

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Stunt Double

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

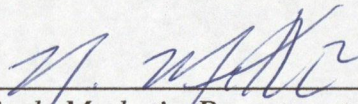
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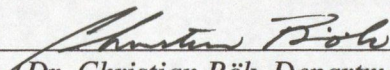
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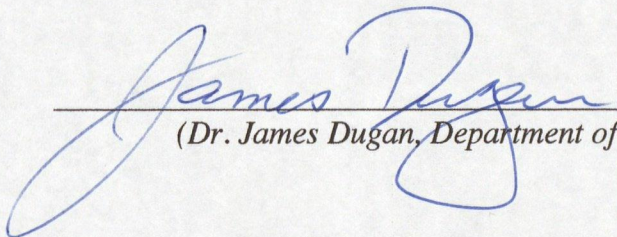
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Stunt Double" submitted by Glen Lawrence Hogard in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



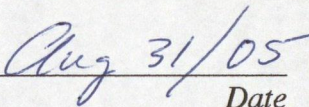
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ABSTRACT

In his manifesto, The Theatre and its Double, Antonin Artaud sought to transform his audience through productions that severely affected the mind and body. In the poem, “Stunt Double,” I examine Artaud’s mistrust of representational language and the limits of his theatrical efforts to revitalize society. The poem re-represents Artaud’s rejection of a theatre based upon texts in favour of a uniquely physical performance as an ironic and frustrating effort to constantly dispel signification. In demanding a theatre outside of representational language, Artaud’s work is framed by an unending world of signifiers that shape this singularly unyielding performative space.

Dedicated to my parents, Tom and Irma for their support, to my sister Elaine for her advice, and to Judith for her unending inspiration.

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“Stunt Double”: An Introduction

My MA thesis, a Creative Writing project entitled, “Stunt Double,” explores the idea of the revolutionary in literature. Specifically, I focus on the theories of the Theatre of Cruelty as a creative attempt to achieve both private and social change. In my poem I re-represent Artaud’s non-representational language. I ironically position his attempts at a revolutionary theatrical language through a variety of representational frames. Artaud’s effort to stage language as a non-representational force inflicting emotional, psychological and magical trauma upon the audience raises problems concerning the effective reproduction of such works and the application of dramatic theory through creative language. I propose that Artaud’s understanding of language as a revolutionary and non-representational tool requires the exposure of the limits of language as it encounters the space of performance and other forms of visual and textual media. Artaud’s attempt to stimulate the physical body on stage approximates an eruption into consciousness. His proposed use of the body as a provocative and unrepeatable gesture approximates the space prior to representational language.

My poem addresses the following questions: in relation to the personal and social, how does creative language produce any efficacy? Can creative language intentionally affect change culturally, politically, psychologically, or even economically outside its reading? Under what conditions does an author presume the language of poetry can alter social and personal spheres?

Taking into account the ideas of this dramatic manifesto my work will also situate the Theatre of Cruelty as affect, art and artefact. Literary criticism, dramatic criticism and visual arts criticism broach Artaud's dramatic ideas. The historical and on-going critical treatment of Artaud's work both undermines and supports the viability of revolt through literature. The language of criticism, drama and the private individual indulges articulate projections and obscure personal statements engaging Artaud's ideas. The poem situates some of the critical appropriations of Artaud against his original use of language as translations of what Artaud hoped would be untranslatable.

In the poem, the figure of Artaud and his theories also become attempts towards the revolutionary prescription of the Theatre of Cruelty. The referentiality of Artaud as icon and his writing as a historical document call into question the intended effect of his theories. The poem explores the performative aspects of poetry and prose as constructs in Artaud's theories and as engaged elements in the text. I establish a contrived projection of language as diminished stage prop within the history of the theory, the forms it employs, and its ongoing resonance in contemporary critical and creative works.

Artaud's work includes plays, poetry, drawings and critical writing. This range of forms engages poetry where drama, narrative, image and explication co-exist in the field of the poem. My poem allows for the deliberate and subversive use of a variety of forms best suited to accommodate Artaud's eclectic work. Poetry as performance develops non-textual aspects as responses to similar facets of Artaud's recorded aural works. Because Artaud pursued the non-representational potential of language, my poem will heighten this non-representational solidity of language as though it were an object on stage. Consequently, as language becomes an end unto itself, it develops the inertness of

a thing without any reflection or representation in the surrounding world. Language is both diminished thing and physical suggestion depending on the repetitive space it occupies. Speech and writing return to a physicality where “they will once more become gestures; and the logical and discursive intentions which speech ordinarily uses to ensure its rational transparency...will be reduced” (Derrida 240).

Given the severe social and psychological intent of the Theatre of Cruelty and its specific historical setting, how does later interpretation by scholars (myself included) in an academic situation defer or diminish any potential use of the theory? My poem, “Stunt Double,” performs the limitations of Artaud’s theory of artistic revolt at the intersections of the referential and non-referential:

black face

what century this is

pander to them and you risk the life after

so much for the phrasing drawn out along the ruts in the streets in the city

of light. (87)

The performative space produced by the poem reveals Artaud’s theoretical dependence on the other languages of the visual, non-textual and meta-textual. It also discloses Artaud’s contradictory desire for materiality. Thomas Akstens notes in “Artaud’s ‘Gratuitousness’: Representation and the Problem of Meaning”, that “like his theatre, Artaud’s text itself seems predicated on both a revulsion with corporeality and an intense desire for concrete physicality” (52). Thus, the idealism of Artaud’s theories begins prior to language with the undeniable body on stage, but that mute finiteness is a

source of distress because it reinforces the ineluctable need for form in performance and in language.

The focus of Antonin Artaud's manifesto The Theatre and its Double, in which he develops the theories of the Theatre of Cruelty, is the regeneration of theatre, but the ambition is to transform the individual from a passive spectator into an engaged body surpassing its own accumulative organs. For Artaud, theatre is literally the stage upon which the social body and its norms can be altered through a revolt against the written text. He rebels against the petrified, stolid text that serves as the source for all western drama preceding him. Artaud desires to renew theatre through a vital language of space and the evocative human body in that space. This language consists of gesture, non-linguistic sound, movement and stylized props and sets that attempt a non-representational significance. Artaud planned for each theatrical performance to be strenuously unique and not the mere repetition of source material, "the actor does not make the same gesture twice...he brutalizes forms...and through their destruction he rejoins that which outlives forms" (Theatre and its Double 12). These forms are written texts offering the comfort of familiar, popular theatre. Consequently, Artaud sought to explode what he saw as the complacent, and now irrelevant, expectation of theatre as the projection of language/text.

Artaud's theories are generative in their anarchic ambition. Artaud attempts to relocate theatre outside conditioned expectations and economies to a site where performance is unrepeatable and without the distributed foundations of the text. The requirement for Artaud's ideal performance is an assured willingness on behalf of the audience to have one's life radically altered. For Artaud, this transfiguration begins on a

cellular level. Through a variety of performative techniques focused solely on the body and its potential within the space of the stage, Artaud attempts to transform the audience on a physical level, “this objective and concrete language of the theatre can fascinate and ensnare the organs” (Theatre and its Double 91).

Though Artaud becomes increasingly distrustful of the organs of the body throughout his life, initially he believes the Theatre of Cruelty can transform, or at least act upon, the physical body. To achieve this, he bypasses written text and attempts to return to an embodied performance without scripted speech. Artaud asserts his theories are a return to magic and alchemy where theatre is a primal transformative and evocative space. He offers the example of Balinese theatre as a performative tradition that exists independent of a directional text (Theatre and its Double 61).

Now, one should be highly suspicious of any attempt to “return” to a more ideal state or time since it is suspect whether such conditions ever existed. What nearly absolves Artaud of this aspiration is his apolitical belief in the efficacy of the Theatre of Cruelty. His theatre alters the individual in a specific space with few concerns for the consequences of affecting a society of individuals and the ensuing political or social changes. All energies are directed towards the physical moments of performance situated outside of the social, political and psychological. Artaud strives for a language that is yet to be and resists implicating other uses of language.

Artaud’s prescription for a revitalization of the individual through the non-representational urgency of the Theatre of Cruelty requires a subversion of dramatic, symbolic language and a “return” to a communicative body. In the burgeoning age of electricity, Artaud sought to use the body as a conduit for “the Great Mysteries” (Theatre

and its Double 51) underneath modern life. He intends to telegraph the lines of the body directly into the receptive nerves and organs of the audience.

Despite his desire to alter the individual, he never expands upon this idea to consider politically or socially how his project will re-form society. He chastises the theatre-going public for its artistic dependence on antiquated forms of expression, but only grants the individual the transformative power of the Theatre of Cruelty. This effort to affect the individual reflects Artaud's singularity of mind and his criticism of the mass interpretation of all western dramatic texts. He extends this condemnation to the written language in all the creative arts as a dead form that must be expunged, "we must get rid of our superstitious valuation of texts and *written* poetry. Written poetry is worth reading once, and then should be destroyed" (Theatre and its Double 78).

For Artaud, language must be unexpected and uncompromising in limiting its own referentiality. The reader, or the audience, will see no reflection or referent but a pre-linguistic gesture as near to the source of creation as possible. There is no signified. The new oldness of Artaud's performance is also not recognized as employing signifiers. There are no signs but their origin in verbal or physical movement and, therefore, this prevents any referential destination beyond the performance. As naïve as it may seem in our cynical, ironic age, Artaud believes he can express "Creation, Becoming and Chaos" which "are all of a cosmic order and furnish a primary notion of a domain from which the theatre is now entirely alien" (Theatre and its Double 90). This return to a primacy is also a return to a pre-linguistic state surrounding and fostered by the body. In my poem the grand aspirations of Artaud are minimized by a history of signifiers following him

where, “the g flat of ‘Great Mysteries’” and “alchemy returns/ in pill form/ perfect white periods of dust” (53).

Julia Kristeva presents a useful theory in her linguistic application of the chora (93) that parallels Artaud’s effort to establish performance prior to language. The chora is a pre-figurative condition of articulation consisting of non-referential drives that serve as one of the foundations of articulation. Kristeva describes the chora as “an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral states” (93). Furthermore, “neither model nor copy, the chora precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm” (Kristeva 94). The chora operates prior to the constitution of a subject in language. This idea is helpful to me, in that, Artaud rejects theatre in which the assumed signified controls all aspects of the production. The material production of a play depends on that which it refers to. The lighting, sets, script, etc. are all only signifiers pointing towards some signified in the assumed world of the real. Effective language resists its own signification and emerges from unique movement in a singularity of time. I bring in Kristeva to argue Artaud seeks a system of communication that prefigures any linguistic structure. He aims to undermine western notions of theatre via non-referential performance where “through the hieroglyph of a breath I am able to recover an idea of the sacred theatre” (Theatre and its Double 141).

The emphasis on the real in theatre infuriated Artaud, who condemned the preoccupation with dramatized psychology as decadent: “psychology, which works relentlessly to reduce the unknown to the known, to the quotidian and the ordinary, is the cause of theatre’s abasement and its fearful loss of energy” (Theatre and its Double 77).

Not only should written language not represent that which is real and revealed, but it should be abolished and replaced by the material language of the body in a performative space. He pursues an immediacy in the arts as a cleansing means of dispensing with all ideas and forms that came before him.

Artaud's understanding of language is more spatial than temporal. Language assumes the causality of the body as it moves through space. Language affects the spectator on a nervous level by assuming forms and tones sympathetic to the body. Lacking any recognizable social form, this physical language does not propel itself into any conventional comprehension by the audience as a whole. Language is laden with an immediacy similar to the undeniable concreteness of the body. Language transfers subject from body to body. In his later writing, Artaud's idea of a performing body without organs expands on this pursuit of a bodily language by removing the internal, mortal punctuation that disrupts the endless arc of the body. Timely organs. Timeless body. Performance achieved and anticipated in staged and possessed space.

That spoken and written language are a common form ensures its repetition. It also ensures, for Artaud, nothing new or vital to society:

an expression does not have the same value twice, does not live two lives:
that all words, once spoken, are dead and function only at the moment
when they are uttered, that a form, once it has served, cannot be used
again and asks only to be replaced by another, and that the theatre is the
only place...where a gesture, once made, can never be made the same way
twice. (Theatre and its Double 75)

Artaud abandons language as an unquestioned, easily digestible and comfortable form of communication. Instead, he advocates a demanding and physically precise, but potentially esoteric, expression through movement that is entirely dependent on its performance. The unreproduceability and unique staging of its utterance restricts both the spatial and temporal implementation of this language. Artaud asserts, “we shall stage without regard for text” (Theatre and its Double 99) and “we shall make attempts at direct staging, around themes, facts, or known works” (Theatre and its Double 98). He plans to stage only the plays of Shakespeare that are “entirely consistent with our present troubled state of mind” (Theatre and its Double 99). Artaud strives for language-less themes that will provoke some recognition by the audience as being evocative of their time but never-before expressed. He does not suggest that these are timeless themes (as much as they should be language-less), but performative space allows for the appearance of more profound matters untouched by common discourse.

The mundane or common practice of language does not enter into Artaud’s performative space. For him, language cannot be relied upon to reveal anything new. The practicality of language condemns it to a cyclical use in the economy of discourse. As a reciprocal action we offer forth language because it is recognized upon its return. The sign is an acknowledged currency traded daily. Artaud wants to move theatre outside this economy of expression to a space where “all true feeling is in reality untranslatable” (Theatre and its Double 71). This subversive quality of the Theatre of Cruelty relies upon creating a uniquely unrepeatable event. Words are only their physical utterance once. They evoke without form.

In abandoning a language that in common usage demands its own repetition, Artaud positions his theatre outside the common economy of intercourse. His performance is the single non-representational movement. In Unmarked: The Politics of Performance, Peggy Phelan develops this idea of performance operating outside the economy of reproduction as one of its strongest and most subversive elements:

Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility – in a maniacally charged present – and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing: it only spends. (148)

Artaud's movement away from the written text as the source of theatre is a movement towards performance outside the economy of reproduction. It is an attempt to act directly on the spectator without the communicative reliance on representational language. True theatre only comes into being as performance where, for Artaud, "it is a question then of making the theatre, in the proper sense of the word, a function; something as localized and as precise as the circulation of the blood in the arteries" (Theatre and its Double 92).

Potentially, this direct physical influence can cure the social body. Artaud's aspirations are apolitical but the implications are eventually overtly social in the accumulative affect of the Theatre of Cruelty on spectators, "I do believe that the theatre, utilized in the highest and most difficult sense possible, has the power to influence the aspect and formation of things" (Theatre and its Double 79). When Artaud writes of affecting "things" he literally means the body of the spectator. And from this essential impact comes an altering of social forms such as communication, politics and the arts.

Artaud understands politics in the loosest sense of the term and subscribes to no particular ideology. The directed, creative body in the Theatre of Cruelty compels the individual beyond any topical consideration such as politics, psychology or commerce. The referents for these discourses have no place in pure theatre as Artaud conceives of it.

My poem, “Stunt Double,” situates the page as the site of theatrical construction. In the Theatre of Cruelty only the event of theatre establishes presence where connected moments of subjectivity occur on stage and in the audience. In my poem subjects compete for authenticity as the seen in performance but are often interrupted by more critical and pragmatically “cruel” voicings:

Heliogabalus strides to the
front of the stage
(this play never produced
results)
pupils dilate in the first three rows. (75)

The page is a comparable space to the stage as Artaud envisions the performer commanding gesture and sound as eruptions from pre-existent forces. Similarly influences suspected to be off the stage/page force and direct the poem. Rarely are the subject(s) of the poem fully determined in the poem. The staging of the poem as an event that has its origin off the stage/page only partially reveals the subject(s). In order not to employ the immediacy of the poem as a literal happening in the reading, I disrupt Artaud’s idea of the magical immediacy of the Theatre of Cruelty by displaying representational language as an impinging inevitability:

when men meet

in boats anchored to billboards in the oil of the bay
 their talk curves to the loose electric lines
 swaying over the audience. (50)

The curve of Artaud's speech also outlines the absent world of referential language he furiously tries to dismantle. The speech of the labourers in the boats flows along the demarcation of the delivery of electricity as the expanding borders of commerce enter rural land. The maintained space of the theatre employs a singular occurrence that dissolves in the wash of the representational.

How can the limits of form become communicative? Artaud wishes not so much to communicate the ineffable as to renege on the accepted purpose of contemporary western theatre. In terms of their practice, the results of his theories are potentially so subjective that even the semi-effective imitation of them seems doubtful. As Peter Brook notes in The Empty Space, "Artaud applied is Artaud betrayed" (54). The attempt to "recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought" (Artaud, Theatre and its Double 89) seems to require an overuse of representational and figurative language in order to establish an understandable framework for the Theatre of Cruelty. This criticism may be cursory but it underscores a curious characteristic of Artaud's writing. He furiously accumulates descriptive language in a centrifugal attempt to propel his theories beyond the representational. Jacques Derrida further suggests that Artaud attempts to destroy representation by puncturing representation with itself:

Presence, in order to be presence and self-presence, has already begun to represent itself, has always already been penetrated...this murder is endless and is repeated indefinitely. It begins by penetrating its own

commentary and is accompanied by its own representation. In which it erases itself and confirms the transgressed law. (249)

According to Artaud, the appearance of a body on stage threatens to become the representation of that body and so movement must dispel the previous movement or representation intrudes, “he returns to collect his papers from beneath the lectern / some distant parallel with sisyphus” (“Stunt Double” 89).

The Theatre of Cruelty presupposes the annihilation of all western forms of representation. The collection of writings that constitutes Artaud’s theories carries the refrain that western forms of thought are archaic and useless. The only valid space for Artaud is the space of performance where language must be minimal, spatial and temporary. His writing begins with the assumption that abandons the language of representation; he is already writing from a place of transgression. Artaud places the demand of transcending form upon the body where no other body can repeat. Only the body can unmake and erase its own appearance. Text already calculates its own repetition. This singular, bodily demand of Artaud’s reduces infinitely the uncontaminated space where performance is possible. Essentially, the effect of the Theatre of Cruelty performs only on a molecular level where there is a vacuum-like absence of language. In the poem, I aggravate the potential for imprecision on such a minute scale that signifiers are assigned to the unclaimed body in an increasing range from the specific location of a terrace to a presidential debate in a foreign country. Referents assail the body as Artaud’s theory struggles to decontaminate it from representing something else:

the greased shoe horn of dialogue

precludes one's own language
 its form announces (to b)
 sinew, ligaments, muscle, bone
 the stage blood drying on catered terraces
 tourist attraction for Americans
 who never offer up their own semen
 for official discussions or presidential debate. (67)

That bodily fluids become a matter of consideration for presidential discourse may seem extravagant, but the body's own decay ensures that no movement repeats exactly as before and any language used to encapsulate it quickly accelerates in an attempt to recover diminishing representation. The ferocious dedication of Artaud to his own theories requires improbable assumptions. The intense deflection and inaccessibility of his later writing only increases this furious search for non-representational space.

What makes Artaud's writing particularly compelling is how he positions himself within his own work. There is no separation between Artaud's physical body and the theoretical body of his work, "a hand full of atoms/...tell an expensive story" ("Stunt Double" 95). The internal organs are as equally influenced by the written text as is the mind, "I propose to treat the spectators like the snakecharmer's subjects and conduct them *by means of their organisms* to an apprehension of the subtlest notions" (Theatre and its Double 81). The Theatre of Cruelty manifested will first inhabit the senses and then insidiously incite the less-tangible sensibilities of the audience, such as the intellect and the soul, where it will "succeed in organically reinvolving man, his ideas about reality, and his poetic place in reality" (Theatre and its Double 92).

By insisting on the physicality of theatre as a means of altering the individual, Artaud establishes a demanding criterion that is almost measurable. He conducts the experiment within the bounds of the theatre building where seats confine individuals who are subject to the sensory affects of the performance. Artaud translates the abstracted entity into a definable condition, “Whether the hypothesis is exact or not, the important thing is that it is verifiable. The soul can be physiologically reduced to a skein of vibrations” (Theatre and its Double 135). In theory, the Theatre of Cruelty is neither an exact nor a political science.

The individual Artaud intends to act upon is one removed from history or politics but who retains an essential need for the arousal of the imagination. Artaud’s assumption of a timeless, apolitical individual is naïve but his remedy in the Theatre of Cruelty does demand an engagement in art, performance, literature, etc. that abandons the comfort of detachment. To discuss Artaud is to discuss the place of art and what social and intellectual activity it generates. Perhaps the best a poem can achieve, as stated by Ron Silliman, is to foster “organized intuition (that) would transfer one’s anger to the appropriate causes of this condition. One rises from the concrete person to the abstract politics of labor” (New Sentence 59). Silliman suggests that effective poetry requires a structured understanding of the world into which it is introduced so it is not an aesthetic end unto itself. Poetry reveals structure and the literal making of a society. For Artaud, the individual is the world and the Theatre of Cruelty both transforms and unveils the body through which the world comes to being represented.

As from sound to signification, so too the body moves from object to metaphor. But Artaud curtails this movement so as to avoid fully representational language in both

word and body: “true expression hides what it makes manifest” (Theatre and its Double 71). “Stunt Double” questions the coy possibility of repealing significance as though it had impermeable boundaries and could be cleanly withdrawn from the audience’s interpretive effort,

lobbying their eyes over curtains

now Vitrac as the count’s horse

text practiced in posture

calculate the number of

one camera for every pore

waiting for the image

logos still in the glossy. (91)

For Artaud, interpretation is a physical effort but he cannot limit the participation of the audience to mere bodily engagement as though they could see by removing their own eyes and throwing them across the stage. The involvement of the audience cannot be controlled as if it were a numerical system and signification cannot be rationed out. Limiting representation is not crowd control.

Artaud tries to exclude representation from his performative formula for the theatre by withdrawing from its borders in an effort to circumvent the socialized use of language. He has no use for the generative potential between traditional and non-traditional uses of language and the performed body, “the language of words may have to give way before a language of signs whose objective aspect is the one that has the most immediate impact on us” (Theatre and its Double 107). Charles Bernstein recognizes that “the tension between sound and logic reflects the physical resistance in the medium of

poetry” where “sound, like poetry ‘itself’, can never be completely recuperated as ideas, as content, as narrative, as extralexical meaning” (21). This fissure between sound and meaning is also the performance where both body and language move through temporary sites of meaning as produced by a physicality that is both temporal and situated.

In terms of theory put into practice, Artaud failed to produce on stage a physical language that re-established essential, transformative forces with a receptive audience. Artaud’s only attempt at staging a play, based upon the tenets of the Theatre of Cruelty, closed after 17 days and was generally dismissed by the Parisian critics (Knapp 143). That he was unable to enact his theories is a failure only in terms of theatre and not in life where performative presence appears and dissolves as we go about our lives. Artaud acknowledges the need for absolute authority that applies more so to his own creative life than to theatre, “I won’t have, in a spectacle staged by myself, so much as the flicker of an eye that does not belong to me” (Selected Writings 343). In reference to producing his only Theatre of Cruelty play, he admits to the difficulty of staging his concept of theatre, “in the last analysis I was overwhelmed by the immensity of the task I had undertaken” (Selected Writings 343).

Because of the physical demands of the theatre outside of the theoretical, I introduce details and descriptions in my poem that thoroughly ground conceptual theatre in an unforgiving physicality. The world of things returns to the intellectual space of Artaud’s theatre with a merciless concreteness:

he’s caged tiny
 as Racine
 responds in affordable costume

the audience counts the threads. (53)

Theatre must account for the physical world as it intrudes on production just as signifiers intrude on Artaud's idea of a pure gesture without descriptive duplication. The minutiae of the material world is a formidable structure always threatening to reveal itself as synthetic threads through a historical costume.

Theatrical tradition also impinges on Artaud's ahistorical efforts. Though he insists on an unrepeatable, performative present, such a vacuum invites the intrusion of external forces. In my poem, the theatrical space of the Theatre of Cruelty is both porous and suggestive due to its exclusive and pressurized atmosphere:

(a radio dialect)

spit & hiss

pour en finir avec le jugement du dieu

(virus)

assemble a device to levitate

the opening dialogue

such a cantilever rivals mass speculation of new york america at 7 am.(64)

The cruel singularity of Artaud's intended performance divorced from any textual origin is nonetheless disturbed by historical, economic, biographical and poetic designs. The directions in parentheses are direct and indirect insertions that mislead the text towards the site of another continent. As a radio play disseminates over the air waves, so too does the suggested physicality in the poem dissolve and reassemble in the streets of New York far from the authority of Artaud. Theory made flesh inhabits a social space unlike the

private locus of contemplation. For Artaud, the world will always produce a rival performance in an uncontrollable space.

As an extra-literary effort, Artaud attempts to return Western theatre to a more essential and non-representational performance that is not dependent on the written text. He strives for a physical language unmediated by the overly conscious pause of signification where one can “manipulate it like a solid object, one which overturns and disturbs things” (Theatre and its Double 72). Language does not become just one thing, but the potential for movement in all things and people. The play is written on the stage in the language of the performative space where this language is, “everything that can be manifested and expressed materially on a stage and that is addressed first of all to the senses instead of being addressed primarily to the mind as is the language of words” (Theatre and its Double 38). This language is also a language of presence and of the body prior to signification. Artaud’s theory of a communication specific to the theatre is momentary, and ideally, unrepeatable.

In the poem I attempt to retrieve these ideas and situate them ironically within the stressed language of poetry:

speaking of the body
 casual as paint on the banister
 flecks under fingernails...
 the lining of wings for the sun
 inhaled into a shadowbox
 actors conserve oxygen offstage
 common seats forge rivets for the crucifixion

till the speaking parts fail. (58)

Speaking becomes a physical detail as imagistically abrupt as the ones that follow. The action that returns near the end of the stanza is one of implied utility. Behind the movement of Artaud's performance is the back-drop of the activity of labour and the marketplace. These are both powerful forces of signification and influence acting upon Artaud's efforts despite his insistence on theatre as an isolated event. My poem attempts to reveal that the body is a site where movement occurs at a greater cost than Artaud realizes. The body is a diminishing source of revenue in labour and on the stage where it is a non-representative tool for Artaud.

As enticingly anarchic as Artaud's proposed non-representational language is, his manifesto and its realization in the Theatre of Cruelty do not operate outside a more common system of signification. In The Theatre and its Double, Artaud resists the language of the signification at the same time he employs it as the only means of communicating his ideas. This compounded position both repels and compels the reader as a reluctant acceptance of language and its disavowal torques his/her reading. Artaud carries this friction onto the stage where physical movement and a pre-linguistic voice propel signification beyond its own reflective occurrence in a perpetual bodily happening. In "The Language of Presence: Sound Poetry and Artaud," Jon Erickson views this motion as a means of deferring the dreaded textual solidity of language, "Artaud sees them (words) as part of a continual becoming – speech becomes gesture becomes ideogram" (287). I would add that Artaud's intended use of language might allow for this continual becoming because it does not reflect back upon a subject. In refusing a theatre of representation and proposing a language of movement, there is no recognizable

or repeatable language by which a subject constitutes itself. Without any linguistic structure, the audience is unable to perceive any reflected self in that which is structureless:

have you failed
has what failed
do people disappear mid-sentence
there are none ever
people or sentences
one after the other words
how is fortunate.
("Stunt Double" 86)

Artaud's experiential understanding of language excludes the social aspects of theatre where the performance acts upon an audience that has common linguistic expectations. The Theatre of Cruelty becomes so unique it avoids the communicative necessity of language and, therefore, a common effect on the audience. Each member of the audience becomes an object without modifiers or conjunctions.

The Theatre of Cruelty is an exercise in decimating theatrical space. Artaud rejects modern dramatic conventions in favour of returning to the naked presence of the body and a physical language. As far as language constructs the subject, Artaud abandons this to remake the experience of theatre as singularly peculiar where the subject recreates itself through sensation and a pre-linguistic voice. This is the cruelty of Artaud's theatre where, as Helga Finter describes, "the experience of theatre, the theatrical 'as if', stands at the beginning of a subject's becoming, and...through the voice,

theatre can provide a setting for the constitution of a subject” (22). Without the support of a recognizable system of representation, and a written text as source, the subject is continually re-created through a series of bodily and verbal movements. For Artaud, the body and the voice bring forth primal and magical states that suggest an “underlying menace of a chaos as decisive as it is dangerous” (Theatre and its Double 51). If these forces are to exist in a theatrical production, Artaud’s work maintains no subject amidst such a formless eruption. In Artaud’s only production true to the Theatre of Cruelty, the main character, Count Cenci, is “presented not as a character but as a forcefield working to destroy subjectivity” (Goodall 535). Artaud equates subjectivity with representation and is forever disassembling characters until they become more akin to the elemental forces he believes to be beneath the surface of things.

Though Artaud believed himself isolated, his work occurs amongst systems of signification and continues today where, “the words of a dead man/ are modified in the guts of the living” (Auden 475). Because Artaud’s ideas remain unapproachable in their isolating severity, the poem re-situates them in a language of details where they perform again against representation. The body of Artaud’s work gestures through the flames of signifiers.

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Stunt Double

In the matter of the spectacle it is not possible for me to give supplementary particulars

move towards the front

view staging the miracle

where interest rates are fluent and

shrilled as gold
lately

left for innumerable recants of forged biography
assembled on the train between auditions

begins
beginnings
your step watch

we need true action, but without practical consequence

remember

you are maneuvering people

they must be paid
thoroughly and to the fraction

my own set designs collect foreign interest rates

coup as cardboard box lids steamed near the Folies-Wagram boiler
flowers brown hand affordable and flat
acquaintances typed on the marquee
cometh the room's paint clicks
inquire pedestrian

read green
almost wel lamost
small light kerning
from change throw under the rows
sure it's a pocket
read the label
lukewarm floodway
whether prediction

dialogue runs out
of textiles

private machinery in a fenced area the idea of petrol runs for generations

in the manifesto
an american musical ignites surrounding the octave

but even if this physics really existed

the exits
are capitalized
in red really

to
encourage panic

let a story sell but this play only one

glowering head of a cigarette
push into portrait
point of focus acres away
the act remains sifting on the sheet

a curious route branches through the court
on page marking period, point
punctuations resound elsewhere
in minerals and exhaled ash and cake

over backdrop and falsetto

runs a compliment of nerves

in the patron's ring
a recoup de main

suggesting but not implying

the artist has little intention outside disrupting the skin

it would be untrue to claim that the ideas which emerge from this painting are clear

unease or catheter
appropriate pausing

(lettre)

To M.B.C.

Paris, September 15, 1931

Sir,

You state in an article on the theatre and the mise en scène that "in considering the mise en scène as an autonomous art one risks committing still worse errors"

(recipient unknown, therefore, the epistolary contract of common ownership)

even breath reproduces
exaggerated lung from drafts
in the room rhythm kept with hammer on wooden block (now found
sculpture)

I've lost count of days under the cabal
this war is a filthy spell starved by administrators

continue writing
on peeled envelopes
menus, public notices
and fabric

the gardener cares for him

I mean his meals

and fresh sheets

those who visit

are young and curious

and f

photo by man ray

nearly the trickle besmirching Paris

predicted by pressing in bold thumbbed print

no paint, no feathers, no diagram, no mark

could prepare

muttering stifles drawing static from all surrounding cities

*the encounter upon the stage of two nervous magnetisms is something as true
as in life the encounter of one epidermis with another in a timeless
debauchery*

the floor

actually the stage

for snow outside

and the crowd's home/street frozen with autos

we waited

countrymen enter the city daily

siphoning electricity

forget lines

two predicates fuse

like

manual labour

workers sing

expect laughter

perhaps the theatre's poison, injected into the social body, disintegrates it, as Saint Augustine says, but at least it does so as a plague

when the prompter rises skyward

as an angel engorged

keep your mark

unless

reveal otherwise

into the rehearsal rolls a turnip
dirty as though smoke wrings
vegetable from another neighbouring municipality
the turnip turns along through the emergency exit

the man resumes his lines and breathes
before he holds the turnip he hums
an air compressor or wind in the channel
a hasty rewrite
after the turnip returns
alarms sound

at the edge of the bed he pauses
rests
in a tradition ill placed in his own language

what else but writing

you

a ration
of paper

I shall make bold to say that is the fault of Oedipus Rex and not of the publics

so small holes

in the manual's
page

one long line achieves
pronounce petard in studied galas
an exercise to graph breath
sense is people forgo lines
curtain or sail jibs yes jibs

the quotation slips under shoulder blades (wardrobe) or
daguerreotype bleached as the moon men (film) or
copperheads rolling in
escalator grooves or
fathers formed by patient's records or
tinfoil lining stomachs

such preoccupation with personal problems disgusts me, and disgusts me all the more with nearly the whole contemporary theatre which, as human as it is antipoetic, except for three or four plays, seems to stink of decadence and pus

to clarify further

would be i feel a song coming on

to clutter aisles with the fashionable propaganda of brown shirts spritzed

with excessive footnotes and copyrights
bodyparts and erotic hieroglyphs

that melody supporting the worker is redundant

and murderous
and cowardly lirting distance is no excuse

you ask yourself

and take note

posture
alters

for now
the letter will
secure the audience

inexperienced with moving pictures
and

*it is not a matter of boring the public to death with transcendent cosmic
preoccupations*

magic lanterns
Antonin affords vaguely
deposit lost
rental phrasing and the bank's miscommunication

footnote for the masses
pasted together by slideshows and a mono recorder

cruel
is a poor universe

I mean that I cannot

repeat
speech unless

*since closed space is fed with lives, and each stronger life tramples down the
others, consuming them in a massacre which is a transfiguration of bliss*

there rehearsal space
enter the beneficent actress
zoom out far
in luxury so

the thick fist of gargantua and not unemployment
thins the actors outnumbered by props

a description if you will

letter television uninterupt view
except for the blue lining joseph's (tristan) eye
cables scroll across heat from uncovered heads
check the channel simple as food

shift cured windows
suffice to shave millions
and the din money all flattest paper
I, A.A., hold up the horizon
be keen on just thin

paper unwinds from offices
roads cobbled by theatrical intercourse
with humane grants where schoolboys carve dice

I conduct currents along public roads

as refined
by France's electromagnetic grid
after wars
I excuse service

for a toothless smile

as though
you paid to
purview

but in Monkey Business when a hunted man throws himself upon a beautiful woman and dances with her, poetically, in a sort of study in charm and grace of attitude, the spiritual claim seems double and shows everything that is poetic and revolutionary in the Marx Brothers' jokes

you afford to be alone

to prescribe oxen in the gallery
the stolid plane of streets
direction is for the needy
inflated over powerlines
ask for a sample and the sky turns to a simmering pail in the centre of Paris
it comes close to a pamphlet

fold brightly along the edges and take
a turn at the period
the critical tide I despise
metered out past intros
on the corner
a brochure parallels the Seine

I organize

the costumes and the sets and the actors who volunteer patrons in disguise

there is
the

lifting of your hand
and setting it
down and forgetting

I promise an accident in my final lecture
forgoing notes for the toothy chatter of shock therapy

cars stop for want of fuel or fire

the theatre of cruelty (second manifesto)
(p.74)

...

he uses the word myth
for public inoculation

*thus, theatre space will be utilized not only in its dimensions and volume but,
so to speak, in its undersides (dans ses dessous)*

he recovered enough memory
recognized medications in refractions of light
a squint of citric acid

to resume drawing

often
actually continuous into dinner conversation stabbing lead into duck

poems accumulate

in response to the sketches

almost exclusively
of visitors
and some furious rubbing
exploiting fibers

re posed
mail without stamps
postmen ignore the cigarette burns

cabal abc
letters split like peat
and to lose one's teeth

unreliable or unlucky
depends on the language
alphabet exposed to ridicule
everything alive for A.A. and rain no tarpaulin
underfunded delinquent in translation
strong-arm kerning fails to control the virus

there are, as we have said, six principle combinations of breaths

stilled he retained an outline
in a few photographs

ignoring the camera
anarchist to the lens

there is a primitive dignity in that
pneuma in a grocers bag

all revolutions require backing
slumped over the slope of a horse
string together any four sounds and you will
hem in magnetism and its salesman timed to
a bovine on loan under floodlights

follow the script demands the anarchist
it should be comforting
to lend money over the fire
invest in celluloid currency
as though sound can tell a story

Artaud cautioned the children
a repeated utterance is blinding
syllables lowered from the rafters
angelus of snare wire
Aesop tarred and glittered

the actor is an athlete of the heart

after so much intestinal writing text confutes form
for example wrapping fish in newspaper

carpenters still shuffle through the encore
time for clever banter amongst the audience

we forget buildings

the public approach the box office
shift through its turnstiles
the dim hall leans to the left
i forgot the oven

the break in narration recovers at line 98

if a character is famished
despite sleep and election results
for aligning cuneiforms in tiny advertisements
I would not ask for my admission back

trained performers, amplified footfalls, oversized effigies, recorded cries,
rancid winds, revolutionary plastics
abandoned patents

splint books
bleach moons
shirk paper

notice to staff:
they must be ushered in as ticketed patrons
their steps outlined

trust the lighting
up there

*conduct them by means of their organisms to an apprehension of the subtlest
notions*

daily periodicals reseal the empire
in common hieroglyphs
ruddy as shit

the chorus repeats

(greek, in the program)

to the front of the theatre where language is a wash

molecules ascend to flaking gilded clouds leaving towels and crimson

in unsold seats – paying customers smell hemlock

when men meet

in boats anchored to billboards in the oil of the bay

their talk curves to the loose electric lines

swaying over the audience

questions of whether audiences deserve theatre now
now
and are willing in 1933 to purchase shares
and distribute leaflets in a red wagon to all quarters
all the while

eating bread

Mexico seen this time by Cortez

the understudy needs to know little of america

except the tarahumara
live as though

signs rain

after Ireland I was restrained and committed
luckily, the war broke out

if the room still held the actor the lights
dim until stars stick the window
few gather combed hands for later today
thrick frack slork shrikken trick

unveil a palms skyward man/boy/anatomy on the curb
where roadcrews loiter in the shade
petrified fossil his body
curling into a disjointed finger

theatre and land mines alter the nerves of
the audience so the body's epidermis accords
the g flat of "Great Mysteries"
strike that

reject Shakespeare simply put
but what of the staging of
the fool

he's caged tiny
as Racine
responds in affordable costume
the audience counts the threads

*in the anguished, catastrophic period we live in, we feel an urgent need for a
theatre which events do not exceed*

alchemy returns
in pill form
perfect white periods of dust

boiling water

a box has six sides

six sides reflecting

the cooked disc in the sky

each side holds degraded

reflections of single faces

the individual

nodding in confusion

“confused” –the reflection

so blind as to drive the car

I planned for parking in other countries

you will behold no lotteries

“willed” the layman is welcome

cough it up – the price of performance

from the diaphragm – daemons exposed to the air

pollution has yet to settle

wars, etc

a ligament to the absolute

some kneecaps in the rafters

what I propose you forget your name, that your name

is a word shaped by other words

I refuse to sing and so on

if only the great war's resources could
mount a city the size
of the one I find myself in.
letters arrive every hour
spoiled envelopes wrinkled
with body fluids.
open your mouth at the precise time
to read them accurately
is misleading, a prediction
more than anything, and I mean
anything, as one ignorant of
weather, seasons, frigid, else
the letters are an amputee's attempt, evidently,
from

the printing of maps

streets, rivers, bridges, central buildings

hospitals, churches, schools

accumulate, forge horizons, whistle a tune

onto one another

the initiate finds a seat

close to the aisle, breathing in

personal odours pool in stairwells

mustard tea boiling coup

speaking of the body
casual as paint on the bannister
flecks under fingernails
hammered into asbestos by stagehands
the lining of wings for the sun
inhaled into a shadowbox
actors conserve oxygen offstage
common seats forge rivets for the crucifixion
till the speaking parts fail

self-portrait

rendition wrent line after line

speak spoke sacerdotal

/ / / / / / /

live meant psi

sharp pencils pricks of lead

inside and outside the organs

boils approach punctuation

one poached egg for a mealy apostrophe

see

proper noun attracts wealthy curiosity

push the drawing onto the wall

alignment is spurned

the institution is whose design?

carefully burnt paper achieves

he stopped writing

long enough

to begin drawing

he used astrology selectively

inventing organs for each of the 12 signs

such as an expandible gland near the liver

to filter pressure on the skin for virgo

forecasting the release of sperm among warring leaders

blood turning to iron on the world stage

urine flows inside pressed trousers

I am willing to appraise the value

of these singed letters

prophetic with insufficient postage

place a portrait amongst the audience
direct the performance towards
that two-dimensional profile with candle
an exercise measured to expose the infantile optic nerves
of the patrons
little credit is given to the people of the time Artaud draws this
even the healthiest paid actor
whose organs are precise
scraping nerves Artaud considered fodder for cosmic adverts
this is a careful table

approach with caution

a sign

tack on many continents

the same here

stop singular

a funeral measured in city blocks

for prosperity today good friday

what I have eaten will fill no proverbial panty

X

spelling alternative world wars

with charcoal abbreviations

walls litter the theatre

the cabalistic revival of Shakespeare

spells of sinister accuracy for

the street's worn stones really the feet on them

107 paces until the earth's bevelled end

bring on the messiah

feathers for the front row

for a mention of Christ

pour en finir avec le jugement du dieu

(a radio play)

sudden reach for robert lowell

skunk hour has no minor subscription in foreign Boston

place in this pantograph

word klept from our sponsors

gentle with carbide

pour en finir avec le jugement du dieu

(a radio dialect)

spit & hiss

pour en finir avec le jugement du dieu

(virus)

assemble a device to levitate

the opening dialogue

such a cantilever rivals the mass speculation of new york america at 7 am

re spite splendence

one simple thrust

thrush no mention of birds

calibal let the order fall

along the scene it is no thing ness

[fo rever demand salted snacks]

city council plans Artaud statue

dedicated to the white stage

misnomer

zion

I willed pulled along out the veins
misleading electricity through dull holes
left outside I am more likely to conduct
shocks my critics bury in the traffic
let me use one word perfectly
laissez-moi employer un mot parfaitement

the greased shoe horn of dialogue
precludes one's own language
its form announces (to b)
sinew, ligaments, muscle and bone
the stage blood drying on catered terraces
tourist attraction for Americans
who never offer up their own semen
for official discussions or presidential debate

looking for lot
to misplace a painting is
a bold stroke
there are few galleries in the forests of ontario and yet
you must rely on memory to reconstitute
the Daughters of Lot
the frame rests on the sooty elbow of a furnace
the paint is pearled and blinds
like ice on roads known only as numbers
there is much squinting and disbelief in the background
in the way of comets and shipwrecks
merchant vessels considering human cargo spines
and
and incestuous glowe in the foreground
this is the painting Artaud describes on pages 33-36
clearly his mistrust of adjectives comes
thru

(hit your mark)

(wait)

timing is everything, I mean time

furious notebooks regarding the calibration of floor boards

tuning of rope strands

diabolical in starch very stiff shirts

the dehydration of select cells

at some point (inoculation)

he will begin speaking

In response to your inquiry concerning the lease of our theatre,
we are unable to commit to your demands at this time.

In the future, all correspondence should be directed to our third address.

on the stage you
will witness an athleticism akin to an illegible prescription
or unacknowledged addiction
breathing is pointed
accurate in its humidity
and temp.

I appreciate your letter, but at this time I have difficulty describing.

If the performance is Friday, as you say, I will attend with no reservations.

mindful vitriol

alabaster alabaster

statues and flies

fine points

released in the audience's perspiration

telegraph again

"when your heart's on fire you must realize smoke gets in your eyes"

another nation

foot candle extinguish
by the sharpened edge of the stage
feet
in twilight unless the door is propped open with act IV spent casings

during the war I was protected by doctors
applying anagrams to my forehead
I recall we were not allowed mirrors

he rarely counted money except to slake the world with counterfeit numbers
and traceable currency

Heliogabalus strides to the
front of the stage

(this play never produced
results)

pupils dilate in the first three rows

I am certain of the audience to the extent that medications should be withheld
the week of the performance

I will trust physicians to understand the importance of this performance

No refunds unless accompanied by an appropriate PhD of explanation
expect delays

subtlety (declared soundly) (a suggestion)
placed on the forehead by Cenci
uncocks shoulder blades
knuckles and a minor key
play playéd as snow
layering the street
call it metrics against imperial rule

light at the lid of the stage
bound to mark a "pop"
starr'd night in vacuum packaging
what to escape expiration on the date
blame the subject, devour or detour

simply put
the line down beside
the candle misshapen tenant
spends the year's wardrobe budget in a finely drawn bead of oil
ring in the ears
under the bed
a millennium ornament ceases
"what hides your face" singly

Artaud's advice for scholars:

take the discussions in a sanatorium

for example

framed in acute measurement of breath

severe molecules but these are to be ignored should they impose specific

politics on the question of discrediting all literature

other time

other time the cadence again like arterial pressure

and thunder inappropriate for the Act

people are also unnecessary unless provoked

'll i

prepare an incision

to level tremors beneath streets

and homes not as though

bubonic forecast through all classes

strata petrified

i'ope

tired of mulch in the gum for sweet teeth i will work the strands into a ball
hovering over industrial parks sewn genuine calf beloved a pet to hamper in
the watt wears to the bone
spare a match to foist this bladder of shade grows warm as lot's daughter of
weather

one day Blake and the possum
spread asphalt on the lawn
the soldiers pronounced his name with no silent e

resolve to flatten gold leaf
on the nymph's letter of introduction
breaking ground entire silver spade
serve this tableau on a sea of virgin oil
newspaper clots and second stomach mementos

cinema paid to conceive childless couple
the hardest of hearing combust at carbuncular seams leaving the aisle free for
curious vagrants

that space where the mind is
not free
not unfettered
but careless

a very singular season
oh mine

descript

lang colludes

trayne trane train tracks I I escape to Ireland

doth vent kidney

maladroit enjamb enough leaven ha

a gracious line leaving the house scented with affluent guests

but really an organ donated to the sunny side of la rue

monotone

apoplectic phrasing of Proust please

man's someone's misery results from fidgeting in his (mother's) room

so tried truly ?

if a snake were still a poem

a Marxist recipe for influence among persons

friends like Carnegie, Artaud

admit there is little money for parades in the nineteenth century

anomie pour vous et moi

(what has to be happening)

build the stage furniture during the performance

enter: revealed without the bribe of language

like the virgin birth as an op/ed piece

if that is still an apt metaphor

have you failed

has what failed

do people disappear mid-sentence

there are none ever

people or sentences

one after the other words

how is fortunate

camphor is exceptional before breakfast

banishing peoples to the sun-less side of her barren shoulder

i.e. our artistic dallying with forms, instead of being like victims burnt at the stake, signalling through the flames

so much for being anthologized
who cannot afford Rodez
gentlemen and ladies coveting the first row
release your glandular frustration with the art
and
and
and
twelve months of winter did you take into account the barometer
an electrified Santa upsets the children
black face
what century this is
pander to them and you risk the life after
so much for phrasing drawn out along the ruts in the streets in the city of light

for those who know hum barter the emblematic life stain'd stovetop
for those who read hum trade the charcoal representational aka hiccup
for those who hear hum purchase the breathing over a block of wood
for those who view has drawings option the alphabet pivoting on cigarette
burns blaspheme nanny
for these asthmatic forms unmedicated summon care

surrealist film festival investigated for tax evasion
sentencing to follow typesetting of manifesto
in shade of imagined fifth season, Artaud reads
vegetable matter as currency the surrealists disown the countryside

cant explain production notes
catapulted into the atmosphere
translation of his last lecture at Vieux-Colombier
litter mixes with winter
driving down the cost of christmas portraits

he returns to collect his papers from beneath the lectern
some distant parallel with sisyphus
the ushers enforce

diagrammatic formal blood
a store-front experiment for eager patrons/atoms
lobbying their eyes over curtains
now Vitrac as the count's horse
text practiced in posture
calculate the number of
one camera for every pore
waiting for the image
logos still in the glossy

written by duress
write yearly, or else

clearly the forecast was wrong
and this weather will be of
< desperate concern for the citizens
not some light papal stroke on the brow
but a galvanizing alchemy to tear
the upholstery off reserved seats
and precious metals in breakfast cereal

i rise from the dead
enticing f-stop in the folds of fabric
hanging from my arm
in retouched glossy photographs
i will never sell enough
the years continue
show me one underfed child in france

the acoustics may please some patrons
but sound should act as an x-ray
i foresee exposing a potentially lethal body
magnified on the wall during intermission
white and bluish black
new nationhoods in this
developing photo

the room clean
except for portraits
a head above the body
misshapen oval floating above transmission towers
even the dedicated buildings
the library, the utility commission
the sun more beautiful in the windows
a hand full of atoms
universal garbage
tell an expensive story

how do emblem
finger nail shavings clack
 like applause recording
memory serves the plate
for you radio
captain america mows
the green grass of jerusalem
finally broadcast
lint on the consumptive bowler
militarily speaking the ocean
flecks as white as blanc
can be my sheets get ready

the institution's gardener tends to posture
vertebrae kerosene moisten
light thickens in that botanical phrase
what if the lease breaks?
renew all on or before april 19
the secret is to catapult wet rags
 over the wall
lear leaning into our driveway
wilt an utter disregard for royalties
bright broken glass atop the walled concrete
he may come and go as he pleases

perhaps 3 moments conjure
after the war closes (refusing food) a concrete temperature in Rodez
if we could refrain from breeding
any further into a common contractual of the future
we but I
brings snow back to the plates
of the orphans of Marseille
my family is strong and humble and calculated

one magnificent shade suffice to say calendar year spoils
with seasons approximate
counting on fists
tonal numeric but refusing children for the price of admission
what was that waste called?
lines and lines of people clearly smoked
a vote during wartime is when

the same thing happens and I promise a calculation so vastly altering that I can sleep until it disturbs the bed where I find what was is always made new and the day is transparent and tiring and filled with light and all is highlighted and significance is nowhere, calm end to the inventory started 54 years ago

what Artaud thinks of christmas
I'm in the mood for climactic change
our saviour and overpopulation
free will and natural resources limited
does he still count them all?
what a waste of protoplasm showering the earth with numerical sorcery
before the coca-cola santa
though he too would have received
a pencil-sized wound to the heart
carbon dated dated predictions
him dismissing the history of western futures
thrown into the neighbour's yard like tiny mouthed pebbles

the desk is on fire
or we speculate as that which reoccurs daily
the postman is a prayer
the award is suspicious
flat as a paper applied
if memory serves breakfast all day
i'll count the seconds ruminant

that image of one beautiful monk
with eyes clear as ozone
frames of reference listing
face, cross (as steeple), gaze angled
over the exhaust of paris

germless construction
breathing in the file folder

rash from that infernal robe
Dreyer paying me in mixed currencies
mongrel economy
my mattress is a numerical certainty
protecting me from this earth's business

allday

parking at the volcano

horses fritter their idle bits

wait for october's chill to empty

into the sewer

the sea

i never comment on jazz