

# BLOOD ATLAS

LYNNE DESILVA-JOHNSON

**blood atlas**

lynne desilva-johnson

40.694222, -73.955084

os | the trouble with bartleby | 2017

the trouble with bartleby print//document

## BLOOD ATLAS

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**the operating system**

141 Spencer Street #203

Brooklyn, NY 11205

[www.theoperatingsystem.org](http://www.theoperatingsystem.org)

[operator@theoperatingsystem.org](mailto:operator@theoperatingsystem.org)

[40.694222, -73.955084]

# BLOOD ATLAS

40.694222, -73.955084



4pm  
one eyed cats and underground ovens  
all around marcy it's midnight in the afternoon as  
they wait for the somethings  
or the someones  
for the aberrations that will grow like magic beans  
under slow slow sun  
into the tallest of tales,  
exponentially elastic expressions of want

4am  
byway of the imaginary  
in deep night broken windshields  
a fallen sky at our feet

Naive universe,  
framed in vaselined mirrors:  
town, you shame me. Yet

the world is wider  
here where the young bring their dreams.  
Here lives Possible.

Haven of beauty,  
embarassing glut of joy.  
A feeding, breeding

place of vampires.  
Of sycophantic panting  
and nauseous paychecks.

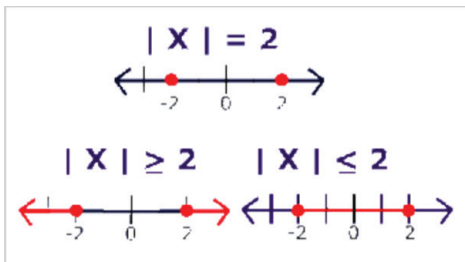
Head borne of cyclone,  
teacups of art and despair:  
*a torrid affair.*

Young pigeon city,  
to thee I desperate cling  
with all love's folly.

The valley's dark ranges are packed with cotton fog, as though a spirit took some kindness on their weary peaks and decided to have them shipped far away from here Japan seems right, as the late winter morning's edges blur like inkwash might, the train windows penning narrative scroll paintings a tale of passing by Of longsuffering bypassed places neither Here nor There. Inwardly I chide: it is not that these reeds and rushes these now-bare trunks and fallen feathers do not speak, only that we have not deigned to learn the language, instead writing N A T U R E, drawing lines between Things instead of reading blurred washes of knowing. Not surprising, for the undefined leaves us exceedingly nervous, a gaping gateway overgrown in creeping vines of myth and power beyond comprehension. Somehow, we sense the rock knows the river knows and the trees, they know. On a morning like this one, as these knowing ones give themselves over to ice, to losing their cover, to blindness in fog, the land escapes definition, and my first thought that it looks like Elsewhere is telling. Funny, how a few low lying clouds undermine centuries of words. Perhaps, then, this unknown dialect is only spoken in the absence of formed things in a dictionary of union and not Parts.

HUDSON LINE || 11 25 08 || 41.50773, -73.977202

from MATHEMATICS:  
 it's not the pale moon that delights me || 01 14 11 || 40.684283, -73.958521



II.  
 BRAP BRAP  
 A brash honk, then another:  
 your departure announces itself.  
 You are going, or coming  
 running away, or towards  
 Colorblind at the stoplight  
 with no driver's license  
 but restless leg syndrome  
 with dreaming feet attached:  
 absolute value



Below a mess of papers  
and pens lifted from places of potential importance  
(or banks)

On the feathered edges of books pages,  
passages and paragraphs to be forgotten  
or the thin humors of another video  
on another screen  
that everyone anyone knows has seen

Through the idle refrigerator tetris  
of condiments and leftovers

are the footsteps of an elephant:

thinking about not thinking about you

The chemical rush of your traces, both  
stimulant and sombulant

The excruciating pleasure  
of hating your yurt in my subconscious, hating

The bittersweet high blood pressure of adolescent infatuation,  
even though the adult heart knows  
this too shall pass

the mindless responsiveness: the attention and the busy-ness  
and the empty water glasses and the "more wine" and the well  
pronounced italian and the overblown explanations and the true  
kindness, and the strained kindness. and the million  
different agendas coexisting over dinner. rich sauces and  
fantasies of selfimportance. and the actual importance of  
feeding oneself, at home, via the feeding of others. and the  
importance of befriending the kitchen staff: if the  
kitchen staff ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. and the  
changing of the guards: the release of the zombie servers into  
the wanton, waiting air in the after midnight hours full of  
charge, when the drunken masters wander the streets. the  
semiconscious heavy eyes stumbling onto the silver chariot  
where the hoards gather, gather, gather and bring the night  
along for the ride, until the doors open and williamsburg  
accepts them like a mouth of silence and swallows the glut of  
wasted wanting whole. tired looking woman with a shopping cart  
and children full of pained exhaustion not sure why bed  
remains so far a fantasy, their faces crushing my heart.

Alone on a dingy rooftop in a remarkable place only so-describable in its utter lack of remarkability I feel -- and did I feel on the steps rising to this tarred plateau -- entirely at one with you, Universe. You have sent me tricksters in flesh and concrete and I have sensed them as such; leaving only shadows they have lumbered away, grumbling that only after a certain number of hours can they collect decent compensation for their work (not to mention benefits). I find myself amused that I do not find the floor below my foot-falls as permeable in reaction to my person as it has become in thought; and then again do I smirk at the structure of Man and his many-festations -- his "laws" of physics, of gravity so-defined and so-taught... Our learned four-walls along the echoing corridors, In the badly-carpeted Cubicle, in the plaster and mortar and steel... Oh Steel!!! How you vowed to bring permanence to these claims! How your trusses and thrusts, your never-before-seen-gestures-skyward made tantamount the folly of y/our childish pomposity! In your corporate halls and entry way anew the flying buttress of he who not long before simulated nature's awe in its canopy and expanses, and didn't I sense Creation? didn't I sense in its vertigo the impossibility of Greatness and now in this church of commerce, even now this? Didn't I, this I of ages, argue and yet feel upon approach the solidity of its columns, borrowed yet from this island's bedrock the permanence of Our Ways, our hold on its soils and yet, below? Like moles we burrowed, like ants carried ground and comrade alike in service to the greater good... and here she stands dwarfing the best of Men and calling those who see only its hologram, the patina -- a replacement Hamlin for those who peeked below the piper's pant to find naught of human-kind. Those who see are blinded and must remain blind, quiet, docile in their disbelief -- some argue and are quashed, some flee from the sight. All too many click their heels like a young lad who needs only that one visit to a whore's bed to make his manhood, but who would be ashamed at an ongoing affair in such dastardly doings. So in this way is New York sold into the oldest profession, prostitute to the Machine. Just as many come to marvel, at times partake and even stimulate the erogenous mass; and just as this, they leave when their needs are satisfied and so too does her creative loin suffer, her ability to re/produce a human, creative thing -- not one that uses even as She has been used, bought and sold for too-quick delights of youth without conscience. So too do they come and go, never detaching from another, Golden whore, never giving whole themselves to this complication and its risks of disease, of low living and want. And so She remains, a way station of sensation and spectacle, and will ever remain. Steamboat Willie keeps his Mickey suit in a locker at Grand Central pressed and ready for the inevitable reel; that which the intensity of these few miles will never fully embrace -- those who stay Machine fix a white-nosed smile on the face of desertion of a different dream, they live below/above in the cities beams and trees; he she also me they are those you dare not see or feel... Restless in your very spine (yoursandmine) wePod instead, we move from Here to There knowing just Where we are, never once letting go our tight squeeze of all the Me's inherent, all those chomping at the bit -- or once in a blue, perhaps we do, perhaps its due, and we're laughing, ever after.

this is what happened in the park this afternoon:  
*there was sun, softening the edges of people and things*, so  
          creating a small darkness under an overtipped hatbrim  
                          I lay down with my soles exposed  
          at the shore of sleep and invited the tides to change

nearby, a biddy *all rice paper skin and scouring pad hair*  
          sang softly, conducting invisible symphonies and  
                          massaging tired veins, sometimes  
                          holding a sock in each pinched hand  
                          so that two tired gold toe batons,  
                          with the haphazard grace of wet noodles,  
          divided the afternoon into silent time signatures:  
          *three four five, one two three, slow and then, stop:*  
                          in a few crisp gestures she is gone,  
                          her mind a one girl caravan of time  
          passing through these benches, this day, and things mine  
                          as quickly as she came, and without ceremony

your blooms cloy; they  
insist -  
your perfume an insipid hanger on  
that hugs too tight and  
stays too long; leaving behind a  
loamy dampness.

a clammy cool that begins  
in the sidewalk fissures of the bones  
as your arbor of limbs clamors and clings,  
uninterested in argument,  
and in a hurry of green grasping  
holds sense captive  
in the backyard of memory

MAGNOLIA || 04 25 11 || 40.728673, -73.990753

Did I mention that there is a slipshod  
life left awry, left unknown  
in this room; the scrim between you  
and your double pales, shows you  
in your light.  
You breathe, air thins, lungs quicken the  
molecular  
tsunamis in your mouth, and I  
drink you in, you and your ripcurl toes,  
your waves of gaze, those eyes  
that floor me.

Himalayas born of last night's candlewax:  
snowy undulations which recall their scale  
reluctantly, at the side of the small bowl where  
we let it puddle.

Adrift in memory's storm, I  
seek a legend to identify these distant scenes;  
navigting from those whiled hours,  
miles away.

"We": although a thing defined by aren'ts and should nots,  
it grows like a weed does in a cracked sidewalk; temerous.

"You": share my pantry, time and air while  
our lost cells get acquainted, and take root in the berber

and

"I": well, I suppose one could say we are most "we" outside our  
opacity; There, in the air  
where the periodic table finds its groove, so  
move a little closer.

Set aside the guide and let me memorize your noble elements,  
let me find the ionic constellations on the maps in your latitude.

How foreign, the geography of another.

STARS FELL || 11 12 11 || 40.684283, -73.958521

but not on alabama  
on classon, on greene, on donner and blitzen.  
on whiskey ginger angels in the four six inches  
in revelling in sparkling white  
judge me  
judge me go on

as this night I throw myself and all thirty one years make angel wings, as  
all of me marvels at this miracle, these softest prism quilts  
laying our too loud world to rest  
down, fulton,  
down, gates,  
down rudolf I suspect  
for even in carols we tease and scoff  
when we should realise the magic of these downy diamonds the sky makes  
that we find ourselves thus blessed to hold such in mittened hands  
before the moment vanishes once more into the sun to come



the first game of the day is pinball  
a thin slip of Dial skips in shower knobs  
two rounds  
before it agrees to rest  
in its shy silver nest  
which only just brushes its flesh  
in small caress.

this,  
after a surreptitious seven am shower  
while this house still hums with sleep:  
arms afloat, wondrous light and wondering  
about the salt content in the dc water table.

now. consider interior functional massings:  
a den peninsula perhaps, or a  
living room archipelago. enjoy  
each subtle, lingual juxtaposition  
how it renders Here at once  
more abstract  
and  
more concrete





**LYNNE DESILVA-JOHNSON** is a nonbinary queer artist, scholar, curator, educator, and facilitator working in performance, exhibition, and publication in conversation with new media. She is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute, and taught at the City College of New York for over a decade.

A seasoned freelance editor and book designer, for years on the team of the critically acclaimed 306090 Books, Lynne is the founder and Managing Editor of The Operating System, (a radical open source arts organization and small press) as well as Libraries Editor at Boog City. She is the author of *GROUND*, *blood atlas*, *Overview Effect*, *In Memory of Feasible Grace*, *Sweet and Low*, and *Progeny Restoration Corporation*, as well as co-author of *A GUN SHOW* with Adam Sliwinski/Sō Percussion, and co-editor

of the anthologies *RESIST MUCH*, *OBEY LITTLE : Poems for the Resistance*, and *In Corpore Sano: Creative Practice and the Challenged Body*. For The OS, she has edited and designed nearly 50 books to date, with many more on the way.

Lynne and her work have been featured at a diverse array of venues, including The Dumbo Arts Festival, Naropa University, Artists Space, Bowery Arts and Science, The NYC Poetry Festival, Eyebeam, LaMaMa, Undercurrent Projects, Mellow Pages, The New York Public Library, VON, Launchpad BK, The Poetry Project, Temple University, Industry City Distillery, Happy Lucky No. 1, Howl Happening, Independent Curators International, Hell Phone, WCKR 89.9 FM NY, Unnamable Books, The Sidewalk Cafe, Parkside Lounge, Dixon Place, Poets Settlement, Karpeles Manuscript Library, Holland Tunnel Gallery, the Cooper Union, and in many publications.

A deeply committed futurist, Lynne is always seeking (r)evolutionary possibility, through the building and reshaping of increasingly intelligent systems, institutions, and processes.

**For more, see:**

<http://lynne-desilva-johnson.strikingly.com>

<http://www.theoperatingsystem.org>

## ABOUT THE TROUBLE WITH BARTLEBY

15 DIY years of *preferring not to* \_\_\_\_.

In 2003, I found myself (a financially strapped visual artist, writer, and increasingly rogue academic) living in a very tiny room in Bushwick (Brooklyn, NY) with no studio/workspace to speak of. I'd already been working with digital art for a few years, and I was teaching myself to code, exploring what the internet had to offer. Wanting an outlet to write and make and share, with no budget, I found Blogspot, and felt at home, in this virtual agora -- a platform offering freedom both creatively and economically, as well as the home for a diverse community of bloggers reaching out across the still somewhat wild internet.

I named the blog *The Trouble With Bartleby* because I felt akin to Melville's scrivener in some ways, in particular the sentiment that I would prefer not to. That is to say: I wished to remain very present in academia and in creative practice, but the m.o. of those worlds increasingly rubbed me the wrong way. I didn't want to play along in order to hopefully be granted intellectual and creative freedom -- I wanted to find and make space for it, and the internet provided that space, as did moving more and more of my creative practice into digital explorations, which didn't require purchase of materials I couldn't afford to buy, or studio space I couldn't afford to rent.

Unless you count the constant "magazines," "menus," and "newspapers" of my childhood, I would say I began crafting artbooks by hand and designing books using a computer (learning an early version of Quark and Adobe PageMaker) around the same time -- in the mid 1990's.

I was never really far from a book project of some sort, and my digital explorations continued to evolve. A 2001 installation, *Urban interMEDIary*, involved mounting over a dozen multimedia accordion books to the wall with hardware that allowed it to rest opened or closed. A previous installation, *re/presentation*, in 2000, involved projection and mounting of large scale digital composites of text and image in panels and across various media. The pinup posters for my Urban Design graduate school thesis presentation, 5 years later, were narrative, designed to be compiled into the pages of a book. And that's only scratching the surface. More recently, I showed "Perfect Sonnets, by FutureForm™" a conceptual set of posters, projections, sound reels, pamphlets, and other materia for scientifically derived sonnets, branded within the invented future corporation, *FutureForm*, as part of *Books Without Words*, a 3 person show at Undercurrent Projects in the Lower East Side.

In 2012, having become familiar with the world of small presses, press and zine fairs (and hand-made chapbooks in particular), I produced two limited edition poetry collections organized around conceptual themes from work spanning around 6 years -- and I called the project *The Trouble With Bartleby*, as this independent production and dissemination of labor felt like a natural extension of what I had by then been exploring on the blog for nearly a decade. The books (*Ground* and *Blood Atlas*) were made using a combination of digital and analog materials and practices, bound and folded by hand. It was the making of these books and the removal of a perceived ceiling they represented that opened the door to the press arm of what would become *The Operating System*.

As The OS grew, I pulled away from producing and distributing my own books via the press or via TTWB, though I made a number of single copy artbook projects and participated in Books Without Words. I became conflicted, not wanting to appear to be building the organization as a “vanity” press. But over the years I’ve been running The OS, I’ve continued to conceive of book projects, work on collaborative book projects, and so too I continue to consider both the experiment that is this organization, the books I design, and any text I produce as part of my art practice, not another box called “writing” or “business.”

My “art” is scholarship, is digital, is handmade, is entrepreneurship, is bookmaking, is social practice, is typography, is performance, is graphic design, is anthropology, is poetry, is photography, is sound, is fiber art, is curating, is constantly evolving, shifting, is a landscape.

With the decision to relaunch *The Trouble With Bartleby* as an imprint of The OS, the arts organization and press I created out of nothing, I want to say something loud and clear:

*Wherever there is a community of makers, editors, artists, there is pure potential for production of whatever those individuals, and their collective, can imagine. In the same way that the internet exploded our ability to communicate, virtual access to digital design and print-on-design publication have transformed the publishing landscape. As with any new technology in the hands of millions, this has laid the ground for the best and worst of us, but I refuse to bow to the notion that skilled artists and writers, working together, still need the approval of top-down gatekeepers to validate their practice. That’s how the OS was born.*

*The 20th century capitalist, colonialist model of exhausting, expensive submission and repeated rejection, with hopes at best for publication of work long after it feels fresh and new has long been broken. In many cases, presses and contests with fees survive on the basis OF rejection: very few may win or be accepted, and what funds this is the rejection of other manuscripts. This is a negative model. One that ignores our ability to teach, learn, and collaboratively make, sharing resources and ENCOURAGING each other to improve that work. We will not be made or become great and important off each other's losses.*

*And now, I say the same for myself: as a writer, an artist, a scholar, a designer, and an editor, I see no difference between the art I know is DONE and the art-book I know is DONE and the book of text I know is DONE and ready for publication. I wish I knew more about the history of self-publishing beyond the canon, but I can tell you that even the now "classic," "essential" works of Ben Franklin, William Blake, Jane Austen, and Whitman were self published, self funded. The history of the printing press is so too the history of the underground or clandestine press, and radical artists, writers, activists, teachers, and thinkers have been bringing their own words, individually or collectively, to print, to distribution, and to the archive for as long as type has existed. We can talk, too, about the impulse for graffiti, with no one's permission, which is much earlier. Whose streets? Our streets. Whose pages? Our pages.*

**I invite you: shuck the gatekeeper.  
Learn skills in collective. (Or teach yourself!)  
Just make your work, and get it out there.**

ONWARD, Humans.  
Be kind to each other.

Lynne DeSilva-Johnson, September 2017

## TITLES IN THE PRINT: DOCUMENT COLLECTION

An Absence So Great and Spontaneous It Is Evidence of Light - Anne Gorrick [2018]

Chlorosis - Michael Flatt and Derrick Mund [2018]

Sussuros a Mi Padre - Erick Sáenz [2018]

Sharing Plastic - Blake Nemecek [2018]

The Book of Sounds - Mehdi Navid (Farsi dual language, trans. Tina Rahimi) [2018]

In Corpore Sano : Creative Practice and the Challenged Body

[Anthology, 2018] Lynne DeSilva-Johnson and Jay Besemer, co-editors

Abandoners - Lesley Ann Wheeler [2018]

Jazzercise is a Language - Gabriel Ojeda-Sague [2018]

Death is a Festival - Anis Shivani [2018]

Return Trip / Viaje Al Regreso; Dual Language Edition -

Israel Dominguez, (trans. Margaret Randall) [2018]

Born Again - Ivy Johnson [2018]

Singing for Nothing - Wally Swist [2018]

One More Revolution - Andrea Mazzariello [2017]

Fugue State Beach - Filip Marinovich [2017]

Lost City Hydrothermal Field - Peter Milne Greiner [2017]

The Book of Everyday Instruction - Chloe Bass [2017]

An Exercise in Necromancy - Patrick Roche [Bowery Poetry Imprint, 2017]

Love, Robot - Margaret Rhee [2017]

La Comandante Maya - Rita Valdivia (dual language, trans. Margaret Randall) [2017]

The Furies - William Considine [2017]

Nothing Is Wasted - Shabnam Piryaee [2017]

Mary of the Seas - Joanna C. Valente [2017]

Secret-Telling Bones - Jessica Tyner Mehta [2017]

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2017 : INCANTATIONS

*featuring original cover art by Barbara Byers*

sp. - Susan Charkes; Radio Poems - Jeffrey Cyphers Wright; Fixing a Witch/Hexing the Stitch - Jacklyn

Janeksela; cosmos a personal voyage by carl sagan ann druyan steven sotor and me - Connie Mae Oliver

Flower World Variations, Expanded Edition/Reissue - Jerome Rothenberg and Harold Cohen [2017]

What the Werewolf Told Them / Lo Que Les Dijo El Licantropo - Chely Lima (trans. Margaret Randall) [2017]

The Color She Gave Gravity - Stephanie Heit [2017]

The Science of Things Familiar - Johnny Damm [Graphic Hybrid, 2017]

agon - Judith Goldman [2017]



To Have Been There Then / Estar Allí Entonces - Gregory Randall  
 (trans. Margaret Randall) [2017]  
 Instructions Within - Ashraf Fayadh [2016]  
 Arabic-English dual language edition; Mona Kareem, translator  
 Let it Die Hungry - Caitis Meissner [2016]  
 A GUN SHOW - Adam Sliwinski and Lynne DeSilva-Johnson;  
 So Percussion in Performance with Ain Gordon and Emily Johnson [2016]  
 Everybody's Automat [2016] - Mark Gurarie  
 How to Survive the Coming Collapse of Civilization [2016] - Sparrow  
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 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, 2014] - Steve Danziger  
  
 CHAPBOOK SERIES 2014: BY HAND  
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 Executive Producer Chris Carter - Peter Milne Greiner;  
 Spooky Action at a Distance - Gregory Crosby;  
  
 CHAPBOOK SERIES 2013: WOODBLOCK  
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 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

/dəkyəmənt/

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 a 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**



