

from **COSMOGRAPHIES**

for Neeli Cherkovski

II.

In the beginning
the spiritual absolute

even nothingness was not

but there was
something else, too

some semblance
of sly possibility

the chaos of
attractive truths

a struggle of soul
an assemblage

of spheres
knowledge, moon

precious stones & soon
first light of logic

magic of mind
jewelry of reason

jasper of time
the Jack of Hearts

quartz & quill
wearing white

& laying still
the woolen oak

along the river.

IV.

Can
self-exile heal

that which
language will

be, as
language is?

Never to be-
come a com-

plete nation,
never further

*than a woman
can walk*

in a day,

unless
governed as such

love will
always come

& go, save for
old, exalted

withdrawal of
Thought. How

we do love
to order all—

the candle
drips

when darkness
falls, plant

seeds in rows
quench thirst

in sips. Poems
come & poems

go, taking
with them only

what we
let go of.

Whole oceans
of meaning

revealed
cannot be

replaced
by that which

you feel.
Don't ask me

what I mean.
Don't tell me

what you mean.
Meaning

is the murder
of process.

THE ALPHABET'S BOOK OF FIRST FIRE

I.

The magic of all theater gives us a sense of place:

There is a lamp in the desert

gathering light
from pure darkness

It is our job to keep it lit—

I'd like to *suggest* *forever*

When I say *suggest*, I do not mean as an action
& when I say *forever*, I do not mean as measurement or duration

What I mean to say is:

Is / Just / Be / What if not this

II.

Fever your way into my dream

13,000 years ago the Pleistocene's final heave:

—it was a particularly dry year—late summer/low waters—

the last obstinacy of antique bison making its way down
from the Uncompahgre to cross the Grande River

Paleolithic Rock Clickers, first peoples of this place, follow

etymologies of their own geographies

wearing heavy wet leathers
carrying whatever they can
first things which might define a world

Upon crossing they walk themselves dry in the last syllables of the sun

& in the first syllables of night
find themselves here
they are right here tending
to their fire
an 800,000 year-old fire
they are clicking their rocks
they are clicking their rocks
they are clicking their rocks
they are singing their song
their deep song
they are singing this song
this deep song
they are gathering light from pure darkness

first things which might define a world

WESTERN SUITE FOR DANNY
ON HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

this desert air carries
promise this morning

*and beautiful tears
have blossomed in my eyes.*

Jack Mueller is dead.
Apollinaire, too,

and Mallarme.

Neeli has asked
that I keep him
alive when he goes.

And so I will.

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

let us rejoice
in the Gathering Light!

And let us rejoice
the supermarket is full

full of peas and full of men
who love peas,
men, who love peas, with guns on their hips!

Ah! I think I'll let my beard grow!

*How strange to be gone
in a minute, how strange indeed.*

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

just yesterday I was washed
upon some distant shore

but a chance inside someone else's dream—

just yesterday I was born
and tonight I will die

in light having traveled
for billions of years

atoms of us
carrying love

this far
only to die

just yesterday, *even nothingness was not*

and it still is

it only wishes
to convince us
otherwise

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

this knowledge of moon
this magic of mind
this *dumb submarine*
this quantum cluster
 of what the fuck
this Gathering Light
this Vision of Johanna
this reverb oil slick
this peace seed
 thumbed in the soil
 of wars
this beautiful reminder
 of who the fuck cares
this love and that
this love and that
this love and that
this Gathering Light
this beautiful reminder
 there are no straight lines
 and there are many straight lines
this deep mystery
this wonder of what
this beautiful reminder

this beautiful reminder
 of Jack in hospice
 kissing my hand
 and I kissing his
 “You’re a source,”
 he said.

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

*(from a working translation
of Camino del Nielol
by Teófilo Cid)*

Solitude is a reflection
of the sacred hours

White ribbons
spilling into the deep black
compact mechanism

Memories worn
by pointy shoes
on the cushions
of quiet temples.

Solitude is a pond
filled with animals
of alcohol

Thousands of nicotine tribes
leave on fragile canoes of thirst
under skies of intoxicated clouds.

I am overcome
by the rivers full
of dead leaves

Trees of sugar
flood of Angelica
dried in the sun

My solitude
is an umbrella that breaks
like a piece from my voice

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

Danny turns 60 today
and he has lived
as variously as possible

he has wandered about
and within himself
a cosmos within a cosmos
an ocean full of oceans

it's 11:17 AM and the sun is shining
no one wants to shoot me today

it's 11:18 AM and the sun is shining
my coffee is still warm

it's 11:19 AM and the sun is shining
I am thinking of my beautiful daughter

it's 11:20 AM and the sun is shining
the Nuggets won last night
and Joker had a triple double

it's 11:21 AM and the sun is shining
somewhere a woman is forgiving herself
though she has nothing to be sorry for

it's 11:22 AM and the sun is shining
I know Art Goodtimes!

it's 11:23 AM and the sun is shining
I feel such great despair, but I'm alive

*Grace to be born and live
as variously as possible,*

Danny if I go first, hang a rock from every tree in Pollack Canyon.

If you go first, I'll stack rock upon rock until they reach an agreement.

KYLE HARVEY

Kyle Harvey is the author of the poetry collection, *Hyacinth*, a finalist for the Colorado Book Award, and winner of the Mark Fischer Poetry Prize. His work has appeared in *American Life in Poetry*, *Dirty Chai*, *Dream Pop*, *Empty Mirror*, *Entropy*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *HOUSEGUEST*, *Metatron*, *Pilgrimage*, *Pith*, *Poems-For-All*, *SHAMPOO*, *Think Journal*, *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, and elsewhere. He has published two serial poems, *July* and *Farewell Materials* (Lithic Press), as well as a package of broadsides titled *The Alphabet's Book of Colors* (Reality Beach). He is working on a documentary film about Jack Mueller called *Portolano*, a manuscript titled *The Alphabet That Never Recovers*, and a translation of *Camino del Ñielol* by Chilean poet Teófilo Cid. He lives with his wife and children in Fruita, Colorado, where he manages Lithic Bookstore & Gallery and designs books for Lithic Press.