

Interim

:the eco issue

edited by Christopher Arigo

with guest editors Matthew Cooperman & Jonathan Skinner



Volume 29/ Number 1 & 2 / 2011

Editor: Claudia Keelan

Contributing Editors: Chris Arigo
Matthew Cooperman
Jonathan Skinner

Managing Editor: John Douglas
Layout Editor: Mollie Bergeron

Interim is an annual publication. Subscriptions are \$12 for one year. Visit our website for complete guidelines and more information:
www.interimmag.org

Indexed by the Index of American Periodical Verse and American
Humanities Index

Library of Congress National Series Data Program
ISSN 0888-2452 ©1999 *Interim*

Thanks to UNLV's English Department and the Black Mountain Institute
for their generous support.

Interim Vol. 29 ©2011 *Interim*

Editor's Note

“In the heart of what is called the Being of the being—would hang the essence of man.”
—from *Humanism of the Other*, Emmanuel Levinas

This special issue of *Interim* collects sui generis work to pose questions and positions relevant to the on going interactions of human beings and what we call the natural world. I am thankful to Chris Arigo, Matthew Cooperman and Jonathan Skinner for the innovative work found here, and I am indebted to the many writers and artists whose continued experiments in artistic expression further the dialogue and expand the possibilities of what is, precariously, our democracy. Here in these pages is a transfigured, yet communal space, countering the transfiguration of an oil rig planted in the ocean floor. You will find here, our legislators.

—Claudia Keelan, editor

INTERIM

Interim

Contents

Section I

Christopher Arigo

Introduction 14

Kimberly Burwick

Statement 16

Panic Attack 17

Reading the Gospel of Luke 18

And Scant is the Newest Grace 19

Massachusetts, 1978 20

Todd Fredson

In Praise of Domesticity 21

Harbored in the Grotto 23

The Hour of the Fifth Sun 25

Laughter, A Passage of Birds, Some Clay Chipped from the
Tractor's Wheel 27

Five Fallow Notes 30

The Poor Are Chained First to the Plight of the Land, I Hear
My Blood Whisper 31

John Gallaher

Statement 33

In a Landscape: VII	34
In a Landscape: VIII	36
In a Landscape: IX	38
In a Landscape: X	40
In a Landscape: XI	42
In a Landscape: LXVIII	44
Kevin Goodan	
Statement	46
Showings	47
Crag Hill	
Statement	50
Good Adaptation of a Trout	51
Into Space from Top and Abstract	52
Psychic Acts and Their Correlates in Limbo	53
Naïve Realism	54
Alice Jones	
Unshored	55
Ocean	56
Sulu	57
Bay of Bengal	59
Michael Kroesche	
In Considering the Jack Rabbit and Our Landscape	62
Aviary	63
Tod Marshall	
Statement	72
Al Dente	73
Eco Sonnet	74
Brice Marden: Why Long Brushes Are Best	75
Bad Words	77

Michael McLane	
Statement	78
Smolder	79
Imperium (for the Last Residents to Leave Centralia)	80
Teratology of Home	81
Dig	82
Kinderhook	83
Hoa Nguyen	
On Austin, Texas	84
The Problem	87
No One Wants	89
Write Fucked up Poems	90
Medina Apples	91
Virginia Creepers	92
Chinaberry	93
Another Drought Almost Sonnet	94
Hill Country Poem	95
Elizabeth Robinson	
Brink: an Eco-poetics	97
Linda Russo	
Yard Works (I – IX)	101
On and around “Yard Works”	106
Sarah Vap	
Statement	110
The Stillborn God	112
Membrane	114
Less, and Less, to Love. Of Ourselves, too.	115
Silent, Night	116
You Weren’t Meant for Pleasure, You Were Meant for Joy.	117

Section II

Matthew Cooperman	
Introduction	118
Karen Leona Anderson	
Cell Bill	120
Venison	122
Sale: Before 5pm Take Off	123
Receipt: Real Estate	124
Amy Catanzano	
Junk DNA	125
Alfonso D'Aquino	
Spores	126
Sinsabor del Acitrón	128
Citron's Bitterness	129
Alumbra	131
Merrill Gilfillan	
Suddenly in the Sky	133
Crazy Horse Day	134
From La Brea	135
Brenda Iijima	
Apparition—What's Standing Right There	136
Aby Kaupang	
Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified (NOS)	141
Sally Keith	
On Fault	154

John Kinsella

The Red Cloud	158
Evening	160
Morning	162
Fool's Gold	163
Bones	164
Fire	166
Vegetable Garden?	169
Friend	170
The Red Shed	172
Grass Cutting	173
Warning Signs	174
Daytime	176
Sheeps & Goats & Alpacas	177
Journal	178
Why I Oppose the Genre of 'Nature Writing'	179

Patrick Pritchett

Twenty-First Century Ecology	185
Forms of Disappearance	186
The Dream of Open Space	187
Ground Music	188

Stephen Ratcliffe

12.31	189
1.1	190
1.2	191
1.3	192
1.4	193

Martha Ronk	
1. Summer Past	194
2. The Remainder of the Third Chapter or the West Wind	195
3. Relics	196
4.	197
5.	198
Tomaz Šalamun	
I Have Heard	199
Sasha Steensen	
Family	200
Susan Stewart	
Terrarium	203
The Uneven Surface of the Moon	205
G.C. Waldrep	
discrete series: NEWBATTLE ABBEY	207
discrete series: DOG/STONE	209
discrete series: SUNDIAL	210
Keith Waldrop	
Before Leaving	212
Cold Starlight	213
Contingence	214
Elizabeth Willis	
The Oldest Garden in the World	215
Poisonous Plants of America	216
Sam Witt	
Deserter	218
Ode to a Baby White Fern	220

Section III

Kristen Baumliér	
Sky / Crude Oil	224
Jonathan Skinner	
Introduction	225
Jen Jofer & Hillary Mushkin	
Deep Horizon, Deep Water	232
CAConrad	
OIL THIS WAR!	236
Duck Call for Dead Ducks	238
Ian Demsky	
Deepwater Horizon: A Documentary Poem	239
Diana DiPrima	
350	244
Kristen Baumliér	
Carboniferous Forest / Crude Oil	246
Alison Pelegrin	
Lamenting the Pelican	247
Ode to the Pelican	249
Jack Collom	
Admonition to the Ocean: “Offshore Oil” Acrostic	251
Marcella Durand	
The Elegy of Ecopoetics	252
Orifice	258

Benjamin Friedlander Gusher	261
Laura Elrick Performative Ingestion: Mourning Rite of Peak Oil	263
Heidi Lynn Staples How Poetry Makes a Difference in the Era of Ecocide	272
Cara Benson nobodyislisteninginginginginginginging	275
Ann Fisher-Wirth & Gara Gillentine BP	285
Sheryl St. Germain Midnight Oil	289
Kristen Baumliér Road / Oil	294
Sheryl St. Germain When Nature Writing becomes Travel Writing: Notes toward a Manifesto	295
E.J. McAdams Fracking Clumsiness	300
Michael Leong The Poem as a Field of Activism	303
Kristen Baumliér Transmission Fluid	305

Michael Leong the transmission of (other subsurface agents may be considered necessary for underground control	307
Christine Leclerc The Enpipe Line	312
Timothy Bradford Contact	315
Kristen Baumliér Sky / Crude Oil	317
Timothy Bradford Waves and the Tide	318
Evelyn Reilly The Grief of Eco poetics	320
Arielle Greenberg Letter to Robyn Gabel, State Representative, 18th District, IL	324
Jared Schickling Conspiracy Against Poem	327
Cowboy Poetry Movement	328
National Wildlife Refuge	329
Laura Mullen Briefing	330
The Story	332
Statement	335
Sharon Mesmer Pimp My Top Kill Live Feed Mothership	336

Philip Metres	
A Poetics of Oil, a Poetics of Action	337
Invocation	340
Crude Oil	341
Kristen Baumliér	
Crude Oil	342
Philip Metres	
Deepwater Horizon Heron (2010)	343
Kristen Baumliér	
Stretch It: Stretching Oil Production	344
Diesel	345
Brenda Hillman	
Report on Actions, Feb 22, 2011	346
Rodrigo Toscano	
“Das Wandern ist meine Lust”	349
Great Awakening	351
Martha Serpas & Heidi Lynn Staples	
Interview	354
Brett Evans & Frank Sherlock	
Spill Life	359
Keaton Nguyen Smith	
No Oil Spills	365
Response from Congressman Lloyd Doggett	366
Abby Reyes	
Parting Song	368
Coda (2011)	374

JenMarie Davis	
Deepwater Horizon	375
Jennifer Scappettone	
Poetics of Enormity	377
Photo Dossier: PARK Rehearsals	385
Allison Adelle Hedge Cook	
Offshore	390
Michael Rothenberg	
Appointment with Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey	391
Shell Beach	393
Andrew Schelling	
Oil & Wolves	396
To the Secretary of the Interior	397
Jonathan Skinner	
Deepwater Horizon: One Year Later	404
Auger	409
Cecilia Vicuña	
Report on a Half/Lost Letter	416
Deep Sea / Deep See	418
Contributor Biographies	419

Jennifer Scappettone

Poetics of Enormity

It seems the trouble is enormity.
Trouble, like form, is “ambient,” can’t get remote.
Trouble, like attention, is dopamine-sprayed.

While the “page” is now in everybody’s faces, glassy &
still obedient to a more or less face-sized frame
more or less the size of our provincialism

and the tool of it too.

The quote on quote page promiscuous & pointing ever away from itself thus
colonizing as never before—in the roving

pocket provincialism of borderlessness:
Transocean going for the record broke
by the well called Tiber—over six miles

low, though, this Rome
into crusts 24 to 65 million years old:
“BP’s second material discovery in the emerging lower tertiary play” —

ocean: the deep frontier:
Eye-in-the-Mer Apollowing it,
that 2/3 of the planet left unexplored ...

now subject to half the world’s stockpile of dispersants
to “kee[p] the water from the shore.”
Scalapino’s portent, riposte: “How can that be alone: [like water in water]?” (1)

Not structures alone but space itself as speculation,
“spreading” in slightness like the base of the faux-golden bowl,

courtesy now of bygosh.com:

“and, though not of signal depth, justified ... by the charm of its shape as well as by the tone of its surface.” (2)

What can poets in the Re-Gilded Age draw from Henry James’s emblem, this gilded cracked non-object wrought of words?

Miming a flat goblet of matter mined on the cheap, mind onscreen, narrative’s abstraction and spreading actuality,

a null-shape, a tone, waxing unspecific. Stein on James: “You see he made it sort of like an atmosphere.” (3) Volume simulacral:

“It might have been ... diminished ... by half its original height.” (4)

Source-chalice, feminized urn of proportions ungiven: of enormity. Material classed by the intimations of “as” only:

“As formed of solid gold it was impressive; it seemed indeed to warn off the prudent ... “ (5)

This gilded crystal vessel as fiat value unhinged from “nature’s money,” worrying signor Pound,

“say also of a lost time,” (6) dissolving, vaporizing,

last century’s paradox, Koons balloon-dog that weighs overmuch on the roof and is as costly. (7)

What can those in the gildwashing age draw off?

A poetics of ambient material

disintegration, counter-speculation.

“Objects and places ... disposed for human use and addressed to it, must have a sense of their own, a mystic meaning proper to themselves to give out ... to the participant at once so interested and so detached as to be moved to a report of the matter”—Henry James, *The American Scene*

A poetics moved to a report of the matter disposed for human use,

addressed to it, thus on the move,
a surface perforation, interface: (8)

“the sea that opens and that unites. You were its servants, indeed you also subdued it; there remains of it a taste of solitude, of regret, in your
body.”

— Edouard Glissant, Poetic Intention

A taste of regret:

- : a junk-shot
- : Corexit
- : a top-kill
- : Sea-Brat #4
- : shore hourglasses of plastic bags for hire

If there's something slapdash & rampant outside the text ...
an ethics of immersion, of “delusional space,”(9) a structure-mired critique ...
committed to the broken codes ... and a locus of accountability ...

instate these exceptions to the post-slogans:

“truth to immaterials”

So the digital's immaterial, while Suzhou workers riot or are hospitalized by the
neurotoxin in your gardenburgers
that can damage the peripheral nervous system & cause paralysis;
but it dries more quickly and reduces streaks on iPhone screens.

“site-speculativity”

So the troublesome sites aren't only pasted over, plasticked, “capped,”
but replaced, transmuted into rhetoric, a searchable Superfundament.
It's rhetoric that off-gasses.

“OF the vaporization and the centralization of the ego-polis. All lies in that.”

Of the unwitting commission of bodies to the vaporization of certain matter-cracks and leaks.

A spill “of national significance,” nation in fumes: deterritorialized, yes. A becoming-major of that.

Wafting ambiance for those “[f]ugitives ... bound for the deleterious ...” (10)

consummation of Cage’s “Lecture on the Weather”:

“I dedicate this work to the U.S.A. that it may become just another part of the world, no more, no less.”

“no things but in ideas,”

stillborn. Except when it comes to paying,

except when it comes to launching them, obsolesced, to South Carolina and China, “far more wonderful than if [they] were to dance of [their] own accord.” (11)

Once hallowed p-dash structuralist tractates are the pernicious inverse of naturalist and realist fictions, which at the acme of an epoch battering nature and body as mechanism sought to expose immanent arcs of determinism: fates biopolitical manifest in the limbs of naïve young things —

tuneless Nana of the dung-heap,

Dreiser’s chorus girl-in-training—

into the lettered public sphere.

Double zeros pass the crisis of that realism. Now out of their reclusiveness

let these dance the catwalk of the dispersed, disorganized body. (12) Choral contour down

the elliptical

gutter, leachate-swale

of incompletely intimate biology and biography

mapped more or less exactly upon the story of waste

in the United States, “our contrary quakes.” (13)

Choros, from the root indicating hedge, enclosure, hortus—yard, garden, and garth of

the polis's threshing floor. In a landscape of concavities and convexities, the threshing-site was a rare platform, place to host both beating & rubbing the harvest for its seed, and dancing—the seduction of

fertility—infrastructure of tragedy.

Hedge, enclosure, hortus. & yet classical drama—forum of the feminized ma-source, zone of the irrational, emoting, Dionysian, transitional citizen, cross-dressed, dithyrambic, apocryphally double-doored, is also a site of penetrability—of the expressive claims of beings with more fluid boundaries,

“more open to affect and entry,” pumps of instability. “[C]atalysts, agents, instruments, blockers, spoilers, destroyers, and sometimes helpers or saviors” (14) for those being trained spectacularly in democracy.

Choros, a word the Spartans used to name their central civic and religious space. The chorus is public space: a choral crowd, spewn through the theater's vomitorium at the end of a performance, are more perfectly interpellated into the citizenry.

Tragedy's blocking of bodies, uncanny manifestation of shared language in an unprivate forum, opening improperly onto a sum of tongue's vulnerabilities, camouflages, parasites—making a body of realism inextricable from the corporal experience in which it's moored.

A chorus of enormity pumped vis-à-vis the infrastructure of disaster—welling up, out of the uncapped lots, weeping schoolwounds, fragrant sloughs—toward the newly sexed shores: dis/aster that hasn't been mapped, only hyperlinked through the symptoms of shame and imperfectly

embellished cancers. Incompletely intimate: one's biology and biography mapping more or less exactly upon the story of waste in the United States.

To drill a poetic field that's choral, relational and participatory,

sucks in the junk and the data of trouble without disgorging a “view from everywhere,”
ambient citizenship that kicks, that has channels, thighs?

The dump is full / of gas. Days vaporize like pages onscreen. Page like methane,
A rough negative value, lethal anodyne, aloft.
Untuneful hissing out of sprawling goosenecks on the mound.

Brathwaite’s “gnashlish” (15)

Mac Low’s “snow annexation flyers the sky ... tropical sweat ... invading the Gulf
stream ... all over credit union readiness” (16)

Scalapino on Valentine’s Day, 2010: “their whole as bodies in the underground
petroleum ... holes
spurting here and there in the sky-turned-indigo as did the ocean, now petroleum.” (17)

To make a start, out of enormity, and make it particulate, scattering the sum,
The poem a site for the restreaming of post-pastoral, post-Paterson fact in motion
as junk in the limbs.

Scalapino: “ ... to render the sense that ‘the word’ abuts sensory space that is of (in) the
world. That is, ‘the word,’ as spatial, also makes a sense of sensory space ... and makes a
sense of the undoing of social tyranny ... (public indistinguishable from private).” (18)

Archaeology of the Superfundament

To recapitulate, rescatter spatiorhetorical ambiguity.

To pucker the realist page into myriad more sensuous channels.

“There are no outdated thoughts which perish beside new energies that are uncontrolled,
naïve, rudimentary History must be assumed completely (lived together) in order
perhaps to move beyond it (like the sea) once more.”

—Glissant, *Poetic Intention*

“The ‘old’ matter is there, re-accepted, re-tasted ...—believed in ... yet for due testimony,
for re-assertion of value, perforating as by some strange and fine, some latent and gathered
force, a myriad more adequate channels.”

—James, preface to *The Golden Bowl*

From one singular sensation, every little sap that demands pacifying into and out of the vomitorium.

Not to make the invisible visible, but to bruise and multiply the channels of its invisibility.

1 from *The Animal is in the World Like Water in Water*, with Kiki Smith (New York: Granary, 2010).

2 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*: see, for example, the digital edition at <http://www2.newpaltz.edu/~hathawar/goldenbowl1.html>

3 Gertrude Stein, “Henry James,” in *Writings, 1932-1946* (New York: Library of America, 1998).

4 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*.

5 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*.

6 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*.

7 Jeff Koons, “Balloon Dog (Yellow),” high chromium stainless steel with transparent color coating, 1994-2000, Metropolitan Museum of Art. See also Williams Jennings Bryan’s “Cross of Gold” speech, uploaded at <http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/bryan.html>

8 See Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (New York and London: Continuum, 2006). Christine Wertheim writes a fascinating application of Ranciere to Kenneth Goldsmith in Open Letter: “The Unboring Boring and the New Dream of Stone, or, if literature does politics as literature, what kind of gender politics does the new poetics of the boring enact?” Open Letter 7 (Fall 2005), archived at http://www.ubu.com/papers/kg_ol_wertheim.html

9 See Lisa Robertson, PhillyTalks 17 (2000), in dialogue with Steve McCaffery, archived at <http://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/groups/phillytalks/pdfs/pt17.pdf>

10 Edouard Glissant, *Poetic Intention*, trans. Nathalie Stephens (Calacoon, NY: Nightboat, 2010).

11 Karl Marx, *Capital*, section archived at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch01.htm#S2>

12 The “disorganized body” is a concept that my collaborator on PARK, choreographer Kathy Westwater, has developed somatically. She gave a paper on this topic before a brief demonstration at the Belladonna ADFEMPO conference’s panel on ecopoetics. The panel, which I organized, was titled “Is Ground as to Figure as Ambience is to Body? Ec(h)opoetics of the Disfigured Landscape,” and held at the CUNY Graduate Center in September 2009.

13 Glissant, op. cit.

14 Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996).

15 From “Nights,” in *Born to Slow Horses* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan, 2005).

16 Jackson Mac Low, *Forties*, 1990-1999.

17 “Buds eyelids,” now printed in *The Dihedrons Gazelle-Dihedrals Zoom* (Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2010).

18 Leslie Scalapino, “The Division Between Fact and Experience,” *War and Peace*, vol. 4 (2009).

Photo Dossier: PARK Rehearsals



Rehearsal for PARK at Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, 2009; choreography and direction by Kathy Westwater; poetry and text scores by Jennifer Scappettone; visual design by Seung Jae Lee; dancers: (l-r) Rebecca Davis, Abby Block, Ursula Eagly

These photos were taken during the early rehearsals for the ongoing performance work PARK with director/ choreographer Kathy Westwater and dancers in the studios of Dance Theater Workshop, an apparently neutral, abstract space, which could refer and be transposed into virtually any context, but which is a specific built environment in itself.



Rehearsal for PARK at Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, 2009; choreography and direction by Kathy Westwater; poetry and text scores by Jennifer Scappettone; visual design by Seung Jae Lee; dancers: (l-r) Ursula Eagly, Rebecca Davis, Abby Block

I had begun composing “pop-up pastorals” for the book-in-progress Exit 43 at Djerassi Resident Artists Program, where I met Kathy Westwater and discovered an affinity in our practices. I set out to tackle the problem of representing ambient catastrophe by spatializing text, placing it into relation with shredded visual footage of landscapes utopian and dystopian, to make new stratified landscapes or “archaeologies.” Words were drawn from newspaper and magazine articles about consumerism, contamination, disease, and real estate, Superfund documents made public by the Environmental Protection Agency, sites of corporate advertisement and defense, Victorian poetasters penning pastorals ever more

hemmed in by the industrial revolution, and the documentation of a more direct, intimate experience with ambient phenomena. They were then slotted into the sampled (non)logics of Alice’s Adventures Under Ground, set into implosive, nonlinear spatial relations. From the beginning, these were regarded as the scores for a choral work.



Rehearsal for PARK at Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, 2009; choreography and direction by Kathy Westwater; poetry and text scores by Jennifer Scappettone; visual design by Seung Jae Lee; dancers: (l-r) Ursula Eagly, Rebecca Davis, Abby Block

In the studio, in beginning our collaboration for PARK Kathy and I began experimenting with the relocation of these texts from the page onto and through the human body in the form of movement and vocalization. From the moment that the dancers began interpreting them gesturally—each in a highly individual, exploratory mode—I came to realize how these works, ostensibly about what is “out there,” were inherently about corporeality. Below is the text of a dialogue we began over email in September 2009:

Kathy: I’ve been thinking a lot about these ideas that you brought up about the representation

of landscape in your visual poetry and then in the rarified environment of the studio/ stage. It does seem to be a very important conceptual and formal concern for this piece. And then how those things relate to the body. You talked previously about your interest in the text being reflexive to the body/ movement. I've started by going in the inverse direction: how the body can be reflexive of the text. But it seems as though maybe the body is absorbing it as well. So it's a deepening sort of reflexivity.



Rehearsal for PARK at Dance Theater Workshop, NYC, 2009; choreography and direction by Kathy Westwater; poetry and text scores by Jennifer Scappettone; visual design by Seung Jae Lee; dancers: (l-r) Abby Block, Ursula Eagly, Rebecca Davis

Jennifer: Watching the process unfolding was an immensely provocative and gratifying experience. I'm even more excited about the possibilities now than I was when they were juggled around in the abstract (and that doesn't always happen—sometimes ideas seem more interesting than their instantiation can be!). It struck me that even if I hadn't been "foregrounding" the body, so to speak, in making those pieces (which I tend to call "stills" as in film stills) it is everywhere in those lines, as the dolorously receiving and frenetically

reprocessed, reprocessing end of toxins and of history that are buried in the landscape in which it stands/ lies down/ strolls/ etc. The body's activation in reaction to the text physicalizes such reprocessing, almost as if the words are toxins or releases with which the dancers are wrestling. On the other hand, even as the text/ scapes are literally incorporated by the dancers, they are in being regarded on the page several steps removed, petrified, even what the Marxists would call reified: representations of landscape hovering apart. I'm sure that in moving forward my writing will be influenced by these witnessed oddments of reciprocity—so that the text will in tortuous fashion be reflexive of these bodies and how they have dealt, as well as of the space excavated and overseen.