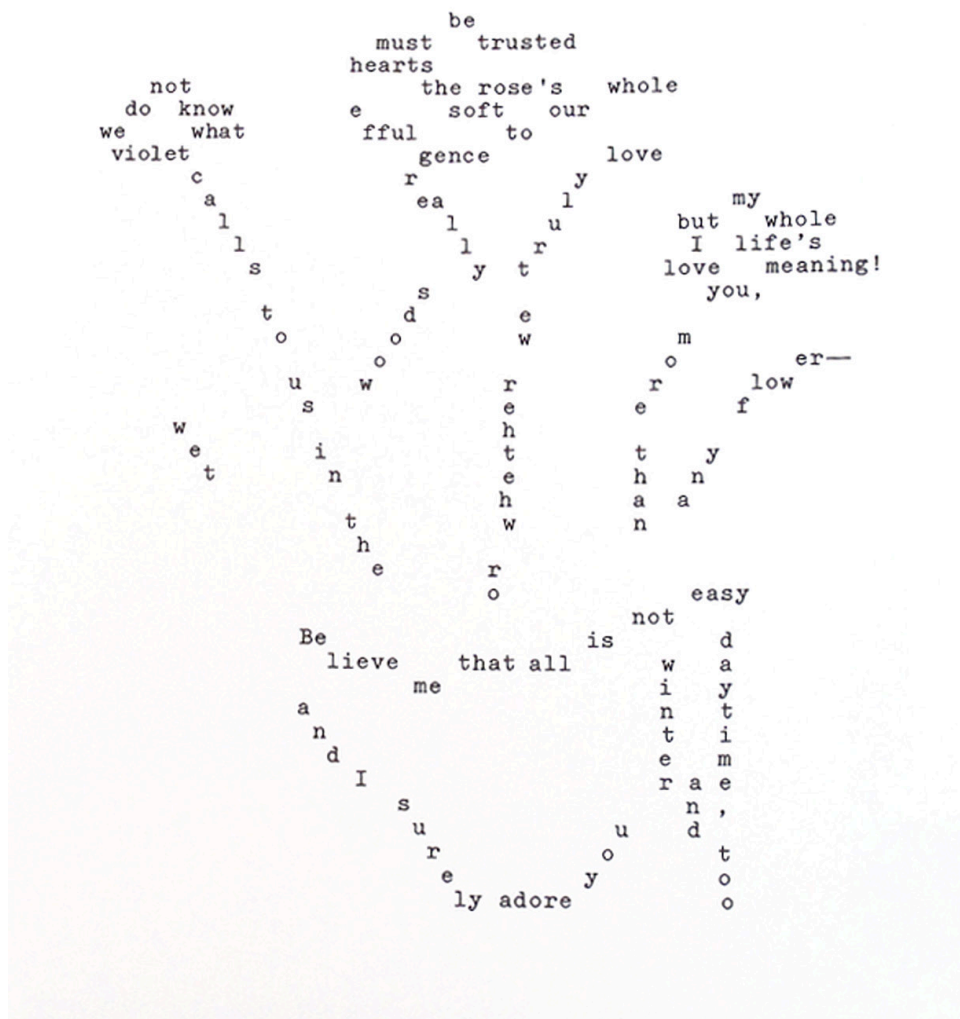


A Change Of Heart Reader

Curated by Chris Sharp
Hannah Hoffman Gallery
Los Angeles, California
June 4-July 16, 2016

A SMALL BOUQUET



Korean mums
James Schuyler
From *Collected Poems*
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1993)

Korean mums

beside me in this garden
are huge and daisy-like
(why not? are not
oxeye daisies a chrysanthemum?),
shrubby and thick-stalked,
the leaves pointing up
the stems from which
the flowers burst in
sunbursts. I love
this garden in all its moods,
even under its winter coat
of salt hay, or now,
in October, more than
half gone over: here
a rose, there a clump
of aconite. This morning
one of the dogs killed
a barn owl. Bob saw
it happen, tried to
intervene. The airedale
snapped its neck and left
it lying. Now the bird
lies buried by an apple
tree. Last evening
from the table we saw
the owl, huge in the dusk,
circling the field
on owl-silent wings.
The first one ever seen,
here: now it's gone,
a dream you just remember.

The dogs are barking. In
the studio music plays
and Bob and Darragh paint.
I sit scribbling in a little
notebook at a garden table,
too hot in a heavy shirt

in the mid-October sun
into which the Korean mums
all face. There is a
dull book with me,
an apple core, cigarettes,
an ashtray. Behind me
the rue I gave Bob
flourishes. Light on leaves,
so much to see, and
all I really see is that
owl, its bulk troubling
the twilight. I'll
soon forget it: what
is there I have not forgot?
Or one day will forget:
this garden, the breeze
in stillness, even
the words, Korean mums.

Lilac Field
Dorothea Lasky
From *Poetry* (April 2014)

To perform death is something only humans would do
No animal would sit there
With a blank look on its face
Just because the camera is there

No no an animal would look directly in it
Or cover its face, like the overweight
Woman in the picture in the magazine
By the room where I keep my bed

What people don't understand about beauty
Is that after all it is not fleeting
After all it is so gross to be that way
That someone sees among you

After all, to call into question
I painted my lips, my eyes
Only our scholars know that
To perform is to be malleable

To perform in language
Or was it
The large purple insect I let in the room
Or was it the furred face—the hippo or the gorge

That I was the devil in the wood
In my own bones that I knew the face
That I took that face
Was it midnight blue sky

No, were my wings iridescent
Even in these lines
The voice moves you
What sense of exquisite cause

Thought
Moves you past these lines
Into conversation
With the undead

I don't know
That is something
You will have to answer for yourself
I came back to this place to help you

And that I did
Shoot sparks of green and gray
Through time
What skin sack

I put myself in
I mean for what, why,
Or who
Did I manage to do this for if not you

Lilaced thing
The soft rustle of beetle wings
In air that is warm and gray
And is not strong

But there, is there to carry us past i

The Fear of Flowers

John Clare

From *Poems of the Middle Period, 1822-1837, Vol. 5*
(Oxford University Press, 2003)

The nodding oxeye bends before the wind,
The woodbine quakes lest boys their flowers should find,
And prickly dogrose spite of its array
Can't dare the blossom-seeking hand away,
While thistles wear their heavy knobs of bloom
Proud as a warhorse wears its haughty plume,
And by the roadside danger's self defy;
On commons where pined sheep and oxen lie
In ruddy pomp and ever thronging mood
It stands and spreads like danger in a wood,
And in the village street where meanest weeds
Can't stand untouched to fill their husks with seeds,
The haughty thistle oer all danger towers,
In every place the very wasp of flowers.

THE FLOWERS

From golden showers of the ancient skies,
On the first day, and the eternal snow of stars,
You once unfastened giant calyxes
For the young earth still innocent of scars:

Wild gladioli with the necks of swans,
Laurels divine, of exiled souls the dream,
Vermilion as the modesty of dawns
Trod by the footsteps of the seraphim;

The hyacinth, the myrtle gleaming bright,
And, like the flesh of woman, the cruel rose,
Hérodiade blooming in the garden light,
She that from wild and radiant blood arose!

And made the sobbing whiteness of the lily
That skims a sea of sighs, and as it wends
Through the blue incense of horizons, palely
Toward the weeping moon in dreams ascends!

Hosanna on the lute and in the censers,
Lady, and of our purgatorial groves!
Through heavenly evenings let the echoes answer,
Sparkling haloes, glances of rapturous love!

Mother, who in your strong and righteous bosom,
Formed calyxes balancing the future flask,
Capacious flowers with the deadly balsam
For the weary poet withering on the husk.

LES FLEURS

Des avalanches d'or du vieil azur, au jour
Premier et de la neige éternelle des astres
Jadis tu détachas les grands calices pour
La terre jeune encore et vierge de désastres,

Le glaïeul fauve, avec les cygnes au col fin,
Et ce divin laurier des âmes exilées
Vermeil comme le pur orteil du séraphin
Que rougit la pudeur des aurores foulées,

L'hyacinthe, le myrte à l'adorable éclair
Et, pareille à la chair de la femme, la rose
Cruelle, Hérodiade en fleur du jardin clair,
Celle qu'un sang farouche et radieux arrose!

Et tu fis la blancheur sanglotante des lys
Qui roulant sur des mers de soupirs qu'elle effleure
A travers l'encens bleu des horizons pâlis
Monte rêveusement vers la lune qui pleure!

Hosannah sur le cistre et dans les encensoirs,
Notre Dame, hosannah du jardin de nos limbes!
Et finisse l'écho par les célestes soirs,
Extase des regards, scintillement des nimbes!

Ô Mère qui créas en ton sein juste et fort,
Calices balançant la future fiole,
De grandes fleurs avec la balsamique Mort
Pour le poète las que la vie étiole.

Hélène Cixous

From "Clarice Lispector: The Approach," in *"Coming to Language" and Other Essays*

(Harvard University Press, 1991)

Touching the heart of roses: this is the woman's-way of working: touching the living heart of things, being touched, going to live in the very close, going forth by tender attentive slownesses as far as the region of touch, slowly letting oneself be carried away, by the force of attraction of a rose, attracted into the heart of the rose region, staying a long time in the space of fragrance, learning to let things give us what they are when they are most alive.

We have forgotten that the world is there prior to us. We have forgotten how things have preceded us, how mountains grew up before our gaze existed, we forget how plants are called before we think to call them and recognize them, we have forgotten that it is plants that call us, when we think about calling them, that come to meet our bodies in blossom.

Someone who has never stolen is not going to understand me. And someone who has never stolen roses will never be able to understand me. When I was little, I stole roses.

In Recife there were innumerable streets. The streets of the rich were lined with little palaces that stood in the middle of large gardens. My girl friend and I loved to play at guessing whom these little palaces belonged to. "That white one is mine." "No, I already told you the white ones are mine." "But this one isn't completely white. It has green windows." Some days we spent a long time with our faces pressed against the fence, looking.

That's how it began. One day, during a game of "this house is mine," we stopped in front of a house that looked like a small castle. In the back, we could see an immense orchard, and in the front, well-tended beds, planted with flowers.

Anyway, off in its own bed was a half-opened rose of a deep pink hue. I was amazed, gazing with admiration at this haughty rose, which had not yet become a woman. And then it happened: from the depths of my heart I wanted this rose for myself. I wanted it, ah, how I wanted it. And there was no way to get it. If the gardener had been there, I would have asked for the rose, knowing all the while that he would drive us away as one drives away naughty children. There was no gardener in sight, there was no one. And because of the sun the windows were shuttered. It was a street where the trams didn't go and cars rarely appeared. Between my silence and the silence of the rose, there was my desire to possess it—a thing that belonged only to me. I wanted to be able to grasp it. I wanted to smell it until I felt faint, my sight dimmed by such a dizziness of perfume.

Then I could stand it no longer. The plan came to me in an instant, in a wave of passion. But, great director that I was, I reasoned coolly with my friend, explaining to her what her role would be: to keep an eye on the windows of the house or to watch for the possible approach of the gardener, to keep an eye on the few passersby in the street. Meanwhile, I slowly pushed open a gate in the rusty fence, knowing it would make a slight creak. I opened it only enough to allow my slender child's body to pass through. And, tiptoeing, but quickly, I crossed the pebbles surrounding the beds. By the time I reached the rose, a century of heartbeats had passed.

Here I am in front of it at last. I stop for an instant, despite the danger, because up close it is even more beautiful. Finally I start to break off the stem, pricking my fingers on the thorns and sucking the blood from my fingers.

And suddenly ... here it is, all of it, in my hand. The race back to the gate also had to be in silence. I passed through the half-opened gate, clutching the rose. And then, pale, the two of us, the rose and I, we ran far from the house.

And what did I do with the rose? I did this: the rose was mine.

I took it to my house, I put it in a vase of water where it reigned -supreme, with its thick and velvety petals of various shades of rose tea. In the center the color was more concentrated and the heart seemed almost red.

It felt so good.

It felt so good that, simply put, I began to steal roses. The process was always the same: the girl keeping watch while I entered, broke the stem, and fled with the rose in my hand. Always with my heart pounding and always with that glory that no one could take away from me.

I also stole red berries. There was a Presbyterian church near my house, surrounded by a green hedge that was so tall and dense it blocked the view of the church. I never managed to see beyond the corner of the church roof. The hedge was of pitanga berries. But pitangas are hidden fruits. I never saw a single one. So, first looking all around to make sure that no one was coming, I put my hand between the railings. I plunged it into the hedge and began to feel around until my fingers touched the moist fruit. Many times, in a hurry, I crushed a ripe berry, which left my fingers looking bloodstained. I picked a bunch and ate them there, and I threw away the ones that were too green.

No one ever knew this. I don't regret it: a thief of roses and pitangas has one hundred years of forgiveness. The pitangas, for example, asked to be picked, instead of ripening and dying, virgins, on the branch.

“Neither honey nor bee for me.” – Sappho

Not honey,
not the plunder of the bee
from meadow or sand-flower
or mountain bush;
from winter-flower or shoot
born of the later heat:
not honey, not the sweet
stain on the lips and teeth:
not honey, not the deep
plunge of soft belly
and the clinging of the gold-edged
pollen-dusted feet;

not so –
though rapture blind my eyes,
and hunger crisp
dark and inert my mouth,
not honey, not the south,
not the tall stalk
of red twin-lilies,
nor light branch of fruit tree
caught in flexible light branch;

not honey, not the south;
ah flower of purple iris,
flower of white,
or of the iris, withering the grass –
for fleck of the sun’s fire,
gathers such heat and power,
that shadow-print is light,
cast through the petals
of the yellow iris flower;
not iris – old desire – old passion –

old forgetfulness – old pain – not this, nor any flower,
but if you turn again,
seek strength of arm and throat,
touch as the god;
neglect the lyre-note;
knowing that you shall feel,
about the frame,
no trembling of the string
but heat, more passionate
of bone and the white shell
and fiery tempered steel. Those are waterfalls to be forgiven
But those are mountains of laughter
Those are plain tales of the mountainous moon
I wanted daffodils to have been picked off of the moon
But I wanted the laughter of the girls
Who gathered the daffodils in the starlight
For those are the silhouettes in the lingering darkness
That lifted our yellow pencils to have told the tale tonight
Of the man who laughed on top of the moon

Peonies at Dusk

Jane Kenyon

From *Constance* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1993)

Peonies at Dusk

White peonies blooming along the porch
send out light
while the rest of the yard grows dim.

Outrageous flowers as big as human
heads! They're staggered
by their own luxuriance: I had
to prop them up with stakes and twine.

The moist air intensifies their scent,
and the moon moves around the barn
to find out what it's coming from.

In the darkening June evening
I draw a blossom near, and bending close
search it as a woman searches
a loved one's face.

Daffodils

Alfred Starr Hamilton

From *A Dark Dreambox of Another Kind*

(The Song Cave, 2013)

DAFFODILS

Those are waterfalls to be forgiven
But those are mountains of laughter
Those are plain tales of the mountainous moon
I wanted daffodils to have been picked off of the moon
But I wanted the laughter of the girls
Who gathered the daffodils in the starlight
For those are the silhouettes in the lingering darkness
That lifted our yellow pencils to have told the tale tonight
Of the man who laughed on top of the moon

Under Eads Bridge over the Mississippi at Saint Louis
Flows the Seine

And our past loves.
Do I really have to remember all that again

And remember
Joy came only after so much pain?

Hand in hand, face to face,
Let the belfry softly bong the late hour.

Nights go by. Days go by.
I'm alive. I'm here. I'm in flower.

The days go by. But I'm still here. In full flower.
Let night come. Let the hour chime on the mantel.

Love goes away the way this river flows away.
How violently flowers fade. How awfully slow life is.

How violently a flower fades. How violent our hopes are.
The days pass and the weeks pass.

The past does not return, nor do past loves.
Under the Pont Mirabeau flows the Seine.

Hand in hand, standing face to face,
Under the arch of the bridge our outstretched arms make

Flows our appetite for life away from us downstream,
And our dream

Of getting back our love of life again.
Under the Pont Mirabeau flows the Seine.

Security Cameras and Flowers Dreaming the Elevation Allegiance
CA Conrad
From *Ecodeviance: (Soma)tics for the Future Wilderness*
(Wave Books, 2014)

SECURITY CAMERAS AND FLOWERS DREAMING THE ELEVATION ALLEGIANCE

FOR SUSIE TIMMONS

From Walnut & Broad St. to Walnut & 19th I stopped for every security camera. Philadelphia watches us always, FUCK YOU WATCHING US ALWAYS!! Several cameras in one block. I took notes, it was noon it was twelve just as I wanted it to be. I took notes for the poem, notes notes notes.

A little basket of edible flowers: nasturtiums, roses, pansies. I eat pansies, I LOVE pansies, they're delicious buttery purple lettuce!! At each security camera I paused, looked into the camera, DIRECTLY IN THERE, and stuck my tongue inside a flower. Flicked it in and out, in and out, flicking, licking, suckling blossoms. A security guard asked, "*What the fuck are YOU DOING?*" I replied, "I'M A POLLINATOR, I'M A POLLINATOR!!" I allowed myself to say only this for the duration of the security camera pollination application, "I'M A POLLINATOR, I'M A POLLINATOR!!" I took many notes, and the notes became a poem titled, "I WANT TO DO EVERY / THING WRONG JUST ONCE."

From *Tender Buttons*
Gertrude Stein
(New York: Claire Marie, 1914)

A PLATE.

An occasion for a plate, an occasional resource is in buying and how soon does washing enable a selection of the same thing neater. If the party is small a clever song is in order.

Plates and a dinner set of colored china. Pack together a string and enough with it to protect the centre, cause a considerable haste and gather more as it is cooling, collect more trembling and not any even trembling, cause a whole thing to be a church.

A sad size a size that is not sad is blue as every bit of blue is precocious. A kind of green a game in green and nothing flat nothing quite flat and more round, nothing a particular color strangely, nothing breaking the losing of no little piece.

A splendid address a really splendid address is not shown by giving a flower freely, it is not shown by a mark or by wetting.

Cut cut in white, cut in white so lately. Cut more than any other and show it. Show it in the stem and in starting and in evening coming complication.

A lamp is not the only sign of glass. The lamp and the cake are not the only sign of stone. The lamp and the cake and the cover are not the only necessity altogether.

A plan a hearty plan, a compressed disease and no coffee, not even a card or a change to incline each way, a plan that has that excess and that break is the one that shows filling.

RED ROSES.

A cool red rose and a pink cut pink, a collapse and a sold hole, a little less hot.

COLORED HATS.

Colored hats are necessary to show that curls are worn by an addition of blank spaces, this makes the difference between single lines and broad stomachs, the least thing is lightening, the least thing means a little flower and a big delay a big delay that makes more nurses than little women really little women. So clean is a light that nearly all of it shows pearls and little ways. A large hat is tall and me and all custard whole.

BOOK.

Book was there, it was there. Book was there. Stop it, stop it, it was a cleaner, a wet cleaner and it was not where it was wet, it was not high, it was directly placed back, not back again, back it was returned, it was need- less, it put a bank, a bank when, a bank care.

Suppose a man a realistic expression of resolute reliability suggests pleas- ing itself white all white and no head does that mean soap. It does not so. It means kind wavers and little chance to beside beside rest. A plain.

Suppose ear rings, that is one way to breed, breed that. Oh chance to say, oh nice old pole. Next best and nearest a pillar. Chest not valuable, be papered.

Cover up cover up the two with a little piece of string and hope rose and green, green.

Please a plate, put a match to the seam and really then really then, really then it is a remark that joins many many lead games. It is a sister and sis- ter and a flower and a flower and a dog and a colored sky a sky colored grey and nearly that nearly that let.

BUTTER.

Boom in boom in, butter. Leave a grain and show it, show it. I spy.

It is a need it is a need that a flower a state flower. It is a need that a state rubber. It is a need that a state rubber is sweet and sight and a swelled stretch. It is a need. It is a need that state rubber.

Wood a supply. Clean little keep a strange, estrange on it.

Make a little white, no and not with pit, pit on in within.

Well, spring overflows the land,
floods floor, pump, wash machine
of the woman moored to this low shore by deafness.

Good-bye to lilacs by the door
and all I planted for the eye.
If I could hear—too much talk in the world,
too much wind washing, washing
good black dirt away.

Her hair is high.

Big blind ears.

I've wasted my whole life in water.
My man's got nothing but leaky boats.
My daughter, writer, sits and floats.

From *Homemade Poems*

Lorine Niedecker

(Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative, Series 3, Spring 2012)

Something in the water
like a flower
will devour

water

flower

Boll-weevil's coming, and the winter's cold,
Made cotton-stalks look rusty, seasons old,
And cotton, scarce as any southern snow,
Was vanishing; the branch, so pinched and slow,
Failed in its function as the autumn rake;
Drouth fighting soil had caused the soil to take
Al water from the streams; dead birds were found
In wells a hundred feet below the ground—
Such was the season when the flower bloomed.
Old folks were startled, and it soon assumed
Significance. Superstition saw
Something it had never seen before:
Brown eyes that loved without a trace of fear,
Beauty so sudden for that time of year.

But though I remained there in front of the hawthorns, breathing in, bringing into the presence of my thoughts, which did not know what to do with it, then losing and finding again their invisible and unchanging smell, absorbing myself in the rhythm that tossed their flowers here and there with youthful high spirits and at unexpected intervals like certain intervals in music, they offered me the same charm endlessly and with an inexhaustible profusion, but without letting me study it more deeply, like the melodies you replay a hundred times in succession without descending further into their secrets. I turned away from them for a moment, to accost them again with renewed strength. I pursued, all the way onto the embankment behind the hedge that rose steeply toward the fields, some lost poppy, a few cornflowers which had lazily stayed behind, which decorated it here and there with their flower heads like the border of a tapestry on which there appears, thinly scattered, the rustic motif that will dominate the panel; infrequent still, spaced apart like the isolated houses that announce the approach of a village, they announced to me the immense expanse where the wheat breaks in waves, where the clouds fleece, and the sight of a single poppy hoisting its red flame to the top of its ropes and whipping it in the wind above its greasy black buoy made my heart pound like the heart of a traveler who spies on a lowland a first beached boat being repaired by a caulker and, before catching sight of it, cries out: "The Sea!"

That year, when my parents had decided which day we would be returning to Paris, a little earlier than usual, on the morning of our departure, after they had had my hair curled for a photograph, and carefully placed on my head a hat I had never worn before and dressed me in a quilted velvet coat, after looking for me everywhere, my mother found me in tears on the steep little path beside Tansonville, saying good-bye to the hawthorns, putting my arms around the prickly branches, and, like the princess in the tragedy burdened by vain ornaments, ungrateful to the importunate hand that with such care had gathered up my hair in curls across my brow,⁴³ trampling underfoot my torn-out curl papers and my new hat. My mother was not moved by my tears, but she could not suppress a cry at the sight of my crushed hat and ruined coat. I did not hear it: "Oh, my poor little hawthorns," I said, weeping, "you're not the ones trying to make me unhappy, you aren't forcing me to leave. You've never hurt me! So I will always love you." And drying my tears, I promised them that when I was grown up I would not let my life be like the senseless lives of other men and that even in Paris, on spring days, instead of paying calls and listening to silly talk, I would go out into the countryside to see the first hawthorns.

113. In his unfinished novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Novalis tells the story of a medieval troubadour who sees a little blue flower—perhaps a bluet—in a dream. Afterward he longs to see the blue flower in “real life.” “I can’t get rid of the idea,” he says. “It haunts me.” (Mallarmé, too: “*Je suis hanté. L’Azur! l’Azur! l’Azur! l’Azur!*”) Heinrich knows his obsession is a little singular: “For who would be so concerned about a flower in this world? And I’ve never heard of anyone being in love with a flower.” Nonetheless, he devotes his life to searching for it: thus begins the adventure, the high romance, the romance of seeking.

114. But now think of the Dutch expression: “*Dat zijn maar blauwe bloempjes*”—“Those are nothing but blue flowers.” In which case “blue flowers” means a pack of bald-faced lies.

To My Flowers

Eileen Myles

From *tender*, edited by Sophie Collins and Rachael Allen, Fall 2013

Why
did you just
come and
die.

