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MICHAEL  
SCHARF

# TELEMACHIAD

and two other books

by  
Michael Scharf

sugarhigh!

## TO BE PLAYED AT MAXIMUM VOLUME

### Telemachiad

Erring Alone

For My New Friend, Jack Spicer, Who Couldn't Spot a Jew

Telemachiad

Epithal-Epistle

### Nine Sonnets for Late 90s Literary Culture

The Midwest; Recent Grad: Poem for the New Yorker; Artist Friends:  
Poem For McSweeney's; Interview Journalism; The Midwest; Fiction  
Pro. Sem.; Alone Together: Colony; Nostalgic Hypochondria: Double  
Holiday Sonnet for the New Yorker; New Jersey: Poem for the New  
York Times Magazine; Domestic Poem; Poem for the New Republic;  
Travel Poem; Elders: The Mill on the Floss

### As Ismene

Adolescence and Stasis (High Bias)

Test Pressing

Affordance: Maine Vacation, Or, This Lime Tree Bower, My Prison  
(for the author of *Last Instance*: an homage)

Snow; Amicus Brief; For a Rabbit

The Lecture

Recording Over

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This edition prepared for sugarhigh! in 2004

Explicit juvenilia  
duplicate and distribute freely but a fellahny to male

# TELEMACHIAD

## ERRING ALONE

I was relating it to myself  
and the morning came; I was wild  
restored  
some 450 type-written pages,  
major symbol activities.  
Thoughts of death and related contents  
keep careful track of ideation,  
that almost diabolical moral "virtue."  
Removed from contact  
for the first thirty-six hours  
"contamination" for anyone possessing  
psychoanalytic knowledge.

Third of nine born—  
this one stubborn, that one cold  
living  
abroad.  
Peculiarities become  
conspicuous  
during the first six to eight weeks—  
fixed, rather tense, positions.  
A choppy  
at times explosive  
billowing—  
a mutinous scramble in the wood;  
a secret career as a drinker  
airing a lone—vache.  
The other two,  
rather revengeful,  
to a college in New York City—  
psychiatric lecture on December 5.

Venice in June can be hell  
featured prominently for a time in my dreams  
deposited in a small cupboard-like space  
elsewhere.  
A torturous and difficult maneuver;  
a flourishing  
gambling establishment, similarly  
sized department store.  
I was slightly excited,  
under the domination and guidance of a milk-

white star, vaguely  
identified with the patient.  
I worked very hard and faithfully;  
I worked apparently for hours at the useless  
task, another fantasy  
clearly recalled.

Miss S., Mrs. Jack Johnson, is clearly  
the mother ideal, festooned with chips and other  
paraphernalia. *Inter alia*.

Flying in close embrace with a coward  
very much opposed to treatment  
Mr. K, the voluptuous Jewess, with a pocket  
full of docketts, cessa-ing  
from one luxuriant valley to another,  
points to the hospital.

In a subsequent discussion,  
I tried to treat everyone square;  
I was supposed to be in hell I guess;  
They had a language there;  
I'd hear things;  
I couldn't smoke a cigarette or drink water.

This fly I termed a 'Benjamin Franklin'  
fly,  
superhuman  
prowess, precise antics  
on the top of the table.  
The parents stubborn, living  
abroad. What  
life with them must have  
been like.  
A burdensome  
package  
sheathed in your kindness,  
your willingness to help in even  
the most difficult circumstances,  
a  
sort  
of  
Tarantinian 'Wolf' of my fantasies.

He gave me what is known as the "queen's salute."  
Flying rapidly over the surface of the earth  
locked in close sexual embrace,  
luxuriant

evidence.

If Brian's poetry is what's  
behind all of this, what will  
you think of my sources?  
It's the obvious question, as politically  
motivated as "Of Being Numerous,"  
with its plumes of smoke,  
or  
the anthologizing of the Todesfugue.

Relentlessly assertive of truth,  
the try;  
the heartbreakingly freighted arrival;  
the uncompromising, line-broken noun  
carrying the spavined consciousness.

Business relations  
night terrors, temper tantrums, enuresis, etc.  
They had become so active  
and were so given  
to standing while in a carriage, or car  
they were burned by turning over  
a container of hot potatoes.  
Very nervous and restless,  
they suffered a great deal, resembling  
each other in physique and physiognomy  
strikingly.

My feelings have got swung around.  
I was relating it to myself  
and the morning came,  
talked through clothes and automobiles;  
all our actions and talks  
were tensions between us  
meaning this,  
a bolt out. No, you can't...  
stop that, but...I suppose  
you can choose the right time. Number '4'  
to my mind, '4' is sort of a doctor's  
number. I touched the 4-ball.

## FOR MY NEW FRIEND, JACK SPICER, WHO COULDN'T SPOT A JEW

I

Just what you would have wanted  
–a collected. But “Foxy-boy  
Sortie” and “Champ by  
and of the Mouth” have been excised.

Your heart turns over  
sends uncharacteristically bourgeois  
demons down

My stuffed animals and your shit bag.

II

The tractatus;

The practicum; the pronouns;

The bedspread dropping to the floor;

The endless texts of the 60s;

At that age, I said,  
“I’m a real tomboy!”

The comforting texts of the 60s

The mail dropped onto the floor.

I yawned back and smelled the pheromones  
on the top  
of my lip.

Beautiful, sensitive  
responsive  
but  
may have a message  
beyond  
a  
small  
clap.



### III

It echoed in the big house,  
the woodpecker knocking his brains out on the dead tree.

Neither child nor nursery be;

Decommission the Irish Sea;

We are certainly free—

sold and bartered on the strand  
yet clearly unfettered—

A door closed. It echoed up the stairs and raised  
the animal's hairs.

There is a slight knocking;  
it is the endless texts of the 60s.

### IV

I read the manifestoes out loud to my children.

I went out of the house. There were leaves on the ground  
and a light rain falling.

In Nottingham the tea goes "Tsk." In Manchester they discuss Man  
United.  
I wanted a cozy.

The wood floors echoed after the next operation, which removed me  
from the grass and brought me into the house.

His or her behind  
brave, jocund, unfeeling.

"Batterny batterny batterny—the stones of blarney go"

V

Be bop de beep  
the kitty  
and the creep  
outrun allusions

He has always been an obvious thinker  
rigidly attracted to received opinion.

He was an antenna of his era, a transceiver  
delicately tuned to the tenor of his times.

Who are the sons of Bruce, and why do we love them?

VI

Touched by an anglophone.  
And...I...touches...what's-his-name  
put the three ball in the pocket.  
Homophonic literature  
seizing upon furniture  
upon the music of my work.  
If I can't touch you here in this place  
of near precocity, altruism  
and blindness, and can't furtively catch  
the sleeve of some passing monstrosity

to what will you chalk up my panic?  
The small, hard hairs of chin? The dog's antic  
pull, waxing the sidewalk with leg dips  
and a full-on kiss to the garbage lips?

I reach for your cake, end up with your hands.  
I can't help but feel good, meet all demands.

VII

Steve,  
the same Steve who appears throughout  
said "we're having an exchange  
right now" at dinner. I'm giddy right now  
at this powerful allusion, dressed carefully  
for that dinner.

Qently to my chambur in Chambord  
I removed the skis. In alien corn  
under alien skies the French looked at me.  
The floor flooded a quarter-inch  
before the shock  
of lip lock.

VIII

Brits: big louts  
clouting  
each other.

If I were  
    receiving the swan;  
    if I were  
the receiving swan—

“I’ve been fucking  
seeing patients all day  
& you  
want me to what?”

Haw  
haw  
—ahem.

We feel;  
death creams.

IX

I press the bar that makes  
the clock tell the time.  
It's 6:08.

It's a mass-market sunrise.  
Links from the dictionary  
to the fruitbowl. A slight hectoring  
buzz. A mound of folded yawl.

Seer sucker.  
Plink of experience.

Connote and commode  
extension from one life into the next  
from compartment to the stocking  
department, from the elevator  
to the shoes.

Boring you with truthful demonstrations  
of melon and softer flesh.

X

Shissyfuss puthes  
da wock.  
—Shut your fucking mouth.

Gene says “wiff”  
and I jump.  
Imperthn—

moth  
my mowff

Mima and Matt  
their mother  
impossibly beautiful

“Go Climb a Rock”  
I cld barely

grip my d—  
at that age.

XI

Where's the eros? The real rotting birdy?  
Van Gogh's "Pair of Boobs"

Until the medium stabilizes  
That is, microtizes,  
Won't reproduce.  
Xerxes PARC

a sow's ear.  
a roc's egg.  
a hero's welcome.  
a king's ransom.

XII

My beliefs run from  
the tinkling streams to the facile depths  
in the light of several decorums.  
Sitting in men's chairs  
performing verbal ablutions  
I move in the space of actual hairs,  
avoid the well-heeled stool-sitters  
and head down for a pee.

Comport, belie, tryst  
Lenses, brush, bust  
and dial. Cloy, file and  
tines. Mist, paper, rack  
float.

So that's what your back looks like,  
and below, your pants fit right.  
Shirtless  
tight  
in the way you move your arms, the little  
death, the thin straps of your tank,  
a satisfied shrug I can't mimic.

### XIII

Language as a model! To think everything through in terms of  
linguistics!  
An unconscious *structured* like a language! Language evolved for  
proximity.  
Will-to-power is bringing others to you! Language is a real thing that  
requires  
you to put yourself in an imaginary relationship to it. The form  
of the poem is  
the poet's body. Blank verse holds Wrdswrth together, with little  
o-rings.  
Sentences are built in expectation of an argument, and assign  
thematic roles.  
Good Will Hunting was a terrific movie about a genius; he took  
things in stride.  
Can X *afford* Y though, as an idea? Dissonance between proximal  
availability  
(Little Neck Clams') and distal unavailability of the poet  
(Little Neck Clams).  
The author widens the scope or shucks the bake for a price.  
You want to ask Matt:  
Why English is iambically friendly? Because nouns are head final:  
NP —> Det N.

### XIV

Park poetry, social.

### XV

My mother worked at the Magic Circle Bookshop. Before that  
she had had another boyfriend, named Art, who had a VW bug  
with a sunroof. He poked his hand out and waved to me as we  
drove in separate cars to Old Westbury Gardens. The gardens  
were real; Art was nice.

## TELEMACHIAD

If your spavined, broken-winded horse can't  
clop into town under its own steam  
and gets overtaken by another man's wagon,  
you have to wonder who'll be picking through the porn,  
bowling trophies, frozen chicken boxes  
and half-squeezed bottles of Afrin.

So fucked up on whatever drugs kept you vertical,  
so terrifying in your proppings of me, with giant hairy arms,  
follicles organized in semitic rivulets, you stood;  
"hundreds and hundreds" of women  
leaned behind you as you threw each ball—  
custom drilled, engraved, sixteen pounds—  
putting out. Pretty much all you could eat  
was cantaloupe, and if you ate steak—

So now I'm gently shoveling the dirt myself  
chasing away the morons with the backhoe,  
and if you're watching  
if you want to give me a little nod,  
some sticky phrase translated into COBOL  
and rapped out onto punch cards,

if you are unable to drink alcohol or work for Ira  
by the light of your unarticulated class  
aversions, your inability to reach across  
the table and touch my grandfather's velvet lapel  
tenderly, like a rabbit's ear, or talk substantively  
about analysis or algorithm, though you made the latter  
for a living and performed the former sexually—  
by that light—

This stuff is endless,  
*ex voto*  
*ab ovo*,  
"hyper"  
not "energetic."

I'm wrenching things into shape,  
but to you I hope  
it's pretty clear

When my father  
comes into contact with dogwood blossoms  
or a hive  
of cellophane-wrapped Jack Spicer,  
a mummy

I pipe orphically;  
I burst into song;  
I cry at the sight of abject men

The explosive trees,  
quietly popping into bloom,  
pooping on the toilet—  
and those talking birds  
must have been little girls.

Schreber, Schubert, Sch—Don't touch it!  
Endured countless "honest moments"  
I'm coming into my own!

You're not listening  
and the trees, for all their spread, couldn't  
really give a crap. But little by little,  
the talking birds reassert themselves,  
and Schreber's relationship with his dead

father resolves  
into brotherly affection, before his  
brother,

too, dies and Schreber  
offers himself  
to the rays of God.  
Lighting farts in burnt offering,  
lavishly firing

toward a loved one,  
failing to repress even the faintest of stirrings,  
kicking the crazy door of the jakes,

disbelief about scatology  
turns to eschatology, ontology;  
the bubble turns its mirrors onto the people



from the mount;  
essences turn to empires

and all that was  
reduced, unsung,  
    bloated,

unrelieve  
-d  
comes pouring out. But  
for  
what? Let

comfort  
unmake  
you.

## EPITHAL-EPISTLE

I would be brilliant;  
I had nothing on mind;  
passed the mirror a fourth time  
saw the symbols inscribed, follicle  
by follicle. On pointe, then plié.  
Shave. You  
loaded each phrase with a rhetorical texture

so rich, any recasting of mine  
would seem purposeful, clumsy.  
The more I  
stare at the photo the more  
it gives up. Brush.

Pack. Little bits of toast;  
small francophile wants;  
aristocratic filth; tines;  
Daddy's letters;  
Nolan's towels.

After last week's running around  
as long as we're together and actively close  
we're not going to be ecstatic all the time  
it was sort of riotous  
yet of course not insurmountable,  
joy; aqua-velvum; aviator;  
Nolan's towels.

This summer we lived in a kind of spiral  
and the world was ours.  
When we separated in the physical sense  
our world of together impressions and reactions  
was put in abeyance.

Passed the mirror a fourth time  
saw the symbols inscribed, follicle by  
follicle. Baroque detail.  
When we were together our plans for the future  
were almost materialized;

since we jumped from summer to summer  
it shows up in sort of a grasping way.

Because of the physical distance between us,  
these feelings have become more and more latent.  
The world is full of people, of love, of aspirations,  
of hopes, of fulfillment, of values, of us—the real  
us.

We feel a more subtle kind of pressure,  
the pressure of boredom, frustration, and another kind.  
Saturday nights every once in a while it becomes  
unbearable, clouds our world a little.  
We have to adjust ourselves to it, until we can blossom

again in a lucid, clear world;  
until we're together again in 19 days  
and can respire,  
take things in,  
yoke and un-yoke,

make the horse's path  
around the wheel describe,  
venn-like, more and more  
with each mis-  
trajected clop. Tines.  
Mud-  
spattered steel.

I wish you were here,  
I were there, or just that  
we were together.  
You are the freshness, the joy  
the love, the beauty, the purpose of my life.

It seems almost instinctive;  
even if you  
and I meet in N.Y.  
or you come here, I really feel like  
it is me who's coming home to you—

You are home. There are larks  
in the trees and a sort of tremendous  
buoyant air  
that lifts off the tops of the grass,  
forms a current and seeps  
ardently through the screen, presses against the walls  
and my back, as if you were coming up behind me.

Or the upset, septuagenarian poet who might have written  
any of this if my father hadn't tried in 1962. Shave.  
"Of course you can put that stuff in...  
just don't be *mawkish* about it."  
Bruce said that but I doubt he'll like this,

another powerful allusion. Finally  
put in a satisfactory day's work  
am really  
feeling all invigorated—if the courts  
were shoveled I would've played a little tennis.

The more I

stare at the photo the more  
it gives up.  
Little bits of toast;  
*Winterreise*;  
*Atomizer*; Harry  
Chapin; Dory Previn.

Unconsciously  
loaded and read  
for rhetorical gesture,  
a sense of who  
falling over at the podium, or the bathroom.

I'm not throwing any purple passion around now  
for I want your company,  
I want to be with you  
and talk to you. I think it's wonderful we can  
both be productive individuals

(encrown  
-ed  
rooster  
king for a day  
crust)

I've been looking for a place to show  
some emotion around here,

a stable field to pull your pants off,  
a ringing endorsable Dorsey;  
a fabulous price for those skis.  
I keep getting tripped up;  
you whelm even the slightest pressure toward closing

Your surprising ampleness;  
Your surprising me;  
Your under-the-sandbox penchants—  
I cried after you;  
I Clyde applied; I watched for you to wake. Glazing.

In between I started to write but got interrupted,  
started over & over; should get off though  
without a penalty. Oh, I think I've  
figured out what you are sending me. Whatever it  
is, though, I'll adore and treasure it.

Not in a way where I tell you every minute  
nor even feel it,

the person whose voice can lift  
any despair or discouragement within me,  
whose body is the only one that fits in my arms  
and returns all the love  
that I have.

There are hundreds of millions  
of ways that we'll be one—every one.  
Glazunov and Barraqué.  
I'm very, very proud  
of us darling, and what we're doing.

Unfortunately,  
all I want to do now is hold  
you in my arms and love you but that'll be soon  
and we're pretty strong (just about the strongest  
of loves I'd say) and it's not long and it's  
infinitely worth  
it.

You probably came across the same piece as I  
in today's *Times* Magazine:  
Can talking  
change the wiring?  
Reading

make  
feelings  
material?  
Drugs break  
bad loops? On pointe.

All I can say  
is you have to get in the mood of miracles,  
not in the way  
that it's a conscious thing  
but in a quiet way. Then plié.  
But this institution, perhaps one should say  
enterprise, is a political question:

privilege  
accorded for possibility  
foreclosed? Care

publicked and property shared  
with facilitated recognition?

Intense love promise?  
Breeding algorithm?  
Morbid, pale, clumsy, shy?  
Lights in the garden.  
Flowers from the market. The more I—

By the end of the evening I was quite bloated  
on everything and here I am with droopy  
eyes and clouded brain.  
Blame flew all over.  
If I had walked out into the snow after you—  
net-white, strung in perfect squares—you  
would've seen me from far off;

I was wearing my red jacket;  
I was upset and knew you were too.  
When you told me you had been crying then  
I felt awful but knew we could make things right,  
that we were right.

As we grope up, less afraid,  
from the shattered poetic pony of adolescence,  
to try to be public,  
to woo it kindly,  
delicate gold hands

moving slowly, how  
beautiful  
to be speaking, to continue  
to bound unmolested, feeling  
the slide of heel in boots,  
the little tongue  
running in the champ magnétique.

Precious! I actually asked the sun—like a muse's  
Father—that if ever  
I'd done well beneath him,  
or sang the thing that mote  
the mind delight,

not to refuse  
whatever it is I'm offering,  
and let this one day  
be ours, with all the rest  
for him. Brilliant.

Have you been snooped on?  
Feels funny  
the other way round,  
you and your immobilized Jimmy Stewart  
proclivities!  
Everything seems charged;  
Had a little trouble

sleeping in my new bed  
and surroundings  
needed and missed  
you as I  
will

for only two more months;  
have woken up the last two mornings  
with the material of myth:  
femme-erections, homme-boners,  
little bits of toast.

We do  
have very wonderful things  
to look back at  
and more wonderful things ahead  
but most of all the present—our love, now,  
is  
most wonderful.

NINE SONNETS FOR LATE 90s  
LITERARY CULTURE



## NINE SONNETS FOR LATE 90S LITERARY CULTURE

### The Midwest

Meistersinger grabs the shears,  
hiccup at the fraenum.  
To tell what he sang would  
break the code, force the school of shad  
apart from the other  
American food fishes,  
“the very prop  
on which drapery’s purpose  
hangs.” Warming up  
the cotton with a hot iron,  
the soothing,  
motivating  
muscles  
of our arms.

### Recent Grad: Poem for the New Yorker

Mesmerized by my own life,  
a shower of potential, an alien form  
listing from side to side along the rows of cubes,  
ducking in for humane chat that quickly grows  
oppressive. The move to escape  
family tyranny in fact an exchange for co-workers  
foibles and bile, the phone glimpses, snatches of yells,  
the difference in the level of impingement like being  
in a bunch of grapes instead of part of a melon.  
I like that shirt; my silence at your haircut earns me  
the nickname ‘Tacitus’ so warm is my implicit approval.  
The pleasure of engaging the electric pencil sharpener  
mitigated by its lack of a shaving sink, a gap where  
the plastic bin, miniature but precisely machined, should be.

You are shorter, you are taller, you are lovely, you are smart,  
you are anxious, you are over your head but thickly blissful.  
Wool crepe so radiant black, blue.  
Gabardine is back too.

Artist Friends: Poem For McSweeney's

I wanted to make a video, my matted brown  
soccer-player hair flew, ears  
reddened  
as when in the throes of an actual encounter.

Ingrid spontaneously brought me chicken,  
made fun of my absurd  
mock-Trenttown stylings  
upon giving notice.  
I had even imagined  
the cabinets.

Several worn flakes of heart  
set to feed the porter.  
Kind basket  
bartle the fisket.

Interview Journalism

Always bare-armed, catching cold,  
Keitel torsoes toward the piano,  
wolfs a smoke and drenches half the site in filial  
light and bird-like song, uplifting and tired.  
Dorothy as control freak;  
discovery of Oz as techno-mastery,  
Lleyton Hewitt clutching Kim Clijsters's cross.  
We toss thoughts like painted balls—  
errhumanized, without a title, bouncing up  
the musical, muscled beach with determinate fuzzy digits.  
People throw bread to the birds  
out the back windows of hospitality.  
Adjuncts and attributes violate our condition  
that branches should not be allowed to cross.

The Midwest

We allow our attention to spread outward,  
like dropped laundry.  
Immune to ideas,  
we pitch our way  
through the sugary  
thickness to an amazing veldt,  
salted rodeo, place  
pointless calls to the hoofy satyr.

Lifting the horn  
with three arresting blasts we ride off.  
"Extraordinarily adept,  
the highwaymen  
glide wave-like in fields  
tilled by people with jobs."

## Fiction

Tapping, slow and tedious, consummate and firm.  
Such oases, ratings and reservations  
will be increasingly common, trollopine, gigallistic.  
Perhaps unfairly, great lakes and great times.  
By now it's almost a consensus: nearly all the talk  
can take five years to improve when they can roam freely,  
and, notably, invoke options that don't require you,  
other ways to pay the freight. Has a familiar market  
ghost returned? "I don't know what they own  
or how they make their decisions."

Animal prints  
are hot. Computer. Bass response.  
Concerns raised by community leaders  
and others unfamiliar two years ago.

## Pro. Sem.

Extraordinarily adept,  
the highwaymen  
glide wave-like  
in fields of unkind,  
sordid endeavor:

"To service the loon we must have proof  
that the markings you put down  
can be pinned to your identificatory tooth,  
once removed. You must be  
undimmed in your affections  
for the secret handshake and shoes,  
for without them we are damned, doomed  
to walk to court without riding,  
completely unable to mount."

## Alone Together: Colony

If subordination implies weakness  
then each embedded clause  
adds another bean  
to our febrile sack.

Make the glazier on your back  
take off his shirt, turn over  
the black empathic pitch,  
cool limey pile.

The air,  
heavy with bricks,  
leans toward the van's rack,  
spilling mannequins into the mock Public  
Garden, accepting  
all equally easily.

Nostalgic Hypochondria: Double Holiday Sonnet for the New Yorker

It's Christmas so I climb into my bigger car,  
bundle up the newspapers and toss them  
among the husky rocks.

You mentioned Cheops, like bird sounds,  
but I can't quite make the bilabial pop and throat clack,  
though fastidious enough.

Had to go see Leventhal,  
so I figured I might as well see Tesser,  
so I got two referrals from the Walfish,

who nodded when I told him what they were for,  
settle a few old scores.  
GP fans out into trinity.

Nightmare trip across the fragmented ferment  
of the slate gray sky at night,  
or nearing night,

breath rocketing out in unmentionable  
rasps, condensing under the nose;  
I thought then it was a drip

dipping down toward  
the top raw,  
kind of bloody maw.

A little hesitation stepping off the sidewalk,  
a little bread broken into the waveletted life  
of wiry shore birds, coordinated diving, stopping off.

Most's has closed,  
Stern's has dropped its veil  
everything's  
on sale.

New Jersey: Poem for the New York Times Magazine

Since it's all pig shit,  
turf

controls the criticism,  
grapeseeds

smother wineries,  
querulous jackrabbit

bites  
sink skin.

25 is the new 30.  
Sensibility is the new sense.

Deb's picks make  
Huppy

Henry  
totally spin.

Domestic Poem

As part of the mix,  
the complexities of academic settings.  
When we got home, the telephone rang.

We punched windows in the side, had to use cutters,  
but they built next to us and chalk flew in the soup;  
they'd hit the water table.

"It's sweet, it's fine," we murmured.  
Young and dopey, our Hope  
got a great table with a great view,  
\$65 cab ride from central Milan.

A freshwater aquarium opens on Lake Superior.  
Fabergé's Kremlin egg made for Duluth, native to the lake's sandy,  
rocky bottom. In Paris, the numbers speak for themselves.  
But eating is not the reason to go there.

### Poem for the New Republic

We are both Jewish like Gertrude and Alice  
and don't practice like them.  
We had to go to that part of the cemetery.  
I suppose it's good that they have one.  
If Louis Zukofsky had died in Paris,  
or had Louis Untermeyer.  
I wonder what Alice had to do when buying the plots.  
Had they bought them together first,  
or did Alice buy them after.  
Or I think it's one plot.  
Anyway, it probably wasn't: Madame, excusez-moi,  
mais ce n'est pas possible d'acheter cet plot.  
It was probably: oui, j'ai besoin d'un terrain  
là-bas.

### Travel Poem

The mall in Washington already too crowded,  
\$990 to see Smashing Pumpkins with our 12-year-old.  
People need the time the Concorde saves. "I don't think  
it would compromise all this at all." A grass-roof building,  
Winter Wolf Discovery, snowcoaches, secret snowscapes, 400 visits  
by snowmobiles attractive, no surprise, quieter (probably  
next summer), banned (hopefully next winter), 60 years later  
dinner at 4:30 for \$5.95. I can't think of the last time  
I've seen a vol-au-vent on an up-to-the-minute  
placard, showcased fat, The Woodland Package.  
Really a profusion of amusements, plush carpets and smoked mirrors,  
a saucer of fricasseed girolles and a tray of canapés.  
I'm afraid to go out, it's only 51, it's cold in the ionosphere.  
Gardens, workshops, government offices,  
courtyards and residences, kiosks and stalls, depots and full days,  
better food, better burro, better said straight out.

### Elders: The Mill on the Floss

Every encounter compromised  
*by lazy acquiescence and lazy omission,*  
*by trivial falsities for which we hardly know a reason,*  
*by small frauds neutralized*  
*by small extravagancies,*  
*by maladroit flatteries,*  
*clumsily improvised insinuations.*

*We live from hand to mouth, most of us,*  
*with a small family*  
*of immediate desires*  
which keep us locked in an insane nursery,  
*we do little else than snatch a morsel*  
*to satisfy the complaining brood—*  
*infirme elu.*

AS ISMENE

## ADOLESCENCE AND STASIS (CR0<sub>2</sub> VERSION)

Mirror mirror  
metrical thirds split into a chorus  
emanating from a small oracle,  
bludgeoned by the heart's coracle.  
Bragged about making the loft scene,  
German diaspora.  
Dictated nightly,  
subordinated to the process and the needs of others,  
which mostly take care of themselves,  
albeit with resentment, the pretty little shits  
aren't good enough, and the bill in fact arrives,  
drawn by the anthropomorphicized coil  
rejected at the white ceramic bottom.  
Just troping—no actual  
first-order content.  
Volk vérité.

No, you wouldn't prevent me,  
but I get a sense of your authority—  
peremptory, extending the superhuman arm  
purveying a dignified alienation leavened by private gestures,  
rich sagacious rituals.  
Your process, though, is preserved, 8-sided,  
octagonal yet hilariously made nasal,  
corrupted by poor inputs.  
Turned and ran a runnel  
in the roseate, streaming  
in the flowers, courtyarded  
and protected, but still  
subject to outer influences.  
And after I wanted the tapes in my vault;  
the correspondences are incredible but undiscovered.

Without access to anything  
beyond a vague feeling of responsibility for materiality,  
a chromed-out legacy, we remain partnered in this, a half-hearted  
reaching out across the milk-deprived squad car.  
After a perfunctory exchange and a heated  
seat, took  
refuge in the oddly  
masculinist meters of the 70s.  
Wept into the fireplace,  
watched the desired  
maternal recoil anchor the backlash,  
force the remaining  
members into  
the livingroom,  
constantly tugging  
toward mourning.

It's all been rehabilitated,  
but remains troubled, interrupting,  
popping up in the dark.  
Menaced by Viktor Frengut daily,  
opened up the drain and saturated  
the faders with the production of poetry,  
toweling my back before  
the knob clamped  
down. Ah, no, I sat  
drinking my eggcream,



no, a blackcherry, no,  
a cream,  
curved  
unmentionable-  
botabolism, craggy  
untuskiphant.

Dimly switched and took Michael Graves  
as far as possible without debasement,  
color-coded alcoves of discovery:  
weak, strong, disorganized.  
Hardly a breakthrough granted,  
a croak folded, on foot or flatback  
on the wall,  
lingering,  
literally getting paid to sit, leaving.  
Did you, hun,  
get, I mean, unlock  
the gate?  
Afternoon's slope recanted,  
gently breeched  
the car window of the yellow car,  
the bumper passive in defense.

## TEST PRESSING (TRYING ADMIRING)

Miles Champion immensely moving.

Miles Champion of speed blows doors off New York.

Poets silent in New York as switchy Miles talks beautiful blue streak.

American poets sheepish as truly royal Brit out and over does them.

Miles Champion pipes tune that drives the kids wild. BKS irradiates kindness.

Allusive poem declares micro-allegiances, fails to reach Champion accord.

Monsieur le pilot, Miles Champion arrives, is immediately appointed to Cornell, infuriating young American poets.

Compositional Miles owns Matching Mole's Little Red Record and the first Germs record on vinyl. Brian lights a cigarette. I own Hunky Dory on vinyl with the original inner-sleeve, but keep my mouth shut. I also used to have the "cowboy cover" Man Who Sold the World. I'm starting to sound like a poet who works in prose sometimes, whom I admire. Better dig in my spikes.

Brian sheened and I admired him, as Miles Champion explained about the speed.

Miles and Brian, tall thin men take Manhattan.

I make comparisons between Miles Champion and performance poets. Allusions and outerwear. Thus more people compare Anselm Berrigan to Beck than either to Mace. This may be an example of paternalist criticism.

Miles Champion innocently asleep between Brian's two beautiful sisters.

Miles Champion unimpressed and tolerant as I point out McKim, Mead & White post-office and prattle.

Brian allowed himself to be kissed, but he was drunk. He was kissing everyone good-bye at Charlus's book party. Miles Champion's Carcanet release was not available. I call Charlus Charlus affectionately.

I thought Miles Champion's allusion to the "diabetic poetics of Brian Kim Stefans and Steve McCaffery" was funny and apropos. Political uncertainty kept others at the famous secret bar from laughing.

Miles Champion claims to have lost his New York School veneer. I salute him from here.

## AFFORDANCE: MAINE VACATION, OR THIS LIME TREE BOWER, MY PRISON

Wednesday

Mowed vs. unmowed areas. Flower bed.  
To hear the nut break with a crack and thump,  
slight pain in the lower back, crow  
caw. Route 230 by-pass, not new  
sentient autohagiograpes, side-long  
glance from a full-packed van. Lilies fading  
and lilies verdant, ant crawl, the three  
trees' twining and purling—whose  
belongs to each, who can't be teased?  
Stuck in the chair. Dead branches hang on.  
Clear-cut stretch of waterblastic embroia.  
Apple trees distant, trunk of oldest concrete  
back-filled, phloem through  
the hollow. Bronchorragia.  
Cat pill, cute, caleb, lieb, lank, lunk.  
Small planned bush. Dead leaf strew, high grass  
catching branches uncaught stirring  
striving vine. Veal siding.  
Cheap van. Fly down. Indistinct  
grass grove, small coppery berry  
bund, stray beech whistle, mourning  
dove passel dive. Shift so back  
legs can wrap chair legs, disproveable gravel  
spray, uncomfortable unapproach. \$12.95,  
the mall in Washington already too crowded, truck  
supine. "Frozen returning from visiting."  
"Frozen..." 1813. Several broken but not  
desecrated. Fort Lauderdale trembles  
along the coast, forces boats up  
the intercoastal through Bass Harbor,  
Seal Harbor, Swans Island,  
Cranberry Island and further  
ununiversalizables. Affords apples,  
the trees' round arches arc  
around the red-bottomed fruit and full  
cottony leaves, fenced round, o,  
second pass rounder, squat fuller, littlest fecunded,  
small transformer resistor, caw, and caw,  
small grey visoring wagon, pickup  
with mower's stainless angled poke.  
Hum. AC low. Fiberglass cracks seabland  
white. Gravel seems dumped, mailboxes,  
dual-function tri-colored patriots,  
the slip of smooth clear blue, no waste  
so vacant. Must or urine soaked be break  
the flowered husk vent the bottomed  
tea. Jerry's pipe suddenly on hand, snuff,  
gone wicked puff, the gum chewed against nicotine,  
x-es tattooing the scalp for proper aim.  
Nine doctors make San Francisco surrealists  
suffer seal yawp bicoastally, the entire  
room in stitches to tell the truth. Dig  
down denizens, dog, dap, dab, damp, dump, dose.  
Car cross. Heavy Chevy Volvo bevvy.  
Nut top found in water crushed in pocket  
cooks the mint bees frozen. Confixor  
confessor. Long shuttering ham to tractor.  
In head life plow. Supperating fin  
tam tom. John Revolva. The moor,  
anemic corn, hard top. Came from tap  
to jazz—capezio cloud, cap, tights, bottled  
lethe lap, longing look, sssp. Yellow  
aspen smock. Crow hits branch hard,  
pronging back and forth on fallow  
barkless beam. Orange cab lilies sway.  
Smarm collective.

Thursday

Pull that ad. Add the ab I ablated. Bed of lilies.  
There aren't two r<sub>s</sub> in patisserie honey bunny.  
The fence is bent, wire mesh, washed by water  
drops, rusting the upper threads with acidic  
spurl. A sole flag flaps over light mud  
grave. White Mercedes van-like, rather  
steel grey. Locked in a look with me. Drop  
in tension. The green drilled stakes stook  
the circle out, thicker when set. Endless  
occurrences afford sustained conscious acts,  
cursive on the leaves, symbols scratched  
on third International whiz green, related Valiant.  
The route a by-pass, the sun a sink. A single  
engine torquing eddies of air, bumping  
ventrally the glass cove; one tree's  
stripped, another's mossy. A clump of bushes  
also seems planned. The soft mountains,  
the hard backs of the trees that describe  
their arcs. Raise my g&t to the blue Subaru,  
causing eye contact conflict encapsulated  
levinastically. Red stump, basal butterfly.  
These responses are all mine.

Friday

Aquamarine Jetta pass, fast. Ant drop,  
no thump unless majorly amplified, unless  
an ant. Covered in marjoram orally, baked  
naked. Crickets chirruping Englishly.  
Coals glowing fiendishly, splattering nitrites.  
Moss patches like paint. Long  
bed of lilies and grasses,  
tender sentry of the drive. Sole fir. Tick-  
less. ~~Crunch~~ repeated crunch. Stir.  
"The small sabbath of the leaves"—Lousse's  
garden, ain't you aiming to reach it, aw  
caw blow by brow back. Early spotting blue Ford,  
turned over old boat, red Chevy mute and still,  
small outcropping by base is not weeds. Poles  
unchanged since telegraph times. Crickets  
gathering (force). Broken-off treated wood.  
Green Suburban-like, then blue Subaru taken on  
the rise, eyelock and then release. The chair's  
afforded sightlines altered. Mossy mostly interred  
stone, partial visage, moon faces, stick bedecked.  
Canoe-topped green Suburban, white Ford  
boat trailing pick-up, dark Lumina.  
Setting sun frames ancient mostly erect  
apple tree, actual MG roadster.  
Clump of lily-like flowers. Picking up the  
pickup through the three-twined torsos,  
seemingly in Matisse-like motion. Can't  
give up for cold. Yellowed leaf. Fine  
brown on otherwise green. Febrile swamp  
maple, brackish unextended unapproach  
must unreproducible be. The line  
of higher and lower grasses,  
desiccated bed-like  
signals to the tired body as the thin stella  
plane emerges, plain milk-like,  
chousing garishly toward no note,  
chair impressions. Lengthen  
legs, shift lap, lenchen.  
Can't wait, Jøtul,  
must go, murmurs  
inside, unbasking  
tide, knife  
slap on board.

## SNOW

I called; I  
held; I feel  
difficultly.

True remarks  
course through  
closed cans,

cloven  
low clowning, cave  
and cape;

proprietary  
flat  
flake.

## AMICUS BRIEF

Life imitates art  
art for art's sake  
ut pictura poesis  
civita Farnese.

Lishu in the garden  
bosen during day  
fall down dark  
up again zen.

## FOR A RABBIT

hut        nest  
          den  
          burrow

hut        thatch  
          rags  
          invention

## THE LECTURE

First  
thoughts  
afford  
expectations,  
not models  
exactly (meaning

anger  
on account of spurned beauty) but  
errors of the once  
much admired:  
terrible burnt cork smell,  
ephedrine dried.

I get a sense of your wisterity,  
hyacinthocity, some rant  
or  
experience  
I'm having  
I can't organize myself.

The merits of having something to work  
out or address,  
fluctuating grandiosity—  
defensive,  
elaborated,  
sequenced.

Took it out on the Boesendorfer,  
a sort of "An Die Musik"  
for newly minted Adèsian interpreters.  
Moved the lecture from the month of the death to the fall,  
a more wonderfully abstracted memorial,  
fully elaborated material.

There were three  
caskets:  
gold, white  
gold, silver,  
platinum,  
lead.

The first  
contained several Bronzino reproductions.  
The second, if confronted with such a speech,  
flushes out the false notes,  
a brilliant detection of the pathetic,  
asbestos mixed with plaster for green ceiling burial.

He chooses the leaden casket—  
the star of youth,  
"the Pole-star's  
eldest boy"  
but  
let

us  
be  
content with Cordelia,  
Aphrodite,  
Cinderella,

and Psyche.

Anyone  
might make  
a wider survey,  
could undoubtedly  
discover other versions  
of the same theme,

preserving the same three  
essential features, completely  
inner-directed. If we  
have the courage to proceed  
in the same way,  
the third's certain peculiar qualities

might strike us as excellent:  
a flurry of work about 19th century New York;  
utopia in Frankfurt; and something Steve  
said Mallarmé said ("Mes larmes; they're arming!")  
might make the transference never beaver,  
take us through the next renewal.

Comparisons between the work of figures  
never known and Alan or Amy,  
a nominal easiness that allows a tossing off,  
a sort of fussy numbness,  
a tincture shot under derma,  
a blister puck risen to absorb the rays.

The three princesses asked for a sound-  
proofed room, three separate alcoves  
off a common area.  
Perfidy. The external factor  
which may be described  
in general terms as frustration, meaning

being  
unmet, stethoscope trumpeting fate  
in a flush of broken capillaries.  
Substitution, a methadone  
for the understanding,  
a neo-vagina for the birth-cathected

Oedipus, the possibility of falling ill  
arises within limitations imposed on the field,  
despondent prize of accessible  
satisfactions. Frustrated,  
pathogenic, dammed  
up and explosive,

lack of response transforms  
physical tension into active energy  
toward the external world,  
eventually  
exhorting a real satisfaction—  
attainment of aims

no longer erotic,  
realized in men's lives.  
This is the Zurich school, regression  
along infantile lines  
falling ill, fulfilling the demands  
of reality.

Perfidy. Poems as screen  
memories. An evidential  
dream. My crumb my  
mansion, my stanza  
my stone; a visit of the partner's,  
a room for our privates.

Tantalus  
in brown wood,  
ceiling beams  
glimpsed  
through lathing, 130 years  
of roasting and freezing,

a cryogenic  
nursery, virulent pastures  
probably  
raising a fresh  
turkey for trussing,  
knowing what we know

about butchering  
and salting.  
Bird fussing.  
Fertility  
in a  
mountebank.

## RECORDING OVER (FOR BRIAN KIM STEFANS)

I might bask for a moment in the departed  
and what's left,  
when gone for a moment, and gone  
for good. The quick traces  
left in the falling  
wake,  
the bedded pause,  
light up and fade of lexical access  
carried the crates into the back,  
under the extended eaves.  
Each slat let in a broad channel of air  
to cool the flies gently drawn across the table,  
slowly spreading as if tiny air postulators  
spinning in toward the moon,  
a pile of moons—I mean the fruit,  
fired in idealized shapes.

There are structures in the mind  
beyond emotion, which is very hard to fake, beyond delight.  
You are beaming beyond eros and the actual stuff,  
mohair and camel hair,  
that singed lamb smell, ephedrine  
dried. But you break it for me.

I said I would read “Stare into the Common  
Joy” if I did this, and here, peering  
through the poor circles of an invented scrip,  
\$5 co-payment. Filed  
down to cart height,  
sticking to the stamp,  
bursting into code,  
feeling for the lamp,

I cast aspersions toward complete kinesis,  
but still lay prone to mastoid insult,  
salinous and sodden. The air  
makes clear the lost tenting space;  
aestheticised passing out astonished  
little helps, the fairest things  
vanished into unclosed  
smiling air, rotting bosc.  
Into every vacuum seethes someone  
willing to make tiny, horrendous  
orders, the flow itself  
blotted lightly,



only, when un-  
coagged, to thicken again at the first sign of movement,  
as if to exhaust itself had been a posture,  
an exceptional position it does not occupy.

Tosses  
thoughts in the air  
like incarnate tennis balls,  
pompeiiian  
ash come  
to life,  
rushing up too much  
too easily. Porters  
walking tragic,  
shiny buttress flies,  
mirrors under buses,  
papers under flies,

We trade speeches as the B61 blows by  
on Bedford; I stick the speakers  
on either side of the mic  
and cover the mass with a towel,  
losing the pans.