

2HB

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FIGURE 1.

Though the figure of communication might be about invention, it is equally about lighting conditions, proximity and timing. Communication rarely moves in straight lines. Rather, it collects interference on the way: angles, curves, reflections, warps, tilts. As these interferences emerge, they touch. We may note that this point of contact between these forces is not a crossing or transference, nor is it a translation from one location to another; but rather a meeting; and as they meet, they touch, and maybe even turn away.

FIGURE 2.

Speaking in space is like shuffling furniture around the room. One both hides and is hidden in order for a something to appear.

FIGURE 3.

Established is a good word, often used in gardening books. A paler word – one thing growing, stretching, the other thing slowing, appearing.

FIGURE 4.

Distance always seems to play a part.
Distance always seems to play a part: am I close enough to touch it, hold it; am I far enough away so that you no longer sense that I am here?
Distance exists only relative to closeness, it exists only relative to apprehension, so one could say that distance exists because of the shuddering, the shaky negative space between the two. There is no equilibrium, there is interference, a wilful circling, a brush, brush, brushing, a hush, hush, hushing, as these two positions are welded, meeting, touching, turning away. They move together to show what is missing.

FIGURE 5.

In sign language, the movement, the wiggling finger; the waving hand, the gentle touch to the chest or head is crucial. In sign language, the form (the shape of the hand) is the consonant and the movement (where it moves, how quickly and in which way) is the vowel. The movement, the vowel; the way my index and middle fingers brush across my forehead and drop down to my side – resting – designates the word as that word. Slide, pull, lift, glide, *that* speaking exists through and with the space in which it occurs.

FIGURE 6.

There is a bird with silken black feathers with specks of aquamarine, specks of green with a white feather at the nape of its neck, a wisp of air nested above his breast. This bird has two voice boxes, it can learn to speak any language, mimic the sounds of its surroundings. Of these birds, those that live in urban environments are known to be able to make the sound of a fax machine or replicate the screech of breaks as a car suddenly comes to a halt. This bird has two voice boxes, it can learn to speak any language

FIGURE 7.

Aggression
Action
Movement
Dilapidation
Circles
Avoid summaries; only work with summaries
Specify and divide everything
Speak naturally, speak backwards
Act dangerously, but don't act too much, or too often
Disappear
Never speak directly in front of you
Pause often
Shout about numbers

FIGURE 8.

This problem has sometimes been described as openness, or too much subjectivity, a way of being that oscillates in and on and of itself. This problem has sometimes been described as separation, not enough subjectivity, a way of distancing, a discomfort, an expansion. When one is still, how can movement be described? In this regard, the negative space could become helpful. The negative space could become a line. The negative space becomes a line, the negative line. Multi-directional, not drawing as such, but a line that points in this or that direction, not an arrow, not a statement but a shuttling, a capacity towards. It is not just negative space, it's the tilting, the warping of speaking, effectively, effacingly, ostensibly. Is it the negative space of communication that makes it communication at all?

FIGURE 9.

A point of constant movement is a slow introduction to a character;
a figure, a woman, a poet, who created a kind of endemia,
a hovering, an aggressing,

A FIGURE

All things swept sole away –
This is immensity.
Poem number 152 by Emily Dickinson.

Poem number 657
I dwell in possibility.

And another:
Disappearance – enhances

When Emily Dickinson hosted guests at her home in Amherst, Massachusetts in the mid to late 19th century she preferred to do so in a particular manner; rather than sitting together in one room she favoured to host from a distance, the guest in one location, Dickinson in another. For example, while she might sit in the parlour the guest would be invited to take a seat in the drawing room.

"If you will stay in the next room, and open the folding doors a few inches I'll come down and make music for you"ⁱ.

Using the architecture as both a way to intensify the point of appearing to a public and simultaneously diminish it, in that, by distorting this system of relations, or a normative understanding of communication, Dickinson initiates a specific and subjective protocol. The space and the elements that construct it – the doors, the windows, the furniture, the stairs and the way in which light drifts through these spaces, catching, blinding and warping – become not only the vessel in which the intersections of private and public or visible and invisible meet and touch and turn away, but also a space of transformation. This precise mode of address used by Dickinson enacts a transformation that must have been felt by *all three parties*, effecting a change to Dickinson as self, guest as other and domestic house as space. The doors, walls and flickering curtains become costumes, parts of a theatre, and the relationship between revealing and concealing is massively disrupted. Or one could say, it becomes irrelevant to attempt to understand *a* and *b* as having such and such a relationship;

rather, one perceives an interplay of relations crucially effected by the surroundings. The domestic dwelling becomes a space for suspended, suspenseful discourse.

Dickinson is at once a magician, at once a dancer.

Surely, there is nothing like being choreographed in such a peculiar manner the first time you call on someone at their home.

Disappearance – enhances.

As Diana Fuss has written, Dickinson, through her use of and demand placed upon both poetic and physical space, acted as a director:

Oh, Miss Dickinson has a wonderful eye for time!

This eye for time was manifested on the page via the use of the dash and in rooms via the use of the portable screen. Both become visible markers or keys for a pause, but a pause that is placed with an acute awareness of its power.

Seeing time, she controlled it as if it were space, through various physical gestures that remained invisible – hovering – but perceivable.

Through this seeing time she was able to show it to her guest, and later her readers, through her precise use of and conflicting relationship with address.

I guess I believe it is she there, sitting in that other room, playing the piano to me.

This is the process of viewing.
One often likes to hide.

In the first pages of *My Emily Dickinson* by Susan Howe, Howe writes: "As poetry changes itself it changes the poets' life. Subversion attracted [her]. In both prose and poetry she explored the implications of breaking the law, just short of breaking off communication with a reader."ⁱⁱ

If communication is in and of itself a strategy of relating, in which manner do we see this, how does the relation appear? If communication has a strong relationship with exposure, what does it expose? One thing I would suggest, is that when emphasis is placed almost entirely on exposure, an exposing that is immediate, an acceleration

of pace, a condition is created that reduces 'sharing space' to 'giver-receiver', 'host-guest', 'provider-user'. What constitutes sharing, is normativised, regulated. This allows the moment of exposing, or the thing that is exposed to be lifted out and away from its surrounding, from the half folded doors that were used to assist its density and variation, from its sense of pause or trepidation, from the very specific frustration that produced the desire to communicate or address in this mode in the first place.

This could be a problem of aesthetics, but equally a problem that relates to an emphasis on action over movement.

Letter number 280.

I should have liked to see you before you became improbable. I found you were gone, by accident, as I find Systems are, or Seasons of the year; and obtain no cause – but suppose it is a treason of Progress – that dissolves as it goes.

Could we dissolve progress?

This is not to say that I believe that directionality or clarity should be destroyed or removed, that there are not ways to reshape and counter-use a certain push towards the surface, towards an evening out from the centre, the enlisting of equilibrium, but sometimes, often, many times, this specificness – the thing and the mode in which it is communicated, the conditions under which the thing emerged – is disregarded when such action takes place. And then what, what of transformation?

In 1971 Tania Mouraud made a work called *Can I be anything which I say I possess?*

The constellation that Dickinson proposes in her insistence on instigating her subjective protocol elaborates on and incites a very different kind of address or exposure, demanding a recalibration of intensities, visibilities; a kind of scattering, a kind of risking, a kind of generosity.

Confronting this subjective logic with something like a public realm in space and through time, Dickinson defies any kind of scripted rhythm; through subjecting subjectivity to such space a contingency is made. At this point, when we are disorientated by roles and voices and positions and things like implication, perception, movement and action, all jostle for attention through the full intensity of theatricality and

obliqueness; at this point, perhaps this could be agency, this could be an agency that exists beyond you, beyond the work.

Like the accidentally gone systems or seasons, The Negative Line could be a weather pattern, a kind of hot wind, that shudders, that ignites and also settles from time to time, often, many times, always, in that it activates the necessity for a movement beyond an agency pre-inscribed or pre-scripted into a work.

It might be the differentiation between movement and action.

The Negative Line could be the point when one uses a mask – as one disappears, one is transformed through this gesture of masking, however, what we meet when faced by the mask is not simply a mask – but also a face and a facing.

The Negative Line could be a parallel.

The Negative Line might also be about the process of making an image – or one could say, The Negative Line is a mode of address. This is not say it means everything or it means nothing, but it might be about saying, there is little confidence in The Positive Line.

Back to Susan Howe:

"Perception of an object means losing and losing it. Quest ends in failure, no victory and sham questor. One answer undoes the other and fiction is real. Trust absence, allegory, and mystery. No Titles, no number; this would force order. No manufactured print, no outside editor: Conventional punctuation was abolished to add Dashes which drew liberty of interruption inside the structure of each poem. Hush of hesitation of breath and for breathing. Empirical domain of revolution and revaluation where words are in danger, dissolving, [...] only Mutability certain."

Though we are in danger, I am, as I implicate you, of appearing to create a kind of opacity that encompasses everything; this is not the case – this is an open display for particular viewership. This is a wilful instigation of specification.

Prose fragment number 30:

Did you ever read one of her Poems backwards, because the plunge from the front overturned you? I sometimes (often have, many times) have – A something over takes the Mind.

ⁱ *A Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped them*, Diana Fuss, Routledge, 2004

ⁱⁱ *My Emily Dickinson*, Susan Howe, North Atlantic Books, 1985



Thumping Watermelons or Cracking Bamboo

REBECCA WILCOX

Green light comes from one direction: top right.

Red light comes from another: top left.

~

Overall though the stage is quite dark; the human figures are swathed in murk. There must be some brighter light coming from behind you though, as the horizontals (noses, forearms, fingers and sticks) are occasionally well defined and almost flash out of the shadows.

Their movements aren't exactly awkward; they're almost clumsy, not quite, more laboured. Legs and arms are long and heavy, heads cannot spin 360 degrees; this is made quite plain.

However, *some* movements are weightless, the ones in the darkest shadows, like the necessarily swift changing of props between scenes. With these movements the figures seem to have no mass at all: brush strokes.

Words are light when no meaning is inferred; it doesn't matter whether we listen or not, the overall undulating sound subsumes any consequence.

Does it sound like a sentence? Yes, good, fine, let's move on.

The movement in the not-so-dark red and green is more akin to a collection of words that are conscious of their function, pace and place. It isn't smooth. These sentences hurt our ears because they don't fit the rhythm and rhyme of rhetoric. We have to listen, and although the light may be murky, we cannot take our eyes off the small and slow actions.

The figures, there are two of them, are making and moving shapes. The shapes cut the planes; sometimes they come from the figure, mostly, though, they come from the bottom up. If we follow the edge of the shapes we can then step back to see the whole dark set. We can pause and breathe in and listen to the heavy sentence.

Back right: a curve moving up up up, slowing down now, beneath the curve is solid and vertical and thin, the curve levels off as it continues to move towards us. Now slowly down, the curve is not smooth, it folds slightly in and out: a concertina. These folds allow it to flatten after the display. This fan cuts the space diagonally, one side (showing more of itself to us) is ruby, the other side, then (must be) emerald.

The shapes move up and down, become full and slight at an even pace, red cancels out green as green passes over red. This slow transition of colour and shape is mesmerising, and as I slip into a state that is half there and half here, she tells me about a game. As she speaks (she whispers, so as to not interrupt the display), new forms appear on the stage. They are revealed in the dusky light as the fan shapes retract and turn, they have a similar weight and presence as the figures manipulating the coloured planes, however they appear to be static.

The game she describes is made up of different pieces, or people; these pieces make up two teams, as is often the way, and they are solid although seem susceptible. Initially afforded a set amount of movements, they move in an unremarkable fashion, quietly and unflinchingly along the lines permitted (nobody pays them any attention).

The display before you and us continues, although the new figures (the pieces) take precedence; the concertinas cutting through the red and green have come to a standstill, and now simply frame the space. The pieces do have the ability to move after all, but as in the game she describes to me, their movements are slow and routine and predictable; numbers diminish or grow and land is gained or lost. As the transition between red and green urged me into a trance like state, so does this to and fro of pieces.

She tells me that eventually, the pieces start to change their ways. They have spent so much time here that they know the consequence of any combination of choices; they grow taller out of sheer boredom, or they become smaller or they shimmer or they roll.

In an erotic mirroring, the pieces before us echo her words, and in a flourish and a sigh of relief, they detach themselves from their domain and implode or fly or sink or glow.

THIS IS NOT JUST YELLOW

LEE WELCH

John Alton: Have you ever learned anything about your work from a critic?

Raymond Carver: No. No review I've ever read concerning my work has changed the way I've written or even changed the way I've thought about myself or my stories.

John Alton: It doesn't tell you anything new?

Raymond Carver: No it doesn't. And if you start to believe the laudatory reviews, then you have to believe the other ones as well, perhaps.

John Alton: So the primary concern you have is telling the truth the way you see it?

Raymond Carver: Yes.¹

///

ME: I am not sure how this is supposed to work...

YOU: Let me see it.

ME: Does this have something to do with it?²

///

HER: I don't think I could play the role you play now.

HIM: But this is me I am letting it all hang out.

HER: No, it's not you.

HIM: This ain't me?

HER: I mean, I think you're thinking of sixty things at once.

HIM: True.

HER: How is it going? Is it getting dull? Is she upset and distressed and articulate? Is she bored? Is she offended? Yeah, here's a good time for a joke? We haven't got much time. You're thinking about nine million things and reacting to what I say and how is that gonna be, is that gonna be offensive, no that's dumb, so you're doing this editing at an insane rate and I mean you have to do that, that's your job. And you have this demeanor of levity and lightness and amusement and zest and it's easy to abstain that finally that isn't what goes on in your mind or your feelings at all.

HIM: I just feel like all my clothes have been taken off.

HER: No, but that's something I couldn't do. I couldn't do what you do and that's a different kind of acting, you're playing a different kind of role. But anyway, we've done enough, we made enough concessions...

///

Les Tomkins: It's like listening to somebody's accent, is it?

Miles Davis: Right. I can hear a grey singer that's trying to sing coloured—I don't mean black, I mean coloured—and all of a sudden, like, he'll say "mother" and his "er" won't get that true sound. Tom Jones is funny to me, man. I mean, he really tries to ape Ray Charles and Sammy Davis, you know.

Les Tomkins: Yes—but he's making a success of it.

Miles Davis: Well, see, he's nice-looking; he looks good doing it. I mean, if I was him, I'd do the same thing. If I was only thinking about making money.³

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Some Points about the Stanislavski Method

The Stanislavski Method suggests that we always start from an understanding of the text.

- Look for the facts of what happens, what the characters do, and how the plot unfolds.
- This includes the backstory—what happens before the play starts.
- Look at the play's given circumstances.⁴

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Ray Carney: In both life and art, Cassavetes was interested in the moments when our patterns are disrupted. He was interested in the moments when we're left a little exposed and vulnerable. Those moments when some of the little routines that get us through life break down. That's the subject of the films. He was supersensitive to those little emotional routines we're trapped in and don't know it.

For me personally, this side of him came out in conversation in the way he could look at someone and instantly "do" them. He was extraordinarily perceptive about people, all those little things that make us us. I'd be eating lunch with him, someone would come up to the table, and the second they were gone, or in the middle of a story about them, he would momentarily switch into their voice and gestures. He had a sixth sense for sniffing out people's emotional and intellectual habits, the patterns of thinking we are enslaved to and don't even recognize. If someone was there—a waitress

or whatever—he would push their buttons to try to see if he could get them out of them, or at least make them see them. He would say or do almost anything!

But it was not in life but in the films that it was done most brilliantly. He wanted to trip up people's routines, mess with their minds—both viewers and characters. Look at *Faces*. It's about Super Salesmen—guys who can sell anybody anything at anytime, but what John was interested in was the moment their sales pitches are no longer sufficient, the times a raw emotion comes out. Look at *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*. Cosmo Vitelli thinks he's figured out life and that it all comes down to a carnation and a tuxedo jacket, and if you just look classy or charming or stylish everything is going to go smooth. Then suddenly he gets tangled up with the Mob and finds out what reality is.

...

Michael Fitzhenry: At no point would he intellectualize what he was trying to accomplish? Like how'd he feel about, for example, Cosmo slipping out of the role he'd been performing so comfortably?

Ray Carney: John was a profoundly instinctual artist. He didn't understand people or experiences abstractly, but practically. He had what Hemingway called an unfailing bullshit detector when he saw something. He could tell if someone was faking it. He could tell if they were coasting on a routine. He could tell if they had some fancy-schmancy theory about what they were doing that was just for their own vanity. His art came from his gut reactions about life.

You ask about Cosmo. Ben Gazzara told me that when he was playing the role, he was having great difficulty understanding it. As an actor, he was uncomfortable and bewildered. One night he said to John, "I just don't understand who this guy is." And John took him aside, and they huddled together in the back seat of a car. And John started crying. Now I don't know if the crying was an act or if it was sincere, but I don't really care. John started crying, and looked at Ben and said, "Ben, do you know who those gangsters are? They're all those people who keep you and me from our dreams. All the Suits, all the people who stop the artist from doing what he wants to do. That's what you are as Cosmo. You're somebody that just wants to be left alone to do what you want to do. And there's all the bullshit that comes in, all these Suits that come in and start messing up your life. Why does it have to be like that?"⁵

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Some More Points about the Stanislavski Method

Breathing Life Into the Text

- Before you enter, you should know where you have just been, what were the conditions of this previous space, what you have just been doing, why are you coming into this new space, what is this new space, and what do you immediately want as you enter?
- Explore the moment of orientation—that is, the moment in which you orient yourself to where you are and, if applicable, to the other character(s) in that new space.⁶

///

Silence

JOSEPH: (*having reflected and gathered himself*) I remembered this: Though Twemlow is introduced to the reader as being like the table at the Veneerings' dinner party, he comes to reflect a wise way of thinking.

RONALD: What is being like the table?

JOSEPH: It's a description of a character from *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens. Actually, in the book he is described as being the table.

RONALD: Nice.

JOSEPH: Or specifically the leaf of a dining table.

RONALD: I think Raimundus Malasauskas once posed the question if a table could curate an exhibition.

JOSEPH: Did he conclude anything?

RONALD: He only posed the question. It was an interview. I can't remember the answer.

JOSEPH: Was it in a specific context?

RONALD: A magazine, but I like to think they were probably sitting opposite of each other at a table.

JOSEPH: I see.

RONALD: The table being in the middle as a posed problem or theme perhaps... which directs a course for the dialogue.

A long pause⁷

///

XII

Once, when they used to do most of the installation themselves in the smaller venues, she noticed a fleeting attraction to him. They worked closely in those days, and in retrospect she chalked it up to the combination of his profile and the magnificent floodlights they had been using. The accentuated angles had caught her off-guard; she resolved to ignore it. They would use those mushroom-shaped lamps for several more shows until they had all burnt out or were lost to the European Union's dispassionate commitment to sustainability. She knew he had finished his last cup of coffee for the morning and she could hear him relent through sarcasm:

So you want to reproduce the Kodak tungsten look of sunlight that's slightly crisper than late afternoon North Ontario Indian summer as it would appear through oak trees on an enclosed veranda facing south-west through late 19th century farmhouse windows, in a white cube studio with three-point lighting?⁸

///

Les Tomkins: However free you get, though, it's based on a given form, isn't it?

Miles Davis: Oh, you have some kind of form. You have to start somewhere. I mean, otherwise we'd all be living outdoors. You have walls and stuff, but you still come in a room and act kinda free. There's a framework, but it's just—we don't want to overdo it, you know. It's hard to balance. Sometimes you don't even know if people like it or not.

Les Tomkins: Can't you gauge it from the audience reaction you get?

Miles Davis: Well, I never really listen to that, you know.

Les Tomkins: You might wonder whether they're genuine, or just applauding because they think this is 'the thing'.

Miles Davis: No, I only look at writers like that. The writers that say it was out of sight, and I know it wasn't. But audiences—they like colour, you know. I can go out there wearing a red suit, man, and they'll say I'm out of sight.

But you've got to give 'em some credit, too. You must. I mean, look at Duke, man; he drops some things on 'em. I think they should be educated; you should always drop something on an audience. And friends should educate you, you know.

Or else they shouldn't be around—if they're just gonna drain you.

When you get in front of an audience, you should try to give 'em something. After all, they're there looking at you like this. You can't go out and give 'em nothing.

You see, women usually make the men satisfied and contented. Bitches like to feel good, have their back rubbed at the same time, look good in the latest clothes, have their man where they want him. You know, they like the comfort. Then, when you come on the stage they want that same thing. They don't want to have to think, or follow you. If they don't like you right away by the way you look, or something, they won't go for you. W Guys should stay away from women—that comfort thing. There's too much crap going on in the world that you're supposed to be comfortable. You've got to be on your toes. You can't just stand—because they're fighting somewhere, man, and it's pretty messy.

Les Tomkins: You've really got to challenge yourself, and also the people who are listening to you.

Miles Davis: If I go to hear someone, I'm at their mercy. I'm listening, you know, but I don't go there and say: "Do something." I'm trying to get whatever they put out. But I don't demand it, because things don't come like that.⁹

END.

1. *What We Talk about When We Talk about Literature: An Interview with Raymond Carver, John Alton*, Chicago Review, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 4-21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25305418> (Mar. 3, 2010).

2. *Untitled*, Excerpt from a script by Lee Welch, 2010.

3. *Miles Davis talking to Les Tomkins* in 1969. <http://www.jazzprofessional.com/interviews/Miles%20Davis.htm> (Mar. 9, 2010).

4. *Using The Stanislavski Method to Create a Performance* <http://www.slideshare.net/jsamarro/using-the-stanislavski-method-to-create-a-performance-presentation> (Mar. 6, 2010).

5. *John Cassavetes: The Adventure of Insecurity*, Ray Carney, Boston: Company C Publishing, 1999. Excerpts from an interview with Ray Carney by Michael Fitzhenry about John Cassavetes the man and artist. <http://people.bu.edu/rcarney/JCinsecure/interview.shtml> (Mar. 1, 2010).

6. *Ibid.* 4

7. *DONE TO A DEAD END & THE DEAD OR ALIVE SALE*, Excerpt from the Script by Giles Bailey & Martijn in't Veld, 2010.

8. *Lighting in Layers*, Serena Lee, 2010

9. *Ibid.* 3

Expanding Earth

THOMAS WALKER

1. Pangaea

Sat in the kitchen with William playing cards in front of the television. I can hear Alfred upstairs packing for a trip he has next week somewhere up north. He's moving around the room with solid footing, I can trace the line between the wardrobe to the bed where I imagine he's put his antique travelling suitcase that he inherited from my aunt.

The house is always full and busy in the morning. I awake before the five of them to enjoy the fingers of first light after having watched the alignment of the stars in the night sky. I monitor the meridians to assess how long it is until summer.

There used to be a tradition in the next village to predict the end of winter. Every February 23rd the village elders brought out the newest born baby of that year and held it up in front of the crowd of onlookers. If the baby looked at its mother it signified that winter was on its way out in a matter of days, but if the infant looked elsewhere, to another face in the crowd say, or downwards to the ground, or just to stare blankly into the near distance, then we were all set for another ten weeks of cold harsh weather.

I went along once when I was a young girl, I remember the pink skin of the baby out in the cold air, the uneven undulations of its scalp, still fusing together. The child was held, wriggling slowly, in one of the smartly dressed man's leather gloved hands.

Later, after consulting my planting guide, I go into the back garden to sow the first seeds of the year. The garden arches softly down the hill towards the river and is usually dark and midgy at the bottom. I had William and Alfred chop back the larger sycamore trees last year that had been blocking out the majority of light. The space is now flooded with new air and new light. The ground is still cold and clammy. I strike my fork down to chew up the topsoil. The lower bank moves slowly towards me. I scatter parsnip and savoy cabbage seeds into a trough. It is almost midafternoon and the river breaks in two. The rupture is long and deep, a 300 metre gauge that runs the river's length, both sides being forced parallel away from their opposing

side. I look down on the model of this I created years after, mostly I'm satisfied with its accuracy, although I was wearing a plaid skirt that day but I could only find a female figurine wearing dark plain trousers. The water remains still upon the surface as the northern bank, which I am stood upon, mirroring the action of the southern bank, lurches towards the hillside. The stratas of loam slowly build up and fold resembling a concertina as they crumple into the nape of the incline. I palm over the remainder of my cabbage seeds, trampling a lone slug as I head up to the house.

Across the valley I see William getting on his bus to college. I can just make out his long gangly legs slowly moving his frame upwards and into the main body of the vehicle. Below, out of the newly forged river chasm, white molten rock pours upwards and laterally outwards in either direction. As it hits the river water the new ground cools and hardens. The first strand sets alabaster white, the second strand sets a dark grey, the third white, the fourth grey and so on forming a zebra pattern island chain. Finally a slick flat foundation of muddy earth marks the end of the rupture, upon which a seam of carboniferous coal shingle has broken through a mottled clay iron-pan at intervals creating a neatly ordered set of dark even ridges.

—Intermission—

I grow and become a piece of spiralling matter
I climb up the trellis
As a smart young thing I correct your mistakes/mispronunciations
Gravity is at my base
In the form of two candles
One Red, made from Brazilian beeswax
One Purple, made of synthetic fibres
They break into pieces
And go their separate way

2. Laurasia/Gondwanaland

Taking a bath while I wait I consider how I would pictorially describe all the different places I have lived, or even simply sketch all the separate parts of this house. Since William, Alfred and Harry left I have turned their rooms into galleries of the scale models I've created over the years. I used to keep them in my en-suite bathroom as the plumbing no longer worked in the attic. I would turn on the extractor fan while I applied rabbit glue to the models.

The first model I made was of the side of the hill our house sits on. It was a simple model with few features, no buildings nor roadways or vegetation, it only conveyed the topography of the land. In my more recent works I have accurately placed telegraph pylons, areas of woodlands using the exact tree types (silver birch is always my favourite but is the hardest to track down), scenes of town squares and railway stations with crowds of figures interacting. Initially I used white mounting board. I would cut each lateral sliver of hillside out, tracing each contour line from an ordinance survey map. Repeating the process moving through the bandwidths of higher altitude, gluing each segment of terrain until the whole hillside is formed.

I pour the bath out, dry my hair, get dressed and head out the door. I am in a theatre at the end of Opptin street, the *Quinteeth*. A row of seats is being removed. It is the front row that is being taken out on the request of the theatre owner whose longsightedness has been rapidly increasing. As his sight fails he removes a row of seating so he can remain in the front row while still being able to view the performances with optimum clarity. Once the crew have removed what originally was row 3, a letterist will renumber each row to keep them in the correct chronological order.

This is the venue for Alfred's wake. I made the arrangements last week after the phone call from Harry. He'd been with him at the time.

The two of them had been spending the winter collecting pelts in Greenland to trade with the boat merchants who travelled over from Scandinavia and Ireland enroute to New Amsterdam. Apparently they'd had a successful two months and were set to return home. But only a couple days after departing they'd run into a terrible blizzard and been separated in the whiteout.

We return to the house after the service. Seeing the four of them together again reminds me of long ago. Looking at them now, as they are briefly joined, I notice all the time that has passed, all the differences they have grown, and I gain comfort in knowing that soon they will break in to pieces and go their separate ways.

Writers' biographies:

RUTH BUCHANAN

In her work Ruth Buchanan (NZ, 1980, Te Ati Awa/Taranaki) seeks to address how artistic agency in the present is characterised by artistic legacy and does so by working across several tones and forms; sculpture, audio, photography, film and text; bringing these various elements together in choreographed spatial and temporal situations. Buchanan gained her MA (Fine Art) from the Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam in 2007. She recently completed a two year residency at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht and currently lives in Berlin. Over 2009 and 2010 she developed a four-part work comprising of a guided tour, theatre piece, installation and publication staged at and in the context of Rietveld Schröder Huis (*Nothing Is Closed*), Utrecht, NL, If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution, Frastcati Theater (*Circular Facts*), Amsterdam, NL, The Showroom (*Several Attentions*), London, UK and Casco Office for Art, Design and Theory (*Lying Freely*), Utrecht, NL. Buchanan actively initiates and contributes to print based projects.

THOMAS WALKER

Thomas Walker (lives and works in Glasgow) graduated from Glasgow school of Art in 2007 and spent six months at School of the Art Institute Chicago. Working in drawing and writing he creates large scale ink wall drawings and small scale etchings dealing with geographical/geological theories concerning continental drift and land movement. Recent exhibitions include *Ink Utero* a collaborative drawing exhibition at The Duchy, Glasgow (2009), prize winner at Pittemweem Arts Festival (2009), solo show at Dais, Glasgow (2008), Catalyst Arts, Belfast (2007), Spezzatura Maze Studio Warehouse (2007)

LEE WELCH

Lee Welch is currently undertaking an MFA at Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam and has studied at the National College of Art and Design, Dublin. Recently exhibitions include *DONE TO A DEAD END & THE DEAD OR ALIVE SALE*, SD&G, Rotterdam (2010); *Clifford Irving Show* curated by Raimundas Malasauskas, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris (2009); *MISSING LINK* curated by Stefan Tiron, Andreiana Mihail Gallery, Bucharest (2009); *work.in.space*, Dublin (2009); *Non-knowledge*, Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2008); *Claremorris Open Exhibition* curated by Lizzie Carey-Thomas (2008) with a forthcoming event *Love Letter To a Surrogate*, Torrence Art Museum (Los Angeles). Welch was Founder and Director of Four, an exhibition space in Dublin and has recently formed *One Thousand and One Nights* a project which appears through a myriad of guises and forms that frames a dialogue between the established and the experimental, the past and the present. Lee Welch lives and works in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

REBECCA WILCOX

Rebecca Wilcox is an artist based in Glasgow, she completed her MRes in Creative Practices at the Glasgow School of Art in 2009 and is currently a committee member of Transmission Gallery. Working mainly with moving image and text, she often collaborates with Laura Smith, with whom she's currently working on a project for Leeds College of Art. Her work has recently been included in the *Artists' Film and Video Season* with Southside Studios and Stereo, Glasgow, *Showreel* at Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, and at SpaceX, Exeter. Other exhibitions and projects include *Weight*, at the GSA, *Settling*, a collaborative project with Laura Smith and *Darkspace* at The Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh. She is the co-organiser of *As We Speak*, a series of video screenings, and in 2009 she received a visual arts grant from the Elephant Trust.

Colophon

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