

ARRHYTHMIA: FORMS OF DURATION

IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY

What is music which does not
in any sense progress?

—Louis Zukofsky, “‘A’-8”

1.

Let us imagine a duration without any regular pattern. Nothing in it would ever be recognizable, for nothing would ever recur. It would be a duration without measure of any sort, without entities, without properties, without events—a void duration, a timeless chaos.

—George Kubler, *The Shape of Time*¹

The poet Michael Palmer cites this passage from Kubler in “Period (Sense of Duration),” a talk given in 1982 whose topic is (roughly) “the inconstancy and mutability of our measures” when it comes to our experience of sounds, words, or constructions of any sort.² In the background of his talk is the fact that much of modern and contemporary writing is an exploration of the conflict and interplay among temporal and spatial forms—perhaps most notably in experiments in typography, collage, seriality, and linebreaks. Palmer’s talk is itself interesting because of the way it drifts or meanders, and one is led to ask whether the drift or the meander isn’t a way of defeating the measurement of duration. Drift, after all, is lateral rather than linear, meaning that it slides around or maybe just idles until a breeze develops. If meandering has a rhythm it is because it winds like a river or a snake, but its path is usually aimless or passive with respect to

the surrounding terrain—etymologically “meander” is related to “maunder,” which is to move (or talk) mindlessly (wandering or rambling):

Well the hearts are—is—
 where you find ‘em
 The coffee spilled
 all over the table
 a calculus of variations
 in itself
 bears no requirement
 as to number, form
 This error we insist on
 as we insist on
 torn pockets, one
 to each hip
 causing us to walk
 somewhat differently
 than before³

This unperiodic poem by Palmer is appropriately entitled “Multiples.” Its form is perhaps reflected in the figure of spilling, another movement indifferent to measure. Accordingly its cadences are irregular—in reading one is apt invisibly to rewrite at least one of its lines to make it come out right “as to form or number,” but this would deprive the poem of one of its two or three pieces of punctuation, depending on how one reads the odd first line. Still, the poem is divided neatly into three five-line stanzas. Given the context of Palmer’s talk on duration, over which the number 7 mystically presides, one could reflect on the numerical weight of 3 and 5, particularly since the lines are composed mostly of either three or five syllables—one of the exceptions being the line that gives the poem its principal conceptual turn: “a calculus of variations” (interestingly, the most melodic line in the poem). (A “calculus of variations” is a branch of

higher mathematics.⁴) It is certainly no accident that the poem on the page facing “Multiples” is entitled “Fractal Song,” which is also a poem about immeasurable durations:

I do not know where I will be in July
 Sam said or said Sam
 The sound so measured has no boundary,
 is not triangle or square
 We pass through it in false flight, relieved
 to be there, to be bearing
 once again at least
 the tick of the cup at the Clarion
 Clouds are not spheres we know
 now and mountains not cones (p. 61)

I was taught (c. 1950) that poetry is Euclidean by nature—in school one learns chiefly scanning and the names of figures—but Palmer is interested in turbulence and unpredictability, that is, singularities in which without warning a sequence of something turns into something else (catastrophe). Timekeepers (an odd term when you think about it) keep or capture very little, almost nothing, of time, which simply unfolds and never gets anywhere. Meanwhile we are merely passing through it “in false flight,” idlers rather than refugees, stopping here and there, say at one of the links in the chain of Clarion Hotels that dot the earth where we run up the “tick”—i.e., tab—at the bar. In his brief glance at “Fractal Song” the poet Albert Cook mentions that the last two lines are a citation from the fractal king Benoit Mandelbrot.⁵ “Sam said or said Sam” is (if I understand) a geometric as opposed to a random fractal (fr. L. for *fragment*); at any rate self-replicating, although perhaps not like a hotel chain.

Emphasis cannot but claim that our experience of duration is real. When hours, minutes and seconds drain away in front of us as this sequence of nothings universalised into the

with wild fiery streaks able.⁸

Following “Prosody as Cognition” one could say that Jarvis’s lyrical aim in this poem is to retrieve meter from the oblivion into which so much of modern and contemporary poetry is imagined to have cast it, and how more dramatically to accomplish this than by writing a poem that gives us, if nothing else, the experience of time, both the footstep of its progress—“the own rote load doles out / a doubt-loud flow into the overload”—as well as its interminability. The poem begins *in media res*, and, although it stops eventually, it never really comes to a close: the last lines are a recitation of the initial verse paragraph; the page that follows is a vast white space broken only by the orthographical marks of embedded parentheses))))); the next page is blank; the final page contains the endnote. Whatever the beating temporality of the individual lines, the whole work occupies what one could call, borrowing from Maurice Blanchot (the Newton of parentheses), a vast *entretemps* that separates a past that never was from the indecisive Messiah who postpones his existence, bewildering those of us in the “ending-cult” who cannot believe there is no end-of-history.⁹ This open-ended between-time is felt most strongly in those pages whose lines are unpunctuated by any period. In an extensive (and indispensable) review of *The Unconditional* the poet John Wilkinson provides a description of the poem that can’t be bettered:

To describe the poem’s prosody in terms of its metrics would be inadequate, for what it engenders in the reader’s breast is far from the regularity and assurance of Alexander Pope’s numbers or from the stabbing and poking of a satirist like Charles Churchill. When it comes to low-life novels it may be commonplace to talk of a literary experience as a roller-coaster ride, but *The Unconditional* fully justifies the figure. Pages of impossibly headlong rhythm will be startlingly blocked, for example, by three or more lines ending with the same monosyllabic word, and after turning on this dime, will again charge off harum-scarum through a 300-word rhyme-propelled sentence. The poem transits between rhyming couplets and blank verse, with these transitions often near-imperceptible; caesuras are extremely rare and rhymes almost always monosyllabic,

Each line scans differently, and (as Palmer notes) the combination of internal and end-rhymes and uncertain syntax produces a highly variable movement—“The image of time so proposed,” Palmer says, “is multi-directional” (*Code of Signals*, p. 254). Then there is “‘A’-14”: “beginning *An*”:

An
orange
our
sun
fire
pulp
whets
us
(everyday)
for
us
eat
it
its
fire’s
unconsumed
we’ll
not
fire
there
rocketed
that
poor

fools
 be
 sure
 moon
 loon
 bless
 light
 he
 pees
 pea
 blossom
 sun's
 peer. ("A," pp. 314-15)

After this period the poem expands to two- and then three-word lines that continue for more than 40 pages. One imagines duration to be horizontal (despite the waterclock and hourglass). How to measure the movement of a vertical poem? Palmer himself cites the similarly vertical "(Ryokan's Scroll)" from *I's* (*pronounced eyes*)—

dripping
 words
 off
 a
 long
 while¹³

—and says that the measure of its "lines" depends upon "the quantity of individual syllables" (*Code of Signals*, p. 254). Meanwhile Abigail Lang reminds us that for Zukofsky the single word rather than the line,

breath, or stanza is the basic unit of poetry, and that, as Zukofsky said, “each word in itself is an arrangement”—a fact that, unfortunately, frequently falls beneath the threshold of our attention.¹⁴ A poem of one-word lines suggests that a word is an arrangement not so much of syllables as of letters—“moon / loon,” “he / pees / pea / [...] peer”—and that a single letter can be the arbiter of what word a particular word becomes as it arranges itself on the page, which suggests in turn that the written or printed word is rather more context-free than the spoken: the printed word “pea” is independent of the predicate “he / pees” in a way the spoken “pea” would not be. The “pea,” as it happens, itself turns into an allusion to Hans Christian Anderson’s story, “A Pea Blossom,” in which a green pea flowers into a yellow plant, or “sun’s / peer.”

To give this line of thought another screw-turn, recall Zukofsky’s law: “Properly no verse should be called a poem that does not convey the totality of perfect rest” (*Presuppositions+*, p. 13). One could say that in a poem of one-word lines each word is (musically) at rest, particularly when freed (as they almost always are) from any syntactical relation with the word above or below. The opening wordlines of “*A*’-14” seem comparable in their objectivity and repose to the (rather more polysyllabic) words in *80 Flowers*:

Lavender Cotton

Dwarfeypress silva evergreen spineranks branchlets
 downinterlace divided leaves Great Men
 sainted *rare* goldyellow globes rayless
 daisies allying baskingmoth summers fragrantwood
 swallows return poppyleaf grayblue white
 sightwort greater-celandine to pilewort porwige
 rare fallen gardens *lavender cotton* (*Complete Short Poetry*, p. 326)

The poems in *80 Flowers* are virtually verb-free and so are paratactic rather than syntactic in their measure; likewise they are free of the words *the* and *a* that elsewhere Zukofsky says are as substantive as nouns.¹⁵ Accordingly, and in keeping with the paratactic arrangement, syllables in *80 Flowers* are predominantly stressed, and to make things even more complex one could just as comfortably read each line backwards as

she

it

i

i

i

trinity

wins

by length

he said

this line

has no beginning

no

end

for furniture

that

doesn't

breathe¹⁸

This page of *Ace* seems more discursive, syntactical, than “‘A’-14,” but other pages that are relatively free of nouns are more elliptical or list-like:

nothing

behind poetry

look

a

like

or is it

an an

but
 why
 so
 there
 fore
 because
 maybe if
 now
 might
 well
 for it
 let
 go
 unhand me
 my good man
 i'm

Meanwhile, as often reported, Raworth reads the poem very rapidly, producing the sound-poem effect of a verbal stream rather than the staccato of linebreaks suggested by the printed page.¹⁹ (Imagine a *speedpoem*.) One could say that the verticality of the poem is compromised both by one's own reading of it, which is geared to sentence-formation, and by the poet's pell-mell performance. Relevant to this context are Raworth's short-duration poems in *Big Slippers On-Fourteen Poems*—"Attitude," for example, is a two-second poem ("Attitudes must be interesting"), "Belt" is five seconds in duration; others range from fourteen to twenty-five seconds.²⁰ Compare the following from Raworth's *Moving*:

8.06 PM June 10, 1970

poem²¹

Or recall Aram Saroyan's one-word poems—

eyeye²²

—which cross the threshold into concrete poetry where simultaneity eliminates the sense of duration, or very nearly so: the peculiarity of “eyeye” is that the first three letters spell out the word “eye,” as do the last three, but (as in Wittgenstein’s duck-rabbit) only if one’s focus moves from the one “eye” to the other, and back again. So “eyeye” could be said to possess a rhythm after all.

Ace, for all its top-to-bottom arrangement, is a poem in four “movements”: “*in think*,” “*in mind*,” “*in motion*,” “*in place*,” together with a fare-thee-well (“Bolivia: another end of ace”). In the first a nomad (or, more frequently, a “no / mad”) has experiences like the following:

no
 mad
 awakes
 we do not feel
 strangeness
 he wakes
 in terror
 from a dream [...]
 he thinks
 alone
 in the honey
 comb o [...]
 see clearly
 nomad
 your name
 nothing
 new
 see

as far as
 yucatan [...]
 no
 mad on
 grass
 breathing
 returns to his
 senses [...]

In the second movement, in which

mr raworth
 continues
 to believe
 everything
 possible

“nomad / meets ace,” as if there were a narrative hovering somewhere (but apparently there is not).²³ As in Zukofsky, each word is a poem unto itself, even when it momentarily stops to coin a phrase or crack a joke, as at the outset of “*in motion*”:

but what
 is happening
 can also
 mean
 PAUSE
 PAUSE

As in *obdurate* duration or, as Clark Coolidge says, “*Obduration*. Hard time”: thirty years to life in a sequence of caesuras.²⁴

5.

Polyrhythms' spatial counterpart, lack of (regular, traditional) closure as generative, tensions restored. It foregrounds an artificial, constructed process, a denatured measure of kinetic shifts, registers of differentiation. This pluralism of incident, refusing all packages—not “cut to fit”—a luxuriant anarchy, a fuller flowering or specificity of internal rhythms and semantic redistributions.

—Bruce Andrews, “Lines Linear How to Mean”²⁵

Steve McCaffery's “Beethoven Sonnets” is an arrhythmic poem about (*sic*) music. It begins by breaking up a musical term (*rallentando*) meant to indicate that time is gradually to be made slower:

ralletand o you wagon lit vir
 tuosa vox humana in two notes the
 gendarme on the corner of opus 2
 where the provenance is the
 symphony's resumé the composer of
 naïve styles is also the
 compositor of ennui which ends
 all codas²⁶

Naturally the question is: how to comprehend the temporality of McCaffery's poem, which is a construction that requires us to measure (in pauses) the spaces that separate its words, syllables, and letters. But because the spaces are irregular, one confronts the spaces without a scale to time them. And since the words defeat syntactical arrangements one's reading, supposing it to be silent, produces something very like a verbovocovisual poem. The poem turns the reader into a sound poet like McCaffery himself in the sense that one has to take the poem as a script to be converted into a kind of theater, however private: that is (like one of Jackson Mac Low's poems), one has to perform the poem in order to read it.²⁷ The space-breaks urge a syncopated performance. And mind the jokes as you go—

it was an ear lier song in
 patois the tympani used suede the
 ersatz finale wa s l acuna
 d'amore die meistersinger [...]

•

clapping on his cactus pant s
 violin and choral mausoleum

•

monochrome in the motherland in
 comunicado for strings and wind my
 father's blue kite for ian
 hamilton finla y it was
 no more tha n merely
 vowels from the violin via the
 soiree (*Seven Pages*, pp. 83-84)

Except for its ludic character, this is not a representative poem of McCaffery's. No two of his poems look (or sound) alike. As McCaffery says, he has "no steady poetics," rather he is Heraclitean or, as he prefers, "nomadic": "I have a constant stream of feelings and ideas that constantly change, modify and carry into action as techniques for living. What I try to do is understand this flux and develop for myself a thoroughly nomadic consciousness; a mind in constant movement through stoppings and starts, with the corollary of a language art in permanent revolution, contradiction, paradox, and transform" (*Seven Pages*, p. 359). As per Kubler, his mind moves without any regular pattern, producing turbulence.

6.

A line is the smallest unit of a poem which might collect dust.

—Gerald Burns, "A Line Primer"²⁸

So at one end of the scale we have one-word poems, and minimalisms like Robert Creeley’s “A Piece”—

One and
one, two,
three.²⁹

—while at the other end are the long lines composed by poet, painter, magician, and circus clown Gerald Burns (d. 1998):

Surrealism at Menil

is a dozen Cornell boxes including homages à ballet and the renaissance pinball, broken panes; all frames ached to have been found, exhibiting themselves like faces in Dante’s hell’s lambent light, blue or pale peach-rose liquids in apothecary bottles never green or bright yellow, specimens always white, tinted by pickle. In an adjacent chamber nail fetishes, very good ones, stood (vertically if little men) furred with nails bigheaded and bent, a few blades, rusted to one tone like Gillettes in a built-in motel tile slot. We frame it all as art....³⁰

The poem refers to an exhibition of modern and contemporary art at the Menil Collection Museum in Houston, Texas, particularly some of Joseph Cornell’s boxes, with their ballerinas and Medici portraits set among pinball machines, among other found objects. Burns’s poems are themselves filled with found objects, his idea being that anything can be a work of art: all that is required is that you pick it out from its surroundings—merely taking it up, as one would a stone or an article at a yard sale, is a kind of framing or staging that recontextualizes the mere thing as an art object (“today in Goodwill / I saw a typed hornbook text on a wood paddle, under plastic laminate with upholsterer’s tacks” [*Shorter Poems*, p. 37]). One virtue of Burns’s long lines is they can carry a lot of stuff:

Fireplace Poodles

What’s (Cavell in *Artspace*) a proper subject for philosophy, profound question you might revise to what is the difference between a proper subject for philosophy and ditto for art....

It shouldn't matter what a museum has in it—anything, your kitchen chair
 (certainly mine, spray-painted black over black to repair the damage done by rubber-base enamel,
 the bentwood chairs Flora Searcy gave me when I was poor in Dallas ditto, from their green and
 yellow pea
 to catch us up to deco), our Hopi teacup on a bookcase in the living room as if for reference.
 It's magical to turn and see things [...].

Anderson's export tea caddies like
 three-leaf clovers translated up leaving a plasma trail, lobate body in pewter suggests a shape
 to a sculptor's already a subject, exploited in the act of recognizing it as a subject....

(*Shorter Poems*, p. 41)³¹

These lines, despite enjambments, sound like prose, but Burns says that they are “mixed measures” that can be scanned. In an essay on “Lines as Entities” he writes (of an earlier poem made of seven-beat lines): “You can describe just about any syllable-stress line if you allow a below-line caret [^] for off-syllable beats, the little cupshaped thingy [~] for light stress, plus acute [_] and grave [_] accents. My own is a measure occupying a felt duration” (*A Thing About Language*, p. 40). He cites a letter from Donald Hall who says that he can't see or hear anything metrical in Burns's lines—“I don't call it meter. I would only call meter that which can be reduced to arithmetic” (*A Thing About Language*, p. 40). To which Burns replies that a mixed measure is “anomalous by definition,” but it is nevertheless a system. “I realize that given Creeley Snyder Olson and always Pound that my favoring of a regular line at all is counter-Modernist.... [Nevertheless] I think *making* the line in that old Yeatsy classroom sense is still nearly the best thing to be about” (*A Thing About Language*, pp. 41-42).

Itself Defined

I sáw an éggshaped stáinless cóntinéntal cóffeemáker, orgánic as this péppersháker shówing
 Sáxifrage óppositifólia, fivepetaled it seems, the úsual fát róseleaf shápe, cóming to póints
 (the sált is bórage, sét befóre réal ívy in wicker, unnóted because not pórcelain) and só
 we sée the únpredíctability of what cónstitutes a sét [...]. (*Shorter Poems*, p. 36)

Anomalous meter sounds a bit like Williams's "variable foot," or say it sounds about right: the anomaly or exception is extrinsic to the system of which it is, as Christian Bök says, "secretly intrinsic."³² And so, as Michael Palmer would say, we see the unpredictability, or perhaps the immeasurability, of what constitutes a measure, or duration.

¹ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 71.

² *Code of Signals: Recent Writings in Poetics*, ed. Michael Palmer (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1983), p. 244.

³ Michael Palmer, *First Figure* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), p. 60.

⁴ See J. M. Gelfand and S. V. Fomin, *A Calculus of Variations*, trans. Richard A. Silverman (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963).

⁵ “After Olson and Celan: The Breadth and Twist of the Referent,” *American Poetry Review*, 24, no. 4 (July/August 1995), 9-16. See Alice Fulton, “Of Formal, Free, and Fractal Verse: Singing the Body Electric,” *Feeling as a Foreign Language: The Good Strangeness of Poetry* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1999), pp. 43-60.

⁶ *Critical Quarterly*, 40, no. 4 (1998), 3-15.

⁷ (London: Barque Press, 2005), p. 5.

⁸ “Her Weasels Wild Returning” (1994), *Poems* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1999), p. 410.

⁹ In “The Great Refusal” Blanchot speaks of impossibility as a dimension of time in which time is “the dispersion of a present that, even while being only passage does not pass, never fixes itself in a present, refers to no past and goes toward no future: *the incessant*.” *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 45.

¹⁰ “The Unconditional,” *Chicago Review*, 52, no. 2-4 (Autumn 2006), 371.

¹¹ See Tom Jones’s review of the poem in *Jacket*, no. 31 (October 2006): “The poem is constituted by an account of its own accidental relations in coming into being, an awareness of those contingencies of language, script, and print that make up the relational landscape of poetry.” (<http://jacketmagazine.com/31/jones-jarvis.html>.) Early in the poem these lines appear:

I write what gets taken into my mouth.

Just as it is I can and do affirm,
 just as it undelimitably is,
 just as a single affirmation sings
 the tunelesst selected tesserel
 or Age of Prose like no prose ever heard
 age not of prose but rather of a dim
 laborious deafness as the condition of—
 just as it is or just as it is not—
 as at some point I false first person must
 gutter to drop the outsided double me
 so this parenthesis will never close. (*The Unconditional*, pp. 29-30)

¹² (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 214.

¹³ *Complete Short Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 203.

¹⁴ See Lang, “The Remembering Words, or ‘How Zukofsky Used Words,’” *Jacket* 30 (<http://jacketmagazine.com/30/z-lang.html>); and Zukofsky, “An Objective,” *Prepositions+*, ed. Mark Scroggins (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), p. 13.

¹⁵ See “Poetry: For My Son When He Can Read,” *Prepositions+*, p. 10: “...a case can be made out for the poet giving some of his life to the use of the words *the* and *a*: both of which are weighted with as much epos and historical destiny as one man can perhaps resolve. Those who do not believe this are too sure that the little words mean nothing among so many other words.”

¹⁶ On the fate of meter in contemporary poetry see Douglas Messerli, “The Rhythms of the ‘Language’ Poets,” a paper presented at the 1982 annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, now available online at <http://greeninteger.blogspot.com/1008/09/rhythms-of-language-poets.html>. Referring to the poetry of Charles Bernstein and Ted Greenwald, Messerli writes: “I am only speculating that the rhythms of such poets may have prosodic roots in traditions other than speech and song. The notion that most of

contemporary poetry has abandoned issues of prosody...may not only be mistaken, but fails to recognize the narrow way in which modern and contemporary critics define prosody” (p. 10). One should also consult the chapter on “Rhythms” in Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), rpt. (Lincoln, Nebr. Bison Books, 1985), pp. 109-18.

¹⁷ *Silence* (Hanover NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 118.

¹⁸ (Washington, D. C.: Edge Books, 2001), np. A fact about Tom Raworth that is frequently cited is that he was one of the first people to undergo open-heart surgery, and that he suffers from cardiac arrhythmia (his heart-rate can vary from twenty to three hundred beats per minute). See, for example, Marjorie Perloff, “Filling Space with Trace: Tom Raworth’s “Letters from Yaddo,” *Differentials: Poetry, Poetics, Pedagogy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), pp. 228-29. So naturally one asks—as did Charles Bernstein in an interview—whether there is any connection between his heart condition and the irregularity of his poetic line (Raworth answered, “No.”). See “Tom Raworth, Conversation with Charles Bernstein on Close Listening, March 13, 2006” (<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/Pennsound/x/Close-Listening.php>).

¹⁹ Peter Middleton gives an account of Raworth’s reading of *Ace* at Birbeck College, London in 2003, in “How to Read a Reading of a Written Poem,” *Oral Tradition*, 20, no. 1 (2005), 7-34, esp. 17-21.

²⁰ *Big Slippers On* is also available at <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Raworth.html>.

²¹ (London: Goliard Press, 1971), np.

²² *Aram Saroyan* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 20. See Curtis Faville’s review of Saroyan’s *Complete Minimalist Poems* (New York: Ugly Duckling, 2007), “Stone Cutting All the Way,” in *Jacket 34* (October 2007), available online: <http://jacketmagazine.com/34/faville-saroyan-grenier.shtml>.

²³ However, John Wilkinson does not think the poem is quite so abstract. See his essay, “Tripping the Light Fantastic: Tom Raworth’s *Ace*,” *Removed for Further Study: The Poetry of Tom Raworth*, ed. Nate Dorward (Toronto: The Gig, 2003), pp. 145-60, esp. pp. 153-54; and also in this volume, Tom Orange, “Notes for a Reading of *Ace*,” pp. 161-69.

²⁴ See Clark Coolidge, “From Notebooks (1976-1982),” *Code of Signals*, p. 174.

²⁵ *Paradise and Method: Poetics and Praxis* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996), p. 117-18.

²⁶ *Seven Pages Missing, I: Selected Texts, 1969-1999* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2000), p. 83.

²⁷ See Mac Low’s performance directions for his “Asymmetries”: “The *durations* of silences (or instrumental tones) are *at least* those of single words or word strings that might be printed in equivalent spaces, as they would be spoken aloud by the individual reader. That is, the reader is silent or prolongs sounds at least as long as it would take him to speak such space-equivalent words. However, one may, in performance, extend these durations whenever one feels that the total performance would be ‘better’ if one remained silent or continued to prolong the sound one is making.” *Representative Works, 1938-1985* (New York: ROOF Books, 1986), p. 207.

²⁸ *A Thing About Language* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 46.

²⁹ *Selected Poems* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976), p. 50.

³⁰ *Shorter Poems* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1993), p. 93.

³¹ A tea caddy is a (frequently silver or pewter) container for tea leaves. “Lobate” means “having or characterized by lobes” (OED). Plasma is “a green variety of chalcedony, a semi-precious stone, and formerly used for carving into intaglios [engravings]” (OED).

³² *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), p.

8.