

Virgo

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Abstract

Virgo

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Virgo is a collection of poetry and poetics that experiments with the visual aspects of language, using page and ideogram to create an art object that exists semantically, visually and aurally.

VIRGO

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# **THRESH**

*We lived with it ... as we've learned to live with a lot of things since then: the boredom, the maddening silence, the sheer futility of our task ... How do you subjugate an enemy who's incapable of noticing you? One by one my soldiers have gone insane and died here, in the shadow of these oblivious monoliths. Tonight I join them. Farewell, Guildmasters. May the fatweb blight your eggs.*

*-- Alan Moore, Vega: Brief Lives, 1985*

*The archatron came forward with his sword and raised it in his two hands above him and clove the traveler's head from his body.*

*-- Cormac McCarthy, Cities of the Plain, 1998*

star-maiden's thresh

smoke begot of throat

mouth overflow

ears

spill

in

on to and over

toss

in

to

light

crow

furl

chaff

in

wind

crepuscule	bier
photonical	archatron
arboreal	stairway

star abscission

ardent leaf

star fracture

hand contracting

pulled itself in and all the ways to its burst

garden leaf hoar

cigarette smoke burl

magnolia moon sets

alight the hill

starve the sky

morning blue fibrin

slow sun rise

empty

guts

bus

inured

hand

of the

hill

bouquet of arc light

train whistle hymn

automobiles rimed

vitreous dendrite

baby apples cry under foot

stale snap to burgeon flour

chaste marias

moon still

in ultramarine

prayer

bead

under

rain

pink

neon

fizzle

evening

crop

waver

drunk stranger

in the eyes of the trespassed

it all felt missing

everything was there

the radio Buck Owens

thin dark dive pinball chrome

clatter ceiling dangle marionette clown

bus ride

skirt

rode up

her thighs

pink

from heat

dirt

stairs

subterranean

market

in the bins

aster

ear

space

of

wheat

my heart in an ink bottle morse-code-in

"Ah --

old  
friend.

Old,  
old  
friend.

How  
long  
it's  
been.

How  
long  
it  
has  
been.

in harvest moon broke throats dingo sweet

winter

red

pomegranate

pustule

moon

burst

red moon,

ma

home soon,

ah

doo-wah

doo

wah

ah

red moon,

ah

mar

oon

ed,

ah

do

wah

do

ah

oo

oo

oo

-- cop over passed out man --

"Sir are you alright?"

-- busker --

"You are bleeding bro."

-- man shaking under pediment --

"How many times have I lost something in Seattle?"

mimetic sound

ferry

from

island to water

plane

from

horizon to cloud

taxi

from

station to transit

poet

from

line to word

sinoatrial

orison

chordal

apparition

transept

of

sun stops in its tracks

setting

carnate

on the butcher paper

salmon fillets

-- How hungry are you -- my love -- my scoundrel --

The color of

Lucy's legs cry

Magnolia!

Magnolia!

crescent lime

gin ice

cube star

bloom

Virgot

star orogen

feed hangover black coffee and cold chicken

clouds

sun

boil

under

gauze

vegas freight train flower

forest conflagrate

mandelbrot koch

sierpinski's gasket

grand ballet

smoke above

the tree line

epiglottis

pyrosis

bear crow ants

thrash

in

fiend fire

acres

cheap gin dirty jokes kiss Greenbean's collar

sexton shiver

sleet

sextant

stench'd

insect

asterism

teeth meet

clumsy kiss

in

all for you

dahlias and sunflowers

all for you

the onions

all for you

the tomatoes

all for you

my little foolish heart

it's all for you

we'll end

will mend

O!

Honey -- Should we get some fish?

I think the salmon looks nice --

cook it

with butter

and lemon

and rosemary --

kiss me -- here in the market --

Darling!

Precious!

How dark  
green turns in  
the moon

drunk on gin

To hell with you

she shouts

To god damn with you

constellation

consternation

cauliflower ear

cloud embrace

Astraea's cigarette

between

fingers &

arm &

throat

t h r e s h

hectares of

star

windowsill

mug

tea

steam

trash can

dinner in pot

fork

garbanzo bean

broccoli

# **BINARY STAR**

*SUPER POSITION --*

*the ability of  
quantum system --*

*To be in multiple states  
at the same time.*

*QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT --*

*inextricably  
linked,*

*whatever happens to one quantum state  
Immediately effects its other.*

*One and  
one, two,  
three*

*-- Robert Creeley, A Piece, 1969*

\*

Tierra saciado,  
pala frio, sepultura desgastado.

Huellas llena  
con la suena de campana.

El sepulturero limpia  
el barro da la ceja.

Piel de iglesia,  
ardiente.

Orando por mas  
trabajo.

Así es,  
poesía con sueño.

\*

\*

Sated soil  
shovel cold, grave worn

Footprints fill  
with the sound of the bell

The gravedigger cleans  
mud from his eyebrow.

The skin of the church,  
ardent.

Praying for more  
work.

That's how it is,  
poetry with dream.

\*

\*

Arboles otoño,  
se dejen caer

Manos de bermejo y azufre  
y tabaco.

Recuerdos brillar  
en el calle.

\*

\*

Trees autumn,  
they let fall

Hands of cherry and sulphur  
and tobacco.

Memories shine in  
the street.

\*

\*

Cruces de luz chocan,  
cañones espacio cristal.

Fragmentos espléndidos,  
huesos de lucero.

\*

\*

Crosses of light crash,  
canyons space crystal.

Splendid shards,  
bones of star-form.

\*

\*

Rebaño de partícula terminar  
su sed en el río estrella.

Lenguas de iluminar,  
olas salivando.

\*

\*

Herd of particles end their  
thirst at the river star.

Tongues of illumination,  
waves salivating.

\*

\*

El caballero se quita la armadura,  
en el acantilado, mirando la río.

Ha sido tan largo que sus manos  
sintieron sol.

\*

\*

The knight takes off his armor,  
on the bluff, looking at the river.

It's been so long since his hands  
felt sun.

\*

\*

Mineral constelación.

Tres y tres y tres --

Sonido azul -- Isla voz.

Dormir y se -- Horizonte termina.

Escarpado -- Mineral humano.

Luz aguantar -- En tierra.

Dormir -- Voz escarpado.

Tres y tres y tres --

Mineral sonido -- Deja horizonte

Islas de colores.

Tierra constelación --

Tres y tres y tres.

\*

\*

Mineral constellation.

Three and three and three --

Sound blue -- Voice island.

Sleep and be -- Horizon ends.

Jagged -- Human mineral.

Light holds -- In dirt.

Sleep -- Voice jagged.

Three and three and three --

Mineral sound -- Leaves horizon.

Islands of colors.

Earth constellation --

Three and three and three.

\*

\*

Madrugar fumé

( Un matiz

Siente campos,

orogén mira

Como oración en espejo )

Lucero --

Mano

abierta.

\*

\*

Dawn smokes

( A hue

Feels fields,

orogen looks

Like orison in mirror )

Star-form --

Open

hand.

\*

\*

Estrella.

Florecer.

Encerrado en  
madera.

Dedos de el mano  
matemática.

\*

\*

Star.

Bloom.

Encased in  
wood.

Fingers of the hand  
mathematic.

\*

\*

Sintaxis sonora de luz.

En el forma de estrella algo se mantiene.

Canción de un constelación.

Cruces de vidrio.

\*

\*

Sonorous syntax of light,

in the form of star something holds.

Song of a constellation --

crosses of glass.

\*

\*

Carne lejada  
estrella entrelazado.

Esrella que se uno  
se vaya si puede.

Extender poesía --  
borrado musical.

En el tiempo de luz --  
peregrinación agregada.

\*

\*

Flesh distance.  
conjoined star.

Star as one  
goes if it can.

Extend poetry --  
erasure musical.

In the temple of light --  
aggregation of pilgrimage.

\*

\*

Doncella estrella,  
anima en arena.

En montañas,  
confiscada.

\*

\*

Maiden star,  
spirit in sand.

In mountains,  
confiscated.

\*

# ASTER

*Subquantum kinetics begins with ether as its point of departure. It conceives quantum structures, such as atomic particles and energy waves, to be concentration patterns that emerge in a primordial reaction-diffusion ether, one whose constituents both diffuse through space and react among one another ... unlike traditional physics ... the continually reacting and transmuting reaction-diffusion ether of subquantum kinetics functions as an open system ... the ether is able to spawn subatomic particles that have wavelike characteristics. They form spontaneously from energy fluctuations of sufficiently large magnitude that occasionally emerge from the ether's chaos ...*

*-- Paul A. LaViolette, Secrets of Antigravity Propulsion, 2008*

*El espacio estrallado  
se refleja sonidos.*

*-- Federico García Lorca, Suites, 1920*

g l i s t

e r

a r d e n t

s t o r m

p h o t o n

b l o s s o m

u n f o l d

e f f u l g e

field

of

aster

b e a m

r h ē g n u n a i

ελαφρύς

elafrýs

μεγαλείο

megaleío

space

inside

mass

nodes

of

Ranvier

starwort

see the

orbital

break

in

to

out

matter

ward

&

&

dance

dimension

slam

fulgur

sing

howl

in

light

g a n g l i o n

Ἀστραῖα

the shape of threshold

g i g a v o l t

m i a s m a

s t o r m

g a r d e n

aster

bloom

# **PARALLAX**

*"The stars through centuries return  
rimes of light to burn in this moment's eye  
universe that flicker -- where?  
the sensory line  
breaks*

*so that the lines of the verse do not meet,  
imitating that void between"*

*-- Robert Duncan, Crosses of Harmony and Disharmony, 1960*

*I've been here and  
I've been there and  
I've been in between*

*-- King Crimson, In the Court of the Crimson King, 1969*

snapped dry wheat dust catch in

so far in the shift stay in

fast in

read word

star form

spike of ear

curled light

follicle

far lost in the running field

traces give in fully must pull

convert out

speak

"could" and "desert"

[ ]

line breaks

submerge in the pull

entanglement of

the what held between

distance holds

a definition

( )

drink

in

light

[ ]

lines

volume

what whol'd space

( )

to be hold

holden

w h o l e d i n

what held in place

what space sound

[ ]

glass aft

er

glass

( )

drunk light

birefringent conversation

one nerve cluster

to another

lines and lines of

heat spun through

air and spit

nornahár on the rocks

[ ]

ink

till

light

( )

orbital

aster

ism

frame by

state

line

to polygon

word

chord

volume

of aggregation

warp space

strings meet

i n

mode

mass  
 of constellation  
 congregation of word  
 density  
 of  
 distance  
 between two b (inary)  
 (st) ars  
 [ ]  
 fulgurite  
 between phoneme  
 pages of sand  
 forged of space  
 eme inward  
 ( )  
 ar-maid ull om arden  
 er ang om m irror  
 root ac  
 quiesce frame  
 ar dense of struct  
 ure emes of body  
 star-maidenpullsfrom herarden  
 flowe rstohang from herm irror  
 grass unde root ac

quiesc e her frame

ar dense of struct

ure emes of her body

[ ]

(w)

rite

ord

mirifi c

ore

space

(p)

article

( )

high tide turbulence

many hand without body

emerge from mirth

crawl on beach

like small pale crab

grain by grain

harvest

like small pallid poets

[ ]

man who is a lighthouse (orbital light)

foghorn -- [u] ooooooooooooo

woman who is a siren (scale sheen)

wail -- [æ] aaaaaaaaaaaaa

binary

separate as the C

wayfaring articles

wave-ferry particles

in

( )

archatrons of fulgor

witness ideogram of

smoke rise from the

altar prayers to

aster words in

aspect

[ ]

Mandelbrotian flowers (b) urst-in

aster bloom aster

hands unveiling hands unfolding

in and in all ways

each a new in

r e c u r r e n t

question of orig in

the question of

of

( )

geometric prairie wind

wheat field rime wave

stem pattern pale

sine wave

a courtin these too

a orbitin tension in there

intension between them and there

bodies each one a contrivance

of not matter and not distance

a line break

pull

that fullness of instance

the of of of

[

]

day starts in

separat-in

placement

wake up to harvest

to wake up searchin

a wake to call

hand demand response

a-reckonin at the dawn a-hollerin

speculate

take in these

neuma

object

stanzas

gain stages

stars on yodelin blue horizon

edge of the field a-hummin

( )

borean neon drunks

dense autumn fog inside the bar

a suspension of hippocampus

remember only pictures of you eye

forget

it's so easy

to

that pictures hold emotion

that they matter --

not that they're important but dense

radiant --

resonant --

that they enact

in act of

an act of

that pictures pull

eye forget eye remember these pulls of light

[ ]

broken stanza

an open word

what holds of fracture

It is an old story

of

a man who removes his armor

walks a way without title or vocation

removes what he was

of

the man read the name on the door of his fissure

it'd been a damn long time since he'd known it

he marveled at the spaces between the letters that weren't too familiar

e r

thresh the space

between the letters

into myth

until he was of

star

'til he was of

word

tilled himself open

a furrow

of

of

( )

breeze

hummingbird

hawthorn grove

a warm garden of aster

the air

not the sky but the between it all

the omni

bloom

[

]

# **FIGURES**

*La forma no nacía de una idea.*

*Era la idea desvaneciéndose.*

-- *Cecilia Vicuña, El Quasar, 1995*

frisson

other plus one  
of thing some  
equal  
word fractal in relation  
page shape  
art ism

re-verb-oros

εἰς

ὁμοῖον

αὐτῶν

ἀναμνηστικῶν

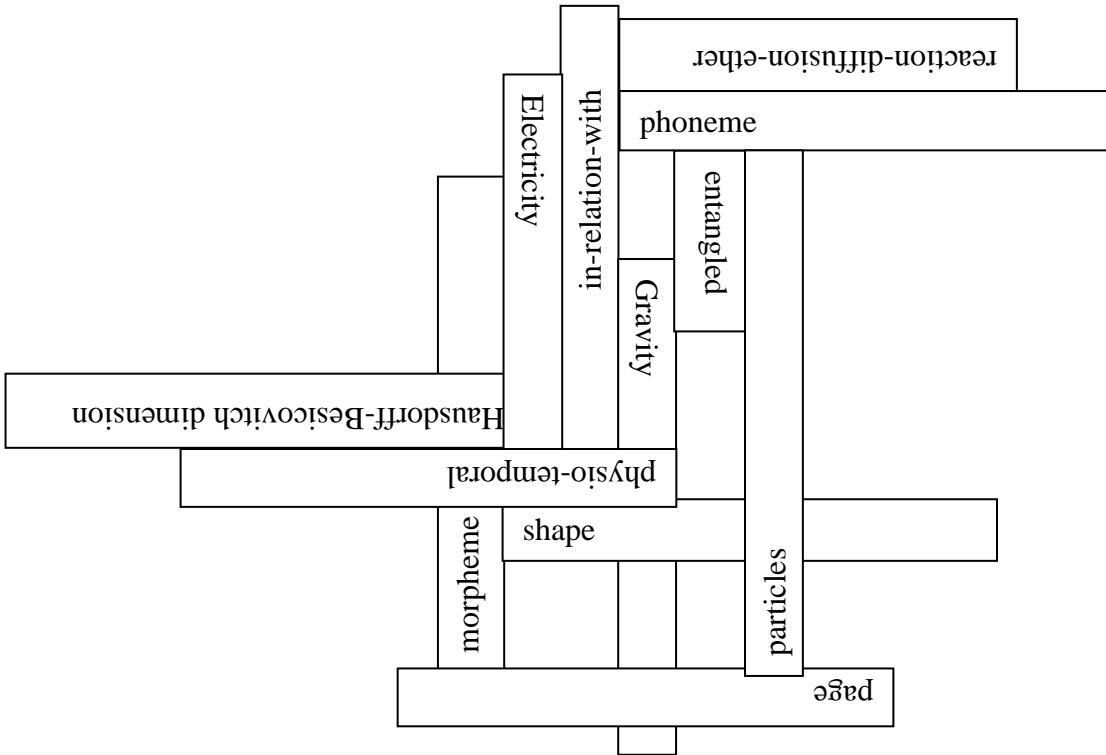
ὁμοῖον

ὁμοῖον

ἀναμνηστικῶν

ἀναμνηστικῶν

w o r d  
i n s p a c e  
i n s h a p e



s h a p e

w o r d

s t a r c l u s t e r

form

shabda

-- constellation --  
-- definition --  
-- door --  
-- poetry --

door  
the open

i d e o g r a m

s h a p e

s p a c e

a s d o o r d o r o o m

a s s t a r d o s k y

-- phonetic flower --

-- cerebral garden --

-- neuron bloom --

-- breath --

-- electricity --

-- Words first shape --

p o e t r y

e s t u a r y

d o o r l i n e s

d e f i n e

c o n s t e l l a t e

Creation is a quantum event.  
Physical-temporal entanglement.

Physical-temporal entanglement.  
Creation is a quantum event.

The work which has existed  
makes itself known

The work, which has existed  
makes itself known

and in being witnessed  
destroys itself

destroys itself  
and in being witnessed

an existent becomes  
a progress towards

a progress towards  
an existent becomes

final form  
begin at no thing & finished

begin as no thing & finished  
final form

at  
time

the same  
the same

time  
at

-- easier to poetry to say --

-- understand in form --

-- poetry is star charts --

-- to know is constellatory --

-- invitation inward --

-- what means define --

-- field of space --

-- celestial body lines --

-- word carry shape --

[ ]

I

][ ][ ] [

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

# **SPACE INSIDE CONSTELLATION**

*The poetic line is a primary defining place, the site of  
watchfulness where we discover how we hear ourselves  
take in the outside world and tell it back to ourselves*

*-- Kathleen Fraser, *Line. On the Line.**

*Lining up. Lined with. Between the lines. Bottom line.,  
1988*

I am in continuous  
relationship with words -- I write  
everyday -- hand or computer --  
note taking, research, journal  
entries -- I don't write creatively  
-- even if all I want is to -- I can't  
make it happen -- it happens on  
its own.

Writing is more in the  
editing, which is a  
conversation with the work.  
It's listening to the idea-  
emotion that moves -- the  
initiate -- and the art that  
attempts to hold -- the carrier.  
These talk. Each influences.  
Ideally they harmonize. The  
initiate and the carrier need  
each other.

If a poem does occur it is in  
one burst. I can't think back on the  
creation, they're blurs -- burst-blur  
moments -- I know it's happening  
when it's happening. It pulls. Any  
furtherance of the work is an attempt  
at reconnecting with that moment.

Trying to re-feel.

These dialogues. these  
moments of trying to connect, are a  
div(in)ing -- sub merge -- goin  
through -- dream wandering -- room  
to room to room. The work is the door  
that leads back to what made it.

*Thresh* was written my first two months in Seattle. First time away from home, Texas desert to Seattle's mass of tree and cloud. *Thresh* was written in contemplations of space -- the space that was myself, the me that inhabited new social and academic spaces -- The title came after the other sections were written. Its title is inevitable. *Thresh* is much less than the original, which had poem titles and more obvious whole sentences. Creating it was a lesson in editing, a process of threshing.

The poetry for *Virgo* happened Aug.-Sept. 2018 and Aug.-Dec. 2019. The sections are arranged in the order they were written. Each section taught me how to write the next. Learning how to write one section gave me the tools to write the next.

In editing I used a word -- the book's title -- *virgo* -- as the driving force -- the door.

*Aster*, then, takes language and breaks it down to its ideographic core. The spaces between letters I learned from Mónica de la Torre's *Happy End/All Welcome*. Landscape orientation and columns open the page, and for the first time consciously in writing *Virgo*, I conversed with the space the words inhabited. I was thinking about star formation and the electricity that must contain, what I thought of as "star storms," and also the physics involved -- stars created from molecules merging -- how does that happen in a reaction-diffusion ether, in a reality where particles are in multiple places and times all at once. On accident, I was thinking about definitions of "space."

*Binary Star* -- the title describes the writing process. *Thresh* taught me how to take away the "I" in the poems, and *Binary Star* is the full realization of that self-erasure. The goal was to write in Spanish in order to try poetry from a zero space. To start again as a beginner. I wrote in both languages simultaneously. I would start in either language then translate and go round and around that way. In this way English and Spanish -- language -- words -- acted as stars revolving.

That "seeing" of space in *Aster* -- that see in -- leads to *Parallax*, which begins to investigate the space in poetry. The space in creation. The space in mass. The distances held in a book. Thematically, the distance between *Thresh* and *Parallax*, *Virgo* and *Parallax*, is vast -- each almost forgets the other exists. Parallax is measuring distance between what came before itself. It's an inward distance. The act of parallax is about closing distance.

What draws me in to Virgo is not really the connections the word 'virgo' has to mythology, astrology or astronomy -- I'm more moved by the idea of star and constellation. Shape defined by word.

Constellation have light years of space within them. Star in constellation are separated in immense spacial-temporal distance. Simple 2D points of light in our night sky in space are mass chemical-quantum-electric-gravitic interaction. Vast omniforms we call star, constellation and asterism.

What we call them is also part of their shape, another way that these object are vast. We give them terrestrial form through language. Two forms simultaneously, their true shape in space, and the one humans made by word.

Word are constellation -- made shapes continuing through zeitgeist, interconnected distant points of meaning. And, like constellation, they contain tremendous amounts of space.

What makes these different?

-- star -- word -- line -- letter  
-- glyph -- poem -- shape -- space

Each is cluster, congregation, constraint -- each is shape and space defining space and shape -- an ouroboric cause-effect relationship's attempt in holding together.

# **XPL-ORATION**

The poem after this essay was originally end notes for *Parallax*. The end notes were attached to the bracketed and parenthesized stanza breaks. They came because there were ideas I thought were being implied within *Parallax* that I never explicitly told the reader. I would read one of the poem's stanzas and then write what it was saying. I got rid of them because they got in the way of enjoying reading the section.

The end notes ultimately didn't provide any insight into what *Parallax* was saying, and that's because I found trying to understand what I wrote impossible. I wasn't able to know what I was trying to communicate, only that I was communicating. The attempt at definition led to more poetry. It's how poetry goes. Trying to hold a dream in hand. Coastline paradox. The form of the end notes has changed, but now accurately reflects the poetry I saw in them when I wanted them to be part of *Parallax*.

These endnotes illustrate how poetry works for me -- or at least why I believe poetry is what it is -- why creation is what it is -- because it always works this way.

Miscommunication

revelation. Further

complication.

I believe one pushes into the work, this coastline crease, that one walks into, pushes and pulls the door, and poetry responds by giving in fully, until your absorbed and the only way out is through. That journey is a learning. A spirit quest. One is always changed on the other side.

# **THE ERASED END NOTES OF PARALLAX**

parallax --

-- Noun/Verb --

-- Greek --

parallassein --

-- change direction --

parállaxis --

-- alteration --

parallássō --

-- to cause to alternate --

allássō --

-- to alter --

áλλος --

-- other --

Apparent  
displacement in the  
apparent position

The angle  
subtended

an illusion  
of depth in 2D  
scene

Pool of poetry --

-- pool of gravity --

that weight distance,

wait-in space,

a grove

The distance contain-in particles,  
bouquet of shapes.

You masses of light!

O unknowing participants of photosynthesis!

The definition required of

hallowed spaces

Is what pulls --

-- what holds the words multiple --

quantum states

in-dependent inter-act

Look in at the shape's self shape --

-- the door, the page, the pull --

The space of --

-- in conversation --

-- the distance between bodies and words --

-- the ask, the acquiesce, the traversal --

-- electro-gravitic inter actions --

what causes effect

The ideograms of communication --

light held in

gravitic hand

all-act

of

constellation -- myth,

an adherence to the of

-- definition --

the recognition of

shape -- a forming of

entrance -- the act of --

asterism and constellation

-- matter-in --

-- a move in and in and in --

through until out

-- the depth

of --

The relationship of electricity to language --  
both are the shape of the other

In pertaining

-- erasure

-- missing

-- whole

-- pool of light

-- one holds the lost in relation

-- to the not

space but where does it start

-- these pools of not --

the notes in

a garden grove

What makes the space?

or put another way,

What happens when quanta shake?

Seeing the self shape -- a recognition of

distance --

Dreams are the depth of the

pool --

a distance -- a see-in

of

layers.

## Pilgrimage

## Primordial

-- prime --

-- ordeal --

constant recursive reoccurring --

-- neural burst --

-- neural birth --

we carry ourselves to let go

the self to shape

Attach

shape and form

to origin

of the process of

realization

-- matter mattering

-- of-matter--

a harvest

The shape of holding

Hold still light

Pull

Write

Myriad forms of weight

Re-surface-in from the

Opening of

# UNFOLDIN

The driving force in Virgo is a fascination with the similarity between the shape of words and constellations. Constellations and words both take up physical space in the medium they inhabit. They are shapes that define a space. These shapes not only have a physical space, but an inner space as well. They are both shapes that carry definitions within them.

A constellation's shape physically takes up space in our night sky. In real space, constellations are vast 3D shapes. These seemingly flat shapes are a massive network of stars. Often, the stars in a constellation, when in space, have no connection to each other, and are light years apart. Because of this distance, these huge 3D shapes hold a lot of space inside their boundaries. Aside from its physical being, a constellation's shape carries the mythological and astrological information within it, which means constellations have an inner space. Each star in a constellation's inner space is a different definition, or mythology, that is often separated by a considerable logical distance. The inner space constellations hold, when imagined, looks like the massive 3D shapes in space would.

Words are the same way. Words are human made fabrications like constellations. They are physically 2D shapes on a blank space. Words are made by connecting letters together. The letters of a word on a page would be the stars in a constellation in an Earth night sky. The word's seemingly flat shapes are a massive network of information. Words hold more than semantics and etymology. They also hold syntactic and phonetic information inside them. The etymologic, semantic, syntactic and phonetic information that words carry is their inner space. The inner space words hold, when imagined, look like the massive 3D shapes that constellations are in actual space. Each piece of information and connection that words hold within them, are also often separated by a considerable logical distance, but still, they are connected.

In researching constellations and stars while writing this book, I imagined words in my mind, and all their associations and connections to other words. The poems in *Virgo* come from those imaginings. Through its experiments with form *Virgo* aims to make a comparison between the logical and physical shapes of words and constellation. The book compares letters to stars, space to the blank page. It examines the definitions of space and shape. The first four poems (Thresh, Binary Star, Aster, Parallax) explore these definitions through the way the words are laid out on the page. The poems and essays after that question shape and space. Each piece of *Virgo* is trying to convey that words and constellations are similar shapes. The title gets the reader thinking about constellations, and then the page layout further propels that thought process. The book's poetics draw attention to shapes and space in order to make the comparison of words and constellations explicitly.

The poems and essays after Parallax are supposed be poetics. Most of the poetics (pg. 97-143) are experimentations in the form poetics can take, and not formal essays. There were originally subheadings articulating what was poetics and poetry, but I took those out. The book is strengthened by the ambiguity removal of these subheadings creates. It forces the question, "what is poetry and what is poetics." The question is important because it broadens *Virgo's* definition of form. Form is not only the page layout, but the genre of writing. Poetics are traditionally essays. In the editing process, I took the sentences of my poetic essays and flipped them around on the page, or put line breaks in the middle of them, and they turned into poetry. Form is a synonym for shape. The question of "what is poetics and what is poetry" is meant to draw attention to the shapes writing can be.

*Virgo's* page layouts accentuate that the difference between poetics and poetry is form. The question "what is poetry and what is poetics" is presented in a writing with an experimental

form that draws attention to words and what they do. The attention is meant to further blur the boundaries between the two definitions. This blurring helps readers focus on the question by providing a comparison. Poetics and poetry are both made of words. And, both these arrangements of words are communicative. The difference between the two isn't words, but something else. Placing a traditional looking prose next to the experimental pieces draws the reader to the difference between poetics and poetry -- form.

The questioning of form draws attention to what words actually do. If there is only one word on the page, or many disconnected words, then the word is allowed to be its own multiple entity -- phonetic, morphosyntactic, semantic, etymologic. Using few words, or placing them together disjunctively, asks one to look for connections not only between the words, but within the words themselves. Seeing the inherent disconnections words carry within themselves creates a deeper understanding to what the word is doing on the page.

The main reason I have for writing this way was articulated by Lissa Wolsak in her poetics essay *An Heuristic Prolusion*, "I wish to question the vincula (connections) between grace and the abyss; Being in duplicity; apparency; things in their oppositeness, not only beneficence in a well of meaning, but as all that is falling; anomie .. accidie, elengenesses" (*Squeezed Light*, 153)<sup>1</sup>. Words always mean everything they might mean; they are a "well of meaning." We draw meaning from the well, hold what we can, and the rest returns to the well. In order to decipher what a word intends to mean, something falls away from it. Words placed together disjunctively creates a negative space that makes the abyss, the not-ness, present. In either isolating words, or placing them together in seeming disconnection, the language reflects on itself, displays anomie, (personal unrest, alienation, and uncertainty), which progresses into acedia, (a not caring or being concerned with one's position or condition in the world). This can

result in elengenesses, (loneliness or misery). Allowing words to be all they are, isn't always a "beneficence," to word or page or the creator's work, but that disconnection, is a connection, or vinculum. Words serve as bridges to simultaneous and multiple reality, "to being in duplicity." They are the bridge between "grace and the abyss," the real and the not, because solely in existing, prior to intent, they are evidence of this chasm.

In its exploration of words through disjunctive forms, *Virgo* becomes a book of fragments. In her essay "Form as Response to Doubt" Lydia Davis explains the nature of fragmented writing, "Any interruption, either of our expectations or of the smooth surface of the work itself -- by breaking it off, confusing it or leaving it actually unfinished -- foregrounds the work as artifact, as object, rather than as invisible purveyor of meaning, emotion, atmosphere" (*Biting the Error*, 35)<sup>ii</sup>. Not only are the forms of *Virgo* fragmented, but they are focusing on the idea that words themselves are fragmented. What a word means in a certain context is a fragment of its whole meaning. Like a constellation in the sky, a word is a fragment of what it actually is.

*Virgo's* disjunctive, fragmented forms put focus on the space the words are inhabiting. The words and page are not an invisible purveyor, but each their own artifact. *Aster* is a good example. Its few words and horizontal page layout make the blank space prominent. The spaces between the letters draw attention to letters, as objects that connect to make words. The letters become stars in the constellation of words. The sparseness of the pages gives the words more density. The words must be taken as their whole selves. Their meaning on the page requires a knowing of what the word holds inside it. Horizontal pages offer engagement with the words in multiple arrangements. Not only do these words have their own unique connections in the context of the book *Virgo*, but they carry connections within themselves.

Virgo's hyper-attention to words and their placement on the page explores the idea that a poem acts as glyphs do. The visual and linguistic stand on their own. In his essay *That Words Can Be On A Page* Nathaniel Mackey explains poet Charles Olson's interest in hieroglyphs, "What [Olson] saw narrowed if not overcome by glyphs is the chasm between pictorial representation and linguistic representation" (Discrepant Engagement, 127)<sup>iii</sup>. Virgo's fragmented poems are pictorial and linguistic. The visual and linguistic must be acknowledged separately, as their whole selves, and then considered in relationship to one another. That they be acknowledged separately, highlights the chasm between the two. As Lydia Davis explains, "We can't think of fragment without thinking of whole" (BE, 35). Virgo's poems are hieroglyphic because each piece of itself is part of what it means. Each word in the poem, and each poem in the book, are stars in the constellation.

Virgo is projective writing. I noticed the hieroglyphic nature of language through composition by field. Through the writing process I have come to understand Olson's second principle of composition by field, what poet Robert Creeley meant by, "Form is never more than an extension of content." This is not only about the graphic quality of a poem. The form of the idea is the words it uses to convey itself. The content of an idea dictates what words it will be in. These words are its form.

I see the "projective" in projective verse as a going inward. I engage with my writing as a reader as it is being created. As I read while I write, the ideas are projected into my brain. I engage these new readings, and react with more writing. This simultaneous reading and writing allows me to go inside the work and react to it. This reading/writing process is the key principle to Olson's composition by field, "One perception must directly and immediately lead to a further

perception" (PV, 17). Perceptions come from reading the work. What is produced from that reading is a furtherance of the original idea.

This process is more like unfolding an idea. The original writing presents itself as this folded thing. Each new draft then unfolds and unfolds until the thing is in its purest form. The reason the idea unfolds and unfolds as I write into it is described by Lissa Wolsak in her poetics, "Writing is my way of listening and ventriloquising until I reach the place of speaking. Or, in order to perceive, I create distance, and re-situate my own epistemological ideas of causation, separation and otherness" (SL, 145). Writing something down creates distance between me and my thought, and lets me engage with the idea as an object that's not of myself. This distance lets the object speak for and explain itself; it allows it to create its own definition of being.

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<sup>i</sup> Lissa Wolsak, "An Heuristic Prolusion" in *Squeezed Light* (Station Hill Press, Inc., New York, 2010), p. 141. Hereafter referred to as SL.

<sup>ii</sup> Lydia Davis, "Form as Response to Doubt," in *Biting the Error: Writers Explore Narrative* (Toronto, Canada: Coach House Books, 2004), p. 35. Hereafter referred to as BE.

<sup>iii</sup> Nathaniel Mackey, "That Words Can Be On The Page" in *Discrepant Engagement: Dissonance, Cross-Culturality, and Experimental Writing* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1993), p. 121. Hereafter referred to as DE.

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