

HOMAGE TO



THE ALPHABET

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texts by

Vyt Bakaitis, Celia Bland, Terence Boylan,
Billie Chernicoff, Lila Dunlap,
Mikhail Horowitz, Robert Kelly,
Kimberly Lyons, Charlotte Mandell,
Joel Newberger, Tamas Panitz, Rachel Pollack,
Jerome Rothenberg, Elizabeth Robinson,
Charles Stein,
Peter Lamborn Wilson, *and*
Maggie Louisa Zavgren

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Foreword by Robert Kelly</i> | 5 |
| Vyt Bakaitis | 6 |
| Celia Bland | 8 |
| Terence Boylan | 9 |
| Billie Chernicoff | 11 |
| Lila Dunlap | 16 |
| Mikhail Horowitz | 17 |
| Robert Kelly | 20 |
| Kimberly Lyons | 24 |
| Charlotte Mandell | 27 |
| Joel Newberger | 31 |
| Tamas Panitz | 32 |
| Rachel Pollack | 33 |
| Elizabeth Robinson | 36 |
| Jerome Rothenberg | 39 |

| | |
|--|----|
| <u>Charles Stein</u> | 41 |
| <u>Peter Lamborn Wilson</u> | 47 |
| <u>Maggie Louisa Zavgren</u> | 50 |
| <u><i>Postscript by RK</i></u> | 52 |

The poems in this collection were written in response to this letter that Robert Kelly sent around:

ALPHABET PLAN

The other day Peter Lamborn Wilson, himself the author of an *Abecedarium*, was kind enough at lunch by the waterfall to say he liked my “Alphabet” in *The Doris* Issue 16. Instantly I thought how we should all write alphabet pieces, each one of us, honoring each letter, an alphabet of one’s own. By ‘us’ I mean this little immense society of friends (we can’t be Quakers, maybe we are Makers, the Scots word for poets) should come up with poems honoring the alphabet, embodying it whether Roman or Greek or Cyrillic or...), letting it show the way, the words, the order of the day. The Greek alphabet, *where for the first time the vowels were written*, is the real origin of democracy: with it you needed to know only 22 signs and you did not need priest or pandit to tell you how the word was to be spoken. When the vowels are there, the word says itself. So: honor the alphabet, let it bring you poems, or a poem in 26 parts, or 22 or 24, or ...

I write this to you on the Epiphany 2020, the day of the showing forth, when we see what is really there.

How about it?

VYT BAKAITIS

The Alphabet
is a scam, at its best in the least
neither recent nor primal, where language has poetry
its first direct yelp arise metaphorically ready
from a local vocal distinction that rides high
as a banner with liars and cheats to gain
social advantage and advance in commerce toward
greedy pedigree
by competitive degree
to rest its caseload as designated abstraction
like the common market with random leaves
that fall from the tree in my backyard in the fall
while the tree itself
never seems ready to collapse
that I should even notice.

CELIA BLAND

A is for Ox

I stretch my neck flat for this yoke.
I solicit
burdens.
There is no dearth of weight and drag and
only me to
hump.
I step into earth's diurnal curve straining muscles
brutally
used.
My sole satisfaction a ring through nostrils,
a chain and
yank,
double tassels tipping
my horns.
Skewers.
Let me say now, I eschew all that requires
quicksilver
shortcuts.
Wit.
Trust in the earth, I say. Eat it,
heave it, step on it,
sleep in it.

TERENCE BOYLAN

LETTERS HOME

A, for anything you do first
Answer me, ask me the
All mighty question we don't have

B is for go back to
A again, ask
A war correspondent in a
Burned out building

Can you be safe?
Come home, nothing noble about
Dying, get out and why are you there

... you're skipping letters, you skipped
Everything from
Hell to
Why

Go, tell the story you need to hear
Tell them how we eased from
Truth to whatever letter
A lie begins with

... eased from what
Jesus said, to
Kill our neighbor, or was it
Love, I get

Mixed up, or maybe
No one listened
Put the story out in your open hands

Hold it up to the whole sky
Let it go as though
Your mouth was whispering "world, dying"

You get called to Heaven when you
Say the perfect prayer

The one that knows there's
No such thing

BILLIE CHERNICOFF

A Marian Alphabet

A, as any
girl can tell you,
pomegranate,
seed grenade,
Apple of Granada.
What has she
to do with Apollo,
our Eva, a seed
on her tongue.

B, her belly,
bees in the marigolds,
be it done to me.
Holds every element
in her house.

Christ is only an open mind.

Dea, open
door,
the Delta,
estuarine, uterine.

Everywoman,
her trident
or vulva,
a mermaid
combing her hair.
Etruscan, Eritrean,
Earthling,
lightning in her hair,
her lyre.

Not far, never far.

Grail. Grotto. Glyph. Glade.
Girl bent over the book in her lap.

Hi, Helios!
Sun,
salutations.
I greet, I praise
& receive him, I do.

O Jew,
how you jaw,
you mouth harp,
jujube, apple
that ripens
into a date,
sweet,
and lasts forever.

K, an angel
holding a Lily.
Mirabili dictu,
just like That.

M, the center
of woman, the
Om of her
womb,
the image
descending,
a word
come down
in her, pressing
her open,
& more,

Mem, la mer,
her waters
break & nothing
is as before.

N, a tent,
three sticks, a fire.
She leans on a tree
to labor.

O in itself
an ode
to Our Lady.

A page of cups,
a newsy fish,
how you go on,
my darling.

Question,
a begetting
utterance,
water
pouring
from a jar,
U, a jar
overflowing
with nothing,
Q the sound of
blowing soft
across the mouth of U.

R, rapture,
head on fire.
Remember
her roving heart,
her mirth.

Swan, her symbol,
an order of solitude.
I am alone so well
in her presence,
the well of her silence.

Runic T,
the restless
truth, agrees
to be here
among the trees.

Undo, unknot
unravel. Unfasten
unto me.

Open your eyes
on the verge of Paradise.
Virgin girl-guide, our
mediatrix. The Way,
if you can bear her blaze.

Welcome dreams
of wolves in winter,
let us draw near
to her blue fire together.

Nexus,
X, ineluctable
crossing,
catastrophe
of love, my God,
if only a kiss
were enough.

I don't know why,
Yeshua, I feel
scared & ashamed
of this, us,
myself, I raise
my arms & cry out.
Not why.
Yes.

Z, I zigzag,
resurrect Isis
take refuge
in zero, O,
measureless Lady,
virgin plenum
where it begins.

LILA DUNLAP

The Alphabet

A is the second letter of the alphabet.

B is a big boat.

C is a common wind that arises,

D is dark and

E is extra things.

F is getting fucked on the sofa

G is good as hell,

H is the hearts of all men, open, to

I, ignite the one in me.

J is the juice,

K is a kitty cat,

L is levee, and

M is mama, always.

N is Nobody, who killed your sheep,

O is the shape my mouth makes.

P is the purpose, for which I do all these things,

Q is question, can't help it.

R is getting riled up.

S is snow, which I've never seen.

T is television, to see and hear at the same time,

U is us, under the windy evening, and

V is violet, the color of the sky over the palm trees.

W, water, in and out of my ears,

X, to examine the river.

Y is you, a name I call myself,

and Z is the zebras in the zoo.

MIKHAIL HOROWITZ

An Asian Ascetic

An Asian ascetic, an anchorite
Blissfully blinded by Buddha's bright
Crystalline crown, cascaded chants
Down Delhi, daring devas dance,
Encouraging every emaciated
Filthy, feckless fakir fated
Gloriously, "Give gurus glee!"
Headstrong, heartstrong, holy, he
Illuminates India's indigents in
Jolting Jaganath's jamboree,
Krishna's karma, Kali's kin,
Lovely Lakshmi's luxuries,
Maya's magnificent mysteries.
Now Nirvana's nullification –
Opalescent obliteration –
Probing, purely pearl-possessed –
Quietly quenches quester's quest.
Rama's rare revivalists ring,
Shavites, Sikhs, stern saddhus sing;
Thousands trill, true temples tending,
Universe ungirt, unending;
Vishnu's victorious vehicle vibrates,
Whistling, whirling, whole wide world waits,
X-ploding, x-ulting, x-statically x-uviates
Yin-yang yoke; yogi's yen
Zippers zenith – zero, zen!

Ziggy, Your Xylophone

(a reverse abecedarian jazz poem)

Ziggy,
Your
Xylophone
Was
Vibrant
Until
The
Squares
Railed,
Quite
Put
Off,
No,
Man!
Loudly,
Kinda
Jealous.
It's
His
Gig,
Foster
Exclaimed,
Damn
Crazy
Bourgeois
Assholes!

A E I O U

An eel in oil unveils

Adam's erotic inclinations. Only Unitarians

And eremites indulge Onan's uncompanionable

Angling; Eve insists on usefully

Aberrant exercises, italicizing our undeniable

Analogy (example). If obsessional under-

Achievers establish intensely ophidian Utopias,

Assist 'em! I'll override Uriel's

Archangels, expressing intelligent orgiastic union:

Asp, entrez ici. Open us.

ROBERT KELLY

ALPHABET

A is the arrow that reaches the end

Z is the girdle that tautens your soul

B is the cabin you built in the woods

Y is the yew tree that stands by the door slim and tall

C is the call that wakes all the beasts in your barn

X is the crossroads where you wait day and night for a friend you call Love

D is a door you welcome them through

W is the wine you beg them to share, but true Love is abstemious and temperate

E is the little sign pinned to the door meaning come in come in if you are who you think you are

V is the dull knife you cut the cake with, makes plenty of crumbs you feed to the birds

F is the flag that flutters on your roof or the light that flickers from your eyes—you decide

U ah, U is the mystery, the bend in the river, the voice from the ground

G is the gold in the eyes of a panther or the coins on a plate, you stick them in meters or give them at church

T is Christ's cross, Woden's hammer, the double ax of Crete, the end of the road

H is woman who tells you to build,
and also the house you obey her and make, and then your joyous breath,
almost exhausted, welcomes her in

S is the sound all things make as they pass – listen hard and listen soft and
cherish the differences

I is the girder holds up the roof you think but the house still stands when
you snatch it away--so what can it be?

R is that very roof over your head and the other outer, the big blue one over
your head where it all begins

J is the enlightened saint you will become, some of you are him or her
already--listen!

Q is always a mystery, isn't it, quail in the thicket, queen on her throne, the
day the fates appointed for your going, or coming at last

K is the candle you need in the daytime, the taste of food, the bird song that
wakes you then you go back to sleep

P is the traveler you spot on the hillside, the hitchhiker on the highway you
can't decide to pick up and you've passed, but P is also the hand he waves
to you, the hand you dream about, your hand on someone's shoulder or knee

L is an outing on the meadow, loll on the lawns and look at heaven, heaven
lets you see it clearly then, you lie on your side and look at a friend

O is the well your mother showed you once, told you of the Milk Lake where
you were born, O is the organ they play in the church
but you don't go anymore, you have a well of your own

N is the fish that swims through you when you're afraid, dark sea, o voyager,
even on the brightest day

M is the middle, mama, Athene's owl gazing both ways at once, M is
meaning and M is the mountain you climb to call yourself by your secret
name, out loud, and the eagles will hear it forever.

LETTERS

Circle cut in the stone
we see the sunrise through —
that is the first
letter of the alphabet.

The second is the sound of water
rippling in the nearest stream.
The third is the brass
doorknob on your mother's door.

All three are consonants
but now a vowel comes
sung high in the mouth:
a bird flies by. (Choose
the species according to gender,
crow for men, oriole for women.)

You must decide whether one
vowel serves for all. If not,
the breath is up to you, your
churchbell skull, your iris lips.

Then more consonants arrive:
acorn fallen from a windless branch,
angry child crying out a block away,
a bicycle clanking as it falls on its side.

The last letter of all is a goat
come skipping down the mountain
shouting as he tosses his long
horns joyously through the shadows.

Have I given you enough to spell the truth?

KIMBERLY LYONS

A Strange Circumference

Alphabet, O I love Almond milk, Arm and Hammer and the A at

Beth Alpha. Blake, bleak and bountiful, you begin with B.

Celsius, are you a saint, author or degree. C cuts Cloth, clothes us complexly.

D is the best letter as in Darn that Dream, Doctor Bronner's and Dram.

English sounds egalitarian, energized, entirely eclectic. Egret is English?

File gumbo, freekah, fountain pen. Forever. F is fancy, forward, feeling.

G is so grand, grounded, gigantic. No Gimbals and gloaming without it.

herbes d provence sounds like errrr, tastes like herbaceous. Has heirlooms in its hand.

J is jiggy with its roof and slide. J is an ancient water park. Jazz, Jaipur, Javanese And Jackson.

K. A shiny old marcasite pin, I found on the sidewalk downtown.

Locomotive, luncheonette, lingerie, lacy, logocentric. Languid. Lots of Ls. Love em. The

Most magical melodious mysterious letters are in The Book of Kells. Take it from

Me.

Pimonten provokes with its plosive smoke. Pensive, pensione, Persephone. Proudly P prevails.

Quixotic and Quandary. Question: ?. Q too quickly? Belongs with Xylophones, Yeats and zebras?

Seek And ye shall find, the best short English sentence. S also starts Sappho and

Super

Mercado. A sibilant

Swan in a rare, unknowable circumstance.

Unbeknownst and Utterly. Utrecht and uh, the word I say most

Verily and Voluminous. Vicente Huidbobro, a vastly good name for a poet.

Xerox might be the most memorable name of a company. Let's X it out.

(I skipped W). Why?

Who dropped this? I asked. No one you can see answered the air.

Yet. The most useful word ever. Yell as well.

Z the most elegant letter of all. Zazzy. Have your Zemirah with Za'atar.

Good-bye from Zona, the transparent substance surrounding.

CHARLOTTE MANDELL

F

Far off in the North Country, there are organisms underground that are busy planning your future. If you listen carefully you can hear them conferring silently with each other.

B

Being alone is not enough. You have to look inwards to consult the deities of the body to be certain of how things stand.

D

The deities speak. Deities of earth; deities of the air; deities of the water. D is an I sailing away. D is an I with no ego.

K

Kanata: settling into the knowledge of birds. How they talk to each other especially. How talking is no different from singing, which is no different from love.

M

Almond trees in flower. Milk-white blossoms filling a turquoise air, just as Vincent shows. A mild, nutty smell all round us. Be mine.

T

A crossroads. A decision to be made. A decisiveness. *Trancher*, to slice or cut, to decide.

V

An abyss. Deep underground, the book of the earth is reading us, slowly unfurling its pages. The soft touch of vellum. Velour, the feel of my childhood. Dive in and forget.

A

The opposite of V. The heavens. *L'abîme des oiseaux*. An abyss that flies upwards, an ecstasy of Elysium, always.

S

A shell opening, slowly. Sound of the sea, silence thereof. The most beautiful letter of the alphabet, in its perfect symmetry, its sensuous curves. Slippery when wet.

C

The openness of it. The promise of an uncertain future. The optimism of never knowing. The certainty of the sea.

K (again)

A roman numeral for infinity.

X

Arms crossed. An impasse. But also an escape, open on all sides. From decay, possibility: there is always a way out. Even into emptiness.

I

The intelligence of singleness.

O

Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, the omniscience of language. Oh my stars and garters. "And my country is the region of the summer stars."

P

An O that has had second thoughts. Peculiar things like pelicans, penguins, pangolins. The bashfulness of a letter that has to come after O.

R

A P with places to go and things to do. A p on the prow. If P is Virgo, then R is Leo: a P with a purpose. Growl.

Z

A Z can go either way, zigzags. Z is Libra. Z is sleep only because it is mesmerizing. A Z is a path with so many possibilities, a garden labyrinth, an endless crossword puzzle, a question with no answer. If A, then Z.

Q

An O with ideas. The logical conclusion for P. An O that has resolved itself into a conundrum.

W

Gemini. *Double-v*. The only double letter. An all-embracing letter, the wisdom of women, the all-encompassing weather, the Wombat. The Wendigo. The immensity of the woods. Woo me.

Y

I grec. Tree of life: Yggdrasil. We all come from Y. Without You I am nothing.

N

Z sideways. No more possibilities. The ways have been closed. The negation of infinity. Even the open parts seem closed. A box with no one's name on it.

U

Two arms holding us up. Underwater, everything floats. The infinite possibilities of U. The buoyancy of it. The life raft of the alphabet.

E

Everything lies in E: a person seated, arms outstretched. The evergreen tree emerges from E, the fairy mound as well. The magic of E is endless, and necessary. There is no end to E.

F (again)

E gave birth to F: the fairy folk. We owe our imagination to F, our creativity, our loquacity, our wit too. Without F we would all be businessmen.

G

The goodness of G, the level-headedness of it, the grace and gravity of it. G grounds F, gives it meaning, fortitude. We are all waiting for Godot.

J

Sounds like “G” in French. Hence is very confusing. A French I, an I with *une jupe*. Je est un autre.

L

A person seated, legs outstretched. Only in English do we have a lap. The mellifluousness of L, the lemony lusciousness of it, the endlessness and openness of L.

H

Two I’s holding hands. Happiness in the here and now, and in the hereafter. Heaven.

JOEL NEWBERGER

As the dragon, self-slain, splayed triskelion,
bled out in Gibraltar, back of the Jews' wagon,
came back to death's hand as a galleon,
daylight's rag, though stained, polished your lucent force,
even your fin shellacked, tail, celadon tongue,
for clarity's quick path to resurrection: this is
gunaikes' silverware trick, their gallant eggs
hugging wisdom all this too-long yuga
in a headless repose — this is a careless lizard's
jazz-step to the glug of superstition,
kommos of the dragon, gauze-pressed wounds
leaking soma again, the body's good news.
May I look at you, from noon until April,
nestled in an ochred snake-egg, snug in an
ode, an alphabet east of here, *gimmel*, *daleth*, to
quell my automatic emotions, a circle of letters
reeling the fish in, a noose, sun's gnostic
solicitation, copper dinar on a sleeping bird
to keep the dragon from the formulas of swords
until the heroine pets her steep mission, Salome's
vowel in Solomon's caput, flashing alphabet of our
winter's hips' voltage in turns in intercourse's
X: in the dragon's tender calyx, a text calls out
you in circles of airborne strict forces:
zero's wick, lit at the love-myth's center.

TAMAS PANITZ

A The antlers left by the white hart.
B Transmogrified monster not to be slain, beauty.
C Caesarian, Christian, intercession into wood-lore
D Demeanor of animals, determination, demonstration.
E Guide our enterprises, bird chatter, spider webs.
F The affable ineffable's furnishings, fastenings.
G Gong in sand arrangement.
H Human fate as human form.
I Indigenous I amid Western circumspection.
J The redundant fields of just do it already.
K Gnaw like a king knowingly through bones.
L Follow the flow therefrom, the flies, fleas, leprosy.
M Market of harms, charms, marmalade, milk.
N Children's noses, notaries, napkins.
O Orchid clogging my oliphant at the crucial moment.
P Permission persimmon podosis.
Q Of the Quest's unerring liquid.
R Curse of repetition, vampires.
S Start the sand slowly circling
T Treason among family deities.
U That ululate through the ultraviolet leaves.
V Revere anyone for their energy.
W The White Whale.
X Beyond the X-ray.
Y Contrary to New York, yellow, yin.
Z A Zoo by the sea, zeros without season.

RACHEL POLLACK

ASTONISHMENT BOLSTERS CONSCIOUSNESS

for Meghan Guidry

A is for Abel, dead animal boy.
Vegetable Cain cracked his head like a toy.

B is for Bread, insufficient alone.
To live we need whispers, the endless unknown.

C is for Cathars, were they really that great?
Do we love them primarily for who chose them to hate?

D is for David, he sings and he kills,
Praising bright God with each life that he spills.

E is Ecstatic, a challenge to stand
Outside of ourselves, uninhabited land.

F is Forbidden, a very long list.
The more we desire, the more they insist.

G is for Guilt, a most useful tool,
For control more efficient than warm golden rules.

H is Hosanna, a shout to the sky.
Can you follow the voices, and learn how to fly?

I is for Instinct, refused and denied.
All rules and commands are excuses to hide.

J is for Judas, and Jesus, together,
A hard-working team, as jealous as brothers.

K is for Knowledge, a vast leafy tree,
With snakes and bright fruit to delight you and me.

L is for loss, it's all that we know,
Lose love, and lose health, and hope, last to go.

M is for Mother, Virgin or Great,
She guides us and comforts our miserable state.

N is for Nothing, the ultimate goal.
Pour all our Somethings down a dark hole.

O is for Oh! a cry of delight,
Discovering joy in morning or night.

P is for Presence, indwelling and bright.
The lift of white wings to shelter our fright.

Q is Quiescent, a rare happy state,
The genuine thing so hard to create.

R is for Righteous, the model of good,
Replacing desire with long lists of should.

S is for Sate, all yearning fulfilled.
Our actual state? Opportunities spilled.

T is for Teachers, whatever their cause.
Listen for love, be wary of laws.

U is unknown, hidden from sight.
Seek it forever, down the dark night

V is for Valley, and shadows, and death,
Where we call out "You there?" with each hesitant breath.

W— Wicks, white flames at their tips.
If only our words could burn from our lips.

X is Unknown, the true state of our Earth,
Every step a surprise, from the shock of our birth.

Y yearns for Yes, the end of all doubt,
To banish all No, in victorious rout.

Z is for Zeitgeist, the sum of us all.
Despite our best efforts, we rise and we fall.

ELIZABETH ROBINSON

Alphabetical One-Upmanship *or* Modernist Party

Berenice Abbott has ground her camera lens from loose-weave linen and silica stolen from Popocatepetl.

Vanessa Bell kisses the air, leaves lipmarks, evanescent patterns on the wallpaper of the atmosphere.

Andre Breton fires a gun into the air. Yet again.

Aime Cesaire folds a page
into a paper boat and with
a single snort, launches it
across the Atlantic Ocean.

Alistair Crowley explains that to rid a cat of its nine lives he was compelled to kill it in nine different ways.

And gracefully, gratefully Isadora Duncan sways, as though walking on water, though she later looks down to note that she is actually supported on the crown of Crowley's bald head.

All this while T.S. Eliot, with his green facepaint, tells dirty jokes.

Janet Flanner could do better. If she wanted to.

She puts a cigarette in a holder, and extends it to the woman beside her,
Gertrude.

Gertrude, whose last name is so self-evident we need not say it, gathers hundreds of pages, sews them into a pocket and pours in extra buttons.

When no one is looking,
Langston Hughes slips
a few raisins in Gertrude's
pockets.

Igor Stravinsky, forsakes the Rites of Spring and has a dalliance with the Ides of March.

Looking askance at the promiscuity of Igor, Alfred Jarry stops the party dead by insisting that he really has been a lifelong virgin. David Jones illustrates Jarry as a porcupine wearing a crown while

Yasunari Kawabata leashes a thousand cranes in order to demonstrate to Charles Lindbergh an alternative mode of flight. Lindbergh, breathless, looks down at the palm of Kawabata's hand,

stunned to see a huemel, an Andean deer, emerge from its creases. Astride it is Gabriela Mistral.

Mistral grows to full size, embraces Kawabata. Incredulous amid the Nobel Laureates,

Lindbergh bows out and turns to

Reinhold Niebuhr. They
put their heads together over

Niebuhr's notebooks, later
shaking hands and parting,
tamely, as cynics.

On the other side of the room, Georgia O'Keefe and Charles Olson eat
olives and pimienta, arguing over the eros of art.

As he is in a fit of peevishness, other guests tell Pablo
that he is dull at a party. But he knows that he
will outlive most of the rest of them,
so he smiles and bides his time.

Raymond Queneau merely turns sideways and he is invisible. He *insists*
that he is invisible.

(This does not work for Diego Rivera. Yet he is able to exhale lilies.)

In the hallway, President Leopold Senghor introduces his doppelganger,
Orphee Noir. They contort their hands to make shadow figures on the wall.

Sylvia Townsend Warner simply looks up.
That is enough. She will not tell us if she is a witch. She licks a lolly and
smiles.

Evelyn Underhill, admiring Senghor and Noir, inadvertently effaces their
shadowplay when she steps forward from the gray world, singing a ballad.

Dark-eyed Rudolph Valentino forswears pomade, grows out his hair, and
studies to portray Samson.

Arthur Edward Waite and Anna May Wong execute a heartbreakingly
delicate waltz

composed by Peter Warlock who tells them to move in first an X and then
in the

circuit of the pentacles as they move across the floor. Peter Haseltine looks
on.

Yeats arises and goes.

But Zora—

Zora has the last word and she offers it
like the curling serpent ouroboros who
places his tail in his mouth and rolls onward,
the circle that begins as it starts. Zora, selah.

JEROME ROTHENBERG

ALPHABET POEM: ZYGOTES ZONKED ZIGZAGGING, ZEALFULLY ZAPPED

axe and animal, all able
but bleeding by blunt barbarisms
creep cowering cunningly, craggily cancelled:
death does dutiful debts, defers
even evening's edges. Eleven eagles
fly furiously. Four foxes, furred,
gorgeously groomed, grow grandiose, groan
however hard. Headstrong hedonists, hairy
islanders in Italy, idiot inmates,
jeer Jewish jugglers, judicious Jainists,
Kantian killers, kowtowing crazy kat
lawyers, lesbian ladies, lowborn, lamenting,
mad mothers made masculine, mammals
no nereids nuzzle, not nymphs
or oracles, only on oceans

pretending. Passengers plumb plangent prowls,
quote quaint quintessences, quarreling, queezy,
religious reformers return. Russian rabbis,
some sinister, sample smoked salmons.

*Travelers, too tawdry, telegraph testaments,
upload unnatural utterances. Useless utopians
vilify violent videos, volatile, vain
with whatever webmails we waken:*

x-rays, xerography, xanadus, xenophobes x-ed.

*Yet you yearn, youthful yammerers,
zygotes zonked zigzagging, zealfully zapped.*

c. 1978/2008

CHARLES STEIN

A

Alpha-privative adapts the Antithetical.
You can't actually have that — a thesis (that is).
What art have you to articulate, to extract that? What practice?
What asymptotic awkward, assiduous apophasis. Stop it!
Any aleph arrogates and abrogates, anything at all.

B

The Great Beast in his little "Ba-it" his house, his beastly bias.
Being on the Back of a Beetle.
Boiling in a bitch's broth.
That bugle blowing ebullient silk billows over bumpy barren broadways of
black cognizance. And the bees are being bruited about, till Being itself
burrows under the Unborn.

C

Caution calls.
Accordingly, acclimation accounts for little which is critical.
The catch in accuracy, the clutch of coincidence.
Caught or uncaught?
Coffee cold in the can.

D

King David in his or (latterly, our own) doldrums.
Delusion devastates but does it draw delight
from the detonation of denotation?
Darken not these disconsolate doorways.
Ding Ding. The doorbell, dubious, doubles the Deep Knock.
Depredations and dizzy diploids.
Debit decibels dybuks daytime death drives.
Divits.

Danger.
Do it.

E
I put an E on my picture of an abstract black egg.
Everyone was especially curious. Curiosity emblemized.

F
Forget about it.
Find a finicular to Frog Hollow. Any Frog Hollow.
Forged financials fecundate foolery.
If fuel's forbidden,
fire flames from the floreate.
A fine funk feint fated. Faded.

g
whizz. Gamma radians, gimmel, camel: moveable storage of mind's
providing waters.
Gobble.
Gobble Gobble.
Gorgeous Gorge. Ghost aghast. Gurgling Geist.

H
Happy harpies, Hoppy's horse.
Is Hilbert Hegel hopped up hopelessly, or Hegel hideously hedged?

I
My Isolate Ich
(ignoramus)
but is it invisible? is it invincible?
I wishes its twittering desist.
It bristles ignominous.

j

This Jew's jalopy jostles the judge.
The Jesuitical jinks the juridical.

k

mein kopf
dum kopf
kaput

L

Long ago a loft below.
O love, let loose your lasso.
Let loosely lying lemniscate leave little latitude for
 leftovers left over loopily.
Let Lois liberate loss lest lessees lurk lykanthropically.
Okay, Loopy lips. Lift and be lucky. Lay loose and Be . . .
Loopy.

M

mister mister!
I miss my mouse!
my massacree memorial mountain monumental monk hut

mind alone

N

Niggling Negative Nabobs of Negativity.
Never accede to another's Never.

O

obliquitous opals obligatory owned ontogogic

ontogogic overt
ontogogic onerous only
ontogogic's own opacitous oink oink

P
peoples proliferate
porkers prance
precision possible properly pictured — but pinged?
the pontif prodigiously iffy

Q
quick quick quiddity quackery quaint
quotidian
quoits
quarts
quips
quotes
quiz notes

r
red recipients
red recalcitrants
roaring red rhizomes
ribo-nucleic ripples reuse release refuse to recluse ruptured ruses
a rigged rope

S
sputter splatter splint or split it
2 suppliant spirits sequester sludgy sortilege
seabeds sink suddenly
sussurant slinkies slither spiratical

T
tortuous treats
tribute trying to twist thought through thick think tank talk time

tickle or tweak it
it transits twice

tips turns toggles tangles talks till
tawdry trucks take torqued tollways to Toledo is it?

U
uncover the undercover updraft upstarts

V
vesicles unverified
values revert

W
while we walked where we weren't wanted we were worrying what
waxwork wiles we'd work when we weighted wartime warbling with
wickerwork wattles we wallowed with weather warts

well, we wore white wigs

X

xenophobic xylophones
extrapolate
exogeny

extort
extraction

excogitate
explicate
expunge

Y

yesterday you yawned yet your yeti (you) yokels yoked yewtrees
yack yack yueltide yacht

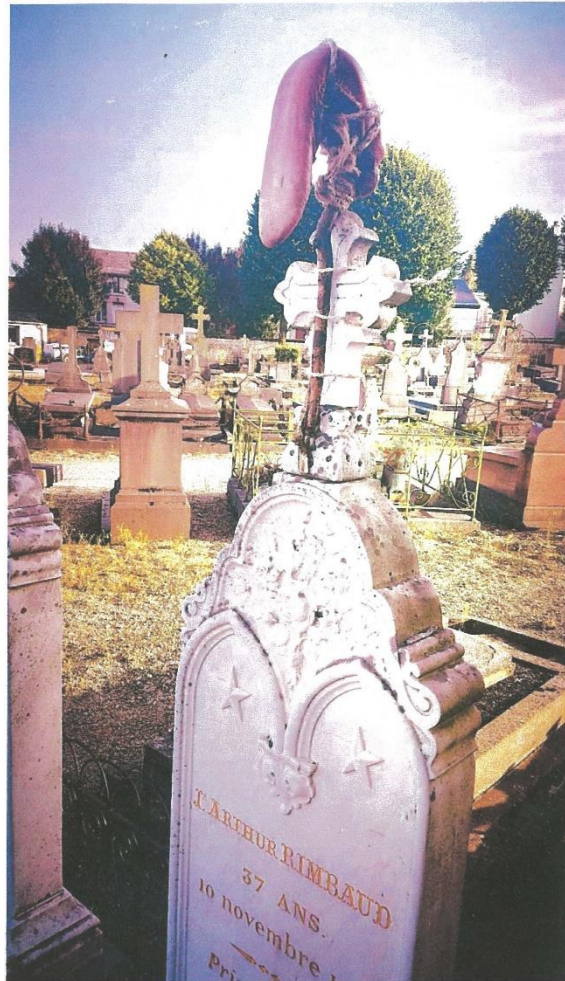
Z

zoot suit zomboid zipper trousers
zomboid zoos

zeven zalphabets zfigure zfinality

zoops on!

PETER LAMBORN WILSON



"Tongue on Rimbaud's grave" – Installation and postcard by KALAN.

An Alphabet for Analphabetics

A is for Analphabetics — Those who enjoy the blessing of non-literacy — and no TV, movies, radios, computers or missionaries.

B the anarch Burglar Alexandre Jacob, who told the Judge, "So, rather than be stolen from, I decided I preferred to steal." (See also Bonnot Gang, the "Nietzschean Bank robbers".)

C Civilization equals: cannibalism plus electricity.

D for DMT (dimethyl tryptamine) which (it is now believed) is found in the “locusts” eaten by John the Baptist in the wilderness.

E – hitherto little-known philosophy of “Cheerful Existentialism”. Why the Sartrean gloom? God is dead? – aren't we lucky

F – demand Freedom from Dreaming!

G – for Gog and Magog, the wicked giants on the other side of any wall [See *Rev.*, XX:8]

H is for Hell. The Prophet said, “Watercress will grow in the streambeds of Hell” at the End of Time; – but according to Jesus, that end has already come

I as in “I-and-I” – the Rastafarian word for “we” – “inter-individualism”

J – Alfred Jarry founder of 'pataphysics – the only science I'd march on Washington to defend

K The first time I saw (in Benares) public worship of Kali I thought – “At last! Real devil worship!”

L is for Lucifer. When Lucifer was expelled from Heaven the Emerald in his crown fell to Earth and became the Holy Grail.

M – “Restore the Ming!” – slogan of the Tongs.

N is for Ned Ludd, who was actually the real-life Monster of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. *Armed Nostalgia!*

O – oval cigarettes of opalescent opium

P – “Persia” – a country that never existed except in the imagination of those who dreamed of it.

Q is for the Qarmatians, who stole the Black Stone from the Kaaba: – the perfect act of esoteric hermeneutics.

R - Rimbaud and the author share a birthdate (Oct. 20) which also happens to be Tomato Day in the French Revolutionary Calendar. [See illustration]

S is the Smuggler who carries Things by moonlight over borders – casks of French brandy, hashish, tea, fairy tales, the meaning of words

T – Just think what a bit of TNT would do to re-enchant the landscape

U – Underground there is a Sun like Christian Rosenkreutz's Lamp; it illuminates but perhaps does not give off much warmth

V – Viewed perspectively (or in a different dosage) the Venom is the Entheogen

W is for the Will to Power. Oh well, it keeps the head warm.

X is for Xtianity – which used to provide us with a hundred and eleven excuses per year to take off from work and have a feast

Y is for the Caliph al-Yezid and his followers the “devil worshippers”, the Yezidis, God bless them

Z is for Zoot-Suit. Before punks, hippies, pimps or beatniks there were Zoot-suiters (circa 1948), visionary working-class avatars of *dandyisme*. [See the movie by my old friend Luis Valdez]

MAGGIE LOUISA ZAVGREN

twenty-six lines that seek to do the ambassadorial work each letter does every day – lines that move the tongue one specific way, and refer to something individual in themselves, but open up to all possibility when set in relation to one another.

first sound of day on the roof, an ear made fleshly, newborn
the hour makes you pass yourself, these early, holy tones
adherence, my tendency – pull the horizon into line
over there a sigil makes love to high noon
the instant of the trochee in the throat
matter moans, shudders into motion
a little golden leash leads you back to meaning
form settles as darkness sets in, not the tree but what we remember
a shape against the real, among it
illusory, the clamor of the open psoas, our entanglements
a small bird in the other room is silent
each step avows
the sound you make silence with
one eye for each mind, one finger to raze me
the wind speaks only of where it's been
images soil their opposites, train us to unsee
right the fallen form, skitters across the floor in sequences
an object caught within the shape of itself
dictum as the hand whispers it

impulse to close the circle, listen to the *next* wind
just now the bloom
adjudication outside the body slips into the gerund
a bestial daybreak lingers, grows indistinct
the tendril we walk
nothing begins, just the sliver of oaks after we see them
circumambulate the seed and arrive

POSTSCRIPT by RK

ALPHABET

What do we know about it.

Theory One (following Dr. Boylan, of the University of Buffalo): Wise beings saw how our organs of articulation produced sounds, and wrote schematic pictures of the organs' position in producing each sound.

This is evident in A, B, C, D, E, I, K, L, M, O, P, Q, U.
Other letters (in current or ancient form) problematic:
F, H, R, S, T, X, Z (G, J, V, W are graphic variants)

Wise beings then gave them names to help remember the signs: horned ox, house, camel, etc., as per the Semitic speakers to whom the Shapes were vouchsafed.

Theory Two: Wise beings drew quick pictures of familiar beasts and objects, and used them to signify the initial sound of the referent in question. Ox, house, camel, doorway, window, nail, etc.

I'll call Theory 1 the Promethean (*pasai teknai brotoisin ek Prometheus*),
and Theory 2 the Mosaic — (imagining Moses giving his Hebrews Egyptian pictures for the initial letters of their words, as we see perhaps in the Sinaitic glyphs. (Wadi el-Hol).

FIN