

POETRY *of the* FUTUREIntroduction:
POETRY & LOVE

Poetry is the greatest force on Earth.
Saint-Pol-Roux

There is no solution outside love.
André Breton

Poetry is language in its highest and most far-reaching form—language at once wide awake and dreaming, unrestricted by the fetters of ideology, rationality, power, commerce, common sense, or other agencies of the Reality Principle. "The day's armor is laid aside in the apples of sleep" (Penelope Rosemont).

No mere "self-expression," poetry is an *activity of the mind* inseparable from the exaltation of life. More often than not it is also a manifestation of the most philosophically rigorous *humor*. "WHEN ONE KNOWS" (Jacques Vaché).

Poetry demonizes so-called ordinary language by challenging all forms of accepted usage—that is, by provoking new and daring relations between words, and setting them loose in the free play of desire. "The tempest unleashes an alphabet / letters fall through the apertures of crazy angles / to spell out the future" (Nancy Joyce Peters).

Poetry deimpossibilizes human freedom by letting the alchemical fire of unheard-of images melt the walls of reified consciousness, thereby at one stroke abolishing the slavery of the mind and raising the stakes in the struggle to resolve the contradiction between everyday life and the Marvelous. "The stone I have tossed into the air of chance shall come to you one great day and exfoliate the original scarab, the carbuncle of delights, the pomegranate inviolate, the sonorous handkerchief of the Comte de Saint-Germain, all the reinvented perfumes of ancient Egypt, the map of the earth in the Age of Libra when the air shall distribute our foods" (Philip Lamantia).

Those who have the *sense of poetry* know that the most radical kind of individual self-revelation and revolutionary social transformation advance as one, hand in hand. "Tightrope of our hope" (Suzanne Césaire).

Mobilized by *love*—mad, relentless, uncompromising, and, as ever, surrealism's surest method of knowledge—poetry is the unfettered imagination opening the way to the unfettered life.

Franklin Rosemont

[MAKE IFA](#)

Jayne Cortez

[A BUFFOON'S ATTEMPT](#)

Cassandra Stark Mele (*In Case of a Storm*, 1995)

[FATHER OF REASON, DAUGHTER OF DOUBT](#)

to Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Ronnie Burk

[DREAM CONSTELLATIONS](#)

for Antaine

Irene Plazewska

[MY TRIP TO RUSSIA](#)

for Leonora Carrington

Penelope Rosemont

(from *Beware of the Ice & Other Poems*, 1992)

[DWELLINGS 2](#)

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington

[IT MUST BE MIDNIGHT](#)

Larry Romano

[SUMMER DUSK](#)

Mary Low

(*Where the Wolf Sings*, 1994)

[CEREMONIES IN A POLAR GARDEN](#)

Nancy Joyce Peters

(*It's In the Wind*, 1977)

[ALPHABET](#)

Franklin Rosemont

(From *Lamps Hurlled at the Stunning Algebra of Ants*, 1990)

MAKE IFA

Make Ifa make Ifa make Ifa Ifa Ifa Ifa

In sanctified chalk
of my silver painted soot
In criss-crossing whelps
of my black belching smoke
In brass masking bones
of my bass droning moans
in hub cap bellow
of my hammer tap blow
In steel stance screech
of my zumbified flames
In electrified mouth
of my citified fumes
In bellified groan
of my countrified pound
In compulsivefied conga
of my soca moka jumbi
MAKE IFA MAKE IFA MAKE IFA IFA
IFA
In eye popping punta
of my heat sucking sap
In cyclonic slobber
of my consultation pan
In snap jam combustion
of my banjoistic thumb
In sparkola flare
of my hoodoristic scream
In punched out ijuba
of my fire catching groove
In fungified funk
of my sambafied shakes
In amplified dents
of my petrified honks
In ping ponging bombs
of my scarified gongs
MAKE IFA MAKE IFA MAKE IFA IFA
IFA

Jayne Cortez

* Ifa = a system of divination developed by the Yoruba of Nigeria, based on the interpretation of cowrie shells tossed on a tray.

A BUFFOON'S ATTEMPT

The sky is a buffoon's attempt to theodolite chance. All is barefooted, one girl ponders the woods. Which way shall she roam? Who knows, Chi sa? Anyway, my left hand catches moths. Circles. The blue words fell from the sky and nestled upon my breast. I told them stories until they slept peacefully. Meanwhile, the barren wilderness became a sieve, I fell out. The bottom went dry, crackling. A small stone, a smooth relic is now imbedded inside my mind. I walked the weeded path calling out silly names like "Balaco." No wonder the birds are crying. No wonder stars hurt in whispers and the four winds taught us to dance. So many nights gathered into one embryo. He grows up to paint his shack red, the door blood red with a blue doorknob.

Cassandra Stark Mele
(*In Case of a Storm*, 1995)

FATHER OF REASON, DAUGHTER OF DOUBT

to Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Father of Reason, Daughter of Doubt
African bees are nesting
On the rooftops
Of lower Manhattan
Mercurio's phrenological head swimming
The skies of green foam
Polluting the black tar honey
Lady Cyclops filled to the brim
in milk opal
Stuffing her nightshirt full of
Ephedra's wooden mandibles
concentric
The circles of her voluptuous rose
mandala
Living at the edge of a world
Held up by chopsticks
Currents of air evaporate
Into buckets of boiling rain water
Ronnie Burk

DREAM CONSTELLATIONS

for Antaine

washed over with dream constellations
the dreamer arises flowers
cascade to petal untouched
mates.
Halves are wholed and realignments
adjust curious insects
who never touched before.
Past lives merge to drive powerful
ravaging flood currents.
The severed right hand is renewed by the left.

Irene Plazewska

MY TRIP TO RUSSIA

for Leonora Carrington

Outside the doorway
a soft tap on the knob
Passionate nerves
invite a cabdriver
onto smooth waters

As I surround
the counterpoint walk
with trees
inconvenient ballets take place
inside the encyclopedia

Still stiff from sleep
like a pack of cards
claimed by a purple line
on a vaulted ceiling
faithful as a lock
with the long-forgotten fragrance
of weird dream fragments
and partly
petrified
pandemonium
I flee
over a waterfall

Penelope Rosemont
(from *Beware of the Ice & Other
Poems*, 1992)

DWELLINGS 2

She thought she married a man, just like any other man, not a man with a single finger, always pointed in accusation, nor a man named History. Dice. Cards. A broom. A broomstick. A mop. A rag. A wet rag. A duster. A scrub brush. A scrub brush holder. A nail in a wall. A wall without tears. A sink with a running nose. A sink with a kidney infection. A sink with cramps. A sink with dishpan hands. A stone bird. A stone bird from K-Mart. A migrant flock. A tea plate. Hung on the wall. An illustrated plate. The image of the Last Supper. This bread is my body. A photograph. A man with full cheeks. A man chinking on his food. His mouth hung open. His hand covering it up. His manners impeccable. A preacher. A glass top table. A glass top table filled with photographs. A cross. A dangling icon. A pretty bauble. A prayer of the day. An illustrated calendar. On the calendar, one day has been scratched out: far in the future—not only checked, x'd out—that day will not exist, when it comes, it will *not happen*. The day she deceives her husband, her hand and mind fantastically coordinated. She picks up the phone, and her gesture throws a shadow of her hand clutching a dark weapon. Using it, though her thoughts jar, she calls the number—preserved under the bowl where her dentures lay in frothy water—of a Realtor who can tell her the value of her home. Breath sucking through her gums, as she does when she is fitfully asleep—though she is hardly asleep, though she is living a day that is outside her chronological years—she calls with a wrinkled hand and, with an angry pencil, writes it.

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington

IT MUST BE MIDNIGHT

It must be midnight
The doors reconfigure the planets

Ultra-uterine ufo's

gripped in the tools of madness
when I'm cognizant enough of the x-factor of immanence

the overtime vision of Gulliver

the rictus of forbidden flowers

Larry Romano

SUMMER DUSK

Life and the moon lean out of a window
(their elbows pointing pearly smudges on the edge)
and watch across the darkening bay
the flute-playing, halted afternoon
paint mirror-palaces on the sky,
all wrapped in shrouds of glimmering spume.

It is a slow time of day.
Under the great archways on the shore
long, slanting shafts of light build ladders
for idle motes of summer dust
to wander upwards and get caught
in crystal cobwebs
severely etched against the encroaching night.

Somewhere there is an aimless trip in progress,
a voyage without point or destination,
all frontiers barred;
a journey undertaken on the missing needle
of an old barometer.

Shall we go?

Mary Low
(*Where the Wolf Sings*, 1994)

CEREMONIES IN A POLAR GARDEN

The tempest unleashes an alphabet
letters fall through the apertures of crazy angles
to spell out the future
uprooting the course of invention
and enslaving the masters
I calibrate the world and load my weapons
focus my eye down the bore of utopian plots
I'm looking for the binding energy of a look
a crop of reflections to be reaped
in a winter of thorn
when icebergs of illusion will melt
to be served at high tea
and the spaces between the poles pinned down
like insects dreaming of the giant eye
at the end of a microscope
just as the stars are dreaming
but they are laughing
I see myself in the smile of a polar bear
while turning the pages of an arctic sky
reading the delirious lines that
foretell the sovereignty of language
and the rule of invisible birds

Nancy Joyce Peters
(*It's In the Wind*, 1977)

ALPHABET

My alphabet starts with X
and wends its way slowly
from L to Q via J
and the last three letters
of VICO

It lingers awhile
on E and Z
then zooms to Y
hits high K
burns the bridges from A to D
twirls the B that comes before F
except after H
and rides roughshod
over U

It takes T
with N and G
(Black Knight to Queen's Bishop Three)
lets W and M stroll along together
hand in hand with Paracelsus
and ends up with a bright red
question-mark

and an
RSVP

Franklin Rosemont
(From *Lamps Hurlled at the
Stunning Algebra of Ants*, 1990)