



LEAD,

GLASS,

and

POPPY

Often there is a star
comes down from the blue
and lands in the deepest part
where a heart and the flesh
that beats it out
in a trickle of daylight and ash
do conspire to hold
all flying things "sacred"
as bombs and *Eros*
collide with the same surface
and mark their intent
with an obliteration
elemental as fire
but not as bloody
now that the blossoms
make the faint fit
for the heart
by blowing shrapnel
through the wind to be planted
like any other seed.

When Comet Hyakutake
streaked close to Earth,
a German scientific
spacecraft made
a discovery that has astonished and
puzzled astrophysicists.

The comet was emitting X-rays
in a crescent pattern
on its sunward side.

The dead, 13 adults
and 3 small children, were found
in a circle around the remains of a
campfire, laid out on the bare
ground in a sunburst pattern.

Split in two
down the middle of the page
there is always the gutter
holding two ends together
making them flow
in two but meeting again
at a point in the spine
the stem of disbelief
or a warning of fire
that burns right through it
since there are no legs to stand on,
no text by which we are saved,
no permission that has yet to be granted
and the liberties taken are
someone's surface,
a story not meant to be torn apart.

The bodies were so charred that
it looked from a distance as if they
had been draped in black robes.
Among those thought to be among
the dead were Patrick Vuarnet, 27,
the son of a French sun-glasses
manufacturer, and his mother Edith.

The final fringe of the forests
in which they had been hunters and
gatherers was put off limits
for all hunting and gathering of food.

A Wanniya-laeto who tried
to stick to the old ways would be
arrested as a poacher.

The charcoal smears
over bombland
where airplanes drop poppies
on targets preparing to seed.
From them comes the emergence
of teflon-coated icons
and worshipped telephones
that mouth prayers
in place of small talk.
Bowling down graves
are already prepared with
reports and proclamations
broken wires of cut-off connections
garbled by the gutted inverse
of poles linked at their equator
by chemical clouds.

When the chiefs of ancient Panama
went into battle, they wore golden disks the size
of Frisbees on their chest. The disks were said to
represent the sun god, and in the blazing
sunlight, as myth has it,
they shone so brightly
that they blinded
the enemy.

At the stroke of midnight on November 10, 1983,
the creation of a new national park in Sri Lanka
made cultural orphans of the
Wanniya-laeto, the last
remnant of a people who appear
to have lived on the island for 28,000 years.

Spread thin and wavering burnt into willows ready to fly. Spread out and wanting but prevented by snow in the outer atmosphere and the sand in her wings. Protected from whatever was out there, the light off yonder of love or of hiding of hate and the never-ending here and then blurry.	In 1940, a new grave was discovered at Sito Conte, and archeologists found the remains of what they thought to be the most important chief. He had been buried with five embossed disks stacked on his chest along with an animal pendant, gold cuffs at his wrists and ankles, and strings of gold beads encircling his neck and waist.
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The spine in the book is a crease in time
and we're lowly waverers
between the cracks
of what might seem to be
unthinkable but true
(because printed)
for certain, and spreading.
Through the tracks buried over
where have you been
when needing you
stuck here where the dawn
and the day that meets it halfway
can't get it together in time to say:
"Here is a house.
There is another's home.
At the corner is an arsenal.
Pick this up and explode, here."

France-2 television
broadcast what it said was
a taped telephone conversation
between two disciples of the sun cult shortly
before they died
in Switzerland in 1994. They chat about
a program which says the sun is halfway
through its life.
"But in any case it's been organized,
we're going to Jupiter."
"So Venus is out? I think we'll first
go to Venus."
"We'll see. I don't give a damn."
The main thing is to go where we have to go."

And what of the shuttle through
from I to you (nonexistent).
And of the liver,
heavy and filled
with the lead
of thousands of years
of tears and nonsense.

At least a third of the world's
inventory of human cultures have
disappeared completely since 1500 –
their languages, their traditions
and ways of life, their world
view and very identity.

<p>The clearing is variously inscribed with official words not quite innocent of all that has been cut out. Where the planes themselves in time will rot back into the sea irreversibly, a story that repeats itself over and over now more than ever as the globe shrinks closer and closer to <i>Eros</i>, you burn me straight through to the wars over the rumors of wars where a fire means there is always an other side that has died for one reason or another.</p>	<p>There seems to be a significant chance that within the next 1.14 million years, an asteroid named 433 Eros could hit Earth, with dire results for the human race and most other species.</p>
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All quoted sources from *The New York Times*: "Scientists Seek Explanation for X-Rays Emitted by Comet" (April 5, 1996); "16 Burned Bodies Found in France; Cult Tie Suspected" (December 24, 1995); "Anthropology Group Takes Activist Stand to Protect Cultures" (March 19, 1996); "Mythic Shields of Blinding Light" (December 24, 1995); "Math Experts Say Asteroid May Hit Earth in Million Years" (April 30, 1996).

LEAD, GLASS, AND POPPY was written using synchronous thinking, which involves actively seeking out coincidences: forcing connections between images in dreams and images in the street, seeing the link between ideas in one's head and stories in the news, reading the connections between different newspapers on different days. In the case of this poem, the December 24, 1995 *New York Times* (in which there was a story about the charred bodies in France) synchronized with my research into Anselm Kiefer (my particular focus was on his charred books.) After the connection was established, I began collecting other newspaper clippings that synchronized around themes of the sun, burning, and cultural destruction. The poem was written to connect these themes, and then was shaped into a sunburst pattern. This poem catalyzed a whole series of newspaper/synchronicity-based poem-projects, the most extensive being *The Parasite Poems*.

LYRIC INFILTRATION is a cut-up technique I devised when looking through my notebooks and trying to find a form for rambling poetic notes. Here's how I did it:

- 1) Compose poetry that is tonally in the lyric/epic tradition. Put it aside.
- 2) Make a scrapbook of news stories over a period of six months.
- 3) Type up one-line descriptions of each news story.
- 4) Break apart the lyric poems and fit them together with the one line descriptions.
- 5) Pick a news story/editorial to be infiltrated (mine are excerpts from longer stories).
- 6) Begin jamming the poetry and one-line descriptions into the news story. Pay no attention to grammar and syntax at first.
- 7) Revise the now jammed news story so that it is grammatically correct but maintains the accidental synchronicities of meaning.

The READING INDEX (TEXTE INDICE) series was inspired by the work of the artist Terence Gower, who creates graphs charting the hypothetical emotional response of an artist reading an art review about her/his work. No. 1 was a stream-of-consciousness exercise in which the poem was edited to conform to the criteria of the graph. No. 2 was created by first drawing an arbitrary graph

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