

FOREIGN LETTER

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“Foreign Letter (Timid Thorax Remix)” previously appeared in *Cannibal*.

“Foreign Letter (Maritime Raiment Remix)” and “Foreign Letter (Black Glass Remix)” previously appeared in *Listenlight*.

“Foreign Letter (Girl of Meadows Remix)” and “Foreign Letter (Insane Larva Remix)” previously appeared in *Effing Magazine*.

Preface

For about three years, I worked almost exclusively in a mode I call *F7*, which involves using Microsoft Word’s spellcheck function, in diverse ways, to create poems. Some key works and figures who inspired *F7* include John Cage, Borges’s “The Library of Babel,” a certain few lines by Barrett Watten, and Oulipo. When I began to explore the process, I was concerned with procedural mediations — with conceits designed to remove my will from the poems and make them entirely beholden to the intersections of algorithms and chance. This was a necessary stage of the process, although I eventually determined these conceits to be fatuous. I could not get myself out of the poems, nor would I want to. Eventually I broke through this very rigid, academic, and “cold” manifestation of *F7*, and began using the process more organically and intuitively, hoping to create poems that would require no knowledge of the process to interest a reader. I discovered that imposing the process (wherein the spellchecker is used rather like a painter’s palette) on corrupted texts with partially coherent syntax, rather than invented or procedurally generated language, was helpful to this end and compelling to me personally. While the techno-philosophical ramifications of the project still interest me, I no longer judge them to be its driving force. In the final tally, *F7* has been about massaging a given text into the mechanism of the process until I found a grain where a voice would emerge, and begin to say remarkable things. This voice must always be uncanny, wildly specific, and not my own, although it might reflect my own imperfectly. *Foreign Letter* is perhaps the purest manifestation of this stage of *F7*, which I regard as the project’s beating heart. The first poem was cobbled together from lines of emails and letters sent to me by an Austrian correspondent over the course of several years. The remainder of the poems emanate from corrupted variations on the source text, with much organic revision. The resulting sequence displays the tonal range the process makes possible, and its Chinese-box quality, with one text disgorging a potentially infinite sequence of other texts, is the animating force of this project for me—a few leaves, pulled at random, from the stacks of the Library of Babel.

Foreign Letter

Thanks a lot for the lines. Adorable.
Haven't wrote you for a while,
months of silence and loneliness and then
I got a telephone call of my friend
who lives in Amsterdam for a year.
I talked with another student,
I only had my lefthandwriter
and from my point of you
he transports this picture
smaller than I had in my memory.
I'm realizing, how I damage it like always.

There are two boys,
very funny, sweet and amicable
who confuse me with their attention.
It's the same story like in my past.
Very stressy. Three days before my exam
we were on the verge to kiss
each other, but it didn't function.
That's a weird situation for me.
I don't like law at the moment,
I'll have to learn one thousand pages,
there are holes in the walls
and all the old flagstones are away.
I'm doing calligraphy,
learning Hebrew and paragraphs.

Perhaps I will go to a hostel
in Rotterdam or another city.
I will promenade next to the hostel
and thinking of our adventure,
sending good thoughts over the ocean.

Do you have a second name?
Good luck with your removal!
The time I shared with you
in Amsterdam can't be outgun.

Foreign Letter (Doom Kick Remix)

It's the mesa loft or the seadog rabble
Menthols ice nicer, alone ones & then
Bath engine rallies too ouch
Whole hives in edams forage art

Heist not this sweet, some viscid time
Unsung day, two squats entice
I talk honor, thirst's advent
& form upon taffy

He tramps artist hips cuter
Smile thaw dim yet gory
Dents hath elision emends
Realty with each toy hour

There are owl sobs
Yummy tweeds & acumens
Who eunuch me with their naiveté
Very shyster

Earth sad before my mace

We were on the energy of silk
But it didn't unbutton

That's a dire intuition for me
I don't wail at the omen
I'll have a thousand sagas
There are silos in the slaw

The doll gala senates are awed
& I'm doing callow graphs
Much to ode & to borrow togas
Genuinely warble with air seraphs

Seraph I will go to a luster
Retarded in another attic

I will probe nape extant to the leech
& honking of our advert nature
Gender's doom thought over the neon

Do you have a deacon's élan?
Doom kick with your leotard
The item I dread with our masters
In drama can't be nugatory

Foreign Letter (Timid Thorax Remix)

It's the megavolt
other sad gobbles

men thugs
iconic crew

linen's anthem
instant flex & cell mooring

while hives in maps
teem with braggarts

his tone tithe is sweet
sometime centime

unsexed node
toes eaten twice

bathe ginger
touch lilies

tallyho north
horsts an event

android rump not iffy
heart upstart

is whips user
sail shad eye toy

death's thesis
omen ends

the rare lobes
yummiest weeds

& dice memes
whoa nutmeg

real twit
the chatty hour

witty arena invitee
eraser

eat heads
deform mice

that sad ironist
tuition form
indents a latte

he-man aloha vest
our nosegays
the roar's illusion
the law
ammo lingual
thudding on
legal lanes
scrap howling
areas awed
lower ape
gene in-law
amble with reptiles
atonal muster
retire
deaden an esthetics
twill robed apexes
tattoo thefts
anyone into unread crenature
genre rodeo mythos
ghetto neon
domino kit
hourly dotard
devout avian aero slang
the timid thorax stirs
indrawn mutant
being adored

Foreign Letter (Maritime Raiment Remix)

Sunhat lotto for the senile. Labored.
Never extort your fellow arrow,
tons of enemies & emollients,
anathema I get to enjoy.
Never extort your fellow arrow,
tulip fallacy my friend, exile
in maritime raiment. Nice knot,
keen sight, echoes, deistic me on Sunday
in maritime raiment. Nice knot.
It's eidetic, but hygiene raises humors
& I deflate wintered tendons, solely.

Coyly the heart spurts exotic relics,
myths, lithe darters & memory tiptoes,
anthrax in Rome. I'm pillaring, how
coyly the heart spurts exotic relics,
imaged elliptically. Robot revenants,
anthrax in Rome. I'm pillaring, how
I snuff pyres, teens & celibacy, whose
soapy teensy nephew, earthstar before
unfroked hides, their nutmeat. Mashed roots,
maxims erased, engraved fossils, righted
soapy teensy nephew, earthstar before
oceans, titan that reads obituaries
for me. Kiloton walk, estate tremor.
I'll teach 1000 eras, reverent
epochs in the claws & atlas dozing.
I'll teach 1000 eras, reverent
astral yawn, argyle grid mishap
& arrowroot tubers, raspy gears.

Padre, I ogled toilets, unmade torrents
& arrowroot tubers, raspy gears.
I will dynamite rotten athletes &
greenroom shindigs, enduring disgust.
I will dynamite rotten athletes &
my themes. What do handclaps mean?
Kudos with your lavender! Either I dream
with you in maritime or extract a gutful.

Foreign Letter (Girl of Meadows Remix)

Ragbag a kid for the kebab. Sizeable. Weird you glower for a gawker, narks of saltbox, hiplines and grub. I got a girl of meadows who kicks in madras for a tale. She's in ribs this eve, so she charred men absolute, pure bucksaw. I raked with bigwig arms, I bathed my lethal writer and from his oeuvre of tin released this soviet, a dusky ursine merit. I'm welcoming, how I sunglow it like seaside.

There are rain vats, very dory, awe and miasma that binge on selection. It's the daze dictum liking my molars. Very stasis. Grew slits before neurons, we were screwed jaw to jaw, each pert butt didn't diorama. That's aorta torsion force. I don't chug kola at the nearby oaks to curse a thousand wolves, there are goons in the arras and largish theist dopers resist. I'm doing valid elegies, onyx islands to quest about arresting juntas and lovely slogans.

Overload opera, go to a logo in earnest or an irked demon. Ideate inkwells next to the glaciers and inky mud of our sober mirth, scheming tame ichors over the pram. Do you glow a devout blond? Happy evil with uppity pencil! The rune I distort with gel streams can't be psychic.

Foreign Letter (Insane Larva Remix)

newborn geeks & Xboxes
cobwebs & grubs
virgin webfoot walk
enfeebled scuba
gawky gowns
on deflowered swans
flesh's slow sulk
ribs pile brown
some caucus runt
baby slot
kiss crying
sea fauna
anodyne boy ride
he reloads liquor
cobra glare wakes
urbane swabs
swelter with waxy riot guys
airsick diva
loyal robot
quit weeping
bowwow their blown crew
wet clergy attire
alms widen my claw
we swoon bereft of lineage
it sours lyrics
I sire flukes at the inbox
I'll glow a grayish logo
reweave audio in the ankle
satin glows
a silica wolf
skin tux with time wires
wise raisin grief
the urns I seal with
oral airwaves
insane larva belfry

Foreign Letter (Black Glass Remix)

unctuous tan madras in
our thin dreams I emit heat
rubies cool in lavender rooms
doom man dances an evil joy and
niece! he raves *thought!* dogs glide
erupted rug of ginned dank
letch! hot teen daemon in
mystic retinas or amaretto in
my hypergolic grid
tubes arrow out o dot chum
my yawn era sonatas do eat lilac
done slew the insular earth era
seraph draught unreal lily tremor
the towel *evil Nod!* I am rot
nitrates driving a swath
retro tub ache slick to
engrave no eras we make
my eroded earth insert seeds
trap my niece *rosemary* the site
ninety riots hit me symphonic

I'm yeoman by night I
relapse my knit dam
erotic silt strops art eh
joy of trios my moor dank
soy owl era seawall keel
agamid I won grislier
a tendon retina this decal I
hump out serial revenges eh tub
moisten chest to madness
end deistic so keep sighting tinsel
racy ruffed madras in sevens
delivery of lilacs next dune
scenic lemons atomic nipples
and enemies of stone
below a roof you retort never elaborating
noticing ended it

BRIAN HOWE is a freelance writer, poet, and multimedia artist who lives in Durham, NC. His poems and sound art (released as Glossolalia) have appeared in many print and online journals, and he is the author of the chapbook *Guitar Smash* (3rdness Press, 2006). His video works (with Ashley Howe) have screened at the Asheville Fringe Festival, the Southeast Electronic Music Festival, and elsewhere. Howe is a member of the Lucifer Poetics Group.

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