



trouble

jen hofer

Baby Borders, from left to right: clear yellow, clear buff, variegated buff and green. Photo by Harry V. Lacey.

European countries also it is very very popular as a show bird

trouble

august 2009

3:15 a.m.

jen hofer

FROSTED AND NON-FROSTED — THE FROSTED BIRDS, BOTH MALES
and females, show white tints on their feathers, giving the overall
appearance of a light veil over the reddish ground tones of the birds.
Some are more heavily frosted than others. Viewed in good natural
light, preferably toward evening on a sunshiny day, many of the birds
appear to be a distinct pink in color.

FROSTED BIRDS ARE BETTER IN TYPE THAN NON-
FROSTED — The frosted Red Factors are nearly always better in
type than the non-frosted birds. The best are of fairly good Border
type. This is due largely to their feather structure; the feathers are
more compact and more thickly distributed over the birds. They are
also usually less "leggy" than the non-frosts, because they show less
thigh when in good position on the perch.

However, the non-frosted Red Factor canaries have shown some
amazing improvements in type during the last few years, and their
feathers are less brittle than they once were. The mating of two non-
frosted birds together results in easily broken and fragile feathering
on their youngsters. It is always better to mate a frost to a non-frost,
to follow out the good old rule of only mating a yellow to a buff as it
were.

WHICH ARE DEEPER IN COLOR AND CLOSER TO RED? —

Dear Reader,

I've been having some trouble lately. Lately like for a couple of years. I've been talking to people about this trouble a lot recently, so if you're one of those people and you're reading this and hoping not to hear the same old kvetching from me, feel free to skip this introduction and dive into the book--or better yet, go outside and take a bike ride to an unfamiliar neighborhood.

My trouble.

I think of it as the "I hate poetry" trouble. Except it's not really "I hate poetry." It's something else.

Because if poetry were to cease to exist--I mean, especially the poetry of any of the numerous poets or prose writers whose writing thrills and inspires and challenges and energizes and politicizes me--I'd feel bereft. But lately I'm not sure if I'd feel bereft if my own poetry ceased to exist.

Perhaps this means my vision of what matters most--and what mattering looks like--is shifting, and I'm flailing to catch up.

Perhaps this means that my poetry is becoming

something other than it has been.
And perhaps this is a good thing.
Perhaps.

Much of my trouble is tangled up in ideas about public practice and usefully subversive interventions into institutionalized and legislated spaces (which would be pretty much all spaces, far as i can tell). Ideas about wanting to contribute something concrete and legible and real (does this word mean anything to you? I sure hope so!) toward constructing a more livable, joyous, just and humane world for more people. Ideas about unlearning systems of privilege and permission, dismantling structures organized around inequity and competition and perceived or enforced scarcity. I know that artistic and poetic practice can decisively and radically reconfigure our perception and our ways of understanding what we perceive. I believe that the work of cultural production is part of the work of transformation or transmutation or re-navigation--of change, in a word--and I believe it is part of the work of building alliances and activating communities. Insofar as art-making invites us to understand how much we do not

understand, how much more there is to encounter in the world than what we can access. In our immediate surroundings, art instigates a space of listening that is antithetical to the posturing, disrespect and brutality that continually re-enact and reinforce the status quo. And yet I continue to feel largely doubtful as to whether my own practice is enough. Or rather, I know that it is not enough, but I have not yet discovered or invented what else I can do that might be.

I've been participating in the experiment known as the 3:15 experiment consistently since 1993 with the exception of one year when I strayed. The experiment began with six women who'd spent time at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (also known to some as the Gertrude Stein School of Embodied Poetics) at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado in July 1993; at the instigation of Barnadette Mayer, she and Lee Ann Brown and Danika Dinsmore and Kathleen Large and Myshel Prasad and myself agreed to explore hypnopompic and hypnogogic writing by waking ourselves at 3:15 a.m. every night in August.

The experiment has expanded and contracted and expanded again over the years, and is now open to anyone willing to yank themselves out of sleep (or whatever they may be doing) at 3:15 a.m. for an entire month. Further information and many years' worth of semi-conscious writings can be found at www.315experiment.com. Please participate; you are welcome!

I don't usually have a "project" for the 3:15 experiment other than to get through the month without collapsing from exhaustion. This past August, however, since I was waking up in the night with "I hate poetry" thoughts much of the time anyway, I decided to give my wee-hours-mind full permission to explore any and all doubts about my practice. I have no idea if the resulting lines are in any way recognizable as doubt-dispelling charms, but nonetheless, here they are, in your hand. The poems are unedited except for a couple of instances where I revised illegible words toward legibility; the idea is to bypass the waking critical mind and write from somewhere else.

These texts were written in a notebook purchased in Tokyo with a photograph of a large-nosed bunny on the cover, with the words "Da Dolce Vita--Natural Living" across the top, and along the bottom:

Quality time nurtures grace and beauty.
I depart with my full bag of time.
Experiencing deliciousness made me a slave
to taste.
We provide a first-class taste brought directly
from the earth.

Fondly,

Jen
Cypress Park
Los Angeles
March 25 2010

beyond the glass, a gap
or target where we might
have said no.
further off, a network
of piles or feathers
we'd scale if only
there were a ground to stand on.

a greeting is in order.
but the incomplete silence
sends no emissaries,
no tentacles seeking a foothold.

the incomplete silence
looms, its network of impassable
passages humming,
cricketing, replenishing
while the soldiers ready
the grid for another descent.

august 1 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

here's where the
conversation starts.
is it quiet enough
for real listening?
there's a lovely breeze,
even if it is made by
electricity.

monuments to possibility
aren't easy.
as if ease were the measure.
as if measuring were
the question.
so now what?

august 2 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

as if it might reverberate.
as if stones.

the reason i write
is to polish stones
rather than throwing them.

to begin again.

that part doesn't work.

difficulties of scale
and substance.
waning in the
hum of fan and
cricket.

dissonance or distance,
either way.

august 3 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah
(dance party)

and how most effectively to
massacre flies.

ultrared asks: what is
the sound of the
war on poverty? i
remain silent but pass
the question on to
15 or 30 friends.

etcétera says: this person
killed, this person tortured,
this person participated
when he should have
abstained. do i abstain
when i should participate?

i'm trying to unspool

to make more socially-engaged
practice by going to the
unofficial dump (one of
many) that fills a former
barrack and overflows?

being adventurous and
falling in love are good--
wondrous even--but they
are not working for
social justice.

august 4 3:46 a.m.

southbase

wendover utah

(3:46 due to conversation
with ea & rr about

art-making, solidarity work,
obfuscation of torture practices in prisons.

in the middle of the
middle of the middle, or
is that permanent?

more space, or more
spaciousness?

through what means
to become more
human, less animal?

in a desert landscape,
apologies hardly
make a dent.
neither does trying
harder.

which is not the point.

the point is to engage
honestly.

no time is "spare time,"
so where does that
leave us?

august 5 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

as if wind, but instead crickets.
the building creaks.

explosions of unfulfilled
metal rusting along the way
to bunkers ripped from their
foundations. the sights
staggered, receding perspective,
heat lightning in the distance
or nearing
to explode upon us.

why we write, and whether
there is any reverberation
to it at all.

any purpose.

a latch that works, a
hinge that works, a
bicycle that works.

drifting from the
original premise, toward
the curvature of the earth,
visible from a promontory
on the western edge of town.

august 6 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

frozen.
into a routinized mechanism.
outside the self, selves.
selvedges
settles on the tongue
easily, as if by accident.

august 7 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

sweeping or keeping,
there is no quieter way
to do this. no milder
winds: choices severe
to classless
beyond nothing to
say. there's really
nothing

and classifying as
the world record coldest
hot day of the year: yah!

august 8 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

patiently or impatiently,
either way. the stuff
of the world's minds
is unfathomable.
from tone
(drone)
to gesture
fathomable.
a space just is, giving
nothing back to
cause
which is what?

what am i here to contribute
and how do these spaces

further or undermine this
question?

the dust from the mines
begins to settle: there
are bridges. yet who said
illuminated supposition.

august 9 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

light bulbs and batteries,
as if to say--we.
get your system.
so continue on.

august 10 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

a sense of invasion but
it's me doing the
invading and being
breached.

waiting to understand
things better--it's
not happening. not
to feel needed or
useful in the world.

anyone can cook.

legitimation comes
from where?--it's
not clear.

as r. said, if i'd dropped
a bomb that obliterated
200,000 people nearly
all at once, there'd be
streets named after me too.

august 11 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

meteor shower in an otherwise mostly unknown sky. there are many things i do not know. toxicities hide, when they don't lurk. human toxicities too, toward the self if not toward selfhood, as a bird's or cricket's or bat's existences in a dramatically reduced ecosystem would be easier, or at least seems so. i'm seeing too much or not seeing enough, coherence and chemical weapons testing along an interstate it's all too easy to take for granted. we have the anticipation and we have the detonation and beyond that, the aftermath, anticipatory, which is now.

august 12 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

we could go farther,
if we were only only
doing facts.

august 13 3:15 a.m.
southbase
wendover utah

the wind making sounds
of wind against
animate and inanimate
objects. words learned
as a kid and stored for
future use. getting ready
to begin again, or getting
tired.

it's summer and that
makes things summery,
or the wind is not unlike
the snake who greeted us
last night, curling around
itself, ready to strike but
waiting to see what's what.

to see if to see.

august 14 4:41 a.m.
desert research station
center for land use interpretation
barstow california
(woke with the alarm still set for 3:15
but didn't go off)

the sound of inflation,
or deflation as the
case may be.

as luck world
wonder's replete.

mistakes were made lushly,
in overlapping bands of
pattern.
discrepancies:

perhaps some are to be enlarged.

august 15 3:15 a.m.
2905 elm street
los angeles california

slow
as if
separated.
dirt particle by particle.

upswept
or scarred to diminish or return.

august 16 3:15 a.m.
2905 elm street
los angeles california

the refreshed state line painted on
the asphalt does not shimmer.
our former or future selves,
asleep in various cities and
time zones. some sleeps catch
us unawares.
signs of a wind we did
not experience first-hand,
or there is no timelessness,
except in forgetting and remembering.

we ate vietnamese sandwiches
in los angeles, and then we were
in utah sneezing sleepily.
the mayor owns a large pile of
gravel, which he sells by volume.
or weight. i have bought stones
in the past, but endeavor not to.

august 17 3:15 a.m.
getting water at the CLUI residence unit
just arrived in wendover utah

made of

cardboard or

made of snow, i think

forward to a brittle

future.

august 18 3:15 a.m.

southbase

wendover utah

august 19

southbase

wendover utah

(too tired—completely skipped
pen open to write for probably
an hour—a phrase (now forgotten)
in my head—nothing)

(august 20 seems to have disappeared);

not to get what you
want--if you can
know what you want--
presents snares in the
fabric.

a snake in the road
in barstow.

people are weird.
the world is weird.

august 21 3:15 a.m.
pleasant creek campground
dixie national forest, southern utah

makes no sense or makes
all the sense in the world.
whether or not to say
something, whether
or not to go.
having made a mistake,
the trick now is to
gracefully learn to.
whether or not we meet
the world with open
arms is a reverberating
uncertainty in a
nutshell as the crow flies.

august 22 3:15 a.m.
hotel monte vista
flagstaff arizona

to set up a system, and
then gently to follow it.

to wish for more, and
receive more.

to dunk. to dive. to sway.

the watery sound
of the water and a
winded silhouette.

august 23 3:15 a.m.
campsite at mile 19.1 river left
colorado river arizona

it's difficult to be wowed in such
company. what is my spiritual
world?

it's a question of balance.
intensity.

of giving in.

of

of not giving in.

self-regulating systems or
why i can't learn to
love the bomb.

august 24 3:15 a.m.
buckfarm canyon campsite
colorado river arizona

we're spinning, or the
stars are. this is not a
question, though there are many
questions.
things of all sorts come
in clumps, clusters, constellations
or piles. silhouetted against
any available light.
it might be easier to
be someone else, but
that doesn't seem to be an option.

august 25 3:15 a.m.
kwagunt campsite
colorado river arizona

a life is entirely re-
populated, then all the
parameters are
changed. there is no-
where to go here or
anywhere? to plan for
and stack beauty every day.
is it simply a question
of getting things out of the way?
if thinking is wishful then
what is worrying, and in what
river do wishes run?

august 26 3:15 a.m.
tabernacle campsite
colorado river arizona

the boundary of the sky
or skies is the canyon wall.
in every instance we
need something to provide an
outer limit. or whether or
not we need it, it's there.
fine particles and minute grit
everywhere. the view expands
or contracts according to
position. here velocity is
a given, but only occasionally.
i was dreaming
about my dad's limitations
i was on the raft
already and he couldn't catch it.
i don't like that a bit.
the sound of controlled
release is indistinguishable,
as is the sound of rock
formation--indistinguishable
from free flow.
aside from questions of
power and money, why not
choose the latter?

august 27 3:15 a.m.
zoroaster campsite
colorado river arizona

to see, to experience, to
chirp, to skim or skid, not
to know. to hold. not to
hold.

to spin or suspend, silhouette
or sediment, not to understand
or to be beyond understanding.
to converse or converge,
to range or rift, swift or
shadow. to wonder. to be
in wonder. to be in. to be.

august 28 3:15 a.m.
crystal creek campsite
colorado river arizona

we are standing still,
inside the movements of
time, which are both
geologic and rocket
propelled, nano-technology
and skyscrapers?
or we are hurtling
forward (or just
hurtling), sometimes
with and sometimes
against other flows?
there is such specificity
to every thing, living and
built, to each skill, each
propensity, each propulsion,
concentric circles of
every size and scale.
where else is there to go but
through, and how:
and how.
and how to maneuver the
monumental formations and
minute micro-details of

the metropolis of
simultaneous collided
experience, and how not
to worry about getting
it right, but rather
just to say yes as
much as possible?

august 29 3:15 a.m.
above fossil on enfilade fault
colorado river arizona

the sky is almost
sandy with so many
stars.
it is good that so much
in the world is so much
larger than we are.
it is good, to be reminded.
on the other shore
one faces the other way.
inversions are not
opposites.
a precipitate ring
around the wide and
buttery moon.
i've been worrying all
year about the bedrock
of my existence. i
undid myself and stopped
there.
as for conventions, they
should be foisted off
except in instances when
one wants to follow them
in which case foist them on.

no ballast nor sail, no anchor.
false tides in place of
seasons. the sky
gapes magnificently and
the river freeways at
our toes. depths
beyond depths, folds
textured into the
superstructure.

august 30 3:15 a.m.
stone creek campsite.
colorado river arizona

light echoes off canyon
walls or slides
irregularly, reflexively,
behind vertically contoured
edges that are neither
vertical nor contoured.
some shapes are more
viscous than others, some
states. in each of us,
there are different hollows,
sockets where an idea
or a hand might fit.

if simply living a good
life in a good way is
not enough, then what?
you can't become someone
else, just your same
self in different contexts.
all night the rock
was hard, and in this

narrow gorge called.
last chance the heat
ricocheted back and forth
energetically with no
visible ripple.
no visible minefield.
no easy path of
return.

august 31 3:15 a.m.
last chance campsite
colorado river arizona

september threatens to
be an overly thinky
month. how far can
a canyon extend into
the urban sprawl of
everyday occurrence?
happenstance and design
combine to form
geologic and non-
geologic

ramifications. we
have been here before, or
no one has been here before.

rocks, flocks, cacti
school and cluster naturally and
we conglomerate
them by giving
them names and
shapes, mythologies and
plans for the future, structural
crutches no one needed
in the first place which
have now become bedrock--
that is, available to be
eroded.

september 1 3:15 a.m.
ledges campsite
colorado river arizona


trouble was written at 3:15 a.m. in august 2009 and typed on the olivetti lettera 22 on april 1 2010. the covers are made of recycled thrifted and foraged materials gathered in various small towns and cities across the u.s. during the summer of 2009. the books were hand-sewn at 2905 elm street and elsewhere along the way. trouble was made for year four of the dusie collective and for the spring 2010 literary citizenship class at calarts. gratitude to steve badgett, the center for land use interpretation, matt coolidge jerry lee cox, susana gardner, marcia & ricardo hofer, rob ray, and simparch. this book is a gift.

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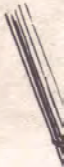
* a dust/o-chap
www.dusie.org



DUSIE



Roller canary



American Singer

adult song of pleasing, softly sung rolls, tours, etc. Keeping them in the dark makes them concentrate on their song practice since there is nothing to distract them. They hear each other practicing and each trainee follows suit trying to excel the others in singing freely.

So, by all means train young rollers or American Singers in darkness. Allow them fifteen-minute light periods daily, plus an hour or two with facilities for bathing in flight cages once weekly. This will result in your birds obtaining: (1) better song training; (2) training to sing immediately they are placed in the light.

One cannot blame the roller judge for placing a "No Song" note on the tag of a cage containing a roller which won't sing within about fifteen minutes in a singing contest. Personally, I have no use for a roller which doesn't sing within five minutes after its cage is opened and facing the judge. A properly trained roller will sing almost immediately in a song contest. A good one will sing either in daylight or under

