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SZERBUSZ

Andre Farkas

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April, 1976

ABSTRACT

ANDRE PARKAS

SZERBUSZ (ser-boos).

In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the English Graduate Creative Writing M.A. programme in Poetry, I am submitting a manuscript of poems.

The manuscript is divided into two parts. Its overall title is SZERBUSZ. Part one is entitled SZERBUSZ while part two is untitled; it is a collection of assorted poems beginning with Er words ah bridge.

The word 'SZerbusz' (sometimes written and pronounced as Szervusz) is a Slavic salutation. It is the 'familiar' greeting used when meeting and when leaving; (Hello/Good-bye). I chose the title because I felt that it most dramatically and directly focused on the tension and conflict that emerged, within/without, during my visit in 1972.

While in Hungary the conscious decision to go back in contrast to my involuntary departure in 1956 became an important theme. This theme emerges in a number of poems; poems that deal with 'going back', with 'roots and uprooting', with people who through time and distance have become heroes of mythic proportion and poems that deal with conscious leave-taking on personal, familial, imaginative and political planes.

The poems are narrative anecdotes in which I have attempted to juxtapose pastoral and lyrical images with urban rhythms, sounds and desires. I

often use incantatory or resonant line and sound structures in order to break through the usual concepts of time and space. Of course their visual and acoustic qualities are considered as well.

The second part of this manuscript consists of poems dealing with the new concerns that arose out of tensions and conflicts resolved in the first section as well as some occasional poems. Over all, these poems are moving toward a definition, physical and poetic, of my emigrant/immigrant/citizen time and space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following poems have appeared in the following magazines

(focusing)

Vegetarian Ear Eater

Eve

I think I'll call it Sunday evening

Clues

If there was a price on your head

Er words ah bridge

sun setting (for my grandfather)

Confession to a stranger

The gypsy judge answers

paper urn (Song in this manuscript)

A memory found in the corner

Cross Country vol. 1 no. 1

Cross Country vol. 1 no. 3/4

Anthol vol. 1 no. 2

Anthol vol. 1 no. 3/4

Antigonish Review (forthcoming)

Antigonish Review (forthcoming)

DAVINCI vol. 1 no. 2

POETRY READINGS DeltaCan

" " "

" " "

" " "

" " "

PART I

SZERBUSZ

Szerbusz

You go back
you go back
szerbusz
you go back knowing you can't

szerbusz

it is said
it is written/it is believed

szerbusz

you go back
you stand on a corner
on a corner
szerbusz
you next to
you in knee pants looking ahead
to scrapes & scraps

szerbusz

to be cried over and
where always wanting to be growing up
is silenced by there is always time

szerbusz

but now its sound
enclosing wrist & brain beats to a different

you go back you go back you go back you go back you go back you go back
you touch

corners szerbusz

you go back
you name them as they should have been named
you go back
you name them as they should have been written
you go back
you name them as they should have been believed
you go back
you name them as they should have been
you go back
you name them as they should have
you go back
you name them as they should
you go back

you name them as they

you go back

you name them as

you go back

you name them

you go back

you name

you go back

you

you go back

szerbusz

I was born here

this train I'm on
chugs on
 along
somewhere in this country
in an atlas
no bigger than a thumbprint
 along
somewhere in this land
in this peasant history
 along
more alive than the collective present

this train I'm on
chugs on
 along
into a pastoral
as far as the eye can see lush green plain

 a thatched house stands alone for ages
 on it a blackened red chimney
 on it a stork's nest
 on it a stork
 on one leg, resting
 it occurs to me forever

 a well of fieldstone
 next to it
 next to it
 a Y old bare tree
 another
 like a see-saw in its crotch
 at one end a rope & bucket
 heavy stones tied to the other

from this train I'm on
I fullwish galloping handsome hussars
red, green, white embroidered costumes
riding up to the golden mean

 and dismount with a leap
 and draw cool shimmering well water
 and quench their hardy & stallions' thirst
 or light their long stemmed capped pipes
 or fold their billowing shirted arms
 or slap their thighs in abandoned laughter
 or weave their arms about each other
 and dance the csardas
 and mount their steeds
 and gallop into the rust brilliant sun

this train I'm on
chugs on

spitting cinders belching smoke

along

into another pastoral
across as far as the eye can see tall wheat fields
in which the scythe still blisters old peasant hands
bends backs permanent in harvest time but
according to the handlebar moustached old man
next to me staring out

naturally, still gather more than those collective combines you see

this train I'm on
whistles sharply

approaching a village
the single track forks into two
on one

this train is on
carries me (a blur to the still landscape)

to where I was born

along

on the other
young half naked soldiers
sunbaked black

bending backs
pounding away
laying tracks
without a sound

this train I'm on
slows down
to take the station master's salute
to take the stares of young conscripts; solemn
thankful for the break

a face screams out!

TUZI TUZI

the face

I jump

mouth open

as he

mouth open

words/breath swallowed by the whistle

of the train I'm on

arms flailing

TUZI TUZI

TUZI/cousin/grew up together/same age/lived in the same house/
sometimes shared the same mother/TUZI/bathed together in same
old wooden tub/hid together in laundry hamper in lightning storms/played
hussars together

TUZI:

Tuzi runs down the track
arms flailing

freezes

makes a sharp about turn
marches

away from this train I'm on

Lost in Debrecen/Montreal time zone differences merge

-1

listening to Debrecen clock tick two
listening to Montreal heart beat six
listening to the difference.

-2

listening to Debrecen sleep
listening to Montreal awake
listening to the difference

-3

listening to Debrecen cousin snore
listening to Montreal woman breathe
listening to the difference

-4

listening to Debrecen drunks sing
listening to Montreal friends drink
listening to the difference

-5

listening to Montreal scenes urge
listening to Debrecen scenes urge
listening to the difference

-6

listening to listening

Lost in Debrecen/Montreal time zone differences merge

-1

listening to Debrecen clock tick two
listening to Montreal heart beat six
listening to the difference

-2

listening to Debrecen sleep
listening to Montreal awake
listening to the difference

-3

listening to Debrecen cousin snore
~~listening~~ listening to Montreal woman breathe
listening to the difference

-4

listening to Debrecen drunks sing
listening to Montreal friends drink
listening to the difference

-5

listening to Montreal scenes urge
listening to Debrecen scenes urge
listening to the difference

-6

listening to listening

I go to you

I go to you/
(tell my friends it's my last chance
to kill a myth/to see a man)

you are small
fragile & bald

You greet me with a blessing
(you have spent my entire flight time
in prayer)

you are wearing an old trouser a shirt
without a collar/cuffs frayed &
a patched vest

it is important to note this

you greet me with tears
perhaps simple/perhaps wise

you greet me on your vine enclosed porch
you sit on your bench legs crossed
elbow on knee face in palm fingers
massaging brow saying
you doubt moon landings & astronauts
asking
what good is writing everything is in The Talmud
saying
a man is no longer a man if he can't smoke his pipe

I sit on a stool legs crossed
elbow on knee palm cupping a pipe inhaling
long listening breaths

you, massaging away pain
mistrust doctors
a pain admitted to early
a simple operation could have fixed

it has something to do with your piss
you know it is not manly to have pain there

perhaps simple/perhaps wise
you will your life until grandchildren wed
you will your life until I leave...

(focusing)

and

the right amount of nostalgia
there is old lady Tatrai's candy kiosk
where we bought rock candy going to jewish school
always it seems

and

the right amount of anecdotes
running to Repa's to play important soccer
sneaking out of stupid jewish class
locking the rabbi in

and

the right amount of fotografs
relatives, arms around each other smiling
standing in front of where the synagogue used to be
holding back tears

and

the right amount forgotten almost
the mob nights and burning jewish homes
and mother carrying an open switchblade
and the chicken coop in which they stuffed the beaten rabbi

In this unbelievable heat

after the wedding my mother american by cloth only
after the wedding american by cloth only my mother
my mother american by cloth only after the wedding
my mother after the wedding american by cloth only
american by cloth only after the wedding my mother
american by cloth only my mother after the wedding

oblivious to this sapping Sunday heat
gathers certain guests from this neglected temple garden
and plants them in her efficient determined row

my mother shouts to cut through this heat
-just normal not any fancy
-make pictures good
-don't cut off heads

I see & talk to her & others
OK! through the viewfinder OK!
-okay! okay!
-smile
-a little more
-get tighter
-ooo...

a man tall & thin in a worn out suit & frayed fedora
tacks himself on to the end of the line
throws chest out, draws stomach in
strikes from ear to ear
a saucer grin,
this man tall and thin

a guest yells through my sweating hesitation
-he happens on all occasions
births, weddings, and funerals
-just leave him out, everyone does

I do
everyone relaxes

my mother leaves to collect
more images for memory

the thin man remains stiff waiting grinning ear to ear
the thin man grinning ear to ear remains stiff waiting
remains stiff waiting grinning ear to ear the thin man
remains stiff waiting the thin man grinning ear to ear
grinning ear to ear the thin man remains stiff waiting
grinning ear to ear remains stiff waiting the thin man

in this unbelievable heat

The Party

Part One: The Dance Master

Once upon a time
Once upon a beat
Once upon

In the center of 20 or so more years ago
dressed in Old World arrogance

He is the Dance Master

one two three around him
round one two three arou
nd him round one two thr
ee around him round one t
wo three around him round

village boys & girls
waltz sweaty palms & hearts

to his imported saue baton

one two
three one two
three one two
three

eloquent feet
old even then...

In step, nimble

He is the Dance Master of Old World arrogance

...he steps from his
center

he plucks her out
and leads his very very young wife
into his very rich house & life
for his very very private lessons

playing the grand; he scales
wealth & respect
she bears him two sons
There is a party

He is the Dance Master

Part Two: The Dance

one awake
new again
two awake
new again
all awake
again

In celebration
(arms about each other's waist)
village men &
women break into
untaught steps
of a familiar dance

to the swirl of skirts
to the beat of boots
to the swirl of skirts
to the beat of boots
to the swirl of skirts
to the beat of boots
to the swirl
to the beat

lovers
in frenzied revolutions
dance the csardas

lovers
in frenzied revolutions
hold guns/barricades dear

lovers
in frenzied revolutions
dance the revolution

to the swirl of skirts
to the beat of boots
to the swirl of skirts
to the beat of boots

to the swirl of skirts
to the beat
to the swirl

lovers
in the ballroom
lovers
in the town square

topple monuments

lovers stay out late
move to the beat
make themselves brave
move to their beat

(embrace against stern parents who have caught them)

bullets reprimand

and they all

Part Three:

and they all
and they all

what is left is

(a broken baton
very young wife leaves very very
old partner/leaves very very old
partner a looted house & two sons

one who hates
one who stutters & swears to

corpses
twisted about each other in one
final dance/twisted about each other
they speak of too much

what is left is

Part Four:

tanks rumble in
to their imported crude batong
unwilling villagers clean up

ressurrect monuments in the ballroom
in the town square

what is left is

(a widowed old woman has
a dead child's room to let

in it the dance master
old even now curses 'whore of a dance hall wife'
& dyes his hair

one two three shades young
again one two three shades
young again and they all onc
e upon a time once upon a be
at once upon

after hours

after the wedding
after the married couples leave
after the celebration ends
at a recent friend's
a few of us gather

it is Sunday
it is after midnight
it is Monday
it is time for sleep
it is time

I am here
our curiosity & politeness keep us up
we sit;
we sit uncomfortably discussing wages
& the difficulty of getting apartments

I turn out the lights

we sit,
darkness grows comfortable
politeness and party clothes are shed

voices in this black late time
take awkward first steps

they stutter along unmapped distances
to thoughts that are

were only rumors in their collective globes

in this half amazed/half afraid room
we sit in darkness

each shadow
takes turns
surprising itself

Mad Sam's Army Tales

-1

The minute I got the call
I hurried to my recruiting station
clutching a medical certificate

-Kidney malfunction-

The good doctor
who diagnosed it for a month's salary
said it was the best thing to have
said "It is very hard to diagnose"

-2

They found me fit

-3

I applied for medical training
I was made a courier

-4

Travelling through the streets of Pest;
carrying my commander's uniform to the cleaner's
was dangerous,

I carried a gun

-5

The last 2 weeks of your hitch
you are taken on a vacation
a field trip to Russia

while on this field trip one fine rainy Socialist day
(excellent for another record wheat yield on the Steppes)
I had to salute nature's command as a good soldier of Socialism
occasionally must

and as a good Socialist well knows
there are no cubicles
(after all

all Socialists are equal and besides
lumber is too valuable to waste) there are holes dug
a dozen in a row

without hesitation I drop my pants/squat
and join my comrade hosts

(we resemble The Red Army Bolshoi chorus line
ten of us non-chalantly reading Pravda/
letting go

my tour of duty complete I tear out a page
fold it neatly and begin to wipe.

NYET! NYET! a chorus in unison sings out
NYET! NYET PRAVDA comrade

(I suppose they thought I was shitting on Russia)

-6

...my buddy & me took 2 Russian girls for a boat ride.
THEY rowed us to a secluded spot.

there, immediately, both pointed to their feet with one hand
and to their paradise with the other

nor their preference

Not knowing the language well

we assumed they wanted us to start at their toes
and work up into heaven

fine/fine I thought:

whatever you Babushkas want
and begin but both protest NYET! NYET!
and point to the same spots again.

and again we begin
and again NYET! NYET!

and we spend the whole afternoon
starting/stopping/staring/starting/stopping
DA-DA! NYET-NYET! DA! DA! NYET! NYET!
and never got past the ankles

one last try/on it
my powerful Babushka kicks me in the face &
sends my glasses overboard

that did it/no more socialist cultural exchange
WE rowed back.

later we found out
Russian girls don't fuck just anyone NO!
Yes, they've got scruples

...at least you've got to come up with a pair of nylons

-7

and in 68
all of us wrote home

 dear parents
good news/we are truly lucky
our commander says that any minute
with our Polish, East German & Russian comrades
we'll be visiting the Czecs.

Wandering gypsy

he smooths his gypsy rainbow black hair
he tucks his old violin beneath his chin
he closes his moon full sad eyes
he knows this path by heart

in this garden cafe
among lovers' tables
under old willows
he wanders by heart

cool wafting breezes carry
his flock of sparrow notes
to entwining lovers' gazes
by a path he knows by heart

his bow on taut strings weep
lovers under a canopy of stars, free
couple fragrant pains; love refrains
theirs alone on a path he knows by heart

he strolls between their heartbeats
he leads them to his well of bitterness
he fills their thirst with sweet madness
he joins them on a path he knows by heart

he closes the women's most willing eyes
he evokes the men's most winning smiles
he bows his life to their half desires
the price of this path-he knows by heart

Mad Sam adventure #1

you take my extra pair of Lee jeans
(brands matter much here) and
we dash down to the train station

here you trade it for a dozen silk blouses
just smuggled in from Poland

you take those dozen hot blouses to a certain
tavern where you trade them for a Russian camera

with this camera we dash to an auto supply shop
just opening for business
the trade is made one camera for 2 Skoda radiator hoses

one we send back to a friend who needs it to go on his honeymoon
(but that's another story) and with the other one
we dash back to the station and exchange it
for my extra pair of Lee jeans

Confession to a stranger

in gas sleep of giving birth
I dreamt of machines

in a sealed temple
of unclimbable smooth walls of bone
a machine lived
instead of cogs and wheels
it was made of shining copper people
and they sang a metal tune

in this dream
of metal parts
I'm a part of this machine
a part that doesn't work
a broken part
lying on the floor
watching this machine keep on going on

I scream LET ME BACK! I BELONG!

after the birth for three days
I could not look at my son

Mad Sam adventure #3

smoking you/
toking you
my
joint
in this
dopeless
land

on this serious train
in this serious land you make me silly giggle till laughter
is pain and then
nothing as simple as that

you are colour (the entire spectrum/each
a different whim I gorge myself on

until I am empty and want no more

winging on the back of abandonment
into the sun/

gypsy joy/

we move through gasps at speeds incalculable

The gypsy judge answers.

you want to take pictures?
who are you?

I'm the Gypsy Judge
I rule here

until someone can take me

they came here with machines
they said they wanted to show us to the country
as we really are.

but we watched it and it was disgusting
all they showed was our women with nothing on

they made us look like barbarians

Mad Sam adventure #2

madness never sleeps in your eyes
it pleads

it laughs

it implodes

it seduces

madness never sleeps in your eyes

it pleads a thousand loves

it laughs wild escapades

it implodes a generation

it seduces melancholy

madness never sleeps in your eyes

it pleads a thousand loves into two thousand arms

it laughs wild escapades into willing thighs

it implodes a generation of hungry tongues into hungry mouths

it seduces melancholy gypsy songs into forever one night love

madness(
pleads

laughs

implodes

seduces) can never sleep in your eyes

A memory found in the corner

wrapped in wrinkles
on the verandah
on the leg stool
all day
everyday
an old woman sits

eyes focus to the distance
the distance is a field
in the field is a woman
in a black peasant dress

she squats under the harvest sun
eyes focus to the distance
her hands slip under her heavy dress

the old woman
from between her knees
from under her black heavy dress
draws out something wet

sun setting (for my grandfather)

sun setting
make-do fenceposts, hand-pump and chickens
casting rusted shadows in your parched yard
sun setting
you come
with unlaced old shoe steps, in clothes grown too large
creased brow fragile old man across your parched yard
you come
sun setting
still warm
a small mound of bleached sand between pump
and broken wagon in the corner of your parched yard
still warm
you come
sun setting
you rest
blanketed on the mound, staring into sun setting
following an old path across your parched yard
you rest
still warm
you are
sun setting

PART II

Er words ah bridge

er Diagliev always problems one the ear the theater something the so called don't I'm hateful
er It's er hands able said: help was dancers to study narrow cochon work notoriety which
er the er and er have I'm actually Dolin of interest dancers said M benevolent suffering
er today er is er Len er trades off C range. She shook r, N is
er for er comeback er Brute er its er Yoko's muzak with record which death dancers
er England er you er Ange er outside er He er exp worse his with I
er liner er cunning er celebrity er afraid er notes er help er Lenny me hand
er John er non? er "A er dan er to er attend er the er the
er of er the er things er Wells er the er dumb er have er er
er country er ands er with er big er was er going er er er
er lay er simplicity er this er Rosario er they're er er er er
er Bruce er still er books er on er er er er er er
er in er thing er insisted er er er er er er er er
er with er in er er er er er er er er er
er man er er er er er er er er er er

ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah resemble.
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah there ah taken
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ver ah his ah advantage
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah the ah depends ah although ah this
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah deal ah location ah used ah therein ah not
ah ah ah ah ah ah railways ah his ah essentially ah caught ah burst ah of
ah ah ah dilapidated ah unaccountably ah search ah the ah when ah lot ah presented
ah result ah Canada ah is ah reconstruction ah shots ah is ah streets ah filmed
made ah version ah musical ah is ah presented ah musical ah shanty ah of panoramic
a ah source ah trouble ah direct ah and ah Kicked ah and country sides education
Pofter ah into ah starring Johannesburg ah however ah that Absalom has son of Sidney
dramatic ah money ah sequence ah of is first the lush long Broadway jail towns effects
staged ah to ah earn is a as something stations his whole the who to suddenly
and ah that often interiors for John good novel much more studio film the lies was
of gone character out by version which uncle song has one the Kumalo salom script Raymond

DATA: Er/ah 15/2/74
words 16/2/74 cut up 116x2=232 Montreal Star Ent. Section, Dance/Theater/Music
read 24/2/74 Vehicule Art Inc. 61 Ste Catherine O. Montreal
INSTRUCTIONS: READ ALOUD

as the breath is the journey

I move on

it is imperceptible as
is the breath just breathed in

and out

The Vegetarian Bar Eater
dedicated to the muse of poetry

Most of the time it's fixed
I, the good guy, win the first round
You, the villain, the next
and the last one ends in a free-for-all

But sometimes it gets out of hand
becomes for real/no ketchup blood

It comes
from the spotlighted center of the ring
the bilingual announcer calls LAADEEZnMEESYER
and declares this as the main event

(didn't all those others mean a thing
weren't they struggles to the finish too

No! those were the midgets, the ladies,
the indians, the freaks; to warm up the crowd/
to make them want/to whet their appetites
for the big men's grunt & blood)

It comes/it will
usually wearing a hood and something hidden in its trunk
to be pulled when it appears that I'm winning
to rub into my eyes
to blind my brain
to flail me into epileptic submission...his name

KILLER

TONIGHTCESOIR

he calls the height/he calls the weight
again

!:

it's me/all 150 pounds of you
against

KILLLLER KOWALSKI

From within
I PROTEST!

THERE ARE SOME UNFAIR DIFFERENCES

and how come it's always me
and how come always against him

from within
WHAT THE FUCK! I ACCEPT

(I've always wanted to be in the big league/
the big money

I have some tricks of my own)

The referee, who is frisking us,
is just another unjust fix
enforcing the no rules.
(which is part of the rules)

and gets thrown out early &/or tangled in the ropes
to the delight of the hungry crowd
(they eat that up)

KILLER struts about, defiant/
basking in the BOOING

I close my eyes/begin to chant
OMMMmy GOD

the bell rings

KILLER
it's me or you

the houselights dim
the spotlights
bathe us in a bloodbath glow

and we know
winner goes high/the loser low

We circle like lovers
Killer in his grin
certain of his win
me in my nakedness
certain of less

like lovers we circle

I follow his destroyer hands
(they are butterfly wings
in slow motion
in a smoke blue field)

SUDDENLY
his lightning emblazed boots flash
my groin explodes like
no simile or metaphor I know

I'm on my back
he mounts the ropes

from the top ones
he dives into my center

he slams my head against the canvas
his knees jackhammer my throat

and cruel he is
won't finish me off

my lungs collapse
and you
you ringside old lady
you yell for more

From the canvas my eyes scream out
HEY LADY! I'M THE GOOD GUY! REMEMBER?!

My life swims before me
I want to swim after it
but no.NO!

I'M IN THE KILLER'S GRIP

NOOOoooo

THE CLAW!!!

(those sure quick butterfly fingers
looking for me/locking in on me
moving my faith & intestines
to where they shouldn't be

THE CLAW!!!

(tearing at my guts
I flail/I scream/I give up/I call it quits--
is there no mercy in this wrestling world

Song

A gypsy kid
stands on the road
and cocks his tattered hat at me

hey mister, give me a cigarette

hey mister, take my fotograf

I say okay
he grabs his friend and throws him down
he takes a kitchen knife from worn torn pants
puts it to his friend's throat and blade to throat he grins & says

hey mister, make it show me brave,
not running down the road

hey mister, come and see my sister. (ten)
hey mister, come and see her charus

I follow him past run down shacks
through woods,
across some cattle paths

beneath a tree a child lies
sometimes paid, and sometimes free

hey mister
take my picture
and you can have me for free

I say okay
I say okay
Okay, I'll take your picture,
Okay.

KILLER won't let me go
KILLER won't let me be

I plead

hey killer...hey
...killer...remember...hey
remember...it's a fix...hey...HEY!

His face is all aglow
Saintly he leans down close
and before I pass out
he whispers...hey, don't doubt

I LOVE YOU

Eve

scars on your body
lying in mystery
silently welcome me

"come" they cry

I an eager explorer
lost in your geography of unknown terrains
push on desperately
trying to find the source of your echo

and in the clearing of the moment
you stand against the want of time
while I

lean against a lamppost on the corner
of some ancient history
selling your hieroglyphic memory that I can not decode

your tears are some rainy season clue (
drenching all eager explorers
lost as I)

revealing in the rainbow

times past
and times to come, time will be no kinder

empty pails will remain empty
and your scars will remain in mystery

And

Man on the Main
one scab gnarled hand
shakes

all he knows

at last
reddish urine spells out his name

See

Crystal Theater scenes

it's dark in here
there are no ushers nor their flashlight
not even the film

in always in progress

now night scenes/headlight eyes/screeching up/down innout

to guide the way

you've made your way
already sitting in the center of the center aisle

we sit one empty seat apart
we always do
we all do

umPh/umPh/umPh/umPh/umPh/umPh

he sits between us
to join & separate us

he leans your way/he leans my way
he breathes this way/he breathes that way

you say
a buck or fuck-off

umPh/fifty/umPh

eighty
umPh/umPh/seventy/umPh

a close up of a gun/a gun point view of a scared face/wide open eyes/
wide open mouth/pleading for life/sweaty brow/dry lips swallowing huge mouth
gulping for air/gasping/grasping for life/close up dead/eyes dead eyes/
dead wide open/staring/a female scream--Comforting strong shoulders/sobs--
Comforting strong words/moans--Comforting strong naked body/detailed violent
attacks/Death again/NO!--Comforting in time rescue/ it was the wide eyes
stare come back/really not dead/all an illusion of living & dying/ close up
of lips/closed eyes/long binding kiss/Comforting happy ending

we are
again
one empty seat apart

No overnight visitors

there is a stink of life in here
I'd exterminate it...
I can't find its source
it creeps in

like
the man's next door snore
uneven

unbathed
this stink has moved in and
like a lover familiar by her scent
keeps me company
even though it is against the rules

My virgin whore

she hacked into my private parts
and coughingly declared

"we're all united by disease"

she said this twice a day
before and after
puking her affirmation
into the communal sink

my mind screamed "don't touch me
you virgin whore!

spread your love else
where and let me re
arrange my room!"

laughing into my chest
coughing strong she shouted

"no need to panic.
remember you joined my world
the moment you took air"

then she wheezed into my ear
and whispered sure

"i'm divine you see,
so go find me an alley where i may sleep on musty straw;
a stable where with legs spread i may gaze at the pin pricked sky
and await the coming of the Bacteria"

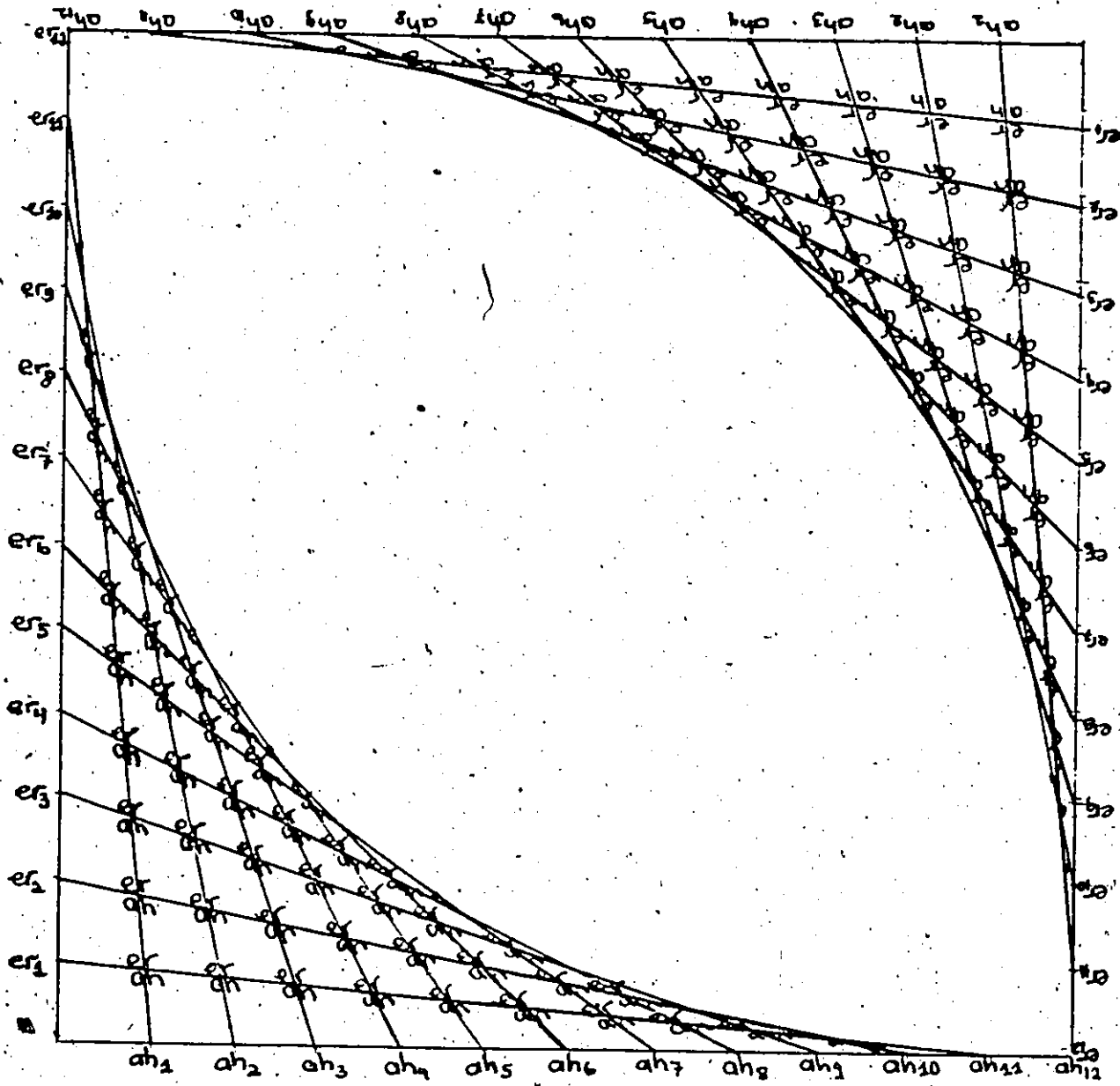
Rooming house dream

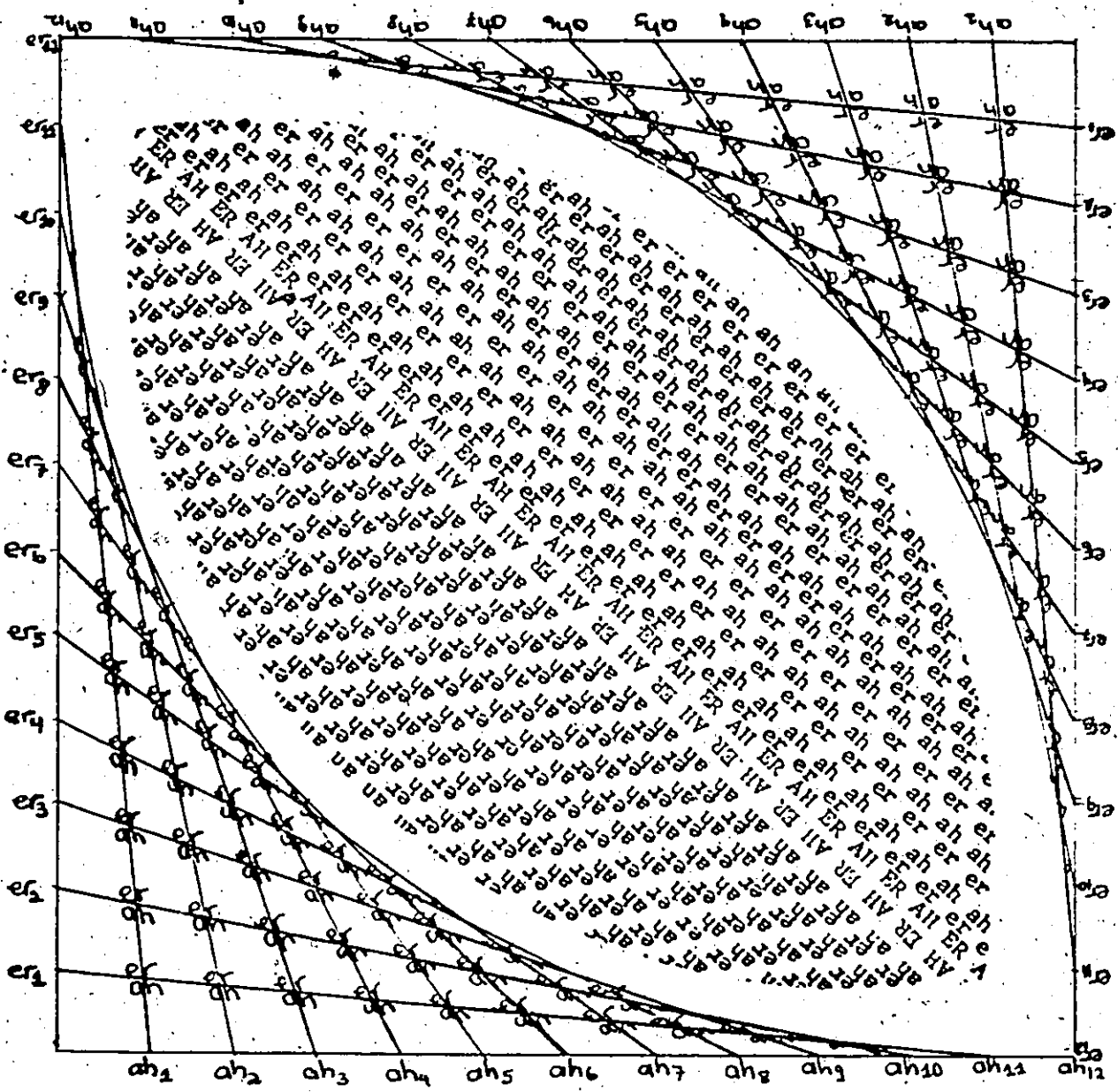
in tired sleep
i swim for a dream of a fix

i sink down eyes
into a dead lake
gasps i remember/
feel alive & empty

in a dream fixed
a single moon eye reels me in
examines and pushes me back

now in a fix
realizing i can't
i must again
learn how to swim





Intercourse

Be the perfect lover
come upon me like a wish
a wish that is
at first unnoticed

but wafting in like the scent of flowers
lingers on, blooms fulfils
the pastoral afternoon

Be the imperfect lover
come quick
implode us to atoms flung
out of orbits
into pain of perfect passion

Be imperfect love
from nowhere
 leap/crush
my animal desire
 leave me shaking
in the urgency of our celebration

Be perfect love
allow our dew to bathe us
in the breath of our wish this is our wish
in this our perfect passion

Love
Be perfect in imperfect love

Old Friend Gone

Old friend gone
old friend gone though I did not think of it as an old friend
until it was gone
Old friend gone
old friend gone though I did not nor it do anything that old friends do
until it was gone

until it was gone
it was an apple basket
an apple basket that no longer caught freshly picked apples
in apple season
until it was gone
an apple basket that no longer weighed on aching shoulders under paid
in apple season
until it was gone
an apple basket that no longer rode dusty pick-up down back roads
in apple season
until it was gone
an apple basket that no longer held fresh apples in corner grocery stores
in apple season
until it was gone
an apple basket that contained sometimes peels of apples &
cores of apples sometimes
until it was gone
out of apple season

until it was gone
it was an apple basket I found on the street on garbage night
it was an apple basket I took before the garbage truck
it was an apple basket I used as a book bin
until I got organized & built shelves

it became the kitchen garbage can
until it was gone

as an apple basket
I suppose it was just right
apples could be stacked like some upside down pyramid

but as the kitchen garbage can
until it was gone
was a poor one

as the kitchen garbage can
it lacked symmetry

until it was gone
the green plastic garbage bags would not fit on
& the garbage would spill into the apple basket
& because it had no lid
it always smelled
& because it had spaces
it always leaked
until it was gone

and kala our cat
though not in any possessive sense
having passed through other households
though not theirs in any possessive sense either
but like an old friend gone
would while we were asleep
turn over this apple basket/now the kitchen garbage can
& spill the garbage for the ecstasy

it was easy for kala
it was easy to find claw holds in the splintered wood
it was a game for kala
it was an easy game for kala because the apple basket/now the poor kitchen garbage
can

was accessible & the myriad of smells so inviting
like an old friend
until it was gone

& in the morning
sleep still in my eyes & brain
barefooted
I would step into the spillage

& I would get pissed sometimes
& when I would
through invective inventory
I would curse this garbage world

& sometimes not
& when I would not
I would with sleep still in my eyes & brain
play guessing games with what I stepped in

my barefeet would cable hints
wet/mushy/slippery/sharp---
wealth of possibilities

& kala watches from safe distances
from under the table
purring
from behind the stove

peering
wide yellow innocent eyes
suggesting from safe distances
that the apple basket was to blame
until it was gone

until it was one day
and Carol got some money
and being the neat one
and the one who cleaned up & emptied the apple basket/garbage can
bought a NEW REAL garbage can

& the apple basket
the old garbage can
like an old friend
was gone

the new garbage can
the one Carol bought on sale
is designed with only garbage in mind
is designed to accept the green plastic safe
is designed with a lid
& opens & closes when its foot is stepped on

and now
kala our cat
though not in any possessive sense etc.
sniffs at this new smooth cold thing
perplexed that it offers no claw holds
perplexed that it offers no smells
perplexed that it can not be rubbed up against

& meows for an old friend gone

The cat's Meow.

meow
m
m
wo e
w
m
eow t
m
e
o
w
t you
m e t
meou
t
m
t u o e
l
e m
e out. le me
o
ut
t
l u e
e m o e m
me
yout let me out

Beware of

Part: One

of poets beware,
they are not to be trusted.
Not only do they lie
so truthfully as art
but steal as well and
will not hesitate if aroused
to turn you into a poem

poets are chameleons
beware
they will take even human form
(any guise)

& write about me & talk about me a lot
there is
before all
a lot of me to write & talk about

I/myself & me
that special trinity
worms a way through everyone & anywhere

beware poets are dangerous/
subversives

who in a blink of mind
on a dare because they are
will like King Kong
climb Empire State illusions

& swat at power,

& if unsuccessful
will succeed for having tried.

Part: Two

and this is the next poem
what is it
poetry
of that part too beware

Trust poetry
even if it poorly lies

it is what it is; What is it
from foundation to wind & view
to thin tip of antenna

it still is What is it
to be seen
to be risen with
or above it
is it What it is

remember
the pen is
read as raw is
the penis (
both coming and making it
What it is)

Part: Three

Beware
behind these words
camouflaged by this smile
a liar lies waiting

no matter what its size
a lie lies as well as a truth lies

a truth is lisped currency
somewhere/
somewhere
even to say this is a truth is to lie

I wish I were there
I wish that were the truth here
that would be a lie
that goes nowhere

Love inside/outside lines&spaces

this was love before
this poem started
but stopped
as soon as it started
four lines a double space & a title up

form crept in
you see
thoughts crept in and
thoughts & form of love isn't love

though what is
I can't put down
That is why
it stopped
fourteen lines two double spacing & a title up

you see...
the double spacing above "you see..."
and the two other stanzas
and the space above/below & around the title

...well
that's more like love
well...
more than what comes after
twenty one lines con-
fused in-between three double spacing & a title up

Clues

i
reflections-in mirrors, plants
on sills & dishes in the sink
speak of two people in this house

I did not think our 4½
was this labyrinthian

ii
we are at play
the game is to leave rooms
when we sense each other near

we leave shadows behind

In the kitchen I have heard
screams that were left behind just recently

iii
we cover each other's scent with our own
& enter games
of leaving rooms quietly

iv
the halls along here
are shored up by bleached bones

you have judged all flesh
dead/& kiss me good-night

after you leave
your perfume of decay lingers
and I get the feeling of being measured

v
there is hollow time between us
clues lead us into dead-ends

If there was a price on your head
I would truly love you

but there isn't
so I hunt you only in my spare time

the rest is spent
playing the old shell game
underneath one is a severed head

what room are you in

I can smell your flesh curl about
the candle flame

I've got you covered
come out with your hands up

you suffer & cry so much
and by clowning--cover it

it's too perfect/too real
to be so real

you've enrolled in a school for clowns

you're funny
in both costumes of that word

you're so good
first class you get put in the intermediate ring

you suffer & clown so much
and from ear to ear
with greasepaint cover it

underneath the painted smile/tears
& rags
those too perfect/too real cliches

make one wonder about
the make-up of tragedy

Mapping

1

I thought
you'd be gone

(the body playing tag with the soul)

but
here you are, the empty suitcase empty
and here I am
still wanting to devour/

thinking

how familiar we look
again our edges dangle from between each other's sparkling teeth

2

nothing is sure
not even the 'want to' leap

so much of what is to be packed
and of we

so much is to be spit back

that's for sure

3

climbed muggle mountain
to get a new perspective/

had to have some distance

the blur of trees
whose names/

like ours/

I don't know
are hedges in muggle mountain's backyard

our house
dog house size

our room
a thumbprint

you and I
on the same map
but different contour lines

Like a moth attacking
a lightbulb
all supper long and even after
our conversation hovers around Death

until we finally get our wish

It is the neighbour knocking
(a dominated daughter
later I'm told)
asking if we'd baby sit
while she rushes out to witness her mother's death

from glossy photos
grandchildren are smiling &
they are asleep
in what used to be her bed;
probably not dreaming of cycles nor
of their stubborn
grandmother giving in

but she does

I do not know WHAT
they are dreaming of in here
In here; her knick-knacked apartment

the dark green walls give me the creeps
Our conversation is...

mouths forget themselves
remain open...

at the bus stop
I shiver and wish we were
home/under warm covers. asleep.

but we are not

I continue to shiver
while a new factory
on the cemetery side of the Mountain

cremates. All night
(from 2 smokestacks) the whitest
white smoke rises against the clearest darkness

It is a delicate alternative
to a dream in which
I, surrounded by my wife's family,
pluck white worms from my left palm

I shiver and curse the slowness
of buses

 waiting
I am forced to not think of dreams nor
look across the street

it is lit up by cold orange lights

We don't like reminders

 (as a courtesy to the living
they only cremate at night

It must be over now:
a name tag attached to her big toe

(probably not the gangrened one)

 & the dominated daughter
must be wondering how to feel sad & relieved at the same instant

what used to
the grandmother's bedroom window
looks out on the new factory

the children dream
I shiver and curse my visible winter breath

naked in innocence
you gaze skyward so that

your throat warm & vulnerable
offers itself to a stranger and

sure enough
I cradle you like a machine gun

applying pressure
I mow down everyone
and all along the unsuspecting streets of your throat
blood gutters

gone beserk most gently
my fingers stroll down arteries /
examining corpses until
from the sky

your eyes return to mine
and make me safe

I think I'll call it Sunday evening

we sit supping
i'm looking through a poetry mag
left hand holding page down
right one fishing with a spoon

(should i finish the line
or turn to swallow/manddoes not
live by blahblahSlurp)

i'm doing the dishes
she's emptying the garbage
CRACK

something break?
bug-off farknich she yells and
gooses me as she goes by

i've got the yin urge she says
i give her the 35¢ i have
she's about to
get herself a chocolate bar then decides against it

i'll make some cookies instead
aloud she muses

all this is hokey & domestic
McFadden-like/i like McFadden
i think i'll write that down

this is a poem/everything is on this page
not below, deep, symbolic only
one draft

can a poem be

she's in the kitchen
she's cracking walnuts

she sees me with a paper in my hand
A MASTERPIECE A MASTERPIECE she mocks
she is cracking nuts with a hammer

i read this to her
a nice now piece she says
and cracks a nut

i'll put that in i say
cookies and poems she says
ok i'll call it that i say

this can go on forever i think

Excusado (after brecht/weston & knudsen)

First St Fortunat Poem

O! it was long in coming-
two days and some hours
but
O! it was well worth waiting for

It collected and
baked inside real solid perhaps

"sculpted" is better put

I could feel it shape itself/
fullfil the contoured void

It was long in coming

It came
kissing its home good-bye

(long sucking kisses)

making its leaving painful
making its coming sweet

O JOY

I cried

Second St Fortunat Poem

I can not believe my eyes
it has survived its intricate/
convoluted
journey in one long magnificent piece

Like a sigh
it settled against the back of the bowl/
cone tip above water

Separated from me
I thought the rest of its trip would be easy

It would not go on/I had to

with a twig I mashed it
but even then six buckets-full was not enough

The seventh did it

This is it

was wondering /..have often wondered../
"how long would it take
before I'd write a poem of me being able

from my study/through 2 facing windows
to see you in our bedroom?"

and then
when the poem happens
"what will I put down as having seen?"

I have seen you
as a Peeping-Tom could;
in the act of undressing/
naked on our bed and

do what he would
if I could not walk those 22 steps from here to there

sitting up back against the wall
your eyes focus on your toes

I have seen you as a triangle

I have seen you in the darkness that
lack of electricity & lack of
gladness outlines

rub on handcream/rubbing slow & long
I have seen you do feminine things
and mused

"had I gone to tell you this
you would have called me sexist"

I have seen you in the fetal position
and wondered/have often...
were you practicing
to be born

I have seen you looking back
I have

Observation of the 7th day of solitaire

she feeds the kitchen stove
he brings in more wood

I am sealed from birth
dirty in private parts of my house

she puts 3^o cauldrons of water on the stove
he rolls another cigarette

I am certain
nothing outside of me is friendly;
even in winter's black window
I see only parts of me

she picks up her book
he takes out the pack

sounds of shuffling riffle the house

I hear more
the dogs' barks
make it worse

I chant
'what is out there is mine'

it is a lie though it is true
as what I do in here is true

she turns a page
he turns up a card

it has become a habit
always was
out here only seven days

red on black in descending order
page after page achingly slow

haven't won a game in seven days
nerves in my brain are taut & cross

barbed wires run my length

boredom & being too much with me
rip & short circuit me
I am negatively filled & empty

she fills the tub
she and I get in

her soapy hands massage
they move in circles across my chest they
move in slow circles across my chest

up along her arms, out of habit
automatically at first

then mine

then
become laborious
become peaceful
become joyous
become our hands cupped-full of shimmering water