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

of the traffic

if you are the clan

of the hubcap

clan

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)*


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),”
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 again
th rctr
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, undestinied—

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—