

12 POST-HAPPENINGS

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Preface

Each of these poems began as a compilation of sentences from the fiction of Stephen Crane. Some sentences have been modified by the superimposition of language taken from advertising postcards. Many have not been altered at all, or have been only slightly altered; in a few cases the sentences have been largely rewritten. Syntax is derived from Crane's, but not always identical with it. Process = palimpsest: (X) no. of Crane sentences + 1 postcard = one poem. Capitalization and punctuation have been altered. Titles have been freely added.

The Brown Paper Arrangement

Paul began to kick into the chaotic mass on the ground. Finally the procession plunged into one of the gruesome doorways. “Let the kid alone for a minute, will yeh, Mary? Yer allus poundin’ ’im.” She shrouded herself, puffing and snorting, in a cloud of steam at the stove, and eventually extracted a frying-pan full of potatoes that hissed. An old woman opened a door. There was a crash against the door and the group broke into the lower level. The theatre group threw red hues over the bare floor, the cracked & soiled design, and the momentous brown paper arrangement. The small frame of the ragged girl was quivering. Paul studied his *London Times*.

“You are glossing over REALITY”¹

The crowd had an air throughout of having quitted a sweatshop. Quiet Germans, with maybe their wives and two or three children sat amidst the striking images with the expressions of happy cows. It was patent that any one of them would have proved adequate for the purpose of which skirts are intended. As a final effort, the women rendered some verses which described a vision of a building reinvented by night, four girls bursting enigmatic bonds. The air in the collar-and-cuff environments strangled art. It seemed that the world had treated this woman very badly, and she took a deep revenge upon the first local photographic exhibition.

¹Mina Loy

POP(!): A Secret History

Evenings of weekdays Frank often took her to see hip sculpture through which the dazzling curator was rescued from the 19-60's of her treacherous museum by Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground. The new work was a triumph for the debaucherous Roy Lichtenstein, the representative of the audience, over the villain and the rich man, his pockets stuffed with bonds, his heart packed with tyrannical modern Art, imperturbable amid suffering. She wondered if the culture and refinement she had seen imitated, perhaps grotesquely, by the biggest and brightest stars, could be acquired by a girl who lived in a wild, fertile tenement house.

\$12/ADVANCE

The woman floundered about in the lower hall of the rehearsal house, and finally stumbled up the stairs. Jessie dodged his head and the blow struck him in the back of the neck. The dancers' upheaval of the tables and chairs had taken place. "Git th devil outa here." When he strode by they paid no attention to him. On a corner a glass-fronted building shed a yellow glare upon the dead bird. A nickel-plated cash register consolidated a place in the centre of the infernal movement. Feet scraped to and fro with a loud scratching sound upon the reservoir. High on the wall it burst like a bomb, shivering fragments flying in all directions. Well, well.

The Mannequin

Here Mannequin Jack's sneer became chronic. Everything is here in sunny California! Win a custom piano, a million dollars and a bottle of beer. FOR SALE. The police were only actuated by malignant impulses, and the rest of the world was composed, for the most part, of despicable creatures who were all trying to take advantage of him, and with whom, in defence, he was obliged to quarrel on all possible occasions. If the Mannequin had had a desire to step in, put his flame-coloured album in stores, and fully dispute the promotion, he would have probably been immediately opposed by a recording company.

An Interruption

A submissive orchestra dictated to by the [*laughing*] old man with frowsy hair [*laughing*] and in soiled red evening dress followed the throbbing of his hand and the waves of his baton. The sound of the music which, through the efforts of the frowsy headed leader, drifted through the red, gristle-rare atmosphere made the room dream. His mother took a trip[p]le from a bottle that sat on the table. S/he continued the performance. The universe was a picture of agony. The usual smoke was present, but so dense that heads and arms seemed entangled in it. A baby falling down in front of the church wrenched a scream like that of a wounded throbbing animal from its mother.

The artist was dedicated to stage work and art-music.
Hair was plastered over his brow in decorative patterns.
But as the girl timidly accosted him, he made convulsive movement and saved his respectability by a vigorous side step. Electric lights, whirring softly, shed a blurred radiance. She threw lots of flowers at men who passed her, giving smiling invitations to those of rural or untaught pattern and usually seeming sedately unconscious of the men with a metropolitan seal upon their faces.
At the feet of the buildings appeared the “flat-op-pop-nouveau” graffiti. He was in the wild mood of new missionaries.

Dub

These two were crew. Of course there were points of emphatic divergence. It was not until he began to spin breakbeat on the stage, and the juju liquid flew everywhere, that the house was visibly moved. In reality he was always delighted to have the world there to witness the bassrush of the mainstage. In the morning, when in his working-clothes, he had met the crew — “Hello, Philadelphia!” The shimmering blue of the electric arc lamps was strong in the blocks south of the field. When the gongs and the electric bass ceased for a moment to harry the ears, there could be heard the sound of the feet of the hyperfunk crowd on the bluestone pavement, and it was an army.

Eyes²

Eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eyeeyeeye eye eye eyeeye eyeeye eye
eye eye eye eye eyeeye's eyeeye-eye, eye eye eye eye eye eye
eye eyeeye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eyeeyeeye eye
eye eyeeye. Eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye
eyeeyeeye eye eye eye eye eyeeye. "Eye – eye – eye" Eye eye eye
eye eye eyeeye-eyeeye eyeeye. Eye Eyeeyeeye eye eyeeye:
"Eyeeye eye eye eye eye! Eyeeye Eyeeye eye eye eye eye! Eye
eye eye eye eye eyeeyeeyeeyeeye eyeeyeeye eye eye eye
eyeeyeeye eye eyeeye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye.
Eye eyeeye eye eye eyeeye eyeeye eye eyeeye eye eye eye-
eyeeye eye eyeeyeeye. Eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye eye-

²After Bob Brown and various others

Democracy: A Rehearsal

Everyone and his assistant instantly poised their razors high and turned towards the window. The man in the first chair faced the art works in a storm of indignation. In this awkward situation he was simply perfect. Most of the young men of the town affected to be superior to this event, even to despise it; but in the still fragrant evenings they invariably turned out in force, because the girls were sure to attend, strolling slowly through the modern atmosphere, linked closely in pairs, or preferably in threes — the curious public dependence upon one another which was their inheritance. The youth hooted from the doors of the youth center.

Wet! Blue!

Suddenly a wet, wet boy somersaulted around the corner of the house as if he had been projected down a flight of wet blue stairs by a wet blue boot. From the blue avenue came the sound of wet blue men who wildly shouted. The wet from the street, creeping wet in blue, blue waves over the blue, caused the blue of shrubs along the drive to throw a bold blue shade. Suddenly the panes of the wet window tinkled and crashed to the ground, and at other windows there suddenly reared other flames, like blue wet specters at the apertures of a wet, wet blue. The blue was already wet, wet like a winter wind among the blue. He called twice in wet, wet muffled wet tones: "Wet! Blue! Wet! Blue!"

“we are preparing the great spectacle of disaster...”³

Between the arrival and departure of the audience, the man entranced the women with the secret, tender regard he felt for degenerate art. The man pounded a live crow with his quivering fists. The women screamed in disgust and drew back their skirts. Suddenly the door opened and a woman in black gown rushed in with outstretched arms. A mourner sat with bowed head, rocking her body heavily to and fro, and crying out in a high, strained voice that sounded like a dirge on some forlorn pipe. In consequence, when he swung around the post-modernist machine, a wheel of the clock destroyed the theater. The doctor was shaving the crow as if it were a surreal secret.

³Tristan Tzara

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