

Eleni SIKELIANOS (b. 1965)

From *The California Poem* [TCP] and *Make Yourself Happy* [MYH]

1.

CP 160-161, 208-210)

2.

Oh, what's this — the/ car is an earth! The bird is a self! The/ mask is human! (CP 35, 48)

3.

poppy, says lizard, like the
sun itself

lying

on the ground

if you are the clan

if you are the clan

clan

of the traffic

of the hubcap

of carburetor

& reflective strips in the road

who

will your helper

be? what power, what plant

animal, vegetable, rock, what skunk dance

(CP p.87 et 117)

4.

Little planet, crystal ball

Tells the tale of a many-layered dustcake

CP 161, 210)

5.

Dead bodies throw trace

Elements: mollusks concentrate

on copper, radiolarians do strontium, Earth accelerates (CP 179, 234)

6. « *Un-Natural Bird-Egg Eating Thief. Alien/ Invader of California* »

Just so, la Migra stops opossums at borders with/ billy clubs, & sends them back/ whence they came
whence they came (c. 1906)/ from South and East, stoned marsupials/ sipping on
the golden soups of CA/ marble-eyed in the night & hanging [...]" (CP 70, 95-96)

7. for all the echinoderms and dinoflagellates (CP3, 7)

8. "world"/ "word (9 & 38-39)," "matter"/master (48)", "early"/ "earthly (82)", "books"
/"brooks (104)", "fame" /"flame (112)", "eagles"/ "angles (135)", "holes"/"haloes (7)",
"pursue"/"peruse (187)",
"annals"/ "Annelids (177), "otters"/ "offers (29)"; "egret"/ "regret"
"hinder"/"Pindar (32)", "radial"/"radical (133 "clock"/"cluck (42)",
"anther"/ "anthem"/ "atom (161)."

9.

how to do stress wood without/ the tiniest breeze (where the tree's flesh responds/ to wind, or snow, gravity, and ground-shifts, goes tough/ and keeps the tree up) in the vivarium?// stress word shift this this" (MKH 129).

10. "A small dark & trembling tree/ is able to reassemble the/ qualities of wind within/ its leaves"
(CP 164, 213)

11.

NO ONE KNOWS how it began/ A few atoms lying in the sun/ began to click and burn./ Then, man." (MKH 121)

12.

Human science is also a human story. We gossip around the atoms (MKH 163).

13.

Animals utter indivisible sounds so/ often yet/ Aristotle does not call any of *them*/ a letter. Still, an/ animal sound will/ make yourself happy. Listen to this/ Kitten. We can call its noises an alphabet without confusion. (MKH 4)

14.

They will never be done Never be/ done dancing If we wipe them/ from the face of the earth/ they will never be done being/ part of it making the world with their/ sounds & feet & hooves// until they are done dancing the/ animals' ghost dance &/ then they will be done (MKH 84)

15. [Montage VD]

It was silent as the atoms were gathering

Then it got noisy

[what can no longer be held in language]

[sieve]

[sieve]

[where does the future take place]

[words were sent through the collider]

[letters atomize, chinks in the particles]

I look up at the sky, scan

for atoms, colors, vowels

[...]

There are quite a few things breaking

sound stops I

use word-waste to build it, Oracle

spine lost its e

spin th carousl round

again

at th nd of tm

spn th carousl round

agan

th retr

Nclr

Hrt tm

cm

[do a biosphere]/ [do a new biosphere]/ [do a new]
(MKH 121-149)

15.

Francis BACON (1561-1626)

We have but one simple method of delivering our sentiments, namely, we must bring men to particulars and their regular series and order, and they must for a while renounce their notions and begin to form an acquaintance with things.

(In Jori Graham, *Materialism*, ix)

JORI GRAHAM (b. 1950)

16. From "Relativity: A Quartet"

as if matter itself were going/ on and on to its own destination [...] / and we can [...] / [...] still/ let it lay itself down frame by frame onto the wide/ resistanceless opening of our wet/ retina—more and more—/ all the debris, all the astonishments, quicker than single file,/ smearing onto us—undestined, undestined—

17. From "Notes on the Reality of the Self"

Crocus/ appear in the gassy dank leaves. Many/ earth gasses, rot gasses/ I take them in, breath at a time. I put my/ breath back out// onto the scented immaterial. How the invisible/ roils. I see it from here. Is there a new way of looking—/ valences and little hooks—inevitabilities, proba-/ bilities? It flaps and slaps. Is this body the one/ I know as me? How private these words? And these? Can you/ smell it, brown with little froths at the rot's lips./ Meanwhiles and meanwhiles thawing then growing soggy then/ the filaments where leaf-matter accrued round a/ pattern, a law, slipping off, precariously, bit by bit/ and flicks, and swiftnesses suddenly more water than not." (3-4)

18. From "Invention of the Other"

light, its outermost edges, congeries of small thinkings, little/ whelps/desire: utterly unequivocal yet/ utterly without// knowledge, a long licking across the surface of/ matter. . . And the body, the gravity from whence this whole thing/ rose—(*the body!* She thought, as if she had forgotten it)—the body itself/[...] / that air, dusty, in which the light, and the molecules of watching, and/ the motes of/ listening, are changes rung, rung, but upon what—adamant—quick—upon/ what? » (131-132).

19. From "Manifest Destiny"

[...]

The museum hums round me.

Something else,

something niggardly letting the walls stay up for now, hums,
something speechless and dense and stationary letting

matter coalesce
in obstinate illustration—hums.

Hear the theories come to cloak it—buzz.
Hear the deafness all over the trees, green.

Hear his scream go into the light.
See how the light is untouched
by the scream that
enters it.
Dust motes.
Peachblossom-fall.

Where shall the scream stick?
What shall it dent?
Won't the deafness be cracked?
Won't the molecules be loosened?

Are you listening? We need the scream to leave its mark
on the silky down of
the petalled
light—