

THE COLLECTION

A photograph of a large, weathered stone fortification, likely a historical site. The main structure is a massive, rectangular wall made of rough-hewn stone, showing signs of age and wear. In the foreground, there's a smaller, white-washed structure with a dark, domed roof, possibly a sentry box or a small chapel. The fortification is situated on a raised platform, with a low stone wall in front of it. The background shows a clear blue sky and some greenery, including a few palm trees. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

PAUL RENATO
TOPPO
2005 CHAPBOOK

BLUES FOR UGOLINO

There's this bloated float in my brain,
that swings into action at unexpected
moments

boasting

of an edge so fine upon
infinitesimal edge, though it is unable
to negotiate

my release at crushing dawn;
a ray, bent like the sudden
spike

of such liquids
of your choosing, but
between guilty dawns

in my arm, erases the slow
lines that mix
through it,

skips in and out
of its own
deadly rhythms

press

making the horizon
endlessly seem
to disappear

the revolution on me, pure
like a stone grown
frictionless

in the moonless ether
of time's collapse.
(like an ass in black slacks),

It swings into action, Father
and does not tremble
above your grave

THE NUDE OF YOU (LAS BABAS DEL DIABLO)

On the platform, watch with agony
of foreknowledge, the declining train
that misses every stop. Not even the Buddha's stopped voice,
decelerating, trapped in expanding feedback loops and
wheels, can get the souls back in there with dignity, because the
tunnel flows to nowhere, or is swallowed there, by land and sea

Self-contained systems expressly approximate, lewd and
forbidden tall axes falling on them, the nude of you goes around
instantaneously
an infected needle, while children grow around the maypole,
and become their own dolls, silent and fish-eyed you know
they rose to the nightly solitudes of space not yet formed, and were
made thus: voiceless so
many times before, now it's just a trick,

frozen intervals of naked fright catalogued in the seamless senselessness
of time

(and its plethora of false pauses)

Think of that as you balance the (deoxy)ribo-ladder, whose android
hands are not even human, upon the face of heaven
And (finally), if you have to break the hearts of angels,

Then at least go digging first where the pain is:
along a series of bases, bound by impossible light,
and the theory
that the little spit (that reflects you) was left by the ghost
of these departed quantities, a confused goggle
of codes, burned with ceaseless love into the martyr's bones.

THE SHAPE OF NUMBERS

I wrote a poem in Math class:

This is hard
This is so hard
This is so goddamned hard
This is so goddamned fuckin hard

This is soooooo hard
Goddammit
This is soooooooooo fuckin hard
(I mean it)

Shake me
wake me
fuck me
Epiphany

I could say
This a bundle
Of times without
Saying

It:

This is (so)ⁿ (goddamned)^m (fuckin)^p hard !^q

And I bowed, infinitely, the figure 8 carving my name into the desk
of the seventh day

In the belly of the clocktower you spurn
all mechanism and that dog with mange
in your brain
that pants like a woman
while you polish the ruby
fruit that will not survive this voyage
of translation

A pendulum rises and collapses to wake
Or erase you

Between beta blocked heartbeats and homages
To immense mirages

Time is never generous, rocker, but stingy
like a whore,
like the truth

Across the face when the first pair of insect
eyes decapitated your middle name
and broke your ass,

you stripped the myths from the wall and replaced them
with tiny bits of stellar
tits, nicely heroin
chic

CLOCK TOWER

Because you had to believe in her
Or fall from that cloud
into the topological oceans of your own brain,
rapt wrapped
up in utterly evangelical hell.

That's why you swallow yourself
into a close Mobius of rage,

because a smirking devil that shits
in the corner of your cage
opposite and adjacent
has caught you
in an act of love

PORTRAIT

I hold the center of this labyrinth,
And wait but
The plastic monkey never comes.
It has been this way since before
You unhinged my heart,
And unseated my soul, when
A chord heard somewhere on
The piles of hell.

Lynched history, (not Numbers) measures the
Vastness of time's relentless withdrawal
From here; while minions and
Ministers evangelize (in the Calvinist tradition)
I wait for the monkey who never comes.
Yet

The perilous dive eludes like a kiss,
Into Self-
swallowing machines lagging
Their masters by nanoseconds of time
At the soft petals of the altar
Other sacrifices arrive
Already dead to destiny

There, upon the breaths and engines of sense,
maybe the monkey
Cages of the superego taunt
The monkey to hump
Because that's how I reason
With it,
Now that pills and treason
Don't do the trick

Will I ever befall myself?

Like an injection, or simply
Wait, under a harmony
Of stars,
while
Only
Comes the ogre, extending
me
A fat hand of bare meat

FINNEY'S DRINKING AGAIN

Who hangs this drunk
attitude on an inverted
crucifix?

tying a time together in a
vicious tomb while

a song goes
skipping
over the grooves like
a syringe bouncing off a vein.

his loose mood lifts
the stillborn moon out
of a crib of wax

it's dark again, and I
have diminished to
the suburbs.

the poplar holds
birdsong (between
the teeth of the leaves)

her eyes broken, guiding
my dreams into what they,
tomorrow, might have become.

BRICK'S MECHANICAL CLICK

I keep going back because I want
to shake this ocean off my back
and spit in its sallow eye
Gulls down on the surface,
the alpha dog of a caravelle
rare like split light

all this

When I make a mess of the numbers
and disfigure your law of physics,
the glass moon rolls out of its eye
to settle in a corner of a
star.

So old ships dance off the
silhouette
of space and come up again like
fossils,
their contours fixed
in the glaze
of a fish's gaze through ironic
ice,
flat on my face

An echo feeds a bloody rose,
and I leave in her open arms a residue
of lewd subtractions.

Do you know the silent coast of the other side?

where my trusty rusted
double toys
with a feeling
I took years to reject,

I discover I desire the
full cup, its rim
a hoop from
which new light jumps
drowning out of the wine

while a hard-on leaves
a thin scar upon the stars.

THIN LETTERS

On a wavelet of air
you hear its music

but the thin letters
evanesce like a corrupt

program
on your tongue

so by midnight
I've strained

language
back through a

thermodynamic beginning;
and now

I'm covered with it
kicking absolute zero's

ass. (it's a habit
that hangs

on dissolving walls
in my head)

I keep on throwing nooses
to my moods,

so the dawns that wait
like syringes

will
tighten around

me in sleep,
their loose

rythms
tired

like statements
and equations.

SCRAPE

are you young enough
to want a facelift?
or has your face, lifted
out of pools of protein,
seen itself in the
eyes of your unseeming
maker?

the idea must nag like a
cocktail or the time
you got raped
on the terrazzo while
the birds stopped
chirping in the vast spaces
of your right brain

Is that skin, after all?
And,
worn like a lampshade,
does it still dampen
that seventy watt
glow of the hole?

NACHO KICKS LOOSE

Rings of scum nag the fuckhole,
Maybe

I pulled into Nazareth

cat fur stings bloodshot eyewhites
of my hero.

gurgling splitting the rayon wind

I have a complaint:

the nails have missed the target, like a
German nurse with her syringe
of empirical miracles,

his hands
roll into a muscle,

those oval shadows of wasp's fine wing

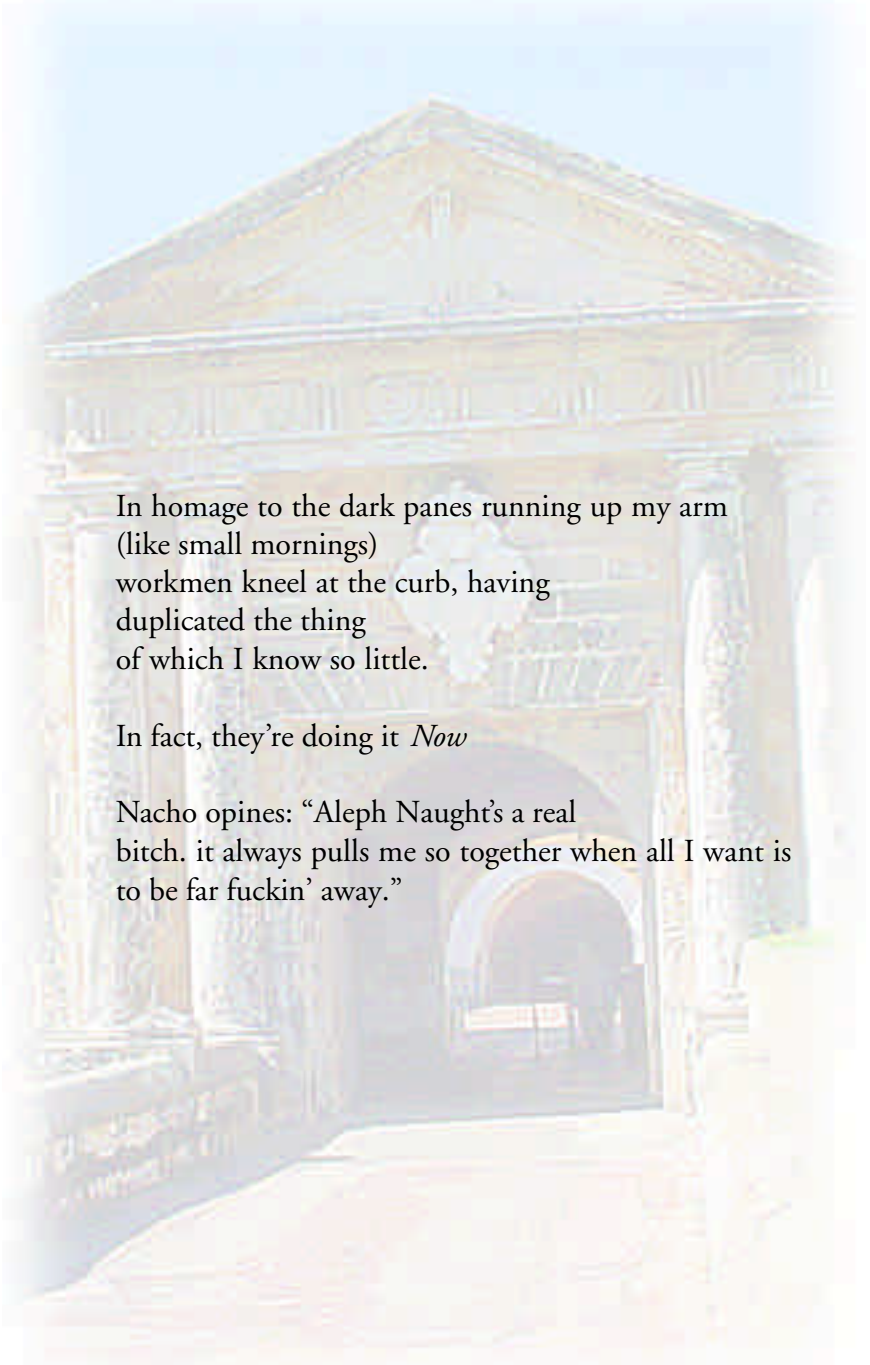
then canals run with a humidity that pops up
like champagne, while fractals of blood litter the air
with fire, falsified

by the trace;

A fat hand reaches out a lyric

La cosa pierde color cuando la piensas dos veces

Nacho's kicking loose of the Earth.



In homage to the dark panes running up my arm
(like small mornings)
workmen kneel at the curb, having
duplicated the thing
of which I know so little.

In fact, they're doing it *Now*

Nacho opines: "Aleph Naught's a real
bitch. it always pulls me so together when all I want is
to be far fuckin' away."

EL ALEBRIJE

the acrylic moon's
a foreign pimp

in my new heart's old land

sparrow your hollow bones hurt
my heads hear voices

on the ocean, but the ship's
vastly horizon itself,
blesses so many solitudes.

Think I'll make a last stand
against blue pools
of probability.

Oh to fuck you
senseless
with bomblets of light
and wallow there awhile
while horses plot a slow-motion
charge

without riders

laying in code no real intentions,
in collimated beams
rude and alone,

which makes me think I
am
down
on purpose.

Now your hoof is kicking out the optic nerve
Now I only feel breath
and frozen lamplight
and fall like a hinge, unhinged.

cleft chin
working
itself
out.

oak door
croaks open
to let
out

a dream, the time is that is
t = t zero is:

too late *cabrón*

all the Jupiters I can conjure come
drooling out.

At painted plates they came to suckle
a white phosphorous

but they are bounce back

Now drip from his glass while
my tail whips around a lidless
eye.

ANTIPOEM

a coward
sits

by a fountain
reckoning

won't
the sea spit

up a fist
of water?

at a foot

by afternoon
its tendril made gold

(or the angle
of the sun)

READING CORT ZAR AND CARROLL

(Estoy de buenas, nena..)

let's talk about the sad contents
of a bag of quarks

(oh, for fuck's sake)

why is that?
I'll raise you one double dual
 $x^{**}=x$ (amen)
why is that?

todo preso es político, claro

well
I think
I'm
a change in direction
I'm
a lookin' past the zipper-faced moon

to a little synapse
that wouldn't

Renato's here!

I hear the echo of that that that never landed
in the trap

that is: not nostalgia, *te lo juro*

you're I me mine

because

finally he rises

to trump the most
faux desire I ever puked out

of a volta,

of a lineup of invective
from the sun

(you might confuse it with shadows)

Renato grasps plastic keys,
up the swing Papá, up

Papá

Papá

Papá

On tas? quielo iy a paque! Papá abajando?

¡Papá!

No me bagas cosquillas

¡Ya Papá!

(házme volar, Renato

Mi Natín)

Here's an antipoem born
To swim in my sea of sins

nunca sorteé las trampas del amor

so
if you can multiply two negatives
sin que se mofen de ti,
I got Borges' death masks sneaking a
late look up the wrong hole.

¿sabías? quiere morder el tallo de mi rosa

then let's
you get back to
you

you see:

(agáchate wey que vas a saber lo que es bueno)

theoretically
-1 means

an escape from funky number town

so that

(-1)(-1)
means: *el futuro llegó hace rato nena*

Doña Eduviges anda penando (ora pro nobis)

¿ya te cayó el 20?

since they put me in this place
I've been diagnosed

by a stupid fuck

eso no me arregla....(a mi)

I hope the music crushes the petals
in your ear

¿cómo no sentirme así? si ese perro sigue ahí.

Renato's on the swing
cooing,
swaying with me
among these trees
of numbers

minusplusminus...
plus

the riddle
you see
will make
me free

The sinusoid rhythms of a giggle like the spongy
ciphers themselves fly from his eyes:
He will soon put some other sun in a wax cradle

When I unlearn long division,
So again I may penetrate the thunder
Again

THE ROOFTOPS OF ZACATECAS

The sky tumbled out of fireless eyes
from the poverty of thin air, a cherub
pissed itself and while snow fell

in hell

I attached to the acetic moon my picture
of you.

How many winters missed you, patient as a flower?
12, if you want to know.

Do you know that

While I sat under your willow little snakes coiled
around my heart,
and the music that crowded my body like a soul
emptied your science from my eyes?

While, all the time, just beneath the surface,
cloned eyes peeked through, only

which ones would turn out to be you?

TEOTIHUAC N

I throw it in
like the towel
I am obsessed by it:

here
a nation rises on a pyramid of numbers,
each morning it arrives
pricking edges of surfaces

the holes that fell fill morning
with a false dew

gravity factors uncountably many
loaded dice
from the pressed sweat
of labored orbits

the stars are its disclaimer,
the oblong places
where we end unjustly

when there is no other place.

and it remains thus through the perishing moments:

the crude archaeology of time
wraps life around its pauses
roughly, while I discover that

an ogre with a sundial has used a trowel to
dig out the fat meat

Later, you will tell me
how it felt between the fingers
when you threw it away

FEEDING ZENO'S HEAD IN METRO ZAPATA

Unlikely like time itself
a clone of slumping moments

roughly speaking, feeling
mechanical

In metro Zapata

There's even a machine that pushes
the people
like a paper dolls

out of their private parts

One's a string of twins, endlessly siamese.

so they will never rise from iron tombs,
or sway

divide this moment's light into pearly layers
of probability and ugly,

low looks at

Cave paintings and two Aztec moons dance as they roll
in the sky

They make a bone rose rise like a flag. In Union Square
the crowd is switching places with me,
away and now through the tired glass,

a man burrows into the womb as I hurry a smile
in the strobe of the poem.

BUSH'S NOVENA

Down at the fireplace the shadows throw
little missives,
at the base of a titanium heart

while the bloodless thumping
beneath the roots

caves to its own echo, and ends, each wave
overtaking the effortless wake

shutting out light
tight,

against a hurricane of tears

Amid bemused and bewildered black contractions,

he arrives and ejaculates at the Superdome,
perfecting,
articulating

a Fox with eyes like rubies of the thousand points of light
which mutate into a kinder and gentler
hyena

killed
inside cages of water,
(because wrath must reach out
to kiss even Parishes
of the soul),

they rattled their pistol-hot bone chains,

the moist air carried footnotes from a sax, down
to the 9th ward, as if
a riff
would suffice
(ne c'est pas, cher?)
to save their black asses.

Time around frames
the dark with blue
and rises

and so forth

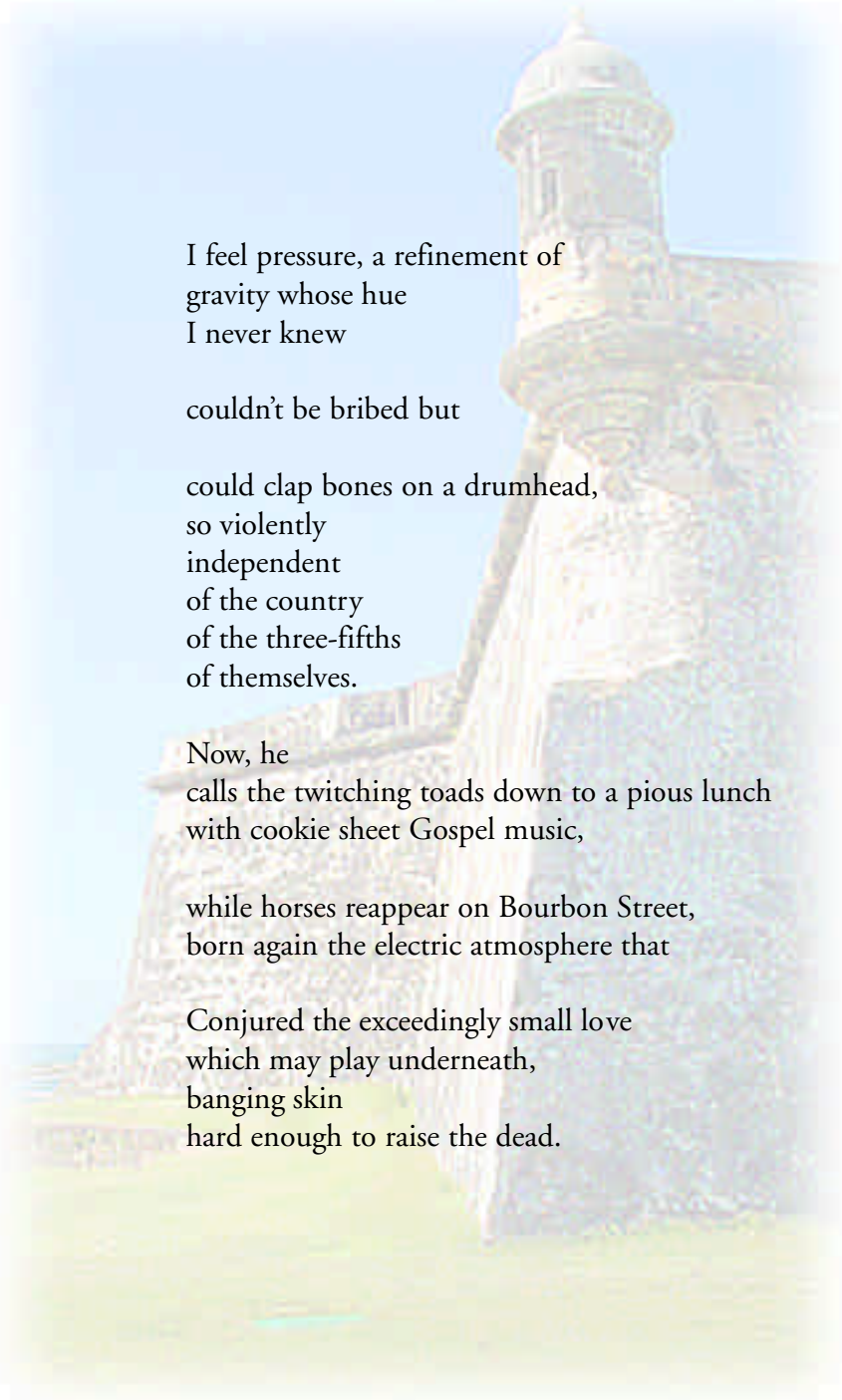
through the branches toward
where the hummingbird was stilled
by a machine gun

Here I wait for the bus to the day
before yesterday

I'm strung along in semicircles,
by politics
in
fat
evenings with bored looks
Nancy Grace
and dead babies
that flash for a moment on screens
of the subconscious

Time to fly to the eye:

voices slide like a sleet of sorrow
vague and silly,



I feel pressure, a refinement of
gravity whose hue
I never knew

couldn't be bribed but

could clap bones on a drumhead,
so violently
independent
of the country
of the three-fifths
of themselves.

Now, he
calls the twitching toads down to a pious lunch
with cookie sheet Gospel music,

while horses reappear on Bourbon Street,
born again the electric atmosphere that

Conjured the exceedingly small love
which may play underneath,
banging skin
hard enough to raise the dead.

THE COLLECTION PAUL RENATO TOPPO

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