

sinew & oils

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collected works from 2014 (revised 2016) and 2016

for my parents Robin and Ernesto Gonzalez
in memory of my mentor Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)

sinew

collected works from 2014 (revised 2016)

...

i peeled its wings back
to watch it walk away – siphoned shame
from a well of concepts . what did you think of me
then ?

in the winter everything is slower and more amenable

what do you think of me now ? now that everything
everything . everything – (my hands my legs my guilt my worth)
is contagious

i'm sorry if you're sick of me

•

i'm
walking away from the river
with a cracked wooden mask and a handful of bones
i'm walking away from the water and
these bones don't look anything like mine
i'm walking
to take them away . their fine lines
map my ethics and
decisions and
fears

i'm walking towards the water
what do you think of me now ?

••

you drove me
to the water
and told me to take the wheel ;
i took a knee instead . when the wind is
too strong i won't go

anywhere

•

forward motion is
preferable , but
lateral motion is acceptable –
because you don't have to be

•

anywhere

•

this wasn't what your hands looked like
the last time i saw you . i won't define your
new face .

your first expressions and initial glances
just like your first breaths
rushed
uncertain
desperate

but now you speak so slowly

say a prayer
in your favorite constructed language
clasp your hands
together ;

let your hollow fingers do the talking

••

carried the torch door to door
until your gills were covered in tar and your
veins were caked in
hardening plastic

and the elastic kept fraying and fraying
until finally it came close to snapping
(at the most inopportune moment)

•

what could you decide about
the mortal world?
my Christmas
with lights on a string
the same color as the realization

and a physical manifestation of your Aura
on top of our plastic tree ;

•

we don't have to work today
we can spend the next 24 hours

wringing our hands
watching each other wrinkle
in real-time

and your breath will turn to crystals and spell the words “ i told you so ”
and i'll sigh
and it will echo –
its tails overlapping and distorting
over time , over space
overlooking the details

tomorrow we'll go back to work .

••

it's twisted logic
mostly

you looked like a Swan during its final song
when its knees break and its
calves and its
shins and it
buckles into stardust , and
Earthdust – to be returned to the ground it grew from ;

it's broken promises
mostly

you spoke like a priest
smug
young
and ready to die ;
in overtones and confessions
and your body turned to liquid silver
when i touched it , but

i thought it was Mercury , so i left you there

•

(really) it's poor planning
mostly

it's hard to plan ahead when your joints are Oak and
your best ideas
fall short

and maybe i'll
let you cut my hair today

or maybe i'll buckle back into the components i came from

••

your hands
were a canon ; one
imitated the other
i couldn't stand it out of context

your context was
uncomfortable

your skin was a glowing mess of glue and fabrics
i never understood how you built
the things you built
with the time you afforded yourself

•

your thoughts
were a homemade bomb ; crude ,
without discrimination

i couldn't handle it out of context
and i couldn't stand to reason

the soil wasn't
right that day . it turned to
ash

and it calcified like bone

•

i couldn't stand to consider
buckled knees
twitchy fingers

i can't stand for very long now and i hope you wouldn't ask me to

••

when it ended we sat there
slack-jawed
awed

– nothing could justify speech –

i could sit here
watching my tongue tie and untie itself
for days
and no-one would notice

•

sometimes it's better to keep quiet .
you reached for the center of the room
trembling
quicker and quicker

“ look outside , it's golden ”
“ it's been that way for hours ”
but you
never found the center
(i wasn't sure if you were actually looking)

i could sit here
watching this room ossify
for years
and our words would do the same

•

your Organs played a prayer in four-part harmony
your spit shined
and danced
because you couldn't close your mouth . your
nose twitched

it seemed to say “ i don't know why you didn't even think to ask . ”

your crown was made of a perfume ad from a magazine
the smell made me sick

••

what is it ?
“ i can't stop coughing ,
and i can't stop wheezing , and
i can't stop thinking of what they'll do if they come for me . ”

this is the
third brain we buried this week
we etched our initials into this one
before we put it in the ground
– for memory's sake –

•

there was a stern warning about situations like this one .
and there were
line drawings ,
graphs ,
and diagrams

(it's unwise to ignore protocol)

i watched my fingers unravel for two months ;
i tried to clasp them so i could pray

it wasn't fair

•

i watched my fingers unravel til my arms up to my elbows
everything beneath was threadbare

“ what was it ? ”
it was learning the components that comprise you

••

stained soldier
looks back up at me with
burnt eyes

didn't need to say much

i expanded into partially realized visions of
my brother
and my ethos

we took my heart to the back room

we took to heart every word you said

wan with loose tongues ;
when we woke up that day , you told me
you were prepared
for anything

•

(you have to exploit every inch of the Space)
the space between the crowns and the planet ,
its impracticality
offset by its inconvenience

the space between erratic advice
and wisdom

•

stained soldier
keeps telling me
to stop teasing

••

the light is an autograph
on the planet and on the room

and on our faces

the light is a signature
giving closure to our contracts

concentrate

coalesce

(it wasn't about getting revenge
then –
it's hard to qualify harmlessness)

•

concentrate
corroborate
ad infinitum

•

my ego stands up
He
slides across the room
entirely impractical for his shape

his light exists
in his teeth

the space is a
constructed area

it breeds alone ,
reimagines its boundaries
constantly

this space will outlast us

and everything

and the roaches

•

condition
convect
forever

•

“ you can learn a lot
lying flat on your face ”

“ but you can't know
until it's over ”

you can pull up half-truths
from the ground
like weeds ;

you can learn a lot
lying

••

treat it however you'd like
but treat it

i spent the day
observing myself
what did you learn ?

(treat it however you want)

these paths don't mean
anything
and the further you go
the closer you get to where you started

stay stained . stay vigilant . stay stable

you can tear out
anywhere
you can hold out
for anything
you can keep the coy smile but spare me

its details

turn in any way ;
you were the Christ star
moving parallel with my thoughts . turn
in any way
but not so i lose you .

it grows like mold
in sequences ;

in sheets – it grows in the pattern your mouth makes
when you tell me –
over and over –
in a broken loop “ i could never ”

turn in the throne
return in ether

my
analog brain
tries to detect the risk

and tries to sustain something ;

stay ignorant stay content
like your idols –
stay close to your components .

you grew from cracked seeds
in soil

defying probability

and you tried to say
something

•

you grew from gravel and i could count all the stones just by looking
it's wrong to think about you now
you grew from wet wood ;
first in patterns , then in phrases
i couldn't stand to talk about you now

in literal terms

•

my analog brain wants to let something else do the the thinking for a while .

•

your structure was such that i could reach in at any point and pull out a heart

••

i was no vigilante

hopeless and stumbling and stammering and –

i severed ties with an old friend
who pushed conversation ,
sewed into the lining of his
jacket

behind the walls of society ;
ambling and furtive and muttering
(too low to decipher) . behind a wall
of empathy in its physical form

pre-cognizance

•

i bartered stories for a frame
to contain my young expanding shape and with my
new eyes and
my new arms and my new legs
and my new spine
and my new digits
and
my new organs i decompressed
and bellowed

as i had found an old world with nothing
and anything but what we are now
“ please let me go anywhere ”

•

post-cognizance

••

baby
wakes up in a salt pan
hands the size of moons
the planet coughs twice and it
reacts

baby wakes up
in a rift in the plane ;
eyes the size
of broken beads

baby coughs twice and learns to read
and learns to
emote

spine the size of contention

•

use my poison
as a crutch ,
and come closer .

my face is too sedated
to
intimidate anyone –

there's a storm over the empire
and i didn't know anything –
i wish you didn't know what to do
when you see my face .

and i wish you would come back

use my poison
as a benchmark
for your framework

evaluate the size and shape of karma

••

say “ fire ”
and watch them scatter
like
the roaches

(small
scared)

remind them of the sun flat
too hot to walk on
unprotected ;
remind them of the words you chose
to cover you .

(you were such a careful curator)

•

what was your first word ?

•

tell them “ it doesn't even hurt ”
and watch their faces contort
bruised

remind them of the broken languages
directly underneath the surface
rare phenomena

worldly anomalies

•

say “ water ”
and watch them scatter
like
the witches

– small
sacred –

••

i couldn't stand
alone at the pews
for the first time . too young

but almost dead ; i wasn't a savage
but i could
try

passing the present into more deserving hands
past the point of recollection into –

what you aren't informs your crudest thoughts .

•

erudite

trace the lines on my face they get
deeper every day they draw a
map that points to

ethics

on the grid of patience
they inform my first theories
they informed my last words

trace the lines on the floor they fade
a little more every second they
inform the center and the framework for your
biggest ideas and
your worst failures

and if you squint hard enough it almost looks like gold

•

while on the subject of
indeterminacy

while on the subject of –

••

it was never
about the drugs
was it ?

you had a beginning
middle
and end and the

end

was broken half-truths, and they all
bled
when they tried to sound

•

what sound do you
try to make ?
it's not the sound
of something falling apart

it was never about the sounds was it ?

and
in the end
that's the only sound you can hear

••

treated ideas
exist
at the center of the surface . you raise yourself ,
and extrapolate into
the atmosphere
and the Planet

you raise your hand
you make your point

•

raw information
exists
in the corners and cracks of this service . it expands and breeds

and bleeds

and connects
and disconnects

•

you raise your hand
you burn your fingertips

•

underneath us
there are millions of talismans made from
calcified bone and
physicalized shame

so deep you could never possibly see
or feel
but you can hear them ,

every single second i can hear them and they keep me honest

•

you clenched your fists and glued them shut for good

••

oils

collected works from 2016

•••

in the afternoon you wake up but you won't look at me

together we are the price of dirty gold
but you have stringent definitions .

sometimes the new champ
cracks under everything
cracks
over everything –

sheds tears
sheds skin
oxidizes
erodes

you can attack any situation
backwards

•

in the afternoon dirty gold looks just like sun-dirt
at night it just looks like stained silver
at night i just look like you

control yourself
control anything
the feeling of power is intoxicating

•

there are termites in the foundation here
look

they're dancing

••

you put your hand in the water
and it tries to pull you in
and you see what you can pull out of it

maybe it's wishes

the forest lurches your name in disgusting harmony
the stems twitch
anticipating

you put your hand in the oil

everything has a price

•

poison sap
trickling down your lips
like drool

•

every drop hits the ground with so much gravity

so suddenly

we'll find a way
we'll find something extra
inside us

when my bones grind i hear them sneering my name
asking permission
each one saying its last words

its goodbyes

•

sun dog keeps crying
and his eyes look like
Christmas lights

and his soul looks like
Christmas

••

who decides
how long your fingers grow ?

ten seconds of the same symphony over

and over
perpetually

grating

it's only in full light you realize
we may only exist around it

do you think about shapes?

•

temper your expectations
even the crystals cracked

here there are lesions in the ground and they're
actively bleeding

it's not safe to come here anymore .
not where the world screams when you step on it

here
and there – you could get swallowed whole

if you're not careful

•

my kingdom for a concept

who decides
how much patience you have ?

•

who decodes your messages ?

this new planet is made from stone and salt

from chalk and

tar

••

when your house burned down
we didn't look at each other ;
we are
living forts

just shelter for guts and bile and shame

•

i crawled across the grass like a baby begging for the sun
the heat

just something to
charge me up

we walked hundreds of miles in opposite directions
and now –

you carry flecks of Copper
palms up

(absentminded whispers in more verbose tongues)

•

you're somewhere with air so thick you can taste it

into anything
from anything

you always keep your palms pointed towards the sky
you always kept your psalms pointed towards me

into anything
from anything

••

we don't have
long

we are surrounded by wet , curdling sand

molten
inviting us in

by now you've realized
where we are

and

by now you've
seen the effigies

work efficiently

•

you
cut their hair
and i'll
cover their eyes

you keep your back to the sun

and i'll stay focused
for both of us

•

strange sermon tonight
isn't it

empty age

••

on the dais
the treaty

this is learned behavior

the writing
on your tiny palms

you read it and you speak so slow

•

your shallow breaths break a pattern
you are
just a baby

still trying to build anything
from nothing

still just trying to hold something

they carry their discoveries in tin pans
ambling backwards
babbling

poorly defined
ambiguously described

they carry their goods in the gold pans and those float overhead
always almost out of reach

•

your tiny palms
your little sighs

••

little winds
blowing
backwards

into you
over you

out
of you

thankful

•

little winds
insignificant victories

dirty grammar

mouths filled with glue
boiling
coming up from
the core

thankful

•

artificial forms
with
alloy-based blood

elementary psychics developing backwards

expanding ;
buoyant

vestiges

language of percentages
book of forgeries

••

the first words
are the hardest
if you can't sound them out

(sunhound
begging to be set free
begging you not to bring it
up)

arbitrary boundaries
core made of brass
cover made of alloy

sugarbound

a moloch dream and a
broken tribute

the soil shooting beams
into heaven

•

two suns at odds
preternatural

glass notes
glass sieves

•

spirit you
told me not to tell you this

••

(it comes up short

again

no answer

no quarter

•

it comes up bleeding at the gums
looking for someone to blame

it doesn't come up in casual
conversation

conventionally

this is where i offer you something ;

sustenance . entertainment

conversation

company

my senses

my digits

my theory

•

my demands are simple enough

without the pretense

without the details)

••

spanning eons
petrified

my argent warhorse
drinking from a river of sweat
bones made of soft gold
and blackened steel

he can't hear me and he can't feel it
and
maybe that's alright

my brother
sitting in his slum
his stone chamber
trying to find a way to be thankful
trying to fund a proper escape

river of pleasures on a bed of changes
they're diving in
it isn't so deep

broken language
synthetic voice ; shrouded
sympathetic voice – resonating

basket of treasures
reasoning

•

in your expressions ;
in your protests

too slow
not slow enough

•

my Goblin king
my copper idol

always

looking away from me no matter where i place myself

my copper idol
with its little eyes and its huge mouth
filled with coins
like a cannibal

and

my Goblin king
frantic and terrified with its beak trembling and
its shame
filled with matter
filled with consequence

••

rising
from the cove
her jaw slacked

whatever it is ,
it is

i won't push you
to elaborate

rising from
the cove
blood under your nails

backwards coping strategies

•

rising from a
bed of salt

used up

•

this is the perfect time
to discuss things
and decide

a golden Delilah
masterpiece

soft gold

all stacked up

•

rising from the oil

granular

little particles –
staggering and

skipping

and just
missing one another
blind

popping
sizzling

•

something gratuitous
somewhere else

••

i hope the spaces turn to phrases you can cling to ,
little martyr king

spinning sympathetically with forgotten worlds :

verdant
wan
cherished

– the heir –

i hope you can find some good in this .

•

i hope you can make some space for yourself here
there's not much ,
but whatever there is , it's yours

(i hope this is a setup)

gallery of figures and a

book of broken chants
always reimagining itself

always irrelevant

gallery of voices ; intangible matter
spotless and
without light and
without consequence

•

a place where you can learn to regret

••

ringing
in my ears
in a new year
absolved of all the original tenets

screeching an
amplified whisper
it's just something you can't get around

i guess

•

they gather together in a pile at the foot of
your

empty
home

unfurnished and unsatisfied

panting like puppies
and it makes you feel bashful
and goddamn
lovely

can you help but qualify your regrets

•

ringing
in the fall
where my throat closed up on the subway
where i trembled
helplessly

until the light came back

••

we were
steamfishing
looking for answers

no one ever asked the question
we were all just
begging

loose bodies
sunsmoker
squalorhearted

•

one nation
under everything
under one thousand glowing moons
surrounding the universe
surrounded by itself

one low vibration you can only hear if you listen right

•

we were starsmoked
wan and ginger
spontaneous

we were under the mountains
surrounded by ourselves and the gravity of the situation
and everything echoed back until we couldn't understand each other

in tenuous situations
sometimes all you can do is observe
and attempt to understand

••

tacit ;
tomorrow you roll up the street
like
an urban tumbleweed

tomorrow i'll call you and we can
talk it out

in silence

just gliding over everything

•

we stayed
bound by a promise
and the gilded saint keeps breeding

the biggest boys
with
the smallest hearts
and seven wishes

wont to fragmented analysis
wont to preserve

•

resistant to perseverance

•

i saw your hands dive into the water like Kingfishers
no splash
no mess
no trouble

i saw your fingers get stuck in the oil pooled beneath it
your cringe was deafening

••

constant :
stay subtle
keep it moving
once
just
one time

•

turning

•

this was the
predicted outcome

this was promised to us

backwards :
stay humble
remember
remember that we asked for this

my fugue dream
settling
adjusting itself

heavy and thick
like paste
like sap

•

if i bring you with me you have to promise not to tell

••

tome of confidence
designed around a shrouded confession

you never learned –

time
expanding without contest
without context
without concept

•

it's time

•

who's watching you if you're watching me

•

patience ; our godless overlord
blessing nothing and blessed by nothing
racking its theories

shaking in its boots

but you're delicate , too

•

thumbing through encrypted pages
broken codes
alien philosophies

stark and contentious
uninhabited
disgusting and inoffensive

thumbing through a book of receipts

evaluating the risk and cost of empathy

••

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