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ON JOHN WIENERS

John Wieners's poetry enchants as incantation—the act as articulation to captivate homosexual consciousness. Of which, narcissism and cannibalism, mediated by seductiveness, fascinate because they are final solutions to what Baudelaire put forward as the *vaporisation de Moi*. It fashions as poems artifacts made not to be self-sufficient, but to correspond to the self on another scale:

I like Sunday evenings after you're here.  
I use your perfume to pretend you're near  
in the night. My eyes are bright, why  
can't I have a man of my own?

Your wife's necklace's around my neck  
and even though I do shave I pretend  
I'm a woman for you  
you make love to me like a man.

Even though I hear you say why man  
he doesn't even have any teeth  
when I take out my plate  
I make it up to you in other ways.

I will write this poem.

What distinguishes this from Robert Duncan's or Allen Ginsberg's homosexual poetry, or even Frank O'Hara's to Vincent Warren, is its self-satisfaction. Wieners's tone sounds at once condescending and obsequious. His manner expresses a sensibility at odds with the modesty of its own poetics. The vanity of "I will write this poem" is that the poet cannot get the better of his suggestions of transvestitism and castration.
In Duncan’s and Ginsberg’s poems, their states of mind or processes of thought and feeling are set forth in images and rhythms beyond themselves. Transcending their experience. They work in the romantic tradition, questing for the ineffable. Beyond expression. Not to be uttered. Though what is taboo, what is beyond expression, once the indescribable has been written down at Auschwitz, at Dresden, at Hiroshima—and been written down mainly by reason of this quest, since the Satanic becomes heroic to the romantic rebel and victim—demonic and sacrificial. Wiener’s narcissism assumes that the apocalypse has laid open the ecstasies. Revealed the bloodthirst in their hearts.

Wiener’s poetry reduces Duncan’s and Ginsberg’s to its original terms, and in its narcissism realizes these terms as images that seek equivalence to self, not transcendence. Duncan and Ginsberg concede this in the vanity of their poetics, the conceits with which they give themselves airs. But because their poetics turn to tradition, their tropes appear to have pretensions outside their own claims, beyond themselves, that shift narcissism from their own poetry to tradition. Wiener transfers responsibility for his homosexuality to the poetry that responds to it. Consequently, his poetry has a simplicity and directness that theirs does not.

Wiener looks back at the apocalypse as Lot’s wife did, engaged by the humanity of that gesture, held by the compassion of which mankind is capable. Duncan, in his poem, “This Place Rumored To Have Been Sodom,” declares the humanity of the quest that created Sodom, the human compassion of evil. Wiener knows that all Duncan’s casuistry does not keep his pilgrims from searching the same ground, toward the same end as the first Sodomites. Wiener moves from disaster, turns back, and is immobilized by it. His tropes capture the passions that captivate him:

An old man and a woman
 came to torment me
 in the desert with ants
 and honey.

Three children set me free
 marching proudly over the
 clearing, tearing bands
 of meat

 from my arms, leaving
 me empty to meet my love.
 Who was waiting in bed
 for me.
Wieners recognizes that these passions are all he ever had, even before his destruction. The ruin of eloquence reveals the nature of narcissism and cannibalism—to suffer the self and assimilate the suffering of others—as it has always been. The tropes of Duncan and Ginsberg are put to an end. Simply the thing that he is will make him live:

My poems contain no
wilde beestes, no
lady of the lake, music
of the spheres, or organ chants.

Only the score of a man’s
struggle to stay with
what is his own, what
lies within him to do.

Without which is nothing.
And I come to this
knowing the waste,
leaving the rest up to love
and its twisted faces,
my hands claw out at
only to draw back from the
blood already running there.

by Ken Bluford
TOUGH-MINDED POETRY


Lynn Strongin has written a small book of severe poems entitled Shrift. In it she captures the austerity of a Southwestern winter: "We stare at anything too long/ and it looks the color of mud:/ our writing, our gardens" (from "Shrift XI"); "The stars whistle like bullets above my head/ I shrug my shoulders to the cold" (from "Shrift XII").

This is not a book for those who want happy images. It is a book for those who seek a match between words and our most difficult experience: "A severe sense of everyday life/ lacking all religious trappings" (from "Shrift VII"). For perhaps the most difficult of our experience is that in which the environment refuses to give, in which surfaces are hard and expectations broken:

Land of smoke, snow, frozen postal-carriers
running with frozen hands
hearts, and heads like harps:

bearing the golden strings of fire
which we tear open.
Missives flow.

How clean the broken.
(from "Shrift XI")
Lynn Strongin’s poetry here in *Shrift* is mysterious. She does not say what it is about. She presents images and asks the reader to accept them, to match his or her own story against them. She will not emerge as a specific person to whom we can attach her claims. The poetry in *Shrift* is in part a deliberate statement to that effect. It is old-fashioned in an age of overwhelmingly personal confession. Yet it is a confession. A preface defines the term shrift: “confession to and absolution by a priest.” Yet the specific person and motivating experience remain behind surfaces throughout the work, behind “bronze sun/ burning in glass,” behind “brilliance shattered,” and an unnamed we who are “simply on shore, with glass, tensely sighting.”

Closer to Lynn Strongin’s heart than any personally specific revelation in the design of this little book is a concern with a certain kind of poetry. She has decided that: “Tough-minded poetry/ will necessarily/ be the most triumphant/ in the end.” She is definite in her stance: “I will be nobody’s spaniel,/ not even the wind’s./ No fawning.”

This is a book about poetry and craft as surely as it is a book of crafted, mysterious, confessional poems. Perhaps because in this lonely winter in New Mexico, Strongin found consolation in words, and not just any words but those that would suit her need for an unyielding vision of the season: “Words can offer protection, like wings/ affording shadow,/ the shelter from which life springs.” For Strongin in *Shrift*:

Now language is breaking:
out of a chipped, eggshell-sky
fall bluish wings
or woodchip-pale flakes of snow

Let’s not try to tell
a thing.
Shape-shifting
It is a dark hour.” (from “Shrift IV”)

These are words that refuse to be padded, words that say that nothing should be presented as other than it is. No matter how much we wish for a warm world, when it is inhospitable we must see this. We may fall but we must try for “cold marble vision.”

Lynn Strongin writes of secrets in *Shrift*, the secrets of a person who has known “privacy like the nests of stone,” who loves “the rustic, the near at hand,” but who cannot now dwell on these free from the knowledge that “death will finally bolt up change:/ fixing us as we are.”

There is the suggestion in *Shrift* that Strongin’s poetry comes out of a personal experience of loss of a love. “We all have fairest ones,” she tells us in the end: “Nothing will bring her back/the dove, not handsome by half as my own. Barbarian” (from “Conclusion to Shrift”).
Yet Strongin refuses to make this book a personal tale of grief. Instead she constructs a marble vision to throw at the world and uses her mind to fight devastating emotion. The confession she is most profoundly making is that she has dared, that she has murdered, has killed with words and "clean-cutting" because this was how she sized up the task. She looked around and took cues from the countryside and the season and fashioned her own tool—"This is clay-country," she wrote:

Which will outlast the fragile treehouses
held like sparkling cups to these diamond skies:

a mind bright as a diamond
lit by a match
between Harlequin and Columbine

twinkles in the wind.
It is a passion play . . .
(from "Shrift VI")

There are too many images and lessons in Shrift to be comprehended in one review or many readings. This is a book to be saved and taken out in winter and at times of loss. There is such strength in its austeri-
ty, such relief in its refusal to smooth things over, that one feels freed and gifted by the vision.

by Susan Krieger

Toby Olson's poetry treats the relationship of things to each other and to an underlying reality; yet it avoids setting up programmatic opposites or similarities that would simplify the world at the expense of specific details. Changing Appearance, the title of his collected poems, 1965–1970, suggests two very important aspects of his work: 1.) the constant flux of the physical world; 2.) the underlying unity (appearance, not appearances) of that world. The transcription of as much of this flux as possible without fixing it, while simultaneously showing its underlying spirit, thus becomes one of the chief concerns of his poetry, a concern I should like to examine in this essay.

Olson's map-making poems are basic to his poetic world, for the problem of the map-maker and the painter is also that of the poet: how to depict a three-dimensional world in two dimensions. Changing Appearance (Membrane, 1976) begins with a sequence of eight poems on the subject. "The Old Maps," the first in the series, contrasts the contemporary cartographer with the old map-makers.

The old maps were not a cartographer's

dream of accuracy. They
described an exquisite
motion of the sky. (p. 2)

One meaning of dream is of course "goal," but it also refers to our experiences in sleep, in which case the juxtaposition of dream and accuracy is strange indeed. No contemporary cartographer would concede that a subconscious dream had anything at all to do with his maps. Olson's point precisely. The cartographer's work is also inaccurate, for his science leaves out the human element.
The poem traces the history of map-making, the conflict between the medium and the world it portrays: "Later, the earth was circumscribed/on square paper . . ." (my italics). Ancient maps were imbued with spirit, the earth made human or divine—or at least so represented—by figures of gods and men or by angels on the corners blowing "inward protection/against the old fear of falling." In contrast contemporary maps are no longer "cluttered with things they describe," except for Shakespeare's Britain in the *National Geographic,* but even here, the poet objects, the figures are stylized, the "intensity" of the old map-makers discarded because of their "inadequate" approach.

The poem, then, posits two methods of depicting reality, the ancient "inaccurate" maps and contemporary "scientific" ones, and we know from its tone which the poet prefers, which will serve as his models as he attempts to chart the changing appearance of the world.

Having thus drawn his own poetic map, Olson humanizes it in "The Globe."

Think of the globe as the base
unit of all existence, and you
are driven back
to the human form
(nous of the tongue

He sees man in the world, the world in man, their shapes in each other. Globes abound in the poem: people's eyes, a woman's flanks, her breasts, the moon. There is no uncrossable gulf, indeed no gulf at all, between man and nature.

Nous of the tongue! Just as man and nature are one, so man's physical and spiritual natures complement each other. Nous, according to my dictionary, means mind or reason, more specifically the divine reason regarded in Neoplatonic philosophy as the first emanation of God. How fitting the tongue, that intellectual and sensual organ, is its instrument. The poet emphasizes both its functions.

When I speak to your breasts
the discourse
is elemental/ words stay
in the tongue
the message
palpable

Here we come close to a perfect joining of flesh and spirit. The poet kisses the breasts of the woman he loves and a palpable discourse ensues. Typically Olson's language is rooted in things, not abstractions. When he makes love, however, language fails because it can describe mystic experience only indirectly as death.
Other poems in the map sequence include: "The Relief Map," which follows "The Globe" and seems a continuation of it, "The Trail Map" and "The Road Map," a contrasting pair, "A Special Map" of the present, the most accurate map, and "The Mapping of Currents," currents of water, sex, and speech.

"The Last Map" concludes an astounding series. A map of Ptolemy's world hangs in the poet's study (which is, of course, also his bedroom—another illustration of the unity of mind and body). He muses that Ptolemy sent men to measure the extent of the world, but several died on their journeys and their knowledge with them.

For Ptolemy
whole continents
do not exist

are locked in the hands of dead men
in their poor dead minds. That's
the latitude
& the longitude of it.

Yet even with this knowledge, the poet continues his own efforts. He ends with a plea for measurement, for speech, for love—a joining of the scientific and humanistic approaches to the world.

Let each of us bring a stake
and plant it in the ground
Let the map
be realized. Let the stake

Bloom

[p. 15]

II

His love poems must be counted among his most fertile maps. My personal favorites include: "Four Love Poems," "Wood Song," "Meditations," "Envoy," "Species," and "Cold House." They all have a slight medieval flavor, yet remain firmly fixed in the twentieth century. The first of the “Meditations” begins with a philosophical thesis.

For once say it straight out and not obliquely
Love is a pain and a burden,
Of course there is a *but*.

but is
the care a woman gives to a man beyond poetry
or music
  (even should he sing
   with great care.

The poet-philosopher, who calls our attention to his presence in the poem with his whimsical aside, then defines his terms. He glosses *burden* in terms of natural phenomena.

I said a Burden:
at night the winter air
cut
  /
  through by rain . the impossible
  job for umbrellas and raincoats.

Pain, on the other hand, is psychic.

Pain
  of putting even your clothes
  and yourself totally
  in the care of another’s hands.

And love itself is equated with the natural forces: the night, the wind, winter, and the storm. But if love is the driving storm, how can it also be defined as “the care. . .beyond poetry/ or music”? Clson does not say directly, but the individual parts of his world are never separate, thought at first they may seem so. The poem began with a straightforward statement which we come to realize in the course of the poem is only partially true. As the poem progresses the philosopher recedes, the poet comes to the fore. Love *is* a Pain and a Burden, but also

  what can never be said straight out
  but only
  obliquely through poetry and music

  as vague and vulnerable
  as the wind is
  cut through by this driving rain—

Thereupon the poet returns, as if with a shrug of his shoulders, to his original proposition, to which the body of the poem has given an ironic twist.
a pain then
and a burden. (p. 38)

Because of such failures of language Olson compares love to poetry
and music. His own lyrics abound in melody. Witness “Wood Song.”

“I cannot bring
men unto women or women unto men,
but only
in so far as a song can/ I sing
them together,

In a dark wood
Moss, in a dark wood
Sap
suck’d from the dark root.”

O Ariel
spirit in the bark
lock’d in the dark limbs

Tit
twit/twit

a bird so
delicate, so various
ly fashioned

you cannot touch it
with your hands. (p. 32)

The m’s, n’s, and ng’s of the first four lines make an uncommonly melo-
dious combination. (One reason for unto instead of to in the second
line must certainly be for the extra n.) The first stanza ends, however,
with a rumbling r, which becomes the musical theme of the second. The
phrase “in a dark wood” with all its voiced consonants is twice repeat-
ed, contrasting dramatically with the unvoiced s and p in moss and sap,
words made even more dramatic by their positions at the beginnings of
lines. The vocal effect is that of a sudden whisper, as if the poet were
telling us a secret. And the stanza ends with its refrain subtly changed:
wood becomes root, ending with still another unvoiced consonant. All
this music reinforces the sense of the stanza by emphasizing words hav-
ing to do with nature while the poet speaks of love as a natural force.
The third stanza continues the ark sound of the second in bark, lock'd (a lighter variation), and dark, all of which contrast with the light birdsong in the fourth. There the abundance of t’s (“Tit/twit/twit”), foreshadowed in root, dissipate the r sounds which have so far dominated the poem, so that one feels a contrasting lightness appropriate to the bird and its song. And the t’s prepare us for both the sense and the music of delicate in the sixth stanza. Various is certainly an important, unusual word, one reason for stretching it out over two lines, though the music of the word itself is another. (By this device the poet marks the stanza andante.) Fashioned at first seems out of place, as if the bird were artificial, so delicate it might fall apart if touched. Touching seems an act of desecration, yet fashion means “to shape” and implies an act of the hands. This paradox reinforces the unity of the spiritual and the material, the natural and the artificial. Ariel is in the bark, the spirit lock’d in the limbs of trees and humans. Nature and artifice combine in the bird, in love, to make wonders as a great artist might—as indeed he does in the poem itself.

III

In contrast to these subtle love lyrics stands “Pig’s Book,” a series of thirty short poems, each bearing the title of an animal, in which the pig dominates the world. Here we find strange extremes. Gross animal sounds contrast with intellectual jokes and word-play. In “Horse,” for example, we find a horse with a dog on his back—except the dog turns out to be a pig because he is riding piggy-back (groan!). Some of the animals seem at first to come straight out of the world of Walt Disney. Pig goes to market to buy a horse. He wears a red shirt, goes on a holiday, dances a jig, then returns to his business. He gets drunk on burgundy, scotch, and rot-gut, and chases his tail. Frog acts like a song-and-dance man.

But if the characters of the animals seem to fit the Disney mold, their actions most certainly do not. The horse Pig goes to buy at the market has an erection so big the reader is discreetly advised to turn away. “Bear,” the poet reminds us, “is not called Smokey.” The creatures are bound to each other by the law of the jungle, which also applies in the barnyard: the bigger eat the smaller. The poet considers the nature of the worm, but Pig puts an end to his philosophizing by devouring it. A dead sparrow falls from a tree, and Pig eats it. In fact Olson goes out of his way to show the pig’s grossness, as if he were trying to make the reader throw up.
...[Pig] eats with his eyes open
has no control
of his jaw/ chomp
of the mouse's livelihood

and sometimes chomp of the mouse.
If there's one thing
he doesn't like it's the taste of a rodent's
bowels/ Pig

has no control. (from "Mouse," p. 101)

But if the pig lacks control, the poet does not, for he constantly calls
attention to himself, as if to remind us that he is also one of the charac-
ters in Pig's barnyard. Literary allusions abound. Marianne Moore once
called poetry "imaginary gardens with real toads in them," and the poet
plays on such boundaries of reality.

Frog

Will die carelessly, always
from mawkish water, in poems
unreal
garden (wherein
    a pig walks) &
on his back
with hand across chest (Chaplin-
esque . or like a dead
dancer - tap . or a comic says Layton. There
should have been hundreds
of frogs, or even pigs. There are.

It doesn't matter the joke is
silent/ suck
of the pig entombs him . unreal
garden (p. 91)

The poet reproaches himself for creating a garden with only one frog
and one pig, but when he attempts to enlarge it the pig suddenly shows
a will of its own by devouring the Chaplinesque frog,¹ and the gross
sound of his eating contrasts beautifully with the literary "entombed."
The poet's final "unreal// garden" is not without irony
"Dove also takes advantage of literary associations. Instead of the
bird singing of love, the pig sings of the bird—as food. When he
doesn’t get it, he moves his bowels; and we find that Toby Olson’s poetic map contains not only lovers and woodsongs but pig excrement. The extremes of his world comment on each other by their very presence.

“Buzzard” begins with echoes of Robert Frost: “Two pigs converge in a yellow wood...” They are in love. One wears flowers. But here we find other appetites. A buzzard in a tree overhead shakes down leaves dressing (note the pun) one of the lovers. The pigs exchange vows, but the final words, complete with catchy rime, are left to bird and poet: “Sweet/ meat says the buzzard.”

And man also eats. The poet notes that the rabbit consists of white meat on the thighs, eyes (a rime he insists upon), and snout. But since all parts are not equally edible, indeed the eye and nose might be rather unappetizing, he advises:

O
cut that part off
poke out the eye. The rabbit

was meant to satisfy.

And once again the final word, a rime-word, drips with irony.

Is man less gross than the pig? The poet reminds us in Pig’s own words that the pig will be slaughtered, butchered, and eaten—for all its grossness—by man.

But the pig says, “I am not dreaming,
a knife in the throat
a hammer.” Come summer

(from “Bear,” p. 104)

The sequence ends with Pig listening to the coyote sing the cycle of life in which he hears his own coming destruction.

...what they will do is make
meat of me
bacon and chops
a-roast-pig, and whatever else is

tasteful (Coyote

sings from it.
and Pig hears it
alone, in the barnyard
where he lives.

(from "Coyote," p. 108)

And Olson’s use of the word *tasteful* in this context at the end of the sequence speaks volumes for his skill as a wordsmith.

The poetry of Toby Olson contains a broad spectrum of life, from the grossness of Pig to the elegance of love, but nothing occurs in isolation. The force that creates the marvelous love-bird in “Wood Song” also controls the animals in “Pig’s Book.” Yet *Changing Appearance* ends not with Pig’s coming destruction but with an elegant love lyric written *after* the poet has undergone the world of the pig.

*Cold House*

There are those who make love in poems
others
    send letters of great vehemence
to those who are making love
or writing poems about it

I am one of those.
and yet
as I enter the cold room
    find you
sexless, sitting before the cold fire
dressed in old clothes
    trying
to take the chill off, I

find I am coming
as if for the first time
into your presence

That’s why
I go into the other room, write
letters to those who are making love
search for
"what is wished for
realized in the ‘dream’ of the poem"

Which is simply, sometimes
    just seeing you
I enter newly
into my life.
Like Walt Whitman, Toby Olson is a great unifier. His map—and I stress the singular—breathes spirit—and again I stress the singular. Like the boy in his poem “The Globe” the poet bravely confronts the complex world he attempts to chart.

he stands
still on the Big Globe, and sees
into agitations
of its surface.

by Victor Contoski

1 Layton, according to Olson, refers to Irving Layton, author of *A Laughter in the Mind* (Jargon, 1958). His poem “Cain” contains these lines about a dead frog:

Hand on his belly, and his white shirt front
Spotless. He looked as if he might have been
A comic; tapdancer apologizing
For a fall, or an Emcee, his wide grin... Coaxing a laught from us for an aside Or perhaps a joke we didn’t quite hear.
MARGIDE:
photographs

photograph of Isaiah Zagar
ISAIAH ZAGAR:
portfolio of paintings

self portrait
self portrait
ISAIAH
Paintings by Isaiah Zagar
Photographed by Margi Ide
self portrait
MADE IN MEXICO

I am
my own
Mexican maid,
and I treat
her like
red hearts

on a pepper tree
that might not
produce
if you don’t
tender them
so.

I pay her with
shining gloss
surroundings,
and she can
stop.were.king.
anytime and
dwell on light
and distances—
the miniscule
in my
kitchen hold
She works

extra
for nothing—
for a song
Holidays,
I prime her
with candy
and rompope
and let her off—
not easily,
but early
Bent of my
Swedish shoulder

against
singing wheel’s
happy turning,
she rearranges
boundaries and
space, like

a clearing
lady cleaning
I own
what I can
care for.
I care for

this maid
By my
hands’ ache—
hers,
in her own
territory

and time
attend.
Diamonds,
faucets,
the muscle of
mind—

uncovered
facets, hers,
new-to-me,
improve
mine
The Mexicana
and I own
our own
land. How
the ground
feels, O and
the house

on it! she
flutters about,
er her Swedish heart
opening up
to mariposas,
er privileged,

busy hands
alighting
flower chores,
exclaiming,
"Precious yellow-
hot morning

sweat
is mine
and sweet!"
I’m my own
Mexican maid.
She sings while

she works,
hers own things
she’s scrubbing.
I treat her as
I would myself—
exotically,

royally,
carefully as
dual monarch
butterflies
interlocked in
a garden afire.
When she gets uppity,
we get uppity together.
When she turns on me, I

become a slavish red pepper
glowing in a dazzling house
demanding things get done.

Lynn Lonidier
In Paris
he refused to endorse
to sign
any authorization
of organized spontaneity

retorted
with Moo!
to those called the Wild Beasts
claiming
as his affiliation
the Cows

returned
at the end of an hour
of an evening
to lodgings
to sleep,
in less than a decade
to Belgium

boredom
nostalgia for Spain
and clouds

Barbara A. Holland
THE FRAGILE PAST

More distant than ever from you,
I remember the blind white heat
the day we went digging in Colima
where lovers of dogs and hunchbacks
had shafted beneath the rock ledge

and left beside their dead,
clay figures of what they’d been
a potter, a clown or singing men
their arms entwined—
then set a cap stone and filled the shaft.

We tested with spearlike tools
within sight of the volcano’s clouds
for broken ground and hollowed graves
packed by centuries of daily tremors,
then with out hands we probed a tomb.

But burrowing away from the sun and you,
I wasn’t sure when I reached something hard,
not then, whether it was bone, bowl or warrior
till I cleared away the last remains
of that earthbound union, finger by finger

Gar Bethel
AS I TURN MY HEAD

for Nancia

Your smile was a waterfall
of language that tortured
with the mystery of its flow
and seemed to promise
a share of its rapture.

It seemed to ask,
"If I were your god,
would you hate me for loving others?"
It bit slivers of ice
and caught sun in their prisms
then ate them like diamonds.

It whispered in my ear
as if I were a secret child.
Even now, at night alone,
I can feel your lips on my lobe.

Gar Bethel
WRESTLING WITH AN ANGEL

I want to tell you something
I can only tell you with my eyes.
I want to be truthful
yet anything I say will be a lie.
I want to tell you
the moon on your face last night
is so much like what I mean
but right away I know
that's much too simple.

I want to tell you something
I can only tell you with my hands
but you are the one who controls them
like the wind directs a pigeon's wings.
I could hope you would understand
if I told you how I feel
toward the pressure of earth and sun
but it isn't the same.

The words never stop forming in my mind
yet there is nothing I can say

Gar Bethel
EL NEVADO DEL RUIS

a snowcapped peak, 17,280 feet
in Caldas, Colombia

Ground forgets
where it comes from, a fault
in the earth reaching
into an inconsolable blue, past
the tree line, past the last
remnants of life, where for miles
the growth is all sinews and sticks
and plants on the cliffs
in their yellow fur like distant
demented children.

Nothing but rock and wind
moving mist like steam
from a buried forge, dwarfs
wheezing like ancient crickets
of unhappiness.

A mountain close enough
to hold a mirror to the moon, its tryst
with silence,
capped with tropical snow,
which may not exist, which may be
a childhood dream, dispossessed
and approached via the infinite angle
of desire.

We have climbed to the cold solitude
of a great patience, climbed to pass
snow from hand to hand, a gift
given us to make warmth, to summon
the living.

Barbara Ras
AT THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ANDES

Above the clumps where feather trees
have quit their night creaking,
I sit on an outcrop. The sun
climbs the rise of the first felted mountain,
unrolls the valley into today’s light
Shadows shrink toward me.

It is so still—
the horses deep in their grazing,
a farmer hovering in his field,
one car touching the far road, moving
the dust tenderly—everything slows
in the time it takes to reach me.

And you in the house under the blue roof
are singing in your sleep, in your sleep
because these are the masked days,
the mute ones, carrying you
into a separate year

Sadness wakes me like a new bird,
shy to touch this dawn of loss,
this strange arrival
I will be happy for you,
later, when your music walks here
without shoes, when change takes us
beyond regret

Now let the valley spread out,
let its green absorb my grieving,
let the cane fields bloom into white wands.

Barbara Ras
VOYAGERS WHO TOLD THE TALE

Subdued stony seas.  
Shivering faroff assembled sailors  
awakened from steaming debris of lost time  
came home to abandoned ancient ways  
at midnight  
came to thresholds  
searching, after barren blinding  
of Cyclops,  
wisps of Circe hiding in their hair  
remembering stark desolation  
of illimitable words  
wandering coeval  
in migratory constant chaos  
with antique accident.

Wheels of crude cleverness.  
Destinations circumnavigating circumstance.  
Horizons swirling.  
Day-doggedness succeeding  
repulsion and desire.
Passing foreshores, sail-sightings, 
reefs, showers, fresh food, trifles 
congealed with whales, acid wares 
into mind-shattering mosaics—
like a magic cultural increment

Their became marvelous mortal memoirs 
recalling daring impulses soaked 
shrouded in mists, confined meridians, 
concealed in isolated ape skulls 
whetted by massive shifting corridors of waves.

Live novel tales, white wondering versions 
of wiles, wrath, 
awkward vast-winged creatures 
long-since vanished, 
dud plans, swamps of space, 
voyages in sealed sound, of flights 
from worship and from warning. 
They told of deductions, ascents, spites, 
stimulating deaths, tainted secrets, 
enchanted isles, Troy, perhaps Tahiti 
as they traversed the tropics 
to their blasting bottom— much of it ballast.

Much must have been transmuted: 
those immobile resolutions, the waitings, 
retracings, wild rituals, 
how they did not listen to the warning, 
so that they dwelt in the strong vessel 
of homelessness so long 
seeking the undiscovered word, 
which seemed a surging seeping cry.

Bombasted, outlasted, sung, unsung 
these were the voyagers who told the tale.

Edward Mycue
THE JUDGEMENT ON THE ROSE

SKETCHING CRAZY DREAMS OF BEING FREE ONTO A WALL OF LUNATIC GLASS, LABURNUM DREAMS STRETCH OUT INTO THE WARP OF HISTORY, INTO SHEBA’S TAPESTRY OF WHICH I CLAIM TO HAVE WOVEN NOT EVEN THE LEAST EXTRAORDINARY LEAF

Breathing doubt, new heavens hells are sitting in judgement on the past “while grass grows, the steed starves” voicing hesitated longings

THEY CALL THEM LABURNUM DREAMS— STRANGE, DARK CREATURES, LIKE BIRDS FLUTING, FLUTTERING, FLUSHING LIKE FUSHIA SPREADING, BLOSSOMING LIKE A FLOWERING MAPLE, NOT NEARLY SO CLEARLY, BUT PRISONERS OF OPPRESSIVE THOUGHTS DWELL IN THEIR LABYRINTHE ALL HONEYCOMBED IN YELLOW AND RED PILES OF MELLOWED BRICK.

Swinging behind mysterious green doors, what we are learning is a false smile.

IN A HARBOR I DID WITH A STONE IN YOUR MOUTH IN AN ATTEMPT TO COMBINE VIRTUE AND TERROR A BRASS CLAMP ** MANKIND ** IS CAREENING ON THE HIGHWIRE INTO A LONELY, CARESSING SORT OF DEATH, WHICH IS A SIGNPOST WITHOUT A SIGN.

I threw a stone

You killed a mockingbird

42
THE JUDGEMENT ON THE ROSE

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Swinging behind mysterious green doors, what we are learning is a false smile.

IN A HARBOR I DIE WITH A STONE IN YOUR MOUTH IN AN ATTEMPT TO COMBINE VIRTUE AND TERROR A BRASS CLAMP ** MANKIND ** IS CAREENING ON THE HIGHWIRE INTO A LONELY, CARESSING SORT OF DEATH, WHICH IS A SIGNPOST WITHOUT A SIGN

I threw a stone.

You killed a mockingbird
A DREAM DREAMING US

This morning I was there when the library opened and it was like the pressure of a numb kiss as in ONCE AGAINST THE LAW, 22 tales of mystery and suspense, I found shoved in the pages this note, which, unfolded, read “Dear Jimmy You do not need me I don’t even want to be your friend Go Blow your brains out ---- Fuck boy.”

That’s all for this morning, I hope. It’s like Pushkin trying to rime shrine and urine while wandering in the streets of stony old St. Petersburg as he laughed at death the way a story like this one this morning in the library reminded me of itself in the pages of a book of short stories folded in a penciled note of seven lines on the reverse of a check-out slip, as if THIS today were the secret day when that hidden anguish all-at-once-so-private becomes so public, seems so seamy, and is sad

in such stories are vibrant tiny eyes of forget-me-not, blue of rosemary, violet/mauve-and-white of Moses-in-the-cracle, sapphire lobelia, myriad pancies of my silver-leafed begonia’s fragrantless pink/beige flesh-like blossoms, and drywhite thousandsmallflowers in those fist-size globes that top the wild green onion stalks We, like plants, unfold quietly, even secretly, and die within a world of plants, within the image of the deepest images of a thousand hues of need unsatisfied, and having given-out fragrances to the wind stink like lilies (“that fester smell far worse than weeds” —

weeds, those defenders of the soil as a text is titled flowers misplaced, misunderstood, blossoms no one wants to recognize.) Great sermons need great listeners. It makes no difference now. the judgement on the rose is gnarled music. Except. Except that yesterday is dreaming visions vanished like the Avars. And the Kalahari felt there was a dream dreaming us. Fuck boy.

Edward Mycue
SWALLOW

There is a stranger within me,
an intruder who is not me and is a part of me.

We co-exist and yet it's he who habitates as I exist.

I swallow and he drinks who'll die when I die or so I think.

Edward Mycue
DERYL MACKIE:
portfolio of paintings
Paintings by Deryl Mackie
Photographed by Margi Ide
KEN FIFER

IMPATIENCE IN MY POLAROID DAYS

Giussepi Parini, Poeta
Barnabi Oriani, Astronomi
They died in this square
Outside the Braidense
Near a monument
To the famous unknown
Pittore, Francesco Hayez
I climb the fence to rest
To wait for Betsy
And meanwhile reread
SEVERANCE PAY

If I were Parini or Oriani
I would know how to praise
This delicate skyscape
I would know how to judge
This hot Milanese day
I would learn the patience
To sit for a portrait
And not just see
Milan through a camera
I would let Hayez paint
My repose in his shades

Ken Fifer
ANOTHER SEASON

Curled in a cup in the kitchen pantry,
I’m listening, but only some of these
Calls are for me. We live on Maple Street,
With rings, we count the leaves
As we stretch our feet
Though the earth is squared against every tree,
On April First we admire every seam
And enjoy the paved asymmetry,
Which reminds us both of our own bodies,
So we go upstairs and change to sneakers
And come out running down the street.
So our quiet times go by more quickly,
Finished before the dishes are clean.
I see my face in the wrist watch you gave me.
My hours are luminous, not free.

Ken Fifer
FOR BETSY, INFORMATION

I was a man on a bridge
For a long time. When the west said
The sky was finished, you stepped
Through the half world night. When
The east said the world would begin
Any minute, inexhaustibly blue
Your body light came-through.
I thought I knew you once or twice.

Ken Fifer
GHAZAL  THE IMPASSE

Sun glints on a metal box of watercolor paints.
Wind stills to a silence like emergency.

We sit in parallel lines, birds on a telephone wire.
Light changes from second to second

She says it’s possible to love more than one person
She stands to buy a ticket wearing clothes I’ve given her.

Aspens shudder on a summer evening.
I take my paints into the woods.

The room smells of linseed oil and turpentine.
Two paintings hang facing each other like lovers holding their ground

Robin Becker
COMPANY

The couple that comes to visit
sits over the table drinking tea.
He is big with a dark beard &
does most of the talking.
She is blond, thin, dissolving,
& then pulled back into the conversation
to agree on a time to leave
& the number of blankets

You are always eager for guests
& listen to the stories of his brother
who used to do a lot of dope
but has changed. I sit quietly
through this session, watching
moths crash against the screen door.

Robin Becker

WHERE I LIVE

Upstairs the kid is crying & I want to
shut her up, put an end to her weeping which
stands between me & what I have to do tonight,
listening, instead to her sobbing I begin to
turn cruel, bite my fingers, & heat up coffee.
Soon I’ll start eating Still, she hiccups & whines.
In the next room, her sister hums, sleeps, turns
away, turns off I imagine her dreams of escape—
men, trucks, highways, hitchhikers—

Robin Becker
CRESCENT MOON LIKE A CANOE

This month you carried me late and heavy
in your belly and finally near Tuesday
midnight you gave me light and life, the season
Kore returns to Demeter, and you suffer
and I cannot save you though I burn with dreams

Memories the color of old blood,
scraps of velvet gowns, lace, chiffon veils,
your sister's stage costumes (Ziegfield
didn't stint) we figured together, you
padding in sneakers and wash-worn housedresses

I see your blood soaking into the linoleum
I see you twisted, a mop some giant hand
is wringing out I see the embryo
I passed in the toilet after you
told me how to abort myself

You grew celery by tucking whipped off
bottoms in the soil You kept a compost
pile in 1940 Your tomatoes glowed
like traffic signals in the table-sized yard
Don't kill the spiders, you warned
In an asbestos box in Detroit where sputtering factories yellow the air, where sheets on the line turn ashen, you nurtured a backyard jungle. Every hungry cat wanted to enter and every child

You who had not been allowed to finish tenth grade but sent to be a frightened chambermaid, carried home every week armloads of random books from the library rummaging them late at night, insomniac,

riffling the books like boxes of chocolates searching for the candied cherries, the nuts, hunting for the secrets, the formulae, the knowledge those others learned that made them shine and never ache.

You were taught to feel stupid, you were made to feel dirty, you were forced to feel helpless; you were trained to feel lost, uprooted, terrified.
You could not love yourself or me

Dreamer of fables that hid their own endings, kitchen witch, reader of palms, you gave me gifts and took them back but the real ones boil in the blood and swell in the breasts, furtive, strong.

You gave me hands that can pick up a wild bird so that the bird relaxes, turns and stares. I have handled fifty stunned and injured birds and killed only two through clumsiness, with your touch.

You taught me to see the scale on the bird leg, the old woman’s scalp pink as a tearose under the fluff, the golden flecks in the iris of your eye, the silver underside of leaves blown back. I am your poet, mother.
You did not want the daughter you got
You wanted a girl to flirt as you did
and marry as you had and chew the same
sour coughed up cud, yet you wanted too
to birth a witch, a revenger, a sword

of hearts who would do all the things
you feared  Don’t do it, they’ll kill!
you, you’re bad, you said, slapping me down
hard but always you whispered, I could have!
Only rebellion flashes like lightning.

I wanted to take you with me, you don’t
remember  We fought like snakes, biting
hard at each other’s spine to snap free.
You burned my paper armor, rifled my diaries,
snuffed my panties looking for smudge of sex,

so I took off and never came back and you can’t
imagine how I still long to save you,
to carry you off, who can’t trust me
to make coffee, but you belong to my father
who bought you in marriage, not to me.

Fast pain, slow pain, pain in the belly
and the back, pain in the bone and the muscle,
pain in the careless joke and the shouted
insult, pain in the fist, pain like knives
and forks set out on the domestic table

you look to men for salvation and each year
finds you more helpless  Do I battle
for other women, myself included,
because I cannot give you anything
you want? I cannot midwife you free.

In my childhood bed we float, your ripe
persimmon voice singing about the crescent
moon, with two horns sharp and bright we would
climb into like a canoe and paddle away
and see, you sang, where the pretty moon goes
In the land where the moon hides, mothers and daughters hold each other tenderly. There is no male law at five o'clock. Our sameness and our difference do not clash metal on metal like swords but we celebrate and learn.

My muse, your voice on the phone wavers with tears. The life you gave me burns its acetylene of buried anger, unused talents, rotted wishes, the compost of discontent, flaring into words strong for other women under your waning moon.

Marge Piercy

photographs of Marge Piercy by Robert M. Shapiro
NAOMI PARKER

THE LITTLE HEAT

1
A low flame blows in the maples.
Each day the sky grows dark above
the folding fields, dark as the corn's
old teeth. Wind scraping the stubble is
pitched like a blade, and stalks
whine high in my head.
Fuel fails in the last
scarlet that falls
and cracks
rib by rib.
The spine goes black on the back of
the earth.
       Maples mark the sky like frozen
arrows of birds.

2
White seeds stick against the bedroom
window. A long branch stooped to the pane
in November and froze,
the black arm stubbed
on the glass though its cold
hand fingers dreams.
In the torn breast of the moon
I imagine a leaf hung
on the end of the arm. Love,
unhook the hand.
       Press your lips
flat on the glass like leaves.
The little heat that splits
the seam of your mouth will
pull one note, one dark and parching fire
forward.

       Naomi Parker
A BIG BLACK BEE MAKES IT WITH A BRIGHT YELLOW DANDELION

It’s not like he was perched on her
nor does he drift idly by
pausing on her body

no, he crouches
heavy, intent, relentless
yet gentle

in endless many-jointed moves
he sorts her yellow silks
with thick black fingers
presses into her yellow
intense as any sentient lover

I never saw a bee do like that before
next to her
there’s a thin white sister
gone to seed

Jane Somerville
CELESTIAL TEMPTRESS

The earth
reversed
her direction

All the clocks
turned
and whirléd back

Latitudes swept past
rivers ran upstream
tides collided

In his dream
the woman stood
profound and silent
raised her arms

in her mind’s eye
the atom jerked
and sprang apart

then
a gentle perfection
sheen of silks
careless air
everything
settling

Jane Somerville
SONYA DORMAN

DRUID

for Diana Kurz

Snow remains, white feathers
on north slopes where sunshine
never falls. Pods’ open cups
hold nothing but air pie
or rain water. I remember
they told me this was no way to live

How wrong they were.
Among rattling oak leaves
I stand, one palm out
filled with striped seeds
and birds come.
There’s a body in my hand
I hold a bright piece of day,
turning me into a tree.

Dressed in white furs the wind
crosses the path. Like a spirit
looking for home it pushes
branches aside, breathes on the pond,
wants to get under my skin
I hold out a hand for giving,
for taking the day back,
air, water, the way to make leaves

Sonya Dorman
MORNING AFTER

Oh Cassis, Cinzano,
smuggled brandy
from Puerto de Santa Maria,
early sunshine on bottles!
Among bombs of dust
the old smoke rises.

After a night on the town
the Navy pilots wing off.
Green awnings stretch
over merchants’ windows,
dry goods tighten up
on their virgin bolts
at the first touch
of a greedy hand.

Oh, morning sunshine
spitting and sparkling
on glassy curves,
half a bottle remains
of strong black rum
and I remember how well
I was speaking American

Sonya Dorman
THREE MAORI POEMS

In translating the poems I used “Legends of the Maori” by James Cowan and the assistance of Charles Olsen, Motorua Island, N.Z.

ABOUT THE GODDESS MIRU

enter sire
the gates of that dark land
the door of endless night
the dwelling of the gods
of the goddess Miru
of the ever greedy one
who hurls you
to the corners
of her gloomy room

THE FLAX BUSH OMEN,
LAMENT FOR THE DEAD

farewell friend
go to your ancestors
you’re plucked from us
like a flax shoot from the bush
held aloft before warriors
you who were our boast our pride
whose name soared high
now your people are desolate
indeed you are gone friend
vanished like our ancestral ships
like the canoe that drew up
from the sea this solid land
TE NGARU’S FLUTE SONG

I sit alone
on the cliff
looking toward Pukurahi
where my love lives

the fires burn low
on the hill
on the hill
pale moonlight shines

I wish we could love again
by that pale light

my sad flute song
drifts across the lake
but your lament
never reaches my ears

Sonya Dorman
ELIZABETH OSBORNE:
portfolio of paintings

"Manchester Porch"  acrylic & oil  1979
Still Life acrylic & oil 1978
Still Life acrylic & oil 1978
Still Life, August  oil & acrylic  1978
Portrait of Tony Greenwood  oil & acrylic  1978
PHOTOGRAPHER AT A
MASS EXECUTION

The newscaster told us
the photographer was a woman
who hid on a rooftop in—
I can't remember the city

I watch
the prisoners
corralled onto a football field—
wearing white
artists, teachers, scientists,
the resisters—
   petals blown from a tree
blur across the lens
then—just before the sound of gunfire—
from trees far left—
the herd of small deer! your arm
jerks in surprise, then
back into focus—

the prisoners fall

one left standing
one last shot

silence
I am left
wondering
what became of you,

imagine how you climb
off the roof and slip into the heat
of a living city,
trying to look like any women
returning from market,
like you have turnips instead of a camera
weighing your basket down,

being a woman you would have learned
to pretend
what you were doing was of no
importance

Lee Schwartz
A lover is someone
not there    A husband is
a dream but a child
is held to the light
and screams
morning awake.

A story is something
never written.
A novel is a dream
but a poem
is breathing in many
cracks of the day

Lee Schwartz
LAST POEM FOR ISADORA DUNCAN

At last I see you
are not a part of me. But a part
of the air.
And I more of earth.

You have danced thru my brain
leaving blue lace,
exhilaration,

and my soul has
risen like air
But it is the air in bread
taking a definite,
limited form.

Not like you.
Not like the air
in clouds.

Lee Schwartz
OTIS BROWN

BONELESS CHICKEN

MY DISH

Boneless chicken i become
when you my vivacious appetite tempter
transform to a combination of my
every colossal delight garnished
with a long stemmed cocktail glass in hand.
All american ham i am staying
long tongued like a calf with
salt on its grass
The last time this all american
boy was seen with a lawn mower,
the FBI came in to investigate the grass.
A choppy liver on the highway, moving
backwards at 100 mph, I still
come up cold turkey Everytime
I think you think we think those thoughts.
Skinless chicken i become when I
call you on the phone and stuffed
chicken when you ain’t at home.
Maybe on a flagpole is where i belong.
I simply want to tie you to
the strip stake and enjoy every tender morsel
MY DESSERT

My order for the day
is you humming a melody
of your assorted creamy noises
like churps and hums for
your esoteric bum
I want to send a sizzling sun
kiss to your tender loins
and beyond. Boneless chicken
sandwiched between you the
hot potato without sour cream
and mastibation is like a
miniature banquet at the waldorf.
Stuffed me dining on the hole
in an onion. Ring me when
heart of you with blue me
on top is on the menu.
Sauerkraut i become clicking
my feet across the threshold
leaving a spiced beef on our
lead brains frying in the pan
of promise. Then you call me
again. Maybe me on friday, and
maybe my sweet strawberry, sunday.
A daring and delightful combo
i become when the situation
demands that i be one. Boneless
chicken sending a sunkiss floating
in sweet strawberry’s sunday,
seven days a week. Weak me crawling
to see you in my mirror of lust
focus your silver dollar laser
beams sprinkling me with sugar
My mirage of magnificency flutters
in the shadows as i wall
nuts.
TAKE OUT

Get you bag,
boneless chicken,
and split.
Neatly wrapped and
ready for teeth, i’d
like to sink into your
neck in a back seat reflex.
Boneless chicken in a greasy
bag trying to let his
tongue wag like a boy’s
camp bound fag.
Come over here and put
on the top of me, you.
Chocolate cake at 3 am,
baby i’ll cop Just keep
my whatyoumacallit hot
Moving back in your with
my head full of bags. My
tongue about to freeze in
head shaking wag.
Whole moonlight through
a field of wheat.
One more, mama, I constantly repeat
A sour note from her horn of
plenty is I copped the one
and only piece. Lemon drops in
my cup and I get up to split
Boneless chicken foiled in an
attempt to be eaten while hot
CHECK

Take a train,
a bloody mary,
and split.
So boneless cant steam
after being foiled
in his every attempt
Hook into some chocolate
cake at three pm.
Take out your spiced beef
on the all american ham
by gaining 15 lbs at
a street side cafe. Counter
by running back from the
apple. A small nibble will
be so mysteriously
missing from your ankle
For hiding in the bag of
luggage with the least room
is boneless chicken cooled
as to give off no aroma.
Take him into the bathroom
and eat him. Dim moonlight
through the keyhole of your
suitcase, our man boneless
is foiled and cool for teeth
ready for the apple.
HOME DELIVERY

Just call us, Lady
Our boy will drop in the
meat of your desire
We deliver anywhere in
a hour block radius.
No fuss about tipping
our boy. He’s the all
american ham Take anything
he can, but keep those
pajama tops closed cause
who knows what evil lurks
in the pants of delivery boy
Our meat will come frozen
stiff or losing juice.
What’s the use worrying about
A&P Whether on your door or
your floor, our boy will break
fast
DISH ROOM

West points the hot dogs, but boneless could at best two lipstick stained napkins as bussing end his journey near the garbage disposal grinding up an apple. His spiced beef flowed to a tender simmer becoming pleaser of all his anxieties. Surely boneless chicken with blood running out the side must violate health codes. Uniformed men marched by boneless' last bed soggy with two time tea bags and cigarette butts. Never would boneless walnuts after breakfast again. A north star from one of strawberry's sunday twinkled in his eye, but why cry for curtains fall on broadway every night. Uptight, boneless chose not to flounder in this hole of indecency. Always considered a delicacy from the deep, such situations were for winged birds like dummy ducks and sam cornish hens. The raw fact was boneless was cooked. Uniformed men fired on a range across the room, but the roar of the garbage disposal captured boneless' every thought. A stuffed liver in a bed of wild onions, he would shortly become. Just one more chance to deliver a meaty mouthful to a hapless housewife bitten twice in her life couldn't be too much to ask.
The uniformed orchestra kept time with a clock sending out a song, juicy and tender and all of the same gender which they found after reading boneless' will was all wrong. Before the crew could strike the final chord above the garbage disposal's recoil, boneless stop the middle of one of the best renditions of HELL TO THE CHIEF to have one last fling with the absurd. Perhaps his only out was to find a way with words.
Life hung from boneless’ throat as the apple rolled in eight million pieces into the garbage can. The uniformed men marched by the clock sighing an end to their tour. Sure, boneless’ knees were knocking like icecubes in a blender. Return to sender was written all over his future. Bite size bits of boneless chicken meat would shortly be rammed into the mouth of the garbage disposal instead of his appetite tempter. A dusty drag on a hardwood floor, what more of a melody of death marches could boneless hum. A bum tried to steal him into a crisp brown bag, but the lone remaining uniformed man garnished his knuckles with an automatic egg slicer. O to be eaten even while cold, boneless posed with his slide down in the not to distant future. Strawberry split out the door leaving boneless to follow the apple into the mechanical dentures, but her motives were as foggy as a smoke storm in a brushfire. The all american ham previously browned to perfection now lay face first in more cocktail sauce. Lost was his style. Never again would his meat and balls sandwich his colossal delight all night over an open fire. Boneless sighed his last breath, and thought of Lassie in hollywood in Federico Fellini’s folding chair in sunglasses. A cool dog in a brown bag like a rat with midriff bulge. The uniformed men hoisted boneless above, and in the distance rose a churp from strawberry, his love.
She is the best looking fruit. A shortcake of her would explode into the deepest corners of a man’s stomach stuffing him into a turkey. “Wrap him neatly so I can step. I think I told the waiter that”

The uniformed men lowered boneless into a bed of tossed greens and elegantly serene, he thought of Lassie on the LA freeway in a limousine enroute at all cost to an interview with David Frost. A cool brown dog in a new bag.

Otis Brown
JOHN E. DOWELL, Jr.:
portfolio of paintings

"Push That Sound" water color 1978
“Lines Played with Soul” silk screen 1976
JOAN LA BARBARA

VOICE PIECE

(One Note Resonance Investigation)

Decide mentally on a comfortable pitch — one which can be placed or felt in the maximum number of resonance areas.

Choose a resonance area or resonating cavity, think the pitch in that area and then start the sound.

Try to use all suggested areas alone first and later in combination:

bridge of nose
high cheek bones
lower front of nose
center of nose area
lips (front mouth cavity — buzz)
chest bones
inside cheeks
back of cheeks
mouth
— hard palate area (anterior)
— soft palate area (posterior)
— vowel variations
upper throat (yawn)
lower throat (front)
lower throat (back)
face mask (general front)
eyebrow region
forehead area (including “Third Eye” central focus region)
top of skull and above (beyond physical barrier)
back of skull (inside)

Do these in any comfortable mental and/or physical order.

Create rhythms by moving in and out of resonance areas, sliding from one to the next. The length of time spent in each area will indicate rhythmic thoughts.

There should be long silent spaces between the first placement of sounds in each individual resonance area. Singer should be certain that the sound will resonate in the designated area before starting any sound.

Suggested Duration: 10 to 20 minutes

Joan La Barbara
March 2, 1974
(revised: September 20, 1974)
Register of Copyrights
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20559

Re: "Voice Piece: One-Note Internal Resonance Investigation"

Dear Representative:

Enclosed are the application Form E, $6 check, one copy of the above mentioned piece and several pages of pertinent information regarding the piece. I have enclosed two reviews and a copy of my program notes regarding the music compositions since I understand it has been difficult in the past for avant-garde composers to obtain copyrights for music pieces which are described verbally instead of notated on conventional staff paper. For your convenience I have indicated with blue pen the portions of the reviews and notes which pertain to the specific piece I wish to copyright.

If you need further description of the sounds, a graphic score or tape I will be happy to furnish them. In the meantime I would appreciate your keeping the enclosed material on file.

This is a very specific piece of music, requiring much skill to perform. It is not "poetry" and I would not like to have to copyright it as such. The sounds made are quite different from one another and melodies are created by the variety of colors and by the isolation of overtones and what I refer to in my notes as "undertones" (the octaves, fifths, sevenths, etc. that I produce below the original sung pitch). Rhythms are created by the movement from one resonance area to another, by the appearance and disappearance of overtones and undertones and by the silent spaces left between each series of sounds (necessary to pre-determine mentally the next series of areas, sounds and resultant pitches).

Sincerely,

Joan La Barbara

P.S. Perhaps it would be best to copyright the piece and my description of it (from VOICE IS THE ORIGINAL INSTRUMENT, paragraph 3, indicated by blue bracket) as a unit.
Ms. Joan La Barbara  
127 Green Street  
New York, New York 10012

Dear Ms. La Barbara:

This concerns your application for registration of a claim to copyright in Class E in the work entitled VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION.

It is obvious from your letter that you are aware of the difficulties many avant garde composers experience in registering their musical compositions in Class E. You may not be aware of the basis for these difficulties, so I should like to explain.

The difficulties stem from the fact that, to be registrable as an original musical composition in Class E, the copy deposited must contain at least a minimal amount of original musical expression fixed in definite concrete form. In other words, the copy should contain notations or other visible written expression representing a succession of musical sounds. As you know, in indeterminate and other avant garde works, the various parameters of the sounds and the order of their appearance are only imprecisely indicated and latitude is given the performer in interpreting and realizing the score. When examining such works we apply liberal standards in determining how the "visible" notation requirements may be met and whether the musical sounds are sufficiently "fixed." (I might mention that the sounds need not be conventional to be copyrightable.) Despite our liberal standards, some works do not qualify for registration in Class E. These are works that carry the principles of indeterminacy to their extreme and that fix few or none of the actual or approximate sound progressions, for example, works that consist solely or predominately of text matter explaining in very general terms the method of performance, describing only the concept of a work, outlining only the general idea or plan for a musical production, activity or sound experiment, or providing only the rule or matrix or basic performance materials for a sound experience.

The copy of VOICE PIECE ... consists entirely of text matter providing only very general performance instructions; no sound progressions are "fixed." What we have in the copy deposited is basically a description of an idea for the production of non-traditional sounds by the utilization of special vocal techniques employing a variety of different resonance areas. Ideas, plans, methods and systems, of course, cannot be copyrighted. Copyright protects only the original expression used to describe the idea.
Ms. Joan La Barbara  
New York, New York 10012

In this particular case, the original expression (text matter) in the copy deposited would be classified as a "book" for which registration should be applied for in Class A. Registration in Class A is possible, however, only after copies bearing the statutory notice of copyright for books have been published. See Circular 60. You could, if you wish, publish the description of the work taken from your program notes with the copy of the score.

I appreciate and understand your reluctance to regard the work as "poetry," and your desire to protect the work as a musical work. You mention being willing to provide us with a graphic score. If it is possible to provide us with a graphic score containing at least a minimal amount of the sounds fixed in legible form, we could consider registration for the work unpublished form in Class E. Since the work is largely improvised within the general framework set forth in your written instructions, performances will obviously differ in content. I assume therefore that any graphic score you might provide us would represent the sounds of a single, specific performance. It should be understood that copyright protection would extend only to the music as notated in the copy deposited; it would not necessarily protect other different versions that might be realized in future performances of the work. In addition to the graphically notated copy, we would need a new application giving your nature of authorship as "music."

Phonorecords are not acceptable deposits for registration in Class A if your work has been recorded, however, the enclosed Circulars 51 and 56 may be of interest to you.

Let me add that I personally find your experiments in expanding conventional boundaries of vocal sound most exciting. I am fascinated by experiments in psychology as expressed in HEAR WHAT I FEEL and utterly amazed by your obvious vocal abilities in VOICE PIECE...

When you reply, please refer to the date of this letter and our (L) no. 249115 (L).

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy P. Keziah  
Head, Music Section  
Examining Division

Enclosures:  
Form A, N, U  
Cirs. 51, 56, 60
Ms. Dorothy P. Keziah  
Head, Music Section  
Examining Division  
Copyright Office  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20559  

Ref: Your Letter of July 17  
and CASH NO. 249115 (L)

127 Greene St.  
New York, N.Y. 10012  
September 7, 1975

Dear Ms. Keziah:

Thank you for your letter of July 17. Pardon my not replying sooner but I was out of the country for a month and am just catching up on correspondence.

I appreciate the time you spent in clarifying just what can be copyrighted as “music” and what cannot. I am interested in doing a graphic score for VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION but it may take a month or so to prepare since I would like certain verbal instructions to accompany the pictorial representations of the sounds. And I think at this point I am ready to set a more definite structure, ordering the resonance areas to be used. Some room must be left to the individual performer, however, and this still concerns me. Perhaps I can decide upon a system or method for repeating certain sections after the ordered material has been performed. It’s a problem I must work on. The graphic score should serve to clarify the specifics of the piece; it is really not as improvisational as it may have seemed from reading the original verbal score and the vocal technique to be used is strictly limited.

The enclosures (Forms A, N & U and Circulars 51, 56 & 60) will certainly assist me in future projects. I would appreciate your sending me several more of the Form E for musical compositions.

Thank you for your very kind words about my experimental vocal work. When I have completed a recording (it is still in the planning stages but should be ready by next year) I will be happy to send you a copy so that you can hear the sounds instead of just read about them.

Again thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Joan La Barbara
Ms. Joan La Barbara  
127 Green Street  
New York, New York  10012

Dear Ms. La Barbara:

I have received your letter of September 7, 1975 concerning the work "VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION."

You indicate that you are interested in doing a graphic score for this work but that it may take a month or so to prepare. Under the circumstances we will keep your file open for approximately six weeks. If we have not heard from you further by that time we will have to refund your fee since we have no facilities for holding open fees indefinitely.

I am enclosing four additional Forms B as requested.

I should be delighted to receive a recording of this work when it is completed. As a government employee I am not permitted to accept gifts for my own personal use but I would be most interested in having the recording for training purposes in the section, if you have no objection.

When you reply, please refer to the date of this letter and our CASH NO. 249115 (L).

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy P. Keziah  
Head, Music Section  
Examing Division

Enclosure:  
Form B (4)
127 Greene St.
New York, N.Y. 10012
October 27, 1975

Ms. Dorothy P. Keziah
Head, Music Section
Examining Division
Copyright Office
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20559

Ref: Your letter of Oct. 3, 1975 and CASH NO. 249115 (L)

Dear Ms. Keziah:

Thank you for your letter of Oct. 3 regarding my “VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION.” I am in the process of finishing the graphic and verbal score for this piece and should be able to place it in the mail by the first week in November. You should receive it on or around Nov. 10. I hope this will be within the six week time limit which I calculate from your last letter.

I am sorry to have taken so long to complete this score but the piece is quite involved and reveals itself to me in new ways each time I perform it. It has taken on quite definite shape and there should be no problem identifying it as a piece of music now.

Thank you for your interest in my work and for your patience.

Sincerely,

Joan La Barbara

Joan La Barbara
Ms. Dorothy P. Keziah  
Head, Music Section  
Examing Division  
Copyright Office  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. 20559

Ref: CASH NO. 249115 (L)

Dear Ms. Keziah:

Enclosed are xerox copies of the first six pages of my graphic and verbal score for "VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION." I expected to be totally finished by this time but the detailed work on the drawings is taking more time than I had estimated. I thought it best to send what was finished to date for your inspection in case it still does not meet your qualifications for "music." I must leave for London in the morning to do concerts in England and France but will return in two weeks and will be able to complete the score then.

What remains to be done are specific directions for the performance of the piece, more explanations for the production of certain sounds, several more series, timings or time areas for each section, directions for improvisation within given boundaries and some other details.

When the score is complete I will have it copied on a machine that can print the entire page, so I will recopy the entire score. These xerox pages can be kept in the file or destroyed when the finished score reaches you.

I hope this two week delay is not a problem and I hope that this format satisfies the specifications for music.

Sincerely,

Joan La Barbara

Enclosure:
6 pages plus title page for "VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION"
Ms. Joan La Barbara  
127 Green Street  
New York, New York 10012

Dear Ms. La Barbara:

Thank you for your letter of November 10, 1975 enclosing xerox copies of the first six pages of your graphic and verbal score for VOICE PIECE; ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION.

These pages do indeed represent an elaboration of the single-page score you originally deposited. In addition to providing more specific instructions (both verbal and pictorial) for producing the various resonances, you seem to have included some ordering to the progressions of the sounds. I would say, therefore, that you are probably proceeding in the right direction with respect to preparing a score that would be an acceptable deposit copy for registration in Class E. Of course, final judgment must be deferred until we have seen a complete copy.

When you forward the complete copy, please refer to the date of this letter and our CASH NO. 249115 (1).

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy P. Keziah  
Head, Music Section  
Examining Division
127 Greene St.
New York, N.Y. 10012
September 21, 1976

Copyright Office
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20559

Re: Your letter dated June 9, 1976/ U.B. FILE
“VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION”

Enclosed is finished score of the above, check for $6.00 and new Form E application.

Also, I wrote to the Library of Congress Copyright Office several weeks ago requesting Form N for copyright of phonograph recordings. I have received no reply as yet.

Would you kindly send me ten (10) copies of Form N and ten (10) copies of Form E and ten (10) copies of Form A.

Thank you.

Joan La Barbara

Joan La Barbara
Ms. Joan La Barbara
127 Green Street
New York, New York 10012

Dear Ms. La Barbara:

You must be wondering why you have not heard from us about your claim in the work VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION.

As I noted in my earlier correspondence concerning previous sample copies you sent us for comment, there is a question whether a work such as this contains sufficient fixed musical substance to justify registration in Class E. The finished score received with your application and fee does contain additional pages not contained in the earlier samples. The content of the additional page however is not significantly different from the content of the sample copies. Thus, we are still uncertain whether we can register this claim as applied for. It may be necessary for you to publish copi with the statutory notice and apply for registration in Class A.

We are continuing to study the deposit. In the meantime I want to thank you for your patience in awaiting our decision.

Should you write us further please refer to the date of this letter and our CASH NO. 60099 (L).

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy F. Keziah
Head, Music Section
Examining Division
Ms. Joan La Barbara  
127 Green Street  
New York, New York 10012  

Dear Ms. La Barbara:

After studying your claim in VOICE PIECE: ONE-NO! INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION quite thoroughly, we decided to register the work as an unpublished musical composition, using the copy you deposited in September 1976. You should receive the certificate soon. We point out, however, that we still have some doubt about its copyrightability; and we registered in accordance with our policy of resolving doubtful cases in favor of registrants.

Sincerely yours,

Mildred Henninger  
Supervisory Copyright Examiner  
Music Section, Examining Division
VOICE PIECE: ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION

JOAN LA BARBARA
Part I  Resonance Area Identification and Placement of Sound.

The following are descriptions of resonance areas, placed in a specific order for performance, with drawings indicating exact placement of sound. The vocalist should think of the sound as a solid object—a ball—and imagine that ball in each indicated area before activating the sound-producing mechanism. I recommend closing the eyes during performance and when initially locating specific resonance areas since one is able to focus sound more accurately when not visually distracted, and fine tuning of pitch and placement is more precise. Vocalist should choose a comfortable pitch which can be placed in the maximum number of resonance areas. Always think the sound in a specific place before starting each sound. Each area should be identified individually for the length of a short breath. Silent spaces in between sounds allow time for the vocalist to concentrate mentally on the next area while replenishing our supply. The vocalist should not use vibrato at any time. The sound is to be clear, clean and specific.

The piece begins when the vocalist announces:

"THIS IS A ONE-NOTE INTERNAL RESONANCE INVESTIGATION."

Lips closed:

Center of mouth . . . Front of mouth . . . Lower front nose . . . Center of nose . . . Bridge of nose . . . Upper throat

© Joan La Barbara, 1975
Keeping same order, repeat these sounds in series:

(open lips, separate sounds:

UPPER THROAT ... CENTER OF MOUTH ... LOWER THROAT ...

Bridge of nose Center of nose Lower front nose Center of mouth Just behind lips

Keep the same order, repeat these six sounds in series. In one long breath so that time can be spent in each of these six resonances, if possible the air supply should be interrupted as a phrase. Lips remain closed. ...
Repeat these in series (figure A):

- Nick
- Lower throat
- Lower throat
- Lower throat
- Lower throat
- Open lips, separate sounds.
- High cheek bones
- Front
- Lower throat
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- Lower throne
- Lower thor...
Split tone / octave:

Mech: Split tones are produced by focusing attention on front throat.

Start the sound here and then thinning it smaller.

Ninth, thirteenth and octaves.

Pants below the original sound. Octave, octave, octave + 4th.

Sound dropping it will produce additional octaves. Continue focusing to relax the throat and letting the sound descend through the mouth, and then thinning it smaller.

Split tone / octave: open lips, separate sounds.

Serires:
**Overtone Series**

To produce overtones the sound should be focused in a narrow vertical band in the center of the face (the area from the lips to the third eye). Both the shape of the mouth and the specific resonance area affect and reinforce the overtone. One depends heavily on the ears for fine tuning. The sound moves in clearly sensible steps. The overtones can float or glide from one to the next or can be moved in stepwise fashion. The drawings below indicate the area for sound placement in order to produce most clearly audible overtones or upper partials.
Series 5  Overtone Investigation

This is a series of overtone melodies created by using the indicated syllables and their appropriate placements (as described in Overtone Series explanation). Each syllable isolates a different overtone.

a. hm oo oh ah eh er ee ee ee er hm oh ah m oh ah
b. hm oh ah m oh ah eh oh m oh ah eh er ee er oh ah
c. oh ah er ee ee ee r er ee ee ee ee (sharp cut off)
d. ee ee er r oh ah oo oh ah oh ah

e. m oh ah eh ee er r
f. r oh ah eh er ee ee ee

g. hm ee hm ee m oh ah er
h. er ee ee ee ee er r eh oo ah m oh ah oh ah

Series 6  Overtones and Split Tones

A series based on overtones (built as above) and freely split tones, i.e., the tones may be split into octaves or combinations (8, 5, 9, 13)

a. hm oh ah eh er r ee ee ee I
b. I ah oh eh er r ee r ee er r oh oo m

c. I on I ah I eh I

d. hm on ah eh ee (hard and forced) sudden drop to I [usually spreads to various tones]
e. I [relax throat and allow tones to fluctuate ... holding particularly beautiful ones when possible ... allowing tones to cut in and out in an intermittent signal]
Series 7  Split tones with overtone focus ..........
Set vocal cords for split tones.
Alter mouth openings according to indicated syllables
to produce overtones that whistle above all other
sounds and spin around the room/space where
performance is taking place.
Move from one syllable formation to another
very gradually, almost imperceptively.

a. Iah Iah uIah
b. Iah Iah Iah uIah
c. mIah Iah Iah Ier
d. mIah Iah Iah Iah

Series 8  Split tone investigation ..........
Single tone ~ (drop to) octave ~ single tone
Single tone ~ octave ~ octave & fifth ~ octave
Octave ~ octave & fifth ~ extend down, adding more tones below

The preceding series should be realized in the order given. Short
reprise sections of series may be inserted but each series should be investigated thoroughly.
Singer should proceed through series at a comfortable rate of speed. 
Breathe and relax.
Part III  Ending:

Alternate between series 5-8, mixing pure overtone isolations with split tones and varying mouth formations.

Explore maximum range of dynamics.

Repeat briefly an early series.

Return to alternating overtones and splits.

Dynamic range: medium to soft

Gradually more subdued.

Finally split chordal tones only.

End is 3-5 pure chordal declarations.

Hold the chord steady with no fluctuations ending should feel strong and self-assured, quiet and powerful.

Approximate duration: 20-25 minutes

Joan La Barbara
Miami, August 23, 1976
FirstSold.
SOURCE AND SPACE AS STYLE

PART I  INTRODUCTION

Virtually all twentieth century western dance-that-is-not-ballet has come to be known as modern dance. Recently, aware of the inherent limitations of modern dance as a descriptive term for seven decades of choreography, both critics and dancers have begun searching for new definitions. Some consider “the new dance” an appropriate term for the work of choreographers of the sixties and seventies who staged happenings or other performances involving non-dancers. Don McDonagh in *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance*, called the choreography of the thirties “historic modern dance” and everything else “modern dance.” Then, troubled by the wildly different styles McDonagh thus classified as modern dance, Michael Kirby in a 1975 essay in *The Drama Review* suggested using the term “post-modern dance.” In calling the new dance post-modern, Kirby alluded to, but seems not to have understood, attempts to distinguish between and to define modernism and post-modernism. Generally it has been agreed that modernism is a movement which began early in this century and tried to order and control life through art. Between World War II and 1950 post-modernism superceded it, reacted against modernism’s controlled forms, and began to search for methods of incorporating diverse elements and techniques.

Kirby’s appropriation of the term, while useful in making the historical point that post-modern dance is that which has followed modern dance, is ultimately counterproductive and misleading. He claims that all post-modern dance deliberately rejects musicalization and dancy movements, substituting instead movement that “results from certain goals, plans, schemes, rules, concepts or problems.” What misleads is that Kirby’s definition of post-modern dance suggests an unbridgeable gap between the choreographers participating in new forms and those more theatrical and dancy choreographers like Merce Cunningham who, he says, “never broke completely with modern dance.” Kirby thus appears to ignore all dance that does not participate in either of these extremes.
PART II. ZERO MOVING DANCE COMPANY

Actually post-modern is to some extent a useful term in that it identifies much recent dance in its search for new forms. But what actually characterizes post-modernism is not so much rejection of whatever it does not wish to accept from the past, but adaptation and incorporation of both what is new and what is useful from the tradition it has inherited, and also involvement in the world, diverse and fragmentary as it may be, rather than removal from it. Necessarily, easy identifications become impossible when a company participates in several traditions, several movements at once. Because of that, Zero Moving Dance Company, based on the collective choreography of its artistic directors, has enchanted, baffled and even outraged its audiences, at times simply because it is difficult to say just what is does.

Zero was founded in Philadelphia in 1972 by Hellmut Gottschild, who had been a student and later a teacher in the school of the German modern dancer, Mary Wigman. The company’s name, first of all, reflects Wigman’s teaching. Known in America primarily as an expressionistic modern dancer and largely through the American teaching of her student Hanya Holm, Wigman did not, like her American contemporaries, Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham, teach a specific dance technique. Instead, for Wigman, movement through space was the essence of dance and its source was inner experience. The dance began without preconceptions from point zero.

At times, particularly just after World War I, when she was first making and performing her own dances, that inner experience was her reaction to political events. These were the dances that critics called expressionistic, but what is actually more important, much more the style of Wigman’s choreography, is that her dances were organic; they grew and took shape from within. It was not learned forms that Wigman taught, but a dance, as she said in 1970 in “The New German Dance,” that “reaches back to the fundamentals of existence as the source of all aesthetic creation and form.”

So the name Zero Moving Dance Company reflects an insistence that no preconceptions about movement, style or the final shape or purpose of a dance exist. The belief in beginning from point zero fosters inclusiveness and a search for form rather than the rejection of specific dancerly ingredients that Michael Kirby suggested might identify post-modern dance. This is particularly true because Zero’s choreography is collective, the product of its artistic directors rather than of one person. This makes it possible in “Riverways” and “Night Tales,” the two finished pieces the company has recently been presenting, to identify some of the influences they work with, as well as their own adaptation of this inheritance, and in that way to approach a definition of their style.
The company is first of all musical. "Riverways," a 1976 dance performed without accompaniment, is based on complex variations and the repetition of a simple, rhythmic line, so subtle that it is often difficult to determine just where either the emphasis or even the length of a particular line might have changed. The sounds that do accompany and become part of the dance come from the dancers themselves: clapping introduces the dance, chanting ends it, and throughout, the evolving rhythm of the steps is part of the dance. In "Night Tales," which is also based on subtle, continuous variations, Zero's musical director, Paul Epstein, accompanies the dancers on stage with a melodica. His compositions, some of them improvisations and others set sequences in which a complex melody or pattern might be carried simultaneously by several voices (that are deliberately and noticeably never in unison), grew out of his work as an associate of The Performance Group. Like Richard Schechner, who founded the group, Epstein believes in performance as a collaborative, organic process. He does not advocate totally free improvisation in performance but one in which a structure provides the opportunity for continuing discovery, exploration and growth. Nor does he believe that music, theater and dance exist in isolated worlds. He is part of all of Zero's collective choreographic decisions, and in performance his compositions are inseparable from the dances.

Along with its musical experiments Zero has also adapted the techniques of contact improvisation. Brought to the company by John Gamble, contact improvisation comes from the work of Steve Paxton and his athletic experiments with weight and balance. Gravity is the key to contact improvisation as the dancers find their balance not within their bodies or in traditional alignment, but by the constant transfer of weight and support as they lean against or roll across one another, gradually discovering a new, evolving point of contact and balance. Zero has presented several performances composed solely of contact improvisation as a dance form, but "Riverways" and "Night Tales" are also influenced by it. In "Riverways," as the dance evolves from one movement pattern and one rhythm to another, the changes must occur gradually and without outside signals. This is possible because the dancers are neither detached performers, following precisely timed patterns, nor wholly individual personalities asserting themselves. In the running sequence that opens the piece—where dancers in a horizontal line repeatedly run five steps in one direction, then turn and run back again—the accent, rhythm and mood change gradually as one dancer alters the quality of the basic pattern and the others follow that change. Later in the dance, when it has opened up into evolving but still repetitive movement patterns, the performers face and acknowledge
This human quality also helped the dance structurally. In its first performances three years ago, "Riverways" was a rather intellectual and unsatisfying dance, falling rather clumsily into about eight sections in which alternately all or several of the dancers participated and which were jarringly punctuated by rhythmic transitions performed by the dancers on enchanting, homemade musical instruments and short sticks. The company has since removed those sections which required only a few dancers and thus eliminated the need for those transitions. Now the dance is an unbroken, thirty-minute piece which makes masterful use of space and creates at times a beautiful bedlam of sound and motion. With these changes, "Riverways" lost some of its more powerful sequences, particularly one in which three women moved directly downstage in syncopated time, but because the transitions between the sections of the dance now occur gradually, it is far more successful, proving in a sense Wigman's contention in The Language of Dance that "strong and convincing art has never arisen from theories. It has always grown organically."

While it would be misleading to insist, as Kirby does, that all movement in post-modern dance results from goals or plans and is deliberately non-dancy, the emphasis on functional movement which was particularly evident in much of the non-dance performed at Judson Memorial Church in the sixties, is present also in Zero Moving Dance Company’s work. Gamble has presented a piece of his own, "Small Spaces, Forgotten Faces," based almost entirely on walking, rolling, running, pulling ropes, and climbing ladders; and the collectively choreographed "Night Tales" also uses functional movement. Based on dream sequences, the dance is a narrative piece, a fairy tale, which opens with four dancers who use six-foot long, painted wooden poles to create passes each other while introducing or transferring new patterns without seeming to communicate personal, extraneous messages. This delicate balance keeps "Riverways," an abstract work, from seeming inhuman, and even allows for some variety. In fact it is, at times, a very personal dance. In the most recent performances of "Riverways" at Conwell Dance Lab, John Gamble and Hellmut Gottschild performed in the piece on alternate nights along with the same six other dancers. The result, within the set structure, was two quite different dances. There is more humor in the piece when Gottschild, often a natural comedian, performs it, and this can manifest itself because of the simultaneously is none of the often playful, deliberate exchange of weight, none of the is none of te often playful, deliberate exchange of weight, none of the actual physical contact that Paxton promoted through contact improvisation and that Zero includes in other works, traces of it do exist in the very human but not necessarily personal interchange.
sageways for five other dancers who enter to participate in rituals of play, hunt, passage and escape. What distinguishes the dance is its simultaneous participation in several traditions at once. On one level the movement is functional. The sticks, long, heavy and hard to handle, are not simple ornaments, but a part of the dance, most commonly as sageways or as supports. Often the very difficulty of maneuvering the poles adds to the excitement of the dance. Yet “Night Tales” also works on more traditional levels. It tells a story and demands strong dance technique. Moreover it is musical: in it the dancers sing and accompany themselves, most notably in a short cacophonous sequence of clacking sticks. Epstein’s score, which he performs on a melodica, moves the dance from one of the night tales to another but also creates an enchanted atmosphere for the dance.

Here again Wigman’s influence is important, for she believed that a dancer’s “real activity” was the creation of space, “not the tangible, limited, and limiting space of concrete reality, but the imaginary, irrational space of the danced dimension, that space which can erase the boundaries of all corporeality and can turn the gesture, flowing as it is into an image of seeming endlessness, losing itself in self-completion like rays, like streams, like breath.” Zero’s dances, whether abstract or narrative, are always self-contained, referring to nothing outside of themselves, and they succeed because each one creates and maintains a totally new and imaginary space.

These influences—Zero’s continuing search for form, its creation of imaginary space in which to perform its dances, its musical repetition and variation, and its use of contact improvisation and both dance technique and functional movement—help to identify the company’s interests but do not quite define its style and idiom. Instead, what more specifically identifies Zero’s work is the balance in the choreography between set forms and improvisation, the use of both abstract and narrative forms, and the way movement and then dances grow from breath. It is clear that much of this interest in breath is the influence of Gottschald’s interpretation of Mary Wigman’s theory of dance, not the expressionistic and interpretative Wigman, nor the Wigman of masks known to us through Hanya Holm and so through Alwin Nikolais, but Wigman the maker of organic dances, dances that find their shape from within. The source of dance in its search for form, Wigman claimed in The Language of Dance, was breath, “the mysterious great master who reigns unknown behind all and everything—who silently commands the function of muscles and joints—who knows how to fire with passion and to relax, how to whip up and to restrain—who puts the breaks in the rhythmic structure and dictates the phrasing and the flowing of passages—who, above and beyond all this, regulates the temper of expression in its interplay with the colorfulness of rhythm and melody.”
Wigman’s influence on Zero is obvious, not only in its direct line of
descent—Gottschild studied with Wigman herself—but, more important,
in Zero’s own work with breath and rhythm. Of course this is most
clear in the interplay of rhythm and melody which Wigman herself
praised. But, more significantly, breath works for Zero as a means of
searching for form, for new ways of making dances. Breath is a factor in
the weight transfer of contact improvisation, and, in Wigman’s words,
“puts the breaks in the rhythmic structure and dictates the phrasing
and the flowing of passages.”

It is not mere coincidence that is was this same method of searching
for form, this recognition of breath as a natural unit capable of dictat-
ing breaks in rhythmic structure, that William Carlos Williams proposed
in his late poems using triadic lines and that Charles Olson, generally
acknowledged as one of the first post-modern poets, popularized as pro-
jective verse or composition by field. Arguing against the tyranny of the
inherited line in verse, Olson called for a verse of process, one which
would be composed, in Ezra Pound’s words, by “the musical phrase”
rather than by the metronome. So that, in “Projective Verse,” while
describing the importance of breath for poetry, Olson sounds remark-
ably like Wigman. “If I hammer, if I recall in, and keep calling in, the
breath, the breathing as distinguished from the hearing, it is for cause, it
is to insist upon a part that breath plays in verse which has not (due I
think, to the smothering of the power of the line by too set a concept
of foot) has not been sufficiently observed or practiced, but which
has to be if verse is to advance to its proper force and place in the day,
now and ahead. I take it that PROJECTIVE VERSE teach, is, this les-
on, that that verse will only do in which a poet manages to register
both the acquisitions of his ear and the pressures of his breath.”

Olson, like Wigman, asserts the importance of breath in the discov-
ery of form, but also like Wigman he is neither exclusive nor dogmatic.
Breath for both is a beginning, a means with which to search for form
and to create. Process and the possibility of evolution are essential. This
is true for Zero, too, in its collective choreography. In its adaptation
and incorporation and constant search for form through breath, Zero
has developed an inimitable style and suggested a broader definition of
post-modern dance.

by Taffy Martin
BOKU-MARU

I am writing.

You are reading.

Try This: Go get a basin of warm, sudsy water
and float your feet in it while you read.

One Saturday morning, another woman and I were the only ones to appear for a jam session. After warming up, we gravitated toward a large square of sunlight on the dance floor by an open window. For a while, as we began to move together, we made conversation. The talk was reassuring. In the dance world we were part of, taboos attached to physical closeness between women were virtually laughable in a room full of people dancing. But we were by ourselves. Would one think that the other was trying to make love? Wanting to make love?
With the sexual preoccupation drifting benignly through my thoughts, I continued to move with her. She was beautiful, with thick, smooth waist-length hair, easy in her sensuality with other women - easier than me, I felt. With the soft, smooth skin of our legs and arms free of clothing, we began to lean into each other, to slide arms around backs, me dropping the weight of my head into the softness of her belly, my heavy head rising up and down on her breathing belly. Staying in our sunlit square, moving and breathing and resting and breathing, we did a slow-motion dance of folding and unfolding around each other. So slowly, so luxuriously. "I can't believe how wonderful this is," my thoughts ran on and on. Our warm bodies bundled around each other's, our session came to an end, and we celebrated what had been special for both of us. I thought to myself, "Other women ought to be given this gift."

"Dancing close" became an ongoing part of my dance life - teaching, performing, philosophizing. I worried sometimes that it was sentimental or indulgent. "Dancing should be done energetically," I told myself. "How can you call this lying about dancing? You might as well go to sleep. Too mushy. Too squooshy. Too soft."

I couldn't explain the fullness of my pleasure in this kind of dancing with women, its importance to me, and its "otherness" from lovemaking. Even my dream life became infused. I had a dream of Yvonne, friend, dancer. I lay in my bed. As she was preparing to leave, we shared great passions - sisterly, sensual embraces. She came back for more and more hugs and kisses. She lay squatted flat on top of me like a frog. Someone watching made reference to lovemaking. "No," I said impatiently, "we're lilypadding."

I wanted to do more lilypaddling but something was missing. I wanted to make a new women's dance but something was stuck. I didn't know what was missing until I found it...This is the time when something named Boko-Maru began to weave its way into my life.
"They had their shoes off. They had their eyes closed. They were facing each other. They were pressing the soles of their bare feet together....What I had seen of course, was the Bokononists' ritual of Boko-Maru, or the mingling of awarenesses...Bokononists believe that it is impossible to be sole-to-sole with another person without loving the person, provided the feet of both persons are clean and nicely tended."

I had been on a Kurt Vonnegut reading binge. Innocent of what was to come, I laughed out loud at this bizarre and irreverent image in his novel *Cat's Cradle*. Secretly I wanted to try it.

One day, without warning, I pressed my feet into the feet of dancing friend Margaret who was lying quietly on the studio floor. Out of our stillness, an unexpected and powerful kind of dance unfolded itself. Not only a dance, but a form as well. The ingredients for what happened between us that day were already there. All I needed was this gentle and receptive partner, and Kurt Vonnegut to tell me how to begin. I stole Boko-Maru, re-invented it, and over two years time, watched it expand with my care into performances, ceremonies, meditations - into an exquisite way to know another person, into people's lives.

My kind of Boko-Maru provided what had been missing for me before:

A form, a container
To hold
Sustain
and extend
this caressing way of dancing together. The form prescribes a beginning and an end with a few suggestions about what goes on in between. The middle is essentially
an improvisation within the simple agreement to always be touching and sensing each other. What happens each time is partly predictable, partly repeatable, partly inevitable, wholly spontaneous, and always very different from couple to couple, from one time to the next.

I'll tell you what it was like on one occasion, from the inside.

I come with others to a large dance space. Sunlight streams onto the floor through a wall of windows. It's warm. The space feels clear and safe. What we wear is soft and loose and leaves a lot of bare skin. There's little talking as each of us prepares - moving alone, lengthening our muscles, breathing, being still, rolling, carefully tending to our bodies. One or two will watch; the rest of us will Boko-Maru.

I find Mary. New friend, wondrous dancer. Sitting face to face for a moment, we slide our bare soles together, our eyes meet. Awkward smiles, we lie on our backs, eyes closed, and stay still here a long time, while a meeting takes place between our soles.

Her soles feel alive, alert, awake. I visualize sending my breath into my feet into her feet, and breathing her into me through my feet. I feel myself relax, sending my awareness into the subtle flow of energy between our feet.
Soon, like a strange new pair of hands, our feet are pressing, stroking, tapping and embracing each other. They dance together, feeling strong and skillful - toes grasping each other like fingers. My feet discover that there are other parts of her stretching out beyond her feet. I begin to caress and explore them: the soft, hanging muscles of her calves, the soft, furry hair there, the shin bone so near the surface. Such places I find - her bumpy, tendenous, powerful knees - the long, loose muscles of her thighs, sometimes hanging, sometimes firm in contraction.

we take our time

Each part is minutely and lovingly explored. I am careful to listen for her rhythm, for my own rhythm. Soon distinctions of hers and mine elude me and it's only our rhythm that I recognize and follow. Sometimes she's still and lets me move her legs about. As she tends to my legs and feet, I find the memories living there - muscle memories of injuries and pleasures - that are triggered by her touch. The time I stepped on a fiery
hot incinerator cover when I was eight and got the crisscrossing pattern of its woven wires burned into my feet. The time when I was twelve that I made my calf muscles as hard as rocks and compared them with my girlfriend's to prove that mine were hardest.

Now my legs, my feet feel hungry for her legs, her feet - hungry to move, grasp, pull, lift, and I'm happy to do this for a long time. Suddenly, my foot finds her hip bone and slides into the soft belly nearby. Letting my feet journey on, I find vast and mysterious new territories to explore. Soft breasts, bony ribs, powerful back. I feel comforted. I'm glad she leaves no part of me untended. With her feet, she strokes my arms, elbows, hands, neck and face.

I'm excited. I've found a wonderful new friend to play with me. I'm also a little bit afraid. Thoughts jamming, "What are we doing? If I become sexually excited is that bad? Should I avoid that? Is that inappropriate for this?" I notice my breath, short and shallow - my shoulders holding themselves off the floor. Her active, inquisitive feet send me confidence. I take deep, long breaths...in...out. I give my shoulders back to the floor.

As more and more of her touches more and more of me, my fear dissipates. Now the space we share grows larger, softer; our bodies are warmer; our skin is getting moist with sweat. I trust her to be careful with my body as we move. I sense her trust of me. I hear her breath. I smell her skin and like it.
Now we signal each other with minute flickers of movement, the flutter of a knee, the tapping of a toe. Now our tendril limbs wrap themselves around each other in smooth, uninterrupted motion. Muscles, skin, joints, nerves, tendons speak to each other in a language so delicate, subtle and quick that my mind falls behind, dumb and amazed. The feeling is new to me, unfamiliar, awesome. This sensory ability is fleeting. I am astonished we can sustain it for as long as we do. For minutes at a time. I feel in this moment like we're dancing witches embracing each other in a forbidden ritual that feeds us both extraordinary new powers.
Sometimes we are very quiet and intent; now we burst into laughter; now we sigh. Mary makes a cradle for me with her body, and I become a baby to her rocking. We curl and spoon and climb upon each other, testing our strength to support one another without strain. We play...porpoises, sliding the large smooth surfaces of our bodies over each other. We are fish, we are fetuses swimming in the womb, we are slippery seaweeds, we are mighty female warriors. This is a feast! I savor the taste of each moment as I become a small child, then a lover, a mother or sister, sometimes a woman, sometimes a man.

We are inside a magical zone where we have freedom to play as foolishly as we like and to hug and to be held for as long as we want.

Mary smooths the wet hair off my forehead and we look easily into each other's eyes, forehead to forehead, breasts to breasts. She slides with me into the floor, rolling, rolling. A twist and a push upwards and we're running through space, slowing down, slowing down, slowing, melting into the floor into stillness with heavy breathing. This stillness is our ending, we both know. We stay snuggled in a heap for a long while, torsos rising and falling with our breathing. I want nothing more but to lie still and warm in her arms.

I've been aware of the other couples moving around us before. Now, about an hour from the time we pressed soles, they are all quiet and still like us. I hear some of them whispering, some of them talking and laughing
with each other. Looking around, I see their open, satisfied bodies gently rearranging themselves and settling in - the kind of dance people do together on their way to sleep. Some still have their limbs laced around each other's in wonderful, unexpected ways, and the rest all remain touching somehow - a bent leg flopped over a torso, a knee to a belly, a foot resting on a calf. I feel extraordinary energy, relaxation and pleasure in my body - as if a layer of pretence and fear has been peeled away. I don't worry about what time it is, or what I'm supposed to do next. I don't review my interminable list of things to do. The noisy racket in my head is replaced with a quiet, gentler babble.
HOW-TO-DO-BOKU-MARU

Find a partner — someone you care for a lot. Dress comfortably; bare legs best.

To a private, warm and favorable place bring yourselves and 1 big basin of warm sudsy water, 2 towels, and 2 pairs of soft clean socks. Take turns washing, drying off and putting socks on each other’s feet using all the best pleasure giving strokes you know. Be generous with each other’s feet.

Being both with clean, dry feet, remove socks and slide naked soles together as you sit with legs out long in front. Establish good contact with soles of feet. Roll down your spine until you lie spread eagle on your back. Squiggle around until bones and muscles sort themselves out comfortably on the floor in the lying down position.

Lie still a long time with feet touching. Don’t move until your feet are very hungry to move. Images: move your breath into your own and your partner’s feet; breathe your partner in through your feet.

In a bit, begin pressing, stroking, exploring each other’s feet with your feet, then gradually move up to discover calves with feet, knees with feet, thighs with feet, pelvis with feet, torso, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, head, face with feet. Deep toe embraces and feet and knee blossoms.

At first using a smooth, continuous rhythm, blend into your exploratory movements more and more of these new possibilities: giving and receiving of full body weight, rolling, counter balancing of body weights, balancing on each other, lifting, games of spooning and mirroring, gently closing and opening your bodies around each other’s bodies fitting together in brand new ways; always touching and always in the process of giving and/or receiving weight in subtle or extreme amounts.

There may be many pauses. Eventually a long resting moment will come just when you’re both exhausted, and let that be the end.

by Yani Novak
LOW NURSE
HOSPITAL

Performance Note:

HOSPITAL, an original performance conceived and directed by Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds, was produced in San Francisco by the Magic Theatre, April–June, 1977.

The original cast included visual and performance artists, dancers, one actor, a poet, four children, and one senior woman. The cast doubled as crew, assisting with three months of construction for the piece as well as cleaning and maintaining the theater. The music was by Steve Reich from Drumming—Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices and Organ—Six Pianos (Deutsche Gramophon) and from Steve Reich· Live/Electric Music (Columbia)

I. HOSPITAL AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Since 1969 Jock Reynolds and I had each been working on a variety of performance and performance-related projects. Jock’s background included work in sculpture, installations, events, and theater. My experience included dance, collective and improvised performance, events, and dramatic theater. In 1975 we began working in collaboration on performance pieces which involved movement, objects, sound, light, and improvisation. Multiple imagery (including individual variations by performers in identical situations), phased activity, and shifting scale and tempo were used to explore problems of perception and of relative points of view. Focusing closely on the forms in familiar objects, behaviours, and situations became another recurring aspect of these performances.

For several reasons we became interested in developing a performance concerning experience in hospitals. We had each experienced hospitals as patients and as visitors. We found that most adults in this country have had at least one experience in a hospital which made a strong impression. Working with such a recognizable and charged, realistic context (with both personal and public connotations) posed a positive challenge. Using the formal elements found in hospital life—multiples, cycles of activity, the colors and sounds, and the individual’s perception—stemmed directly from the earlier concerns in our performances.
To gain a more thorough, objective sense of the hospital we interviewed medical and other hospital workers, as well as patients. We observed routines, procedures, and general traffic through hospitals. Performance situations based on these observations were developed in studio-workshops with artists and students improvising in constructed situations. A great deal of the material was discarded—leaving about thirty sequences of action (some of which were performed simultaneously) in the performance itself.

The HOSPITAL performance departed radically from the fare usually associated with hospital drama. Neither linear narrative nor emotionally-arousing drama were developed in the performance. Rather, the sounds, images, and actions commonly found were expanded to suggest additional, though not specific, dimensions. Actions with moments of stop-frame, multiple images, exaggerated objects, silence, phase music, changes of color and of light focused attention on the otherwise familiar or commonplace. The performance was structured to evoke—and to provide a frame for re-consideration of memories of actual experiences in hospitals which any audience member might have had (or fantasized).

Details, routine activity and occurrences were the fabric of action: curtains were opened and closed, objects and patients lifted and moved, night rounds were carried out, cleaning and repairs were done, visitors arrived and departed, patients faced their bland diets. Interesting coincidences occurred. Women in labor were draped and attended to by husbands, nurses, and a doctor while the maintenance crew could be seen (and heard) hammering and sawing, industriously laboring on improvements in a hallway. Three other patients had bedpans brought by nurses. When the bedpans were placed on the beds, the nurses wound up musical movements within them starting a round of "3 Coins in a Fountain."

Every kind of situation was given equal emphasis. The patients' and maintenance crews' activities were stressed as much as the doctors' and nurses' involvement. That even a mundane task is of value, can alter life and events in a hospital, was evident. The endlessness of these chores was also evident.

The flux of events and people was constant. Each performer appeared and reappeared in several roles; as a patient at one point, later as a nurse, then as a surgeon, etc. Toward the end of the performance every performer appeared walking quietly through the corridors as a patient. No figure or group was singled out for identification as protagonist. The performers acted completely as an ensemble.

The audience's role was built into the space. Their seats were constructed to be deliberately similar to those of a staff gallery in an operating room. They were there to observe from the closest possible vantage, although remaining somewhat separate from the action. Everyone had an equally good view from this elevated seating.
The hospital opened out from the audience’s eyes across a space 100 feet wide by 60 feet deep. The space was marked out into five channels or areas running parallel to the audience seating. Three patients’ rooms occupied the front area. The rooms started two feet from the audience and were indicated by three 10x12 foot tiled rectangles (with 3 foot strips of the original concrete floor left between them.) A narrow, tiled hallway at the back of the rooms led to a nurses’ station (counter and observation window) at one end and a hall with a scale at the other end. The performers never walked on the concrete floor, always staying on tiled or painted areas of the hospital layout. The walls seemed to have dissolved but the rooms and hallways remained distinct.

Behind the rooms and tile hallway, moveable curtains were mounted between four structural beams. These curtains opened onto a broad, painted corridor (which also served as a labor room and an operating room at various times.) Back of this broad corridor a cyclone fence (an original part of the building) was used as another dissolved wall. Through its meshed link, movement in the narrow painted hall beyond could be seen as if through a grid. The wall behind this hallway was solid. Five doors were spaced along its 100 foot length. The doors opened into deep rooms suggesting several more wards, laboratories, etc.

Since the performance was housed in the third floor of a former army equipment and machinery warehouse, its institutional identity was obvious. The raw quality of the original military building acted as a foil to the functional formality of the hospital which the cast/crew had spent three months building into the site. Raw, cracked beams, stained concrete floor and walls, and dead-end conduit showed through the hospital structure as a pattern, or ground, contrasting with the seemingly pristine hospital tile, curtains, nurses’ station, immaculately painted portions of the walls and spotless linens. The hospital seemed to hover within the shell of this abandoned warehouse. The dream-like and contemplative quality of the hospital was actually circumscribed by the warehouse’s concrete form.

The physical structure of HOSPITAL and its cyclical flow of people, events, materials, sound, and lighting evoked the nature of a real hospital and presented the audience and performers with an opportunity for reflection.
LOW WALK
II. **HOSPITAL**: Scores

**SLOW WALK**

(6 minute section)  
**Music**: Steve Reich’s Drumming No. 4

1 Nurse with a tray of three metronomes scurries through the middle hall just before Drumming No. 4 comes up.

1 Nurse walks through front hallway in slow motion. As she passes by each of the patients’ three front rooms, she pauses, twisted from the waist with her right arm forward, left arm back (in a frozen stride) framing the patient’s bed. Then continues, very slowly, walking to the nurses’ station.

3 Maintenance People collect mops suspended from a cable in corridor & isolation buckets in a normal tempo but hold the stride as they cross one another’s’ paths or approach another person.

2 Nurses in the far hallway walk in slow motion from opposite ends of the hall pulling on every other overhead light switch. They cross and pass one another and continue until every light in the back hallway is switched on.

2 Nurses in the middle corridor walk extremely slowly and close to each other like sailboats, gently pitching and yawling. One stops and turns back, the other continues across.

2 Doctors with five foot long rectangular satchels slowly thread their ways (one pitching and yawling, the other very steady) through the hallways.

2 Children and 1 Man appear in a back doorway and walk to the front to visit one woman patient. They walk in normal tempo to her room and when there sit still and talk quietly. They leave.

2 Patients in the other two front rooms lie still.

Towards the end of this section a nurse and a doctor appear in the middle corridor with stainless steel carts, park them and proceed to pull and cut two seemingly endless cords coming from sources too high up in the ceiling to be seen. Eventually each one cuts the string and wheels the cart off.
SURGEONS’ DANCE

(8 minute section) Music: Steve Reich’s Drumming No. 1

The hospital is empty. One light in the back of the middle corridor is lit.

The surgeons appear walking in by ones, twos, and in small groups from alternate sides of the corridor until thirteen are in place, forming a wedge-shaped group with the apex in the central tile room extending 25 feet to the back of the painted corridor.

The last surgeon to arrive walks in from the back of the group to the apex of the wedge (6 feet from the audience) and pulls the chain lighting the lamp overhead.

Immediately all the surgeons begin a choreographed series of unison gestures and tasks moving only their hands and eyes. They observe the rules of a sterile field, keeping their hands in front of them and touching nothing with the palms or fingers. Forearm wipes brow; backs of wrists on temples; quick hand movements as the body bends left, right and center; fingers work a square of stitches; right arm does the liver retraction reach.

Elbows are flexed at waist height; palms and fingers open wide by the sides of the body. Surgeons sway, rotating axially from ankles (feet stationary and facing frontally) in synchrony for nine rotations. On the ninth they freeze and/or change direction of rotation randomly for three more cycles. This swaying is stopped suddenly. The liver retraction reach is repeated and everyone pivots to face the back wall. One more axial rotation and then hold. Complete stillness before they disperse.
ACCUMULATION/TREATMENT

(10 minute section)  Music: Steve Reich’s Drumming No. 3.

2 Janitors appear in the back hallway placing 25 red three foot long keys on the far wall. The keys swing slowly.

3 Nurses in the painted corridor perform a series of waiting movements—shifting weight, putting hands in and out of pockets, shaking down thermometers and turning on lights overhead.

3 Patients walk to and wait at the aisles leading into the front tile rooms (directly in front of each waiting nurse).

1 Technician places small tables in each front tile room.

1 Nurse places beams (suspended to designate corners of each front room) on each of the tables and then returns to place a second beam across the first shaping an X.

2 Nurses at the nursing station perform a slow motion do-se-doe pivoting with soundless bells they move from the front desk to the back window.

1 Doctor places a flat white bed-sized rectangle on the floor of each tile room (in front of each small table with X-beams)

The 3 Patients each lies on one of these rectangles in their own room.

1 Doctor places flasks of liquid on the X tables.

1 Nurse places calibrated white sticks on the bodies of the patients after they have laid down.

1 Doctor arrives with 3 black satchels and leaves one beside each patient. A diagnosis has been chalked on each satchel.

1 Doctor appears in the middle corridor with a five foot pencil.

1 Nurse walks in the corridor pushing a pair of giant white wheels (4½ feet high)

1 Nurse walks through the corridor with a 2 foot white disc under her arm

1 Technician with a rack of painted wooden test tubes appears. The janitors measure doorways.
Music stops  Silence  A nurse spins the 2 foot pill on the floor of the middle corridor. It wobbles and falls clattering on the floor. Everyone is still. Nurses in the nursing station ring the bells quietly.

Everyone resumes action by reversing the procedures they have just been through. Music resumes. (Nurse removes calibrated rods Patients leave, etc.) A janitor walks down the hall carrying a 12 foot broom. As the last object from the treatment is removed, a rack of laboratory rabbits in cages is wheeled through the corridor.

by Suzanne Hellmuth