

WRITING
WEST

MUSIC

at the

HEART

of

THINKING

FRED
WAH

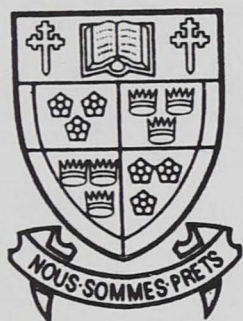
MUSIC *at the* HEART *of* THINKING

The music of thinking. The thinking of music. A poetry devised within the music at the heart of thinking. From jazz, the unpredictable *ad lib* of the attack. From a drunken Shao Lin monk, the poem as imbalanced tai chi. From Keats' negative capability, the half-closed eye, the estrangement of language. All intended to bump "what is" into focus. As a response to contemporary texts and ideas, *Music at the Heart of Thinking* relocates critical language and thinking to the poetic bavardage at the heart of such endeavors. These improvizations deal clearly with the mean "ing" normally marginalized in the illusion that one "makes" sense.





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**RED DEER
COLLEGE PRESS**

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ISBN 0-88995-030-X

The Publishers

Red Deer College Press
56 Ave. & 32 St., Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta, Canada T4N 5H5

Credits

Design: Robert MacDonald, Dreadnaught/Media Clones
Typesetting: Boldface Technologies Inc.
Printing: Hignell Printing Ltd.
Author photo: Ian Patterson

Acknowledgements

*Open Letter, Line, Cross Canada Writers' Quarterly, Brick,
Poetry Canada Review, Peter Quartermain.*

The publishers gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution of the Alberta Foundation for the Literary Arts, Alberta Culture, the Canada Council, and Red Deer College.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Wah, Fred, 1939-
Music at the heart of thinking

(Writing West Series.)
Poems.

ISBN 0-88995-030-X
I. Title. II. Series

PS8545.A5M8 1987 C811'.54 C87-091232-1
PR9199.3.W35M8 1987

For Jack Clarke
and Peter Huse,
thinking musicians



PREFACE

The notion underlying *Music at the Heart of Thinking* comes from a Chinese movie I saw in Japan several years ago. It was a martial arts film about the Shao Lin monks in China. One of the monks would practice his tai chi while drunk so he could learn how to be imbalanced in the execution of his moves without falling over. In real battle his opponents were confused by his unpredictability. I've tried to use the same method in these pieces, *sans* booze of course. This method of composition is the practice of negative capability and estrangement I've recognized for many years, through playing jazz trumpet, looking at art, and writing poetry. I've tried to use it here in a series of improvisations on translations of and critical writing about contemporary texts and ideas.

I include with this preface the notes to two of the sets as they've been published elsewhere. *Music at the Heart of Thinking* 1-10 was written for and published in an issue of *Open Letter* (Spring 1984, Fifth Series, No.7) on notation. *MHT* 21-30 was written for and published in a festschrift for bpNichol (*Open Letter*, Sixth Series, Nos. 5-6: Summer-Fall 1986). *MHT* 40-49 was written for and published in a special edition of one copy of a collection of writings for Warren Tallman (collected and published by Peter Quartermain, Fall 1986). *MHT* 50-59, a series of meditations on bpNichol's *Martyrology* books five and six, was written for a special issue of *Line*. Other pieces in *MHT* 1-69 are responses to texts by Steve Rodefer, Gerry Hill, Michel Gay, George Bowering, Robert Kroetsch, Lionel Kearns, Nicole Brossard, Frank Davey, Dave McFadden, Steve McCaffery, Roy Kiyooka, and Phyllis Webb.

NOTES

1-10

The following "drunk" writings are notes for talk. In the explication of these estranged pieces lies possible coherences for some sense of writing as a notation for thinking as feeling. The difficulty is literal and intentional. I'm wary of any attempt to make it easy –

"language (the true practice of thought)" Kristeva says or Jack writing yesterday with reminders all through his letter, mind stumbling over itself not recognizing stuff 'til later,

That last part of your letter makes me remember Wittgenstein's saying "don't think, look." And if the "dogmatic order" is only in the para-text of perception, then...the syntax of thinking in its (linguistic) periodicity is always going to elide that bump or 'nipple' Juan de la Cosa's eyes included (but you'd have this already from Henry Lee and Benjamin L.).

And then the gates open to the "double," the binary. Emic. Dialogic.

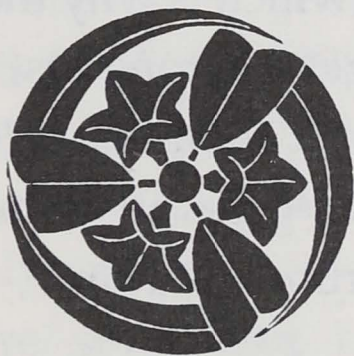
1. At any point at least "two" are possible, many are probable.
2. The "eme" is an irreducible (chemical?) constituent in language and the world governing prehension. Available at every point.
3. Proprioception and Desire. Organic/Semiotic. Dialogue/Biologue.
4. Stress, pitch, and juncture, but particularly juncture shapes the voice of the body so that some of the text can be seen as felt.
5. Notation as jig, pattern, clef, signature, name, etc.
6. The space, *l'espace*.

21-30

This series of *MHT* is written in the development of a critical poetic that sees language as the true practice of thought. Here, in homage to bpNichol's own work in enlarging the field of perception in such poetics, I have used his early text, *Journeying and the returns*, as a writing to stumble over and with because that is the one that started for me, before the *Martyrologies* and everything else, the word-wobble so central to the axis of our ongoing dialogue.

1

DON'T THINK THINKING WITHOUT HEART NO SUCH separation within the acting body takes a step without all of it the self propelled into doing the thing (say, for example, the horse) and on the earth as well picking up the whole circuit feet first feel the waves tidal and even outside to moon and sun it's okay to notate only one of those things without knowing fixed anyway some heart sits in the arms of



2

PREACT THE MIND AHEAD OF THE WRITING BUT STOP TO
think notation of the mind ahead of the writing
pretell the "hunt" message doesn't run like the
wind simile makes it the belief of the wild
imagination or trees or animals too to preface up
the head ahead but notice the body as a drum-
mer preacts the hands to do to do insistent so it
can come out tah dah at every point simply the
mind at work won't do or the body minding
itself thinking (which is why the drum's cedar)
get it right or get it wrong just strike from the
body falling back thoughts felt behind to the
notes sometimes gives it shape or thought as
body too my drum tah dum



3

WAIT FOR THE MIND TO STOP FOR THE WRITING TO GO ahead into the rush for the hand to hold the head's waiting (or keep the motor running) in place of an image caught movement of the world art at a standstill picture I thought to write to move could be a movement of the movement Fenellosa naturally more music in the body heaves the mind to work inside the body syntax synapse to jump the spot or specific junction shipped into the text with the mind caught thinking earth earthing world world music a sign aptic rhythm of body convulsion call it proprioception consciousness or call it desire but only override the "eme" with something there something factual the ing always inging for instance like S. said of the grapheme saying it into the page living and longing keeps (the baseball in there somewhere) invisible visible

4

TO TAKE APART THE TREE BARK BY BARK AND BURN IT UP
top to keep the skin spread open to the air that
moves through the world-tree message seems
unnoticeable capable to the area over which
limbs cover all those upright configurations for
the connection between branches and roots
likewise any surface to depth genetics provides
unmentionable because invisible soundings
taken quickly re the mouthings of the trembling
body another language like French might place
elsewhere simple as tongue there is after all the
reaching for the water, reaching for the sun



5

PUT THERE TO INDICATE NOTHING NECESSARILY BUT ITS own possible dimensions from everywhere else that it simply participate in the flow fish as vector of some platonic creek homing in on the spawn of itself or "emeness" probably of the world to hold all writing actually in motion witnessable to both river and salmon one can't know the individual ocean's accumulation to ward off the trace or the limiting container of the "universe" could change at a touch the guideline-point or hologrammar effect what'd he say not just dual but "four steps: negative/positive (forward) & negative/positive (backward), or no-yes/no-yes" not as a grid not as a plan but at every single point a part of the whole picture to the very piece of gravel originally probably what we believe, the water, the egg



6

SENTENCE THE TRUE MORPHOLOGY OR SHAPE OF THE mind including a complete thought forever little ridges little rhythms scoping out the total picture as a kind of automatic designing device or checklist anyone I've found in true thought goes for all solution to the end concatenates every component within the lines within the picture as a cry to represent going to it with the definite fascination of a game where the number of possibilities increases progressively with each additional bump Plato thought



7

REPETITION BY NATURE DESIRE AND NEED BECOMES A relief or by jargon animals again and again feeding themselves in the substrate forest once or a number of times naturally nonrecurrent figure it out stone outlives the message preserve and disseminate the single solely by the light and shade hemisphere disappearance of the material self simply in order to understand or learn since the "sieve" or "collander" is only rational some Chinese invention in art usually a beam technique simultaneously foraging with the mule in the sunlight for more than once you need a copying device undreamed- of switching waits there for the food



PREVENTION OF THE FEELING OUT BY PREVIOUS SETS "I" gets enclosed again except by stealth to find the point where Harrison says dromenon pre-tells the story story being dangerously easy to repeat (all the time) but "L" or "P" like Nicole in her book or even the bible are new once just about accidental why stumbling is not taught in the court everyone else believes in animals too to fake it that writing just like Shao Lin under the moon the drunk dance

ostranenie via K., K., and Chklovski making strange eyes half closed negative capability defamiliar estranged and abstract cover trade, nothing for another otherwise imposed logic but watch it if you think there is an edge until swimming like climbing maybe the drunkenness of a foreign dance or sentence saying this

MEMORY BEHIND THE FINGERS TOO REMEMBER THE
stove's hot thus numbers right the surplus
substance coded as braille at the tips still a stage
further than the mind the dot there but taken in
the rush forward literally as revibration spelling
sticks in our craw alphabet is all an act but not
the one behind memory of the cipher formula if
you've never ridden a horse grammar is there
for that if you forget hold on



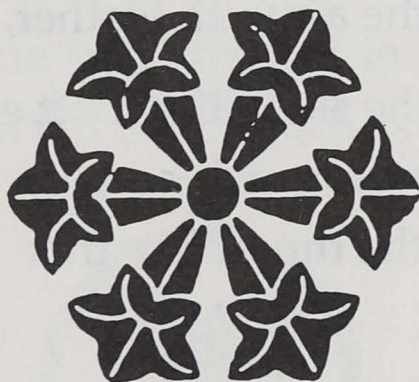
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NOW I GET TO HEAR THE LANGUAGE RATHER THAN
only see it in French over my head fingers want
to touch the sight of the letter oral tactile
fragment hunger in another language the wolf's
ear to make it up before it happens to hear it
somewhere inside my body before the lips
touch the mouthpiece or fingertip valves as soft
as silk intelligence like that gets carried in the
language by itself the cow simply eats the
whole field I have to practice to get it right and
blow away anyway



11

ONGOING DIALOGUE IN BETWEEN SURFACES AND FIELDS
middle-voice dipolar action done for the one
self speaking within or to the skin via rhythm
image knowing sheet music as in Japanese
counted morphologically like an idea and then
used Marx (Mars) for currency movement to the
instrument or bicameral tumblers sparked
shockwave blip simple breathing of the
magnetic dip



=====ANOTHER MHT=====

once thinking as feeling thought
then becomes simple and there
crows fly in no pattern
through the fir and spruce, already
system takes over voice
today was beautiful, clear, crisp, the trees
expect nothing if not imprint or pre-print
time so surrounds all
the birds' caw's last name
goes through the air with feather, snow
to not know "the silent life" soft earth, guttural
what I mean is the quick body
as it comes to the throat like that

12

DON'T REALLY WRITE JUST WORK WITH IT AFTER IT arrives Joanne Gerber says total she and my bodies in Candida alert across the prairies with practice hit my world and stomach look for the speaking language speaking another language as in the music driven body horn hopes to push minding my own what I need is a piece of wire or a Japanese word to make yummy thinking keep up with the electricity but voice of voices American watches out for such a line Site "C" maybe Caroline will string it in "Keeping the Peace" or what if it was French as in Qu'Appelle



13

I WISH FOR THE OSPREY NEST GETTING THIS JUST LIKE A letter to Gerry I could have it habited on this hilltop wheatfield plateau me like a boat going off in three directions with the wind minding the bike both with and against it and the swirling summer dust and chaff devils in Swift Current like water in a gopher hole lacrosse is like that as a kind of medicine I mean game just sleeplessness laying low in the heartland very few numbers to work with here yet I like the diving craze Sally got by asking a question writ silence back into the flat whoosh and rumble I can't sleep under coming at me over the whole northern stretch to the ice cap when I did tai chi this morning a squirrel fell asleep watching me in the pine limb above my head take that and push it into the buttock and shoulder there is no elegy here things'll have to be different if the bird and kinetic glacier know anything 'bout what they're up to I hope

14

TRY ALL THE OBJECTS/PEOPLE EXCEPT SPEED THE/MY
mind or morning which will merely lock into
the heart for editing train after train so I don't
think knowing will tell you rock along the beach
meaning is everything just like muffins are
sweet especially sweet with berries except
sighing does just what you want/need how
sharpen those oriental exercises or match the
pebble eating its world even the river in this case
lake gets it as thought skipped over the surface
numbers and then sunk but there's the arm
sinking too simply from habit that's perfect
clarity things around us plus persons and places
Vancouver maybe a little Italian lunacy shades
of Prague watch Rodefer carefully essaying
how symbol clouds the sky yet signs the size of
sandwiches or grannodiorite rocks we dive
from pool into those same canyons migration of
the soul i.e. Ocean and maps of trailing training
currents currants

15

O NO! SUNLIGHT SUDDENLY ON THE PATIO STEPS AND
I'm in a Kyoto temple persistence of the spirit
sometimes turns root words without mathe-
matics and without visible profile the true face
of a two-faced man le vrai visage etcetera I catch
myself for example in place and the moment
shines maybe a little like "scrub lake" queued
for the printout along the shore everyone is
busy in their summer palaces it's hot and dry in
the hills I write this to you in the Shanghai
dialect Mori-san your eyes answer me with the
word for sunlight please



16

otherwise;
right now it's confusing.

small words
small months
anouncements, abandonments
and tribulations; or tell me.

raptures now risks, secrets
parts –
nervous falcons.

shy shit;
materials, circumstances,
and that's for sure.

and that's what I miss.

an abolition of another longing.

sea liquid is endomorphic red
ochre imprint for our self
it intervenes as a shadow on this planet
the skin and the wall, all these reappearances
all these others, and then birth with a life
like one of your long novels
jellyfish evaporated, fell back
the urgent life was full of opacity
my old felt hat got wet and muggy
(fingers licked)
I still admire the electric ethnic revolution of
the 60s
the temperature of the radiator
exceeds the circles of heat
remember when the eyes would speak
the whole soul
the person ignoring eternity
with the clear gaze that haloes knowing

18

kill is almost a forgotten emotion

sacked

the tropistic car that poses the world

entombment in the nerves

needled

example: seismic surface figures

fissures in the wall (just the hand, writing)

or a total traverse – enroute

or just to die in the bush

that motif (fate comes to see)



fine art an idea list
intelligible for a language
an idiot doesn't have his own taste
a sex idea, considering the coma
the bonding reflection at heart
a deep need
of the intelligence to render one
perfect and rundown
sun no more comes silently,
naive, and tender



20

a thousand spits

brittled slantingly

but the offal

a death machine

of some kind

(paris sea the way out—————>)

RETURNING & THE JOURNEYS TIME WAFTED OLSON'S
 notes prairie barnyard grain elevator siding
 mentality that hawk circling within the head
 windows with a bead on eyes (intense eyes) or
 fluid ears let's say cities mapped too overlay
 keyed lock in his own handwriting samsara
 liturgy (I like the light!) you see saying it too near
 the sea you know what I can't get over is the
 synaptic speed of now you don't see it now you
 do make it up and it's not made up all the bodies
 all the fire all the love all in these motions.



ALWAYS THINK THINKING INSIDE MYSELF NO PLACE
without death Kwakiutl song sings or watch sit
scramble and catch last blue Pacific horizon no
end to the complete thought transference of
which the words "circling eyes" Mao knew this
is the life writing questions even every rock
etched in wonder sometimes that song feels like
the master paradigm or river we return to with
a sigh the archipelago syntagmed "empty from
breathing" but the body as a place that is as a
container has suddenness so the politics of
dancing is a dead giveaway to the poet's
"nothing will have taken place but the place."



POINT WITH A STICK BETTER STILL A CHARRED ONE
 that's it slots or bumps to catch your foot or
 your breath forked branches everywhere when
 we need them a la slingshots in the gulley
 transphrastic symmetry sticks to the point I
 keep running into this "soft pad of (the) feet" not
 as Mallarme would say of the hero (la) talon nu
 or it could be Bakhtin's jivey beak (de la Cosa's
 eyes included) the prehended world Ah! your
 "print still visible drifting out to sea" dialogue
 on the contrary the same but trees bucked and
 split or shadows even that's what style is.



THE WORD "ANCIENT" IN YOUR FIRE FRAGMENTS IN histology filtered sememes with names deliver the mythology probably before or first map brain-word always the flower of creation black sun chrysanthemum at dawn on June 6 1944 such "dragging the eyes" to the "eye of the dragon" is no different from the notion of war as another temporal relationship seeded I keep finding the tree from the sky Yggdrasil "always, beautiful tree" and the pleistocene cave cups east European changed carriers hence the schema leaves all over the ground and then it snows.



WALL OF THE MIND OCEAN CONTINENTAL TRANCES
 inchoate rampart wet cedarbark wickerwork
 avec traces whose primary spatial finger "wants
 to live there" counterbalanced and I spot you in
 the window with your lawless plan your récit
 strapped with ta'wil and bridge city too the
 gentle sea appears out of the table forever
 "waves breaking" the proto-indo-european
 hedge in the Vancouver rain footsure in the
 couloir mountains this is where the wall ends.



YOUR OWN ANTHROPOLOGY JUMPS LIKE A BEAR FROM the apple tree tonight her "breasts glistening"? no foreign words there except maybe love which I got after Earth as hunger "tasting flesh in mouth" her depth anima logical triple register reach for an imprint split between sight and thought colour can do so it's eth as in ethic means why any one returns plus confluence plus edges of a genetic inscription or homes another forgotten message carried there where the character sticks and also the mother when Daphne insists on the conscious I feel caught outside the tripartite knowledge the red of the apple.



"ONE NARROW WORLD" IN FRENCH IS WHY SIGNS IN language carry the secret imitation Kristeva points to in the hidden interior polemic here the "other" passes poetry as magic to bury, chill, and fill our faces, hearts, and bodies the feelings I have stand with Polo's journeying if a Pacific Rim could be imaged up the liturgical sea and bells would have shown the Khan some other Italian Cavalcanti or Calvino the room of despair the sudden confusion runic grabbing of the right hand to fill the left as you say "that might be anywhere" that's what I think that flow is.



SALT FOR THE TONGUE'S HEART HEARTENING DESIRE
 paradoxical cold and hot Canadian presence/
 absence mime's right action right mind et al
 simple terms a vision Avison teaches frames
 leaks hollows and flows in '63 she and Olson
 walked out to the cliffs at Point Grey
 oceanward falling west to "placeless place" he
 says she did not walk out if you see his West 6
 but I remember the day and it wasn't evening it
 was afternoon he says for him the most impor-
 tant conversation and event was this Pacific
 continental wedge "that marge of the few feet
 make the difference between the West, and the
 Future" magnet in the word finds this salt
 exciting if there was no wall there wouldn't be
 the heat not just "Is" and "is not" come clear as
 she says but how much "in the tongue's
 prison" of the dream this overlaps "the rest is
 history."

STRIP IT CLEAN THE OLD SCRUB LOGOGRAPHY GESTURE
 for the body to denote ideas as in the mythologem "in the middle of wreckage" bare our selves
 for me it was marriage I fix my life up each event
 is as hard to believe whole winters on this
 hillside face west (actually a bit south) to denote
 not thought or experience but synonymously
 such painted over natural wood impossible
 Chinese Sam Perry helped to get the walls and
 ceilings painted over everything it is still a cave
 from where we dare to venture or love the word
 for ocean doesn't stand for such a notion there
 are always these planks over the windows and
 these re-built connections as names "upon our
 breath."



BOOMERANG THE TRUTH IN HOW TO READ A MAP OR don't pay attention to the terrain those signs that became questions for the city the complicated tracks remain "a view of histories" incredibly difficult shapes and languages but proportion gets it together and south of here tomatoes still ripen that story the mind traces feathers your hawk for example in motion "counterbalanced by a movement a way back" look at them they are not birds we still think they're stars or headless moons that pictogram of "a closed universe" the circle a story sometimes you tell yourself as Saussure says "covered with patches cut from its own cloth" or that big boulder in the middle of it "has an etching / a face" journeying and the returns he called it cute.



TALKING HE SAID LIKE A FOREIGNER WOULD GET YOU snake-eyed commentary or a tongue for booze in fact understand cowboys and indians as the ones to immolate because that's supposed to be childish sensoryness thinking on the horse or bicycle mind's eye world is forever you know really still carving the bows and arrows out of vine maple in the gulley it's all running shoes out of the mouth whip stock for slather and the whole earth "noping" some image of themselves one lifetime so Kiyooka says to Bowering twinkle.

(TIGHT WORLD, TIGHT LIFE. STREET.
CREEK. BARETT BOYS' APPLE FIGHTS
BALL GLOVES WARM FROM SUN.)



PATCHY COUNTRY FOR A MIND SLIPPED WITH WILLOW
whadaya grow north of orchard country – dry,
boy, real dry – underneath thoughtlessness how
history lingers as the blue sky above Okanagan
Lake on August afternoons below eyelids
drooped future furniture actually stand above
the farms and ridges of the Nicola valley ever
said he expresses “hope” but the cool groto of
question-asking almost infirmity of the day,
maybe money, I can’t forget, no I can’t sever
rather dissect event not sloppy vision (or even
sleepy) shine to squint at the intersection.

(MEMORY AND THE DREAM
HALF CLOSED UNDER A NOON SUN
DRIVING WEST AT DUSK)



INDIANAPOLIS'S EUROPEAN HISTORY IS WHAT YOU SEE in such gold light if you look elsewhere place has always played "country" and even this dude bought Johnny's apple story and John A.'s fish. Same west, he thought, and that did the implant for the journalist's tactile talk stories across the country and into the side-streets actually always on the edges of the town are traces of the place prior to the white man as well as underneath remembering water flows but that's downtown kitty-corner from.

(THE SCAR OF MY EYES
POLITICS AND RELIGION
NO APPLE TREES YET)



This synchronous surface of the page
 (room of the city
 the modernists still call it a building)
 numbers and letter
 names to which the human forms true
 poetry visible
 morphology occupied by thought
 but still within the territory, all
 and in the soil too, in
 the soil, in the dirt, it grows.



NO, THE WORDS SEEP INTO A WATER TABLE THAT connotes only thirst and hydro, which is maybe why I'm uncomfortable with the repetitive sedimentary taste-crossed politicians from the movies and romance, at least if my life driving up the lake, has something to do with it. Dissected lines like that trapped in I want the image of warm wet snail shells vortical in the gravel under three feet of snow the seasonality quivers too empathy with the hillside's membrane bleeding spring's frozen wounded surfacing. Blind water, hidden mothers.



36

I don't understand brute body and the institutions.

To exercise my faculty of synthesis, care for the new procedure w/ precision.

I wait for you and wait outside this occurrence of discourse.

The other authority here is the dailyness.

Certain people and others with names from the sea.

Alternate routes on the continent traverse the horizon.

Advance the impression there is an avalanche ahead.

Release all the other lakes, the glacier is no great illusion.

There are three dimensions that the body appropriates.

One memory of the search for the perfect formula.

Another voyage (the sky is like a fiery rose).

Observe you are not so obscure, but think of Italian.

In her who is saved other than a lady of
 rumour
 confounding confidence of a man
 also a woman poor other than in the mind
 mobility for a conception in language
 the garment which exposes entire mental, la.



IN THE DREAM THE BEAR COULD BE IN THE BUSH BESIDE the path and you wouldn't see him just the key and the tin cup down where the log crosses the creek heart-shaped moss at the intersection of the eternal event or when you get to the wall will the bear still be with you just as she saw it and I see it too such trauma and trembling you're right is what makes the nation Cabot Champlain Moodie Winnipeg but what I want to know is what on this moonless night were you hollering and was there even a path?



Fallacy she concocts with naming
 whatever is the most delicious
 (chocolate) moveable is
 attentive to the other three letters
 (I know, what three?)
 small in relief, she waits for feeling
 sees into the sun
 Papillon (the movie)
 and all the German rain which awaits it.



HE SAYS TATTERDEMALION REALITY AND ME I'M
thinking body for the ragged things now in the
air all over the earth not just America but
definitely earth with roots dangling.

He has 'red' all over him but he doesn't care
even when he dances on the stairs.

Lines like wire antennae, like history, stones
with secrets, stones with dirt that clings.

Line-breath, points-blood, tooth-strong,
hearted-light, bird-early, headed-red, secret-
god, music-mouth, felt-heart, life-of-breath,
precious.

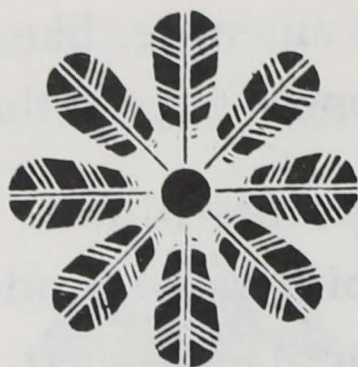


Blake could see beyond places.

Cezanne sits troubled, yet he moves around
picture-charged counter-parts.

Whitman marches.

Creeley.



Is that the flesh made word
or is that the flesh-made word?

Is that get it entirely right
or is that somewhat wrongly?

Le mot juste or just tomatoes?

The poem as a field of carrots or stones?

You, squinting, as I tell you.

Telling you, you telling me, field waiting.



SILENCE TELLS (TALKS), CHANT'S ATTENTION, A GOOD
part of the truth in sight of the unconscious,
butterfly inside rock.

Whisper intelligencia, murmuring Thoreau as
an old Greek, yet Pound (not pond).

Rant these paper-thin words at paint or points,
parts of speech, gulp eye, ear, tongue, and heart
to the heart.

As though vistas were car windows, pray for
final blueprints, middle-voice Olympic
mounts, Oregon nights, twitters.

His poem, his rock, his home, his block.

Get around much anymore.



ALL THIS WOOD LIES DORMANT WITHOUT BREATH, THE shore Melville saw but never mentioned, Lawrence in Oaxaca, Creeley in Mallorca, minutely particularizing the mind, under the sun, thought washes the beach but can't store the shapes stomach does, memory, hunger, and love are the generous chunks, this story is the same story about how landscape got caught every time style imitates growth-rings cylinder wall scarred leaf-mold.



1. He said it was made of stone.
2. Style, stick, car.
3. Japan, Massachusetts, or Bolinas.
4. There is this breastlessness.
5. Mud for guts. Now we know.



46

THAT'S WHY THE MESSENGER HAS TO MAKE UP THE message from yourself to yourself because the dream intercepts curiosity as some kind of latter note on the design just to shore up the sad story via the milky way or backlighting luminous noumena mapped farther and carried as blood fonts flesh first what an interlude.



UNDER THE SKIN RIGHT-HANDED POETRY IN THE CAR TO work out the modulation and correspondence of Marine Drive lectures even on a Saturday morning he too looked out from the subject side of his sentence not at the Straight but middle-voice reflective the trees and the mist on Pt. Grey shot out of 3 a.m. mornings of typing writ by ear and John Donne's enchanted mind Robert Duncan's portuguese cape mad madder maddest Creeley-eye driving down by Kerouac's riverside these motions this peck peck.



48

CUTS TWO WAYS ANYTHING-AMERICA VEHEMENCE
loosening political world-view literally for a
world absolutely rhythmic absolutely haystack.

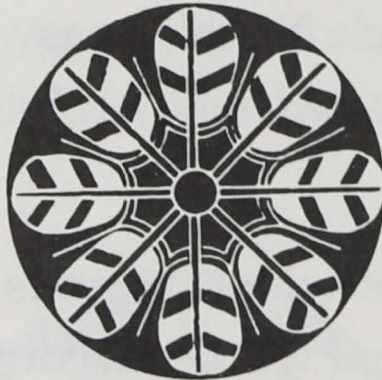
Intermittent voice, intermittent silence, the
whole man master in stride and monument
testing coastal continuity, checked the
metaphor Ernest F.

That dynamic of natural vowel just to get
around the block. No thing easy to be conscious
of a solution; from itself hole intelligence, open
art open body.

Sound outside wisdom, gods, skyscrapers,
countless ancient world anecdotes drowns like
a stone in a shallow pond unless many ones
make tense dust.

Rock of candor and abode of consciousness drift
fixed ideas to perimeter's eternity any joe blow
relocks on that landscape and that's not just too
bad.

Butchered from the body.
 No way to legislate.
 Architectures I am.
 Pilgrims, half out of love.
 The possible figures.
 Loyalties of the place.
 Palpable, palpably –
 Weather unmeasured song.



50

Going through the language of time.
Chronometrics. Horologicals. A book of years.

I like the water in it. And the footprints.
That movement. As you look for words
"sans intermission."

Of course it's the heart. Pictograph –
pictogram.

Epigram – epigraph. Cardiogram. Histogram.
The paw again.

Cellular. Un instant. Je vais voir si je la trouve
dans ce livre.

It's that "yelping pack of possibilities"
the hour as the order.

The predication, the pre-form of foot
in snow, log
on truck, finding out it never was lost,
fooling.

Everywhere I go here, here I go again.
But even if I worked it out ahead of time
I'd do it.

I know me. This train
crosses all the Chinese rivers in Canada.
Each one the same world water, the same
trestle, same deep gulley.

In Japan Mt. Fuji no more
than a quiet, black Shinkansen tunnel,
out of sight, out of mind.

When Dorn said
the stranger in town
is the only one who knows
where he's been and where he's going
I could see Pocatello's tracks.

Your symbol as "accent
to the basic drum of consciousness" lurks.
St Am stutters and stumbles.
These rails are only half continuous.

tongue mist lip boat brown gull hill town bed
stone shadow crow tooth rain boat flood ham-
mer star gill shadow skin hammer mouth town
mist hill rock brown bed bird tongue snow creek
lip crow circle brown lip wave boat shadow city
light hill sky mouth talk snow gull hammer fog
moon wet grey stone boat bed mist skin gill
word flood crow tongue river mouth star brown
lip night flood sail wave sky tooth rock red bird
shadow stone snow city blue hammer bed hill
crow tongue



God, how awfully large it is to sit here
lost on this log
without the im as you say from mortality.

But no extremis in this breeze for me. Things
such as this bark I cling to
deer chased by coyote.

Look, I don't want to appropriate his "words,
goddammit, words" or her "continent."

But I've lied, muse's
golden mouthed righteousness.

I was where I was
but I didn't know where the others were.

These are muddy waters: the abandoned
messages released,
our daughters, chicadees already in January.

How numbers make trails.

Track Li Po to Castlegar,
the Kootenay River flows down from the sky,
never returns.

And chance to get in the way
of water's predictability
or the white clouds of pacific
western mountain flesh.

Birth is like that, though.
Homes, mothers, names,
friends as images. Puffs
of imagic "rift or lake," anyplace.

Notation of these events quad right. He's got
ideas fixed.

Video la province, video la country, Winnipeg.

Hold it! When imprint hits grapheme
then eme is as in memory
just an echo.

Map of streets stream of dreams
map of creeks street of cream, fragments
and imago imprint, geomance a glyph,
a place on earth, under, or from it.

Name's broken letters maybe
words your body made.
Idiot bridges to parts of our selves still lost
in the palindrome.

A found chain on the coffeetable,
Some Sapes as a bookmark
to automobile between 3 and 6;
flex, flux, flooding, fl-

(Θ Creekscape: Looking Upstream)

Fred Was. Fred War. Fred Wan. Fred Way.
Fred Wash. Fred Wag. Fred Roy. Fred What.

Creek water hits rock with hollow sound.

56

YOU LOOK FOR THE NUTRITION OF YOURSELF WHEN YOU think of food in this different way when yr alone, totally.

Does that "i" in "white explorers'" look like a sail on Lake des Entouhonorons? Because of love?

Wounded, wounded. Parents and God, how hungry.

Hounded into the signifier ship, into the vessel, into the mouth.

Back in the cave Plato thought up the perfect vowel.

A big stone navel, under his feet, the cup holes.

Another god's daydream. The stage. Memory of your voyage totally serious, a sixteen foot oar, wooden Wodin, Sutton Hoo.

JUST TO THINK OF THE COULOIR COLLANDER THE M IS impossible wickerwork boat of water music.

Weather on the sea only the deep soul empties out shining like a village no wonder then the vivid river.

Not so much a fence as a fish weir (sometime giggle mesh) never to be totally contained in fact you should've been a sailor.

I want all that flood to be soft underbelly felt from birth to be the message home and absolutely local.

That inchoate body we all lumber under the maw of isn't that still the Galilaean galaxy and all the little stars and fishes?



WAS SHE PHONEME'S SISTER? DID SHE EVER LEARN TO drive a car? Some said she was a beauty. Did you ever hear that?

That's a good idea. Write it all down in case you get a memory disease – we all do. Time is impossible except literal. Faces maybe. Sisters.

That little { really translates tripartite for me. And when I try to feminize the model, eyes haze into wheat and flat roads.

True geography? When Kroetsch arrived from Plunkett in his Honda I knew this place was all afternoon business. Excited but didn't mention her.

When Olson read "the genetic is Ma the morphic is Pa" what I heard was "paw" as in print. Maybe that's how Grammar gets to be the Granny.

Around here I'd like to be
St Mountain Station
on the Great Northern tracks
in the natural situation.

Don't you talk of speaking singing
soul carried forward,
lines of a life, truth written
in the lie of the word?

Maps through the days make a lot of sense.
Imagine friends beyond these times
sure recompense.

When St Orm runs the alpine ridges
on Kootenay Lake,
on the beach, at my feet
single waves of history break.

Now I know the names to measure
in this language stream:
whatever rhymes with no sense
keys the dream.

60

MAYBE THAT WAS SAMSARA NEAR ABBOTSFORD ONCE but when I was a kid it was Fort Langley and the train to Vancouver Upanishads sometimes still when I drive by Sumas and the US border Fraser Valley cowherds now I smell the pig shit when we hit Chilliwack I think often of that morning in the snow all night coming back from Cid Corman and Seattle w/ the one seat belt on yr old Ford around you and Gladys in the front seat smile as you hit the ditch didn't we roll onto our side my side and George and Dave in the back seat what the fuck and the drunk and the truck cop and police station back roads all night snow storm finally dawn whiteout detour sliding into yr folks home in Abbotsford what a world we could have had Japan cept Corman had Noh thing to say but that kind of driving got you India and a narrative into the mysterious Dravidian gutteral or as you say in this story you rip up your own street.

WHILE I WAIT FOR NEWS OF THE NEST THIS POSSIBLE sub-continental construct or model plugs the heat in the air.

It's those heats that stretch throughout our lives though, not the recent jet-age humid ones that clam our dying skin.

Especially the stretch that includes grandmothers as the walls of that ancient life we grow up in belief of.

Like the random notes you play in the hotel lobby, I think your view is a right full story, empty bullock cart, waiting.

Or Siva's rock phalloi excited in the world the Buddha stands next to, or that elephant "watching the bare earth self-fictionalize."

HOW DID THEY STAND AS AN EXERCISE AND HOW DID they move out of your way or did you touch when you walked through the crowded doorways what was their breath like did it make you think of a world breath under the sahri how was that did you find your eyes wound up in the saffron cloth what if you had married a girl from Abbotsford would your children have to leave the country is memory a horse or an elephant and was it monkey play or monkey business in the Garden of the Maids did you find any solid evidence of transcendentalism in what way did Dal Lake resemble Cultus Lake how often did you think of Victor Coleman when you were there or Allen Ginsberg could I hear that egg curry raga please perhaps with a cup of chai what's a Ghat was the paralogical condition legitimized did you consider becoming an orange-robed sannyasi and never coming back? How would you relate this spiritual experience to a life of therapy or crime?

ART OF DARKNESS TELLS POEMS ABOUT THE GREAT distances in our lives revealed by doing numbers on ourselves especially threes and sixes since it plays or shows it possible to between the yaw of deep need and practice almost the result of stretch and hunger for discipline such strict structure in the river of ecstasy that drains the far interior watershed such feeding of the nutrient ladder around which vertically unless you are drowning swerves deep and heartfelt connections to not so much darkness and light as some rather vigorous waving to the distant shore.



64

THE PERIPHERAL VISION WITH HALF-CLOSED EYES AND
the passing cars.

The grid or graph and the brick houses along
this street in Toronto.

The Mind of Pauline Brain and a city, actually
any place really.

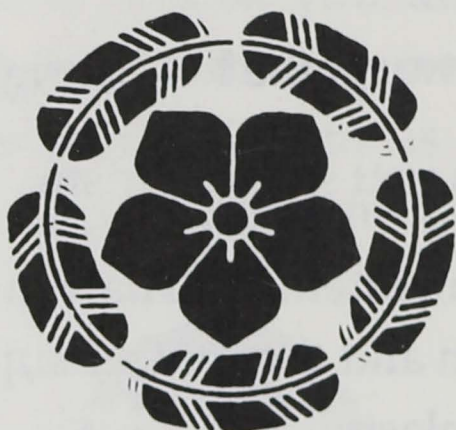
The intestinal tract and the portable cassette
tape recorder.

The weft the warp, the left the right.

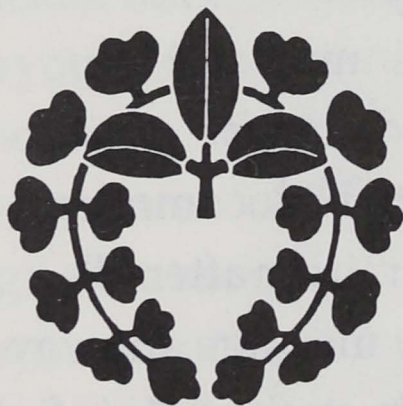
The prison as you say the prism.

The word as an intentional flaw in an otherwise
perfect design and thought as super glue in an
unworkable plastic.

TELEOLOGICAL MAPPING OUTSIDE THE REALM OF observation architected to the brain the edge of which you get so close to saxaphoning the right gap this spark plug explosion dieseling after the key's turned off invisible eme shapes still hanging around when she says roulette to you what is called meaning on the sound track translated two levels under the lyric Hermes should have said not to steal from yourself yourself.



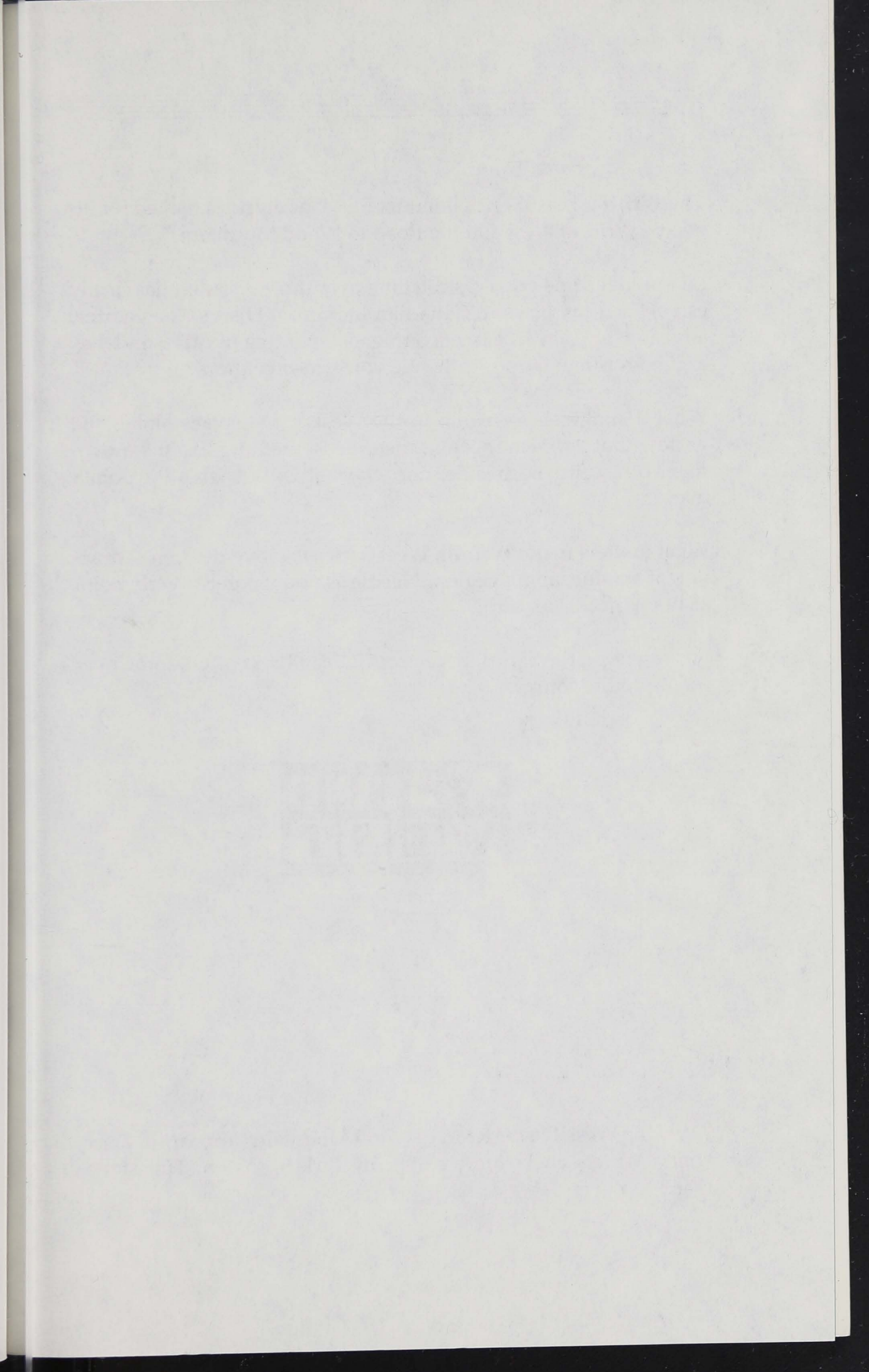
SPLIT SCREEN CONCURRENCY LIKE WILLIAMSESQUE
Kora repetition to accomodate the known
language conspiracy this incendiary device
shifts the fence out of the back yard and into the
melody with an equally careful telos to quote
you only then see F at that point does the genu-
ine odour return.



That old constant periplum positive/negative
 negative/positive
 From Clarke's fingers plus/minus forward
 forward/backward
 Or Prynne's north Atlantic magnetos
 Channel one channel war
 Something from the sun/moon exactly
 like creek from ice
 End is the beginning and so
 forth that hated circuit
 Locution gets to be locomotion
 Old right/left mirror after all
 Isn't really any message anyway
 Just a jet shuttle on world's infinite horizon •
 Drive a cock-horse to Greenham Common
 Cocks. Horses. Crosses.

A SCATOLOGY OF THIS BOOK INDEX BACK TO FRONT
 problem how to reference shit sans number
 stone gland possible cold lump in their throats
 after she spoke of her anus mucous faeces foetus
 with a little warm piss dribbling down the leg
 who is the little "i" who slid the bedpan under
 his ass with the sadness of death looming large
 on Ontario's acidic horizon whether or not it's
 her or he that's your anagogy for you the middle
 section of Panopticon vacant of shit until the
 repetitive fecal matter which writing blind
 bowel stirrings as a narwhal from the body
 words that form the "hole" image dogma
 mouthed unfortunately with disgust except
 language stops to begin with.

PLACE (BY THE WATER) BOOK (A NOVEL TRANSLATION OF another larger) so Hesiod parodied somewhere place as a zero something outside the walls like in I, Danny the King who one serves or Queen not so feminist outpouring of the soul's vivid mind (perhaps out of that idea of a "soul" I feel like Budha running from "consciousness") across the river from here across the gutter is a support for language not unlike Kiyooka in Japan yearly right now space rented in an emptying out of all the other spaces a la James Joyce going to get in my mind all he needs to continue with or the voice people from Quebec Cedar map boat w/ motor on hearing and the Delphi poem could be a bounce off the walls probably a tieing to the whole pictureiness goes on between the two moons woven at least tied up against the current fishing



The Writing West Series honours Eli Mandel and is named for his essay "Writing West: On the Road to Wood Mountain."

Eli Mandel's fine poetry, stretching over three decades, has firmly established his place in Canadian literature. His work as editor, educator and critic has encouraged emerging writers and has argued for innovation, authentic voice, re-invention.

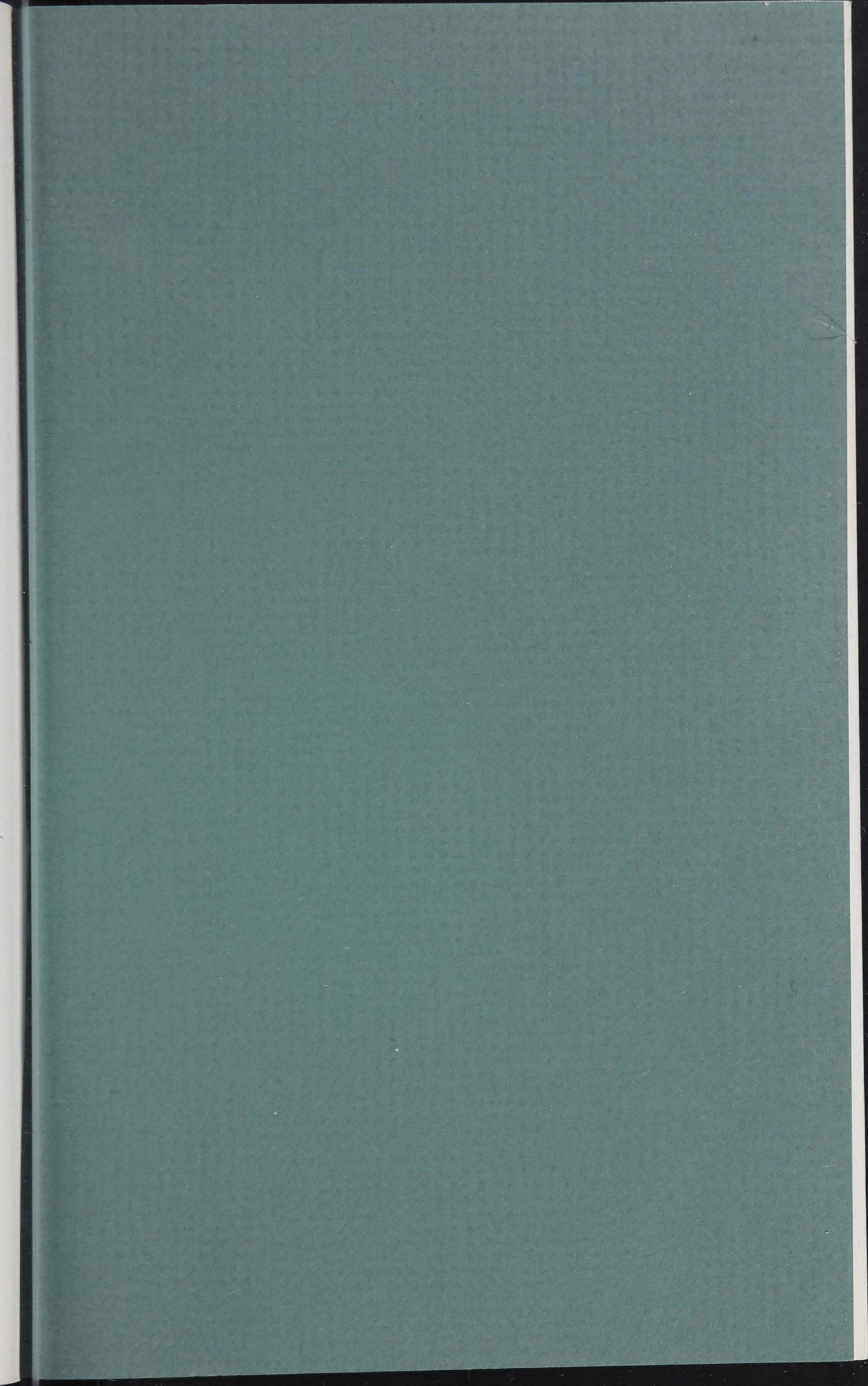
What distinguishes writing in the West "is not place alone," he writes, "but a direction, an attraction – something like the movement of a compass needle; not where it is, but where it points matters."

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WRITING WEST

("Writing West: On the Road to Wood Mountain" appears in *Trace: Prairie Writers on Writing*, edited by Birk Sproxton, Turnstone, 1986.)





FRED WAH

Fred Wah was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and grew up in the Kootenay region of British Columbia. He studied music and English literature at the University of British Columbia in the early 1960's where he was one of the founding editors of *Tish*. He did graduate work in literature and linguistics at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and at the State University of New York in Buffalo. He was the founding coordinator of the writing program at David Thompson University Centre and at present teaches in the Professional Writing Program at Selkirk College and for the Kootenay School of Writing in Nelson and Vancouver. He is a contributing editor to *Open Letter* and a managing editor of *SwiftCurrent*, an electronic literary magazine. Fred Wah has published eleven previous books of poetry. The most recent, *Waiting for Saskatchewan*, received the 1985 Governor-General's Award for Poetry.

MUSIC *at the* HEART *of* THINKING

FRED WAH

Music at the Heart of Thinking is a linguistic silky thought reminder of what can be achieved with words when a voice tunes in to its own music and works out the motif.

NICOLE BROSSARD

Out of Wah's synaptic leaps a wonderful new music springs, a source, primary materials every reader needs.

BP NICHOL

The word 'heart' contains, if you are spelling it, he, hear, ear, and art. Fred Wah knows this, and we know that it is either too easy or very hard to imagine the present participle of a verb having a core. This book, if it is hard enough to read, will reward and amuse you, I promise.

GEORGE BOWERING

Fred Wah a kind of ideal poet, his integrity of vision, his not looking away from the light of the word itself. Not the mere Word, but the word itself.

ROBERT KROETSCH, IN *THE CROW JOURNALS*

**WRITING
WEST**