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*For Sarah*



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## **Yo La Tengo**

Ira Caplan's sonic squall rips  
New York's fourth of July gulls  
from the captivities of silence  
like a chainsaw down a bough  
of glass, or chalk on yesterday's  
pavement. A soul possessed by  
demons determined to explode.  
Indices Richter-scale on Jersey's  
fretboard: blinding sounds erupt  
then ribbon out - dangling notes  
along the blue-green themes in  
the park for homeless evangelists.  
Shredding civic programmes deep  
in the feedback dream (blooming  
into atonal squiggles of sound -  
an express blast of manhole heat),  
peacebombs dropped on America  
heave in a swollen thrashed loop  
of pure non-violence & entropy,  
each firework of snarls & stripes  
tearing the sky a new arsehole.

## **Walt Whitman Service Area**

I sing the throbbing pains of  
your great nation's bad coffee!  
Hot plates keeping the entropy  
warm. Out along the turnpike

your name is dissected by the  
moon-like stares of motorists.  
Stupefied in the concrete glare,  
I sing the car electric! May it

render your oil wars useless!  
Though to be truthful, Walt,  
these you never did envisage.  
May the worn hands of peace

close together over industries!  
Radios play *The Turnpike Down*.  
Rock us into that gentle sleep  
in each of our final rest areas.





## **Alone In An Airport**

all the concessions have finally closed  
the luggage tags likewise now unravel -  
i've spent the night in an airport alone  
even the cleaners have all gone home ...

out on the tarmacs the rain is a canvas  
the planes are invisible up in the sky  
at every counter the shutters have risen  
only perfumes of the flight crews linger

the terminal's redevelopment is complete  
now there's nothing left here to expand  
& duty-free shops disappeared long ago  
inside the food court a fake fern sleeps

departure boards flicker like r.e.m. dreams  
but the gangways are empty of tired feet  
the veins of the airport throb in safety  
nevertheless i will practice my tai-chi

i use broken glass to create my murals  
ticket stubs provide my fire with fuel  
i walk naked through abandoned latrines  
in arrivals halls i begin planting trees

## **Fir**

Not the tree but the man.  
Not the fire but the boys.  
Not the emergency plan.  
Not the silence nor noise.

But the swan or the glass.  
But the time or the dream.  
But the elegant trespass.  
But the wings and the stream.

And the wind not the boat.  
And the blood not the bay.  
And the soundless float.  
And the voice but the day.

Or the nail nor the wishes.  
Or the tray but the ball.  
Or the unwashed dishes.  
Or the men but the all.

## **Mná**

Nor the key and the woman.  
Nor the girl and the moon.  
Nor the blindingly human.  
Nor the shard for the tune.

And the hill for the crescent.  
And the pond for the scale.  
And the continuous present.  
And the smile save the Braille.

In the table save billows.  
In the mirror save clouds.  
In the triumphant pillows.  
In the bib it's the shroud.

It's the same now the ebbing.  
It's the time now the most.  
It's the estuarine webbing.  
It's the girl and the ghost.

## **Kunst-Wet**

two intersecting lines radiate strings of heart beats in four times double the directions secreting small agents into the surrounding streets & lanes transfers of desire stilt-legged voyages hour-burst rambles freshly-bottled smell of the underground random splices of muzac shred the dark corners of an interruption clock's soundless alarm men follow women towards escalators triggered by their muffled boots the station entrance collapsing out into the waffle prints of passing tramline desires meanwhile you're down there stroking tokens that get stuck in the machine above our heads amongst the stars giant pulsing nuggets of steel erupt in longing while the red lights blink delaying our union by variants of minute-long bursts of motion this is the station called silence at which i long to get off with you so as to emerge into some blinding shower of certain life-affirming illuminations as blades of wet rubber hack away at the heads of screen actors we shoot our own minimalist movie under the smurf blue on white of kunst-wet this hyphen between breaths where electrons & whole atoms wander aimlessly plotting dotted lines on imagined vertical sheets of glass & of her far-flung snow-bound commune dappled with spots of rain love.

## Abendland

in abendland our eyes reflect the windows  
of real estate agencies couples roam there  
small dogs shit wherever they like everyone  
has a bulging belly here in abendland guitar  
music is *de rigueur* words like *de rigueur* are  
never used rivers flow & woods are pictures  
hung in galleries frequented on sundays &  
feastdays only post offices never close old  
audio cassettes remain unavailable sought  
after only by newcomers phone calls will be  
monitored & can only be made from inside  
hastily-assembled booths & there are no  
television channels only movies with in-built  
& hard to avoid advertisements girls wear  
stripes & old boots that make their ankles  
look skinny boys maintain a gruff persona  
only enhanced by permanent thirty six hour  
growths love is an absence or closing time  
garbage piles up but no one seems concerned  
in abendland beer comes in bottles that the  
homeless can collect & exchange for pennies  
or one more beer poetry has not yet been  
invented nor cricket which would be absurd

## **18 Fields**

- 18 fields (sites, battlegrounds)
- 17 banners (standards, uniforms)
- 16 bands (spartan, militaristic)
- 15 ribbons (loose, fluttering)
- 14 sashes (bright, coloured)
- 13 clouds (grey, foreboding)
- 12 drums (clipped, regimental)
- 11 fires (effigies, crackers)
- 10 rows (deep, breasted)
- 9 steps (slippery, barnacled)
- 8 hours (waiting, working)
- 7 days (blessed, counting)
- 6 rounds (fired, targetted)
- 5 friends (rioting, missing)
- 4 slogans (graffitied, shouting)
- 3 leaders (inspired, pathological)
- 2 winds (changing, dying)
- 1 blow (kingdoms, coming)

## **Goražde**

Who will give colour to Joe Sacco's  
black & white cartoons of Goražde  
safe haven - & who will go there  
is it needed are the people safe?

When will the mist shrouds on  
the mountains give up their secrets  
these criminals those war dead &  
weary - which daughters sons?

How are we to read the inverse  
Braille of bullet-studded buildings  
riverside mosques that pierce the sky  
the river itself a great onward flow?

What happened to the generators  
the flywheels paddle steamers hydro-  
power creators that fed the people  
juice to watch war movies in the dark?

& where do you go Joe Sacco in your  
dreams - is it black & white or do  
colours invade that paperthin canvas  
& bleed the edges of your stolen sleep?

# Another Death Star

*For Martin*

i hear lady vader's footsteps clang on the stainless steel gangway & look busy attending to my knobs & buttons but the dark side is so strong in this one that i am forced to switch on the emergency power - lights bleed across my console & i swivel in my chrome-plated bauhaus / ikea captain's chair to face her wrath should it ever come there is another death star I explain it contains no flaws unlike its predecessors into whose plans vader for some reason saw fit to introduce design elements that would make a first year engineer blanch; perhaps he knew even then something of his fate ... were those two hideously greige orbs a metaphor for his own body's penetration fantasy? a slight shudder as the x-wing entered the duct? how else to explain the ridiculous ease with which those rebels identified our killing machines' weakness – other than by referring to that space (in vader)? I digress - & our plans progress would you care to inspect? with that slight limp she follows me to the docking bays where our transport awaits - after you i murmur giving way so as to watch as her plastic skirts sashay only hinting at the unseen power of that incredibly spherical argh-!



## **Landschaft (mit Gerhard Richter)**

took a photograph of sunday night  
then blew it all onto a wall in paint  
something stirs in the brittle light -  
abrupt denouement; studio sounds  
erupt into white (the power's down)  
this wasn't scripted neither were  
your forearms' shudders - closing  
in on abstract stalks that make a  
silhouette in green a single figure  
walks on your microscopic moon  
but he's a fake the painting's done  
in someone else's living room now  
on corsica perhaps in a sun room  
or alone at last in a private church  
where guardrails keep the *volk* at  
bay or catalogue this desperate  
silence that makes photorealistic  
snow swept the candles gutted or  
a chair pushed back like a lock  
of black & white hair; poised for  
an ironic pose jackie onassis is  
becoming bored reading newsprint  
on the freshly-plastered walls ...  
inside an album sleeve notes keep  
their peace; & revolutions occur  
on a momentary basis swinging on  
chandeliers borrowed from the cast  
(we all need to eat) in this essay  
at last the landscape is given its  
due & sleigh bells ring out like  
broadway tunes or stolen dogs &  
here finally stands gerhard richter

## **Death In Dubrovnik**

you dispense with direct emotion/  
experience & become the second  
person the observer - it's safer  
here you see & as for your reader  
well she's gone her own way she'll  
meet you later in the old town -  
for now be content to sit & watch  
as tourists wait impatiently for  
their boat to arrive a three island  
cruise you suppose - it's late & the  
harried salesgirl repeats in three  
or four languages - one more hour  
seven more minutes five more now -  
then someone challenges her in  
italian - that was ten minutes ago!

she raises her hand as if to hit  
the sky & the frenchman looks at  
his wife - at his command she rises  
- he flashes his ticket at the brown  
girl & demands the expected - a  
refund & while she's off to fetch it  
you see the look on the woman's  
face & sensing a small part of your  
self there you close your eyes to the  
adriatic sunshine & for that moment  
of shame you cry & you want to die

## **The Two Faces of Zlatyu Boyadziev**

(1)

crystal: dignitary portraits  
his men clean-shaven the women  
stern children on sleds if you  
remember rightly panoramas  
of coal mine towns silly dogs  
chins pointing to the future  
the sun - gold haloes spirits  
with whiskers windowframes ...

(2)

crumpled: just out of bed  
or home from a long night of  
drinking all traces of artifice  
stripped away peasant loves  
more silly dogs the omnipresent  
minarets bulgarian eternities  
lifeless eyes trembling brushes  
a grandmother in every canvas ...

smooth our sharp edges over  
centuries of soothing (easy  
for me to say on windy days  
i think of anton music who

drew pictures of his living  
hell in charcoal & who is  
known today as the "dachau  
artist" born in slovenia &

a student of fine arts in  
venice arrested & sent here  
only for his talents to be  
rediscovered it's chilling

but necessary to look upon  
his ghost lines of tangled  
limbs & to know his words:  
"we are not the last ones"

# Dachau

there was no need to be told  
of the jewish custom whereby  
rocks are placed near graves  
instead of flowers (eg lilies

in the place of the barracks  
we found an ocean of stones -  
larger than a fist smaller  
than a child's head just big

enough to force one to walk  
more slowly than normal & to  
think with each step about  
a person who has passed on

nothing is expected of us  
except understanding (& an  
opening towards knowledge -  
like the burgers of dachau

whom american troops forced  
to march through these gas  
chambers saying look! look  
this happened in your town

rocks grow in every country  
this world is filled with  
graves - one day they will  
return us to the rivers &

## **Mit Gas!**

could you be flirting with me (tiny periwinkle of a trip-hop  
soundtrack? was that a smile (pretty vacuous air bubble at  
the bottom of my glass? come here & slide down my throat  
(abstract freckle of a thirst quencher hobo of the backwash  
past (reboot the soda stream of our invisible passions (poet  
of the cafe bar menu (lifeguard of the frozen bottle (remove  
yourself from this moment (stolen password of my internet  
identities (echo chamber of that dream lover's rehearsals  
refill this loneliness (unbranded apple flavoured cinnamon  
doughnut of a daydream (me wearing sunglasses (crucial  
sunshade of a postcard meeting (intern of hotel romancers  
change my channel (aqua blue invisible shapeless nomads  
of my early morning coffee headband greeting (effervesce  
my face (pigtail non-plussed crude translation of a mineral  
(once more mit gas (repeat mit gas (kiss your aerated body  
(pump the spray (ignite the liquid gel of these silhouetted  
traces in the neverending (nitrous of our emissary specks!

## **Pigtails**

she emerges from the bobble-cordoned bathing area with her pigtails wet & sticking out like unicorn horns from the back of her head – instantly she's a girl again the shining happy memory of herself as a swimmer a dancer & singer all at once like a sea monkey queen reacting with water swirled & sequined in the jar for all to see - i've been reading too much murakami not to understand what does drive the mind growing old what cues the eye interprets as "summer holidays": chipped nail polish lines of a different bikini beneath the new pair we stretched our legs on a gaudy beach towel airport novel open at a random page left there like the roof of a swiss house sometimes i forget that i can't speak japanese & this book's just a translation irritating in its americanisms as the endless parade of paris hilton stunt doubles along the beach - vacuous stares hidden from view by designer fly or wasp sunglasses ... they couldn't ever hold a candle to this girl in pigtails emerging like reality TV from the water

## **Dürer: Innsbruck 2005**

Do not throw anything yet, Albrecht;  
It is dangerous as well to lean out!  
Customs examination of luggage:  
Important notice. In winter, steam  
Macht (Thomas Mann) mobil. Also ...  
Kinder unter 15 fahren gratis. You  
Have no claims on the blue-green  
River waters flowing backwards to  
Trento. This is our Tiepolo. See  
Gerhard Richter (19-3 to13-12-2005)  
Run. Informazioni per il Viaggio:  
"The most brilliant SF mind on any  
Planet". (Rolling Stone). Read more  
Penguins online. With an introduction  
By Venezia, S. Lucia. Penalties for  
Improper use. Plus Blake Morris on  
The lost art of editing. One Saturday  
Poem by David ... "the art of hint". (5)



## **Abandoned Youth Camp**

the planes fly well overhead now  
& couples no longer dawdle down  
by the jetty where an old dinghy  
rises & falls on the fluke waves  
of passing powerboats ... & the  
cicadas chorale across an empty  
bay old pipes protrude from the  
muddy shallows & the trees though  
blooming still billow untended &  
unloved (though the summer & this  
giant cross remain drifters are  
its only pilgrims - snorkellers  
scan the basin for discarded  
bikinis or martini glasses (the  
old wreck of a hotel still hopes  
for a reunion with its past loves  
the storms at sunset or the mock  
evacuations - shells bursting  
underfoot as the guys with their  
miniature five string ukeleles  
serenade two lovers demolishing  
a lobster - all gone to the great  
fairground in the sky - packed  
up like crates of beer bottles &  
shipped off to another island  
or another beachside retreat  
now i hear the choppers swing  
low coming in for their daily  
sightseeing pass - dissecting  
sea mist like it's cold cabbage  
inspect our abandoned futures  
like so many real estate agents

## **Baudelaire in Bruxelles**

a silent cartoon wanders  
the non-descript chaussee  
over bridges it casts its  
chisel comic-book shadows  
illuminated by a passing  
policeman's truncheon light  
as air; that withered stare  
turns flowerboxes to stones  
or the dogs to barking fruit  
stalls there in the internet  
cafe glare baudelaire calls  
burundi for twelve cents -  
resenting the booth's semi-  
privacy (one hand in pocket  
jiggling ... hear the retort  
of verlaine's little gun as  
though he's not there & the  
women are all black now in  
this frame; thought bubbles  
crammed with grammatical  
marks suggesting curses in  
parlour rooms filled with  
that unbearable sound of  
harpsichords playing french  
tunes ... & he sees in this  
zone between falling empires  
the rest of his days spread  
out like a cloak on a corpse

# **Pink City**

*For Mikey*

bad boy scouts wearing red  
bandannas & hiking boots prowl  
the outdoor bars bringing alpine  
airs to ljubljana - i won't be  
climbing the steps to the castle  
won't conquer what's not even  
there (the view the haze) instead  
i'll walk around photographing  
pink buildings for you ... do you  
remember that cold afternoon at  
sheherezade after the mallarme  
gig? i can see why you liked it  
here where the boys ride bicycles  
& sit by the river smoking long  
whites joints - & sparrows bum  
cigarettes from strangers for  
a lark - i missed primoz by two  
weeks but there's poetry here in  
the inventiveness of the street  
performers or the flowers on the  
cobblers' bridge ... i know that  
somewhere here there's a boy you  
once loved if even for that one  
short visit - it's summer & all  
the pastel's aglow despite the  
crumbling flaking skins i can  
hear you & only wish these few  
photographs could capture their  
audible decline - the boys whose  
hair alone makes me feel so much  
older so much younger than even  
this breathless poem ever could

# **Käthy Kruse**

*For Klare*

the hands that made the hands  
then passed her to the second set  
the hands that plucked the human  
hairs & threaded them into a wig  
hands sewing on the yellow jacket  
passed then to unknown hands that  
gave her eyes to see herself mouth  
to breathe in cotton hands to hold  
her head in until she fell asleep ...  
two hands that made her cheeks  
pink in case she was called upon  
to blush the hands that filled her  
belly full of spätzle or gruel hands  
that kept her upright while they  
sewed her shoes into place & left  
her there wobbling but alive alone  
but made of human hands of hair  
the skirt to hide her girlhood hair  
combed platted maybe depending  
upon her mood then the hands that  
transplanted the still-beating hand-  
made heart into her chest covered  
breasts & silken brain with which  
käthy produces her first thought:  
their hands have stroked my arms  
& legs my doll's face into dreams  
my heart beats like a baby drum ...