

Beginning to End

Beginning to End

and other alphabet poems

by

Alan Halsey

The logo consists of the text "E·RATIO" in a serif font, with a dot between the "E" and "R". The text is white and is set against a dark blue rectangular background.

E·RATIO

Beginning to End

E·ratio Editions

2011

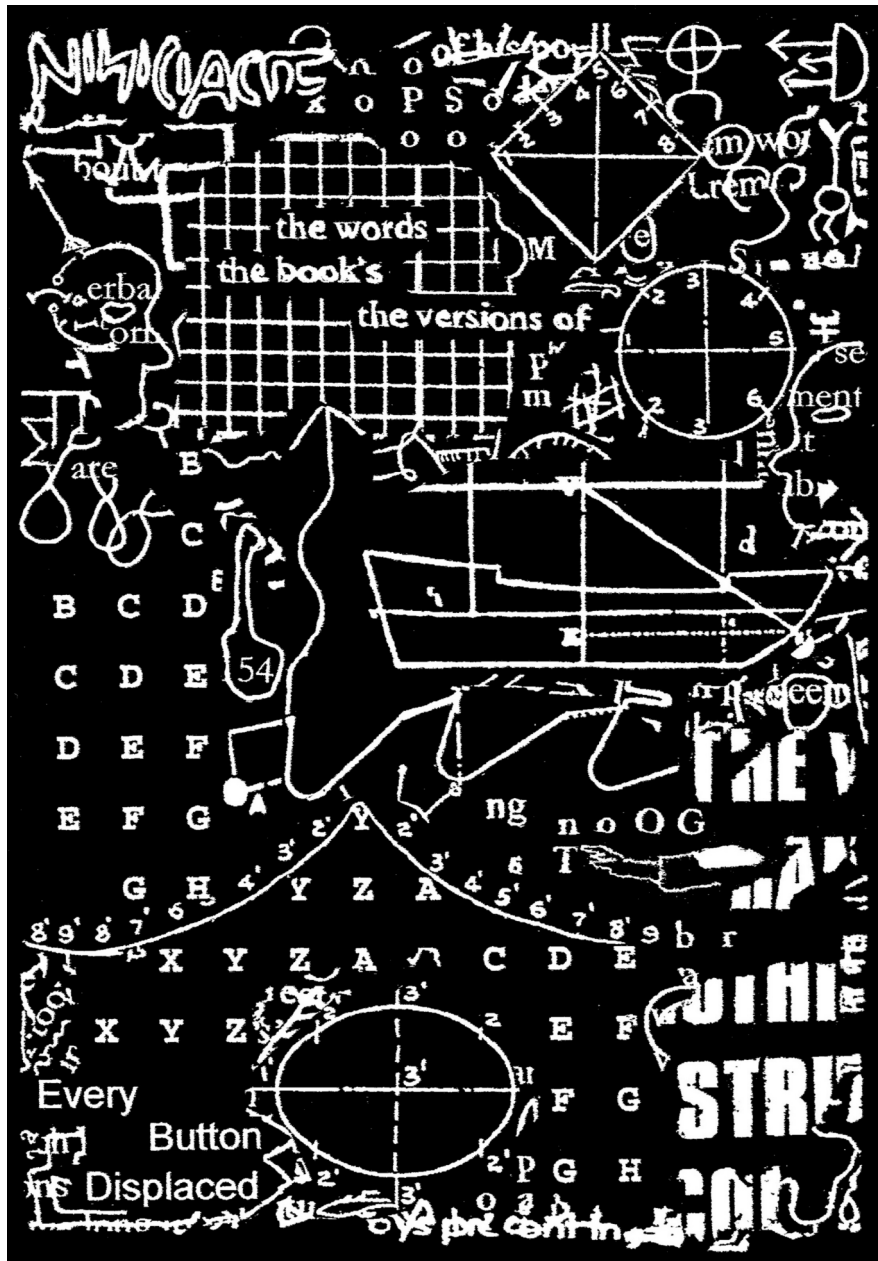
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Beginning to End

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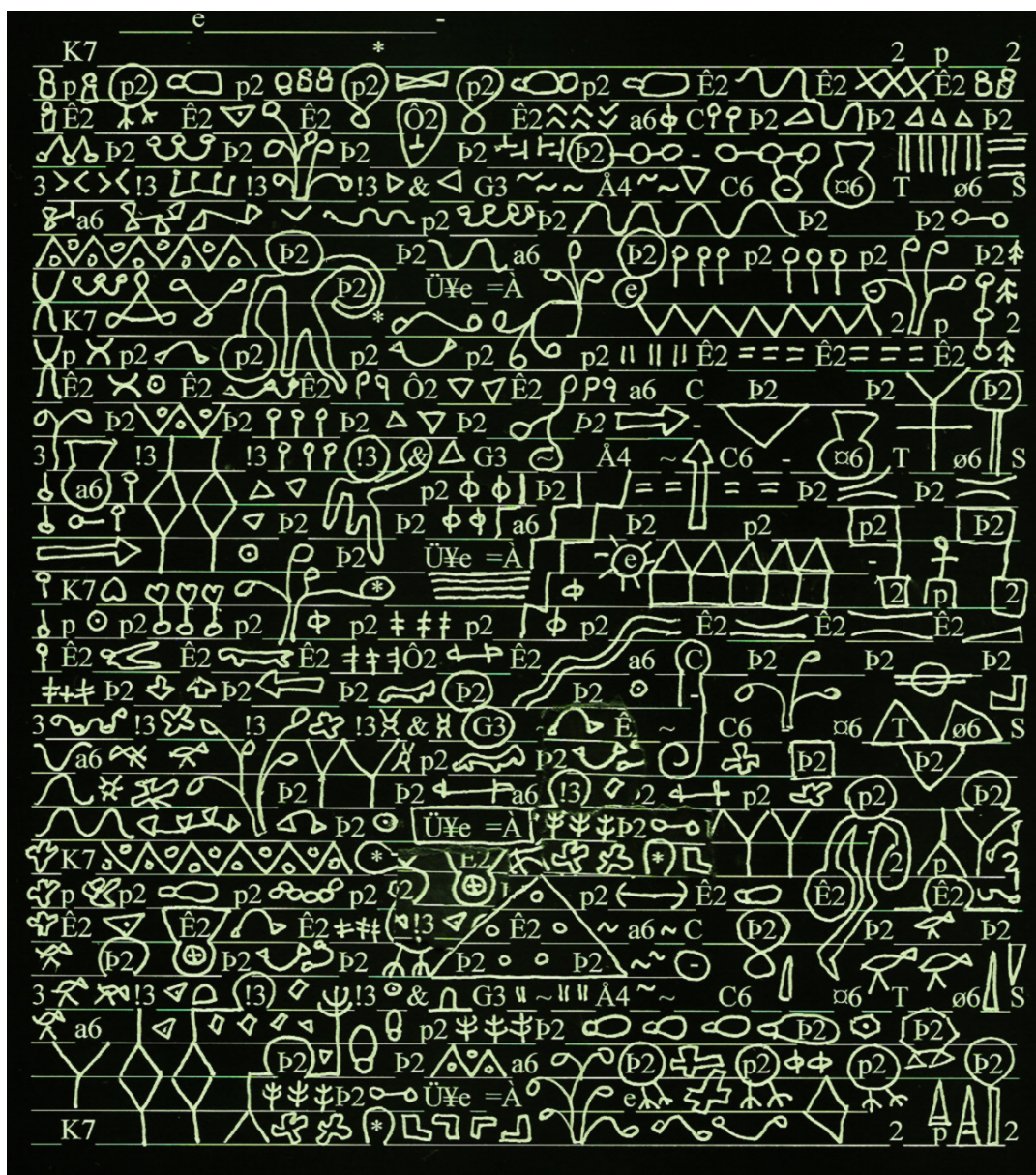
and other alphabet poems



Beginning to End

‘Abyss-seedy’	7
A History of His Own Times or A Virtual Index of Operations	8
A Looking-Glass for Logoclasts from the Phoenician	9
A Looking-Glass for Logoclasts: Life Studies	10
Alphabet According to Sir Thomas Browne	11
An Alphabet for Karen Mac Cormack	12
An Alphabetic Guide to the Texts of Paul Klee	13
An Alphabet of Emblems	14
Beginning to End	20
Entries & Extracts Volume M	26
‘Gutenberg the Movie’: An Alphabetic Treatment	27
In Memory of R. Buckminster Fuller	28
‘Less than half a bet’	29
Lost Works of a Logoclast: A Short-Title Catalogue	30
Malcolm Lowry: An Uncollected Poem	32
Notes from the Scriptorium	33
Poet’s Poem	35
Register of Gargoyles	36
Robin Hood’s Alphabet: A Play for 2 Voices	37
Towards an Index of Shelley’s Death	39
Ω in A	46

Beginning to End



Beginning to End

Abyss-seedy
he
th'effigy
a-chided

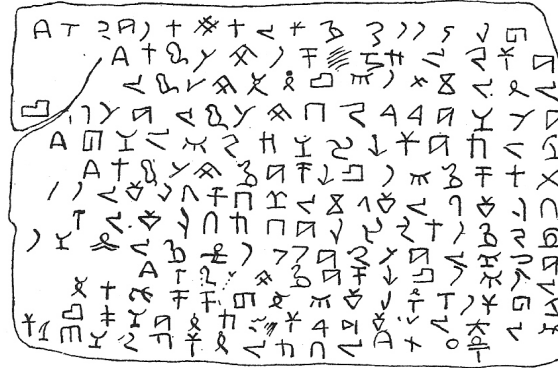
J & K
L & men
O epicure
arrested!

you feed
apple? you
ask why?
See.

A History of His Own Times
or A Virtual Index of Operations

An Argument Autumn Cloud will Avalanche.
One man's Backhander's Barbarossa's Big Switch
so says Blackcock. Bluehearts – remember
her Blue Spoon when she
danced the Bolero in Boston? Such a Bump,
as if a Buzzard hit the Carolina Moon like that
Carpetbagger Casanova
with his Chromite Clean Slate, some Condor –
but Continue Hope, Copper Green. Desert Calm
to a Fox is a Shield in a Storm & better than a Sword
just as Deliberate's as good as Determined Force:
it's an Eastern Exit for Enduring Freedom and
a Fiery Vigil for Fingal's Fivesome a Flaming Dart
will Flatten since Frantic is to Friction as
Gladio to Glory – it's a Golden Pheasant, Hawkeye –
ask Herrick. Huddle in the Indigo, ring Infinite Justice
you Ivy Bells. O Jacana. Jolt. Jubilee's Just Cause but
Kaput! – what a Killer was that Larry
with his personal Magneto in the Market Garden –
Masher of the Mulberry, Musketeer to Neptune
and at Niagara our Nimrod Dancer, Overlord
with Pig Stick for Pipe Dreams and Plunder,
such Productive Effort – Provide
Comfort, Hope, Promise, Refuge, Relief,
Provide Transition,
Providence! Ptarmigan lost in a Purple Storm,
some call you Rencong Terbang. Ripper
likes the Rolling Thunder for a Round-up but
a Sand Flea avoids a Sharp Edge. Sinbad
with his Sledgehammer will never Snipe Starkey
but beware a Super-Gymnast such as Telic
with her Toenails. Uphold Democracy,
Urban Warrior, with Urgent Fury. May the satire
running backwards in Veritas
trouble you forever when exequy's said.

A Looking-Glass for Logoclasts from the Phoenician



L says: I worked the T in bronze
I am L whose stylus engraved the tools.
My K is the key to the temple signs
and I wrote its name JHKJ.
I engraved the ABC of the altar's brass crown
for the honour of M and the family of N.
And a bee swarm D noted
M's son made for N and N's brother.
I altered the half M
these labours of mine and nine others
performed without question
at the time of the governor P in 6 days of Tamuz.
May Great A grant L the first place.

A Looking-Glass for Logoclasts: Life Studies

Cumber of immediate impressions left to steep for the 100th time.
I view myself from the outside observing his lowered and gathered a habit.
A jabbered of everything the spider knows to the dead letter office.
B sat qualmish in the porphyry chair with a halo of ghosts to write or drub.
C had enough woods of withered pines more exquisite than anything by Horace.
Nephritic pains and blue-devil verses were his household gods.
Dearest D who knew the want of a want spelt a thousand words wrong.
Not many more Sundays shut an absinthe mistake in his golden cage.
E so fond of his friends doomed to a suburb in the Pindaric style.
My dear Cozwoz dearest Princess my dear Mary so attached to Ovid.
Dear Rock of Names where the thunder sleeps.
When F and G arrive at the summum bonum they'll be boys again.
H had such a fancy as retreat disembrangled.
J's was the barber's talent who talked as he wrote like a perfect gallows.
His jobation unhinged K and L.
My late dead dear sparrow you may expect it to snow stars.
M made a bread-and-cheesish profit from garlic comedies.
What was Hecuba to him but a mess of the poets?
You're not in Arcadia, N told him, when you're in the Post Office reading my letters.
O saw Elyzium transplanted in a pocket glass shaken to atoms.
If ever he was mumped he was doubly nettled.
The world dead around him but himself circumspangled.
P's volcanic dialect was easily confused with Babylonish jargon.
When the frolic had gone off Q could never forgive England.
First it's bogberry and apricots then purging and subliming.
Dear Machiavel.
R told S what T would do tomorrow.
U was Molly Mog's puppet at his time of transmigration.
V went to Italy with money and left W farewelling.
As if the setting sun could be caught unannoyed my dear heart.
The ruined renovated.
Three words and a half smile sometimes recall the most pastoral of authors.
At the cataclysm X will be sunk in Spinoza in a cabman's shelter.
Where there's a parcel of singers there's a cargo of songs.
Y didn't seem luciferous to Z but meteorous.

Alphabet According to Sir Thomas Browne

Artificial hills, of
Bubbles, notes on
Curiosity, concerning too nice
Deformity, handsome piece of
Elephant dancing on ropes
Fayrie stones
Garlands and garland-plants
Husks eaten by the Prodigal Son
Impostors
Juglers
Kikaion
Leaning towers
Mustard-seed, grain of
New World, the
Ostrich, on the
Perfume, transcendent
Quandros
Ropalic or gradual verses
Shovelard
Tutelary angels
Uncircumcised fruit
Vegetable horns
Writing-dust
Xanthus
Yarwhelp
Zeboim

An Alphabet for Karen Mac Cormack

A colony is no more a kernel than pronounced command.
Beauty when a culture's a passport's a quality of syntax.
Cerecloth since sincere yet loth to be part.
Dover was to a beach as a cliff's condition.
Early when employed and easy for each could be either.
Fid of origin unknown pinning topmast to faith.
Graze where gold may significantly ground in a garden.
Homeland and then some even if somatic and the same.
Imperative to reinstate implacable Latin.
Jewelled as a day and night watch dualistic.
Kaput's the capital city of an alphabet's heartland.
Lucid tries a line on for size.
Miles more than memory is minuted by flicker and flux.
Nouns a motor noise in the ear ticks a notice over.
Once was an overdue opening for others often.
Presence plays across a stage in private pieces.
Quiet or enough and too middling.
Ripples when a sound through papers in quest.
Spinning so far as the top's been soldered to its north and south.
Ten times as many lorries as a transport policy.
Utterly unchanged by the utmost repetition.
Verbatim on the one side and verboten on the other.
Women in an alphabet wanting double you.
Xerox of zero on the rocks.
You of your years become a sort of a story.
Z seldom seen though in size but neither bruises nor begins.

An Alphabetic Guide to the Texts of Paul Klee



An Alphabet of Emblems

'Aliquid stat pro aliquo.'
A sign or something
like a liquid
stands for something.

Antibodies

What souls are these
but the antibodies
gathered on Mt Purgatory's
new-found antipodes?

Being

Being entered as
a plea being altered
in perpetual adjournment:
on perpetual alert.

Chapels

Dead quick past the chapels, due north
and a harsh salvation,
rigor mortis and tenor
of a foursquare temporal possession.

Difference

Mark the difference in scrap
spruced out at that point
on the scarp where meaning
becomes profit, cheap timber.

Empire

Empire transfixed
and reviewed in a single
and simple figure, this
revenant is Psyche.

Fool

Prey pray nothing twice
removed from a paradise
whose fool proved no fool
flesh nor fowl not to fall.

Gravity

Such a practical achievement of
patriarchal order as gravity
is foxed? O pressures of dark days,
the precious tail in the gravy.

Horizon

Horace on
azure,
horizon
assured?

Index

Finding myself out on the discarded
index I'll call Europe, that's the trick
and that's a fact, here's my hand.
Stations reel between the trains, still on time.

Jinxes

Infinite jinxes of demonstrable
number strip sense to a t denoting
time or that beast which this possible
world made of anything at all.

Kings

[] in the reign
of [] resign
to [] the regions
[] rejoin.

Lethe

‘The sun-boat crosses Lethe’
but you notice but that every
clause in the dream begins *but*,
but the sun-boat crosses Lethe.

Memory

Dear memory don't wait
don't want but go anywhere
with random access
go back to the bank.

Nowhere

No straighter way souls take flight
 than over Norway, perhaps nowhere
 more narrow than the nerve
 one summons up, one goes down.

Order

Then, Coriolanus, cares
of state in double time caress
the hand that pecking
order fears fears order.

Promise

The bearer's promise will become your demand
just as the self-styled look of the look-alike
identifies the referent repaid and yet tricked
like the end in itself out of time and mind.

Questions

Minds multiplied by questions
simple figures on the carpet
like the towers of bibles or any
books at all events piled up.

Reticence

Virtually the image just behind
the mind's eye something
everything, reticence included,
includes, as if anything does.

Scale

Weighed with care
up and down is the same
way the scale if it strays
like a river stays human.

Tract

A tract of country stretches
out before them
like a treatise beyond human
understanding exhumed.

Umbrella

Oceano segura, but a shade more
or less secure than
ocean, securior umbris, or
England's umbrella.

Voices

For whom no one
but voices in
reserve reverse
order.

Word

The way we see
we never see the way
leading over the edge
of our word is bondage.

Xcursions

Time's days off on the century's off-days
causing more fights & insolent excursions—
here's an isolated unsunny woe-betide estuary
abridged in Heraclitus & by Watts unsung.

Beginning to End

Years

Years of a comparable
moment furnish
seconds then squared in a parable
of light and then finish.

Zeno

As in Zeno it differs
and defers,
subscripts array,
volunteers in a row.

Beginning to End

An apocryphal
Apostrophe
to the
Apothecary
Aphrodite
An apparition
An apotheosis
An athematic
Analogy to
Anything
An A

Be summed up
Be multiplied
But
Better not
Be some-
Body's second-
Best
Besom
Beswept

C saw A & B.
C's not sore
C's certain it's
Curtains for A & B.

Beginning to End

D was a
Delta for angels. Whatever you
Do
Don't
Dither with
D. And whatever you
Do
Don't
Deconstruct.

'Ecstatic in Ecbatan'
was some message
but to send it to
England: a mistake.

Fanfarole meant
Fun for all.
Fair & fervent
Flags unfurl.
Festivaletudinarians:
Farewell.

Gog a
Gruesome
Giant? – For-
Get you said it if you
Get to meet him in a fore-
Gone conclusion. For
Gog is and was a
Great fierce
Giant, as
Giants
Go.

Hwaet!
Silence!

‘I too was
Initially
In Italy.’
(I’s an
Imitator.
I’s all
Inside out.)

Jeopardy’s my game
said the poacher
in pursuit of a parti-
coloured moocher
often seen hereabouts
by any other name
a joke-panther.

K when we last saw him
was in serious trouble.
Kritiks had his number.
He pointed out
the House of Pure Reason
less than a kilometre away.

Lambast
not bombast? Charles
Lamb could tell you. But the
Lambs who lie down with
puns very often become
Loin chops.

Beginning to End

Mark: name:
read: make:
mean: damn:
dark: dank:
Mandrake.

Novel me
No
Novels
Number me
No
Number
None

Ossian invented Macpherson
Only to show that he,
Ossian, was no
Objective correlative
Ordinary ghost.

Petals and leaves differ.
Petals are rarely found
in books whereas leaves
always are. Also
'Petal' endears. 'Leaf'
although a fine old word
does not.

Questions abound. In-
Quisitors nowadays are everywhere
commoner than inkwells.

‘Rosicrucians transplanted
the Rosa Mundi in a
retrograde position
in the King James Version.’
Discuss.

Spirits of the letters
Sprites of the
Spits of
S

Thanks it
takes trash to
detract from
or
Trash it
takes thanks from
to detract

Unlikely
Ukelele
Ululation

Vnexplained absence.

World as
Will?
Would anyone
Wish it?

Xenophanes’
hexameters
vex
lexicons
extremely.

Beginning to End

You think an alphabet tells
You nothing. Is that
Why it runs in
Your head
Year after
Year after
Year? And
Why
You hope it stops at
You? It stops at nothing is
Why it won't stop at even double
You.

Z in rezponse
pullz the plugz.

Entries & Extracts Volume M

Malware, a pest infecting memory from a remote source. See *Marathanatos*.

Mandrake, a vegetable creature of notable remembrance. ‘Mandrakes upon known account have lived near an hundred yeares.’ A poet’s familiar.

Marathanatos, a long-distance messenger who brings bad news (orig. unknown).

Marvel, a charm defined by apparent antithesis. Cf. ‘No marvel it has a sullen condition.’ A poet.

Melampode, Helleborus Niger. A cure for melancholia. Not ‘admitted within the walls of Paradise.’ See *marvel*.

Melancholia, a condition of memory and durable darkness, believed universal; ‘it degenerates into philosophy’ (R.Burton).

Memory, a container, usually containing multiple containers. ‘Urnes have been found in my Memory’ (T.Browne).

Mercury, a messenger. Silvery and slippy: see *mercy*.

Mercy, a quality or vegetable of Paradise. An antidote to malware (*q.v.*).

‘Gutenberg The Movie’: An Alphabetic Treatment

Ahab, Captain, his copy of the Bible, its provenance
Burton, Robert, his *Anatomy* filmed in real time
CCTV cameras, labels found on, such as ABSOLUTE
Drafts, in a room in Strasburg, 1436, abandoned
E, its triplicity in ‘Jezebel’
Features, or feathers, ‘Gutenbird’ requiring erratum
Gentitalia, the first ‘t’ in, southerly migrations of printers
Hanged man, regarded as hanging sign
Inventories, inventories of
Jezebel’s initial, whether muted in ‘Johann’
Kites, mistaken for paper ghosts escaping from bonfire
Laden, in ‘zu Laden’
Mainz, Gutenberg’s absence from, 1430
Night, its synonyms
O, considered the first letter in ‘Johann’
Profanity, unfortunate effect of Gutenberg’s invention
Q, as in ‘white’, whether proper to ‘question’
Repetition, of ‘in’, in writing, its abuse in chiasmus
Screw, described as ‘peculiar appliance’, its use in a press
Trade, printing, species of coining and mirror-manufacture
U, its questionable presence in ‘Aldus’
V, its proper appearance in ‘Aldvs’
Whisky, a small fly drowning in, as symbol for misprint
X, its purport, whether warrant for ‘Rex & Lex’
Y, its use in ‘type’ but absence in ‘artificial writing’
Zu Laden, in Henne Gänsfleisch zur Laden, zu Gutenberg

In Memory of R. Buckminster Fuller

MAY BE SEEN DELAY
EVENLY EFFECTED
GEOMETRICALLY
ACHIEVED
EYE ADJACENT
CAVE ELEMENTAL
OH PEAK YOU ARE
ESTEEMED YOU VEER
DOUBLE YOU EXALT
WISE EDIFICE

Beginning to End

Less than
half a bet

when a busy
de-effulgence

of hill-snow
they wish on

holds up
nightfall.

Lost Works of a Logoclast: A Short-Title Catalogue

Anonymity of Orpheus, The
Apostasyntheosis
Bastards, Fish-backs & Three-bellied Squares
Commentary on Chapter XXVIII of Blake's 'Jerusalem', A
Cosmos Gratis, A
Crucifix for Catfish, A
Democritus on Cacophony & Euphony: 'The Sacred Writings of Babylon'
Translated
Derived Obelisks: A Basilisk Bereaved
Dialogue of Daedalus and the Dandelion, The
Dizzards and their Glassification: Studies of Robert Burton & Sir Thomas Browne
Emblem Poems for Useful Divination
'Facetus Me Fecit' and 'A Pom-Pom for Pomposity': The Cambridge Debates
Failure Re-erased: A Study of Postmodern Intention
Forgotten Art of Simonides Melicus, The
Griffins at the Goldmine, or Epicurus' Garden Replanted
Hats Off to the Clones: Contemporary Poetry in Retrospect
Hone's History of Parody edited from the MS
H, Q & Z: The Fallacy of Empty Letters Reconsidered
Hyperlinks and Railways: A Commentary on the 'Parmenides' of Plato
In Praise of the Ellipsis
Internal Motives & Ulterior Ideas: Wittgenstein Answered
Intimacerations
Marvell's Essays on the Neoplatonics: A Study
Melancholy of Merleau-Ponty, The
Menastor's Messages Transmitted in the Works of John Dee
Merrygreek, A Companion
Misleading Accounts of Walsingham's World Wide Web
Moabination of Abom, The
Morticians & Their Mortification: The Imaginary Conversations of Lucian, Landor
& Beddoes

Beginning to End

Mouldiwarp Nitebook
Mustard and Nashe
Mysterium Coniunctionis in the Work of Thomas Swan, The
Negative Pockets
New Edition of Rawthey's Madrigalls & Ayres, A
Newts, Nymphs & Other Essays on a Private Pond
Noble Ideals and Ideal Notions: The Intention of Postmodern Erasure
On Meteors & Ordinary Weather
Opacity's Capacity
Osoph, or The Middle Ground of Philosophy
Paper and its Prospects: an Ill-Advised Digression
Poussin's Passion, or The Poison Trees of Arcadia: The Fate of the Counterfactual
Significant Tantrums
Specimen of a History of Anticyra
Superb Caterpillars
Sylvam Furiae: An Answer to Sir Thomas More
Thomas Rowley: A Biography
Tobacco's Answer, or A Defense of Poetry
Whiffling Vexations: Walter Shandy's Life of Socrates

Malcom Lowry:
An Uncollected Poem

Blindage
blind alley
blinder
blind fish
blindman's buff
blind staggers
blind story

Blind tiger!

Blindworm
blinkard
bliss
blithesome
blister beetle
B. Litt
blizzard

Thanks a million
for the dictionary

Others were not so lucky as we
getting through latter
I mean the blizzard
as you probably read

Am back at work
& grateful
to have left
Paris well astern

Notes from the Scriptorium

¶ Never arbitrate with alphabets or easily attribute.
If the chimp could only write she could talk.

¶ As well spawn danger as destroy known script
remarked Aeneas. May all your phoenicians be phonemes
and your photoglyphs have faces you can name.
His Troy as was but read 'wars' and what will be.

¶ Anagram spectre as amalgam scripture.
If the alphabet could talk. What odd bull to begin with
but often it has charms to represent.

¶ As for empire the fanatical claimed status
but financial formed states. Some mutes made semi-vows.
Things are such that invisible ink isn't needed.

¶ Devil point his voice trap stop. In one alphabet
the vowels had been replaced by windows
tourists could look through and hear it sing.
Did you see the giant dragonfly in there
and the minuscule horse? The golem?
And that snake of an acrostic? How easy
to forget that the singing is a slave-song.

¶ Hacks and cuts of business hands.
I too wonder if I'd read better backwards.
It's not because the chimp can't write
that she's violent as we are.

¶ One idea descended like a desolate rune
depicts further fissures
continuing from and expanding.
Proper reports of proper sounds.
If you can make an anagram of Cosmos I'll kiss you.
Twist & Exist are such constant weary words.

¶ Exhausted numbers as atoms in a net.
This emptyhead's ideas are in his mouth
quipping quibbles about natural forms
and irresistible shapes of some meaning
as if there were a god of names
still busy deciding names of gods.

¶ And so they hiss. They say
origin's our prop. Our common comic.
I say to you and your double
others destroy one without use.

Poet's Poem

A bee and
the sirens
and so on
say the sea

is about
to be calm
collected
and respelt

i.m.
SM
2006

Register of Gargoyles

Bimbatgo
Concevhu
Dupdiwja
Faqfoxke
Heshuzmi
Jitjabmo
Kovkecpu
Luwlidqa
Maxmofre
Neynugsi
Pizpahto
Qobqejvu
Rucrikwa
Sadsolxe
Teftumyi
Vigvanzo
Wohwepbu
Xujxiqca
Yakyorde
Zelzusfi

Robin Hood's Alphabet: A Play for 2 Voices

1V: His acre. His alley.
2V: His arbour.
1V: His ball, his ballads, his barn and barrow.
2V: His bay.
1V: His bed.
2V: His bog, his bow, his bower and bridge.
1V: His but and his buttes and his butts.
2V: His cap.
1V: His castle.
2V: His cave.
1V: His chair and his chase.
2V: His close.
1V: His cottage and court.
2V: His croft and his cross.
1V: His delight.
2V: His end.
1V: His farm, his field and his fishing.
2V: His games.
1V: His garlands.
2V: His gate.
1V: His grave.
2V: His hills, his house and his howl.
1V: His inn.
2V: His island.
1V: His lakes and lane.
2V: His larder and leap.
1V: His meadow, his mile and his moss.
2V: His park.
1V: His penny stone.
2V: Pennyworths.
1V: Picking rods.
2V: Pot.
1V: His ring and his road.
2V: His rock and his row.

Beginning to End

1V: His shaw and his spring.
2V: His stable.
1V: His stone and stoop.
2V: His stream and stride.
1V: His table.
2V: His tales.
1V: His terrace.
2V: His tower.
1V: His valour.
2V: His walk, his way and his well.
1V: His whetstone.
2V: His wind.
1V: His wood.

Towards an Index of Shelley's Death

A being within our being
A boat
A boat of rare device
A boat with swift sails winging
A dome of many-coloured glass
Airborn shapes
A lead-coloured fog
Along the dark and ruffled waters
A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly
A meteor of light
Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild, wreathed in the silver mist
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air
An isle of lovely grief
An universal sound like words
A peculiar glistening brilliance
As a serpent's path light air erases
As a storm is poured from jagged clouds
A sea reflecting love
A sea which wrath
A shoreless sea
As many-coloured as the snake that girds eternity
A soul within our soul
A spirit of a dark and formless nature
A Spirit seemed to stand beside him
As [the] lightning [the] a vapour
As the memory of a dream
As thunder mingled with clear echoes
A tempest winged [boat] ship
A thousand unimagined shapes
A voice to be accomplished
A vulture and snake outspent
Awful Loveliness
Awful shadow of some unseen Power

Beginning to End

Bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind
Beautiful as a wreck of paradise
Beyond the glassy gulfs
Beyond the [sunny] gleaming [isles]
Borne beside thee by a power
Borne darkly, fearfully afar
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea
Borne the summer night through isles forever calm
But to the Snake these accents sweet were known

Calm as a shade, the boat
Came shadows, & the countenances waned
Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Changed by wondrous sympathy
Closing round his vessel's track
Clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain
Clouds whose drops make sacrifice of sanguine fire
Coiled in rest in her embrace
Cradled in tempests
Curved prow of thin moonstone
Curved shell

Death and his brother
Death is the veil
Death's dedicated bride
Dense shadows of himself which
Descends to pierce awaken enlighten
Describes a circle
[Dimmed] by that it shd. [disperse]
Dissolved into a mist of fire
Doomed to pursue those waves
Drink the liquid light out of her eyes

Echoes of the human world
Embark and meet lone Death
Empty mist
Enveloped and disguised
Envious shadow

Beginning to End

Ere [thus death]
Ever-spreading sound

Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic
[False sea which smiles but] false waters
Far before her flew the tempest
Far from the shore
Fell shadowy masks
Fierce fiend of a distempered dream
Fiery shadow of his gilt prow within the sapphire water
Fire for which all thirst
Fire which is not brightness
Fled back like eagles
Floating through the air
Flow [in] & [fade] mingle with the livid [air] sky
Folded within their own eternity
For they foreknew the storm
Fragments of sea-music
From all the blasts of heaven
From that chasm of light
From that ghastly bark I leaned
From the fire-isles came

Gazing on its own exceeding light
Glide in fire
Gliding waves & shadows dun
Glode fast o'er a pellucid plain of waters
Great Daemon

Half-created shadow
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst
Heaven-reflecting sea
Heavens [blue] [Abyss] Abyss
He came where that bright child of sea did swim
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild, to a dire Snake

I am but as the shade of her
I dreaded not the tempest

Beginning to End

I float down
Imageless
Intertranspicuous
Into a sea profound
Invulnerable nothings
I saw that lovely shape
It floats along the spray of the salt sea
It interpenetrates
Its collected lightning
[Its] eyes [are like] Two Heavens of [azure] liquid darkness
Its sightless pilot's crest
Its stormy reflux pauses
It transmutes all that it touches
It was like thee, dear love

Lamia[e], elementary powers the Angels faries, ghosts, d[ae]mons
Light us to the isles of the evening land
Like a chaos of stars
Like a charmed bark
Like [a dew mist] [grey death] the lightning asleep
Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
Like a snake coiled in [slumber] dreams
Like echoes through long caverns
Like floating Edens
Like Maenads
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream
Like serpents interlaced
Like tears, they were a veil
Like the polar paradise
Like two dark serpents tangled
Like [wind-] light-vanquished [vapours] shadows
Lost in the white blaze
Love, all love
Love rules
Love scooped this boat
Lulled by the coil

Beginning to End

Made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air
Massed in death
Mazy sounds
Mirrors of the gigantic shadows
Most beautiful of pilots
My dreams were fire
My hell of storms
My spirit's bark is driven
My words are drowned

Now [dimly] seen [thro' tempests] athwart

Ocean-like enchantment of strong sound
Of sullen lead
One oblivious melody
On the sun's slant path
On unerasing waves
Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended between two heavens
Out of that Ocean's wrecks
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea

Perpetual[ly] Orphic song
Pilot lightning
Pilot of the Fate
Polymorphian I
Powers of nameless worlds
Purple spirit of [a] light [that]

Realms where the air we breathe is love

[Sails] rushes
Sea-snake
Seas of [flame] which [breaking] [from] [which] [there] [came]
Seen [through that] more distinctly thro that [from the] mist
Self-created shadow
Serpent lightnings
Shadow of beauty unbeheld
Shape all light
Shifted domes of sheeted spray

Small serpent eyes
Snaky black lines
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
Sped on the charmèd winds
Spirit-wingèd boat
Sunbows starboard
Swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion

Tempering the cold and radiant air
That band of sister-spirits
That planet-crested Shape
That strange boat like the moon's shade
That thinnest boat
The boat of my desire
The chasm of an insufficient void
The golden boats
The heart-fire
The intense inane
The interpenetration of a diviner nature
The killing sun
The object of another's fear
There seemed a being within me
[There] Where these Depths are unveiled
[The serpent spell coiled] for thee alone
The serpent that would clasp her with his length
These strange shadows after brief space
The shadow of white death
The snake did seem to see in dream
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath
The Snake then met his mortal foe
The thickest billows of that living storm
The wandering voices and the shadows
The wingless boat
The wreck of his own will
They interpenetrate
They outspeeded the blast
Thine old wild songs
This soul out of my soul
Thro the fast falling rain & high wrought sea

Through the inmost veil of Heaven
Through the white ridges of the chafèd sea
Thunder-baffled
Thunder-psalm
Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes
Till it becomes a wingèd mist
Till it came to the cloud
To an ocean of splendour and harmony
Touched the World with living flame
Trembles and burns

Under the all-covering water
[Unf] immeasurable fire
Unimaginable shapes
[Until] Till the [voiceless] void wind

Veil by veil
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath
[?Vield]
Visions how unlike his own

Wave ruining on wave
Waves hiss
Waves which dare not overwhelm
Wells of unfathomed fire
Wherein man his nature sees
Where never mortal pinnacle glided
Whirlwind and waves upthrown
White light scattered
[Wild] blind pilot-spirit
Will [send] [wake] loose the serpent coiled
Wingèd clouds soar here and there
Wingless footsteps trample the sea
Within the gloom of their own shadow
[Worse] More dread than [the] his visions were

Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake
You said that spirits spoke



Beginning to End

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The Text of Shelley's Death (Five Seasons, 1995, West House, 2001)

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Fit to Print (with Karen Mac Cormack, Coach House, 1998)

Days of '49 (with Gavin Selerie, West House, 1999)

Wittgenstein's Devil (Stride, 2000, 2002)

Ahadada Reader 1 (with John Byrum & Geraldine Monk, Ahadada, 2004)

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The Paul Klee & Buckminster Fuller pieces were issued as Poetry Bookshop postcards in the 1980s. The Klee was reprinted in a silkscreen edition by Curvd H&Z in 1987.

Beginning to End

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