

Love Poems to the Poet's Body

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Abstract

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This is an abstracted narrative of recuperation. These poems attempt to salvage a body marked by physical and cultural violence. Beginning with a series of "love poems" that address the body as an other, the poems move through the body's interior, caressing its organs, and finally examining its surface, repairing and rebuilding as best they can. The project of its reclamation is both incomplete and contested under the assumption that there are some words and some bodies that might not be reclaimable. But my queer body was intact within the wreckage of my queer self, and it could be written. If I succeed at anything, I want it to be in the form of an *écriture faggot*. "Here is my homo / glossia." Like an *écriture feminine*, this faggot writing is the necessary outcome of the necessity of faggot writing faggot. And so I write my body to write myself.

LOVE POEMS TO THE POET'S BODY

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SCULPTED & SPLAYING INTO ANASTROPHE

I feel apart from
man & woman
& child posing
waiting for passer
by waiting for can you
take our picture apart
from wait let me
try let me rack this
waiting for I
solemnly
swear
for death do us
in at the last
minute waiting
for something
to load me
into the
back of a
truck & haul
me to the edge
of exactly that
waiting for edge
for street corner
for line up a
part from man up
start they say
the situation is
unavoidable haul
me place me on one
leg spinning I
need to not
make need
something
not of use let
me try let me botch
this poem this body
let me worship
the useless bits

I. LOVE POEMS TO THE POET'S BODY

“—Let me tell you everything, rapidly through my thirst—”

— Julie Carr, *Rag*

THIS AUBADE IS A DOGGEREL MESSY & UNHINGED

Hello body I'm surprised
you don't have so many open
ings so many let
me ins hello sirmadam
I've been trying to take
care of this sink
hole in the bottom
of the body
of they call it
me & likening one
thing to itself
is the pervasive
of what we did try we
opened our
mouths &
confession I
know you are un
lovable body
I'm writing this
attention for
your span
you are
lonely chicken
scratch of
a change in
tense body
in need of
message

BODY IS A DAFFODIL I STARE & SNIFF EVERY CHANCE I GET

If this sadness is a form
of resistance then
we're doing very
well body & it's a matter
of integrity a matter
of meter the output
of how much we haven't
been saying to one an
other in the span of time
spent not wondering about
the output of what
we have been signaling
to ourselves & what
would that be body

STARVED & EXPERIMENTAL BODY SEEKS SAME

Such lovely emac
iation body
began as
change in
scenery as
take me
to the beach &
whatever you do
body don't watch
as I take on the
form of
exactly what you
wanted an
outcome of those
starvation charts I
made when I was
seven

BODY LIKES TO ROLE-PLAY SOME EVENINGS

Up again
st the wall
body I've
been re
searching for
a means
to a
re
start
of the engine
looking for
is there
neutralized
zone is there
connective
tissue hold
ing us
is this
vital
organs
is this
reproductive
mannerisms
is this
thing
your ep
ider
mis is
this spread
eagle is
this a break
age in per
form
ativity
you repeat
actions you
repeat

A BODY LOVE APOLOGETIC

You can't ask for
help body & I
can't give unless
asked an unin-
tended consequence
of a curse from
when I was
nine which isn't
the only curse but
the only I'm allowed to
remember from
when I
was nice
but things
have changed
& now
I treat all
of my parts
with equal
consternation
harried
legs un-
shaven
touch touch
& sigh

ITEM FROM LOVE QUESTIONNAIRE SCRIBBLED ON OUR ARM

What does
it mean to
personify you
body this self
a plant
dutifully
watered

I GUESS WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT OUR FEELINGS

You be
come a holo
gram body is your
dangerous meat in
cold storage now a
projector every
where you go
unfortunate
reliance on
light mechanics
you don't under
stand body
we've gone be
yond particulars
& somehow
arrived at similar
conclusions

this is the meat
this is your meat

**BODY HAS PROBLEMS WITH MY LANGUAGE I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH
BODY'S LANGUAGE**

Apologies for the
interrogation body
but I have to fill
out this question
naire to deter
mine eligi
bility for repa
rations if you
could rank your
damages on
a scale of
1 to 4

BODY IN EXPENSIVE HEELS THE STUDS A BIT WORN

Body on strike body
is revolting a
dissident mon
ument refuse
d to eat to drink
to brush teeth to
say hello to
strangers
lost your
charm body
home in you
occupied in
me an uncanny
force forcing
you into strange
clothes lipstick
nail polish high
heels from room
mate clothes quarters
in bra holding up
fat you would
come to lose
I am ten & in bed
on my back
legs in air
you want to
be a woman body
& I said yes
be a body
& forgot to say
you're wel
come tried
on mother's
floral dresses
mother's high
heels mother's
cubic zirconium
body became

pregnant with
mother's nega
tive thinking &
remained in
bed with her
watching Two and
a Half Men &
said I could
be not a
body I
called you over
ly sentimental it was
out of line senti
mental is already
overly

BODY MY LOVE FOR YOU HAS ME ON MY KNEES

Taken up by your
virulent strain of
sadly moving
along a line of
bodily action
kinesthetic is the
one involving move
ment action is a
violent state English
is a violent lang
uage fertilize is a
violent word & you
wanted to be a
victim of it body
you took a bus to
a gated commun
ity on your knees on
the manicured lawn
licked the fertilizer
from the ground
licked the rotten
leaves licked
insect corpses
I licked

YOU DREAM OF BEING TAKEN APART I DREAM OF GUTTER LOVE

You've surprised me
body growing inward & outward
day to day but you keep the outward
to yourself & everyone is thinking
diet pills but your skin can't keep hold
my hands can't keep holding the parts of
body that are falling off in the kitchen
piece by piece yesterday it was the fat of your
back before it was the fat of your teeth
before it was the fat of your thighs before
you forgot to mention the dream you had
when I was nineteen an age I don't remember
because I didn't care to think of
dreaming of me andering down the plumbing

BODY HAS DISCOVERED THE SECRET IN SADNESS

Sexual body you
have me sexual
ized body you
have filters for
all of your sad
body I have
your sad sown
into me body
we reap this
resistance look
at body I say
& cheer
& cheer
at body
form of com
plaint com
pliance
I don't know
what to do
with all of
this attention
it's usurped the
poem body &
it's for the
beast

BODY IS A HOT MESS

I love your dys
function body
remember to
flinch to hide
switch marks with
loose clothing
psychosomatic
is just another
way of saying
I love you
neurons in
the skin re
call recoil
muscle memory
can only be
trysted in
case of emerge
ncy press fin
ger to thigh
hold for
thirsty seconds
you eat as
if raven
ous body
chew softly
no one will
take the poem
from you

THE CLOSER I LOOK THE MORE YOUR HER IS SHOWING

I have you anthro
pomorphized
into an anim
atronic shell body you
carry it on your
back the better
to break us with
a lonely
a mimetic
a stable
boy is
what you
were in a
previous
life a
shamed of
your her
itage of
your insis
tence upon
breaking down
walls body
& expo
sing in
appropriate
circum
stances
think of
repent
of revoke
of class act
ion law
suit
think of
and do it
any
way

**I COULDN'T AFFORD TO NAME A STAR AFTER YOU BODY SO I WROTE A
DICTIONARY ENTRY INSTEAD**

You are term mean
ing the position w
here two plains meet
body you hide your dic
tionary self to the det
ritus of everyone in
voked historically
speaking there is
precedent for being
mistaken for
litigious when
all you wan
ted body was re
kindle your mar
riage with a
bit of juris
prudence that's
all it
takes they
said at the
meeting bet
ween div
orcees in
which all
parties in
volved a
greed to
partition pen
chant position &
forget vocabulary even
fictive body you are
prone to stagnant

THIS IS THE SEXIEST LOVE POEM I CAN WRITE

I'm so
tired body
is exhaust
ion a sym
ptom or a
cause I feel
effected
by this do
you feel it
too body en
croaching on
waking to
rolling over
tired moments
I mean a con
stant re
membering in
monuments
reject reject
reject reject
eject ejac
ulation
is that a
symptom or a
syntax body
do you
remember the
man you
loved who
was all
ergic to
his own
semen I
feel like
that with
you

YOU'RE A HANDSOME BODY COME HOME WITH ME

I know I can be ped
antic body forcing
you into form in out
up down large small
small small smaller
& to what end
I can't speak can't
seek can't art
iculate you were
always better with
words body

let
me wrack this
ability to distinguish
between this & that
sense of self there

was
a time when I could be
mistaken for unfortunate

chance
change in

terse body
product is an appropriate
way to say I love you
& I do yes I
eat meat I
kill I shop
lift identity
for you body
despite
never un
derstanding your

ability to
change in
size & shape

your
ability to
change in
tense for
whom to
what
grammar

I HAVE A LOT OF FEELINGS I NEED A WHOLE HAND TO COUNT THEM

I've tried listening to you
body but
with endless distractions
your tick tock
body your
metronome rhythm
me body a
clock with optical allusions
you it does
pulse you it
does sing
& I hear
apart from
nothing
faint whisper
faint whisper
a body on
display the
clack of heels
the sigh of
make-up
made-up with
body feels
a slight
test thud
a noticeable
movement in
chest
trimmed
me is
what I've
given you
body

& what of
return what
is your return
policy
I hear a
return with
in thirty
days
endless
compli
cations
deri
vations
what to
return with
receipt
but there
is no
don't leave
hospital
without
proof of
purchase
I didn't hear
a choice
what are
options body
do you work
for them
with it you're
a worker b
ody is that
why
I can't
won't hear
with all this noise

**BODY I'M DESPERATE I'M WRITING LOVE MARGINALIA LOVE POEMS
MARGINALIA POEMS**

I.

Are you mar
ginal body
refusing to
take up
space but
of course I've
made you this
way in at
tempts to
not sure how
to say body in
terms you will
understand don't
take this the
wrong way I don't
intend to
disparage but
I can't recall if
large words can
cross the blood
brain barrier

II.

In terms you can
understand body
this line of quest
ioning is appendix
on the verge of
bursting but not
quite & frozen
body in a constant
state of almost
& this uncer
tainty is our

vulture or was
it a crow pecking
at organs that
never decrement
no matter how
we try &
returning each
day like a lover
the vulture or crow
continues & what
have you to show
for it bits of
skin on the ground
that take root &
grow upward
a haphazard structure
becoming less under
standable the
closer you
look
but in
viting you
all the
same

BODY YOU SHOULD BE FLATTERED I MEAN FLATTENED

I've spent years un
sexing you body &
in love & in fear &
in & out & above &
into something body
born of violence
out of into & other
prepositions &
propositions &
I have daydreams of
intellectualizing you
body in unbecoming
verbs & assuming
nouns & on a
lectern bent over
so as to
better see the
margin notes

A BODY GRAMMAR HANDBOOK

Repeat again I love
repeat again I love
but in what manners
what to wear
what to touch
can I borrow a
body grammar
handbook a
reference guide
here is my homo
glossia you &
I on floor licking
your language
licking my
language licking
your language
licking my
language do
you like it on
your adverbs
your antecedents
& what about
my adverbs
my ancestors
illiterate
I've spent ages
writing to you
body in emails
texts letters missives
legal documents
open letters
love letters
I've given speeches
in my head
given speeches
to empty rooms
I put a pillow
in a chair

& called it you
& spoke to you
through the pillow
in the chair I
put you in
a chair &
called to you
I put you
in the tub &
washed you
gently
I took you
to the kitchen
to feed you
I took you
to bed to
hold you
I took you
to sleep to
cure you
I took you to
language to
point you
out in a
sentence
diagram
I remember when
they took part
of you away
from me body
after they were
finished I
found a machine
& put you
inside of it
& found even
more of you
to love

II. THE POET'S GUIDE TO VISCERA

"There is nothing more useless than an organ."

– Antonin Artaud

LIVER

Language filter. Replace every six months. Admire the clog of body's words remove them from the filter and consume them back in. Vomit them in a language sick. The sickness cured me. Cured of what. What of loneliness. Liver are you lonely. Liver are you there. Are you there Liver, it's me.

Liver in an attempt to disrupt loneliness grabs the vegetarian options though not vegetarian. Liver thinks the woman looking at frozen assorted vegetables is vegetarian & wants to impress. Look at my veggie burgers. Do you want to see my abs.

Liver dreams of living. Liver dreams of leaving. Liver goes under the knife. Elective surgery to be rid of language. Liver pretends to like it. Sliced out. Sluiced. Iced. Liver is rolled around in a wheelbarrow. Taken to the park. Taken to the ferris wheel. Taken to the coffee shop. Taken to the university. Taken to the car dealership. Taken to the hotel. Taken to the restaurant. Taken to the zoo. Taken to the water. Taken to the library. Taken to. This is the life.

TRUE RIBS

Define lone. A lone is a small bird perched in the chest cavity. Feelings of despair can be traced to the lone pecking nearby tissue.

Use lone in a sentence. My lone is really acting up today.

Define loneliness. Loneliness is a flock of lones. Their formation is reminiscent of the carrier pigeon.

Use loneliness in a sentence. The loneliness was majestic until shot down by hunters, one by one.

PANCREAS

Both & neither & pancreas you
remind me of myself & body &
you are but are not & oh I can't
quite make distinctions anymore
& I'm not trying when younger I
would chart days & motions &
keep track of bodies I liked &
disliked & bodies I wanted to
know & bodies who hurt body &
pancreas you're a sweetheart
listening to me you're busy
keeping charts of your own
secretions & excretions & what's
the difference but I do care where
your fluids go but direct or
indirect or can it be both has to be
I long to be drawn out on a couch
next to you pancreas show you
my secrets these are my sexts that
I show not to priests but to
myself over & again until I stop
seeing patterns & erase tracts of
body I mean queered land pur
chased at a steal

FALSE RIBS

Define erase. An erase is an opening in the body, a gape of one's own making.

Use erase in a confession. I became an erase. I had a nightmare in which I erased body. I was gaping yet mobile. I was disappeared but vocal.

Define erasement. An erasement is a condition of erase in perpetuity.

Use erasement in a sentence. This erasement is avoidable but inevitable.

KIDNEY I

I confess I know little of infection I mean inflection I mean reflection I mean deflection I mean affection I mean affliction I mean benediction I'm no saint no pastor not ordained not online though I took a quiz on Buzzfeed just the once that confirmed I'm a Socialist my parents oh what to tell them when I tell them that I have a kidney I am skilled in filtration I found connection between this & that space between twin & I covered in glitter & bleeding fame & making birthday wishes for being recognized outside of a mirror not drawn not drone not driven to the party of the year in a stretched sonnet taking place in the Victorian era oh those ankles somewhat related the urologist told me it was not cancer & that was a stressful moment but at least I got a poem out of it

KIDNEY II

Coveted in glitter of course I'll undress for
the camera redress for the you know red
dress for hello there I feel guilty for having
sexual closet space & I've come a long way
from posting nudes to 4chan in hopes of
but still I dream of a sex tape with Andy
Samberg with what camera do we film
ourselves brushing teeth doing dishes
poorly putting in laundry detergent in
skimpy clothing download apps read about
the dangers of high heels wear anyway
open message from serial killer in hotel
room offering oral sex in the event of the
advent of advantageous erroneous errrrrrr
or lavish domestic spaces in which we hang
our art sleep on floor did I miss a spot
welcome to the artist enjoy your stay

STOMACH

Take in animal parts to sustain animal parts. Take in plant parts to sustain plant parts. Take in to sustain to take.

Measure day in growth & contraction. A means of self-shortening. Bend over in form of apostrophe. Accept strange looks. Bend over toilet over bin over plate. Move things around. Abuse with painkillers. Drink nothing for two days.

Measure ages seven through nine in contraction & contraction. It is possible to continually decrement. Everything has a half life.

Everything has life, stomach said, & now I take care to nudge the rocks. Place leaves gently. Arrange things neatly beside crow bodies. Eat though guilty. Though inefficient. In hospital, pause before ordering. Inquire about tubes.

Expel the following in sequence: bird, fish, rabbit, bullet, old t-shirt, pit of apple, slip of note, slice of cheese, sip of wine, slit in body, excrement, excitement, excruciate, crucifixion, fixation on waist, waste, addiction, diet pills, bagel with cream cheese.

You think on your own & deter mind shifting of thinking of shitting of shedding of eating of yes body is insatiable & you

LARGE INTESTINE

Con // art // parts //
sustain // evolution // not
// know // n // Take
// ake // Me // in //
con // action. Con // actions
// a // self // sure // in //
traction & // action // I //
decrement // Everything //
A // feel // a // nudge
// a // gently // A // though
// a // though // i //
i // i // rab // i // d // i // pit
// i // i // slit // in // ex // ex
// ex // cru // x // fix //
addiction // thin // k //
y // o // n d // e // r // in //
sh // ing // th // ing // sh //
ing // sh // ing // e // ing //
bo // y is in sat
iable

SMALL INTESTINE

Co//art//stain//v
olution//not//no
w // Me//con//
a//Con//act//a//s
elf // action//
action//I//decre
ment//Every //
feel // // rab//
i//d//slit//in//thin
//ing//th//ing
bo//y is in//able

PELVIS

Define excrement. A decrease or deletion, especially one of a series on a fixed scale.

Or, the opposite of increment.

Or, the perfect form of decrement.

See also the purpose of consumption

See also ideology

Use excrement in a grovel. Excrement, I humble before you: decrement me, decrement me.

APPENDIX

[A] I love the way you don't. I love the space you've left. Without you I'm lonely. You can return to me. Crawl through rough mouth. I was a young mouth taking consistent overdoses of painkillers. I had a prescription prescribed on some manner of parchment. Take 1000 mg when thirsty.

[B] Adrift without you. A drift is another way of saying a shift in understanding is another way of saying function is another way to prove. But what.

[C] Appendix a small child. Trained early to notice linguistic patterns. I am to only love things beginning with B. I have made it a short way down the alphabet. Beat by bat. Stung by bee. Pecked by bird. Alternately fucked & shunned by B. B is for Boy. Boy is for appendix is for I lack is for Freudian fuck you.

[D] I fell in love with
Appendix so mother &
father had it removed.
Just a small incision. It
will hurt me more than
it will hurt you. After I
wake I eat chicken from
the hospital cafeteria
with green jello. Jello on
top. Jello falls on arm.
Lick off. I eat little.
Nurse writes that down.

VERTEBRAE

Define obtuse. [Archaic.] A form of knowing with a blunt instrument.

Use obtuse in a rhyming couplet. A childhood victim of obtuse / now rather enjoys the abuse.

SPLEEN

Splendor spleen are you yellow ornate in construction & always there for me for example in the restaurant for example in the park for example on a date for example under the bridge for example & I want to write stories about you in domestic circumstances but you're not domesticated spleen not house-trained not prepared to wear an apron to use the toilet take out the trash listen to how was my day lie on surfaces lie about how you like it separate compost from garbage from recycling from what to put in mouth & what about what comes out of mouth I think we have a lot in common but really I don't know you that well where are you from spleen did you go to college do you have a favorite postmodernist what of your politics you did what to whom under influence of what substances did you inhale do you like rain do you like thunder do you like men do you like me check yes or no what is your favorite color are you well are you happy in your position in life in capital in boss's productivity chart did you decorate your cubicle for Christmas Halloween Easter Thanksgiving did you meet your customer service quota today are you in debt should I be concerned what have you given up to make your student loan payments do you sleep naked are you serious are you silly spleen are you sufficiently Americanized when was the last time you went to Burger King are you vegetarian do you like muscles what is your kind of music do you keep track of your finances are you a top or a bottom are you versatile in your schedule at work have you ever missed a payment did you hit pets as a child are you angry what is your opinion on violence the death penalty prisons war drones shooting an overdose of I love you do you think of me often describe yourself in five words or less do you want me do you want forever are you a cat spleen or a dog spleen

STERNUM

Define garbage. A genus of herb known for its medicinal properties. In recent usage, the term can also be a verb: to garbage.

Use garbage in a contemporary sentence. I write poems to him her he she we they garbages & everyone is thankful because we have so much of it.

Explain the contemporary sentence. I write poems.

HEART

Potential space to stitch up
 feels I mean electrical
current I mean reckless
 in bed I mean I know
you in sound from man met
 on OkCupid I mean
fix up which is distinct
 from hook up I mean
I have some heart but
 not a lot of heart I mean
I'm not complimentary
 I mean not domestic
here is a reminder that
 heart rhythms are
a metonym for
 your machine is lovely
& loved & we are
 attuned to your electrical
motions they are lovely
 are alive & pretending
to be happily but this
 endless circulation
this work
 this work
 I tire
 quickly
 & turn off the light &
dream of saying yes to
 the man on Adam4Adam
in the banana suit snuggling
 up with the banana suit
reaching under the banana
 suit taking off the banana
suit & trying it on when
 he leaves for work
in the morning

LUNG I

This endless circulation this work this
work question answer cog in productive
outcomes now I'm every where
welcome to the queer opportunities
section boy look in mirror body look at
sitcom & find reflections of lung
everywhere & happily & happily &
sadly & sad & there's a gay icon for that
videos images reflections of something
not present question no answer lung a
scapegoat for body a scapegoat for in
out this endless circulation this work
this work

LUNG II

Even the exhaustion is ex
hausting

CRANIUM

Define work. The observable the unobservable the machinic and all that shines.

Use work in a sentence. They go to work to work so as not to work.

Redefine work. I'm trying.

CEREBRUM

Here is
& there
& I
all over

is artificial
this passage
this baggage
art baggage
body baggage *I carry this*
around am carried am
carrion

wart is forming
on the left hand

notice the sign in
English & in Spanish

I receive
a man a
package

I like the taste of this
I know only the surface

Make money

Eat food

Avoid taxes

Distinctive

American

Instinctive margin

A quick

fuck

under bleachers yes

& there is trouble

Treble is taking hold of
voicebox

When will your voice
change

Change pitch to pass
I know only the tonal

(Speaking softly)

It will hurt
 You & me
Always in
 Shape of
Man in dress
 I do look
lovely in this

CEREBELLUM

This is the meat. It is everywhere. Lift that from here to here to. It touches. Touch here & here & there. It speaks. Touch yourself three times. Walk faster. Cerebrum reminder walking faster makes you live longer. Internet source. No citation available. Get to work. Increase step height by 2% to accommodate mud. Look at woman. Look at man. Cerebrum reminder suppress erections in public. Lift that down to here. As day goes on cerebellum increasingly confused & alone. Everything touches & moves & you like it admit it lift put down touch gently caress caress & abstain. Cerebrum reminder fluidity is to be expected. Fight only when observed. Eat & return to work. Lift & put down gently. Cerebrum reminder you don't have to understand. Repeat again.

TEETH

Define eat. The verb form of *ear*.

Use eat in a sentence. Can you eat me now?

Define now. I can't.

EYE

yes can i
nhibit pro
hibit sadden
it's too
much

no know thi
nk about the
consequence
wait think a
bout weight

and still cr
ossed into
an uncom
fortable th
at over there
constrained
into a com
fort

want

can you see
my voice

don't think
don't feel
don't know
if this is a
feel

conspicuous
or uncons
picious
can't tell or
eye un eye
un

a reliance to
the detriment
of touch
it's been
so long

when was
the last time
I can't can't
think with
out this sig
nifier of the
signifier I
can't find
the voice

have you
seen my
voice

SKIN

Self flaying an act of *don't say* should I say hoping for should I say reaching for exposure
spread my legs expose body look at *a gesturing* yes a motion of the muscles look at me
darling *I'm here to stay* even when removed you are *but what about* about leaving you *yes*
I mean I do need you but I'd prefer not to *you sculpted me into this sad* at least it was me
& not someone else *at least that* oh don't be upset with me body *who says I'm* I know you
body & know *you know* I know *eye knows* yes but I also & together at last body & I *but*
only a fraction of body a fraction more exposed & sensitive *incomplete & fractured* & overly
dramatic *slough me off slough me* sentimental over thin layers of *me* thin layers of *you* thin
layers of *us* but thin skin & incidental all the same

III. SELF-PORTRAIT VIA MACROSCOPY

“Are you sure—one would like to ask—that it cannot love you back?”

– Maggie Nelson, *Bluets*

Sexuali
zed I

Sexualized wan
der I a lone
body I no I
can't

Sexualized interior wan
der I field damage a recur
rence of lone perched in
dreams a bright body I
refuse no answer no mo
tion I can't

I have a sexualized interior wandering through a field of objects. There is a recurrence of a lone. Am I is or are. In dreams an unnamed forest of bright lights. What I wouldn't give to be made up of photons. Body & I stuck in refuse. No answer. I can't say exactly.

How much person. In which organizational structure. I woke up to a lattice both recognizable &. I barricaded. Surrounded by a forest of objects I didn't understand. This solitude was the beginning of starvation was the beginning of obsessive charting was the beginning of tender was the beginning of repeat after me was the beginning of stop was the beginning of quiet. Is a sexualized interior decorator queerying organs. Body refuses to move on. I ask politely repeatedly but receive no answer. Is it you or is it you.

This poetry is so unconvincing. With a vice. With which curvature can I convince that I. Take it out on the adjacent. I have sexualized tendencies. Memories of a trailer in a field in a town made of glass. Or it was grass. Or it was weeds with yellow flowers. Or it was inadequate. I am a natural wander. Body is multipurpose tangential &. I ask repeatedly politely but receive no motion. This is my regret sexualized. I happily. I sad. Am I too young for this body. How much person does it take to answer questions of a sensitivity nature. I upside-down. I have thought more on it & I have memories of a trailer in a field in a town made of field made of what have you. I bend at an odd angle.

Inadequate in escape in fractal I fractured. All this time with body & I can't put my finger on it. Can't help but. I long for exile. I gathered the objects in my apartment & arranged them neatly around me. Stacked high. Made windows then filled them in with books & bits of paper. Ate all of the food & drank all the water. Renamed all the objects as if they were smaller. I slept. I dreamed of body with a vice in tension with my. Wrote down the dream on the bits of paper. This continued for multiple sleep cycles. I have inconsistency. I have body in a bag designed for garbage. I replace body's parts with objects I don't understand: a blender for a heart, a flip phone for a spleen, fork tines for feeling, spoons bent for palms, coffee pot stomach. Pill bottle brain stem. Ink cartridge gallbladder. Bits of dream-paper for bits of skin. This new feeling is excellent. I can see much more clearly with these awls pointed inward.

I dream so much of body. I run out of small strips of paper. I dream of body in the forest. Things perpetually. Things brighter. Can't help but arrange things neatly in inappropriate places. Teeming with. I wake next to body in the bag. Coffee pot stomach warms in hunger. I replace nerves with wiring & send signals. There is no response & then there is. It takes time to decode. The response says listen. I listen & sleep. In sleep a bodyless in the. I wake & wonder if this is what there is. I poke body to feel. Body feels. I determine each day to replace something of body with the body of something else. I make bets. What will. I send a signal to parts of body. There is no response & then there is. The desire has been there from the beginning. I replace kidney 1 with a porcelain lentil bean. At what point do. I write words on the dream-paper bits of skin. I run out of room & write over previous words. I make new words by layering. How do you say. With feeling. I want to show body but. I sit next to the bag & wait for lucidity to pass because then.

Bodyless in the park. Bodyless in the restaurant. Bodyless under the bridge. Bodyless in consideration of how I feel now & all of the time ever. Today will contain multitudes & body & object-body & I within it. Etcetera. Replace lungs with plastic kitchen bags filled with candy wrappers & bits of string. Replace what's left of skin with thread sewn onto bone & ligament. What will it take to satisfy. With two fingers open body's thread-skin & caress various. I move the objects closer to us. There is very little space now. I think about asking body if it wants to be replaced with objects we don't understand. I decide no. I sift through what's left: needles, bulbs, a bowl, a cup, an electrical outlet, a picture of a small dog, a stuffed animal, chips of paint, a box of bandages, sunscreen, lotion, hair straightener, charger. Make mental notes & forget about them. I use the body bag as a pillow. At what point does rotting begin to. I smile & replace penis with flashlight. Replace lymph nodes with bits of stale cake. Replace fat with balls of lint. I grow tired & want to sleep. I feel ambivalent. I plug the charger into body into the wall & wait.

I sleep despite the charge. I wake. I draw crude patterns on objects with flashlight. I sleep. I wake. I unplug body. Take on the disappearance of. I have this regret sexualized into a flashlight. I have this regret motion regret motive regret in a pinch regret snap regret not regret spoken regret. I have plastic egret as a spine. In sleep I dream of body a great bird of flight in flight surrounded by clouds of thread. Body dives & I narrate. *Poet is territorial. Poet has a plumage of dun. Poet wakes up to find a sad lattice structure put together by.* I wake. Things are becoming perpetually & in a moment I can see that I. I hear a whisper. I move closer to all of the objects. Sounds resembling sounds. I move farther away. I look around. Replace ears with small jewelry boxes. The better to hear you with. I hear not words not sounds only air. Everything is air. Objects speak air. I ask body if it loves & I hear air. I open mouth & hear air. My thoughts are air and are aired look look. I send signals. I ask body if it is a sky. There is no response & then there is. Yes.

I have sad queered into a lattice. I say to myself. Run fingers along the length of the structure's design. Copy the design onto a piece of cardboard with a permanent marker. Show body. Get body's attention. Touch touchtouchtouch touch touchtouch. Body is a lattice. I feel more like. I replace feet with shoeboxes. I feel like more. Something in the body bag moves. The bag teeming with leftovers that won't rot. I should've done this years ago. I say aloud. I shh myself. The bag moves again in a faint. Make note to investigate later. Spend hours untangling thread-skin. The body bag teeming with movement. I write on a piece of cardboard *body with objects for organs* then lose the piece of cardboard. I find another piece of cardboard & write *these organs do nothing and i love them* & sew the piece of cardboard onto shoulder. Replace brain with external hard drive. Beautiful reset. Cover the body bag with a heavy blanket. Tidy up a bit. Look for additional pieces of cardboard & find a bag of glitter instead. Replace kidney 2 with the bag of glitter. Lie down & attempt sleep. Close eyes. Open eyes. Everything is gray & beautiful. From this distance the body bag movements mimic breathing.

NOTES

1. "...place me on one / leg spinning" (page 1) comes from the following passage in *The Book of Frank* by CAConrad: "'why doesn't my son have a cunt!?! / what has happened!?! / what a WICKED world! / DARK! / and spinning / on its one / good leg!'" (3).
2. "Body Has Problems with My Language I Have Problems with Body's Language" borrows language from Jessica Bozek's *The Tales*.
3. "Pancreas" is inspired by "The Laugh of the Medusa" by Helene Cixous.
4. The epigraph to section two is from Antonin Artaud's "To Have Done With the Judgement of God," collected in *Selected Writings* edited by Susan Sontag, quoted by Deleuze and Guattari in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
5. "...body with objects for organs" (page 67) borrows language from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

POETICS OF QUEER/RIVING: A THREADED ASSEMBLAGE

/ 1 / I need to address my body. My object/ed body. My material body. My queried body queered body cleared body. Probe body with language. I queer/ry body. To understand. In queerness. I write love poems to body. And ask questions. As do others. I, too, subject body to uncomfortable situations. We reli(e)ve histories. To rip body from myself. Or me from body. One from the other, back and forth.

/ 2 / I address body. And in addressing, name. There is violence in naming, in the you-ing of someone. Of body (of me). A system of organization in which we form from what we are not. We name to say *not me*. I see violence in it. In what I do to myself: declaring a need to define body, in othering what has become a queer object, in writing love poetry, in the objectification, in the taking-part in oppressive histories of organized love. In calling the poems *love poems*. In setting up a distinction between mind and body. In calling the poems *love poems* thereby being bound to the term and usurping it. Made mine by reclamation by fucking it up. A queer love poetry: The poetry turned inward. Aubade and serenade now directed at the body: from me to me. Leaving and returning to myself. Because the love in poetry requires leaving. The lover leaving or returning to the window.

/ 3 / Is body the window? Is body the object-ed subject on the other side of the window? The clothes a window. The outermost layer of skin. The blood-brain barrier.

/ 4 / If I cut off my head, are these poems for the head-body or the body-body?

/ 5 / Does a love poem need love, or just a sense of direction?

/ 6 / The first time I had sex I was in high school and he was in high school and he was my best friend's brother and I had thought about having sex with him for a long time and he had thought about having sex with me for a long time and we were both very awkward about it. Your legs are hairy, he said. I said, Yes. It hurt. He pulled out when I asked and I was grateful. One room over, my sister and her boyfriend were on the couch watching T.V. and drinking beer. The music was loud because I didn't want anyone to hear what I thought would be loud sex. I knocked over the lamp when I quickly got out of bed because I heard a truck. He went back to his boyfriend. He told his boyfriend that I smelled nice, after which his boyfriend gave me strange looks. He liked his boyfriend more than me because his boyfriend wanted to be fucked in a tree and in the back of a van. His therapist told him to visit a doctor and I thought he gave me HIV because he didn't want to use a condom and I was lonely. Months spent feeling for swollen lymph nodes. My parents had recently gotten me insurance through the state's health care plan for impoverished children, which required parental consent for all doctor visits because of legal objections to teenage abortions. So I did nothing.

/ 7 / A few months later I learned I did not have HIV, but I did have appendicitis. In the hospital, the nurse asks me if I am sexually active. My mother is nearby. I say no.

/ 8 / I have to speak about queerness, but it makes me anxious. In a certain way. Anxious of speaking unitarily of queer identity because in doing so I wouldn't be speaking of a queer identity at all. I mean in writing love poems to myself. To body. Object, as if any body. In trying to conceive something as a whole. Or as a hole. I mean in writing love poems to my queer body as if it were *the queer body*. Because it's not. Because it's mine. Because even in its queerness it's a privileged body. Because my body is finite and my queerness is infinite.

/ 9 / I repeat in my head in a self-murderous rage: *my gender is not my body my gender is not my clothes*.

/ 10 / In the hospital I watch *E.T.* on T.V. while waiting for surgery. Days of being bent over in a pain spiral. The surgery involves three small incisions around the belly button. After the surgery I wake in recovery. In my bed the nurse offers plates of food I can't eat all of it she is concerned the doctor speaks to my mother the loss of my appendix is blamed on my eating habits *anorexia* the nurse pushes more and more Jell-O more chicken more potatoes *diet pills are bad for you* encouraging the body to consume and it can't childhood of eating scraps in the trailer kitchen has given way to an overconsumption *you're getting fat* my father tells me looking in the mirror grabbing chunks of fat in hands and squeezing until bruised. In the hospital I watch football on T.V. while recovering from surgery. I pretend to like it.

/ 11 / I need to look in multiple directions. I need to make the words difficult to pin down. I want a juggling act, moving between intellectual and sensual. Permeating this

narrative with the untidiness of individual moments. I want disruption and discursion as a queer mode. I want to pin myself down as being unable to be pinned down.

/ 12 / In trying to bridge language and the body—in allowing the text to be a metonym for the body—I’m both running away from and towards sentimentality. Love poems without love. Body without organs. Organs without a body. Disturbed by my own disturbance—turned off by my turning away. What I’m skirting around is that I put down, in these poems, a sentimentality which I both defend and offend. In revision, I resist the urge to remove myself from the disembodied body. But only just. And how annoyed I find myself with myself, sentimental and anti-sentimental and anti-anti-sentimental at once.

Which feels situated within Conceptual Poetry’s binary logics and aesthetics. An antagonism of form. Situated, as Kenneth Goldsmith and Craig Dworkin have situated poetry, as *expression* or *against expression*. A purist ideology. Which feels like an offense. Because purist conceptualisms have been getting to me lately. Because no expression. By which is meant sentimentality. By which is meaning declaring the self. As if post-identity. As if identity politics is a synonym for lazy. Because a lot of straight white guys have tried the expression thing. As if expression and identity can be neatly separated. As if my queerness is not inscribed into my self body poetry art the words I say the words I choose how I say them.

/ 13 / I hate my organs. How they make me work by working. Their functionality begets my functionality begets this work this work. I need a poetry of useless tendencies. I want a poetry that could be a Netflix marathon. To binge on poetry. To

(s)wallow and forget. To slough off this skin and everything beneath it. A queered gender performance: a constant shedding. To reflect everything and nothing.

/ 14 / On Valentine's Day a man I hadn't spoken to in a long time sent me pictures of his dick. *I hope you enjoy this little gift.* He sent additional gifts: detailed messages about my body gagged and bound on the bathroom floor to be shared between he and his friends. He stopped sending messages when his partner came home from work. I questioned why I'm always the other queer.

/ 15 / A queer love poetry: a poetry of failure. Failed love. I failed to love myself.

/ 16 / The problem is that I don't know how to refer. To myself. Or how to defer to a name.

/ 17 / Or that is the beauty of it? Am nothing am myself.

/ 18 / A queer self in an ontological state of becoming is desiring to *becoming* a body without organs. For Deleuze and Guattari, a body without organs is one that is moving away from relational identity. An identity located in movements rather than spaces and organizations.

/ 19 / To be *becoming queer*: not constituted by my constitution, resisting particular organizations and favoring movements, gestures. Always moving in the direction of queerness. But never quite getting there.

/ 20 / To slough off this work this work. Baudrillard warns of an integral reality, an operationalization of everything. So beautifully, tragically efficient. This operationalization into an oblivion of efficiency and functionality. Queerness, then, would be anti-operational. A body that is disruptive in all the right ways. A body that, as Halberstam reminds us, has made an art out of failure. When the inside doesn't reflect the outside that presses down chanting time management and employee output and listen listen. I want a poetry that feels like a million personal days taken in a row.

/ 21 / But what I have is a queer body with objects for organs. The organs are sloughing off in favor of materials that can be bought and haggled. QBwOfO: A body organized on a basis of use and value. A fabricated body. A body on display. An organism of efficiency begetting a social organism/ization of efficiency. A body preparing for medical miracles where the metonym can be realized: the body with medical objects for organs, forever in extension. A queer prosthesis.

/ 22 / But what I have is a queer body in a time of homonormativity. Queer bodies becoming relationalized: an organ in our collective marriage-body. An organ in our collective war-body. An organ in our collective sexed-body. An organ in our collective worker-body.

We need an angry poetry of radical bodies.

Bodies that fight against their relationality.

Relationality is a product of you-ing, of naming.

Relationality is violent.

/ 23 / In attempting to address the violences done to body I'm being violent to body: objectifying and demanding meaning through language. Body reduced to abstraction. Abstract in a desperation. Desperate to un-relate. An abstract body is a radical body: a body sloughing off its bodiliness. A necessary abstraction is a necessary violencing of body to break body out of this essentialism of what is body.

/ 24 / And what is body.

/ 25 / In a poetics statement in *Troubling the Line*, Aimee Herman asks how we can "define the need to *not* be defined" (41). Halberstam provides space for this in her notions of "queer time" and "queer space," expansions on Foucault's understanding of cultural fear being not of homosexual acts or events but of a gay way of life. If an essentialist/heteronormative view of bodies is one defined by definition, then a queer body is one that is "define[d] [by] the need to *not* be defined." Or a body with boundaries of boundarylessness. Or as Halberstam puts it, having "willfully eccentric modes of being" (1). Or, a body outside of relationality. Relationality is defining. Or confining. Queer time and queer space work against relational identity in their disruption of body essentialism: queer bodies existing in queer time and queer space are not indicated in events with quantified social capital (reproduction, marriage, successful career, owning a home, etc.) but instead in a series of fluidities, an existence not relying

on relation and organization to other bodies and prescribed events. Or, to be free.
Floating.

/ 26 / Or alone.

/ 27 / I want a poem-body. Oliver Bendorf writes, “Every time I write a poem I make a little body. Then I name it with a title. And then it’s beautiful or moving or ugly or whatever and then maybe other people read it. The poem-bodies—like all bodies—grieve and feel shame and sense things and exist in a certain time and place. The poems remember, the poems are erotic” (422). Bendorf cites Gloria Anzaldua’s *Borderlands*, where she “writes about poems as living, mutable, contextual things—bodies!—rather than inert, isolated, ‘finished’ objects” (422). I like this definition since one of the synonyms for mutable is *fickle*. I want a fickle poetry that stands me up and refuses to settle and doesn’t want to stay at home. A poem like a little queer body: an unprecious thing. A *strange* thing. A *disruptive* thing. An *unfamiliar* thing that isn’t welcome back home.

/ 28 / Anzaldua writes in *Borderlands*:

in a New England college where I taught, the presence of a few lesbians threw the more conservative heterosexual students and faculty into a panic. The two lesbian students and we two lesbian instructors met with them to discuss their fears. One of the students said, “I thought homophobia meant fear of going home after a residency.” And I thought, how apt. Fear of going home. And of not being

taken in. We're afraid of being abandoned...for being unacceptable, faulty, damaged. (738)

And I think about my own homophobia, my fear of going home, which has to be a metonym for a fear of being known, of having a home that can know me. A home in which I pass. Or try to pass. As not-me. As straight. As a man. Whatever that means. From whatever I am. OKCupid once changed my identification from male to man and I was surprised and angry and afraid. I deleted my account.

/ 29 / In a way nobody passes as anything and I understand that, in the complexity of it all, that is true, but for a moment I want to be simple and I want to say that when I went home I wore blue jeans and boots and flannel and lowered my voice and spoke little and on some level I passed as not-queer because my parents kept paying for my car.

/ 30 / But going home is not just a returning to a place but a continual state. Anzaldua reckons that she carries her home with her: both a comfort and a dead weight. For Anzaluda this comes from a convergence of identities: a woman, a woman of color, a queer woman, working class. She can't go anywhere without her home on her back, a sight/site to be seen. For me this comes from intentional displacement. For me, the home on my back is a sight/site to be not-seen (hidden in my white privilege), and in the not-seeing covering over queerness. An attempt at passing is to also carry home on your back, an internalized homophobia, a queerphobia, a vicious tautology that falls back on itself. A continual going-home is a continual attempt at passing. We're always going home. And always moving away from home. And always trying to pass as something

in the process. In the process of home. Trying to pass as home. As from home. And I guess this means that home will always be associated with failure.

/ 31 / I repeat in my head in an anxious rage: *my gender is faggot my gender is faggot*.

/ 32 / They say: we are against expression. And I hear: put your body away.

/ 33 / Here is my act of resistance: the body on display. The body is me is the poems is queer is willful.

/ 34 / My body is a sad structure. "You sculpted me into this sad." Yes. And I've been interpellated into Faggot. A home that collapses outwardly. *Faggot* is a strange home to find oneself in: a term not reclaimed. The project of its reclamation is both incomplete and contested under the assumption that there are some words that might not be reclaimable. And who wants to call themselves a faggot anyway?

Lee Garcia Jimenez and Rubby Paulino ask, "Where is the faggot anthem? Who is going to write a mediocre song that goes #1 in all countries and liberates the fags?"

Perhaps it is individually reclaimable. That is, it is not reclaimed as a cultural symbol/signal (as with *queer*), but it is reclaimed in individual protest. When I call myself queer it is a positive radical act. When I call myself faggot it is a re-weaponizing of a weapon of a word: the grotesquery of making the self into an offensive/offended caricature and showing it off. Look at me, darling. Faggot with a

capital F. As with putting the body on display, gagging the body with language, vomiting the language out and choking it back down. I swallow.

/ 35 / I'm fascinated with thread. As a cross-dressing child wearing mother's dresses, mother's high heels, mother's treasured pearls, mother's mannerisms and mother's small hands, thread and its use became a gender demarcation: only mother mended clothes. Now I'm taking up thread for myself: mending clothes, binding books, constructing art, weaving these thoughts.

/ 36 / My body is a threaded assemblage.

/ 37 / The queerness of thread is important to me despite I rarely wearing my queerness as a garment.

/ 38 / Here is my act of resistance: a threaded body stitched together in a manner that resists definition. I sit in bed and mend shirts, socks, bags. Put together books. Stitch together letters and call it art.

/ 39 / Wearing father's large hands as an ornament of punishment. My mother told me the story of my first broken bone: I was two I was running in circles on the trailer porch I was told no I was running in circles I fell off the porch it was a long fall the collarbone cracked. My father took off his belt and hit me repeatedly. A few days later they took

me to the hospital I couldn't use my arm. Years later I fell again I bruised the same collarbone I was given a sling in which to cradle my arm. My father told me to pour him a drink so I went to the kitchen and with one arm spilt the milk all over the floor he told me to clean it up on the floor leaning on the slung arm wiping up the milk.

/ 40 / These poems are me on the floor leaning on the slung arm cleaning up my body taking it to the privacy of my room putting it back together putting it to bed and sleeping.

/ 41 / Maybe queer happiness is happiness in drag. Taken to the extremes. A costume of a costume to highlight the costume.

/ 42 / Maybe my poems are all in drag. A drag of a dreg to highlight the dread.

/ 43 / The love poems to my body begin with a doggerel. Because I like the idea of writing failed love poems. By which I mean love poems that don't convey love. Or convey differently. Or directionally. I called them love poems first. Then I wrote poems that weren't love poems. And looked. And continued calling them love poems despite the fact. Knowingly writing failed love poems. And I don't quite know what failure in a love poem necessarily means or looks like, but I know failure. As Halberstam reminds us, "failure is something queers do and have always done exceptionally well" (3). Failing to write proper love poems, failing in love, declaring the body lonely forever and always and already and finding pride in it. In body. In loneliness. In not-knowing.

/ 44 / There's a strength in that.

/ 45 / The enteric nervous system—the collection of neurons commonly known as those residing in “the gut,” by which is meant that they span from the esophagus to the anus—does a lot of things I don't understand. There's a lot about my body that I don't understand. And that is scary and wonderful and I want it. I want there to be a form of knowing that I can't know. A queer way of knowing through not-knowing. To situate the known (body-as-home) as containing the unknown (the queer as uncanny). It seems appropriate that, etymologically, body is of unknown origin.

/ 46 / If I succeed at anything, I want it to be in the form of an *écriture faggot*. “Here is my homo / glossia.” Like an *écriture feminine*, this *faggot writing* is the necessary outcome of the necessity of *faggot writing faggot*. The faggot writes itself. The faggot must write itself in order to be written. And so I write my body.

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