Dark City, Charles Bernstein’s twentieth book, is an at times comic, at times bleak, excursion into everyday life in the late 20th century. In *Dark City*, Bernstein moves through a startling range of languages and forms, from computer lingo to the cant of TV talk shows, from high-poetic diction to junk mail, from intimate address to philosophical imperatives, from would-be proverbs to nursery rhymes and songs.

Bernstein’s city is flickering and evanescent, moving from Madras to New York to Los Angeles, from “Virtual Reality” to “The View from Nowhere.” Yet his collage of divergent/divisive voices also represents, as *The Village Voice* has noted, “A tireless attempt to regain our attention and bring us from inertia into discourse again”:

Love is like love, a baby
like a baby, meaning like
memory, light like light.
A journey’s a detour
and a pocket a charm
in which deceits are borne.
A cloud is a cloud and
a story like a story,
song is a song, fury
like fury.

Author of, most recently, *A Poetics* (Harvard University Press), *Rough Trades* (Sun & Moon Press), and *The Sophist* (Sun & Moon Press), Charles Bernstein is the David Gray Professor of Poetry and Letters at the State University of New York, Buffalo.
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There appears to be a receiver off the hook. Not that you care.

Beside the gloves resided a hat and two pinky rings, for which no finger was ever found. Largesse with no release became, after not too long, atrophied, incendiary, stupefying. Difference or difference: it’s the distinction between hauling junk and removing rubbish, while I, needless not to say, take out the garbage (pragmatism).

Phone again, phone again jiggity jig. I figured
they do good eggs here.

Funny $: making a killing on junk bonds and living to peddle the tale (victimless rime)

(Laughing all the way to the Swiss bank where I put my money in gold bars [the prison house of language].) Simplicity is not the same as simplistic.

Sullen supposition, salacious conjecture, slurpy deduction.

"A picture [fixture] is worth more than a thousand words":

With this sally, likely to barely make it into a 1965 "short stabs" poem by Ted "bowl over" Berrigan

[a tincture gives birth to a gravely verve]
a dull blade with a greasy handle (a
docent page with an
unfathomable ramble). Poetry’s
like a spoon, with three or four
exemptions: in effect only
off-peak, void
were permitted by Lord,
triple play
on all designated ghost phonemes
(you mean morphemes)
[don’t tell me what I mean!]
Rhymes may come and
rhymes may go, but ther
e’s
no crime like presentiment. To refuse
the
affirmation
of
(a)
straight-forward
statement
(sentiment)
is
not
to
be
so
bent-over
irony
as
to
be
unable
to
assert
anything
but
to
find
such
statement
already
undermined
by the resistance
it
pretends
to
overpower
by
its
idealism
masked as
realism.

What? No approach
too gross if it gets a laugh. In Reagan’s
vocabulary, freedom’s
just another word for “watch out!” (I
pride myself on my pleonastic a[r]mour.) {ardour}
(Besides.)
Love may come and love may
go
but uncertainty is here forever.
{profit?} (There was an old lady

who lives in a stew…)

(A picture is worth 44.95 but no price can be
put on words.)

She can slip and she can slide, she’s every
parent’s j

oy & j

i

b
e

(guide)

In dreams begin a lot of bad
poetry.

Then where is my place?

Fatal Error F27: Disk directory full.

The things I
write are
not about me
though they
become me.

You look so bec
oming, she said, attending the flower pots.
I'm a very becoming guy
(tell it to)

. That is, better to become than (gestalt friction)

\{traction?\}
\{flirtation?\}

to be: actuality

is just around the corner (just a spark in the dark); self-actualization a glance in a tank of concave [concatenating] mirrors. Not angles, just tangles. From which a direction emerges, p urges. Hope gives way
to tire tracks. On the way without stipulating the destination, the better to get there (somewhere, other).

The magic phoneme for today is “kth”.

Funny, you don’t look gluish. Poetry: the show-me business.

You’ve just said the magic phoneme!

“Don’t give me any of your show-me business.”

She wore blue velvet but I was color blind and insensible. Heavy tolls, few advances. Are you cl os e to your m
other?

The brain of Bill Casey preserved in a glass jar deep undercover in Brunei.

Andy

Warhol is the

P.T. Barnum

of the
(late)
twentieth century

: there's a
sucor dead every twenty seconds.
A depository of suppositories
(give it me where it counts:

one and
two and

one
two

thr

eree)

I had

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it but
I misp
laced
it somewhere

in the
back burner
of what

is laug
hingly
called m

y

mind

(my

cri
e). A
mind is a terrible thing to steal:

_intellectual property is also
theft._

Ollie North, pound of chalk—but who is writing,

what is writing? Nor

all your regret change one word of it; yet so long as the blood
flows in your veins there is ink
left in the bottle. 

whistle to write (spiritus sancti). No “mere” readers only
writers who read, actors who inter-
act. Every day fades way, nor
all your piety
or greed bring back one hour: take a swivel to
strike.
(The near-heroic obstinacy of his refusal [inability?] to despair.)

& who
can say
whether dejection or elation will
ensure the care for, care

in
the world that may lead us
weightless, into a new world or
sink us, like lead
baboons,
deeper into this o
ne? Yet
you have to admit it’s highly
unaccounted
desires, undertows of an imaginary that cannot be willed away but
neither need be mindlessly
obeyed. *What’s that?* If it’s not
good news
I don’t want to hear it (stand up and leer.) Our new
service orientation
mea
nt
not only changing the way we wrote poems but also diversifying
into new poetry services. Poetic
opportunities
however, do not fall into your lap, at least not
very often. You’ve got to seek them out, and when you find them
you’ve got to have the knowhow to take advantage of them.

Keeping up with the new aesthetic environment is an ongoing
process: you can’t stand still. Besides, our current fees
barely cover our expenses; any deviation from these levels

would
mean working for nothing. Poetry services provide cost savings
to readers, such
as avoiding hospitalizations (you’re less likely
to get in an accident if you’re home reading poems), minimizing
wasted time (*condensare*), and reducing
adverse idea interactions

(studies show higher levels of resistance to double-bind
political programming among those who read *7.7* poems or
more each week).

Poets deserve compensation
for such services.
For readers unwilling to pay the price
we need to refuse to provide such
service as alliteration,
internal rhymes,
exogamic structure, and
unusual vocabulary.

Sharp edges which become shady groves,
mosaic walkways, emphatic asymptotes (*asthmatic microtolls*).

The hidden language of the Jews: self-reproach, laden with
ambivalence, not this or this either, seeing five sides to
every issue, the *old pilpul song* and dance, obfuscation
clowning as ingratitude, whose only motivation is never
to offend, criticize only with a discountable barb: Genocide
is made of words like these, Pound laughing (with Nietzsche’s
gay laughter) all the way to the canon’s bank spewing forth
about the concrete value of gold, the “plain sense of the
word”, a people rooted in the land they sow, and cashing
in on such verbal usury (language held hostage: year one
thousand nine hundred eighty seven).

There is no plain sense of the word,
nothing is straightforward,
description a lie behind a lie:
but truths can still be told.
These are the sounds of science (whoosh, blat,
flipahineyhooh), brought to
you by DuPont, a broadly diversified company dedicated to
exploitation through science and industry.

Take this harrow off
my chest, I don’t feel it anymore
it’s getting stark, too stark
to see, feel I’m barking at Hell’s spores.
The new sentence.

As if Harvard Law School
was not a re-education camp.
I had decided to go back
to school after fifteen years in
community poetry because I felt

I did not know enough to navigate
through the rocky waters that
lie ahead for all of us in this field.

How had Homer done it, what might Milton
teach? Business training turned
out to be just what I most needed.

Most importantly, I learned that
for a business to be successful, it
needs to be different, to stand out
from the competition. In poetry,
this differentiation is best
achieved through the kind of form
we present.

Seduced by its own critique, the heady operative with twin
peaks and a nose for a brain, remodeled the envelope she
was pushing only to find there was nobody home and no
time when they were expected. Water in the brain,
telescopic Malthusian dumbwaiter, what time will the train
arrive?, I feel weird but then I’m on assignment, a plain blue
wrapper with the taps torn, sultan of my erogenous bull’s
eyes, nothing gratis except the tall tales of the Mughali
terraces, decked like plates into the Orangerie’s glacial
presentiment . . .

No,
only that the distinction
between nature and culture may observe the bodily gumption of language.

Hello

my name is Max Gomez

(Commanding without being a command.)

Or else to say,

Catalogs are free, why not we?

Clear as fudge.

Then what can I believe in?

(She'd rather exploit

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than be exploited.) If you break it, you won't have it anymore.

Solemn in functional midrift, tooting at bellicose grinding, who can no more bear witness to the doddering demise of diplomacy than uproot the cancer at the throat of those trajectories.

“Daddy, what did you do to stop the war?”

We may be all one body but we're sure as hell not one mind.

(Tell her I had to change my plans.) It's not what you know but who knows about it & who's likely to
squeal

. Button

your lip, cl

asp your tie, you

re on the B team. (A job

by any other name

would smell as

sour.) It's

not an operating system it

,

san

op

rating environm

ent.

Besides
Sunsickness

Blame it on resembling, as if it would change so easily, rough up glares or trace avenues by fingertip. You skirt on top afraid to sink into and why not falter, marched into elides, forked by definition or conscripted from declamation—the founding harbors faced it thus. Then alone on hooks, trying to get loss, the ground refusing way. There's no point, you proceed with intermittent steps, & when the starting line appears it can't be said it's the same. No inanity suited better than this poled tack. Nor too much light either—heaving like you'd just been hit in the face by a
wave—yet no particle
cares that much. I’d wager you’ve
had it by now—burn or defraud your
comeuppance as some sort of serial madness,
pegged to the flap that won’t mind its
places. There was azure, agate, fool’s
dust, but I never got any, just this
speculative bonfire. I’d give you credit
for that—but credit never satisfied
you. & after that there’s only bone or blood
or sinew & not enough to share. Certain
things are private or anyway demand
privacy—but I’d be reluctant to say
who. No more than you I’m content
to lay low, tank up on decompression
& sing a chord or two—not possible
to remember many more than that. Or failing
to note the calm (calamity), fall prey to
remoter executions (I mean command
from distant quarters). There is a choir
here & don’t know whether to blow
light still shone on we who have shaded our eyes. A few phrases remain, but the drift is vanish. No way out & no way in—a straight call to blast. Adrift on stage for all to view—the cringe, the sigh, the curvilinear elide. The scholar-trancemaker hangs from the end of a trope and asks to be cut down. An umbilical cord signifies no less. Yet despite, I can now see or is it all a mistake? & does it splatter? The important thing is the sweep by which the specific is hampered on its way to the laundry. The "only objective comment" lifted from the interrogation, then fingered in this historical fantasy some have undertaken to get out of. & so our Reviewer can state that his false assertions are "absolutely true" & "patently true" even in the face of being absolutely false & patently misleading. Facts are a dime a dozen but opinions are like pearls. Society's sailed amid so many stuffed shirts. The road redelivers the redaction. Yet form can contain almost nothing, just enough. & bursts onto the floor waving & jumping up & down. Sleighbells of an anticipated foreclosure chiming at a frequency beyond reach yet driving to distraction all the same; which is to say without goal & undecidable expectation—can't even say toward—& naming the passage time or placelessness. Getting in bed with promise & waking up with make-believe. Fortunately impecunious, at least on a materials level. Floor board, window pane, ceiling fan, . . . Cold as a cow with a long tail going to confession, crazy as a one-legged chair at an ass-kicking contest,
nervous as wet fog, silly as a bedbug
in a brass bra, smelly as a white man
on election day, I enters the canvas.

Then what would you know the meaning
of? Hard as honey, white as flint, loud
as the snow, dumb as mud . . . There
be another horizon, boots on bay, time
left for every day. It’s not as if
it hasn’t been said before or won’t be
said another time, but never quite
the same. Soft as midnight, clear as
dead . . . With the radio you always
turn this sort of thing off & now you’re
paying for it. Floating entirely
inside the dump, unmaking proportion
in small-mouthed widgets encapsulated
astride phantom departures. Slow &
sullen; fast & nasty. [Please do not turn
page until completion of song.] For which I
languish, in thousand lacerations entangled.
Demark wave, implosion of what

is vapor. Days stifling of cork &
circles of music, sordid front mounted, enlarged
trembling like spectre of corpses adorned
(absorbed). & the fissures
elevate themselves & grunt
& the savor forces its
effects. Like as to as & what to what remains.
Me won voice. Me other is:
An objection: haze of the subject
brought to a locus.
An aberration: filter as creator—aspire
to what is dejectedly broken
occasionally the inflection of meteoric
& terminal vagueness.
Everything marked, no need to fence.
Sopping hard & alike as
a fiddle & a dive. A simple no
that knows no answer. & if he say cut off their
hands, then he shall have his tongue cut out.
But revenge is for cues &
plates (tools &
states), defiance for the rest who wait
& are willing. For what
you may learn is that by going
down into the secrets of your
own crimes you descend
into the secrets of all
mimes (minds). Anyway:
some other. Worlds
hourly changing
sparring with cause to an
unknowable end. Asking
no less, demanding no
more.
Then suddenly and without explanation a bell rings. A grifter, his hands covered by calfskin gloves, drives to the station house to receive the goods. Exemplary passages are cited. A mystical blond with a scintillating hat devours the nightlife. Overtures are made to the underlying functionaries in the hope that they might oil the machinery. Fades prompt petty tirades on the part of the tired professor. Enabling fictions adorn the prisoner’s cells. In a minute you can hear the dust settle on the settee. The troupe fans out to outflank the patrol. Portions of lockets are auctioned at poolside. A gazelle collides with a zebra.
on the crowded skyway. Sentiment cements the well-settled arrangement. The fabricator eschews her prognostication. Streetlamps crash into pounding surf. Foreign lances punctuate the intermission. A billiard pictures a tumbling terrace. Sewage accumulates at rearmost flexpoint. Plumage flutters from above, gift of a departed origin. The regulator consults the ordinance but cannot determine its application. Sustenance evaporates in subsequent slumber. Amulets emit armatures. An obligation meets its reward. Laundry revolves in large metal tumblers filled with soapy water. The radio covers the burn in the table. Headwaiter pockets tip from man in wool suit, makes bet. Snow obliterates the distinction between here & eternally. Man’s body stocking constricts the flow of his blood. Oil tankers pour steam into the gulf, upsetting the balance of argument and insularity. Sorcery threatens the petulant perpetuators. Unequal in demand, frightening in reward, flares appear dim & the sky a tenement ceiling. Unguents unnerve the future bookie’s wry predicament, mindful of deeds left unfinished, duties not discharged. Crumbling into the Seine, memories of mysteries never conceived. Then drops a lantern, a picture window. Notation develops on top of nuance. Crusts accrue like pillows in a fight. Voiced as if regard were trust or limousines malteds. The fun is over before the fun begins. As when a chance to speak becomes a chance to slip: accommodation its own desperation, dispute its own punishment. Pulling a dumbwaiter
& wishing for water. Discoloration of the enmazed tractor parts—shifting through the pieces to find the hearth. Hunt or hunched or clump or confront. Roads roll into the harbor, with no sign of the travelers. The crow flies over the abandoned mine, irrespective of penetratable homilies. Slow, maybe slender, taking foreground for must. Craters cantilever to the corner. A forager flushes his finds. Sacrifice deploys secreted salvage. Burgers bounce busily. Ratiocination cops plea to lesser offense. Curls dwindle in the high-pressure dome. The dreidel begins to wobble wildly before tumbling to ground. Emanations suffuse the body. Sound permeates the schl. Young man with horn can’t hit imaginary note. Steeplechase cascades through valley. Someone says something. Motor oil materializes miraculously. Camels stagger in the desert. Snowballs batter the Mercedes as it speeds through the puddle splashing the pedestrians. The bride, tripping on trail, makes her way to the launch. Holsters pile up in the checkroom. The mission is cancelled. Balloon slips from hand and floats into sky, like the soul of Jesus meeting its father. The bus disappears on route to Jakarta. Holiday sales mask the despair of a populace exhausted by good cheer and bad chocolate. Ice coats the windows and railing of the fabled outhouse. An apprentice disconnects the hose that irrigates the pavilion’s ostentatious gardens. Workmen erect the towering edifice according to plan, then report to next job.
Locks Without Doors

"The world is half night"
—PETER STRAUB

1.
Will you promise not to get mad
if I tell you something? Nothing
notable except the prism without
light effects. Except that
expectations stymie hunger for
exceptions, such that
dedication rumples the doily
while in a tugboat there's
too little chance for remorse.

Like pillars of sand at a Revivalist
Meeting or pockets of pumice at a
Pita Party. For when the fire chief
told Pickles that he could stay
the cat knew he had finally
found a home. Any other solution
would be shallow and unseemly and so
seemingly inconsolable. An

inexorable

drift bombarding an quixotic emission,
a fleeting factotum culminating in
gesellschaft.

Settle for less

and you’ll get less.

A kettle of fish

is worth two pints of pink chocolate, a

bucket of kool-aid twice a coterie of
covens.
Slump not lest slip, slumber, swagger into
indelicacy, delirious indolence. The

world is half right, half flight, half
sorrow, half sliced. The
eucalyptus

bloomed in the decor, the dooryard
extruded the stall.

For long have I entombed my love
Less fleck than flayed upon
Who quaint and wary worry swarms
In tides lament nor laminations are
As stare compares a bellys tumble
Have I awaited by the slope
Of lumined ledgers lumbering links
Foregone though never bent

Not that I mean to startle just
unsettle. The settlers pitched their tents
into foreign ground. All ground is
foreign ground when you get to know
it as well as I do. Well I wouldn’t agree.
No agreement like egregious
refusal to hypostatize a suspension.
Suspension bridges like so many
drummers at bat, swatting flies in
the hot Carolina sun. No, son, it
wasn’t like that — we only learned we
had to be proud not what’s worth taking
pride in.

Looking for truth but finding only
memory
5.
Like two boats with one oar
Two lives with one core

6.
Forest ranger, inflatable stranger
Show me the place to flop down
Longing to go, got a beer & hoe
Deep under this frown

My daddy told me
Were certain men
Sell you for fodder
In ocean of sense
Tried to talk to you
Given my word
No sense talking
To men with no curves

7.
I can't but make it con-fluesce.

8.
ever knew what west is / best is

9.
I got
no eyes

all ears
tear verbs

for very long
had no song

give me a day
to make my sway

glow and rasp
will not last

be kind
slow mind

go blow
fill holes

come clean
go away

in summer
get butter

floor plan
poor slant

regularize
close your eyes

summary
mummery
grumble
fumble

ice cold
innuendoes

in it
for keeps

all right
too slight

mike knows
it's over

sam helps those
cooperate

10.

not for you
the hullabaloo

11.

No touch like your touch
Tiled to the flap it spun
Holding windows make-shift blouse
In rolling tide would crest

Cold lurch spills spit fold
Wild by such splat is come
Flushing sinews buttressed blast
On twirling slides next bounce

12.

I'll swallow my pride
Before I die
I'd bury my song
Without your arm

13.

The quality of Hershey's is not
too great although I always preferred
Skippy's smooth to crunch. If
Devil Dogs are not so good as Mars
bars, Camel's can still do what
no Virginia Slim dares. There was a time
I'd take a chance on generic
but I've learned to take pride in Tide.
“Put em away
or else I’ll
take them away”

“I’ll smack you on the face you say that again”

“There go
the lassoes”

lovely to see you
lolling about the lake
eating cake

the brotherhood of sleeping cars

I used to be Detroit
Now I’m Tennessee
I used to be distraught
Now I’m hard to get along with

Then again the quality of Jersey is not
much to wriggle your teeth about
five o’clock I’d say
nothing about it to him at all
you’ve meant to her & she
turned it over in her head
straight for the moors

you got a license for that torque?

Books can be deceiving, for instance
that look you gave me does not faze me
or it’ll be a frozen fog in Alberta
before the slot delivers.

“He stepped right on our castle”

“It’s a real crab with flaws”

“Don’t blame me I’m from Idaho”

“Don’t blush it only appears to be happening”

Put lack in your pipe and stroke it.

Not the hand
in the glove
but the mitten
in your mouth.
How I Painted Certain of My Pictures

“You say I’m like a Jewish mother but the kid is losing weight.” Turning by turns as though turns would make it different. Sunny with shallows all about, the solvent flush of fiduciary abandon. Mayhem that may be all right for Craig or Thomas but makes Dora duller. By crater lake, the minds too late. Or do the pushed pins pullulate; not that the motivation to continue could ever be just go on. Ingratiatingly grouchy, guardedly unconscious. Or else the pride of admission is not worth spitting on. I got to gargle but the loop’s on the VCR & the pillow’s in deep fry. Similar to dusting for fiberboard after each
feel. "I don't like mistakes, but purposes truly scare me." The lorry has left the levy lest the sandwiches lay lost, looted. Which cries out suddenly, incorrigibly that the gasket's blown an apricot. Or there'll be no more glowing. As in a deed is worth only half a word, over three-foot bird (seldom blurred). & then the launches sway in the cringe, fix flutters against green & yellow mutters (mothers). "Thomas is in my place & won't move." But it's not birds that are the problem. As if the ordinary were just there answering our call but we won't sound it out, or find the work too demanding (de-meaning), too extra ordinary. There are sleigh bells I know but never mine. Yet nothing I've lost, nothing yet to find. If that makes you sad then I'm sad too, even though we've never met or meet just now. Events are no protection from circumstance & circumstance is a positive hindrance.

Darling girl, darling boy Let's burn the house Tear down the ploys Stalled among the pantomimes, obsolete rimes. Never saw a bird that didn't want to fly—but there must be pigeons of different feather. Yet woman & man are no feather at all. Crazy like this rag gun rapping on my brain's floor.
So skip to the slaughter
Just like you ought’er
& take that smirk off your grimace

Yet kindness has such a bad
name, deliverance no less. Trees won’t
say it any better than “O!”
rings. Every syllable stings. & that’s the
hardest thing to stomach on a low-noise
diet, if you can sink your teeth into
the
thought that all that sound gotta be
digested. Anemic
poetry—or roughage?—for the health-
continent society? But
why prize distraction over direction, song over
solemnity? The times detail a change of
pockets & everybody’s loopy, mind made
up with hospital corners, while the leaves
of our lives unsettle their occupation. Or
is it a value simply to glide in the
turbulent air & push back when things
get foreshortened? The fate of the earth—

like if the world doesn’t care who will?
“Don’t scream so close my face!”
That we have to inhabit the world to know where
the earth might be, is. Then where was
it (was it?) lost. When I get
home I’ll glue it together as a little book.
& if that won’t work we can play Billie-
come-gravely all the way to the moon. If
the clue slips tear it. Nor jingle your
jaundiced gestures in my directions.
I’m as plump as a cherry on the tree
George Washington never chopped, as carefree
as a hornet in amphetamine
dive. You’ll
be lucky if you get out of here with your
yarmulke intact—but the shadow world will
intervene before the last lost moment. “People
don’t like you because you’re a brat—selfish
& whiny.” Although if you brush your teeth
twice you’ll get more than enough advice.
“I had to leave the job because I couldn’t
stand the people & the work was totally absorbing.” Because humble is not the same as humiliated.

Notice which bugs.

& over & over again

with aesthetic turpitude

(Let’s trade flavors).

Normally I’d say there was no jettisoning.

But my friend Frisby-Love took all she could take

before dead-ending in the hersemblescent poker patch. Darn this dated elan, these holes

of pure cheesecloth. As if outside

were anywheres at all. Bruised to the knees

in amours & cleaves. Confidence

just a prick—the man

on the barge selling

you the bridge between this thought

&

this.

Still waters run about as deep

as you can blow them. But it’s time

I came clean & you swept the boat

(I mean cameo): floor-length conscription with matching five-piece hush-orange ensemble.

Reading the riot act in the middle of sacral pacts. “Whatever you say, Sheriff!” “It’s been a long day, they always are.” “But why can’t I go out because I can see children playing?” Fluent in dreams, inconsolable otherwise. “I guess I have you to thank

for the mustard.” I guess we all just want to go home to bed.

I guess light doesn’t even notice it’s going so fast.

Drum beats on the meridian, sun beats on the Mercedes. Mr. Bush stares blankly on the podium wondering what to do next. M.
Mitterand has some warm words for Danton. Mrs. Thatcher bangs a few notes on her bagpipe. The silencers click onto the muzzles. “I just don’t want to have to go through that again.” I’ll just put down my pen.

*Exeunt.*

*Curtain.*

*ACTION!*
"Zip it up—I don’t care—you listen
to me." Proscriptive or prescriptive: the weight
of tradition or
a tradition of weights. Just
waiting to get the go ahead from my friends on
the force. Blanked
out on parry when route
has found alternative to clown-out, suction. Running
to meter the lawn in consequence of which
showers departure. "Chill
off!" Confining
masquerade
to detail, touching
promise until you’ve fingered
the figures out of it, out of
yourself. &
yelling behind the truck, inaudible
to the exhaust,
like some nasty duck pounding against a pond.
The view I am going to suggest, I hope in
less obscure
language, is related to this.
Essentially, there are three
types of problems. Sometimes
with hardly a notion that she has
heard a word. Blue & blue-
black. For what’s the point of having
different words if they mean the same
thing? Something made me
want to get out of the house. I
couldn’t understand that money was going
to be burned
when people was
in need. But the issue
is different if we return
to the question posed at the beginning. In
addition to the question of objectivity is
the question of

scale. The importance of this
point will emerge when we see how complex
a psychological interchange constitutes
the natural development of sexual
abstraction. I felt
bad. I
felt cold. I felt
completely out of
it.
The article
paints a picture
of its author as seething with jealousy
& egomania—hopelessly out
of touch
with the material
that is his
putative
subject. The thing then to watch the spectacle
without being sucked up
in
it—for there is
a danger in finding yourself dictating
defenses to crimes not only not committed
but really just the opposite
of crimes—what
is left to be done. Of course, what
many have regarded as a liberating
permission
to write in otherwise unsanctioned ways
will provoke professional sanction-takers to see
only red. Because
of casuistical problems
like this
I prefer to stay with the original
unanalyzed distinction between what
one does to people
& what merely
happens to them as a result of what one
does. Notions
for a September day, lying in the
hay
of tumultuous enfolding.

All this
is as clear as day
right now. The crow
slides low over the abandoned
mine, looking for correspondence &
twine. While in Gaza
the rioters have
nothing
to lose
but loss.
The view I am
going
to suggest
I hope in less obscure language
is related to
this.
for Susan

Swear  
there is a sombrero  
of illicit  
desquamation  
(composition).

I forgot to  
get the  
potatoes but the lakehouse  
(ladle)  
is spent  
asunder. Gorgeous  
gullibility—  
or,  
the origin  
of testiness  
(testimony).

Laura  
does the laundry, Larry  
lifts lacunas.  
Such that  
details commission of  
misjudgment over 30-day  
intervals.

By  
the sleeve is the  
cuff & cuff  
link (lullaby, left offensive,  
houseboat).
Nor let your unconscious
get the better of you.
Still, all ropes
lead somewhere, all falls
cut to fade.
I.e.: 4 should always be followed
by 6, 6 by 13.

Or if
individuality is a false
front, group solidarity is a
false fort.

"ANY MORE FUSSING & YOU'LL
GO RIGHT TO YOUR ROOM!"

She flutes that slurp
admiringlier.

Any more blustering & I
collapse as deciduous
replenishment.

So sway the
swivels, corpusculate the
dilatations.
For I've
learned that relations
are a small
twig in the blizzard
of projections
& expectations.
The story
not capacity but care—
not size but desire.

& despair
makes dolts of any persons, shimmering
in the quiescence of
longing, skimming
disappointment & mixing it
with
breeze.
The sting of
recognition triggers
the memory & try to
take that apart (put
that together).

Popeye
no longer sails, but Betty
Boop will always
sing sweetlier
sweetliest
than the crow who fly
against the blank
remorse of castles made
by dusk, dissolved in
day's baked light.
Emotions of Normal People

"Truth is the antithesis of existing society."
—TH. ADORNO

With high expectations, you plug
Into your board & power up. The
Odds are shifted heavily in your
Favor as your logic simulator comes
On-screen. If there’s a problem
You see exactly where it’s located
& can probe either inside or
Outside with a schematic editor.
English-like commands make
Communication easy. Auto-scale
Gets waveform capacity on-board
Without the need for monolithic or
Highpass switch debouncers &
Dissipation separators. For
Correlating interactions, the 16-
Bit data bus & interrupt controller
Lets you place a timestamp value on
Every transaction stored—at no
Cost to your memory depth.
Normalization then corrects for
Reflections & imperfections caused
By connectors & cables. Enter the
Digitalizing oscilloscope with 20
GHz bandwidth, 10 ps resolution, &
Floating-point primitives upwardly
Compatible with target-embedded
Resident assemblers & wet-wet
Compilers. & the fact that you can
Configure it yourself means you
Get exactly what you want—and cut
Down on chances for device failure.
Moreover, all systems components
Are easy to install & reconfigure
Since interconnections use a
Floating interface that produces
Consistent low-loss mating. Add

Dear Fran & Don,

Thanks so much for
dinner last night. You two
are terrific—we knew that about
you, Fran, but, Don—we don’t
meet rocket engineers such as
yourself very often and so
meeting you was a special treat!
Next time—our little Italian restaurant!

Warm Regards,

Scott & Linda

Suddenly, in spite of worrisome statistics that had unnerved the Street, we developed conviction and acted on it. Aside from the arbs and the rumor mill, the major trend remains up regardless of street noise. The liquidity is there, so any catalyst should hasten the major direction. The market’s internal technical condition is far from overbought, which leaves room to rally back to October’s 2500.

I think our big problem is inhibiting post-normalization.

Success demands getting more from available space, taking efficiency to extremes, paying less for improved performance. Moreover, 1440 sacrifices none of 1430a’s performance.

Intuitive user interfaces provide only part of the road map out of the dark ages. We’ve made debugging easier with differential nonlinearity, monolithic time-delay generators, and remote-error sensing terminals (RETS). Yet, we still face a severe memory shortage and rather than resolve the problem we’re buying our way out of it. We need a tariff on cheap foreign-made memory so we can regroup our own. The current controversy, however,

stems from the attempts of several vendors to control the marketplace by promoting standards that especially benefit their computing architecture.

I’d like you to meet Jane Franham. Jane was my mother-in-law until I married Jim. While I was sure of Joan’s love, I still worried that she might be tempted by other men. Now both hands are able to work, since the magnifier is suspended around the neck on an adjustable length of cord. We had argued about his job before, about how wrong it was for a man with three kids to spend so few days a year at home, with no end in sight. I suspect that your father had an adrenal gland tumor that was driving his blood pressure up. Lillie was very emphatic that she wanted to be a ballet dancer; the nun thing was just a passing phase that lots of girls go through. Lipstick is meant to be the perfect finishing touch—one that doesn’t compete with your eyeshadow or clash with your blushes. Only when the soup course is finished is the service plate taken out. —Who’s the woman YOU
most admire? Is it Shirley Temple Black, Raisa Gorbachev, Phyllis Schlafly, Winnie Mandela, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, or Ella Fitzgerald?

After my neck surgery, Marge asked me if I would be investing in a lot of scarves.

The Cowley’s one exceptional expenditure is the $583 they give every month to their church. This outlay represents nearly 15 percent of their budget. And in 1985 and 1986, when the church was being enlarged to include a 2,500-seat chapel, Dick and Carol contributed nearly 25 percent of their income. “The church is the focus of our lives,” says Carol. She is a volunteer in the church library; Dick teaches adult Sunday school, accompanies the choir (on trumpet), and every Tuesday evening goes out on “visitations”.

However you come to terms with your feelings about your husband, you must face the fact that your son is totally innocent of any responsibility. No matter how much bitterness his father deserves, you must not transfer it to the boy. Define brows with brown eye-shadow pencil; blend with stiff brow brush for natural effect. Use powder one shade darker than skin tone. Brush on temples and under chin to widen face. For long-lasting color, dust lips with translucent powder before applying lip color. All things considered Joe was a thoughtful husband.

The only thing nicer than a letter from a friend is taking the time to read it over a warm cup of Orange Cappuccino.

In InteliCorp’s KEE, frames are called units, properties of units are called slots, and properties of slots are called facets. In Teknowledge’s 5:2, however, frames are called classes, properties of classes are called attributes, and properties of attributes are called slots.

“When someone hits the board with the head in that fashion, you can get a scalping effect,” Panzano said. “The board hits the head and the skin is peeled back and it requires extensive suturing. The worst thing a Diver can do is hit the board or the Tower. When I see something like that, I get a sick feeling in my stomach.”
If you would love to be living your life in a different way but don’t want to spend a lifetime learning how... Dynamic short-term social therapy can empower you to make the moves you’ve been afraid—or unable—to make, in your personal life and your career. You don’t have to be a victim of loneliness, depression, “mid-life crisis”, insensitivity, or regrets. Free up your ability to grow and change as you learn the emotional and social skills you need to be intimate and passionate. Write The Dysraphism Center for more information.

Bernstein’s argument is an important one and his discussion is consistently thoughtful, energetic, and smoothly handled. Any reader of the modern verse epic will find The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic stimulating and provocative.

This hereby serves as your second and final return notice. Since our previous notice to you remained unanswered, we must assume you do not want your Casio 300 rear projection color TV or your three piece Cardin designer luggage. As previously detailed, this sophisticated color projection television viewing system features the latest in television technology. This set delivers rich contrast and sharp resolution. This system must be given away in order to comply with state and federal regulations. The same is true of the designer luggage by Pierre Cardin. Your failure to respond immediately will release your television to other persons located in your region. Please call 1-800-233-4797 to schedule your tour of Tree Tops Resort. Operators are on duty.

Which best describes your dress size? What brands of bar soap have been used in your household in the past 6 months? Which of the following hypoallergenic products are currently being used in your household? Which of the following best describes the sensitivity of your skin? To which of the following products have you experienced a negative reaction? On average, how many days per week do you use foundation? Do you use a facial cleanser other than bar soap? Do you or anyone in your family wear support pantyhose? What brands of underwear do you wear? How often have you used a nasal spray in the last 6 months? How many tablets of pain relievers are used in your household each month? Did you ever use a nonprescription pain reliever in capsule form? Do you own an automatic dishwasher? If so, how many loads do you do in your automatic dishwasher in an average week? Do you use Mexican sauces such as salsa or picante? If you have burned artificial firelogs in your fireplace, which brands do you burn most often? If anyone in your family practices heart attack prevention, how? Which of the following home improvements do you plan in the next 6 to 12 months? How many times did you medicate for diarrhea in the past year? Are you concerned about the side effects allergy medicine can cause (drowsiness, dizziness, insomnia, sleeplessness, dry mouth)? In an average month, how many calls are made by you and any other household member living with you to places outside your area code? Have you moved in the last year and during which month? How many vehicles are owned by members of your household? How do you feel about your present auto insurance company? Do you invest in or would you welcome literature describing special offers on securities? Which of the following do you own or have, or are you considering for first-time purchase or replacement within the next six months? What organizations do any members of your household belong to? How many times have you shopped by mail in the past month? Do you frequently donate by mail to any of the following?
Dear Mr. Chinitz:

I am writing to follow-up on two previous phone calls on this subject and because I will not be able to reach you by phone late this afternoon when you are scheduled to be in your office.

As you know, I called you on September 30 and October 2 to report a very loud vibrating noise coming from the main water risers in our apartment—a noise that affects the whole "R" line and can be heard in the hallway of the building. This noise persisted throughout the middle-of-the-night and into the day on the occasions I called. The noise was such as to prevent sleeping and thus is a disturbing and serious problem. Almando the super checked out every apartment on the rear line of 464 on October 2 while the noise was going on and found it appeared to be unrelated to any water use in those apartments.

Subsequent to that time, the situation had improved: the noise would occur sporadically for periods of five minutes to one hour. During the day today, however, the noise has been persistent from 11:00 am on. Typically, the vibration occurs for about 10 seconds and then stops for about 20 seconds. The hot water riser can be felt to shake: and the adjacent walls also shake.

I had hope that this situation had been resolved, but evidently not. Your urgent attention to this matter is necessary and would be most appreciated.

A 1985 survey shows that 23.3 percent of all writers write poetry—that's 2,180,000 people who are writing poetry and want to get published. 1989 Poet's Market contains current, accurate, and complete information to help poets to do just that.

Poets will find out where and how to publish their poetry through 1,700 listings (550 of which are brand new) of mass circulation and literary magazines, trade book publishers, small presses, and university quarterlies. Updated listings enable poets to accurately target their work to receptive publishers. Poets will find details on who to contact, how to submit work, types of poetry needed, comments from editors, poets published, whether the publisher accepts unsolicited poems, type of compensation (where applicable), and sample lines of recently published poems. In addition, each listing is coded according to the level of submissions desired (beginner, experienced, or specialized).

Through 12 "Close-Up" interviews with such poets as Richard Wilbur, 1987 Poet Laureate of the United States, and Rita Dove, winner of the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, poets will gain further insight into the process of writing and publishing poetry. They'll also find advice on increasing their chances of being published by knowing how to judge their own work; participating in workshops, clubs, and networking; working with regional publications; plus opportunities in greeting card, poster, and postcard markets and information on contests and awards.

How do statesmen become aware of unfavorable shifts in relative power and how do they seek to respond to them? Who makes constitutional laws? Were early Americans a distinctly modern people, a people without a past? This is an exemplary work of mutually supportive normative argument and empirical investigation. Reading it is like backpacking through the nation's forests in company with a modern-day Thoreau. Secondly, the posture that the work takes is frankly quite liberal, and, in recent years, open and undisguised liberalism has become something of a debased currency. After absorbing these revelations and analysis, it is hard to imagine comprehending the origins and evolution of the cold war without them. Drawing on the work of Indian and Japanese patients and displaying a professional anthropologist's eye for telling detail, here is the first comprehensive study of Protestant theological concerns. A fascinating history that should be required reading for any serious student of turn-of-the-century
French gaiety. Abounds in rich description and valuable insight. Destined to become the definitive treatment for decades. All Americans who care about their country's place in the world will find this book worth reading.

Are you a normal person?
Probably for the most part you are.
Your sex complexes, your fears and furies and petty jealousies,
your hatreds and deceptiveness, only serve
to secure your normalcy. I can still remember
vividly the fear I once experienced, as a child,
when threatened, on the way to school,
by a half-witted boy with an air-gun.
But a person who calls himself
a psychologist is in a peculiar position
these days. Dr. Cuit P.
Tichter of the Johns Hopkins University
found that Norway rats
died quickly if their whiskers were clipped
and they were put into a
tank of water. Actually,
we have two emotional levels, one

fundamental and the other more or less
superficial. Actually,
most people need only a few close
friends, with a larger circle
of casual friends. Experiments show that
if someone says these
things to a man on his way to the office,
sometimes he can scarcely work
and will go home to bed. Besides,
being busy is
not a virtue in itself!
There are no adequate emotional outlets
for many stresses and people who depend completely
on their emotions frequently find themselves
in jail. This explains why
persons with father-in-law, familial
or boss troubles develop
painful spasms. The intestine is
as sensitive to bombardments
from the brain as the skin of some people
to sun rays. The
bowel is a bear for punishment.
In such an atmosphere
a husband can develop a disturbing
sense of inferiority. He begins
to doubt that he still has the capacity
to be attractive. He may
become so convinced that he has lost his
charm that he no longer
makes any effort to look nice or
appear charming. Of course, the
opposite type of upbringing can be just as
harmful. Of course,
you can’t grade husbands like apples or oranges,
dropping each
through a slot previously evaluated for size,
shape, dis-
position, and domesticity.
“Men like to be bossed,” says Dr.
Cleo Dausson, University of Kentucky
psychologist and authority on
masculinity. “Men are fearful. Glandular
differences make them five times more fearful
than women. They attach more
importance to security than women do. Emotionally
they are never
on the same keel two days in a row; as a result, they need
contant reassurance.” But some parents
always act fearsome and
protective toward their children, not thinking
that by killing
their nerve they are also killing their chances
of having rich,
exciting, and successful lives. Children
are born with
practically no fears and if not repressed
by their overanxious and tyrannical
parents
would have a natural courage that would
sustain them throughout life. Nor can I second
your notion that
you’ve got moral grounds for divorce. Rather, I think
your
misery calls for psychiatric treatment. In other words, the mother's natural reflex equilibrium could not be restored to a completely resting or balanced condition until Teddy had learned to perform his part of the rug-folding process perfectly, and was further able to take the initiative in directing his mother's movements so that they would cooperate completely with his own. Again the explanation of their incompetence in passing a mental test may lie in the subjects' seeming inability to regard fellow students as rivals, or to feel any element of opposition in either the test itself or the examiner. They frequently appear just as well satisfied with a poor record as a good one and seem willing to submit to any degree of hardness or criticism or reproof from the teacher or examiner without assuming the least antagonism of attitude. In any case, sarcasm is evidence of a sadistic trend in one's personality.
Debris of Shock / Shock of Debris

The debt that pataphysics owes to sophism cannot be overstated. A missionary with a horse gets saddlesores as easily as a politburo functionary. But this makes a mishmash of overriding ethical impasses. If the liar is a Cretan I wouldn’t trust him anyway—extenuating contexts wouldn’t amount to a hill of worms so far as I would have been deeply concerned about the fate of their, yes, spools. Never burglarize a house with a standing army, nor take the garbage to an unauthorized junket. Yet when I told the learned ecologist about my concern for landscape she stared unsympathetically into the carbon. Mr. Spoons shook his head, garbled his hypostases. To level with you we’d have
to be on the same
level. Then, with all honesty, we can
only proceed to deplane. Looking for society
in a lamppost will not necessarily eliminate
need for empirical
evidence. There are the
below-the-surface conduits
to consider. As a rule, I keep
my mittens in the drawer. Structure
is metaphorical, function metonymic. Meaning
my aim is to blur
the distinction between logic and normalization.
(“Though I still don’t get how confusion
is supposed to be positive?”) Are they literally
bricks or are they literal steps? The infernal
machinery of missing harness, by the bus,
gates close to malediction, as in
get off my bunt, churning
in make-work flirtation, shocked to find a bandit
loosened . . . Venetian red (Rem), prussian
ultramarine (Rem), shiva red, thick

red, thick pink, thick ochre, medium green
paintstick (thick), thin black, thin
ochre, thin
red, paper palette, tissues, garbage bags,
wax.
Yet it is the virile voice of authority, the condescending
smugness in tone, that is thrilling. What
does it matter that he hasn’t any . . . “Creative
goals and financial goals are identical: we just
have different approaches on how to research
those goals, and we have different definitions
of risk.” A localization that may not
dovetail with forced archaization, which
is the groundswell of our importunity.
&
speaking of “pressmen’s licence”, here is a truly
novel instance of “creating facts”
riddled with holes like baloney. Respond:
yes or no. The point not to right wrong
but to come to terms
with error. It’s not only
the wrong road but the wrong
destination; still if
there's no way back, there's company
in the
loss. Heeding without ceding . . . Couples
dancing in the snow, in the blinding
light. No matter how much you protest.
"If I'd have lived longer, I'd have lost
even more money." For months he retreated
into his inner sanctuary, emerging only for meals
& sleep; once, stealing through its
locked doors, we briefly glimpsed
the spot: bare
walls without furniture or implement, floor
covered with thick black
loam. Better
a barber than a splendor
be. Fool's
gold
is the only kind of gold I
ever cared about.
The men, having lost their comrades in the

explosion, returned the next day to the mine
& the memory: what other
image of courage could have
so little capital & so much
weight? The salt
of the earth is the tears
of God, torn for
penitence at having created this plenitude
of sufferance. So we dismember (disremember)
in homage to our maker, foraging
in fits, forgiving in
forests, spearing what we take
to be our sustenance: belittling to rein things
in to human scale. A holy land parched
with grief & dulled
envy. The land is soil
& will not stain; such
hope as we may rise from.
Motion rises, sustains a
predilection in askance
who periodize location, slush

boat to chimes
sloths emotion, like as
in thumping pummels
or pulverizes punt

vicarious want to
be possessed no room
arrays diphthong slope

gumption gum drilled or
guttered, the contraption
is delinquent must fly
trap or elevate

theatrical equivalent of lozenge
a.k.a. e’er do-well seamster
stirs up corollary antidote

or weightier osmosis
stems looking glass affect
coddling codices in
endoskeletal humor mongering—you’d

have to admit—
belies the unpoetic poetic
who cruises palatially—
all adrift intended—I’ll
get slumpy and
maybe open a garden
(levied at about
30,000 fleet)—or hate
the boom-shebang effect
fostered at time
interlock, station flayed by
inoperable hampers, obsequious
swoops, as pulp bumps
plop, thingamawhoiseit buffle
joint, glassed in gradually
gestures of gerrymand
origin, jitters jocose oblong—
nor say this—
materials not hard to
locate but reform—
like like or as
before, getting a
taxi in a sandstorm
breathes (not breaths)
a lie of belief
tokes of congregation
voids convivial handtray intubation
until detains corrode
lavalier pistol-whip upholstery
larvae of dysfunction
branding witless hip, demarcation

baloney, scintillating sway
of deadbeat ejaculation, sipping-
good aluminum: anything
that can be forgot
will be forgotten
blue ashtray on a
plexiglass puncture, plowed
to enclosure, moment before
enunciation: I left
you there but you
have never found
me though I hide
in visibility and
wade higglety pigglety among
archways or ski lifts
courting caresses while plummeting
occasionally to shoreline
sighting concavities like the
mannequin that had
no manners, trading flops
for angular inebriation
(awful salvage), lighting delay
as if details
could reverse the course
of reason’s palsy:
heart in my eye
remorse buckles under
weight that overpowers all
I call mine
all touched by such
exposure imagination flings
tools formed in shell-

bent plan we
mourn at singular unleavening
excretes by fold
It is often said that the bladder is an unreliable witness. I’ve felt that way myself coming back from a sluggishly encumbered day at the computer bank. “They clammed up like so many turtles in overdrive”—but only if you didn’t get to know their Mercurial propulsions. There’s a version that says quell the branches before you braid or at least unload the interfusing hot buttons. Don’t know much about chopped wax either, loop the reliquary, some cross-valent comet coming at 50,000 kilobytes per minute per mention, I left the rack at the store but recalled the combination to the cross, “he would suck up to an octopus if he thought it would strangle somebody for him”, no pork barrel just juiced petunias . . .

It was one of those almost unfamiliar sections of LA, just beyond the tar pits, where you could get steak & eggs for breakfast for under ten & change. I wasn’t quite a regular but they knew me well enough to bring the order without asking too many questions. It was a dive I went to to get my mind off work, my attention Intermittent Diffuse with just enough juice to register the scene at the end table by the picture of Hydra.
Ripping through the water like it was so much Swiss cheese

"The only thing Swiss about you is the baloney!"

Dear Mr. Charles,

I wish and pray this letter finds you in the best of health and cheers. May I introduce myself as a missionary priest working for North East India with its thousands of downtrodden people, suffering from the pangs of poverty, illiteracy diseases, etc. Hence in their name this begging letter to you for any little help.

So many innocent and poor children are to be fed, educated, and looked after. Timely aids for emergency needs give us tensions in distress we have no other way than to make appeal in folded hands to kind hearted people.

Fr. Pallatty M.
Madras 600 008

Dried ice or crunched innuendo, on your toes then on your knees. To capitalize Despair—that was the old way; to capitalize on despair, who promises an aspiring future in piece goods . . . The boat found the hay but the ocean had turned to a symphony of suction. So long sweet tuna, so long gefilte fish. The only true traditions the ones we invent to vent the spleen of the inconsolable loss of history’s ambient diffusion and victory’s unsparing parry. Witless in the rain, sober in the dew . . .

Or more due than ever done, when debts
Soak the morning and regrets eventide

My name is Necromancer
My sister calls me Still
I’m widely known as Cast Away
‘ve trouble with my Trill

Yet despite the disintegration of his personality, the foolishness of his actions, his excessive drunkenness and incurable extravagance, Goldsmith was, and is, a great man—a man of rare talents that border on genius, one of the finest natural writers in the English language.

For Blake’s art is ornamental & rhetorical, not organic & formal.

Slip & slide
pop ‘n’ fizz
blink and whine
drop, spin

There hangs the fade, there the woolen shoes.
The roof has swoops—
two fools under one hood, alarmed to the teeth one with an eye on the sail other with ear to the—.

Where the carcass is, there
the crow flies.

Swarming around the bandshell
waiting for the buzz saw
or Buick Pompadour convertible
hearts break when you don’t touch them?
Are the rich getting richer or are you just glad to see me?

“I didn’t give it to you with any sand so why do you give it to me with sand?”

“Well, Blanche, I just brought the egg over here because the recipe says to separate two eggs.”

LET’S CALL THE POLICE!

“Let’s call the Swedish delegation!”

Call me irresistible or call me unreliable but don’t call me I’ll call you

He showed a malignant unwillingness to differentiate frames suggesting an underlying refusal to distinguish between performative, substantive, substantive-performative, and perfermno-substantive utterances.

“I thought utterances were for cows”

“You think you’re big but in reality you’re very little”

“In reality” I don’t exist though I will recently have moved to Buffalo.

Elbow or buckled philodendrom

“It’s just hard it’s not like you’re gonna get killed”

First there is the build up & then the fizz (fix).
In Utopia the story will never end.
—“Or begin”

“Yah but a softball is still hard”

Or if this followed the other, that this? This that other, the followed this if, or.

Just don’t say it like you mean it

You can’t substitute heating oil for ‘moral panic’

You get the hose, I got the biscuits

Look! Look!

I’m eternally attentive but nowhere sentient

“Just tell the snake, ‘NO’!”

Fluidly floral or floridly fluid

Butcha better belch

“No they’re not fighting it’s real play”

She doesn’t give up she doesn’t even try!

Flummoxed or flunked or flushed or refrigerator

Decals make the man much the way oilcloth makes the kitchen. “Oilcloth” being an old-fashioned way of saying linoleum, “decals” being an oblique way of suggesting models for.

“I’m hungry and want someone to greet”

If sand’ll get you shore, sad’ll get you exactly nowhere.
No I'm not hostile, just unhappy.

No I'm not unhappy, just hostile.

I mean, hospitable... I mean I've been a little grumpy the past few decades

Harder for a rich man to read a poem than for a hippopotamus to sing bel canto.

Preposterous!

Para(pa)posterous.

Indubitably, indubitabler, emergency intubation

—But then you've probably never heard Rataxes sing!

Not only that, either—when two bits ain't worth a dime, you might as well swap those Swamis for some canned fish

No, I'm not sarcastic, just unsettled, like images of the Indians trouble my sleep, like we settled altogether too much too fast & have to throw out our backs retracing our steps

There is a madness to their method: Take no prisoners, pensioners

For to dissect is to delight in the sentient; all else is so much hocus pocus, ring-a-levos of repression and triplebind, culpable blindness to what is before our touch. Read to redress, disguise as promise—not to submit.

Hollow words with a ring of truth, signet of sorrow. Not to reprimand is to be remanded to the custody of those escaped the tide of moral pull: accumulation beyond the wildest needs of child or woman or man—this is the first sin. Our jailers are our constipating sense of self—not that madmen claim many kin. Rue or be ruled or take a ruler to the wind to measure the gravity that locates us surely as the morning falls, whether or not we get up.

Or else—

wake me for meals
The Influence of Kinship Patterns upon Perception of an Ambiguous Stimulus

What's money worth? Not a whole lot if you come up a few bits short & come away empty handed. If that was the case what would you have to say then? At least the motorperson knows how to blow a whistle. At least in the winter it's not summer (God damn mosquitoes & horseflies). What did the Mandela say to the Mandela? BOY HITS IGLOO. Snowed motion, i.e., frosted or laminated. To be such a bitter pill & have nothing wrong. Don't laugh *It really hurted.* If you put on my shirt then what shirt am I going to wear? The kind of people wear plaid Bermuda shorts. The kind of people who wear plaid Bermuda shorts. The kind of
Day this has been (I think I am
Falling into a tunnel of love but
Forget to get on). For a long time I'd
Say *twirl* when I meant ’spin’. Have you
Heard the one about the fly & the
Paper? The fly bottle could not found
The fly. The Mother Bear could not
Find the rest of the story. Harry has his
Troubles too but these are not interesting enough
To bear replay. “That’s a very
Suspicious-looking baby.” “It’s hard
Not to be a baby.” “But
Are there really babies or just baby-
Behavior?” —For the purpose
Of your request I’m including this
Sentence about the influence of John
Ashbery. While the packet
Boat sunk I can still imagine I am
Crawling into it; at the same time the ice
Is too thin to
Pretend to fall through.

*Meanwhile*, the water is wetter in the
Rich man’s pond but doesn’t taste
As good. —Hey wait a minute!
That’s a bit *too* close, try to stay
Back at *least* 10 inches. So what
If the margins don’t
Turn out right? Whadda you *mean* you’re
Going to the next poem? *This is the best*
*Part!* Oh, I’m sorry, I guess I misunderstood
You. —But nobody seems to want to hear
About the pain we men feel
Having our prerogatives questioned.
A bunch of darn-dash pragmatists
With justice on their side (for all
The good that will do them). Don’t
Frame me or I’ll bust you in the
Doldrums. —*Now let’s*
Switch the subject & try to find
Out what’s on *your* mind. Voyage of life
Getting you down? Felt better when things
Were really rocky & now there’s smooth
Sailing but it's lost its meaning? I'm a
good listener & only mildly demanding:
There's just the one-time fee (mostly
for paper & printing & distribution
Costs) & unlimited returns. I'm bubbling over
With empathy & good advice & I'm not
Afraid to tell you where I think you've
gone wrong. Let's face it—
From the word go you've
Resented me—resented my being finished
In the face of your—what?—continuing
On? But I don't mean to be complete
If that makes you feel distant; still
As I say, I
do want some distance. She was a
Sort of Betsy Ross figure but without the
Accoutrements—no washer/dryer, just the one
TV. I said to her—What can you expect
From a poem? —evidently a lot less than
She did. A poem bleeds
Metaphorically, just like I do. I can

No more breathe than face
The music. But if the first
Banana smells a rat look out for
Lost leader (tossed reader). —"I
don't think I'm ever
Going home." —I don't think
I've ever been home. We are looking for
Cheerful, enthusiastic self-starters
With solid backgrounds in detailed
Wails. The point
Not to change history but to change
Events. For instance, you
can change in the car, change on the
Beach, or use a changing room
At the beach. Don't change me
& I won't change a hair on your
Chinny chin chin. Or let me
Put it this way: You can call
Me anything you want to but give me
The right change. That's right: I
haven't changed, you have. It's
Not the time it's the beer. I'm in
A rush, don't forget to send a
Check. Not a con
Just a dodge. Not a dodge a Lincoln-
Mercury. Take me to your leader. Take me
To the 5 & Dime I've got to go.
Faith under leisure: as difficult as
Keeping a hat in a hurricane
Or an appointment with an erasure.
*One Mandela hit the other Mandela in the nose.*
What color blood came out?
R-E-D spells red.
Are you people? You're about the nicest people
I know & I know some pretty unpleasant
characters.
"We're a great pair—
I've got no voice
& you've got no ear."
—LIZABETH SCOTT to
CHARLES HESTON, *Dark City*

1. *Apple-Picking Time*

A transom stands bound to a flagpole. Hard
by we go hardly which way is which
lingering somewhere unsettled where evidence
comes harder by sockets, stems
etched in flexed omission like osmotic
molarities flickering edge and orange at flow
rates unrepresentative of ticking or torpor
any child or person requires for, well
against, that remorse remonstration
brings. It’s cold outside, maybe
but the heart sinks daily in
slump of sampled parts and I
*feel like* carelessness, disowning what’s
acquired in indifferent
animation, no body swaps to—
not as if elevated or cut down
to size up, like layers of lost
boys, like aspiration in a tub
at sea, lists all the scores and
scares at measures twice the fall.
I’m parked because I have no taste
to go—penned down, no row to call
my own. Abruptly, silently borrowing
ignition from rumble, pouring
face into a
stir...
We're a great fire, pining for a
tower to burn through, yet no matter
whose ice scatters our shouts—
dive for the switches, bury the
slots.

There's an eggplant in heaven
Seen it there, know the sign
It's awaiting for me
End of time, long-lost rime

I loved my love with gold
She loved me with her smile
But I took no possession
Then / Had no taste called mine
I knew I wept alone that night
As sure as sheep in folds
The I has ways the arm betrays
For now my lance is warped

The Bitter Core o'erwhelms its fate
An abler loss casts breeze
Sobriety's a fool's way out
I'll take the sea in me, in me
Nor swap the waves for thee.

Floorlength gowns of commodious indelicacy
suffusing articles on plums
in monk's applause, equipped with attenuated
slips, adjunctive rumination, felt
bellowes. Before I, in the interests of
but not to further ascribe, at which
mechanism, slate, pediment, protrusion

abutment, laceration, absinthe-oriented
divestment gaged to occur or unveil
its numinous ectoplasmic Jill or gel or
JELLO AGAIN THIS IS JACK BENNY FOR
JELLO PUDDING AND PIE FILLING.
Overboard or just over-by-a-long
shot. Grateful to even imagine
shore.

As a matter of fact
I'm as good as packed.
I slept longer than you
Now isn't that true?

A poem should not mean but impale
not be but bemoan,
boomerang
buck(le)
bubble. Malted meadows & hazelnut
innuendos: I'll bet the soda water
gets the shakes sooner than
Dan gets to Tampa. "Don't Tampa
with me or I'll lacerate that
evisceration off your face so fast
you'll think my caddle prod was a
lollipop." "Stay out my face or I'll
deploy my assets against whatever
collateral you've got left after I
target your abstemious alarm." He
was the kind of guy who pushed
my buttons but couldn't carry a
tune from Kuala Lampur to
Guadalajarya, like those zebras
with cross hatchings, or the trapeze
family with Venusian ventilators. I
mean I felt good at first
but then it dawned on me, what
if it was really a mistake, maybe
I shouldn’t have said what I
did, did what I
done. Mildred paced around the museum
for another few hours before she spotted
him, but it was much too crowded to
finish the job right there. “They were
my favorite boots,” she cried. “They are
your only boots,” I replied.

2. Early Frost

I think it’s time we let the cat out
its bag, swung the dog over the
shoulder, so to say, let the hens
say “hey” to the woodpeckers, doled
out some omniversions to the
too-tapped-upon, the tethers without
toggles, the field-happy expeditioneers
on the march to Tuscaloosa, Beloit,
Manual Falls, Florid Oasis.
“Damn but you’re a beautiful
cow / of a / bell! Haven’t
I seen you on the radio?”
Where are those fades (arcades, shades)
when you need them? Who
was that text I saw you with
last night? Is there life after
grammar (glamour)? The Czech
is in the jail (the wreck is
in the wail, the deck is in the
sail, the Burma shave’s shining over the
starry blue skies, Waukeegan, New Jersey,
1941). He that cannot pay: let him pay!
She that peeps through a hole will kiss
the wave that troubled her. No larder

but has its puddle, no rose without
overthrows. Ask no questions and at last
you shall be blind! A stumble may
prevent a fall but a fall guy’s
my kind of man. Every poem
has its price, every anxiety its reward—but
no person ever tripped in the same
place more than I choose to
recall. There are spots even on the
sofa (meddle not with another person’s
meddling, i.e., the rock that falls
from the sky breaks your toes).
For the footprint makes the joint a
well-appointed appurtenance aside the
jesting hooligan, shenanigan, or
general call to bedlam, or did
she say, be calm? Clammy hands
hurt the advancement of the waiter
but I never heard no tell of no
gust or gallon of time worth the
curing in weight alone. Boxers
can’t live by punching alone, but
stay clear of such as possible—a
Divine Swerve will still land you
in Hell’s cauldron. Thus
make your peace with yourself at
your own risk for peace with the Devil
costs everybody more than you could
hope to destroy. Holy is as holy does.
Essence precludes existence.
3. *Endless Destination*

If I should die

cut out my throat

and burn it on the pyre

of their indifference.

It means no more to me

than that, to take

your hand in my

hand and turn our backs

from the wreck

not of our lives

but where we have been given

to live them. I would not

walk alone here, where the

dark surrounds, where your face

radiates beyond my swollen

misgivings and clarifies the mist

of my belonging. Stay near

that I may hold you lightly

else the fear inside tear

away what measures I have

held against the night.

Love's no more than that

a straw against the wind

that blows us to the ground

without submission. Come

love, come, take this

shadow I call me: cast

it against stone, lest the gloom

become us. Come cast me

down 'gainst shore, where

sand enfolds us.

4. *In the Pink*

Now let's turn to some advise for expectant

fathers. Never wear a hat to a

hanging or carry a feather pillow to

cello practice. Suffer not the

professor of culture nor the minister

of taste, but assail all who

complacent sit in the place of those

deserve it. Take the cracks on

the wall as your credo or call—

obscurity's in the eye of

ones will not behold—

what they can understand

isn't worth the price of

a used tin can. I may be loco

but at least I listen: What

you've tuned out would make a Paradise

of Plies.

This is the difference between truth

and reality: the one advertises itself

in the court of brute circumstance

the other is framed by its own

insistences. Truth's religious, reality
Charles Bernstein was born in 1950 in New York City. He attended the Bronx High School of Science and Harvard College. He lives in Buffalo, and in Manhattan, with painter Susan Bee and their children Emma and Felix.

Bernstein's first book, *Parsing*, was published by his own Asylum's Press in 1976. In 1978 he began editing, with Bruce Andrews, the influential critical journal, *N—G—A—G E.* The same year, Sun & Moon Press published *Shade,* in its first book publication. *Controlling Interests* (1980) and *Islets/Irritations* (1983) further established the characteristic range of Bernstein's stylistic and philosophic preoccupations. *The Sophist,* published in 1987, made apparent that comedy was a fundamental element of his work. Like *The Sophist,* *Rough Trades,* published in 1981, received international critical attention. Writing in *American Book Review* Pierre Joris declared: "*Rough Trades*—and starting with the title's witty punning on atmospheric conditions, sexuality, labor relations—does not only give pleasure through its intelligence and wit. It is also a book that demands the reader's constant rethinking of her own 'ground' and poetic presuppositions.... This is exhilarating and liberating work."

Bernstein has published two substantial, and widely reviewed, collections of essays—*Content's Dream* (1986) and *A Poetics* (1992). In 1990, he edited *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy* as well as *Patterns / Contexts / Time,* with Phillip Foss. He has also edited collections of poetry for *The Paris Review* and *boundary 2.*

In collaboration with Susan Bee, Bernstein has produced several books that explore visual settings of text. Bernstein is also active in musical theater; he has written three librettos with composer Ben Yarmolinsky.

cultural, or rather
truth is the ground of reality's appearance but reality intervenes against all odds.

5. *The Plight of the Bumblebee*

She was a rudder
without anchor
in a chaos
of expectation,
a comb
without teeth, a
brush without
bristles.

6. [untitled]

"The words come out of her heart & into the language" & the language is in the heart of that girl who is in the heart of you.
From the early '70s to the late '80s, Bernstein worked as a writer/editor on healthcare and medical topics, with a break to serve as Associate Director of the CETA Artists Project (the largest postwar American public employment program for artists).

In 1990, Bernstein was appointed David Gray Professor of Poetry and Letters at the State University of New York, Buffalo, where he is a founding member of the Poetics Program in the Department of English.