

e-flux journal #22 — january–february 2011 <u>Gregg Bordowitz</u> Eclipse

01/06

Each day a required task remains undone And the mind can't know what isn't finished

So, the soul continues to feel alone Unable to picture its own wishes

The eyes glaze over news from Washington Vacations collect painted shells on sills

Getting out of bed demands volition pills

I have nothing to make, no gallery Yet I persist in calling myself art

Not the maker but the thing itself. Fear Of the unstructured and unopposed – life

An interminable question – what if? Poised where one thing ends and another starts

How attached I am to vague discontent Here now the quality of obscurity

Remoteness of touch, blurred appearances What this substance called fear-of-being is

A future of one's own, without consent Subject to fantasy, unhappiness

Nothing but the hollow empty feeling Thinking of a chore more common than rent

A flaw no less appealing than money O, the near rhyme of its proximity

It being something that cannot be told Held like perplexity, as value

Phony, counterfeit, yet somehow principled Reportage is such a nice word for it

I live in a fever dream astounded Chewing on food without taste's amusement

Listening to the sound of teeth touching Wondering how the current is ground meat

It's all a matter of my defenses Reduced to hidden corners, crouching down

Off-kilter supported by meeting walls The comfort of geometric limits

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I am finished with the life of the mind The life itself cured me of that ailment

One many revolutions of a wheel Invisible hamster-like progressions

The length of time remains fruitlessly still Marching to war against dull wrung senses Downward motion is stirring to the soul Disorder as tight circular returns

The ground rises to meet the level eyes Swirling the oval tilts back in laughter

Leaden with gravity and goalless effort Dying is the only verb called for here

Summoning the bored creaking mechanism Summing up the biomechanical

Crying becomes analog for glisten Shiny, repetitious, strung pearl globules

Linked all together as varicose veins Age, knowledge and yearning in a sentence

Finding in, the preposition pointing A circle either makes itself or not

For in the work of searching I am found Cast, melted or molded as fashion

Crafted with timely details, edges round Sought after, but not caressed in order

Spun from one gain to another decrease Roundness, I, not perfectly circular

But many-studded, a devious hat Lifted off the steaming head – wintry

Its line follows a path of discontent Leading around avoiding all corners

Goes to one of four burners, pilot lit Pots and pans rest on the cooking surface

All encircles the hot morning habit Repeatedly returning the purpose

Sunshine, news, morbid depression, fretting Heat off the rippling surface steaming face

Stultified and incredulous Two words appropriate to depression

In their specificity of purpose They are both proper to the condition

Is this the poem or the mood I write? The difference between thought and feeling

Must I choose among senses, sound or sight? As if one is more proper to being

Not perfect still I am found in spirit Submerged permeated contained infused

Alternately both agent and subject The two being the same, it's confusing All existing prepositional it Increasing knowledge dispels delusion

Is mysticism a refuge or retreat? Letting go of all facile solutions

Divine impulses hold fascination As the poet crafts his own vehicle

Aesthetic judgments rhyme with sensation They investigate what's empirical

Meter is the order of creation A numerical system beneath all

Life's a gradual accumulation Adding up to the inevitable

Cliché is the future of all poems Words exert no mastery over will

Poems explore every condition Physical, political, mystical

They confound reason with core emotions They expand what we think is reasonable

But the chief purpose is not expression The purpose is simple – fundamental

Writing constructs a girding suspension Fixing holding supporting encircles

Catches the present for recollections Turns experience into little pills

Imaginary reports that surround The spatial configurations of illness

Unlocatable origins of sound The theory as substance of belief

Talking about forms and how thoughts subtend How bracts extend underneath their petals

Finding the point of a line, touching the ground Letting go of sense, relieved of power

Contemplate the oval in its roundness To conceive of nothing, forget the hour

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Let's make 'I am here' the sole proponent Lose control. Rise up to fall down

How to talk about circularity? A question arises about language

The names we have don't match appearances Who's to tell what one does to another?

And how does one make the damn topic rhyme? Trust no scheme with any fidelity I'm bored, fatigued, I have too much baggage The frames we use don't catch the nuances

I'm through with description – why bother? I'm getting older, running out of time

No more interest in identity What is perception? What's reality?

To be in the world and not of the world I recall that Lenin instructed that

O, to be done with collecting these pearls Sayings and maxims, masters long deceased

Deeply alienated from this world And there is no outside from which to judge

This is about prepositions and roles About how we connect object to object

The way behavior swings between two poles And how we remain in constant discomfort

We exist inside something enfolded Knowing ourselves only through habit

Through prepositions we move things, get fed Survive by actions conjoined with projects

We move in circles until we are dead Leaving memories and a few effects

The ear moves between the world and the dead Here each line describes this trajectory

Transcribing views from within an ellipse Testifying to the hazy border

I'm trying to get beyond this crisis To make some sense of my fractured order

With words find meaningful ways to exist Be all elements, earth fire air water

Trying to render language matter Daily I touch the creative process

There is no purpose or reason to persist The aim is to get beyond bitterness

Because the house of reason collapsed And we were all present bearing witness

We are reliving matters of the past Confusing present and future tenses

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<u>Gregg Bordowitz</u> is a writer and artist. His most recent book *General Idea: Imagevirus* was published as part of Afterall Books' One Work series. Bordowitz is currently the Chair of the Film, Video, New Media, and Animation Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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