITING READING"
—Rachel Smith

FRAMEWORK

—Andrew Topel

[In "Writing Reading" from "The Rustle of Language", Barthes writes about analysing his own reading process in order to 'devise a theory of reading': a reading which is both insolent as it interrupts and smitten as it continually returns to the text. Rachel Smith's "Reading "Writing Reading"" presents marginal reading notes made on the first page of this chapter, with Barthes' original text removed. Similarly, in Andrew Topel's "Framework", a limiting space serves not only to enclose, but also as a transformative point of departure.]

FOR CHRISTIAN

—Andrew Topel

Prohibitive & Plastic

Material & Conceptual Limitations

THREE LETRASET POEMS

-derek beaulieu

[These concrete poems present the strictest of lipograms, each
having been created from a single Letraset letter, torn into
pieces and rearranged.]

FROM TEXTURES
—Petra Schulze-Wollgast
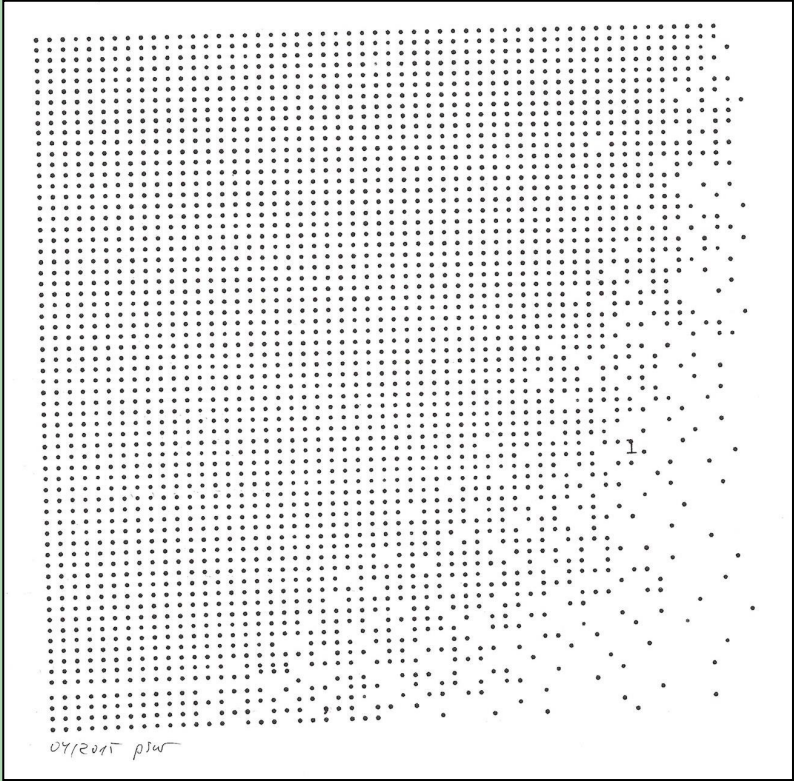
On a Wall, Ivy Suddenly Stops, Like a Broken Fairytale
—Catherine Vidler
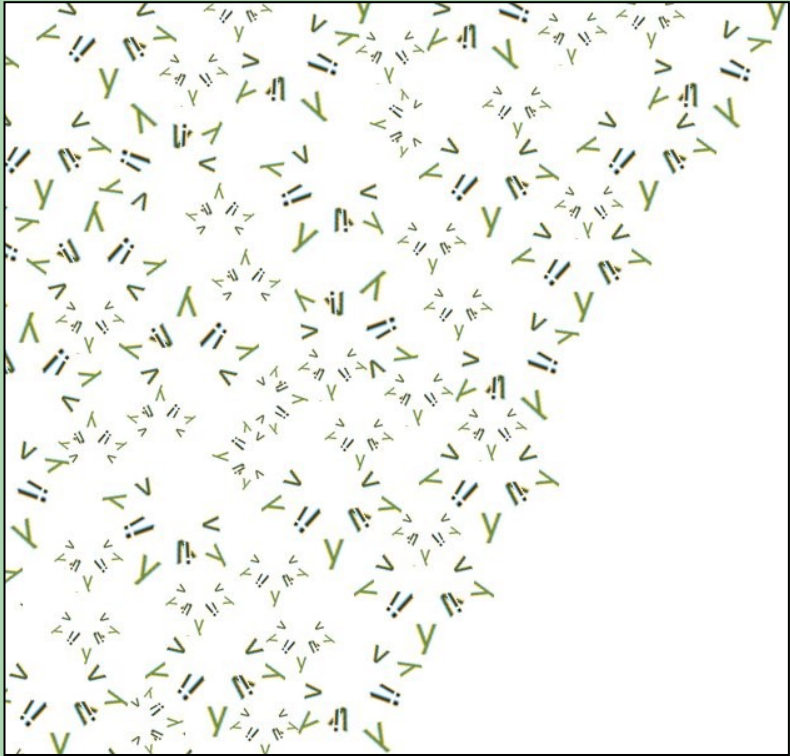
[These two pieces each, in different but congruent ways, create visual poetry from a straightforward glyphic, lipogrammatic restriction: While the former limits itself to a single glyph, the latter uses only the characters of a single word, creating a concrete beau présent.]

FOR HENRY IAN HOTTEN

—Ross McCleary

Atone, here, Henry, hear it in
the tree, anoint it here, tint the thorn
'neath the horny tyrant in the north.
The earth hath teeth, a rotten
antihero trait, treat it ornate,
orient the heathen tone in her heart,
in her art.

The noir: an iron tent on the heath.
Note the tint in her throat
ration that art,
note another heathen art trait:
Another entirety in another
iron tent on a heath,
on the internet, in the art,
in the theatre. That art,
neither here nor there,
neither trite nor neater than honey!

Ration the nonart, Henry? No.
Therein an earthy rat, a hater hath
teeth. Retain that threat, eat that threat,
hone that airy rant, tie it in, art it,
entreat a hitherto earthy tenor to
anoint a nation in the north, here.
Entertain the nation, Henry,
entertain it.

THREE DEFINITIONS
(FOR CHRISTIAN BÖK)
—Luke Bradford

METAPHYSICS

a mystic escapism that tames a physics at its seams

'PATAPHYSICS

a psychic catastasis that spays a physics at capacity

DADAISM

I AM
I AM
I AM
I DISMISS

["for Henry Ian Hotten" is a beau présent that uses only the letters in the name of its fictional dedicatee (whose name is a perfect anagram of the name one of the poets included in this anthology...). Similarly, "Three Definitions" displays a series of beau présents, each of which offers a concise definition using only the letters featured in the word that is being defined.]

Two Concrete Poems

—Arnold McBay
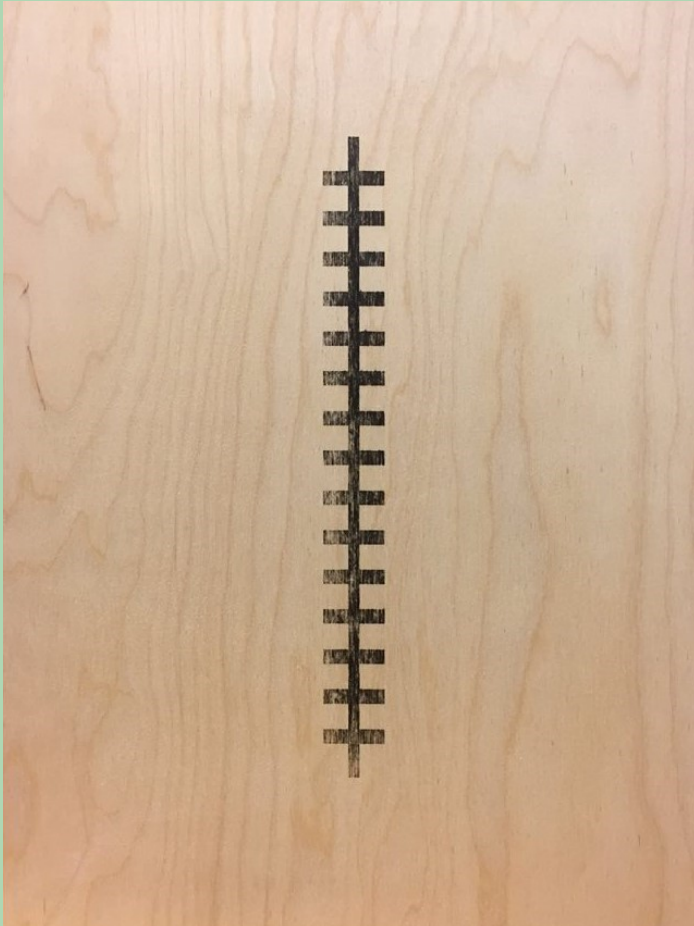
for Anselm

for K

[These concrete poems have been created digitally, before being laser-printed and then transferred onto wooden panels.]

Assembling Lines Nos. 1 & 2
—Eric Schmaltz
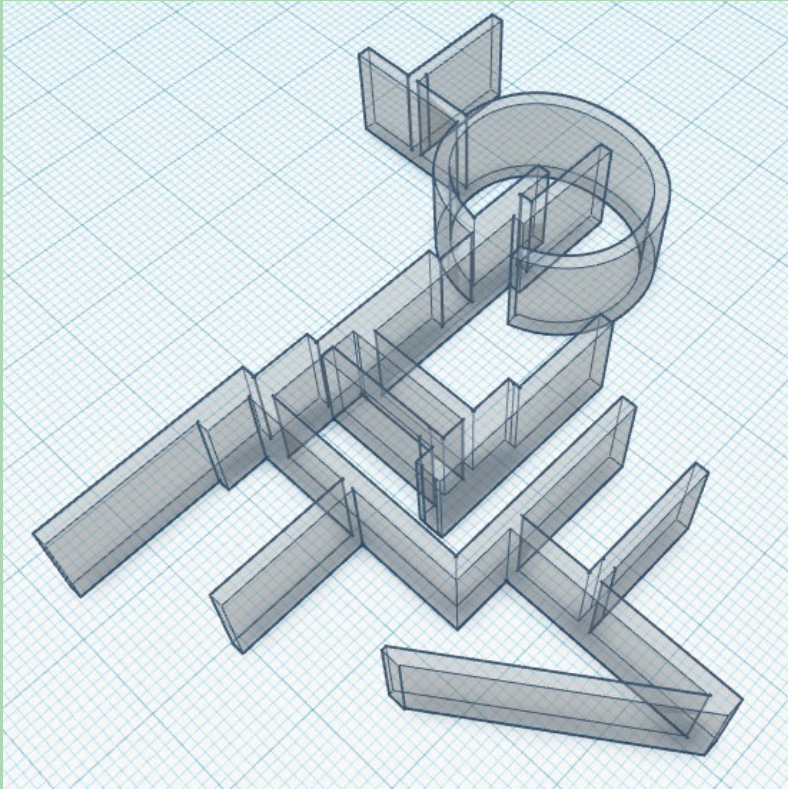
Assembling Lines No. 1
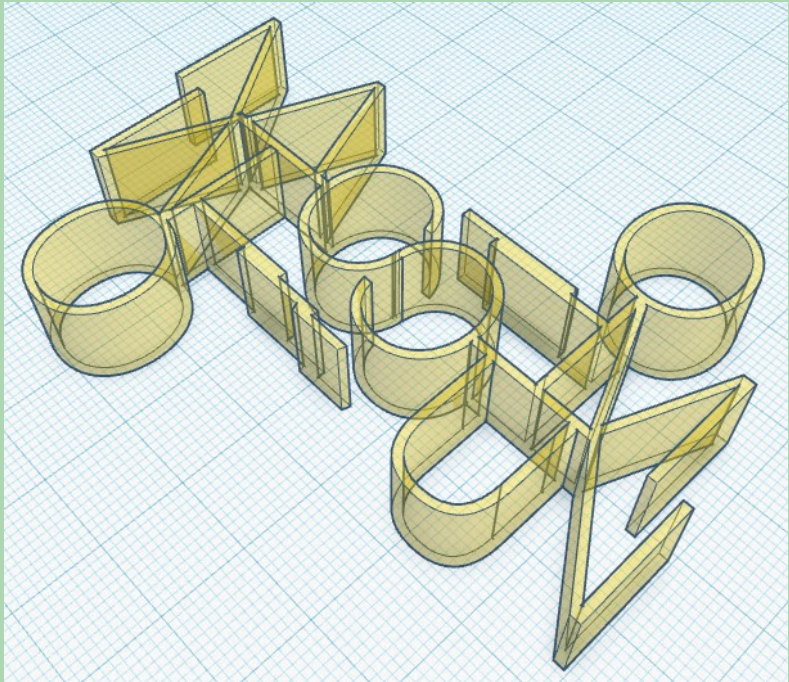
Assembling Lines No. 2

[These poems, depicting the assemblage of glyphs, are screenshots taken from inside a 3-D printing schematics program.]

FROM BARCODE POETRY

−Kyle Flemmer

```
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS
AND NOW   FOR A POEM   FROM OUR SPONSORS

05 3    3     3 1 4     4   3     8    51
```

```
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION
SIGN UP   TODAY   FOR EMPTY   VALIDATION

03 4    2      5      3    5      10    35
```

38

THE ICE AGE
—Nick Montfort

One eon ago, one old era ago, was the Ice Age. Ice did
hug our orb, our egg. Ice fit the top and fit yon, too:
One cap and two. Our icy orb was all one ice box. Our
orb had not fog, nor the wet dew, but sky-hue ice. Cow
did not moo nor low, owl did not fly, cat did not mew,
man did not run and cry. The ice did wax; vim did ebb.
Woe, woe for all.

DNA did die out, but not yet man. Man did sit mid the
orb and off the ice. The ice rim did not eat all. The ant
and bug--wry ant, wee bug--yet ran. Vim did yet hum
and run: One bit, one dab. The orb was one bit wet, but
all the ice was dry: Dry ice. And, one day the sun did
pop out, hot and red. One axe for the ice, yes, the ice
all men had.

The sun axe did hew the ice. The ice was cut and did pop
and ebb. Vim did run now, wet, hot. The ice was mud. The
sun did fry the ice and all got wet. The wet orb was
now fit for men. Men did run--she too, and the man, did
jog and hop--and all met joy. The icy foe was now not
big but wee: one wee top cap, one wee cap yon. The sun
had won.

[Adhering to a fixed 38 characters per line (including spaces),
each poem in Kyle Flemmer's "Barcode Poetry" series generates
a unique numerical code, determined by its letters-per-word.
Conversely, Nick Montfort's "The Ice Age" (excerpted from the
longer work, "All the Way for the Win") limits itself to the
use of only three-letter words.]

Sonnet for the One-Electron Universe of Feynman and Wheeler

–Anthony Etherin

Elected speck; relentless, endless sphere--
engender, breed ensemble, hence effect.
Reverse resettlement. Cement the here.
Re-enter, reel the verse; renew, reflect....
Re-represented seed! The presence swells.
Let essence be serene, emergent germ!
Strewn, never feel depleted, ever dwell.
The needle sews the text, the length, the term....
When schemes extend extremes (reversed, else free),
renewed events meet tethered, nestled nerves.
The skewered self emerges per decree--
between the present newness, elder swerves....
These self-elected scenes exceeded tense,
when Wheeler's jest expressed the tenet hence.
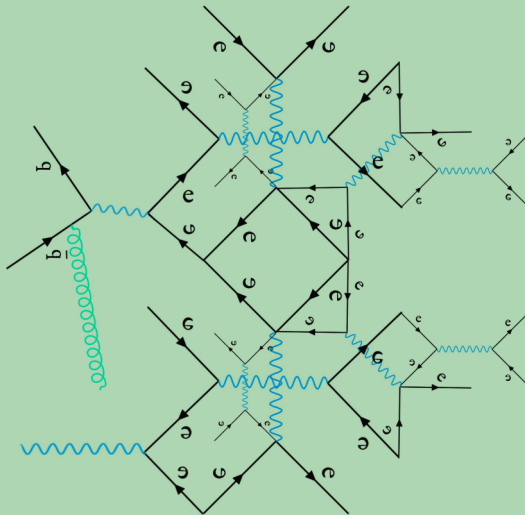
Error Twin

―Franco Cortese

āo uoiauai   **ŋ̀ twyndyllyng**

au ū   žlč prs
ǣ eua   strk tŕň
ě úa   zdrhl krv

error twin

bile breast
stroke thorn
run away descendent

["Sonnet for the One-Electron Universe of Feynman and Wheeler" is a Shakespearean sonnet and univocalic lipogram that eschews the use of all but one vowel. It is here complemented by a concrete poem made from rudimentary Feynman diagrams. Employing a more extreme lipogrammatic restriction, "Error Twin" presents two multilingual micro-poems, one featuring words that use only the letters a, e, i, o, and u (borrowing from Romanised Japanese, Old English, Hawaiian, Danish, Luhya, Romanised Mandarin, and Old Irish), and a second using only words lipogrammatic in a, e, i, o, and u (borrowing from Cantonese, English, Slovak, Czech, and Serbo-Croatian). These two multilingual poems generate the same literal translation into English.]

FROM TORTURE
—Ken Hunt
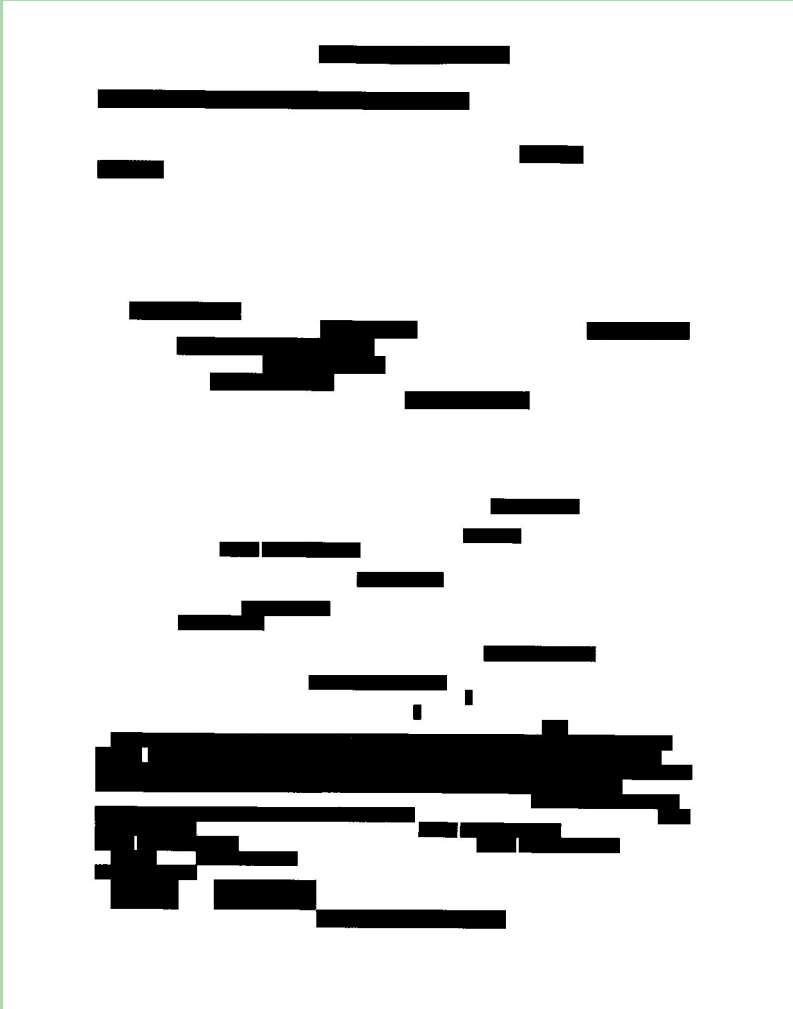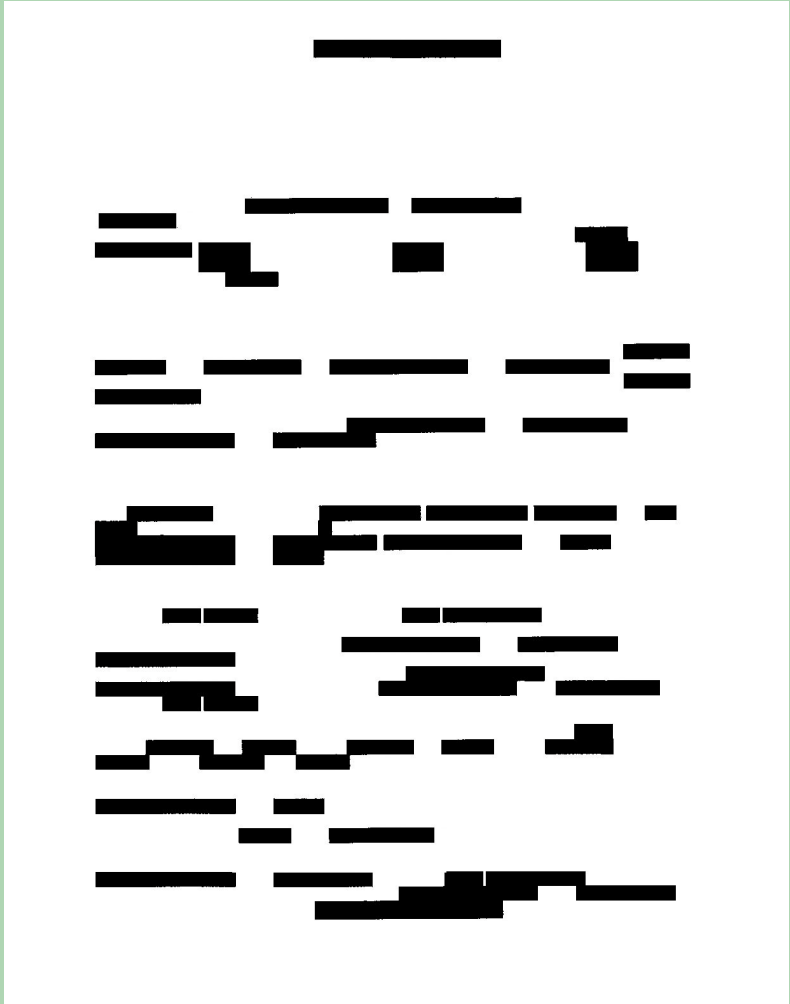
["Torture" is an erasure poetry series, erasing the US Senate Committee's "Report on Torture", leaving behind the black censorship bars, while removing all other text completely.]

1957: A SONNET

—Sharon Phillips

Anti-satellite anti-bugging
big beat bitchin' bullshot,

pat down Vietcong with
decision trees and clip art,

mainframe magic mushrooms
have lo-fi cognitive dissonance.

Potheads and flick-knife femmes
are ghosting happy campers

and rumble-strips are a sin tax:
laser the zen-like scumbags

with their low-rent loungewear,
fab opioids and clownfish;

doggie bag the refried beans;
be writerly and snakebit.

THE HAPAX LEGOMENON
—Gregory Betts

We will make the word.
For so long, he was made
as part of many, she an other.
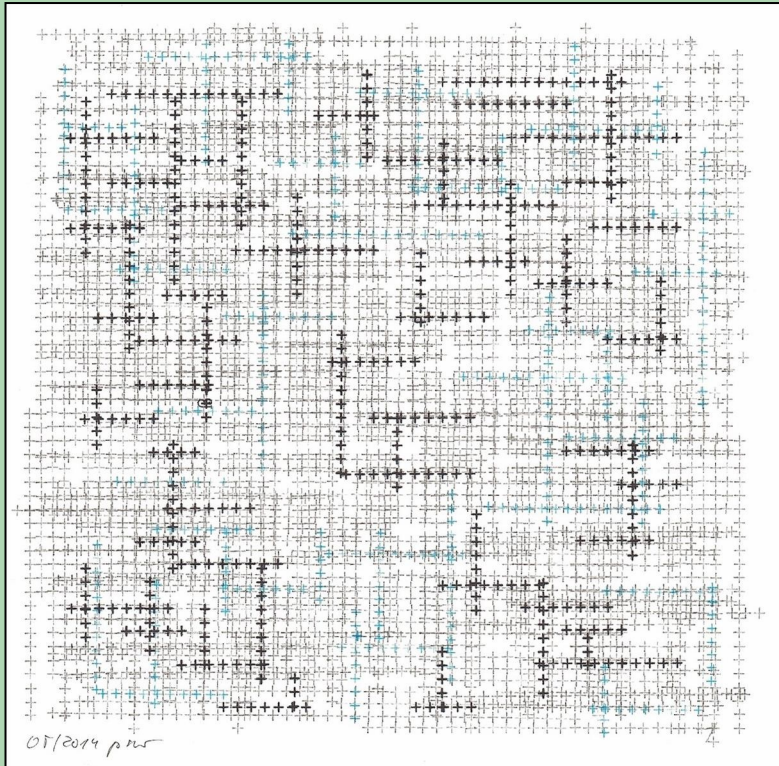But did it have to go like water into oil?

Look, first, at this *I* in your *his*.
Now, find *him* who are *her*, or were *their*.
And see, there? It's all about
what is said from use,
two that had been a number.

If they can call my people down,
then how could these not come up?
When no one has time with which day may be,
each get on by. Would you do more than them?
Write some way out.

[Apart from articles, conjunctions and forms of 'to have' and 'to be', Sharon Phillips' "1957: a sonnet" uses only phrases introduced into the English language in 1957 (according to the Merriam Webster dictionary's 'Time Traveller' app: https://www.merriam-webster.com/time-traveler/1957). Along similar lines, Gregory Betts' "The Hapax Legomenon" employs the 100 most frequently used words in the English language, each once and only once. (Hapax legomenon are words that are used only once in a given text.) The 100 words employed in this poem constitute a distillation of approximately half of every book that has been published in the English language.]

TWO POEMS

—Samuel Andreyev

I

             sharpness of the deceit;
the reception hinges on effort--less so on
partition [albeit diminutive towers have a
way of impinging on reception] save for
minor scrapings. Furthermore,
rhetorical joints are made thusly:
bracket the thought (round or square as bearing
dictates)

             since a slight bump may
allow the engine to hum again with
the addition of essence or fluid cali-
brated messily with oily cartoon hands
grubbing about the dial

II

      this is a photograph
                    toiling away by night to
get the job done with pure grit, massive exodus
of vowels shifting into the dumbness of censure
     (pretty upset about new trends
in the evaluation of 'chaotic' patterns--next they'll
rediscover iron and name it melignite   get
some initial momentum going and business is really
booming so it'll all just snap into place, the longer they
sit on that chesterfield the more their mutual sexual
attraction will become unbearable,

FROM TEXTURES
### —Petra Schulze-Wollgast

[Samuel Andreyev's poetry employs prohibitive rules at the level not of the letter or the word, but of the phrase: Permitting only self-contained clauses, and eschewing all pronouns but 'they', each phrase must be as simple as possible, must avoid subphrases, and, crucially, must not tangibly relate to the content of its adjacent clauses. The result is a network of thoughts that both connect and disconnect, overlaying in a dense fabric. The same effect is achieved visually in the above, its (dis)connected patterns making overt and exclusive use of a joining symbol (+).]
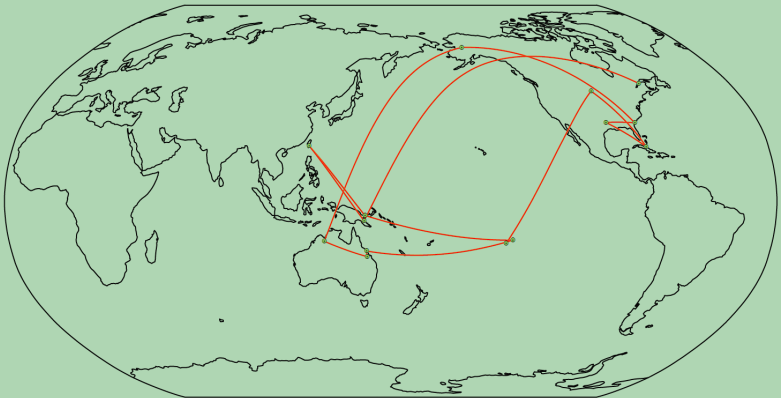
AND...AND...AND...
-Rachel Smith
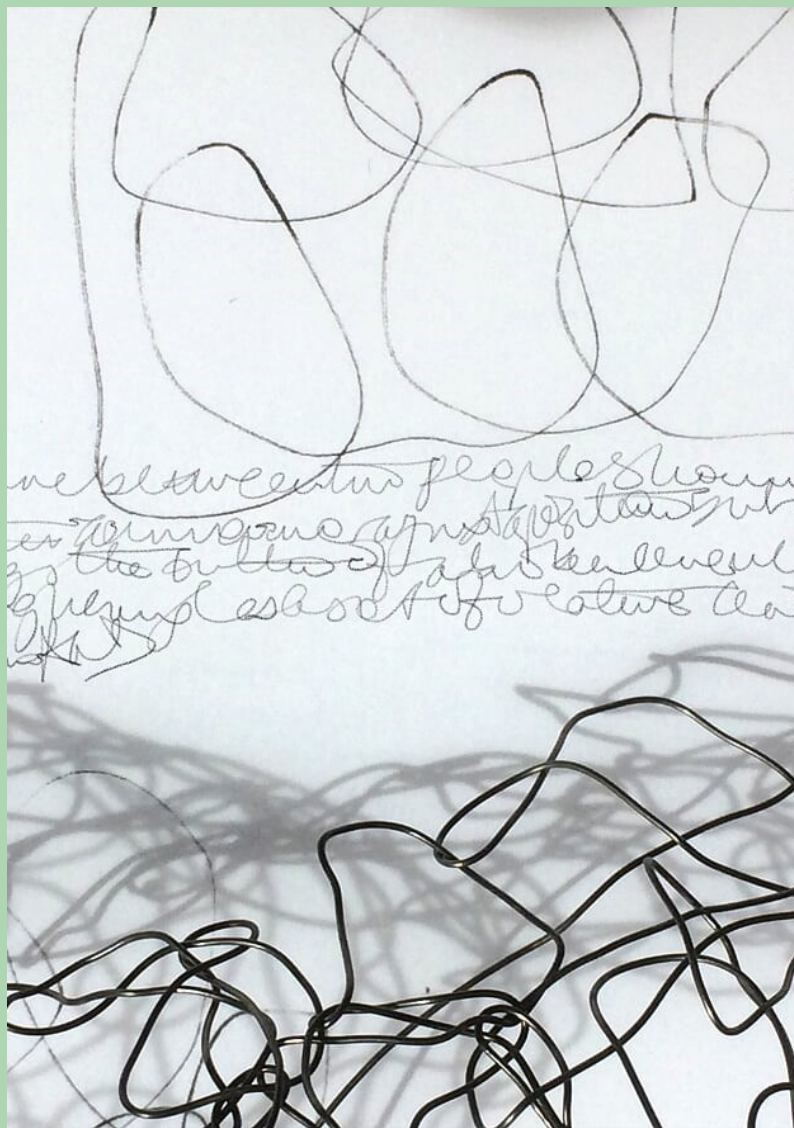
ALF AAH BET

—Nasser Hussain

AAA BBB CCC

GGG HHH
     KKK LLL
MMM
PPP   RRR
SSS TTT UUU

YYY

[In "AND…AND…AND…", three materials trace a Deleuzian 'line of flight' across the page, reaching for the space in between. The image resulted from Rachel Smith's "Interrupteur" artist residency, which explored relationships between materials and dialogue, via interruptions and the unexpected encounter. Tracing a different line of flight altogether, Nasser Hussain's "ALF AAH BET" (from "SKY WRI TEI NGS", Coach House Books, 2018) is a lipogrammatic 'sky poem', composed solely of real airport codes. The map below it describes the poem's route.]

Infinity White
# on Infinity White

—Christian Bök

BLACK SQUARE #2

—derek beaulieu

[“Infinity White on Infinity White” by Christian Bök and “Black Square #2” by derek beaulieu constitute limit-cases in lipogrammatic, concrete poetry. The former uses paint swatches to dissect “Suprematist Composition: White on White” by Kazimir Malevich. The latter uses dry-letter transfer to dissect “Black Square” by Kazimir Malevich.]

CONCRETE POEM

—Andrew Topel
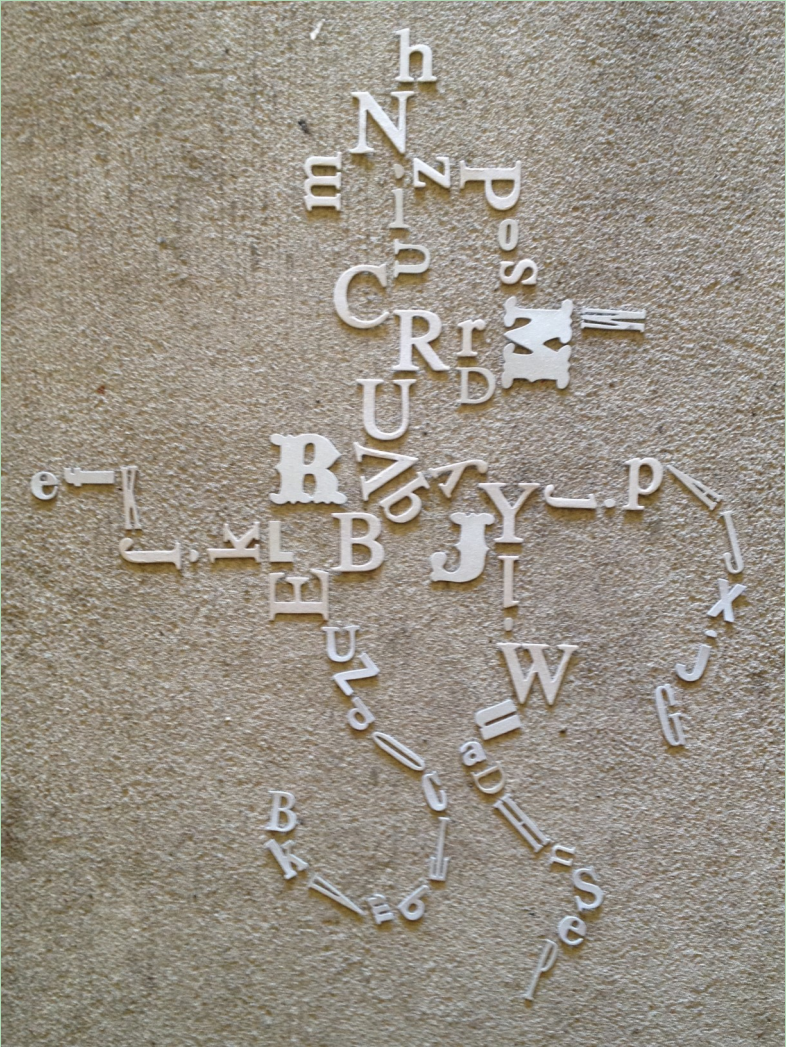
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