

## Delays in Glass: Social Media Poetics

*Now that is all.*

—Gertrude Stein

For the past five years I have taught a course at School of Visual Arts in Manhattan called *Visual Poetics*. Curiously, I have ended each of these courses, all of which have had a different theme, thinking about poetry and writing after social media. I always like this moment in the semester because it tends to be when I learn the most from my students. Social media still seems novel for my generation (I am in my late 30s), but for people in their teens and early 20s it is the air they breathe. For their final projects, my students invariably end up giving me works that mediate their experiences through the technology. A major concern is intimacy, how to frame intimacy and make it available for a reader. Chapbooks of screen captures, of Google chats and text messages; love letters copied and pasted from email; remixes of found language, language run through Google translate, or Translation Party, or any number of popular algorithms for creating Dada word salad; digital “glitch” poetry. What appeals to the students about social media principally is the question of immediacy—of realness, of authenticity. What is ‘the real’ when our world is so thoroughly mediated? How to capture the real, its essence? How to represent one’s sociality without reifying it—that is, objectifying it to the point where it becomes no longer living?

*Enframing the Brink: Fuck the Police and Fuck the Avant-Garde Too*, with Brandon Brown, *BOMB* (online), spring 2012: I had this experience today that reminded me of you. Going to a friend’s house, a friend who is a painter, ostensibly for a “studio visit” but really just to hang-out. After I visited his studio/apartment, we stepped out for a drink down the street. When we arrived at the bar, he noticed he had a message on his phone from my number. I guess when I arrived at his studio/apartment, I had called him but forgotten to hang-up, so the phone left a message of our greeting each other and starting to get settled in his studio. I was thinking how much maybe the phone was performing something similar to what you call “preceding/proceeding” translation [...] any act of translation which makes visible the translator’s embodiment and their situatedness within a set of life circumstances as a vital aspect of the translation, if not the very content of the translated work itself. As if those voices return to us more real through their framing in a just-left voice message, or through translation works which [...] always depend on a re-translation by others who will make the work matter through their own performances, a performance by their future bodies. It makes me think that when we talk of “life,” or a radical autobiographical practice [...] we are talking about how artifice and mediation can register these delays that make us feel as though we have lived or are living more acutely while also framing, to use your phrase [...], an “anxiety about the destruction of the present.”

The course I taught this past spring, *Meta/discourse*, regarding writings and art work that foreground their mode of discourse, conditions of social production, and/or technical apparatus, started with two of my favorite films, from the tradition of social realism and *Cine Verité*. Dziga Vertov’s *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929) and Jean Rouche’s

*Chronicle of a Summer* (1961). Vertov's film has interested me since I first saw it as a teenager because it shows a film within a film. More so, it is about the making of a film—how it is shot, edited, and projected—received, and distributed. It tries to show “life unawares” (this is the mission articulated by Vertov and his team, which consists of his wife and brother, in the interest of promoting “cinematic truth” [*kino pravda*]). Life unacted, unmediated. Ironically, it is through a kind of total meditation (the display of each moment of the film-making process) that Vertov is able to achieve such an effect. My first full-length book, *The Hole* (Disaplced Press, 2012), was an attempt to produce an effect similar to *Man With A Movie Camera*, in a printed book form. Where you can see how the work was made and also anticipate (or stage?) how the book might be read. Where there is the illusion that one can grasp the totality of a process. There is the manuscript of poems within the book itself. There are essays about making the book, and commentary from my friends, and email from the designer, and other forms of paratext (envoi, preface, postface, notes, colophon, etc.).

Jean Rouche's *Chronicle of a Summer* is shot by two anthropologists, Jean Rouche and Edgar Morin, as an experiment in how one might reveal ordinary life in its raw state. At the very beginning of the film, the subjects of Rouche's and Morin's experiment go out into the street and interview random strangers. “Are you happy?” they ask them. Some people dwell and talk with the interviewers. A man says, “What do you care?” A student tries to engage them in a discussion about philosophy, pointing to a book of Descartes. Lecturing about the film, I emphasize a scene towards the very end, when the subjects are gathered together to watch the film in a screening room. What they say is interesting, because it anticipates our own opinions of the film we have just watched. Someone criticizes one of the subjects for “hamming it up,” but then another person comes to that subject's defense, saying that if she did not act the scene would be less emotionally compelling (it depicts a woman recounting her experience of a French detention camp, and losing her family in the Holocaust). Some scenes do seem slightly overwrought, especially from the vantage of contemporary “reality” television shows, some not staged enough. In the final scene, one of the filmmakers points out this very dilemma. That when they use certain techniques the filmmakers are accused of manipulation; but to not use certain technical devices and directives results in bad art.

One way we could talk about social media and poetry is in terms of documentation. Since it is often by lifting things wholesale from one's Twitter feed, or Facebook statuses, or Tumblr, or what have you, that one gets the sense that they are dealing with something more real, or truthful. This has resulted in new forms of theater, a theater of public content management, an emergent administrative realism. We can also think about them in terms of the documentation of a scene of one's sociality. Social media poetry as distributed autobiography. Or as the tracing of a milieu (one's social/communal context) in real time. The question is, what happens to that material as the technologies become obsolete? As one platform replaces the next? As the culture changes based on trends in how the technology is used? Who should even care in the face of the impending anthropocene, a friend glibly quipped at a recent poetry reading. Like any still-emergent technology, we are still figuring out how to narrate the history of social media. As poets, we are still discovering what the technology can do (and, perhaps more importantly, what

we *don't* want it to do). When, I keep wondering, will there be a mass exodus from Facebook, a medium that caters not to teenagers and twenty somethings (as I discovered in one of my classes), but to people in their 30s, 40s, and up? For about a week it seemed it would happen—everyone was moving to Ello—but then the exodus quickly abated.

I think some would trace the origins of social media poetry back to Search Engine poetry (aka Flarf), which became popular in the late 90s and early 2000s as the result of increased traffic on the Internet and the rise of search engines like Google. But then we could also look to listservs in the 90s as a precedent, the Buffalo Poetics List, for example. Or before that, small magazine cultures and mail art. One good place to start seems the work of Ray Johnson, whose New York Correspondence School bears a resemblance to many ways that poets seem to channel on Facebook and other social media platforms. Through random acts of tagging. Through a practice of naming, at once critical and celebratory. Using epistolary as a form of social sculpture. I think of Joseph Bradshaw's work in this way, such as his "Of Being Numerous," where naming produces a celebratory, Whitmanesque litany, but also echoes strategies of branding. A darker aspect to his work comes across in his poem "The New York School," which makes an interior monologue about certain poets a little too public, breaking with the decorum of community gossip.

Christopher Smart lament with me  
in piles across my room  
our days Brandon Shimoda  
Kellog's Froot Loops  
Kellog's Apple Jacks  
Kellog's Corn Flakes  
Kellog's I don't want to be depressed  
Herman Ebbinghaus only wrote about death  
Baudelaire only wrote about Brenda Iijima  
Nerval Thom Donovan  
Cori Copp has an iPhone  
Daniel Johnston stay alive  
David Abel Bruce Boone Osip Mandelstam  
there's only one bird below each name  
Ben Kopel Nick Deboer  
A.R. Ammons Coca-Cola

Nestle Pure Life Apple

James Castle is another room

somewhere deep inside this absence of birds

Jeremy Smania Maryrose Larkin

Joseph Beuys I hear everything

I also think of Nathaniel Otting's and Josef Kaplan's work in this way, where the name is a site of currency and of a hyper-archival tendency (in Otting's case, where the proper name becomes a placeholder indicating a paranoid awareness of a totality of social exchange), or a stage for situating complicity on a micro-social scale (in the case of Kaplan's "Kill List," he provides a list of poets who are "comfortable" or "rich" echoing, however tongue-in-cheek, the infamous "kill lists" of the Bush and Obama administrations).

### **The Day Lady Died**

It is 12:20 in New York a Friday  
three days after Bastille day, yes  
it is 1959 and I go get a shoeshine  
because I will get off the 4:19 in Easthampton  
at 7:15 and then go straight to dinner  
and I don't know the people who will feed me

I walk up the muggy street beginning to sun  
and have a hamburger and a malted and buy  
an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets  
in Ghana are doing these days

I go on to the bank  
and Miss Stillwagon (first name Linda I once heard)  
doesn't even look up my balance for once in her life  
and in the GOLDEN GRIFFIN I get a little Verlaine  
for Patsy with drawings by Bonnard although I do  
think of Hesiod, trans. Richmond Lattimore or  
Brendan Behan's new play or *Le Balcon* or *Les Nègres*  
of Genet, but I don't, I stick with Verlaine  
after practically going to sleep with quandariness

and for Mike I just stroll into the PARK LANE  
Liquor Store and ask for a bottle of Strega and  
then I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue  
and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theatre and  
casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton  
of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it

and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of  
leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT  
while she whispered a song along the keyboard

to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing

One place where we might locate social media poetics' origins is in the New York School. Particularly the work of Frank O'Hara. As a thought experiment, might we imagine "The Day Lady Died" with hashtags before the various proper names of stores, and streets, and people? Might we also imagine "Having a Coke With You" as a status update or private email correspondence made public, a kind of love poem meant to circulate in the semi-public realm of the (poetry) community? Curiously, in Anne Boyer's poem, "The Day Steve Jobs Died," she capitalizes on this function of O'Hara's and much New York Poetry, transposing it through the political urgencies of the Occupy movement in the fall of 2011, where virtual and actual spaces often collided via online social media platforms like LiveStream:

### **THE DAY STEVE JOBS DIED**

It is 8:32 p.m. in New York City a Wednesday  
four days after the battle of the Brooklyn Bridge, yes  
it is 2011 and in New York City the #whiteshirts  
have begun their antic machinated  
baton-swinging at the assembled crowd but  
everyone's a journalist and the journalists also yelling  
"I'm a motherfucking journalist you motherfuckers"  
Fox-news-crew getting tear gassed  
And the white woman being arrested for assembly  
for standing alone on the corner  
who says she is Emmett Till and  
the young black man who is crying  
into the camera of Democracy Now  
and everyone tweeting "What did the police do  
to the guy with no arms?"

The poets of Philadelphia are resting for their march  
against anything against the everything at 2:30 a.m.  
in San Francisco the people of the city  
build around the cops a barricade

like everything is actually manifesting  
the melting things becoming solid  
the metaphors gather in the walkways and plazas  
all figures of speech now just figures

the open  
finally  
that

If O'Hara is the first poet to tag, then we might say that Hannah Weiner, a latter wave New York School poet (she doesn't start writing poetry until the late 60s), anticipates the distracted simultaneism of multiple screens and constantly updating feeds through her

“clairstyle” journalism, whereupon she famously hallucinated words upon herself and the page and the world around her. The proper name, in both O’Hara’s and Weiner’s work, is that which forms a commonplace for friendship, love, and community, albeit in highly aestheticized, and often ironic forms. In the case of both poets, tagging involves an ambivalence, where O’Hara recognizes a relationship between the proper name and the commodity form (born out by the title, “Having a Coke With You”), and Weiner, in her mature clairstyle work, *Spoke* (1984), recognizes the proper name as a site of subjection and discipline (such as in Weiner’s pun on patriarchy: “surname”).

But in earlier clairstyle manuscripts such as *Clairvoyant Journal*, the name functions much more immediately, as a way of calling forth a person whom she desires, or a thing within her immediate surround. *Clairvoyant Journal* is loosely journalistic, as the title suggests, but even more so it is cybernetic. At the crossroads between subjects, people, bodies, things, proper names signal forming an index of desire. World forming in medias res, *Clairvoyant Journal* is in constant flight. *Clairvoyant Journal* also constitutes a snapshot of Weiner’s world as it is occurring, represented through a writing that approximates an experience of real time, if only that of one’s inner psychology, memory, intentionality, desire. Like Ray Johnson, who includes her in a proposed seating arrangement for his NY Correspondence School, she establishes a network of others through her journal pages. She is the original social network. Her mediumship is the mediumship of one who longs to be part of a community, while recognizing the perils of membership, the toll it can take on the ego. Through *Country Girl* and subsequent journals in the early-mid 70s she constructs a radical empathic field; a smashed, projectivist poetics which can channel a world of others, things, New York City (and America) in its countless excesses.

With regards to mediumship, one might think of what Robin Blaser calls Jack Spicer’s “practice of outside” less in terms of a negative theology à la Maurice Blanchot or Jacques Derrida, than as a hyper-attention to the vicissitudes of his milieu and a larger network of poetry communities in San Francisco, Vancouver, Boston, and New York. In *Admonitions*, in particular, the tag function operates as a form of territorialization, warning certain younger poets to be wary of him, or to stay out of his way; also notifying potential love-interests of his affection/intentions. (I was reminded of this during Kevin Killian’s recitation of Spicer’s “Goodnight” last May at The Multifarious Array reading series in Brooklyn, in which Spicer names his younger rivals one by one, disparaging their efforts to write poetry and be part of *his* local scene). Spicer’s tag is negative and disruptive, seemingly the inverse of the New York School’s cheerful, ironic uses of it. It becomes an index of dissensus, negative affect, and self-/loathing, but also of desire conceived through aggression and antagonism. As such, Spicer anticipates many of the ways homosexuality has been conceived through negative affect and anti-sociality by Lee Edelman, Leo Bersani, and others.

Though there is much more to be said about naming practices in contemporary poetry, at this point I would like to talk about a few books that I feel are exemplary of a Social Media Poetics broadly defined. By talking about these I hope I can elaborate on things I’ve said so far which still may be a bit sketchy.

This window makes me feel like I'm protected. This window makes me feel like people don't know much about recent history, at least as far as trivia goes. This window makes me feel whole and emotionally satisfied. This window makes me feel like I'm flying all over the place, gliding and swirling down suddenly. This window makes me feel like I count and I enjoy knowing my opinions are heard so that hopefully I can help change the future. This window makes me feel like I'll find the one thing that makes me feel like I want to feel. This window makes me feel like I can tackle any problem anytime.

In a poem composed in the wake of 9/11, "This Window Makes Me Feel," Robert Fitterman collects language from Google searches in an attempt to provide a collective portrait of grief. As he explains: "This Window Makes Me Feel, written in 2002, was propelled by my interest in appropriation. I.e., what would a text read like if it were entirely subjective, but not my personal subjectivity. I started googling the phrase 'this feels' or 'this makes me feel.' The further I wrote into this text, the more it resonated as a response to 9/11, even though none of the borrowed language speaks directly to that event." "This Window Makes Me Feel" is exemplary of ongoing attempts to collate and sculpt found content towards the presentation of transpersonal affects—forms of feeling that transcend autonomous subjects. Similarly, in his most recent book, *No. Wait. Yep. Definitely Still Hate Myself* (2013), Fitterman appropriates the form of New York School poet James Schuyler's "Hymn to Life," arranging found content from Internet sites in which people describe states of depression, as a result providing a set of affects quite different than his earlier poem. Fitterman's 2010 work, *Now We Are Friends*, takes its inspiration from Vito Acconci's "Stalking" performance, in which the artist follows strangers until they disappear into private spaces or he is detected photographing their movements. *Now We Are Friends* performs a similar function, only using a Facebook "friend" as his stalkee. Through the book, Fitterman dramatizes how much information can be gleaned about a complete stranger (and other strangers by the same name) by tracking them on Facebook. As such the work is a document of Facebook as a technology of surveillance, reminding its reader that to participate in Web 2.0 is to become an object of information gathering and metadata.

Somewhat like Fitterman's *Now We Are Friends*, Tan Lin's *Heath* (2007) would appear to trace a certain available content on the Internet. Namely, posts and feeds related to the death of the film actor, Heath Ledger. As scholar Danny Snelson has argued, Lin's *Heath* can be read through Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory, where Lin attempts to trace a network of social actors and technologies based on the media event of Ledger's death, news of which spread quickly via RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds and SMS (Short Message Service) platforms. But to read *Heath* through Actor Network Theory alone is to reduce its stakes. Like my own book, *The Hole*, and as we will see in a moment, Stephanie Young's *Ursula or University* (2013), *Heath* concerns the ways that the book itself functions after Web 2.0, how the printed codex (and analogue reading technologies) are altered by the appearance of digital media platforms.

As in Fitterman's work, *Heath* investigates how affects emerge through events, in this case the death of a beloved young celebrity. Central to Lin's work is the replacement of

the author by a network, and the return of networks to specific bodies, not least of which being Lin's own. Where *Heath* reveals its own apparatus, pointing to the ways that it was constructed, and the significance of this construction after SMS (Short Message Service) and RSS (Rich Site Summary) technologies, it is also a document of a workshop Lin gave at the Asian American Writers Workshop, in which his students composed a poem collectively through the use of writing procedures. I am struck by a certain phrase that appears in the book: "Our feelings were made by hand inside the softest index." Here, I believe "softest index" is a reference to RSS as an indexical technology, "soft" because it is not materialized in an actual codex. It is as though by making the book *Heath*, Lin were appropriating the digital in order to return it to a realm of feeling, sensation, and embodiment often lost (or alienated) through digital mediation. Elsewhere, he refers to this process as a means of "punctuat[ing] clock-time just a little bit differently" (see "Less Creative Anachronism"); and in *Heath*, he conveys this idea through "bruising," whereof by taking digital formats into the 'flesh' world one stamps them with traces of spontaneity, accident, and error against the function of their infinite reproducibility:

Thus Ryan McGinley's photos of a social network, e.g. The Hamster's Nest, suggest that bruising the media lens takes form as grainy, under or over-exposed photographs of social activity: bodies frolicking or vomiting (temporary visible phenomena produced by the body and appearing on the body's skin) or made visible in what looks like the cell phone-induced-photo ecstasy unwinding around a Morrissey concert. Such loosely planned non-media events are equated with social movements, regarded as a stage for a localized visual vocabulary of cultural forms that have yet to become genres (house music, road trips, rock concerts" [...] [I]n an image-based world, duplicity and authenticity require bruising an image so the overall process of production/duplication looks like an accident[,] a blip on the surface of conventional mass distribution techniques, as for example, when an artist subjects digital images to consumer-based, small scale or one-off publishing, or redistributes material into an existing "context" that guarantees its eventual demise or short circuit.

Here, and throughout his work, Lin is not being a Luddite, so much as pointing to the cybernetic loop between embodiment and one's online life, and to ways that the printed book might become a site for this reclaiming of sensation. Not unrelated, *Heath* is also about how copyright functions, and the obscure status of authorship in an age of "weak authors" however "strong networks" (Lin's phrases in *Seven Controlled Vocabularies*). Reading Lin, and much of social media poetries, I am reminded of Michel Foucault's closing remarks in "What is an Author?," whereby he states that the author function will undoubtedly whither, but what regulatory constraint it will be replaced by (as a function of discourse) we cannot yet know. Foucault: "I think that, as our society changes, at the very moment when it is in the process of changing, the author function will disappear, and in such a manner that fiction and its polysemous texts will once again function according to another mode, but still with a system of constraint—one which will no longer be the author, but which will have to be determined or, perhaps, experienced."

Social media poetry explores precisely this problem of a withering author function in terms of changing relationships of (digital) property. Distributed and collective authorships, made more and more possible through access to online networks,

problematize the author function, as do ways that that the book is situated within an economy of both the print and digital worlds through various legal designations (copyright vs. Creative Commons, Copyleft, and Copy Far-left, for instance). Lin's work demonstrates that to transfer certain materials across media and/or platforms is to give them a different time sense, therefore a different social potential beyond existing property relationships established and defined by commodity culture. He points this out explicitly in a review he wrote after a performance by artists Kelley Walker, Cory Arcangel, Seth Price and others at The Kitchen in 2007, where the artists took materials from The Kitchen archive and proceeded to photocopy them and make zines from the photocopied materials.

Such a phenomenon points to a crisis that cannot any longer be regarded as a crisis but as something of a *laissez-faire* situation, and maybe, if the optimists are correct, an opportunity: The question is, if avant-garde techniques from Stan Brakhage's montage to Andy Warhol's reality-based screen tests have been fully assimilated by mass-cultural forms as diverse as Coke ads and YouTube videos, then what sorts of post-ideology critique appropriations are possible? Works by a number of contemporary artists—such as Arcangel, Wade Guyton, Jutta Koether, Reena Spaulings, and Beth Campbell, to name just a few—hint that the answer may lie in MP3 files, shareware, sampling, social networking platforms, open architecture, and open-source movements as they intersect with our everyday lives, all of which suggest new modes of taking hold of an archived "event" and unfreezing it by repackaging and redistributing it. In place of mass distribution there arises an expanding social network, multiplying forms of mass customization, or, in the case of Price and Walker, a private, off-kilter distribution network that punctuates clock time just a little bit differently. With its intentional obscurities and recourse to ancient and modern recording media, it might be read as its own coded resistance to its distributive process. Resistance is no longer directed at any singular entity.

New media artists have been exploring digital archeology for years, where obsolescence is not just 'planned,' but enforced. We could say the same of digital platforms and networks, which tend to evolve in accelerating cycles. At the beginning of Stephanie Young's *Ursula or University* (2013), Young quotes Chris Kraus quoting Ann Rower, that "when you're writing in real time you have to revise a lot." This is a beautiful observation, and one applicable to so much work after Kraus and her peer group, many of whom draw liberally from New York School and Downtown writing. How to write something that remains present, that in Gertrude Stein's phrase, constitutes not the repetition of beginning, but a "continuous present." Stein and her peers recognized the problem of Modern poetry as a problem of contemporaneity; how specifically art and writing could keep up with the present, especially during times of war and mass social upheaval (See, for instance, Wallace Stevens' lecture, "The Nobel Rider and the Sound of Words," where he relates a "pressure within" that modulates and tempers a "pressure without"; and Stein's lecture, "Composition as Explanation," in which she discusses Modern composition in relation to the accelerated time-senses of industrialized warfare and mass media).

Young's book is a book in a Steinian genre, where the challenge is to embody the real time of life mediated by semi-communal forums like blogs and more recently Facebook.

The book includes documents of Facebook comments and status updates throughout. Likewise, many of the sections of the book were written for blogs, the most notable being perhaps Young's epic write-up regarding the 2010 Rethinking Poetics conference at Columbia University, a gathering that was heavily criticized within a national poetry community (and much of this criticism was mediated by blog and Facebook). As though a primal scene of trauma, everything moves outward from a single event, the 2009 martyring of Oscar Grant by a BART police officer. It also extends from Young's attempt to understand Grant's death during a poetry reading at the New York-based SEGUE series, where she performed Neo-Benshi (adding live soundtracks and dialogue to films) upon Jacques Demi's *Bay of Angels* (1963)—a performance which Young insists resulted in "failure," a failure that necessitates and 'frames' the composition of *Ursula or University*.

*Ursula or University* has a curious time sense. Partially because it incorporates writings that were meant to communicate something immediately, without thought of a future, to a very specific community, for a very specific occasion (like so many writings via social media platforms). Its time sense also feels to me curious in the way that it embodies a certain movement I too have felt, away from larger social and political responsibilities (like Oscar Grant, or social movements such as Occupy, or the imminence of ecological catastrophe) towards one's friends, and then into a very private realm of family and self-reflection. The book strikes me as a moebius strip of this movement between public and private, self and other, external and internal, the occasional and future-oriented. Its time sense is always ahead or behind itself—deictical, pointing, indexical—as if to dramatize the fiction of immediacy simultaneously with the fact of occurrence. A "delay in glass," as Duchamp once wrote in reference to his *Large Glass*. Or as Leslie Scalapino noted of her own writing with regards to the comic strip format, in 1985: "Being inside each frame, is the present moment. But at the same time the writing (the frame) is really behind, in the rear of 'what is really occurring.' The things are happening out ahead of the writing."

Time is never seamless in the book, but interruptive, fractured, uncannily signed. It reminds you constantly that a book is being written, that it is under construction, and that it is failing to do the things it would find most necessary to do (like render a just verdict; or usher in revolutionary change; or dispel incapacitating melancholy and depression). It also tells you that while a book is being written, events continue on both massive and miniscule scales. Young mourns her father—she does so almost imperceptibly; this event at the heart of the book flashes by—but then quickly turns to the situation of protesters in Egypt and Turkey and Greece. Like Hannah Weiner, whose journal *The Fast* Young evokes in a blog post collected in the book, one feels themselves contaminated by forces that would cause pain and remind them of their complicity with a world outside their domicile. That would substantialize our complicity with social inequality and injustice somatically (as though, as Young suggests, Hannah Weiner's color auras issued from US imperialism abroad, or a war at home defined by socio-economic inequality). Trying desperately to escape what Young calls after the French radical collective, Tiqqun, "the terrible community," a community whose members can only talk incessantly among themselves (often through social media), the book refuses to name the event which

Young has lived through, but which remains in the future of the book's time-line. On the horizon of her own terrible community in the East Bay is Occupy Oakland, an event that would transform the poetry community, bringing many poets into the fold of direct actions such as the shutting down of the ports and the strategic occupation of buildings downtown. The time-sense of those events can't be known yet, *Ursula or University* seems to tell us. The book is the rupture with one's sense of chronology—opening to a set of possible futures. I had a very similar sense of “now time” when I was writing my book *Withdrawn*, which will come out next fall with the Oakland-based Compline press, much of which was composed between the period of the Arab Spring and American Autumn. That I was writing within the split of past and present. That a horizon of (political) possibilities had finally opened, and therefore that writing and art must change with this horizon.

*Time Stamps*

(Composed November 2011)

There's a totally different way to do this and we know it

A totally different way to pay for labor, to put money in a bank, to think about banks and money and effort

Bling and spirit and bling and spirit and bling and spirit and bling and spirit

Elena is right when she says more people should take responsibility for their own minds, totally aware of how much we've internalized our subjugation

To feel the heft of something that makes sense and then have it effervesce

Like they took the books away, the books become even more beautiful with their withdrawal

Likewise, the people become more beautiful, the idea of the people, with every eviction

Those who were living in the park from day one--sacral

Drifting into enunciations that are not formations

Parsing the difference between police forces—New York's is an army, Oakland's a band of thugs

What amount of love it will take to make things right?

The young become a poem of force anticipating an era that was not defined by objective violence

Not even demanding paradise, just that rights be enforced, the withdrawal of resources be rectified

Double consciousness of having a job, double vision of the Live Stream

Where we are in time, and where we are in space, and where we are in the media

A delay in glass because two windows were open in Safari makes me wish I was recording this

When we think we wish we were recording this what posterity could we possibly have in mind?

Are those people we are imagining in the future like us, not entirely without hope?

There is a mood of end times and there is a mood of Kafka but these are not the moods I'm in

Anything could happen

More than anything I want the conditions that make it possible for you to read this poem to wither

It is like memoir, what we are doing, it is like shout-outs into the future anterior

Some void or vacuum we will have produced ourselves in beyond what crisis calls "the nightmare of we"

This is the us I want to produce, finally

The youth who slept in the park from day one now walks dogs to make some income

All friendship, as Dana recognizes, is an effort of forthcoming

Not everything we "didn't talk about," but the conditions we created for speaking with each other again in the future

Nursing those greetings contra the violence that would vanquish duration, 'human' duration at least

My sense of time is different now

As though some world shimmered just beyond our efforts to see it

The new organs of perception we would need to cultivate in order to understand it

Wondering why we have inboxes anymore

Wondering if these buildings will be here in a year

I don't want the world to vanish, or be destroyed, just to be totally altered

Mate with the ones you want to become, like Bhanu says

The time of singing is over because they are amassing armies to stop the world from occurring.