

Interglacial (Poems 2015–2021)

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with Florent Toniello)

A SHELTER IS NOT NECESSARILY AN ISLAND

as title for something cogent right now

comes to mind & brings to mind

Eric Mottram's 1971 book title

Shelter Island & The Remaining World

so now is shelter

the opposite of the

"remaining world"

— when the remaining world is

helter-skelter (late 16th century adverb: a rhyming jingle of

unknown origin,

perhaps symbolic of running feet or from Middle English skelte

'hasten') —

or not? No,

shelter is island

island is always plural

is always already part of

some

multiplicity, an archipelago

"a series of sound groups a local thrush

chickadees at their red plastic spinning bins

active for dark brown striped white sunflower seeds

gull's white crab and cree low over wrinkling shore planes"

(E.M. *Shelter Island*)

3/30

Thinking of a possible essay on “commissure” that piece, that place conjoining Celan & Olson, I just came across this in an old notebook, 8 June 1971, London, a day on which I threw the I Ching & got:

	21	—————>	27	
	/		\	
	Biting Through		The corners of the	
			mouth	
/			\	
the clinging, fire, above the			keeping still, Mountain,	
above the			arousing,	
arousing, thunder				
thunder				

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3/31

We are eternal only while we are alive.

4/1

These buds on the branches
here this year too
their steadfastness, my surprise

*

Nachhaltige Nicht-Nachhaltigkeit

= title of a German book

translates as:

sustainable non-sustainability
(or: the empire strikes back...)

4/12

So in the last dream,
Derrida comes down the
majestic red-carpeted
staircase just before day
breaks and with a
large smile & an even
more expansive wave
of his left arm
(the other rests on the
baluster) gives the
order for the gerrymandering
to begin or to end
I can't be sure how
this one links to the
long black and white
dream just before (only
a quick pee separates
them) in which I talked
lengthily to various politicians
and a few pundits
(me included, it seems)
about the evil of
gerrymandering, and
we are all absolutely
certain, as certain as one can
only be in a dream, that
our lives depend on
ending that terrifying
trend and now that I
woke up for good I
would really like to go
back into the last one
and ask Jacques if his
gesture meant to begin
or to end what the

dream proposed. But I
can't, I can't, the sun
has risen behind me
where I can't see it but
I do see its reflection
in front of me, reddening
the East Coast buildup
West of here on
Staten Island just
across the Verrazano Straights
— much quieter today,
these waters, not half as roiled
as yesterday, or as my dreams
made me today.

DURING A ZOOM READING by Jerome Rothenberg

Two thousand run
of the mill Buddhas
tread water

There are no mirrors
anywhere in the world
: only others

In several parts
the whole
is & is not

The whole is
& is not
in separate parts

In acts of cruelty
the present is miscarried
again and again

Time you say is a bullfight
I say time is kneeling
in the sand-hour facing the bull

*

4/14

So what is there left
except for the light
of a watery sun slanting
through clouds,

some cars, some runners
all wearing masks except
for those three in a circle
(what is a circle of three?)

((there is
no way of
squaring that one
except as the four-line
stanza, come in without asking
& now broken up))

based on 6 feet distance
who are smoking in concert
and that 5-kid family of
orthodox Jews rushing toward

the pier and maybe the water
will part and they can
escape the plagues of New York
— no pharaoh will chase them to
no paradise.

4/28

This morning's birds,
no owl in Owl's Head Park,
but

6 or more

Northern Flickers (my first sighting
after Nicole's excited reports)
the usual mess of robins,
my gaggles of sparrows, some
common house, some white-
throated, some chirping balls
of white bellies stuck out &
red-brown Mohawk aimed at
the rising sun,

the usual array of doves, never think of calling
them mourning, in or
out of same, they're just a
bit sad,

but then a ring of doves
with capitals in English
but without in the Arabic
tawq al-hamanah is
a major treatise on love
by Ibn Hazm
(to be looked into
when home-in-shelter from
early morning birding
walk).

4/29

Merle Bachmann: "I am in exile from exile."

5/4

one-hour morning walk nets
a day to be named “Grey Catbird
Day” in honor of the multiple sightings
in Owls Head Park —
a walk ending w/ 7 cormorants off
Pier 69, & in between
one Eastern Towhee
any number of robins
one female cardinal
one “Elster” — ah, yes, magpie,
and all the sparrows,
all the sparrows!

5/11

Days ago
I wrote about a dove,
& thinking back on it
& Ibn Hazm’s *Ring*
of same I turn
to the window
& there she is
on the branch of
the tree, keeping a cool
6 feet
social distance,
as I raise my head
& she’s gone
except for the
cooing, still
hanging in the
air — even after the
sharp warning wing
whistle
stopped.