

ETUDES. EVIDENCE. OR A WORKING DEFINITION
OF THE SUN GEAR

*... many elements are common to many things,
as letters are to words*

Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*

*The organization of movement is the organization of its elements,
or its intervals, into phrases.*

Dziga Vertov, *Kino Eye*

In a picture of thought the *f* stop opens
as when skylarks departing,
it was night, wheeling clicks in the lens,
full, volumetric night, scribbling
streets, irregular gardens
around a sea chamber, the din
deployed as architecture, a ribbony neon,
or the permanent shape of a letter.
The shape of the letter is important
like the colour blue today has 26 hues,
wrote "*belle lumière*" at 8 PM.

It's true,
the shaped light is making the curve of an *s*,
loop of *e*, the crown of *a* as boats
in spilled ink sway from indigo to silver,
bottle green to rust and over, the years
that go into a face, boredom to ecstasy,
feigned excitement to vexed to saddened
to it's hard to say,

sun bundled at one end
of a late autumn field, the sheen, the lawn,
the line we walked across evening sky.
If it was written, it was "*Alas*"
cloaked in purple, it was perfume,
it was the sun couched all day.
The *x*'s and *o*'s of pistils and stamens,
a majesty, the one with letters,
legends, morning walks by the sea.
Picture a crenellated string of photons

& gravitrons from here to a mirrorball,
 stacked *n*'s, tilted *w*'s wave into distance.
 Between building and sky is a *GULF*
 and *CINEMA*,

glittery droppings,
 gulls poach among the colossal signs.
 Is it warmer near the neon, those *dzziitt* sounds
 mixing with the chubby honk of tugs by the pier,
 the surface of thought littered, *x* of *t*,
 rubble of *r*, the *a* in pear, sting of *s*, silent *h*,
 everywhere, enough. Confetti
 and the remains of roman candles.

It was a *fête du jour*, name day,
 happy hour, day of rest, busman's holiday,
 it was evening in the port,

festival effects

and commuter traffic folded
 in dusk, deeper, plash of wave,
 deeper, *tinging* rays, deeper, the spin
 and drift of air, of atoms, the sky also deeper
 in me than I am, the light, water,
 grass, this roll of traffic, hush.
 A fly zigs a knight-to-queen-4 pattern
 on the ceiling, ants on the sill
 angle to share the warmth of the printer,
 fingers pecking the black keys,
 the diatonic sequence of e-mail dialing in,
 that wooden deck sound in the electrostatic storm
 twisting,

the thrill of connecting,
 the ochre wood grain, slate fractures
 in ceramic tile, goosebumps on sheet rock,
 cobalt shadows on the fridge,
 Hans Arp water spots in the sink,
 the *sfumata* silence, dish rag, sponge,
 the coffee filter's stained parchment effect
 seems historical,

hysterical tears
 on the stoop, a girl of six: "Mama"
 out of the ambient hum. There is a project

for the sun, the rise and fall, sting of s,
 silent *h*, out the kitchen window.
 The *shh sh* of its mother having small effect.
 A single heartbeat records the gathering storm:
 one kettle drum, two cymbals and a sheet of tin
 are all that's needed to wake this city up,
 the KABOOM closer than the contralto
 across the way,

the broadcast interrupted
 by a sudden applause of rain
 finding a bigger voice, a thunder crack
 crossed with the radio's tin aria.
 Now, the passing boom of sun busting
 through an open window,

a rainbow
 in the glass by the phone, "aglow,"
 you heard it say as the sun passed low.
 Where am I in this thing called morning
 with a ricochet of boys in the street,
 the walls lemon with olive shutters
 reading "the painter of the future will be
 a colorist such as has never existed."

The big green day is peeling
 a lemon's nimbus reflected on the desk
 beside a postcard from Trevor's show:
 1 jay, some bubbles, 7 1/2 tubes of paint,
 a lightbulb, a vase, 2 pillars, a book
 of matches, a star, a lemon, and a harp.
 There is a snow scene in pink light,
 two skiers in silhouette, a navy skirt
 with large snow crystals and a keyhole
 with colour fields of chocolate, mauve,
 billiard green, rust, a spearmint trim
 with a touch of empire stripe:
 gold & honey to the lower right,
 the upper left, salmon & ivory.

In a notebook: the colours
 are meant to disturb us, the exegesis
 of abstract patterns leads
 to an incarnation inside a viewer,

We took the darkness with us into midday,
 descending scales. To breathe was enough.
 From here the city is *sacer*, kids
 in the schoolyard, the sea, dinky apartments,
 labours, a construction fire morphs
 the stone ports in the tower,
 escaping tongues mimic flames in the spire,
 a space broken into glass
 catching light or the responsibilities
 that go with it.

Shadow are you sleeping?

The song expands in rings, the cadence dips,
 breaks off, recapitulates. The song
 is an engine, a "kiss," a "summer day,"
 a "mother ship," a "heat wave,"
 "groove thing," "ball o' confusion,"
 is "helpless," "under my skin,"
 "all the things you are," "a new morning,"
 "an afternoon delight," "stardust,"
 "I remember you."

In the stone port

the cubed volume of public air floats the plaza,
 the waves near shore startling things,
 a body's slow aperture takes its time
 allowing a ray from three or four thousand years
 to want the present, record the terrain,
 the language and customs of leaves
 in early winter, burnt orange fresco in pieces,
 a blushing cheek on a triangle chip,
 eyes on a trapezoid block,
 metallic sky over busy street, one spot
 of gourd-yellow glory on the sign.
 How much sun can a body carry
 while it ticks, whirrs, hiccups and spins,
 and what about reflected light
 tucked away, does this go missing
 when a body folds back into wind?
 What are we that we become
 whatever, what are we that we come
 to whatever, wherever are we

when we come to.

Take a trip to see:

le portrait du fils de M Godefroy avec
 spinning top, *M Le Nowl's* boy is building
a château de cartes.

"Quite a view,"

the crew of Space Shuttle mission whatever
 reports. In the *Herald Tribune*:

"Work is no longer a place," said Jorma Ollila,
 CEO of Nokia Oy, "You can do anything
 from anywhere or will be able to soon,"

walking the streets of Paris.com
 to see Notre Dame.com in the evening light,
 writing a love poem.org to Montparnasse.com
 filled with brassy boulevard talk
 and window displays, the shock
 when you catch a reflection: animals
 can be so complete it's awkward,
 saying "*beau paysage*," yes, it's material.
 Picture this: work is no longer a place
 but place is constant work.

The debris of the poem,

fate of phrases,

of vermilion, damned to souvenirs, a view,
 the difficulties in translating a view:
 sapphire, sapphirine, turquoise, smalt, lapis lazuli,
 (Oriental) aquamarine, wachet, blue-black,
 blue-green; royal, Prussian, Dumont's or king's
 or starch, powder, Antwerp or Haarlem
 or mineral, robin's egg, Parma, Napoleon,
 Chinese, deep, sky, livid, electric, etc., blue.
 In a gallery:

L'embauchure de la Seine

playing "spring leaves" on Turner's coast
 of grass-*étude d'arbre* 1832, *étude colorée*,
 ghost lines and outlines w/ 3-D bateaux,
 a lightning chalk line in Arabic, *un arabesque*,
 harbour flares and water light,
 book of the sea, *soleil sur le port*,
environs du fort, horn flowers.

The hazelnut groves ablaze, a few cypress,
 the plain tilts and a weather vane spins
 widdershin in my solitude: transposing grass
 into letters, air to description, sounding rock,
 feathers, syllables sounding tissues,
 deeper in me, true city

tick in *t*, imp of *i*,
 the *m* in mountain, *e*'s empire.
 Trains pass through, the tracks bow a bit.
 The industrialists dreamed of steam
 and left us brick, rolling macadam in the distance,
 the sound of tires through trees,
 trees at 8 PM, all the birds were leaving,
 it's time to go.

When the voices came,
 the wind came with. Difficult to tell
 one draft from the next or harvest memory
 from breath, the need to fashion for curtains
 and stagecraft, a mystery, a cloth,
 so as not to forget anything:
 a frame. Night taught us
 the wheel, the wagon, the way
 the smallest dot is something's home.

à Marseille
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PETER GIZZI is an American poet, living and teaching in California. He was a guest in residence at the Centre for Poetry (CIPM) in Marseille in the autumn of 1999 when this poem had its inspiration.