

D E R I V A T I O N S

Luke Bradford

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FIRST EDITION

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Designed in Brooklyn, New York.

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In the blood's alluvium
there are alphabets...

— Robert Bringhurst, “Hachadura”

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D A W N

pearl-handled, almost
glass. What was
can precipitate

What awaits
and that darkness
was alive: small creatures aglow and crawling
against gravity, against
certain failure. What
can't contain
weak clarities
at dawn?

Almost anything can happen.

Around Meares Island
an animal wakes
above water.

And water
and attention
gleam cleanly

Day after day, day after day,
sparking and fading.

Each naked human face a candle

an oak leaf,
an alert animal's ear

A shallow, stagnant, inland sea,
a stranger, accidentally

Wading.

Imagine waking
as distant rain,
and staying that way.
Imagine breathing

that rare
earth.

And fall.

M I D S U M M E R

Darmstadt

Distant buildings

under dark daylight.

Repeated

suddenly radiant,

Red and gold

Red
edged gold

THE OCEAN

Dressing, one earring, then another,
trees open their cafes;
 contemplating the future, leafing
over strawberries
flowering below; earlier, we walked
the innocent streets,
beside the white
breach between dimensions.

The place where the sidewalk ends.

The ocean whose muffled explosions
broke the quicksilver distance
written like Death's pale flowers.

 Trees are chronologies;
 unlike seawater's jagged molecules,

They are fleeting.

We circle silently
the empty wheelchair,
seven years older—

When death comes
she comes close:
every detail clear,

Unsayable, endlessly.

INVISIBLE FISH

I

In April,
Italian music is playing
in railway stations

II

brief lights
linger

radiant,

in moonshine, whirlpool eddies, circular ripples—

desire

eclipses
experience

desire

which is nothing—
experience
which is nothing—

SECOND ESTRANGEMENT

Imagine waking
under slanted curtains
suddenly
an unrecognized stranger.

Dressing, one earring, then another,

experience and attention
and language
 plummeting,
sparking and fading.

M I R R O R

To come home,
you consider how

your own reflection.

Allows no other history.

Crystallization.
of your exhaustion.
of your tongue
of coral

Of undoing —
not you.

To come home,
you consider how

who loves you, you

mourning,
position.

R A I N

April
freckles your outstretched arm,

friend, parent, or lover—

where raccoons rustle
over strawberries

where every breath
resuscitates memory,
unravelling years
unreadable. Heart
reaching,
mourning,

Carefully bearing
breakable flowers,
their green neurons.

Lingering onward dreamily
another year, working

Another world.

Trees are chronologies;
April

Bringing rain

resembles emeralds
wrestling iron through grass.

SHIPWRECK PASTORAL

These variables. Various valves. Pressures.
Systematic.
Unsayable, endlessly.
Inside:

Caverns,
bubbles rising.

Gossamer-seeming,

his brother's correspondence, scrawled
somewhere.

Smoke sculpture
is also
solitary,
aimless,

cigarette's ash
devours itself

suddenly

Just so,
as, suck, suck, swallow,
turquoise sea
rises
steps closer.

T I M E

Taken:

The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
the Dutch, with its shifting clientele—

Flotsam—though sometimes

With the turning tide

the tchotchkes
quietly return
to accumulate.

The continuous bifurcates into the segmented

The light
into the lightning

The courtyard to its quiet,

The moment

Repeated

Through the city.

Taken:

Stained light,
the Dutch,
the unpainted stairs
seething with afterglow.

L E A V E S

Victoria Grove—

Leaves everywhere—

Derivations is a collection of centos: each poem is assembled from individual lines quoted verbatim from the poetry of other authors.

Each poem is also a reverse lipogram: a text in which every word must contain a particular letter of the alphabet. Lipograms, which avoid letters rather than mandate their inclusion, are a more popular and ancient form of constrained writing; an iconic modern example is *La Disparition* by Georges Perec (1969), which avoids the letter E.

In each poem in *Derivations*, a poet is never quoted twice, though many poets, poems, and single lines appear across multiple poems. The indentations of lines are taken from the source of each poem, though accidents of typography make the depth of indentation more variable from one source to another than other elements of the text.

NOTES

DAWN

- "pearl-handled, almost" Rankine, Camille. "History."
- "glass. What was" Thirkield, Jonathan. "Design for a Silver Box in the Shape of a Melon, 1918."
- "can precipitate" Bök, Christian. "Experiment #1."
- "What awaits" Pagel, Caryl. "Red Sky."
- "
and that darkness" Roberson, Ed. "Lunar Eclipse."
- "was alive: small creatures aglow and crawling" Harrison, Jeffrey. "The Light in the Marsh
Grass."
- "against gravity, against" Teicher, Craig Morgan. "Another Day."
- "certain failure. What" Murphy, Miguel. "The Sunlight."
- "can't contain" Teare, Brian. "Convince me you have a seed there."
- "weak clarities" Johnston, Devin. "Aubade."
- "at dawn?" Wieners, John. "Time."
- "Almost anything can happen." Collins, Billy. "Aristotle."
- "Around Meares Island" Maultsaid, Deirdre. "False Dilemma."
- "an animal wakes" Pickard, Tom. "winter migrants."
- "above water." Roach, Christell Victoria. "The Women Leave You with Children."
- "And water" Eliot, T.S. "The Waste Land."
- "
and attention" Cagney, James. "Personal Forest."
- "gleam cleanly" Crews, James. "Clearly."
- "Day after day, day after day," Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."
- "sparking and fading." Casey, Kimberly. "Irish Goodbye."
- "Each naked human face a candle" Spires, Elizabeth. "Glass-Bottom Boat."
- "an oak leaf," Meyers, Bert. "Images."
- "an alert animal's ear" Mohammad, K. Silem. "Considering How Spooky Deer Are."
- "A shallow, stagnant, inland sea," Paine, Albert Bigelow. "In Louisiana."
- "a stranger, accidentally" Girmay, Aracelis. "Second Estrangement."
- "Wading." Fauth, RK. "Queer Appalachia."
- "Imagine waking" Pastan, Linda. "Agoraphobia."
- "as distant rain," Komunyakaa, Yusef. "Toys in a Field."
- "and staying that way." Armantrout, Rae. "Skill Sets."
- "Imagine breathing" Doty, Mark. "A Green Crab's Shell."
- "that rare" Kellough, Kaie. "if who."
- "
earth." Gregerson, Linda. "Narrow Flame."
- "And fall." Crapsey, Adelaide. "November Night."

MIDSUMMER

"Darmstadt" Palmer, Michael. "Sun."

"Distant buildings" Meyers, Bert. "Images."

"under dark daylight." Young, Kevin. "Negative."

"Repeated" Moore, Marianne. "The Fish."

" radiant," Maultsaid, Deirdre. "Winter: Helmcken Falls."

"suddenly" Gilbert, Jack. "Rain."

" Red and gold" Eliot, T.S. "The Waste Land."

"Red" May, Wong. "Buying Camels in Dresden."

"edged gold" Pickard, Tom. "winter migrants."

THE OCEAN

"Dressing, one earring, then another," Levis, Larry. "Ocean Park #17, 1968: Homage to Diebenkorn."

"trees open their cafes;" Meyers, Bert. "Images."

" contemplating the future, leafing" Komunyakaa, Yusef. "Islands."

"over strawberries" Crews, James. "Clearly."

"flowering below; earlier, we walked" Sze, Arthur. "Pe'ahi Light."

"the innocent streets," Pastan, Linda. "Eyes Only."

"beside the white" Williams, William Carlos. "The Red Wheelbarrow."

"breach between dimensions." Bök, Christian. "Fractal Geometry."

"The place where the sidewalk ends." Silverstein, Shel. "Where the Sidewalk Ends."

"The ocean whose muffled explosions" Harrison, Jeffrey. "Not Waking Up."

"broke the quicksilver distance" Fogel, Alice B. "Objects In Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear."

"written like Death's pale flowers." Etherin, Anthony. "Interstellar Wild."

" Trees are chronologies;" Hoover, Paul. "Darkness of the Subjunctive."

" unlike seawater's jagged molecules," Solie, Karen. "The Hermits."

"They are fleeting." Videlock, Wendy. "Flowers."

"We circle silently" Rich, Adrienne. "Diving into the Wreck."

"the empty wheelchair," Collins, Billy. "Aristotle."

"seven years older—" Cagney, James. "Personal Forest."

"When death comes" Oliver, Mary. "When Death Comes."

"she comes close:" Ford, Katie. "The Fire."

"every detail clear," Atwood, Margaret. "Morning in the Burned House."

"Unsayable, endlessly." Biespiel, David. "Sekiu."

INVISIBLE FISH

"I" Bringhurst, Robert. "Hachadura."
"In April," Wong, May. "Moving K. to Glendalough."
"Italian music is playing" Greenwald, Roger. "Argentina."
"in railway stations" Pastan, Linda. "Eyes Only."
"II" Ginsberg, Allen. "Howl."
" brief lights" Hughes, Luther. "Near Sacramento."
" linger" Piudik, Jaclyn. "Synthese."
" radiant," Maultsaid, Deirdre. "Winter: Helmcken Falls."
"in moonshine, whirlpool eddies, circular ripples—" Sze, Arthur. "Midnight Loon."
" desire" Cagney, James. "Interview with a Rose."
" eclipses" Villareal, Laura. "Inside Yayoi Kusama's 'You Who Are Getting Obliterated
in the Dancing Swarm of Fireflies.'"
"experience" Bök, Christian. "Crystals."
"which is nothing—" Young, Kevin. "Mantle."

SECOND ESTRANGEMENT

"Imagine waking" Pastan, Linda. "Agoraphobia."
"under slanted curtains" Tribbia, Arlene. "Sure."
"suddenly" Gilbert, Jack. "Rain."
"an unrecognized stranger." Hirshfield, Jane. "Meeting the Light Completely."
"Dressing, one earring, then another," Levis, Larry. "Ocean Park #17, 1968: Homage to
Diebenkorn."
"experience" Bök, Christian. "Crystals."
" and attention" Cagney, James. "Personal Forest."
"and language" Pickard, Tom. "sea."
" plummeting," Maultsaid, Deirdre. "Winter: Helmcken Falls."
"sparking and fading." Casey, Kimberly. "Irish Goodbye."

MIRROR

"To come home," Crews, James. "Clearly."
"you consider how" Mohammad, K. Silem. "Considering How Spooky Deer Are."
"your own reflection." Villareal, Laura. "Inside Yayoi Kusama's 'You Who Are Getting
Obliterated in the Dancing Swarm of Fireflies.'"
"Allows no other history." Maultsaid, Deirdre. "False Dilemma."
"Crystallization." Bök, Christian. "Experiment #1."
"of your exhaustion." Yates, Kristin. "How to Grow Baby's Breath."
"of your tongue" Perez, Craig Santos. "ars pasifika."

"of coral" Armantrout, Rae. "Care."
 "Of undoing —" Levis, Larry. "Ocean Park #17, 1968: Homage to Diebenkorn."
 "not you." Gilbert, Jack. "Rain."
 "who loves you, you" Girmay, Aracelis. "Second Estrangement."
 "mourning," El-Kurd, Mohammed. "War Machines Dress Up as Drag Queens."
 "position." Solie, Karen. "The Hermits."

RAIN

"April" Millay, Edna St. Vincent. "Spring."
 "freckles your outstretched arm," Shepherd, Reginald. "Roman Year."
 "friend, parent, or lover—" Harrison, Jeffrey. "Girl Carrying a Suitcase."
 "where raccoons rustle" Nuernberger, Kathryn. "You Are Afraid of the Dark."
 "over strawberries" Crews, James. "Clearly."
 "where every breath" Meyers, Bert. "After the Meal."
 "resuscitates memory," Dybek, Stuart. "Curtains."
 "unravelling years" Reibetanz, John. "The Finger Puppets in the Attic Dollhouse."
 "unreadable. Heart" Laux, Dorianne. "Heart."
 "reaching," Maultsaid, Deirdre. "Winter: Helmcken Falls."
 "mourning," El-Kurd, Mohammed. "War Machines Dress Up as Drag Queens."
 "Carefully bearing" Mullen, Laura. "Le Séducteur."
 "breakable flowers," Pastan, Linda. "Mosaic."
 "their green neurons." Yates, Kristin. "How to Grow Baby's Breath."
 "Lingering onward dreamily" Carroll, Lewis. "A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky."
 "another year, working" Willard, Bruce. "Song Sparrow."
 "Another world." May, Wong. "Buying Camels in Dresden."
 "Trees are chronologies," Hoover, Paul. "Darkness of the Subjunctive."
 "Bringing rain" Eliot, T.S. "The Waste Land."
 "resembles emeralds" Rakosi, Carl. "The Lobster."
 "wrestling iron through grass." Komunyakaa, Yusef. "Camouflaging the Chimera."

SHIPWRECK PASTORAL

"These variables. Various valves. Pressures." Spahr, Juliana. "Dynamic Positioning."
 "Systematic." Armantrout, Rae. "Natural History."
 "Unsayable, endlessly." Biespiel, David. "Sekiu."
 "Inside:" Mullen, Laura. "White Box (notes)."
 "Caverns," Lawrence, D.H. "Purple Anemones."
 "bubbles rising." Rakosi, Carl. "The Lobster."
 "Gossamer-seeming," May, Wong. "Moving K. to Glendalough."
 "his brother's correspondence, scrawled" Liu, Patricia. "Translation."

“somewhere.” Goodly, Nicholas. “Crossing the Bridge.”
 “Smoke sculpture” Riviere, Sam. “Künstlerroman.”
 “ is also” Bidart, Frank. “California Plush.”
 “solitary,” Pickard, Tom. “winter migrants.”
 “aimless,” Hughes, Luther. “Near Sacrament.”
 “cigarette’s ash” Meyers, Bert. “Images.”
 “devours itself” Bök, Christian. “Fractal Geometry.”
 “suddenly” Gilbert, Jack. “Rain.”
 “Just so,” Hirshfield, Jane. “Meeting the Light Completely.”
 “as, suck, suck, swallow,” Cowles, Kathryn. “*Moon*. Eleanor Eleanor. Oil on canvas. 2018.”
 “turquoise sea” Moore, Marianne. “The Fish.”
 “rises” Perez, Craig Santos. “ars pasifika.”
 “steps closer.” Swander, Mary. “Dutchman’s Breeches.”

TIME

“Taken:” okpik, dg nanouk. “Found.”
 “The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,” Service, Robert W. “The Spell of the Yukon.”
 “the Dutch, with its shifting clientele—” Spires, Elizabeth. “Ocean City: Early March.”
 “Flotsam—though sometimes” Biespiel, David. “Sekiu.”
 “ With the turning tide” Eliot, T.S. “The Waste Land.”
 “the tchotchkes” Cabico, Regie. “Daylight Saving Time Flies Like an Instagram of a Weasel
 Riding a Woodpecker & You Feel Everything Will Be Alright.”
 “quietly return” Mohammad, K. Silem. “Considering How Spooky Deer Are.”
 “to accumulate.” Armantrout, Rae. “Background Information.”
 “The continuous bifurcates into the segmented” Sze, Arthur. “Chrysalis.”
 “ The light” Maultsaid, Deirdre. “Winter: Helmcken Falls.”
 “into the lightning” Pastan, Linda. “Mosaic.”
 “The courtyard to its quiet,” Levis, Larry. “At the Grave of My Guardian Angel: St. Louis
 Cemetery, New Orleans.”
 “The moment” Goodly, Nicholas. “Crossing the Bridge.”
 “Repeated” Moore, Marianne. “The Fish.”
 “Through the city.” Edgar, Stephen. “The Building of Light.”
 “Stained light,” May, Wong. “Moving K. to Glendalough.”
 “the Dutch,” Rice, Oliver. “Timely Enumerations Concerning Sri Lanka.”
 “ the unpainted stairs” Atwood, Margaret. “Habitation.”
 “seething with afterglow.” Laux, Dorianne. “Urn.”

LEAVES

“Victoria Grove—” Eliot, T.S. “Mungojerrie and Rumpelteazer.”
“Leaves everywhere—” Meyers, Bert. “Images.”

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