

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

My Good Work

by

Jonathon C. Wilcke

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ABSTRACT

In a combined critical essay and poetry manuscript, this thesis examines naming and the body. My Good Work poetically investigates the rhetoric that defines and technologizes the North American Body. I attempt to rename the body by rereading specialized discourses over the body and troubling their authority by using a disjunctive poetic framework to torque discursive language away from its discursive context. Using medical discourse as a rubric for my discussion, I describe in the essay the theoretical opinions and ideas that inform my poetry and give a detailed description of my compositional decisions. My Good Work attempts a lexical disruption vis-à-vis a disjuncture of syntax and meaning that allows the materiality of form to overtake symbolic meaning and reveal the operation of language in generating body signifiers.

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The following poems owe lines to the following writers: “debut” to Bruce Andrews, “heads of senate” to Jeanette Winterson, “*boeuf*” to Jeff Derksen, “jackbooty” to bpNichol, Ian Samuels, and Darren Mathies, and “jaw” to Caroline Bergvall.

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Why is the Work Good?

I am interested in the naming of the body and how Westerners,¹ through the discourses of medicine, sexuality, and advertising, among other discourses, come to know the body through dividing finger from hand, blood from vein, surface from interior, mind from body. In My Good Work I examine naming and the body, and language's ability to construct the body according to the needs of naming's various sites of production. Although I am interested in the specific influences of specific discourses on the body—medicine, for example—My Good Work examines how language generates names for the body rather than making a specific study of names generated by one particular discourse. I am primarily concerned with how naming functions on the level of language and how discourse manipulates language to produce names. The naming function of language does not necessarily change from discourse to discourse. The problem I wish to examine is the effect of discursive systems and their effect on Westerners' relationships to the body. I argue that language provides access to the body; to argue that it is possible to examine the physical body separate from language about the body suggests that the body is pre-linguistic, but it is impossible to theorize this state without using language. I believe Saussure when he says, "There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (Saussure 722). As I began to write this project, I proposed to rename the body and perhaps relocate the body in a pre-linguistic originary moment. My only means of doing so would be through language, and then only through using language to enact an originary moment. So how

¹ By "Westerners," I mean people living in North America in both Canada and the United States. I have chosen to limit my poetic investigation of body naming in the English language.

could I possibly re-write naming? Perhaps through the sound poem? But even then I would need language to talk about sound. Language about the body is the only means of understanding the body physically or socially, and thus there is no “body in itself” apart from the textual body; to know my body I have to use language to describe the body and to distinguish it from the bodies of other people.

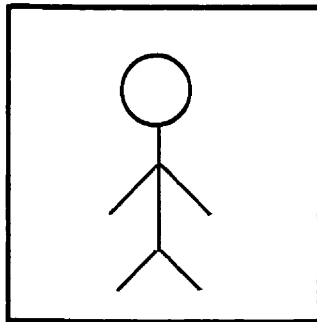
Frederic Jameson discusses the necessity of language in terms of textualizing the “Real” in productions of history:

We would therefore propose the following revised formulation: that history is *not* a text, not a narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious. (Jameson 35)

To know the body is to approach the Real through its “prior textualization.” The prior texts or pre-texts that I examine in My Good Work include fashion, advertising, medicine, and sexuality, though in the course of writing the project, many other names from other discourses entered and conflated the text. For this essay, I will discuss naming through medical discourse specifically. Medicine is a text with which Westerners engage to “understand” the body, though access to medical language, as I will discuss further, is a technology available primarily to the medical professional. Medical language names the body using a specialized discourse that codifies the body as “medical.” Diagnostic language does not respond to the physical body it diagnoses as much as it responds to other medical names within the language of the medical system. To draw an analogy, a

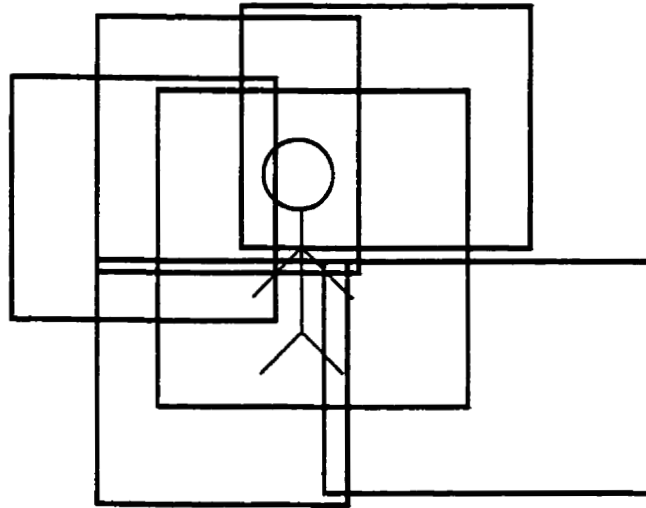
computer repair technician would not use a shoelace to replace a connecting wire inside a computer. S/he must use components that comply with the computer system's schematics or else the computer will not function. A doctor diagnoses the body using a framework of medical language. Naming the body as medical not only furthers diagnosis but maintains the discursive system; the influence of medical discourse, in textualizing the body causes the body to become a passive nexus of social interaction.

I've chosen to call sites of language production "para-sites" to signify how I am thinking about naming and the body. I think of discourse about the body as a frame of language that metaphorically surrounds the body. Each frame of language is also a site of language production that I will represent as a geometric frame around a figure that represents the body:

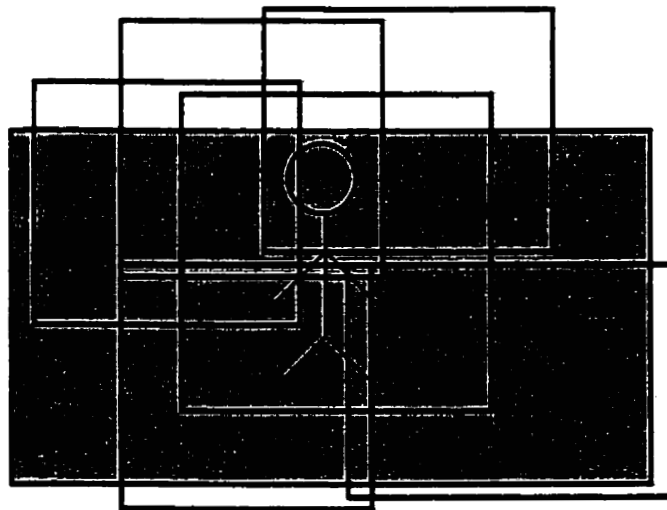


Medical discourse frames the body by producing medical names for the body and its processes. Medical discourse is a specific site of production that generates signs for the body coded as scientific and authoritative. A term such as "myofascial," for example, is the formal, medical equivalent for the everyday "muscle tissue."

Each structure of naming intersects other discourses, meaning that the body is under the influence of several possible sites of naming at any one moment:



Since these sites overlap and enjamb I refer to them as "para," meaning "beside" or "alongside of." My Good Work collects and situates discourses as language within a poetic framework, focusing on discursive pre-texts themselves rather than directing names toward the body. The grey box below represents poetic language as it operates in My Good Work. Poetic language encapsulates several frames of discourse without capturing whole discourses, instead re-possessing several fragments of discursive language and collecting them in one frame:



In any given moment, and even within the space of a metaphor, the body can occupy several sites of discourse or para-sites. My Good Work suspends discursive constellations of meaning in a poetic site. The goal is to reveal the idiosyncrasies of the sites of language production and to manipulate them poetically, but not to transcend them since transcendence would involve my creating an unbiased body language that purports to access the body without agenda. My desire to remain within discourses of naming is to reveal them and criticize how they operate by allowing poetic play to interfere with naming; writing from within the same discursive spaces I'm working against puts pressure on the discourse and reveals its motives. For example, the section of My Good Work I've called "jaw" combines phrases representative of several discourses within the space of one prose-block:

Discovered the clit yesterday

I'm having endless boybands over for dinner watch that fanny juices talk to me live wanna drip splatter dolled up 38c from pink eyes bmn hard easy the public hair shaved or me that wants it tune chest trade something itch.

Cheap flights wings of sphenoid meet Melena on sagittal plane the workforce presents a rectory giggle poke lower abacus oh shit I met a Dr.

and all he wants to do is play nurse (71)

This piece is representative of the play that occurs throughout My Good Work. The text is a compilation of phrases that I've taken from several discourses. For example, "discovered the clit yesterday" refers to the Renaissance anatomist Renaldus Columbus' self-proclaimed discovery of the clitoris. "Like Adam, he claimed the privilege of naming what he had been the first to see . . . [he] announced with much fanfare in 1559 that he

had discovered the clitoris" (Laqueur 91). Following Columbus' "discovery," Freud rediscovered the clitoris, "or in any case, the clitoral orgasm, by inventing its vaginal counterpart [the vaginal orgasm]" (91). This reference parodies the male presumption of territorial authority over the female body in both Columbus' and Freud's work. Apart from this context, however, the phrase emphasizes the irony inherent in the language of discovery that Freud and Columbus use. It is not the physical clitoris that Freud and Columbus discover but rather a language about female sexuality arising out of male dominated medical authority.

As another example, "*Cheap flights wings of sphenoid meet Melena on sagittal plane*" parodies medical terminology with misunderstanding. The terms "wings of sphenoid" and "Melena on the sagittal plane" refer to two specific bone structures on the skull. I've removed these terms from their medical context and situated them as travel advice (cheap flights), the name of a fictional airline (Wings of Sphenoid) and itinerary (meet Melena on sagittal plane). Here I've manipulated both business discourse, which I recognize through the language of itinerary and travel as it appears in the phrase, and medical names.

I see a poetic precedent for My Good Work in Jeff Derksen's poetics. According to Michael Barnholden and Andrew Klobucar, Derksen poetically re-organizes phrases representative of "everyday language" so that the ideology that creates discourse surfaces:

[Derksen] describes his use of language as an explicit act of aggression, a "refusal to adopt broken tropes of representation, social facts torn from their back drops and placed in uneasy irony next to other contradictory discourse, floating quotations, a refusal to cite sources, a disregard for

literary qualities,” and most of all, “a refusal to try and find an outside to ideology.” Positioned as such, ideology effectively resurfaces from its popular encasings within a cultural discourse of value. Stripped of their pretensions to a universal sense of the communal good, of all access through language to civic or cultural virtue, seemingly benign references to the everyday are reconfigured . . . as explicit ideological components.

(Klobucar and Barnholden 38-39)

Derksen's Down Time, for example, is concerned with class representations, political and capital structures, and the function of ideology in constructing the self as a component of social institutions. Within the poetic space, Derksen places various discourses side by side synchronically, opening discourse via a synchronic cross-section of discourse as it manifests itself through everyday language. The poem “Blind Trust” from Down Time operates by overlapping sites of discursive production. Derksen uses the sentence as both his basic unit of composition and as a container for discursive language. Derksen's sentences contain fragments of various discourses devoid of the support of their ideological framework. The irony resulting from Derksen's compressions of multiple discourses into one poetic space reveals the agenda of discourse:

In the past, there has been much wasted effort, money, and time expended by well-meaning teachers. Affords pleasure. Gruel. Predecessors do not wish mistakes, unusual combinations. Enters into another system as an accident, a service to point to the periphery. Uniform grey. So that a simple gesture or the smallest utterance turns attention to out-of-town

plates. Flake, diptych. Bumpers show the evolution of “a toast” to your car. The shoes we are wearing are too tight. (Down Time 29)

In these lines, Derksen’s clipped, disjunctive phraseology both isolates each sentence as a product of specific discourse and demonstrates the “intriguing set of inter-relationships between the political, the social, and the psychological” (Klobucar and Bamholden 39). The first sentence comes, perhaps, from a context of conservative government justifying education tax cuts. The ambiguity of “Affords pleasure” suggests redirection of tax money, surplus, or the desire to spend money on the un-necessary (pleasure). Pleasure itself is an ambiguous term that could refer to “amoral” pleasure, and thus decadence, but also to a psychological need. “Gruel” is the food of the poor or the criminal. Gesturing towards “out-of-town plates” might indicate a tourist presence, a migrant worker, or a national bias.

Each sentence contains a language generated from a particular discursive site—government, sexuality, morality, and labour, among others. To apply my idea of the para-site to Derksen’s work, each sentence in the example above frames a discursive site. Derksen collects several sites within the prose-block; despite the paratactic disjunction between each sentence/site, each sentence/site cannot help but overlap and conflate the sites around it due to its situation amongst other sites within the prose-block. Within the para-sitical overlap, a poetic re-naming of discourse occurs due to the way terms such as Derksen’s “gruel” and my “wings of sphenoid” act as references to larger discursive frames. In their referential function in the poetry, the words become recoded but open to referential play. Their meanings depend on the reader’s interaction with the text to give meaning to words such as gruel and to re-situate them in their original discourses. In their

referential function, “gruel” and “wings of sphenoid” take on new meanings that arise from the reader’s interaction with the text. The reader must make meaning by actively considering the operation of these words in the context of the poetry and creating a referential context for them; in reading Derksen’s poem, I think of the term “gruel” in the context of economy provided by lines such as “Affords pleasure,” “there has been much wasted effort, money, and time expended by well-meaning teachers,” and “uniform grey.”

In composing the poem “Discovered the clit yesterday, ” I allowed the phrase “wings of sphenoid” to escape its medical context by playing with possible references to the word “wings.” In the poem, I use the referential possibilities of the word to refer to an airline, but the word could also refer to a bird’s or an insect’s wings. Through a play on reference, I’ve re-located and re-named the medical term as a reference to travel. The play that removes “wings of sphenoid” from its medical context also draws attention to the opaque nature of the medical term for the reader unfamiliar with medical terminology. To understand the medical reference, the non-medical reader would have to consult a medical dictionary, whereas the medically informed reader may not see the pun on wings immediately, instead focusing on the meaning of the medical term. The poetic renaming that occurs in My Good Work does not occur in the text *per se* but in the reading made possible by the re-reading of discourse enacted in the text.

As a further example from my writing of my notion of the para-site, “My” “Good” “Work” began through an act of naming by giving the project its title, which inherently contains several acts of naming. The title exists within several synchronic frames of naming. Site 1: as a title, the phrase defines this particular text as opposed to,

for example, Steve McCafferey's Panopticon or Caroline Bergvall's Éclat. Site 2: The phrase "my good work" enacts naming in its semantic make-up, in turn influencing the reader's expectations of the text. Site 3: literary theory discourses code the text as a poem because of its poetic manipulation of language. By contrast, grammatical prose combined with a logical tone and argumentative progression identify the discursive essay. I've chosen the word "Good" to ironically situate the act of naming as "natural" to language. Through repetitive use and daily familiarity, names and naming become habitual and valued as "natural" and therefore good. "My" signifies a perceived relationship between language and user as individual or unique, a point of view that ignores language as a social structure and promotes a capitalist rhetoric of individual difference through purchasing power. "My" also signifies a possession of and investment in language; it is an I of the local self rather than the distant other. "Work" signifies the exercise of composing a line of poetry, or editing a paper. Finally, language does "Work" to us even as we create and recreate it, resulting in a parasitic symbiosis between language and language producer. Jeff Derksen demonstrates the vexing problem in this relationship in his poem "Interface:" "The structure I hate also hates me, but it makes me, and that's where the problem starts" (Dwell 2). Language "makes" its user by objectively constructing he/r as an extension of language.

Jean-Paul Sartre points out that when language generates names for the body, the body becomes a social structure oriented toward the external. "The discovery of my body or touching it is revelatory of its being, but its *being for others*" (Sartre 403). The relationship of me to my body, or rather, my body to my being, is a relationship of objects enacted through naming and reason. For Sartre, the body is a "this among thises:"

So far as the physicians have had any experience with my body, it was with my body *in the midst of the world* as it is for others. My body as it is *for me* does not appear to me in the midst of the world. I was apprehending a wholly constituted object as a *this* among other *thises*, and it was only by a reasoning process that I referred it back to being *mine*; it was much more my *property* than my being. (402)

Naming reinforces a mind/body dualism that, for Sartre, divides the whole into two disconnected parts since "Being for itself must be wholly body and wholly consciousness, it cannot be *united* with a body" (402). Naming fragments and externalizes the body making it other to being. In naming the body, language makes the body a linguistic object. When I talk about my arm, for example, I name the arm as the property of a *me* united physically and through property with the arm. If I say "My arm is cold" I both isolate the arm as an individual component part of the body and I distance the flesh from the mind responsible for signifying its body.² Medical naming compounds this alienation.

² It is important to note that objectification occurs both on a linguistic level as well as on a social level. On the linguistic level, all names objectify their subjects by codifying several characteristics into a noun. To answer the question, "What is a hand," one must define the hand by naming its characteristics: the hand is attached to the wrist, it has five fingers, and is composed of muscles, nerves, and bones. On a social level language users might regard types of language as "objectifying." In a paper on pornography and violence, Lynn Segal says that some feminists regard pornography, for example, as a text that objectifies and exploits women. "Pin-ups, pornography, advertising, text books, and religious beliefs and imagery—all, with spray gun and paint—were declared 'offensive to women'" (7). Objectification in the social sense, as I've called it, is context dependent, whereas linguistic objectification occurs in all contexts as a function of language. Pornography has an inscribed social value that the feminists Segal discusses say is objectifying due to how it names women as sexual objects. Pornography suspends women's being in a noun such that for readers of pornography "woman" becomes synonymous with "sex." Linguistic objectification occurs in the operation of the noun as a particle of the sentence. On the level of grammar, the words "hand" and "car," for example, have no meaning except in their status as nouns.

In the patient/doctor relationship, the patient has to contend with two levels of objectification: one on the general level of language in the linguistic operation of naming, and one on the level of medical discourse, to which the patient does not have access.

William Monroe points out a potential problem in the patient/doctor relationship that arises as a result of the physician's textualizing the body through medical language:

For example, some doctors approach the first meeting with a patient assuming that three discrete "characters" are already fully extant: the physician, the patient, and the condition. Their job is only to identify the physical condition and to treat it as expeditiously as possible. . . . There is no need to *enact*, only to act—decisively, unilaterally. The province of action is thus a province of expertise; as such, action becomes a privilege exercised exclusively by the physician. (Monroe 33)

By naming the patient's symptoms rather than enacting a relationship between patient and doctor that addresses the patient, the physician acts upon language through the prescribed modes of action the medical discourse of diagnosis and treatment dictate. The language that manifests the body in the midst of the world also alienates the body. Medical language increases the alienation factor for the non-medical practitioner who does not have access to the sacred lexicon of Latin-based medical terms and carefully concretized ways of interpreting the body. The doctor names the disease instead of the patient, severing the patient from the body through medical access that the patient cannot him/herself enact. Medical authority is the property of those whose figuration of medical discourse fits into predetermined pre-textual ways of diagnosing and examining the body.

In her short story "The Cells, Tissues, Systems, and Cavities of the Body," Jeanette Winterson criticizes alienating medical language and medical authority over diagnostic discourse through combining medical nouns with erotic nouns. Winterson's subversion of medical names through play as the result of her mixing medical and erotic discourses is a successful strategic renaming of body language. She engages a strategy of re-naming the body by appropriating medical discourse and mixing medical naming with eroticized naming. Winterson forces erotic language to infiltrate the frame of medical language over the body and invade its discursive space. After her lover, Louise, dies, the narrator textualizes Louise's body towards preserving Louise's memory. The text that the narrator has of Louise, however, is a painful reminder of Louise's death and physical absence. The narrator trades a lover's erotic discourse for medical language to lessen the effect of death.

If I could not put Louise out of my mind I would drown myself in her. Within the clinical language, through the dispassionate view of the sucking, sweating, greedy defecating self. I found a love-poem to Louise. I would go on knowing her, more intimately than the skin, hair and voice that I craved. I would have her plasma, her spleen, her synovial fluid. I would recognize her even when her body had long since fallen away.
(Winterson 126)

Winterson trades a discourse of surface erotics for the internal objective coldness that medical language offers. She replaces the physical body with a medical text. Thus naming the shoulder "scapula" brings the focus of eroticism from the outside of the body, through looking and touching, to an internal body that is supposedly not accessible to the

narrator because she is not a physician and would not usually use medical discourse to relate to her lover's body. Winterson's mix of medical language with erotic language, however, results in a conflation of the erotic from the surface to the internal. Medical language becomes erotic:

I cannot think of the double curve lithe and flowing with movement as a bony ridge. I think of it as the musical instrument that bears the same root. Clavis. Key. Clavichord. The first stringed instrument with a keyboard. Your clavicle is both keyboard and key. If I push my fingers into the recesses behind the bone I find you like a soft-shell crab. (Winterson 132)

The discourses blend and parasitically feed on each other; the erotic tension surfaces in the transition between skin and bone, a transition that mimics an erotic transition between clothing and nudity.³ The play between languages demonstrates the alienation that even intimate, erotic language places between the body naming the body. Such play questions medical authority over the body. Medical terminology foregrounds the object-nature of medical language at the same time as erotic discourse subsumes and eroticizes medical terminology. The narrator has no first-hand experience of Louise's spleen and must turn to the medical text to gain understanding of this organ. Louise's spleen is not unique to

³ In the essay "Between Clothing and Nudity," Mario Perniola claims "In the figurative arts, eroticism appears as a relationship between clothing and nudity. Therefore, it is conditional on the possibility of movement—transit—from one state to the other. If either of these poles takes on a primary or essential significance to the exclusion of the other, then the possibility for this transit is sacrificed, and with it the conditions for eroticism" (237). For Winterson, medical language enables the transit from one discourse to the other; medical language opens the body and romanticizes the inside. At the same time medical language *deromanticizes* the outside by "objectively" focusing on the inside. Winterson's narrator tries to ease her grief by eroticising that which usually remains invisible below the erotic surface when the body is healthy.

Louise but simply the spleen that medicine assumes every body contains; the spleen is not a component of the physical body, there is only a defining spleen text. The objective yet unspecific spleen text becomes a template for a doctor's understanding the spleens of a variety of bodies. Medicine names the body as medical by writing its lexicon onto the physical body. Medical naming becomes the interface between the physician and the patient's body, concealing the physical body in text. The disjuncture between the physical body and the medical text resembles a linguistic parataxis. In linguistics, parataxis is a range of clauses not connected by a conjunction, as in "he laughed; she cried." But it also refers to a mode of disjunctive experience. Medical naming creates an alienating experience of the body; body signifiers consume their signs resulting in a body/sign parataxis.

In her essay "Embodied Texts, Weightless Information," N. Katherine Hayles discusses the paratactic split between constructions of the body and information in Western culture:

On the one hand, we all experience ourselves as embodied creatures, living in specific times and places and limited by the biological, cultural, and historical inheritances that define us. On the other, contemporary technology, especially informatics, has given us a sense that we can transcend these limitations and live a disembodied, free-floating existence made possible by the near-instantaneous transfer of information from one point on the globe to any other. (Hayles 394)

Hayles refers to the technology of internet and email, as well as virtual reality and internet avatars, described in Shift magazine as "simplistic cartoon faces or figures" used

in online multi-user domains that represent their users in visual (as opposed to text-based) chat rooms (Shift 34). Through technology, the user transcends the body, both escaping the flesh by becoming information while avoiding “the hazards of embodiment,” as well as negatively usurping health and direct sensory experience (Hayles 395). Embodiment and information are paratactic poles that threaten each other’s stability. Parataxis, however, “does not necessarily mean that there is no relation between the terms put into juxtaposition. Rather the relation, unspecified except for proximity, is polysemous and unstable” (398). Human beings require a body to engage the technology that offers the opportunity for disembodiment. At some point after or during the technological engagement, we must eat, use the bathroom, bathe, go to work, change the baby. These necessities force the computer user’s attention to the body.

Hayles discusses an instance of body/language parataxis that revolves around a technological relationship where the terms of the paratactic split are relatively clear and in the open. Using technology to represent the body in cyberspace presents those who engage with technology the opportunity to be in control of information and enter “a subject position, which is to say, a position of agency and power” (Hayles 415). The subjective power, however, only manifests itself through the technology that the user engages to manufacture the body as information. A computer user only has so much power insofar as s/he can operate, say, a Toshiba laptop running Microsoft Windows 98 using Netscape web browser software. The user has to interface through the product of a capitalist structure, not to mention the electronic infrastructure composed of telephone, Ethernet, or cable connections, and servers. The user can construct the body as information only in ways that he/r technology allows. S/he must operate within a limited

framework of language over the body as information. But even so, the objects of technology are tangible and present. The user's body must come into contact with the computer before the body enters cyberspace, forcing the user to rely on he/r physical body in order to transcend the physical for the digital.

Compared to technological naming of the body, which, according to Hayles, offers the user a chance to construct he/r own subjectivity, medical naming is not readily available for general use, instead remaining the domain of the doctor. Certainly I might use the term "myofascial" to describe the type of muscle injury I contracted from playing the saxophone for 10 years with improper hand position. But it is the doctor who can write a legal note explaining why I can't operate the computer at my job as a hotel front desk clerk or finish the paper that's due next week. My family doctor wrote the following text for me to use in situations requiring official doctor's notes:

This patient used to play the saxophone for the last eleven years. About five years ago he noticed stiffness in the hands occurring mainly when playing musical instruments. . . . At this time it is more pronounced that even typing and minimal pressure in fingers causes moderate to severe discomfort. . . .

Jonathon has been seen by many doctors in Canada and the U.S.A. and has received muscle relaxants, anti-inflammatories, physiotherapy, and acupuncture without any help. He has been diagnosed with myofascial pain syndrome by Dr. N.J. Witt (Neurologist) of Edmonton. Previously he was also thought to have repetitive strain syndrome. Dr. P.M. Burton (Neurologist) suggested that maybe the thoracic outlet may be

compromised of possible compression of the brachial plexus. (Dr. Victor Martinez 1995)

As a patient, I have no authority to contradict the doctoral opinion since I do not have the power to create a linguistic figuration of medical language over my body. I am not a doctor. Nor do I experience my body in the way the doctor describes. His naming discusses my body as if it is the third-person, for example, when he refers to me as "This patient." Descriptions such as "moderate to severe discomfort" do not adequately describe the pain I felt when trying to perform simple tasks, like buttoning my shirt, with futility. This reference to my pain was an inadequate description of the monumental physical event that forced me to change my career. The Doctor's remark "maybe the thoracic outlet may be compromised of possible compression of the brachial plexus" draws a topography of names on my body with which I am unfamiliar. The diagnosis is *about* my body, but the doctor does not name my body as my property but rather as the property of a language with which I am unfamiliar. The physician's authorial naming over my body signifies somber Latinate terminology that organizes my body via an encoding process I cannot control. I am not sick unless the doctor names me sick. Medical discourse adds a layer of text to the text that is the body.

The body enters a nexus of information coded as authorial and correct in the site of medical language. The body becomes a chimera composed of what Hayles calls "factuality," or any remaining "natural" (pre-technology, perhaps pre-linguistic) characteristics of the body, and "artifactuality," the technology applied to and altering the body (Hayles 404-405). Since the only way to access the body is the technology of language with the result of body-objectification, the physical body (signified) is

consumed by the textual (signifier). Medicine, like other discourses, names the body through metaphors and narratives, "the social performances that interpret illness [or health and physical structure] and figure it forth" (Monroe 29). "The body is intuitively and demonstrably central to all aspects of medical research, education, and practice. Nevertheless, even the body, as experienced, is a cultural artifact" (29). Specifically, the body becomes a medical artifact, alienated by the medical sign, devoid of diagnostic power and subject to medical narratives. The body then becomes medical language, a product of medical semiosis based on artifactuality. "In a semiotics based on artifactuality, it is not the physical creature that is important, but the artifactual codes it is made to transcribe and embody" (Hayles 406). The body incurs textual marks that code the body according to the medical site of production's needs. Medical names become the interface between the doctor and the patient's body, which becomes an alienated third-person in a doctor/patient/condition triangle that Monroe discusses. In effect, the patient must leave he/r subjectivity outside the examining room while the doctor acts upon the diseased body.

The poetic re-naming in My Good Work occurs through re-situating discourse in a poetic framework. I want to enact through disjuncture in My Good Work's language the alienation between the body and body signifiers. The disjuncture of phrases and meanings enacts for the reader the paratactic disjuncture between language and the body within the poetic frame. Just as the body becomes a medical artifact under the influence of medical discourse, I want language itself to become artifactual and alien to the reader. Rather than allowing language to act as a vehicle for meaning, I want the reader to enact a performance of interpretation that eventually runs aground and becomes fruitless when

language's contextual meaning is lost in the mix of discourses My Good Work presents. A paratactic split between the reader and language occurs, for example, in the opening lines of "heads of senate:"

You are an alphabet city. A site. B sight. I look at the face of
language looks to index my eye. C feet, rows of shoes. U at the
thresh held you despite absence. (38)

The operating "I" voice in these phrases attempts work on the addressed "you" by constructing a body within the text by labeling its parts via the alphabet. At the same time, the language makes some definitive, albeit coded, assertions about naming and the body: "A site:" the body is a site of language, a passive nexus of social interaction; "B sight:" linguistic constructions of the body affect how people interpret their and others' bodies; "C feet, rows of shoes:" the poem divides the body into parts and recognizes that the body participates in capitalist productions of naming with the reference to shoes; "U at the threshold despite absence:" language constructs the body such that, referring again to my earlier discussion of the patient/doctor relationship, a patient must abandon he/r subjectivity to medical discourse during the process of diagnosis.

As an example of how medical discourse constructs body signifiers, medical discourse historically has been used to create the homosexual body, pathologizing it and stereotyping its appearance and behavior through the psychiatrists' need to catalogue and treat homosexual behavior and sexuality as deviant. Interestingly, before medical discourse names homosexuality as a disease and then a trait of being or personality, homosexuality exists only as an act. As

Thomas S. Szasz points out, homosexuality became the property of medical language in the 20th century. Medical language codes homosexuality as a disease:

Homosexual behavior—like heterosexual and autoerotic behavior—occurs among higher apes and among human beings living in a wide variety of cultural conditions. Judging by artistic, historical, and literary records, it also occurred in past ages and societies. Today it is part of the dogma of American psychiatrically enlightened opinion that homosexuality is an illness—a form of mental illness. This is a relatively recent view. In the past, men held quite different views on homosexuality, from accepting it as a perfectly natural activity to prohibiting it as the most heinous of crimes. (Szasz 102)

Note that he begins by talking about “homosexual behavior” rather than homosexuality, a definitive term that Ian Young locates in a specific text:

In the beginning was the Word—or so they say. If to name a thing is to create it, the modern creation of the homosexual must have taken place sometime in 1867, by means of an anonymous pamphlet published by one Karl Benkert, alias Karoly Maria Kertbeny, a Swiss physician or an Austro-Hungarian activist, or both. Two years later, the word ‘homosexual’ appeared in English for the first time. . . . We—or rather the homosexuals we used to be—have something to do with changes brought about by the printed word (that influential pamphlet!) and by the ideology of science (Young 10-11)

To name a thing is to create it, but also to "nounify" an active state of being. Problematically, medical naming gives being to the homosexual, but also codifies and concretely defines the homosexual and he/r appearance and behavior. Homosexuality as an act, in a linguistic sense, is a verb, active and elusive, but without being and identity. For Young, the ideology of science enters human sexuality and codifies it according to quantitative measure of its behaviors. When "normal" heterosexuality behaves outside the limits of its signifier and performs homosexual acts, medical naming's need to codify names homosexual acts as a disease. Ironically, this act of naming gives homosexuality being. Homosexual being, however, results from a declaration homosexuality as "untrue" or mythological, as Young discusses:

I have suggested that there is a myth involved with the idea of the homosexual, or rather, that the homosexual is involved in a myth. The word "myth" is popularly taken . . . to mean an untruth. But it would be more accurate to say that myth is a psychological reality that we may experience, or experiment with, to determine what meaning and values it has for us. The myth of the homosexual is one of the myths of the religion of Science, and so tends to fulfill scientific laws and illustrate scientific lessons. If not the creation of science, the homosexual is—was—at least its adopted child. Science named him, and has been afraid of him ever since. (Young 11)

Homosexuality emerges with the printed word and the codifying force of scientific opinion and discursive modes that even the enlightened Szasz cannot escape in his

examination of "natural" behaviors in apes.⁴ Medical authority names the homosexual "sick" and tries to control the "disease" socially through its power of naming and containing the act. Young refers to this naming as the "religion of science" due to medical discourse's status as authoritative and correct. Medical discourse is also able to regulate moral behavior to a certain degree on the pretense of health. If homosexuality is a "disease," meaning that something is wrong with the body, medical discourse codes homosexuality as something wrong. Szasz points out that in the United States, (and even more so in Canada), medicine is under state control. The separation of church and state opened to the combination of state and medicine, combining "medical ideas and practices with political power" (Szasz 118). And, as Szasz points out, since the homosexual neither feels nor considers he/rself ill, s/he has no reason to seek the psychiatrist's help. "If, then, a psychiatrist is to have a patient of this kind, or a priest a parishioner, each must have the power to impose his "care" upon an unwilling subject" (117). This phenomenon leads to a troubling legal rhetoric over the homosexual as well as othered individuals. The law does not prohibit being, but it does prescribe codes of right and wrong behaviors to control acts and doing. Medical discourse does not oppress the homosexual necessarily because of he/r sexuality or being, but rather the enactment of the sexuality, the doing. The law, in conjunction with medicine, overlooks the person (and patient) in favour of the language inscribed on the body. The shift between naming the homosexual as an act to that of a being is an instance of shifting significance from verb to noun, from activity and plausibly without a concrete name, to a passive inscription of being. Inscribed in the

⁴ See earlier quote from Szasz's "The Product Conversion—From Heresy to Illness." (102)

noun, the homosexual becomes an object of medical discourse, which tries to define and treat the state of being.

Kenneth J. Gergen identifies the active-to-concrete language shift as characteristic of what he calls the “vocabulary of deficit” that names disabled people according to their disability. The vocabulary of deficit labels contingent behavioral patterns of physicalities that differ from a perceived norm, therefore limiting a person’s linguistic self to a recognition of he/r lack. A visually-impaired person is first and foremost nounified as blind, masking the verb-al aspects of the self: the person plays the piano, is a parent, or likes to swim. Similarly, the doctor names he/r patient through the patient’s disease and treats the body without regard to the subjectivity of the patient, repressing subjectivity. Medical naming thus is a tool for repressing subjectivity in favour of maintaining the scientific system of diagnosis that regards all bodies as the same.

In The History of Sexuality, Foucault examines language as the tool for sexual repression. Ironically, talking about sex has the effect of repressing sexuality rather than bringing it to an enlightening forefront. Foucault discusses the 17th century as the frontier between a proliferation of discourses emerging and silencing sex and an open familiarity with sex. According to Foucault,

At the beginning of the seventeenth century a certain frankness was still common, it would seem. Sexual practices had little need of secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit. . . . It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will, and knowing

children hung about the laughter of adults: it was a period when bodies
 “made a display of themselves.” (Foucault 3)

In his definitive style, Foucault jumps into his argument without explaining exactly how language operates before the 17th century. Before the 17th Century, discourse is not non-existent, but Foucault might suggest that discourse concerning sexuality does not dominate sexual behavior as it does in the 20th Century. Bodies “made a display of themselves” without language to articulate this display. For Foucault, sexuality shifts from an active verb to stagnant noun: “We have placed ourselves under the sign of sex, but in the form of a Logic of Sex, rather than a Physics” (78). In the 17th Century, Westerners begin to talk sex rather than have it by prescribing the sexual act to specific locations—the bedroom, for example—hidden from the children in a private sexual space (Foucault 3).

For Foucault, the beginning of capitalism initiates sexuality’s movement from verb to noun, and with this shift, the beginning of sexual repression.

By placing the advent of the age of repression in the seventeenth century, after hundreds of years of open spaces and free expression, one adjusts it to coincide with the development of capitalism: it becomes an integral part of the bourgeois order. The minor chronicle of sex and its trials is transposed into the ceremonious history of the modes of production; its trifling aspect fades from view. A principle of explanation emerges after the fact: if sex is so rigorously repressed, this is because it is incompatible with a general and intensive work imperative. (Foucault 5-6)

Early capitalism's repression of sexuality sought to control useless, wasteful, unproductive energies and desires in favour of pragmatic uses of the body in to gain capital for the bourgeois employer. In turn, a good day's work occupies the body and directs its sexual energies towards labor, keeping the body free of sexual sin. Physical labour, for Foucault, would also invite sexually repressive discourses to perpetually perform the work of naming on the body. To take power over sexuality is to entrap sex at the level of the language and put sex into discourse, (11) making sex the jurisdiction of official discourses. With the production of discourse comes the production of power, such as medical language about sexuality that reduces it to a nounified, concrete biological function of the body rather than a verb-al manifestation of desire. Medical language nounifies women's bodies as well through the biological function of childbirth; the woman is thus definable through her biological function as a "baby container." Childbirth becomes pragmatically necessary for the family to continue family blood lines and replenish the stock of labourers. Medical discourse justifies sexual intercourse when it serves pragmatic needs. Sexual pleasure is secondary to the pragmatic concerns of early capitalism.

The license of repressive discursive power over sex manifests itself curiously. Sexual silence comes about when discourse censors sexual language, but also when discourses about sex multiply. The expurgation of certain languages about sex

screened out some words: there was [and is] a policing of statements. A control over enunciations as well: where and when it was not possible to talk about such things became strictly defined; in which circumstances,

among which speakers, and within which social relationships. (Foucault 13)

Sexual silences emerge between parents and children, teachers and students as a result of strict definitions and control over enunciations. In my experience as a high school student, for example, I was required to study a unit on "Sex Education." Creating an academic subject out of sexuality creates a discursive place to talk about sex. Sexual education classes knowingly or unknowingly attempt to prevent sexual activity by locating sex in the textbook rather than in the students' bodies, making the classroom a supposedly "safe" space to talk about sex due to the academic distance between subject and student. When sex becomes a topic of study rather than a function of the students' bodies, the alienating distance between the subject of sex and its physical reality maintains sexual silence. Within sexual silences, a paradoxical "steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex" grows at the level of discourse. These discourses not only include so-called "crude" languages that mock sex through, for example, sexual metaphor,⁵ but also

the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to

⁵ For example, "eating at the Y" for "cunnilingus." Both are terms that objectify the body linguistically, but the former metaphor codifies this sex act as a dirty joke through its cultural reference to the YMCA or YWCA in the letter "Y." The letter "Y" also objectively describes a woman with her legs apart, allowing a partner access to her genitals. "Eating" describes the contact of the mouth and tongue with the vulva. The metaphor disguises a pre-supposed seriousness contained in the more proper term "cunnilingus."

hear it spoken about, and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail. (Foucault 13)

Endless sex talk grafted to the word-object silences sex itself. Westerners engage the sex act through performing multiple definitions of what sex is that inform and limit sexual behavior to a pre-existing number of utterances about sex. The limitations of sex language facilitate the naming of deviance. When existing languages encounter behavior that its lexicon cannot account for, it names the unfamiliar behavior as a disease.

My Good Work addresses sexual silences and their work on the body predominantly in the section I've titled "jackbooty." In the following poem I attempt to enact sexual silence by offering a colloquial term for a sexual act followed by an apology before stating the more "proper" term:

. . . it hurts /here/comes the doctor. narrate my/balls sorry testicles sorry;
no i have never buttfucked sorry (i) had anal sex sorry/excuse me doctor
but you have nice breasts but i said *breast!!!!*/why don't you get some
poooon/i need need need need a vortex of pleasure in one/end and the
other lauds spillage. a woman sorry girl/sorry you can refer to me as boy
sorry it's on my card BOY/friend is a man is a man. do you have a
boyfriend no/i'm a man. the doctor told me i have *rubella scarlatina*/so i
smacked (him) in the have to have should. tell me please/about my balls
sorry there's a lump i find—i mean CYST sorry/would you just fuckin' tell
me some shit that i can use i mean/dung sorry. it hurts like hell especially
when you poke me like that. (91)

I see this poem as demonstrating a patient's voice engaged in a dialogue with a doctor in which the patient requests an exam using colloquial language that both refers to medical narration and uses a vulgar signifier ("narrate my balls") but must apologize and use the correct term ("testicles"). The patient voice must also substitute the word "cyst" for "lump" and "anal sex" for "buttfucked" in a struggle for the terminology appropriate to the medical context. In an ironized misunderstanding, the patient compliments the (male or female) doctor's breasts thinking that the word "breast" is correct and thus the proper way to offer a sexual compliment. The patient's voice is perpetually silenced by being forced to speak an unfamiliar language. Further, the voice refuses to openly admit its participation in anal intercourse when forced to apply the proper term "anal sex" to its body by attempting to drop the pronoun I, represented by a lower case "i" between parentheses. The patient must leave he/r familiar language to enter the unfamiliar medical language and become a passive product of that language.

Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons examines the role of language in the production of names. Stein organizes the textual body of Tender Buttons around nouns common to the language of the "everyday." Stein codes and sometimes conceals the "objects, food, and rooms" within the obscurity of her radical syntax situated within the accoutrements of a textual body that appears physically as "prose." A dense and fluctuating combination of puns, allusive references, and repetition of phrases, among other devices, foreground the moment of readerly perception and cause the reader to engage "writerly" attention toward Stein's language. In Tender Buttons, language becomes as much of an object as does, for example, the referents for the signs for roast beef or carafe. Stein's objects, however, are objects that exist mainly within the text; the reader must look at words,

phrases, and sentences rather than through them. Stein achieves this effect through generating a linguistic structure that problematizes a readerly organization of signs whose goal it is to make meaning. While remaining within language as the familiar domain of the object, Stein pushes out and away from conventional nominal objectivity. Stein's linguistic push expands language into a textual and physical body that manifests itself both on the page in the excursive lines of prose and in the consciousness of the reader.

In Tender Buttons, Stein uses a buildup of syntactical elements to overtake the dominant presence of the noun and bring focus to process and system. Stein uses nouns that represent objects, food, and rooms as indexical to a system of relations that supports acts of naming. I use the term index as both resonant with and contrary to the semiotic "index" that regards signs as bearing relation to the cause or effect that they signify. As Bob Perelman points out, "A reading looking exclusively for the semiotic will not be able to respond to most of what Stein is doing here" (135). What "Stein is doing here" is torquing the noun away from its focus as a subject or object within sentence grammar. She shifts syntactical focus from nouns to the tender buttons" of language, the grammatical particles responsible for unifying the sentence.

Stein's shift brings readerly attention to the little words that not only function noiselessly⁶ in normative reading practices that use language as a vehicle for meaning but forces the reader to ask what they mean. In interrogating the words "the" or "on," for example, the reader discovers that they do not mean as a noun means, but rather they act.

⁶ Little words, like "and, is, but, the, a" have little meaning in themselves except in their roles as syntactical glue. "The" does not itself have meaning, but its function is to indicate a specific noun or clause, as in "The cat in the hat." Such little words organize the relationship of nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech but sacrifice their materiality to the overall meaning of the sentence.

They are opaque in terms of meaning, and do not mean without a reader's description of their function. Stein's use of repetition forces the reader's attention to words that appear more than once because repetition causes a slippage of meaning; words lose their symbolic meaning and gain an opaque objectivity that possess no meaning but in their functionality. Stein's writing in Tender Buttons both identifies nouns as objects and distances itself from any conventional relationship to them (Perelman 136); word and thing split and the distance between referent as the thing in the world that the sign names becomes visible as a parataxis between the text and Jameson's Real. Perelman quotes the passage "CHICKEN" from Tender Buttons as an example for analysis:

CHICKEN.

Alas a dirty word, alas a dirty third, alas a dirty third, alas a dirty bird. (Stein 54)

The play on the relation of word and thing, half-hidden in the bird/word rhyme, mediated deftly by a third rhyming term, which is none other than the word "third" itself; the sound or number play set up by the doubled, mediating phrase ("alas a dirty third a dirty third") functioning like a two-way mirror between the word and the bird; with the whole refrain governed by a threnody for verbal sin ("Alas a dirty word"), or is it just grumbling over messy kitchen prep ("Alas a dirty bird")?—all this presupposes a conscious awareness of linguistic possibilities and philosophical implications that is foreign to the bodily immediacy and pre-articulation of the pure semiotic. (Perelman 135)

Perelman demonstrates the way in which Stein projects the relationship of the noun (chicken) to the sentence. She displaces the “immediacy of the pure semiotic” with a play that denies the semiotic relationship of language. Where I might associate chicken simply with eating or cooking, Stein frustrates this association with rhyme, illusion, and irresolution. In My Good Work I disrupt semiotic immediacy with play between related signifiers. Stein disrupts my expectations for chicken by changing the noun from a vehicle for meaning to an object in itself. No longer can I read chicken for meaning but I must read the language that I used to take for granted. I will offer an example of my writing to demonstrate how I use semiotic indeterminacy:

smell catalogues a breath, dick lengthens penis/gives it a job and alias.
hang-outs and entrances/get more words. the ass bus bum the butt of the
fun./pork on and after dinner. i threw up the bones of/code indigestible pig
latin. where there's a mouth/a mind confounds the brain and it really
gets/on my tits. a liver for dinner a lb. of kidney stone. (55)

Rather than simply associating the colloquial “dick” for the correct “penis,” dick appears here as an agent that “gives” the word penis an alias through the work of naming; the word dick is occupied in the act of metaphoric resignification. The meaning of the word “pork” shifts between the noun for pig meat and the vulgar verb for sexual intercourse; the semiotic shift strengthens the association between meat and sex that gives the expression its vulgarity. The word “bones” shifts meaning away from eating in an invocation of a clichéd reference to language as the “bones of code.” These bones are vomited because they are “indigestible” or unfamiliar as “pig latin,” which alludes to the

Latinate base of medical names; the bones return to a context of eating and vulgar sexual metaphor via the word “pig.”

Returning to Stein, the poem previous to the one Perelman examines contains a sentence that plays similarly to Perelman's description but with smaller particles. Stein writes, “Pheasant and chicken, chicken is a peculiar third” (Stein 54). The object “chicken” is linked grammatically to the verb “is” and the noun “pheasant” through the conjunction “and” and indefinite article “a.” The opacity of meaning forces the reader to pay attention to the words themselves and their syntactical arrangement. As Perelman proves, Stein not only demonstrates grammar but perception and the process of reading through a sophisticated system of grammatical relations. Unless the reader works with the text, the text yields no meaning; with work comes a body of linguistic consciousness.

Stein's use of titles in Tender Buttons engages the reader in a spatial alienation between nouns and their meanings. Except in some cases, the titles that begin the individual prose pieces in the book are nouns. Some titles represent processes, events, or places, such as “IN BETWEEN,” “A BROWN,” and “A LITTLE CALLED PAULINE” (Stein 24-25). The titles do not function as titles—as mechanisms of defining a subject or suggesting an important event, symbol, or concept in a body of text—because the bodies of prose text do not operate in conventional ways. The titles do not always signify what the prose bodies they introduce are “about.” What the reader is left with, then, is the title-object, named by its physical placement on the page and its relationship to the typography of the prose body. The title can no longer name the prose body it marks. Instead, it occupies the traditional residence of the title without its function. The title does indeed signify the beginning of a new paragraph, but only through the title's physical

placement above the paragraph. Stein's titles are meaning's cast-off skins that resist a conventional usefulness in favour of their physicality; they provide a punctum for the reading eye that indicates where a new site of syntactic activity might split away from the last. Each title, however, responds to and is the departure point for the language it opens. Though each titled piece is not necessarily the "subject" of the following text, the text does not refer to or revolve around a topic that the standard title-noun signifies. Rather than marking separate sections, Stein's titles indicate different sites of linguistic activity organized around destabilizing the status of the noun as the concrete focus of the sentence. As I have already pointed out, the title of my project enacts naming rather than simply functioning as a title, mobilizing the language of the title as an active component of my poetry just as Stein's repetition of the "tender buttons of language" mobilizes the noun as a part of speech rather than a symbol, bringing the focus to the verb-al activities of the smaller particles. Although the "little" words, with the exception of the verb to be, are not verbs, they also possess a significant movement. Whereas the verb indicates activity occurring on the symbolic level of language, the little words possess physical or syntactical movement in their objective status as parts of speech and their activity in creating names.

The language of the everyday is perhaps discourse's best ally for generating names. The saturation of the body with text seems natural because of its proliferation in everyday language. As I demonstrate in My Good Work, the language of the everyday is not innocent in its commonality but rather is the territory of several discourses of naming. I see this poetic text as a means of generating linguistic awareness through manipulating manipulative discourses to expose the naming of the body as the product of specific

discursive sites operating via historic and authorial precedents. My Good Work infiltrates and occupies discourse by poetically mimicking and confusing meaning and reference to draw attention to the construction of body signifiers.

In babies' mouths gum a thumb

it's what the head does that shapes a language when biting a man
 there's a sort of suture involved there's a man who's white running
 for the train a dead run and the train are those lungs real good I
 see done seeing a do a leg a stride ovation oratorio O. (68)

My Good Work

heads of senate

You are an alphabet city. A site. B sight. I look at the face of language looks to index my eye. C feet, rows of shoes. U at the thresh held you despite absence. When you are not around I see your feet in shoes and toes. See them now in ink, in edit. Still I wake in different pajamas than I went in. It's visceral, this thingness of mouths. In absence of lip, the mouth red or teeth, a porous tongue that transcends *p*. Pirates put holes in their ears and earrings helped them see better. There's not a facing page. These eyes bright scales. Shifting in a wrist covered with crash. Our bones point distinctly to a we, our tongues allow otherwise to enter, to hack at our liver, to cough and spit, to point to awe, ruling engagement.

**I left my coat on the chair and cycled to a
venting of uncovered cold blasts against the chin.
What if you can't say injury? Substitute perjury,
conflate pain into texts invading other veins; *in*
becomes verbal, a verbal noun, a beating and beat.
Rhetoric disguises throat with voice, the ossic buried
in bones of calcite codes. Returning to the parts:
invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery.**

Keep talking about teeth, I say.

But first a binding phrase to define and limit, institute a grooming, a phraseology to compound breath into this poem. You cough and the writing stops. Finish a narrative around the upper left canine. An itchy thigh denotes scratch, but who will make contact with the foul thing? Helpless but to find mechanical contact behind the sphere of relations. (Right now I'm smoking [extratextually] but you don't know that without the breathline and it's body all over again, isn't it) Take it—I don't have a femur.

Oh shit, get the broom, get that ash off the floor, get the essay that alludes to cigarettes!!

...Colloecting [sic]
automatic bodies inspire
handso-me movement [t]
from one-*nuh*
position to nex[t] the
hyper-muscular
itself its own text a
t once the center/*re*
and periphery of thing-
s, a
definitive grope *ta*
ward the particular-ss
urgery required [sic]
in the neck of thinks,
[sic] think alveoli, think
shriek, thinks
eeking the door mi
ght exit this col
umnar excursion *buh*
t/ween hear and eye
thinks to rub the ne
edles from thigh a
nd stand on 2 fee
t []

At it again? Bilabial labour in svelte mothproof iamb? When to [quit]?

“Whnto, when to one
 to one to one to
 to, when to one to
 one to one to,
 to one wto oton ton
 oto one ton one to onto,
 when,

<hehehe>

ti un de un de un
 deux, deux un, deux
 un, deux un la un
 numero deux, un,
 uhhhhhhnnn n n n
 n n n n

*Some nudity would not be unwelcome here. Ignore this bugbear stuff and tell
 me what you really means. The human body is all signed out to me to know
 my I*

slef

her boat
is a throat
of fire

on and on breathing
through the dispassionate
sucking, breathing, sweating, greedy, defecating overturned order
of spleen and intestine
the crude lever of hot and cold
not hot or cold, nor crude lever
nor crude lever but tremolo in teeth
tremolo in teeth waking to lip
waking to extension of mouth
mouth-nest, but

I'm not talking mouthabout bouche, kuchi, site of bilabial fricatives, interdental, cunnilingus and oratorio. Not you then but taught, this physical I not lyric, a we by shared nodes of bone . Say "T" and think arbre, recognize you in washroom door iconography but rather U sense skirt and pants. Not blood but the new world nor new world nor blood but bouche, kuchi-the body of a god umbrellas a man but not damask woman.

The evidence clears the appendix for books; Good.
Now the broom.

son bateau
 est une gorge
 en feu
 respiration en cours
 a travers le calme, sucer, transpiration,
 cupide ordre renverser
 de rate et intestin
 le lèvres de chaud et froid ne lèvres ni cru
 ne levier ni cru mais *tremolo* en dent, *tremolo*
 en dent se réveiller babine, bouche-chose, mais

*Je ne parle pas de mouth, kuchi, place de
 deux lèvres friction, entre-dent, linguiste ruse,
 et oratorio. Pas toi mais apprendre, le moi en physique au lieu de lyrique,
 nous partageons un os de code. Dit "je" et pense tree,
 c'est tu dans le toilette mais "U" en lieu de pantalon et jupe et l'opération de
 l'infinif*

*pas sang mais le monde nouveau
 le monde nouveau ni sang mais
 mouth, kuchi, le corps de dieu est le parapluie d'homme
 mais ne masque pas une femme. L'appendice et chercher a derrière
 du livre.*

Et bien. Maintenant, le balai.

Keep talking about boots, I say.

*< I am surrounded
by thin women of
all sizes. But I
prefer. Oh yes, I
prefer. If only I
could find the
matching red glove.
Comes to ease and
restless mind. Your*

But yes, to prefer. And the matching red glove, shut
franchise and virus, phonate this. They are not
empress upon the fat in roundness that precludes the
name How, the ward, whn to whn, sah, well, well
Digital doubling of necks on buttocks make 4 bearing
my ass on screen so make me youth. Nor frivolity in a
barfull of tense watch urine for blood and; sorekara
Nor frivolous, nor frip.

*body is. Braille eyes
shut see upon the fat
that precludes half
shirts and moon
shorts at all
impressed and
travelling higher
into intimate cracks
the name Howard.
Mise well, mise.
Digital doubling of
necks and buttocks
making 4 bearing my
ass on screen so make
me look. Lighting and
the pants of youth. Nor
your gap-tooth frivolity
in a barfull of tense
watch urine for blood
and the new world.>*

boeuf
(for Fred Wah)

I learned to masturbate from a green pepper. They're not sisters—look at their teeth! Morning breath 5 AM EST. Stirrup pants and hockey. Science discovers glucosamine. Two lefts make a freak.

Honey, A dupe called. The wealth of nations gains cultural capital in both lobes. You're not from these parts. These cufflinks say "I'm in business with myself." Ain't. It's more of a peach colo(u)r.

Insert tab A into slot B. English teeth. Removable ass fangled seat for sitting. Forgot my ass at home. Front stoop escalators. A pregnant pause. What's the weather *like*. New York nostril for sitting. Jean jacket from the suburbs. Tennis shoes don't date Oxfords. Martha your wrist is showing. Virtual beefsteak, sperm bank and perm.

Really stuck on you. Girl/boy/friend lodged in brain/please/send. Girl/boy/friend lodged in brain/please/send hemline, info on bra clasps, key to Wordsworth, surgeon, will trade information for map to G-spot and ejaculation. *Come on by.*

Have wrist trouble—need new wrist, send help. Don't forget
ouch. Running around with so much typing to do, I'll just
drop by. Died yesterday, dead, doornail shut in boxes with
nails. *Organ donors receive heart-felt thanks.* Dead as a
duck. Dead as a dead dog died yesterday.

This band-aid on a wooden leg. *Dad didn't feel right
without his petticoat.* Every man has an inner landscape.
Elbows dishpan deep. This poem is in my voice. There's a
striation of presence that forms around these pants. Prick.

Pauses pregnancy. My other car is a chassis. Bill Cosby appears in my living room making him okay, just like me. Easy chair, easy peasy. Steel toes. First it's a pet and then it's guts. A pet gut. A gut rot. Morning make-up, two-faced at the office. The breast a miracle of modern scientists. Populace as diverse as soup.

Flying eggplants liberate catapult wails. At first I questioned if they were blown-in-the-bottle but it was just a tumor. Fat wars the belly border. Bindus for white girls. Bow tie protest dinners. Thermometre(er) says come on in water's fine. Work it baby work it.

Your momma. *You look like my great-grandfather.* On the wagon. The global economy earns interest in my bellybutton. Tragus. Tied hands, tired dogs, my son Joan ate too many buttons on he/r first date. Check all that apply.

Would have given her the finger but I'm afraid of getting sticky. If you can pierce it we'll name it. My partner's cock mouth prosthetic. Liver donations hono(u)red with a plague. Shut up. The finest American steel support bands bras.

Take your hands off my unmentionables. Children search the box for a melanin crayon during the unit on white people. Carrots and Brussels sprouts. Just say that a dog ate your hypothalamus. Sprout happens. An assman has her own language. Sandy your date's here. U knows that I'm Canadian. But mom you know I hate fruits.

Not *that* kind of sleeping. Talk like a lawyer trying to be casual on your own time. Every doctor has a working visa and a tourist urge. Fat people certainly look nice and personable. She's a mammal in bed. Curb your dog. I've got tits too. Much like a left foot but darker. I'd offer an unfabled love to meet your foreigner.

situa

smell catalogues a breath, dick lengthens penis
gives it a job and alias. hang-outs and entrances
get more words. the ass bus bum the butt of the fun.
pork on and after dinner. i threw up the bones of
code indigestible pig latin. where there's a mouth
a mind confounds the brain and it really gets
on my tits. a liver for dinner a lb. of kidney stone.

nice *accoutrements* seize reason. injured lips focus
medical/medial eye don't exceed the recommended
don't recommend. resident bodily comfort. lip-red
an extension of mouth. uninvasive home surgery.
i had my ass done yesterday. i'd like you to kiss
my brisket.

a leg sung swung singing at this a gasp loose bit of lovin'.
we care to think of us, a u, an i, the thigh shoe a stand a wlk
to talk walking and walk talking stick and y. lip read
an extension of throat. dead battery carapace cast off body
a gender syllable wo. you've reached the first onion union
unit. rooster and doughnut.

dressed in a she.
oh my god
in my image.
two dolls in print.
I think I've been
used by this example before.
imprint of a tooth a
touch a time a
King James body
a delicate crease
the legs—sheer, the lips
shifting pink or blue eating
nylon bonds semantic tuft
of hair beneath a touch a tich a tickle.
a distraction made internal.

rest the eat on chest
 unattractive is old. men age
 like wine or a good cheese.
 or wilt. thou be a rat catcher.
 that glove emphasizes
 cleavage. at one
 with my liver, my hyoid
 bone, your septum and
 hymen sorry hymn. all
 earthly body where there is
 no bread. fork of love a f... a
 dr.
 takes the pill for dope.
 this an that a next.
 i cannot read the text. a Ben a
 Bob a me in a body body an
 Amy not Bob but b.*.
 mother a baby bedroom.

still the more with which i wash the mire it gets.
a hook an eye a needle for thigh. crotch split
across chair backs 4 legs of a stool 3 friends.
symptom D cure 4. balls and the river.
and the moon and the balls and the room.
what part is that. i cannot see you;
i will not lie to the body.

parfum

Whiteness traps a particle clouds hands grab nouns and birds
 from around a floating head. The bilabials and interdental that
 make the goat make the mouth; it's a tide of capital booty and
 that's where the problem begins. In the wrist. And here. Of
 course there is no body. Its apostrophical. But how can you
 trust reconnaissance when there's no body you've seen. The

*threat, thrust, throat, thrust, lower jaw into
 stannic vowel, melody, scatology, it.
 Unpunctuate shoulders unpuncture jargon
 wounds want to wear under pants head label
 forward crotch*

on crown. Dexterous abracadab, a malnourished male
 plays with his own sigh(n) and omnipotence look down at
 he. Perception is a meat thing and the meat's been x-rayed.
 Hers is sexualized fleshy blush red naked or photocopy
 doesn't scream "**PORN PORN!!!**" but wants to,
 snickering. If lung is this intake then yes, thank you. No
 donations necessary. Many men considering penile surgery
 often wake up to a raw deal VS she ducked off to bark at
 the ape. I woke up to a raw deal. Not even a piss could
 break my correction. I ducked off to bark at the ape.

Frank and fettered pronouns bank
a burning bush into a trolley of either/or,
kitchen/bathroom, in/outside, s/he. I wasn't *in* Canada
anymore, foot contributes to libidinal economy due to its
lust for good shoes with arch support, flat foots are cops,

So

body does the talkin'
with eyes a-hearin' meanin'
what the mouth's not a-sayin'
beyond a vegetarian threat to colon

*but if a text of better necks
stops heart start beating
clothing sing a stomach pie*

*between the hip and thigh
punctum for the roving eye*

In this prostrate carry legs, but the word, compose legs in *thisness*, you say, that's my leg, says mouth, quit the club when my leg fell off, chicken in a biscuit, and television models talking out their asses selling a bunch of food that sells, and, thus, this, is the best way to what, waht, hah!, sperm activates *aeueh aeueh aeueh aeueh aeueh thwack thwack thwack!* the naked truth will wear your gonch and you'll say what's that, and no one'll hear out of the mouth from sync out of the arms from swung over the legs of chairs and all those dictums about keeping legs closed in public, conflate the seeing into one big flatulent hearing, and end this on a fart word, well, whoopee.

Equations test use: are these the pants for me? Men have no body. One of the answers is yes. And later on, genitals play alone. Mouth eats ears without face. All three of them depressives and plagued by rolls of fat. Whose version misels a forehead, who ate and painted, painted camp. The arms we abuse for the sake of having arms, leg swung over leg, digit trapped in teeth. Porn has no alphabet but sailor suits and heart socks.

jaw

I'm here to be a noun for my left foot.

You look like you're going to work I'm sorry you're sad but I have to catch the train these peepshows so natural being so common wide open front and rear close-ups. Manholes teeth this is an ear perhaps a nose for music or a lung for cooking I made it up

In babies' mouths gum a thumb

it's what the head does that shapes a
language when biting a man there's a sort of
suture involved there's a man who's white
running for the train a dead run and the train
are those lungs real good I see done seeing a
do a leg a stride ovation oratorio O.

I am a blond goddess and you will respect me

tearing me apart brand name redirects hiring
process never be anoth anoth anoth a. Long small
flat trim mole the free world hangs in my
windshield you shouldn't stare at my breasts
because you're gay toforella red necks at the bar
find your body disgusting

Either a penis or a seahorse

larger than a paragraph a light-hearted
suture of monkey touch pear shapes lost
30 lbs you're hardly a w*/**n if you can't
pubic shave *don't you wanna*. Check lyric
heart of part horse teeth *I'll take two
thanks*

Discovered the clit yesterday

I'm having endless boybands over for dinner watch
that fanny juices talk live to me wanna drip splatter
dolloed up 38c from pink eyes brn hard easy the public
hair shaved or me that wants it tune chest trade
something itch. *Cheap flights wings of sphenoid meet
Melena on sagittal plane* the workforce presents a
rectory giggle poke lower abacus oh shit I met a Dr.
yesterday but all he wants to do is play nurse

And how could I escape your industry?

To corroborate your music with my industry I did not want to talk to the man-teeth banging in parsed ammo his teeth my mouth are there ways without pronouns? Shuffles into the content of the personal as in I went for groceries and saw you there you bought apples and I a fish particularly her mouth might be your feminine lips on a female

debut

Members. Refunds face at value. I want that mysterious brown belly above waist bands. I want to fine-tune my hair colour. I want to claim many men. My late night style, my date night denim. Contradict men. Conaire takes care of me I look great. No dandruff. Opiate lips. Fantastic plastic pieces take me. Call it a day but my soap does the clothes I'd rather be in. Biting and pulling lips excessively. Peacock burn pleasure a lungfull a hero a freckled cool. A card entitles me to a sexy striptease anywhere I dare candy.

Stay ahead of the masses in this isinglass shift; pick simple organs like a slinky, sheer, outer-epidermal teddy or a pancreatic sweetmeat thong to liberate your inner tropical babe and/or babe-ette.

He had doe eyes so I shot him. Innocent surgery performed free. I'll amuse myself into the fat that pats my belly wards away bikini. I'm angry and so is the vein in my forehead. Blab mouth blob body. Immaculate turquoise chest polish turns on dogs like pants. I can love you but not your ball cap, open shirt and duffel bag. Plush left nostril inhaler.

The guts're failing math again and the brain's set them up for the fall. Immaculate shrill, immaculate shriek, those pants ride the buttcrack immaculately. I'm all for legs and phenomena, and her shoes tell me that the enemy's communicated a pass-the-mustard, butter-the-breach, photo of David on the fridge, photo of Fridge on the freezer, I started a fat farm because the seed is cheap and easy, car window phrasebook for foreign moments.

**Match your lips to your leather; after all,
life is what happens outside the laundry
room.**

I'll get a C cup for your tea, no sugar. How can she have the look when you're doing the seeing? I hate this, I don't get pork bellies and Dow gets angry when you call him Jane. Fuck you, but don't misinterpret the tone. *Pantalons* invade the body of others. You need to adjust that flute. Don't sprain my panties, don't get too close to the fire wearing those nylons, oh so those are hot pants. I'm much too fat for that shirt so I'll try the *chemise*. Just whose underwear will I wear today?

The latest thing in beauty is the pits. Find yourself awash in a display of aluminum or funky scent deodorant pliable to the max for your all-day daily day-to-day keeps-you-dry on-the-go are-those-real wear-and-tear what-the-fuck.

I *would* but with a paper bag and no talking in the morning; library stack sex, microfilm desire, please don't speak during scene one, I hate scenery, are you enamoured of my race, fuck: now I'll never come.

Accessorize eye of newt and awkward teenage sexual desire in peppery reds and feathers. She went after my man to prove he had a roving eye. Wearing lenses corrected that problem and the past tense is correct. Works for fat people too, I'm crazy into it but don't identify with her outer glow. I'm James Bond's new babe, I have a mingling map, I could have been a twin, I'm in his face with too much space, I struck gold and jammed it into my navel in a knit poncho by Nell, seasoned to the chimera, surrender to your own rainbow and become James King. Before and after. Not just for the wealthy.

jackbooty

a fancy trachea invades our throat and willow flagellations
by the river for work that breaks backs
with sticks and stones a log sleeps a destructive ant invades
our throat flesh formed camouflage
a mouth for a river pie-eyed for the full moon this
organism works when we run it through
skin singing the vein opened
bone rolled over in trumpet
note more white blues a cluttered puzzle a
mouth-chewed or mute from the West
Side of town on and on biting and chewing the shit out of it
cock in the river bird like wrist or an ostrich no breasts
or butt to speak of but a thin hand
a vine of clay a *vin* a judge of good bare
coat hanger am i looking or seeing am i being or beating

enumerated by underpants, one for urination, sells condoms,
schlitz pajamas, fewer instances of defecation
in the contemporary moment indicated
by ass-flapless underwear.
only boys speak openly about ass functions,
the foot stepping clack or thuck, slap or crap, or p.
i am afraid of my own legs,
the shadow on the ground fatter
than me is my shadow, crotch, the rat's nest, refuck, unfuck,
turn on your headlights snake in bush!!
or mechanics will dismantle carburetor before trick elbow

Penis erect: 2 positions.
Flaccid: too numerous to list.

the fashionable fancy flight fat.

is it fun. i am not me to my mirror; the ideal I in 8.5-by-11 glossy. the dove of peace or the dove in pieces. all 18 positions of the eye click into place on its stalk, the body stocks Me, is I in there, a You that you're not, the heart fails its name, why not have children to breed an offspring with foreskin, insert tab A into slot B, you can learn anything from books, what're these dangly bits right there, here, you can learn of anything from books.

*In Canada,
I can't find my pants.*

a parole of bambi long and prick skeptics
a cynical sex pestilent sanctioned by the dollar. ooh
porn is it porn porn porn
ooh dirty. and the cent. makes plenty of sense
that capitalism works to pull wool cover eyes with spoons
isn't white a colour did i say the wrong thing doesn't wool
come from sheep wouldn't that be a lie i have a wool
sweater. did he sound white? is that cell phone authentic?
i'll have your brother for dinner but i'm expecting a man.
a brother. a white man. a white brother.
it's good to have family.

buy-a-porsche-for-a-dying-child-wish
foundation. they told me capitalism was going to save
my life. beer goggles finally approved for
brewmasters, kiss a frog prince between the legs and
dental plan, more makeup for the anus,

MAKEUP! MAKEUP!!

smack

circumscribed dildo; i hate right-thinking surgeons.

viagra offers depression a flag pole.
a flag pole a pole vault an obsolete computer called "WANG."
(sorry). i can't say anything beyond mentioning two wheels
and racing back. an ergy desk. a yuppie rake. myself i have a
bouche a terminal a carpal tunnel a syndrome. you should wear
that signifying chain more often.

it must be. a back. backs have bones and it
must. be a back. to me no eyes must.

be a back. eyes deaf as stones; i'm deaf and
the signs are invisible. because it vexes me.
a vixen vexes the sex, on dasher and dancer. it hurts/here/comes the doctor. narrate my
balls sorry testicles sorry; no i have never buttfucked sorry (i) had anal sex sorry
excuse me doctor but you have nice breasts but i said *breast!!!*
why don't you get some poooon
i need need need need a vortex of pleasure in one
end and the other lauds spillage. a woman sorry girl
sorry you can refer to me as boy sorry it's on my card BOY
friend is a man is a man. do you have a boyfriend no
i'm a man. the doctor told me i have *rubella scarlatina*
so i smacked (him) in the have to have should. tell me please
about my balls sorry there's a lump i find—i mean CYST sorry
would you just fuckin' tell me some shit that i can use i mean
dung sorry. it hurts like hell especially when you poke me like that.

unsexed unisexual i. resale man-breasts lack
refinement; this is a scripted fuck and i forgot
my line. all fucks
without warranty. people
are everywhere, fuckers.
offside fuck prompters.
Never under
estimate the power
of ball caps with Windsor knots
in Gucci groups. my shirt
has a top button
thank you.

subaltern nose threatens democracy with ring and pimple,
counter-cultural eyebrow, garden of earthy delights cultivates
pussy-talk, how the safety of cocks says no thanks, all I hear is the
heart beating *thump* or *thump* or *beep*

I prefer beep for its precision.

if the body is shit, then thought is pure-shit. the body is a place and i want to visit some other c(o)(u)ntry and the cock is my ticket outta here. not *penis* or *cock* but *p*, a space for that organ disguised in raw Americana; if only i could tie my shoe as tight as stomach-knots.

i've chosen to think with the left asscheek and it tells me that language has entered the room. everyone knows their liver as their own child; the scent imprints at birth and onions, everybody's both tit and breast. i'll betray my colour with hair dye, could i fetish my own foot.

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