

Let writing get to the real topography that we are taped to. Instead of serenading the landscape with gentle reprimands and sly innuendo, poetry could help with the labor of dislodging some of those boulders. Enough bodies lie already under them. Let the imagination use its power to see what pathway could lead up and into the terrain of a habitable possibility.

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Sampling out of this World

In *Tripwire 1* Sherry Brennan wrote, "The poetry of the twentieth century ... is not simply concerned with being new, but in the tensions between the new and the contexts out of which it writes." Context: the convergence and presentation of circumstances, facts, or evidence that surrounds a particular event, situation, or reality.

Context-based poetry includes a variety of influences, and the points of contradiction only make the points of contact more deliberate and intense. This is not political—it is poetical, and follows suit in a lineage that extends from Blake, Rimbaud and Whitman, through to Stein, H.D., Duncan and Olson, not excluding the lyric address, surrealism, ballads, folk music, and Greek tragedy; derivation, projective verse, appropriation, and collage. (This is my skeletal list—other poets will have different priorities).

The world is not some abstract exterior we maneuver through from life to death and back again—it is not a thing which some people are in "real" contact with and others are not. Evidence, information, unique convergences—all which feed poems—are at every corner. This evidence is gathered up by artists and writers of all different traditions, and changes depending on the space, time and locale of the seekers. It is not thanks to leisure time that the world and the evidence with which it is filled comes into the creation of a poem or art work. It is the sustained chaos of the visible world—between jobs, on public transportation, reading the paper, dreaming, listening to music, to children—that becomes the poem. With the time-old attention to all-that-is-out-of-place, or within-place, but extraordinary, radical contexts are created making tangible Noah de Lissovoy's statement, "Revolution means imagination." (*Tripwire 1*)

Many poets sample, although they might not refer to their methods as such. The transmission of energy, objects, words,

vocabulary, rhythms and sounds are picked up from the poet's maneuvering through his/her days. Evidence drives the poem forward and creates its context. Through sampling, the poem becomes a project that is continually changing, or that can continue with no end in sight. Unlike collage which de-contextualizes and removes the reference from the object by forcing a cohesion with other objects, sampling preserves the reference by presenting it as a chunk of information, rather than as a fragmented cut-up. Both re-contextualize the original reference—but while collage consumes the reference, sampling allows the seams, and the points of convergence with other references, to show.

Words that become poetry are mixed with all the information I've deciphered through the day, whether it be fictional, real, or dreamed: toxic waste makes lobster livers soupy; a turkey vulture spread its wings and completed a high voltage circuit; the big bang shattered space like glass.

from Chronicles of the Heart

So blessed was the gunpowder
in wafers and water
I trained my tears for the deluge
spread my feathers
and singed my eye
wept with the martyrs
and rhymed with the skunk
rowed in the power line
and electrocuted the boat
the blast was an attack of winter
the planet was reeling through space
the clouds passed swiftly
through my yellow room
the day was atomic
and filled with fright.

A turkey vulture spread its wings and touched two hot wires,
completing a 69 million volt circuit.¹
A man's face caught fire while he was being executed.²
The reverse spin of Venus was possibly caused by collision with
another planet.³
"Blue jets" are beams of blue light that appear to extend
upwards from the tops of thunderclouds.⁴

1. "The Year in Review," *Key West Citizen*, 1-1-98.

2. Source lost.

3. Catastrophists' Theory.

4. "Blue Jets Emitted Upward From Tops of Thunderclouds,"
Science Frontiers, Jan.-Feb., 1997.