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Gertrude's Lazy Susan

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Gertrude's Lazy Susan

by

Emily Griffin

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requirements for the degree of

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and

English

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Lazy Susan: Artist Statement

The following manuscript is the outcome of a recurrent curiosity centered on a particular poet, era, and genre. Through a predilection for modernist literature, I have found myself returning again and again to the complicated works of Gertrude Stein, focusing on her prose poetry text *Tender Buttons*.

This manuscript (“Lazy Susan”) and critical essay (“Gertrude’s Lazy Susan: An Examination and Evaluation of Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons*”) are a response to *Tender Buttons*. The manuscript is my reaction to and employment of personal settings, objects, and subjects using Stein’s methods, styles, and intentions as a motivational lens. Stein’s personal history and devotion to her work also drive elements of this project. Her personality, work ethic, and dedication to creativity enabled her production of such novel and unconventional work. I have used this project as a means to explore creativity in a way that has previously made me uncomfortable, and to force myself into experimentation and critical writing with the goal of reflecting upon and challenging notions of genre, language, and purpose.

The poems collected in this manuscript were written while simultaneously rereading and reanalyzing *Tender Buttons*, with the goal of holding a mirror to Stein’s text with my own, while concurrently developing a method and style to best suit personal poetic goals and intentions. These goals and intentions relate specifically to the creation of and a reliance on an emotional logic conveyed in a poem that appears to lack logic completely. Emotional logic can be defined as the emotional resonance delivered by language. It creates emotional spaces for understanding text: emotional logic establishes possible spaces of original creation as well as new spaces in which a reader feels the completed text exist.

Stein’s experimentation with language allows for the publication of private life through a somewhat opaque window. Her work inspires a space for creativity that I seek to explore and harness in my own writing. I have looked specifically at Stein’s methods regarding associative language, repetition, and sonic qualities of language in creating layered meaning. These methods are described in detail in the critical essay as well. The primary method involves attempting to remove concrete words and their names (nouns) from their familiar contexts and reevaluating them in abstract spaces. This both forces and allows a reader to pick up a word, like a pebble at a beach, and turn it in their hand as though they have never seen it before.

I attempted to mimic, recycle, or transform different elements of *Tender Buttons* in the creation of my own “Lazy Susan.” These elements primarily include literary devices: repetition, alliteration, assonance, dissonance, and anaphora. I also attempted to incorporate some of Stein’s repeated sentence structures, such as:

a (noun), a (adjective) (same noun)

Stein’s sentence structures, which are often traceable, are complicated to mimic, as they feel very stuck to her own subjects, with those nouns, those first concrete and then abstract objects. They in some ways feel transparent, as though we cannot get a full grasp on them, and in some ways feel quite heavy, as though they own or belong to Stein’s sentence structures.

The Cubist elements of *Tender Buttons* establish complicated perspectives and reference points. These elements generate a bizarre sense of depth that is just past continuous recognition. The color play that Stein employs—almost always straight colors, familiar and simple—generates illogical images and out-of-place settings. I attempted something similar, using color in ways that I had not previously used it, coloring in spaces that I typically would not have given color. The same is true for attempting to establish perspective. I desired to establish and challenge perspectives within the same poem, either by creating new ones or destroying the originals in the editing process. This was perhaps the most challenging element of Stein’s work that I attempted to include.

Finally, I relied on certain words that Stein often chose to repeat—especially *suppose* and *necessary*—to generate pieces. Often using those words as starting points, I would allow poems to grow.

Stein’s rejection of traditional publication, her willingness and drive to experiment, and her strength and independence are among the many reasons why she became an iconic Modernist poet, author, and editor. I found that the lack of logic in *Tender Buttons*, the nonsensical sounds and bizarre images, the sense of cohesion outside of understandability, were all crucial in reading the text, coming to terms with it, and working with it on both critical and creative platform.

Lazy Susan

Bread

A cutting board a crumb pile a broad back a house from a lazy susan. A lazy susan spinning a tornado house. A cutting board built into the kitchen a cutting board: a drawer made up with neglectful gentler featherbed hours hours hours.

My feet catch on the nails in the woodwork the woodworker left in the wood. Why would he leave such sharp things so invisible in this home? What of the soft things what of the palms of my hands? Softened with the pastry dough handfuls of sawdust teeth clenching dough hands granite hands What of the butter in the dish on the board the shaving cream on the mirror. Suppose a fistful of butter. Suppose a fistful of butter spread on bread. Suppose butter.

A butter knife lack lust er butter spreader spreader spreader louder for the softness, the sweetness delicate buds what of the soft things what soft things the flower petals sewn to sheets you mirror lost you unrecognized unrecognized map unrecognizable body tacked on body unrecognized king comes home from work king comes leave here leave the butter in the dish, leave the cutting board crumbs leaver leave the susan spinning. Leaving here

The king walks through the front door what do we typically find whatever empty bowls we used to use are not useful anymore. He leaves here with the bottle of gin some cranberries a handful of lemons slices slices leaves here with fistfuls of bruises lemons leaves here with bruised lemons bags of them all for sweeter. Suppose limes instead suppose mesh bag of lemons left on the counter suppose her dizzy spins the door close suppose the lemons rot suppose rotted body.

The king comes home no night no safety switch cold tower and wonder between the brick. Watch him leave here watch her dizzy and the luster of the mirror queen cutting board map body sawdust teeth and a better frame.

Juice

A small four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth when the day moves sunflower sky,
 ten in the night time sun-settling inside of the glass sipping the orange juice when the dust
 from the air from the church falls into the glass does it become holy from the rafter hearts.

What is holiness in a dust room in a broken van? A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold.
 The holiness reaches the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint the juice
 leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips
 all red and sticky the strawberry is a magic token trinket body the berry is a piece of magic
 the body and the berry are of a piece.

Cut cunning tart cherry tart cunning tried cunning cut near the whine and shudder carmine
 cut ruby grapefruits in the kitchen split the grapefruit down the middle through the peel
 flesh watch the juice bubble soft skin ruby red cut pink pith cut and with that hand-holding
 pocket-knife cut no one ever notices the country sweet side carmine lockbox between
 warmth that current blooming naming each cuneiform slice anew cut the next fruit never
 come forward about the poppies in the vase.

The dust air from the church falls through the windowsill lampshade and falls under the
 light of the lighthouse on my thigh what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors drinking
 church dust out of juice glasses what of the sailors softeyed drinking the lighthouse
 holiness from the cut of the grapefruit slices.

Mixer

The baker breaks open breaker's means bloodier in morning maybe baby baby open the cabinet an egg's left and the baby bird been screaming cabinet's still empty, baby still empty what do? A still is still in the flooding waters waiting wading silently no real move meant for stale joints stale bones stale stale bread for dinner for breakfast.

The baker breaks open let the yolks flood a yolk flood better than a flood flood better still a butter flood for the baker to wait through five thousand yolks mud is clean in skin mud is dirty in dough is grit all glitter in the skin the baker walks through a front door carries the bouquets of torn thistles thistles for the doorways hangs thistles for February the high ceilings the door hinges falling off mold growing in the bed but the baker hangs the light like a light switch like a switch like a switch over loving brighter

the mixer pulsing pushing when the wine poured pours pouring purring wood pantry doors splinter scars the stairs too stairs many stairs and the lips like lips softness grass on concrete gaze on gaze toward the cork screw please please place the open window against the fireplace pronounce pots and pans music toward the thick white frame please please the name is not lost the name is tongue heavy the body is not lost, it is missing. The name, the long lost name, is missing inside the pots and pans.

there is a calmness breaking point boiling thick plums bubble and fall quickly quick turn the wick up side down for your whole heart to read read in a steaming stream scorch seam split seeming terror to terror in half. Consider the fear. Consider the rouge on the cheek and the wine in the teeth, the sweet wine in the teeth and the soreness of feet. This means a door alone unlocked, a door alone unlocked for knocking. This means a window, an open window, an open window waiting. A wide frame. A thin glass. A broken door. A wailing guess.

Tea Pot

Please break the porcelain chip teeth and please lose the cracks and lips appease the place
 please this space place broken from garage gifts from heart gift heart of palm please run
 home home home home whose home whose home who is home whom home who's next
 who's neck who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood.

Why wheel the body from behind the eyelid eyelashes stuck on the wheels in the wind in
 the dirty wheel barrow we'll just fall off the edge where I can't keep breathe breathing
 more when the bottle break and the tooth chip and the broke glass embedded the wheel
 and we just keep falling like no body notices no body on the hill no body cares about no
 body.

We lie on the grass dirt hill we lie and lie lie if sleep is honest know the body can't be so
 clean so shining so screaming when arms are on frame fingers in wood splinter scream
 what when the frame all wood what when the bar and the bodies no body cared about no
 bodies snap the bird bones egg shell skin tip toes public statue face like a morning veil a
 mourning for no body but a frayed rope or something spilled in dirt in July melted popsicle
 on her fingers rubbed in dirt chin nicked on the swing chain blood on the blouse fast
 forward blood on her chin and salt rub every corner she turns around I glancing from the
 risen window don't tread here. A burial, a large clean burial, means for long branches. The
 tall hill reaches out for miles. Don't tread here.

Spiders nest against the tea pot the book shelf with the cerulean blue the gold-edged spout
 and the dead flowers "dried" the saving flowers saving grace face importance after a flight
 home a gutted airplane and awkward hellos hello the white paint coat the dirty dirty carpet
 still mattered promise no more neck snap please break every cup in the cabinet every no
 body on the front step every stem step every needle hollow hollowed out how bout that
 how about that.

Room

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor cold seeps. It's a night of soured lips.

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin on a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, the brain tastes of metal and the saliva pools on the pillow. When the virus runs cold what then.

Pining after plums, the sweet summertime plums, the bottles he sways mostly empty hold careful to the rail with my muddy nails. Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin, in the whole hurt skin. The whole everyone, running. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream. The hurt that runs through it. Attend to the cacti. The brown brown bottles. The whistle. Attend that shrill. Attend to the way the body knows. To the way the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given space. Do not attend the space. This is to say, someone is calling from the rooftops. Their hands clap with someone's.

Intend to wake through the center of the room intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The largeness of the room prevents the finding of its center. The mattress akilter. The milk crates are not for my body, they are for the things. The dresser is not for my body my things. Some of the things for the body. The rain for the body. The snow for my body. Her metal for my brain.

The body for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators the bed cannot high way. But a mountain. There was something in saying that (how about that) that made the red dress fail. There never was a red dress just a black dress like a black and blue dress dresser. Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry the polite thing to do. Floating on through target practice. It is dissolving in gum tissues, the walls shrinking.

Orange

The white white bowl the sugar cubes. Keep the brawl where it stays. The white white mug and the tick tock clock the burden of the button a blaring arrival.

Mourning a perfectly narrow roof & a place with no static. Call the static watch it grow with that tornado sky outside. The white bowls from the living room cracking the body bawling get out get up get gone get back. Any room is a waiting room, is a distance. Any body is a waiting room. Get salt over rejecting the window's curtains has never swept so sleepy so quiet such lemon chiffon on the wooden floorboards plaster walls (cracking) and the curtains sway sweep swing swing what storm is this? What tornado do we see? How slow it moves. How much might it mourn. Despite: the sun yawns like the grapefruit. Perched. The white white pillow case mixed remnants the cold shoulders touching.

A bookshelf broken: the transversal gray touching the soot and the grime and the fence posts. The fence posts are not broken. This means clarity. The shrubs planted last spring tearing and torn at their respective seams: where the leaves might have grown hot smog instead. Hot smog is a kind of drowning. Keeping an eye on the center. A center to spin through. A center is a grounding. The wide couch cushions long since parted. Feathers in every square inch their encasings ripped to skinny strips. The overhang translates into a blackness with which you were not previously familiar. A blackness fire soot in your eyes tint screen across your body, whole. Keep your eye on me. Charcoal coating arms rumbling enamel.

Touching walls slightly wet most cold most damp touching walls most unaware. Most secretive the root vegetables rotting in the refrigerator. The refrigerator does not mind. This matters in dinner making. The coffee beans scatter across the counter when the cabinets scream. Skitter skittering to the root of the mouth. Little bugs living in the ceilings in the walls in the wood.

Little bug, little bug, what do you have to say to me? Too early for the ligaments. Too early for the break down the stairs now please love please go back down the stairs with the coffee beans the webs and the pithy fruits breaking down from your shoulders down from your shoulders drawn away the white white bowl slivered in the mourning shadow.

Moth

Let the light on when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home it's been a long year of sharp teeth. Let the moth live light it's been a year of red tongue. The lamp's gone out definitely a spectre, that is, an opening watching for an open window cooking soup never required such focus. Such focus focus focus against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain. Let the light on there's a moth on standby for the bricks to spill some story like a campfire's on let the light on. There's a circle's center here. A center beneath the bones and the lamplight porch door lock and key.

Let the light on when my body meets the neurons on the wide front porch in the middle of the rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a short bottle and a tall body and a brain all juggling warmth. Follow the path the movement wings move the center from where it started follow the moth's movement

and my gritted teeth the soaking nature of rain water capture rain water on my tongue rain water soaked breathing razor nuance through the front door lace queen watches the windows shake late thin glass. Lace queen invites you inside lace queen holds her head in her hands when the sand starts sinking. Snails sink below flowers and petals what do we want with the dew drops.

Buzzing incessant upon porches and roofs. Lace queen can't listen anymore. Too many whispering ghosts. A ghost is an endless river through windy fields. The inner ear feels mosquitos climb aboard before noticing wings trapped in silk. Silken arms crossing across the stairs follow the movement of my moth pursed

nightdresses give way to stars waiting for the right pique breathing nuance act as nothing every the barkeep is a medium man with a telephone and thick knuckles a coaster is a coaster is a coaster is a whole tripping point the quick trip and the slug's body glue to the cement stair the night dress billowing like nothing every change just bodies beneath leaves embedded.

The skillet left on the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches leave the lamp on. Follow the movement of my moth.

Boxes

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly quiet minutes and the spinning begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning burns all of the shaking fingers the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow somewhere quieter: inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. A small body arrives at your lungs. A small body wants your knees. A child wants your walls. Your walls are rubies. Your rubies are enraged. A child is enraged a child wants your walls you cannot remove the walls you are crying. The porcelain cool against your forehead. A small body arrives for your lungs.

Everything has been stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding. It was all stolen. You did not want to give it away. You did not want to hide. Know it was stolen knew it too late watched them steal everything you needed you have been waiting such a long time to get everything back. Such a long time. What if that time never closes what if you watch bark grow on trees for years the water never stops falling and you let it flood all of your valleys and all your mountains how do you flood a mountain that is not possible. the blinders on the house are spinning lazy susan house tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medicating house medium house median house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle to stare at. A tube with a top. A tube of circles. A tube of dots. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of paint. A body painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking boxes.

Tea

hold wild thick fists for a yearning shoulder. the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. the tweezers are in the medicine cabinet. take it in heavy breath let it sink. the possibility of the empty sweetness draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire. caught fire a ride home. the flames in every doorway shouting smoke through the roller window shattering nearly all the glass. the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder cannot sing. The medicine mirror kaleidoscoping.

the dull knives all the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center the one with the burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving. previously growing and groaning and moving still. previously. no more high functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils. The hot metal of the kettle has turned the pads of her fingers to plastic.

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes. my entire hands are plastic now. how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the walls wide enough. the rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car no heat car little box car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. perched at the summit. sometimes pink. sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question. the mugs have all broken.

Kitchen Bulb

Pale pale light bulbs and the end resting on the tea cup edge. Wait. Watch for the pears to ripen. ripened pears waiting for a knife. a knife waiting for an occupation. a string of pearls in a ceramic bowl where is the letter from the mother land your arms hard against my shallow the shallow pot for steaming carrots washed and shining on the counter on the shelf count his eyelashes on the stairwell hips against a counter count the number of times she blinks looks left and answers in the ambiguous rouge carrots, the steamed carrots put away again. dishwashing against the counter red wine stains stains stains stays stay and watch watch and wash and wash and salt against skin rubbing dry like sand dry like desert watch for the edge of the desert rising up from the cutting boards rising up from the knife blade knife blade watching like a mirror. I can't see through glass no more. This is not to save a place but say a person. The dust on the windowsills seals the clouds inside the kitchen fills with hurt hurting her tingling fingertips between a buzz and a numbness in those same veins my veins where all of the glasses not broken on the floor again the pale pale light bulb buzzes from the telephone wires black wire spider arms the pale pale light bulb breathing some kind of other sky for when the flashbacks come back come back come back pick up your body please pick up pick up your body my body my body my body my body the carpet is woolen it is warn and not warm and skin is warn but not warm sometimes warm sometimes aching sometimes the cactus shakes with the spins from the spills.

Still. Be still. Be still under the pale bulb, the pale yellow bulb. Wait the pears ripen. Let the pears ripen. Ripe fruit is not so bad fruit. The ripe woman is not a wrong woman. The woman's red face is not an answer. The woman's blushed cheeks and quivering fingers against the kitchen counter. The inside of her cheek, grater, her body greater, her body through the colander and the chalky pink acts out yes on a curtained stage. Quick tick quick quick tick and eye glance and a quick hope. burns on the stovetop. everything burns. on the stove. top up.

Gertrude's Lazy Susan:

An Examination and Evaluation of Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*

Introduction & Background

The identity of the American author has been challenged, engaged, and transformed by scholars and critics in multidisciplinary fashions as definitions of “American” have been scrutinized through socio-political, economic, historical, and cultural lenses. The genre of ‘American literature’ is worth investigating to analyze and review elements of literature that have created borders and boundaries in order to establish the genre. The Modernists of the early 20th Century are frequently cited as particularly “American” authors: the styles of Fitzgerald and Hemingway somehow having become notable as acutely American. When we ask, What makes an American author? or What defines the American identity? we often receive answers related to geography and to particular values, such as individualism, liberty, self-creation, etc. Outside of geography, the Lost Generation is defined as American, yet many lived with expatriate status. This can alter a reader’s perception of “American” literature, and of the boundaries, titles, and definitions that have been established through it. It calls traditional aesthetics and categorization into question.

Gertrude Stein is one such character whose national identity and identity as an author are broadly classified as American, despite expatriatism and many years spent abroad with sympathies dedicated to Europe. It was Stein, though, who aided and encouraged the Lost Generation of Americans and their explorations in literature. Stein is a key figure in interpreting the American authorial identity as it existed in the early 20th century, and how it changed over the course of the years that followed her publications, especially due to her experimentalist work.

Stein’s study under William James at Radcliffe College in the early 1890s is of particular importance when considering Stein’s creative ideologies and methods. James influenced Stein’s writing with alternate conceptions of the consciousness. One theory that is often applied to her early writings is James’ theory that consciousness is unique to every person, hence “stream of

consciousness” being acutely individual in nature, arguably coded based on the conscious frame of the author (*Norton Anthology*, 1150). It was James who coined the term “stream of consciousness” and later referred to it as “stream of thought” (Sutherland, 91). The different attitudes towards the consciousness and towards channeling it appear in Stein’s work, particularly in the earlier works. Stein engages the reader with a constant present, as if temporality does not exist. Donald Sutherland notes, “the consciousness was now an activity going on. Relations were more important to it, more essential, now, than substantives” (91). We see this relationality demonstrated in Stein’s work through what is referred to by many scholars as a rejection of the name or noun.

Stein joined her brother, Leo, at Harvard in 1892, where she then worked with James. Much of her higher education is in part a result of her relationship with Leo, as she joined him at Johns Hopkins, and later in Paris in the fall of 1903. It is their relationship—their friendship and affection towards each other—that in part led to Stein’s self-imposed exile to Europe and the development of her friendships with European artists in Paris. The relationship between Gertrude and Leo was later strained when Alice B. Toklas moved into the now famous 27 rue de Fleurus. Gertrude and Leo relied on each other in many ways, but Stein was still able to fully make decisions for herself that may have seemed radical at the time, specifically the choice to live with Toklas.

Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* is a text that exposes elements of Stein and Toklas’ lives together through a unique lens that challenges notions of literary genre. The “autobiography” is, obviously, not technically autobiographical, having been penned by Stein and not Toklas. However, the text details Stein’s life just as much, if not more, than it does Toklas’. The text begins: “This was the year 1907. Gertrude Stein was just seeing through the

press of *Three Lives* which she was having privately printed, and she was deep in *The Making of Americans*, her thousand page book” (6). The first paragraph goes on to discuss Picasso’s portrait of Stein, Matisse’s “*Bonheur de Vivre*,” and a conversation between Picasso and Stein in which one tells the other “we were young then and we did a great deal in a year” (6). The character and real-life person of Stein are clearly the forefront of the text, making it truly Stein’s own autobiography under Toklas’ title. While *The Autobiography* is one of Stein’s less challenging texts to read, and is rather approachable, it is an early suggestion of Stein’s curiosity towards literary genre and form.

Stein’s contributions to the canon were not initially welcomed. Stein’s work was often seen as unapproachable, incomprehensible, vague, or, in the case of her more erotic works, as obscene. Publishers largely ignored her experimental work, leaving Stein to self-publish with Toklas’ help. Her potential success was underrated, and she is generally remembered as an iconic member of modernist American literature whose work itself is largely unread (The Poetry Foundation). When Stein returned to the United States for a lecture tour, after being away for thirty years, she was well received, perhaps in part because of her personality, her commanding presence, and enjoyment of lecturing, and less because of her literary works.

Stein developed an experimental style dedicated to challenging conceptions of language and perspective. She worked alongside the cubist painters of the era, developing a multi-dimensional language that she perceived as being abstracted from the concrete world. This experimentation and reinterpretation of language, time, and consciousness led to the 1914 text *Tender Buttons*. *Tender Buttons*, originally published by Marie Claire out of New York, is a text that moves beyond the breaking of literary rules or conventions as she had done previously. This text, with its lack of grammar, logic, narrative or recognizable form, has been described as

automatic writing, stream-of-consciousness, and complete nonsense. It is a complicated text that has been regarded from a variety of stances, some finding it rich with theoretical possibilities and others deeming it utterly useless, merely an illogical placing of random words. Studying literature in a way that serves the boundaries, establishes the identities, and engages presupposed rules or expectations does not do *Tender Buttons* any good; it prevents the reader from engaging in the text in a way that allows it to do any of its essential work.

We often seek to construct coherence in literature as a result of a desire to discern precise meaning and intention from the text. Stein transcends the necessity of seeking particular coherence through unique employment of language and style. Stein specifically uses object correlatives, repetition, and sonic choices (as well as all widely used literary tools—metaphor, symbolism, emotional logic) to establish a text that lacks cohesive meaning, but engages the reader in determining value through individual pieces of language and their further associations for the individual reader.

When we consider what makes for good poetry—that is, valuable poetry—or perhaps for valuable literature, there are three primary categories that are often addressed, especially when studying within an academic setting. The first is the use of literary devices (i.e. form, repetition, alliteration, anaphora, etc.): are they used successfully, for a purpose, what purpose do they serve. Next is literal content: the piece has value because of what it is about. The final element is the theoretical content: the non-real aspects of the work, whether those are elements that drive the work (i.e. theoretical method), elements that the reader invents based on the text (i.e. associative meaning through object correlatives), or theoretical consequences of the text, such as how the work can be interpreted and applied. These three categories are most often evaluated for value within academic settings. Outside of these three is the best way to consider and evaluate

Stein's work. When we consider Stein's experimentalism, we must look at different elements, including: diction (individual words), sonic logic, emotional logic, and object correlatives, or associative language.

One must first recognize the value and importance of Stein's distinct words in order to let the language serve as the first step, or level, in discerning value. It is important to note that it is *not* the first step in discerning *meaning*, which, I believe, is of little use when reading Stein's *Tender Buttons*. Beyond the individual words, one looks to the way they are connected to other words: the syntax and devices used to attach individual pieces together, forming, in theory, sentences, clauses, and ideas. The purpose of the sentence as a purveyor of an idea or some one-sided thing, however, is also unhelpful with regard to *Tender Buttons*. Instead, we look to how the words fit together outside of a theoretical meaning, but rather for their sonic links, associative links, and possible images generated. That is, we must consider those rhetorical devices so necessary to developing a study of literature differently that they are so often defined. We must look at the way they affect individual words, rather than the concept purveyed in the sentence.

There is an undeniable element of nonsense in *Tender Buttons*. This nonsense does not discredit the work, or prevent it from having value, coherence, or relevance. "Sense" in *Tender Buttons* does not exist, as we understand sense. A common understanding of sense relates to logic: sentences that are understandable without necessitating interpretation. Stein's sentences do not make sense in the way that they can be read and understood without interpretation. That said, they can or cannot be coherent. The coherence in the text comes from relatability, association, sonic references, etc. It comes from a feeling of the text, not the interpretation of it. The text is interpretable, but it also resists interpretation. *Tender Buttons* works in a way that engages and

disrupts our understandings of valuable literature, as it weaves value sans necessitation of meaning or interpretation.

Coherence in *Tender Buttons*

As previously stated, studying literature in an academic setting suggests that we must work with texts to discern meaning and value, be that through criticism, theory, or otherwise. In order to see how Stein resists these traditional modes of reading, we must employ them. Below is a transcription of the twelfth poem in the first section of *Tender Buttons*, titled “A Plate.”

“A Plate”

An **occasion** for a plate, an **occasional** resource is in buying and how soon does washing enable a selection of the same thing neater. If the party is small a clever song is in order.

Plates and a dinner set of **colored** china. **Pack** together a string and enough with it to **protect** the center, cause a considerable haste and gather more as it is **cooling**, collect more **trembling** and not any even **trembling**, cause a whole thing to be a church.

A sad size a size that is not sad is **blue** as every bit of **blue** is precocious. A kind of **green** a game in **green** and **nothing flat nothing** quite **flat** and more round, **nothing** a particular **color** strangely, **nothing** breaking the losing of no little piece.

A **splendid address** a really **splendid address** is **not shown** by giving a flower freely, it is **not shown** by a mark or by wetting. **Cut cut in white, cut in white** so lately. **Cut** more than any other and **show it. Show it** in the stem and in starting and in evening coming complication.

A **lamp** is not the **only sign of** glass. **The lamp and the cake** are not the **only sign of** stone. **The lamp and the cake** and the cover are not the only necessity altogether.

A **plan** a hearty **plan**, a compressed disease and no coffee, not even a card or a change to **incline** each way, a **plan** that has that excess and that break is the one that **shows** filling. (17)¹

The first clause of the poem does not have inherent meaning. One does not know how to think of

“An occasion for a plate.” Perhaps this refers to a fancy dinner party; perhaps this means a fight

¹ The bolded text represents the use of literary devices, specifically moments of repetition, alliteration, and anaphora. Bolding is mine.

² The bold text represents single words that are repeated, or alliterative letters. The underlined text

worth the throwing of dishes for; an occasion nonetheless. It makes emotive sense to the reader, without the reader needing to know or understand its literal meaning or direction.

Next, we move to the second paragraph in the poem. Again, the first sentence makes sense, even literal logical sense. After that, things become more vague and complicated. The rest of the paragraph, one long sentence, is illogical. It describes time, an event, and movement, though we are not sure what time, what event or what movement. A reader is able to gather those evoked notions through individual words working together. The use of demanding verbs (“Pack,” “cause,” “collect”) appear to be directed at the reader, and suddenly the reader feels included in the scene, though the reader has no clear signifying words to tell them exactly what the scene is. Instead, we gather words to put together a *possible* scene. The diction in this section—“gather,” “collect,” “trembling,” “whole,” and “church”—also suggests an element of tenderness and create a nurturing space of preparation. The poem moves from something logical and relatively understandable—a dinner scene with fancy, colored china—to something illogical. How does one interpret “cause a whole thing to be a church”? It does not need the interpretation. It does not want the interpretation. There is coherence in this section because there is sentimental movement produced through the diction.

The section that follows is swollen with sound and color. It creates perception and depth with diction. This section is, as so very many of Stein’s critics point out, cubist representation in literature. The sense of perception comes through with the changing of the object’s shape and size: “nothing flat nothing quite flat and more round”. The colors (blue, green, white) evoke the dynamic and colorful nature of Cubism. These are flat colors made to have depth through other descriptors, such as “precocious.” A human and childish characteristic, this particular blue becomes not only blue. A reader may not understand what a precocious blue is, but we are able

to feel it because of associations with the language, with that which is precocious. The movement is maintained in this section through the run-on sentence, comma use, and the fluctuations between what objects are and what they are not (i.e. flat versus round, blue versus green), without a direct understanding or image of those objects. Perhaps we are reading about the plates (objects that are, indeed, flat and round and colorful), but perhaps there is more at stake here. Stein thus produces a cubist image of dinner china without permitting the reader to easily access that image.

As readers, we tend to believe that coherence exists when something—a sentence, phrase, or idea—makes logical sense. This section of the poem does not make sense, but it is coherent. In certain ways, it is understandable as both image and sentiment: it evokes the colored dinner plates, but it also evokes something small and lost. It is interpretable, but it does not need to be interpreted to be coherent. For this we look back at the first line of this paragraph: “A sad size a size that is not sad is blue as every bit of blue is precocious.” The alliteration and repetition in this sentence produce a lovely noise, something that almost sounds like a nursery rhyme. The word “precocious” at the end provides something finite, with the pretentiousness of the word itself and its final ‘s’ sound.

The next section is traceable through its standard grammar, making it approachable for interpretation. “Splendid” alters the previous sentiment of something lost (gathered from “sad size” and the repetition of “blue”) into something exciting or beautiful, enhanced with the words “giving,” “flower,” and “freely.” What ties these words together is irrelevant because their proximity promotes a positive sentiment. “A mark” and “a wetting” are uncomfortable, creating a bizarre juxtaposition between feelings of stability (produced from positive diction) and discomfort.

A new sentiment is generated again with the section that follows. The diction and repetition of “cut” suggest increased discomfort and violence. The color change—from blues and green into stark white—is harsh and feels sudden, especially with the inclusion of the word “lately.” “Cut more” and “show it” incite intensity and an element of violence not previously felt in the rest of the poem, especially since “cut” and “stem” follow the reference to a flower in the previous paragraph. At this point in the poem, the reader reaches a new level of nonsense. Up to this point, the poem still feels approachable and almost logical: there is a string of understandability in it, tethered to the lines about plates and dinner. At this point though, the logic feels lost, and the poem nestles itself in a world of nonsense. The piece maintains its coherence, however, through the sentimentality—not in the sense of nostalgia, but meaning the inclusion of particular emotions that shift—that is tied to that string and to the end of the poem.

Stein incorporates a new concrete object into the end of the poem. The repetition of this object, “the lamp” creates something very concrete, especially with the transition of the lamp’s article from *a* to *the*. This section of the poem includes diction related to mediums: glass, cake, and stone. Each of these mediums feels very different from the next. Again, there is therefore movement: from something transparent, to something mushy and soft, to something hard, opaque, and heavy. These mediums, which are also individual objects, nouns by themselves, are connected through small articles and small words. They are connected by definite articles, making the scene somehow personal and specific. The notion of “not the only” is interesting because it creates an alternate openness and possibility; it suddenly feels like there are more answers for whatever this “sign” is all about. The little words, especially the articles, are repeated in a way that makes the sentence feel as though it makes sense, even if it doesn’t evoke logic or definite meaning.

Finally, the poem ends with a vague paragraph that employs repetition and articles to signal a central concept: a plan. This feels related to the directive and preparative language used at the beginning of the poem: “pack,” “protect,” “cause,” “collect.” One begins to feel in cahoots with Stein; regardless of whether or not we know what she’s asking us to do, what we are planning, protecting, or preparing, we suddenly have a plan. Not only is it a plan, it is a hearty plan, even if there is no coffee. There is also a breakage in this section: “that break is the one that shows filling.” This again feels cubist, like a crack in a mirror or a painting that provides a bit of depth to a typically nearly-two-dimensional thing. This relates to the concept of illumination (also frequently at play over the course of the text), as it creates something new to be seen: something filling in a space under the light of the lamp, in the heat of a plan: a new expectation. This expectation is not logical. It does not make sense. But it is formed through an emotionally coherent piece, the emotion derived from the diction.

Sonic Logic in *Tender Buttons*

Stein’s diction throughout *Tender Buttons* is influenced by the methodology of creating sonic logic. Stein used sonic elements—specifically, alliteration, repetition, anaphora, and rhythm—to establish senses of emotion, spaces, and movement that compliment the written words. The importance of sound in her work suggests the thoroughness of which traditional logic was rejected in favor of different kinds of coherence, including sonic coherence.

The repetition and alliteration in a particular section of the first poem of the “Food” section of *Tender Buttons*, titled “Roastbeef,” provide an example of how Stein’s literary devices create movement, rhythm, and energy. Excerpted from “Roastbeef:”

“...every time there is **silence** there is **silence** and every time that is languid there is that there then and **not** oftener, **not** always, **not**

particular, **tender** and changing and external and central and surrounded and singular and simple and the same and the surface and the circle and the shine and the succor and the white and the same and the better and the red and the same and the center and the yellow and the **tender** and the better, and altogether.” (36)²

This section begins slowly: “every time there is silence” is a long clause built with short syllables. It is therefore a slow clause, and the mouth does not have to make so many movements. This is disrupted by the word “languid.” A word of still only two syllables, it is awkward to read and then say. This awkwardly shaped word is then followed with short easy fast words that feel out of order, “there is that there then and not,” making the tongue dance. The three key words that follow, “oftener,” “always,” and “particular” all have similar contexts as temporal references. There is also something comforting about such familiar sounds, and the gentleness of “oftener,” with its frequently silenced, obtrusive *t* softened by its concluding *ner*. This is enhanced by the word’s proximity to “tender.” The phrase “tender and changing and external and central” is a turning point in the paragraph, and perhaps in the poem. These words lack the obvious repetition at the beginning of the excerpt as well as the alliteration of the end of it. Their sounds are therefore the tipping point, or the highest point in the poem.

Stein then creates a fast-moving flood of *s* sounds: “surrounded,” “singular,” “simple” followed by “same,” “surface,” and “succor.” The sounds of this poem create a complicated depth of space. There is a desire to fit these items together, to find an anchor in the poem to catch hold of, but it does not exist. It is not meant to be anchored, but meant to flow. The reader is meant to become lost in these sounds. They become centered and quieted at the end of the excerpt, with the concluding word “altogether.” The sweet tenderness of the beginning (the

² The bold text represents single words that are repeated, or alliterative letters. The underlined text represents phrases or pairs of words that are repeated. Bolding and underlining is mine.

beginning of the excerpt, the beginning of the poem, and the beginning of the book) is still present: “the tender and the better, and altogether.” The desire to fit the words together, despite their lack of concretizing object or clear logic, suggests forcing the passage into making sense. However, the sounds allow for a release and a rejection of sense-making because of the tenderness and comfort that they establish.

Stein’s employment of rhythmic patterns is of particular interest regarding sonic logic and sonic coherence. There is no singular consistent type of sonic choice, beyond the constant use of repetition and alliteration. Within each poem, and independent of others, there are certain sounds that create interesting webs that allow for the poem to often float, though somehow still attached to the text. For example, about one third of the way through “Roastbeef,” the reader is greeted with: “Lovely snipe and tender turn, excellent vapor and slender butter, all the splinter and the trunk, all the poisonous darkning drunk, all the joy in weak success, all the joyful tenderness, all the section and the tea, all the stouter symmetry” (37). This sentence is its own contained paragraph, contained especially through its specific rhyme and meter. The first clause (“Lovely...turn”) is trochaic, as are other sections of the poems. This suggests a possible alternative form for the poem, as if Stein wrote it with meter and line breaks, and then replaced the line breaks with commas. However, this theory is problematic due to the complicated meter of “excellent vapor and slender butter”. Every other clause is written in trochaic trimeter with an unattached final foot. This section, though it seems to lend itself so well to scansion and sonic interpretation, resists through that complicated clause of vapor and butter.

This section of “Roastbeef” also provides us with a key non-word: darkning. Stein uses non-words in various poems throughout *Tender Buttons*. In this case, it seems that its use was out of constraint by form; the word “darkening” would add an additional syllable to the trochees in

use. This theoretically wouldn't be an issue, however, given that Stein broke this form just two clauses prior. The logic behind that choice is therefore difficult to discern. That logic is also proved irrelevant, since the sounds in the piece establish coherence. The trochees create a nursery-rhyme-esque song, as noted in the discussion of "A Plate." Bits and pieces of *Tender Buttons* create these moments of childishness through sound and rhythm. A reader then must ask (or is trained to ask) why the nursery rhyme? Why the songs? This is up for interpretation, along with the entire text, but does not necessarily give the text greater value. If we evaluate the purpose of the childish elements of *Tender Buttons* to be a way of creating an accessible point, a kind of brightly lit door through which to enter the world of *Tender Buttons*, we reduce this work to being an end that simultaneously functions as a means. Reductive interpretation becomes problematic when every end becomes a means. These ends/means might be repetitive sonic structures, complex cubist descriptions, or acute observations of a chaotic home. These are elements of a whole and complete text that become individual fragmented means, with the end of discerning intentional logical meaning that can then be used for an assessment of value.

Critical Responses to Stein

In Allegra Stewart's 1967 essay on Stein, titled "The Quality of Gertrude Stein's Creativity," Stewart discusses the juncture at which Stein placed written words in the context of existence and of consciousness, without directly calling either state directly into the text, but rather representing concepts of both. Stewart notes that Stein "strained words and exerted pressure upon them, and renounced 'names' (nouns), and dissected grammar" (99). She continues by discussing the movement and process of Stein's work, including Stein's belief in a "final creative act" in which "knower and known are joined in unity" (99). Stewart's argument, and the

argument of many Stein scholars and critics, is vague, but appears with intention and concision. The intensity with which these essays are often written conveys a sense of urgency that is missing in Stein's writing. This is the intensity of discovering that element of the 'known:' of uncovering the hidden world of Stein, of becoming comfortable with the strangeness of Stein, or of coming to a conclusion regarding illogical sentences and object correlatives that the reader finds themselves spinning and weaving in an attempt to determine a "correct" or "logical" related item, object, or emotion.

That said, while it sometimes appears that critical theory can suffocate or reduce texts, it can help to engage new concepts for application to the text. For example, Stewart's language in describing the way that Stein applies words and "renounced 'names'" is helpful in recognizing nouns in *Tender Buttons* and disrupting our understanding of them. Lyn Hejinian also discusses names and nouns in "Two Stein Talks" (*The Language of Inquiry*). She takes the renouncement of nouns further, noting: "Language, as she [Stein] thought and felt it, does far more than simply offer names for our experiences; indeed, a dependency on names (nouns) tends to obscure experience, by replacing what we experience with a pre-established concept, a 'simulacrum' of it" (93). Taking on these perspectives allows for alternate understandings, interpretations, or ways to engage. But these manners are vast and overflowing in every direction. Which provides the best support is debatable, since so many of these critical texts feel oddly desperate, making bizarre and somewhat vast claims or assertions that feel buoyed on Stein's own ambiguity.

In an intriguing and engaging critical essay on *Tender Buttons*, William H. Gass presents an interesting concept related to Stein's use of Cubism and perspective. He suggests that the entire book and the format of the book, with its three distinct sections, create a three-dimensional space. His evidence is particularly interesting, as he establishes the specific axes and draws

parallels that are clear and simple. It almost seems too reductive; it breaks the book down into a grid-like, calculable state. However, it provides a reader of Stein and a reader of literary theory a particularly situate-able space.

Gass suggests that *Tender Buttons* is a cube, with three sections functioning in one direction, on an X axis (Objects, Food, and Rooms), and three more sections moving on a Y Axis. These Y axis elements are described as: “Work, or household chores, Love, or the complicated emotional exchanges between those who spend their daily life together, and Art, or in this case the composition of odd, brilliant, foolish, accidental, self-conscious, beautiful, confused, or whimsical sentences” (329). The Y axis is that which provides depth to the X axis, whose elements suddenly seem so simple in contrast with the Work, Love, and Art that Gass infers exist in the spaces between words and sentences. He argues that the sentence is a syntactical space where words commit acts, contributing to a particular and specific feeling. He parallels the syntactical space with rooms, the words with things and people, and the committed acts with cooking, cleaning, etc. (329). Gass spends a mere paragraph of "Gertrude Stein and the Geography of the Sentence" on this idea, though it is provocative enough to generate its own essay. It is a concept that parallels with the ideas of many other scholars—that of Stein’s work functioning as Cubism in literary form—but goes beyond a simple comparison into thorough abstraction.

The break in logic that I argue generates value is discussed by William Carlos Williams as well. He introduces “The Work of Gertrude Stein” with the following lines:

Stein’s theme is writing. But in such a way as to be writing
envisioned as the first concern of the moment, dragging behind it a
dead weight of logical burdens, among them a dead criticism

which broken through might be a gap by which endless other enterprises of the understanding should issue—for refreshment.

Critical Essays on Gertrude Stein, 55

This “gap,” as Williams names it, is exactly the space in which it is necessary to read Stein, after having cut away from that dead criticism and the burdens of logic.

Many of the essays on Stein that have been published since the 1960’s, especially those in the 70’s and 80’s, are in conflict with each other. One piece calls out another as being too reductive, and then attempts to make claims on the best—most accurate, most compelling, or most innovative—way to interpret Stein, as though there is a manner that does not reduce the text to cold, individual, incomprehensible words, as it seems Stein would first expect, then appreciate, and eventually loathe. Stewart’s emphasis on the etymological roots of Stein’s diction, as discussed in “Selfhood and the Word” (*Gertrude Stein and the Present*), is considered particularly problematic. The etymologically biased method described in “Selfhood and the Word” is often cited as an ineffective method for trying to “decode” Stein. The counter argument to thoroughly examining, uprooting, and interpreting Stein’s work involves ultimately ignoring critical examination all together, and rather reading for pleasure’s sake.

Incoherence Precedes Logic: Emotion, Association, Correlation

This manner of reading—for the sake of enjoyment of language—is a potentially facile approach to *Tender Buttons*. It might be the most manageable approach, but it dismisses the beauty and intention that exists in the work. In this essay, I have argued that value in literature is not determined by logic. It is also not determined by coherence. While coherence exists in this text, in a strange way that may or may not be discoverable when merely reading ‘for pleasure’s sake,’

it is *not* the coherence that establishes its value. In order to allow *Tender Buttons* to exist and work in the most successful and engaging way, we must allow incoherence to take precedence over logic. The coherent elements of the text, such as the beginning of “A Plate,” for example, do not create a definite meaning. The book does not, for instance, tell the story of a dinner party, or of the home of two women in Paris. While many of the poems and scenes describe things, upon which we attach personal or non-personal meaning, that might suggest the text has such a meaning, we cannot make this argument. Doing so places logic, narrative, understandability, and sense *above* sound, emotion, and relationality. The emotional logic, the associative language, and the object correlatives used in *Tender Buttons* create a value beyond the meaning of the work derived from logical assumptions or beliefs that are not present in the text.

A primary example of emotional logic at play outside of literal—or literary—logic is the distress and panic of “This is This Dress, Aider,” the final poem in the “Objects” section. The poem, short, repetitive, and strangely violent, reads as follows:

Aider, why, aider why whow, whow stop touch, aider whow, aider
stop the muncher, muncher munchers. A jack in kill her, a jack in,
makes a meadowed king, makes a to let. 31

The intensity of this poem, the emotion behind it, can be clearly felt both through diction and sound. There is no logic and there is hardly coherence, but there is an emotional logic. “Stop touch,” “stop the muncher,” and “kill her,” suggest violence, specifically sexual violence. However, it is not my goal to discern a meaning for this poem. I do not suggest that this poem means a character was subjected to this type of violence; rather, I argue that this poem moves, or is motivated by, sexual violence. The emotion that a reader connects to individual words, as well

as the words as they are conjoined, creates an emotional logic with which to feel the distress (“this dress”) and panic of the poem.

From the same poem, we can discern and employ associative language. For example, “a to let” at the conclusion of the poem has a dual association. One might associate the phrase with the word “toilet,” as the two sound similar. One might also associate the phrase with leasing or renting, “to let” referring to a space’s availability to be rented. If we read it as a space ready for renting, one quite quickly understands the space as a body, the body upon which pain is being inflicted in the poem. We often associate the word “king” with a man, a man who has power, and often a man who abuses his power. These associations grow with the emotional logic of the poem and create possible answers to questions of meaning. Ignoring those answers—i.e. sexual violence perpetrated by a man—as pieces of meaning and allowing them to exist solely as elements of thought, of existence, or of emotion places a value on the poem different than a value derived from meaning.

The associative language here is synonymous with the object correlatives that are at work as well. Outside of those previously mentioned, the phrase “A jack in” is of interest. This ‘jack’ stands in as an object correlative. It might function as a symbol of the perpetrator, or otherwise. However, its placement in the poem and its proximity to the ‘her,’ seemingly the subject of the poem, forces it to function in an active way. It therefore has some kind of relationship to the ‘her’ and to the speaker of the poem.

In the literary field, we have a tendency to strive to establish cohesion and logic in literature. This human desire—to interpret for meaning, to discern all that we can, to uncover what is not understood—has helped us to understand so much within literary discourse. It engages us with our texts and forces us to reconcile with different theories and approaches. It

opens up possibilities for interpretations that may not have previously been useful. Literary discourse, analysis, and interpretation does incredible work. That said, if we are constantly attempting to interpret, dissect, or explicate literary works, might this lead to a failure of acknowledging the value of the language itself? Stein's work, particularly *Tender Buttons* is of value—is beautiful, generative, complicated and innovate—both inside and outside of literary interpretation.

Stein forces her reader to work hard, whether that work is interpreting the text or simply reading it. Stein challenges her reader to consider form, genre, intention, and language in a different way. She places language in a category of its own, and encourages its scrutinization through abstraction. The sonic qualities, the emotional logic, the nursery rhymes: these all contribute to a personalized reading of the text, based on how one reader might associate a word, or how a word might correlate with another for that particular reader.

Many have said that *Tender Buttons* did not succeed as a book of poetry, or that perhaps it succeeded as a book of nonsense. Regardless, *Tender Buttons* interrupts our conceptions of literature. It fuels experimentation and encourages an engagement with language on a level that exists outside of a necessity for direct meaning or discernable interpretation.

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“Lazy Susan:” Portfolio of Drafts

&

Revision Narrative

The following portfolio includes every draft of the poems compiled for the manuscript, "Lazy Susan." This is included in order to demonstrate where poems began and how I worked on them while considering *Tender Buttons*. The revision narrative can be viewed in the footnotes. Every footnote connotes a particular change to the draft. Some of these notes include how the change is relevant to the manuscript and the study of Gertrude Stein.

Certain edits are consistent from poem to poem. The change of form, from stanza to prose, and the eventual removal of blank space between words, were choices made in around the middle of the composition of the entire manuscript. The first several drafts of most of the poems incorporated these spaces. These spaces were initially an important element to the poems, as I desired to generate a feeling from the spaces and where they were located. However, as the poems progressed and as I focused more and more on simulating Stein's style I decided that these elements were in fact not necessary, and I could create more interesting spaces by filling the gaps with juxtaposing images and sounds.

I began the process by simply writing about domestic spaces that I occupied. I wanted to discuss my relationship to these spaces and objects. As I read further and further into Stein though, I began to attempt to abstract the objects: to situate them in one place and then to remove that situation. I also attempted to incorporate greater acknowledgement of traditional spatial description (ie. large, small, wide, round, flat, etc.), changing perspectives of the reader, speakers, and characters, and a constant shifting of spaces.

—edg

POEM #1Bread

d.1

A cutting board. A pile of crumbs. A house formed
from lazy susan. Lazy susan spinning. Tornado house.
A cutting board built into the kitchen. A cutting board, a drawer.
My feet catch on the nails in the woodwork
that the woodworker left in the wood why would he
leave such sharp things so invisible in my home? What of the soft things
what of the palms of my hands? What of the butter in the dish
on the cutting board?

A butcher knife, lackluster butter spreader
spreader, spreader louder for the softness, sweetness
what of the soft things, what soft things
the flower petals in the bottom of the bed
king comes home from work king comes
leave here, leave the butter in the dish, leave
the cutting board crumbs
leaver, leave the susan spinning.

Bread¹

d.2

A cutting board A pile of crumbs a broad back ²
 A house from a lazy susan. A Lazy susan spinning
 a tornado house. A cutting board built into the kitchen³
 A cutting board: a drawer made up with the gentle neglect of
 childhood to forgetfulness. My feet catch on the nails
 in the woodwork that the woodworker left in the wood
 why would he leave such sharp things so invisible
 in my home? What of the soft things what of the palms
 of my hands? What of the butter in the dish on the board?

A butcher knife lack lust er butter spreader
 spreader spreader louder for the softness, sweet
 ness what of the soft things what soft things
 the flower petals sewn to the bottom of the sheets⁴
 king comes home from work king comes leave here
 leave the butter in the dish, leave the cutting board
 crumbs leaver leave the susan spinning. Leaving here

The king walks through the front door what do we typically
 find whatever empty bowls we used to use are not useful
 anymore. He⁵ leaves here with a bottle of gin some cranberries
 a handful of lemons requests lemon slices slices at restaurants⁶
 leaves here with fistfuls of bruises of bruised lemons leaves here
 with bruised lemons bags of them all for something sweeter.

¹ General changes: increased text, increased narrative, move towards prose form, increased white space between words

² "a broad back" added for third element and sound produced by third item in list

³ desire for additional articles: the and a

⁴ from 'bed' to 'sheets'

⁵ use of pronoun; greater reference to character

⁶ reference to narrative

Breadd.3¹

A cutting board A pile of crumbs a broad back
 A house from a lazy susan. A lazy susan spinning
 a tornado house. A cutting board built into the kitchen
 A cutting board: a drawer made up with the gentle neglect.²

My feet catch on the nails
 in the woodwork that the woodworker left in the wood
 why would he leave such sharp things so invisible
 in my home? What of the soft things what of the palms
 of my hands? What of the butter in the dish on the board?

A butter³ knife lack lust er butter spreader
 spreader spreader louder for the softness, sweet
 ness what of the soft things what soft things
 the flower petals sewn to the bottom of the sheets
 king comes home from work king comes leave here
 leave the butter in the dish, leave the cutting board
 crumbs leaver leave the susan spinning. Leaving here

The king walks through the front door what do we typically
 find whatever empty bowls we used to use are not useful
 anymore. He leaves here with the bottle of gin some cranberries
 a handful of lemons requests lemon slices slices at restaurants
 leaves here with fistfuls of bruises of bruised lemons leaves here
 with bruised lemons bags of them all for something sweeter.

¹ General changes: altered spacing

² Removal of 'childhood to forgetfulness'

³ Change from 'butcher' to 'butter'

Breadd.4¹

A cutting board A crumb pile a broad back a house from a lazy susan. A lazy susan spinning a tornado house. A cutting board built into the kitchen a cutting board: a drawer made up with neglectful gentler featherbed hours hours hours².

My feet catch on the nails in the woodwork the woodworker left in the wood. Why would he leave such sharp things so invisible in this home? What of the soft things what of the palms of my hands? Softened with the pastry dough handfuls of sawdust nail teeth clenching dough hands granite hands³ What of the butter in the dish on the board the shaving cream on the mirror.⁴

A butter knife lack lust er butter spreader spreader spreader louder for the softness, the sweetness delicate buds⁵ what of the soft things what soft things the flower petals sewn to sheets⁶ you mirror lost you unrecognized unrecognized map tacked on body unrecognize⁷ king comes home from work king comes leave here leave the butter in the dish, leave the cutting board crumbs leaver leave the susan spinning. Leaving here

The king walks through the front door what do we typically find whatever empty bowls we used to use are not useful anymore. He leaves here with the bottle of gin some cranberries a handful of lemons slices slices⁸ leaves here with fistfuls of bruises of bruised lemons leaves here with bruised lemons bags of them all for something sweeter.

The king comes home no night no safety switch cold tower and wonder between the brick. King comes home and watch him leave here watch her dizzy and the luster of the knife mirror queen cutting board map body sawdust teeth and a better kitchen knife for a bed frame.⁹

¹ General changes: form from partial-verse into prose poetry format. Removal of great spacing between words.

² Change from 'gentle neglect' to 'neglectful gentler featherbed hours hours hours'.

³ Insertion of underlined section. Attention to the body and to mediums (i.e. dough, sawdust)

⁴ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to establish more doubles, more parallel items.

⁵ Insertion of 'delicate buds,' again creating a parallel between the body and objects

⁶ Removal of 'the bottom of the.' Decided to simplify; the phrase otherwise felt obtuse.

⁷ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to generate depth, unrecognizable space, a character with an unknowable body.

⁸ Removal of 'requests lemon slices slices at restaurants.' Felt specific in an unproductive way.

⁹ Added final stanza. Ending with 'sweeter' would have been too sentimental. Final stanza a goal to force reader to recall previous images, objects, mediums from earlier in the poem.

Bread

d.5

A cutting board a crumb pile a broad back a house from a lazy susan. A lazy susan spinning a tornado house. A cutting board built into the kitchen a cutting board: a drawer made up with neglectful¹ gentler featherbed hours hours hours.²

My feet catch on the nails in the woodwork the woodworker left in the wood. Why would he leave such sharp things so invisible in this home? What of the soft things what of the palms of my hands? Softened with the pastry dough handfuls of sawdust teeth clenching dough hands granite hands What of the butter in the dish on the board the shaving cream on the mirror. Suppose a fistful of butter. Suppose a fistful of butter spread on bread. Suppose butter.³

A butter knife lack lust er butter spreader spreader spreader louder for the softness, the sweetness delicate buds what of the soft things what soft things the flower petals sewn to sheets you mirror lost you unrecognized unrecognized map unrecognizable body⁴ tacked on body unrecognized king comes home from work king comes leave here leave the butter in the dish, leave the cutting board crumbs leaver leave the susan spinning. Leaving here

The king walks through the front door what do we typically find whatever empty bowls we used to use are not useful anymore. He leaves here with the bottle of gin some cranberries a handful of lemons slices slices leaves here with fistfuls of bruises lemons⁵ leaves here with bruised lemons bags of them all for sweeter⁶. Suppose limes instead suppose mesh bag of lemons left on the counter suppose her dizzy spins the door close suppose the lemons rot suppose rotted body.⁷

The king comes home no night no safety switch cold tower and wonder between the brick. Watch him leave here watch her dizzy and the luster of the⁸ mirror queen cutting board map body sawdust teeth and a better⁹ frame.

¹ Insertion of 'ful'

² General simplification of punctuation. Removal of spacing and embracing of prose form.

³ Insertion of underlined section. An attempting at mimicking Stein's use of 'suppose.'

⁴ Insertion of 'unrecognizable body.'

⁵ Rephrasing of 'leaves here with fistfuls of bruises of bruised lemons leaves here with bruised lemons.' Wanted to alter the feeling of 'fistfuls of bruises' to be less blatantly associated with domestic violence.

⁶ Removal of 'something' before 'sweeter' to disrupt sentimentality.

⁷ Insertion of underlined section. Added this section for purpose of additional items to be related to a body.

⁸ Removal of 'the knife' to avoid obvious or blatant violent associations.

⁹ Removal of 'kitchen knife for a bed.' Again, the violence intrinsic with the knife felt too blatant and/or obvious. The same with the bed reference. The proximity of 'bed' to 'knife' had too much a feeling of sexual violence, domestic violence.

POEM #2Juice

d.1

A small glass a four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth
when the perfect day moves like the perfect day moves
inside of the glass sipping the juice from the glass
when the dust from the air from the church falls into the glass
does it become holy.

What is holiness in a dust hut, in a broken van? A pocket-knife reach
ing for a hand to hold.

Cut. Cut near the wine a pinot cut ruby grapefruits in the kitch
en split the grapefruit down the middle watch the juice bubble
up ruby red cut pink pith cut with that hand-holding pocket-knife
cut no one ever notices that current blooming naming each slice anew
cut the next fruit never come forward about the peonies
choke in the rotten vase.

Juiced.2¹

A small glass a four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth
 when the ²day moves like the day moves sun-settling³
 inside of the glass sipping the orange⁴ juice from the glass
 when the dust from the air from the church falls into the glass
 does it become holy.

What is holiness in a dust hut in a broken van?
 A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold. The holiness reach
es the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint
the juice leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting
but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips all red and sticky⁵

Cut. cunning told cunning tried cunning⁶ cut
 near the wine a pinot cut ruby grapefruits in the kitch
 en split the grapefruit down the middle watch the juice bubble
 up ruby red cut pink pith cut and with that hand-holding pocket-knife
 cut no one ever notices that current blooming naming each slice anew
 cut the next fruit never come forward about the poppies⁷
 in the vase.⁸

The dust from the air from the church falls through the windowsill
 lampshade and under the light of the lighthouse on my thigh
 what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors
 drinking church dust out of juice glasses
 what of the sailors drinking the lighthouse holiness from the cut
 of the grapefruit slices.⁹

¹ General changes: lengthened significantly, altered form with individual stanzas.

² Removal of 'perfect;' too vague and too sentimental.

³ Insertion of 'sun-settling' to evoke temporal reference of some kind, as related to the sun.

⁴ Insertion of 'orange' for specificity.

⁵ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to evoke red and blue images, to establish an emotion based in warm months when strawberries are ripe, when the sun is hot.

⁶ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to increase sounds with *cunn* for the effect of the *un* sound combined with the images and colors of citrus fruit.

⁷ Change from 'peonies' to 'poppies.' Didn't like the sound generated by *eon*.

⁸ Removal of 'choke in the rotten.' Felt too heavy for the poppies, too unnecessary and obviously juxtaposed.

⁹ Added final stanza. Desire to expand upon the dust mentioned earlier to establish an sense of nostalgia, comfort, and safety, juxtaposed with something traditionally unsafe and unnerving, leading to drunk sailors. Wanted an opportunity to repeat 'the cut of the grapefruit slices.'

Juice
d.3¹

A small four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth when the day moves sunflower sky², sun-settling inside of the glass sipping the orange juice when the dust from the air from the church falls into the glass does it become holy from the rafter hearts³.

What is holiness in a dust room⁴ in a broken van? A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold. The holiness reaches the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint the juice leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips all red and sticky

Cut cunning tart cherry tart cunning tried cunning cut near the whine and shudder carmine cut ruby grapefruits in the kitchen split the grapefruit down the middle through the peel watch the juice bubble soft skin ruby red cut pink pith cut⁵ and with that hand-holding pocket-knife cut no one ever notices the country sweet side carmine lockbox between warmth⁶ that current blooming naming each cuneiform slice anew cut the next fruit never come forward about the poppies in the vase.

The dust ⁷air from the church falls through the windowsill lampshade and under the light of the lighthouse on my thigh what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors drinking church dust out of juice glasses what of the sailors softeyed⁸ drinking the lighthouse holiness from the cut of the grapefruit slices.

¹ General changes: adherence to prose form, removal of white space between words.

² Replacement of 'like the day moves' with 'sunflower sky.' Felt like original phrase was vague and repetitive in a boring way.

³ Insertion of 'rafter hearts' to evoke nostalgia or whatever personal association one might have to rafters.

⁴ Replacement of 'hut' with 'room.'

⁵ Insertion of multiple words/phrases (i.e. 'tart cherry tart,' near the whine and shudder carmine) to overwhelm the stanza with red references: sights, tastes, tactile feelings, etc.). Removal of 'near the wine a pinot' because I felt like the wine references were out of place among the citrus and fruit references.

⁶ Insertion of underlined section. Again, increasing red diction and relation to the body.

⁷ Removal of "from the" for simplification and generation of an alternate possible image.

⁸ Insertion of 'softeyed' to again establish another juxtaposition and to follow Stein with using non-words.

Juice
d.4

A small four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth when the day moves sunflower sky, ten in the night time¹ sun-settling inside of the glass sipping the orange juice when the dust from the air from the church falls into the glass does it become holy from the rafter hearts.

What is holiness in a dust room in a broken van? A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold. The holiness reaches the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint the juice leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips all red and sticky

Cut cunning tart cherry tart cunning tried cunning cut near the whine and shudder carmine cut ruby grapefruits in the kitchen split the grapefruit down the middle through the peel flesh watch the juice bubble soft skin ruby red cut pink pith cut and with that hand-holding pocket-knife cut no one ever notices the country sweet side carmine lockbox between warmth that current blooming naming each cuneiform slice anew cut the next fruit never come forward about the poppies in the vase.

The dust air from the church falls through the windowsill lampshade and under the light of the lighthouse on my thigh what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors drinking church dust out of juice glasses what of the sailors softeyed drinking the lighthouse holiness from the cut of the grapefruit slices.

¹ Insertion of underlined section. Desired a more concrete temporal reference that simultaneously rejects conceptions of time.

Juice
d.5

A small four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth when the day moves sunflower sky,
ten in the night time sun-settling inside of the glass sipping the orange juice when the dust
from the air from the church falls into the glass does it become holy from the rafter hearts.

What is holiness in a dust room in a broken van? A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold.
The holiness reaches the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint the juice
leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips
all red and sticky the strawberry is a magic omen the berry is a piece of magic the body and
the berry are of a piece¹.

Cut cunning tart cherry tart cunning tried cunning cut near the whine and shudder carmine
cut ruby grapefruits in the kitchen split the grapefruit down the middle through the peel
flesh watch the juice bubble soft skin ruby red cut pink pith cut and with that hand-holding
pocket-knife cut no one ever notices the country sweet side carmine lockbox between
warmth that current blooming naming each cuneiform slice anew cut the next fruit never
come forward about the poppies in the vase.

The dust air from the church falls through the windowsill lampshade and under the light of
the lighthouse on my thigh what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors drinking church
dust out of juice glasses what of the sailors softeyed drinking the lighthouse holiness from
the cut of the grapefruit slices.

¹ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to expand on the strawberry, its potential relationship to the body, the magicalness of the color and whatever magicalness the reader might associate with such a fruit.

Juice

d.6

A small four ounce glass the sun echoes in its mouth when the day moves sunflower sky,
 ten in the night time sun-settling inside of the glass sipping the orange juice when the dust
 from the air from the church falls into the glass does it become holy from the rafter hearts.

What is holiness in a dust room in a broken van? A pocket-knife reaching a hand to hold.
 The holiness reaches the body through the strawberry carton strawberry pint the juice
 leaking the blue carton red red juice rotting but sliced with sugar and dipped-in fingertips
 all red and sticky the strawberry is a magic token trinket body¹ the berry is a piece of magic
 the body and the berry are of a piece².

Cut cunning tart cherry tart cunning tried cunning cut near the whine and shudder carmine
 cut ruby grapefruits in the kitchen split the grapefruit down the middle through the peel
 flesh watch the juice bubble soft skin ruby red cut pink pith cut and with that hand-holding
 pocket-knife cut no one ever notices the country sweet side carmine lockbox between
 warmth that current blooming naming each cuneiform slice anew cut the next fruit never
 come forward about the poppies in the vase.

The dust air from the church falls through the windowsill lampshade and falls under the
 light of the lighthouse on my thigh what of that lighthouse light what of the sailors drinking
 church dust out of juice glasses what of the sailors softeyed drinking the lighthouse
 holiness from the cut of the grapefruit slices.

¹ Replacement of 'omen' with token trinket body.'

² Used 'of a piece' because of its frequent use in both Stein's writing and in criticism on Stein.

POEM #3Crow Nest

d.1

The baker breaks open breaker's methods are
 bloodier in the morning, maybe, baby baby
 open the cabinet a spoiled egg's left and the
 baby bird been screaming cabinet's still empty,
 baby, still empty, what do?

The baker breaks open let the yolks flood
 a yolk flood better than a flood flood, better still
 a butter flood for the baker

 walks through front door carries bouquets of
 broken thistles thistles in the doorways
 hangs thistles for mistletoe in February
 the door hinges falling off mold growing in the
 brightest corners but the baker hangs the
 light like a light switch like a switch like a switch
 over something brighter

the mixer pulsing pushing when the wine poured
 pours pouring perfect purring pulsing and the
 stairs too stairs many stairs and the lips like
 lips softness grass on concrete gaze on gaze
 toward the cork screw toward the open window

there is a calmness breaking point boiling point
 bubble up and fall quickly quick turn the wick
 up side down for your whole heart to read

Crow Nest

d.2

The baker breaks open breaker's means¹ are
 bloodier in ²morning maybe³ baby baby
 open the cabinet an ⁴egg's left and the
 baby bird been screaming cabinet's still empty,
 baby still empty what do? A still is still in the flooding
 waters waiting wading silently no real move meant for stale
 joints stale bones stale stale bread for dinner for breakfast.⁵

The baker breaks open let the yolks flood
 a yolk flood better than a flood flood better still
 a butter flood for the baker to wait through
mud is clean in skin mud is dirty in dough is
grit all glitter in the skin⁶ the baker

walks through a front door carries the bouquets
 of torn⁷ thistles thistles for the doorways
 hangs thistles for mistletoe February
 the door hinges falling off mold growing in the
 bed⁸ but the baker hangs the
 light like a light switch like a switch like a switch
 over loving⁹ brighter

the mixer pulsing pushing when the wine poured
 pours pouring perfect purring ¹⁰and the
 stairs too stairs many stairs and the lips like
 lips softness grass on concrete gaze on gaze
 toward the cork screw toward the open window

there is a calmness breaking point boiling thick cherry¹¹
 bubble up and fall quickly quick turn the wick

¹ Change from 'methods' to 'means.'

² Removal of 'the' for simplicity

³ Removal of comma, desire to disrupt punctuation

⁴ Removal of 'spoiled' because its image was too strong

⁵ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to play with sounds ('waiting' and 'wading') along with desire to establish a quiet emergency for the character to interact with.

⁶ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to repeat sounds ('wait' and 'wade') and to introduce opposing mediums (mud and glitter) to a character that creates.

⁷ Replacement of 'broken' with 'torn' for the alliteration

⁸ Replacement of 'brightest corners' with 'bed' for simplicity and a quicker image.

⁹ Replacement of 'something' with 'loving' for the sentimental possibilities after something somewhat stark.

¹⁰ Removal of 'pulsing'

¹¹ Change from 'boiling point' to 'thick cherry'

up side down for your whole heart to read
read in a stream seam explosion seeming to terror in half.¹

¹ Insertion of final line to play with sound ('terror' sounds like *tear her*)

Crow Nestd.3¹

The baker breaks open breaker's means² bloodier in morning maybe baby baby open the cabinet an egg's left and the baby bird been screaming cabinet's still empty, baby still empty what do? A still is still in the flooding waters waiting wading silently no real move meant for stale joints stale bones stale stale bread for dinner for breakfast.

The baker breaks open let the yolks flood a yolk flood better than a flood flood better still a butter flood for the baker to wait through mud is clean in skin mud is dirty in dough is grit all glitter in the³ skin the baker walks through a front door carries the bouquets of torn thistles thistles for the doorways hangs thistles for⁴ February the door hinges falling off mold growing in the bed but the baker hangs the light like a light switch like a switch like a switch over loving brighter

the mixer pulsing pushing when the wine poured pours pouring purring wood pantry doors splinter scars⁵ the stairs too stairs many stairs and the lips like lips softness grass on concrete gaze on gaze toward the cork screw please please place⁶ the open window against the fireplace pronounce pots and pans music toward the thick white frame⁷

there is a calmness breaking point boiling thick cherry bubble up and fall quickly quick turn the wick up side down for your whole heart to read read in a steaming stream scotch seam split⁸ seeming terror⁹ to terror in half.

¹ General changes: transition to prose form. Removal of excess white space.

² Removal of 'are'

³ Insertion of articles, especially 'the'

⁴ Removal of 'mistletoe' because of its sentimentality. Desire for 'February' to seem lonely/brutal without the added image.

⁵ Insertion of underlined section. Desire for additional kitchen image, something to interrupt the velvetiness of the wine/reds.

⁶ Insertion of 'please please place' and removal of 'toward.' Wanted to present the window as more active. Wanted to damage the speakers voice.

⁷ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to engage more sound, sonic references beyond the sounds of the words themselves.

⁸ Insertion of 'steaming,' 'scotch,' and 'split' to add alliteration. Removal of 'explosion' because it felt too abrupt along with the smooth s-based destruction of the stream.

⁹ Insertion of duplicate 'terror' to increase repetition of sonically important words.

Mixerd.4¹

The baker breaks open breaker's means bloodier in morning maybe baby baby open the cabinet an egg's left and the baby bird been screaming cabinet's still empty, baby still empty what do? A still is still in the flooding waters waiting wading silently no real move meant for stale joints stale bones stale stale bread for dinner for breakfast.

The baker breaks open let the yolks flood a yolk flood better than a flood flood better still a butter flood for the baker to wait through five thousand yolks² mud is clean in skin mud is dirty in dough is grit all glitter in the skin the baker walks through a front door carries the bouquets of torn thistles thistles for the doorways hangs thistles for February the high ceilings³ the door hinges falling off mold growing in the bed but the baker hangs the light like a light switch like a switch like a switch over loving brighter

the mixer pulsing pushing when the wine poured pours pouring purring wood pantry doors splinter scars the stairs too stairs many stairs and the lips like lips softness grass on concrete gaze on gaze toward the cork screw please please place the open window against the fireplace pronounce pots and pans music toward the thick white frame please please the name is not lost the name is tongue heavy the body is not lost, it is missing. The name, the long lost name, is missing inside the pots and pans.⁴

there is a calmness breaking point boiling thick plums bubble⁵ and fall quickly quick turn the wick up side down for your whole heart to read read in a steaming stream scorch seam split seeming terror to terror in half. Consider the fear. Consider the rouge on the cheek and the wine in the teeth, the sweet wine in the teeth and the soreness of feet. This means a door alone unlocked, a door alone unlocked for knocking. This means a window, an open window, an open window waiting. A wide frame. A thin glass. A broken door. A wailing guess.⁶

¹ General changes: Change of name from 'Crow Nest' to 'Mixer.'

² Insertion of 'five thousand yolks.' Wanted to attempt Stein's use of numbering seemingly irrelevant items/objects.

³ Insertion of 'high ceilings' to establish perspective and depth.

⁴ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to reintroduce the body beyond the body of 'the baker.' Wanted to engage Stein's sentence structure as discussed in the Artist Statement. Wanted to disrupt comfort and repeat the desperation.

⁵ Replacement of 'cherry' with 'plum' (did not want boring repetition of 'cherry' from previous poem). Removal of 'up' for the same reason.

⁶ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to insert the word 'consider' the way that Stein inserts 'suppose.' Wanted to attempt to introduce rhythm and rhyme. Wanted to use indefinite articles in a list format to generate many quick potential images all related to one central image that the reader has not been informed of.

POEM #4

d.1

Please break please lose please lose loss losing chips teeth and cracks
lips appease the place please this space broken from garage gifts
from heart gift from palm please run home home home home home
who home whose home whose home who is home whom home who's neck
who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood who's next.

Why we'll wheel some shocking move
some shocking mood bottles and crayons
not a peculiar word but wheel while we lie we lie while I
watch windows not empty not learning not tea pot not coffee mug
not broken glass broken jar

Garage Giftd.2¹

Please break the losing chips teeth and please lose the cracks and lips
 appease the place please
 this space place broke
 en from garage gifts from heart gift heart of palm
 please run home home home home
 whose home whose home who is home whom home who's next
 who's next who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood. ²

Why wheel the body from the memory in the
 dirty wheel barrow we'll just fall
 off the edge³ where I can't keep breathing
 more when the bottle break and the teeth chip and the
 broken glass embedded in the wheel and we just keep fall
 ing like no body notices no body on the hill no body cares about
 no body. ⁴

We lie on the dirt grass hill we lie and lie lie like sleep is
 honest
 know the body can't be so clean so shining so screaming when
 arms are on frame what when the frame all wood
 what when the bar and the bodies no body cared about no bodies⁵

Spiders keep nests against the tea pot on the shelf with the cerulean blue
 and the gold-edged spout

please break every
 cup in the cabinet every no body on the front step.

¹ Given a title. Moved from long lines in short stanzas to shorter lines in longer stanzas. Maintained some images/objects/diction, but drastically changed much of it. Developed the poem drastically overall, with a longer second stanza and a completely new third and fourth.

² Wanted to maintain references to the body throughout manuscript.

³ Attempt at perspective/depth

⁴ Working with repetition, sound, how to force inflection on certain words.

⁵ Using repetition to suggest desperation

Garage Giftd. 3¹

Please break the losing chips teeth and please lose
 the cracks and lips appease the place please
 this space place broke
 en from garage gifts from heart gift heart of palm
 please run home home home home
 whose home whose home who is home whom home
 who's next
 who's neck who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood.

Why wheel the body from the memory in the
 dirty wheel barrow we'll just fall
 off the edge where I can't keep breathing
 more when the bottle break and the tooth chip and
 the broke glass embedded the wheel and we just keep fall
 ing like no body notices no body on the hill no body cares
 about no body.
 We lie on the dirt grass hill we lie and lie lie like sleep is
 honest
 know the body can't be so clean so shining so screaming when
 arms are on frame what when the frame all wood
 what when the bar and the bodies no body cared about no bodies

Spiders nest² against the tea pot³ the book⁴ shelf
 with the cerulean blue⁵ the gold-edged spout and the
dead flowers " dried " the saving flowers saving grace
face importance still mattered promise no more neck
snap⁶

please break every
 cup in the cabinet every no body on the front step
every stem step every needle hollow hollowed out how bout
that how about that¹

¹ Insertion of white space between words, changing of line breaks.

² Change from 'keep nests' to 'nest'

³ Removal of 'on'

⁴ Insertion of 'book'

⁵ Removal of 'and'

⁶ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to add to the image of the tea pot of the bookshelf with another house-hold image that is also somewhat uncommon while proiding a growing emotion of impatience and frustration (i.e. 'saving,' 'importance,' 'still mattered,' 'promise,' 'no more').

NEW TITLEd. 4²

Please break the porcelain chip teeth and please lose the cracks and lips appease the place
 please this space place broken from garage gifts from heart gift heart of palm please run
 home home home home whose home whose home who is home whom home who's next
 who's neck who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood.³

Why wheel the body from behind the eyelid eyelashes stuck on the wheels in the wind⁴ in
 the dirty wheel barrow we'll just fall off the edge where I can't keep breathe⁵ breathing
 more when the bottle break and the tooth chip and the broke glass embedded the wheel
 and we just keep falling like no body notices no body on the hill no body cares about no
 body.

We lie on the grass dirt⁶ hill we lie and lie lie if⁷ sleep is honest know the body can't be so
 clean so shining so screaming when arms are on frame fingers in wood splinter scream⁸
 what when the frame all wood what when the bar and the bodies no body cared about no
 bodies snap the bird bones egg shell skin tip toes public statue face like a morning veil a
mourning for no body but a frayed rope or something spilled in dirt in July melted popsicle
on her fingers rubbed in dirt chin nicked on the swing chain blood on the blouse fast
forward blood on her chin and salt rub every corner she turns around I _____.⁹

Spiders nest against the tea pot the book shelf with the cerulean blue the gold-edged spout
 and the dead flowers "dried" the saving flowers saving grace face importance the white
paint coat the dirty dirty carpet¹⁰ still mattered promise no more neck snap please break

¹ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to allude back to the flowers, as Stein does. Wanted to evoke hollow, empty, chaotic emotional logic through posing a question without an answer, nor with a specific reference.

² Decided that the poem needed a new title; hadn't decided on one yet. Move from stanzas to prose form. Removal of white space.

³ Insertion of 'porcelain' to challenge conception of body versus object.

⁴ Insertion of underlined portion. Replacement of 'memory' with 'eyelid eyelashes' to establish a more concrete but unrecognizable version of memory. Added movement with 'stuck on' and 'in the wind.'

⁵ Insertion of 'breathe' to increase repetition to establish a notion of panic and breathlessness.

⁶ Reversal of 'dirt' and 'grass' to make the image harder to discern.

⁷ Replacement of 'like' with 'if' to remove the analogy and increase possibilities.

⁸ Insertion of 'splinter scream' to mirror earlier scream.

⁹ Insertion of underlined section. Wanted to generate a greater sense of hollowness and urgency through images (i.e. 'bird bones,' 'egg shell skin,' 'morning veil') and sounds (i.e. 'tip toes,' 'mourning'). Wanted to include bleeding with proximity to melting to generate parallels between body and object. Wanted to include the speaker to change the perspective, but was unsure of what the speaker should do.

¹⁰ Insertion of underlined section. Desire to include something stark (white) beside something familiar (dirty carpet).

every cup in the cabinet every no body on the front step every stem step every needle
hollow hollowed out how bout that how about that

tea pot
d. 5

Please break the porcelain chip teeth and please lose the cracks and lips appease the place
please this space place broken from garage gifts from heart gift heart of palm please run
home home home home whose home whose home who is home whom home who's next
who's neck who is elbow who's kneecap whose blood.

Why wheel the body from behind the eyelid eyelashes stuck on the wheels in the wind in
the dirty wheel barrow we'll just fall off the edge where I can't keep breathe breathing
more when the bottle break and the tooth chip and the broke glass embedded the wheel
and we just keep falling like no body notices no body on the hill no body cares about no
body.

We lie on the grass dirt hill we lie and lie lie if sleep is honest know the body can't be so
clean so shining so screaming when arms are on frame fingers in wood splinter scream
what when the frame all wood what when the bar and the bodies no body cared about no
bodies snap the bird bones egg shell skin tip toes public statue face like a morning veil a
mourning for no body but a frayed rope or something spilled in dirt in July melted popsicle
on her fingers rubbed in dirt chin nicked on the swing chain blood on the blouse fast
forward blood on her chin and salt rub every corner she turns around I glancing from the
risen window don't tread here. A burial, a large clean burial, means for long branches. The
tall hill reaches out for miles. Don't tread here.¹

Spiders nest against the tea pot the book shelf with the cerulean blue the gold-edged spout
and the dead flowers "dried" the saving flowers saving grace face importance after a flight
home a gutted airplane and awkward hellos hello² the white paint coat the dirty dirty
carpet still mattered promise no more neck snap please break every cup in the cabinet
every no body on the front step every stem step every needle hollow hollowed out how
bout that how about that.

¹ Insertion of underlined section. Generation of new perspective. References to death in more obvious tone. Use of command ('don't tread here') to mimic Stein's commanding verb use.

² Insertion of underlined section. Temporal reference ('after') to charge interaction.

POEM #5

d.1

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do, all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters, moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor, cold seeps.

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin, for a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, taste of metal and the saliva pools on the pillow.

Pining after plums of the other months, the bottles mostly empty, hold careful to the rail. Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream through the windshield. The hurt that runs through it.

Attend to the cacti. The empty bottles. Attend to the whistle. Attend to the way that the body knows. To the way that the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given the space. Do not attend the space. That air is out light bulbs.

Intend to wake through the center of the room, intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The milk crates are not for my body, they are for my things. The dresser is not for my body, it is for my things. Some of my things are for my body. The rain is for my body. The snow is for my body. The metal is for my brain. Like bicycle cranks. Maybe souped up.

My body is for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators, the bed cannot be a highway. But a mountain. There was something in saying that, how about that, that made the red dress fail. There never was a red dress, just a black dress, like a black and blue dress, dresser. Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry, that's the polite thing to do. The thing to do is to find the right goal. The right now.

The truth is not waiting for the teeth or the mouth. It is floating on through target practice. It is grazed. It is dissolving in gums.

Room
d.2¹

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor cold seeps.²

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin on³ a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, the brain tastes of metal and the saliva pools on the pillow. When the virus runs cold what then.⁴

Pining after plums⁵ the bottles mostly empty hold careful to the rail. Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream⁶. The hurt that runs through it. Attend to the cacti. The brown brown⁷ bottles. The whistle. Attend to the way the body knows. To the way the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given space. Do not attend the space. That air is out light bulbs.⁸

Intend to wake through the center of the room intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The milk crates are not for my body, they are for the things. The dresser is not for my body⁹ my things. Some of the things for the body. The rain for the body. The snow for my body. The metal for my brain.¹⁰

The¹¹ body for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators the bed cannot high way¹². But a mountain. There was something in saying that (how about that)¹³ that made the red dress fail.

¹ Given a title. Unlike other poems, this piece began in a prose form. At this point in the writing process, I had decided to drop stanzas completely.

² Removal of punctuation, except periods.

³ Replacement of 'for a' with 'on a' to create depth.

⁴ Insertion of both underlined section. Insertion of 'brain' to reestablish a body. Insertion of final unanswered, undemanded question to pose something empty and futile-sounding, something illogical that sounds amoral.

⁵ Removal of 'of the other months'

⁶ Removal of 'through the windshield.'

⁷ Replacement of 'empty' with 'brown brown.'

⁸ Removal of some articles throughout stanza to create a more staccato rhythm.

⁹ Removal of 'it is for'

¹⁰ Removal of 'is' in various phrases to establish a different sound.

¹¹ Replacement of 'My' with 'The,' to challenge ownership, personalization, definition.

¹² Replacement of 'be made a high way' with 'high way' to simplify and generate potentially different images.

¹³ Use of parentheses instead of commas.

There never was a red dress just a black dress like a black and blue dress dresser. Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry the polite thing to do.¹
Floating on through target practice. It is grazed. It is dissolving in gums.

¹ Removal of 'The thing to do is to find the right goal. The right now.' This felt like preaching, like telling the reader they should be living in accordance with poems.

Room
d.3

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor cold seeps.

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin for¹ a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, ²taste of metal and the saliva pools on the pillow. When the virus runs cold what then.

Pining after plums the bottles mostly empty hold careful to the rail. Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream. The hurt that runs through it. Attend to the cacti. The brown brown bottles. The whistle. Attend to the way the body knows. To the way the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given space. Do not attend the space. That air is out light bulbs.

Intend to wake through the center of the room intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The milk crates are not for my body, they are for my things. The dresser is not for my body my things. Some of my things for my body. The rain for my body. The snow for my body. The metal for my brain.

My³ body for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators the bed cannot high way. But a mountain. There was something in saying that (how about that) that made the red dress fail. There never was a red dress just a black dress like a black and blue dress dresser. Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry the polite thing to do.

The truth is not waiting for the teeth or the mouth. It is floating on through target practice. It is grazed. It is dissolving in gums.

¹ Replacement of 'on a' with 'for a' to create a parallel between 'grin' and 'daybreak.'

² Removal of 'brain.' Too concrete, too awkward.

³ Return from 'The body' to 'my body.'

Room

d.4

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor cold seeps.

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin on¹ a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, the brain tastes of² metal and the saliva pools on the pillow. When the virus runs cold what then.

Pining after plums the bottles he sways³ mostly empty hold careful to the rail with my muddy nails.⁴ Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin. The whole everyone, running⁵. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream. The hurt that runs through it. Attend to the cacti. The brown brown bottles. The whistle. Attend to the way the body knows. To the way the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given space. Do not attend the space. That air is out light bulbs.

Intend to wake through the center of the room intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The milk crates are not for my body, they are for the things. The dresser is not for my body my things. Some of the things for the body. The rain for the body. The snow for my body. Her⁶ metal for my brain.

The⁷ body for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators the bed cannot high way. But a mountain. There was something in saying that (how about that) that made the red dress fail. There never was a red dress just a black dress like a black and blue dress dresser. Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry the polite thing to do.

¹ Return to 'on' instead of 'for.'

² Return to 'the brain tastes of.'

³ Insertion of 'he sways' to produce a new perspective, a new viewer/speaker.

⁴ Insertion of underlined section to again, shift perspective by including an 'I' speaker using a party of the speaker's body to 'hold on.'

⁵ Insertion of underlined section.

⁶ Replacement of 'The' with 'Her.' Attempt to alter perspective and understanding of potential characters and speakers.

⁷ Return to 'The' instead of 'My.'

Floating on through target practice. It is grazed. It is dissolving in gum tissues and root canals.¹

¹ Removal of 'The truth is not waiting for the teeth or the mouth.' Insertion of underlined section. Attempt to remove vague, ambiguous, sentimental words ('truth') and replace them with something weird and uncomfortable ('root canals').

Room
d.5

Instantly cold was the way for the wall all cracked and creased. And when the time arrives the time the time wrapped up. Wraps up like wasps do all covered in skeletons fall flowers. The king saunters the way a king saunters moves slow for the time and the when. With no bed frame just mattress on wool floor cold seeps. It's a night of soured lips.¹

The snow wasn't so clean but still fit for a grin on a daybreak. Hands so cold when a heart so warm so beating so bleating in a field like a virus. What does the chewed up nickel taste of, the brain tastes of metal and the saliva pools on the pillow. When the virus runs cold what then.

Pining after plums, the sweet summertime plums², the bottles he sways mostly empty hold careful to the rail with my muddy nails. Hold careful careful of the teeth waiting around the corners. The teeth waiting. The teeth. Waiting for the sun, when the glasses might shimmer. But the sun cracked up. Watch for it. Watch for the change. Watch for the cracks in skin, in the whole hurt skin³. The whole everyone, running. The chalk outlines aren't up for the taking, the drafting the moving.

Act like wine doesn't cling to the carpet. To begin there is no open road. And that, beaming, makes up for the empty open river. The endless stream. The hurt that runs through it. Attend to the cacti. The brown brown bottles. The whistle. Attend that shrill⁴. Attend to the way the body knows. To the way the body knows nothing. The door might break when it is given space. Do not attend the space. This is to say, someone is calling from the rooftops. Their hands clap with someone's.⁵

Intend to wake through the center of the room intend great grace in the presence of some sun. The largeness of the room prevents the finding of its center. The mattress akilter.⁶ The milk crates are not for my body, they are for the things. The dresser is not for my body my things. Some of the things for the body. The rain for the body. The snow for my body. Her metal for my brain.

The body for my body. The cobblestones were not escalators the bed cannot high way. But a mountain. There was something in saying that (how about that) that made the red dress

¹ Insertion of underlined line to end the stanza on something short and sharp.

² Insertion of underlined line. Used to define 'plums' in a similar fashion to the way that Stein often redefines items.

³ Insertion of underlined section to define 'skin' in a Steinesque fashion.

⁴ Insertion of underlined section to increase effect of anaphora.

⁵ Insertion of underlined section and removal of "That air is out light bulbs." Replacement used to generate a new sound, image, and depth that could not be done with a descriptor of air as light blubs. This image was designed to suggest great space with small space

⁶ Insertion of underlined section used to establish depth and provide shifting spaces, relying on a centerpiece that is not truly center.

fail. There never was a red dress just a black dress like a black and blue dress dresser.
Dresser up in fur the best. Quiet down with the sorry the polite thing to do.
Floating on through target practice.¹ It is dissolving in gum tissues, ²the walls shrinking.

¹ Removal of 'It is grazed.'

² Replacement of 'root canals' with 'the walls shrinking.'

POEM #6

Orange

d.1

When the timer dings there is a dancer like a person in the wind in the sun. There are sometimes questions but almost usually demands. The demand sounds like breakfast. Sounds like awake. The demand is buried between your toes. A place can spin in a second. A couch bed and a sweeter whine like a cough syrup like last person in line. Orange going wrong direction. Orange going hundreds and hundreds. Orange going wrong way.

Weigh the amount necessary for moving forward. Choose the necessary amount. Choose the necessary. Breathe deep and call.

Orange¹
d.2

When the timer dings there is a dancer like a person in the wind in the sun. There are sometimes questions but almost usually demands. The demand sounds like breakfast. Sounds like awake. The demand is buried between your toes. A place can spin in a second. A couch bed and a sweeter whine like a cough syrup like last person in line. Orange going wrong direction. Orange going hundreds and hundreds. Orange going wrong way.

Weigh the amount necessary moving forward. Choose the necessary amount. Choose the necessary. Breathe deep and call.

SCRATCH

¹ There are no particular changes between this draft and the first draft, as I chose to begin fresh with the third draft and used nothing from the first or second. For this reason, that the third draft is essentially a first draft, there will be no annotations on "Orange" d.3.

Orange

d.3

The white white bowl the sugar cubes. Keep the brawl where it stays.
 The white white mug and the tick tock clock the burden of the button.

Mourning a roof & a place with no static. Call the static watch it grow with that
 tornado sky outside. The white bowls cracking the body bawling get out
 get up get gone get back. Get salt over

rejecting the window's curtains has never swept

so sleepy so quiet

such lemon chiffon on the wooden floorboards plaster walls (cracking)
 and the curtains sway sweep swing swing what storm is this? what tornado
 do you see? How slow it moves.

How much might it mourn. Despite: the sun yawns

like the grapefruit. The white white pillow case mixed

with eyeliner remnants the cold shoulders touching.

Touching walls slightly wet most cold most damp most unaware.

Most secretive the root vegetables rotting in the refrigerator.

The coffee beans scatter across the counter when the cabinets scream.

Skitter skittering to the root of the mouth.

Little bugs living in the ceilings in the walls in the wood.

Little bug, what do you have to say to me?

Too early for the ligaments. Too early for the break

down the stairs now please love please go back

down the stairs with the coffee beans the webs and the pithy fruits breaking

down from your shoulders drown from your shoulders

drawn away the white white bowl slivered in the mourning shadow.

Orange
d.4¹

The white white bowl the sugar cubes. Keep the brawl where it stays. The white white mug and the tick tock clock the burden of the button a blaring arrival².

Mourning a roof & a place with no static. Call the static watch it grow with that tornado sky outside. The white bowls from the living room cracking the body bawling get out get up get gone get back. Any room is a waiting room, is a distance. Any body is a waiting room³. Get salt over rejecting the window's curtains has never swept so sleepy so quiet such lemon chiffon on the wooden floorboards plaster walls (cracking) and the curtains sway sweep swing swing what storm is this? What tornado do we⁴ see? How slow it moves. How much might it mourn. Despite: the sun yawns like the grapefruit. Perched⁵. The white white pillow case mixed eyeliner remnants the cold shoulders touching.

A bookshelf broken: the transversal gray the soot and the grime and the fence posts. The fence posts are not broken. This means clarity. The shrubs planted last spring tearing and torn at their respective seams: where the leaves might have grown is hot smog instead. Hot smog is a kind of drowning. Keeping an eye on the center. A center to spin through. A center is a grounding. The couch cushions long since parted. Feathers in every square inch their encasings ripped to tatters. The overhang translates into a blackness with which you were not previously familiar. A blackness fire soot in your eyes tint screen across your body, whole. Keep your eye on me. Charcoal coating arms rumbling enamel.⁶

Touching walls slightly wet most cold most damp most unaware. Most secretive the root vegetables rotting in the refrigerator. The coffee beans scatter across the counter when the cabinets scream. Skitter skittering to the root of the mouth. Little bugs living in the ceilings in the walls in the wood.

Little bug, what do you have to say to me? Too early for the ligaments. Too early for the break down the stairs now please love please go back down the stairs with the coffee beans the webs and the pithy fruits breaking down from your shoulders drown from your shoulders drawn away the white white bowl slivered in the mourning shadow.

¹ At this point in the editing process I again moved towards prose-formed stanzas. I removed white space between words and restricted how the words are placed on the page.

² Insertion of underlined section for definition.

³ Insertion of underlined section to draw parallels between bodies and spaces.

⁴ Replacement of 'you' with 'we.' Working towards including the speaker and the reader.

⁵ Insertion of 'perched' as word play. *Perched* for its place in the sky, but sounds like *parched* from the attention to the mouth and the image of the grapefruit.

⁶ Insertion of stanza. This section has a goal of suggesting the chaos of a storm in a somewhat stationary space.

Orange
d.5

The white white bowl the sugar cubes. Keep the brawl where it stays. The white white mug and the tick tock clock the burden of the button a blaring arrival.

Mourning a perfectly narrow¹ roof & a place with no static. Call the static watch it grow with that tornado sky outside. The white bowls from the living room cracking the body bawling get out get up get gone get back. Any room is a waiting room, is a distance. Any body is a waiting room. Get salt over rejecting the window's curtains has never swept so sleepy so quiet such lemon chiffon on the wooden floorboards plaster walls (cracking) and the curtains sway sweep swing swing what storm is this? What tornado do we see? How slow it moves. How much might it mourn. Despite: the sun yawns like the grapefruit. Perched. The white white pillow case mixed² remnants the cold shoulders touching.

A bookshelf broken: the transversal gray touching³ the soot and the grime and the fence posts. The fence posts are not broken. This means clarity. The shrubs planted last spring tearing and torn at their respective seams: where the leaves might have grown hot smog instead. Hot smog is a kind of drowning. Keeping an eye on the center. A center to spin through. A center is a grounding. The wide couch cushions long since parted. Feathers in every square inch their encasings ripped to skinny strips⁴. The overhang translates into a blackness with which you were not previously familiar. A blackness fire soot in your eyes tint screen across your body, whole. Keep your eye on me. Charcoal coating arms rumbling enamel.

Touching walls slightly wet most cold most damp touching walls⁵ most unaware. Most secretive the root vegetables rotting in the refrigerator. The refrigerator does not mind. This matters in dinner making.⁶ The coffee beans scatter across the counter when the cabinets scream. Skitter skittering to the root of the mouth. Little bugs living in the ceilings in the walls in the wood.

Little bug, little bug⁷, what do you have to say to me? Too early for the ligaments. Too early for the break down the stairs now please love please go back down the stairs with the coffee beans the webs and the pithy fruits breaking down from your shoulders down from your shoulders drawn away the white white bowl slivered in the mourning shadow.

¹ Insertion of 'perfectly narrow' for specificity/definition.

² Removal of 'eyeliner;' too specific and gaudy.

³ Insertion of 'touching' to establish relationship between the gray and the soot.

⁴ Replacement of 'tatters' with 'skinny strips.' *Tatters* felt cliché; alliteration was possible with *skinny strips*

⁵ Insertion of 'touching walls' for increased repetition.

⁶ Insertion of underlined section, to provide a different perspective on the situation.

⁷ Repetition of 'little bug'

POEM #7Moth

d.1

Let the light on for when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home it's been a long year. Let the moth live light it's been a year.
 The lamp's gone out merely a spectre watching for an open window cooking eggs has never taken such focus. Such focus focus focus
 against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain.
 Let the light on --- there's a moth waiting for the bricks to exude some sort of story like a campfire's on, let the light on.

Let the light on for when my body meets my brain on the front porch in the middle of the rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a bottle and a body and a brain all juggling for warmth beneath the jacket.

Buzzing is incessant upon porches and roofs. The inner ear feels the mosquitos climb aboard before you've noticed wings trapped in silk. The shoe tattooed the cement stair the body of a slug for ink. I buried it beneath a leaf. The leaf is embedded in the step now. The body became glue.

The skillet left of the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches and leave the lamp on. Follow the movement of my moth as I blow out the candles. It's beautiful, haven't you noticed.

Mothd.2¹

Let the light on when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home
 it's been a long year of sharp teeth.² Let the moth live light it's been a year of red
 tongue.³

The lamp's gone out definitely⁴ a spectre watching for an open window cooking soup⁵
 never required such focus. Such focus focus focus

against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain.

Let the light on there's a moth on standby for the bricks to spill⁶ some⁷ story
 like a campfire's on let the light on. There's a circle's center here.

A center beneath the bones and the lamplight porch door lock and key.⁸

Let the light on when my body meets my brain on the front porch in the middle of the
 rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a bottle and a body and a brain all
 juggling warmth.⁹ Follow the path the movement wings move
the center from where it started follow the moth's movement

and my gritted teeth the soaking nature of rain water capture rain water on my tongue

Rain water soaked breathing razor nuance through the front door lace queen
 watches the windows shake

late. Snails sink below flowers and petals what do we want with the dew drops.¹⁰

Buzzing incessant upon porches and roofs. The inner ear feels mosquitos climb aboard
 before noticing wings trapped in silk.¹¹ Silken arms crossing across the stairs follow
the movement of my moth pursed¹²

nightdresses give way to stars waiting for the right pique breathing nuance act
 as nothing ever changes nothing ever changes nothing ever changes the slug's body
 glue to the cement stair the night dress billowing like nothing
 every change just bodies beneath leaves embedded.¹³

¹ Insertion of more white space between words. Less clarity between stanzas.

² Insertion of underlined phrase.

³ Insertion of underlined phrase; creates parallelism.

⁴ Replacement of 'merely' with 'definitely'

⁵ Replacement of 'eggs' with 'soup.' Felt more weather appropriate.

⁶ Replacement of 'waiting' with 'on standby.' Replacement of 'to exude' with 'to spill.'

⁷ Removal of 'sort of'

⁸ Insertion of underlined section to repeat references to *center*.

⁹ Removal of 'beneath a jacket.'

¹⁰ Insertion of underlined section to introduce new object, character, and space.

¹¹ Removal of small words: 'is,' 'the,' and 'you've.'

¹² Insertion of underlined section. Removal of previous lines about a dead slug. The diction in describing the slug did not match the tone of the poem.

¹³ Insertion of full stanza. Produces image of dead slug, juxtaposed with the dresses.

The skillet left on the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air
without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches leave the lamp on.
Follow the movement of my moth I blow out the candles. It's beautiful

haven't you noticed.

Moth
d.3¹

Let the light on when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home it's been a long year of sharp teeth. Let the moth live light it's been a year of red tongue. The lamp's gone out definitely a spectre watching for an open window cooking soup never required such focus. Such focus focus focus against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain. Let the light on there's a moth on standby for the bricks to spill some story like a campfire's on let the light on. There's a circle's center here. A center beneath the bones and the lamplight porch door lock and key.

Let the light on when my body meets the neurons² on the front porch in the middle of the rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a bottle and a body and a brain all juggling warmth. Follow the path the movement wings move the center from where it started follow the moth's movement

and my gritted teeth the soaking nature of rain water capture rain water on my tongue rain water soaked breathing razor nuance through the front door lace queen watches the windows shake late. Lace queen invites you inside lace queen holds her head in her hands when the sand starts sinking.³ Snails sink below flowers and petals what do we want with the dew drops.

Buzzing incessant upon porches and roofs. Lace queen can't listen anymore.⁴ The inner ear feels mosquitos climb aboard before noticing wings trapped in silk. Silken arms crossing across the stairs follow the movement of my moth pursed

nightdresses give way to stars waiting for the right pique breathing nuance act as nothing every the barkeep is a medium man with a telephone and thick knuckles a coaster is a coaster is a coaster is a whole tripping point the quick trip and⁵ the slug's body glue to the cement stair the night dress billowing like nothing every change just bodies beneath leaves embedded.

The skillet left on the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches leave the lamp on. Follow the movement of my moth I blow out the candles. Too late for the option of quiet of catatonic.⁶

¹ Removal of white space between words. Establishment of prose form.

² Replacement of 'my brain' with 'the neurons' include the nuance of 'mind' mind physical diction.

³ Insertion of underlined section to invite reader into the space and to develop a character.

⁴ Insertion of underlined section to continue narrative.

⁵ Replacement of 'nothing ever changes' lines with underlined section. Provide greater dynamism, new images, specific ideas.

⁶ Replacement of 'It's beautiful/ haven't you noticed' with the underlined section. Previously felt cliché and sentimental.

Moth

d.4

Let the light on when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home it's been a long year of sharp teeth. Let the moth live light it's been a year of red tongue. The lamp's gone out definitely a spectre watching for an open window cooking soup never required such focus. Such focus focus focus against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain. Let the light on there's a moth on standby for the bricks to spill some story like a campfire's on let the light on. There's a circle's center here. A center beneath the bones and the lamplight porch door lock and key.

Let the light on when my body meets the neurons on the front porch in the middle of the rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a bottle and a body and a brain all juggling warmth. Follow the path the movement wings move the center from where it started follow the moth's movement

and my gritted teeth the soaking nature of rain water capture rain water on my tongue rain water soaked breathing razor nuance through the front door lace queen watches the windows shake late. Lace queen invites you inside lace queen holds her head in her hands when the sand starts sinking. Snails sink below flowers and petals what do we want with the dew drops.

Buzzing incessant upon porches and roofs. Lace queen can't listen anymore. Too many whispering ghosts. A ghost is an endless river through windy fields¹. The inner ear feels mosquitos climb aboard before noticing wings trapped in silk. Silken arms crossing across the stairs follow the movement of my moth pursed

nightdresses give way to stars waiting for the right pique breathing nuance act as nothing every the barkeep is a medium man with a telephone and thick knuckles a coaster is a coaster is a coaster is a whole tripping point the quick trip and the slug's body glue to the cement stair the night dress billowing like nothing every change just bodies beneath leaves embedded.

The skillet left on the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches leave the lamp on. Follow the movement of my moth I blow out the candles. Too late for the option of quiet of catatonic.

¹ Insertion of underlined section to alter tone.

Moth
d.5

Let the light on when the moth comes home. Let the moth come home it's been a long year of sharp teeth. Let the moth live light it's been a year of red tongue. The lamp's gone out definitely a spectre, that is, an opening¹ watching for an open window cooking soup never required such focus. Such focus focus focus against the kitchen counter is a red stain like a wine stain. Let the light on there's a moth on standby for the bricks to spill some story like a campfire's on let the light on. There's a circle's center here. A center beneath the bones and the lamplight porch door lock and key.

Let the light on when my body meets the neurons on the wide² front porch in the middle of the rain storm after a long walk home in the dark with a short bottle and a tall body³ and a brain all juggling warmth. Follow the path the movement wings move the center from where it started follow the moth's movement

and my gritted teeth the soaking nature of rain water capture rain water on my tongue rain water soaked breathing razor nuance through the front door lace queen watches the windows shake late thin glass⁴. Lace queen invites you inside lace queen holds her head in her hands when the sand starts sinking. Snails sink below flowers and petals what do we want with the dew drops.

Buzzing incessant upon porches and roofs. Lace queen can't listen anymore. Too many whispering ghosts. A ghost is an endless river through windy fields. The inner ear feels mosquitos climb aboard before noticing wings trapped in silk. Silken arms crossing across the stairs follow the movement of my moth pursed

nightdresses give way to stars waiting for the right pique breathing nuance act as nothing every the barkeep is a medium man with a telephone and thick knuckles a coaster is a coaster is a whole tripping point the quick trip and the slug's body glue to the cement stair the night dress billowing like nothing every change just bodies beneath leaves embedded.

The skillet left on the stove to cook out the oil. So much oil in the air without caring about lungs or skin. Light the matches leave the lamp on. Follow the movement of my moth.⁵

¹ Insertion of underlined section

² Insertion of 'the wide' to create depth

³ Insertion of 'short' and 'tall' for variant depth

⁴ Insertion of 'thin glass' for greater description and depth

⁵ Removal of 'I blow out the candles...catatonic.' Previous phrases felt heavy and awkward.

POEM #8

d.1

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet for exactly twelve minutes before the spinning begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning and all of the shaking fingers and the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water that doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing for pears to grow somewhere quieter: inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. Everything has been stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else to hide. It was all stolen. You did not want to give it away. You did not want to have to hide. It was stolen but you knew it and you watched them steal everything that you thought you might have needed and you have been waiting such a long time to get it back. Such a long time. What if that time never clicks what if you watch bark grow on trees for several years and the water never stops falling and you let it flood all of your valleys and all of your mountains how do you flood a mountain that is not possible. the blinders are on when the house is spinning lazy susan house tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medium house median house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle to stare at. A tube with a top. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking. Four purses, none used in four years. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of paint. A body painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking the boxes.

Boxesd.2¹

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly twelve minutes and the² spinning
 begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning all of the shaking fingers
 the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-
 tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow³ somewhere quieter:
 inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. Everything has been
 stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding.⁴ It was all stolen. You did not
 want to give it away. You did not want to hide. It was stolen but you knew it late⁵ and
 watched them steal everything that you thought you might have needed and you have
 been waiting such a long time to get it back. Such a long time. What if that time never
 clicks what if you watch bark grow on trees for years and the water never stops falling
 and you let it flood all of your valleys and all of your mountains how do you flood a
 mountain that is not possible. the blinders on⁶ the house is spinning lazy susan house
 tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medium house median
 house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle
 to stare at. A tube with a top. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking. Four

¹ Changed the form to produce the white space running through entire piece.

² 'and the' replaces 'before the'

³ Changed from 'wishing for pears to grow' to 'wishing pears would grow'

⁴ Changed from 'there is nothing else to hide' to 'nothing else hiding.'

⁵ Insertion of 'late'

⁶ Removal of 'when'

purses, none used in four years. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of
paint. A body painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking the boxes.

Boxes

d.3

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly twelve minutes and the spinning
 begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning burns all of the shaking fingers
 the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-
 tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow somewhere quieter:
 inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. Everything has been
 stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding. It was all stolen. You did not
 want to give it away. You did not want to hide. Know it was stolen but you knew it late
 watched them steal everything you thought you might need¹ and you have been waiting
 such a long time to get it back. Such a long long² time. What if that time never clicks
 what if you watch bark grow on trees for years and the water never stops falling and
 you let it flood all of your valleys and all your mountains how do you flood a mountain
 that is not possible. the blinders on the house is spinning lazy susan house tornado
 house mechanical house mending house medley house medium house median house
 mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle
 to stare at. A tube with a top. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking. Four
 purses, none used in four years. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of
 paint. A body painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking the boxes.

¹ Changed from 'might have needed' to 'might need'

² Repetition of 'long'

Boxes

d.4

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly quiet¹ minutes and the spinning
 begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning burns all of the shaking fingers
 the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-
 tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow somewhere quieter:
 inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. Everything has been
 stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding. It was all stolen. You did not
 want to give it away. You did not want to hide. Know it was stolen knew it too late²
 watched them steal everything you needed³ you have been waiting such a long
 time to get everything⁴ back. Such space and Such a long time.⁵ What if that time never
 closes⁶ what if you watch bark grow on trees for years and the water never stops falling
 and you let it flood all of your valleys and all your mountains how do you flood a
 mountain that is not possible. the blinders on the house are spinning lazy susan house
 tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medium house median
 house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle
 to stare at. A tube with a top. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking.⁷ A box

¹ Replacement of 'twelve' with 'quiet'

² Changed 'stolen but you knew it late' to 'stolen knew it too late'

³ Changed 'might need' to 'you needed'

⁴ Replaced 'it' with 'everything'

⁵ Insertion of 'such space and'. Removal of repeated 'long.'

⁶ Replaced 'clicks' with 'closes'

⁷ Removal of 'Four purses, none used in four years.' Too specific; tone is out of place.

full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of paint. A body painted. A painted body.

Painted bodies dancing. Breaking the boxes.

Boxesd.5¹

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly quiet minutes and the spinning
 begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning burns all of the shaking fingers
 the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-
 tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow somewhere quieter:
 inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. Everything has been
 stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding. It was all stolen. You did not
 want to give it away. You did not want to hide. Know it was stolen knew it too late
 watched them steal everything you needed you have been waiting such a long
 time to get everything back. Such space and Such a long time. What if that time never
 closes what if you watch bark grow on trees for years and the water never stops falling
 and you let it flood all of your valleys and all your mountains how do you flood a
 mountain that is not possible. the blinders on the house are spinning lazy susan house
 tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medicating² house
 medium house median house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle
 to stare at. A tube with a top. A tube of circles. A tube of dots³. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A
 fearful kind of looking. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of paint. A body
 painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking the boxes.

¹ Removal of double spaced format.

² Insertion of 'medicating'

³ Insertion of underlined section, to provide greater depth/possibility to the object being described.

Boxes

d.6

Resisting the blinders keeps the room quiet exactly quiet minutes and the spinning begins. The spinning and spinning and spinning burns all of the shaking fingers the quivering eyes and the almond-shaped water doesn't feel too clean and the yellow-tipped mistaken habitual breathing. Wishing pears would grow somewhere quieter: inside the closet. The closet is such a quiet place. Such a calm place.

Associate a small body with the child that grew up in your place. A small body arrives at your lungs. A small body wants your knees. A child wants your walls. Your walls are rubies. Your rubies are enraged. A child is enraged a child wants your walls you cannot remove the walls you are crying. The porcelain cool against your forehead.
A small body arrives for your lungs¹.

Everything has been stolen from everyone else. There is nothing else hiding. It was all stolen. You did not want to give it away. You did not want to hide. Know it was stolen knew it too late watched them steal everything you needed you have been waiting such a long time to get everything back.² Such a long time. What if that time never closes what if you watch bark grow on trees for years the water never stops falling and you let it flood all of your valleys and all your mountains how do you flood a mountain that is not possible. the blinders on the house are spinning lazy susan house tornado house mechanical house mending house medley house medicating house medium house median house mediation house mediating body in box.

A closet full of sweaters. A rectangular box for sitting and standing. For breathing. A bottle to stare at. A tube with a top. A tube of circles. A tube of dots. A buzzing buzzing buzzing. A fearful kind of looking. A box full of boxes. A body full of bodies. A body full of paint. A body painted. A painted body. Painted bodies dancing. Breaking³ boxes.

¹ Insertion of underlined portion to alter perspective, create more dynamic emotional narrative.

² Removal of 'such space'

³ Removal of 'the'

POEM #9

d.1

Hold wildly with thick fists for a yearning shoulder while the water boils. Ride a hand along the door frames. Take it in with heavy breath, and let it sink. The possibility of the empty sweetness was draped, dreamed and dropped: caught fire. Caught fire and a ride home. The flames are in every doorway, shattering nearly all the glass. The door frames shudder. The door frames shudder and cannot sing.

The dull knives and all of the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center, the one with burning edges the dull eyes cutting into a softer space, previously thriving.

Previously growing and groaning and moving, still. Previously. No more high functioning moving, no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling.

Watch the water boil. Watch while the water boils.

Empty bedroom of crossed-out nights and bloody knees, how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. The rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car seat at 6 am, no heat car, drunk fingertips car, buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight, there can be no surprises there. Sometimes it is red. Sometimes it is pink.

Sometimes both. Sometimes skin. Wait for the water. What is the question the mugs have all broken.

d.2¹

Hold wildly with thick fists for a yearning shoulder while the water boils. Ride a hand along
the door frames. Take it in with heavy breath let it sink.

The possibility of the empty

sweetness was draped

dreamed and dropped: caught fire.

Caught fire and a ride home. The flames in

every doorway, shattering nearly all the glass.

The door frames shudder. The door frames shudder and cannot sing.

The dull knives and all of the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center

the one with burning edges the dull eyes cutting² a softer space, previously thriving.

Previously growing and groaning and moving, still. Previously. No more high

functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing

unwilling.

Watch the water boil.

Watch while the water boils.

Empty bedroom of crossed-out nights and bloody knees how often do the walls crave

someone more glorious. The rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of

a car 6 am no heat car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain.

It is merely sunlight ³no surprises there. Sometimes it is red. Sometimes pink.

Sometimes both. Sometimes skin.

Wait for the water. What is the question

the mugs have all broken.

¹ Insertion of white space between words, often to replace commas. Shortened lines.

² Removal of 'into'

³ Removal of 'there can be'

Pasta Waterd.3¹

hold wildly with thick fists for a yearning shoulder. ²the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. take it in with heavy breath let it sink.

the possibility of the empty sweetness was draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire.

caught fire and a ride home. the flames in every doorway, shattering nearly all the glass.

the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder and cannot sing.

the dull knives and all of the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center

the one with burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving.

previously growing and groaning and moving, still. previously. no more high

functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing

unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils.

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights and bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes³. how

often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the rigorous test of watching a sunrise.

The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car⁴ no heat car drunk fingertips car

buzzing in your brain.

It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. sometimes pink.

sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question.

the mugs have all broken.

¹ Insertion of title. Removal of capital letters.

² Removal of 'while'

³ Insertion of underlined phrase

⁴ Insertion of 'car'

Pasta Waterd.4¹

hold wild² thick fists for a yearning shoulder. the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. take it in heavy breath let it sink. the possibility of the empty sweetness draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire. caught fire³ a ride home. the flames in every doorway shattering nearly all the glass. the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder cannot sing.

the dull knives all the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center the one with the burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving. previously growing and groaning and moving still. previously. no more high functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils.

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes. how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car no heat car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. sometimes pink. sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question. the mugs have all broken.

¹ Removal of double spacing; separation of stanzas

² Changed 'wildly' to 'wild'

³ Removal of 'and'

Tea
d.5¹

hold wild thick fists for a yearning shoulder. the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. take it in heavy breath let it sink. the possibility of the empty sweetness draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire. caught fire a ride home. the flames in every doorway shattering nearly all the glass. the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder cannot sing.

the dull knives all the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center the one with the burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving. previously growing and groaning and moving still. previously. no more high functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils.

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes. how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car no heat car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. sometimes pink. sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question. the mugs have all broken.

¹ Changed title from 'Pasta Water' to 'Tea.' Removal of white space between words.

Tea
d.6

hold wild thick fists for a yearning shoulder. the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. the tweezers are in the medicine cabinet.¹ take it in heavy breath let it sink. the possibility of the empty sweetness draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire. caught fire a ride home. the flames in every doorway shouting smoke through the roller window² shattering nearly all the glass. the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder cannot sing.

the dull knives all the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center the one with the burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving. previously growing and groaning and moving still. previously. no more high functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils. The hot metal of the kettle has turned the pads of her fingers to plastic.³

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes. my entire hands are plastic now.⁴ how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car no heat car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. perched at the summit⁵. sometimes pink. sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question. the mugs have all broken.

¹ Insertion of underlined phrase to provide alternate, specific image.

² Insertion of underlined phrase

³ Insertion of underlined phrase. Inclusion of 'her' pronoun to establish a character and a speaker.

⁴ Insertion of underlined phrase to engage the speaker.

⁵ Insertion of underlined phrase to create depth.

Tea
d. 7

hold wild thick fists for a yearning shoulder. the water boils. ride a hand along the door frames. the tweezers are in the medicine cabinet. take it in heavy breath let it sink. the possibility of the empty sweetness draped dreamed and dropped: caught fire. caught fire a ride home. the flames in every doorway shouting smoke through the roller window shattering nearly all the glass. the door frames shudder. the door frames shudder cannot sing. The medicine mirror kaleidoscoping¹.

the dull knives all the blinking eyes all of the eyes moving closer to that center the one with the burning edges the dull eyes cutting a softer space previously thriving. previously growing and groaning and moving still. previously. no more high functioning moving no more getting on with it getting on with a type of timing unwilling. watch the water boil. watch while the water boils. The hot metal of the kettle has turned the pads of her fingers to plastic.

empty bedroom of crossed-out nights bloody knees ex on eyes no eyes. my entire hands are plastic now. how often do the walls crave someone more glorious. the walls wide enough.² the rigorous test of watching a sunrise. The gruesome tolerance of a car 6 am car no heat car little box³ car drunk fingertips car buzzing in your brain. It is merely sunlight no surprises there. sometimes it is red. perched at the summit. sometimes pink. sometimes both. sometimes skin. wait for the water. what is the question. the mugs have all broken.

¹ Insertion of underlined phrase to create a mixing of images.

² Insertion of underlined phrase to create depth.

³ Insertion of 'little box' for depth and spatial awareness.

POEM #10

d. 1

Pale pale light bulbs and the end of the world resting on the edge of a tea cup. Wait. Watch for the pears to ripen. Ripened pears waiting for a knife. A knife waiting for an occupation. a string of pearls in a ceramic bowl where is the letter from the mother
 land your arms hard against my shallow
 the shallow pot for steaming carrots washed and shining on the counter
 the potted cacti watching dishwashing against the counter red wine stains stains stains
 stays stay and watch watch and wash and wash and salt against skin rubbing dry like sand
 dry like desert watch for the edge of the desert
 rising up from the cutting boards rising up from the knife blade knife blade watching like a
 mirror.
 Mirror mirror mirror.
 The dust on the windowsills seals the clouds inside the kitchen fills the air with hurt
 hurting
 her tingling fingertips between a buzz and a numbness where are all of the glasses not
 broken on the floor again the pale pale light bulb buzzes the pale pale light bulb breathing
 some kind of other sky for when the flashbacks come back come back come back
 pick up your body please pick up pick up your body my body
 the carpet is woolen it is warn and not warm and skin is warn but not warm sometimes
 warm sometimes aching sometimes the cactus shakes with the spins from the spills.
 Still. Be still. Be still under the pale pale bulb. Wait the pears ripen. Let the pears peel.

Kitchen Bulb

d.2

Pale pale light bulbs and the end resting on the tea cup edge¹. Wait. Watch for the pears to ripen. Ripened pears waiting for a knife. A knife waiting for an occupation. a string of pearls in a ceramic bowl where is the letter from the mother land your arms hard against my shallow the shallow pot for steaming carrots washed and shining on the counter on the shelf count his eyelashes on the stairwell hips against a counter count the number of times she blinks looks left and answers in the ambiguous rouge the potted cacti watching dishwashing against the counter red wine stains stains stains stays stay and watch watch and wash and wash and salt against skin rubbing dry like sand dry like desert watch for the edge of the desert rising up from the cutting boards rising up from the knife blade knife blade watching like a mirror. The dust on the windowsills seals the clouds inside the kitchen fills with hurt hurting her tingling fingertips between a buzz and a numbness where are all of the glasses not broken on the floor again the pale pale light bulb buzzes the pale pale light bulb breathing some kind of other sky for when the flashbacks come back come back come back pick up your body please pick up pick up your body my body my body my body my body the carpet is woolen it is warn and not warm and skin is warn but not warm sometimes warm sometimes aching sometimes the cactus shakes with the spins from the spills.

Still. Be still. Be still under the pale pale bulb. Wait the pears ripen. Let the pears ripen. Ripe fruit is not so bad fruit. The ripe woman is not a wrong woman. The woman's red face is not an answer. The woman's blushed cheeks and quivering fingers against the kitchen counter. The inside of her cheek, grater, her body greater, her body through the colander and the chalky pink acts out yes on a curtained stage. Quick tick quick quick tick and eye glance and a quick hope. burns on the stovetop. everything burns. on the stove. Top up. Top off.

¹ Change from 'edge of a tea cup' to 'tea cup edge'

Kitchen Bulbd.3¹

Pale pale light bulbs and the end resting on the tea cup edge. Wait. Watch for the pears to ripen. ripened pears waiting for a knife. a knife waiting for an occupation. a string of pearls in a ceramic bowl where is the letter from the mother land your arms hard against my shallow the shallow pot for steaming carrots washed and shining on the counter on the shelf count his eyelashes on the stairwell hips against a counter count the number of times she blinks looks left and answers in the ambiguous rouge the potted cacti watching dishwashing against the counter red wine stains stains stains stays stay and watch watch and wash and wash and salt against skin rubbing dry like sand dry like desert watch for the edge of the desert rising up from the cutting boards rising up from the knife blade knife blade watching like a mirror. I can't see through glass no more.² The dust on the windowsills seals the clouds inside the kitchen fills with hurt hurting her tingling fingertips between a buzz and a numbness in those same veins my veins³ where are all of the glasses not broken on the floor again the pale pale light bulb buzzes from the telephone wires black wire spider arms⁴ the pale pale light bulb breathing some kind of other sky for when the flashbacks come back come back come back pick up your body please pick up pick up your body my body my body my body my body my body the carpet is woolen it is warn and not warm and skin is warn but not warm sometimes warm sometimes aching sometimes the cactus shakes with the spins from the spills.

Still. Be still. Be still under the pale pale bulb. Wait the pears ripen. Let the pears ripen. Ripe fruit is not so bad fruit. The ripe woman is not a wrong woman. The woman's red face is not an answer. The woman's blushed cheeks and quivering fingers against the kitchen counter. The inside of her cheek, grater, her body greater, her body through the colander and the chalky pink acts out yes on a curtained stage. Quick tick quick quick tick and eye glance and a quick hope. burns on the stovetop. everything burns. on the stove. Top up. Top off.

¹ Removal of most uppercase letters

² Insertion of underlined phrase to engage the speaker.

³ Insertion of underlined phrase

⁴ Insertion of underlined phrase

Kitchen Bulb

d.4

Pale pale light bulbs and the end resting on the tea cup edge. Wait. Watch for the pears to ripen. ripened pears waiting for a knife. a knife waiting for an occupation. a string of pearls in a ceramic bowl where is the letter from the mother land your arms hard against my shallow the shallow pot for steaming carrots washed and shining on the counter on the shelf count his eyelashes on the stairwell hips against a counter count the number of times she blinks looks left and answers in the ambiguous rouge carrots, the steamed carrots put away again.¹ dishwashing against the counter red wine stains stains stains stays stay and watch watch and wash and wash and salt against skin rubbing dry like sand dry like desert watch for the edge of the desert rising up from the cutting boards rising up from the knife blade knife blade watching like a mirror. I can't see through glass no more. This is not to save a place but say a person.² The dust on the windowsills seals the clouds inside the kitchen fills with hurt hurting her tingling fingertips between a buzz and a numbness in those same veins my veins where all of the glasses not broken on the floor again the pale pale light bulb buzzes from the telephone wires black wire spider arms the pale pale light bulb breathing some kind of other sky for when the flashbacks come back come back come back pick up your body please pick up pick up your body my body my body my body my body the carpet is woolen it is warn and not warm and skin is warn but not warm sometimes warm sometimes aching sometimes the cactus shakes with the spins from the spills.

Still. Be still. Be still under the pale bulb, the pale yellow³ bulb. Wait the pears ripen. Let the pears ripen. Ripe fruit is not so bad fruit. The ripe woman is not a wrong woman. The woman's red face is not an answer. The woman's blushed cheeks and quivering fingers against the kitchen counter. The inside of her cheek, grater, her body greater, her body through the colander and the chalky pink acts out yes on a curtained stage. Quick tick quick quick tick and eye glance and a quick hope. burns on the stovetop. everything burns. on the stove. top up.⁴

¹ Replacement of 'the potted cacti watching' with the underlined phrase

² Insertion of underlined phrase

³ Replacement of 'pale' with 'yellow'

⁴ Removal of 'Top off.'