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I've had my little rebellions about the old aesthetics of identity, symmetry and flow. But the problems inevitably reach beyond the sentence into narrative itself:

**Flo sux**

Do you want to be buoyed by the viscous, mellifluous current; do you want a sure poultice for your wounds; do you want continuities; do you want a certain mirror from page to page? You want a prediction rule and a foreshadowing rule and a consistency rule and life-comes-full-circle rule? Flow rules, OK? But does it flow? you say.

I reckon flow suxks.

Look, sweetheart, I'm a woman who's edgy. I like edges; I like the slipping edge, like dislocation at the fault-line of I and I and I from me, a shattering and refaceting of the compound eye, like feeling my resistances against the AC and the DC, lending my miraculously stretchy skin to those charged intervals. I like unlikely couplings winking across impossible
TELEPHONY OR PHONEY TELOS

space...I like a surface where dispersed entities—words, lines, blobs—spark their reciprocal fires to find no specular satisfaction but intensify their differences. Clusters of potentiality (you can call them characters or figures or motifs or...) process their singular losses and let their separation testify to this in their cross-hatchings. I will not use an overall treatment as if they are the same, subdued the same. They can be elements from other perceptual repertoires but they’re not just promiscuously quoted. Yet Daisy Duck can live in Ledaville. These elements, wherever they come from, are not subdued by a new master framing: they’re not set in commerce with one another for the profit of the Big M Message. But they celebrate their irreducible differences in a pyrotechnics of loss, a polylogue of potlatch. They love the loss across space from their nervy excited edges. I, I am pleasured in the charged field of that improbable dialogue.

I want a waking pleasure. Flo sux.¹

I am writing about a novel that cannot become.

Character and story are troubled categories if you want to produce identities and sexualities subject to the flux of fantasy identifications. Telos, or narrative that is destination-driven, in which a recoverable sequence mimes some cause-and-effect nexus, is going to be inevitably threatened. And yet, and yet, there is loss, there is drama, because you cannot produce any spaces for imagining responsible subjects in society if you just promiscuously launch improvisational selves into the textual/social as if becoming-other were limitless. Telling stories, as I’ll try to indicate in a sequence from the novel that isn’t, remains one of the strongest resistant practices for those who haven’t historically had access to the discourses that have framed them.

And I am haunted, too, by a primitive need, no matter what postmodern feminist theories might tell me, for some founding story of loss, alternative scenarios that might enable me to claim the loss as invention. This is the tension from which I write and cannot write narrative; this is the tension from which I can only write draglines, lines of an un-becoming drama. I would like to fix once and for all
the mimic, ditch mimesis or the old nostalgia to reproduce, and, rather, to trace in fictive space the mutual imbrication of desire and being in the world in productive writing so that the drive towards you is the motricity and the motor city through which our encounters are screened; I’d like for there to be nothing but traces of writing fading in the rear-vision mirror, no loss. This is what others do very well, like Nicole Brossard, not I.

To imagine such positive practices, an important first step might be to forgo, as Judith Butler has suggested, the psychoanalytical obsession with originary narrative:

Although Rose, Mitchell, and other Lacanian feminists insist that identity is always a tenuous and unstable affair, they nevertheless fix the terms of that instability with respect to a paternal law which is culturally invariant. The result is a narrativized myth of origins in which primary bisexuality is arduously rendered into a melancholic heterosexuality through the inexorable force of the law.

Rather than fixation of identity, a performance model would admit to a variable play of ‘gender identifications’:

Consider the claim, integral to much psychoanalytic theory, that identifications and, hence identity, are in fact constituted by fantasy.

Judith Butler formulates the production of gender identities as transfiguration, which can be related to Pamela Bunting’s equally anti-reproduction translation model developed from Hélène Cixous’s body-voice relations.

If gender is constituted by identification and identification is invariably a fantasy within a fantasy, a double figuration, then gender is precisely the fantasy enacted by and through corporeal styles that constitute bodily significations.
Butler develops the implications of Foucault's rejection of internalization as it operates in the service of the repressive hypothesis:

The soul is precisely what the body lacks; hence, that lack produces the body as its other and as its means of expression. In this sense then, the soul is a surface signification that contests and displaces the inner/outer distinction itself, a figure of interior psychic space inscribed on the body as a social signification that perpetually renounces itself as such.\(^5\)

If gender performance then becomes a fantasy (of interiority) of a fantasy (identification) inscribed on the body surface, then a writing practice that performs sexualities would involve a fluctuating play of intensities, endlessly subject to reconfiguration through the encounters or fantasized encounters of these already-busy-body-surfaces with other already-busy-body-surfaces.

In leaning towards 'you', 'I' fantasize infinite becomings through \textit{palimpsexes} all over my skin. 'I' can always everywhere be rewriting and performing sexuality.

The speaking subject is not completely merged with the thinking subject. Drives, passions, flesh, logic, nerves, the tissues of her throat, the slip of syllables and words on her tongue, the sound waves lapping her inner ear, the qualities of the public space, even her trembling knees—enter into the play of subjectivity and signification. Thus her speaking body cannot be reduced to phallocentric vocality. Her body cannot be corralled by speech. Nor can it be coerced into controlling her speech.

For Cixous, what takes place between a woman's body and her words is not representation but a fluctuating process of intersemiotic translation.\(^6\)

What I am after is not representation of any body through some sort of written mimicry, not writing as the fallout of speech. I want to travel through tracts of that intersemiotic space (between

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body/voice; sex/text) as the erotic field. If fictive ‘voices’ are produced in this space, they are not nostalgic for any ‘voice’ that might precede them; these voices trace rather a choreography of the gap, so what is missing in translation becomes a rhythmic enactment. What is missing in translation, as Bunting writes through her negotiation of Cixous, this babble of othering tongues in the inner ear, begins in the scene of writing, to produce and not to reproduce scenarios of desire-in-the-world, in the intersubjective theatre of memory and desire.

My own personal investments aside, it strikes me that the lesbian text can provide privileged sites, in some of its enactments, for exploring a sexuality on-the-make through the fictively productive aspects of language itself because it can explore the othering within the feminine other and othering within the subjective site. The flow from one to the other demands difference between and within the ‘same’, which in any case, we know after Irigaray, is not one.

In a valuable article, ‘Lifting belly is a language: The postmodern lesbian subject’, Penelope J. Englebrecht cites approvingly the linguistic productivity of the lesbian desire in Gertrude Stein’s ‘Lifting Belly’:

I say lifting belly and then I say lifting belly and Caesars. I say lifting belly and Caesars gently. I say lifting belly again and Caesars again. I say lifting belly and I say Caesars and I say lifting belly Caesars and cow come out.

Can you read my print.
Lifting belly say can you see the Caesars. I can see what I kiss.

Baby my baby I backhand for thee.
She is a sweet baby and well baby and me.
This is the way I see it.
Lifting belly can you say it.

She is my sweetheart.
Why doesn’t she resemble an other.

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This I cannot say here.

Full of love and echoes. Lifting belly is full of love.

I becomes a backhand complement for thee, I is doing writing that in the mirror is different from itself, I is the othering in the space of the mirroring relation ("Why doesn't she resemble an other"). I rewrites the tradition of the love poem (flow from I to thee in the heterosexual space) in the space of lifting belly, a female semiosis, coming to the other, a blissing semiosis. This is an approach that does not produce breasts but translates the kissable as Caesars, the writerly fallout.

I would argue, counter to Englebrecht’s criticism of Monique Wittig’s The Lesbian Body, that although ‘the shadow of the phallus’ might fall in unlikely places, the kind of constant othering of the I-thee relation practised by Wittig here prevents any phallic arrest of sexual becoming.

In Wittig’s The Lesbian Body, it’s the velocity, even in immobility of the becoming-body (Deleuzoguattarian before the letter), that is celebrated in the body of the language, in the materiality of the letter. It’s the metamorphosing energy of the desiring lesbian that is celebrated, turning the whole imaginary into endless and accelerated desiring machinery. In The Lesbian Body je(I) is always split, always in intimate and slippery relation with the l/other: each text, in appropriating the prayer-like invocation, is a remaking of subjectivity. The way I hail you changes me. If I address you as Superbitch or Sappho, as Centaura or as Sphinx, as Goddess-of-All-Things, as Mother-Who-Hath-Abandoned-Me-In-My-Hour-of-Need, as Winged-Victoria-Made-of-Steel who machinically disassembles me—I constantly assume new shapes, new levels, new scriptural layers, new states of the palimpsest: I am constantly othering myself.

I fall I fall I drag you down with me in this hissing spiralling fall speak to m/e turbulent maelstrom cursed adored pain of pleasure joy tears of joy I take you down with me your arms wrapped around m/e turning around two bodies lost in the silence are infinite spheres, what is the self, someone at her window, can she say she
sees me going by, gentle muzzled milk lamb cat I spit at you, spit at you spit you out...\textsuperscript{11}

This is taken further by Nicole Brossard in *Picture Theory*:\textsuperscript{12}

th'I\textsuperscript{13} force familiar is desire so similar. I say *after the text* and the remark rises from the body of woman into a thinking woman.

Or this, the white scene that rewrites radically Henry James's pattern in the carpet as it does Mallarmé's scene of writing with its Hegelian notions of the Idea:

i add; so there are two scenes. One dated the 16th of May, the other very close to it. The book scene and the rug scene. Riveted to each other as though held in suspense by writing, we exist in the laborious creation of desire of which we can conceive no idea. Or the Idea, everything that manages to metamorphose mental space. Sort of pre-requisite Idea in order to remember that networks exist. The white scene is a relay that persists as writing while the body dictates its clichés, closes its eyes on the mouths that open to repetition touched by fate in their own movement. Faced with what is offered: the extravagance of surfaces, transparence of the holographed scene.\textsuperscript{14}

Back to my novel that isn't, *Draglines*. These are, of course, the lines spiders use to parachute and to travel on airdrafts; also fishing lines, which drag and might well dredge up the unexpected; but of course, lines of writing in which cross-dressing or re- and un-gendering might be possible. The shadow of the phallus can fall in my text and *I* can be clitorally punctual and driven; *I* can be welling/willing, *I* can go on and on and on, cyclonically. *I* can be Asif, a fantasized alien boy, a Bidon, inhabiting the *Bidonville* or the shanty town, the junk zone of capitalist representations, because I as a woman in some ways can fantasize our connection, although I might have no right to do so.
I can be Tom-Tom, the syncopated one, never quite coincident with herself wherever she sounds, always beating beside herself, who becomes other as she imagines couplings variously. I chose the name for the resonance of Tom-boy, sure, but especially for the idea of the tattoo, as drumming and inscription, inside and out. She can become her own disbelieving narrator, or as Peeping Tom, the figure of the prowler, the marauding masculine at the picture window. This Tom-Tom is not a character; this is a matrix inhabited by difference and which is subjected to repetition throughout the text in the knowledge that repetition is impossible.

I know about peeping tommery:
I prowl inside and outside the draglines
As a writer I am prowler and prowled upon
finger and fingered
I am the heart and the pulsing relay
I am delayed in tattoos
all over the place

In a way my writing began before Lines of Flight with a little thing about showing my father's body: excessive, he was a weightlifter but he was light and small on the photo. I who had no father showed him. The scene has a hallucinatory clarity: whether lived or imagined as first transgression. I showed my friend in order to be valued by her, the body of God and there was no penis, the left thigh being raised to mask it. I was the little girl with only a missing man with a censored penis to show...

**Exhibit Number One:** look for what is missing and you'll find something else.

There is always something else to dream up in the folds of writing.

The sense of replacing the father or loss of that embodied-voice has been my vice, as in *twisting device*, my loopiness connecting me with what prowls outside. There is the return of the missing father to haunt the writing, the voice that whispers:
I the prowler

I am a little girl and there's always a prowler outside my picture window. The prowler watches me watch. I paint what I want to watch in my picture window. Sometimes I paint the prowler myself. The prowler looks like me in some of these pictures. But I'm stuck in my spot and the prowler prowls. The prowler is sniggering in the labyrinths of my ear as I paint. The prowler is the marauder in the margins of my notebooks. The prowler says: *Arrest that contour, fix that line. This is what she means—if she's writing for anyone but her own vicious circle.* The prowler is my intimate framer. The prowler is my right hand. The prowler says: What are you looking at, girl; wouldn't you like one too? This is what the little girl wants, the prowler says. The prowler says: I'll be your dealer if you'll stay behind that picture window. Sometimes the prowler is God. Sometimes he is my father before he bounces off the trampoline, the voice of the mothers I invent. The prowler's feverishly flicking eye and side shuffle are my own imposture returning in the dark. I write sometimes like a straight guy. What I dredge up in my draglines, you'd be surprised. The prowler returns to haunt me. The prowler's an old hand at cross-dressing. He finds me out when I sneak into his baggy pants, iron-shiny serge, low at the crotch, his twisted belt. The prowler is the paradigm policeman: he whispers at my ear: they'll say you're mad, self-indulgent, illiterate, you who'd be subversive with your naughty language games, see how your rebel words clot with your fear. You'll never have the guts to be lawless like me, to be a real iconoclast, that means image-breaker, sweetheart. You a terrorist, ha! If that is true, a terrorist is just an orphaned baby. And by the way, it is I who made up the Spider. Caught you there!

I'm trained to think with a simulated alien brain. I'm in constant dialogue with it. I make a nice couple: I make a nuclear family all by myself. The prowler says you will never shatter the glass of their representations. Obedience gives style
I can be Tom-Tom, the syncopated one, never quite coincident with herself wherever she sounds, always beating beside herself, who becomes other as she imagines couplings variously. I chose the name for the resonance of Tom-boy, sure, but especially for the idea of the tattoo, as drumming and inscription, inside and out. She can become her own disbelieving narrator, or as Peeping Tom, the figure of the prowler, the marauding masculine at the picture window. This Tom-Tom is not a character; this is a matrix inhabited by difference and which is subjected to repetition throughout the text in the knowledge that repetition is impossible.

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and panache to your revolts. Kick a door open you'd make sure your foot described an arabesque. The prowler incites and rebukes. The prowler wrote this on his visiting card.¹⁵

For Tom-Tom, the Banksiaman is the Prowler Elect, since around her grandmother's house these trees proliferate.

What the writing does is appropriate this figure: this is the hairy libidinous agency threatening to carry off and drop from great heights the innocent gumnut babies. I, the gumnut baby, am in love with the Banksiaman. It is not a man but the potential that the binary base of heterosexual Anglo-Celt drama chases to the other side of the picture window; because in some ways, the Banksiaman is a racist hallucination, the Imaginary Savage.

So I've got Tom-Tom, the figure of ambiguity, the syncopated heart, the prowled upon, the split-from-the-beginning sexual subject, the good girl and the delinquent, and I have the picture window.

If there is a telos it is a phoney one, the 0, what is missing in the voice-become-vice, the phallic principle, twisted into vice: look at me apprenticing myself, learning to look crooked, taking up the prowler's sidestep.

It is literally loving myself as something that might return on the other side of the glass. It is getting this habit: sidestepping from the windows of my own life, and finding myself suddenly ablaze. Saying: Yes, that's where I am.

Down in the square the men are playing pétanque. P-tank p-tank. Little white chalky puffs hang in the air where the ball thuds. Remember Lou and me back then in the schoolyard. We were retards in a sense, the others talking boys and socials. At twelve we were still chalking out the hopscotch. Hopscotch, hot crotched. Our brown legs with the down all sun-bleached. Our ponytails swinging, thick and glossy. Still feel the flame of those first blood passions. Sun in the blood; it was enough. Even the eye imagining all the senses was enough.

See me, little, watching for hours the banksia's bright cobs knocking at the glass, their glistening styles captive, close. I read close in my picture window. I trace with my tongue the nectar-heavy unfurling of the banksia styles until one, two, many, tip at the
glass and write a honeyed trail. The slow approach of style to glass is what I like. It's the wonder. The wonder of the approach, before the encounter. Against the blown-up banksia I can see my dark eyes seeing, this mouth parted to speak Banksia; see me cloud it with my fogging breath. These styles are becoming me. I see me on my stomach taking the texture of the old Honan squares into my skin. These styles uncurl like chameleons' tongues. I am licked with the mystery of the chameleon tongue.

My third-person narrator who frames Tom-Tom's first feels the barman's gaze like a stylus on her lids reading her reading.

What kind of conceit was that, he'd say, the chameleon's point of view? For the chameleon was the change of self always the same? Could it taste the rewards of such solipsism? Some clever bastard said of Peter Sellers that he was as fucked up as a chameleon crossing a kilt. If your character's like that, it doesn't augur well for your story, my dear. But did love have to be arrested in an object? Was only the drive towards divinity allowed to be intransitive? Perhaps there were some ethics to be rescued in this intransitive love that now she was trying to capture. For all the semblance of betrayal, perhaps Tom-Tom had only ever loved through people, onwards, onwards. Trying to frame her writings, was it this she was trying to capture?

Still it was the self in house arrest of adulthood, the self-seriousness, the fixation of the identikit, that made all the dangerous fictions. The effigy of arrested potential that she had become, too. But if you gave yourself to constant innovation, what then of integration? How did you stop falling apart, bits of self racing into space? Was that where Tom-Tom had failed? Still there were these little moments of repose where she'd remembered what counted. Bad-timing. You have to make your knowledge inform your action; it's more than simply dancing it. Tom-Tom had been seduced by the wrong notion of dance, perhaps.

Banksias. The barman watched her watching the season through its fast-forward until the banksia cob, still hairy but as
in the organized memory of hair the artist drew, creaked open its many lips and spoke. The cobs had long since spat their seeds or popped them unwillingly in the fires that always nearly took the house. Banksias knew how to live with their skeletons: on the same branches, the glowing cob, honeyed and heavy, and the austere old ones like etchings waiting for developments into gaudier media. In disproportion to the stem of the tiniest seedling, the taproots were long. They looked robust enough but their secondaries were fragile. They wore their nervous systems on the outside. And Tom-Tom? The tiniest seedling required a massive excavation for transplantation. You could see even in those newspaper photos that the self-sown ruled: it dictated the configuration of glamorous gold and scratchy grey at those bullet-starred windows. The rule of the self-sown, ha. She felt her jaw lock into a howl that might never be released.

Out of the Banksia notation, this dance of the Banksia knowledge, comes the first writing, and it is a wild yelping, a sacrifice of pants and fixed gender alignments:

**Running writing**

People from the highway see late into the night Grandma Maeve lit like a black and white negative under the old hurricane lamp hanging from the iron lace and through the sprawling shadows, they see me the girl running wild.

The bonfire ceremonies. I have Little Joe and Zak and Josie race around the bonfire whooping to my gobbledygook chant. I'm a boss. Don't question it. The ceremony peaks with our tossing our underpants to the flames, as we wave our sizzling sparklers. It is running writing we're doing. There's a message in the sparklers' looping trace, but I won't translate it. That'd kill the magic. Around us we can hear the old banksia cobs mumble words without saliva, catching, tearing them on their horny lips:
Schnapschnick
schnapschnick
prrrack!
lip
lip
lipslung
lip
lip
lap
liplap
lalalipslung
garrouff
garrrrouff
prreetkuluu
kuuluuu
lala
liplip
lalalipsong
garrouff
garrouff

She later sees herself as the prowler running outside the windows of her own life, outside the language. Coming to write, there's nothing. She's been so busy being on the make, there's only the zero white scene of potentiality.

Point blank

Wipe out. Zero characters, it reads on my menu. Do you read me? There's nothing on my file. I become the cursor shouting: give me blanks any time before white lies. And I am the mangy, rangy bitch, running, sniffing outside lexis. I've left behind the security blanket. I rattle my bones in the blanks of your visions and revisions. I parade my blank-mange: lick this, Sir. Itching scabs stitch my skin. And you talk of syntax in the poem parlours of your memory. You pamper your sleek bodytexts. Try, as I consider razor wire, the cursor growls, just try to get me with your blank bullets. See how the sores run.
Payment? RESTITUTION for infecting you in my viral returns? Here’s my blank cheque. It makes you blanch? You with your lethal chic and aerobic tongues, have your checkout chicks check this one out: my signature is full of blanks. A Bidon dragline, a Laporian scrawl, you say. You give me that blank smile you reserve for us. Your memory bank’s gone blank. Maybe there are no words for such as me. Your look says it loud and clear: you blanking blank, you’ve blanked our blank, you blanker. Come on: who’s tossing the blanket now?

The Spider is a fantasy (exorcised like a motif from an orientalist text) between these two, Tom-Tom and Asif. One of my themes has been the old lure of radical chic of which my characters are guilty, borrowing, not unlike myself, motifs from other people’s struggles while doing precious little in the world.

The Spider (the mediating relation between self and other, ethnic and cultural, a fiction) is something like a necessary hallucination, between them. She is, if you like, the principle of transfiguration necessary for one sex to speak to the other, to fantasize the other and to meet in a field of desire. In a sense, Tom-Tom has made up the Asif to whom she relates through the Spider.

**Now our web**

We crochet the lines between us as we change to see us pass one another by make our negative passes mismatching what passes for us and now our web is this draft of where we might be a messy thing indeed this need to fabricate a spider out of the tenuous lace of little deeds

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Self-improvisation, sexuality-on-the-make, brings on the seductions of betrayal. Commitment is unthinkable in this ethos, if the Spider will be transcendental, arrogating for herself the glamour of The Struggle.

**Arachnocidal**

Yeah she has us all doing the spiral scaffolding which she removes once the structure's there so you've got to say the web is hers. We're just the agents of her eccentricity; we provide her epicentres, dance attendance upon her phantom pregnancies. We manufacture Spider clones for her. Sure we work. With our pedipalps we service her all right: we puncture, probe, crochet. We tick-tack dance on live-wire legs but we're choreographed by her. We digest her food for her: so she eats outside herself. We are her kitchen and her stomach. We dangle from our draglines and perform for her a relay of decoys. Need be she'll expend us all. We know the risk and love her for it: at any time any one of us can become her food. Caught plucking out our amorous code, when she's in that mood, we're lover-tucker: we're running webstruck, all of us.

As if it were her own image, Tom-Tom counters in her femraps the macho struttings of the Bidon migrant workers with the theme of polyphony as female anarchic return in the monolingo of the Dominant Culture:

**My femraps**

I watch the femrap footage later. It is now I see what a pathetically solipsistic bubble we've been in, working it up, working it off, in no revolutionary perspective whatsoever but to our own warped mirror. Basilio gets a great shot of a crane operator watching the show, indulgence of our madness: it's at best a distraction. You can hear some jeers coming from I don't know where, along with the powerhammers and the muted roar of traffic beyond the site. In the middle ground
there are workers continuing oblivious. I'm still pretty stoked on the job Molly and I did on the costumes, though. The banksia suits are covered in huge horny lips from which we speak and growl and cry. Our stockings are worked through with mesh to which we have stuck horsehair, as are our sleeves, extended by stick-form fingers, webbed together with a waxy vinyl Molly found in remnants. Head and torso are fused inside the cob. The hidden mikes give a weird amplification that rises above all the workplace cacophony and which we use as grounding for the musical structure.

we're the Banksia
Bidons
hairy big fat violent
we're polylabial through
and through
our horny lips
but songs come honeyed too
or oyster-luscious
ding-dong uvular moist
we ring for you
we're softies hard in the middle
we're what you need
to make of us
soft-heads with hard-ons
we're peeled almonds
at the centre should you care to lick
we've got our biceps up
on your machines
with our single battery cerebral lights
we redden the workplace
we bloody it up
we're the catch
in your safety regulations
we're the spanner in the works
we're working it up
working it off

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we dance with the chainsaw
the sledge the jackhammer the bobcat
we’re all ditchwitches
we cream and we spout both
asbestos fibre, battery acid, you name
the poison we give it back
recycling your batteries and brakes
we make you go and not go
materially we’re the basest
we’re building little shrines
to what you admire in us
to microcephelia and hirsutism
singing polylabially, we make
our polyglossaries erupt
in your monolingual
we’re the Banksia cobs
come back to haunt you
we wear our skeletons on our sleeve
we’re capable of glistening styles
we dance with the bones
your machines have crunched
send up the stench your hygiene
bestows upon us
toss our foetal and faecal detritus
down to your restaurant courtyards
we splatter your demographic tables
with our discreetly dead babies

Here the Banksia operates as the figure of heterogeneity that the categories of multinational capitalism chase to make its subjects function. It is the polylabial, heteroglossic litter of representation: it is this that makes the West go and not go.

This theme of surrogacy, or of elected prosthetic selves, comes to the fore later in the text. Like third-world narratives fuelling in a later development of orientalism the theoretical discourse of the first world, the body of the Bidon or the Abnuilisian Indigene, as the Nyoongah people are derisively called in the Nulliusian Institute for

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Prosthetic Studies (NIPS), gives a surrogate life to the worn-out abstract body of the middle-class radchic thinker. In a section called Changing the Subject, a Derealization Facilitator has been sent by the government to NIPS to check out pockets of resistance to postmodern subjectivity, recesses of narrative atavism, closet believers in the subject as agency, etc., those who dare invoke embodied experience, throw-back militants, feminists and indigenes, referred to as Remnant Bodies or Remnants.

She calls me up, seductive enough, on the phone. She lets rip one or two anti-Remnant salvos. What new collusion is being proposed, I wonder.

—Can't trust those strays, she says, they'd bring back the talk event behind your back, no worries. You've got to get them in by talking nomad. Promote migratory subjectivity. Divide and multiply the subject effects, this'll divert them from their political purpose.

But now she's on to the excesses and the Stalinist self-seriousness of the Derealization Skills Officers so I start to open up.

I feel my skin being peeled back by that investigative tongue of hers.

—New graffiti have appeared, she says. The DSOs are pathetic as Palimpsest Busters, trying to efface the history of Smear Campaigns. By the way, saw one on the DSO's toilet. You know I've access to that sublime space? It was written around a coathook inside the door: Suck on this essence Lou Barb.

—Surely that's a Masculine Effect, I joke, I must have alienated in my teaching?

—Hmmm.

Suddenly my body comes back to me. I'm aware of the leak, the miasmic swamps—can she pick up the olfactory, the rebel vapours—can she read me?

I feel I'm on a slide for her analysis. My sex come inside out. I breathe away from the mouthpiece.

Still I'm hanging on like Tom-Tom, all fishfingers cupping
the receiver. Ring-ring, there’s that voice again, and it’s her, sure enough.

I’m talking to an ersatzmama. There are—normal trees outside, dangling their cat-o’-nine-tail whips against sky blue, lazy. Welts come out on my skin as I talk. As if it too were converting to the term of the simile, I’m taking its lashings; I tell myself no, the tree is a weeping Caesia Princess, white-painted, no discipline device; have to get away from this body thought. I can sublimate with the best; it’s just the silly habits of language, coming back to disown me of my own prosthetic power. I must talk reasonably to the Mother of Sublimations, to She-Who-Led-Me-from-the-Brutish-Manger, away from my animal self...Forget my Remnant friends here, make no mention of them.

—No, I say, really, I can assure you: there is no organic smear campaign. And her voice turns through the labyrinth of my ear, finds other alleys into the me and the not-me while I listen, go into these blindfolds where what I know and don’t know play hide-and-seek.

A phone call is policing me and I can’t stop talking because of protocol and am aware of the turning tape at the other end. Ersatzmama indeed.

So, you see that the Derealization Facilitator from the Semiotic Police, sending herself through the phone, excites a new body into being for the character.

Lou Barb, the narrator, says: I go back to these trance texts as to a letterbox to see what has happened to me, as well. I begin to be addicted to the oscillation between her excess and my measure. Oh fort da fort da goes the reeling spool. My mother knits her stiff crochet to censor me while hers, being dead, is generous, but deadly, deadly for her. In her cruising, I wonder whether eros or thanatos will win.
Beating the breast

I am a door
& offer
not the room expected
but sudden prairie
when you thought you’d found
a sofa, earth for the blue
idea of lightning

I’ll be a verb for you
vaulting blue
verb me briefly in return

fire? let small fires run
reciprocal in muscle
from our touchless embrace

I’ll never noun you
but ripple you perhaps
in watery relations

make with you if there’s a hint
of structure
catscradling for a scaffold

I’ll be devotee of demolition
where prepositions
are concerned
no fixatives you understand

music? you ask for music?
I’ll be song you’ll invent
pegging sound shards on a line
drawn for laundry mornings after
I refuse to leave you like a forlorn
Lorca woman wondering
if hate struck first to cause
such numbness in the wake

I'll be glad
satin sheath for your émigrée
appearances

I'll do the fugitive line
be the nomad thief of name tags
ruin of directories

still I'll baby you
nuzzling trackless
and have you unashamed
by mothering
as debtless I desert you

Walpurgisdunkel

I cross the immense parquet—diamonds within squares—
deep in it and above are chandeliers—diamonds within squares—I walk piano, piano. I open the grand piano. My fingers prowl and pick, and note by note, a Lied comes to me, of Sehnsucht for a German tongue. I compose myself a German pair of lungs, a leather larynx, am glad of the spacious cavity of my mouth, that curve of teeth. I pitch my darkening vowels to the chandeliers. I know I am singing the cruise ship in. I sing that it's a cruise ship as you'd say, it's a breeze. All familiar things are bound to shipwreck on this cruise. My voice cruises for the witch's word. When she comes to me, and beckons with her knife, this is what my Lied expected. Lend me your ear: I see I have to barter my ear against the cruising familiarity of things. I sing ja to severance. She says, watching the gush: can't believe you fell for that. Bet you didn't even try the dancers on the parquet. Diamonds within squares!
I watch figureless as my blood circulates Walpurgisdunkel on the sea.

The principle of the field of identifications could be called, if you're Kristeva, the imaginary father. I'll call it the rather: in the space of alternatives, the oscillatory principle, of cross-eyed or bisexual identifications. Not the mother, not the father, but in that field between 'I' become, it is the space of un-selfing, of othering, 'my' sex whinnies, my fingers sprout, 'I' am under the outrageous attraction of that space. This is what art can give me, a simple rhyme across distance giving a scandalous magnetization to radical strangers, not this or that is my mirror, but the space between those potlatch moments where one and then another element sacrifices in its singular way any pretence to singularity...This is where writing performs for me a sexual becoming; and this is why it can only enact a phoney telos out of motifs always differing from themselves as they look to the picture window.

I have to let the clash and overlap of voices arising from these motifs enact the difficulties of being multiple and singular at once through subjection to particular identifications—in passion and in loss—in this crazy world.

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3 ibid., 333.
4 ibid., 334.
5 ibid., 335.
7 See Julia Kristeva's sujet-en-procès, the subject on trial/subject in process or on the make, elaborated in *La Révolution du Langage Poétique* (Paris: Collection 'Tel Quel' aux Éditions de Minuit, 1974).


In the Althusserian sense of interpellation.


*Th’m* as homophone of *thy* inscribes the effect of *différance* and fantasy inscription of self-in-other in the body of the word.

Brossard, 21.

A different version of this piece was published in *Second Degree Tampering* (Melbourne: Sybylla Collective, 1993), 82–3.

Who act *as if she were* outside their performance.

I am indebted to Rosie Braidotti, cited by Pamela Bunting, for this term: ‘text...the ultimate prosthesis’.