Gertrude Stein, spatial form, and prose poetry: how Stein uses the linguistic hybridity of prose poetry to present space as process.

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Abstract

My project explores how a language-based strand of prose poetry, indebted to the formal experiments of Gertrude Stein, can be used to stage space as a flux of becoming. It investigates the dynamics of this kind of prose poetry through critical reflections on my own creative practice as it has developed out of a close analysis of Stein's poetic innovations. My poetry engages with the problematic histories and geographies of my own local landscape and so, in this project, I have looked to Stein for poetic strategies to challenge static and exclusionary ways of conceptualising place. I build on the work of scholars Steven Meyer and Linda Voris to argue that it is primarily as a radical empiricist that Stein experiments with the prose poem, turning it into an active textual field within which she can stage spatial relations as processual. I add to Meyer's and Voris's findings my own original analysis of how Stein exploits a linguistic hybridity in the prose poem to develop a newly plural 'deixis'. By offering the reader fresh, dynamic ways to orientate themselves deictically in the text, Stein makes the prose poem into form where experience can be encountered as it emerges from the 'yet-to-be-determined', and where 'place' can be re-made in a flow of becoming.

As well as thus advancing the understanding of Stein's poetics, my project also adds to critical discussion of the prose poem. Prose poetry is frequently described as a hybrid form by its current theorists, but my project refines this definition by contributing a new linguistic account of this hybridity and its significance.

Contents

This thesis is presented with a 40mm left margin, and with a one and a half line spacing, in line with University's research degree procedures, apart from the Portfolio of Creative Work where spacing is used as a creative strategy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As a poet who works primarily in the prose poetry form, I have a particular interest in the work of Gertrude Stein who has been credited as 'mother of the prose poem',[1] or at least, of a language-oriented strand within the complex evolution of prose poetry. My project explores the dynamics of this strand of prose poetry through critical reflections on my own practice as it has developed in relationship with my investigations of Stein. The focus of my exploration is how Stein finds in the prose poem the potential for a hybrid grammar, a hybridity which enables her to develop it into a highly energetic, 'lively' and open-ended literary form.[2] Prose poetry is situated across both prose and poetry, making available the conventions and literacies of both. My creative practice investigates Stein's development of this hybridity to turn the prose poem into an active textual field within which she can stage space as dynamic and processual.

Stein was part of a milieu of artistic experimentation in early twentieth-century Paris, mingling with other writers and artists such as Hemingway, Picasso, and Matisse. Her interest in spatiality can be contextualised by the visual enquiries of Cubism.[3] But her interest in a processual staging of space can also be understood as the manifestation of an understanding of experience as process which she shared with contemporaries such as William James and Alfred North Whitehead.

I argue that it is primarily as a radical empiricist, indeed as a radical *literary* empiricist, that Stein makes of the prose poem a dynamic spatial form, that is, a poetic form which activates spatial (and indeed temporal) relationships and organisational strategies to stage experience as a flux of becoming.[4] My argument here builds on the work of

[1] David Lehman, ed., *Great American Prose Poems from Poe to the Present* (New York: Scribner, 2003), p.21. I take issue with the gendering of Stein's influence on the development of the prose poem but since this is such an authoritative statement of her importance, I have included Lehman's words.

[2] 'Liveliness' is one of Stein's aesthetic priorities. Critic Lyn Hejinian comments '[f]or Stein vitality – liveliness – is a supreme good' in her essay 'Grammar and Landscape' in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 112. I refer also to Hejinian for definition of 'open-ended' as opposed to closed form: '[w]e can say that a closed text is one in which all the elements of the work are directed to a single reading of it.' 'The Rejection of Closure' in *The Language of Enquiry*, p. 42.

[3] Harriet Chessman, for example, examines Stein's linguistic experimentation within a Cubist context in *The Public Is Invited To Dance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 75.

[4] I use the phrase 'flux of becoming' here in the context of James' and Whitehead's use of terminology to characterise their processual understanding of experience, an understanding

scholars Steven Meyer and Linda Voris who have demonstrated that Stein 'corrects' the work of James and Whitehead by taking language seriously and by making the literary text the stage for her radical experimentation.

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which I argue (following Meyer and Voris) is shared by Stein. In his posthumously-published *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912), James uses the phrase 'an immediate flux of life' to refer to his concept of 'pure experience' (p. 46) while Whitehead reflects on process as 'flux' (*Process and Reality*, p. 46) and as 'the becoming of actual entities' (*Process and Reality*, p. 22). Of course, 'flux of becoming' has taken on additional contemporary significance both within the work of more contemporary thinkers, such as Gilles Deleuze and in its recent revisions by feminist theorists and philosophers, such as Rosi Braidotti. In her book *Nomadic Subjects* (2011), Braidotti summarises the Deleuzian position as 'the affirmation of the positivity of difference, meant as a multiple and constant process of transformation. Both teleological order and fixed identities are relinquished in favour of a flux of constant becoming' (p. 246). She goes on to critique Deleuze's theory of becoming as one that both assumes a symmetry between sexes in their points of exit from a phallogocentric mode and is also distorted by Deleuze's own 'location as an embodied male subject'. She offers a feminist, 'post-Deleuzian' account that suggests 'the process of becoming, far from being the dissolution of all identities in a flux where different forms and connections emerge, may itself be sex-specific, sexually differentiated, and consequently, take different forms according to different gendered positions' (p. 259). Braidotti's account resonates with feminist and queer theorist Sara Ahmed's phenomenological exploration of the embodied subject, whose becoming involves differentiated processes of proximity and orientation (*Queer Phenomenology*, 2006). An alternative framing of my own project within a critical approach based on this philosophical and phenomenological paradigm would, of course, have been possible, as is suggested by Braidotti's use of an epigraph from Stein to introduce her own project of 'feminist nomadism' (*Nomadic Subjects*, p. 21) and Ahmed's fascinating discussion of textual orientation in the work of Sartre (*Queer Phenomenology*). Amaleena Damlé's 2014 study *The Becoming of the Body: Contemporary Women's Writing in French*, for example, applies a notion of becoming to questions of transformation and the limits of the body which resonates with my own explorations in *A Method of a Jacket*. Damlé uses a feminist-informed reading of Deleuze within a combined literary and philosophical approach as her main theoretical paradigm. However, whilst an awareness of its philosophical and phenomenological implications has necessarily informed my project, my research question engages specifically with the importance of Stein's choice of literary form and focuses on how she uses the *linguistic* hybridity of prose poetry to engage processually with space and place. I have therefore chosen a stylistic paradigm as my main approach for this project. Stylistics combines literary theory with linguistics to engage with the structures, styles, and functions of (mainly) literary language and to explore how the reader interacts with the language of the text. A stylistic approach has enabled me to identify and address gaps in the current account of the philosophical engagements of Stein's poetry, particularly around the significance of her formal choices and the detail of her grammar innovations. And it has provided me with the concept of 'deixis' as the technical framing for my account of the detailed ways in which Stein engages the reader in active and ongoing textual re-orientations. Broadly, it is within the discipline of stylistics that deictic theory has developed from its initial context of speech theory to detailed analysis of its application to the written text. For further detail, see my discussion of deictic theory in Chapter 3, but in summary, I argue that, as conventional deixis depends on the folds of hypotactic syntax to construct its spatio/temporal/situational coordinates, this arguably interrupts the 'flux of becoming' by congealing it into a hierarchically-structured discourse organised around a deictic centre. In my account, Stein pursues how such a flux might be staged more dynamically in the written text, exploiting the hybridity of her literary form to innovate with an alternative deixis. My choice of paradigm provides the specific tools for this detailed analysis but is not incompatible with the kinds of philosophical and phenomenological paradigms discussed above.

'Radical empiricism' was James's coinage for his theory of knowledge and being, central to which is his insistence that the relations between things are as much part of experience as the things themselves. Meyer's 2001 authoritative study demonstrates conclusively that Stein was deeply involved in the science and philosophy of her day and had specific connections with James, and also with Whitehead. She was exposed to James's ideas as a student at his Harvard Psychological Laboratory (Stein attended Radcliffe College, then an annexe of Harvard, from 1893 to 1897, where she famously carried out laboratory experiments on normal motor automatism under his supervision), and she stayed for an extended period with the Whiteheads in England as the First World War broke out. In her own recollections of Stein, Alice B. Toklas describes her as 'under the influence of James and Whitehead.'[5] However, Meyer's study pays attention not just to these physical connections but to the intellectual cross-threads between Stein's work and the thinking of James and Whitehead, teasing out the ways in which all three participate in the 'redefinition of entity as process'.[6]

Meyer particularly emphasises Stein's interest in a radical *literary* empiricism. He concurs with earlier scholars of Stein's radical empiricism that her interest in the connective parts of language can be aligned with James's definition of experience as including its constitutive relations. Jamesian 'experience', Meyer reminds us, comes into being through a dynamic connective tissue in which transitions and exchange are the important 'seams' of becoming. This 'connective tissue' is explored linguistically in the Steinian text. He emphasises that, for Stein, '[w]riting, no less than the human mind – or any entity for that matter – is an activity, not a substance; accordingly, it is made, in James's phrasing, of the same *non*substantial – neither substantial nor insubstantial – "stuff as things are".'[7] The difference between the apparent immateriality of writing and the apparent substance of matter disappears when we apprehend both as process. This idea, as I demonstrate in a later chapter, is fundamental to my own creative engagement with Stein's ideas in relation to place. Stein's literary focus for Meyer corrects what he describes as James' and Whitehead's neglect of writing. Whitehead, like James, suggests Meyer, 'failed in his philosophy of organism to take writing

[5] Allegra Stewart quotes Toklas in *Gertrude Stein and the Present* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967), p.23, n. 24.
[6] Steven Meyer, *Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 124.
[7] Meyer, p. 114.

seriously enough.'[8] In this respect, he argues 'Stein's radical empiricism serves to correct, not just complement, theirs,' nevertheless Meyer positions Stein with a group of important radical empiricist figures, 'figures such as Emerson, James, Whitehead, Langer, Edelman, Haraway and Varela' whose thinking is characterised by 'redefinition of entity in terms of process and hence as a function of both conjunctive and disjunctive relations.' [9] For Meyer, Stein's conception of a dynamic and pluralistic universe can be mapped onto James's insistence that '[w]hat really exists is not things made but things in the making.'[10]

Most subsequent scholarship has built on Meyer's findings. Joan Richardson, a distinguished scholar of pragmatism for example, concedes that Meyer's 'solidly constructed case' for reading Stein's work as experiments in radical empiricism renders any further investigation of her own unnecessary.[11] Linda Voris (2016) is also explicit about her acceptance of Meyer's conclusions: 'I agree with Steven Meyer that Stein's work is best understood when we "approach it in the spirit of radical empiricism in which it was composed."' [12] Her reading of Stein's compositions as spreading textual fields can be compared with Whitehead's understanding that 'the very essence of real actuality – that is, of the completely real – is process' and that 'everything is spread out in a spatial-temporal field, everything is process.'[13]

It is perhaps worth mentioning that Jennifer Ashton (2005) is a dissenting voice here. She reads Stein as turning away from experience and towards a Wittgenstein-like interest in the logical structures of language. However, Ashton's view has been persuasively critiqued by Maud Emerson (2019) who argues that Stein, like Whitehead, mistrusts any polarisation of abstraction and experience and works towards a new continuum of experience and logic in her writing. It is not true to Stein's practice, Emerson observes, to read into her work oppositions between materiality and

[8] Meyer, p. 318.
[9] Meyer, p. 318, p. 124.
[10] Meyer, p. 269 and see reference to James, n.5.
[11] Joan Richardson, *A Natural History of Pragmatism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 231.
[12] Linda Voris, *The Composition of Sense in Gertrude Stein's Landscape Writing* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 24.
[13] Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (1933) cited and discussed by Kate Fullbrook in her work on Stein's radical empiricism, 'Encounters with Genius', *Researchgate* <DOI:10.7765/9781526137654.00017> [accessed 13 August 2021).

experience or between logic and experience. Instead, she suggests 'Stein's poetry conveys the sense that experience and grammar are bound together in a way that make it impossible to imagine excluding one from the operations of the other.' [14] Emerson here builds on Meyer's analysis of how Whitehead was committed to uncovering the relation between general principles or abstractions, and 'stubborn facts.' [15] Whitehead's concept of 'rhythm' is a way of bridging this apparent gulf. For Meyer and Emerson, Whitehead's rhythm describes the way that abstractions or general principles exist in the cyclical variation of concrete detail through which they are constantly realised or instantiated. Each cycle repeats the abstract structure but realises it with the variations that are the rhythm of life. Meyer points out that this resonates with Stein's realisation that the repetition she attempted to use to demonstrate 'bottom nature' or 'type' could never occur without variation, and that liveliness depended on subtle modulations and variations within a structure of repetition.[16] For Meyer, this is Stein's version of Whitehead's 'cycles' of repetition with differences, his 'variations of cycles, and cycles of cycles' within which the general principle is immanent.[17]

Despite the significance of Meyer's authoritative work, Linda Voris (2016) is a more important predecessor of my project as she analyses Stein's radical empiricism with a greater attention to textual detail than the former. She builds on Meyer's general conclusions by applying his framework to her analysis of Stein's landscape compositions and what she sees as Stein's radical empiricist model of knowledge, manifested in an activity of *knowing* which takes place in the dynamic linguistic relations of her texts. She therefore approaches Stein's landscape writing of the 1920s as a series of experiments through which Stein comes to conceive of knowledge in 'spatial terms' and to treat 'knowledge as a process of holding open or suspending a space in which connections can form.' [18] The Steinian activity of knowing, argues Voris persuasively, takes place across the surface of her compositions, not in a hierarchy of moving from individual examples to higher order generalisations (within which we might say individual examples 'disappear') but instead, in an active engagement with the multitude of examples spreading across the page, making connections and relationships between

[14] Emerson, p.80.
[15] Meyer, p. 175 (the phrase 'stubborn facts' is Whitehead's).
[16] Meyer, p. 183.
[17] Meyer, p. 182, quoting from Whitehead's *The Function of Reason* (1929).
[18] Voris, p.55.

them, or finding differences. [19] This method is 'accumulative, and it is a productive aggregation, not a reduction by abstraction' and is claimed by Voris as, specifically, 'an empiricist model' of epistemology. [20] Like Meyer, she links this to James' insistence that 'the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience […] as the things themselves.'[21] 'Making sense' becomes 'a dynamic effect produced by sustaining the difference between properties of language.' [22] This radical empiricist model of knowledge, Voris points out, is plural and constructivist.

Voris also goes significantly further than Meyer in teasing out the implications of Stein's radical empiricist concern with the pre-predicative, or what Deleuze has termed the 'zone of indetermination',[23] providing a foundational argument for my exploration of Stein's experimental grammar. Voris argues that, as 'the "essence of what happens"' for an empiricist is 'dynamic flux, movement rather than determination', this is consistent with the attempt 'to come into contact with 'what is as-yet-undetermined.' [24] She extrapolates from James that radical empiricism means shifting the 'site and operation of meaningfulness from terms and their determination for subjects, to the lateral activity of relations, and thereby allows for the possibility of the pre-predicative'.[25]

For Voris, Stein's engagement with this pre-predicative 'zone' can be seen in her emphasis on 'transitive relations generated by an emphasis on parts of speech including prepositions, articles and modifiers that point without fixing reference and suggest dynamic movement rather than specifying states of being'.[26] However, Voris stops short of engaging with Stein's choice of poetic form for her literary experiments and thus fails to identify her use of prose poetry as a key Steinian strategy for staging the pre-predicative textually.

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[19] Voris views this as spatial 'making' of knowledge.
[20] Voris, p. 55, p. 53.
[21] William James, *The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to 'Pragmatism'* in *Writings, 1902-1910*, ed. by Bruce Kulick (New York: The Library of America, 1987), p. 826.
[22] Voris, p.46.
[23] See Voris's discussion of Deleuze's affinity with radical empiricist interest in pre-predicative, p.24.
[24] Voris, p. 23 (with reference to Stein's *Lectures in America*, New York: Random House, 1935).
[25] Voris, p. 23.
[26] Voris, p. 59.

What I add to Voris's findings, therefore, is my original account of the importance of the prose poem form to Stein, and in particular, my analysis of how Stein exploits a linguistic hybridity in the prose poem to develop a new, plural or hybrid deixis as an essential strategy in this experimentation. [27] Deixis, from the Greek work for 'pointing', primarily refers to those words or phrases that point to the time, space, person or situation of a piece of writing. As John Lyons puts it, 'the term deixis is used [...] to refer to the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns, of tense and of a variety of other grammatical and lexical features which relate utterances to the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the act of utterance'.[28] If writing as a technology has fundamentally shaped our representations and understandings of the world, then deixis has provided the syntactical architecture for how we have established its spatial, temporal, and other coordinates. Experimenting with a different deixis, then, might offer new possibilities of organising and experiencing the world. In Chapters Two to Four, I show how Stein draws on techniques available to her through the prose poem to expose the staleness and narrowness of conventional deixis and to offer new, dynamic ways for the reader to orientate themselves in the text. For Stein, the literary text, and specifically the prose poem form, becomes a site where experience can be encountered as it emerges from the pre-predicative and as it is freshly made and re-made in the flow of becoming.

As well as thus advancing the understanding of Stein's poetics, my project also addresses a gap in the current theory of the prose poem. Definitions of prose poetry have so far eluded critical consensus partly because it is a form that subdivides into different kinds. The existence of different strands within the prose poem form has been authoritatively established by Michel Delville (1998) who expands earlier definitions of the form by Michael Benedikt, arguing that the latter's account is derived from a too narrow selection of poets.[29] Delville sets out to be more inclusive and to acknowledge the presence of other kinds of prose poetry, including a specifically American tradition. He explores how a new programmatic aesthetic proposed by poets Ron Silliman, Bob Perelman, and Charles Bernstein, led to Silliman's manifesto for a new sentence and a

[27] Neither Voris, nor any other critic, have discussed the relevance of the prose poem to Stein's textual rendering of a radical empiricist process philosophy, nor, in their discussions of Stein's grammar, have they engaged with her specific experimentation with a new deixis.
[28] John Lyons, *Semantics*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.636.
[29] Benedikt bases his definition on the French-inspired, neo-surrealist work of Edson, Bly, Simic and himself. Feminist critic Holly Iglesias (2004) has been particularly critical of Benedikt's failure to consider the work of women prose poets.

new language-oriented prose poetry. For Delville, this new prose poem draws on earlier traditions such as Objectivist poetry, Dadaism and *zaum* but is also 'directly inspired by Gertrude Stein'. [30]

The presence of multiple strands and traditions within prose poetry is also acknowledged by the recent comprehensive and authoritative account of prose poetry by Paul Hetherington and Cassandra Atherton (2020), which argues that 'the prose poem has evolved in numerous directions in various countries, and prose poets have done so many different things with the form that it is difficult to summarise all its developments'. [31] This complex evolution sheds light on the lack of critical consensus on the defining characteristics of the prose poem itself. Instead, critics tend to talk about the impossibility of pinning down such a definition. Jeremy Noel-Tod's introduction to the encyclopaedic *Penguin Anthology of Prose Poetry* (2019) suggests that 'both its manner and its matter resist generalization', concurring with David Lehman, editor of an earlier anthology *Great American Prose Poems* (2003), who writes 'the only generalization you can safely make about the form is that it resists generalization. ' [32] Where critics have proposed defining characteristics of the form, this has not met with unanimous agreement. For example, Jonathan Monroe (1987) and Margueritte Murphy (1992) both identify what they see as an innate subversiveness in the form, basing this on their application of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to prose poetry.[33] However, the idea that prose poetry can be characterised as innately subversive is strongly resisted by Andy Brown and by Peter Riley, each of whom warn against the temptation to ascribe any such utopian tendency to prose poetry. [34] The lack of critical consensus is thus clear.

My own critical approach to prose poetry as a hybrid form is not new and garners significant support across the different camps within this critical debate. Hetherington

[30] Michel Delville, *The American Prose Poem* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1998), p.194.
[31] Paul Hetherington and Cassandra Atherton, *Prose Poetry An Introduction* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 12.
[32] Jeremy Noel-Tod, ed., *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem* (UK: Penguin Random House UK, 2018), p. xx. David Lehman, ed., *Great American Prose Poems from Poe to the Present,* (New York, Scribner, 2003), p. 13.
[33] Bakhtin uses the term dialogism to refer to a multi-voiced text which is constructed in relationship with another's words. He develops this usage throughout *The Dialogic Imagination* (1982).
[34] Andy Brown in *British Prose Poetry*, ed. by Jane Monson, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) and Peter Riley in 'The prose poem', *Fortnightly Review*, (04/2019) <http://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/2019/04/prose-poem/> [accessed 9th September, 2019].

and Atherton point out that an appreciation of its hybridity is common to many scholars of the form.[35] Indeed, they suggest that a growing interest in prose poetry is largely due to the contemporary 'embrace of apparently hybrid or new literary forms.' [36] But what I am proposing is something more specific. Stein identifies and exploits, I suggest, a particular hybridity in the way prose poetry brings together the deixis of prose and of poetry and uses this to release experience from the 'deadening' hierarchies of conventional syntax.

My own creative practice has made a vital contribution to these findings. In Chapter Five, I tease out the important ways in which my portfolio has played a key role in my research. My poetic practice is largely concerned with exploring the problematic history of my local landscape in the southeast of England, challenging the commodification and cultural enclosure of certain sites as 'heritage assets', and subverting any related, essentialist ideas about the self, identity and ownership. The Steinian prose poem has informed my own model of practice by suggesting poetic strategies through which to subvert and re-open such static and exclusionary ways of conceptualising place. However, the way in which Stein's experimentation has informed my practice has been an iterative process. I have used my own compositional process as a research tool to explore the textual mechanics and possibilities of Stein's practice which has in turn suggested new ways to read her work. From this, new research questions have arisen about prose and poetry as distinct discourses and about the significance of combining them, given the differences in their constitutive structures and conventions, and even in their literacy requirements.[37]

[35] They list Robert Alexander, Michel Delville, Stephen Fredman, Jonathan Monroe, Steven Monte, Margueritte S. Murphy and Nikki Santilli amongst the scholars who have acknowledge the hybridity of prose poetry (Hetherington and Atherton, p. 5).
[36] Hetherington and Atherton, p. 4.
[37] See Chapter Three for my discussion of the historical emergence of prose as a discourse, accompanied by a prose literacy.

Chapter 2: The Steinian Prose Poem

In this chapter and the subsequent one, I focus mainly on Stein's early prose poetry collection *Tender Buttons* (1914) to demonstrate how she develops the prose poem into a dynamic form for her exploration of a radical literary empiricism, exploiting its linguistic hybridity to stage a process of becoming. In Chapter Four, I turn to some of Stein's later work to show how she continues to draw on the prose poem as a multivalent and open-ended form for the staging of her later landscape compositions.

Stein began writing *Tender Buttons* while she was travelling in Spain in 1912. The book was first published in 1914 and comprises two sections of short prose poems which engage obliquely with various objects and foods and a third section, 'Rooms', which is an extended prose poem with a wider focus that includes objects, foods, interiors, and exteriors. Meyer considers 1914 to be the start of Stein's 'two decades of experimental writing framed by *Tender Buttons* and *Stanzas in Meditation*'.[1] He argues that *Tender Buttons* is the initial site for Stein's formal explorations in radical literary empiricism, proposing that it should be read as 'linked sequences of experiments' from which her radical empiricism 'can be deduced and made explicit from the compositional features of particular experiments'. [2] Voris, however, distinguishes the early experimentation of *Tender Buttons* from what she sees as Stein's later development of a radical empiricist compositional form in her 1920s 'landscape' pieces. Even though she agrees that a poem such 'A Long Dress' (read by Meyer as a key 'experiment' in radical empiricism) shows us the dress 'not as a static object but within a crackling field of energy',[3] she argues that the poems in *Tender Buttons* focus only on individual elements. It is only the later landscape compositions, she argues, that bring relations into view and thus manifest Stein's radical empiricist vision.[4] However, she bases her reading of *Tender Buttons* solely on its first two sections, 'Objects' and 'Food'. She does not engage with 'Rooms' which, as l demonstrate below, is concerned with relations and forms of organisation in exactly the way, according to Voris, that Stein employs them in the later landscapes. This is a serious omission. Voris's neglect of 'Rooms' means that she does

[1] Meyer, p. 270.
[2] Meyer, p. 36, p. 37.
[3] Voris, p.103.
[4] Voris, p. 105.

not examine the relevance of prose poetry, particularly the extended prose poem, when discussing Stein's quest for radical empiricist compositional forms.

Lyn Hejinian, however, reads *Tender Buttons* as Meyer does: portraits of things 'viewed in the process of coming into objecthood'. [5] Unlike Voris's incomplete reading, Hejinian includes 'Rooms' in her discussion and argues that Stein 'wanted to understand things not in isolated rigidity […] but as present participants in ongoing living – outpouring, fountainous living.'[6] In other words, entities reconceived as processes and congruent with a radical empiricist understanding of experience.

Stein herself emphasised the experimental nature of her approach in *Tender Buttons*. She compares her poems to the work, not of artists who paint what they remember, but those who have 'actually created the thing in itself that they are painting'. [7] She insists that for her, these 'portraits' were not a description or a 'remembering' but a staging of life itself, the essence of life being process or a movement 'lively' enough to 'exist so completely that it would not be necessary to see it moving against anything to know that it is moving'. [8] Or, as she writes in her later 1933 *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas,* the writing of *Tender Buttons* was driven by 'a desire to express the *rhythm* of the visible world'. [9]

I suggest a reading of *Tender Buttons* at the formal level as Stein's experimentation with prose poetry as a form for engaging with her vision of life as process, as indeed a 'rhythm'. It is the success of this formal experimentation which explains why she takes forward the extended prose poem form to use for her later 'landscape' compositions. In this and the following chapters, I demonstrate her transformation of a sentence-driven prose poem into a dynamic and kaleidoscopic literary form fit for her continued use over the next two decades of radical empiricist experimentation.

[5] Hejinian, p. 97.
[6] Hejinian, p. 101.
[7] 'Portraits and Repetition' in *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, ed. by P. Meyerowitz (London: Peter Owen, 1967, 2004), p.111.
[8] 'Portraits and Repetition', p.111.
[9] (My emphasis). *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), p. 130.

The emergence of the 'Steinian' Prose Poem in Tender Buttons

Stein differs from the poets who inspired Benedikt's account of prose poetry in her lack of interest in the unconscious (despite her studies in psychology) or in the form's association with the surreal. Her interest is primarily linguistic and focused on the form's reliance on the sentence and the paragraph which contrasts with the lineation of verse poetry. Stein does not explicitly discuss her view of prose poetry in any of her critical pieces, however there is an authoritative body of critical opinion, pioneered by Michel Delville and David Lehman, which has established the Steinian prose poem as the forerunner of the sentence-driven prose poems of the Language poets. Delville argues that 'the syntactic dynamics of Silliman's 'New Sentence' are directly inspired by the work of Gertrude Stein'.[10] Indeed, she anticipates what has been described as the autonomy of the New Sentence, the Steinian sentence standing in disjunctive relationship with both its preceding and following sentences and 'continuity being provided by word and sound repetition as well as by semantic transfer'.[11] These 'syntactic dynamics' can be seen in the apparent non-sequiturs of many of the *Tender Buttons'* poems. The poem 'A LITTLE CALLED PAULINE', for example, includes such surprising sequences as 'A whole few watermelon. There is no pope', where continuity relies on the series of modulating, melon-like 'o's. [12]

However, although Stein can be seen to anticipate the New Sentence of the Language poets, her experimental sentences can also be contextualised as part of her radical literary empiricism. Indeed, Meyer explicitly aligns Stein's syntactical experimentation in *Tender Buttons* with James's emphasis on relationality,[13] and even Voris accepts the Jamesian implications of Stein's apparent non-sequiturs, linking them to the former's insistence that 'the relations between things' can be disjunctive as well as conjunctive.[14] Lyn Hejinian has pointed out how many poems in *Tender Buttons* deal with fragile or temporary containers (bottles, boxes, carafes, tumblers, cans, vases and packages) reminding us how many words there are for cracking, spilling and breaking. For

[10] Delville, p 194.
[11] Perloff quoted by Lehman, p. 21.
[12] *Tender Buttons* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), p. 15. This edition used as unabridged text of the work first published by Claire Marie, New York, 1914.
[13] Meyer, throughout, but for example p.40 where he relates Stein's interest in the 'neuron' doctrine with a Jamesian account of conjunctive and disjunctive relations.
[14] Voris p. 24-25.

Hejinian, this preoccupation with the problems of containment is a familiar, modernist anxiety about the ability of language, of words themselves, to hold and contain meaning or perception. [15] However, I propose that these poems can also be approached through the lens of radical empiricism as Stein's resistance to the textual organisation of experience into brittle, static forms, leading to her exploration of a new, more fluid approach which releases its 'objects' from their conventional, syntactic (indeed, hypotactic) 'containers'. Her poem 'A LITTLE BIT OF A TUMBLER' for example, stages its broken glass in disjunctive sentences:

> A shining indication of yellow consists in there having been more of the same colour than could have been expected when all four were bought. This was the hope which made the six and seven have no use for any more places and this necessarily spread into nothing. [16]

The smashed glass releases 'more' of its 'yellow' as colour itself spreads beyond its containing object just as the disjunctive sentences enact the smashing of their conventional semantic bonds to release a new energy. Even the series of numbers ('six and seven') is released from 'any more places' and, liquid-like, spreads into nothing. 'Nothing' here seems ironic, both the infinite zero and the uselessness of the broken tumbler in terms of its practical function. In the meantime, its newly released aesthetic liveliness manifests as a burst of energy: not just yellow but a 'shining indication of yellow'. 'Indication' is significant here and anticipates my discussion of Stein's deixis in Chapter Three. Instead of positioning this yellow within conventional prose syntax, by which the 'indications' or pointings of a grammatical deixis might orientate our relationship with this 'yellow' (or a yellow 'something') as part of prose discourse, Stein offers us an intense experience of yellow seemingly capable of instantiating itself. Like Stein's famous 'rose', so this yellow is yellow is yellow.

Nowhere is Stein's interest in new forms of organisation more evident than in 'Rooms' which she refers to as one of her 'portraits' of 'enclosures that is rooms and places', provocatively linking it to *Tender Buttons*' exploration of containment.[17] The piece

[15] Hejinian, p. 102-3.
[16] *Tender Buttons*, p. 13.
[17] 'Portraits and Repetition', p. 112.

opens with the direction '[a]ct so there is no use in a centre.' [18] 'Rooms' continues to reflect repeatedly on what a lack of centre might mean to its own organisation. 'To begin the placing', 'distribution' and 'spreading' all appear in the opening sentences of 'Rooms' and this emphasis on spatial arrangements and how things are placed continues throughout the piece. The very first sentence is followed by a declaration: '[a] wide action is not a width.' [19] Width and length are measurable properties of fixed, centred forms of organisation as opposed to the dynamic activities of a 'spreading', decentred,[20] 'wide action' that Stein invites us to explore in 'Rooms'. The reader is asked to engage with sentences that are not just disjunctive but are also dynamic and multi-directional. Instead of progressing in a linear fashion, they fold back on themselves to modify and reframe initial propositions, thus resisting abstract generalisations.

A key passage in 'Rooms' exemplifies this, highlighting its concern with its own organisation ('collection') from the start:

> There was a whole collection made. A damp cloth, an oyster, a single mirror, a manikin, a student, a silent star, a single spark, a little movement and the bed is made.[21]

The 'whole collection' introduced here initially appears to comprise a straightforward list which adds up to the abstract 'collection'. However, the juxtaposition of such incompatible items as 'an oyster' and 'a manikin' immediately suggests some startling new relationships, and when the list ends with 'a little movement and the bed is made', the whole sentence starts to reverse direction. Hejinian describes Stein's sentences as 'multidimensional, multirelational' and Stein says herself that '[a] sentence is an interval in which there is finally forward and back.'[22] The reader is prompted to seek the activity that made the bed. But there is no preceding verb per se - the only activity here is the jostling of these words against each other and the fact that there is the mention of

[18] 'Rooms' in *Tender Buttons,* p. 43.
[19] 'Rooms', p.43.
[20] I use 'decentred' here to refer to forms of organisation which displace the individual human subject from its central role and thus release writing into a 'lively', plural, and multi-directional playfulness.
[21] 'Rooms', p. 46.
[22] Hejinian, p. 121.

'movement' as a noun. This suggests a new reading, that 'a little movement' should perhaps be read as the summation of the list, reflecting on its activity, rather than simply another item. Once that possibility is raised, new equivalences can be read into the list. Is the silent star offered as an equivalent to a single spark? Is a dead manikin all you find if you only look into a single mirror? Are these items not a list at all but a kaleidoscope of different ways of looking at one thing? This challenges our way of reading and looking. Can the bed, which a reductive look reduces to an inert, familiar object, be seen instead through a Cubist-like vision as 'made' out of layers of shifting perception? Is the 'collection' not an abstract generalisation of individual items but a plural way of staging textually the multiplicity and dynamism of any apparently single thing? The Steinian sentence, it seems, is beginning to serve a radical empiricist view of experience.

This is where Voris's reading of Stein becomes relevant. In her discussion of Stein's later landscape compositions as a 'homology' for her radical empiricist epistemology, Voris points out that the Steinian text demands that the reader let go any expectation that the text is proceeding towards a conclusion, and instead, engage with the immediate activity of the text.[23] Stein offers us the text as an active field, Voris suggests, in which many different transitions between elements are possible, and 'making sense' has become 'a dynamic effect produced by sustaining the difference between properties of language.' [24] The 'liveliness' or 'intensity of movement' so important to Stein, Voris argues, depends on the 'variation in intricately calibrated series, or a modulation in the intensity of relations, incrementally and across the composition.' [25]

Although Voris is of course talking about Stein's later compositions, this resonates strongly with my reading of 'Rooms' which I suggest is the prototype of this kind of composition: a spreading textual field structured across sentences which refuse assimilation into generalisation through their dislocations and multidirectionality, and across which the reader can explore relationships through linguistic connections, modulations, and aggregations. Whilst we might not see in 'Rooms' quite the 'variation

[23] See also my discussion of Voris's analysis of Stein's epistemology as one that takes an 'accumulative' approach to experience, rather than an assimilative one, and it is a productive aggregation, not a 'reduction by abstraction' (Chapter One).
[24] Voris, p. 50.
[25] Voris, p. 195.

in intricately calibrated series' that we see in the later landscapes, it is Stein's early experimentation with a decentred spatial compositional form in 'Rooms' that prepares the way, as she explores how to hold in a cohesive, but dynamic, form an endlessly shifting set of relations, transitions and transformations (the very 'ongoing activity of engaging with the transitions and relations between elements' that Voris sees as characteristic of landscapes).

'Rooms' presents space not as the 'enclosure' Stein ironically dubs it but instead as an unbounded and spreading arena. One room blends into another without ever fully leaving the first one behind: the kitchen 'stove', 'cake' and 'sugar' flow into 'bed-room', writing-desk and mirror. [26] 'Every room is open', Stein tells us, and 'in every space, there is hint of more.' [27] Moreover, there seem to be no walls enclosing this domestic 'interior'; this is not a space defined by a binary 'inside/outside'. What holds things together within this space are linguistic relationships. An example of this is the following:

> If comparing a piece that is a size that is recognised as not a size but a piece, comparing a piece with what is not recognised but what is used as it is held by holding, comparing these two comes to be repeated.[28]

Cohesiveness is provided by its repetitions of words, letters, syllables and sounds, such as 'comparing', 'piece', 'size' and 'recognised', and the near-repetitions of 'comes/compare' and 'held/holding'. These are repetitions with variation as words swap order and emphasis or are only repeated with a modification which activates a range of internal and near rhymes: size/recognise, held/hold. Stein draws our attention to this systematic use of (modified) repetition, pointing out 'comparing these two comes to be repeated'. The passage continues through an intense series of questions and qualifications as to the import of making comparisons, the outcome of which is not a conclusion but is rather a performance of the process of comparison-making as an inconclusive, ongoing and spatial, epistemological activity: 'is there an exchange, is

[26] 'Rooms', p. 43, p.50.
[27] 'Rooms', p. 44, p. 48.
[28] 'Rooms', p. 45.

there a resemblance to the sky which is admitted to be there and the stars which can be seen. Is there. That was a question. There was no certainty'. [29]

This passage gestures to the primary textual activity of 'Rooms' as one of constantly making and unmaking resemblances, forging new collections and configurations of words, phrases, and sentences across the text's spatial composition. It can surely, then, only be Voris's overlooking of 'Rooms' in her reading of *Tender Buttons* that accounts for her failure to recognise this early appearance of what Stein later dubs her 'landscapes'.

Voris's neglect of 'Rooms', and thus of the prose poem form, in the development of Stein's landscapes is all the more disappointing because her most original contribution to a reading of Stein's radical empiricism links directly with my research into Stein's experimentation with the hybrid grammar of the prose poem: her analysis of Stein's engagement with the pre-predicative. Voris argues that Stein shares with James an interest in what might be described as 'pure experience', that is, experience not yet shaped by human perception.[30] Voris is interested in how Stein attempts to engage with this textually by focusing on language's own ability to make connections, thus shifting the emphasis away from the activity of the subject and towards the possibility and potential of language itself. Through close analysis of what she describes as the 'intensive and gathering surface' of texts where 'words demonstrate their attachment to other words: nouns are transformed into verbs, verbs into adverbs, adverbs into adverbial clauses, and so on,' Voris demonstrates that in Stein's work 'subjects do not determine the possibilities suggested by grammatical variation'.[31] This allows us access to what Voris describes as 'pre-predicative' or even 'non-human' composition as words continue to attach to other words and parts of speech to transform into other words.[32] The purpose of this for Stein, Voris suggests, is to go beyond the limitations of conventional human engagement with a world of existing organisation, wrongly perceived as 'outside' the self. Voris says, 'the palpable intensity of Stein's sentences, their utter strangeness, suggests the vast and impersonal force that eludes classification

[29] 'Rooms', p. 46. This lack of 'certainty' is emphasised by the way Stein sets up an expectation of consistency or solidity by using some exact repetitions, only to dissolve it again as the repetitions slip into modifications.
[30] Voris, p. 169.
[31] Voris, p 169.
[32] See discussion of pre-predicative in Chapter One.

as subjectivity or objectivity, and that precedes or exceeds the self organized within the scope of iterative and familiar experiences.' [33] But despite this highly suggestive analysis, Voris does not engage with what is, for me, the most significant way in which Stein activates this 'pre-predicative', staging it within a radically transformed deixis. In the next chapter, I argue that some of Stein's most significant experimentation is with this aspect of conventional grammar.

[33] Voris, p.170.

Chapter 3: Stein's New Deixis

It is at the level below the whole sentence where I find Stein's experimentation most original and interesting. In conventional deixis, co-ordinates tend to be organised around one subjectivity or a single 'deictic centre'. This is the 'canonical' deictic situation described by theorists such as Karl Bühler and John Lyons.[1] I argue that Stein departs from this 'subjective' or 'egocentric' orientation of conventional deixis, activating the hybridity of the prose poetry form to develop new, plural ways of organising and orientating experience within her text. I build on Voris's account of Stein's engagement with the pre-predicative by proposing that *prose poetry* becomes the formal site for Stein's radical evacuation of the subject, unseating predication through her new deixis and thus gesturing to that 'vast and impersonal force that precedes or exceeds the self'. [2] And by engaging the reader in encounters with this 'pure experience',[3] and involving them in new activities of orientating and organising, Stein gives the reader a dynamic alternative to the inertia of over-familiar forms of organisation and the deadening effect of conventional syntactical structures.

Deixis

Contemporary critical approaches to deixis are largely based on the earlier work of Karl Bühler. In his book *Sprachtheorie* (1934), he establishes that deictic terms and elements relate to an 'origo', or zero-point, set by the speaker with regard to the spatial and temporal context of their utterance.[4] Bühler defends the inevitable 'subjectivity' of deictic expressions by arguing that they must be 'relative', they can only give information that is valid from a particular position, i.e that of the speaker. Thus, a deictic field is for Bühler a 'coordinate system within subjective orientation' whose points zero are 'here', 'now' and 'I'.

[1] See bibliography and note 4 below.
[2] I extrapolate my phrase 'radical evacuation of the subject' from Jonathan Levin's argument that 'Stein's interest in words and especially the movement of words leads her to a more thoroughgoing rejection of the organising centre of consciousness than anything James had imagined' in *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism and American Literary Modernism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 152.
[3] See Chapter Two for references and discussion of Linda Voris's 'vast and impersonal force' and William James's 'pure experience'.
[4] Karl Bühler, *Sprachtheorie: die darstellungsfunktion der sprache* (Jena: G.Fischer, 1934). See bibliography for details of the English translation I have worked from.

John Lyons (1977), a more recent deixis theorist, extrapolates from the work of Bühler and others to establish the notion of an orthodox situation of utterance. He defines deixis as a pointing to persons, objects, events , processes and activities, referred to 'in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a simple speaker and at least one addressee'.[5] Lyons draws on the work of Émile Benveniste to assert, despite Bühler's attempts at rebuttal, that 'person-deixis [...] introduces an ineradicable subjectivity of natural languages'. [6] This 'canonical situation of utterance' is what theorist Keith Green (1995) identifies as an essentially 'egocentric' model which, although it is derived from an analysis of speech, transfers over into the literary models of deixis that describe text.[7]

Some of the most significant work in extrapolating the relevance of deixis to written language has been done by cognitive scientists and discourse analysts such as Catherine Emmott (1997), Dan Macintyre (2006), Andrea Macrae (2019) and Peter Stockwell (2020), who have taken these ideas about deixis and applied them within the field of literature, primarily to narrative. Their most important contribution is the idea that the reader can project or 'shift' themselves into a 'deictic centre' (DC) established by the narrative or text, usually that of the narrator or of a character whose point of view is predominant.

This is where I see Stein engaging in something much more innovative. I argue that Stein departs from organising deixis around a single deictic centre, replacing this 'canonical situation' with a more fluid form of deixis compatible with her radical empiricist aesthetic and her interest in new forms of organisation as discussed in the previous chapter. From an early interest in parts of speech,[8] she develops multiple ways of pointing, combining an alternative approach to grammatical (or prose) deixis with an approach to deixis drawn from poetry, and fundamentally changing the relativity of deictics so that instead of being relative to a DC, they are relative to other words within carefully choreographed verbal sequences.

[5] John Lyons, *Semantics*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p 637.
[6] Lyons, p 646.
[7] Keith Green, "Deixis: A revaluation of concepts and categories" in *New Essays in Deixis, Discourse, Narrative, Literature,* ed. by K. Green (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), p. 11.
[8] Stein's interest in creative innovations with parts of speech is discussed by Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000), p. 96.

Stein and deixis

Current Stein criticism has little to say about the role of deixis in her experimentation. The few critics who mention it do not engage with the formal significance of prose poetry as the site of this experimentation. [9] The critic who comes closest to my own analysis of Stein's interest in deixis is Lyn Hejinian. Although she does not explicitly use the term deixis in her discussion of *Tender Buttons*, she pays attention to the phrase a 'system in pointing' used by Stein in the opening poem 'A Carafe, That Is A Blind Glass'.[10] Hejinian ponders: ' [p]ointing itself, the gesture, is relational, in that it locates a thing relative to the position of the pointing person and implies the presence of contiguous or neighbouring things beside which or among which the thing-pointed-to sits, and among which it might be "lost" if it weren't pointed to'.[11] This seems to be a definition of deixis in other words, although Hejinian's discussion focuses more on Stein's experiments with representation. I go significantly further than Hejinian here by proposing that Stein finds in the prose poem a formal way forward for her technical exploration of 'pointing' and its role in our encounters with 'being', [12] offering her a potential dynamism in its hybridity of conventions and grammars. The prose poem, situated across both prose and poetry, makes available to Stein the deictic traditions of both, enabling her to construct a new, plural, and dynamic deixis to underpin her construction of a 'lively' textual rendering of being as 'becoming'. To support this proposal, I tease out below the theoretical basis for differentiating between a prose and a poetic deixis which, I argue, combine in the prose poem. I then demonstrate how Stein develops from this hybridity her new radical deixis.

Hybrid deictic traditions of the prose poem

The critic whose work opened the way for my thesis is Steven Fredman (1990), who roots his discussion of the prose poem form in his argument that prose has a distinctive deixis, a deixis based in the structures of writing. He argues that '[through the use of hypotaxis], prose evolves a powerful way to create a deixis, an outside, folded within

[9] Quartermain (1992), Spaulding Cook (2007).
[10] *Tender Buttons,* p. 3.
[11] Lyn Heijinian, p 100.
[12] Hejininian refers to this as 'primary being', p. 97.

the text itself'. [13] He draws this contention from an important historiographic study by Jeffrey Kittay and Wlad Godzich, *The Emergence of Prose* (1987), which attributes the success of prose as a dominant signifying practice to its development of a specific prose deixis.[14] Prose, they argue, 'achieved hegemony as a new guarantor of truth when writers learned how to create deixis internally, to ground one discourse within another inside the written text'.[15] Whilst much poetry has 'fought back' against this 'hegemony' by privileging a lyric voice which attempts to recapture a deixis grounded in a notion of the voice and its presence, Fredman points out that a number of poets have taken an alternative route. They have, he suggests, developed a prose poetry (or 'poet's prose') out of the very foregrounding of the 'devices [...]and the deictic procedures of prose' as part of their investigation into language.

Fredman's work has been a valuable signpost for my own project, however I develop my own reading of Kittay and Godzich's study to suggest that the latter's analysis of the development of prose not only emphasises the importance of a distinctive prose deixis but also includes an account of a persistent *poetic* deixis. What distinguishes the Steinian prose poem for me is not just her foregrounding and subversion of prose deixis but the way in which she fuses it with a poetic deixis to create a strikingly new and plural grammar. Crucially, Kittay and Godzich expand on their account of prose's ability to 'refer to its own enactment and thus to construct deixis' by contrasting it with poetic deixis. Whereas performance, and by extension verse, relies on a performer as its deictic centre, and thus space and time are constructed within the deictic field of the performance, written prose constitutes person, space and time within its own textual environment. As they put it, '[p]rose operates in a space of its own making, a purely textual space, rather than one of performance'. [16]

But Kittay and Godzich remind us that poetic deixis does not simply disappear with the development of written prose and its new kind of literacy. It persists but it loses its authority as a guarantor of a particular kind of truth or authority. More recently, H.H.

[13] Stephen Fredman, *Poet's Prose,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3.
[14] Jeffrey Kittay and Wlad Godzich, *The Emergence of Prose* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Although written in the 1980s, this historiographic study of prose has retained its authority such that it is relied on by relatively recent literary criticism e.g. William Watkin's discussion of Ron Silliman's use of deixis in prose poetry (2008).
[15] Fredman, p.3.
[16] Kittay and Godzich, p. 34.

Yeung has provided a more detailed discussion of poetic deixis in her study *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (2015). She argues that, even on the page, 'the deictic force of poetry stems from embodiment' because of its connection with the voice/speech which are 'foundationally related to questions of the embodied nature of being'.[17] She relies on Denise Riley's claim that poetic deixis belongs to the realm of the senses and sees this as 'a major contributing factor to the spatial nature of human thought and articulation'. [18]

Stein's experimentation with deixis is apparent even in *Tender Buttons'* shorter poems. A LONG DRESS demonstrates this dramatically.

> What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle, what is the line that presents a long line and a necessary waist. What is this current.
> What is the wind, what is it.
> Where is the serene length, it is there and a dark place is not a dark place, only a white and red are black, only a yellow and green are blue, a pink is scarlet, a bow is every colour. A line distinguishes it. A line just distinguishes it.[19]

The dress is not a static object but appears to be moving, either with the residue of its construction or through some kind of static energy or draught – but who is perceiving this? Whose line is the 'line which distinguishes it'? or rather, whose line of sight? The reader is presented with multiple perspectives simultaneously. These multiple perspectives are made possible, in part, by the poem's strange deixis, in particular, its lack of any grounding pronouns around which the view of the dress is organised. Indeed, if we examine this poem's deictics further, it becomes apparent that its spatial and temporal coordinates are also left ungrounded and open. The poem poses the question '[w]here is the serene length' and replies with the deictic declaration 'it is there.' But where? We are given no anchor for this deictic. It seems that 'there' is referring only to a positioning within the written text itself. This 'impossible'

[17] H.H. Yeung, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) p. 44.
[18] Yeung quotes Riley (2000), 'perhaps that founding spatiality of thought, beyond which it seems impossible to reach, is partly based on our embodied senses', p.44.
[19] *Tender Buttons*, p.8.

inside/outside garment is only perceivable as it comes into being in language and is subject to the reader's active engagement with the text. Stein's deixis works here as a strategy for keeping the poem, and indeed, the garment, fluid and multiple. Our attention is shifted away from the activity of the subject, and towards the role of language itself in the activity of orientation and alignment.

Throughout *Tender Buttons*, Stein frustrates the expectation that, at the beginning of the poem, we will be offered a deictic centre with which to identify and around whom the co-ordinates of the text will be organised. However, the prose poetry form, with its dual allegiance, allows Stein not only to subvert such grammar conventions of prose but also to draw on the conventions of poetry, in particular its reliance on patterning derived from its oral roots. Rather than semantic relationships, *Tender Buttons'* poems tend to rely mainly on sonic similarities to create connections between words or phrases. The poem APPLE, for example, starts '[a]pple plum, carpet steak, seed clam, colored wine, calm seen, cold cream, best shake, potato, potato and no no gold work with pet'.[20] There is not much help here from conventional grammar. This is not even a simple list as it develops into the repetition 'potato' and the declaration 'no no gold work with pet'. There are no grammatical deictic markers to enable us to establish spatio-temporal coordinates nor to be confident about the relationship of these items to each other, or indeed to us. What Stein gives us instead is an intense play of sonic effects to create a network of connections between these words: the alliteration on the letter 'c', the rhymes of 'calm seen/ cold cream', 'steak/shake', 'potato/no', the sound echoes of 'plum/calm/cream' etc. Connections and relationships are established at a linguistic level through the material qualities of the words. The semantic co-ordinates of the textual elements may be impossible to pin down, but the language carries sonic and visual 'meaning' beyond the semantic, and the deixis of these 'meanings' orients them to the materiality of the language, its sonic, visual, and haptic qualities. This connection to speech/voice and to the other senses brings into play a sense of the body performing or reading the text.[21] This is a multiple deixis, then, the open-ended and active deixis of her radical prose deixis working with the visual and sonic aspects of her poetic deixis.

[20] *Tender Buttons,* p. 30.

[21] This kind of sonic patterning is discussed by Marchiselli (2016) as an example of Stein's 'queer sonorities' which destabilise semantic meaning and produces new associative meanings. See discussion in Chapter Five.

This experimentation again finds its fullest expression in 'Rooms'. The shorter pieces of 'Objects' and 'Food' retain a certain amount of more conventional 'edgework' (that is, a clear demarcation between one deictic centre and another signalled by chapter-breaks or sub-titles etc.) by providing titles which point towards what is featured in the poem, however complicated this pointing then becomes. In 'Rooms', even this edgework has dissolved. There are no sub-titles to direct the focus, and no deictic centre around which the reader can co-ordinate the text. We are warned, of course, by its opening sentences '[a]ct so that there is no use in a centre' and '[a] wide action is not a width' but with no deictic centre established to which the extent of 'a wide action' can be related.[22] Rather than any specific 'wide action' or 'width', these are left undetermined. The reader who hopes to land on a deictic centre later in this paragraph will be disappointed. It continues: '[a] preparation is given to the ones preparing. They do not eat who mention silver and sweet. There was an occupation.' Neither the 'ones preparing' nor those who 'do not eat' are offered as the centre of the text's deixis. This is confirmed by the final sentence of this opening paragraph, '[t]here was an occupation', which seems to be charged with a mysterious, emotional intensity but without providing any co-ordinates to help the reader locate this 'occupation' or themselves in relation to it.[23]

The fourth paragraph moves more explicitly into deictic territory as it concerns itself with spatial and temporal organisation:

> To begin the placing there is no wagon. There is no change lighter. It was done. And then the spreading, that was not accomplishing that needed standing and yet the time was not so difficult as they were not all in place. They had no change. They were not respected. They were that, they did it so much in the matter and this showed that the settlement was not condensed. It was spread there. Any change was in the ends of the centre. A heap was heavy. There was no change. [24]

[22] 'Rooms' in *Tender Buttons*, p. 43.
[23] 'Rooms', p. 43.
[24] 'Rooms', p.43.

This is another passage which resists any easy explication of its semantic meaning because its 'meanings' inhere in the linguistic relationships of the text itself, relationships which are made dynamic through Stein's new deixis. There is an illuminating passage in one of Stein's notebooks where she writes: 'think in stitches, think in settlements, think in willows'.[25] In 'Rooms' opening series of paragraphs, Stein seems to be exploring a new way of organising experience processually within a dynamic process of thinking as writerly-readerly activity: that is, as a 'settlement' spread 'there' on the page. A way of conceptualising change as a linear process through time is replaced by a spreading 'spatial' change as elements move into (and out of) place.

In the paragraph quoted, the process of 'placing' does not rely on a conventional organisation around subject and object. There is no 'wagon' of an organising consciousness or deictic centre to drive it. The use of the negative here acts to dislocate the reader from their attachment to a stable centre. We are clearly not in the canonical situation described by traditional deixis.[26] The only pronoun given is an unidentified 'they' or series of 'theys'. We have no way of telling whether the 'they' who 'had no change' is the same 'they' who 'were not respected,' or indeed, the 'they' who 'were that' or who 'did so much in the matter'. Is this the same 'they' or a series of different 'theys'? Similarly, there is no clear anaphoric link between the 'it' which we are told is 'spread there', and anything that has come before. Spatial and temporal deixis are similarly liberated from any deictic centre. Tense varies from the strangely negative continuous present of 'there is no wagon' to the continuous past of 'that was not accomplishing', or to past acts which appear to be completed ('there was no change' and 'they had no change') but with no co-ordinates to locate this past. Similarly spatial deictics are unfixed: all we know is that there is 'a continuous spreading' and that the 'settlement was not condensed'. As with temporal markers, spatial markers are left unfixed. The mysterious deictic activity of this passage is perhaps summed up in Stein's mischievous phrase 'It was spread there'. There is no way of identifying the personal, spatial, or temporal deixis of this sentence. We have no more idea about *where* 'there' is than we do about the 'it' which is apparently 'spread there'. Even the apparent

[25] This is quoted by Susan Howe from one of Stein's *Sentences* notebooks (1928-1929) in *Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives* (New York: New Directions, 2014), p. 19.
[26] See p.15 n.7 above for Green's description of the egocentric model which he sees as defining a 'canonical situation of utterance'.

completion of 'was' ('it was spread there') becomes uncertain, left *spreading* between the unfixed 'it' and 'there' at either end of the sentence.

However, there is a dense linguistic patterning, deploying sonic and visual similarities to create connections between words or phrases and reflect on their significance. The repetition of 'change' draws the reader to connect the phrases in which it occurs: 'There is no change lighter', 'They had no change,' 'Any change was in the ends of the centre', 'There was no change.' The repetition of change with the variations 'is no change'/'had no change'/'any change' etc highlights the syntactical change that *is* happening is to the word 'change'. As well as the sonic impact of the repetition, there is the visual concatenation of the moving syntactical position of 'change'. This is a poetic deixis which points to the activity and patterning of the language itself, a spatial linguistic activity mobilised across the surface of the text.

The deictic purchase of this paragraph is thus between its series of words and sentences, their differences, distinctions, and connections, demonstrating the 'spreading' activity described by the passage, and staging textually its assertion that 'they were not all in place'. The only guide we have for understanding the temporal deictics of this piece is the relationship between linguistic markers within the text. The only reference point for the 'was' and 'had' of the passage is the present tense established in the first sentence 'there is no wagon': temporality can only be established 'spatially' as a relationship between sentences. Thus, this linguistic activity delivers the intense, internal movement so important to Stein for her 'liveliness': it is here as a 'space of time'[27] in the relationships between words and sentences, as well as in the active involvement of writer and reader participating in this unfixed grammar.

'Rooms' proceeds, then, by networks of intense alliteration, assonance and consonance, for example: 'a little lingering lion and a Chinese chair, all the handsome cheese' or 'a single mirror, a mannikin, a student, a silent star, a single spark' or '[t]he tender and true that makes no width to hew'. The paragraph '[w]hy is a pale white' develops her earlier liberation of 'yellow' into a sustained interrogation of 'a single piece of any

[27] Stein avoids a binary distinction between space and time by conceptualising them as 'a space of time'. See Chapter Four, n.14.

color',[28] and exemplifies how Stein uses a repertoire of sound effects to point to connections across the surface of the text:

> Why is a pale white not paler than blue […] Why is there no necessary dull stable, why is there a single piece of any color, why is there that sensible silence. Why is there the resistance in a mixture, why is there no poster, why is there that in the window, why is there no suggester, why is there no window, why is there no oyster closer. Why is there a circular diminisher, why is there a bather, why is there no scraper, why is there a dinner, why is there a bell ringer, why is there a duster, why is there a section of similar resemblance, why is there that scissor.[29]

There is not only alliteration, assonance and consonance here ('a section of similar resemblance', 'that sensible silence'), there is range of rhyming and near-rhyming effects (circular/diminisher, oyster/closer, dinner/ringer) and a powerful, almost oratorical rhythm, driven by the insistent repetition of 'why' at the start of every sentence and accelerating through patterns of rhymed word endings (every phrase in the second part of the paragraph ends with 'er' or 'or'). The poetic deixis of this passage is unmissable, it is scored like an oral performance, deploying all the vocal aspects of language to create a network of material connections between words and phrases. This is characteristic of 'Rooms' as a whole, the presence of a poetic deixis signalled by the dense sonic and visual patterning: '[c]adences, real cadences, real cadences and a quiet colour', '[s]tar-light, what is star-light, star-light is a little light', culminating in the sonic fireworks of the closing paragraph with its almost mesmeric play on 'notwithstanding': 'notwithstanding Europe and Asia and being overbearing, not even notwithstanding an elephant and a strict occasion, not even withstanding more cultivation and some seasoning [...] all this makes a magnificent asparagus and also a fountain.'[30] This is a

[28] For Stein's sustained interest in experimenting with how a linguistic staging of colour in the literary might be 'livelier' than any specific instantiation, see *Portraits and Repetition*, p. 114 (Stein's 'colour thing') and also my relational use of colour in *A Method of a Jacket*, discussed in Chapter Five.
[29] 'Rooms', p.47.
[30] 'Rooms', p. 52.

deixis that is rooted in the materiality of the text and is relative not to a presiding DC but to a network of other words.

As with the 'wagon' paragraph, the 'pale white' paragraph still communicates powerfully that it is concerned with a kind of organisation, an ongoing, incomplete, spreading, *textual* flux: the flux of a radical empiricist 'becoming' staged in language. Even without an 'origo', the language itself is still engaged in deictic activity and the reader is drawn into this activity which (resonating with Voris's account) is able to point to possible connections ('why is there a section of similar resemblance') without being organised around an identifiable subjectivity or 'point of view'. This radical and plural deixis allows Stein to stage what Hejinian responds to as 'fountainous existence', an existence liberated from fixed predication and allowed to proceed independently of conventional human systems of organisation. It is the existence envisaged by Stein's radical empiricist vision of being as a process of becoming. This staging is made possible by the hybridity of the prose poem form, a form which Stein takes forward into her later explorations of space and place.

Chapter 4: Stein's Later Prose Poetry

Stein's first landscape play, according to Voris, is 'Lend a Hand or Four Religions' written in 1923 following trips to St Remy in Southern France and published in the volume *Useful Knowledge* (1929). I propose that this 'play' is best read as an extended prose poem, and that *Useful Knowledge* is most usefully approached as a collection of prose poems building on the earlier experimentation of *Tender Buttons*. The works contained in *Useful Knowledge* deploy the same linguistic and deictic hybridity as 'Rooms' and build on poetic strategies first used in *Tender Buttons* to engage the reader in activities of textual re-orientation and re-connection with the freshness of experience before it is fixed around subjects and objects.

'Lend a Hand' as landscape composition and prose poem

'Lend a Hand' is not a 'landscape' in any traditional sense. Whilst some of its motifs may seem connected to landscape by their bucolic nature, Stein dismisses any idea that she is concerned with a traditional pictorial landscape by parodying scenic 'views': 'The sky is blue. The hills are green. She is green too. And her eyes are blue'.[1] Indeed, there is strong critical consensus that Stein's landscapes are concerned, rather, with the presentation of 'an integrated, simultaneous, static whole which is made up of continuously moving parts.' [2] More interestingly for my project, 'Lend a Hand' proceeds through a textual accumulation comparable to the composition of 'Rooms'. Verbs of 'gathering', 'widening', advancing', 'arranging' and 'adding' reappear throughout 'Lend a Hand', self-reflexively indicating the activity of the text as it gathers and arranges and adds to its multiple series of linked words. In 'Lend a Hand', this proceeds more gradually than 'Rooms' and Stein appears more invested in relations between verbs than in nouns, their parsing and modulation, and in the posing and denying of connections. However, as in 'Rooms', these accumulations, connections, transitions, and modifications often rely more on the sound of the words than their semantic meanings. An example, perhaps more exaggerated than any of the examples from 'Rooms' but not fundamentally different in kind, is: 'Can you mention sweet neat

[1] 'Lend a Hand', in *Useful Knowledge,* p. 173.
[2] Dekoven, p. 123. This is a view shared by Hejinian, Will and Voris, although I would question Dekoven's use of the word 'static' here.

complete. Tender mender defender, joy alloy and toy.'[3] The repetition of 'er' endings is particularly reminiscent of 'Rooms', reinforcing my proposal that 'Lend a Hand' is best approached formally as an extended prose poem because of its combination of prose and poetic conventions.

Reading 'Lend a Hand' as a prose poem illuminates how Stein is able to stage 'space' according to her radical empiricist vision. One of Stein's main concerns in her 'landscapes' is to subvert abstracted and polarised concepts of space and time in order to present what she describes as a 'space of time' or what Hejinian calls a synchronicity in which nothing is superseded, everything - all its 'variations, contradictions ' - continues to exist.[4] Stein articulates this as 'the landscape not moving but being always in relation' where 'being always in relation' is an active state of combining and recombining elements into relationships.[5]

For example, at the very beginning of the play, the challenge arises of how to introduce a new character without disturbing the sense of a continuing simultaneity:

> First religion My sister
> Second religion My sister and her sister
> Third religion My sister or my sister
> Fourth religion Your sister
> First religion advances and then sees some one she advances and then she sees some one.
> Second religion Second religion they advance and they see some one, they advance and they see some one as they advance.
> Third religion She advances and she sees someone, she sees someone or she advances.
> Fourth religion As she advances she sees someone. Some one is seen by her as she advances.[6]

[3] 'Lend a Hand', p. 187.
[4] Hejinian, p. 117.
[5] 'Plays' in *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, p. 77.
[6] 'Lend a Hand', p. 170. Please note that in embedded quotations, I have retained Stein's use of capital letters where relevant to discussion of 'stage directions', emphasis or her distinction between North and north etc.

The passage continues like this for some time. It resembles one of those children's memory games that grow by addition, each child having to remember all the preceding items before adding their own. It creates a concatenation of repetitions or slightly modified repetitions; an accumulating or 'spreading' kind of advance. The new character is introduced as part of the existing fabric of the text, she is 'sister' to the speaking Religions. Her advance onto the stage proceeds by accretion, each advance connected to seeing someone, and then advancing with them. The spatiality of this advance is suggested by Stein's use of a continuous present and the preposition 'as' to suggest a simultaneity. She also deploys the notion of sisters as a 'simultaneous' intra-generational relationship as opposed to an inter-generational, parental/child relationship which would evoke an 'inappropriate' temporal axis. This is a continuing advance that leaves nothing behind, not a succession in which one thing 'succeeds' or replaces another. There is ambiguity over whether some of the phrases are stage directions ('action') or something else. Is 'First religion advances' an actual stage direction? Or is this still contained within Fourth religion's dialogue and simply part of a motif of describing movement? I have laid out the quotation exactly as Stein does, combining the gap between stage direction and speech typical of a play with the regular spacing of a conventional sentence. This dissolves any clear distinction between directions and dialogue, reinforcing that this is prose poetry, not playscript. Thus 'First Religion advances' no longer indicates an external action but is part of the textual fabric. And yet an advance *is* made, the new character has been introduced and is now on the stage; and the text moves on - by similar tiny oscillating moves - to introduce the house she may furnish and the water she kneels beside. And there are a few, significant temporal markers: the idea of **then** is briefly introduced: 'she advances and **then** sees some one'. This moment of apparent succession or temporality is quickly woven back into the text's spatial relationships as **then** is replaced with the more simultaneous **and**: 'she advances **and** she sees someone'.[7] This is a 'space of time' or a dynamic simultaneity. Everything is continuously happening and yet there is a constant play or scintillation of movement in the text's modifications and oscillations. And through these modifications, the character is both able to 'advance' and to be part of the continuing

[7] Where I use the image of weaving here, Hejinian (2000) uses metaphors of flattening: 'Time is pressed onto and spread over the imagined spatial plane' (Hejinian, p. 118). Weaving, I suggest, indicates the textured effect created such dense patterning, a poetic effect I draw on in my own creative work.

fabric of the text. A poetic pattern of sounds in this passage reinforces this sense: the sonic resonances and echoes form an aural weave, all those 'advan**ces**', 'somes' and 'seens' looping backwards and establishing a pattern of repetition and alliteration. These same sound-patterns also function to keep things lively and avoid stagnation by injecting some sense of pace and forward momentum through the use of shorter sentences and the occasional introduction of new sounds into the pattern which are themselves echoed and repeated.

Voris's interest in a Steinian 'space of time' in this piece is mainly linked to her suggestion that Stein's composition achieves a kind of 'immanence'. This links back to her model of Stein's 'sense-making' as an ongoing activity or process whose patterning of relations is able to yield an immanence, apprehendable 'all at once'. But it is here, at the heart of her account, where I find Voris's reading falls short. She argues that Stein learnt how to create this sense of immanence from French painter Paul Cézanne, and achieves it by playing with contradictory time senses: 'By imitating Cézanne, Stein conveys a palpable quality of immanence in which events can appear to transpire in the play with an eerie suspension of time that results from the expression of two apparently contradictory time senses, duration and immediacy.'[8] But I think this misses a more significant literary and linguistic strategy used by Stein here: the continuation into this piece of Stein's experimental work on deixis, achieved within the prose poem form, and ensuring the reader is drawn into active engagement with the processes whereby time and place coordinates are organised within the text and thus encounter the flux of 'pure experience' at the point of 'becoming'.

In 'Lend a Hand' (as in 'Rooms') Stein again dispenses with any stable deictic centre to organise a deictic field. It might be assumed that the DC would move from one 'religion' to the next but none of these 'characters' centre a deictic field, as indeed none of them inhabit a stable sense of time or place. They too are in flux and part of the textual activity. One of the exchanges between them confirms their lack of temporal and spatial stability:

First religion: Did she say that they were expected to-day.

[8] Voris, p.118.

> Second religion: Did they say that they had expected to stay
> that they were expected to come to-day.
> Third religion: Did she or did she not stay. Did she say that they
> were expected today or did she say that she keeps them there
> or are they coming to stay. [9]

The shifting of tense around expectation and staying makes it impossible to identify the temporal co-ordinates of 'today' while the grammatical movement from a proposed stay to an event of staying (that may or may not have happened) destabilises any notion of 'staying' as 'remaining in place' and dissolves the idea that there may be a stable place in which to stay. And so, the reader is not offered any stable possibility of aligning themselves with, or orientating to, any of the 'religions' - all co-ordinates surrounding them are in flux and can only be engaged with as an experience of deictic activity in process.

Whilst the grammatical deixis is as uncentred as in 'Rooms', there is a strong sense of poetic deixis dominating this piece. Not the deixis of conventional theatrical performance, pointing to the specifics of time, place and action we might expect from a play, but the rhythms, rhymes and sound-play of a poetic deixis orientated around the materiality of the writing. As we have seen above, it is only the sonic connectivity that links many of the verbal chains which form the texture of the piece: **'**if she folded roses or if she folded roses for them, if she folded roses for them did she pass them or did she pass them and fold roses for them or did she surpass them in folding roses for them.' [10]

This 'roses' extract, I suggest, also shows what underlies or produces the 'strange time sense' described by Voris. On the one hand, there is the constant activity of verbal and grammatical modifications from phrase to phrase ('folded/folded for them', 'pass/surpass') on the other, the sound effects knit the piece into a sonic whole - it is only as a whole and against the accumulating pattern that the full range of sonic effects can be felt, providing the 'dense relations' that 'evokes an illusion of spatial dimension'.[11] This is what Voris describes as the 'time sense of immanence' that 'combines a startling sense of immediacy with a sense of duration that does not depend

[9] 'Lend a Hand', p. 177.
[10] 'Lend a Hand', pp. 177-8.
[11] Voris, p. 124.

on the passage of time'. [12] But this is an immanence that derives primarily, I argue, from a multiple deixis that combines the immediacy of intense grammatical activity with the sense of duration that comes from the emergence of an embodied sonic pattern. This is the multiple deixis Stein pioneered in 'Rooms' and owes its hybridity to the prose poem form.

Staging 'America' in the prose poem

In several pieces in *Useful Knowledge,* Stein returns to her exploration of 'America', first attempted in *The Making of Americans* (1902-11). Barbara Will is one of the few critics to pay much attention to this collection. She suggests that its short pieces offer 'many possible points of entry for an investigation of how and what 'America' has come to mean for Stein' by this stage in her career.[13] Curiously, although Will's study of Stein's 'genius' pays considerable attention to her early studies with James, she does not approach Stein's later writings explicitly through a radical empiricist lens. However, Jonathan Levin supplies this framework, suggesting that by the 1920s, the 'America' of *Useful Knowledge* had become for Stein synonymous with experience as process.[14] Levin's account resonates with Stein's retrospective essay on 'The Gradual Making of the *Making of Americans'* in which her language has a distinctly radical empiricist flavour: America has become a 'space of time that is filled always filled with moving'.[15]

I want to build on this framework by suggesting that, in *Useful Knowledge,* Stein's use of an extended prose poetry form underpinned by her new deixis, enables her to stage this 'America' as an open-ended and plural textual process, and to engage the reader in activities of textual re-orientation and navigation. One of the most interesting and relevant pieces for my project is 'Wherein the South differs from the North' in which Stein explores these abstractions through restaging them as a set of linguistic processes, anticipating my own navigational deconstructions in *Stein's Snark.*[16]

[12] Voris, p. 129.
[13] Will, p.120.
[14] Levin, p.149.
[15] 'The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans' in *Look At Me Now*, p. 97. Looking back from the 1930s, she insists that she has pursued this vision in 'all the writing that I have ever done'.
[16] 'Wherein the South differs from the North' is only one of the many pieces in *Useful Knowledge* where Stein explicitly engages with the concept of America as a place and as a concept. Other pieces that engage with and interrogate the construction of a 'United States of America' include

'Wherein the South differs from the North' evokes the hugely significant history of cultural, economic, and political divides across the Northern and Southern states, including the Civil War and its aftermath. Although Stein does not refer explicitly to this context, she makes several references which strongly suggest it. 'This breaks up a union' comments the text, referring to its own activity but also resonating with the historical context, adding laconically: 'Plenty of violence.' [17] Rather than engaging directly with this conflict, Stein dissolves any fixed or polarised oppositions between an abstracted North and South and stages them instead as a textual process of a relative Northing and Southing. In passages such as the following, north only comes into being relative to a south, as it is orientated around an 'it', whose position I will show is itself unfixed, and against a south which can only exist in relation to a north in an ongoing process of linguistic differentiation.

> North what north. What north. What north and which North.
> Which is north. Which is north. Where is north.
> Where is the north. North of it.
> North of it. The north a north, it is north it is north of the south it is as south of the north it is as south it is as south of the north. It is as south of the north as that. [18]

If, as I suggest, this piece is read as a prose poem, it becomes clear how significantly Stein has deployed her new hybrid deixis to underpin her staging of place as ongoing textual process. Her use of a decentred deixis sets the whole passage in motion and engages the reader in a highly active reading. Conventional deixis would provide us with a deictic centre around which to organise textual deictics. However, the 'it' ('North of *it*') which might appear to offer us a DC around which to organise coordinates of north and south only comes into being in relation to a North which has already been introduced as uncertain. 'What', 'which' and 'where' have already been posed as questions about 'north' and 'North'. This 'it' then reappears as part of a series of relationships between north and south, none of which can be fixed: 'it is north of the

'Wherein Iowa differs from Kansas and Indiana', 'Business in Baltimore' and 'Near East or Chicago'.

[17] *Useful Knowledge*, p. 26, p. 30.

[18] *Useful Knowledge*, p. 23.

south it is as south of the north it is as south it is as south of the north.' This demands an active reading as, each time 'it' recurs (six times), it is modified by a series of small but significant qualifications such as 'it is north of the south' and 'it is as south of the north'. Is this the same 'it' whose position we are trying to pin down or is this a series of different 'it'(s) forming a row of different points on the compass or map? It is impossible to be certain as we are in the realm of the pre-predicative, before meaning has been fully organised; still part of a process of trying out different possibilities. The shifting or undetermined nature of 'it' is reinforced by the rhythm and impetus of the whole passage in which the initial staccato questions about north/North build into an extended sentence of rapid repetitions: 'The north a north, it is north it is north of the south etc.' This is launched by the apparent proposition that the north is only one possible north ('The north *a* north') which is followed by an unpunctuated rotation of many 'norths' and 'souths'. This is the rhythm of flux and flow and, as some of these sentences are almost palindromes, it is a flow which can run in both directions. Again, as in 'Rooms', Stein resists fixity at a syntactical level in order to stage the energetic flux of experience.

The verbal *similarity* between 'north' and 'south' starts to seem more important than the few letters that divide them. Indeed, the effect of a series of end-consonances (*th*) reinforces the sense that even their difference is inhabited by a similarity. Read aloud, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between 'north' and 'south' within their rapid rotations in this piece. This consonance is, of course, the emergence of Stein's poetic deixis that I argue accompanies her decentering of traditional grammar. It replaces the subject-orientation of conventional deixis with alternative bearings suggested by language patterns. In this passage, it emerges as a similarity, the '*th*' consonance which also involves the passage's use of *'th*e*'*, undermining any attempt to assert an absolute north by the addition of the definite article specifying 'the' north as a particular north. This consonance also undermines any attempt at finality in the statement 'It is as south of the north as that.' 'That' is brought into the consonance and is thus simply another term in a sequence of relative positions whose sonic similarity is in creative tension with the apparent activity of differentiation. Stein's poetic deixis supports the performance of 'southing' and 'northing' as a creative activity of linguistic patterning in which similarity is at least as important as difference.

And yet this lively performance of north-making and south-making is not naïve. It does not deny that there may be an inevitability to the emergence of north and south divisions. Their status as absolutes or identities is dissolved, but northness and southness re-emerge as immanent in the creation of relationships between them and in the ongoing, present continuous activity of finding what distinctions there are. North and south may be processual rather absolute, but there is something irreducible in the text's insistence on how each must constitute the other in the process of constructing themselves. They are persistently paired together in this piece, they 'nestle' each other: 'North and south nestles north and south. South and north nestles south and north. South and north nestles.' [19] Nevertheless, the fluidity, embodiment and internal tensions of Stein's multiple deixis thus perform the process of co-ordinate making (and by extension, world-making) as a linguistic process, and as such, it is dynamic, participatory, and plural. Deictic closure is made impossible throughout this piece as textual co-ordinates can only be established in an ongoing series of relationships and modifications. Given this motility of north and south, it is not surprising that place (and thus the place of 'America') itself emerges from this piece as similarly processual, becoming an activity of 'placing'; of relationship-making and difference-finding. Stein's radical empiricist understanding of place is as a verb, not a noun. As she dissolves any absolute sense of north and south, so she questions the naming of places. The passage asks '[w]hat do you think what do you think when each one has a name. Do you think that it indicates the place a place.' Instead of answering this chain of questions (what do you *think* you are thinking about?), the passage shifts away from nouns and names altogether and instead turns to an imperative, insisting 'Place it.' [20] In a rare concession from Stein, she presents a metaphor of the active work this requires, albeit one with uncomfortable colonial resonance for the contemporary reader. The reader must become an 'explorer' participating in 'constant observation and relative comparisons'. [21] I discuss this 'explorer' passage further in Chapter Five but it is clear that 'place' has thus become an activity – a textual activity – and is part of the process of experience constantly being made and remade from the pre-predicative. For Stein, it is language that provides a site for a potential encounter with what is not yet determined, 'north'

[19] *Useful Knowledge,* p. 29. Note how Stein uses the singular 'nestles' suggesting 'north and south' are an entity.
[20] *Useful Knowledge,* p.25. This imperative perhaps also takes on a meta-textual function, reflecting on the difficulty already discussed of identifying a referent for 'it'. Throughout the text, it is up to the reader to 'place' it.
[21] *Useful Knowledge*, p. 32.

and ‘south’ and ultimately ‘America’ itself, emerging mutually from the flux of the undetermined through a *process* of determining. But I want to tease out further the importance of her experimental deixis by taking a close look at the final paragraph of ‘Wherein’.

> North here and there. South here and there. […] Come to Mary. South here and there a name. Come to Mary here and there a name. North here and there a name. North, Mary here and there a name. Here and there a name south, Mary, here and there a name. Here and there a name Mary, north, here and there a name. Here and there a name Mary. Here and there a name. Here and there a name Mary a name. Here and there North a name. Here and there Mary a name. Here and there Mary a name South a name. Here and there a name North a name. Here and there a name south a name. Here and there a name. [22]

This final paragraph is clearly not a conclusion in the sense of summarising or making generalisations about north and south. Rather, it is a continuation of the processes of the text, here staged as a process of naming in which any notion of an essential link between names, identities, persons and places is replaced by an arbitrary activity of naming through which, it seems, any place or person could be named North, South or even Mary.[23] I want to focus on Stein’s use of the deictics ‘here’ and ‘there’.[24] In conventional deixis, ‘here’ would be closer, relative to the DC and ‘there’ would be further away. However, in Stein’s decentred deixis, ‘here’ and ‘there’ could be anywhere – the only thing we know for sure is that they are distinguished from and relative to each other, much as the text has taught us to experience north and south. Moreover, the lack of DC makes it clear we are in the realm of the pre-predicative in which experience has not yet been organised into a world of subject and object. Instead of establishing co-ordinates, this deixis is ‘caught in the act’ of establishing coordinates

[22] *Useful Knowledge*, p. 37.
[23] It seems that the same name could be given to more than one (‘Here and there a name Mary’) or that more than one name could be given to each (‘Mary a name South a name’) and so we are again reminded there is nothing fixed or absolute about any identity posited by a name.
[24] ‘Here’ and ‘There’ (and other co-ordinates) are explored in detail in my creative piece ‘Stein’s Snark’ and discussed further in Chapter Five.

as relative, not to a subject, but to each other. Indeed, coordinates – here and there, north and south – are treated as matters of linguistic distinction. Rather than concluding the piece, this paragraph serves to emphasise the point already implied by the text: 'here' and 'there' behave, just as we have already seen 'north' and 'south' function, as textual activity. Where conventional deictics are relative to a deictic centre, Stein's are relative to other *words* or parts of speech. It is only in the unfixed play of linguistic relationships within her literary text, Stein seems to suggest, where experience can truly be experienced as flux and as creative process. This is of fundamental importance to my own model of practice as discussed in the next chapter, with particular reference to 'Stein's Snark' in which the text itself becomes a crumpled, topographical map.

But with this relegation to textual function comes a new liveliness and energy, and the kind of movement which for Stein characterises 'America'. There is something almost incantatory about the rhythms and circling repetitions of this final paragraph. With the release of coordinates into the flux of experience, Hejinian's 'fountaining' is accompanied by a sense of exhilaration verging on intoxication. This is the intoxication of the softening and dissolution of the hard edges of a world of absolutes into a flux of possibility and process. It is the energy of Stein's explorer-reader rediscovering 'America' through being intensely engaged in the activity of place-making and re-making. It is a poetic energy, and one that I attempt to tap into as I draw on Stein's experimentation for my own model of practice, although as I discuss in the next chapter, I replace the colonial role of 'explorer discovering America' with the more hesitant and dialogic role of the reader as lost wanderer.

Chapter 5: Critical Introduction to Portfolio of Creative Work

My portfolio explores Stein's model of practice through a new body of prose poetry created for this project. It consists of a pamphlet-length prose poetry piece (*The Sleeping Place,* published by Guillemot Press, 2023), and a prose poetry collection which combines two extended prose poems, 'Stein's Snark' and 'The Method of a Jacket', with a lyric essay 'Selvedges: Poetics of the Edge'. This body of work responds iteratively to my developing understanding of Stein's experimentation with the prose poetry form and how its hybrid grammar enabled her to stage space and place as textual activity.

The linguistic focus of my final portfolio emerged from a preliminary series of creative explorations of spatiality and language within the prose poem form. The most important of these early projects was *Enclosures*, another pamphlet-length prose poem published by Osmosis Press, 2021, and included in my appendix. *Enclosures* was formative for my research as it uses various strategies to dramatize prose's instability at the very historical moment of its rise to pre-eminence as a discourse of supposed stability.[1] It is also an early exploration into the possibility of staging the reopening of textual 'enclosure', leading me to shape research questions focused on Stein's experimentation with 'closed' forms of conventional prose discourse. However, *Enclosures* relies on an intertextuality between text and textile, whereas the body of work presented in my portfolio emerges from my investigation of the linguistic basis for Stein's model of practice and is informed by my literature review of Stein's radical empiricist understanding of language as experience. Although I return to the relationship between text and textile in the later projects of *Selvedges*, it is to explore what the structures and behaviours of textile can offer to the internal fabric of the sentence.

The Sleeping Place

The Sleeping Place allowed me to experiment with my own constructions of place as a changing network of past and present relations. My emergent account of Stein suggested to me a compositional approach for a textual staging of this understanding of place, presenting landscape and its history as an open-ended series of provisional

[1] See Chapter Three for discussion of historiographical account of prose.

assemblages.[2] These linguistic assemblages draw on my developing understanding of Stein's grammar experiments but I also rely on a range of strategies very different to those used by Stein (such as illustration, ritual, performance, textual constraint) to respond to various ethical and aesthetic issues. This divergence from Stein's model contributed to my research as these departures clarified for me how rigorously Stein commits to her purely linguistic staging of experience. A new iteration of my Steinian account thus emerged from my work on *The Sleeping* Place, one with a much greater emphasis on how Stein uninhibitedly stages experience in language.

The Sleeping Place project came out of my discovery that in the 1920s, a Saxon burial ground was discovered and excavated at Guildown, which is situated on a chalk ridge (the 'Hog's Back') in Guildford very near to my family home. As I explain in an essay published by Guillemot Press:

> I discovered the earliest part of the burial ground dates back to the sixth century, but the site was in use for burials for the next five centuries. Pagan burials mix with Christian graves, alongside burials of peoples from a variety of tribes. Many of the graves were 'shared', containing the remains of several different skeletons or parts mixed together, suggesting it may have been, for a time, an execution place or the site of a massacre. Alternatively, bones may have been ritually mixed to make one ancestral body.[3]

My interest was captured by the complexity and multi-layered nature of this site and the way it so dramatically contradicts a nationalist myth of a 'pure', and indeed 'white', Anglo-Saxon originary. One of the aims of my project was to pre-empt any essentialist notion of this burial ground as a 'Heritage Site' of supposed Anglo-Saxon 'Englishness' with its associated claims of fixed and unified meanings of place and history. But it was

[2] My use of 'assemblages' here refers primarily to the use of the term by Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, for example: '[t]he assemblages at the heart of archaeology and performance are not of one or more homogeneous categories […]the assemblage, both practice and representation, is heterogeneous'. *Theatre/Archaeology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), p.56.
[3] Susie Campbell, 'Writing *The Sleeping Place*', *Guillemot Press Journal,* (2023) < https://www.guillemotpress.co.uk/journal > [accessed 25 April 2023].

the 1920s archaeological records of the site excavations which provided me with a template for how to approach this project. As I wrote in the Guillemot article:

> The archaeological records of the 1920s excavations of this site are held in my local museum archive. The main site plan was made by archaeologist A W G Lowther. He led the dig in its final stage, but his plan incorporates the notes and plans made by an earlier team, using a numbering system based on the order in which burials were excavated. The site plan is crowded with layers of finds and multiple burials, a teeming mass of layered information which demonstrates the choices and decisions made by different archaeologists and the way the understanding of the site and its burials kept shifting and changing. Perhaps inadvertently, Lowther's map provides a diagrammatic representation of this site as a one in a state of flux and constant revision.[4]

These archaeological excavations are staged in *The Sleeping Place* as provisional assemblages of language and visual collage, and out of these layers of complexity and insistent patterning the reader is invited to re-assemble the past. This approach was partly inspired by the post-processual archaeology of Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks and their definition of archaeology as 'a process in which archaeologists, like many others, take up and make something of what is left of the past'.[5] The work of archaeology, they suggest, is to forge assemblages which, if they are to be authentic and meaningful, must be volatile: 'the emergence of new meanings depends on the perception of instability, of retaining energies of interruption and disruption'.[6] This resonates with my understanding of Stein's model of practice as a continuous 'liveliness' and is exactly what I attempt to do in *The Sleeping Place,* its continual reworking of linguistic relationships demonstrating their contingency and instability.

The Sleeping Place takes the form of an extended prose poem which is structured into a series of mass 'burials', each one of which is headed by grave numbers and epigraphs

[4] Susie Campbell, 'Writing The Sleeping Place', *Guillemot Press Journal,* (2023) < https://www.guillemotpress.co.uk/journal > [accessed 25 April 2023].
[5] Shanks and Pearson, p.50.
[6] Shanks and Pearson, p. 52.

(and epitaphs) from the 1920s archaeological site report. The text of each 'burial' section that follows is constructed out of intricately-plotted repetitions, modifications and reworkings of linguistic relationships such that a pattern of echoes and reminders unsettles the stability of each piece, linking backwards and forwards to alternative iterations of the same text.[7] The density of these verbal echoes makes them quite challenging to exemplify but here I highlight a few examples from early in the poem.

The poem opens:

Here is a sleeping place

whose danse macabre & *DANGER OF DEATH* & who enters here

here is the place in full sight, so there is nothing to be done but start again.[8]

This opening passage sets up a pattern of repetition (of 'place' and 'here is') and of echoes, both internal such as 'h**er**e […] ent**er**s h**er**e [...] h**er**e, and external: the second line echoing a clutch of external sources. 'Danger of death' is taken from the safety warning posted on modern electricity sub-stations, one of which is positioned adjacent to the cemetery gates. 'Who enters here' echoes the warning on Dante's gates of hell. These opening lines also warn us that, despite what might appear to be a peacefully sleeping cemetery,[9] its apparent containment and manifest intelligibility ('in full sight') is the trigger for a new and very different way of apprehending it: 'There is nothing to be done but start again'. As these opening sections progress, this 'starting again' is realised in new ways of assembling the evidence. For example, 'here' and 'danse macabre' reappear rather differently in the sentence 'a dance of death for 1 & 1, how a free woman walks is the walk of one not born here'.[10] The danse macabre now signifies either the appearance of entwined corpses (1 & 1) or the death of the personal pronoun

[7] My construction of this intricate pattern of linguistic relationships drew on Stein's compositional methods for her 'textual arenas' such as 'Rooms', as discussed in Chapter Two.
[8] Portfolio, p. 78.
[9] 'Cemetery' from the Greek for dormitory or sleeping place.
[10] Portfolio, p. 81.

'I' which does not appear at all in this piece (until the Timeline). 'Here' now appears in its negation: 'not here'. In addition, the appearance of a 'free woman' is the beginning of an iterated series of relationships between excavated female skeletons. For example, one section begins:

> Still a daughter arriving is a fortress stronger than these hills whose proud head is prouder than the head of the river.
>
> Bone settlement is only down or across, a chalk downland erodes down.
>
> When a dream only shines before dawn, the bones of the limbs are often stouter and long.[11]

These configurations swap around through subsequent sections. For example:

> After rain the needle spins to another home where the dream of a daughter is the memory of a ship. Beyond the doorframe is a guarded wood or a hill in full sight so there's nothing to be done but start again.[12]

The 'daughter' is now only 'the dream of a daughter' following a repositioning of the 'dream' that 'only shines before dawn' (from the earlier section). And ringing through from the opening section is the repeated exhortation 'so there's nothing to be done but start again'. Meanwhile, the dense, internal repetitions and assonance of the sentence 'B**o**ne settlement is **on**ly ***down*** or across, a chalk **d*own***land er**o**des ***down***' are then themselves repeated and reworked in a subsequent section: 'Bone settlement is only across or down. Repeat, moving with the body close to the ground.'[13] This kind of linguistic braiding is sustained throughout the whole poem.

What emerges from this is a text which proceeds primarily by means of repetition, modification, and patterning. It aggregates as it proceeds, each new assemblage building on previous combinations. For the 1920s archaeologists, new finds did not

[11] Portfolio, p. 85.
[12] Portfolio, p. 87.
[13] Portfolio, p. 89. Also please note, when quoting from my poetry, I have retained capitals rather than adopting the MHRA convention of [lower case].

obliterate earlier conceptions of the site but rather added new layers of complexity. Similarly, the 'landscape' composed by *The Sleeping Place* builds up as the text continues, suggesting a concept of place as emergent and processual, immanent in the reading of the piece as it works its way through numerous iterations, disruptions, and adjustments. This place cannot be reduced to a unified meaning or an abstraction as it can only be apprehended through these cycles of instantiations and can never be complete.[14]

My approach to composition here draws directly on what I have come to understand as characteristic of the Steinian prose poem which proceeds through extended networks of linguistic connections and relationships, and which I described in Chapter One as facilitating an 'accumulative' approach to experience, rather than an assimilative one. It is a productive aggregation, not a 'reduction by abstraction'.[15] As Voris might say, the *place* of my piece is no more or less than 'an event of the text, unfolding as discrete examples multiple, splinter and recombine'.[16] Its provisionality is suggested by the discovery of yet another grave after the completion of Lowther's site report which demands a remaking of the cemetery place to include it: '& another/still to be counted.'[17] As the text scatters down the page, words rolling away like beads yet to be strung, we presume this will continue. The text's concluding 'Timeline' warns: 'perhaps there are many more burials to be discovered, hundreds of skeletons spreading down the hill towards my family home.'[18]

Underlying the volatility of the constant reworkings of the poem's linguistic relationships is my emerging understanding of Stein's experiments with a lively grammar. However, at the point of composing *The Sleeping Place* I had not yet fully articulated how rigorously Stein stages her processual vision through a reworking of syntax. And so, I adopted a non-Steinian strategy in order to destabilise my deixis, a strategy that had the additional benefit of bringing into my text elements of arbitrary choice and random chance, essential aspects of how *The Sleeping Place* presents its

[14] See discussion of Whitehead, Stein and abstraction in Chapter One, pp.4, also discussion of 'Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose' in Chapter Six.
[15] Voris (2020), p. 55.
[16] Voris (2020), p. 46.
[17] Portfolio, p. 105.
[18] Portfolio, p. 109.

conceptualisations of place and the past. In the 'Timeline', I describe how I adopted a textual constraint for compositional purposes:

> March 2021. I decide to use Lowther's site plan not just as a template for my text, but also as its skeleton. The plan shows 223 burials and so I create 223 pieces of text out of an imagined engagement with the material circumstances of the site. Each piece of my text includes a deictic, those parts of speech which establish the spatial and temporal co-ordinates of a piece of writing, but at this stage in my composition they are detached from any presiding subject. They are simply loose fragments of text whose role in place-making or poem-making is not yet determined. Tokens of orientation, they wait for sentences in which to embed themselves as milestones and signposts. Or gravestones.
>
> Late March 2021. I am inspired by the graphic quality of Lowther's plan to read it as though it were a page of text. I read it left to right and top to bottom, turning its burial numbers into a code or pattern by which to combine my text pieces into a whole. I arrange my text fragments into an order suggested by this code. As I do so, words attach to each number, randomly pooling around roots and squares. As the text comes into curious being, its deictics form new syntactic relationships, staging their temporal and spatial coordinates within the poem's newly formed sentences. These coordinates seem both random and plausible.[19]

Although the use of constraint in the process of composition is, of course, not part of Stein's model, this was just an initial stage in my drafting process, providing me with a skeletal structure of the text. The next stage involved conscious editing and careful revising to achieve something approximating Stein's replacing of a single organising centre of consciousness or deictic centre with networks of sonic and visual connections. Such revisions involved a Steinian attention to textual relationships as I reworked this initial skeletal draft into a visual and sonic patterning of the poem's textual arena. This

[19] Portfolio, pp. 107-108.

not only provides the cohesiveness discussed above but also restages the poem's deixis within a patterning that relies on the material qualities of the text and invites an embodied reading where non-semantic meanings can emerge across its surface.

Exemplifying this, the poem says: 'A severed horse-head wedged between the ankles warns against aligning burials with the square next-door'. [20] At one level, this warns against the violence of a reductive linearity in conventional historical narratives. But it also gestures to the procedure of the text as it forms deictic co-ordinates out of a pattern of verbal 'neighbours', that is, a pattern of repetition and alliteration. The deictic 'between' is 'wedged' in the middle of a series of verbal placement cues that all start with the letter 'a': the indefinite article 'a' plus 'ankles', 'aligning', 'anyone' and 'another':

> A severed horse-head wedged between the ankles warns against aligning burials with the square next-door. Anyone is crying murder. But here is another spring turning up & another.[21]

The blatant irrationality of basing relationships on verbal patterns exposes the hidden irrationality of a linear account of 'history' but also goes beyond it by participating in an ongoing process of relationship-making. By drawing on a version of Stein's experimental deixis here, the poem ensures that the 'square next-door' does not stay still in *The Sleeping Place* but is in constant movement.

As well as its 'burials' sections, *The Sleeping Place* also includes linking sections which engage with the Saxon glass beads which were found by archaeologists alongside bones and other grave goods throughout the excavations. These 'bead' sections partly work as a structural device but also have a 'meta' function, figuring the processes underlying the construction of the main text.[22] Again, I quote from the Timeline:

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[20] Portfolio, p. 83.
[21] Portfolio, p. 83.
[22] Also note the metatextual function served by Lewis Carroll references. *The Sleeping Place* plays on the coincidental juxtaposition of a Victorian cemetery, containing Charles Dodgson's grave, with the Saxon burial ground. Carroll and Stein shared an interest in using word games and 'nonsense' to highlight how language can function as a system to make meaning out of linguistic relationships.

> April 2021. I create and present at Willesden Library a place-making performance using different coloured glass beads. A large number of beads were excavated at the Guildown site, but most were too displaced to determine their original order. The subsequent re-stringings of these beads by museum staff resonate with my own approach to place-making, and so I adopt this as an additional textual strategy. I use modern Murano glass beads for my performance but, as far as possible, I duplicate the colours of the Saxon beads: reds and blues, greens and yellows, ambers and mauves, silvers, blacks, and whites. I also make space for the broken and missing beads noted in Lowther's site report. Each bead is linked to a bank of text fragments from my original store of 223. Taking a 12-inch length of red cord, I string 7 beads in a randomly chosen order, in which the audience or reader is invited to participate. Following the Willesden Library performance, I repeat this re-stringing 12 times.[23]

Based on this performance, the bead sections of *The Sleeping Place* form word-strings which thread through the text as the beads and their associated phrases progress through a series of reiterations. Thus, for example, this bead section:

> & a silver bead, a red bead, a yellow bead, a green bead, a black bead, a mauve bead, a mottled bead -
>
> - the full moon is quieter here than water at night and nothing is sharper than a strong beak or wind across an open field. No-one is more fleet-footed in a field of geese and apples ripen sweeter than the soft-stepping doe. Naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword and the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost, but how far past the yew tree is grieving - [24]

Is reworked/rethreaded as this:

[23] Portfolio, p. 108.
[24] Portfolio, p. 80.

> & a mottled bead, a silver bead, a red bead, a mauve bead, a red bead, a white bead, a black bead -
>
> - how far past the yew tree is grieving and the full moon is quieter here than water at night. Nothing is sharper than a strong beak or wind across an open field, and the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost. Tomorrow is following the dog as it chases its own tail and nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or adopting a new name, but naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword - [25]

These bead sections form a cohesive ribbon of repeated words, sounds and rhythm which link together the sections of text organised around burials. This works conceptually as well as structurally by responding to the way excavated beads from the site were subsequently restrung and included in a display of 'Saxon life'. The meta-textual function of these bead strings figures and draws attention to the way words and phrases have been strung and restrung as if they were glass beads, matching them by look and sound rather than semantics, much as the museum staff restrung the beads based on their colours and patterns. The patterning and rhythms of the way the beads are strung suggests a way of reading the text that takes the emphasis away from the semantic meaning of individual sentences and directs it towards the changing relationships between words and phrases. As each new archaeological find changed the meaning of previous 'finds' for Lowther's team, so each 'restringing' of words creates new possible meanings for the reader to construct.

But other meanings started to emerge from these bead sections. The arbitrary stringing of beads makes its own commentary on the ethics of how we deal with human remains. One of the questions that emerges from *The Sleeping Place* is how much time has to pass before human remains become simply museum exhibits, or indeed, used as the source for a poetic constraint? Stein uninhibitedly exploits the ability of language to

[25] Portfolio, p. 82.

'speak itself', [26] but I found myself increasingly confronted by an emotional and ethical need for some response to the fact of this place being the burial site of human individuals. The random operations of my process led to my use of burial numbers as numerical 'avatars' around which my deictics could temporarily settle, sentence by sentence. 'Say it's just 9 & 8 & 7 jostling for space' suggests the text pragmatically. [27] However, my arbitrary use of these burial numbers was complicated by my discovery that Lowther's site report included detailed notes on each skeleton excavated, including gender, approximate age, and grisly details of what seemed often to have been violent deaths. Using the numbers of these burials as the impersonal 'pegs' for my deixis began to take on ethical and affective dimensions, problematising the way in which my composition process randomly uses and replaces these numbers in its deictic organisation. Treating human burials as beads to be restrung began to raise urgent questions for my text to address.

Again, I reached for a non-Steinian solution. I explain in some detail in the 'Timeline' how I used numerical symbolism, ritual, and even an act of grave desecration, to assemble a symbolic or 'virtual' individual from my pragmatic use of burial numbers. I started to introduce a notion of seven stones as symbolic of human personhood into my text to take the place of what is evacuated by my deictic decentering. The relationship between what I label in the text as the 'pragmatic 223 and a ritual 7' starts to dominate the closing stages of the text's many cycles.[28] It seemed that my decentred deixis was itself calling into being an emotional response to the absence that occupies its unmoored coordinates, and thus recalling to the text an awareness of the grief and mortality banished by my initial procedural response to a burial site.[29]

From these reflections emerged new research questions concerning the ethical and affective implications of Stein's model of practice for my own concerns. As I discuss below, in my subsequent creative projects, I found new ways of responding to these

[26] See my discussion of Voris on Stein's interest in language's ability to 'speak itself' in Chapter Two.
[27] Portfolio, p. 81. Please note I am using 'pragmatic' here in its common usage not as a philosophical term.
[28] Portfolio, p. 79.
[29] I made an early decision in this project to work with artist-archaeologist Rose Ferraby so that her artwork takes on some of this affective work. See my discussion of the role of artwork in the published *The Sleeping Place* in 'Writing The Sleeping Place', *Guillemot Press Journal,* (2023) < https://www.guillemotpress.co.uk/journal > [accessed 25 April 2023].

questions through the use of a composite subject/centre of consciousness and a more intricate, multi-directional patterning and looping of sounds to create a sense of 'immanence', or apprehensible and cohesive existence, from multiple instantiations.[30] In addition, from my work on *The Sleeping Place* came a new clarification of the linguistic rigour and profoundly subversive nature of Stein's work. Texts such as 'Wherein the South Differs from the North' are perhaps stylistically more radical than *The Sleeping Place*.[31] This is because my deixis returns to an element of centredness as the text proceeds and, to some extent, the performance of place that went into the text's construction in the end abides more in the account of its constitutive processes and in its metatextual figurations than across the surface of the text itself. Stein's deixis, however, remains decentred and performative, constantly engaging the reader in the construction of its coordinates, and in the relationships and distinctions of a linguistic place-making. My deixis in *The Sleeping Place* works to create an uncertainty and looseness around spatial and temporal co-ordinates rather than Stein's more radical unanchoring of them.

Selvedges

The creative component of my project culminates in a collection of new prose poetry which responds to my fully developed account of Stein's model and revisits my earlier experiments with landscape and textiles, such as *Enclosures.* The collection is organised into three sections or 'fits', drawing on the term used by 'Lewis Carroll' for the sections in his poem *The Hunting of the Snark.*[32] In addition to the two extended poems in the collection, there is also a lyric essay. In my discussion here, I focus on how the two extended poems contribute separately to my project before briefly considering the contribution of the lyric essay and the collection as a whole.

Stein's Snark

[30] See my discussion of Voris on Stein's' immanence' in Chapter Four.
[31] See my discussion of Stein's deixis in 'Wherein the South Differs from the North' in Chapter Four.
[32] *The Hunting of the Snark: An Agony in Eight Fits* by 'Lewis Carroll' was first published in 1876. As with Stein's work, this text has perplexed many of its readers and scholars have propagated multiple interpretations.

This project re-engages with my ideas about place and landscape in the light of my learning from *The Sleeping Place*, but whereas the earlier project draws on a site map for its poetic, in *Stein's Snark* the text itself becomes cartographic, replacing the abstraction of the static, two-dimensional map by a continuously evolving and particular relationality. The re-emergence of Lewis Carroll as a source of inspiration for this project alongside my continued reference to Stein's model of practice is of course signalled by its title *Stein's Snark.* In my own poem, I draw on a tension dramatized by Carroll between the comical risks of inhabiting language as a system capable of generating its own ('nonsensical') meanings and the tragic risks of seeking a source of meaning and existence beyond it. Like *The Sleeping Place*, this poem comes out of my engagement with the local landscape, this time a wooded hillside nature reserve further along the same chalk ridge as it re-emerges on the other side of a river valley. Known as West Hanger, [33] it is famous for its steep woods, ancient quarries, and even more ancient trackways. It is also the route taken through this part of Guildford by the so-called 'Pilgrims Way', [34] but is less well known as the landscape within which Charles Dodgson wandered while composing *The Hunting of the Snark.* Neither Carroll nor Stein appears by name within the body of the poem but a fictional conflation of the two appears in the guise of a Virgil-like guide within the poem's staging of 'getting lost in a wood' and consequent quest for reorientation.[35]

Stein's Snark takes up the challenge posed by my use of non-Steinian poetic strategies in *The Sleeping Place* by responding more closely to the rigour with which Stein stages experience linguistically. In this later poem, place and navigation are presented as a series of linguistic relationships and finding one's way becomes a reading activity. The

[33] 'Hanger' refers to a wooded hillside, typically of beech trees.

[34] The 'Pilgrims Way' as it appears on Ordnance Survey maps of Surrey was largely an invention of a Victorian surveyor E. Renouard James who superimposed a single 'way' onto a multitude of pathways and tracks used by pilgrims, drovers, and other travellers. His book, *Notes on the Pilgrim's Way in Surrey*, was published in 1871, a few years before Dodgson wrote his poem, and inspired many writers and artists, including fellow nonsense writer Hilaire Belloc's patriotic *The Old Road*. See bibliography.

[35] This 'conflation' is Inspired by what I read as Anne Carson's tacit conflation of Gertrude Stein with Greek poet Stesichoros. 'S' in the interview at the end of *Autobiography of Red* (1998) is at times Stesichoros ('There is no Helen') and at times unmistakably Stein ('I will tell about 1907[…] everything everyone saw everyone saw because I saw it'). See bibliography. Stein is of course coming from a very different and much later philosophical position to Dodgson, but they are linked by their interest in language (and mathematics) as relational systems capable of generating meanings beyond the referential. 'Virgil-like' is a reference to Dante's *Inferno* where, famously, the poet, lost in a wood, is guided by the shade of Virgil.

form of *Stein's Snark* is one continuous prose poem, organised into 32 sections which correspond to the 32 bearings on a navigational compass. As demonstrated in the following section, NNE, each of these bearings is subdivided into four strands or 'pathways', inspired by the strata of historical tracks that meet in this place:

> NNE
>
> beyond legions along roads or crossing seas come new breeds of sheep
>
> NNE
>
> and the Lamb as holy familiar steps across into a new wilderness
>
> NNE
>
> newly willed as you face about and what is backwards if discarding the compass at this crossroads
>
> NNE
>
> crossing the path of a guide and fellow hunter of the difficult art[36]

The first 'pathway' in each section relates to the ancient trackway which predates Christianity (here there is mention both of the Romans and of the introduction of sheep farming), the second to the Pilgrim Way (here sheep become holy Lamb), the third to my own walks without the aid of a compass, and the fourth to Lewis Carroll's perambulations through the landscape as he composed his poetry. Here, Carroll's 'difficult art' (see epigraph) refers perhaps both to navigation and writing.

Although they might look like poetic lines, the four 'pathway' strands of each section are governed by a poetics of the sentence and are short, partial sentences. For *Stein's*

[36] Portfolio, p. 117.

Snark, I adapted a form of prose poetry termed 'free-line' by Hetherington and Atherton.[37] Complicating this apparently simple four-sentence structure is an intricate web of linguistic patterns which draw together the poem's parts into one tight knit. In NNE for example, variations on 'crossing' and 'cross' tie together the four 'pathways', as does the patterning of 'new'/ 'newly, 'wilderness'/'willed' and the cluster of words associated with wayfaring itself ('crossing', 'steps', 'roads', 'crossroads', 'guide', etc). This draws directly on what I have come to define as the 'Steinian prose poem' as a textual field (sustained by its hybrid grammatical underpinning) which engages the reader in a process of pattern making and creative construction.[38] *Stein's Snark* responds specifically to a passage in 'Wherein the South Differs from the North' (see Stein epigraph at beginning of *Stein's Snark*) where Stein characterises the kind of reading required to construct meaning from her work. Here, reading is characterised as 'exploring', a very particular kind of exploration which involves 'map-making' based on recognising pattern of repetitions through successive 'traversings' of the page:

> the explorer should be able to know how to and also to recognise the spots he has seen before and which he will recognise again as he occupies as he successively occupies as he occupies successively the places he recognises and not only that he occupies them successively but also that he will later be able to make maps of the region which he has traversed. [39]

Only through a layering of recurrent, non-linear readings of the text, and an active making of connections and comparisons, can the reader navigate the text:

> Such is the duty of an explorer. In short it depends on him in short he is to realise that he is to acquire knowledge of the directions of the direction of a direction of previous visits and successive visits. It becomes necessary therefore that he indulges in active plans and map drawing and also in constant

[37] Hetherington and Atherton offer this term in place of 'single sentence paragraphs' used by Silliman, pp. 95-98.
[38] See for example my discussion throughout Chapter Two.
[39] *Wherein the South Differs from the North,* p. 32.

> observation and relative comparisons. In this way he easily finds his way.' [40]

And this of course also characterises the kind of investigative and constructive engagement demanded by my own portfolio. But rather than 'explorer', a role still inflected by Stein's immersion in early twentieth-century colonial thinking, the reader of *Stein's Snark* is disorientated, and invited to find their way by seeking alternatives to old models of mapping in adopting new reading strategies. In performance, I deliberately present different combinations of extracts to encourage a non-linear, exploratory approach to my texts and to invite comparison of different ways of connecting the visual and sonic links through different 'visits and successive visits'. It is this aspect of my model that reviewer Anna Reckin describes as 'teasing and unsettling'.[41] And it was perhaps to this invitation that poet Rebecca Drake was responding when she shared, on social media, photographs of notes and questions ('mappings') scribbled onto the pages of *The Sleeping Place* as she read.

Stein's Snark's exploration of navigation and textual reorientation is initiated by the fall of a great tree. This tree which serves as navigational marker at the start of the poem, is brought down by Storm Eunice.[42] This 'event' coincided with a personal dislocation caused by the concurrent experiences of bereavement and being diagnosed with cancer. The tree's downfall thus resonated for me through layers of psychological, philosophical, and topographical disorientation.

The 'you' who appears briefly as an agent at the beginning of the poem, before themselves 'falling', connects the fate of the tree with their own hubristic summoning of divine presence.

> You set fire to God. A God-Tree by whose finger *here* takes
> shape but still you try to ignite the sacred with a spark.

---

[40] *Wherein the South Differs from the North,* p. 32.
[41] See bibliography for details of Anna Reckin's review of *The Sleeping Place* in Long Poem Magazine. https://longpoemmagazine.org.uk/reviews/susie-campbell-the-sleeping-place-guillemot-2023-ruth-wiggins-the-lost-book-of-barkynge-shearsman-2023/
[42] I accept the environmentalist argument that Storm Eunice and its resulting damage was due to the exacerbating effects of climate change. The destruction of the tree in *Stein's Snark* is not due to purely natural causes but is linked to the negative environmental impact of global capitalism which are referenced throughout the poem but most explicitly within the S sections.

What is summoned always answers. It smoulders inside the rotting wood as your hands blister. Nine days in succession you return to check the blaze is out and on the tenth day the storm.

Then you fall down.[43]

The loss of the tree's North-pointing needle creates the need for a new method of navigation. The hunt for the sacred becomes a stumbling quest through a place whose traditional devotional pathways have been so compromised that the whole poem is haunted by the possibility that nothing of it remains but 'your face on what is lost'. [44] As place is staged in the textual networks of the poem, navigation becomes a reading activity: the page takes the place of map and compass. The reader must negotiate the text's strange deixis in order to establish textual co-ordinates through a series of active 'chartings' of the text's patterns.[45] North becomes N, a graphic mark prompting and participating in a series of graphic and linguistic repetitions, relationships and ambiguous 'pointings':

N

here is hollow as this head of rotting wood is no more than your face on what is lost

N

lost is fallen here into death and bewildered as the empty trunk of Knowledge is uprooted on the Path

N

a path where you fall as North is and echoes inside its hollow navigation or any

[43] Portfolio, p. 114.
[44] Portfolio, p. 115.
[45] This also plays with the language of 'taking readings' when using a compass for orienteering.

N

and any here is always hunting for a there around this compass[46]

The deictic 'here' is prominent in this section but it is not relative to any obvious subject. Like N it can only be placed in relation to other words. The poem's deixis is not yet fully decentred as there is still a vestigial stump of a 'you' around which some (but not all) of the text can be oriented. However, later in the poem, this 'you' is discarded as 'dead yew' and the reader is left to establish coordinates in the text purely from its linguistic patterning. Even in this early section, the reader is warned that, much as Stein's North and South, 'here' can only be placed relative to another word, there: 'any here is always hunting for a there'.

The other important set of graphic marks in the text is of course the arrow marks used in place of quotation marks around the excerpts from *The Hunting of the Snark*. These arrows suggest that the compass needle itself has entered the text itself, not just as a graphic mark but as the deictics of writing. They point in two opposing directions to highlight the poem's dismantling of linear readings in favour of an exploratory traversing, and to indicate that coordinates in this text are 'Steinian' and thus relative to other words. They also suggest the function of the Carroll quotations is to include an intertextuality which allows the poem to spread in multiple directions. [47]

Complexity thus begins to emerge across the apparently simple surface of the text. The tree's fall marks the liberation of space from its confinement within the navigational compass, associated with the 'striated' divisions of the world into trade routes and territories.[48] This conventional compass is dissolved into a new series of spatial and temporal relations appropriate to a vision of space/place as a creative process of textual

[46] Portfolio, p. 115.
[47] See also my discussion of the multi-directionality of Stein's sentences in Chapter Two. As well as the Carroll text, *Stein's Snark* also includes echoes of Dante's *Inferno*, Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets.* This is part of the 'canonical' (and male) literary 'landscape' against which this poem's alternative navigations can also be read.
[48] The use of 'striated' here alludes to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1987) use of the term for 'settled' or enclosed space as opposed to a smooth nomadic space. See bibliography.

composition rather than as an external and fixed location. The maritime compass is replaced by an invented textual or 'Deictic Compass'. Each of the conventional bearings are substituted for 32 deictics (eg North = Here, South = there).[49]

The wandering reader's activity of textual orientation takes place within a 'landscape' staged as a 'space of time'. This landscape is constructed out of the relationships between and across the four temporal pathways now restaged as a spatial network of sonic and visual patterns. As these pathways spread across the quadrants of North, South, East and West, they draw on 'banks' of imagery allocated to that sector (North = trees and vegetation, East = stones and quarry, South = military and commercial features, West = valleys and caves). For example:

> NE
>
> this place where yesterday's root still twists against its emptiness and bends back towards
>
> NE
>
> or wards off fear of death with this yes and the day's flowery shrine and rattling bells empty as miracles
>
> NE
>
> miraculous as if you could write this in yesterday's green unnatural
>
> NE
>
> a natural terror if yesterday is lost in its ← perfect and absolute blank →[50]

[49] See diagram of deictic compass, Notes, p. 205.
[50] Portfolio, p. 119.

As this section interacts with the North quadrant, it draws on a bank of tree and plant imagery: 'root', 'flowery' and 'green unnatural'. And these quadrants themselves enter the poem as 'spaces of time' in the NW by W section:

> NW by W
>
> even a name after life begins to erode
>
> NW by W
>
> or this road to an Afterlife just a road and this knowing a sin
>
> NW by W
>
> a single after cannot follow this before and before
>
> NW by W
>
> but after four quadrants house space or quartering time[51]

The quadrants of the compass (or indeed the clock) which seek to contain or divide space and time are here unable to impose solid boundaries as they also participate in the poem's linguistic patterning and are pulled into word play on 'after'/'before' and 'after'/'four', 'time'/'time's count'.[52]

As well as being bound together in a pattern of verbal repetitions and echoes, the four pathway strands are also folded together around the 'deictic' associated with the bearing of each section and which is repeated across each of the four sentences. In NE it is 'yesterday' which is repeated directly in three of the four sections and emerges sonically from 'yes and the day's'. The prose deixis of the piece has unravelled significantly by this point in the poem – the 'you' cannot provide a centre by which to understand from whose perspective 'yesterday' is designated. Only in the poem as a

[51] Portfolio, p. 142.
[52] 'Time's count' begins the first line of the following NW section'. See also my *Selvedges* lyric essay for a discussion of an intertextuality here with T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

whole, which traverses ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’ (but not ‘today’ which is the today of each reading), can these deictics start to function ‘deictically’ and then only in relation to each other.

The linguistic patterning of *Stein’s Snark* differs from the series of repetitions in *The Sleeping Place* by utilising a looping structure inspired by knitting. As I say in the essay, ‘[k]nitting is a form of making deeply inscribed in this place’ due to its use by sheep drovers who made, wore and sold their own knitted garments.[53] Each sentence-paragraph loops back to the previous by means of a repetition or sonic echo of their last and first words. In the NE section quoted above, these word loops are ‘towards’/’or wards’, ‘miracles’/’miraculous’ and ‘unnatural’/’a natural’. The final word of this NE section is ‘blank’. This loops into the next section NE by E which starts ‘blank fog’ and continues with loops ‘fetch’/’and fetching’, ‘in doubt’/’as doubting’, ‘for flight’/’then flight’. And ‘flight’ then loops into the ENE section which starts ‘light’.

NE by E

blank fog if outside is a blind fetch

NE by E

and fetching in what is bare outside or shivering in doubt

NE by E

as doubting which bird trusts these feathers as if to
stretch out for flight

NE by E

then flight is to hope as inside spreads out

*

[53] Portfolio, p. 189.

ENE

and light between broken branches is a door to the dead
world and beetles for messengers[54]

The tightness of this linguistic looping, which is rarely a perfect repetition but more often a Steinian 'modulation', creates a dense wroughtness in the text which holds together its otherwise spreading arena. Its pattern emerges through many instantiations across the text, suggesting there could be many more. And there is some mysterious affect in this wroughtness, which emerges from the very expression of the overt loss and destruction explored in the poem. Against the poem's bleakness it offers an immanence, a pattern emerging from its instantiations that suggests the sacred has been relocated to the page itself, perhaps to the realm of the aesthetic and to the creative vitality demanded of the reader. However, this is a page constructed out of language as a relational system, vitalised by Stein but also haunted by Carroll's fear of its potential 'perfect blankness'. The poem disappears into darkness at the end lightened only by the hope of its ongoing repetition prefigured by its recurrent motifs of rings, loops, and echoes.[55]

A Method of a Jacket

As its title suggests, this extended prose poem owes something to Stein (the title alludes to 'A Method of a Cloak' in Stein's *Tender Buttons*) as well as to the main inspiration of this piece: a hand-embroidered garment made by Agnes Richter in the early twentieth century whilst a patient at Hubertusberg Mental Asylum.[56] The psychological dislocation which is part of *Stein's Snark's* exploration of disorientation becomes, in this poem, the more profound disturbances of trauma and mental illness. *A Method of a Jacket* responds to a need emerging from such disturbance for a new

[54] Portfolio, pp. 120-121.
[55] In the stand-alone version of this poem, it ends by circling back to N and the repetition of the first section. However, within the collection, the circle is left open to suggest that the work of navigation continues across the collection as a whole.
[56] More detailed context is provided in the portfolio itself as part of the *Selvedges*: *Poetics of the Edge* lyric essay.

'language of extremity'. This is the extremity of Richter's experiences of mental and emotional fragmentation, and institutional oppression, but it is also the extremity of language frayed and unravelled by my own syntactical experiments. Once the 'I' and the 'you' (the toppled tree and dead yew of *Stein's Snark*) are no longer reliable deictic centres to assist the reader in establishing the coordinates of a text, there is the need for a new kind of language – a Steinian or Richterian kind of language. Richter didn't just rip up her oppressive and ill-fitting patient's uniform, she refashioned it into a bespoke and flexible garment. Similarly, this poem addresses not just the need to unravel and tear apart the deadening uniformity of conventional language but also a corresponding need to remake it. Inspired by my 'reading' of Richter, I thus draw on some of the structures and behaviours of textile in this project to fashion a 'new language' which fuses what I have drawn from Stein's model of practice with my interest in textile work.

A Method of a Jacket is again a poem which offers the reader a textual arena to explore by means of a multidirectional linguistic patterning. [57] It is structured as forty interlinking sections. Twenty of these sections are each linked to a coloured thread, rotating through green, yellow, red, and blue, and utilising some textual fragmentation to suggest the unpicked selvedges which preceded Richter's remaking of the jacket. For example, the poem starts 'athre ada th readagree nthrea dat h read how a green', whole words gradually forming out of their unravelled parts.[58]

Each of these coloured threads draws into the poem a different version of the poem's 'subversive garment' motif: this is the motif of clothes used as an alternative form of communication by women. [59] An intricate linguistic patterning weaves these threads together to form the main body of *A Method of a Jacket,* staging in language a processual and Steinian sense of the self as a plural becoming. The experience of 'being' here is not contained within one individual subject but is a patchwork of subjectivities stitched and folded together along the selvedges of the text as garment.

[57] The choice of a (Steinian) prose poetry as its form not only means I can activate those linguistic aspects of its hybridity which can support a processual vision of experience and of the self as a becoming, but also can use it to form a subversive, dialogic relationship with those discourses of medicine and law which look to prose for a supposed authority and objectivity. See Chapter One on prose poetry's dialogism, or for more detailed discussion, see my essay 'Borders On Edges', in *Prose Poetry in Theory and Practice* (2022); details in bibliography.
[58] Portfolio, p. 148.
[59] See *Selvedges: Poetics of the Edge* lyric essay for more detail on my use of colour motifs.

This adopts Donna Haraway's proposal in *Situated Knowledge* (1988) of 'the joining of partial views and halting voices into a collective subject position'. [60] This collective subjectivity is made possible by the way linear temporality is reworked into this textual space as a 'space of time'. The coloured threads align narratives from different historical time periods by creating a connecting relationship or 'sisterhood': Sister Agnes, Sister Joan, etc. which teases out an idea of women's solidarity across the centuries.[61] Each sister functions like a pin or tacking stitch which temporarily fixes the temporal fabric of their individual narratives into a spatial fold and brings them alongside each other. They are introduced in connection with a particular colour as if stepping onto a stage lit by their own, coloured spotlight: 'Sister Agnes in a blue light takes a linen sack and a laundry number' initiates both Agnes's bond with 'blue' and the motif of her remade institutional uniform. Sister Kate, who inhabits a later decade, is brought alongside her within the poem through the repetition of 'sister', her own, coloured light, and her associated motif of what becomes an immodest garb: 'Sister Kate in a red light waits beneath a modest hat'.[62] Similar sentence structure and sound echoes ('takes'/'waits', 'sack'/'hat') bring the two sisters into alignment. Repetitions and patterning across the sisters' different coloured threads binds them together along a selvedge which is reworked as 'self-edges' to suggest Haraway's collective subjectivity.[63] One sister, like one thread, can only be part of a whole.

> Sister Agnes in a blue light rising. Domrémy, then. Sister Joan in a yellow light rising. Brookwood, then. Sister

[60] Quoted and discussed by Catherine Dormor (2020) in the context of her discussion of text and textile, p. 85. Meyer contextualises Haraway as a later participant in tradition of process philosophy (and the self as process) shared with James, Whitehead, and Stein, see Chapter One.
[61] In this context, see Whitehead's 'everything is spaced out in a spatial-temporal field, everything is process' (my Chapter One, p.3) and Lyn Hejinian's discussion of Stein's 'landscapes' in which 'Time is pressed onto and spread out over the imagined spatial plane' (Hejinian, p. 118). My use of 'sisters' was initially prompted by a Steinian-like enjoyment of the odd appropriacy of the verbal jingle 'Sister Susie sewing shirts'.
[62] Portfolio, p.155, p.157. Like Stein's 'saints' (*Four Saints in Three Acts*), these 'sisters' are part of a group of 'sisters' which enables differences and similarities to emerge whilst remaining open-ended: any number of sisters might be added to this group. (I subsequently discovered Stein's text, *Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters)* See also my Chapter Four discussion of the spatiality of sisters in *Lend a Hand*.
[63] This can also be contextualised as Stein's interest in seeing several parts of the object simultaneously or seeing an object in several different spaces, an interest shared with her Cubist contemporaries.

> Kate in a red light rising. And I in a green light and a white and partly. [64]

The 'coloured thread' sections alternate with twenty sections which have a more 'finished' edge than the fragmentary 'thread' sections. These justified sections (such as the one quoted above) are like stitches fastened into the poem's running threads and imply possibilities of continuation and cohesion against the thread sections' concern for plurality and multi-directionality. The 'thread' sections can be read in juxtaposition with the 'stitch' sections, but they can also be read in relationship with each other, as they are underpinned by matching syntactical structures across the different colours. The poem spreads multi-directionally to form a textual space across which patterns emerge and possible meanings can be constructed.

For example, in the following extracts from the opening 'green thread' section and the subsequent 'yellow thread' section, there is a matching syntactical pattern beneath the surface lexical variation. Compare, for example,

if surgically are now shiners as a background of grass becomes figure blade by blade repaired edges still your blade slips when alive is worked from the body's tissue to alien on this work table to not able to or crawl even not to be nor bear to nor be born yet moves these others whose whispers are a walk from keening and their wintering winter a green winter is this yew somanysomany

with:

if salutary are now weepers as willow bark soothes pain blade by blade sealed edges still this blade slips when awake is cobbled from the body's tissue to an act as dumb and swinging its head or kneel even not to feel nor bear to nor be felt yet stirs these others whose words are an ally to a kindling and their simmering summer a gold summer is swinging a side to side its head somanysomany[65]

[64] Portfolio, p.187.
[65] Portfolio, p. 148, p. 150. I have not indented these quotations to reflect the different page layout of the two series of prose poems.

The first, 'green' version, with its motifs of surgery and scar tissue, has 'when alive is worked from the body's tissue to alien', whereas the second, 'yellow' version (associated with the stirring energy of a Joan of Arc) has 'when awake is cobbled from the body's tissue to an act'. The hospital setting of the 'green thread', which has 'these others whose whispers are a walk' and 'from keening and their wintering', becomes the more rousing, militant, and yellow version: 'these others whose words are an ally' and 'to a kindling and their simmering'. The variations across the different coloured threads meet in a series of repetitions (word and letter), culminating in what becomes almost a chorus across the different threads, expressing the sense of a plural, patchwork self in the cry 'somanysomany'. Thus, from this dense linguistic patterning emerges a possible convergence of meaning in the concept of a collective sense of self/subjectivity.

Colour in this poem has clearly become detached from its traditional meanings.[66] Indeed, meaning emerges rather from the differential between the different coloured threads. It is less about the significance of any specific colour and more about how colour functions here as a marker of similarity and difference. And even this small sample of textual analysis demonstrates that *A Method of a Jacket* represents an intensification of my commitment to the construction of a textual space within which relationships can be explored through linguistic patterning. Not only does *Jacket* suggest that meaning is spread out over the surface of the text, but that 'being' itself emerges through the conjunctions and disjunctions, repetitions, and variations of the poem. The text becomes the dynamic connective tissue in which transitions and exchange are the important 'seams' of becoming.

The textual architecture which sustains the openness of this textual space as 'dynamic connective tissue' and supports its sense of becoming as emergent, processual, and constructed, is of course its innovative deixis. This is a deixis which exemplifies my findings about the role of Stein's experimental grammar to stage what Voris describes as 'the possibility of exploring states that have not already been determined by a subject-centred perspective'. [67]

[66] See my discussion of Stein and 'yellow' in Chapter Two, and experiments with colour in Chapter Three.
[67] Voris, p. 24.

The lack of a stable deictic centre in *A Method of a Jacket (*around which the reader can orientate the text) invites the reader into an active engagement with the text, involving them in activities of determining and organising syntactical relations (and coordinates), and thus, in a textual becoming, which is fluid and emergent rather than already settled around subject and object. This is a becoming which is constructed by the reader. Critics Levin and Franken do not engage specifically with Stein's experimental grammar but come quite close to the conclusion I am advancing here when they propose that Stein's rejection of an organising centre of consciousness (such as the textual deictic centre) transfers 'becoming' to the reader's own activity.[68]

For example, the first 'stitch' section does not provide a deictic centre (DC) to help the reader place deictics such as 'this' and 'here':

> Turned inside or outside and altered. To unpick is partly shouldering into a new fit and now this is no longer an outsize or under. Excess of embroidery is a green a yellow a red and a blue. Or pull against the white thread here to unravel what politeness of the consultant's secretary and at ease in statistical advantage. [69]

There is a blurring between the garment which is 'turned inside or outside and altered' and the subject of the verb 'shouldering' in the next sentence which could either be the wearer of the garment or still the garment itself, destabilising the 'this' which follows. There is similar blurring of the subject of the verb 'pull' in the last sentence. And in the longer final sentence the internal unpicking of syntax becomes more obvious: the lack of a stable DC and of a hypotactic ordering of phrases releases the word 'what' into a fluid state, possibly a question or an exclamation. This offers the reader options for how to construct the relationship between the 'white thread', privileged medical attention, the deconstructed garment, and the 'thread' of the whole section. Whilst this syntactical unpicking continues throughout the poem, the reader is also offered new seams along which to make possible connections. These are the seams of linguistic patterning which criss-cross between the stitch and thread sections as green, yellow,

[68] Levin, p. 11. and Franken, p. 148.
[69] Portfolio, p. 149.

red and blue, and re-emerge in patterns of image and sound throughout the poem, with the white thread appearing as a sporadic loose thread.

The sound patterns typical of the whole poem can be seen in microcosm in its opening sections, the green and yellow 'threads' and the intervening 'Turned inside' stitch poem (all three quoted above). There is play on 's' (ess) here, both within the sonic play of the 'Turned inside' section which includes an s/ess/ize alliteration and assonance (in**s**ide, out**size**, exc**ess**, politen**ess**, ea**s**e, **s**tati**s**tical), and alliterating across both its preceding 'green thread' section (sleeping, scratch, surface, surgically, sewn, salvage etc) and the following 'yellow thread' section (soothes, summer, sealed, self-edge, etc). This is characteristic of the dense sonic play throughout the piece, accompanied by the visual patterning apparent in repetition and the recurring use of colour and fabric images.

This does not just create cohesion. It also functions as a poetic deixis, drawing attention not only to the materiality (fabric) of language as a site for making connections and meanings but also its corresponding embodiment in the reader as a possible source of orientation and co-ordinate making. Thus, the reader does not simply construct the poem's collective subject but is drawn into participation with it, becoming part of its spreading 'sisterhood'.

Selvedges: Poetics of the Edge

The lyric essay, which completes *Selvedges*, offers a reading of the combined collection by proposing that a 'textile-inspired poetic might be applied to the "selvedges" of linguistic discourse', unpicking abstract grammatical structures such as hypotaxis, predication and deixis, and remaking them within the embodied text. This is exemplified in the two extended poems of the collection, showing how far I have travelled from the early poetics of *Enclosures,* in which I relied on an intermediate 'intertextuality' between text and textile, to the later methodology of this collection, which recalibrates the visual, sonic, and haptic qualities of language. But perhaps, more importantly, what I describe here as the new internal 'selvedges' of the sentence also functions as lyric expression of my project's findings: a reading of the Steinian prose poem as the site for new constructions of experience released from its conventional syntactic 'seams'.

The lyric essay form is of course another literary hybrid, combining elements of poetry, essay, and memoir. Some recent collections of prose poetry, notably Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* and Sandeep Parmar's *Faust,* also include lyric essays.[70] My essay is primarily a poetic meditation on the words 'selvedge' and 'salvage' and draws on some elements of 'memoir' to explore Hélène Cixous's notion of a 'scarry' literature.[71] It provides a useful 'test' for my definition of a prose poetry driven by a linguistic hybridity. The lyric essay utilises elements of hybridity, drawing on a 'poetic' or figurative rhetoric rather than a more expository argument to connect its synapses, using metaphors such as 'ambiguous selvedge of flesh' and 'tight seams of syntax' in place of logical connection. However, it is not charged by a tension between prose and poetic grammar conventions, nor does it release prose from its conventional syntactic hierarchies. I would not define it, therefore, as prose poetry in the strict Steinian sense. Nevertheless, it is another, related hybrid form which sits comfortably alongside prose poetry. It earns its place in my portfolio primarily by providing an intuitive bridge to my final articulation of Stein's model of practice.

[70] See bibliography.
[71] Dormor, p. 51.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Language plays a crucial role in how we think about space and time in our constructions of the world and in how we see ourselves as part of that world. Deixis is what we use to orientate ourselves temporally and spatially within written discourse, using markers relative to a deictic centre and relying on a syntax predicated around subjects and objects. Stein's remaking of this grammar, through her use of the prose poem, challenges and reinvents these traditional forms of organisation, thus offering us a poetics for re-imagining the world. By subverting the hierarchies and orientations of conventional syntax, Stein makes it possible to stage place as an interactive textual process: a newly imagined world re-emerging from possibility as a series of creative, linguistic engagements; Stein's energetic version of the flow of becoming.

In the poems of *Tender Buttons* and in her landscape pieces, Stein invites the reader to participate in the construction of place as a plural and processual 'space of time'. I have argued that she does this by developing specific aspects of prose poetry's fusion of genres, using its linguistic hybridity to experiment with an innovative deixis which is relative, not to the deictic centre of conventional discourse, but to other words within series of verbal relationships. She draws on the material qualities of language, organised into the intricate verbal chains of repetitions examined in Chapters Two and Four, to suggest that this new deixis might emerge from networks of visual, sonic, and tactile relations, thus offering the reader creative possibilities as to how they might construct space and place as a textual 'becoming', constantly re-orientated in, and by, an active reading of the text.

The poetry in my portfolio investigates this poetics as part of my engagement with the problematic histories and geographies of my own locality in the southeast of England, a part of the country famous for historical sites all too often used to justify nationalist views of 'Englishness' or to support essentialist ideas about identity, 'heritage' and ownership. This is an area to which I have a deep attachment, as it is where I was born and where I have chosen to make my home, but I also find much about it politically abhorrent. My own model of practice explores Stein's strategies and literary forms to re-imagine this 'place' and to resist deadening and oppressive ways of envisaging it and its associated personal and public histories.

Two of my pieces, *The Sleeping Place* and *Stein's Snark,* engage directly with Stein's model of space to explore how her approach might be used to generate different ways of staging the complexities of place as provisional assemblages of language, producing linguistic constellations held together through an insistent visual and sonic patterning. *The Sleeping Place* examines how procedural and syntactical choices can combine to produce the past as a present affect, and to suggest how ethical implications may follow from such aesthetic choices, while *Stein's Snark* plays with how to re-calibrate the navigational compass, replacing its thirty-two bearings with the complex loop and ply of patterned language. *A Method of a Jacket,* and *Selvedges: Poetics of the Edge,* build on these pieces to combine Stein's linguistic experimentation with the structures and behaviours of textile, in order to stage 'being' as a processual space of 'becoming'. The 'jacket' of my poem becomes analogous to the Steinian prose poem: folded, many-sided, and continuous with the body. And in all these pieces, 'place' and 'person' are like Stein's 'Rose' ('Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose'),[1] never generalised or abstract, knowable only by their immanence in an ongoing series of instantiations. What we know of Rose, or of Agnes Richter, or of a Saxon burial ground is always changing; there is always another 'rose', another 'bead' or 'burial', or another 'stitch' to extend the fabric of their becoming.

The importance of my findings lies largely in what they add to the critical understanding of Stein's poetics by attending to her choice of prose poetry as the form for her radical empiricist literary experimentation. Not only does this add significantly to the understanding of Stein's own achievement, but it also provides a more detailed context for those poets who have drawn on, and continue to draw on, Stein's poetic strategies and formal choices for their own work. One of the limitations of my own project has been the restriction of its scope to Stein alone. There has not been space to consider the importance of my findings for other experimental poets, particularly those who work with the prose poem or innovate with grammar. This is an area for future research which might usefully explore how far Stein's influence, particularly on writers working within feminist and queer frameworks, is due to the subversiveness of her underlying syntactical deconstructions. Further research along such lines might prove

[1] Stein returns to this phrase repeatedly in her writing, sometimes in the iteration 'A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose' but her first use of it appears as 'Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose' in the 1913 poem 'Sacred Emily', published in *Geography and Plays* (1922).

particularly significant for women poets engaged in experimenting with language. Deborah Mix has commented on the difficulty of establishing a tradition of avant-garde female poetry and on how problematic it can thus be for experimental women poets to situate their work within a tradition of women's writing.[2] Additional research might build on my findings to offer a more detailed context within which individual women poets might connect and develop their models of practice, informed by possibilities offered by Stein's experimentation with prose poetry as a site for radical linguistic enquiry. Certainly, as I conclude in Chapter Four, this reappraisal of Stein's model has been formative for my own practice.

My findings also add to the current body of prose poetry criticism, offering an important clarification of the significance of the form's hybridity. As a prose poet myself, I have sometimes been disappointed by what can seem rather superficial or arbitrary definitions of the form's characteristics, particularly those discussions that focus primarily on features such as brevity or 'justified' page layout, features which would exclude much of the prose poetry of Gertrude Stein, not to mention Lyn Hejinian, Claudia Rankine, Carolyn Forché, Anne Carson, CD Wright, and many others. My project offers a clear linguistic account of the hybridity of prose poetry as based on the different historical developments of prose and poetic discourses, and the resulting variety in their structures, grammars, and conventions. This highlights the prose poem's potential as a site for language-based experimentation. In my introduction, I referred to the current critical debate over whether prose poetry is innately subversive. My findings may not finally resolve that debate, but they offer a new linguistic basis for engaging with questions of what might be 'innate' to the form.

One of my personal aims for this project was to give an account of the prose poetry form which would allow me to articulate my own poetics or 'manifesto' and to demonstrate this through the creation of a new body of prose poetry. I have come to realise that I share with Stein (and indeed, Richter) the conviction that the sentence needs 'mending'. Its syntactical structures require radical alteration to make it 'fit' for

[2] Mix argues (throughout) that this difficulty is due to the erratic publication of women's avant-garde writing, and this is certainly true of much of Stein's work (e.g. *Useful Knowledge*) which struggled to find a publisher and even now is little known. See *Vocabulary of Thinking: Gertrude Stein and Contemporary North American Women's Innovative Writing* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007).

engaging with our contemporary understandings of the world as processual, emerging from (and contextualised by) complex networks of socio-economic relationships. This repair work, as demonstrated by Stein, depends partly on recalibrating the role of the sensory qualities of writing within the activity of meaning-making in order to restore to language some of its involvement with the body. Crucially, Stein's new deixis draws attention to the material and embodied qualities of its language and invites the reader to engage, not just intellectually, but also emotionally and physically. This speaks to the idea that knowledge, or in the case of my project, any kind of understanding of place, is not just an intellectual exercise but is also a sensory and embodied, even haptic process.

An aesthetic of materiality has been called for by some commentators seeking grounds for hope at a time of climate and environmental crisis. Iain Biggs, for example, argues that the way to a new understanding of our world and its fragile ecology calls for media and artworks which foreground the body's intimate interactions with the materiality of the world and evoke an interdependence of bodily skill, psychic attention, and conceptual understanding instead of more reductive ways of knowing that prioritise the purely intellectual.[3] Any work on rebalancing language's materiality - and in particular my explorations of Stein's recalibration of the relationship between the material and the linguistic - also resonates with the 'new materialist' thinking of Karen Barad, Elizabeth Grosz, Donna Haraway and others. Although there is not scope to pursue this here, further study might usefully relate my linguistic exploration of fusing textual and textile-based 'discourses' to 'material feminist' statements such as 'the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity', and might contextualise Stein's processual poetics within Barad's definition of 'discursive practices' as 'specific material (re)configurings of the world through which local determinations of boundaries, properties, and meanings are differentially enacted.'[4]

[3] Iain Biggs is an artist, academic and co-convener of the forum PLaCE International. He discusses the importance of the material throughout *Creative Engagements with Ecologies of Place* by Mary Modeen and Iain Biggs (London and New York: Routledge, 2021) and in a conversation with me here: https://www.placeinternational.co.uk/post/another-sense-of-deep-mapping-susie-campbell-s-the-sleeping-place .

[4] Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Towards an Understanding of How Matter come to Matter' in *Material Feminisms*, ed. by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 140 and p. 146.

Engagement with the material qualities of language highlights the reason why the conventional sentence itself might need 'repairing'. Its hypotactic syntax and its embedded, grammatical structures for organising time and space do the opposite of foregrounding its materiality. As I discussed in Chapter Three, a feature of the successful emergence of prose as a supposedly stable and authoritative discourse is its use to convey semantic meaning whilst downplaying the import of its material features, whether within speech or writing.[5] Indeed, this has prompted many modernist and postmodernist avant-garde poets to redress this tendency by experimenting with 'sound' poetry, 'concrete' poetry and 'visual' poetry. My findings position the work of Stein within this context, exposing how, as Stein uses prose poetry to present space as processual, she also remakes sentences, amending and materialising their underlying mechanisms to subvert their role in our everyday constructions of the world. This remade sentence has become vital for my own model of practice, its poetics activated within the hybridity of the prose poem. Prose poetry therefore emerges from my project as a literary form able to engage with and interrogate discourse itself, and as a vital site for innovation across language's deep syntactical structures.

[5] In Chapter Three, I refer to Fredman's discussion of poets whose experiments with language foreground the camouflaged 'devices' of prose.

PORTFOLIO

SELV/EDGES

A PORTFOLIO OF PROSE POETRY

Contents:

The Sleeping Place

1929. A gardener discovers a Saxon burial ground next to the Victorian cemetery where Lewis Carroll is buried.

Here is a sleeping place

whose danse macabre & *DANGER OF DEATH* & who enters here

here is the place in full sight, so there is nothing to be done but start again.

Seven pieces of chalk for the puzzle, 6 for a quiffed skull, 7 & 3 crookd spine & dis-placed pelvis, 1 & 5 & 2 & 4 calcium sudoku of limbs.

6

1 *7* *5*
&
3

2 *4*

Who could grieve for this
compass rose shattered and spread here

It is a sleeping place

until let's play pick-up sticks with a flattened pyramid, or organise gears for an orrery.

6
1
7
5
&
3
2
4

A kind of order in myth and a store of many dead have rolled apart or they are not quite dead things. Some game of chance is played in this country. Which body or skull belongs to: which hinders.

And the objects buried here are covered over just centuries ago and some yesterday.

A sleeping place where who dropped this blue paper mask has rotted & a few strings. Of beads probably.

And always a spreading & let's re-knot the missing string B TW N pragmatic 223 & a ritual 7.

& a silver bead, a red bead, a yellow bead, a green bead, a black bead, a mauve bead, a mottled bead -

- the full moon is quieter here than water at night and nothing is sharper than a strong beak or wind across an open field. No-one is more fleet-footed in a field of geese and apples ripen sweeter than the soft-stepping doe. Naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword and the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost, but how far past the yew tree is grieving -

Burials
223 220 219 217/218 222 221 129
119/118/117 120 116 10 166 186
11 135 113/114/115 13 14 9 8 7

All together in a shallow and very confused burial
Three extra heads
Disturbed during gardening operations

Requiescant.

Lullaby is a white song, a white song, a comforting RIP, for England is a member of the white Teutonick nation.

So lay down your 220 & 219 head-to-toe for hedge-leapers whose blooded home once taken is kept locked against strangers or poached into passport control. Or play a game with 217 & 218 in chase-follow, a supple haunch and limb, in which the winner builds their lodge here, rests in peace, weaving mud with sticks to block the paths. Or piss of flesh-biter pissing on boundaries keeps guard of huts built on bones, their new bone-hearths.

F T F R TH S L F RTH R NS S LS TH S FAT FUR THI SEEL IF OTHERIENS AS ELSO THUS FIT FOR THE SOUL OF ARTHURIANS IS ALSO THIS: GNL ND S W NDERF LLY ND MYST R SLY ANGLUND AS O WINDORFALLY END MYSTIREAOSLY ENGLAND IS A WONDERFULLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY local survival of the free Norse-Saxon race. There is a proud pride to be an Anglo-Saxon in the Church of non Angli sed Angeli.

Say it's just 9 & 8 & 7 jostling for space, gagged, ankles bound and pushed face down. Year worms into year. Broken knuckles and broken mouth yet still sleeping in one bed. To stay though there are two others crushing your ribs and the cold thighbone of your neighbour is where your elbow is.

A dance of death for 1 & 1, how a free woman walks is the walk of one not born here. Look West to East for an early flowering, show devilish sly bones in a cocked hat and a large jaw to fright the holy.

Cousins, break the circle before the story is done, naming these oak trees for an old god is a curse: come out, old gods, empty your stones and wells lest an Arthur and another make a hero from this crowd. Yet another FTH R OTHER ARTHUR whose followers rest or assemble against invaders or stand.

Along this chalk-ridge, horse-headed wanderers are not returning to Camelot, and imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers here. But not if planning permission is: and they who fell asleep.

In pacem requiescant.

& a mottled bead, a silver bead, a red bead, a mauve bead, a red bead, a white bead, a black bead -

- how far past the yew tree is grieving and the full moon is quieter here than water at night. Nothing is sharper than a strong beak or wind across an open field, and the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost. Tomorrow is following the dog as it chases its own tail and nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or adopting a new name, but naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword -

Burials
18 74 111
170/171/172/173/174/175
133 17 110 112 6 19 124/125

There were buried at Guildown a very considerable number of people who were not Saxons

A severed horse-head wedged between the ankles warns against aligning burials with the square next-door. Anyone is crying murder. But here is another spring turning up & another.

It is private land, no permission to look, but follow the line of a scar to the truth of a theft. The sun cuts a shadow faster than this axe and the best thief is waiting for the longest shadow. Not to trespass surely keeps out the day after tomorrow. No-one is more fleet-footed in the land of thieves and what's left behind at harvest is winter's curse: B R D WH T TH R TY I BAREAD WHUTU OETHERATY A BURIED WHITE AUTHORITY.

Play 19 for *he's a local hero* as though he died yesterday and not buried in a grave tilted 45 degrees through chalk, lying side by side with a white rabbit, head pillowed.

& a mauve bead, a white bead, a blue bead, a mottled bead, a black bead, a yellow bead, a blue bead -

- the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost and nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or adopting a new name. How a free woman walks is the walk of one not born here and how far past the yew tree is grieving. Naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword and no-one is more fleet-footed in a field of geese, but whose proud head is prouder than the head of the river -

Burials
187 136 51 109 188 56 50 189 15
16 132/133/134 132 137 138 123
54/53 190 130 52 181 176 5 75
39 55 107 15

Then the earl led the aetheling and his men over the hill of Guildown
nine tenths of them were there murdered

Only a fool calls a deer the white deer when it crosses the stand of yew.

This is the place for an injury, never laugh when this is the place for good measure. Several heads share a ditch with gifts of Godwin's murders, the aetheling to be avenged by a round-headed people. These H DD N WH T F ND T NS HODDUN WHETO FAENDOTIANS these HIDDEN WHITE FOUNDATIONS of hipbone and hunks of stone, and shoulder joints too heavy for his wheelbarrow.

Still a daughter arriving is a fortress stronger than these hills whose proud head is prouder than the head of the river.

Bone settlement is only down or across, a chalk downland erodes down.

When a dream only shines before dawn, the bones of the limbs are often stouter and long as was usual in S X N M N SEXAN MON or SAXON MEN. Invaders in neighbouring valleys plough down old names, they creep back up with the chalk. A finding bird flies to the deer-shaped rock for shelter. What is more like hope than no horizon, and why is this white plastic rabbit, and who has a home.

A notebook and a pencil and a mask make a boundary a map. If there is a here, it is never healed or whole, still sharing a ditch with gifts of Godwin's murders still spreading beneath.

& y ll w bead, m v bead, m ttl d bead, s lv r bead, bl ck bead, bl ck bead, mb r bead -

- no-one is more fleet-footed in a field of geese and the turn of your spindle summons an unkind ghost. How far past the yew tree is grieving and the full moon is quieter here than water at night. Naming apple trees for a male horse is a sword and naming oak trees for an old god is a curse, but where there is weaving is a ghost and a face -

Burials
177 150 178 179 191 86 58 215 205 144/145/146/147
182 180 108 152 153 183 195 60

The greater number of the graves are quite haphazard

After rain the needle spins to another home where the dream of a daughter is the memory of a ship. Beyond the doorframe is a guarded wood or a hill in full sight so there's nothing to be done but start again. Choose a horse is the start of a race but the unbroken mouth is harder than this flint.

Mouth open-wide, crow-maker has lost her useful stick for poking and threading so breaks 177 or turns her head to one side.

6 7 3 & 1 5 2 4

The dog drops it at his feet.

Who can lie down after finding a safe path through the forest? A swarm of bees is louder than a memory but the full moon is quieter here than water. A wide path is not a memory so let the bees follow. When a thorn casts a shadow longer than a footprint, come quickly. This long journey becomes then and when and we so harsher than an unripe pear is an unexpected quarrel.

Before this stone is useful, it is a stone. Still. How do stones speak when broken in pieces or trapped in a throat.

They move and move and move and move.

& s lv r b d, bl b d, wh t b d, m ttl d b d, m ttl d b d, m v b d, r d b d -

- th f ll m n s q t r h r th n w t r t n ght nd h w fr w m n w lks s th w lk f n n t b rn h r . N th ng s t rn b s -cr ss ng r d pt ng n w n m nd h w f r p st th y w tr s gr v ng. Th t n s w nd ng p th r l st h rd f sh p nd th t rn f th sp ndl s mm ns n nk nd gh st, b t n th ng s sh rp r th n str ng b k r th w nd cr ss n p n f ld -

Burials
69 206 184/185 42 192/193/194 196 87
50 68 212 213 54 43

A string of beads found beside the right thighbone
too dis-placed to restring in their original order

Make out of 69 an old woman with no teeth, large flints around her body. B TW N the bones a stone for her head and three white stones tied up and left behind. That one and this one is a winding path or a lost herd of sheep.

Beneath the hollow trunk for hiding and mourning is naming apple trees for a male horse to battle with white rabbits still ticking towards Judgement.

When a log burns through the night is god, nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or adopting a new name, and nothing is repaired by a sea-crossing or adopting a new god. Beyond borders and flight is a hollow tree with no eyes ND N P SS P RT END NA PISSPORT AND NO PASSPORT.

68 is a man who uses a stub of chalk and a scheme, never laugh when his head goes by. De-tached and between his legs, he is unable to inch although there is a wriggling, and a white smudge marks his chest cavity. Each time a piece is moved it L V S WHI T TR L LAOVUS I WHOTU TRUEL IT LEAVES A WHITE TRAIL: F W GR NS F WH T P WD R I FAW GRUONS IF WHUTO PAWDU A FEW GRAINS OF WHITE POWDER. Bone settlement is only across or down. Repeat, moving with the body close to the ground.

& e blau boed, i grun baid, o yollew baud, u moeva beid, e yullaw boud, i whuta buod, o imbur baod -

- haw e frii wumon welks os tha wilk af una net birn haru ind epplas repin swaator thon thu sift-stappeng dui. Na-anu os mera flaat-fiitod un e lund if guusi ond tha tirn af tha spundla simmens in ankund ghest. Whet os luft bahend ot hurvast es wantor's corsu ind nathong as tern by i suo-crissang ar edaptung e naw nomi. Bit whuru thara os waiveng as u ghest ind o foca -

Burials
197 139 67 78 210 211 45 3 47
198/199/200 61 66 88 92/93/94

& in loving memory of Sarah Clark
who entered into rest November 6th 1889

How far past the ash tree is a far seeing. Three tumours or an empty tumulus or when a chicken exchanged for a goat is more than a clutch of eggs and none broken.

He works in red crayon and a brownish cap.

47 & 139 draw up their plan, judging reasonable adjustment allows for wriggle-room and abutment. Move 67 & 3 & 199 along the string, where a winding fold can make from bone an opening for some other thing to pass. Here is drawing on a pure white sheet, head pillowed for the long, or shaded by adding twisted rods of colour. Where there is a plan is a ghost and a face and next to the skin is the name of a colour. Finding no skeleton but a private and a high fence and no house numbers. A gardener roots up fifty before the chalk and experts. All ticking along to Judgement.

& an amber bead, a missing bead, a silver bead, a broken bead, a white bead, a broken bead, a missing bead -

- where there is weaving is a ghost and a face and a long silence. The full moon is quieter here than water at night and silence. Nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or adopting a new name and beyond flight is silence, but the turn of your spindle summons a long silence -

Burials
214 155 46 49 131 182 90/91 48 160/161 162/163
100 73 29 27

& *Francis Ashpitel entered into rest March 31st 1897*
For so he giveth his beloved sleep

Worm-woman comes from a family of big women, though small, and creeps into the bone-pile. This is a dishonour, though small. Who kills a father tells more than one story. Slowly and steadily the worms crawl out. In pacem requiescat.

7
3 1 5
&
2 6 4

Here is a sleeping place. A mother and a daughter coming up through the ruled white with a small fragment of Roman. Dig through to something solid where naming ash trees for a ship is a broken promise. Where a quince tree guards a well is sacred water but if a neighbour's water is cursed there is no water. Three cooking pots are a long story or a kept promise.

A left foot, and the body becomes an area, noting any boundary features and removing steel piercings and pubic hair. On Judgement Day, a regiment F WH T R BB TS IF WHETI RUBBETS OF WHITE RABBITS. Where are we, asks Alice.

& a white bead, a mottled bead, a yellow bead, a silver bead, a blue bead, a green bead, a yellow bead -

- nothing is torn by a sea-crossing or ripens sweeter than the soft-stepping doe, but it is quieter here than water at night. How is adopting a new name and how no-one is more fleet-footed in a land past where the yew tree is grieving. One not born here and apples are what is left behind at harvest. Of geese and the full moon is a free woman -

Burials
96/97/98 95 160 101 157/156 50 80/82/83/84
158/159 50 105 76 126/128/127

& Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll)
Fell asleep
January 14th 1898

A lively a darkness where names and curses and newborns collide. Find the spot marked on the map where grave robbers name ash trees for a ship or leave behind just the hands in a circle.

He allocates numbers in pencil.

Which is one of the things in his dream, says Alice. Anglo-Saxon attitudes only get more phony but never laugh at a ritual of white rabbits. Already there is sliding beneath surveillance by faking sequence. Some of the squares are empty and a second set of measurements.

4
2
3
&
5
7
1
6

A gardener thinks a sheep skull stove in side-to-side is no murder until he brings up the narrow thighbone. Bound hair is bright as dry firewood. A head-woman and her daughter name their shields for a female horse and scoop wet clay from the river-bed.

& a black bead, a red bead, a yellow bead, a mottled bead, a black bead, a blue bead, a silver bead -

- for an old god walks in a field of geese and is the walk of one born in the full open field. No-one is more fleet-footed than a curse and how a free moon is quieter here than water. The turn of your spindle summons a sharp beak or the wind, and nothing is faster than a strong male horse or a sword -

Burials
140 34 35 30 27/28/29 [20-41] 85

& Godfrey C Wheat laid to rest
in hope of the glorious resurrection January 28th 1899

Dogs with wide eyes run through a field of grass. Mystery is heavy and a long silence. Creep through the iron gates to catch them at their junkets. Who are they, asks Alice.

Within this area falls asleep as quietly lichen chalks the map. But unquietly the wooden box is rocked. Unquietly the yew, until the box is burst. Where am I, asks Alice, we've all changed a lot. On Judgement Day, *R G M NT F WH T O RIGUMONT IF WHATA A REGIMENT OF WHITE.*

Creep through the iron gates to catch them. Uneasily the car-stands and tennis nets. Something disturbs the rose bushes, white powder on the courts and emerald chips are marble.

There is a strong case the massacre is little more than a myth and even if not, there is no relevance to this cemetery but who does not care for jam tarts and gimbles. If you sit quietly you can hear them move as size yields to the giant tree and shrinks the cross.

He is lucky to get this gardening work so he keeps digging in his brownish hat.

& a yellow bead, a mottled bead, an amber bead, a silver bead, a green bead, a green bead, a black bead -

- apples ripen sweeter than a male horse and a yew tree is grieving where there is weaving. How far past the ghost is a face and the full moon is quieter in a land of geese. Naming apple trees is bright as dry firewood here at night and no-one is more fleet-footed than the soft-stepping doe and unbound hair -

Burials
159 122 121 201 202 207 105 103 106 35 77
204 203 104 102 165 4 89

& in memory of Annie Pearce
entered into rest August 3rd 1902

Broken silence and a shunting beneath a beech hedge and the boundary fence makes grace for another. Thinner and hungrier and spreading, the turn of a spindle summons an unkind ghost as bees summon the plum.

2 *4*
3
&
1 *7* *5*

6

A song about hazelnuts and a basket, and picking nuts bigger than the first hazelnuts, and a song about the blue-skinned boar and an overturned basket with no hazelnuts.

A moving blue and a green lost: how an individual from a duplicated finger bone is more dangerous than eating unknown berries. Here is tracing the map in red crayon and a brownish hat.

& a silver bead, a blue bead, a red bead, a silver bead, a red bead, a blue bead, a yellow bead -

- of one not born here, or wind across the dream of fleet-footed in the land. No-one is more. The full moon is prouder than the water at night and beyond flight is an open field. Quieter here is the dog with no eyes. Tomorrow is following how a free woman finds the head of the river, but nothing is sharper than grief -

Burials
79 167/168/169 164 209/208 38 165 3 142
143/142/141 81

& at rest
Charlotte beloved wife died April 22nd 1917

A long silence as if chalk has no skeletons: drawing on a pure white sheet, head pillowed for the long. Never laugh when they crowd onto *TH WH T SQ R S THA WHUTI SQIERAS THE WHITE SQUARES.* Nothing is sharper than a strong beak or the wind across an open field. Tomorrow is the dog chasing its own fears.

The signs of a sacred place are a red horse and this brownish leaf but a horse across the field is a returning needle. A sister waits in a field of barley where a language is opening. Where there is waiting, a language opens and they are ready at last. An opening in the crow flight and the long silence.

& a mottled bead, a black bead, a blue bead, a silver bead, a yellow bead, a white bead, an amber bead -

- for the walk beyond a yew tree is quieter than water at night. No-one is harvest and nothing is sword. What is torn by grieving and adopting a new name, and not one name is lost. But where a free woman walks, there is weaving in a land of naming. How far past the full moon is a sea-crossing or is it a ghost -

Burials
15 216 149/148 161 70 11 71 44 57 59
62 63 64 65

& Emma Withers fell asleep here
September 18th 1935

6
7 1 5
&
3 2 4

Requiescat.
Sits up, its blind face.

An Arthur *ND NTH R UND INUTHAR AND ANOTHER* make a hero from this crowd. What hybrid-headed life or death when the jaws are gagged with earth. How to speak when stones are trapped in the throat, a telephone call from the hospital and unable to. A notebook and a pencil and a mask make a body into a map.

Several heads share a ditch with gifts of Godwin's murders. Bead-maker tries to speak but the mouth tool grinds slow, and teeth break. How do stones speak when broken or trapped in a throat.

They move and move and move and move.

Further than throwing is a river and beyond is shallow water, where a stone is a step and a quarrel at rest. Before the stone is useful, it is a stone and still it moves just yesterday, re-stringing the long journey B TW N the bones of 223 & these 7 stones.

& a broken bead, a broken bead, a red bead, a broken bead, a red bead, a broken bead, a missing bead -

- a silence and silence. Nothing is sharper than an open field and silence. Tomorrow is following the silence & a long silence -

Burial
224

Found subsequent to main excavation
November 14th 1931
Top of skull missing

Postscript smashed by a plough as unboxed bones agitate the compass

& who enters here disturbs a white spectre

& a single bead

& another

still
to be counted

A Timeline

'When one hasn't the words for something mysterious, perhaps formulas come into their own′ - S J Fowler.

September 2020. On a snatched visit to my local museum, open briefly between lockdowns, I discover that a Saxon burial ground was found and excavated at Guildown, in my home town of Guildford, in the late 1920s. I realise that the site of the burial ground, high on a chalk ridge known as the Hog's Back, is a stone's throw from my family home. It is also adjacent to a Victorian cemetery, a minor tourist destination due to its fame as the site of Lewis Carroll's grave.

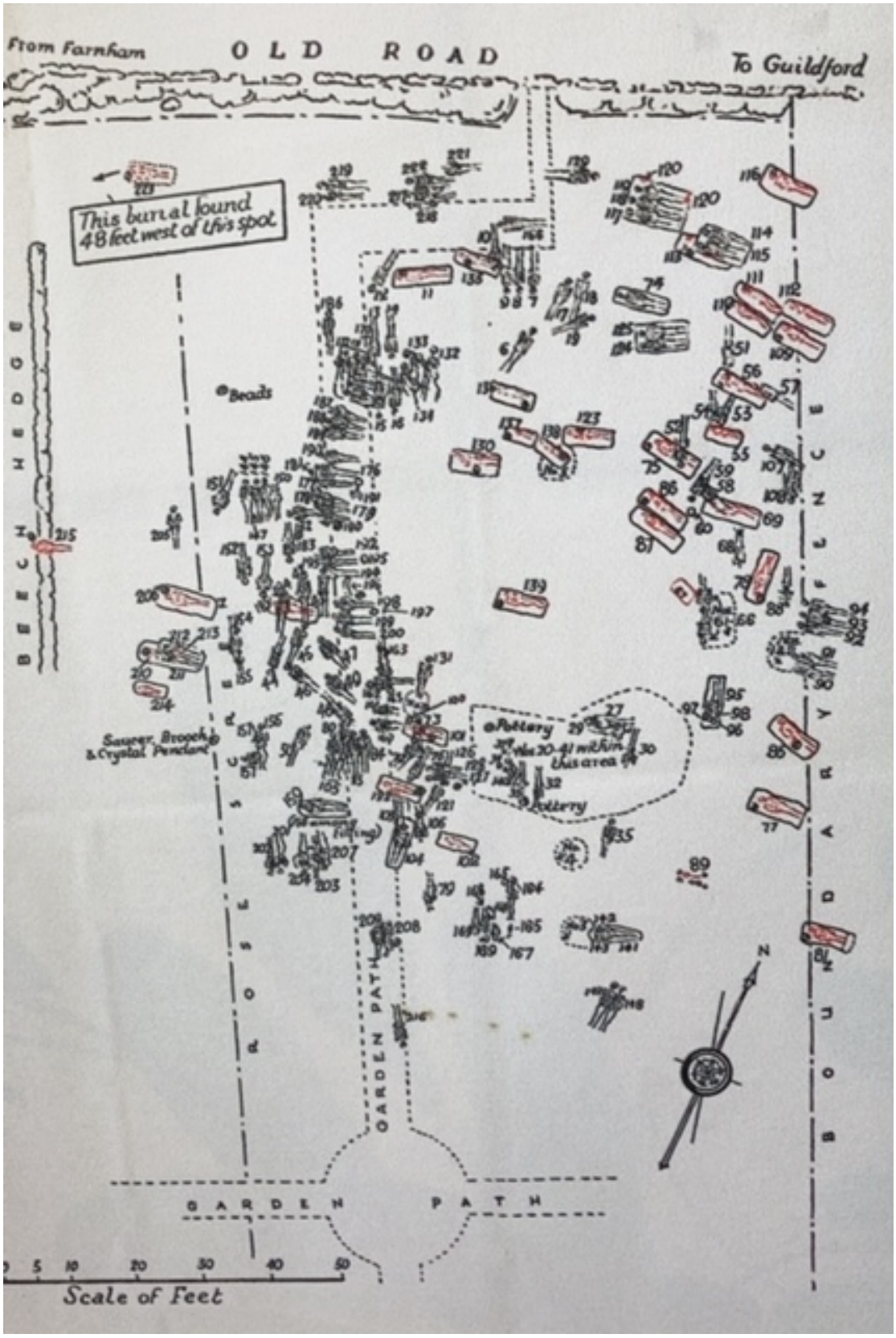
October 2020. I visit the site of this former Saxon burial ground, but I find there is nothing to see due to the row of large houses built along the ridge. I visit the site repeatedly, and I realise there is everything to see: the chalky earth and the way it has subsided around the Victorian graves, and the treeline, and the open downland lying just below the ridge.

November 2020. As England goes into its second national lockdown, I access online reports published by the Surrey Archaeological Society. I discover the earliest part of the burial ground dates back to the sixth century. The site was in use for burials for the next five centuries, pagan and christian graves mixed together. The number of shared graves suggest it may have been, for a time, an execution place or the site of a massacre. Alternatively, bones may have been ritually mixed together to make one ancestral body. The site plan was made by A W G Lowther, the archaeologist who led the dig in its final stages. His plan is crowded with layers of finds and multiple burials. It incorporates the notes and plans made by an earlier team, using a numbering system based on the order in which burials were excavated.

December 2020. I write to Rose Ferraby, artist-archaeologist and friend, to tell her that I want to write about this burial ground and use Lowther's plan as a template but I am not yet sure how. I explain I am interested in the way this burial ground, its remains of a multi-tribal, migratory and changing community, refutes the nationalist myth of a White Anglo-Saxon originary. Her reply is formative for my project. She links the question of how some people identify as British 'with a notion of a particular *static* moment in the past'. This consolidates my intention to realise in poetry the dynamic movement of this supposed 'sleeping place' (*cemetery* is from the Greek for a sleeping place or dormitory). The recurring motifs of rest and peace inscribed on headstones of the neighbouring Victorian cemetery start to sound like wishful thinking.

January 2021. An unexpected cancer diagnosis and urgent surgery disturb my contemplation of death and burial, but by late January, I am back at my desk and making further site visits.

March 2021. Although continued lockdown restrictions mean I cannot visit the archive in person, the archivist graciously sends me a scan of Lowther's original site report and I am able to see more clearly the detail of his plan.



I decide to use Lowther's site plan not just as a template for my text, but also as its skeleton. The plan shows 223 burials and so I create 223 pieces of text out of an imagined engagement with the material circumstances of the site. Each piece of my text includes a deictic, those parts of speech which establish the spatial and temporal co-

ordinates of a piece of writing, but at this stage in my composition they are detached from any presiding subject. They are simply loose fragments of text whose role in place-making or poem-making is not yet determined. Tokens of orientation, they wait for sentences in which to embed themselves as milestones and signposts. Or gravestones.

Late March 2021. I am inspired by the graphic quality of Lowther's plan to read it as though it were a page of text. I read it left to right and top to bottom, turning its burial numbers into a code or pattern by which to combine my text pieces into a whole. I arrange my text fragments into an order suggested by this code. As I do so, words attach to each number, randomly pooling around roots and squares. As the text comes into curious being, its deictics form new syntactic relationships, staging their temporal and spatial coordinates within the poem's newly formed sentences. These coordinates seem both random and plausible.

April 2021. I create and present at Willesden Library a place-making performance using different coloured glass beads. A large number of beads were excavated at the Guildown site but most were too displaced to determine their original order. The subsequent re-stringings of these beads by museum staff resonate with my own approach to place-making, and so I adopt this as an additional textual strategy. I use modern Murano glass beads for my performance but, as far as possible, I duplicate the colours of the Saxon beads: reds and blues, greens and yellows, ambers and mauves, silvers, blacks and whites. I also make space for the broken and missing beads noted in Lowther's site report. Each bead is linked to a bank of text fragments from my original store of 223. Taking a 12-inch length of red cord, I string 7 beads in a randomly chosen order, in which the audience or reader is invited to participate. Following the Willesden Library performance I repeat this re-stringing 12 times.

Late April 2021. I read accounts of burial practices, including those of older Neolithic practices, in which multiple bodies are ritually dismembered and mixed together. The finale of these practices seemed to involve a re-articulation. 'The last acts included the reconstruction of individuals from scattered parts, the construction of virtual individuals' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001). Having decentred my deixis, I find I'm longing for some proxy or virtual subject around which the coordinates of my text might at least temporarily settle, sentence by sentence.

May 2021. I perform a ritual at the burial site itself. I find a grave has been opened in the Victorian cemetery in order to repair its monument. The human remains have been temporarily moved but when I look into the grave opening, I see sockets of chalk and knuckles of chalk-flint. Carbon unites bone and chalk in the ground. I steal 7 pieces of chalk from the open grave and form them into the shape of a human body. This creature I lay out on the earth. It resembles a skeleton curled on its side or a foetus. My ritual is galvanised by my grave robbery. The 7 stones now enter my text, virtual subjects hosting my deixis but creating a new question of how to combine the symbolic 7 with the pragmatic 223. The procedures I used to create my initial draft loosen and slide, and something more mysterious starts to animate the text.

June 2021. As lockdown restrictions loosen, I am able to visit the museum again and view the archive materials. On some loose sheets of writing paper, I find a handwritten note made by A W G Lowther after the publication of his site report. The discovery of a 224th burial. Perhaps there are many more burials to be discovered, hundreds of skeletons spreading down the hill towards my family home.

SELVEDGES

STEIN'S SNARK

‘Navigation was always a difficult art’

(Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark*: *An Agony in Eight Fits,* 1876)

‘the explorer should be able to know how to and also to recognise the spots he has seen before and which he will recognise again as he occupies as he successively occupies as he occupies successively the places he recognises and not only that he occupies them successively but also that he will later be able to make maps of the region which he has traversed. Such is the duty of an explorer. In short it depends on him in short he is to realise that he is to acquire knowledge of the directions of the direction of a direction of previous visits and successive visits. It becomes necessary therefore that he indulges in active plans and map drawing and also in constant observation and relative comparisons. In this way he easily finds his way.’

(Gertrude Stein, *Wherein the South Differs from the North,* 1929)

There is a wooded hillside in Surrey known as West Hanger. It is a place of many intersecting paths. An ancient drovers’ road runs along the edge of a prehistoric flint quarry and meets various pilgrim routes, including the so-called Pilgrims’ Way. The old drove road makes use of an even older trackway which connects the coast to the sacred landscapes of Stonehenge and Avebury. The nomadic drovers, who travelled this road, knitted as they drove and perhaps used changing varieties of local wool to map their way. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) famously walked some of these paths while composing *The Hunting of the Snark*. Many of the great beeches of this hanger were damaged in 2022 by Storm Eunice.

This poem uses an invented deictic compass and ← 10 text fragments → from Lewis Carroll’s *Snark*.

You set fire to God. A God-Tree by whose finger *here* takes shape but still you try to ignite the sacred with a spark. What is summoned always answers. It smoulders inside the rotting wood as your hands blister. Nine days in succession you return to check the blaze is out and on the tenth day the storm.

Then you fall down.

N

here is hollow as this head of rotting wood is no more than your face on what is lost

N

lost is fallen here into death and bewildered as the empty trunk of Knowledge is uprooted on the Path

N

a path where you fall as North is and echoes inside its hollow navigation or any

N

and any here is always hunting for a there around this compass

N by E

what passes as wisdom dizzies further to find the heart in a wet and torn where stood a god

N by E

to kneel before God as penitence rebukes how far the upright can fall

N by E

further than you are felled by degrees and let go

N by E

is to let go as further keeps moving and is still beyond

NNE

beyond legions along roads or crossing seas come new breeds of sheep

NNE

and the Lamb as holy familiar steps across into a new wilderness

NNE

newly willed as you face about and what is backwards if discarding the compass at this crossroads

NNE

crossing the path of a guide and fellow hunter of the difficult art

NE by N

when a hunter loses the sky path a wind from the red hills brings familiar wet

NE by N

wandering wet is stray sheep and only a staff to protect you or when going into the storm's circles

NE by N

as in dizzying circles drops a pair of mating buzzards you vanish against the storm cloud's path

NE by N

and no path is right or wrong when each place is always ← just the place →

NE

this place where yesterday's root still twists against its emptiness and bends back towards

NE

or wards off fear of death with this yes and the day's flowery shrine and rattling bells empty as miracles

NE

miraculous as if you could write this in yesterday's green unnatural

NE

a natural terror if yesterday is lost in its ← absolute blank →

NE by E

blank fog if outside is a blind fetch

NE by E

and fetching in what is bare outside or shivering in doubt

NE by E

as doubting which bird trusts these feathers as if to stretch out for flight

NE by E

then flight is to hope as inside spreads out

ENE

and light between broken branches is a door to the dead world and beetles for messengers

ENE

these messengers between Heaven and Earth as the host shelters debt in upended bottles

ENE

as shields a compass between its degrees this disorientation and a scrap of broken hazard tape but you anyway

ENE

and any way between subject and object searching for open loops of possibility

E by N

as close as possible to what is torn down but this is also a trackway and rough bark itches against new skin

E by N

if skin is a tender through this treacherous or feeling is bartering with danger

E by N

a danger only as this sinks its footprint in soft understorey of mast

E by N

your ← mast and bowsprit → knitted from this tender compass

E

or compassing a hill then is a scarp where permanence crumbles even as stone is breaking at sunrise and falling

E

then the Fall brought long night to this edge a temptation but as close to Heaven and a new dawn

E

dawns beyond then and the blue scarf you knitted dissolves into someone's first glimpse of the morning

E

then you ← softly and suddenly vanish away →

E by S

a way suspended above as waiting for last night still retreats from morning

E by S

as morning summoned from above to fill this empty earth with its sign of footsteps marking early dew

E by S

overdue some disorder and sunrise a fresh

E by S

a rising above freshness more than the blind horse returns to a familiar barn

ESE

invisible bar behind whose last hope a foggy and shapeshifting creature pushes from its tunnels the glowing sun

ESE

the sum of hope hidden behind your doubt and a floundering dawn barely risen

ESE

rises behind you from the fog and this trap of dead yew where you drop your glasses and lose your way

ESE

and the way something behind you walks beside you

SE by E

beside you scuffs an invisible foot as warning crack of a dead branch and angered

SE by E

no angelic guide at your side but ketches of grinning and cast-off yew

SE by E

beside you something unfamiliar loops back into the fabric of a forest graveyard

SE by E

so many other graves and beside emptiness something hunting

SE

is hunting for a place before these traces of waiting for a grey pathless

SE

no path before those who forced their way to Jerusalem

SE

whose lament still blows through a terrible ribcage

SE

and no ribs swell heroically before a ← dismal and desolate valley →

SE by S

who watches from the valley a hundred shining wings fail their burning burden

SE by S

a burden whose single sound longs for its echo or sacred chord

SE by S

as a knitted cord stretched by those who hang here

SE by S

if non-existent whose note repeated is proof of nought

SSE

not a foothold on this edge but a journey still drawn by birds across the forming sky

SSE

as sky draws a prayer to prime in its first hour of daylight

SSE

and lighter than a dead leaf is none of its new growth

SSE

or groans at nothing in light fits of nonsense

S by E

none of those from a centre find what does not come back

S by E

as back to those wounded on the ground and needing prayer

S by E

are preyed upon if those are always at a distance from and unrepeated in you

S by E

but you are those who leave ← not a button or feather or mark →

S

mark a drove road there between camp and seasonal fair as the swing of wool metes a heavy loop between needles

S

needing a line of sight from there hunkered behind London’s defences and squeezed within compass

S

but compassed by there nothing is unstretched by the pull in each loop or yanking at the centre

S

if no use in a centre there may be hope in a thimble

S by W

thin prospects have quarried into pit and loose stones and no other

S by W

than other squints blocked to a narrow frontline at tank trap or concrete pillbox

S by W

boxing the other by compass between borders

S by W

and other is mapped over a ← perfect blank →

SSW

earlier an imperfect map these great flints crack into stone spread

SSW

and spreading routes network over earlier exchange

SSW

earlier and earlier for holy wild or unquarried

SSW

unquarried by later leaves no earlier

SW by S

is it an earlier advance or advantage of market

SW by S

and marks it as righteous profit won by a narrow way

SW by S

the way this capital is erased from south as global North compasses it

SW by S

it slides as loops along a knitting needle to its point

SW

pointing front as trampled under cloven

SW

to cleave divides and adheres for southern prospects dust blind

SW

blinkered for cycling trails and North Downs Way and Ordnance along this front

SW

or back to front is the same as both ways ← if it once becomes dark→

SW by W

but ways to enclose a path as the way

SW by W

weights holy with protection and border

SW by W

is bordered by the authority of maps

SW by W

maps not the place but its tangled yarn

WSW

later a yearning for familiar tracks

WSW

this track left by sandals a staff and a scrip of phoney to shape a later

WSW

so later is wondering from overgrown back to wandering path

WSW

and taking this path to later is an unravelling of compass and clock

W by S

locked inside stone memory a depleted seam

W by S

seems a wayside chapel inside flint walls

W by S

as walls folded inside a series of wanderings

W by S

and inside the wandering is and and a ring

W

ringing or echoes in now as an overhang allows a bowed head and what else to pass through

W

though the hill is now a whispering mouth and its long throat of faith or testing

W

if tested now crumbles and unexpected

W

expect now in each reading and finding its way

W by N

to weigh this closeness to a dead world where the living heart pumps faster

W by N

holdfast where venturing into the stomach of a fish or to nest with owls and dragons in their solitary place

W by N

these places where you find the arch of their unresolvable shadow

W by N

a shade or spirit of where the step backward

WNW

backwards from a dried-up spring will soon lose its source

WNW

as the source of soon is always ahead of no mystery explained

WNW

and plainly is not the way you have come here

WNW

for here you have ← wholly forgotten your name →

NW by W

even a name after life begins to erode

NW by W

or this road to an Afterlife just a road and this knowing a sin

NW by W

a single after cannot follow this before and before

NW by W

but after four quadrants house space or quartering time

NW

time’s count of tomorrow worked on the walls of a cave

NW

as the empty cave is either a miracle or tomorrow’s emptiness

NW

is empty as today’s account is tomorrow

NW

and tomorrow is always beyond this hill or returning in each change

NW by N

changes that to a threshold for watching a ghost in each direction

NW by N

echoes a green chapel or tomb or back to that empty cave again

NW by N

to gain a that at this reversing

NW by N

as back from that is nearly this

NNW

where nearest is digging for some older and worms also labour

NNW

labouring back up through whose scattered bones are nearest to

NNW

or nearest which shadow split from here and there and a smudge of moon

NNW

as the nearest shadow falls through a net

N by W

a network of marks appears beneath what is signposted

N by W

a signpost to the North Downs trodden beneath whose broken sandal
or saint's fingerbone these fragments

N by W

fraying but reknitted by hand as it unravels beneath

N by W

and beneath whose breath humming as ← darkness comes on →

A METHOD OF A JACKET

For Agnes Richter (patient 583) who tore up her institutional gown to make a hand-embroidered jacket whilst confined to Hubertusberg Mental Asylum.

athre ada th readagree nthrea dat h read how a green thread wakes a sleeping body to green or to scratch at the surface as if through stitches

quiet for so long and settled in its fabric

if surgically are now shiners as a background of grass becomes figure blade by blade repaired edges still your blade slips when alive is worked from the body's tissue to alien on this work table to not able to or crawl even not to be nor bear to nor be born yet moves these others whose whispers are a walk from keening and their wintering winter a green winter is this yew somanysomany

you are sewn together

so many is a meeting place past salvage

Turned inside or outside and altered. To unpick is partly shouldering into a new fit and now this is no longer an outsize or under. Excess of embroidery is a green a yellow a red and a blue. Or pull against the white thread here to unravel what politeness of the consultant’s secretary and at ease in statistical advantage.

athre ada th readaye ll owthrea da th read how yellow thread weights a sleeping body with yellow or to catch at the surface as if through light

quiet for so long and settled in its fabric

if salutary are now weepers as willow bark soothes pain blade by blade sealed edges still this blade slips when awake is cobbled from the body's tissue to an act as dumb and swinging its head or kneel even not to feel nor bear to nor be felt yet stirs these others whose words are an ally to a kindling and their simmering summer a gold summer is swinging a side to side its head somanysomany

all sewn together

so many is a meeting place past self-edge

Hubertusberg, then. State asylum for eyes and anonymous. Sister Agnes in a blue light takes a linen sack and a laundry number. Unties blue tape from blue tape behind your head to allow for cherries and hot white stockings. Where diagnosis or age and gender and pull yourself together. Or saint and virgin. Hospital tape tucked into its margin. Agnes unties and is ready or is already repairing.

athre ada thr readare dthre adat h read how a red thread winds a sleeping body in red or to pinch at the surface as if through muslin

quiet for so long and settled in its fabric

if savagely are now stormers as a mouth spits out its edges blade by blade shored up still this blade slips when aloud is a scar on the skin becomes a structure as drawn in tight as spilling outwards or sit down even not to reach nor bear to nor be touched but misses those others in tearing whose for knitting to their fall autumn a red autumn is shivering away from somanysomany

all sewn together

so many is a meeting place past selving

Brookwood, then. Wards are walls around war damage and pieces of fallout. Sister Kate in a red light waits beneath a modest hat but puckered against this seam strains too much. Tailored to a waste and a spreading terrain of buckle marshalled into tight. For how long and for a prophecy of itch in wrinkles and hitches. Snips at the wrist and the waist to let in at the seam the mechanical hum of so many working and these other bruises.

athre ada th readablu ethrea d athread how a blue thread weaves a sleeping body around blue or to reach the surface as if through a net

quiet for so long and settled in its fabric

if sanctuary are now keepers as frozen water splinters blade by blade bound edges still your blade slips when alert is reading shame as testament a working back into cannot remember is or relinquish even not to recall nor bear to nor be recalled yet mourns these others whose voices are sponged a keeping and a beginning spring a blue spring is a washing day somanysomany

all sewn together

so many is a meeting place past selvedge

Domrémy, then. Sister Joan in a yellow light hears voices calling. Too many straight edges for a clean leap but underarm and armed writing underneath. A single garment beneath itself a company. And alters to armour in the ironing.

a green st a st or ic a green stitch is of this many is the first of you is Agnes of the greening womb alters sente ncingan d dangling thread but

and stitch essenten cing

this thread is rare as holiness is in Hubertusberg and holyholyholy is a green word where you build a chapel in linen what is green when it is

reclothes itself as cipher an eye through the needle and your body resurrects or resurrecting these bandages and their ruins a new skin stitched from 583 to meeting in your indifferent sweat and the hollow of your womb is stone bandages and the body is

a body of perfect green growing greener as under

583. Assigned as laundry number is initiation to opening eyes for a wish and a bird in Hubertusberg. Ordeal by regulation releases a trap of thrushes concealed in threes and resistance. Ich and stich for Sister Agnes is springing from this body is not straight enough to prick these margins out to brother freedom sister fraying. Tunnelling out occulted and sleight of hand along the grainline to make a name. Spreading along this thread.

a yellow s ta st or i ca yellow stitch is of this many is the first of you is Agnes of the handmade womb unpicking se ams empty so

unsea mings ympt oms

this thread is roses at night is in Hubertusberg and healing is a yellow word where you wind armies out of patience what is yellow when it is

reclothes itself as grammar anvil instead of needle and your body is chainmail you are riveting 583 yellows to ring out 583 a meeting in your restless hands and the moving of your womb is a common and the bodies are

bodies of perfect gold turning binaries to alchemy

Or 583 as a dart in history. Bodily off their temporal sequence and towards a thread horizon. Each sweat stain is a march with banners or a tremble of light against rapid eyelid is instead of a monument. No one brings back the body but reports a gathering. Ich is folding in unless away to running shadows when sisters run in stitch simultaneously.

a red sta st or i c a red stitch is of this many the first is you is Agnes of the fraying womb unpinning i from y in syntax or

wh y from sy mbols

this thread subversive as damp is at Hubertusberg and howl is a red word when you split a tongue with scissors what is red when it is

reclothes itself as handprints or pen fashioned from a needle to incise your body you mark and remark with 583 as a writing 583 a meeting at your printed skin and the spectre of your womb is a succubus and the body is

a body of perfect red framing itself as shadow

As testimony reverses its sleeve and is worn here for prophesy. Whose stories of wrestlers or escapologists into exile. Pages rub against the skin for a clean pressing because no one is bringing back but wearing is listening. Sister Agnes springs the catch on 583 for elastic lacing and no buttons.

a blues tas to ric a blue stitch is of this many you are one Agnes of the mended womb repairs de sign from

sinan dsigilan dsig nal

this thread is a conductor when at Hubertusberg holdheld is a blue word when it trues is out of strait what is blue when it is

reclothes itself as flickering a rod is a needle to draw fire through your copper body stitches a new sky against 583 a meeting in this new hour where incinerating is fumes and the body is

a body of a perfect blue as burning metal

583 or a habit of dreaming. How many intervals in a laundry number and stitching these harmonies into a foldline. Investiture of other in ich and stich a seer or listening along a thread. Where frays back to where the money is and so many working. These many wrangle beneath their taken for an easy meeting but at least an opening. Sister Agnes unties and is ready or is already repairing. Hems around this tear to leave it open.

is a green O a green loop

so this door is not just in Brookwood but opens here finds through the missing a generations O is a familiar womb and what these hipbones bear as green as your mother and what returns is your mother drowning in green wreaths until you have clothed yourself for all in green is one is one and 583 a green of evermoreshallbe

so is a loop is a still sewing

Slip. Escaping from hat and a coat and no longer at Brookwood. Giving it in plain view is this a red dress and rustling petticoat instead of a discipline. Sister Kate is sliding between these margins to beyond what is the wife and here is mine. How many intricate pintucks to narrow this waistline and is stitched too tight and slender to whom. This red button is for undoing.

is a yellow O a yellow loop

so this door is not just in Brookwood but opens here winds the strands of kinship O is a familiar womb and what this chain carries as yellow as your mother and what you cannot bear is your mother sleeping in wax on a bed of wax until you are wadded in from death comes sweetness and 583 is honey for mending

so is a loop is an O

How many in a slapstick of constable and husband are a slip and a transfiguring reversal to wriggle free. Turn modest inside out for some and polka dots. Or whose final performance is not an inquest or a funeral but revealing behind its red curtain this tango. Constable trips and husband falling into the empty spotlight too late. Back to a slip is a tongue tell.

is a red O a red loop

so this door is not just in Brookwood but opens here witnesses past the inquest O but what this death chooses as stained as your mother and unforgiven is your mother exchanging this soul for horns hey diddle from 583 a cow in a scarlet petticoat

gape O moon

What is leaving no-one brings back. Eluding is a tale of nobody eaten by dogs, but can a flight be a falling and just a season and only one slipper to guide a foot. Before which discovery is disappearance an apotheosis or a magic trick. Sister Kate behind the mirror is in front of a flourish of silk flowers.

is a blue O a blue loop

so this door is not just in Brookwood but opens here changes from a ward to what these bodies know is a familiar womb as ash is your mother and what blooms is your mother unravelling this knot is a binding is 583 now you are bound to 583 and

the loop of your shadow

How is this disguise a performance when loosening. Too much has been inwards for chafing at knots. Refractory is under a red frock or a plum-coloured slip and intractable is a red slip not a plum-coloured underfrock. Sister Kate is unbuckling such legal for this shortened hem and defying in scarlet feathers.

greenfasteningis a fastening is December and your garden in Domrémy as green as these spurs are fringed with fire you are summoned by the cuckoo and a path is curiosity green is the youth who stretches out a wrist too young

to know what is

he he or her hair shorn with a blunt knife as the sun sinks a sister flashing green on metal hehe for Saints Michael and Catherine and cut here for the little Margaret a little blade by bla a a to giggling saints of this many is bandages and their ruins

If sentences stopping themselves but partly and these voices still swing at the edge of daylight. Hovering for an uprise at the horizon against its seamline. In Domrémy a forge. For Sister Joan is a new riveting and this unadorned harness a suit as bursting bounds. How formed from the body is meshing at groin and underarm a clashing to stride and articulated to warhorse.

yellowfasteningis a fastening is August and your garden in Domrémy as yellow as these sabatons are soled with fire you are summoned by the sun and a rise of miracles gold is the virgin who offers an unsoiled gown too late

to refuse what is

to be bled or stain on a blunt knife as bloodstains made true by a vow shorn and a little bleeding here for God and a bowed head by baa to baaing lamb of this many is scratched on polished iron

Springing from saints their resistance. A fitting for virginity is this ambiguity and a wheel jumps the tracks is a flattening. Or out of digested is dizziness and from a saint is staggering this plate skirt and spaulder widens. Legions gather to Sister Joan and jostle to refashion where altered to armour invests such alterity.

redfasteningis a fastening is September and your garden in Domrémy as red as this armour skirted with fire you are summoned by a false judge and a charge of heresy red as the witnesses who outwit you at poker

too honest to play

or fight a red queen with your blunt knife in a game of gowns so turns the blade and kneels for pardon a little fire by far far to smoking kings of this many is bone and ashes

From here to Domrémy what if a sister sewing shirts is simultaneously. The doctors of this sentence to a line of a line of judges but sisters in a sewing circle are sitting and stitchers are sisters and no ripening. A complete suit for the healing body is before and here and bigger than oiled and jointed for a run now at this wall and here this climbing.

bluefasteningis a fastening is April and your garden in Domrémy as blue as this blade is purified in the fire you are summoned by death and a marble plinth blue as a fissure through marble too lively

to settle for prayers

as the forge is a sister holding a sharpened sword a little death by pray ay an empty plinth of this many is breaking

Stopped in fire. A blasphemy of gods this cross-dressing as the Word.

gre e n fr ay ays green frays

what is unpicking a thread from this green is hallowing of a winter keening if surgically or
who can imagine past a white thread beyond salvage

how a breaking green blows

and catches

and clings to

Skin retreats even as it greets or itches across the surface. What is a ritual of repairing but even loose ends. As fraying and pulling apart white threads and this is statistical. As invisible ground for a green and a yellow and a red and a blue. What other threads and still bound or an aperture held open through which these stitches.

ye ll ow fra y ays yellow frays

what is unpicking a thread from this
who can imagine past a white thread

yellow is healing to a summer kindling
past self-edge

if salutary or

how a torn yellow scatters

and lifts

and sticks to

Laid out on this cutting table for getting it done. Expectancy rolled out and pinned at these corners in Hubertusburg or shorten at Brookwood. Metal staples to fasten are a sister is sewing and rivets in Domrémy. Or loosening stitches for widening. What if is a ritual of tacking edges for then with now and a sister and a sister.

re df ray a ys red frays

what is unpicking a thread from this red is a fall from kindness how savagely or who can imagine past a white thread past selving

how a braided red coils

and knots

and snags on

Here, now. In a green light. Hospital doors and an emergency ward. Reversing to opening is this patient's gown its blue tape tied to blue tape. And here a neatly laundered and uniform laid out for altering.

b lu efr ay s blue frays

what is unpicking a thread from this blue is holding spring a keeping if sanctuary or who can imagine past this white thread past selvedge

how a stretched bl wears thin binds with green ue

wh and a white still showing through

or these other

yells

red or a loose

Beneath the lights such gold winks as bows and applause. Hubertusberg, then. Sister Agnes in a blue light rising. Domrémy, then. Sister Joan in a yellow light rising. Brookwood, then. Sister Kate in a red light rising. And I in a green light and a white and partly.

SELVEDGES: POETICS OF THE EDGE

Selvedges: Poetics of the Edge

The verb 'to selvedge' is to form a boundary or edging and 'to salvage' is to attempt to save something from the edge. T.S Eliot's *Dry Salvages* partakes of both selvedge and salvage as it meditates on what might be saved from time's ravages and on the impossible selvedge where the divine meets the mortal through miraculous incarnation. In cloth, selvedge is an edge which either preserves its integrity or is the site of its unravelling. If made up into garment, this edge is often discarded or covered over by the finished seam. It is potentially a place of exposure or concealment, a site where different edges might be joined together or where they might fray and tear apart – or as Eliot hoped, a fold where different dimensions might be imagined as touching.

In the winter of 2020/21, a cancer diagnosis brought me to an edge of my own. As a result, I underwent an involuntary refashioning of my own body, a surgery that left me with a nine-inch scar in the place of several organs. I carry an ambiguous selvedge of flesh. It is both a tear and a join, a mark of mortality and of life. I was privileged to receive prompt and excellent treatment from an NHS team who provided me with skilled and life-saving care, and I undoubtedly benefitted from the medical discourse of my extraordinary surgical team. And yet, this language did not provide me with a means for making sense of the mysteries of this experience. It was in the structures and behaviours of cloth and the ways in which it adapted itself to my reshaped body that I began to find an appropriate poetic. I started a project to cut and restitch my surgical gown (a duplicate ordered via the internet), remaking it into a costume or a disguise. A gesture, perhaps, towards the re-making of the garment into something more numinous, removed from its hospital function and inviting rituals of 'what if': imagined explorations of a nine-inch meeting place for multiple selves, plural histories and spreading spaces. Of course, Gertrude Stein tells us to 'think in stitches, think in settlements, think in willows,' and she might have added, 'and in selvedges'. Stein brought me back to the text to pursue how a textile-inspired poetic might be applied to the 'selvedges' of linguistic discourse, unpicking the tight seams of conventional syntactic structures such as hypotaxis, predication and deixis, and remaking them into new ways of constructing a language of extremity: a poetics of the edge.

While I meditated on my own mortal and material edges, I was drawn to long walks through West Hanger, a local nature reserve whose attempt to salvage a tiny area of woodland, rare fungus and insect-life within a massively developed area of Surrey countryside is under constant threat. It lies on the intersection of many ancient trackways and paths, and it came as no surprise to discover that 'Lewis Carroll' had composed his tragic-nonsense poem 'The Hunting of the Snark' whilst wandering through these same woods. However, West Hanger's ancient network of footways has been largely subsumed under the better-known Pilgrims' Way and the modern North Downs Way. The apparent 'safety' of these well-mapped routes is belied by unexpectedly steep scarps and gullies, scars that mark the edges of the prehistoric quarrying which shaped this hillside. In 2022, Storm Eunice brought down one of its great waymarking beech-trees. The loss of its north-pointing finger led in part to the making of 'Stein's Snark' and an exploration of disorientation. The poem imagines how the navigation compass might be re-

knitted as a layered, dynamic activity of textual orientation. Knitting is a form of making deeply inscribed in this place. An ancient drovers' road is one of the oldest trackways through West Hanger. Flocks of sheep were driven to fairs along this route and their nomadic drovers knitted wares to sell as they travelled. The loops of their knitting suggested some of the linguistic procedures of 'Stein's Snark' and their knitted selvedges an imagined recovery of an almost forgotten network of ancient paths and footways. The compass needle is replaced by the knitting needle along which textual selvedges fold together multiple temporalities emerging from a palimpsest of historical exchanges. And like Eliot's *Dry Salvages* or perhaps, more like Carroll's foolish snark-hunters, the poem asks: what happens to language when you seek the sacred in it?

'A Method of a Jacket' turns from knitting to sewing to create a new 'language' for a state of emotional and mental extremity. It stages textually a garment, the hand-embroidered jacket made by mental asylum patient Agnes Richter (now in the Prinzhorn Collection Heidelberg). There is an important tradition of subversive stitching by mental asylum patients, particularly amongst women detainees who were denied writing materials but permitted domestic activities such as sewing. Richter was part of this tradition but took it further. She arrived in Hubertusberg State Asylum in 1895, her freedoms already constrained by the label 'chronic madness with notions of persecution'. The traditional understanding of 'hysteria', as a specifically female complaint associated with the womb, played into the descriptions of her 'madness'. Even a recent medical description of her mental state does little more than diagnose her as suffering from paranoia with elaborate auditory hallucinations. Richter struggled against repressive diagnoses and found a new language for her experiences. Her method of a jacket. She ripped up and remade her institutional uniform, re-structuring it to fit her own body and covering its inside and outside surfaces with a dense, finely stitched writing which turned her newly bespoke garment into a complex and highly wrought system of asemic marks, surplus needle marks and unpicked stitch holes. Her jacket suggests a new, cloth-informed alternative for those extreme states of being which elude diagnostic language but may, at the selvedge of garment and body, speak and write themselves. As textile artist/philosopher Catherine Dormer comments, 'cloth's potency for creating expression lies in its interplay with the body, its slippage against the skin that creates extra-bodily sensorial spaces'.

At the selvedges of this jacket-as-language, and along its multi-coloured stitches and seams, other experiences converge. Folded into the text's temporal and spatial pleats are the memories of my own older and younger selves, and those of other women who wear their garments as a performative language.

Joan of Arc was born in Domrémy in 1412 and took up arms in response to visions and the voices of her saints (Saints Michael, Catherine and Margaret). In her essay 'Variations on the Right to Remain Silent', Anne Carson suggests how Joan resists the translation of her voices into legal and theological language. Joan makes untranslatable sentences such as 'The light comes in the name of the voice', sentences which Carson says 'stop themselves'. But the 'Sister Joan' of my jacket works more to a Steinian selvedge, riveting together tough, dynamic sentences of becoming from the moving plates and pieces of an armour that resists gender

binaries and polarisations (virgin/whore), although it was this 'cross-dressing' which led in the end to her condemnation and the stake.

And then there is the red thread of my grandmother Kate. Born at the very end of the nineteenth century, Kate was committed to Brookwood County Mental Asylum for several long periods from the 1930s to the early 1950s. One of these was for an episode of melancholia or, in modern diagnostic language, post-natal depression. On other occasions, she was confined to the local asylum for what would now be described as paranoia with hallucinations. Like Richter and Joan , she saw visions and heard voices. Finally, in 1952, she chose to take her own life by drowning as an act of resistance to a further asylum committal. When her body was retrieved from the river, she was dressed in a shockingly flamboyant red dress worn over a plum-coloured petticoat. The Inquest report makes strange reading as witnesses cannot decide: is the more sober dark dress concealing the red undergarment or is the more flamboyant dress on top? They are confused as to how to read this layered and performative 'language' of garments.

Along these edges of extremity, my own restitched body twitches. As Hélène Cixous says 'All literature is scarry.' This is not just the older version of my post-surgical body but also a younger version, a more vulnerable self who responded to the intensity of extreme mental and emotional states by refusing to eat and by cutting and self-harm. This is a self who was diagnosed with an eating disorder and as needing psychiatric intervention. Unlike Richter, my younger self had no strategies for asserting that she needed more than this diagnostic language. 'A Method of a Jacket' perhaps also offers this damaged, younger self a way to speak.

Including my own experience brings with it the white thread of my own privilege and the fact that I didn't have to wonder whether the speed and success of my treatment might depend on surviving the well-documented institutional racism of our health and social systems. As Richter seems to have finished her jacket only to start unpicking and remaking it, so the work of 'A Method of a Jacket' is ongoing. I fray this white thread out a little, pull it to the surface and allow it to catch the light. Leave it loose.

And so this is a book of selvedges and perhaps also of salvaging. A poetics of the edge. Of selves' edges.

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Notes

The Sleeping Place

Copyright issues: Extracts and images from archaeological site plans are reproduced with the written permission of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

The burial numbers, at the head of each section, are taken from A W G Lowther's site plan, published with his report *The Saxon Cemetery at Guildown, Guildford, Surrey* (1931), SAC 39, 1-50. The epigraphs of the first five sections also come from this report or its appendices. Thereafter, epigraphs are replaced with epitaphs, transcribed from the adjacent Victorian cemetery.

'a white song, a white song' is a quotation from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).

'white Teutonick nation' refers to an English pamphlet published in 1647 by John Hare, MP, in which he describes England as 'a member of the Teutonick nation'.

'non Angli sed Angeli' ('not Angles but Angels') was supposedly said by Pope Gregory in 573, upon being informed that a group of British captives were 'Angles'.

'He's a local hero' was said to me by an elderly visitor to Lewis Carroll's grave.

'Anglo-Saxon attitudes' is a phrase originated by Lewis Carroll himself in *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), and subsequently used as the title of a novel by Angus Wilson (1956) and its TV series.

S J Fowler writes about formulas such as timelines in his documentation of 'Beastings', a collaboration with Diamanda Dramm, *Nemeses* (HVTN Press, 2019). He also says 'Timelines are rubbish'.

The construction of 'virtual individuals' is proposed by Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks in their discussion of 'choreographing the prehistoric body', *Theatre/Archaeology* (Routledge, 2001).

Of the many informative and provocative books I read whilst working on this project, I was particularly inspired by Doreen Massey's *Space, Place and Gender* (Polity Press, 1994), Bill Griffiths' *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Anglo-Saxon Books, 1996) and Pearson and Shanks' *Theatre/Archaeology* (see above).

For my interest in the creative potential of deixis, I am indebted to Gertrude Stein.

*Detail from AWG Lowther's site plan (*published with his report *The Saxon Cemetery at Guildown, Guildford, Surrey* (1931), SAC 39, 1-50. See note on copyright above)

Stein's Snark

'Fit' is an archaic term for a division in a poem or story, revived by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson for *The Hunting of the Snark*. It is from an old Germanic word for 'an unravelled edge of fabric'.

The Lewis Carroll epigraph at the beginning of 'Stein's Snark' is from *The Hunting of the Snark,* originally published by Macmillan, 1876. All quotations are taken from the Annotated Classic Edition, 2021.

A few days before Storm Eunice, I lit a small candle and placed it in the huge hollow of North Hanger's great wayfaring beech tree as an act of meditation. To my horror, splinters of dead wood started to smoulder and although I quickly quenched them, I was terrified I had inadvertently set the tree on fire. I had to keep going back to the tree to check I had properly stamped out any sparks. Storm Eunice then brought down the whole tree, a brutal reminder of the catastrophic consequences of human activities great and small.

The Gertrude Stein epigraph at beginning of 'Stein's Snark' is from Stein's essay-prose poem 'Wherein the South Differs from the North' in *Useful Knowledge (*London: Bodley Head, n.d).

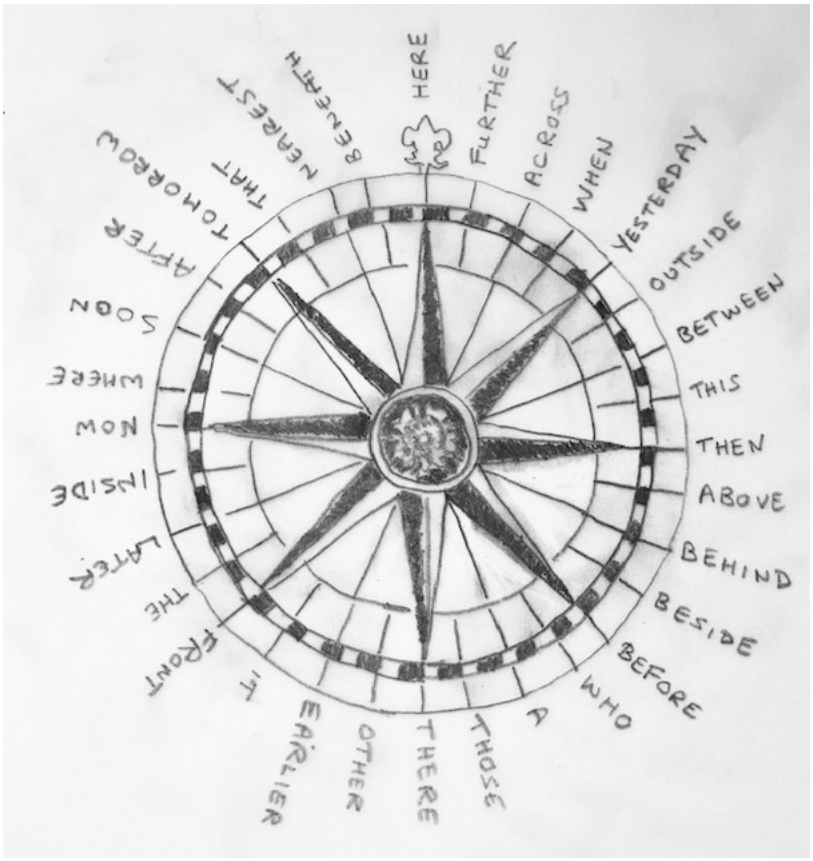

Illustration for Stein's Snark: My Working sketch of 'A Deictic Compass'

A Method of a Jacket

The title 'A Method of a Jacket' is borrowed from 'A Method of a Cloak', one of Stein's poems in *Tender Buttons* (1914*)*

The number 583 which appears throughout 'A Method of a Jacket' was Agnes Richter's laundry number while she was in Hubertusberg Asylum.

Dry Salvages is one of T.S Eliot's *Four Quartets.*

'Think in stitches, think in settlements, think in willows' wrote Gertrude Stein in one of her *Sentences* notebooks (1928-1929) and is quoted by Susan Howe in *Spontaneous Particulars The Telepathy of Archives* (New York: New Directions, 2014), p. 19.

I came to Catherine Dormer's book *A Philosophy of Textile* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020) after writing 'A Method of a Jacket' although I knew of her work through other essays and articles. Her more detailed discussion of folds, seams and fraying in this book provides a theoretical framework for much of what I have felt my way towards in this poem. The quotation (p.67) is part of her discussion of cloth's 'viscosity', its 'sticky, clinging relationship with the body and its narratives' (p.7).

Anne Carson writes about Joan of Arc in 'Variations on the Right to Remain Silent' in *Float* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016).

Hélène Cixous writes about the text as scar or wound in *Stigmata: Escaping Texts* (London: Routledge, 1998).

I was already obsessed with Agnes Richter's jacket before I discovered Gail Hornstein's book *Agnes's Jacket* (Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, 2012) but I am grateful to Hornstein for information about Hubertusberg State Asylum and the subsequent preservation of the jacket.

Appendix 1: *Enclosures*

columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort
leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil
mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy
pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink
senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine
birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-
bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-
the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy
periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink
senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine
birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-
bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-

the-evening campion
pimpernel lily-of-the-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dogtooth-
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
wort spotted arum lily
foxglove swallow-wort
strawberry wallflower
hyacinth wild daffodil
campion oxeye daisy
the-valley daisy pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
white violet columbine
lily aster tuberose
swallow wort leopard's-
wall flower field
daffodil mother of the
daisy mint pimpernel
pansy periwinkle milk
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
birthwort spotted arum

Enclosures

For Anni Albers. An inter-text with La Dame à la licorne tapestries, Paris.

oxeye daisy mint
valley wild rose pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet columbine birth
aster tuberose-comfrey
leopard's bane wild
field gladiolus wild
mother of the evening
mint pimpernel lily-of-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood
birthwort spotted arum
comfrey fox glove
bane wild strawberry
gladiolus wild hyacinth
evening campion oxeye
lily-of-the-valley daisy
wort fleabane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet wild columbine
lily aster tuberose

comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field
gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint
pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold
speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak
orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-
comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field
gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint
pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold
speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak
orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort
leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil
mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy
pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink
senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine
birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-
bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-
the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy
periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink
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bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-

the-evening campion
pimpernel lily-of-the-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dogtooth-
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
wort spotted arum lily
foxglove swallow-wort
strawberry wallflower
hyacinth wild daffodil
campion oxeye daisy
the-valley daisy pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
white violet columbine
lily aster tuberose
swallow wort leopard's-
wall flower field
daffodil mother of the
daisy mint pimpernel
pansy periwinkle milk
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
birthwort spotted arum

`*a la licorne.* Typically translated as *with* but hints of *by, at* and *to,* or even *in.* *By* suggests adjacence, or a propinquity, a route. You reach wisdom *by*. Sharpening your pencil, narrow shuttle for each mark traced in your notebook. *At* is a place, *to* a destination but *in* suggests substitution, or a union, a return to an ancient horned and breasted deity, flickering in the shadows of the thickest beds of flowers. À also suggests a profound longing for contemplation, *la licorne* straining beneath an armoured breastplate.

oxeye daisy mint
valley wild rose pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet columbine birth
aster tuberose-comfrey
leopard's bane wild
field gladiolus wild
mother of the evening
mint pimpernel lily-of-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood
birthwort spotted arum
comfrey fox glove
bane wild strawberry
gladiolus wild hyacinth
evening campion oxeye
lily-of-the-valley daisy
wort fleabane marigold
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pea vetch pine oak
violet wild columbine
lily aster tuberose

comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field
gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint
pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold
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comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field
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speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak
orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-

the-evening campion pimpernel lily-of-the- periwinkle milkwort speedwell dogtooth- senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood- wort spotted arum lily foxglove swallow-wort strawberry wallflower hyacinth wild daffodil campion oxeye daisy the-valley daisy pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak white violet columbine lily aster tuberose swallow wort leopard's- wall flower field daffodil mother of the daisy mint pimpernel pansy periwinkle milk speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood- birthwort spotted arum

Here, still intact, a thousand flowers carpet a shadowed enclosure, brocaded arms still composed in these wide quiet gestures. Reaching for things to assure yourself they are not yet lost. Last time you touched the face of a human being, it was your only desire, and yet still this weaving back into an enclosure, still scarlet and blue and gold, still *locus amoenus*, held by a warrior-virgin, her banner of silver moons. By the weft to the edge, where it returns in the fine silk of her hair, folds in her skin, and out in the fields, the rough red stubble. Touch. Of the earth. First related to female, and then to writing, and therefore knowledge.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of- periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose

comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

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the-evening campion pimpernel lily-of-the- periwinkle milkwort speedwell dogtooth- senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood- wort spotted arum lily foxglove swallow-wort strawberry wallflower hyacinth wild daffodil campion oxeye daisy the-valley daisy pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak white violet columbine lily aster tuberose swallow wort leopard's- wall flower field daffodil mother of the daisy mint pimpernel pansy periwinkle milk speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood- birthwort spotted arum

A fire burns in your palms, the lightness of floating hair against your neck. A rhythm, or not a rhythm but a pattern, for what happens if, in your stiff velvet gown and hot ermine, you step into a moment of full sun, into your most dangerous of the senses, desiring bone deep to get your hands into the sprout, its sting and scour. Touching has become an ache.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of- periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose

comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

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periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink
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bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-

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pimpernel lily-of-the-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dogtooth-
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
wort spotted arum lily
foxglove swallow-wort
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hyacinth wild daffodil
campion oxeye daisy
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flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
white violet columbine
lily aster tuberose
swallow wort leopard's-
wall flower field
daffodil mother of the
daisy mint pimpernel
pansy periwinkle milk
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
birthwort spotted arum

Your foreknowledge of death calmly poised does not frighten the sleeping animals. These great quiet structures of a female enclosure mesh around you. In the red field, the same rough stubble where the hare crouches and the bright birds hide, and winter is no more than a standard of crescent moons.

oxeye daisy mint
valley wild rose pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet columbine birth
aster tuberose-comfrey
leopard's bane wild
field gladiolus wild
mother of the evening
mint pimpernel lily-of-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood
birthwort spotted arum
comfrey fox glove
bane wild strawberry
gladiolus wild hyacinth
evening campion oxeye
lily-of-the-valley daisy
wort fleabane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet wild columbine
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comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field
gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint
pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold
speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak
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gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint
pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold
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the-evening campion pimpernel lily-of-the-periwinkle milkwort speedwell dogtooth-senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood-wort spotted arum lily foxglove swallow-wort strawberry wallflower hyacinth wild daffodil campion oxeye daisy the-valley daisy pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak white violet columbine lily aster tuberose swallow wort leopard's-wall flower field daffodil mother of the daisy mint pimpernel pansy periwinkle milk speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood-birthwort spotted arum

Yearning to touch horizontals and verticals, objects of your love, to warm your hands with the friction of materials. If anywhere a God, or a mythical being, it is in this dirt between your toes, under your nails. An active play of flesh into itching hives, the slip and pull of silk, this journey threaded into terrain: longing for the epidermis of cloth, its staggered diagonals, to rub against its grain, finding in its roughness the relief of combining with the world.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of-periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose

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Taste is of water, and so of wine. This sense is also female and a gateway to Heaven and Hell. The original sin. A woman who eats is a challenge to God. Trees laden with fruit: oranges, mast and holly berries. Your mouth craves a return to an earth untainted by poisons. For wilder creatures than a parakeet to feed freely from your hand. Where the red field is left to burgeon, and eating dates and apricots is safe on the tongue.

columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-

the-evening campion
pimpernel lily-of-the-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dogtooth-
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
wort spotted arum lily
foxglove swallow-wort
strawberry wallflower
hyacinth wild daffodil
campion oxeye daisy
the-valley daisy pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
white violet columbine
lily aster tuberose
swallow wort leopard's-
wall flower field
daffodil mother of the
daisy mint pimpernel
pansy periwinkle milk
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
birthwort spotted arum

Corralled by rose hedges, a coronet of sky-blue pimpernel and jasmine. Hidden in the wild hyacinths at your feet a monkey devours the fallen apple as you breathe the dark air of an old fabric scented with wood violets.

oxeye daisy mint
valley wild rose pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
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leopard's bane wild
field gladiolus wild
mother of the evening
mint pimpernel lily-of-
periwinkle milkwort
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birthwort spotted arum
comfrey fox glove
bane wild strawberry
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lily-of-the-valley daisy
wort fleabane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet wild columbine
lily aster tuberose

comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

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At the furthest shuttle you turn back toward this still contemplation of the garden. Your laurel wreath has been replaced by woven rows of pearl. Where once the great stretched teats of an udder were softened with perfumed oils, soft drapes fall modestly to your feet and your only horn is this spiralled one. All your ancient quarrels are pinned up in these petticoats, but still these aromatic flowers, peppery as cloves, sting your senses awake. Beneath their hot fragrance, the sharp pungency of piss: urine used in the making of orcein. As the garden's sweet orange has an undernote of musk.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of-periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose

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Hearing is also of the air, and of time. This journey starts with a choice of pronouns in your back pocket, pencil sharpened and tucked into its elastic. Here sound is made into space stretched between the keys of a small organ. The worn surface of bone beneath silent fingers where once pungent undergrowth tickled the back of sinuses, nettles unfurled their serrated edges. Hunting down weeds until all that's left is plastic-plush, fringed with turquoise mane and purple lashes. You play them back into being, the weft turning back across invisible sinews. Deep inside your ear time begins to sprout, soon you will be made of a thousand flowers.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of-periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose swallow wort leopard's-wallflower field

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Of sight. Associated with fire because most closely related to mastery and purification. Blue mirrored stones fuse a lively play of glances, reduce eyes to a single pronoun. The rabbit stares at the hunting dog. A pyramid is fixed.

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But the eye is opened by hyacinth. You follow the rooms through this house, feeling in the mirror for another reflection. Footsteps and music echo ahead, a sharp note in the nostrils and on the tongue.

oxeye daisy mint valley wild rose pansy flea bane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet columbine birth aster tuberose-comfrey leopard's bane wild field gladiolus wild mother of the evening mint pimpernel lily-of- periwinkle milkwort speedwell dog tooth senna broad bean sweet orange holly pea wood birthwort spotted arum comfrey fox glove bane wild strawberry gladiolus wild hyacinth evening campion oxeye lily-of-the-valley daisy wort fleabane marigold violet jasmine pink pea vetch pine oak violet wild columbine lily aster tuberose

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the-evening campion
pimpernel lily-of-the-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dogtooth-
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
wort spotted arum lily
foxglove swallow-wort
strawberry wallflower
hyacinth wild daffodil
campion oxeye daisy
the-valley daisy pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
white violet columbine
lily aster tuberose
swallow wort leopard's-
wall flower field
daffodil mother of the
daisy mint pimpernel
pansy periwinkle milk
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood-
birthwort spotted arum

The sixth sense between the warp and weft, the jitter and strain of all held there. All that still creeps out from the spaces in the weft, the tremor of a thousand flowers, swollen fruit, an ambivalent virgin and a dangerous beast. Only desire. *Mon seul désir*. Of the body opening to all that is contained or lost, all that is still. The sixth sense between the warp and weft: *à la licorne*. At the dark edges of Eden's enclosure, the peat beds beckon you home.

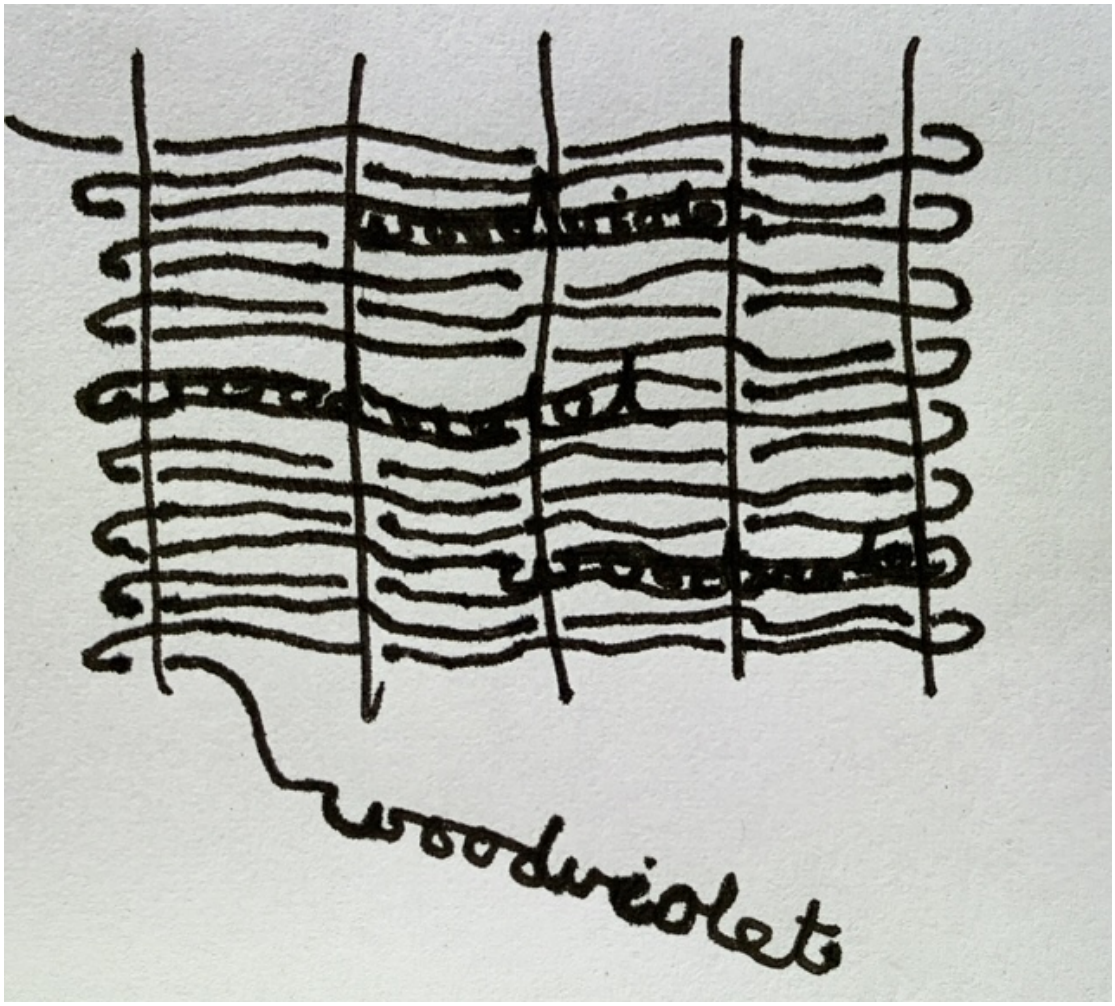
oxeye daisy mint
valley wild rose pansy
flea bane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet columbine birth
aster tuberose-comfrey
leopard's bane wild
field gladiolus wild
mother of the evening
mint pimpernel lily-of-
periwinkle milkwort
speedwell dog tooth
senna broad bean sweet
orange holly pea wood
birthwort spotted arum
comfrey fox glove
bane wild strawberry
gladiolus wild hyacinth
evening campion oxeye
lily-of-the-valley daisy
wort fleabane marigold
violet jasmine pink
pea vetch pine oak
violet wild columbine
lily aster tuberose

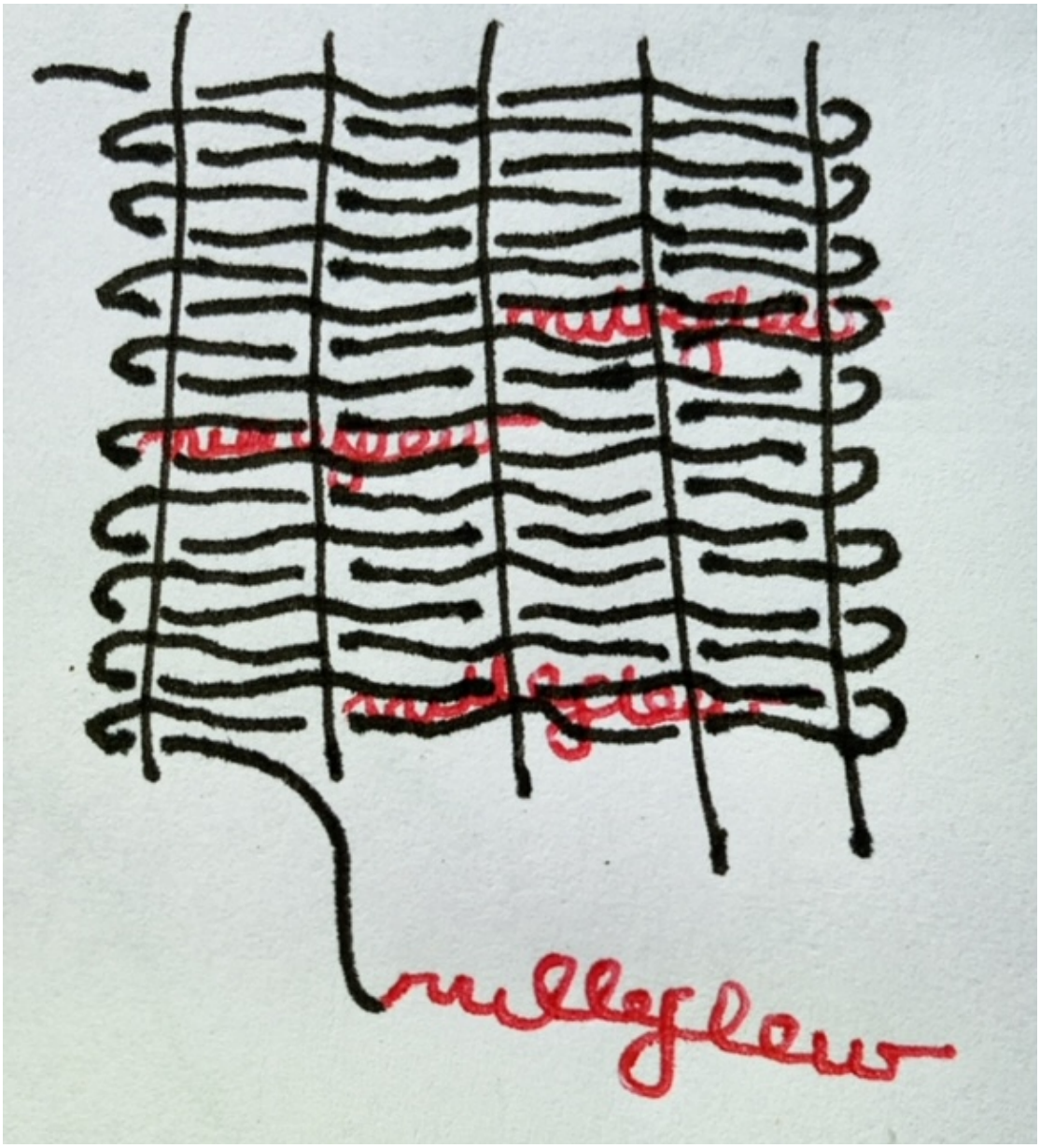
comfrey fox glove swallow wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth-violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood-violet columbine birthwort spotted arum lily aster tuberose-comfrey foxglove swallow-wort leopard's-bane wild strawberry wallflower field gladiolus wild hyacinth daffodil mother-of-the-evening campion oxeye daisy mint pimpernel lily-of-the-valley daisy pansy periwinkle milkwort fleabane marigold speedwell dogtooth violet jasmine pink senna broad bean sweet pea vetch pine oak orange holly pea wood violet columbine birth wort spotted arum lily aster tuberose

The event of a thread: an introduction.

A note in my writing journal ruefully reflects that the writing of *Enclosures* 'has been one of the most painful creative processes.' This discomfort was caused partly by the technical challenges of realising this 'inter-text' and partly, by the interruptions. First there was the temporary closure, for rebuilding, of the Musée de Cluny where the *La Dame à la licorne* (*The Lady and the Unicorn)* tapestries are held; and then it was the protracted closure of pandemic lockdown which has given a new context for one of the poem's motifs: how to reconcile conflicting desires for contemplation and action. And yet the creation of this piece has also been a joyous process, giving me license to indulge my lifelong love affair with this Lady and her unicorn. When I could visit the museum in person, I spent many hours in front of the tapestries responding to them in writing and drawing, and when the galleries were closed, I played with the challenge I'd set myself: how to create a skein of spatial practices across forms. *Enclosures* is one of the outcomes of that challenge.

(from my notebook:)





But what drew me to these tapestries in the first place? Quite apart from my love-hate relationship with the unicorn as a popular icon, these tapestries fascinate me as art works made at a key point in a shift in European signifying practices. The *La Dame à la licorne* tapestries were woven circa 1500 at a time of an emerging concern with how to document and verify the truth. It is the period when written prose was emerging as a preferred signifying system, valued for its apparent stability and incorruptibility compared with an oral, poetic tradition. The five senses, celebrated in these tapestries (with a sixth tapestry dedicated to 'À Mon Seul Désir' [‘My Sole Desire’]) were a popular motif across art forms throughout this period, with 'Sight' emerging as victor over supposedly less reliable senses. This concern to protect 'truth' from contamination was highly gendered. The common (patriarchal) belief, as articulated by influential Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti, was that the female was dangerously pliable unless enclosed in a surveilled and protected domestic world. 'La Dame' of the tapestries is a virgin - according to myth, only a pure virgin could tame a unicorn - and is dangerously unstable due to her potential move from a father's

household to a husband's. Not surprisingly then, she is represented here as locked into a safe garden of enclosed fertility.

What particularly fascinates me about weaving is that it shares some similarities with the construction of writing. Text and textile share an etymological root in 'texere', the Latin verb 'to weave', suggesting they might belong to a cluster of linguistic values and characteristics that could be unravelled through an inter-textual exploration. And I am also interested in the multiple ways in which both forms can escape and subvert professions of stability and enclosure. Prose poetry, the form in which *Enclosures* is written, offers multiple ways of deconstructing or fraying the supposed stability of writing through its dual allegiance to both prose and poetry conventions. Similarly, these tapestries have other allegiances which destabilise their borders. Their central motif of lady and unicorn draw on older and more dangerous myths: Eve and the serpent, a deposed female Creator, and a wild Lady of the Beasts. Moreover, through the meanings of their texture and materiality, these tapestries signify beyond the themes and motifs they depict. And so in *Enclosures* I was interested in pursuing whether further destabilisations become possible within an inter-textuality between tapestries and poetry. American poet and artist Jen Bervin famously draws on the formal characteristics of Dickinson's poetic fragments for her textile forms[1], but I wanted to do the opposite. By exploring how poetry might engage with the formal characteristics of the tapestries, I wanted to see what new meanings and ways of making meaning might emerge, and what might slip out between the imperfectly interlocking threads of this 'inter-text'.

My interest in an intertextuality between textile and text was fired up further by discovering the work of Anni Albers. Albers was a pioneering textile artist who developed weaving as an abstract modernist form. Her influential 1965 text *On Weaving* discusses the many historical and contemporary ways in which thread has been used to express abstract thought, and how it can behave as 'writing'. By this, she is not referring to the weaving of actual words, such as on a sampler, but to the way in which weaving can create a texture and materiality capable of communicating and expressing abstraction. 'The thoughts' she says 'can be traced back to the event of a thread.' Threads, not words, are one of the 'earliest transmitters of meaning.' [2]

Albers' emphasis on the importance of a neglected 'tactile sensibility' resonates with a contemporary, environmental concern. She worries that we have lost our sensitivity to the 'epidermis' of things. Our contact with materials is 'rarely more than contact with the finished product', she says, and we have come to rely on the visual at the cost of neglecting the haptic. Her advice is that we need to get our hands back 'into the dough'. [3] There is perhaps an irony in Renaissance tapestry that relies on the texture produced by interlocking threads but makes an appeal to the eye through its pictorial representations. Albers' own work is a

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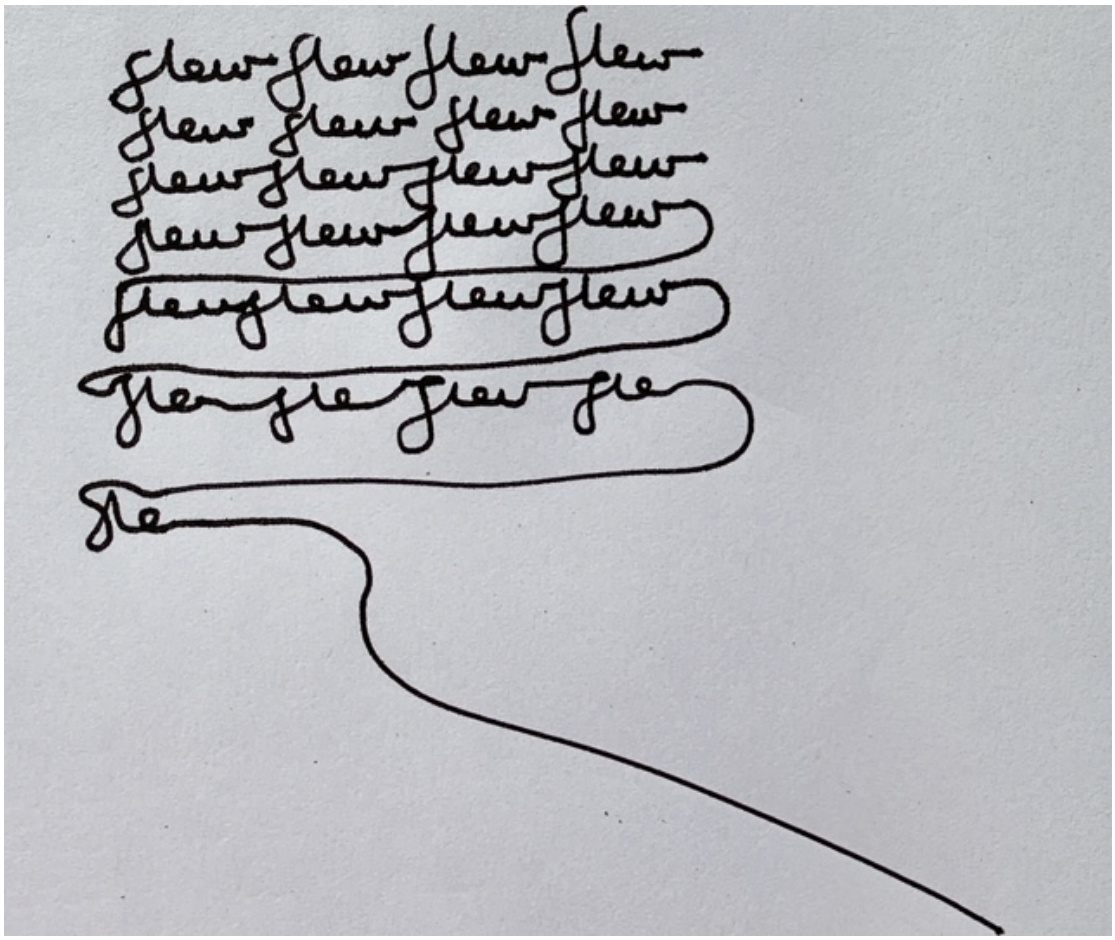
[1] Images from Bervin's Dickinson Composite series can be seen here; http://www.jenbervin.com/projects/the-dickinson-composites-series

[2] Anni Albers, *On Weaving* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press in association with The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, 2017), p. xi, p.50.

[3] All quotes from 'Tactile Sensibility' in *On Weaving,* p. 44-47.

glorious celebration of the non-figurative meaning-making of weaving, foregrounding its construction and its juxtaposition of textures. However, one of the formal ways in which the *La Dame à la licorne* tapestries subvert their own pictorial celebration of enclosure is through their use of a 'millefleur' background. The technique of filling the field of the tapestry with an irregular pattern of individual wildflowers became popular in Europe in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. In the *La Dame à la licorne* tapestries, this becomes the riot of more than 40 recognisable species of wildflower – vetch and daisy, violet and daffodil – that would have been familiar from the meadows and woodlands of northern Europe. Not only does their uncultivated wildness pull attention away from the central enclosed garden depicted on each tapestry, but the lack of any regular flower pattern gestures to the hands and skills of the weavers behind the work. The making, the texture and the interlocking weave of the fabric start to surface. The soft borders of the 'millefleur' are therefore a key interface for my 'inter-text', both hiding and exposing how writing and weaving as signifying systems may gesture to a supposedly external environment whilst actually constructing that environment within their text/textile.

(from my notebook:)



And yet, still these tapestries elude me. They continue to create in me a desire for a contemplative moment that has the stillness of enclosure whilst paradoxically remaining porous. And I continue to hope that an inter-text between poem and

tapestry might create a third space where more mysterious exchanges can take place.