



//////////PRINT // DOCUMENT SERIES 3 :: OF SYSTEMS OF

# **cyclorama**

## **davy knittle**



the trouble with bartleby  
*in collaboration with*  
the operating system





THE OPERATING SYSTEM PRINT//DOCUMENT

## **cyclorama**

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THE OPERATING SYSTEM//PRESS

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## advance praise for CYCLORAMA:

Davy Knittle's poems invite us into a myriad of homes—the house of the body, the street, the car, the subway, the animal. by calling this gem of a collection a “cyclorama,” he invites us into a gorgeous panorama that envelopes us in “the life of every sound,” “the lot for cars between cars,” “dream coffee,” and “in the balance/and behind the balance range.” these poems are paintings. these poems are windows. these poems use language as a process in which motion and relationship are always present” (Rukeyser, *The Life of Poetry*).

Davy's poems build a world i want to live in—honest, lyrical, smart, unafraid to risk and feel, poems that ask all the hard questions all the right ways. He writes:

“I do the work/to hold a body/different readers know/is theirs to name.”

erica kaufman

Time and space aren't really like that -- how you expect them to be, at least, not after you start to accumulate so many things to remember. Davy knows that the time and space we really move through, comes from the heart out, always changing. So sometimes you're arches and a house, sometimes you're more in the car than other times. He writes “where else is left/ there we can/ spend one night/ in a room/ with nothing/ but the Bangles.” It's this constant shifting or slipping, not forwards or backwards like a regular car, but inside and outside, in and out. These poems make me feel like I'm in the passenger seat of a very strange car Davy is driving, down real streets, then imagined Houston streets, then dream streets to ER coffee, to feet pounding yellow shirt summer streets, and all around there's so much activity and possibility, and inside the car, which is the heart of the poems, like inside my heart when I read Davy's amazing poems, there's so much life & music & room.

laura henriksen





///GRATITUDE///

Craig Morgan Teicher

Elizabeth Willis

Emma Steinkraus

erica kaufman

Laura Henriksen

Lynne DeSilva-Johnson

Mark Levine

my generous community of Iowa City readers

Sophie, for reading and reading the poems





**cyclorama**





*for sophie*





## ALMANAC

I am the same age as salad in a bag  
months shy of kisses with almonds  
like plain but harder and better  
when the best was for space  
and I was for that  
and freeze-dried ice cream  
the simulator in the science museum  
and the sense of when a building  
is a monument and being in it  
and a diner where insects  
get in my shorts and I'm fine about it  
my age now is about when I am not coeval  
with cars on the road  
but still equal to trains  
howling on their way  
holding my body in bed listening  
for the rumble and roar  
supposing there is a train

/// ALMANAC | 7 ///





suppose there is  
the shadow of its voice  
in my helm and the kitchen  
and where it follows me  
around the house  
there's a shallow end  
to the life of every sound  
the send off of every joyful voice  
I go to my room  
when I sleep I'm bigger  
and wake up how I went to bed  
in the night I'm not tired  
but bigger still  
get up and dressed  
ready to eat and watch  
watch and belt and sweater and shoes  
lighting up even and  
never as sped as my heart







## PLIANT INTAKE

I feature my mother  
I buy a toaster that prints her face  
it toasts only in places  
and is some effort  
to line up the parts  
some of mom  
but some of me  
and some of you, asleep  
and some of my brother  
if I had a brother I'd pray  
I'd feature myself in him  
and that the same day  
asleep in us would glow  
and find us in one another  
you asleep I carry in me  
and my feet cull my tracks  
I feel in the forest  
when there's no one around  
I future our grain  
follow its lines to fruit  
if I helped my brother  
I'd take his hand up the subway stairs  
we'd get off the Q train together  
and he would be a forum  
to talk about our states

/// PLIANT INTAKE | 9 ///





we'd have waited for the train  
and talked about  
that woman I loved after she died  
Elizabeth said she's real nice  
Elizabeth who I love and her dog  
who smells me and knows me  
partly for Elizabeth I'll furrow  
in that dead woman's work  
I'll cave and cave again  
when her poems permit it  
I follow her line to forest  
I remember its room  
here after I'll think of it  
and still be where it is





## IN THE HEARTLAND WE DID NOT ENVISION A DEFENSIVE STANCE

shape of everyone I love  
cedes to the edge of them  
descending public stairs  
they lit up folds of snow

after the weather  
the town's entire with ice  
in a week it sweats itself  
everywhere paths go back

I unstructured go out  
unsteady walking  
in the splitting of the early warm  
settle for sitting on my porch

delight has weight  
and real purpose  
but walks on by  
or I shake and shake so hard

I can't hold the globe  
of my flayed town you're in  
people come through it winter  
try to steady my bike in the street stream

/// IN THE HEARTLAND WE DID NOT ENVISION A DEFENSIVE STANCE | 11 ///





## START LOVER

scared I shook me up  
changing direction  
on my vehicle  
sure I said  
I'd take the train  
and when the train  
came I was inside  
listening for it or  
what I came to say  
I didn't but stayed  
around the house  
we kissed in  
where we talked us  
into our luck  
scared I wouldn't  
get out of my clothes  
because when it was just  
me I kept them on  
for days and days  
where I could feed  
and bathe and dress again  
but only two of three





so from the shower  
I put on my clothes  
warm from me in them  
and sat in bed in daylight  
hearing the soul festival  
until I couldn't see  
my bike locked outside  
and you out on  
the last night like that  
and the next night was  
our steady date  
the days hurdled over  
our permeable first  
like all of the ways  
it could have been  
but not like them  
warm from their almost use  
their free path  
shifting in its difference

/// START LOVER | 13 ///





## GO LONG

what I loved about it  
was how she made my car feel  
how in the car I was  
where it was the equal of me  
my room to look up in  
as in my muscles in the heart  
where when I look up  
I'm arches and a house  
Claire is moving to Houston  
I mean to write her back  
what I just start doing  
in the heart is strange  
it's a walk in heart  
people film in there  
and also in the airplanes  
in the museum's other wing  
we're at the age  
when everything





is bigger and big things  
are bigger still  
Claire is moving to Houston  
I am sitting in a kill vehicle  
it lights up  
I drive at night and sweat  
my sweat distance  
it's the heart of the road  
I wait at a signal  
not continuous but red now  
its hard voice gets permissive  
sends the walk sign on  
Claire is moving to Houston  
on a street I did not drive on  
but in the car  
I imagine me doing it now

/// GO LONG | 15 ///





## GEORGE AND MARTHA

so many of you I have in me  
all indestructible because  
they drive a truck  
they sit in and cool their wheels  
I walk down the street believing you  
it becomes me I get handsome  
in how we look alike

I'm a hippo, a hubris hippo  
I love all what you loving do  
you make napkins  
into handkerchiefs we share  
there's a rhythm to my composure  
you know better than I master  
yours, awake in your seams







what a procedure -- all I could do  
harbor the harbor you reason  
bet that your why  
is the better why -- it is  
we make it in this alphabet place  
because you lead your truly love  
I see that -- I raise mine

I'd prefer to be so big I'm all  
teeth and face, not the body stem  
but the big eyes  
what I have to say is that  
I come better into place each day  
I have a frame I fill with me  
I follow you, do it

do it to you -- fill you out, come help  
I'm standing shaking like a kite  
I met some  
one your age two years ago  
she was just married -- it shook me up  
that's all my life, to get to you  
before we're distant ships

I warm to the anchoring music  
of you -- my hippo face designed  
to secrete smiles  
boat of you alphabetic  
say it again back and forth -- ours is  
a total thing -- its ends defined  
shuttles like a pinball





a movement song of our constraining  
move in me in here however  
come here and stay  
I like you like our music  
I get handsome understanding you  
understand I watch what you make  
you sending me the day

or get in it and go by converse  
propulsion like fish so hippos  
are big and kind  
I wish to walk on more ground  
than my feet can touch -- as your feet can  
reach the ground they admire  
can reach what's here in song





## ALL US ALL USE

your refrigerator is stunning  
slice of cheese  
bird parts in film  
mom tells what she ate  
in the hospital  
and I tell you  
you and I are similar volumes  
in different containers  
it's good but hard  
to find a pace for us  
three is the right number  
of times in our field to try  
gila monsters try to seal me  
in the airport  
available people  
are the ones it's good  
but too hard to know  
plane air supports  
a lot of points of entry  
gila monsters sell ointment  
down by the kiosk  
mom waits in the bed  
for one more meal  
before going home  
there in her wing  
they're playing my song  
your refrigerator is pure luck  
I bag a bird and bring it back  
fake the flight it didn't get  
buy my fouls on credit  
come out alright  
come home all over you  
pouring it on

/// ALL US ALL USE | 19 ///





## DAY VEHICLE

the logic of following  
is like the lines in the lot  
for cars among cars  
where a car goes when it leaves  
is where we go walking  
determined by directions  
I release for my body  
the body that's for you  
you and I are its readers  
her kids had never been  
on the train  
so we took them  
took a bus first  
which was confusing  
and indirect  
off passing indefinite lots

while you and I are walking  
I'm running down the street  
to change a fifty dollar bill  
into singles in a grocery store  
that's barely that  
in my yellow shirt this summer  
and I'm polite and the man does it  
I won't be a boy forever  
but I might read as one  
for another five years





while we walk I wonder  
if together we're like a duck  
in that we're airtight  
and heavy above the street  
like water like the day  
and how did I get to be like that  
I haven't seen Kate's baby  
in a year and four months  
and he's a boy now  
and will be for a while  
babies we remember  
remind us we want to have one  
but effort is the tallest thing

we're walking home  
while I'm taking the stairs for charity  
I'm pining after a weather balloon  
and the men in it  
that's a job I could have done  
I love to measure  
I love to keep a record  
I count and add in the shower  
I count down to when you'll wake up  
and you will  
you do it every day





## UPSWING SET

if you are wanting you  
 must wake me if it  
 is cold or if  
 you sleep and it's bad  
 and your fountain of sleep recycles  
 ever and its dependents

if sleep ever  
 isn't a friend to itself if  
 you want cream cheese and  
 olives you must  
 tell me and you  
 can even if what it is

is the hum of thinking in twin tracks or  
 every time you jump  
 if you land bad you wake up or  
 you're trying to recycle the sleep that  
 must go on in its network  
 and haunt someone else





stroke of elsewhere and  
making dream coffee in the ER and you up is  
all the consequence of must  
I ever  
let the night self-govern you  
and I and if

if you're up with me it gets light  
and improves  
you find this hour  
is ours find for  
ever that hours  
must come around





## COME ON HEARTLAND

some cover  
we have to be under  
some go to bed  
every night  
the same time  
some you hail  
some you haul  
some haul night  
y'all come home  
where else is left  
there we can  
spend one night  
in a room  
with nothing  
but the Bangles  
I like you  
like I love  
how spiders look  
busy at the heart  
of what they do







## MISSING SINK

slight up  
 how many  
 I am  
 with you  
 how many  
 is the  
 best value  
 to work out  
 some way  
 around a  
 bad current  
 down  
 a high grade  
 engineers  
 like to make  
 traffic  
 of circuits  
 of traffic

/// MISSING SINK | 25 ///





I like this  
circuit  
such a  
satisfaction  
just to say it  
and the raft  
happens  
just say  
white water  
and look at  
what a rough  
accident  
takes up  
to tell us  
what sticks  
a hand out  
of the car  
of what starts  
when you  
say what  
you were  
going to say





## /// NOTES AND COMMENTARY





## ABOUT SERIES 3 :: OF SYSTEMS OF \\\

Since its inception with two handmade books until *The Trouble With Bartleby* imprint in 2012, this chapbook series has sought to not only encourage and empower its participants via a collaborative, instructive process -- highlighting and involving all its poets in the design and conception of each series, as well as engaging in dialogue about book form and production -- but also to draw visual artists into that dialogue, creating covers in direct conversation with the poets and their texts. This year features Emma Steinkraus, who talks about the process below.

- lynne desilva-johnson, editor

I came to this project through Davy Knittle. I've been reading his poems for a year now. I've got two taped up on my studio wall. I think about poetry often and its relationship to painting; they seem to share a strange logic, full of slippages and juxtapositions, expert in uncanny, intuitive truths. So when Lynne contacted me about creating some art for these chapbook covers I was excited. I read through each manuscript and kept a short list of images that struck me or intersected with my own obsessions. I related to Anurak Saelaow's use of mirrors, mediation, and refracted, glinting light. I was taken with Anton Yakovlev's sophisticate handling of nostalgia and noted the appearance of sunsets and collections of animals (both recur in my own work). I kept thinking about Joseph Cuillier's line "We're on the other side of the American flag." At moments his writing is so blunt, but also subtle and subversive; I tried to maintain some of that balance. For Davy, I wanted something that made visual the amazing way he smashes together the personal and the urban. He writes domestic life with the velocity of a highway, and vice versa.

Reading and thinking alongside these poems was pure pleasure. As was scurrying around setting up still lives, transferring photos to pleather (that happened), sourcing textures, painting and collaging. If there were moments when I found this project stressful, it was out of a fear of disappointing good people and good books. My hope, though, is that in some small way these covers collaborate with their insides and lead you, dear reader, in.

- emma steinkraus

*Emma Steinkraus is a visual artist living in Iowa City. Her current obsessions include imagined apocalypses, witches and mushrooming; her recurrent obsession is with depictions of romantic love. Before moving to Iowa as an Iowa Arts Fellow in the Painting program, she studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art and at Williams College. She has received a Hubbard Hutchinson Fellowship, a Frederick M. Peyser Prize, worked as a Steamboat Scholar in Contemporary Curation at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and completed residencies at the Henry Luce III Center for Arts and Religion and at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center.*





## //// ABOUT CYCLORAMA

cyclorama occurs in the car. it occurs in the house, and in bed and in the shower and on the street and running down the street, in standard uses of spaces quotidian to a kind of urban life, and aberrant uses of those spaces. it occurs in synesthetic simultaneity. perhaps you are in the room but also in the shower. or in the car and also in the train station waiting area. one place is the green of another place, and is then also that place, even if it stops being green.

many of these are domestic spaces, or spaces rendered domestic by thoughts of intimacy. even so, the speaker of these poems spends a lot of time alone thinking about domestic spaces, or everyone else is asleep, or they're in the past but being in this house feels like being in that other house by means of how different it also feels, and so that house is in the room. if the compulsive representation of other rooms within this one is a difficult thing, it's also a kind of luck.

-davy knittle



Davy Knittle's work has appeared recently or is forthcoming in Rain Taxi, Denver Quarterly, and Caketrain. He lives in Iowa City, where he co-curates the Human Body Series with Sophia Dahlin.

note: the poem "in the heartland we did not envision a defensive stance" borrows its title from lines in Paul Foster Johnson's "Clone Memoir"





## //////THE OPERATING SYSTEM IS A QUESTION, NOT AN ANSWER.

*THIS is not a fixed entity.*

*It 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 off-line: 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.*

*Whether on or offline, all publishing produced by the The OS can be most accurately described as **documentation**: an archive of creative production and process. We publish to exemplify a 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.*

*We currently publish a spring chapbook series of 4 volumes each year, read rolling submissions for full length volumes continuously, and print conceptual edited collections of text, art, and less easily defined work in “magazine” form.*

*Our ongoing original series, **FIELD NOTES** and **RE:CONVERSATIONS**, seek to create an online home for process conversation, increasing the value of the work we as creative practitioners are already engaged in, as well as encouraging an open-source peer learning environment amongst creators from all mediums.*

*Here, you’ll also find partnerships with cultural organizations modelling the value of archival process documentation -- American Composers Forum, CulturePush, The Mycelium School, and 10,000 Poets for Change are just a few. 90 living poets have written tributes to their peers, heroes, and mentors via our three annual Poetry Month 30-posts-in-30-days “Inspiration, Community, Tradition” series, and 30 more will join us in 2015.*

*We welcome unsolicited contributions and are actively seeking ongoing partnerships for online content that fits THE OS’s mission. ...And funding!*

*We are proudly lean and agile, but gladly welcome help.*





**TITLES in the PRINT: DOCUMENT COLLECTION**  
**SERIES EDITOR/ DESIGN AND CURATION: LYNNE DESILVA-JOHNSON**

BAD JUJU [fiction] - *forthcoming Winter 2015* - David Moscovich

MARILYN [non-fiction/memoir] - *forthcoming Fall 2015* - Amanda Ngoho Reavey

LOVING HUMANITY : THE BIRTH OF A RAINBOW WARRIOR  
*forthcoming Summer 2015* - Suresh Fernando

WHIPSTICHES [poetry] - *forthcoming Spring 2015* - Randi Ward

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2015: OF SYSTEMS OF  
 \*featuring original art by Emma Steinkraus

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

SAY/MIRROR [poems and histories] - 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

/// NOTES AND COMMENTARY | 31 ///





# DOC U MENT

/däkyə mən t/

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

