



OF SOUND MIND

CHORDS

per longo fono

the operating system 2016





THE OPERATING SYSTEM PRINT//DOCUMENT

CHORDS

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*Cover Art: Quilt Drawing #13 - For Maureen by Daphne Taylor, 2010
www.daphnetaylorquilts.com
Book designed and edited by Lynne DeSilva-Johnson*

*This text was set in Minion Pro, DIN Condensed, Kinesis Pro, OCR-A Standard and Futura;
printed and bound by Spencer Printing and Graphics
in Honesdale, PA, in the USA.*

THE OPERATING SYSTEM//PRESS

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Brooklyn, NY 11205
www.theoperatingsystem.org





CHORDS







DISCLAIMER AND STATEMENT

This work aims to represent chords subjectively as an assemblage or family of characters, with each chord corresponding to a single poem and each character corresponding to a representative tone (“One,” “Three,” “Five,” etc.). Though the poems make use of historical, analytical, and academic registers, this is not intended to be a comprehensive undertaking. These are poems first and foremost, and decisions have been made accordingly to emphasize sonic and/or semantic textual elements over absolute musicological fidelity.

This work exists to honor and glorify God.

- Peter Longofono -







MAJOR TRIAD

There were three sisters.
 One was firstborn, a door.
 To get her, enter by her
 to a room: One's own

spanse, enough to never have
 to stand beside the other
 nonetheless there—next
 sister, indignantly insistent,
 born instants later—she *hates* it.

That's Three. She has it hard
 watching her tone, in arrears:
 a hurdle she hauled in place,
 a caterwaul, a cant. She *can't*.

The listener will note last
 the youngest, Five, peace-
 and policymaker, peripatetic,
 broad, staunch. She won't lie,
 and thereby's often ignored.

Of the trio, however, her ear
 pricks quickest at the implication:
 the three of them chase places,
 regular sidesteppers, spokes
 or rungs wheeling about their hub.

A Pythagorean wink, their parts
 humming three and four and five
 semitones apart: a Y, say, as in *key*
 or *joy*, *yes*, *young*, *your*, *my*, or *why*.

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MINOR TRIAD

Something like chess—the best
our sour planet can do, a wet view
of the early virtues in shredded
afterglory. Strike the camp, sicko.

One mostly keens, these days.
Not a jot different (get up),
decked in her old fustian, even,
though gunked, limestone (I said up).

Five, too, pours on primevally,
autobiographical, teeth unbrushed.
She tries to be civil. She testifies.

Who changed? Ah: Three
(Don't ogle, it makes her tetchy),
whose tongue's slit's still singed.
Three, three. Taking your bishop.

She can't sleep or think fondly.
All she has is her croak-rictus.
Her masturbating fey.

(Here's where you're sleeping tonight:
your childhood closet, toy-free, Mom
trying the knob, angrier than ever).





AUGMENTED TRIAD

The Principals file back in,
squinch-eyed and masculine
by ordeal, touched, martial.

One and Three, hammer and tongs,
in bellicose abandon. They bunt
and boister, perforce (have at thee!)
at major conflict (the emergency exit!).

We'd thought Five above troubling—
water's opposite, maybe, but not quite
dry—well, well, look at her now,
she's thrown in with the irregulars.

What could it mean that she's turned
mean? That she'll reimburse diddly-
squat? Indeed, that she raises klaxon
at our nodding, off or along?

This is, evidently, how she was
raised. Just listen: is she not
a raisin, a merchant of asperities?
Take her point by point (seriatim):
(#) ouch. (#) *Ouch*. She's sharp.





DIMINISHED TRIAD

And see, now the sisters three
are spent profligately, tucked
gels with a goblin's schnoz in each ear.

One could grow a sunflower
from her tongue's dazed crib.

Three sleeps—as such, is flat.
Think: should she come to?
Come to think of it, once more,
with morlock snore Five, too,

is down and done for the count.
Maudlin, dejected, the pair
scroll crookedly afoot One's slippers,
bemoaning the type of door kept shut.

The sun through One's mourning
veil a dull, impecunious hoop: °.
They'll slip it on, the semibrudes.
They may as well drown, the Hebrides.





SUSPENDED FOURTH

They've grown old, the girls—
vivid, tinkling hillsides, piedmonts
threaded with high-minded
miscellany: aqueducts, granaries...

they've speed limits now.
Age has done its number,
namely, a chronic slide
from Three to Four; presto,

there goes gender. It's less
a question of *want*
than *meant*: listener,
here's where "resolution" obtains—

Four, with perfect aplomb,
took Three's place. A last-act
war, or: Euterpe's theme, an Attic
air, a pendular tic the crone croons.

/// SUSPENDED FOURTH | 11 ///





SUSPENDED SECOND

For want of Goodjohns, for to be
fruitfully infused, the technique:
take Four and Five, a matrimony,
and refract the pair athwart One,

now cloaked in crow-stepped gables.
One's, for once, high-pitched,
though like all social climbers
she forgets herself. We'll call her
like we see her (Five) and the pair—
voilà—assume clockface north, 1 2.

There's, more or less, something else:
with Three gone so long, the rest
start forgetting, themselves. For all
her lip, she qualitatively rooted the family.

They're upended. They're expecting,
end-heavy, putzing about, bump-jumbo.
Three's skipped orbit, left space altogether.
See the crowded incumbent bodies outvie.
The intermission ends: let's find our seats.





ADDED TONE CHORD

Figures that extras would hustle
 for a split of the equity. The girls'
 act attracts, but isn't exactly a king-
 maker. Three's back, and back on,
 but *back off*, beancounters! "Be thankful,"

Three snarls, voicing it closely
 to disconcert her understudies.

Five's fitter at shaming them
 into place; it's as mutely apparent
 as a tangle (or a whistle, or a kettle)
 that Five's got their number, the youths:

Four, trail after them like a poltergeist.
 When your activity stands without being
 understood, you'll earn the name Eleven.

Two, you're the puerile hill Three's unwilling
 to die on. When you kill on Broadway,
 they'll call you Nine. The both of you—
 don't ham for the camera, be circumspect
 with your riffs, and *keep it natural*, capisce?

You'd foreheads even in the background.
 You've been plucked from the chorus,
 Appoggiaturae. You don't get a break.
 You're a twosome—don't be tiresome.





SIXTH

The sisters step back, mirror-gaze.
They'd like a hat, a little someone
to wear out, to catch in throat
or lens, the four of them prosperous
and unbothered on their promenade.

And a hat they get, but sick as well:
a worrisome hush commences,
bedside men swoop low, readying
their post-mortem photographic implements.

It's a timely calm for lyceum lectures,
shore-charting and the like: the doleful
juveniliads and whiskery dotage bookending
the era's brim. But also a Hibernian tableau—

Lordwise waits Six (a he, a him, ahem),
flanked on the left by One (the muttermother),
while Three in her huff smooths the napery
and Five poses, poised to plant the rarebit
in its polished chafing dish over the brazier.





MINOR SIXTH

The ancients prescribed manual labor
to cure the demon of apathy, acedia,
now bedeviling our intrepid quartet.

Six carries on, the abbot; One, wan
in her negligee, all but tumbledown
and most slatternly, waits up for him.

The family's soused in colostrum.
Bathhouse listlessness, sport of doulas,
creases the sometime spotless textiles:
bombazine, milky crêpe. These folk

are asked after—are their mirrors
covered? Three, have you miscarried?
She's downright hoarse from sobbing,
whited with malnourishment. One's sin,

insomnia, connives like thrown casements.
Five, supervisory, overeats. Vacant seats,
sheathed umbrellas. Six loiters closely,
a hex of semitones estranged from Three,

swabbing the flagstones. One mustn't
shrink from archbasilican functions.
Firewood's salient. Suds quell tedium.
Suds are self-pity's natural predator.

/// MINOR SIXTH | 15 ///





MAJOR SEVENTH

The slow march comes up short,
 limp-colored, lapis lazuli arms arrested:
 a change! A checkpoint! Six is relieved
 by sheikh squad, a melange transport,
 and for a punishing moment a state
 auto-da-fé purports, prognostic.

But no: the object topples, he won't
 be offed (have your laugh, docents,
 the rubes were sure duped). The aria
 rearranges. Six phoenixes, sang-
 froidful with eyes of blue-in-blue,
 a fresh regent, a sumptuous, a Seven.

One, Three, and Five signify wonder
 at once: this risen scofflaw, this majolica
 graviteur lends them levity by the ounce.
 They're extraordained. They're loosed.

Such Alhambra color's advenient our ambit,
 a gift outside the seasons' wheel for each:
 One becomes a girl again by quartz cadenza.
 Three, edelweiss.
 Five, libido.





DOMINANT SEVENTH

It couldn't last—because he floats,
Seven's become a superscript,
a pontifical exponent, unearthly
albeit groundless. One, the humble

exemplar, ceded primacy and sits
at his right hand, at times just
a step away, but Three and Five
bear the gruntwork's brunt: brass

beards hang from them, the siege
machines, and consonants inherit
all significance. Cadences establish:
chain-gang campaigns, minecarting,

The Mach, filth, donnybrooks, *the blues*.
The pressure locks One in anthracite,
the better to tense the tissue and stand
the welts. This is Dominant Seventh,

who owns Barbershop, who keeps keys
on rings, who *sangs*, stripes backs,
attacks hearts, clogs lanes, overexplains.





MINOR SEVENTH

Jain cosmology calculates *Palyopama*,
at minimum 10^{194} years, as follows:
take a hollow, cubic pit, eight miles
to a side, and cram it full of seven-

day-olds' hair, further subdividing each
hair into 2,097,152 individual particles.
Then extract one particle per century
and sum the years until it empties.

10,000,000,000,000,000 of these
makes a *Sāgaropama*; multiplying
again by 20,000,000,000,000,000
yields a *Kālacakra*, or one rotation

through the cosmic time trundle.
Are you getting all this, Three?
You aren't; you, too, feel demeaned,
truncated, consigned...why, instead

of contentment, must your days win
-now with labor? Here in lowly steerage,
who'd you even ask about your newborn's
lanugo? It makes you younger and younger

—to wit, you dwindle—in doing so, though,
do you accrue value? Let's say the thought
drove you to raise Cain: would a week suffice
to claim clippings from your neonate? Surely not!





AUGMENTED SEVENTH

These quadruple adders! They wield
 their honorifics, a major film
 on jingoist advances in serge.
 All assaying the pectoral spread—

the warchest—and vying fraywise
 for primogenesis. They figure Four
 a fixed tetragrammaton, a cardinal
 oriented Forward, a Frankish directive

to forge on, spilling turf with color,
 though she hasn't favored any corner
 with her countenance for millennia.
 Just the same they act her Aspects:

Regiment One envenoms sabres
 nightly, religiously, peach effulgence
 mustering in the coves of her mudras
 as she instructs her fold of poisonmakers.

Regiment Three, the rancid Upright,
 permanently umbered in the archetypical,
 mulct-moltissimo skycast. Who divides
 oncomers as hills do errant tufts of cloud.

Regiment Five: bombardiers, ruinmongers
 unyoking payload after payload. Where One
 gathers, Five hunts—at a distance, a dissonance,
 hypersonic railguns on their good, good ships.

Regiment Seven is just the one Knight, Parsimony,
 an opportunist. A garnishment. Effectively immortal
 since the Concordat of Worms. His thumb pins
 the rest. They're screwed. They're his underlings.

/// AUGMENTED SEVENTH | 19 ///





HALF-DIMINISHED SEVENTH

Theatre is tricky. Boors dig
the calamity, the beer cocktails,
but the leading players expire;
even Seven, the Ringmaster.

A universal prohibitor (oh, stow it)
sounds mandatory: an interdictory
circle internationally observed—

A slashed circle! Don't take that
tone! One, Three, and Five array
at even intervals on (why not) the field:
playing repeat-yourself out loud,
but also in front, behind, and aside:

there they go, pert and so self-similar.
They nettle, each commemorating
Seven in isometric succession,

adorably panicked, blotto, bearing down,
Teetotalers (another invention of theirs).
It's hardmode, telling them apart.
They titter, faithless and unstatuesque.
Over they go like unto wise old government.





FULLY DIMINISHED SEVENTH

The State's toppled, crumbs without cohesion
in a *fin de siècle*, shame- and gutless, treacle-tub
era. It's the XXth C. and complete symmetry
blurs the foolhardy Fundament. These peccadillos

dribble distilled anise like the longhairs they are,
an Itinerant concern without any distinction (with
every convenience). A circus byline thithers, oinks,
drenched with bruxist blue like the gathered remote.

They've names, sure—One, Three, Five, Seven—
shuttlecocks, more like. *All* alike, khaki potatoes
clothed in eyeslits like oilllets. Invert them, subvert them:
they're enharmonic starch. Stackable. Modular.

Small wonder they were numbered. Simpler to kill.
Even so, dying in ignominy—even so, wrenched
from the Empyrean—these our characters baffle.

Pity the tapestry with which these meddlesomes
and mass-magnetizers performed the disbandment.
The obscene scrollworks with which they discover
their most *recherché*. That is: they return (man
alive!) to the greensward. They find themselves before us.





MINOR MAJOR SEVENTH

Seven grows philosophical...prone...
dominance bores him. He's trustier,
changed; inspect his ∂ and his Δ .

Now he gets a capital "M," a Hitchcock
raptus cartwheeling him at billiards.
Subsidized with prime-time tension,
naturally (why else would you play him?).

Let's make this interesting. Fella's indulging
an augmented triad on his knee (Three).
He inoculates her: she weaves back
to the bar, Five and Seven nesting
chipperly on her shoulders. She tends

to lower herself to the situation, bluesy.
And he tends to himself, his own barkeep,
de-silvering the mirror with his stare.
This bar sucks. That tension resurfaces,

minors versus majors. He's standing
so close to One. Is he in The Police?
Has Seven changed? The tosspot, he's up
to his old tricks. He's down for whatever.





SIX-NINE

So ditch Seven altogether: the roused
 rabble slackens, freeing their being
 from that *firebrand*. They plug their tonic
 and go soft, decumbent, an odd set
 of cribbed behaviors: One, Three, Five.

And a post-dominant Pax rolls forth: art
 effloresces, a steadily lengthening chaptery
 where porridge-bowl-bearers boldly claim fourths.
 Lardful repletion marks the lidded Quaternary
 Age. The populace oil their beards and grow

denser. Stratagems relax. Lax Decadents pry
 firkins from their ornamental fastholds, coloring
 with spot-ragged audacity. Dice-for-eyes,
 these lacquered mummings take each other by
 ritual, plummy force (leaving, you'll note, beauty marks).

It goes like this: Six struts out, an Ortensio
 or a Leandro. His stirrups never cease
 clicking; his puff-chested cockamamie argot
grates. Bow-legged, shellacked. Now Nine

peahens from her father's loggia, languorous
 Beatrice or Isabella, all the gaudier for Tuscan
 capitals behind. Two Mediterranean luckwits!
 They merely understand, with history's-end

courtliness, how to dress and to address. Neither,
 it's chillingly clear, ever alters: theirs is a consonance
 constipated in Late Antiquity. A gross neurasthenia.
 We abscond, ticking troubles, and pass in gripping
 movements through the period's remainder.

/// SIX-NINE | 23 ///





MINOR SIX-NINE

One and Three commiserate, guess why:
 time was they were the toast of their kid-
 gloved, pheasant-stuffed milieu. Abruption
 tore in and nudged them closer—glum
 reminiscers all, this cagey clan, toned down.

Five and Six married (never'd have guessed),
 another cluster, the henpecked, the out-argued:
 they share a jacket against imprecation. Nine sleeps
 alone, inconsolable. They're stable, if that's the word
 for an unsung stay *in* a stable; they're fair, if relegated

to caravans. Hell, flip Six with Nine and see if you can
 follow the changes. Go ahead: they'll catch as catch can,
 the malversationists. They don't fight, work, earn, trade,

pray, or listen. The barbarians won—that's what you want
 to hear, there's why they hide. Such is the gypsy character,
 the gnaw cellophaned and fretting idly in Hungarian Minor.
 Take "Topsy" from the top. Take "Turvy."





DOMINANT NINTH

Five isn't One for corn
 -pone displays. She stiff-
 elbows her siblings, those
 Obsequiae. They kiss
 the dust with small fingers
 twined crosswise at the spine.

Three, cheery for a change, fetches
 droppers of belladonna. Her job:
 to tarnish like the polestar, to point
 forward like lost significance must.

Pliny the Elder implores for a snip
 of forelock; His Magicians induce bile,
 kinking knees uncannily to Triskelion.

From the stump, the podium, decipher
 a trill of bongos, Listener, and roadrunner
 away—you unicycle. Now zip it. The ritual
 of oak and mistletoe. Brother sacrificial

bulls nose the turf, together a Legendary
 Token Ox with flash, opposite-tailed: uncial
 “q” vs. “g.” Oh, wait, that's Nine: s/he
 of cloven hoof, of toady, white, infertile druids

in bondage. Discipline. Submission.
 Masochism. *Nein*. Seven's here somewhere.
 Who else would bind the horns? Blight the crops?
 This is the Giant's Causeway: no standing anytime.





MINOR NINTH

Five's installed, a cantilever: structurally
rigid. She beams, abridges...she barrels!
That's her, stout-staved, protrusive, uncritical:

but she keeps vigorish swells of strongarm
persuasion *in*—her thin responsibility.
One and Three versus Seven and Nine.
Towards whose anchor-jerking good
should she capitulate? OK, so yes,

she's rounder now; does anyone argue
that shear familiar force is to thank?
So with elemental rhetoric she goes
by Punctured Cushion—her stitched
counterpane failed (the pairs having force

-d apart her respectably tarred seams). *Over*
a barrel, limbs taut at equal moment,
she can hardly be expected to object.
Inspect her bedspread as you would a Paris

streetmap: can you manage, pricks? Is it quality
quilting? Or does she ring hollow, a keeled vessel
empty of family, cargo, vermin, and crew?





MAJOR NINTH

Morningtide—grainy light, plug-ugly.
 Through a woozy, shriveling arcade,
 catavaulted as the tapeworm, creeps
 One like a folded banknote (she must:

her take gains ground even as it dilutes,
 like hearty soup cut overmuch with water).
 Voicings crowd. One and Three's grim
 sideshow has them hoisting Two (the *boy*),
 a shuffling, shouldered, hyperextended concern.

Seven, the Load-Bearer, clearly fled, smitten
 or schismed or somesuch: vanity, that cluster
 of polyps, grew exaggerated in his brainforest.

Listener, are you queasy? Well, yes...
 here's where Five betook her starvation,
 the first to succumb in this fivesome's privation.

From the floor she mulls Nine's thermospheric
 mug, a compound bombast in the next octave.
 Correct or not, Five to the last in Punic wrack
 wouldn't feed. Now take Nine: much like hunger

he pines for relief, to *be* overpopulation, to spread.
 And it's for damn sure he'll never retract; compare
 Five, immeasurably wiser for slipping this mortal
 wallet. Ask for her in a vamp, a comp.
 She's relieved to be absent.





DOMINANT SEVENTH SHARP NINTH

What else but a disc of hammered tin,
a chintz spotlight on Three, she who's
pleased to disgust us? Who's also winsome,
but little, like smallpox. Three is many

at once; though she hurts to harbor,
she's so convincing in withholding
satisfaction that we feel her tormentors.
The doppelgänger! The difficult-to-
interpret squirrrm's nebbish saccade.

Five's still playing dead, or hellicule.
Hard in this glance-backwards light
not to turnaround, to insubordinate.
Hold onto One, if you can: that's funk

at the end of the day, a ham-fisted
holdup wherein Seven clamps her
noblewoman's windpipe for ransom
against Nine's millipedestrianism.

Boss fight! A Hendrix confabulation,
utterly lewd, unthinkable enagement
blotching fuchsia behither the pipsqueak
veil. Nine's none other than Three
Threed! *What chance does One have?*





DOMINANT SEVENTH FLAT NINTH

But then wasn't Nine just after
all a colloquy in burlap, a chitin
skit One slapped with a slipper?

Didn't One used to get dressed
to the Nines? Such rue pools
in her cigarette tin; what Grand

Guignol that her age shows
(what a show) while her necklace
of arthropod segments doesn't.

Listener, between us two:
she keeps Nine close only
because the dance leaves
her out. Her and her mod

stone fruit. Them and their
penknifed, wind-up Malbec
symmetrics. Climbing One
and abseiling her mien.

Three and Five and Seven
posturing without fathom,
murderous and woebegone
(both nine-letter adjectives,

One aches to acknowledge).
For whom but this incalculapod
has she knelt to arpeggiate?





ALTERED DOMINANT SEVENTH

Seven loops pinkies in the fluted hooks of his balcony.
Lupercalia, California—two weeks into February—
by nonesomuch as fume topiary the rumor of it
inflicts his scaffolding. (Is Cappadocia so far off?)

Suspended in cochlear fluid, does he
the Salamander feel the seismographic
affront? Lithe, lizardly Five, supernaturally
grafted in the sigmoid confines of Seven's
Inner Ear...! And Nine, native Philadelphian,

geist-cycling like a hailstone nucleus from high
to low mass—articulating shingles in this storm-
prone hamlet. *Grüß Gott* and *Great Scott*, Valentinius

had soul (and valor! Observe valerian's anxiolytic
agency!). His knuckly, spavined claws, long absent
the finesse to wield a saucepan, held petrification
off in time to snap these reptilian spines, to cure

the jailer's purblind daughter. Witness Thirteen,
starting from a scoliotic sleep miraculously flat.
Listener, listen: be Seven again, brought up

for your first-ever peek from the peak of the statehouse
rotunda. What'll it take to keep you from leaping, you
Leapling? To illustrate—as tritones do—the mortal
difference just three steps make? (How else'd your fell
deeds redound, if not paltrily, applausibly?)





DOMINANT ELEVENTH

Scene: the Sensorium, dusk.
 One and Seven perch, equinoxes,
 birthrighteous sonorities: each
 foretells a higher thing
 than husbandry, and each styles
 their own Major Triad—

 the three Sisters' court
 portraiture infernally inverts
 across the green, Nine's smirk
 fratricidally self-assured. Scions!

So: Four, unspurned, divorces
 from Five, the lousy backfire.
 Common law, that sensemaking
 painter of shires, hasn't the muscle

to unspoil it—to right dissonance—
 yet because the blanket's untugged,
 a third faction crowns, a demimonde
 entreating Five to reinstate the Minor
 Seventh Dynasty. What fun, a joust!

So: far from fleeing, Four feigns
 dismay and withdraws a greased dirk,
 cold steel as always the surest noise-cease.
 Four is the manifest spirit of sloth

butchered, of ascendant Anglicanism.
 At this hour, it is hopscotch; she sharpens
 twin bailiwicks, bespoke mitre already
 on, and assumes Elevenhood.

/// DOMINANT ELEVENTH | 31 ///





MINOR ELEVENTH

Three tweezes a blowdart,
 blanching—One shares
 a glimpse with Five, gesturing
 in sedan-chair shorthand
 to stow the litter by (*“by
 your leave—!”*). Three’s weak,

unwelcome, vermiculate.
 She buckles, an unfit shoe;
 gives or makes way, an alley.
 Loser. However hackneyed,

she had a place in the cramp
 and destitution; now look at her,
 the teastain ruckus raiser! Look
 out, Listener: she’s rickety.

Seven’s a horse for hire,
 gelded and argyric in the London
 slick. Such encumbrance
 these upper chords bear,

entire extensions roosting
 on their humped hides.
 Eleven’s reins slacken.
 Nine, her morose footman,
 taps his tweed flatbill and spits.

Isn’t it just like the louts
 to spin a syrupy song
 from their missteps?
 To bathe in soot for want of sun?



MAJOR ELEVENTH

If Eleven's cataclysmic,
she's also candylion:
she has an asinine side
inside, a mid-sentence

had-a-heart imprecision
her people live to despise.
She sepulchrates, clabbering,
an overbittered indigestive...

if One guards One's back,
that's Eleven. If One flakes
and clouds, an outworn mirror
in a spat of self-excoriation,

that's Eleven. Small wonder
the ticklers with their brilliant-
ined coifs stuck her lines
through with a pin; a sharp,
with-a-will mothbottle affair.

You see it whenever twins
compete, the sort of short-
temperance Hot Clubs sling.
A risky, enkindled poker. Pocket
shrapnel hissing a hole in One's
waistcoat. The majority plays,

but the house wins—if One won't
be done in, then Eleven must
needs suffer payment. If she'll ever
have relief, it'll be on the underside of a coin.





DOMINANT THIRTEENTH

Primes compel; on this put-upon hardscape
in scantness they lengthen. That we might
disrobe from want (as Three craves, knit-
jawed in One's train) let it be listenable
that a subcategory subsists: an *emirp*:
a prime whose digits reverse to another.

Thirteen is the first, cutting to Three's quick
with the Myth of Thirty-One—see Three
drunk and covetous (yet gingerly seated
at Cenacle). What, imagining tough guise
dines before the rest? What, leadened lust?

One to Three: "Let us two attain the Great
Wyrms' years." Three: "I am hatched."
Seven: "Both you bloodworts hush."
Five: "...[redacted]."

Six strides in, striking Seven immediately
dumb. If his rule is draconian, it reminds
the strikebroken not to overfeed, to decline
as fishmongers do their own basketfuls

and with *agape* approach the common cup.
He may be too late, for though he's fervent
One and Three are now thoroughly snelled,
a winged Bahamut ascendant, anumerological.

To his credit, Thirteen (Six returned,
or devotionally Saint Anthony: patron
of recovering the lost) doesn't shrink,
but neither does he scale. For he's most
unlike the squamous crawlers and divers
of the Earth even as he swims with vision.

Even as he takes the measure of twining
scales, as the twin aurelians flex his gullet
wide to pour in the order of *Lepidoptera*.
Let it be known: his glow outlumins
nearly any other: abyssal, or cerulean, or...





MINOR THIRTEENTH

Let us examine Thirteen in earnest.
 He is, we maintain, a sweetbread,
 Portuguese, of sickly cast, howbeit
 disposed to splendor: a crowded street
 -car negotiating a hill, not yet invented.

He is a good friar—ask Seven, whose digits
 contract with ergotism, whose cankered rye
 blunts sunlight, loathsome as a cell window.
 Ask not, lest your limbs rot, the luckless
 seclusionist Cluny what he would imperil:

“*caute*” reads his signet (One bewitches
 herself by his books). And staggering down
 the street: Eleven, she who stands beneath,
 yet gazes up incautiously, even discourteously,
 who longs to affront the twisted lens-grinder

as only calico, meretricious Nature can!
 Let us, as a reminder, Listener, *examine Thirteen*,
 his tongue venerable, feline, curled up alongside
 Saint Anthony’s fire, well-bred, delirious.

Listener, as he dies, so you’ll be born; a cherem,
 both devotional and destructive. A mercy, that
 this-the-sweetest-chord lets you live in a transept
 you’ve never left. An insidious crop of transepts
 taking stubborn root in the ensuing centuries.
 One presumes she’ll step outside soon. Oh, One...!





MAJOR THIRTEENTH

One's mortally ill, teeth templing
 from grand-generations' truthbetolds.
 She perceives Three and Five,
 her juniors, circling her like wolves
 or wastewater. And Seven, pretender
 no more, their Fauntleroy in clutch
 intransigence, to whom they ministrante
 as they would debt.

Nine parts the Castrum Doloris,
 velvet pathfinder; probity gleams
 within, autoclaving. One sees him
 as a hurtling boy, terrible dear
 Two, cathecting as depressionware does
 this terminal dawnhinge. Fool Eleven
 draws near—as, alas, the occluded
 moonwharves won't—archdecades
 of contortion having failed to undo her
 Intrinsic: clumsy girl Four who can't sing.

Finally Thirteen, Scots-baronial, popular
 as pogrom: the selfsame, her Son, her
 walled-in-a-friary Six. Her balding toddler.

Be at peace, sisters and brothers. One goes
 earthward like the fountain's issue. Not one
 of you psychopomps has her minutest semblance.
 You are cats in your incapacity to resist her
 twitching. Be at peace: nothing despicable
 practices on her any longer. No telescope
 was ever devised that could reconcile the Fantastic.

You, too, Listener: find peace with the fact
 that after Thirteen has hung up his pallbearer's
 shroud and huffed, alone, his way to the crown
 of the bluff, after he has installed his slight frame
 at his post in the cylindrical bartizan's turret
 and undone the plaited drawstrings between
 himself and the interior of his goatskin rucksack,
then in the afterhour of One's death will the enormity
 of this unreal telescope transpire. We leave him to his grief.





/// NOTES AND COMMENTARY





**OF SOUND MIND ::
PROCESS AND PRACTICE**

Peter Longofono and Lynne DeSilva-Johnson in Conversation

In 2016 The Operating System initiated the project of publishing print documents from musicians and composers, beginning with Mark Gurarie's full length debut, Everybody's Automat and this year's chapbook series, all of which fall under the OFSOUND MIND moniker, and all of which are written by creative practitioners who work in both poetry and music. I asked each of them a series of questions about the balance of these two disciplines in their practice, which I'll share with you here.

- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson

Who are you?

Name's Peter Longofono. I live in Brooklyn and play in BIG FIGMENT with my girlfriend Jennae and my best buds Adam and Andrew. Also play in TH!CK with Adam and another genius, Brett. I write lotsa poems, love tiramisu, am a lifelong devotee of Magic: the Gathering, and place enormous personal value on travel.

Why are you a poet / why do you write?

In its most empathetic sense, wordplay is a strong and keen force in my brain. It's how I organize, digest, and reconfigure the world. Poets have the most license there, so that's where I work. My poems have fidelity to the action of my thought, that's pretty much it.





When did you decide you were a poet (and/or: do you feel comfortable calling yourself a poet, what other titles or affiliations do you prefer/feel are more accurate)?

I used to have a problem with the title, but then I realized that I was inventing problems to address instead of addressing existing problems. So I guess that change happened right around the end of grad school in 2012. The internal decision to do everything I could in service of syntax and morphemes and whatnot happened much further back—ninth grade?

What's a "poet", anyway?

Broadly, a fastidious class of writers who make a personal choice not to work purely in prose, playwriting, recipe, etc. That's the best I can do: apophatic production. They borrow from these like they borrow from ballet, geology, and couture, but the essential aspect is in the (generally) lineated, word- or letter-conscious, spatially taut object.

What is the role of the poet today?

This one's a doozy. I look at it morally, often: to propagate betterment. But also: to be at least a little inscrutable, to honor the weird (to be the vanguard). To find and exalt the fringe compassions.

What do you see as your cultural and social role (in the poetry community and beyond)?

My role is still very much in development, and I'm not entirely sure I'll have it down by the time I die. Nonetheless, I seek to do my part in the vast (trackless) public work of radical empathy, dealing always with individuals, rendering help when it's needed and especially when it's asked for. This is a larger thing than poetry for me and often requires me to set aside poetry; I don't resent that.

Talk about the process or instinct to move these poems (or your work in general) as independent entities into a body of work. How and why did this happen? Have you had this intention for a while? What encouraged and/or confounded this (or a book, in general) coming together? Was it a struggle?

The felicity of this project in particular was in Lynne's request—make a chapbook, she





said, and I'll publish it. I suppose one of my mental blocks initially stood in the way: I don't generally mix poems and music, as each is a refuge for the other (I don't, for example, ever write lyrics). So all of these poems were written towards that purpose, they didn't have a life before her request. It was a very plainspoken, duty-bound production ideal, and I don't have many of those, so I'm grateful.

Did you envision this collection as a collection or understand your process as writing specifically around a theme while the poems themselves were being written? How or how not?

Yes, 100% a held-together, synergetic collection. The important thing is that I'd never done anything quite like this before, so it has the peculiar and mystic quality of being my first in the idiom. The idea to try to render chords as character-driven poems first occurred in late 2011, but I (rightfully) didn't trust myself at the time, I didn't have the nuance or the propensity to research.

Speaking of monikers, what does your title represent? How was it generated? Talk about the way you titled the book, and how your process of naming (poems, sections, etc) influences you and/or colors your work specifically.

I hate to sound so boring, but the title here lives in a modest, purposeful mode—it has, of course, the strange authority of naming at all, but in a larger sense it purports to serve its contents totally. It's a collection about chords in which each poem corresponds with one type of chord. The concept absolutely sings with clarity. This, again, goes against my standard practice of trying for the remotest, barely threaded little weirdlet of a title I can devise when it comes to individual poems. But this was, from the first, a blueprinted undertaking, and I feel that a clean-though-monumental title works best. The titles of the poems just fell right into place, stupidly easy, and I knew which chord I was working on from word one whenever I sat down to churn another one out.

What does this particular collection of poems represent to you
...as indicative of your method/creative practice?
...as indicative of your history?
...as indicative of your mission/intentions/hopes/plans?

It's very possible that I'll fail spectacularly, [*ed: no chance!*] but my mission here is to defog the layperson's sense of chord theory. In speaking with friends, musical and non-





I kept running into a surprising blank in many minds, a conversational hole where music theory should have been, coupled with a resigned, wistful air...not ignorance, but the assumption that the topic was categorically beyond them.

This book seeks to rectify that to the best of its abilities. It situates chords in a broader cultural context, but never moves very far from the (dramatic! behavioral!) dynamics between the tones themselves: why minor sixth chords have, in modern practice, a palpable sense of saudade; why major ninth chords can feel poised and urbane, yet a bit decadent. Quite plainly, I think about this sort of thing all the time, and I especially think about it when I hear friends' new compositions, wondering if their thought-emotion-discipline lattice interprets chords through time similarly. I would like to extend that wonder to readers/listeners who may have sold themselves short.

What formal structures or other constrictive practices (if any) do you use in the creation of your work? Have certain teachers or instructive environments, or readings/writings of other creative people (poets or others) informed the way you work/write?

These poems in particular borrowed heavily from Ponge's mastery of the thing-in-itself, his charming visuality and roving cultural index. Vallejo, too: the unapologetically strange, utterly singular stance. I'm not much of a believer in generative/constrictive devices except for ruthless editing (scalpel, almost) in poetry; in music, the act of passing an idea back and forth until it's satisfactory constitutes a fundamentally different methodology, though I guess it has to do with constriction in one way or another.

Talk about the specific headspace of being a musician / composer / performer - when and how do you feel you enter a space of consciousness in which "sound" or "music" is the dominant sense?

I'm much, much, MUCH more confident as a performer in the musical sense—I still quiver and mumble in reading poetry, I'm not sure if that will ever get better. I came to music first and am very much at home in it, having developed the patience for much longer. There is something strengthening and also comforting in putting in so very much practice into it. Again, discipline, I have so much respect for discipline. There's also the fact that we speak and write to one another constantly, and usually not from a place of artmaking, such that the communicative sense and objecthood of music automatically places the listener elsewhere, somewhere they presumably couldn't have gotten without the experience of listening. It's wilder in that way: less human, less altogether human.





Do you feel that you are ever unaware of sound? (How) does your relationship to sound/music inform and/or affect and/or change other parts of your life / day / experience?

No, I'm never without a sense of sound/tone/noise/sonics when I'm conscious. It's how I am, and it's how I'm happy to be. I can't remember the last time I was well and truly bored; the imaginary music is too compelling. Importantly, this isn't an argument to withdraw or to hold oneself above other people. I don't doubt that the intrinsic mind-play of any given person is anything less than extraordinary. Mine happens to usually work by sound.

Do you consider yourself equally musician/composer/poet? Are there other equally important disciplines, influences, labels or other words you'd want to call our attention to that we might not know that you feel are important in understanding your creative practice? If we didn't get asked "what do you do" and force ourselves to fit into easily consumable disciplinary categories, what would you like your title to be, if anything?

Yes, I'm almost exactly 50/50 in that regard. It's worth acknowledging that I come from an explicitly Christian place/practice/mindset, and so there's a sacrificial and self-abnegatory cast to much of my work. That's going to turn many people off and I've come to terms with it. Titles are less important to me than names, as you might have guessed.

Describe in more detail the relationship between music and language in your life and practice. How and when are these discrete influences / practices and how/when are they interconnected? How do they influence each other? Do they ever not?

Many people disagree with me here: I don't think poetry has music. Put another way: it doesn't have music any more than it has, as I mentioned, architecture, spacefaring, philology, meditation, and the like. It doesn't have any special claim—it skates gorgeously over everything, and that's its special nature. It does, I think, a disservice to the thankless and more-than-human aspects of those pursuits to ascribe them as they are to poetic practice. For example, poetry has at best a jaundiced, clumsy rhythm. This comes from an abiding respect and immersion and trust in rhythm, not from a desire to hurt poetry. But that is my place—I exist at the halfway point, able to fully engage in one or the other, and I say that it's a lazy, disrespectful, selfish thing to say poetry has music. It uses music, but it doesn't have it; we would call it a kind of music if it did.





In terms of your written or text based work, do you “hear” it, speak it out, hear its rhythms, before you write or as you write and/or before you perform? Do you ever memorize your texts / treat them more like a score or sheet music?

Yes, it’s critical to speak a poem as you write it. This is not to elevate spoken word to some position of authority over primarily page-based work, but rather to acknowledge a debt to the oral origins. I do it as I write, letting the shapes and spaces of the words and lines interact with their signifieds; it’s stop-and-go work, often halted or paused. I come back to old, old pieces and completely rework them. Memorization is a musical practice for me, so no, I don’t memorize my poems (I value the extemporizing/interpretive device when reading poetry aloud).

Let’s talk a little bit about the role of poetics and creative community in social activism, in particular in what I call “Civil Rights 2.0,” which has remained immediately present all around us in the time leading up to this series’ publication. I’d be curious to hear some thoughts on the challenges we face in speaking and publishing across lines of race, age, privilege, social/cultural background, and sexuality within the community, vs. the dangers of remaining and producing in isolated “silos.”

I come, not entirely purposefully, from a DIY place, which is how much of my music operates. I see it as a giving affect: approaching strangers in order to give food, and to give space, give attention, give labor (none of it can happen without hours and hours of dedicated work). Only with giving can I construct a theory of self that’s adequately humble, open, and empathetic; only such a self is fit to meet the Other with the patience to try to understand or accept that understanding isn’t ordained. To give without expectation of reward! To invite and not resent if refused. It’s learning (and unlearning) modes of behavior, mostly defense mechanisms. And never, ever, ever to presume.





ABOUT CHAPBOOK SERIES 4 :: OF SOUND MIND :: DESIGN \\\

In addition to gathering together the work of poets who are also musicians / composers, this year the OF SOUND MIND chapbook series continued our tradition of collaboration with an artist, using as our jumping off point for each cover the quilt drawings of Daphne Taylor, a consummate artist and educator (indeed, my art teacher for many years at Friends Seminary here in NYC). As in past series I was interested in bringing in the proprioceptive qualities of craft and human making through the use of texture in the cover art, which the quilts were perfect for. The handwritten quality of the cover typography I designed as a nod to the DIY, underground labels, homemade recordings and accompanying zines circulating in the 80's and 90's -- a fitting, if tongue-in-cheek, allusion for this home grown series of musicians' books.

- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson



From the Artist:

In my Quilt Drawing series I honor my love of drawing and painting. Lines reminiscent of landscape and figure are embroidered, pieced and composed within frameworks ranging from wide open spaces to complex colored fields. The rich visual language of these lines and markings is influenced and restrained by the power of simplicity. Hand quilting is of great importance in my work because it is the equivalent to the act of drawing. While the placements of fabric are composed geometrically, the quilting on top is a loose, spontaneous act. My hand responds to the shapes in the cloth, creating a loose rhythm of shadow line that is simple, clear and meditative.

- Daphne Taylor

Daphne Taylor was born into a Philadelphia Quaker family with historic roots reaching over two hundred years. As an undergraduate at Rhode Island School of Design, she studied ceramics and developed her love of craft traditions. While working on her MFA in painting at the University of Pennsylvania, she continued her life long discipline of drawing, which to this day, influences stitching patterns in her quilt work. Her close association with the Quaker traditions is a strong influence in her life and work. The curious and profound silence of a Quaker meeting can be felt in the patient, meditative lines of her quilts. Her compositions also frame challenging relationships of colors and other formal tensions, suggesting that there is never an easy or obvious blueprint to her quilts. Like the complex silence felt in a Quaker meeting, the world within Taylor's quilts is hardly a straightforward place. Taylor taught for over thirty years in New York City and now lives in rural Maine.





//// ABOUT CHORDS

Chords comprises thirty poems exploring how musical chords resonate: sonically, structurally, historically, pedagogically, and symbolically, for starters. Conceptually, Peter approaches the poems from a jazz perspective, skewing pragmatic in an attempt to render each chord as it feels to him in his performer's mental shorthand. Each poem corresponds to a single chord type, depicting representative tones as characters in conversation and competition with one another. The poems hold to one another in the compositional sense, approximating a chord progression of sorts as increasingly complex tone relationships emerge. As befits the aural subject matter, the reader is encouraged to declaim the poems after a few silent reads in solitude for the full effect.

-Peter Longofono



Peter Longofono's poems and criticism have appeared or are forthcoming in H_NGM_N, fields, Luna Luna Magazine, and Tenderloin, among others. He serves as the Reviews Editor at Coldfront and makes music with Big Figment and TH!CK. He lives in Brooklyn.

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THE OPERATING SYSTEM IS A QUESTION, NOT AN ANSWER.\\ \\ \\

THIS is not a fixed entity.

The OS is an ongoing experiment in resilient creative practice which necessarily morphs as its conditions and collaborators change. It is not a magazine, a website, or a press, but rather an ongoing dialogue ABOUT the act of publishing on and offline: it is an exercise in the use and design of both of these things and their role in our shifting cultural landscape, explored THROUGH these things.

I see publication as documentation: an act of resistance, an essential community process, and a challenge to the official story / archive, and I founded the OS to exemplify my belief that people everywhere can train themselves to use self or community documentation as the lifeblood of a resilient, independent, successful creative practice.

The name “THE OPERATING SYSTEM” is meant to speak to an understanding of the self as a constantly evolving organism, which just like any other system needs to learn to adapt if it is to survive. Just like your computer, you need to be “updating your software” frequently, as your patterns and habits no longer serve you.

Our intentions above all are empowerment and unsilencing, encouraging creators of all ages and colors and genders and backgrounds and disciplines to reclaim the rights to cultural storytelling, and in so doing to the historical record of our times and lives.

Bob Holman once told me I was “scene agnostic” and I took this as the highest compliment: indeed, I seek work and seek to make and promote work that will endure and transcend tastes and trends, making important and asserting value rather than being told was has and has not.

The OS has evolved in quite a short time from an idea to a growing force for change and possibility: in a span of 5 years, from 2013-2017, we will have published more than 40 volumes from a hugely diverse group of contributors, and solicited and curated thousands of pieces online, collaborating with artists, composers, choreographers, scientists, futurists, and so many more. Online, you’ll also find partnerships with cultural organizations modelling the value of archival process documentation.

Beginning in 2016, our new series :: “Glossarium: Unsilenced Texts and Modern Translations”, will bring on Ariel Resnikoff, Stephen Ross, and Mona Kareem as contributing editors, and have as its first volume a dual language translation of Palestinian poet and artist Ashraf Fayadh’s “Instructions Within,” translated by Mona Kareem, which will be published later this year, with all proceeds going to support Fayadh’s ongoing case and imprisonment in Saudi Arabia.

There is ample room here for you to expand and grow your practice ...and your possibility. Join us.

*- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson,
Founder and Managing Editor*





TITLES IN THE PRINT: DOCUMENT COLLECTION

In Corpore Sano : Creative Practice and the Challenged Body
[Anthology, 2016] Lynne DeSilva-Johnson and Jay Besemer, co-editors

Instructions Within [2016] - Ashraf Fayadh
Arabic-English dual language edition; Mona Kareem, translator

Let it Die Hungry [2016] - Caitis Meissner

Everything is Necessary [2016] - Keisha-Gaye Anderson

agon [2016] - Judith Goldman

Everybody's Automat [2016] - Mark Gurarie

How to Survive the Coming Collapse of Civilization [2016] - Sparrow

There Might Be Others [2016] - Rebecca Lazier and Dan Trueman

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2016: OF SOUND MIND

**featuring the quilt drawings of Daphne Taylor*

Improper Maps - Alex Crowley; While Listening - Alaina Ferris;
Chords - Peter Longofono; Any Seam or Needlework - Stanford Cheung

TEN FOUR - Poems, Translations, Variations [2015]

Jerome Rothenberg, Ariel Resnikoff, Mikhl Likht

MARILYN [2015] - Amanda Ngoho Reavey

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2015: OF SYSTEMS OF

**featuring original cover art by Emma Steinkraus*

Cyclorama - Davy Knittle; The Sensitive Boy Slumber Party Manifesto -
Joseph Cuillier; Neptune Court - Anton Yakovlev; Schema - Anurak Saelow

SAY/MIRROR [2015; 2nd edition 2016] - JP HOWARD

Moons Of Jupiter/Tales From The Schminke Tub [plays] - Steve Danziger

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2014: BY HAND

Pull, A Ballad - Maryam Parhizkar; Executive Producer Chris Carter -
Peter Milne Grenier; Spooky Action at a Distance - Gregory Crosby;

Can You See that Sound - Jeff Musillo

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2013: WOODBLOCK

**featuring original prints from Kevin William Reed*

Strange Coherence - Bill Considine; The Sword of Things - Tony Hoffman;
Talk About Man Proof - Lancelot Runge / John Kropa; An Admission as a

Warning Against the Value of Our Conclusions - Alexis Quinlan





DOC U MENT

/däkyə mə nt/

First meant “instruction” or “evidence,” whether written or not.

noun - a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record
verb - record (something) in written, photographic, or other form
synonyms - paper - deed - record - writing - act - instrument

[Middle English, *precept*, from Old French, from Latin *documentum*, example, proof, from *docere*, to teach; see *dek-* in Indo-European roots.]

Who is responsible for the manufacture of value?

Based on what supercilious ontology have we landed in a space where we vie against other creative people in vain pursuit of the fleeting credibilities of the scarcity economy, rather than freely collaborating and sharing openly with each other in ecstatic celebration of MAKING?

While we understand and acknowledge the economic pressures and fear-mongering that threatens to dominate and crush the creative impulse, we also believe that now more than ever we have the tools to relinquish agency via cooperative means, fueled by the fires of the Open Source Movement.

Looking out across the invisible vistas of that rhizomatic parallel country
we can begin to see our community beyond constraints,
in the place where intention meets resilient, proactive, collaborative organization.

Here is a document born of that belief, sown purely of imagination and will.
When we document we assert. We print to make real, to reify our being there.

When we do so with mindful intention to address our process,
to open our work to others, to create beauty in words in space, to respect and acknowledge the strength of the page we now hold physical, a thing in our hand...
we remind ourselves that, like Dorothy: *we had the power all along, my dears.*

the PRINT! DOCUMENT SERIES

is a project of

the trouble with bartleby

in collaboration with

the operating system

