

**Norman Fischer**

**All right then . If so**

All right then . If so

then ..... in a field.

I'm out here flapping in a field in a

field like a flag in

a wind—

So that

the words I once

knew

I've forgotten (in a

field , in the field flapping in a wind

a mind)

You who ..... not that again....

all those others, the others

Here is subject matter, matter at hand

speaking

once . again

to . you

oh

you.....

\*

frequently used words among those  
of my social and economic class  
frequent concerns of ours are the  
following — we, our concerns while  
at the same time (though not  
here in the environment of the  
here on the flapping page)  
the myriad others,  
on all scales, in all time-frames  
and places ..... do not quote  
unquote have quote unquote  
concerns — by definition, ours

\*

thus i'm here among tall trees waving  
in the distance in the wind while in my  
ear (waving just the same) are the words —  
no, the *force*, of the poets I've loved  
chattering not in, as would be expected,  
words but in the fluted winds flowing  
across the field — I'm here in

the field or

the poem

such wide open spaces

here

anything

could

occur

\*

I'm casting about for vocabulary  
any sort of vocabulary, what would  
the Buddhists say about all this  
maybe they'd say there's no choice  
now, that is, no word choices  
only this word could appear in this

space now (concerns of the others).

\*

now, look at this wall, this brick wall  
I've evoked now — here — in the

field of

the

poem

which is the back of a building  
orange in the twilight as all  
bricks are. thank you for  
not smoking

\*

that there was a man, young,  
bald, but shaven-headed  
neart-shirted sitting eating at  
sidewalk cafe with woman, young  
white light blouse (it's summer)  
wearing shades, she's wearing large  
shades, he is, though their table's  
in the shade, not sun, as on tv,  
world cup's shown, shocked young  
man wearing thick orange gloves eyes  
wide in disbelief at decision  
of official

\*

get out from under  
maintenance worries everything's  
constantly falling apart & must be  
shored up replaced cleaned  
repaired what grows profusely  
naturally outstrips its bounds  
must be trimmed back tall trees  
limbed & topped two women  
tapping on laptops two women  
reading all heads bent slightly  
rapt as players in yellow gloves

lunge for ball fall grimace get  
up

\*

dump truck rumbles by every day's  
interesting a novel has characters but  
they are not real when someone's writing  
it's words that make the mind real  
imagination falters in a terrible  
downpour rain & wind disturb  
it absorb it all save big on  
shell fuel upgrade now Fed-Ex truck  
driver says on Fed-Ex truck passing  
another on city street in sun

\*

conditions make the — clothes make  
the — man, listening for the arrangements  
(crooked, balmy, bent) the woman walking  
down airplane aisle in bare feet  
wants to get into seat two people rise  
to effect possible ending of hostilities  
in Ukraine they do not end as world  
events resume their cursory twists  
and turns down here on earth (ah  
who knows what goes on up or out  
there or here in blackest space)

\*

along the lines  
of Phil Whalen

quoting now some spice

he rages in his room, amethyst, quartz

(this

couldn't be

flapping, waving)

\*

boy with funny hat curled up on seat  
watch colors blur on tv screen  
as dark-haired mom slack-headed  
sleeps blonde woman in real world  
(of narrow airless airplane) walks  
down long aisle to bathroom which  
you having been on an airplane can  
picture. though this is not the airplane  
you imagine but words do do that  
they pretend to be the thing

\*

dark hair dark skin man of India  
or Iran, Bengladesh, Pakistan, walks  
behind burly white man in flowered shirt  
shows his muscle here in solid visible  
world plane shifts and jars pilot  
issues helpful warning fasten seat  
belt refrain from walking about cabin  
pen wavers on page dark haired  
African woman or Native American  
now majority of minority is “we”  
when you write English

\*

can't place

her

it's maybe

him , gender-struck

sense of self & place — all

a matter of feeling — you,we, speak

falling down a stairwell's

gender

neutral



wear grey-striped ties

this poem could be more clever

\*

dear sir, what are you thinking now?  
allow me to be the first to congratulate  
yourself on my achievement of freedom from  
time , the past now unhooked from present  
and all one need do is recognize  
total responsibility in and of  
the present , no time like , for disorganizing  
the whole mass of doubt and pain  
yet sir i cannot help but notice  
there's blush upon the peach, sheen  
on the apple well don't worry about all of  
that there are no particulars the senses  
just a duck blind. K A P O W! and all  
is lost well not necessarily, he said and  
i said well have it your way but don't  
pine for me Angelina, don't pine

\*

Well, not even to think  
to be silent, to be alone  
All the being & doing evaporated  
and one shrank, with a sense of solemnity,  
to being one's self only, wedge-shaped  
core of darkness, invisible to others,  
self free for its adventures — so she knit —  
when life sank down for a moment  
The range of experience is limitless  
these unlimited resources  
one after another must fuel our apparitions  
(she, Lily, Augustus Carmichael)  
the things you know us by  
are simply childish — beneath it is  
all dark, spreading, unfathomably deep  
— but now and again we rise to surface  
and this is what you see —

\*

writing with fountain pen as all  
remark with astonishment “ah you  
write with that, so few do these  
days” yes as evidenced by blue thumb  
and index finger yet truly fountain  
pens do not leak they

seldom

or never

[seld om , sel dom

do

leak] the

phenomenology , the endocrinology

the underground tragedy

of inked

moments

\*

see the clouds as if etched in sky  
see the moon, full & bright, hidden  
behind bright cloud as if etched in sky  
see the seeing, that there’s seeing that  
the air — or the err — is the seeing that’s  
the moon’s mirror for sight is lost  
in thought — in words — if there are  
any—

\*

lightning flash — whole place sud  
denly A P P E A R S  
out of dark then back to  
dark and ten times as

dark

pitch

that                      bl ack

as    now                n ow

nothing's here ,    h ear

but

I'm   met    in the

field

carrying suitcase over rough terrain  
to adobe room all the participants  
all the participants all the people  
the people where are all the people  
going to in the light, the dark, the  
something then nothing  
then something and  
nothing the

dark    we

were                and

are/are

\*

the woman wearing two big fish for earrings  
from her ears hanging two large fish  
silver against the darker skin of her naked face  
and dark naked body she's in a place  
neither here nor there but clearly fish  
are important to her, of greatest  
salience — here now the cry of our  
collective people the people one knows  
that have (like a blanket) covered one  
that have (like a fire) warmed one these  
slipped-by decades, centuries, those we  
think we never knew, know us could  
tell us convincingly, "don't get lost  
this is who you are"

\*

golden Buddha seated in golden circle  
on golden paper in golden room  
holding flat blue medicine bowl halo and dark black hair  
on golden lotus petal throne — yes  
Indian imagination fertile and  
precious adobe room curving and  
pure where's the light, what's the  
light source in this picture?

\*

It's doubtful I have

my doubts yet

doubts themselves are

doubtful you can

doubt doubts then

where are you then

where will you be but

if you're certain of your

doubts , well

that's not much doubt after all

that's just a definite "no"

not as good as a

tentative "yes" which is to

say that

this word is in

this spot and

never        mind

\*

that's a picture of a picture  
in someone's mind

\*

that's creative, isn't it  
that you can make up what's  
on your mind — that you do  
make it up so then you've  
got a world on your hands now that  
world becomes a tyrant. benign &  
gracious & forgiving, you can excuse  
almost anything & you feel good & free  
as the world burns  
if it does

\*

She wore a shapeless dress (though  
of course like everything it has a shape,  
a dress shape, particular dress  
shape someone calls "shapeless"  
I'm writing this poem — he's —  
she's — all collectively write this poem  
in all its echoic collective in  
shapeless language) to the restaurant  
lovely shapeless dress so well designed  
to be shapeless beauty, fabric, thick,  
coarse, patterned, what was the  
pattern, well definite pattern with  
variety [not the same pattern in all  
places but differing yet related pattern]  
that one can't quite remember when  
writing of it some time later, words  
coming as they always do now, not then,  
when remembered impressions have  
fled the aging brain yet doubtful  
if past is/was as recollected if  
at all

\*

confidence in words, confidence that  
they do depict situations, realities, aspects  
of what is, that they communicate that  
I now communicate the a scene de  
picted does register in a reader's mind  
that one believes there's a person at the  
other end of this, one who lives & breathes  
& feels & knows as you do yet words  
could be mathematically generated by  
machine words could be reflections of  
words' words, words could like inde  
pendent monsters rampage

\*

was on the train that was moving and the  
conductor with the accent took my ticket  
punched that ticket took it passed on  
to other riders' tickets that I debarked  
that train went down that long old  
stairwell and out onto street in sunlight  
on a day, then, in the past that can be  
nearly or completely trusted

\*

overhead fan's moving casting  
shadows on hardwood floor in summer  
heat, flies, flies, flies, unhindered by this  
but in Brooklyn backyard garden mosquitos  
(that don't know to fly over houses out onto  
street in front) blown back by fan that  
redolent phrase, where's history (I mean  
myth) now that words' twists question time  
inventor of the railroad do we know who  
huge sudden brute force unstoppable  
beast darkly mows down important character  
in Dickens novel which we, now, in dense  
contemplative silence I see there's  
no seeing, I see best in dark where  
all things look the same in snow  
covers all equally white listening, listening,  
listening to the silent remains after  
fly's buzzing dies

\*

this

that

one

sees

and knows

not now as

there's here — and

so .

[content goes in this space]

\*

duff of live oak leaf mulch and  
redwood chips and clumps  
in pampas grass (if that falling over  
plant is that) and stones stacked to make  
a wall — dry creek — summer sun beats  
down on all the little people houses  
plants and others crawling around down  
here in endless space someone said  
the Pleiades are now falling out of the sky  
you can see them late at night flame out  
in an is that's also a was as is  
any physical sensible thing who needs  
now a surface and a depth — of  
meaning — why's this now poem like  
any other speaking its word to any  
other reader as man and woman in  
near distance (so their words can be  
heard) speak of tremors on the eyes or  
ears' affections despite a horrid present  
tremor, this is not writ  
in any book (except maybe bible)

\*

people not moving sitting yet  
moving even a muscle can I simply  
say such a thing is such a thing in  
actual world possible to be so  
can writing a poem be that easy  
that one can say such a thing this that's  
right in front of me (sound of cicada  
can one in the poem hear that, refer  
to that) oh now people begin to move  
they must be alive after all can these  
people I'm seeing right here in the poem  
actually be people not in the poem but in  
time in space, how can these people be  
contained .....

\*

people don't move  
seem to move in space  
but no , there's no  
never any — not any  
movement , people remain  
stationary , there's no thinking no  
moving — what are they  
now feeling  
how do you like  
your life  
now — flying ant  
wiggling antennae furiously —  
now again still

\*

Soft breeze, damp green maybe leaves'

canopy or trees' green leaves overhead but  
for patch of sky — this is classical a class  
ical saying (the patch of sky might be or  
might as well be another world as in the  
photo) prose should be at least as well  
written as poetry, no that's the other way  
round, poetry should be etc prose  
etc poetry leaves — was the maple —  
that's maple, it's moist and lovely  
this is Minnesota land of clouds  
in water now clouds over lake you see  
through small breaks in trees people  
moving by, yes people moving

\*

there's no other way  
but this way for people  
to move past  
in Japan

\*

palm fronds — no not palm fronds  
dark spaces between them or this is  
the other side of the moon flat surface  
green, mauve, hard of hearing because  
a large tree fell down on my car I  
can't see straight anymore am largely blind  
walking with a thin white stick to show the  
way but there's an eye in the stick, pastiche  
this isn't writing it's reporting it's  
living it language  
there is a tongue in the language it tastes  
that is a tongue a feeling a distortion  
see how the air moves see the head  
or ear move through the palm fronds  
oh I meant ferns, those are ferns  
big green stiff ancient odd old  
ferns, ferns, ferns, feathery slashed  
leaves, segments, sharp repeated patterns  
living ferns not ferns in tropical  
jungle no not here where I am it

can't be this easy to be dead

\*

Seeing people in rooms or there are  
people on streets, people people people people  
hearts minds hopes fears fingers toes bellies mouths  
tongues, I mean actual people peopling  
the poem, jumbles of them, entangled  
they politely speak say we're the people  
of the poem of the many poems we are  
not to be denied don't think we are  
readers we're not, not readers, don't  
think we are not readers, we read, think,  
lapse, relapse, entangle, we're also  
violent & sexual mixed up with the  
words, dripping their blood, which is  
comic: Mozart is always comic

\*

the moon's empty  
the moon is opening  
the moon is filling up with nothing  
slowly, quietly, the form empties  
the moon empties  
solu, solu, everything thrust  
out of the way —

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