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Berkeley Island

to Gregg Biglieri

*An island
Has a public quality.*
—George Oppen

This island called nations
Abounds

In holes
The ecstatic whole
Of home-

lands when the trees
Tunnel
The walls would just kill

Star persists
However it
Might tussle

When dissolves to wind

Against the all
The *beyond in*
These islands are

Perverse in being
Watched and
Having been

A Western will
In an Eastern
Wind

Captivities capsize O our
Unwitting linoleum

The windows
Of darkened dwellings
Delimit the comic intrusion

The despair of nations
Singing out to be real

To be not merely
For what we are
Tunneling

And what we mark
These islands only
Not will be saved

Not in this *time of the nations*

You have built
A house not limited
By earth

Nor by any sky
But a sleep
Of our making

History a tree
Makes snap a shape

Of things
To dwell or not
To dwell in

Not all
Interiors being
Interiorizing

Not all houses
A home for effigy.

“As you are no more than this... a tone.”

“Trembling veil, my limit.”

“Enlarged seizure.”

“Speak to the tongue it tells.”

If we dig a hole far enough
Or number shudders
Or a single pane survives

The body what camera
Can't be *in camera*
For your sublime?

An ontological can't
A kind of prick
A not is not a whole

To put the present in
A burden to present
Disburdening this old

Extension extending
A new lens (a
Shoot if you will)

Points and chutes
Like lines live forever
More importantly more

Descendents arise
Transcending defense
Abeyant Phoenix

Who dovetails nicks
Not in this
Time of the nations.

To not to have left
Is to interrupt
Becoming for whose sake
The primitive transgression
The genital speech
Topples sand castles in
A father's private sense

The missing scenes
Contraptions watch
Virtual spots
Tunneling to not
To have been heaven yet
A theme develops
Across these plots
Scolded daughters write
Their allegories
In abandoned sand

An allergy of borders
Patrol the primitive marks
Make of subjects
Identities for centuries regress
Like a child's
Eyes to have opened
History history then
Grows sleepy
One's ears for others
Look into their own

Other drowning men
In other words survivors
Interrupt us to be a singular
Footprint is to shudder
It is not only to see out
To those other islands
But to touch their in-
habitants a kind of contact
Lens the shattered rays
Alighting in our wildness
Cracked like a monad
Like a window I mean

A theme develops
Across these waves wrecks
Disasters of we
Ventures of you
With an I for borders
To convey another route
Out of the cave others
Dig a hole inside me
Travel such distances
To be at home
In a parole of eyes
Seeking the holier
Hostage of witness.

Surveillance Says

after Harun Farocki

If a tree falls and the only witness is the image of the tree

If the image is itself rootless

Disaster mark the lips of mouths unseen
Shed not light but shed light ideally
From idols the trains of doing and the trains of fate
The trains of not doing that the little blade
Is there and there in the big wake
Of time that is us we are its question
What the mouth discovers and the eyes cover
What veils evidence this distance our blade knife
Blade night what occasional claims in idols

Occident and gas shed not light but shed
Visions a glass to stimulate flight simulator
Of proven movements war exercises are
Object lessons perspective doesn't complain
Of camouflage and the false Red Cross
Illusions of truer trees houses men like gods
Oversee these projects measuring man to man

If a tree falls or night falls on eyes shades
Dark shades a wake falls awake
If a tree falls like the solipsist's body a common
Sense that each picture pictures
If we sing ourselves we must sing of others
This too must be a picture
What light breaking into song too late

For the eyes too are products of light
Made of beams if you will and human beings
A kind of research into the sound of waves
The wood pushing a lapping furthermore and whereof
One image arrives without explanation
And another its shadow and sanest words
The shadowless discovering of veils
A cropped mouth identifying the police instead of us

This too the world's invention
This inversion this Roman pact
This peace without *pax*
Images outnumbering the soldiers
Bodies outnumbering measure
Photographs of the dead
Outnumbering the dead

Burnt as eyes withdraw from eyes
Sense grace withdrawing eyes from eyes graves burnt
As eyes withdraw from eyes sense grace withdrawing
Eyes from eyes graves.

Children of Men

Our guns | we drop to | our knees

Our guns the infant | holding us and mute | the start

The stutter | startled we | drop our guns

We are not crying yet | in this event | we are only

Shedding ourselves | subtracting from

This event | what it will have been

It matters this tear like a beam in the eyes confused
With sunshine or another light of any substance

His argosies before this sudden test like knights
Become benighted invincible and grasped

Sky sheds sky shells rise and touch their aftermath
Before they become undead

In the place we will not be when the walls fall
Charitas will only be cell

Will be cell and soon and never soon enough

Journalists of ought can hardly save this night

The will is a zipper at the edge of every plan

Civilization is stone cold called away to global loaves

Incommensurable like all truth what won't be spared

Must remain like a call on the other line of others

Lives or like tears frozen in time so-called

Note: there will be no revolution such as we plan it

It's not as they say just that the revolution will not be televised (i.e. mediated)

It will be realized only through that number which cannot be named

The bullet holes and the shrapnel like a music missing us a kind of coda

We are humiliated but then we are also heard

Red is a flavor and blue a waste
That smothers sunlight converting us

White like heat is not sighted
Or cited to a blanker gaze

An everything as were the words we're stuck with
They compose an index here

And not in the sky a system of numbers
As arbitrary as anywhere else

We care to call this scattering
So stacks will call us back

I want to grasp that flower too that is not her
Then ungrasp it

Like it were me and not her who can see
Everything and hear

The deer just beyond this line the sure
Beams their eyes
Are shined with

Just before they die in the hunt
But don't really
Because as soon as we're grasped we're not

For yes and not on high
For here and not sweet hereafter
For missed targets and not the
Deadly recalcitrance of belief.

Unsalvageable in Auburn

for Beth and Terry Cuddy

Visions come to everyone a voice made "soft white blue"

In the mineral light over water the place your body shone

A finger lake certain ways of place in our talk if we would

Keep speaking what would we do if there is a God it comes

Down here for a little while hit over the head where force

Wasn't before it speaks to the body not experiencing this

A non-site above our head yours the place where you led
Yourself the families to freedom history now this talking head
Floating in the CNN ether made distant by effects we can see
The outlines but not the letters more radiant for themselves
More than anything we can make them say a weariness about
Every monument a wreck of eyes as far as history can see

On the road for you and us this

Water gap crossing our shared

Name a country between voices

Honing place a pit stop forever

Yours when we were slower

Modes you started to tell a story

Our lips were a nipple around a

Similar sound I'll write though this

Instead you'll talk to a stutter

What words won't come between us

This highway today America I feel

We feel so far away

What was refused the news of it

Wasn't even fit to print

There being nothing to report

But to only feel it happening

This country framed falsely

By what appears

What does that water sparkling and

Green say about the water elsewhere?

Like sound the bees disappeared

Two thirds of them the real hum

Of their honey we want the body

To point to the body to parse us out

But we can't even find the corpses

Their stench so should the real suffice?

Nostalgia is not a groundwork

For this video no face will be

Healed by lines color hovers

For her eyes like a grief of names

Never given so unsalvagable

Did they open to these distances.

The Spirit of the Beehive

At this mirror stage
Blowing on bees
The terrifying *l'enfant*
terrible of more tender
Moments bleeding
A cat to be born or live freely
For resistance relies
On a belief structure

And ideology and conviction
Whether or not we see ourselves
Through the imaginary eyes
Of a Hollywood monster
James Whale's transfixed in a pool
The eyes reflect a politics
Prepared by trauma
Images of sticks catch flame

O what travesties of bees
Their fables what the image
Proves us to be for we does not
Know what it wishes for
In the name of country
Like an image before images
Had names or spirits their place
In abandoned dreams

The screen of being and
Family and soil
Throws up its light through the fog
The honeycombed lattice
Ripples in a child's eyes
Where stones were ever thrown
A nation dethroned itself
We was ripped to shreds

Sovereignty divorced connatus
From the general good
Of multitude drones leave
The hive abuzz with voices
Not able to communicate or critique
Whatever they'll become
Seized by an involuntary society
Caught in this projection.

Notes

Berkeley Island was written after Guy Ben-Ner's 1999 video by the same name. It includes quotations from Jen Benka's spring 2006 reading at St. Mark's Poetry Project, and makes conversation with Louis Zukofsky's poetry and Emmanuel Levinas' ethical philosophy.

Children of Men was written after viewing Alfonso Cuarón's 2006 film by the same title. Using the film Children of Men as a starting point, it considers Alain Badiou's concept of "Event."

Unsalvageable in Auburn was written after a trip upstate where I visited my friends Beth and Terry Cuddy and presented work at Cayuga Community College near Auburn, NY. Memorable on the trip were news reports of bees dying in large numbers, as well as Terry's video work about the abolitionist Harriet Tubman, who is buried in the town.

The Sprit of the Beehive was written after Victor Erice's 1973 film by the same title.