

## EMBARK

embark/im-'bark/ *vb* [MF *embarquer*, Fr. OProv *embarcar*, Fr. *em-* (Fr. L *im-*) + *barca* bark] *vt* 1: to cause to go on board a boat or airplane. 2: to engage, enlist, or invest in an enterprise.  
1: to go on board a boat or airplane for transportation. 2: to make a start: COMMENCE <~ed on a new career>

Begun.

Perhaps not the best of beginnings.

Still. Having begun impossible not to.

A solid lump of substance will just sit there harmlessly  
(say, a lemon or a melon), but:

*beyond the critical point, the system suddenly  
attains the capacity for self-reference, & thereby  
dooms itself to incompleteness*

A pretty thot.

Without the threat of a dog barking at one's heels  
or a gun to the head.

*A critical point is inherent which triggers an explosion*

How water knows to freeze at 0° C & boil at 100° C  
or uranium becomes a bomb.

Not 'know' that kind of 'know' yet in a limited sense.

I HAVE NEVER HAD AN ORIGINAL IDEA IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.

Unable to step into that same fucking river twice (or once,  
even) without picking up something I say I 'know'.

Like, what we name a thing makes a difference.

Why a rose is not a palindrome or a quark or a river

(tho we can image a river of roses, a golden braid of river  
flowing deep within the rose).

Why this rose is not this rose.

Or cold water turns hot at the suggestion & raises a welt.

Tricks performed without mirrors & nothing up the sleeve.

Except. The head of this rose with enuf critical energy  
to explode any river back to its beginning.

No lemon, no melon.

## MOUNTAIN

- 1 First there is a mountain  
replete with crags.  
Ledges  
rammed tight  
the horns twisting  
to the dead centres  
of it.

There is no thought here  
but one imagines.

There is little else.  
Still, a vagrant fly  
sets the entire scene.  
Quaking.  
The animals make their ceramic plunge.  
Dust circles their footprints.

- 2 Then there is no mountain.  
A line remains but it is hardly the same.  
More like a building with elevators.  
Windows black beneath the eye of commerce.  
The animals have no recollection  
of having been animals.  
The rocks have no recollection.  
Even the line forgets.  
Even the line assumes its shape.  
The elevator plunges & the motion is ceramic.  
No comparison should be made.  
There is no sadness & no dust.

- 3 Then there is.  
Not like before but  
like before.  
It has a voice that speaks mountain  
but without the weight.  
Without the loneliness.  
It plunges forever &  
    there is no comparison.  
There is only that one word &  
everything it entails.

Mountain.  
Mountain.  
Mountain.

## SIGNATURES

The railway stitches a red tear  
    running the possible limit of what might be called.  
A country.  
Who cannot not follow it & remain  
Unidentified?  
Shoes that image themselves as feet in this dust  
Learn to go by going.  
This says nothing for the rest.  
How split a personality lost invisible beneath such lands-  
Cape?  
Merlin or any other quest.  
Gessed wrongly.  
Without the promise of a sword to wrestle from a stone  
Few venture from the tracks  
Or risk the riddle of monsters hunkered in sand.  
Searching for meaning where none was intended  
    also has meaning.  
As centuries old wheel ruts still signature the plain  
& rocks piled neatly one atop the other still scream.  
Direction.  
Railroaded east to west & west to east  
Raises little question.  
Outside this narrow frame. The prints of a stranger.  
Gessed.

## RANDOM CAGES

There is a fracture I am pulled inside out of.  
A hairline travelling one end to an other.

More noticeable in the dark since it makes a sound.  
One hears only at the point of not listening.

Imaginary Landscape #4 structures music in random cages.  
24 performers twiddling 24 knobs on 12 radios: volume & station.

The border between self & the rest impossible to dissolve.  
2 lizards locked straining in opposite directions is also music.

Between me & the door the haunted breathing of furniture.  
Outside a stranger sloshes moonlight in a pail.

What hand or door records the knock that is not knocked?  
Who can say if the hand clenched & the hand open is the same?

If there was no god, it would create one.  
Balanced on the edge of this cracked surface without a net.

Rubbing acid into the palms of the hands is a leap in the dark.  
Or incautiously throwing open the door I thot I heard myself.  
Disappear.

## BEARDED EROS

for Louis Zukofsky

*The more you understand an age, the more convinced you become that the images a given poet used and which you thought his own were taken almost unchanged from another poet... poets are more concerned with arranging images than with creating them. Images are given to poets; the ability to remember them is far more important than the ability to create them.*

– Viktor Shklovsky

1 *advice*

Don't sweat it cats.  
Others swoon on  
    salty rhyme  
embrace love's prick  
bunt belying cant  
the dull smut  
never reaching bone  
you'll canter  
all it's worth  
    no forgetting  
    an old flame  
    like making  
    a new flame  
the same tired story

*bunt:*

*push & shove; middle  
bellying portion  
of a sail or fishnet;  
a parasitic fungus,  
species of smut  
which converts  
interior of grains  
of wheat  
into a black, fetid  
powder.*

*cant:*

*inclination or tipping;  
hypocritical or  
ostentatious religious  
talk; any technical or  
professional jargon;  
secret language of  
thieves, gypsies, beggars  
etc. Scot: bold, brisk,  
lively*

lit  
with a new match  
the net licked hot  
with fevered tongues:  
beggars, gypsies,  
thieves.

*Art is a way of  
experiencing  
the artfulness of an  
object; the object  
is not important.*

– Shklovsky

The ghosts you secrete are worms eager for fish.

*But defamiliarization is not only a technique  
of the erotic riddle – a technique of euphemism –  
it is also the basis and point of all riddles.*

– Shklovsky

Bull by the horn old cock!  
Give it & go on giving  
Catullus  
    who'll have it.

2 *response* (a free translation from a poem by Catullus)

Catullian: *A satisfactory style is precisely that style  
which delivers the greatest am't of that in  
the fewest words.*

Aristotle: *Poetic language must appear strange &  
wonderful.*



*By 'works of art,' in the narrow sense, we mean works created by special techniques designed to make the works as obviously artistic as possible.*

– Shklovsky

*Malest, Cornifici, tuo Catullo,  
Malice – Cornificius – your Cats'  
malest, me hercule, et ei laboriose,  
malicious for some stud's labours.  
et magis magis in dies et horas  
Make it, make it any day now some hour?  
quem tu, quod minimum facillimumquest,  
Get off! What an easy quest.  
qua solatus es allocutione?  
Consolation for lack of allocation?  
irascor tibi. sic meos amores?  
Air I score baby! Make me sick or amorous?  
paulum quid lubet allocutionis  
Poor this lame love is, all cute ones  
maestius lacrimis Simonideis.  
mist as tears miss my poor Lesbia.*