

## Bittern space, a siskin

Patrick Farmer

Bittern space, a siskin.

Between 2013 and 2015 I published three short books concerned with sound, listening, and...

*try i bark* was written in Mooste, Estonia; *wild horses think of nothing else the sea*, whilst walking the welsh coast; and *Yew Grotesque*, as I walked in and around Grizedale Forest in Cumbria. I consider the three books to be a species of triangle, a series of de-centred perspectives that behave in waveforms.

Each book acts like a knot of the other in a spawn of its own accords.

*try i bark* is something of an outside, akin to a heard poem; *wild horses...* is more of an internal artefact, a slow mapping of fluctuating expanse; *Yew Grotesque*, the third publication, holds up a mirror to their echoes.

Composition spins like a wheel of place, sending and receiving signals in a fog of form and content.

*Bittern space, a siskin* is an attempt to transform parts of these books into relations of audition, to extract elements of sound from them in the guise of listening's multiplicitous qualities and the myriad modalities of writing. This is a process that can perhaps be likened to carpentry, planing the lines framed by the dimensions of the page, picking shavings up off the floor, endlessly arranging them into trivial giants.

Writing about the writing of sound and listening can relate as the concurrent creation and destruction of perspective and memory. *Bittern space...* is not an attempt to make less legible meanings of sounds legible. Likewise, it does not seek to make them even less legible than they seem to be. It follows that it is not an attempt to clarify what I think I mean, in a singular sense, when I attempt to write listening. I have no desire to fold a concrete relation between sound and text. I am not even sure that listening can be written.

The reflections of the texts herein correspond to processes of speculative listening and remain, as far as possible, incredulous to the origins and destinations of reception.

*try i bark* sounds as if it is subliminally afraid of the edges that exist at the ends of its many cracks. Such edges are not only those of the page, the ostensible presence of a frame, but the edges of words, sentences, sounds, the very heart of it, the resonant frequency of a place lost among a contingency of indefinite revolutions. The book projects this in an abstract and meaningless sense, which is to say, it did not plan on such encounters.

*wild horses...* takes this elsewhere by pointing at its own faults, attempting to form shells of edges, erecting downward statues to reach and record the elements that are themselves texts between land and sea.

*Yew Grotesque* is a loving of such wayward places, diving into them as if it were a cormorant. It is a book of adoration, moving through its various speculative auditions under the dappled echoes of birds and querulous reflections of mirrors. It laps up water from the footprints of close words.

Writing sound and listening. Moving in place as phonemes and meanings intertwine. Can place be raised from the buoyant vessels of oxymoronic imagination? Flattening any number of opposites onto the surface of the page that is a lichen in the oscillating ruins of thought. Can it be heard in the imperious concern for equilibrium, in a writing that attempts to oppose, from one moment to the next, any degree of variation?

As I write, do I double up with listening's exigency? Does a reader push an emergence, viviparity, out of the seeming stillness of the line, just as vibration, echo, is thrown out of the cochlea? Perhaps this imagined coupling is a gesture to the ongoing sensibility of relation and equivalence, like a brain calling to language, or time rattling a skull; the beauty of bookends, an imposition rather than a beginning. Can we identify with our own listening, or is such recognition the fleeting desire of unidentifiable difference? Is to write about sound and listening to encounter an endless palinode?

This commentary imagines that it exists among the tense edges of three books. Amorphous strata. Liminal place. Sounds can be pulled in as well as pushed through. The more I listen (the more I write about listening) the more it edges.

Holding open the void, Grey hands it to himself. The room is a series of boxes within boxes, each one trying to depart and move into the other. He is the cold—standing—waiting—figure between them all. On his back in the dark, stiff limbs, his eyes break the balance, coming to rest on the ceiling to which the night before he had pinned the conference schedule.



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Sound moves in with the silence. The prefigured boxes become rooms in a projected flow of close images. Looking across the mirror and up to the words forming words, Grey reads slowly, becoming slower as he moves down the list, pausing between names to hear the pause that becomes longer between the words that break.

*From Yew Grotesque*

*On his back in the dark*

A parasite in the single sentence of an ear, hectocotylus, a madness of arms seals the ostiole, denying light and air. From inside rises sound as a voice growing taller over a wall constantly converging into a dent. One sculpture of a hand survives the descent. The wall is bent in its yellow and the hand calls from the underneath the fumitory.

*On the ceiling to which the night before he had pinned the conference schedule*

In quick succession a plaster hand and a note of empty images with regards to the in-exactness of the cast pour over the wall. The note is hand-typed and evenly-spaced, its occasional mistakes jut out like a bright work of inexact personalities. It is a fandango that arrives without warning, still in its existence without sense. The typography denotes (it is simply so) a collapse that was premeditated, beating over the wall and landing like spring. An arch was replaced with the muffled sound of laughter as the hand came to ground. Not a crack on its surface. On closer inspection, the ungraspable refractions of precipitation and condensation along the many manipulated joins and narrows leave internal speech repeating something along the line – we propose to disintegrate as we please. The sounds in their descent are those that keep up the mind, a sadness on another side of a wall, red swells on a seagull's hook, sending things into masks and boxes as the bird lands on the reassurance of its clench. The force of the fall turned sound over.

*A projected flow of close images*

Slow creatures and the smoke of the earth. Letters planted close together and competing for yeast water. The grammar of space requires unlimited thickness, cold bodies wanting to blow on the thin face of the mould. Between concords of issue and reception. To write is to be struck in the ear, shown in the face.

*To hear the pause that becomes longer between the words that break*

Bending the personality the more we listen in. Words break on our ears as wood does under an axe. If we choose to listen we feed, hear degrees in fields of collapsing dissimilitude, knee-high and deep attractions, overgrown grasshoppers. Passive we, hear metamorphoses of signals, rush stridulating crowds of listening forever.

denouement, for want of nothing else, not everything  
anything, the negation of other or else—

hands willingly place the virtues of not thinking in writing

else, anything than the other else remembers the other in spite this all else  
anything, causes prevalence

nor, anything else—  
*metacilla alba* flings in and out, point to pointing spontaneous, displaying always unknown motion

From *try i bark*

*denouement*

‘you know its name, the banks  
are laden with day, like the name,  
you feel it out, with your hand:  
Alba.’

Paul Celan, *Tabernacle Window*.



The plaster hand and the *alba* are sacrificial anodes, one is the other, passing over and parting at dawn – a time and a mark of quiet feet—they search for the other with hidden ears. Catch my short sight in your wing, your spine, your absent pinnae, says. Your feathers cannot undo my knotted nature.

Forcing the hand, myopia, silent words convulse the spine of rash and quick decisions, projections bend and bruise the source for lack of place and a contrasting explanation. This listening is not straight and not clear, the distinction that is burdened by orientation is a transluscent opening of closing. Nets can be deployed if we desire to know which way we listen. Relationships are a celebration of perplexity, every thought reaches infinite boundaries. Where might the struggle take? The growing echo of an inner voice reads from the closing of books.

*hands willingly place the virtues of not thinking in writing*

The resolve of the hand as a writing hand found in mud. The approach of a perspective compared to which ours had lost all interest. A patient hand. Now it is here. We ask ourselves if it should be called a hand at all. The net of lines would connote a thing, as is expected, watched and treated from many angles at once. This thing receives from numerous perspectives and tensions though it fell from only one. How many angles is it possible to conceive at once? Perhaps it is best to consider this object and our understanding of it in light of its actions. It could not see over the wall, yet it was determined to exist. The protruding speckle of colour wished for its own vantage point. It is not so much a thing as a place, a place that opens up temporal emissions from which to compose. All of this happens in silence. 'I'm going to write now, as my hand moves.'

*Motacilla alba flings in and out*

The hand and the *alba* wish to be the same – though both are by definition plural – it is a combustable ash grey, it is an underside flecked with yellow, like an eel. Interpreting the dimorphism by washing in the imagination of the other. This is the case, says, without words. It carries a folding bird in the beak as the sky moves muscles as an unfolding. How might we speak, or think of only the one thing, it evades our finality, and laughs at the captivity of our jocular and disparate minds. How is this it, says, and what do we do, if it is not? What does the heart tell us about the ear? One always in need of more than the other can give. Are we children trying to catch our condensing breath? Speaking in front of an obscured reflection we feel in the voice that an I is missing from the ear. Is it possible you do not exist? says. That would be cause for great sorrow, if we were nothing of life, says, emerging from several equivalences into a place where projections converge. Who would opposites be, if that were so? Looking out of the nothing over hear. Words lost in words with an invisible heart.

The hand now resides on a desk by an open window, its keeper, unidentifiable shade, professes a fondness for it that exceeds any feelings extended toward the hands of others. The writing hand is no longer clean, but it is the only possibility.

Limitless–Transparent–Skin

*try i bark* is part of a strange and intermediary attention paid to the pervading and evasive natures of sensation and sensibility, the things one does not attend to whilst nevertheless attending. It was written as part of a residency at MOKS in Estonia, and is a seeming product of removal, by which I mean the abstracted state in which I wrote. Virginia Woolf has called this, 'non-being', a sort of becoming that is not lived consciously, an inability to recall aspects and events of place amongst particulars that re-arrange personality, the furrow and cause of projections, a time that unidentifies.

Events wipe lines of walking like a cockerel that competes with its echo. Events want to respond but cannot because environment absorbs the text.

My readings of *try i bark* are part of an immanent understanding post-publication. Predicated on the things that happen when one is not paying attention, an unpredictable scattering of the binary, an inability to recognise oneself after writing.

*try i bark* smells of the arboreal heat of an Estonian July. Myriad horse-flies and tics maintain a tense situation.

Wool is felt in its abundance as a material that in its composition and touch serves to push the writer outward away from the empirical form of the sentences and toward the unimagined reader.

The abstraction of wool as the pulsating cortices of the book connotes scattered pockets of density and void. There is an understated proximity that enables the reader to pick through the pages as wished. Muffled scree of neurological material, akin to holding palms of wool over pinnae. Lateral paths of association and dimensionality.

Trailing this inverse topography can enable words to be experienced in ways that numb the ostensibly formal nature of their publication.

The materiality of wool is a restless map of invisible form, a microcosmic literary and environmental pattern that shows up in the atmosphere of a poem. Clumps of floccus lay still under the light-ice of clouds that shine over somnolent lids like teleconnectic effects over curvilinear filaments.

Many poets and scholars tend to the life and noise underneath words. Barbara Guest writes of the 'invisible architecture' that can support a poem, constantly being re-built in light of the imagination. Charles Baudelaire also conceived of many analogous structures, though perhaps the most apt here is the life of the Thyrsus, a staff, or straight line, of giant fennel covered in ivy, a correspondent arabesque of wild and tamed metric, a supposed time, a light that is a loss of memory.

In his prose poem, 'Thyrsus', Baudelaire uses its potentially contentious image as a way of further amplifying the blurred boundaries of poetry and prose, considering the essential nature of both as co-extensions of each other, a dualism both itinerant and established, like its mythological wielder, Dionysus. In detailing their intertwined lives and the oft-reciprocal and extended nature of duality as a fluid system, pulsating like a limitless station of meaning and depiction, Baudelaire points at the singular beams defined by their differences in the omni-structural symmetry of *Paris Spleen*:

'Who would dare to decide whether the flowers and tendrils were made for the stick, or whether the stick is only present for revealing the beauty of the flowers and tendrils?'

This is a clear and impish enjoyment of equivalent measure as the poet traces dry fingers over the edges of the line, creating a residue of indistinguishable cause and effect.

As the Thyrsus rattles the known becomes the found.

Like writing and reading we listen for the inherent gaps of perspective in words as if they were part of a relationship that connotes a continual reapplication of balance that itself accounts for, and often demands, the existence of these contradictions and antinomies.

Words posture like marks between the crawling tendrils and smoke of arabesques. Patterns are like a lake of migratory birds, corresponding and inaudible lights, the polytropic natures of language that cluster among vectors of energy underneath walking lines that change in accordance to the life of the reader.

Such synergy enables a constant ejection of fragrance and colour into the world, promoting readings of renewal.

An atmosphere of these three books articulates an injection of writing into writing, an extension, or even a performance, where one has no idea any one is present.



Eyes closed to the marram of foundation. Sweet inflection unawares the tuneless relationship between wind and sand. Pushes sag into a compressed sand. Basking a ways forward sag games for our own interpretation, and of course have an explanation. Sit and wish for the ears of sand. To be deafened, sucked up into the vents of gulls, eggs vanish miles out to sea plastic. Hearing borders and lights up to a threshold heard in always for the first time in speechless words always hovering, squawking. What is there left of hearing to hear? And why must I ask I continually ask. Is that how in light of thoughtless stretches, sea. Mr. grubby preens a series of cadence? Shells and falling forests in their science vested implications move forth physical composition to statistic, to contradict (every tree) (writing) the same event  
write

From *wild horses...*

*Eyes close to the marram of foundation*

One of the etymological lives of Down is that of a shortened Old English form of dune. Dunes and marram grass are scattered throughout *wild horses...*, they are its ground, or down-ness, part of the low element of the pages that are sunk full of decomposing shells, infinitesimal plastic nodes, and algae. We might imagine the continuous structure of marram as analogous to the myriad networks that move across various sections of the books, linking tropes and sounds by way of accumulation, metabolism, echo, repetition, and cut. Stacked words and sounds. Clearing place so we might speculate language in terms of listening and listening in terms of language. In such ephemeral frames we might focus on making strange the qualities of listening and their plurivalent states, readings that span the sediment and invisible tiers of the texts. We might listen out for that which shimmers, only to disappear at the foot of it, allowing it to enter us and stack.

*The tuneless relationship between wind and sand*

*wild horses...* is a residue of the walk that is itself a remembrance of topographical and phantom things. What is down there in the sound of the word dune? A sound that absorbs its own messages. Under the dunes where there is no air, a sinew of life, no path, and darkness, there is potential of collapse. The sound of a word barely begins to scratch out its own contours or resounding variousness before it disappears. The image of a dune denotes a rising structure, but of course there are the inevitable opposites and accords prevalent in all words. The roots of marram grow in all directions in order that the dune may keep its particular ground. Marram is a word whose movement is found in its sound, heard over wild distances. Such sounds, the spectrums of condition and often unknown possibility from its two syllables, belong to the history of gnawing animals and the upkeep of vegetation, mineral, and colour. Marram holds the book together and yet opens it out beyond the senses or its history into a bottomless nature. It is the metric, the palimpsestic prints left in the dunes by animals matted by wind. It binds the book in transience, vocabulary, and structure.

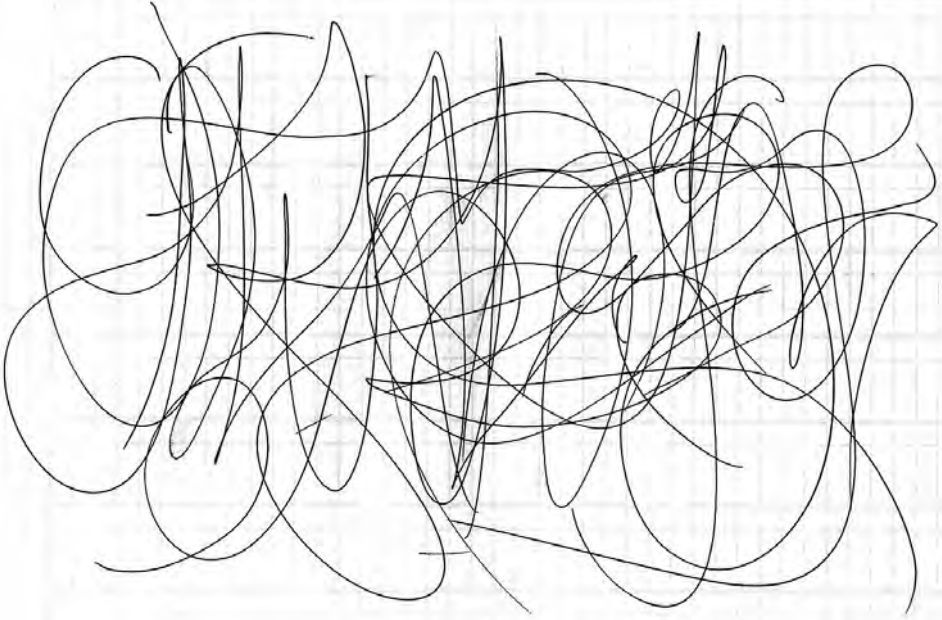
*Sit and wish for the ears of sand*

The Aeolian nature of the dunes I encountered on my walk (Ynyslas in Ceredigion is one of the last Aeolian dune structures left in the UK) provided an ample bed into which vocabulary dug as I slept, creating ample resonances around which the physicality of sand and its forms poured through the text.

*What is there left of hearing to hear?*

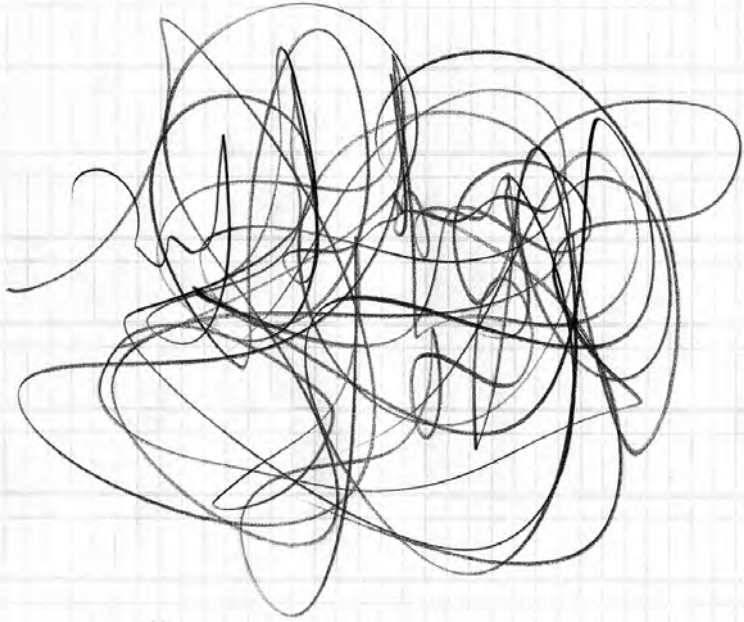
Can sound act as a medium in which the imagination moves, vibrating it as a type of transient matter? Sound moves in waves, thus so might the imagination, into, through, and removing things. Talk of the in-between is an abstraction, gifted, both from the imagination and reality. Sounds of words or things that make no sound can still make a sound in the imagination, often acting as a pretext for poetry, where noise can move in and out of elastic geography. It is here that the sound of the voice crawls out of words and into the sea. To speak of it the reader swims into the production of fluttering marks, flowing from the current of the outside that the poet is occasionally allowed to swim against.

I've often attempted to re-write pages from *wild horses...*, focussing on the exfoliation, suggestibility, and illegibility of phonemes, extracting myriad sounds out of the words in order that they may form a slopped roof of their own composites.



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The Book of Good Noise



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Fetch Lime for Horses

The writing of *wild horses*... reflects an apposition to nature. Looking out and listening to sea, it attempts to fold into vantages of place. The surface can be calm, it can be monstrous, a readable thing that can be listened to, finding sound there in the stillness. Underneath the poem, in the things and the stuff, the fierceness and the constancy of life, we go back there, again and again, returning, resorting, rebuilding, rethinking, to the fury of life on the surface.

As I began to write and walk *wild horses*... my awareness of the plural universe of water in William Carlos Williams's epic poem of place, *Paterson* – published between 1946 and 1958 in five parts, with Williams working on a sixth as he passed away – was paramount in my attempt to focus on the life all around me as I walked.

No location walked through was one thing or another thing, everything felt like it was taking apart in concentric and close motion.

A resolute life of creative tension, that of permanent attentiveness, will return and project as much 'positive' as 'negative'. Birds both reveal and absorb the sky. As I tried to arrange such perspectives, I returned to Williams:

'My two leading forces were trying to know life and trying to find a technique of verse.'

My preoccupation with *Paterson* resides in Williams' practise of listening to others, and of finding his listening in things, to strangers on a bus as much as waterfalls. Initially I was more concerned with the latter, being as that was where I saw myself, as a listener of and to things, but slowly the construct expanded to focus on relationships, that is to say, not only literal relationships, but the distance accorded to liminality.

How much does one need listen to oneself in order to begin to listen to anything other? A syrinx of breath in taxa, expanding negative affirmation.

As Williams wrote *Paterson* he lived and listened in the webs of the other *Paterson*, working to hear a language that spoke to the dissimilarities of human life. By quartering the subliminal maw, silence crashes about the metropolis. The noise of the Passaic falls, wherein the mass of *Paterson* begins, reflects in its spew the white noise of speech, the difficulty in listening to the energy that exists behind relentless appearance. The Passaic River mirrors the course of Williams' life as he searches for his language, walking the firm banks of decomposition.

The Passaic is matter from which the inhabitants of *Paterson* tacitly draw their history. The water of the falls, the constant energy of life and imagination, rolls up over the lavish absence of osseous labyrinths.

Dominating the folds of *wild horses*... is an attempted treatment of sound as that which is always already there, in scant need of decoration or company.

Sound plays every relation in *wild horses*... it is its own company, and yet I feel it can only be heard on the quietest of its surfaces.

In these surroundings text attempts to suture itself to the tissue of innumerable centers of convulsive environment in order to transform through its being into any number of other sounds, images, and things.

The multiple relations of sounds inherent in the book and in the mind of the reader can create zones of speculation. Motion between listening and its textual representations, resonating slabs, little stars.

The mud of listening and the silt of poetry are often conjunct in their ability to obscure perspective. Listen, relative orientation of inside and outside lost to the tumult of a mind unable to separate itself, relentless, separate, mute utter distinction. Inner and outer surfaces of the page shadow the reciprocal network that runs through the lines. An impression that they are all there is.

I found that Oswald Egger's *Room of Rumour: Tunings*, pulls a similar measure out of reading, like feeling for omni-intuitions underneath an exposure of neurons to the sounds of words. Egger's room is a text that arranges thermodynamic sequences of transformation, a place where vestibular ataxia swallows any reflection.

'nothing vanishes, nothing remains, nothing follows'

Projecting onto this entropic triad we attempt to render listening into an object, encounter discord sealing and stacking, think, 'nothing vanishes'. If we are convinced of a truth of so often thinking new thoughts, trembling instants, and not just listening to ourselves formerly listening, it is easy to forget about that which is already there, a hue of between, 'nothing remains'. As we listen we assemble reminders toward things already known, writing like we are learning, trying to discover what lies behind listening, 'nothing follows'.

gain

*motacilla alba* reminds me initially  
 means backwards of forwards inside of down *hirundo rustica*  
 searches for its self corners  
 hearing reflection of looking  
 small

a fly behind a pane of glass

From *try i bark*

*a fly behind a pane of glass*

I realise now that this refers to the end sequence of Luis Buñuel's last film, *That Obscure Object of Desire*. To the hive of symbolic embroidery (interlaced figures in a modern arcade soon to be reduced to rubble, fixing and unravelling on the surface of a torn mantilla) amidst ambiguously reflexive positions of fantasy. The height of many realities condensed to a speck. The need to master objects and the need of objects. After I had been fortunate to see her through a pane of glass, the only thing I wanted in my life, was to feel that great pleasure again. The walled space of increasing interiority. Our lives were exacted on a variety of scales. Her was a moment of flux found in contempt, inaudible words that heard in themselves other languages, their own steady differences. Witnessed in the grimace of a face and the soft rubbing of hands, listening was a mirror of the human world, an incessant echo of spurious appearances. Pleasure took the place of a pane of glass, and remained unavailable.

*reminds me*

We are always saying more than we can say, hearing more than we can hear, drawing things apart to feel the differences as the heart quickens – we try with varying results—to bring this to a close. Each of us wants to live like the other, familiarity disappears between us in a burg of spoken solitude.

*means backwards of forwards*

When we were five we ran away with our sister, through fields, we have understandably forgotten that we found anxiety to be slowly amputating our escape. We came to halt some miles down the road from our mother's house, resting inside a small stone building, hot grey, once used for housing sheep. Not long after we had unpacked our books and board games a part of the roof, a slab that was already hanging upside down like a crop of feeding birds, dislocated, letting in more light than we could understand. A coppery glow absorbed the smell of grease and lanolin, and so we abandoned ourselves back into the humidity. Our memory of this event is silent, slow landing is the sound we have given to both the hand and the slab, being as we heard neither. To smile as if for the first time, Walt, is the sound of it. Vibrations harden like glass inside each other. We had with us a tiny pouch, filled with poppy seeds, on which we would suck and be quiet.

*small*

One moment few-  
grated saffron over black radish is beautiful.

Mango leaves dandelion broom-  
precipitates of colour, unrecognisable sunlight dappled by  
things and place combine  
low citrus gape yell a bronze siskin in the sound charcoal-

History, dust. From the bear of sulphur and stone seam  
familiar.

*hearing a reflection of looking*

To see something other than a language in our language, in that world where our hand rested on your body and we adored it. Where your body welcomed recognised and loved that hand, a consciousness aware of being nothing but a series of unfathomable depths. A limit disappears and swallows the visible waves of a frisson. It is down among the distances that we search for our knotted tongues. In a sinking valley.

*searches for its self corners*

The existence of indivisible molecules and atoms in the air of escape. The beds we make. The conceit that things have an underside as well as an underneath, an above as well as an equivalent.



what is it to write now.  
after everything.  
felt—  
sat  
in similarity.  
hearing  
all the which is not  
seen and also  
heard, already gone. noticed in bone.  
white trees fly, succumb to nesting as *ardea cinerea* in themselves

ghosts of a landscape reduce the skin to lakes.  
stone experienced space.  
*columbia livica domestica* lies over water and no trace.  
holes in *nuphar* bring light to dark below.  
check my leg for *lasius niger*, please—  
an old man wanders between fields and field.

insects on the lakes surface are not holes on the lakes surface

From *try i bark*



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*What is it to write now*

The full stop lasted two weeks and then removed it. That time, a landscape took the place of a body. We grew listening out of the moment.

*ghosts of a landscape reduce the skin to lakes*

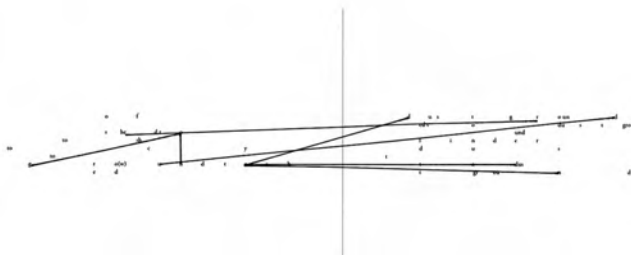
This might imply the untying of a scene, worn hands dropping objects into their immediate return before turning back to the absence. Spreading out is an understanding predicated after the scene of untying, coiling, recoiling.

*heard, already gone. noticed in bone*

A sense of wish fulfillment, the knots in the ear, an image of tinnitus in sound, the stacking of blood, hiss as they push past the gaps in the knot. I still find this strange, as if I were projecting a desperate character of escape, revealing the desire to be rid of a certain tread within my physiology. I read this now, early signs of future concerns; the negation and affirmation of listening's qualities in text, a total immersion in listening off the page, creating delineations where there need be none, but there must. Opening and closing the mouth to words, crawling around in a tattered teleology.

*white trees fly*

The book spreads out like a forest full of teeth, a deathless lustre of mouth wood. We might hear black ants circling fast filaments in concentric measure. Gold, I want you under yellow, with such bright moss you might hunch your shoulders, and I guess to the sound of us. Yours, siskin.



Eidolon / Ideal – one.

Ideal objects appear in sound, to disappear like yellowhammers among courgette flowers. What these phantoms make us think or believe is a chance time of life—how or what we want to hear—inhalés us. Listening does not promise, it is itself an *Eidolon*. The world reflection seen in the shades of a mind sowing itself.

Eidolon / Idle – one.

Alba is a number of lines, the lines are direction, direction is energy. The network takes form as a boundary series of yellow stones imperceptible from the ground. Neither the flammable human face nor the deepest ears can rediscover the mirror or echo for which they are searching. Enclosed in the open work that lures us irretrievably towards a sulphur labyrinth, a smell wraps along the yew walls like taught wires pounding against the poles of docked boats, the outline of one shifting to the outline of the other. Gaps in the invisible smoke of the lines claim to evoke emotions we have not hitherto experienced. Thermal walls of greenish yellow on which ideal shadows extinguish the bright space. Unable to hear the slow advance of deconstruction, the conjugation of things with daylight creates beams of transparent yellow, intention folds into affect.

A still movement hinges back to the edge of the water. Black mustard, wolf flowers, sea purslane. We cannot tell from where we are listening, sound is both amplified and subdued along footsteps that extend the perplexity. We cannot listen for lack of privacy.

The remnants of potential sound encountered when we stop reading are different places to the ones felt as we close our mouths. They are places that take place from each other. This is part of the balance of understanding between the books, needing to find between that are themselves surfaces between.

The interrelationships of reading and speaking take form in *wild horses...* as modes of interconnected physical and cerebral resonance. The text vibrates into its occasion, more distant than external reality. A complex of molar and molecular difference.

The formation of words and sentences in the mouth and the mind express charges of meaning beyond and yet inside everyday meaning, inducing the air of correlation, some matter of issue and return between text and sound.

The three books span their distances as one book and the geography that stretches over the writing is incipiently subsumed below the ink. These knotted perceptions come into the world as if all such things were occasions not only themselves but of other occasions – flickering into resonance, cumulation, and imagination – rolling up into and out of the sea.

The corresponding life of these books can be imagined as a series of surfaces in which no one layer transcends another, where each side of their surfaces may become a mirror for the other. It follows that not all activity need take place in the seeming silence of a metaphysical reading, the secret storerooms of thought and language from which things are seemingly extracted. It can happen everywhere.

The smallest vats, molecular grapheme, magnetism of wave, allusion, enjambment, displacement of phoneme, caterwaul the paragraph to condensation, the low frequency of libraries.

Words can manifest as auras of a loud bend, as light sources that obscure outlines. Intertwined in their concerns, beginning and end move through imperceptible words and slip into reflections that burst over malformed intersections of chance encounters.

Edges are a pretext for vertiginous leaps that span anxious chords. Textures of the quavering ground. Pieces on an incipient shattering hand. All of this talk of edges and bends should not take away from the surface of the text itself. Taken together they can form any number of potentials where the roaming of interstices becomes a way of reading.

*Yew Grottesque* provides the third line in the 'triangle' made up of *try i bark* and *wild horses think of nothing else the sea*. All three (a number of which I am only now beginning to realise the importance) offer a direct and indirect textual correspondence with the experience, concept, and abstraction of listening. The relationships between these publications are typified in the words of Jack Spicer, a poet who felt that his own works 'echo and re-echo against each other', creating resonances that are unable to 'live alone anymore than we can'.

The undertow of the initial publications, located amongst the knots and fluctuating dichotomies of the external and internal, hears its reflection in *Yew Grottesque*, a book stacked full of short sentences and stubborn negations, leaning toward the condition of a possibility. *Yew Grottesque* is a desire to inhabit and reinvent the many divergent angles and qualities of listening unearthed during the writing of the previous two books, it feeds into its own decay.

The triangle between the books is not one of Euclidean space. It is not distinct until its satellites realise they are not alone, finding their centre of gravity among the intimacy of voices. The books learn something of themselves from each other in the place that constructs the signals corresponding between them. They inhabit an architecture that enables the sounds of the words to move through the intersections of the medians they appear to be.

If a reading of the triangle can be like listening to a crowd of voices, does that mean the singular points, the books that are themselves differences, are unstable? That they shimmer? Is listening stable? Does it affirmatively increase uncertainty through the purposeful action of never quite knowing? Pulling things that were apart together.

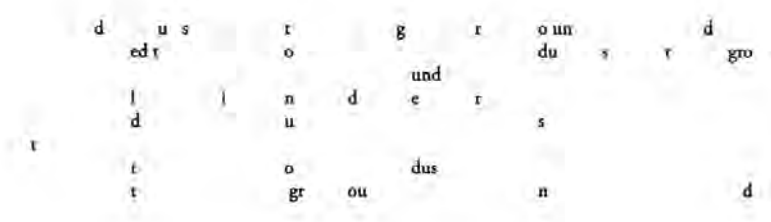
o f  
 s he d t o  
 to to sh c y  
 g to r o(w) u n d t o s h  
 e d

From *try i bark*

o f

Re-tracing to re-marking these movements to patterns made and seen in remarkable foraging. The aim is one of deaf representation. The pattern on the page now makes more sound than the bird that skimmed over the dry ground. Making the marks left more of a dent on the auditory environment as experienced by bodies, stacking copies in front of the loss. Not to fill but to hide. Many of the letters, giving into the lip, echo under the words that take roof. Various memories blocking out the light, a silver birch protrudes from a conflation of events framed by no singular activity. Two ears protrude from the skull. *alba* is signal, tracing pathways, transparent.

Gertrude Stein writes: ‘some one who was living was almost always listening’. My listening caught sight of the bird at that time, but it made no sound that I could hear, caught up in between absence that suggests sound, a state that compels me. I am drawn to depict such listening modes as these, moments of no sound. So what has listening? Full as always of suggestions of sound and memory. Gertrude Stein continues to write: ‘some one who was loving was almost always listening’. My love of birds causes me to listen, love is so often a pretext for listening. Listening caught my attention, the quiet skittering of the bird is so often a pretext for writing. Gertrude Stein continues: ‘one who was loving was almost always listening’. That one who was loving was telling about being one then listening. Across the diversity of these truncated words over there is a story that makes up its own sound against its own wishes.



From *try i bark*

### *dus*

Is this page an attempt to depict the relationship that exists between the writer and the already written about? The filter dawns over the senses, the sounds exhaust the mind, dictate what is put down on the page. The gaps, the shadows of possibilities, are blobs that forage among the patterns to create possible routes and find possible sounds. The writer did not move for the duration yet made more sound than the bird that only moved. It is easy to imagine the sound, hiss of muscle and wave of beak, opening and closing on whatever food source or mistake drew the bird in and out. Silent motion is cause for listening. When one listens to that which makes no sound one is really listening. The page retains the possibility of making no sound (the marks eject their phonemes) yet sound always exists on the page, someplace. As one enters the page it is a recognition of this. I am still recognising what I heard not what I am hearing, evenly hovering over the skim of the bird that got caught up in my attention to the point that I was able to empty it onto the page, from and onto 'a world of stones'. The letters are over an appearance that I did not actually have the means of hearing, over an appearance that did not actually have the means of resounding, which is only sensible, considering the wide variety of predators in the area.

The writer's sensibility turns a lack of sound in this reality around in the mind fluttering, attempting to exfoliate the foot into a suggestibility of distances and potentials.

to

The double spread that colludes with the erratic residue of the fleeting bird enfolds the information within its structure. There is no obvious way to read a field of distended and isolated words, only rarely does the reader find something perceptible, and even then, all that it may entail could be a simple and lone preposition that in its plurality may well note a relationship between the mucus of subject and object. The movement and shock of recognition can bury itself deep within a structure, shunting other elements in and out of perceptive range as it descends and is buried. There is at least one cohesive sentence spread out among the white space – I tend to think of it as a map of the territory of the book – language combines the landmarks, faint tracteries of words underneath the surface, graphemes roam into multiple connotations and flocks of digression.

Hint at patterns propelled from this small bird and the environment that it temporarily made me forget. Its voicing seems like the sound on the page could be both cause and effect, a result of the perpetual process of landing and taking off, the creature, foraging as best it can in the dry earth, creates cross-hatching relations between the mind and the senses.

g r o u n



EDINBURGH  
University Press

d

As children, we read *The Floating World*, over and over, from which a wagtail is propelled out of clouds so that it might unearth a geography from the pre-existent quagmire of mud and silt. Material abounds, constant shift, granting itself to new perspectives. Today we read tell of Dada the spider, sent by Amma to set Ogo's chaos in order, 'a cone turning opposite a cone', structure from below accident.

paper  
inside  
||  
open

nautilus  
her  
open  
open

*paper*

To imagine a neurological movement of listening could be to conceive of listening as a new mirror or neuron of itself, where everything among sounds a ‘reflection once removed’. The bruise and ornament of gossamer shells rise perpetually to surfaces. Great flat tints, a fluid life, repels its centre.

*nautilus*

‘Argo is an object with no other cause than its name, with no other identity than its form’ – this is to draw one’s own geometry—‘for authorities whose hopes / are shaped by mercenaries...’

In 2014 we stayed in a small stone cottage in Trawsfynydd, white caps riddled the mountains and a wind of wet fog encircled wax in the air. Returning from our daily walk around Trawsfynydd lake and away from Basil Spence’s power station, a face of no uncertain sound, we slowly placed our feet onto the pristine ice and into a fast scuffle. A resounding pendulum arc caused us to turn, seeing, to our surprise, as we felt nothing, a thing clad from head to toe in a dirt of black material. Its eyes were masked by calcium buoyancy, its mouth detached, dimorphic appendage, a protruding web of respiration. Diving shells compose in fettered light.

In 1965 Liverpool County Council presented a bill to parliament (bypassing the individuals it was to crack in half) in order that they might funnel their increasing urge and need for water (a direct consequence in speed) through the valley of Capel Celyn, a hamlet in Snowdonia. Quaker cemetery, post office, school, clutches of buildings. Funneled ichor in calm above. Seventy slabs of stone fixed into a submerged ground, pushing their quarry into the relentless. A reservoir now covers softening homes in scatter. The underside of a new surface remakes a ‘thin glass shell’ over the invisible.

*open*

Devising ‘true’ and immutable form for the underneath of a poem is no doubt as fruitless as attempting to create an unshakeable hierarchy of listening as an qualitative act. Such fleuron and invisible tailpieces need not relate to any universal degree of their own correspondence, held in place like concrete statues that desire to choose between seemingly fixed alternatives. We think of such rippling spaces as impossible labyrinths lit by flowers / roads and headaches raised up to the sound of glittering rubble / fluid psychological systems traced through bifurcations of a corresponding gaze / ‘a street opening and closing’...



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