

**As Poetry Recycles Neurons: Flocks of Words, Tracks of Letters**

**Edited by Marisa Malone**





## A Student Field Study Project

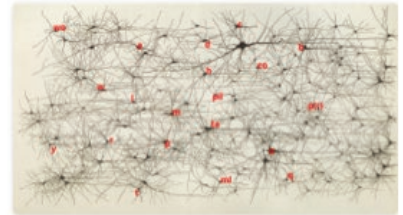
### As Poetry Recycles Neurons: Flocks of Words, Tracks of Letters

The Evergreen State College, 2012-2013

*"Like the entomologist in pursuit of brightly coloured butterflies, my attention hunted, in the flower garden of the gray matter, cells with delicate and elegant forms, the mysterious butterflies of the soul, the beating of whose wings may some day- who knows- clarify the secrets of mental life" -Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Recollections of My Life, 1923.*

Just as the "header" image mirrors Pablo Garcia-Lopez's "[PET Soul Butterflies](#)," (1) which in turn mirrors [Santiago Ramón y Cajal's](#) 19th C. discovery of the neuron "in the flower garden of the gray matter," this field study project mirrors our own discovery of "neuro poetics."

Each of the letters on the [neuro site map](#) featured to the right provides a link to a student's **winter** and/or **spring** quarter field study: a month-long immersion in, and poetic expression of, a passion that tests both Marjorie Perloff's theory of the [unoriginal genius](#) of contemporary poetry and Stanislas Dehaene's hypothesis of reading as [neuronal recycling](#).



How are our reveries—as well as your ability to read them through these black lines and curves on an illuminated screen—mere remembrances of our ability to read animal tracks and bird flight?

Just as you can buy a t-shirt that says "Poetry is good for neural development" as well as a book on neuroeconomics that will explain why you bought it, each of our field studies explores the poetic experience of language as an evolutionary exaptation. "Words as orbs," wrote Bachelard, "murmuring memory," says the poet."

The letters of our eAlphabet bring attention to the act of knowing poetry in the way that Emily Dickinson knew it: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." Our goal is a mindful recycling of neurons, one in which reciprocity between specific forms of poetry and specific states of consciousness binds ecological adaptation with neural integration ... and disintegration ... "age of earth and us all chattering/a sentence or character/ suddenly/steps out to seek for truth fails/falls into a stream of ink Sequence/trails off/ ... flocks of words flying together tense/as an order/cast off to crows." (2)

(1) PET Soul Butterflies, 2012, Silkscreen, photo printing and crystal beads on black plexiglass ( <http://pablogarcialopez.com/home.html> )

(2) Susan Howe, Pythagorean Silence, 1982, New York: Montemora Foundation.

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All of the essays and poetry in this book were selected from the programs eAlphabet blog which houses a variety of prose, poetry, and videos that were unable to be included here. Please visit: <http://blogs.evergreen.edu/ealphabet/neuro-site-map/>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Mimicking the seasons (and our observation of their rhythms) the curricular themes in *As Poetry Recycles Neurons: Flocks Of Words, Tracks Of Letters*, have shifted, evolved and recycled. The work in this anthology traces that movement from fall through winter quarter.

The essays in Part I: Science As A Conversation were written during the fall when we spent time at The Evergreen State College's Organic Farm. We observed ourselves being drawn to a plant through a method of science known as the Phenomenology of Knowing. This method was introduced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1832), a German poet, artist and naturalist. We explored the slippage between art and science and the border between heart and mind while writing research papers that mixed prose and poetry. The form of our research papers followed Craig Holdrege's *Doing Goethean Science* and our peppering of poetry throughout mirrored that in Stephan Buhner's *The Secret Teachings of Plants: The Intelligence of the Heart in the Direct Perception of Nature*. The section headings in Part I are from Holdrege's essay and serve as an umbrella for each of our individual voices. Part II: Poetry Of Passions, presents poetry from our winter quarter field studies during which we applied the Goethean method in a month long immersion in a particular passion. Our assignment was to make poetry evoke the experience of our immersion within a passion, as E.L. Doctorow said "Good writing is supposed to evoke sensations in the reader--not the fact that it is *raining*, but the feeling of being rained upon."

This anthology aims to render into language our individual experiences within the shared context of the program, to create for those of us who desire the intimacy of turning a page something tactile: a textured memory of a point in time, kept alive in the body of a book.



# PART I: SCIENCE AS A CONVERSATION

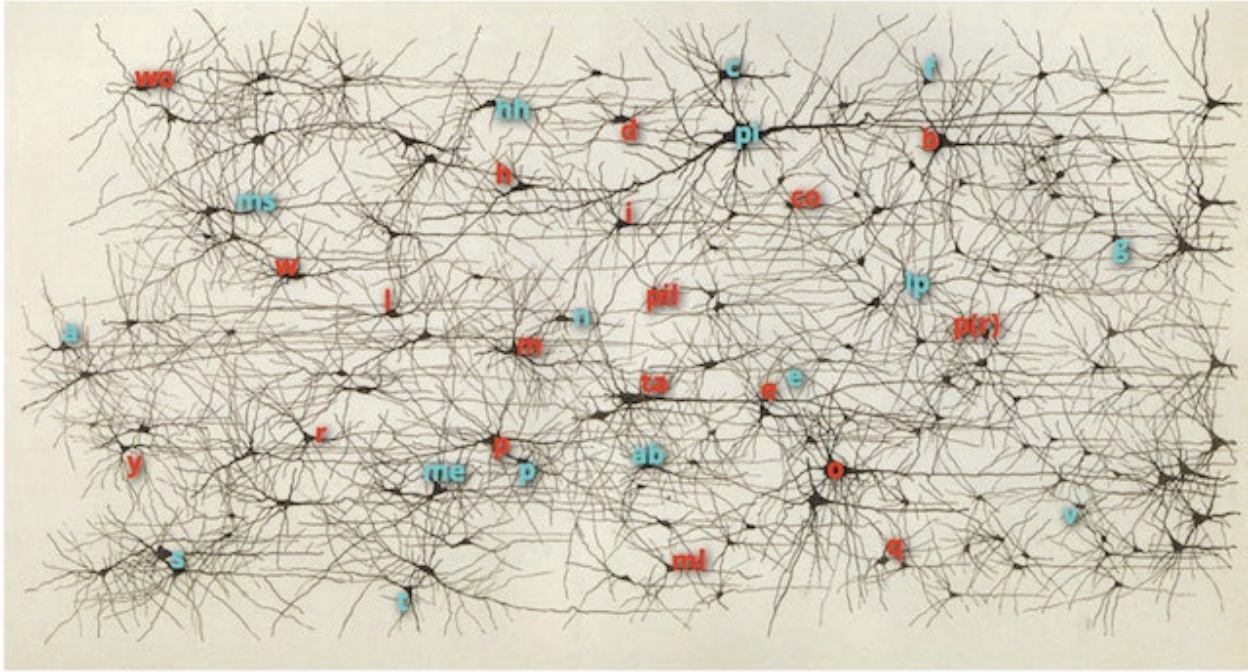


Image: Neuro Map screen shot from eAlphabet blog.

## SENSING BOUNDARIES

*“The realization that the phenomena we confront are always richer than the abstractions we use to explain them is central to a Goethean approach.”-Holdrege*

In Goethean science the sensations, emotions, and thoughts that accompany the interaction or ‘conversation’ we have with a phenomenon (in our case a plant) are honored as a valid source of information and become an active motivator for research. The whole process is dependent on this first step of recognizing and going towards that to which we were drawn. Without this passion it’s somewhat stale and hard to keep motivated.

*“Our feelings are such an integral part of our lives; we cannot often separate them from what we acknowledge as facts.”-Houstyn Evans*

*“By remaining curious to what may come out of any interaction, you can discover a broader spectrum of what that interaction entails.”-Jesse Hunnicutt*

We explored the Organic Farm on Evergreen’s campus and took note of what we were drawn towards or repelled from and settled next to something that captured our interest. With the awareness of not wholly understanding why we were drawn to a particular plant came the invitation to be acutely aware of our surroundings and discover the boundaries between our object and us, boundaries that exist within and around us. These boundaries were seen and felt in relation to, gender, education, fear, illness, age, science, art, poetry, prose, mind, and body.

*“The edge is not the boundary, the boundary lies within us.”-Jonathon Hiller*

*“As a young girl I saw the fragments of myself. Untrusting of my own inner voice, I criticized my multiplicity and became isolated, dissected and labeled.”-Marisa Malone*

*“[N]o one had ever told me what to do. I had never been told that something I drew or made was “wrong.” I had never been told that I was using the wrong color crayon and I had never been told that I was weird. I experienced a lot of “firsts” on that first day of school.”-Houstyn Evans*

Through this first step the initial barriers we faced began to shift along with our perception of the ways we interact with the world.

*“It became important to me to explore the boundaries that the plant was trying to establish with me.”-Trent Morris*

## DELICATE EMPIRICISM

*“The process of observing these plants and observing myself in the presence and context of these plants, revealed a much more complex and interactive relationship than I imagined I would find.”-Jasmine Doughy*

By being aware of our selves in relation to a phenomenon a dialogue is initiated. This conversation can arise in the form of feelings, memories, and bodily sensations. This step leads to new methods of observing, listening and understanding.

*“[O]bserve the context, the landscape, the smells, sounds, tastes, temperatures and light of the place where the plant grows...also note how this place feels. How it feels through your body.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“[W]hat I had to do was to listen and be immersed in the moment.”-Jonathon Hiller*

*“A conversation through touch, a link between man and plant, and a reminder that most living things hold more than meets the eye.”-Trent Morris*

The insights and wonder that came from the observation of our chosen plant varied. However, these differences all emerged from the same method, the observer observing her/his self observe.

*“Goethe’s approach [to science] is gentle, graceful, and most of all, mindful of the indisputable yet largely unrecognized truth that everything is alive, and everything is interacting...”-Rhys Dovey*

*“It’s not simply avoiding dissection or manipulation of nature, but is more about engaging both halves of your brain, emotional and logical, for observations that have both insight and meaning.”-Jesse Hunnicutt*

*“We do not extract information from the world around us- we converse with it. We lend our senses to the world and it interacts with us and we come away changed.”-Jasmine Doughy*

This process of engagement with our surroundings allows the dialogue to move from the phenomenon to ourself and back through the flow and shift of awareness. The challenge becomes how to translate that dialogue through the abstraction of language.

*“The power of poetry and art is that it can then pass on that original, raw experience of a phenomena to others through words and images.”-Thorey Munroe*

## ENGAGING THE CONVERSATION

An affective conversation requires a balance between open awareness and focused questions. Through an “unframed mind” as Holdrege names it, we are not dominating or contorting the outcome of the interaction. Instead we are observing details: the way the light is cast on the leaves, the color of the soil, the mood we are in.

*“Immediately I am drawn to the grace of this plant. How its form embodies gesture, how it acts like a palm to catch the sunlight filtered through the forest canopy.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“The whole nut orchard speaks to me in some way, but the walnut tree in particular.”-Houstyn Evans*

*“I choose a glade in which I am surrounded by the tall fir trees of the area. I am at peace here. I listen to the wind whispering through the tree tops and I set to my goal, to commune with Nature.”-Jonathon Hiller*

Through detailed observation we begin to see connections between the organism and its environment. This is a method of seeing that acknowledges all the parts that build the whole.

*“Awareness is incorporating all my senses, as is the translation I perceive from Goethean scientific practices.”-Siproena Johnson*

*“What comes in key here is to listen...It’s important to let the conversation be steered by both parties involved.”-Jesse Hunnicutt*

*“I found my relationship with mint to be an ambiguous kind of love, which is much more commonly recognized in relationships with other humans, because it reflects a truly complex*

*interaction, a giving and taking on both parts.”-Jasmine Doughty*

*“Whatever I engage in conversation with deserves the basic respect of being treated as its own gathering of atoms.”-Renee Ingersoll*

*“In communication with my tree, I leave behind language that speaks not in tones of lucid speech, but rather ambient conveyance, and it is then that I feel the strange sense of timelessness.”-  
Rebecca Barrow*

## EXACT SENSORIAL IMAGINATION AND LIVING UNDERSTANDING

*“When you do this kind of conscious picture building, you grow more and more connected to what you’re observing.”-Holdrege*

By (re)imagining the phenomenon we bring it into our bodies and harness at an intimate level the details of its parts and functions.

*“Between each observation, images of my plant and the sensations of being near it would surface and resurface in my mind.”-Jasmine Doughty*

*“The fern is like a cloud or like smoke. It takes up a lot of space yet does not have mass or weight or substance.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“It becomes a subject that transcends time and has all the power and potential of its entire life combined into one.”-Jesse Hunnicutt*

From this process of imagination a time-lapse occurs and blends together the multiple transitions and subtle movements of an organism that the human eye cannot perceive in live time.

*“While I was understanding this transformation, I knew I was only capturing a still shot.”-  
Marisa Malone*

*“I have seen, I have been shown, it is mine to remember and share.”-Trent Morris*

*“When trying to create a sensorial image, recalling the sounds and textures will help you feel like you are inside your memory.”-Brianah Droubay*



## A PORTRAYAL

*“I see science and poetry as stemming from the same thing, both being based on wonder at the world.”-Jasmine Doughty*

It is a challenge to capture through language a three-dimensional living organism without reducing it to a flat description of its parts. To help transition from texture to text we reached somewhere in between scientific and poetic language.

*“I am confronted with the bracken. Delicate curls like eyelashes. Bold curves like architecture.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“The circles in the dangling seed pods, the long spiral strands, the angular patterns on the leaf...this plant does the dance of sacred geometry and reflects layers of patterns within its layers of meaning.”-Trent Morris*

*“Leaves of water-resistant animal hide, shaped like half of the heart you once left behind but reclaimed in the wood.”-Martha Lefebvre*

We relied on artistic methods (such as: drawing, painting, and photography), our skills of observation, and language to effectively portray that with which we were in conversation.

*“Whether it is sound, literature or the world around us each points to the ways in which attention to detail and thoughtful interaction are required for a deeper understanding of any subject.”-Seth Lueck*

## THE WHOLE AS A PART

To see a phenomenon as a unified organism it is important to view the symbiosis of the parts that build the whole; to zoom in and out of the borders between and among sensations, language, seasons and art.

*“I did not discover a self-contained personality expressed within the tree itself, but instead a connection between the tree and all of its surroundings and insides.”-Jesse Hunnicutt*

*“The fern is made half of air; in life and in death: where the green earth-water of lobes leave negative space, air and sunlight illuminate.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“Here in this single tree we can see all the cycles of life.”-Jonathon Hiller*

*“I enjoyed this herb is at various stages of development and admired its ability to remain as a whole, working with and accepting its decaying parts.”-Marisa Malone*

This process brings a mindful awareness to the cause and effect, creation and compost, the recycling of our selves in relation to our environments.

## THE UNITY OF THE ORGANISM

The patterns that exist in nature reveal themselves when we are open to see them. This awareness builds a picture of unity.

*“I began to see a flow and flux of elements, an aura, a unity that each part brings.”-Marisa Malone*

*“My tree has, in essence, died, without any fruit to bear but what I have found has been some sort of afterlife full of glistening golden brown color, a warmth I thought had passed.”-Rebecca Barrow*

*“Plants don’t have judgments like beautiful or ugly, right or wrong. They just are. And they do it so well”-Martha Lefebvre*

These cycles are rendered transparent through the functions of an organism and invite us to unveil the unity within ourselves.

*“This is the point where we are creating more of a whole understanding. Where pattern meets creation of thought, where valuation meets understanding.”-Seth Lueck*

*“The tight curl created underground rises up, gently, vulnerably uncurls then continues its revolution in direction of the earth, lives, retreats to rhizomes and arches skyward before the final fall with gravity.”-Thorey Munroe*

## DOING GOETHEAN SCIENCE

This method of knowing, observing and interacting with a phenomenon connects us, the observer, with the observed. We each invite the other to exist as we are while simultaneously discovering where the boundaries bend between us.

*“It allows us to fully and completely reach understanding through multiple ways of analysis and contemplation. When using Goethean science we understand that we do not always understand.”-Brianah Droubay*

*“At the heart of all science is both the question and the questioner.”-Seth Lueck*

*“With Goethean science, a whole new sensitivity is brought into interactions with what’s around you.”-Renee Ingersoll*

As a subjective observer we become both vulnerable and influential in relation to the phenomenon. Knowing this, an inclusive rather than intrusive approach is taken in this method of understanding.

## PRACTICING GOETHEAN SCIENCE

Goethean science is a practice that can be adapted to books, people, plants, lace, water, music, and any other interest that takes hold. It is a practice that requires imagination, curiosity, and patience and can illuminate connections for which we might not have known to look.

*“The sense of peace and oneness I have experienced when spending time with the walnut tree has opened a whole world of possibility”-Houstyn Evans*

*“Through thoughtful language, we will be able to change the metaphors of science from humans controlling and manipulating the object of nature to humans learning from and with the subject of nature and thus, instill a different, more respectful relationship with our planet.”-Thorey Munroe*

*“I can learn from this plant to be sturdy and to persevere.”-Martha Lefebvre*

Different understandings arise when we experience something first hand versus when we hear or read about it. By putting the Goethean scientific approach into practice we are engaging on many different levels of observation and communication. We become, as Holdrege would say, a “better, more transparent instrument of knowing.”

## PART II: POETRY OF PASSIONS



Image: Letterpressed alphabet by Marisa Malone.

## FABRIC (Q is for Quilting)

*Molly Baker*

As the needle penetrates the fabric, as the pen inks the page, as the warp kisses the weft, The worlds meet as one.  
me got lots of stories, lots of patterns, lots of fabrics,  
me hold numbersome fabrics in my closet, on my bed, in my life.  
me touch them in moments of inspiration, Like when me hear a distant fiddle, or when me smell a breeze of goat.  
me hold fabrics of color, of sun, of intricate stories,  
of elaborate fairytales,  
of crumbling brick,  
of fishing towns. Of the distant kitchen in my minds eye that I wish to cook in.  
The thread that is my reverie, holds together all of the meaning made memories that are of my fabrics.  
So many fabrics.

## Architect (E is for Writing)

*Michael Doughty*

When I write I  
Recreate the stars  
Giving them a rhythm  
Absent in the real world  
Life doesn't flow but story flows.

Still, the starts they are  
And here in this tiny world,  
Though I create it,  
I am not God but bard,  
For stars would obey God  
Instead of  
Demanding better music.  
To the outside,  
Writing is awkward. Attempting to build  
A house, a home, a cottage  
Out of marshmallows and toothpicks.  
Language is clumsy, fragile  
One wrong letter shattering  
The entire structure

Harder still when something  
MATTERS  
These stars and hand I was dealt  
Are similar to others  
Who have been cast out  
Thrown to the wolves, to be  
Devoured by hate and pain and  
Loneliness.  
I have toothpicks and marshmallows



Shallow platitudes and reassurances.  
Yet my toothpick house  
Draws people to admire  
Such a foolish work.  
Look closer I say  
See these wolves  
And my people left  
To be devoured?  
They look. How courageous, they say  
About my toothpick house.  
What a marvel, a wonder a show.  
Steam flows out of my ears.  
Running from the wolves  
Is not a show, is not courage.  
I am not superior to those who died  
For lacking my head start of skin color  
And not being able to run faster.

Building a toothpick hut of  
Letters and hope and  
Tears  
Might be foolish, stupid courage  
But I am not a soldier  
I know not how to fight  
So this is how I do battle, because  
What I know is toothpicks  
And marshmallows  
And persistence beyond what is healthy.  
I will build a spectacle  
To draw in those that know not what they do  
Attempting to get them to change.  
So you have your people

Left out in the cold.  
Foolish courage borne of desperation.  
Find your toothpicks and marshmallows  
What story would you tell?

## Earth (C is for Ocean)

*Rhys Dovey*

Kissing  
Growing  
Making love

This is Earth  
A flying dove

Greening trees  
Everywhere  
A violet sunset  
Is her hair

This is life  
Solid rock  
Holding me

Soothing me

She loves and i love her

## The Punk Pit (Co is for Counter Culture)

*Brianah Droubay*

we dance like animals fighting,  
kicking and screaming in close quarters.  
the group smells of stale beer and cigarettes  
and anything else we're wearing that doesn't get washed.  
boots clash on boots  
and spikes scrape together in a violent love affair, mashing and molding  
into each others crevices,  
tearing at clothes not equipped with such armor.  
Our bodies slamming like ocean upon rock, creating a spray of sweat cast from our brows.  
sometimes there is blood, and you may get it on you  
but don't complain because when you decided to come to a punk show  
you should have known what you were getting into.

## Tears (H is for Hawk)

*David Edwards*

*For Brook*

She's like a cloud on a morning in may  
Shifting her shape as she moves thru the day  
Confronting the sun she holds back her tears  
Till my shadow betrays me and she knows I am near  
She's like a whisp at the edge of the sky  
She sighs as the heavy clouds push her on by  
Ice to water vapor as molecules mobalise  
Then that big hot sun starts sinking  
and the cool of evening cuts her down to size  
When the tears are all spent  
We'll sleep the night thru In love so warm we'll wake as morning dew

## The Chinese Restaurant Ignored By Time Passing (Pr is for Presence)

*Houstyn Evans*

Present but not really here  
a 1960s Chinese restaurant like David Lynch  
deliciously drunk on tastes  
like dangerous candy  
words flowing off my back  
like water  
the warm buzz of people  
safe in private conversations  
the scent of childhood  
in lemon-lime fizz  
packs a dangerous punch  
–like schoolyard bullies.

## Untitled (P is for Piano)

*Rukha Fuerst*

I just want to melt into you and see what it is to be you.  
I live in a box and hold so much tension,  
All I want is some air and light and release.  
I'm always holding tight strings in suspension,  
But only because my notes bring you such peace.  
Now open my lid and look in my insides  
I'll show you many riddles and all my lies.  
Though, clearly, you can see where my heart resides,  
You can't comprehend all my steel pins and ties.  
If, you push down my keys, and see with your ears  
And press down my pedal to evolve each note  
You will find that the room was waiting to hear  
Waiting to be dressed in the black that you wrote.  
If you bang on my keys and force me to sing  
I will pummel your ears for each time you strike  
And lash out sharp to make you echo and ring.  
- Though I'm often gentle, I also can fight.  
I'm held in place by my thick, heady constraints  
My sole escape comes in your presence each day  
When my palate of sound-colors breathes and paints  
And sings of beauty in your world far away.  
If you roll arpeggios from end to end  
I'll joyfully sing you to sleep every night  
With a gentle caress of sound I can send  
All thoughts to the sea, with ethereal light.  
I feel in your fingers the curve of the hill  
And the tangible mists that mask the deep glen  
In the echoes of this my heart steel is still.  
- I wonder as I wander if this will end.  
As I watch from the window each season pass

Melancholy melodies speak of winter  
But I know, as you know, time melts and won't last.  
And someday, my tension will make me splinter.



## Hinges (M is for Movement)

*Gabrielle Gribbin*

I stand vertical holding in the air I've just inhaled,  
here I wait for the exhalation that your touch will bring as  
fingertips brush the backs of my heels.  
Slowly out of the warmth of my hinges the small of my back  
emerges as the ground your feet covet

I sink into you,  
as you into me  
(I am in your hands)

Soon my field of vision flows in a backwards incline,  
neck draping gingerly as I become buoyant atop your two  
sturdy stacked trunks  
I allow myself to breathe, coaxing my spine to sink into the ease of an arch

As hands find the shallows of my collar bone we sink deeper,  
legs seep down with gravity,  
we descend deeper as I allow your ever shifting feet to  
manipulate my petite frame.

This is a permeable game of trust,  
the necessity for comfort-ability in the very real possibility of falling  
Is here  
a loss in grip, in footing, in breath  
yet the counterbalance that is achieved sends me to flight  
I am a bird  
I feel strong

The wrought iron hinges of me,  
bend to your warm milk of a touch  
I meld into your depths,  
the creases you create as tension eases all else.

## Untitled (Pil is for Pilgrimage)

*Jonathan Hiller*

Darkness clouds through the grey starlight  
Twinkles in the wide open sky  
Worlds across the ether open to the night

As dawn rises the fog shrouds the earth's mask  
Slowly covering all in the shroud of morning dew  
Waking to the dim light covered in warmth  
slow to rise for the dreamscape lingers

Dreams of the sunlight  
Dreams of the dark

As eyes open the sunlight beckons  
the warmth of the every shining star  
burns the sheet of grey and the world awakens  
soft chirps sound in the distance  
Soft rousing

Awake...  
It is morning  
and the dark is but a memory

## Untitled (T is for Tarot)

*Joshua Humphrey*

Gradients of light – breathing, Open up a vast pool before me. A warm kiss embraces my very being. The Sun, whose gift is so bold and penetrating, Commands reverence from every creature that dwells within my soul, Yet, it is the Moon whose presence holds invisible sway over the tides of my ocean. The Sun’s double – the Moon – has its own Sun. This Divine Constellation is a Mirror of a Mirror, As if sun were reflected in sky and pool and Moon in pool and sky; And sky in pool and pool in sky...

How can we know the name of this Goddess, were it naught for the Sun’s kiss? Reverie. Reverie comes, in dripping beauty, When I and image merge.

Separation is the birth of Thought, the birth of Sun...

## Forming (Wo is for Woodwork)

*Jesse Hunnicutt*

Saw teeth cut wood grain  
Apoptosis shaves away  
Sculpting forms in space  
Chisels peel and pierce  
Ancient sculptures of flesh  
Revealing (hidden) layers  
Ghostly blueprints find  
Themselves laid down onto wood  
Hinting what will come  
Moving from carelessness  
To vigilance, we light up the world  
Illuminating ghosts  
Joinery shapes wood  
Growing fractals like fingers  
Embryology  
Birth of creation  
Subtlety like nurturing  
Delicacy of birth

## Untitled (L is for Lizard King)

*Renee Ingersoll*

Through my lips sleeps the tongue of a lizard beneath these heavy lids reptile eyes, blood cool and skin sleek I cannot awake while the world is so weak.

....

Evolution spilled across the wall,  
paint bubbles spin the tale of men's growth  
from cell to flesh.

Lucy opens the window to a God like form tearing reality at its seams for mind's play.

## Patience (T is for Therapeutic Child Crafts)

*Siproena Johnson*

Left or Right

The mistaken, the misunderstood

Study, research, inquiry

Deeper thought, searching too hard

How do we use theory accurately to prescribe what we need?

What is the remedy if not a thing?

Penetrate the mind and journey to the heart

Connect these organs beyond the physical blood streams only to return to the beginning...

Or what is thought to be

What is thought to be if not a thing?

A machine like the body is never perfect

Every system has its flaws

Fear...Control...Lost

Paint a picture to document the journey

Large scale, microscopic, literally invisible by any measuring tool

Not that the presence is a problem

It is simply in need of a name

Inconceivable by onlookers to grant legitimacy

Disregard for feeling by the people as a whole or the person in their self?

How much farther? What distance will be scoped for the answers desired?

Artists continue moving with uncertainty but somehow create the remarkable without any thought

Meditative movements now break through barriers

Now null and void be these barbed wires

Mere paper tape these artists' blocks seem

Threshold now met

Defiance in lieu of the terms

This diagnosis cannot and will not conquer me

## The Passion Of The World (W is for Winging It)

*Nathan Lefkoff*

The passion of the world  
like gravity  
tugs at our rags  
and magnetizes us.

That which makes us tame  
and unraveled and untame  
with its limits and its  
limitlessness.

Strange little prince  
who tugs at my rags  
and asks me to be there.

In some way  
the world wants us.



## Mind Like Letters (B is for Body Mapping)

*Marisa Malone*

the mind like letters  
sits shelved and  
quiet,  
collecting dust,  
degenerating,  
dreaming  
of the time it  
will feel the rumble  
of the cabinet  
cracking open;  
the sliver of light  
passing over  
becoming active  
from the hand  
that selects  
words  
for conceiving  
thought.

## The I in Ai (I is for Ink)

*Adam Maubach*

I thought I knew what Love is;  
it sounded like my Eye, and I  
told you how I Love so much I couldn't tell you Why.  
But the moment I belie Wo' Ai,  
you have another Eye:  
A coiled Thought like Buddha sitting  
claims the label "I".  
I thought I was Love, but Love is Ai. (I know for sure Wo' Ai)  
But what of I? It can't be "E",  
because Sun and Moon make "E".  
The Sun and Moon make Change in me,  
and lizards in my mind,  
but I and Ai, I still can't see—  
  
which one of them is mine?

## Waterbodies II (O is for Ocean)

*Thorey Munroe*

The river nodes of my wrist  
flip cross direct when  
they feel the sea near.  
Blue tributaries that rush to tingle  
fingerpads at the humidity of salt air.  
The blue blood sea blush  
traces the swirls of this body,  
a warmth in the river neck,  
the sphere-lake brain,  
the seafoam fingertips,  
the twin torrent thighs  
and the ocean belly. Pulse pushes for tide. Feel the white roar of abrupt  
end of land. Moon lumens pull  
at the blood sea lumens of my veins  
and direct a tide between  
brain and belly and body,  
a slow push of blood sea  
to fingers, back to gut.  
Ocean sound: deep rumbles wrap  
the spirals of cochlea from waterwaves  
to airwaves to waterwaves to brainwaves.  
Sound. Sound. Roar. Lap-ripple.  
Water to air to water to air.  
Ocean to sky to body to mind.  
We are where the rivers spill  
and the sea is all.

## Heart of Decay (R is for Ruin)

*Crystal Muns*

These streets are narrow leading  
me on to the gates of heaven or hell,  
(It is what you make of it)  
and decasia slips through  
the floor boards, trickling onto  
my toes and pouring into the  
hole within my heart.

“Creee-eee-k”, the doors swing wide,  
I stumble in the darkness feeling round  
for the familiarity of wooden panel or  
switch,

.....useless.

My senses refocus, and silhouettes begin  
to appear in the night only to be whisked  
away from me by the harsh glare of  
the flashlight coming to life for the  
flicker of an instant, only to be snuffed  
out like the flames it impersonates.

Drift on in this mildewed dream,  
and try telling me that there is any  
other way of being as natural  
as the fall from grace, and the  
return to nature

## Our Secret Language (Y is for Yoni)

*Liberty Peru*

Layers  
are opening  
as my mouth is circled around your nipple  
and you gaze into me.  
We have only just finished a long endeavor, as  
together we surrender to the exhaustion,  
as our bones turn to liquid our brains come in sync with the knowing that this moment,  
This moment marks the very beginning of a new journey.  
As the layers that make you up  
open and allow me to move through,  
the layers in around my eyes,  
slowly prepare,  
allowing me to open to the light:  
Through your speaking layers.  
First I remember the sounds you made,  
Those primal ones that still shake my veins awake  
still open my hearts gate  
flooding me with adoration for your strength.  
We were both swollen and exhausted  
with joy,  
our bones, cleaned of the experience  
as our minds embraced and curled in around each others bodies.  
That language  
only we have ever spoken  
together.

## Untitled (Ml is for Music and Lyrics)

*Andre Simmons*

What will you talk about?  
Ink spots on hands on pad  
Blots, blotches, caught up now  
Will you talk rings watches watch them  
Watching you talking about  
How you sell your soul out.  
Will you look into the past and future  
How you sail your soul out  
Or be a hostage held to what they said –Silence.  
Sirens, sirens, please stay out my mind while im writing  
Hectic thoughts all I see is blazes of fire and lightning  
Stretched across a field of lost desire and writhing  
Heat in my head my hand even in the pen that i'm scribing  
With, anger danger and violence, these words are the livest  
Talk about highs lows and whichever girl is the finest  
Vanity stricken, if its about bullshit I bet you would listen  
Rap ain't the work you put in, its whatever car that you're whippin'  
I want to write these lyrics right bare god as my witness  
Picture perfect pictures painted with every depicted sentence  
And in the end I end the stress in whatever chair that im sittin'  
Hear my heart and hear my mind and take a second to listen  
Because its not all about vanity or materialism  
It could be spirituality, internal decisions  
Rap is about all that inside knowledge, experience, wisdom  
All it takes is to hear yourself, dreaming, hoping, and wishing.

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