





**ALPHABET NOIR**



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# **INTRO / INTO THE NOIR**

Crag Hill

In the beginning was no sign; it was too dark. Or not dark enough.

In the beginning was the sign, the spoken, gestural, written light. Or the dark, inside out.

The written sign was the beginning of written language. The power of the originary sign remains and sustains while the kinds of signs and the complexities of signs have increased and continue to increase, in space, light and dark, on pages print and digital, in and out of body. Nico Vassilakis' work is rooted in this beginning but also in the perpetual becoming of language.

The letter is the pivot, the fulcrum. The word is an oar. The letter is the river you can never step in twice. The word names the river and stems its flow. Vassilakis' poetic is intensely focused on documenting the letter in its pre- and post-word state of being/ness.



The letter is not the building block. The letter is a building itself, the process of meaning processing the language building meaning. Vassilakis works at the DNA level, unraveling the signatures letters encode, embody, enact.

I have always appreciated that Vassilakis believes in his readers; his work does a lot of thinking but it does not do all of the thinking for its readers. It possesses but is not possessed by its own hermeneutics.

“The thing you do not want to do is explain everything.”

I have known Vassilakis’ work for over 25 years. A hallmark in multiple genres—visual poetry, poetry, performance, or in his critical writing as demonstrated in this book—is how the work itself is thinking as it is doing its work. It’s thinking in the act of creating, on the act of

creating, for the act of creating.

“say deceives	writing retrieves
say conceives	writing relieves
say what you mean	writer of invisible ink
to say it ends is false	this writing continues”

Vassilakis wants the notion/s of letters living life outside the constraint of a word scrum to be available to all. The reader may get stymied, curtailed by the ephemeral nature of letters’ lived life: how does one explain, or frame, or undergird this phenomenon, this deliberate fabrication, this tenuous cloth and this whole cloth of language that lives in us as much as we live in it? The letter our cell.

Vassilakis wants the reader, in this book, to read how a visual poet verifies and validates their seeing, their life of sight, and he wants the writer to read seeing. He hopes to magnify and multiply

and for a moment enable the reader to dislocate his/her eyes, to see language, its material, happening and happening and happening. He wants to push the reader and the writer who reads seeing and is interested in writing visual poetry, the letter casually mounted over the mantel in hopes it will disturb and disrupt and get passed down to other readers and writers.

*Alphabet Noir* has two movements: implicit and explicit arguments on the poetics of the letter, the space/s of meaning before and after the word. The first movement is more suggestive, elliptical, transitory, a verbal cognate of Vassilakis' visual poetry. The second movement, the notes section, pulls the curtain aside on to the background of his work, deeply rooted in shared contexts, ways of seeing that may not be as old as seeing but are at least as old as the first written sign. Now is the time for you to be the beginning and the becoming. Into the noir is into the light.



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**ALPHABET NOIR**

**NICO VASSILAKIS**

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## MY VISPO

I think of vispo as preparation for a future language event.

You can read anything as language is everything.

Someone asked if I could read a shag rug, so I got down and began articulating the width, length, direction, color, etc of each tuft/thread in sound units.

The thing you do not want to do is explain everything.

I think vispo is a kinetic mirror.

I am very interested in drawn letters. I am not though so interested in written letters.

My first letter O, for instance, was drawn by me as a surrealistic potato.

Soon after that the letter O became uniform, compliant and precise, forced to fit obediently between the perforated lines.

It takes from the blurred periphery of language, and language material, and brings it front and center.

It receives and transmits visually altered and verbally tweaked alphabetic documents. It is obsessed with this information.

It keeps our communication exchange agile and fresh.

It intends to promote continued focus and attention on what is missed, what is missing, what needs further investigation in the sentence, the word, the letter itself.

It is the same as a “poem” you recognize though your interaction with it may seem more fleeting.

Don't worry, it will get locked in the brain and meander about until such time as the future language event comes a-knocking.

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## NANCARROW'S PROXY

**Nos. 1-5** During this opening time signature the spores are introduced. They leak through the punched holes and begin inhabiting space. Comma blends with period, with colon, semi colon, with dash and ampersand. After entering and exploring the field, hints of collective logic start to manifest. First, attractive accumulation shows itself followed by intentional groupings. The spores gather en masse in specific designs and directions not yet aware of their purpose.

**Nos. 6-10** In this timeframe, the spores take on new instruction. They intuit the possibility they exist within language, amidst the syntax and grammar of a communication system. They reach, they contain, they march through available space and are excited to translate their new surroundings. The spores start creating formations to engage and respond to the language field. The inkling of sound triggers a potential hypothesis - a moveable orchestral proxy.

**Nos. 11-15** This time series tends toward completion, but doesn't quite achieve it. The spores are prone to repetition, to contrast, to balanced composition. You see the momentum there trying to capture a musical dance - the music equation ensues playfully. Substituted eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, whole notes detach and congeal in a suspension or flotation that seeks to speak. The infection begins to formalize into graphic notation. They seek conversation by conveying an initial felicitation.

**Nos. 16-20** The spores begin to show a level of complexity. The compositions become more involved, more enlivened. They acquire volume and depth. The spores are now completely united and move with one intention toward the goal of how to communicate in the language field. After offering the most common universal



greetings the spores have reached an impasse - the ability to communicate seems unavailable.

**Nos. 21-25** The spores, in a bid to negotiate with their host, initiate a plan to utilize visual motifs to gain access and solve the problem of mutual language exchange. The spores collect and proceed in shapes and patterns, recognizable and familiar, that may overlay with that of their host. This effort garners a fruitful exchange that leads to discovering the fundamental building blocks of understandable speech. The text is minimal in content at first, but allows for a cross-cultural, cross-medium sharing of vital information.

**Nos. 26-30** The spores, their corporeal aspects, resolve the dilemma by joining or melding with their host and thus arrive at a certain freedom to morph and navigate on their own. The flow of

the two, and this without revealing the third. The third is a parasitic inclination that reaches questionable equilibrium, yet is further beneficial to all. Visual language is dependent on the virus that infects it. The constant task of the field is to suppress and acquire information in order to assure its lock on power. The spores now blend, they mix and spread, asserting just enough of their own language vector onto their host.

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## I WILL ABANDON YOUR TERMINOLOGY

An A poetics: today is important, as ever, as usual. What gives shape, gives way. A tolerance, as in, A tolerates B. Will distinguish action from observed action and that action in turn more disheveled than the previous one. Even minutia in the nooks of a sentence. Oh say can you see what I mean - how each of us might. And too, this language this bridge bends to make.

Relations in all relative corners. Relate at each glottal stop. The associative properties of B poetics. Will intuit like a clown does kids. The pulled verse, formal and digitized. We are ready. Now!

## SAY

say moves away from writing  
say is recorded and writing record  
say is mistakes  
say is language writing exhibit  
say is batman writing robbery  
say writing is clenched write saying twice  
say denies writing stops  
say is more plagiarism as amalgam  
and original say's inside  
writing says what saying does  
and writing thinks about what saying says  
this say says a lot non-stop writing  
say deceives writing retrieves  
say conceives writing relieves  
say what you mean writer of invisible ink  
to say it ends is false this writing continues  
he says she writes  
he says too much she writes too few letters  
so it comes to this to say a letter  
to write a letter

to utter	to draw
to blurt	to jot
say is	writing copies is
say a fractured bone	write an elaborate splint
say is quote	writing is end quote

## THE WORD EATER

The Word Eater is a verbal-visual totem. The Word Eater enunciates staring inside monkey bars where oxygen attracts twice the hydrogen. To look upon minus alliteration. Staring as a buffer - staring into nothing. Then leap. The invisible reunion of electricity. Greek totems lead to a phalanx. A nugatory battle between what you are see and what you are say. Asemic to the foreign totem. This in the end is what makes the person.



h\_\_\_\_\_

As one returns, as day or spring or one meaning  
asserts another, as it accrues, as apparition, as  
h\_\_\_\_\_ memory is a stain. You  
reach it by writing your way there, to make  
otherwise be fruitful. To stare's h, h,  
h\_\_\_\_\_ end, your desire  
distracted, you create a house, you live in it,  
there's hair everywhere. h, h, h,  
h\_\_\_\_\_.

## **LOOKING AHEAD (with Ernst Jandl)**

What can you say about seeing? It's wonderful, well, that's not nearly enough. Try as you might, and thousands have, to describe the joyous nature of seeing. Some of it romantic, some of it informative, but all of it detached. It's removed, if you will, from the very moment of sight. An image getting, not so much lost in the translation parts of the vision system, but diluted through distance. That distance or measurement where content is vulnerable to corruption. It's a passage from the thing through the eye into the brain. Seems like a fantastically long journey where anything can happen. And it does. And no one ever seems to really be there. No one ever gets it right, so we continue to look, to stare.

**schtzngrmm**  
**schtzngrmm**  
**t-t-t-t**  
**t-t-t-t**  
**grrrrmmmm**  
**t-t-t-t**  
**s-----c-----h**

How looking at atomics informs the celestial is how parts of letters construct a word. The keyboard as periodic table, as stillness and value assigned to each button. Accelerated molecules go streaming out the mouth. Elements are floating everywhere. A sub-atomic splice of Q caught in an asterisk. To confound the dictionary by eroding cohesion between the letters that form words. Like a word, like biscotti snapped in two, in four parts, into crumbs. Then there are aspects of an erupted B dangling off a row of commas.

**tzngrmm  
tzngrmm  
tzngrmm  
grrrrmmmm  
schtzn  
schtzn  
t-t-t-t**

Morton Feldman said of Philip Guston's abstract expressions that he was taking snapshots of Time Undisturbed. What is staring but that, Time Undisturbed, until fidgeting subsides, until the pace is realized, until your thoughts are cleared out enough to allow the material to enter. To repurpose what's given till new possibilities emerge.

**t-t-t-t**  
**schtzngrmm**  
**schtzngrmm**  
**tssssssssssssss**  
**grrt**  
**grrrrrt**  
**grrrrrrrrt**

These letters here have been captured so as to convey the pre word segment of a letter's life. The parts of letters you regard as useless are busy, very busy. They line up ready to take their turn. One after another they sacrifice; they offer fragments of their body. They are exhausted. The goal is to acquire shapes that equate to sound, and they are exhausted.

**sch**  
**sch**  
**t-t-t-t-t-t-t-t**  
**sch**  
**tzngrmm**  
**tzngrmm**  
**t-t-t-t-t-t-t-t**

When no one's looking, letters quietly arrange themselves. They exist in a kind of muscular and musical chaos – a dance, a stutter, a tumble into birth. Their amniotic twirl awaits its one perfect and predicted result – to be born into word. They will live, sleep and make sound in that word. The page is now their home.



## 8 PROBLEMATIC INTERSECTIONS OF ALPHABET AND SOUND IN ENGLISH

gb

fs

mn

dt

hx

jl

pk

zc



## RANDOM DOSES

. . . The hum of Letters harmonize. That demeanor of Singular design objects. An arrangement of Chance before capitulating. The letter is Form. The letters Are content. Words will not thrive Here. Composition is its Own vocabulary. Decisions over. We celebrate the Pre word . . .

## WHAT'S YOUR COMMUNITY?

A visual one    Looking at seeing  
    Using alphabet to make objects  
Using alphabet visually as language for seeing  
The eyes and the eyes    Open    The ego of the eyes  
I like what the eye likes              Share this  
There is no power structure  
    We all see what needs seeing  
We create so as to replicate and enhance the  
    fascination visual alphabet holds for us  
    U, U, double U, double, double, double U  
By getting it and getting it right    It continues  
    by honing your intentional mark  
We chose work            Chosen for its lack  
    of repetition  
To toss it far enough that nothing relates at  
    such a distance  
A community of happenstance  
    A confederacy of surprise

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**What's reading?** Reading is an intentional look. We see or visually gather information in saccades. We seek cadence for saccades to capture a rhythm in order to proceed along a page. We hope cadence engages long enough for the eye to absorb it as reading writing. Writing is organized markings. The eye sees thinking, it reads a trail of thinking, left behind. Writing is organized markings left behind.

So, poems. How to read poems. And what of their cleverness. Virtually all writing is bound by margin. Margin logic and the act of returning. The saccades stop and return to their margin of origin, only lower each time.

To confine and constrain. The eye forced to read marginalized space, unable to stretch past the fence, at least not often enough as we'd like.

So, the eye likes to locate itself, to pick a spot to start. It's grown accustomed to starting, at least in Rome, at the upper left hand corner. It then marches from margin to margin like a foot soldier. The eye is easily bored if the markings aren't fetching. It seeks attractive thought, glowing thought, left behind.

So, if the eye were tracked while reading a textual poem it might look like endless tide coming onto shore. What happens to the eye when it reads visual poems? It gets lost. It's desperate to locate a beginning. The eye is confused and tries to determine if it should be in reading or viewing mode. Two different eyes colliding. The tracked eye looking at vispo would tend to be chaotic, not orderly. It might resemble drunken spider webs or pin the tail on the donkey or any aleatory start looking for logic.

Is reading visual poetry a learned experience? Or is someone just pre set to be drawn to it? I think it's about being fascinated by the interior space of letters. You either are or you aren't.

Ж

Technology has touched visual poetry, that much is true. It has allowed the alphabet to liberate its visual material, letters, more readily. Electronic sharing of imagetext has been a boon to vispo, expanding both audience and practitioners equally. One wonders what early Concrete or Lettrist poetries might have done with these machines.

Vispo is going through a new surge with more books, anthologies, exhibits both on and offline. Factions, like asemic writing, are splintering off in new directions. Literature is becoming further hybrid, further minimal, further conceptual, but

the basic unit of measure, the letter, remains its genetic landmark.

The notion of alphabet in vispo has shifted to include not only the visual substance of letters, but the fragmentary markings, the drawn portions that make up a letter.

Concrete poetry was about the reduction of literature to its bare essentials while attempting to sustain word logic. The results varied from slogans, to puns, to visual representations of language. Visual poetry, for the most part, alleviates itself of word-bound meaning in order to get to the building blocks, the atomic associative relations between seeing and saying and thinking and documenting our visual world and how it effects us.



## **AS VERB**

To vispo; the process of applying letters to the world in a way that alters or creates meaning specific to the use of alphabet as visual material and not hinged to semantic, syntactic word logic. Though words can be used to draw the reader toward the action of vispo, as a descriptive, words are not part, the basis, of a result of vispoing. The letters, and every permutation therein, are the principle ingredients to a vispo creation.

To vispo; the act of looking at alphabet and seeing only its visual material.

To vispo; the imagined or real interaction with letters and their visual presence. While vispoing, the poet can create a field of renewed understanding with their over saturated word surroundings.

To vispo; a form of looking. The process by which one deconstructs a word through

the release of adhered letters. The breaking of letter bonds that capture and keep letters inside words.

To vispo; a way of liberating the letter, to read past the word toward the design elements of its component parts.

He vispoed his way through a landscape of billboards.

Her vispoing transformed advertising in the subway.

As evening went on, the book he was reading was visited by a vispoing spectre and the letters began to float off the page.

The architect was thinking of how to use her vispoed text as a blueprint for new building ideas.

To vispo; to disincorporate text. The vispoed word, being a unit of letters, disincorporates by discharging its letters and relieving word of its meaning.

To vispo; involves being witness to the trajectory of the making and breaking of words. The pre accumulation of letters, the wrangling for position, to acquire word definition and meaning. This applies to the departure or post word exhaustion, the renewed liberation of letters just before they're asked to reassemble into word again.

To vispo; the act of staring at language. The uncovering of design material used to fashion alphabet.

At night, the lower angled support scaffold of the letter K would vibrate.

While watching the newly christened name of the boat reflect in the water, its letter E kept extending and disappearing.

My compass was the sharp angled pointing A and beneath it cool safe shelter.

Once, you pressed the lower, larger bulbed support of capital B and the upper part grew in size. Over and over again, you pressed.

## NOTES

It's always been a catch-as-catch-can operation of work. There are crossover possibilities in hybrid poetics. Visual poetry portals have been useful. I'm not sure how to answer this. I think engaged fun is the overriding theme to collaborating, also it acts as a buffer to working alone. There are a few that include sound, but yes, for the most part, I think sound does interfere with focus and in this day and age of everything happening at once silence becomes a point of respite. I think it's the pulse that animates and gives the illusion of movement. What I intended by that was that the word, after being stared at, will lose its meaning by having the Letters become loosened from their position. The Letters acquire a new sense of visual logic and associative meaning, thus knocking the word off its throne. This was achieved through a sequence of filters that enabled that multi-colored pulse to come through and attract the eye. Of course, the mind's eye is much more agile than any machine or program.

Any lack of sophistication is deliberate. I should say, approach video recording as blank white pages with all the decisions and chaos you encounter during that exchange. Preparation is about collecting and selecting the materials. It is about envisioning what text could do.

You can't look at anything without it having an emotional aspect.

Where do Letters go. After watching them disincorporate. Liberated from confinements of the word. Simple accumulations that become decorative elements in visual poetry. Fascinations with representative sound units. After attempts at altering. After value's been reassigned and ciphers adjusted. What next for the emancipated Letter. Digitize and spiff up, done. Letter as fingerprint. More Letters, Letters that exceed, asemic Letters, done. For the Letters that choose not to return to the word. It is a kind of suffocation.

My interest is in watching Letters disincorporate from the words that contain or confine them.

The first tendency of Letters, when newly released from their word bondage, is to become decorative. This is usually followed by design logic and visual pun, as well as other compositional templates. Next, Letters either proceed into new visual poetics or return to the word. We are taught to return, but are seldom given an option. Yes, they said, let us go, free us.

Seattle, 2012

## NOTES

*for Crag Hill*

Portmanteau of alphabeta  
Is askance and peripheral adventure  
When language doesn't do  
    what it's accustomed to  
Where eye meets page and alters both

History minimizes word to bare essentials  
Liberates letter to its multiple applications  
Alphabet's visual meat leaves word behind  
It's not an image placed alongside writing,  
    but where the two merge  
We are one of many imagetext waves to come  
Leaves a mark that Infects and widens

How to know what is and what is good  
How to know bad and what it's not



Why does it take so long, he meandered,  
to handle the hybrid nature  
The mixed ingredients,  
both fruitful and handicap  
futures of our technology  
This is where everything



## NOTES

*for Martin Gubbins*

Pleasure in viewing is a pleasure to think freely, visually, without destroying it with interior chatter.

Ж

If words convey the image of a thought and letters are part of words, then parts of letters are...what's the most suitable response here.

In the past forty years, we have gone further into the nucleus finding more and more material. We're looking for that last unit of information to associate it to all other living material. Without the tiniest bit of the letter how can we have the word. A molecule is not possible without a sequence of atoms. The blind vispoets move about in the dark of their homes making and breaking code according to instinct. Science is the perfect unresolved pest.

To fold paper enough. To make it sing at the crease. The pulse of the place derived by how the ink and fibers commingle. There's disturbance there too. How birds write their way through sky. The poets make us sick. They continue to make askew what asks to be left alone.

Ж

Where letters are conterminous Where a letter neighbors another Where letters detach from the word they're caught in Where letters only huddle and flank each other Where letters verge into themselves Where letters are visually contiguous Where parts of their bodies touch Where letters are flush against the other Where letters fringe and skirt other letters Where letters abut nearby letters Where a letter attracts its fellow letter and makes actual contact. This is where my eyes move toward This is what they seek Where a letter is its own magnet Not only to other letters

but to my eyes' attention You find this in the  
streets Walking among our communal visual  
texts Out of the corner of our eyes.

Ж

When you say a word the same time you hear it  
on the radio.

When you read a word the same time you hear  
it spoken.

When you turn your head the same time  
someone looks at you.

Ж

The chilean national military orchestra played  
jaws, brazil, adele, and sousa in the gazebo at the  
Plaza de Armas.

Ж

The black damp.

Ж

Plaza de Armas in Santiago - I walked into a protest during and about an economic summit between South America, Europe and the Caribbean. Speeches, music, pro Chavez, communists, socialists, queer, Mapuche, colorful dancers, marching bands, giant flags, the black block, Che t-shirts, and of course the cops. They battled over one street, back and forth, big trucks spraying water into the crowd. The crowd throwing rocks, sticks, bottles. Several thousand people, young and old, smiling, sweating, angry, soaked, giddy, and just there to stand alongside other people with slogans on sticks.

Ж

## Spicer's LANGUAGE (foreshortened)

### *Thing*

No/One listens to poetry.  
The poet is a/counterpunching radio.  
Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz; buzz, buzzz.  
Dancers shrieking one by one.  
Prayer/is exactly that  
Zooms.  
Death is not final.  
Death/is a tooth among/Strangers.  
The in-/Visible world.  
Almost too big to get used to

### *Love*

The baseball season finished.  
Shit/Enters into it only as an image  
It is not for the ears.  
Blind guesses.  
I gave you my imaginary hand.

*Intermissions*

the celestial movement of spheres in a long,  
boring procession  
We found a champion. The poem  
Who carries his dreams on his back

*Transformations*

We is an intimate/pronoun  
Those swans and/I  
Everything out of place  
We/Hated them.  
It is not that the name of the town changes  
Troy was a baby  
having no recorded/language/Never knew  
what hit them  
Across from the house that Jack built.  
This is the end of it,

*Morphemics*

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth  
How/Motherfucker can I sing  
Moon,  
If it were spelled "mune" it would not  
    cause madness  
an image of syllables  
They would only listen.  
Nor could Alice



*Phonemics*

Over that land  
There  
Is more of it.  
Empty fragments.  
Found but not put together.  
The/unstable/Universe  
telesexual route to the brain  
Your voice  
Would not have been possible  
Believe me. Linguistics is divided  
two phonemes/that never paired before  
Vowels somehow get between  
to produce/children.  
A ground-/rules double. You recognize them  
by pattern. Try

## *Graphemics*

I can hear the little sound of it  
The sun-dial makes a grapheme I  
cannot understand.  
The hour-glass is a computer.  
Orange  
Doesn't last long.  
You flicker.  
The space between it  
We made tapes. They were probably erased like  
we were.  
both script i and cursive i  
between/The spaces on a paper the letters grow  
within I within i  
time leaves us  
Words

Ж

after ISOU  
(lifted from David Seaman's  
Concrete Poetry in France)

First "amplified" then "chiseled"

ISOU came to the conclusion that words had to be broken down into what he considered to be their components - letters - in order to reconstruct the world of poetry.

Tzara's efforts at the destruction of language are praised by ISOU, but he feels they stopped just short of the final step, reduction of word to letter.

"Mission of the new poetry: reduce everyone's outpourings and impulses to letters; rebuild the perceptions in themselves in a meaningful and sensitive matrix of letters."

"Poetry will be Lettrist, or it will cease to be. But poetry will be Lettrist!"

After the emotive power of letters in painting is recognized, the purely visual element becomes of prime importance. ISOU soon ended his period of Latin notation, and began to introduce other embellishments, alphabets, and signs of all origins.

This new form of Lettrism was at first called metagraphics.

Hypergraphics (formerly metagraphics):  
Ensemble of signs capable of transmitting the reality seized by the consciousness more exactly than all the former fragmentary and partial practices.

Maurice Lemaître says, for the first time with poetic Lettrism and hypergraphic Lettrism, PAINTER AND POET are one and the same (because the genre has become the same).

The question is really how far one can go in reducing and limiting the elements of a genre and still be considered part of that genre.

"The author said to himself one day, that by drawing the word "sun" instead of writing it, he blows up the sentence where there is the idea of sun depicting the "sun" itself: instead of recalling the sun by the series of letters in which it had been seen written a thousand times, he would for the first time brilliantly break into the sentence. A new, immediate, captivating representation would enter contemporary writing."

Ж

## THE CLOUD APPRECIATION SOCIETY

My dear thumbnail,

Hello my friend, how are you? How are clouds where you are? It has been some time since we have spoken to one another. I wanted to update you on what's been happening. As you know, the letters, our annual records from The Cloud Appreciation Society of 2008, were seized and frozen several months after publication. Legal action was threatened, because another Cloud Appreciation Society exists that owns the rights to the name. Also, the two young members of our Seattle chapter unknowingly used cloud material from their public archive to create those stickers. The unfortunate result is that our annual cloud exchange is stuck in limbo, which is a mother cloud of a problem. We don't see clouds as being able to be copy-written. To resolve this issue I propose we republish our letters in a second edition using a different title, The Cloud

Letters. This will avoid legal action and thusly make available what would otherwise not be. I look forward to your response. Keep the strength, my friend, and may the sky reward you daily.

As ever,

Mr. Behoover  
Vice President

"Writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the "imagetext" incarnate." - WJT Mitchell

Ж

Sutured, sewn, becomes the one with qualities of two. As a child succumbs to its parental information only to emerge a singular new byproduct. To force an image onto text or text onto image is a weakness. The composition should arise from the shared balance and sensibility of the two. A blend of data and vision. Not simply seeing, but knowing - a haiku of sight. The drawn is a reproduction of it, the written is a recreation of it, the said is a facsimile of thought. They are the filters to activity behind the eyes.

The research is mixed. A bag of saddened murk.  
A dullard bumps into a word not seeing letters.



Tears her pearls off, she can't be honest about signage. Maybe three electric eyeballs in a cart full of academic padding. No brilliant volume to go to, to see seeing, to write seeing. The time period, usually kindergarten, between learning to draw a letter and learning to write a letter.

Ж

Would it be a better approach?  
Is it better?

How we group our letters into syllabic word sounds.

To write out in full or enumerate the letters of which a word is composed.

The inconvenience of spelling out the letters in words during normal speech exchange would be enormous.

A verbal formula considered as having magical force.

Spell out your words, put a spell on your words. Make the letters stand individually, not only as the ingredients of a word, but as sounded signage. Each letter given its due, both verbal and visual.

To write or name in correct order the letters that comprise the conventionally accepted form of (a word or part of a word).

Spell a word and everything starts to slow down.

Ж

The surface where text, visible language, joins image, the representation of visual meaning, to create the byproduct - visual poetry (vispo).

The predilection for fidgeters of text to have letters be unmoored from their word source, so as to consider even the singular letter or portions of that letter as material for composition.

Alphabetic is used loosely to connote a series of visual markings with or without semantic purpose.

Ж

Which letter or portion of that letter will quell this desire of yours.

I've arranged these letters. Put them together - next to one another. Yes, I have.

There is no one word to satisfy what it is you want of me. No collection of words. No sentence affirming or destructive enough to keep you fully engaged.

Paragraphs, as you know, are too loud, so those  
we relinquish.

Ж

The one sentence painting.

TOM TOM'S GOTTA GUN

ssS So So O So o S s au Ss o os Os so Ssss

Ж

from Klaus Peter Dencker:

"If concrete poetry has been made to serve against the wearing out of language and for the discovery of a new literalness, a new material and language awareness, then the chief service of visual poetry lies in the discovery of a new context awareness and new language reference systems, whereby language no longer means only alphabetic language."

Ж

Mallarmé once evoked "the book, total expansion of the letter," the letter, then, would seem to be the germ of the book.

Ж

from Ilse & Pierre Garnier:

"Letters, here they are galaxies. Appearance of currents, whirlwind, gusts. Jazz for the eyes...This poetry is not aimed at the mind but at the senses. Because each letter is both a line and a sound on the page. Visual and acoustic vibration: we hear these letters...through our eyes - and the music is heard in the subconscious. With the result that the page sings."

The term Garnier prefers is the German Schreibaktionen ("action writing"), which he defines as "unique and total union of conception, production, and process. Instantaneous. Spontaneous."

"Drawn out, deformed by the other words nearby, the word sometimes gets quite noticeably out of adjustment with itself"

"the word or its components taken as objects and centers of visual energy."

"The new reader" / "The new poet-reader"  
(Gomringer/Solt)

Ж

The letter "h" may be the easiest of all the Spanish letters to pronounce: It is always silent.

Ж

So, what is Linguistic Sensual Concrete Poetry?

So, what is Linguistically Sensual Concrete?

So, what is Linguistic Sensuality?

So, what is Lingual?

from Claus Clüver:

"The minimal material of some Concrete ideograms or constellations, to use the terms employed by the Brazilians and Gomringer, respectively, lend these texts the quality of "signs" in the sense of traffic signs - which was indeed a part of Gomringer's program: instant recognizability. Does that diminish the poem's worth? Marjorie Perloff wonders "whether the conflation of Concrete poetry and advertising isn't a kind of dead end for the former" and she further asks whether a text like Gomringer's "silencio" can continue to hold our attention."

"The tendency of equating Concrete with visual poetry, pernicious when it occurs in widely used literary glossaries and dictionaries, needs to be redirected..."



from Lars Elleström:

"Printed poetry has a solid, two-dimensional material interface, or a sequential combination of such interfaces (if realized in the technical medium of a book). It is perceived by the eyes, but also when read silently it becomes apparent that it also has latent auditory qualities in the conventional system of signification called language. Most poetry gains its meaning through these conventional signs, but there may also be substantial portions of iconicity in both the visual form of the text and the silent, inner sound experiences produced by the mind. In terms of spatiotemporality, printed poetry is essentially spatial. Very rarely, virtual space is perceived as a result of illusive depth in the two-dimensional visual appearance of the poem, whereas virtual space in the sense of illusionary worlds is often created. Printed poems that are dominated by

readable words, rather than, for instance, clusters of letters, are indirectly (partly) sequential since the conventional signs (partly) determine the temporal realization of the written language."

Ж

Populated islands in the back throat.

Ж

from Philadelpho Menezes:

"In my practice as a poet, I have been trying to investigate especially the new forms that technological media suggest for organizing visual and sound signs in space and time. But I try to escape from the specific problems of form to head for a semantic field where the complex

relation between reality and thought for aesthetic signs is imposed. In 1985 in Sao Paulo I organized a polemical exhibition, called "Intersign Poetry," in which I proposed that after decades of experiments with sound and image effects, experimental poetry must address itself also to the new meanings that new forms can produce. Such poetry must begin with the opened possibilities of organization of the form in new syntaxes required by technology, if one works with technical media, or suggested by technology, if one works on paper or with traditional means.

Linguistic and semiotic theories agree with the idea that our thought is conditioned by the form and the organization of the signs in a discourse. And these theories argue that language is fascist, as Roland Barthes said, because it imposes a procedure of thinking and guides us to a certain

concept of reality which reinforces the system of language. We can escape from this vicious circle only if we are able to perceive the fragility of the links between signs and thought, language and reality. Poetry is the chief guide for this practice because it exposes the sign as a touchable event that makes signs as real as the material world, in spite of the fact that signs are a creation of thought."

Ж

This bird has particularly good posture

Ж

My Dear Behoover,

How nice to hear from you after so long a break! Clouds have gotten darker in Budapest (or it is my weakening eyesight), but we're still in business. My young colleague has gotten fed up with clouds and moved to the Mediterranean where he can concentrate on his "old passion", the sky. (I was not surprised.) The Cloud Letters would be a perfect title and if we get in trouble again for any reason, please bear in mind that our Budapest Office is now specializing in cloud insurance. (I've attached a pair of stamps for your convenience.)

Hope you're doing well, and I wish you all best,

m. R. koppp'  
Vice- & V.-President  
The Cloud Appreciation Society  
Budapest

Exploding seed pods

Lunar hemorrhage

La escritura, en su forma física, gráfica, es una sutura inseparable de lo visual y lo verbal, la encarnación del "ImageText".

So, what's the most suitable response.

...bit, fraction, piece, scrap, cantle, shred, tatter;  
end, leftover, oddment, remainder, remnant,  
stub; portion, section, segment; chip, flake,  
shard, shatter, shiver, sliver, splinter; clipping,  
paring, shaving; atom, crumb, dribble, fleck,  
flyspeck, grain, granule, molecule, morsel, mote,  
nubbin, nugget, particle, patch, scruple, snip,  
snippet, speck, tittle of a letter.

Vitacura, Chile 2013

## NOTES

Vispo is clearly a response to language. It tends to enhance the quantum aspects of language by focusing on the elemental design parts of language material. What's that mean? People like fidgeting with alphabet.

Vispo is a response to reading and writing language. There is a connection between seeing writing and writing reading and reading seeing. Vispoets transmogrify, they undo the word, they reveal the potential locked in the word by visually deconstructing it. They replace language with other visual language. Vispo is Poetry's bastard child, a figment of language's imagination.

My fascination with how letters sit beside each other and patiently wait to be freed of their word logic scrum hasn't subsided. So, I capture that alphabetic dalliance as document of some future language event. Vispo is a byproduct of ones

experience with literature, with writing, reading and seeing. It's about how you look and read your way passed words and refamiliarize yourself with the intentional drawing of letters.

New York, 2014



## ONE LETTER AFTER ANOTHER

Yes, the word and letters are distressed  
The word cannot exist without letters  
And letters are designed to make words  
What horror  
This conflict of opposition

Then sound, then letter, then word,  
    then sentence  
Oh yes, sentence, complicated word sequence  
Further confused with piles of letters -  
    a collection of sentences  
A dotted field of harvested hay  
Blah, blah, blah

The word will unclench and let letters fall  
    to the floor  
The letter's prowess to capture the eye  
The word is become effortless and lazy  
A lack of focus  
Softened without point and in peril

Word

A word

For being a collection of letters

A manufacture

We agree on

With letters

Make words

A manufacture

We agree on

A word vibrates for a moment

And its letters move away and then from each  
other

The letters glued to the word give way

The letter glue

Letter glue on each side of the letter

Letter after letter adheres to the other

Words form that easily  
One letter after another  
Then they break  
Detach  
Just to reconvene  
Again  
In another word

What horror  
This conflict of opposition

Word has an identity problem  
Not knowing who he is  
Not knowing if he'll change when the letters  
change  
He is letters after all  
Word is a form convenience

A word walks to the edge  
and starts dropping one letter after another  
What the word means starts to change

The word is recreation  
A proxy to whatever we experience  
A ball, a bat, a movie, a toy, that Stan Getz  
Waters of March song that lists items  
Lists everything

Where one hand reaches into a box

Letters followed by letters pulled  
Box after box  
Till a word finds the arrangement of  
letters a word should be

And this word will stand for something  
Will be applied to an item, an object,  
a way of going

And what the eye can see  
Words afloat around us  
Nailed to every surface and printed on any  
product we handle

Fine print, gross print, mixed ink, we sink



## ALPHABET NOIR

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