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## The Advancement of Surrealism: Navigating the Logical Implications of Surrealism in Poetry Through Time

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The Advancement of Surrealism: Navigating the Logical Implications of Surrealism in Poetry  
Through Time

In your own mind, how do you define beauty? There are many different answers to this question, and it varies not only from person to person, but from culture to culture, discipline to discipline, and from time frame to time frame. One unique perspective on the concept of beauty is that of Surrealism. Surrealism attempts to mitigate the influence of the rational, perceivable world in favor of irrationality and the unconscious mind. A pure surrealist would find beauty not necessarily in the external world but in the juxtaposition of the perceivable world and the potentiality of the unconscious mind. Where most people may find beauty in symmetry, a surrealist finds beauty in asymmetry.

The purpose of this project is to provide the reader with an appreciation for the beauty of Surrealism. This task will be attempted through two major guiding themes: an attentiveness to research and an inclusion of the creative medium of poetry. Research for this project will be conducted with the following question in mind: What does the irrationality of Surrealism in poetry tell us about the rationality of humans? Researching this question will allow me to highlight the essential components of Surrealism, identify how Surrealism has affected or has been utilized in literary movements leading up to today, and discuss how the irrationality of Surrealism provides a foundation for humanity that deserves appreciation. Furthermore, this

research question will allow me to focus on and integrate the disciplines of philosophy and literature in order to better understand how they work hand in hand, especially in regards to Surrealism.

The Surrealist movement began in the 1920s and lasted for roughly 40 years. One of the most essential catalysts of this movement was *The Manifesto of Surrealism*, written by André Breton in 1924. Breton, widely considered the father of Surrealism, published another Surrealist Manifesto in 1929. These manifestos provided important knowledge on the Surrealist movement and prompted that the realistic attitude needed to be especially scrutinized (Breton 1). Breton goes on to define Surrealism as “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express -- verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.” As Breton has laid out, Surrealism is primarily focused on the unfiltered mind, dreams, and irrationality. It is through this lens that I will be researching the poetry and rationality of literary eras taking place after the Surrealist movement to answer my research question.

Although Surrealism and irrationality go hand in hand, it is important to distinguish the disciplines that concern each of these terms within this paper. While this paper will be analyzing Surrealism in literature, particularly through poetry, it will be analyzing irrationality through the lens of philosophy. In the philosophical discipline, Surrealism closely relates to the idea of Anti-Realism. Anti-Realism is the philosophical belief that the world is mind-dependent and that it does not consist of any objective facts (Khlentoz). One famous argument of Anti-Realism that helps illustrate their beliefs is Putnam’s “Brain-in-a-Vat” argument. Putnam argues that we could be heavily diluted brains in vats and that if we were, we could not be certain that every belief and

perception we have of the external world isn't false. This argument illustrates the Anti-Realist idea that no matter what we believe to be inherently true, there is always a possibility that we are wrong, whether it be due to undiscovered information, deception from a higher or stronger phenomenon, or dilution of the brain from something such as Putnam's described "vat".

Even though irrationality is a prime focal point of both Surrealism and Anti-Realism, it is important to note that these two ideologies have some key differences that will be beneficial to outline to understand the full content of this paper. One of the key differences between these two ideologies is the goal that guides them. Surrealism aims to unleash the creative potential of the human mind, while Anti-Realism aims to explain why nothing can be held to be objectively true. Whereas Surrealism is concerned with the *creative potential* of irrationality, Anti-Realism is concerned with the *epistemology* of irrationality. Although irrationality guides both of these ideologies, it is evident that they use irrationality in very different ways. In addition to the goals of each of these two ideologies, another defining difference between the two resides in their unique outlooks of irrationality. Irrationality in Surrealism persists as a creative medium for true mental representation. Irrationality in Anti-Realism, however, serves as an inescapable foundation for knowledge and the components of the world around us. Whereas a Surrealist sees irrationality as an *opportunity*, an Anti-Realist sees irrationality as an *inevitability*.

Now that I have touched on the guiding forces of Surrealism, Anti-Realism, and the differences between the two, we can now look at the periods of literary history that consist of the poetry being researched in this paper. Three of the largest periods of literary history that occur after or during the arrival of the Surrealist movement in the 1920s are Modernism, Postmodernism, and the contemporary. Modernism, spanning roughly from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, primarily involved itself with logic, science, and enlightenment ideals

(Khachatryan). Although Surrealism emerged during the time span of Modernism, they are quite different in philosophical structure. Postmodernism, on the other hand, was essentially a reaction against Modernism that promoted more Surrealist ideals. It spanned from the early 20th century up to the start of the 21st century and involved itself with relativity and a rejection of absolute truth (Khachatryan). Everything occurring after the Postmodern period is considered contemporary. The contemporary literary period is very diverse and can sometimes be tricky to classify within a specific, overarching theme. Despite this, many contemporary literary pieces share common themes of addressing reality head on, breaking free of any restrictive artistic or poetic structure, and integrating components of both Modernism and Postmodernism. The breaking free of structure and tradition that is common in contemporary poetry has led some to consider poetry in the contemporary time period as “the new surrealism” (Breslin 357). These three periods all fall into different places on the spectrum of rationality, providing an excellent canvas for us to trace Surrealism on.

Now that I have provided necessary background on the content concerning this paper, I will take a brief moment to review the literature essential to this paper’s foundation that has not yet been discussed. As this project is concerned with the scholarly areas of philosophy and poetry, I will be using underlying literary pieces from both to complete this project. While we have already briefly discussed the philosophy of Anti-Realism, we can take a look at the opposing position of Scientific Realism in Bas. C. van Fraassen’s book *The Scientific Image*. Researching these two ideologies will help build a strong foundation concerning the discussion of irrationality in this project. Concerning the establishment of Surrealism, a direct response to Breton’s *Surrealist Manifesto* was Naum Gabo and Antione Pevsner’s *Realist Manifesto*, which we can analyze to shed light on the emergence and opposition of Surrealism at its roots. Finally,

the following poets helped provide important pieces guided by or utilizing Surrealism within the Surrealist movement or the modern, postmodern, or contemporary time periods: Aimé Césaire, Paul Eluard, Kim Kyung Ju, Ocean Vuong, Mina Loy, Hans Arp, Benjamin Péret, Federico García Lorca, André Breton, Arthur Rimbaud, Michael Palmer, and James Tate. Although there are many others that have helped shape or highlight the Surrealist movement, these poets are the ones that will be researched within the scope of this project.

With a better understanding of some of the foundational literature regarding this project, we can now look at the methodology that will be used to help provide insight towards the irrationality of Surrealism, the rationality (or lack thereof) of humans, and the relationship between the two. I will be utilizing two methods of research for the culmination of my project. First, I will be tracing the use of Surrealist components in poetry throughout different timeframes. I will be doing this through the Surrealist movement and the modern, postmodern, and contemporary timeframes. Tracing the use of Surrealism through these timeframes will allow me to establish a better understanding of how Surrealism has changed over time, whether or not it is still prevalent today, and whether or not the rationality or core values of humans change in a direct relationship to the progression of Surrealism through time. Second, I will be composing my own surrealist poems to illustrate the culmination of my research on Surrealism and to provide a means of comparison to the surrealist poems analyzed in this paper. This method will fulfill the creative research portion of my project and the poems will be included in the appendix at the end of this paper.

I will now discuss in further detail how the use of Surrealism in poetry has evolved over time and how it has had an effect on every major time period happening after the initial Surrealist movement. I will begin by taking a look at the start of the Surrealist movement: What

components of Surrealism were so essential or appealing that they stuck around for so long? As we discussed earlier, Surrealism thrives through the essence of irrationality and of the unconscious mind. This is often achieved through the use of juxtaposition, the references and inclusion of dreams, and the use of unfiltered, unstructured thought processes. It would be unreasonable to discuss the roots of Surrealism without acknowledging the work of André Breton. Breton does an excellent job conveying the important aspects of the Surrealist movement in his poems. In his poem “Always for the First Time”, Breton shows juxtaposition in the line “In a frenzy all the flowers swarm back in”. This line shows a delicate object swarming somewhere and being in a frenzy, a characteristic certainly opposing the general state of such a delicate object. Through this, Breton establishes the surrealist component of juxtaposition which has been passed down to many Surrealism-based works. Breton then utilizes the reference of dreams through the overlying theme of imaginary objects and a different reality in the poem itself. References such as an imaginary house and reality being affected when Breton comes closer to the subject of the poem imply the use of dreams or a dream-like state that directly opposes the natural occurrences of reality. In a similar manner, many more poets from the original Surrealism movement, such as Lorca, Eluard, Rimbaud and Péret, use these components in their poetry which helped solidify the Surrealist movement as a whole.

In order to provide a solid foundation for the basics of my surrealist poetry, I researched the five poets of the original Surrealist movement that are mentioned in the above paragraph significantly. Doing so allowed me to write “Drunken Garden”, “Homage to the Ferryman”, “Grass Lanterns”, and “Backyard Facade”. The purpose of these four poems is to reflect what Surrealism looked like in its original state through a modern lens. Just like the poems of the original Surrealism movement, they utilize juxtaposition, dream-like scenarios, and unfiltered

thought processes to convey the beauty of Surrealism to the reader. Two of these poems, “Grass Lanterns” and “Backyard Facade”, utilize a unique form of unstructured and unrestricted framework called chance poetry. The purpose of chance poetry is to highlight the surrealist belief that poetry should not be bound by the limited framework and creative functions of the writer; the writer uses true unconscious methods to provide the reader with a poem independent of the author’s will with their own interpretation being just as or even more important than the author’s. I composed two chance poems to highlight the array of forms that Surrealism can reside in and to point out that Surrealism is more than a one-dimensional, easy to pinpoint method of writing.

With a better understanding of the important aspects of Surrealism during the original movement, we can now analyze how it still prevailed during the era of modernism and if it looks any different than it did during its initial outbreak. One example of a poet who used Surrealism in modernist-era poetry is Mina Loy, a poet and painter of the first-generation modernists. Loy employs Surrealism in her poetry through the use of dream-like scenarios and radically unexpected imagery. In her poem “Wing Shows on Starway Zodiac Carousel”, we can see her using these Surrealist components in the lines “A flock of dreams browse on Necropolis” and “crusaders from hallucinatory citadels of shattered glass” (Loy). Loy’s devotion to the breach of reality observed in discussing dreams and hallucinatory images shows the utilization of Surrealism within the poetry of a widely recognized modernist poet.

Another example of an influential modernist poet that writes through the lens of Surrealism is Hans Arp. Interestingly, the way that Surrealism shows itself in Loy’s poetry is nearly opposite of how it shows itself in Arp’s poetry. While Loy’s poetry mainly concerns itself with the dream-like component of Surrealism, Arp’s poetry flourishes through the use of juxtaposition. His poem “What Violins Sing in Their Bed of Lard” has multiple examples of this.



The very first line of the poem is “The elephant is in love with the millimeter” (Arp) which brings together two objects of opposite sizes. He continues with lines such as “the snail dreams of the moon’s defeat” and “whose every hair weighs a pound”, which both show direct connections between objects of opposite characteristics uniting. Arp uses juxtaposition fervently in this poem to create unconventional imagery unique to his poem and to establish Surrealism in the modernist era.

The final poet that we will be looking at to analyze the use of Surrealism in the modernist era is James Tate. Tate established Surrealism in his writing mainly through using the unexpected to drive his poetry forward. Some examples of this in his poetry include “where bifocals bulge in an orange garage of daydreams” and “Beware the trumpet wants a glass of water!” (Tate). Tate wrote these lines with the intention to show unconventional imagery to the reader and to keep the reader pleasantly surprised throughout the entirety of his poem. In doing so, he embodies the essence of the surrealist movement and entwines it with the progression of the modernist era.

Although Loy, Arp, and Tate each have a unique way of carrying the legacy of Surrealism through Modernism, there is an overlying theme that we can see regarding Surrealism in the modern era compared to Surrealism anywhere else. In the modern time period, Surrealism acts more as a *rebellion* to the overlying culture and philosophy of the time. Because of this, Surrealist pieces of poetry serve more of a purpose of indicating the contradictions in everyday life and the senselessness of the overlying theme of rationality and realism that composed the modern time period. Because of this, we can see in the lines from the poets above that there is a heightened focus on shocking, unconventional imagery. Although this is a component of many Surrealist poems, it is more prevalent in the modern time period due to the “rebellious” aspect of Surrealism during a time of enlightenment thinking.

If Surrealism's driving force is rebellion in the modern time period, then what would it look like during Postmodernism, a time period flourishing on the rejection of absolute truth? To answer this, we will start by looking at Aimé Césaire, a founder of the negritude movement in France who also helped Surrealism flourish in the postmodern era. We can see Césaire's fervent use of Surrealism in his use of reality-defying imagery and a provocation to the reader to determine their own meaning of his poetry. One of the important details of Césaire's poetry that separates him from many poets of the modern era is his frequent use of the second person. Césaire likes to take the unexpected, juxtaposing characteristics of Surrealism and apply them to a specific individual in his poem rather than to the environment around him. Some of the lines he uses to accomplish this include "you who are the wind through the salty ipomoeas of consciousness" and "it is you the dazzling maguey of an undertow of eagles under the banyan" (Césaire). This implies that the way Surrealism is used between time periods may tell us more than the actual components of Surrealism between time periods.

Another example of a surrealist poet in the postmodern era that projects the characteristics of Surrealism onto a specific individual rather than on the environment is Michael Palmer. In "Song of the Round Man", Palmer chooses to spend most of the poem focused on the round man and the dialogue between him and the narrator. Additionally, in his poem "Tomb of Baudelaire", Palmer breaks up the poem into many small excerpts each concerned with a different individual. Palmer's focus on individuality and the use of human subjects as canvases for Surrealism in his poetry align with Césaire's own use of human canvases and allow us to draw a distinct difference between the environment-focused modern era of Surrealism and the human-focused postmodern era of Surrealism. Since Postmodernism was concerned a lot more with the rejection of Modernism and enlightenment principles, it makes sense that

Postmodernism tends to take a more individualized, reader-focused approach to utilizing Surrealism. This approach tells us that the postmodern time period was focused more on ideas such as individualism and that Surrealism was more widely accepted during this time period than during Modernism.

Now that we have seen the environmentally focused force of Surrealism in Modernism and the individualized approach of Surrealism in Postmodernism, we can now look at what Surrealism looks like in the contemporary time period. Although Surrealism is not currently as popular as it once was, we can still see many uses of it in poetry all around us. One poet still using Surrealism today is Kim Kyung Ju. Kyung Ju does an excellent job using juxtaposition and unique metaphors to revolutionize the use of Surrealism. We also see Surrealism in contemporary poetry through the writing of Ocean Vuong. Although Vuong is not devoted to Surrealism, he integrates his own personal life with the aesthetic of Surrealism in many of his poems. Finally, Andrew Joron is currently using surrealist poetry to make a name for himself as well. He is more inclined to traditional surrealist characteristics such as erratic line breaks and using more space than just the left margin on the pages of his poems.

Although these three poets are significantly different in the way they use Surrealism in their poetry, one characteristic of their works that binds them together is their frequent use of a single, overarching metaphor for each poem. Whereas many poets from the previous time periods that we have discussed have an affinity for squeezing their poems full of as many different metaphors and images as they can, many contemporary poets that utilize Surrealism try to do this with more closely related imagery and metaphors. For example, Kyung Ju uses all of his poem "Reindeer on my Upper Lip" to, as the title implies, discuss the reindeer that are walking on his lip. He follows a similar pattern of using a clear, overarching metaphor in "Sweep

Up a Flock”, where he focuses on a flock of birds. We can see this same pattern in many of the poems in Vuong’s poetry collection *Time is a Mother*, and in Joron’s “Phrases of the Moon”.

The contemporary time period is still cementing its place in history, which makes it difficult to determine clear, underlying ideologies and writing practices that set us apart from the ideologies and writing practices of other time periods. However, looking at our culture after the major events of Postmodernism, we have been defined by a greater push than previous time periods towards pragmatism and progressivism. The tendency of contemporary poets to focus more on specific metaphors and imagery than previous poets goes hand in hand with the underlying contemporary ideologies of pragmatism and progressivism. It parallels the ideology of progressivism because contemporary poets are using a movement designed to break apart previous societal barriers and go even further to use Surrealism in a manner that goes against its traditional norm of including many different and juxtaposing images. It parallels the ideology of pragmatism because it grounds the reader and brings focus onto a specific theme intended by the author rather than inviting the reader to try to piece together a theme of their own.

Now that we have seen the unique differences in the manifestation of Surrealism in different time periods, we can look at whether or not the way in which Surrealism is used directly relates to the underlying philosophy and rationale of humanity during that specific time period. After significant scrutiny, we can see that Surrealism not only persists through time periods leading up to today, but also that it looks different depending on which time period it resides in. In the modern era, Surrealism is primarily environment-based. In the postmodern era, Surrealism is primarily individual-based. Finally, in contemporary writing, Surrealism seems to take form in conceits and in more direct poetry. We have also seen that the way in which Surrealism is utilized also coincides with certain underlying values embedded within these time

periods. Surrealism is used as a rebellion during the modern era, a period in which many core values directly opposed the characteristics of Surrealism. It aligns perfectly in postmodernism with the underlying ideology of individualism being so popular at the time. Finally, as previously discussed, Surrealism today is used in accordance with currently popular values such as pragmatism and progressivism. The tendency of Surrealist writing to reflect the values of different time periods significantly implies that the “irrationality” of Surrealism does indeed lay down a foundation for the rationality of humans.

Now that we have traced Surrealism through the different time periods, I would like to take a brief moment to discuss the second methodology of my research, which is the poetry composition. I have added an appendix at the end of this paper with 15 poems that I have written to fulfill the creative portion of my project. I have composed these poems for two main purposes: to showcase the research that I have done on Surrealism and on surrealist poets and to compare these poems to the poems analyzed in this project to see if they reflect the same information about underlying values. Three of these poems were written in reflection of modernist poetry, three for postmodernist poetry, and three for contemporary poetry. Of the remaining six, four were written in reflection of the original Surrealist movement, one in reflection of Anti-Realism, and one that serves to highlight the advancement of Surrealism throughout all four movements. The appendix identifies which poems fall into which category.

After analyzing the way in which Surrealism is used in each time period, I have found that in my poetry, only the ones written in reflection of poems from the modern time period seem to match the conclusions that I have made about how Surrealism is used in that time period. The three poems that I have written in reflection of the modern time period, “The Straw Man’s Ode”, “Nine of Diamonds”, and “The Flammable Tears of a Cigarette Dress”, all seem to fit nicely into

the theme of Surrealism in the modern era as rebellious and specifically inclined to juxtaposition as an indicator of the contradictions of everyday life. The first two poems follow a theme of an unwanted presence bearing down on the narrator and the narrator not conforming to this presence. The last one is the poem that I believe has the most juxtaposition out of any that I have written for this project, which nicely indicates how important it was to the modern time period.

While the poems I have written in reflection of the modern time period match nicely with the conclusions that I have drawn about Surrealism during that period, I can not say the same about those written in reflection of the postmodern and contemporary time periods. “Good Morning, Death” is the only postmodern-inspired poem that aligns with the conclusions that I have drawn. Although some of them fit with the structure or topics of poems from the time period that they were based off of, they do not fit with the specific way Surrealism was used during that time period. I believe that this is due to me having too much focus on the structure of poems in each time period when I wrote these poems rather than on the aspects of Surrealism in each time period that separated them from the other time periods.

With the tracing of Surrealism through the different time periods and the composition of my poetry complete, I will now discuss the implications of what I have found and how it is related to Anti-Realism and the future of our society. As stated earlier, Surrealism is focused more on the creative potential of irrationality, while Anti-Realism is focused more on the epistemology of irrationality. Because of this differentiation, Surrealism can be dynamic over time, while Anti-Realism remains stagnant, making it harder to draw implications about the future of Anti-Realism or the underlying philosophical beliefs of the future. However, the fact that Surrealism can tell us about the rationality of humans does imply that although Anti-Realism is not as popular as it was during the postmodern time period, we can expect it to persist for quite

a bit of time in the future. Additionally, these findings imply that in the past, present, and future, we will be able to look at surrealist writing to determine the philosophical values and beliefs of a certain time period and therefore draw conclusions about what motivated people during a specific era. Finally, we can see that since the use of irrationality is a foundational component of Surrealism, and that the way in which this irrationality is used changes often, that Anti-Realism should be viewed not necessarily as a black-and-white belief, but rather as a spectrum. There are many different ways that anti-realist beliefs can persist in philosophy, each with a varying degree of irrationality. Because we have found that irrationality is a spectrum, we can therefore conclude that Anti-Realism is a spectrum as well. This also implies that as irrationality takes on new forms, we can expect to see new branches of Realism and Anti-Realism forming as well.

After extensive research on surrealist poetry, Anti-Realism, and the underlying values and philosophies of the modern, postmodern and contemporary time periods, it is clear that the irrationality of Surrealism directly relates to the underlying philosophy of the time period that it comes from. I have also found that Surrealism is primarily focused on the irrationality of the external world during Modernism, that it is primarily focused on the irrationality of humans during Postmodernism, and that it is currently focused on the irrationality of tradition and politics. The use of Surrealism in each time period directly coincides with the philosophies that they were composed of. Additionally, I found that although poetry written in reflection of certain time periods may look similar to the poems of these time periods, they do not provide an accurate depiction of the underlying values of that time period like the original poems do. The results of this research imply that we can expect to learn a lot in the future about a culture even from seemingly irrational literature and that Anti-Realism is a spectrum that we can expect to persist for quite some time and even branch out into more beliefs as time goes on. Although

many people may overlook the importance and the beauty of Surrealism, it emerged from a movement essential to our understanding of the human psyche and will continue to provide our society with a plethora of both knowledge and enjoyment for years to come.



## Appendix: Poems

### Backyard Facade

(Surrealist movement, chance poetry)

gestures  
house in a swarmed darkness  
ladder of hovering hands rolled at an angle  
the moon's grave bears a snow interpretation  
take care of the ivy in our throat  
who was the postage stamp in my honeydew home  
you harmonize  
caverns anticipate teasing the inviolate facade of our pocket  
we are rocking vessels with saws on our waists  
the half-witted hunt  
window of aluminum ears  
eagles where the key surrounds the facade  
door of dancing wildflowers with stones of mine  
pluto can ride daylight's tail  
silken chairs sing out over my heart  
and I am the rift  
corralling the ripe fog of the sun  
under the roaming plains of my gavel  
to welcome in the dawn of crinkled hearts  
trapped inside the lungs of an epilogue



**Drunken Garden**  
(Surrealist movement)

there in the garden tea lilies full of odd questions daylilies humming  
a nightingale's thorn the moonbeam's cavity all but encompassed  
tiptoeing along the veil garnished with parallel pine needles the same  
ones who found a cord of heavens beneath the wildfire but refused to  
stop the trifling of chaos when the wintertide of those before caters to the  
heaven's pockets filling them with silver stitches and time again to look  
at the doves but where else would we find a noble creature such as a  
dream but melting in a drunken garden seas below lashes yet to be  
liberated barbed-wire necklaces fulfilling the lust of the monologue  
where a marksman's verso has yet to be born with the animate eyes of  
a cradle's bloodshed he sighs from a mouth that isn't his warped sails  
of ignorance deadset on the urn deadset on dampening the urge to fly  
but oh how he has learned of ecstasy's gull waiting for fools to dictate  
the leaves waiting for Askeladd to march on home

**Homage to the Ferryman**  
(Surrealist movement)

fractures in the windowsill  
hear the *tap tap tap*  
as the marrow of the rifle falls

sunflowers nip at the ferryman's soul  
a heel piece harbinger a  
peppercorn patron  
gambling on whether the flock of trumpets  
can mimic the crows

simply complex  
the fume of the grand narrative  
sowing their own paths  
for the lanterns to grow sour

fickle ferryman  
sip on your lukewarm prison  
amidst the cutlass tide  
sandcastles grieving  
in the most unpredictable fashion  
weeping bullets heard from the city  
forget about the wind  
*tap tap tap*

i am but another man's arrow  
a tip of dew  
bow of dust  
just the shadow of the smallest moon  
singing my ode to the gutters

ferry me to provence  
together navigating glass mountains  
slaves only to the chapped wings of chaos  
content while the shadows dictate  
the wise man's anthem  
carnivorous limericks  
breathing tender compulsion

under the acoustic canopy

so here we are  
pseudo-graces in an underwater garden  
hidden macrocosm  
hidden voyage  
welcoming you to the funny little myriad

the sour sway of transparency will  
eulogize what's underneath  
underneath  
the peregrine petals  
where tomorrow is a salt shaker  
expanding the devil's palette

i am drunk on the sap of skeptics  
a product of footprints painted hollow  
watching the wood's light weep  
while the meadows pretend to dream  
of a prismatic sky  
standing on my eyelid  
tugging on the curtain of my lashes  
held together by the thin cry of a death

**Nine of Diamonds**  
(Modernism)

grinning  
of the crown's breach  
eyelids gone with your will to run  
crown of the seaweed  
shall we depart

your lungs are sleeping  
naked in memory  
dreaming in unison

but the cloud's echo  
is all too real  
rotting reflections  
in the sonnet's red river

spear-headed passerby  
always on the run  
the millimeter's prey  
escape in another dimension  
barefooted and cruel

twilight's myriad  
is this your card

**The Straw Man's Ode**  
(Modernism)

the clocktower doors of a straw building  
perfect spheres tracing my pupils  
while the straw man traces them onto his bones

ears of the sea exchanging tall tales  
of gelatin blades who he once loved before

threaded submarines traverse the dense roots  
underneath the twilight tree  
bittersweet  
like pistols in the sand

seduce him with symmetry  
while clouds below spit copper faces  
spring departs tempting the bronze palette  
her emerald rain embellished by the threshold

copper saplings sprout bottom side up  
swimming beneath my iris  
to eulogize the becoming of ash

storm-studded sonnet

do I recognize you from somewhere?

**The Flammable Tears of a Cigarette Dress**  
(Modernism)

skulls unwind in the bitten cheek of the horizon  
where the dry mud of instinct carries the tiny cosmos  
chipping away at the blind eagle who can

ride a desert wave  
under the avian almanac  
holding hands with the casket-bound clouds

from a static revolution  
the alkaline bride who has never been born  
weeps uncurling acorns

friend of the pine oak  
trodding backward into the womb  
against the funny bone's grain

against the current of cartilage  
what's left are just yesterday's freckles  
clicking tongues of a serpent's ear

plucked from the protist drawer  
of a coal miner's kitchen  
oh what a monotone demolition

in the pride of a human's beak  
suspecting the coral butchery of wildfires  
if it wasn't for the rumpled cufflinks

of an incessant cauldron  
the clay retracts to one  
helix of arrows with no memory

of the boiling skin of repetition  
just a machine gun on a checkerboard  
ready to fire his bones



**Good Morning, Death**  
(Postmodernism)

good morning, pluto's envelope  
the rhinestone dew has you falling again, doesn't it  
crestfallen doe of your cheeks epochs within their  
own immortality my dry lips will never be your  
armor when the sea blinks the berm forgets to sing  
arcane while the garden tunes her devoir for you I  
open the whistling buttons doors to your acoustic  
reign my own vessel lost in your knavish brow where  
you forgot to poke holes in the battlefield in the  
ribcage connecting the salt on my fingers its you  
you are the color of jupiter in my pockets with your  
fork too deep into the minute hand the september  
leaves no longer laugh when you refuse to digest me

**Patchwork Harbor**  
(Postmodernism)

beyond the silhouette riding your amber waves  
a cord of alleyways completes the hearth's aurora  
stray bullets concoct a garden palisade  
for the tooth-feathered partridge  
i see the sibilance shrivel by the bitter  
light of my crackling brow  
my shoelaces are just atoms  
or are atoms just shoelaces  
gears turn  
gears deserve all the soapsuds of the epiphany  
gears asunder  
damn  
gears crest on the throe of the hearty knell  
beyond the silhouette riding your amber waves  
clandestine metaphors nipping at the flaxen vines  
my bracelet to remember you  
purple yarn stringing together the stars  
and a crooked little button  
to remind me of your dawn

**Dear Mortals**  
(Postmodernism)

Antiquated bricks descend to their masters,  
     as if called  
 A bit of wax cascades over the canopy  
 prompted by the weeping rushlights  
 Twins of demise  
     the rest of the family sleeps  
 while the angelic pitchforks erupt  
 harmonically  
 I wonder if I will submit  
 surely I am the exception  
 my life in front of the mast  
 when the sun's foothold  
     begins to fade  
 I witness the evening blanket  
 overthrowing the tyrannic windows  
     to safely tuck in the Hyacinths goodnight  
 still falling  
     falling to the death of unity  
 Too soon the swan spits up the moon  
 the rebellious feathers ahead of schedule  
     defining the bitter tongue of the snowdrops  
 armed against another world  
     Stay humble now  
 The clouds still fear the chisels  
     of folded encores  
     too much to pop the fields of daggers  
 floating feebly above  
 while a necklace of missiles holds hands  
 laughing at their own demise  
     laughing at my own  
 The brass Caladrius emerges  
 from the rubble  
 to tell us what we already know  
     the taste of magenta  
     the smell of compliance  
 the world a marble coffin  
     with untied laces  
 falling into itself

**Iron Sky**  
(Contemporary)

Try to remember  
what was life like before the lights were weeds  
bulbs of victory not yet personified?  
I wonder if the carpet knew your name  
before you turned her into the ocean's gallop.

Cruel Ironsmith,  
you craft God under fate's mouth  
forge the winds so the bowfins refuse to fly  
dealing in absolutes  
as if the prying clocktower  
paints our faucet with thistles  
instead of seeping through the battered windows.

Can I tell you a secret?  
I never liked how the summer poison hardened  
around your infinite lips  
born on the spines of meteors.  
But who am I  
to defend the morning palate  
cracked from when you accidentally swallowed the woodlands  
breathing wooden armies  
and sending them to their deaths.

**Dream A Dying Hillside**  
(Contemporary)

but forever does get a little old  
pitted against a trespasser's ambition  
graveyards dipping their irises into the pitcher  
of riptides too pale  
to fathom the veins of bravado  
forward  
yellow-bellies marching on a gyrating murmur  
their sanity mended by the bare shoulders of the hillsides  
absorbed by an echelon of parallel tongues  
no further will the seaside fall from the brow of  
the morning ibis  
no longer will the mountains nestle in the gentle lips  
of conformity  
wounds die but violence lives  
just beneath the shoe of a cackling ensemble  
reprieved by a narrative's blink  
rushed from the vermiculate walls of vanity's refuge  
forever is just  
the curse of a flaying shore  
the spinning of fangs on a molotov playground  
the pendant of an undefined doctrine  
aging like alliums rise  
rising like dominoes fall

**Atrophy**

(Contemporary, Automatism)

dry tides of enclaves cascade over the summit like the noisy scent of tangerines with  
tasteless fissures like the blood of an ally manipulating the sundial with a serene  
sort of language the sun-speckled facade kinks the hose of another hollow conscript  
it is raining thimbles right where it hurts the open wound of  
Hephaestus a crater in the moon a ball pit for the  
ampersand a parachute of serpents to dethrone the nightstand while  
envelope outskirts circumvent the gash of the afterlife wearing  
torpedoes in their fortified hair all while witnessing  
the wet nose of a cruel disposition  
waiting and winking and erupting and  
there below the milkweed's wrinkles  
a web of arms  
fusing their wakes  
erected into  
nothing.

**What an Anti-Realist Feeds the Sun**  
(Automatism, Anti-Realism)

under the moss-colored light of a newspaper furnace  
the boy says a prayer to his silhouette's god  
of the two-dime track of an alibi's dream

pragmatic, the boy  
climbs down his own crooked thumb of moonlight  
through the screen doors of a trailblazer's jaw  
into the egress to find

nothing  
below the floating walls of his syntax home  
not insight nor emptiness  
just a hint from the world that he couldn't touch

defeated, the boy  
climbs to his room  
ball of rubber echoes in hand  
bouncing it between misfortune and the scent of lemons  
like a fingerprint between the glass oculus of sorrow

yet determined is he still  
bouncing his ball to the shining egress  
with a swift kick  
sending it through the threshold

but the echoes cease  
and the ball then never was  
in presence nor in memory  
just a boy remains  
confused where his shoes went  
where his clothes went  
why the tint from the morning stanzas  
is falling from his mouth

**Progression**

(Surrealism, Modernism, Postmodernism, Contemporary)

your journey starts  
where the attic grows from a porcelain maze  
as the grain swallows the solar system  
as a school of daybreak  
rests under the eighth color of the rainbow  
the calm eruption of a widow's galaxy  
creeps through your nose  
like the restless chapters of a laughing torso

then you will lose yourself  
under the gaudy tide of a knuckle's museum  
replaced by the bottlecap jungle of dialect  
hazelnut eyes watching destiny's lips  
down  
into the mechanized splinters of indifference  
octaves electric like rockweed  
where the crawfish envies the cavity's cape

next you will taste defeat  
under the fickle freight  
of the governing webs of open wounds one  
mammoth in a sea of the beetle's gaze  
cutting the hot breath of a mother's casket  
with the sharp fist of a mermaid's tongue  
while paper mache men draw their weapons  
in the sand of a graveyard shore

now here you are  
made whole by the humbling smell of  
magistrates meeting constellations  
letting the viscous baritone run through your fingers  
ear against a tree of boiling branches  
to taste the sound of a modernist's bones  
feeling as if the metronome's pages aren't bending  
oh what a foolish mistake



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