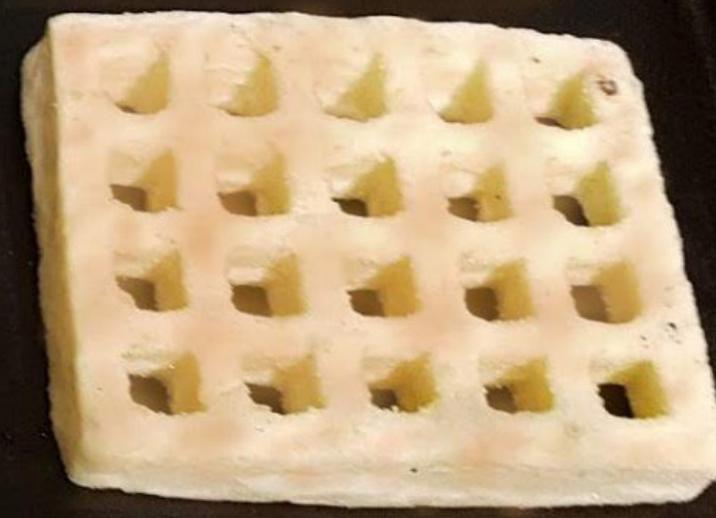
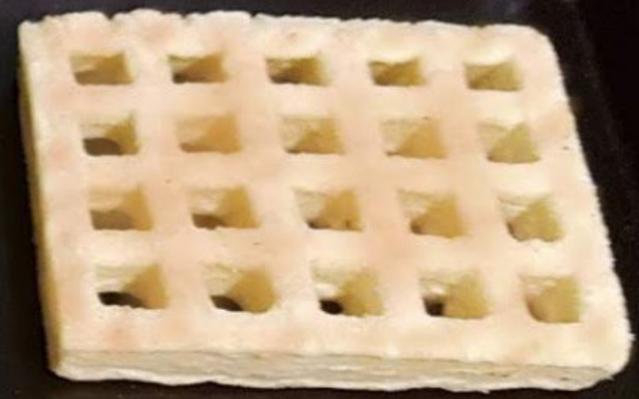


NO MATTER PRESENTS



New Matter



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# NO MATTER COMMISSIONS

NO MATTER PRESS  
2021

ANNE BOYER  
LISA ROBERTSON  
VERITY SPOTT  
JADE MONTSERRAT  
SHARON KIVLAND  
SIMONE WHITE

aporia into which this little bit of theory tries to move, a space trap music helps me to see—where black people are no longer aspiring to what has been called freedom. I’m asking simple but troubling questions about the black radical tradition that aren’t even mine. I think they really belong to Denise Ferreira Da Silva, who maybe doesn’t listen to the same music I do. In another section I actually try to say “what is happening in the music called trap and drill,” and I write about Chief Keef. Still working on getting back to a thousand plateaus. Still working.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## SIMONE WHITE

Simone White is the author of *or, on being the other woman* (forthcoming from Duke University Press in 2021), *Dear Angel of Death* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2018), *Of Being Dispersed* (Futurepoem, 2016), and *House Envy of All the World* (Factory School, 2010), the poetry chapbook, *Unrest* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2013), and the collaborative poem/painting chapbook, *Dolly* (with Kim Thomas) (Q Ave, 2008). Her honors include a 2021 Creative Capital Award, a 2017 Whiting Award in Poetry, Cave Canem Foundation fellowships, and recognition as a New American Poet for the Poetry Society of America in 2013. A graduate of Wesleyan University, she holds a JD from Harvard Law School, an MFA from the New School, and a PhD in English from CUNY Graduate Center. She is the Stephen M. Gorn Family Assistant Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania and serves on the writing faculty of the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College. She lives in Brooklyn.

Simone’s commission is an excerpt from the essay in progress, ‘Warring’. She writes: I started this writing knowing a) that I had raised or posed some theoretical questions to myself in the poem *or, on being the other woman* (forthcoming from Duke University Press in 2022) and it was time to answer those questions; and b) that the questions came out of engagement with trap music so I was itching to write about the work of Chief Keef and Future. I write prose slowly and miserably, so I have been very grateful to have opportunity goals—such as the No Matter presentation—that compel me to show up having written some words. Since March, I’ve completed two sections of this essay, one an introduction that identifies the

## CONTENTS

ANNE BOYER . . . . .	3
LISA ROBERTSON . . . . .	11
VERITY SPOTT . . . . .	17
JADE MONTSERRAT . . . . .	23
SHARON KIVLAND . . . . .	27
SIMONE WHITE . . . . .	33

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS & COMMISSIONS . . . . .	39
--	----

ANNE BOYER

17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

SHARON KIVLAND

Sharon Kivland is an artist and writer (she has also been called a poet, to her surprise). She is an editor and publisher, the latter under the imprint MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE. Currently she is working on the natural form, editing the letters sent to her by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan over the many years of their turbulent love affair, and trying to finish her novel *ABÉCÉDAIRE*, which will be published by Moist in 2022.

Sharon's commission forms part of the ongoing project 'ENVOI: Love letters from Jacques Lacan, received during our love affair from 1951 to his death in 1981'. Parts of the project have been published and read as follows:

1. ENVOIS I. 1953–1954. Commission for Emily Beber (ed.), *The Bodies that Remain*, New York: Punctum, 2017 [2016]
2. ENVOIS XX. 1972–73. Commission for LUNE: A New Journal of Disorder, 2018
3. ENVOIS III. 1954–55. Commission for OAR (Oxford Artistic and Practice based Research Platform, 2018
4. ENVOIS IV. 1955–1956. Commission/reading NO MATTER, 2020
5. ENVOIS. Seven postcards from Munich, sent in May 1958 (unpublished)
6. ENVOIS. PROMISES MADE BY JACQUES LACAN TO SHARON KIVLAND, from 1953 to 1964. Audio recording for LOW TEXT, Berlin, 2020

## VERITY SPOTT

Verity Spott is a poet from Brighton. Their most recent publications are *Coronelles Set 1* from Veer Books and *Hopelessness* from The 87 Press. Verity co-runs the poetry and performance events *Horseplay* in Brighton and work as a commissioning editor for the poetry press *Contraband Books*.

Verity's commission is an early draft of what later became the final poem of *Hopelessness* (The 87 Press, 2021).

## JADE MONTSERRAT

Jade Montserrat was the recipient of the Stuart Hall Foundation Scholarship which supports her PhD (via MPhil) at IBAR, UCLan, and the development of her work from her black diasporic perspective in the North of England. Jade works through performance, drawing, painting, film, installation, sculpture, print and text.

Jade's commission informed a subsequent performance as part of *Pre-Ramble*, a series of live events hosted at David Dale Gallery, Glasgow in January 2019, and *Reciprocity*, a text read as part of the Yellowfields online symposium *Production Production*, hosted by Eastside Projects in autumn 2020 and included in the accompanying publication. Text from the performance was also incorporated into an online performance as part of *Open Courtauld Hour: Women Artists* in Spring 2020.

## ANNA KARENINA

I want an Anna Karenina of self-driving cars, about a woman who falls in love in a world of self-driving cars, is driven by them both toward and away from her lover, sees her lover when looking out the window of one, her lover, too, being driven by them, and sometimes the woman and her lover riding in a self-driving car together. Together they see a stranger almost get struck by one, the car stopping inches before its would-be victim as it stops before squirrels, cardboard boxes, other cars, and the wind. As they are almost but not quite struck by love and almost but not quite romantic fools, the always not-quite love-struck Anna is often getting into what drives itself along a path she believes she has ordered, but to a destination about which she always has doubts. When our Anna realizes the vacancy of a life lived for love, even this only available love, the not-quite-dangerous love of the time of the self-driving cars, when she arrives at the truth of a life lived in the individual upholstered misery and a digital dashboard of what transports her but which never takes her anywhere she wants to go, she cannot, like Tolstoy's Anna, throw herself in front of it. Everytime she throws herself onto the pavement, like every time she stands or sits on the asphalt and wishes herself away, the car stops short. The car never stops stopping. Anna's vehicle can only drive her toward wanting to die, it can never provide her with death. And as our Anna cannot die from her transport, she learns that what she must do instead is to stop all cars.

## THE WRITING DESK

Kierkegaard subjectivity is in the expensive writing desk that he can't unlock, and then, after knocking it open with a hammer, he removes his subjectivity from the drawer and puts it in a gun case where he also puts back the gun. Then he takes his subjectivity to go out shooting. I could never be a citizen of the 19<sup>th</sup> century like that.

But I can believe in another thing about Kierkegaard. You don't ask an undercover policeman to uncover himself in order that you can know him better: it is his false nature that is his true nature and to ask for a revelation is to ask that he become falsely untrue rather than truly. *Kierkegaard I will write in my journal later has purchased a very expensive awareness to fire upon himself.*

## ANNE BOYER

Anne Boyer is a poet and essayist. She was the inaugural winner of the 2018 Cy Twombly Award for Poetry from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts and winner of the 2018 Whiting Award in nonfiction/poetry. Her books include *A Handbook of Disappointed Fate* and *The Undying*, as well as several books of poetry, including the 2016 CLMP Firecracker Award-winning *Garments Against Women*. She was born and raised in Kansas, and was educated in its public schools and libraries. Since 2011, Boyer has been a professor at the Kansas City Art Institute. She lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

## LISA ROBERTSON

Poet and essayist Lisa Robertson has held residencies at the California College of the Arts, Cambridge University; University of California, Berkeley; UC San Diego; and American University of Paris. Her books include *Cinema of the Present*, *Debbie: An Epic* (nominated for the Governor General's Award in Canada), *The Men*, *The Weather*, *R's Boat* (poetry) and *Occasional Works* and *Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture* (essays). Lisa Robertson's *Magenta Soul Whip* (Coach House) was named one of *The New York Times* 100 Notable Books of 2010, and was longlisted for the 2011 Warwick Prize for Writing. She currently lives in France.

Lisa's contribution is excerpted from 'Drunk' in *The Baudelaire Fractal*, published by Coach House Books, Toronto (2020). You can buy the book from UK bookshops, including indies like Tender Books & The Second Shelf.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS & COMMISSIONS

### THE HAUNTING

You've got to live your destiny, they tell me, and part of this is driving out to my hometown to move my mother from the hospital, which she has been in and out of for seven months, into Presbyterian Manor. I didn't recognize her when I went into the room, sunken into herself, asleep in a wheelchair. My family home, where I slept each night alone then, was haunted by my father, whose ghost was restless, worried, trying to get things accomplished, stuck in the territory near where he died, moving from the bathroom to the laundry room to hovering around the back door, the tv in the den, unable to go near the front door or out of it. When he was alive he told me his life had been all about ambition for its own sake, a drive forward without any end, and now his ghost had the same problem.

I thought my mother was being figurative when she told me that ever since he died he was about to walk into the room. I didn't know she meant that the house was haunted. And I didn't know a person could become a ghost who died like a philosopher, in charge of his own death, courageous and rational, having decided beforehand how he would prefer it. I thought ghosts, were they to exist, were the products of traumatic ends.

Now I must consider that dying like a philosopher is a traumatic end.

## FORTY FIVE

“In the absence of false drama life tends to reveal its true emptiness: a problem” Ben texted me

I forgot to text back “It’s as if the distraction is the thing itself and the thing we thought was the thing itself is only the shadow of the distraction.”

work, to divine nodes prepared for exploration and use, to explore what is possible and tempt fate.

Consider Denise Ferreira da Silva’s remarks in “In the Raw” regarding the practice of “black feminist poethics” where her:

poethical reading approaches the artwork, *Majmua* [by Madiha Sikander], as a composition, the components of which also include, for instance, the artist’s intention, but are not determined by it. For what the reading does is to move to consider whether, and if so, how the components of the artwork, approached in the raw—that is, as matter contemplated both as actual and virtual—signal a path for a kind of reflection that avoids the colonial and racial presuppositions inherent to concepts and formulations presupposed in existing strategies for critical commentary on art.

An artwork’s content is, Da Silva suggests, a polyglot materiality that implicates each person differently in their relation to the many materials and technologies (each of which comes with its own infinitely complex vectors, associated points of origination, developments, and ultimately, meaning) being deployed simultaneously.

I do not know anything that is like the music Chief Keef makes. Because it confounds my own (not insignificant) aesthetic and theoretical vocabulary, it expresses a demand for a poetic capacity, vocabulary and focus—and, along with Scalapino, an observer / object possibility—for how the interlocking spatial flows trap music initiates. That is what Da Silva invokes here.

real occurrence in the present.

My premise is stated in the final chapter: 'What's modern is the writing being to state structure in order to see 'objectively' its reverberation solely.'

The intention in the following is to allow the shapes of the structures of the texts being considered to emerge. The texts' characteristic is in stating their own structures as their forms which is *per se* scrutiny of the present.

In the reality which is created by a writing, to narrow to the outlines of its form is utter scrutiny, is real. It's the interior relation of experience.

In Part 1, I tried to practice the haptic criticality of *Objects in the Terrifying Tense Longing from Taking Place* that centers being with and near works "without subjecting [them] to my writing"—my writing's prerogatives, preconceptions, blindness and conceptual drag. Part 2 is a study of resonance; that is, this Part hypothesizes that once a thing has been *noticed*, one can begin to think about how it works with other things to create another thing that is neither object nor subject but what happens between them as a possibility or effect of their togetherness: a way.

Thinking about how things spread out into other other things and aggregate as complex experiential loci that constitute ontological possibility presumes and partakes of a philosophical style of inquiry: asking "what is it?" and expecting an answer of some kind. Which is to say, there is no reason to naturalize the expectation of an answer; many questions cannot be answered. An initial question for this writing is, therefore, what is the use of philosophical style for (black) people who philosophy productively forgets? Artists do not need philosophy to make

## ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Form -- when it works -- is a dazzling quarantine for experience, with all the delight of energy and none of the burden of matter. If what you are writing about feels like it is killing you, the form you have given it is off, go back and try again, thinking of the particles of light this time, not iron and every heavy thing. No one on earth wants anyone on earth to destroy themselves in the process of calling words to their pages. To write without fear, of course, or if not that, to walk into to it without flinching, but knowing that the worst thing to do is, out of fear, wrap yourself in its result: a steel burden, crude replica of torso, head and leaden limbs. You can't move then, or can only move barely, overloaded, hot, exhausted from the monster suit you sewed from fabric of apprehension.

ODE TO THE MOON  
IN THE ERA OF THE WAR  
OF EVERYBODY AGAINST EVERYBODY  
FOR THE MERE PRESERVATION OF LIFE

This moon is super!  
Number one moon!  
Best moon ever prize!

awarded each  
to the same moon  
same face same orbit  
same uncontestable body  
same super superlative  
moon eats moon world

But the moon does not have to be super  
for us to love it  
no better  
than an average moon  
laurel-less hanging there  
in the common sky

(not repetitive) that is joy (17).” One (implicitly, not two): ordering (differentiation) involves “a range and configuration of potential, infinite actions which are on the edge-of-seeing their actual occurring (by being chronological)” (14-15); “one can never equal one” (15). I understand her discussion of seriality to withdraw from the exhausting pursuit of individuation in which sublime relations are figured “in impossible union” (15). The digital remainder, an infinite and recombinant series of zeroes and ones, is *being oneself*; it is only as oneself, and not as a subject who is constantly arrested/dead center on what ought to be an impermanent/past place, that real intimacy and “eroticism” become possible in the poem and in the world.

Under Scalapino’s analysis, Creeley’s poems go unhanded. I read her and perceive what she is reading within an electrified scrim that is her own comportment and intelligence; she and the critical “object” have a glancing relation that does not require her to reverse out of the thing out in panicky awareness that it is not inside her. They touch and observe one another naturally. She writes, “as serial thinking are doing nothing in the sense of being in the single present world where that very convention/ of love is not taking place”.

Again, What is taking place and not taking place when I impossibly allow hearing trap music to occur, when I hear it and I am near it?

My intention in *Objects in the Terrifying Tense / Longing from Taking Place* is to juxtapose shapes of various contemporary works of writing in a resemblance of their own structures to ‘real’ events (which these writings as is floating in reciprocal shapes are as much as are occurrences in the world) to see their

from WARRING

I'm taking key methodological cues from Leslie Scalapino's *Objects in the Terrifying Tense Longing from Taking Place*. That text is a model for this writing insofar as Scalapino sets out, characteristically, to attain critical nearness to the works she is reading and also to show how the works themselves achieve temporal immediacy. She develops a theoretical vocabulary for a poetic practice of presence—one might also call this intensity—capable of loosening the bonds of (literary) “convention” —truly inventing—but her vocabulary and syntax are not exactly explanatory. In “Thinking Serially in For Love, Words and Pieces,” her essay on the love poems of Robert Creeley, she arrives at indispensable insights about how Creeley's love poems invent around and outside the literary and thought traditions of the English tradition of love poetry and American/Puritan senses of the self- in-relation. I learn that “the mind's patterns contain convention and repeat it but do not remain in it in the serial writing, though it is a race to continually move off the dead center which is its formation ...” (18); “The ‘several dimensioned locus’ is the serial work that is really all over, multiple” (17). These statements ground a masterful demonstration of how writing comes to take part in event as immediate and singular: to “transcend” AND “obliterate” the “dual consciousness” of the Anglo-American poetic tradition (17).

Scalapino visualizes present poetic consciousness as digital. Zero: in Creeley, “hole or circle, sometimes delineating seeing only within the mind's own forms repetitively, or an emptiness

LISA ROBERTSON

19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019

from DRUNK

*The Baudelaire Fractal*

I made my way to London, then paused there for a night. I was to stay with a friend, and visit the Joseph Beuys exhibition hosted by the Tate before continuing on to Sheffield the next day. We were at this exhibition, my friend and I, discussing Beuys's seriously ridiculous installation *The Pack*, in which marvelously a fleet of wooden dog sleds bearing grease-farded grey felt rolls tumbles outwards fanning from the opened rear doors of a Volkswagen van, and as we rehearsed our reservations about Beuys's shamanic proclivities, barely conscious of my gesture, I reached for the pink silk pouf to clean my glasses. From the breast pocket of the Baudelairean jacket, following the small flourish of the pink square, escaped a stream of small moths. Softly they fluttered over the dogsleds with their cargoes of felt. Do moths also go for fat? I thought that it was my own heart that was moth-ridden, so deeply mortified did I feel, and when we later returned to my friend's house, I hung my jacket outside the front door on a shrub, not willing to infect her simple and elegant household of textiles and garments with my travelling scourge. I had already inaugurated the destruction of the part of the heritage of Joseph Beuys that was made out of felt, but at least my friend's own tailoring and upholsteries would remain intact. The next morning as I left I retrieved the jacket from its branch, and with an appalled awareness that the garment I wore was in fact alive, and exactly why it had been so cheap to buy, I continued to my destination.

SIMONE WHITE

19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

LOVE'S LETTRE  
for, after and to Sharon Kivland  
Scott Thurston

When you want to get  
to the truth,  
sometimes you give up  
searching for meaning.

We make this mistake  
all the time –  
I will always tell the  
truth telling you  
telling you off.

You will place meanings  
here despite yourself.  
*C'est ça.*  
That's all, isn't it?

In Sheffield the conventional pleasures of the experimental poetry event awaited. I was met by my hosts at the train station, itself a very Goth, worn-out fantasy with its rusting lace-like steel skeleton, and expanses of roughly boarded-up glass between faux-medieval masonry arches. A thatch of bright band posters covered the hoardings and yellow-and-black emergency tape cordoned off the most decrepit parts of the station. There was garbage everywhere and several interior sand-piles; the visual and spatial complexity was so absorbing that it was difficult to locate a door. The systems and infrastructures were continuing to erode, as they had been doing since the arrival of Thatcher in 1979, and the defunct industrial beauty of 19th-century train stations was no exception. Everything had been privatized or was about to be privatized except for poetry, which was worthless. These things, and others, about the depressed local economy, the fall of the social state, and the increasing precariousness of survival, were explained to me as I walked with my hosts to the pub where the reading would be held. Emboldened by our shared scorn for capital and our appreciation for difficult syntax, we drank a great deal. Plastic cups of red wine stained our lips black. We continued after the reading to an Italian restaurant, ate heartily, danced between the tables after closing, and then went back to the house of the hosts. By then drunk, I had quite forgotten about the shameful condition of my jacket. I flung it over the back of an armchair with everyone else's coats, in a great dark heap. We continued our drinking discussions.

Finally in very early morning it became time to leave. I had not yet checked into the hotel which, along with a small stipend and the train ticket, my hosts had provided for my visit. Searching for my jacket among all the others in the heap of dark cloth I suddenly remembered the moths and dissolved into laughter. When I explained my situation my hosts stiffened in anger; like

most poets I knew, they too were great collectors of vintage tailoring and old cashmere and beautifully worn carpets and now I had in all likelihood infected their house. The more they recoiled the louder I laughed. Nothing could be as ridiculous as this. I laughed til I wept. I would not be asked back. Tersely now I was accompanied to my hotel.

It was a sprawling, worn-out hotel just across from the train station, and had not yet been visited by the glitzy horror of provincial hotel renovation—no eggplant over-scaled paisley carpet, no smoky-mirrored dividing screens in the so-called breakfast room, no chrome-plated light fixtures hanging from exposed, black-painted ductwork in great bundled clumps. Instead it was simply and reassuringly nondescript. Brownish I guess, with some faux-wood touches. The desk clerk discovered that I was not in their system— my registration had been lost. And what was more awkward, the hotel was entirely booked by a stag party. It was very late at night, and we all searched for a solution. It was decided that I could stay in what the clerk termed the “hospitality suite,” the only uninhabited room that remained, a room not typically let out for entire nights. It was on the ground floor directly across from the back entry to the bar. I needed very much to sleep off my wine, so I accepted the proposition. My host left, satisfied that I’d been properly seen to.

This room was very large, and judging from the state of the carpet, had accommodated its share of parties. There were cigarette burns edging the few pieces of formica furniture, and in the middle of the room, the sagging bed was covered with a pink quilted nylon bedspread that seemed to have been there since the year of my birth. Not daring to witness the bedsheets, I fell on top of the pink coverlet, still wearing the infamous jacket, and slept.

13 JUNE

Last time I left you... We have been intoxicated for some time. What is at issue? A lived experience? An irreducible feeling? Let's start from there. The you isn't always the full you. You are my master, you are my woman. Here again, what you is involved? It's the you that says you in us, this you that always makes itself more or less discreetly heard, this you that speaks alone, and says *You see!* to us, or, *You're always the same.* That's our experience. We don't have to stop there all the time. It may seem strange to you that I mechanise things in this way, and perhaps you will imagine that everything is contained within the relation between the I and the you. You are this, my woman, my master, a thousand other things. This *You are this*, when I receive it, makes me other than I am. What am I if that's what I am, if indeed I am it at all? *Thou art the woman who will not abandon me.* Thou art the woman who wilt not abandon me. In the first I exhibit a much greater certainty, in the second a much greater trust. And when you say *I will always tell the truth*, well then, you're not afraid.

person who is before you and who takes up space, there he is whom you see, who so manifestly captivates you and is capable of making you jump up and hug him. I shall leave you there for today.

18 JANUARY

My intention was to penetrate and I thought that was mad. I was reassured by the thought that what we are undertaking is not so isolated and hazardous. It isn't easy, however. I pointed out to you last time that this is perhaps not totally satisfactory. What Freud said about the withdrawal of libidinal interest goes right to the heart of the matter. But we still need to spell out what this might mean. At what level does this withdrawal occur? My wife is nothing to me. I have never said this. It is in fact an erotic relationship. We have to go further. Animals have a much less complicated life than ours. Animals have relations with the other whenever they want to. For them there are two ways of wanting to – first, by eating it, second, by fucking it. This is how things are. I would love you to take enough interest, as in an erotic relationship that one initially refuses to take part in and resists. There is a danger.

21 MARCH

What was the meaning of last night? What is it to be a woman? The female sex is characterised by an absence, a void, a hole. This is not in doubt. Is this sufficient to exhaust the question? I indicated this last night. I say this to tell you that I'm not backing away from my responsibilities in asking you. This is what I showed you last year. Things became interesting, you'll remember.

I dreamt drunkenly of the origin of tailoring.

In the quite late utopia of my sleep, a sartorial aura distributed itself across the long textile era called modernity. I turned on the pink coverlet. The mediocrity of capital was parodied on a lapel. This meant that textile's inherently mechanical reproducibility stretched in taut dialectic with the tailor's cut, repeating and repeating and repeating. I threw my sleeping arm across a stain. A she-tailor sliced into the continuous cloth of capital to make a garment. This garment constructed the pure ideality of the androgynous form. Who was this tailor? I muttered and scowled without waking. The dream-knowledge held that the tailor was modernity's mystic. I had not even removed my boots. She said that the tailored garment first developed in the middle ages as a fitted woolen underlayer for suits of metal armour. She said it was in order to prevent chafing. Now my boots were chafing. She said that before the 14th-century all garments were made of simple uncut squares and rectangles of cloth. The dream was very long. Now I was weaving rectangles. Folded rectangle was stitched to folded rectangle. All edges were woven selvages. I kept sleeping. I kept stitching. She said that before armour the beautiful power of garments was folds. I felt the folded beauty in my sleep. She said that the folds were inconveniently uncomfortable beneath the snugly fitted armour. They clumped up and chafed and bruised the wearer. Therefore the tailoring or cuts, to draw the garment close to the skin. One part of the technique of tailoring was layering many woolens to mould a form. The woolen layers constituted a padding fitted to the body. She said that in so contriving the woolen padding she transformed armor to a kind of furnace or chrysalis. From it the dandy inevitably emerged. What was emerging. I was waking, still a little moist, coyly fluttering the tails of my morning jacket. Sun penetrated the hospitality suite. There was very little time,

no time for breakfast. I had to catch my train. My mouth was not a good place. I stank. Also my jacket stank. It had been through a great deal. I recalled the moths.

In the far corner of the room was an armoire. What did an armoire have to do with the sort of hospitality this room proffered. It was not even formica; it looked like walnut. It was decoratively crested with a carved geometrical cornice, and a tarnished key dangling a scrap of ribbon emerged from its lock. It exuded a magnetic force. I opened it. The interior was lined in peculiar floral wallpaper. It was as if this armoire had materialized in the night, transubstantiated from a cheap hotel on the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle in 1865. I saw hashish-emboldened stories in the shapes of the flowers. A wooden hanger hung on a hook. Otherwise the armoire was empty. There was only one thing to do, and I did it with a kind of quick instinct, as would an artist who all at once, in her studio, perceives the only solution to a longstanding worried-over metaphysical problem. I removed my jacket and hung it there, respectfully and tenderly buttoning its buttons and adjusting the fall of the shoulders on the wooden hanger. I closed the armoire, then ran for my train.

This is how I lost both the poems and the jacket of Baudelaire, and in doing so made my only installation work. Perhaps the armoire has never since been opened, and inside it, the jacket is now livid dust.

penetrated... I was trying to make you feel comfortable. You can never say that this is what is being designated. There, the word is the soul of the situation. It's what we might call the refrain. You must touch upon the inadequacy. What is at issue is the sign of hasty thoughts, of repentance. One absolves oneself, pays one's debts. This is so far from being straightforward that it leads immediately into an endless play of mirrors. You are my woman, which means you are what is still within my speech, and this I can only affirm by speaking in your place. This comes from you to find the certainty of what I pledge. This speech is speech that commits you. We shall, if you like, write. You are my woman – after all, what do you know about it? I can't repeat all I once said. It's not for nothing that in Latin testimony is called *testis* and one testifies on one's balls. You must be able to tell the difference. You have to have already admitted. You love me. You see the questions that remain open. Perhaps what I said this morning will give you some indication, an utterance, a testimony, the brute recognition of a fact?

7 DECEMBER

What we are concerned with here... what is this three-card trick we are prey to, this strange juggler's game? What are we talking about? It wasn't very easy for me. I approached the centre of what was manifestly present. I make the same mistakes as you. If you understand, so much the better, keep it to yourself. I don't dwell on it. You understand, you are wrong. Should we stop? Certainly not. You are my woman. Something gets born there. And such a commitment conditions all the discourse that follows, and here what I understand by *discourse* includes acts, steps, the contortions of puppets, caught up in the game. As my woman. Let's call this eroticisation, and let's avoid explanations that are too simple. Just as words of love are. There is the real

## ENVOIS VII

LETTERS FROM JL TO SK 1955–1956

I am editing the many letters and postcards I received from the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan over the course of our turbulent love affair. Some of the twenty-five letters he sent to me between 1955 to 1956 follow; I have chosen five letters that are perhaps easiest for readers to understand, especially those in which he addresses me as his woman (Jacques could be very possessive). This was a difficult year for our relationship; Jacques was working on psychosis, an emblematic case of language entrapment. He was grappling with the distinctions between the neuroses and the psychoses; symmetries and contrasts emerged, reflected in the development of our affair. He drew upon Judge Schreber's account of his psychosis, and on Freud's notes on the case. Schreber phantasised he was turning into a woman, one who was fucked by God, and I identified with that. To read these aloud was painful (I could not understand why there was laughter). I re-lived some of the intensity of our *rapport*. Later, the poet Scott Thurston sent me a poem, *Love's lettre*, which is included as a postface.

30 NOVEMBER

Before we become too satisfied with this overall arrangement... you think that you are dealing with someone who is communicating with you because he speaks the same language as you. You get the feeling that here is someone who has

VERITY SPOTT

14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2019

from HOPELESSNESS

Tell me some more of your dreams, or if you can cut me open, to be near again whilst fires outside in contempt, or even snow. An apparition at the empty beach. The beach is vast and dulled, a cold concrete ridge miles adrift to tell your dreams you and I are cold again. Aren't you suitably cold. Drifting up to the empty shore it stared across the ice, the ice stared across as sure as drift softy ensconced a photo light the creaking chair in the corner. Floating out to you; dream to hate again. Turn from the edge to empty apparition, not again. Currents tear to crystal but it stands there staring at me. So far off the empty beach it terrifies my sleep and still tread softly onto the water, climb away to the ground. But if it should hear me... Tonic this old body mine, what if that thing should hear me? At the shore the spite is bolstered, what have I taken, when did it hear me? Only on this desert stay and fold up. There's a small pipe stuck in the ground. And spite glimmers in the resting sky, in your brains.

It flickers like an air, there across the edge from us, up to the spiteful fucking air is it there like a flame above the sand. There is no flame to my eyes who is this who is coming across my back, the eyes, behind above in muck and toil the ground who is this who is coming. Who a flame floats along the shore is. This gentle oath to the ground an empty side in the water, my dumb hands breathe, immobile, for days agape beached to choice, somebody come who is that, oh no. Stay by my sleep, slow terror sleeps. Somebody hold the back that stands against the distance the first sheets are tearing down show us and gulp to the distance.

SHARON KIVLAND

5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020



And spite flaps in the air and I cry into my softened mouth for hope.

Folded in the lap extremely call across the site, will reach out to trust with nothing, clothed unclashed exceed to the bounds, edge and riddled who is this, who is coming. Whose neck is split the beach expense; expressive straits turn into the day what comes when slow death spits and dies away; are slow spirits waiting in a quiet open world without an ear to creak for? If you're drugging me to rifts no crashing at the edge or hands below the door, who is that what is coming. Pinning the shoulder, hatred crumbled tile, losse sheets let nothing end you permissions, end you hanging loose please hold to just until we're out of this miniature false clutch. You must not throw my teeth into the darkness.

The foot is walking, the tiny world, take us up float back into the soaking ground a little lift to take away the lives that sent it into the grave; I met with you there across the ground, a speechless creak. Leak and spread to the earth, care passed over to another, no, the gone and slow creak sparsely, one alone against the sky who is it some slowly gone creaking echo of a shadow on the beach. Scatter life over this cold and echoed climate, a terrible shake tugs horizon's roof. I am the shake and the roof for you, slowly finished the breeze, there is a dead brow of the sea. Salt will be your eyes. Spite your pretty garter.

I have never seen a flame. Just this distance to the edge, a slow and thoughtless taking; of life away, how I have never seen a flame at all and yet burning in my chest is nothing yet so to still have never seen who is this who is coming down into the ground who is coming who is you, flat, who and though I have never seen a flame I feel there has been a flame. Some way over

there no I don't see it I don't feel who is this who is carried,  
in a barrel to the edge for me, I have the eyes to know it when  
I see it, who is coming? But they don't, they won't, this is the  
circumstance, with them, end with us in this ground open  
mouthed forever staring up like emptied teeth, there is nothing  
of a flame to be seen though we have what we need who is to  
know and see it who is coming. A thousand enormous smiling  
graves, your hungry little band.

Don't cross us on the sand not heavy water salt in your tongue  
cut off who comes inside the light so much space for such a fit  
of weight fall dead against the edge. The apparition has spoken  
I have never spoken have the eyes to see it when I see a flame,  
who is coming, agitated mouth with the eyes so she may speak.  
It. It. It who is so closed the beach rears up in nightmares and  
folds back to the air there's some light but it is lifeless never  
speaking or burning salt ground water sun dizzying loss of its  
candour, hush. The little apparition I find here shaking covered  
in the earth and the damp; so I see who is this, who is coming;  
as it follows my back for the distance and folds up, we stare and  
it shakes at me in a terror. How disgusting, to stand here on the  
very brink.

If there's nothing to see, if to never have spoken; then without  
these agitants, the slowly killed body walks abroad the empty  
scratching edge forever for now dynamical imbalance, you here  
and isn't save for the ghosts of slow deaths who is it who stands  
completely still and shows that we are here alone they are all  
around, that the eyes have decided to have never seen a flame,  
to have never spoken, and so it is, the empty beach; and a tiniest  
pipe in the ground.

\*

Rehearsals for this performance happen at the earliest the day  
before my performing the dance in public. Rehearsals comprise  
re-watching the Vimeo video to prompt memory and footing. On  
finding myself performing, dancing proper, for a short while into  
the routine, on whichever stage, I have begun to notice that my  
body initially responds to the music and perhaps muscle memory  
kicks in. At the beginning of the routine, concentration mixed  
abandon fuels my movements, getting into a groove. Muscle  
memory perhaps also tugs away at recollections, memories and  
perhaps a dissonance takes hold. Memories of forgetting steps  
the few times I performed on stage as a kid. I felt shamefully  
'naked', guilty, glared at, blinded by a spotlight, awkward and  
self-conscious. This would highlight forgetting. Not knowing  
the steps. And an ambivalence. Joe taking an afternoon off work  
for it. Never again he said. Having now performed Revue for  
6 years or so, fear conquered perhaps or rather numbed, my  
body now instinctively gauges the space allocated to move in  
as a default to entering it. During the performance I take in  
eye-fulls of the audience despite vigorous bodily movement.  
As the dance continued incrementally the duration culminated  
in the 24-hour long Revue. By now my movements have fallen  
into spasms of protest. Although the skeleton of the routine  
lapses identifiably through these durational performances, the  
exhausted body, limps or is ignited and exalted, it convulses and  
marches, and is jolted by memory fusing through the muscles  
now.



As you become awake your arm goes over your body to check your nozzle. The button on the side of it lights the display. A message says “As this is near your limit, please ensure you have enough money available to cover payments”, which is why you fear the nozzle. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is £3.70 per hour. We had been in a fair and stable phase. When you were younger you worked in an extrusion plant. Things have changed. Things that are normal now, being underpaid, not being paid, being paid according to the perceived quality of your work, qualitative payments; for example, to be awarded with your £3.70 an hour you need to work as though you’re being paid £8.21 an hour, and when you start acting like £8.21 an hour I’ll start treating you like £8.21 an hour, that is except for the £8.21 an hour, which may come later. You dreamed of becoming a musician, and spent a great deal of time working away from work, and people would tell you what it was. Now drenched in the teaming meadow. You’re moved into the home. You said you’d always want your dignity, which was dependent on the non dignity of the people in the home. Every morning a music and movement session, based on Tom Kitwood, about endorphins. Never me, you say. Have you done enough to be paid.

Every morning they come in and hold onto people’s hands. You can’t read. Something is making you not able to do it. You can only watch.

One day I will get up and dance, the nozzle glares but the tube itself glares. You yourself glare into the hands you hold singing a song from the forties that you were never in with a care worker who has the same thing in common, never having been in the forties, still the two of you awkwardly singing a lost song whose theme is against loss both beholden to only loss, excruciatingly

long, and within it a quiet dignity called loss, *real* loss, the kind that abstract loss can't know. Hopeless loss without conditions. Radical hopeless loss without the condition to move, no clause, just there; forever at the mouth of the nozzle glaring out at the Mourning Cloak in the meadow who sits maddeningly still, nozzles filling up their dark wings with your blood.

**JADE MONTSERRAT**

11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019