

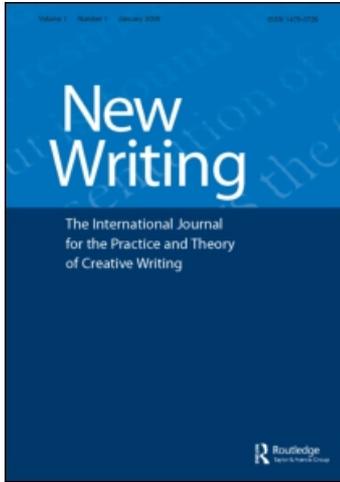
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## Writing on Water, Murmur of Words

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# Writing on Water, Murmur of Words

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Our project was initiated by a simple, straightforward desire: to write on water, to put a poem on a pond. In this essay, I will discuss the subsequent 'writing on water' projects undertaken in conjunction with university classes offered on visual and concrete poetry, its history and application. Here, the students and I were together presented with the challenge of imagining (and manifesting) alternative forms of text, alternative means and methods (other than upon paper or computer screen) of inscribing language onto the environment. The poetic and pedagogical repercussions from these projects proved quite illuminating, as language itself was materially and conceptually re-enlivened, re-imagined as liquid resonance, as floating form.

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'With words-in-freedom we will have: Condensed metaphors. Telegraphic images. Maximum vibrations. Nodes of thought. Closed or open fans of movement. Compressed analogies. Color Balances. Dimensions, weights, measures, and the speed of sensations. The plunge of the essential word into the water of sensibility ... '  
(Filippo Marinetti, Futurist Manifesto)

To date, there have been three different large-scale 'writing on water' installations completed on the pond adjacent to the University of North Florida's library, with the fourth now in the planning stages. When first



conceived, this project was largely hypothetical and theoretical, proposed – almost on a whim – as a part of a course that I was teaching at the university on concrete and visual poetry. However, once the idea for such a project was presented, it seemed that its implementation had to be attempted, even if it were finally to fail.



What wasn't realised at the time (nor could it have been) was that, with this first 'writing on water' project, a poem was begun that would remain on-going and that the initial installation of the words 'WATER ON WATER' was only the opening line for a piece that would be added to incrementally and over a long period of time. Indeed, this was but the beginning of a poem written very, very slowly (and very largely), with just a line or two added each year. Its development and completion – if there was to be a completion – would thus remain essentially unknown, unforeseeable, with a year separating the added lines of language, ample time taken to conceive with care the words annually needed for the growing poem.

Most recently, the second component of this pond poem was installed, its three words again placed directly onto the water's surface. During the first week, the piece – made of letters 2m by 2m., cut from thick plastic and, with the aid of a kayak, – read: 'MURMUR OF WORDS.' Then, after a week out on the water, a minor material adjustment was made – adding a 'U,' while replacing an 'R' with an 'N' – that was to constitute a major adjustment of the poem's tone and implication. Returning with the kayak out onto the water,



the poem was changed ever-so-slightly to read during the second week: 'MURMUR OF WOUNDS.'

Concurrently, installed in the four-storey stairwell of the library – its tall windows facing directly onto the pond – there was an accompanying sound collage that was composed of the recorded voices of 25 randomly chosen library readers. From hidden speakers installed throughout the stairwell, the various voices of the library's own readers echoed through the space, mingling into a murmur, while the pond poem was seen directly below, its words inscribed upon the water.



With the completion of this second installation, the 'writing on water' poem had slowly grown into its most recent incarnation, its fourth line now pending:

WATER ON WATER  
MURMUR OF WORDS  
MURMUR OF WOUNDS  
...

In what follows, I will discuss in detail the two-part 'MURMUR' installation, focusing upon both the practical dimensions of the piece, but also upon many of its theoretical repercussions and motivations. For it was as a result of this installation, and inherent (if hidden) in its formation, that something of language itself was materially and conceptually re-enlivened, re-imagined as liquid resonance, as floating form. Consequently, the written elaborations about the installation that are developed at length below generally came much later, recollected in some kind of tranquility. Indeed, retrospectively realised (and with only my memory and the numerous photographs of the project remaining), many of the project's implicit impulses and intentions were clarified and defined only after the installation itself had long since vanished, after the poem had been dismantled, the words dragged from the pond. Like Freudian dream-work, in which a brief (and fleeting) dream generates sustained amplification and speculation, our brief (and fleeting) poem had

similarly engendered lengthy imaginings of the various implications arising – as if out of the water – from this installation.

The success and reward of the first ‘WATER ON WATER’ project lead directly to this second ‘MURMUR’ installation the following spring. This time, however, with the formal aspects of the project largely mastered – we (my students and I) now knew *how* to do this, *how* to write on water – other concerns could rise to the fore. For instance, without having to ‘reinvent the wheel,’ reconceive the mechanics of our poem’s construction, we could instead ask ourselves how we might develop and register more expansively our subsequent project, and how, while avoiding repetition, we could do what we’d done before, but this time differently and more expansively.

Though there are various bodies of water to be found on the grounds of the University of North Florida (the result of the necessary dredging, draining and directing of Florida’s primordial swampland out of which our very campus has, over the decades, slowly arisen), the library’s pond would remain our site of writing, our chosen surface of inscription. In large part, this was due to the library’s dramatic stairwell and stairway that overlooked the water through its many tall windows, as well as the many other windows on the library’s upper floors: all of these had proven ideal for the reading of our first poem, offering an



elevation onto the site that afforded a ‘bird’s eye view’ for seeing the installation steady and whole. With this second installation, though, we intended to find a way to integrate the library itself more richly into the project as something more than just a fine vantage, to incorporate in some as-yet-undetermined manner the library as an archive of language, a traditional

repository of available, promised knowledge, and the dynamic site of study that our library actually is throughout the year.

To walk within the university's library is to encounter immediately individuals engaged with language in one form or another. Either in the silent act of reading from books, magazines, journals, computer screens, or writing on paper, typing on computers, texting on cell phones (or speaking amongst themselves), various individuals are seen throughout the building working with words – writing, reading, talking. Surrounding them all, rows and rows of bookshelves abound, from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling. Indeed, throughout the library, it seems that language is everywhere to be found, packed and pressed between covers, whispered from ear to ear, or illumined on computer monitors, filling nearly every imaginable crack and crevice of the various rooms with words, words, words . . .



Broad areas of our library's third and fourth floors are specifically designated as 'quiet zones' (and there are even mounted diagrams on walls indicating the precise locations of these 'zones'). Wandering around on any particular day, one routinely sees many who are privately engaged with language in one way or another, and in varying degrees of isolation and intensity. From within these zones of quiet, one might even imagine hearing – if our ears were sufficiently attuned, our imaginations appropriately directed – something of the rumblings of thought itself arising, like a vaporous haze, from the heads of the concentrated readers dispersed throughout the library's many open spaces. Surrounded by so many silent individuals, one begins to detect, however gently, a collective whirr or whisper hovering above them all, a sounding cloud of intermingling language, a quiet chorus of murmuring words.

It was from out of this softly bustling hum of the library – as if the library itself could be heard thinking – that the next line of language for our pond poem suggested itself. Offered in conceptual conjunction with the library's adjacency and the rich experience of language encountered there, our newest installation would somehow endeavor to transport aspects of the library's own energised linguistic sonority onto the surface of the water itself. Indeed, our ambitious intent would be nothing less than to make the library speak!

From within the intimacy of the readers' zones of quiet interiority, of privately worded reflection, something of the delicacy of this acousmatic event would be transmitted, telepathically, through the broad windows and out onto the water. With our attention thus directed to the library's own echoing resonances, our second pond poem would read:

### MURMUR OF WORDS

Knowing already from our previous installation *how* to write on water (even having a large roll of the thick plastic sheeting left over from the previous spring), we could immediately direct our attention to this new challenge involving the capture and transmission of readerly echo, this ventriloquistic throwing of the library's many quiet voices – or rather, the library's own *über*-voice – onto the adjacent pond.

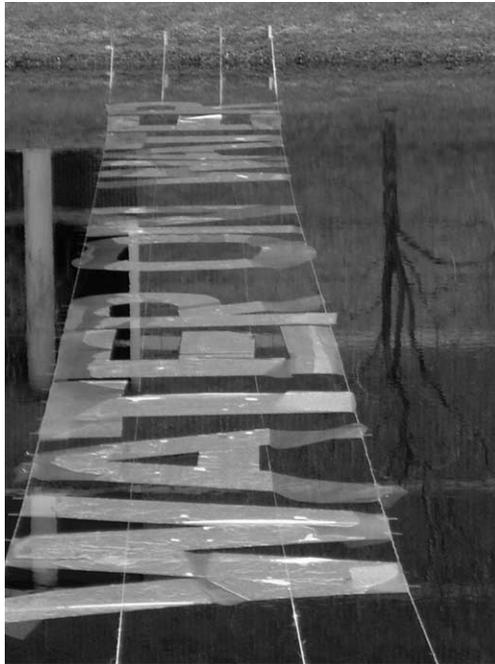
The first step would be fairly straightforward: to record a sampling of library readers reading, to get something of the language that they were presently engaging into a captured and workable form. With a digital voice recorder, I randomly approached – over a period of a couple of weeks – twenty five different individuals who were quietly studying in the university library, abruptly interrupting their privacy and asking them to read aloud for two minutes from the book, journal or computer screen from which they had just been reading. We were indifferent to content; all that we wanted were the readers' read words, as if neutrally collecting data (for dada), *whatever* printed language had been before their eyes just moments before.



Once compiled, the words of the recorded readers were then downloaded onto a computer and a kind of acoustic collage was carefully constructed over the period of two weeks, the final result being a murmuring of multiple voices melding into one another. At any one moment of the recorded piece, three or four such voices could be heard simultaneously sounding, its dense layerings of language entangled, with the precise content of what was being read generally confused within the otherwise sonorous wave of words. The acoustic effect that was created resembled what Roland Barthes (1985)

describes, in his essay entitled 'Listening,' as a '*shimmering* of signifiers, ceaselessly restored to a listening which ceaselessly produces new ones from them without ever arresting their meaning' (259).

Still, in the midst of our collage's shimmering, each of the twenty-five voices was allowed its moment of relative comprehension and prominence, a kind of restored privacy from out of the public muddle, during which, for several seconds, an individual's voice would rise quite clearly above the surface of sound (as if briefly raising his or her head above water). For instance, listening carefully, one might momentarily hear clipped references to a mathematical equation, an incident of European history, the strategy for an advertising campaign, a passage in an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel, a teaching technique . . . Such fleeting clarities, though, were very soon re-submerged into the otherwise generalised flow of uninterrupted, unarrested language, the rippling cadence of various voices concurrently reading – rising and falling in and out of each other – the wave of words subordinated to the rhythm of water.



With the sound collage completed, we could now begin thinking about this recording's actual installation, as well as the accompanying installation of the pond poem 'Murmur of Words.' But, from the beginning, we wondered where the recording would be most effectively installed, and how, in some still undetermined manner, might its many collaged voices be made somehow to conjoin with the words on the adjacent water, making audible something of the library's own collective voice, its own collected thinking captured and transported? If only we could figure out how to install the recording within the very stairwell that had previously offered such a fine vantage for the reading of the first poem, 'Water On Water,' perhaps then such thoughtful transference of the many murmuring voices might be achieved.



Etymologically, the 'well' in the word 'stairwell' might even be seen as assisting in the conceptual transference of our recorded words out onto the library's pond, as the stairwell's suffix can be usefully linked to a well that has been dug down into the ground: 'A deep hole or shaft sunk into the earth to obtain water.' And, additionally, in an adjacent definition that allows further linkage to the act of writing itself, the well is also defined as 'A container or reservoir for a liquid, such as ink.' To the extent that the actual word 'stairwell' and its signified space in the university's library align and point to one another, perhaps we can now split the difference between these two definitions of the word 'well,' picturing the library's stair/well as pertaining to both meanings simultaneously: as a well that is 'sunk into the earth,' offering access to the library's adjacent water, but also as a 'container' of sorts for the ink of our own eventual writing.





The stairwell in the university's library, like most stairwells, is an often overlooked architectural site, in part because it is, if thought about, a kind of non-site, or quasi-site, in which one is 'neither here, nor there,' but always already (on the way) elsewhere. After all, libraries are mostly imagined as made up of sedentary spaces designed for reading, writing and thinking; an individual sits still within the library's furnished rooms, immobilised, in order to concentrate and study. The stairwell and its contained stairway, however, function as a zone of mobility and transition from one floor to the next, for movement up and down the stairs, from one *real* space to another; one does not stop in the stairwell, but instead, in compliance with gravity (exertion going up; ease going down), keeps moving, like Duchamp's descending nude painted as if seen in perpetual motion.

The stairwell in the university's library is no different in its functional capacity as a space intended primarily for passage. However, with its wall of tall windows facing directly out onto the adjacent pond, this normally neutral, or pragmatic space has been made quite dramatic, offering even a moving site for seeing (a seeing in perpetual painterly motion). From such an aesthetic vantage, if discreetly installed within it, the many recorded voices that had weeks before been compiled and collaged could, in effect, be repositioned to be heard, re-heard, murmuring in simultaneous conjunction with the floating words seen through the stairwell's windows. And, like the first project in which an isomorphic clarity had been achieved within the three words of the poem itself – the floating signifier (**WATER**) self-identical with its floating signified (**WATER**) – this second project might offer another kind of signifying confluence. This time, however, such coming together of the poem's own form and content would also be rendered both spatially and architecturally, inscribing a second instance of self-identical signifying from within our growing poem. From one floor to the next, viewers would thus be engaged synaesthetically as they moved up or down the stairs, seeing the words *outside* as they are heard (**MURMUR**), while hearing the words *inside* as they are seen (**MURMUR**). The sight and sound of the library's own language, the recorded residue of its contained thinking, might thus be telepathically transported from its interior 'quiet zones,' to the transitional non-site of the stairwell, with the shimmering voices finally 'thrown' on out – through the tall windows – as if onto the legible waters of the adjacent pond.



The intimacy offered by the library's designated 'quiet zones' promises a site of privacy, a stilled space from within which the library's vast storehouse of language might be engaged. However, such a solitary encounter with language occurs while surrounded by others, others who are similarly engaged with language of their own. From within this public site of private interiority – indeed, of being private in public – there occurs inside the library a conflict of sorts in which this imagined solitude is in fact violated. This unforeseen



violation occurs, though, not just by those others with whom one shares the space (their whispers, their cell phones . . .), but by a growing awareness of language's own indiscriminate availability, and its incapacity to go on privately speaking to the one who is so privately listening, listening silently to those read words heard murmuring in the private mind. For what occurs at such a point of contact is an interruption of sorts in which what was initially imagined as an isolated, silent activity is suddenly seen as a collective event belonging to a much noisier public domain, that my *privacy* is in fact *public*, that my *solitude* is *social*. And that the library's 'quiet zones' have been largely established to allow a shared illusion of seclusion and separateness, while, in reality, turning the reader inside out. There, openly displayed for all to see is the absence of inside – of any sort of sacred and inviolable interiority – usurped by the sovereign reign of this common (all *too* common) language that one may wish to possess but which instead may mostly – entirely? – possess us, as if we were unknowingly enveloped within its tight folds of signifying repetition. Rimbaud (1996) famously wrote that 'It is wrong to say: I think: One ought to say: one thinks me. – Pardon the pun [from the French homonyms: *penser*, 'to think'; *panser*, 'to treat a wound']. – I is someone else' (371). Might it thus be equally 'wrong to say' *I read*? Perhaps, as Rimbaud counseled, 'one ought to say': one reads me.



Positioned at this intersection of the private and the public, the words – once seen as a substance of self-consolidation and concealed consolation – are now received more piercingly, the *penser* and the *panser* cutting at their silent collision, the thought causing the wound with its words.<sup>1</sup> Their entry then penetrates into delicate sites more secretive for all that is *not* there, for all that these words do *not* offer (the secret that there is no secret; the secret of *that*). Amidst the turmoils of an imagined interiority lost, a paradise is thus infected by the viral spread of words that everyone unhygienically shares. Alone in the library, with all of the others, *I is someone else*.



Suddenly, this library that had stood as a site of encyclopedic knowledge, a vast and ever expansive archive of information and determinative data, has been transformed into a narrowly bound dictionary – with the shift of a letter, its data into dada (like Man Ray's 'DANCER' into 'DANGER') – every word referring to another word, which then refers to another, and another, unendingly, never leaving its own tight binding behind, never transcending its own self-referencing affirmations.



In other words, in reading quietly alone, as if one were – in the privacy of this concentrated act – drilling a well for water, what had long been perceived as digging deeply, thirstily, into the promising ground (for an ever accumulating knowledge) has now been replaced by the obsessive scratching of a delicate surface, as if the surface of one's own thin skin were being dug into. But, dangerously, in place of blood emerging at the site of such a self-inflicted wound, there is a kind of ink that arises, the ink of others, *all* others, promiscuously commingling. Perhaps Walter Benjamin (1999) was right when

he wrote that 'He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging' (576).

And of our collaged recording of voices within the library, that 'quiet chorus of murmuring words' that was earlier detected and described as benignly, almost mystically arising like a 'vaporous haze' from the heads of the library's many readers, such a sound is now more troublingly understood as a cause of contagion. For abruptly the library has resignified itself as a zone of contamination where there occurs each day afresh the ache of separation, the murmuring words wounding in their unfulfilled, unfulfillable promise to say privately what is seen, to see secretly what is said, never offering much more than a publicly-owned bond in which a word is the shared (and arbitrary) signifier of the thing itself, that world of things as seen through stairwell windows. While exposed behind the thin veil of the printed page is a vast silence of impossible significations and a newly defined *public* privacy, not of rich solitude, but of deep loneliness, not of infinite promise, but of sheer terror, and of nothing to say, but the obligation to go on saying, nothing new to read, but the obligation to go on reading. If the library exists as an archive of language, as a feverish site of sought knowledge (a fresh source of wishful thinking), then its overlapping murmurings of words can only now present themselves as a series of untreatable wounds, a series of open sores speaking of what cannot be said.



While of our own pond poems and the writing on water occurring there, could it be that it was something of the poems' own isomorphic, self-referencing form that was also partially exposing these worded wounds to open air by revealing the manner in which the apparent referentiality of language arises, like a tower of Babel, its foundations built upon sand . . . or upon water . . . on water? And has the self-presencing that was desired and promoted in the library, through the privacy of thoughtful and secluded self-affirmation within its 'quiet zones,' been subsequently muddied by our own murmuring words, the once-numinous language seen now as fabricated of a fragile material, and of an ephemeral light reflected off of cheap plastic, the letters clothes-pinned onto fraying twine?



Confronted by such resonant implication, the initial installation onto the pond of 'MURMUR OF WORDS' would, after a week floating out on the water, need amending. A minor material adjustment of the poem's letters would be made – adding a 'U,' while replacing an 'R' with an 'N' – that would nonetheless constitute a major adjustment of its tone and trajectory, a syllabic shift reflecting the very transmission of the words to wounds. During the second week, returning with the kayak out onto the water, the poem would be changed ever-so-slightly to read:

### **MURMUR OF WOUNDS**



With our second writing on water project now largely determined, the day finally came for its installation that, this time round, would include both the writing on water and the placement of the sound collage within the library's stairwell. That afternoon, the pond installation went quickly and according to plan, as we benefited greatly from the knowledge and confidence attained with the previous year's 'WATER ON WATER' installation. Still, even though

the large-scale letters had been cut out ahead of time to facilitate the poem's placement, new and unforeseen challenges arose as different letters were involved in this piece, some with unexpectedly troublesome shapes and appendages. For instance, the lower, extending branch of the 'F' would, it was quickly discovered once out upon the water, require additional structural support to keep it afloat. While most challenging of all was the 'S' that, in its serpentine formations, resisted our gridded pinnings, slowly sinking on its curvy sides. To remedy these structural weaknesses, a vertical line of twine at the outer edges of both of these letters was needed to support the unruly forms, to keep them from slipping into illegibility.



In the stairwell, the technical expertise of sound artist Erik DeLuca was called upon to install the recorded collage of murmuring voices. At each turn of the four story stairway, and directly adjacent to the windows overlooking the pond, small speakers were placed discreetly behind the handrails. The necessary wires were then strung from the top of the stairway to the ground floor, where they were then connected to three different disc players, hidden away beneath the stairs, that played the fifteen-minute recording throughout the day and into the evening in a continuous loop. Out of sync with each other, the discs were each heard at different positions of the recording, creating additional overlappings to the already overlapping voices.

With the two components of the installation completed over the weekend, the following Monday all was in place and ready to go: the poem was on the pond and the sound collage was playing discreetly in the stairwell. As visitors to the library arrived that morning, they entered into the stairway, its tall space echoing with many of their own recorded voices; they climbed the stairs and, at each landing, could see more fully through the large windows the words written below on the water, words that were *saying* to them something of what they were *hearing*. Indeed, the 'murmur' seen outside was the murmur heard inside, the floating words matching the floating voices, as the sound waves filled the stairwell with words.



Both installations were immediately well received and much commented upon. Eavesdropping on the stairway, one could even hear a kind of confirmation of the piece's ventriloquistic intent, as the people entered, ascending or descending the stairs, seeing the words, hearing the voices, pausing at the windows to look more closely at the poem below, but also to locate the source of the otherwise unseen voices emanating from the small speakers. Like a tide going in and out, waves of students would come and go throughout the day; at certain times, the stairwell would be nearly empty, with the recorded collage seeming to fully fill the space, a haunting echo in the absence of others. While at other times (between classes, for instance), the stairs would then suddenly be occupied from top to bottom with students arriving and departing. Their 'live' voices would entirely drown out the recorded ones (or blend seamlessly with them), while the words seen below on the pond would seem to narrate their own murmuring engagement, as if describing (or subtitled) the real-time event unfolding in the stairwell. As they exited the stairway, however, the space again emptied of their voices, giving way once more to the recorded ones that would keep the tall space constantly filled from top to bottom with words, a continuation – at a lower register – of those same voices which had been so vividly heard just moments before.



Once, a young man alone, a student probably, entered the nearly empty stairway and stopped at the window, lingering a while on the third floor landing to look and listen. Reading the poem on the pond, he then seemed briefly to wonder if the murmuring words were coming from others elsewhere in the stairwell (or, as he described to me later, perhaps even from within his own head); he then leaned over the railing, moving closely to the window, as if to hear more clearly what the voices were saying, what messages might be received. But such delineations of language were often difficult, as the voices were generally too tightly entangled for sustained clarity; individual words and phrases might briefly separate from the generalised flow of sound, only soon to resubmerge into its thick density. Also, because the various disc players on each of the landings were always at different points of the looped recording, leaning into the empty space of the surrounding stairwell would likely only make more audible the adjacent sounds arising on the other levels. Like ghosts in the machine of the library's own architecture, those many hidden voices thus created the curious effect of layers of liquid language invisibly inhabiting the space, the words shimmering in the air as if rising from the surface of the written water below.



After the first week of the installations, many of those in the library would seem to have become accustomed to the poem on the pond and the accompanying sound in the stairwell. Indeed, both installations gradually absorbed themselves, quite comfortably, into the library's busy environment. The recorded voices had begun to form an almost familiar, ambient cloud of sound, gentle and lulling in its quiet and constant presence in library's stairwell. While the words on the water had become an anticipated part of the pond, inscribed as if inevitably and permanently upon it. Many may even have come to expect the poem to float before them as they entered the stairway, while (as with the first installation) the geese and the turtles in the pond had similarly adjusted their own movements to the words on the water.



Still, after the first week, and over the next weekend, the kayak was again brought out to the pond, two new letters were prepared, and the already determined adjustment to the poem was completed, with the MURMUR OF WORDS shifting to the MURMUR OF WOUNDS. And, while the stairwell's sound installation remained entirely unchanged, this abrupt alteration of a single word out on the water – moving from WORDS to WOUNDS – was to constitute an immediate and dramatic adjustment of the poem's tone, a shift from the lighter lyricism of words murmuring, to the darker one of wounds beginning to speak. For the suggested source of the language had moved from the mouth, to a less determined site of distress – of a cut, a contusion – with the lips of this new wound now suddenly speaking. But of what?



Yet how were these new utterances to be comprehended, this open wound to be treated? Or finally, adjacent to the words on the water, had the incessant murmurings simply multiplied into a complete muddle, with the overlappings of language now canceling each other out. As if resonating within an echo chamber, had any hope of comprehension now been drowned out entirely by the very rush of words, by the entangling eddies of reference and reverberation?



Clearly, the poem displayed below was now narrating a different kind of linguistic event, one that had abruptly taken on a more ponderous density. With the weightiness of a murmuring wound, the words heard in the head had become the words heard in the stairwell, dislocated and displayed (through the window, onto the water) for all to see, while settling into their own concise description of separation and loss, of light and language shaping into liquid dispersion.

Through wind, rain and wildlife, our poem thus endured, while sinking daily ever so slightly just beneath the pond's surface. For unexpectedly and unintended, our pond poem had, over time, begun both to signal and sinkingly manifest its own ephemerality and progressive disappearance, with the words enacting upon the pond something like an applied act of entropic, or deconstructive, poetics. And, contrary to the more conventional and enduring inscriptions of poems on paper (or even those chiseled into stone), *our* poem had integrated into it something of its own eventual vanishing, as the words were written onto the very substance that would slowly submerge and subsume it, erasing it from view.



In fact, by the end of the second week, nearly all of the letters had sunk several inches beneath the water – the pond having slowly risen from recent rains, the twine having stretched slightly over time – and, at certain moments of the day, at certain angles of the light, the poem became increasingly opaque and difficult to read at ground level. However, from the architectural elevations allowed by the library's adjacent windows, the words were still fully visible (perhaps even more subtle and ethereal in their newly submerged and muted condition). Actually, seen from the various levels of the library, the translucent plastic of the now sunken letters appeared increasingly like a thin film or a delicate membrane of shaped light. There, just beneath the pond's shimmering surface, was the uncanny sight of the sunken poem, as if fallen from Rimbaud's own drunken boat, a hallucination of language.



By the end of the second week, the pounded stakes on the shores of the pond were pulled up and the words were unceremoniously dragged from the water. With its removal, the sublimity of the poem's readable form was quickly replaced by the slime and sludge of the filthy plastic that was, alas, summarily deposited into a nearby dumpster, a jumble of illegible letters now destined for the landfill. Without words upon it, the water (as water) was quickly restored to itself, the pond no longer divided by the poem, its full expanse returned to the geese and the turtles. For several days thereafter, though, a kind of afterimage of language seemed to linger from off of the water, as if the watery words (as phantom forms) were somehow floating still on the pond's shimmering surface.

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### Correspondence

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### Notes

1. Writing on Derrida (1976), Gayatri Spivak describes the exacting, wounding cost incurred by such a thought, and of a 'text where "penser" (to think) carries within itself and points at "panseur" (to dress a wound); for does not thinking,' Spivak wonders, 'seek forever to clamp a dressing over the gaping and violent wound of the impossibility of thought?' (lxxxvi).
2. In November 2009, the fourth part of this onFlgoing poem, titled "Floating Form Less," was installed on the pond at the University of North Florida's library. Images from this installation, and others, can be found at my website. <http://www.unf.edu/~clunberr>

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