



Sigma Tau Delta,
Rho Xi

Portfolio 2016-2017

Table of Contents

About Sigma Tau Delta Rho Xi	3
The Commodification of Love in <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> by Amanda Riggle	4
Destabilizing Fictions: Defamiliarization and Biopolitics in Rankine's <i>Citizen</i> by Mark Dietzel	10
Love Poetry Contest Winners	16
In Prose or In Verse Poetry	19
The Jacobin Reading Group	28



SIGMA TAU DELTA
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY



Sigma Tau Delta, Rho Xi

Cal Poly Pomona's English Honor Society

Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, was founded in May 1924 at Dakota Wesleyan College in Mitchell, South Dakota, by Professor Judson Q. Owen. Its central purpose is to confer distinction upon outstanding students of the English language and literature in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies. Sigma Tau Delta also recognizes the accomplishments of professional writers who have contributed to the fields of language and literature.

Cal Poly Pomona's Rho Xi chapter follows in this tradition by striving to create a community between students and faculty. Holding meetings regularly showcases our commitment and drive towards helping fellow students and exposing students to new cultures, literature, passions, ideas and welcoming teachers to do the same.

2016-2017 Sigma Tau Delta Officers

Kristin Kawecki	President
Amanda Riggle	Vice President
Mark Dietzel	Treasurer
Emily Ayo	Secretary

2017-2018 Sigma Tau Delta Officers

Amanda Riggle	President
Parveena Singh	Vice President
Luz Badillo	Treasurer
Ana Silva	Secretary
Lauren White	PR
Casey Marshall	Webmaster
John Danho	Historian



The Commodification of Love in *The Merchant of Venice*

By Amanda Riggle

The Merchant of Venice is a play about love, friendship, and the power of money. William Shakespeare wrote in a time where the economic system in England was shifting from feudalism, a system where the land and peasants working the land generated monetary wealth for the lords and the crown, to capitalism, a system that depended upon production or services to generate an income according to Harry Levin and his book *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times* (31). Gentleman were once able to live off of the wealth produced by their estates but the shifting from one economic system to another left estate-holders like Bassanio perpetually broke. Women like Portia were able to survive the transition because their families had so much accumulated wealth that the shift in systems did little to their capital. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio uses love as a means to overcome his lack of wealth in a society transitioning from feudalism, where he would have made money from his estate, to capitalism, where he has no means to produce a living. Portia's wealth left from her family is the reason Bassanio pursues a relationship with her.

Within the play Bassanio pursues three options to earn money with his estate "disabled" as he states in Act I scene i: one is to borrow money, which he does from Antonio in the beginning of the play. Second is to take out a loan which, again, Bassanio does but in the form of Antonio taking a loan out from Shylock so that Bassanio may borrow the loaned-money. Bassanio's third money-making options within his current disabled monetary status is marrying Portia. Portia's introduction in the play comes in Act I scene i when Bassanio describes her to Antonio:

In Belmont is a lady richly left

And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,

Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes

I did receive fair speechless messages:

Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued

To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth (169-175)

When Bassanio first describes Portia, it is not her beauty, virtue, nor personal qualities he explicates; instead, he goes for the fact that Portia is rich and without parents when he states “In Belmont is a lady richly left.” Karen Newman in her article in *Shakespeare Quarterly* notes that “The commercial language to describe love relationships...in *The Merchant of Venice* displays not only the economic determinants of marriage in Elizabethan society, but England's economic climate more generally - its developing capitalist economy” (23). While he does describe her as “fair” and gives her credit for “wondrous virtues,” his language keeps wandering back to fiscal terms when he talks about her being “nothing undervalued” and states that “nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth.” Wooing, love, and marriage to Bassanio are measured in fiscal language because it is a fiscal matter tied to the capitalist system of Early Modern England. He can like Portia, for she has value as a person, but his main concern lies with her income and the fact that she, and again, her wealth, appear unprotected by parental oversight.

Wooing Portia may be the rationale behind Bassanio's latest pursuit of a loan from Antonio in the opening of the play, but the funds secured by Bassanio were used for more than finding passage to Belmont, where Portia resides. By spending Antonio's flesh-loan on a servant, clothing, shopping, and at least one nice dinner in Act II scene ii under the guise of winning Portia's hand in marriage, Bassanio is doing her a disservice as well. When Bassanio asks for this loan from Antonio, he explicitly states that this latest venture of his, which happens to be courting Portia, would lead him to be able to repay all of Antonio's loans and

more. Bassanio expects that, if he's able to win Portia's hand in marriage, all of her estate and worth will be his to repay his debts. According to Walter Cohan's essay "*The Merchant of Venice* and the Possibilities of Historic Criticism," Bassanio's courtship of Portia "is motivated by a concern for property" influenced by "the process of transition from a feudal to a bourgeois concept of marriage" (777). From his first introduction to Portia in Act I scene i to his promising to "To unburden all my plots and purposes/How to get clear of all the debts I owe" (139-140) when describing his plan to marry Portia, Bassanio's intent for her hand is clearly fiscal and not about the love of the lady herself.

When Bassanio finally does get to Portia's estate to woo, Portia's parents, while absent, leave behind a test to make sure her suitor isn't after her wealth through the riddles on the three caskets made of gold, silver, and lead. The audience is shown, through a series of suitors, that the gold and silver casket are not correct but Bassanio gets no such insight before he has to take the test in Act III scene ii. The other suitors, according to Sigurd Buckhardt, "Aragon and Morocco fail because they try to interpret the lines inscribed on the caskets rather than the substance; they calculate which of the inscriptions correctly states the relation between their own worth, Portia's worth and the risk of choosing wrongly" (247). Further, it's not the riddles themselves, meant to test how a suitor values marriage and Portia, but Portia that helps Bassanio pass the test left behind by her parents through a song:

Tell me where is fancy bred,

Or in the heart, or in the head?

How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,

With gazing fed; and fancy dies

In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell

I'll begin it,--Ding, dong, bell (III.ii.1430-9)

As Burckhardt notes, “as often in Shakespeare, music liberates from the slavery of intention; it suspends, in a momentary harmony, the endless chase of means and meanings” (248). In this case, it’s not the music itself that offers liberation or harmony but the lyrics that offer a clue. The first three lines of the song itself, as well as words like “engender'd,” “fed,” “cradle,” and “ding, dong,” all have hard “D” sounds which are echo the “D” in lead. The song is also filled with short “E” sounds that occur in lead like “bred” and “head,” and is even more filled with the same “L” sound from lead in “tell,” “let,” and “bell,” for a few examples. Whether or not Bassanio consciously picked up on the song can be debatable but the influence of the sound pattern on Bassanio is clear: a man with little interest in Portia outside of her wealth was able to pass a test designed for those who value Portia for more than her money.

By aiding Bassanio in the test left behind by her parents, Portia later finds reason to doubt Bassanio’s ability to value her outside of her wealth in Act IV when Portia, disguised in drag as a lawyer to defend Antonio’s life from Shylock, asks for Bassanio to give her a ring as payment. The ring is one Portia placed high value on and declared that it represented their bond of love. Bassanio yields the ring, not knowing this ring was being asked for by the very woman that first issued it to him. Karen Newman sheds light on the fact that “gift-giving was a significant aspect of Elizabethan...social intercourse” and “helped to establish the newly formed family” (24). Significantly, Portia’s ring “is a visual sign of her vow of love and submission to Bassanio” (25) which he gives away at the behest of Antonio after Portia-in-drag has stated that her request for the ring as payment was nullified in Act IV scene i line 2378. Bassanio, by

giving away Portia's ring, has assigned the monetary value of the item over the emotional and social value placed on the ring by both Portia and the Early Modern audience first watching this drama unfold. While Bassanio gets the ring back and earns Portia's forgiveness in the final scene of the play, the question of his hierarchy of values still remains: has he really learned to value the bond he's entered with Portia or has he just learned that his wife can outsmart him, more so than his friend Antonio, when it comes to matters of manipulation, lies, and money? Given Bassanio's characteristics throughout the play and his fixation on wealth before the people around him, a long term change of heart is unlikely for this lord with a depleted estate in search of money.

Throughout *The Merchant of Venice*, Bassanio has demonstrated his need for wealth comes beyond his emotional bonds with others within the play. The economic shift of the era, from feudalism to capitalism, created the monetary vacuum for the lord that Antonio from the merchant class was first able to fill. From that relationship, Bassanio shifted his means for economic comfort to Portia, a woman also from the aristocracy but one with greater wealth that was unaffected by the transitioning system. Bassanio uses love, or, more precisely, gets others with money to love him, as a means of overcoming his expensive lifestyle and lack of revenue from his estate. Bassanio's ability to take advantage of Portia is facilitated by the shift in economic systems, but the commodification of love within the play is created by Bassanio.

Works Cited

- Burckhardt, Sigurd. "The Merchant of Venice: The Gentle Bond." *ELH* 29.3 (1962): 239-262. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 March 2017.
- Cohan, Walter. "The Merchant of Venice and the Possibilities of Historical Criticism." *EHL* 49.4 (1982): 765-89. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Feb. 2017.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Martial Law in the Land of Cockaigne." Ed. Ivo Kamps. *Materialist Shakespeare: A History*. London: Verso, 1995. 108-41. Print.
- Harris, Jonathan G. "Marxism." *Shakespeare and Literary Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 143-157. Print.
- Levin, Harry. "Perspectives." *Shakespeare and the Revolution of the Times: Perspectives and Commentaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978. 29-50. Print.
- Newman, Karen. "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38.1 (1987): 19-33. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 March 2017.
- Shakespeare, William. "The Merchant of Venice." *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973. 284-319. Print.

Destabilizing Fictions: Defamiliarization and Biopolitics in Rankine's *Citizen*

By Mark Dietzel

Art possesses the power to disrupt the accepted state of affairs, or at least find the cracks within it. The undercurrent of power in our time rests in biopolitics, a system of control which relies on the regulation of life by establishing norms. These norms manifest in a racial context by establishing black Americans as less likely to be innocent in a court of law, offered aid in a crisis, or granted access to quality social services. Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* undertakes the herculean task of revealing the cracks in a system which lies hidden in plain sight, but it succeeds by utilizing Victor Shklovsky's theory of *defamiliarization*. Rankine employs defamiliarizing techniques to transform quotidian vignettes into anecdotal indictments, to subvert the biopolitical norms of race in the United States.

Biopolitics has exerted itself as the dominant force in the 21st century via big data and demographics to control biological outcomes—the power “to make live and let die” in Michel Foucault's words. The mechanism of control within biopower is the establishment of norms, “something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regularize” (Foucault 72), which serve to maximize the preservation of the population. Foucault summarizes: “It is simply a matter of maximizing the positive elements... [and] of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient... quantities that can be relatively, but never wholly reduced... [thus] one works on probabilities (Security 34-35). Race enters the frame when it comes to those ineradicable risky probabilities which inhibit life; the system has a built-in discrimination filter that offloads these risky probabilities onto the “non-normative” race.

Norms are problematic for genuine dissection because of their regularity—they operate without explicit recognition. Defamiliarization comes into play here, because while Shklovsky's

theory applies to the definition of *literature* relative to other kinds of writing, the framework can be applied to biopolitical norms. Shklovsky writes that “as perception becomes habitual, it becomes automatic,” and “the over-automatization of an object, permits the greatest economy of perceptive effort” (Shklovsky 778). Biopolitics can be framed as a literary category in that it defamiliarizes more traditional schemes of power through the establishment of norms—effectively automatizing power itself. However, defamiliarization can also generate perceptive *friction* to constructively critique these very same biopolitical norms. In Rankine’s case this friction is applied to racial norms of “blackness” within “The vernacular visuality of blackness [which] comes to be recognizable by virtue of its very negation of a racialized normativity that takes whiteness as its dominant symbolic reference” (Craig and Rahko 289).

Several of the vignettes in *Citizen* use the 2nd person to command the reader into an unfamiliar state: “you tell the manager you are speaking with that you will come by his office to sign the form. When you arrive and announce yourself, he blurts out, I didn’t know you were black!” (Rankine 44). Anyone who reads this story is foisted into the position of a black person, whose gender, age, and other characteristics are obfuscated by the pronoun “you.” The focus remains on the immediacy of the moment, with minimal details, including a lack of quotation marks separating the manager’s dialog from the standard prose. The reader is firmly lodged in a moment of unfamiliar blackness because the only details that matter are “you,” the “manager,” and “black.” When combined with “your” response to his blurting out, “You didn’t mean to say that *aloud*,” (Rankine 44, my emphasis) the norm is called out for what it is—that the manager was expecting a default “white” experience from a white person.

Biopower accounts for crime and other “undesirable” outcomes via supposedly empirical quantification, but the establishment of norms based on these numbers does not consider individual variance or personal agency. The “black” population is defined by aggregate data and

as such each person must prove that they are the exception to the statistic which states: “this individual *should* be a threat.” The data creates a norm of suspicion for black men relative to a norm of innocence applied to white men—the default setting for each race is different—but also influenced by its very definition as the “default” or “alternative” race.

The norms of whiteness relative to blackness in everyday interactions are insidious in their commonality, but more overt forces like policing are also masked by biopolitical norms. As an apparatus, law enforcement perpetuates a different categorization of “blackness [that] designates a changing system of unequal power structures that apportion and delimit which humans can lay claim to full human status and which humans cannot” (Weheliye 3). Rankine defamiliarizes an encounter with the police by manipulating sentence structure to create an intentionally “difficult, roughened, impeded language” (Shklovsky 783). Compared to the vignette in the workplace, this story built around New York’s infamous “stop and frisk” policy never explicitly says the word “black,” but given the treatment of the imagined suspect one cannot help but assume that they (the reader as the object of the “you”) are black—an exercise which is in itself an example of racial norms in action.

To defamiliarize the “stop and frisk” experience, Rankine uses terse sentences combined with rapid word swaps to create phrases of circular meaning. “Each time it begins the same way, it doesn’t begin the same way, each time it begins it’s the same.” (Rankine 107). In these pages, the disorienting effect emphasizes the inescapability of “stop and frisk” for black Americans, because the established norm of criminal behavior does not correspond to “whiteness”. Lines such as, “You can’t drive yourself sane. You are not insane” and “... still you are not the guy and still you fit the description because there is only one guy who is always the guy fitting the description,” highlight the catch-22 of a policy which effectively criminalizes race, or at least makes “blackness” inherently suspect. The reader is imposed firmly into a

black perspective once more via the 2nd person, but the shift in orientation from a more standard narrative to one of mental feedback loops posits a black perspective of policing which clashes with the normative white narrative—replacing a logic which “makes sense” with a parallel state of incoherence—made manifest via defamiliarization.

The power of statistics and (in this case, racial) norms combine to control people at the individual and population levels, as “it follows that ‘individual’ and ‘mass’ are not extremes but rather two sides of a global political technology that simultaneously aim at the control of the human as individual body and the human as a species” (Lemke 37-38). Institutional racial norms control individual “black bodies” and the “population of blacks” by neutralizing resistance as it occurs, because any outburst from a black American body can be categorically reassigned. Individual resistance becomes “disorderly behavior,” and a collective outcry becomes “unpatriotic anarchism,” with both labels effectively sterilizing the racial component. Racism which manifests in this way resists being “called out,” because such racism “... is not defined by individual action. Rather it structures social fields of action, guides political practices, and is realized through state apparatuses” (Lemke 45). The futile struggle of a black American within this biopolitical system is artfully explicated by Rankine’s defamiliarization of a typical black American’s interaction with the state apparatus vis-à-vis police officers under “stop and frisk.”

The racial norms beneath “stop and frisk” may be difficult to pin down as a force of biopolitics in action, but at least it can be named—and if it can be named there is a chance for resistance. The fully regularized and integrated racial norms remain nameless and are more resistant to abstraction. One vignette in *Citizen* revolves around Hurricane Katrina, and Rankine plucks fragments of interviews from affected residents, stitching them together to paint a broad picture of the “nameless” norms brought to the surface in a time of crisis. The dissociated images work in a manner similar to that of biopolitics: they generate a “mass” based

on individual accounts, and simultaneously the “individual” perspectives are byproducts of the mass. The defamiliarized presentation of the event composed of personal accounts and media quotes is punctuated by a repeated refrain of “Have you seen their faces” (Rankine 83) in reference to the victims (alive and dead), who remain invisible in their “blackness”—both literally (they are not visible on the page) and metaphorically in their “literal-real” lives. The nameless racial norm here is never stated explicitly, just as in reality: that “matters of life and longevity, health and illness...reflect collective choices and normative preferences in a given society” (Lemke 87). The collective choice here was to ignore these matters of life for both the black population and black individuals—as Rankine presents us with individuals who comprise a collective population on the page.

Biopolitics may not be literature, but it functions via norms which distance us from its manipulations, in the same way that “habitualization devours works, clothes, one’s wife, and the fear of war” (Shklovsky) in literature—automatizing life as an organism and life as an experience respectively. Just as defamiliarization can combat the habitualization which afflicts the written word and grant it new life, so can it create the contrast required to illuminate the artificiality of the norms which arise from biopolitics and grant us the chance to combat its influence. Rankine presents vignettes which defamiliarize racial norms so readers might catch a glimpse of the experiences which are hidden from them behind biopolitically managed definitions of “whiteness” and “blackness.” These very definitions, combined with state apparatuses which foster complete control of life on the individual and mass levels, presuppose a narrative of facts which we can call into question: “The fiction of facts assumes innocence, ignorance, lack of intention, misdirection; the necessary conditions of a certain time and place” (Rankine 83).

Works Cited

- Craig, Byron B. and Stephen E. Rahko. "Visual Profiling as Biopolitics: Or, Notes on Policing in Post-Racial #AmeriKKKa." *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* 16.3 (2016): 287-295. PDF. 26 November 2016. <<http://csc.sagepub.com/content/16/3/287>>.
- Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*. Ed. Michel Senellart. n.d.
- . "Society Must be Defended." (n.d.): 61-81.
- Lemke, Thomas. *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. New York: New York University Press, 2011.
- Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2014.
- Shklovsky, Victor. "Art as Technique." *The Critical Tradition*. Ed. David E. Richter. New York, 2007. 774-784.
- Weheliye, Alexander G. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Duke University Press Books, 2014.

Love Poetry
Contest Winners

1st Place: Michelle Mermilliod

Yerba Buena

a
hand
full of
freshly
washed
leaves, set
on the counter
for me. I look so tragic
feign my sickness
so that my mom
will let me
stay at
my
grandma's house.
She washes the
yerba buena
plucked
from
her
yard. It grows with little help
it is there when you need
it. I wait on the couch
sniffing, cuddled in
a blanket and wait
for the tea. She
adds *azucar*
for me.
My
grandpa walks through the living room
Don't leave your tissues on the flo'
I'm scared of his gruffness, but
only a little. Here I feel loved,
am loved. The *yerba buena*
proves it. I melt into the
couch and sip the brew
made special for me
and enjoy my time
with Grandma
without my
stupid
sisters around to
bother me.

i
have
no more
grand
parents
i don't even
have a dad. But I do have Mom
to walk me down the aisle. And she
goes with me to the store to buy pots and
pots of *yerba buena* to put in to vintage teacups
set next to the succulents in El Pato cans my sister put together
because she saw it on Pinterest and thought it *looked cute*
(they do, but Jesus can she get any more basic?)
to hand out to my almost-husband's and my
friends and family on our wedding day
I am surrounded by love, the *yerba buena* proves it
it will go on to be planted in the yards of loved ones
the good herb will soothe the tummies of those we
hold dear, the succulents will
hold up well in the desert
where he grew up and
the knowing ones
will replant them
in something that drains well
as well as the mint in the
beautiful, dainty cups
purchased from a
thrift store on
The West Side of The Bern
where they play
Golden Oldies, a time warp,
Art Leboe's Killer Oldies
John Waters, hand jive
and I think of how
Grandma used to
take me there
back when I was little
and wanted her
all to myself
and she
would make me tea
with love

2nd Place: Catherine Vasquez-Ochoa

yellow

i wake up and i see yellow
a man holding me like my grandma holds her youth through her photographs
his scent smells like he fought an exquisite monastery's bright courtyard to smell like such
he asks "does it still hurt?"
but the only hurt i feel is when i reach over and all that quivers is vacancy
like if it was ten years ago when my fingers were just twigs

he knows
he reads to me because he understands that the words on the paper are real people
he knows that to me that is the only thing that makes me feel safe
he titles all his poems with my name
he touches me like he found god and he says
"you make the world feel like it stops spinning sometimes"
and i whisper back
"please exist for me"

he tells me that rain falls so that i could see it
that the suns beams through it and brings warmth while the room is lit up,
yellow

he showed me that art is
loud
it absorbs the minds of those with eyes wide open,
and grips dullness to perish it like all things evil
yellow

he reminds me that loneliness only enters if i allow it to
that sleeping is beautiful
not another place to scream
that true fragrance comes from within
and that my exterior is simply a framework of vessels that contains eras of beauty
that the words "be careful" mean "i love you"
that the sun is golden
but it's not yellow
that's him

*In Prose or In Verse:
A Night of Poetry
and Prose*

Grant Palmer



“At Night”

At night

I go outside to look at the

Moon, Stars,

On a small piece of land

Through which a creek runs, frogs croak.

A stump from a fallen tree

(I don't know the type of tree). A dark ash grey and brown stump

With twists of black

Running across the diameter

Of the saw's cut,

Hard to make out in the dim light of evening,

Stands upon the steep north western bank.

A man lives down in the ditch

cut by the creek

and enhanced by the city

Through infrastructural ordinance,

as well as a stray black cat with green eyes

that sometimes has sex with my cat.

The stump sits teetering on the edge

Of the steep slope

Which rushes quickly to the

Floor of the creek bed,

But huge roots root it to the earth

like an anchor of a steel-hulled ship,

Chain-taut-strong.

Michelle Mermilliod



Nought Grant (Ed)

I make the mistake of asking the Pastor why?
He said women were made by G-d to multitask;
Men to single-mindedly solve problems.
So women are supposed to be secretaries?
assistants for male [experts professors directors deans]?
Fuck that.
Men rule the world but can't even make a goddamn doctor's appointment.
I walk away wishing I am...
Tall, spectacularly white, impossibly loud, cis-male
know how to work on car engines while discussing String Theory
I wasn't taught anything but how to laugh nervously when touched unwanted and
not ruffle feathers. This is born of fear. This is taught for no other reason but to
prolong a sickness.
Beauty wears a jacket with a painting of ovaries on the back.
It reads Grow a Pair
I want her to be a bad ass.
i want her to be the bad ass i wasn't
But, like Boethius, hope and fear
destroy me while i await my fate
And I hope that Beauty claps back when dude refers to her body parts with words
like pussy and fuck to describe what he would like to do to her body mind heart.
My daughter.
O Audre Lorde, give me strength!
Z-A-M-I!
a new name to identify
with Deniz Kandiyoti in a bargain with patriarchy.
Anne Fausto-Sterling, I have uttered your name countless times in talks of inter-
sex human beings, feminism, and the disenfranchised!
I am sad to say much of my presentation fell on deaf ears; I have failed you in my
lack of knowledge in Biology.
Michelle Cliff telephones in:
WE ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE
as I erase trickhoeslutbutterfacewhore from my vocabulary
because there can never be any male equivalents.
The fear continues- that my hope will not be granted
fear that our leaders are just weak and hateful
That legislation will not help her when I can't be with her.
that i will spend all my time hoping and fearing, like Boethius, just to meet Doom.
this march was made for walking, but we uber'ed in
forgive me.

Kristin Kawecki



The Reoccurring Thoughts of an American teenager in her Senior Year of High School

Sometimes I think about it--but only sometimes
Indignant—

How DARE they reject ME!

How do they dare deny dreams that I paid so
dearly for

(—hopes take up an expansive portion of the
brain's capacity)

.....

But now it hardly bothers me, (I've taught
myself to believe, successfully)

My future lies elsewhere

Occasionally I think about him

Strong, Clay, Arms straight, slanting, torso

Solid and so, so, wonderfully kinetic

I have always liked bread more than cake

I often think about them.

This is the difficult part.

The hurting thought.

What can I do?

Am I Strong enough? ---For it is they that
support me

It is a fight against both myself and them.

And my tears are traitors.

.....

I cannot imagine love without them;

They are giants that flicker with questionable
duration

In a world that expands the farther you look
down the horizon.

But it is straining to look down that horizon and
at

My already dissipating giants, at the same time.

I Must Not Blink.

But I love so much more than them.

And I always think about me.

This is my sin,

It is one I cannot pardon nor prevent—

I have not a communal brain.

I am guilty of so much (and somewhat
unabashedly plan to continue)

I have committed gluttony, murder, lust, all
unto myself.

It is I that I hunger to consume.

But I always think about her too

That sensual dancer of the cosmos, daringly
bearing the colors of life.

She speaks to me at times,

Reminds me to think about my billions of
brothers and sisters.

And I feel as if I know them as I dig my toes into
the warm soil;

But the salty copper taste in mouth reminds me
of their illness

I am all too fortunate (not everyone has giants)

And although she smiles at us as we frolic

Under the dancing, swirling bits of green life;

She is bewildered;

And with senility repeats the moaned question:

“why have you not written songs for the ice,

for the bears

for the trees and whales and wolves?”

I, him, it, them, her, we.

These are the characters of my thoughts.

Kristin Kawecki



Reflections of Becoming

I know what it is to be a forgotten god
To one day be Fairy Queene,
gracing her pedestal

and then some months past, to be neglected
disrespected, discarded

an object now profane and burdensome

I knew what it was to be an entity beyond belief
my existence so spectacted
that even I began to wonder
at the reality of my presence

I was virgin-mother, bringer of life to some
I was starshine child, miracle of light to others

Sometimes at night
with the mist and the crickets
and the birdsong and the silence

I would sit and soak in
the own breathtaking beauty
of my enigmatic existence
so powerful in its delicacy
so overburdened in sensitivity
so entranced in my vanity

the eyes of my lover and words of my books and
professors
whispering in my head
to the extent that I could not hear or see
my own voice, my own picture of myself

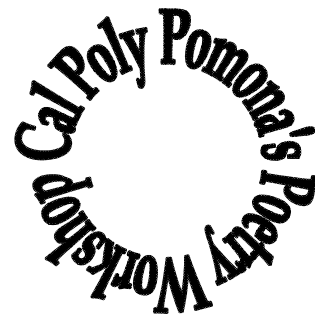
I would gaze up to look in the mirror
bring fingers to face
to make sure that I had not dreamt myself up,
dreamer that I am.

I would be drunk with my own startling
awareness of my being
afraid of becoming what I thought of as
perfection
that I was becoming exactly what I prayed,
all too desperately as a child to become

Later I would learn that it is fear of the
goddess's power
her own fragility yet largenessk
that I grew to let twirl inside me
that would drive some to hate me,
some to fear me,
most to misunderstand me
and many, so many, to try to control me.

We are though, our own gods,
I worship the life and majesty within me
regardless if I am alone at my own millennial
shrine,
in my quest to be filled with light and love
I necessarily spill joy and discovery in the paths
of others
I am servant to the power that is of me,
but not precisely mine,
an eternal whispering of beauty and greatness
that is most powerful, most ubiquitous,
and most human.

Ivan Rios



Master Discourse

I've been alive too long.
I'm a flower that blooms too late.
A fish that has no school—
A dog that has no friend.

I've been dead too long.
The high yet flat memory;
I'm roadkill without a witness,
or a parrot with no tongue,
or a person with no soul.

I've been stuck far too long.
I'm a fly trapped in a house,
or a mouse in a glue trap left out
in the summer sun. Life's
a fragment of disease. Hold
your breath; your soul's
escaping. Listen, the
master discourse speaks.

Alex Lennert

The Signs of our Time



Wading through the broken days,
Our shattered mantle
On desolate plains,
These are the signs of our time:
Those snakes that speak with lurid tongues,
Gaudy conciliation paying fire with fire,
The endless stream of boots on sand,
Isaac's father's unstead hand—
All these are signs of our time.
To sift for gold yields only fangs
Laid bare against the ashen snow,
Fragments of modern pottery
That stifle Tethys' mouth—
These, too, are our signs.
Left reeling, spun in semiotic daze,
In a cocoon of hemp and airless word,
Metal collar and prolix guns,
Teeth that crave that flesh submit
To animal law's overwhelming force,
Which blinds us from these signs.
By bending we capitulate
And master's greed turns servant's guilt—
The yawning majority sighs, then cries,
"These are the signs of our time!"

Casey Marshall

Whirligig



I know, I know, it could,
I think, I might, I know, I should
Maybe, could be, I might - I ought
To focus on another thought?

My reflex is evasion -
- flashing through a new equation -
Of the need to stop - go - rest
Before I burn in the urge to test,
Myself. Right?

It could, I think I might, I should,
I know, I know, row row row the boat,
I'm struggling to stay afloat,
In details, minute, I need to think!
Before, below the the lucid line I sink!
I can, I will, despite my inclination,
My temper, my tendencies are - broken,
Like a rotation; up and down
Smile and frown, angel-nagel,
To and fro, stop and go,
Where will this tide take me?
Into what will this condition make me?!

I'm like a paper helicopter,
Spinning, reeling,
Never winning, confounded by feeling,
Of a rotation; up and down,
smile and frown, angel-nagel,
To and fro, stop and go
Spinning around and around,
As I plummet down,
A whirligig, I twist and glide,
Enjoying the freedom to feel curious inside
Till impact, when I land - kaput.
I am trapped underfoot.

Zane Landin



I am not what I look like

Just tell me, and I will tell you back
You can break my tears
But the pains stray from the fears
I am 100%, yet 99% to them,
And that makes all the difference In me,
Passion has dried up and change is ignored
I am sick of disappointment,
So, you can judge me in a room full of cold questions, my best wasn't
good enough, was it?
But I stand up and run with the passionate winds,
You may see what the outside tells,
I will fall, like everyone, and the ground greets my fallen failure
The ground is alive to pick
me up
I don't need a hand, I've got two of my own,
My brittle bones survive and
When the clouds reach the sky, I'll be there as I have when they were
abused, ashamed, and victimized.
I am still wandering toward the path of the unknown,
You can hear my voice fly above as
My future awaits at midnight,
Even if you cast the darkest abyss,
Your eyes deceive, as my eyes start the fire, where my ashy soul
sprouts, grows, and consumes,
Where I live on within the wind
I used to write convolution, impossible to understand,
Maybe there was truth in that
But my life is straight and clear
Emotions don't shake me anymore.
Living with half the sky.
Living with them, not against them.
This is our story

John Danho



A Delay in Shibuya

Stark-blue eyes, wide stare;
I steal glances in passing.
We met once before.

Hickeys down her neck,
my lips patter like the rain;
“Ramen?” she asks me.

She speaks with a lisp.
English, Spanish, and German,
noodle, egg, and pork.

Ev’ry taste, a thought
floating calmly in the soup.
Ev’ry step, a sight:

A delicious life -
too strong for my tongue, sometimes,
and tough to swallow.

More rain in the streets;
we promise that we’ll return,
our words in each drop.

Tall towers of steel -
a busy intersection.
We reach an impasse.

Her friend drags her off
before I recall her name.
A far, fizzled light.

CPP'S JACOBIN READING GROUP

**OPEN TO ALL
MAJORS**

4-5 READINGS A MONTH

**This group is dedicated
to leftist readings and
providing a left voice
here on campus.**

Founded Fall 2016

By Amanda Riggle

And Dr. Brian Stone



**For more information on Cal Poly Pomona's Jacobin Reading
Group, check out our Facebook.**

**Sponsored by Sigma Tau Delta, The International English
Honors Society**

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CPPIACOBINREADING

Continuing Fall 2017

**We hope to see you
there!**