



OF SOUND MIND

IMPROPER

MAPS

also covering

the operating system 2016





THE OPERATING SYSTEM PRINT//DOCUMENT

IMPROPER MAPS

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IMPROPER

MAPS







“Hope became a spectacle, a decoration. Anger was simply annulled. All that we could experience inside the diorama was the fateful listlessness usually attributed to the inmates of decaying houses, or to the intolerable justice of betterment, the listlessness of scripted consumption. It was innocuous and pleasant, but it did not move....

And as we strolled through the park to accomplish our speculations always we wondered—were we inside or outside the diorama?”

— Lisa Robertson, “Second Walk,”
*Occasional Work and Seven Walks
from the Office for Soft Architecture*

“What’s a diorama?”

— Ralph Wiggum







diorama 49

Peer into the set design of men who dreamed an architecture but possessed no hand for line. Floor to ceiling treatments of a fragile psychology: plastic geometry etched into brass, reciting lists of long walks through projected cities. A bath tile sheen shafts light on bourgeois lovers. This tepid, soapy-filmed immersion loosens lips in the apex of being: a pink lawn flamingo signed by Donald Featherstone, smoke pouring out the back of an open-top Jeep.

/// DIORAMA 49 | 7 ///





diorama 21

Any of these young, smiling faces could be famous. The images have aged well, drawing out the beige of the matted shag carpet & the bad moustaches. Found in basements full of boxes, fell into an internet khole of uploads. Mischief accumulates in wrinkles; a future federal crime. We don't need to cross state lines but it helps. Collected evidence: a prevalence of motorcycles, wind-blown hair, & dirtbag accomplices with smirks past the camera. We should be embarrassed when we're not like this. Slack-jawed with joy, shirts ripped, pumped fists. Laughing our asses off as we fake fight.





diorama 13

We wait for holy visions. Down sand to break routine. We cleanse ourselves of sentences insensitive to being. What would any other lineage of prophets do? If they were us? Maybe fast. Pass a few weeks in the desert of the real. Feel the moss underfoot at the roots of a tree. We've been taking notes on how to live the literal meaning of damocles. We've been wearing secondhand; wearing out our welcome. Simple vices under microscope reveal our echoed movements. Tell the mayor we're recycling. Better yet, write a letter. Sign it *Thanks for all this culture*. We need to wonder what it's like to be a target demographic.

/// DIORAMA 13 | 9 ///





diorama 29

As children we were told there's no accounting for taste; it's anaesthetic to investing, no aesthetic to ingest. Yet we've a vested interest in exchange, it's truly vexing. Put a hex on us, tell us this is all a test. We need a cheat sheet for metaphysics, signs that our attention is desired. We sell a doomsday device: style after lifestyle; mutually-assured dispassion. Time to let the bled-through shine in the sunlight, a mother-of-pearl lining for every tiny irritant.





diorama 2

We step out from the shadow of the colonnade against the light, squint with hand to brow & find no other motion. A plaza spreads its limbs, its fountain spray; the sandstone swallows sound as much as heat. We find the source of our errors tinted crimson as the capstones of each arch & rise. What else did we believe aside from our ability to harmonize three notes & conjure something out of nothing. The rules bend when the air's so thin.

/// DIORAMA 2 | 11 ///





diorama 20

If we must paint a universe, we first must cut a slab of concrete from a sheet of canvas. I had a practice: every morning, stretch. When we get what we want practice wanes. Edges soften & bulk. In waves I tighten & sag. A chisel & brush I must make of myself. Split stones into scatter, clear strata with soft cracks, caked layers of dust. A red orb, a white dot, a wash of bent pentagrams. We find one bone in rock, we must find other bones.





diorama 62

Brand awareness finds a niche an hour off the interstate, in every national parking lot. Anyone can come to gawk for 25 a head. We're one more set of tourists taking pictures of a canyon. This guy talked to Jesus just this morning; those guys are a baseball team. The rock is red from sunlight & embarrassment—a tiny trickle down its crack attracts a great commotion. We each need time alone to process this enormity of empty space. Try driving here at night. Try the pizzicetta back in Flagstaff. A pilgrimage requires tears, but there's no manual on where to leave them.

/// DIORAMA 62 | 13 ///





diorama 44

Welcome to the shrine of Our Father of Misplaced Ambition, Our Lady of Perpetual Infantilization. Sign the guestbook now, this may take forever. Enter green & leave translucent; fixed in the heavens of our comrades in a culture shift from lavalamp to cloud. The scenery is pleasant in a light that says it's nice to visit. It's possible to smell an inheritance in loam; mycelia at a denseness indivisible by vinegar. We eat lemons like oranges.





diorama 52

A man sings a fake operetta in the street, his tin foil sword coaxing bloom out of quarantine. He asks for change or nine volt batteries; respite from his demons & an autoharp for backup. His melodies blend in car alarm counterpoint, syncopated siren. We appreciate his moxie, dread his approach. We wish we had a mode to set to zero self-reflection; stones collected for paperweights instead of empty pockets. Options cost extra on these low-end models: no dealer rebates, all the serial numbers scratched off.

/// DIORAMA 52 | 15 ///





diorama 26

We've trained our palettes with sophistication; we've developed a taste for murder. This isn't what makes us human, but it helps; the corner we always moralized ourselves into. Over that hill heathens sun themselves in the dew-tipped grass. We made a collective executive decision, leisure is the opposite of culture, depending on your assets & access to capital. It's spectacular. It's a differential equation not every function satisfies.





diorama 64

Waffle House toppings: diseased, swindled, & killed. We've made the best mistakes repeatedly—the taste of iron mother's love. Feast on this trove of taxidermied fur & feather. This once was destined to be ours, a vast expanse of other peoples' homes erased except for place names. There are lands where the sky's not painted on, where a single cirrus cloud slides a music through the spheres. Nothing else for miles but a tract home cluster, a farm, a farm, a truck stop. At night the windmills blink red in unison.

/// DIORAMA 64 | 17 ///





diorama 54

Clap your lips upon the dream end of a glue factory, a used gravy hutch, a cushy wet vest on a godless charred suburbanite. The word Dutch is heavy sugar: not molasses, butter crumbles. *New ideas relax the smallness of the extra*—if we could see one more dimension we'd have shadows with z-axes. Flavor's not a term in this equation; it's a means to measure mouthfeel. We spurn chances low in social grace spreading Li'l Hell welcome mats across baked clay. Puff adder pastry for the safety set, how this debt-free living can sustain itself.



diorama 36

A burlap sack prepackaged in cheap plastic. Static fields of food scraps. Scanning electron tablets. What we leave beneath our gas-exhausted hills will tell the future everything. Anticipate precipitation, shimmer from deep—whatever charcoal arcs track across wet tarmacs. We love in proximities. Capital a crown blown ochre under scrutiny. This wasted practice; less loosened weave than shattered lamps of wishes left ungranted. We watch as marble beauty reenacts reproduction: rote movement, unusually lucid, rehearsed in a manner that leaves us craving abuse.

/// DIORAMA 36 | 19 ///





diorama 11

What weak stomachs. What a waste of hummingbirds' wings. We can almost make distinctions between up & down: the confines of this curvature—this gravity that warps what little space between desire. It's our potential panorama of horizons, our need to pick out repetitions in the details. *Play us the music of your people* they demand, asking next to translate what it means in simpler terms. We can't apologize for arguing; we're never really sorry.





diorama 4

It's not the monsters in our minds that send us tumbling into anxious states of panic, it's that we fail to read them; the walking wounded in our midsts that we suppress & call the better angles that we've nurtured. Our compass wobbles. In whose shadow do we live? Do you mean exactly? Is it chance & guilt or do we choose our common guilds? I'm rarely present long enough to process all my inner memos. We take turns as homunculus & jockey for position.





diorama 8

Who else is overly concerned about living on the right side of history & digging their own final resting place? Who else got high before they arrived here? With the virgin & the whore gleaming in the stained glass, the priest referred to love. Butterflies alit on tips of other tongues. This suit is slightly too tight, too opus dei for my tastes. It's one more set of motions personally tailored for me to ghost through. Wearing such vestments inflates one's sense of self-importance. I look good. May the kingdom, the power, & the glory be ours forever & ever, apemen.





diorama 47

Ah, that's better, I said, handing out copies of my treatises on gardening, diet advice, & how to live in comfort as a real estate speculator. *Now I can do anything.*

/// DIORAMA 47 | 23 ///





diorama 65

Slowly but surely we're winning the battle against utility. Why not write poems in an age so confused by competing notions of value? Each foot, each line a small negotiation with Empire, stealing back minutes in trips to the fountain. This user experience was explicitly designed for us, optimized advertisements we've always longed to see. Somebody's died mining our consumer data. We offer only the inverse, a clinic for botched amputations peddled as a cure. If you want to make money off us, you can start by washing our feet.





diorama 6

In unseen danger I am static, breathe in deep, feign investment with whichever acrid perfumes bloom. The shuffle into spark of dawn on marble skull; we were told this would be something to make time for, an act whose only purpose was to elevate. Old factory of enlightenment, we made you a museum, a missing sense that's only hinted at in cinema, the central facet in my habit of forgetting plots to movies. When the critic says it stinks my inclination's to agree; when the people call it rosy it's a failure.

/// DIORAMA 6 | 25 ///





diorama 32

Crisp tap. Krill kiss hazmat suit. A constellation of sub-audible frequencies. Woman with bird in hand flees sun, empties her throat of nests, & consumes her egg. She is many hourglasses; olives for eyes, unfilled pencil ovals. Using weed for weight loss, she hopes hunger will digest itself while working other bodies, working weights. Deadlift a roof back overhead. Snap, hiss; monitors chirp. Glint isn't anaesthetic in this sheet music, but torn rib from rib.





diorama 5

This ship is going down & we're going down with it; each a deckhand into history, on a search for recognition. Simultaneously feeling like we're burnt out & washed up; like ashen & sparkling, spun dry with the facts as we knew them. We blew it, these are windless sails, a canvas stretched for show. Below, the life boats unload, a long drop before the crest of every wave. The chandeliers sway with each pitch of the hull, each dot & dash encoded in a call no one will answer. Drift disaster. Pick a chair to rearrange & hum yourself a tune.





diorama 15

Topless beach, revivifying novelty. A parade of imperfections in a public forum. We started wearing tighter, smaller bathing trunks. They complement the little bellies nurtured through advancing years & lassitude; a toké before a long ride on a stationary bike, passed watching athletes in their prime. We call this heartiness, winter beginning in earnest; planning small convoys towards the shoreline, tiny victories. I'm going to show off the body of knowledge I gained being cold; show you my Vitamin D deficiency.





diorama 46

We think we know how the world works, what keeps it ticking. We know a good problem when we make one.

/// DIORAMA 46 | 29 ///





diorama 12

Pull your bones out through your skin, prove you're better at description. This game is exhausting: the mirages in community. All alone with gusto & together as a ritual of cracking ribs in rhythm. We grind ourselves to sand to polish bigger stones worth trading. We let things get precious, then we haggle for the hell of it; you can quote me on that. We dig what we dig despite our best intentions, pin every exoskeleton collected under glass.





diorama 27

We can't say we gave it our best shot. I only mean myself, but I know you feel me. No privateer instinct, no drive to crush my enemies & impale their skulls on pikes outside the city gate. Some prepare their whole lives for doomsday. There are weeks I want the world to descend into the primitive. I want to command a battlestar. I want to have a series of coherent thoughts. We all need to take a long walk & think about what we've done. Hands calm in the pockets of unbuttoned jackets, everyone briskly meandering toward their deaths—that's my kind of communism.

/// DIORAMA 27 | 31 ///





diorama 1

What we look for only finds its face in paint. Where this field exists it breathes, bequeaths a quiet storm of spores. There are many moons here; we tell our time by tides, the rise amidst the mud flats of a salty waft that mixes with the char of lava-scorched saplings, their thin black arms the veins that feed a claret sky. We'd pierce allergic clouds with silver arrows & be sated, but the next white orb announces its arrival: open-mold to flood, a cone of sand to drain & chase eclipse; a second's loss of object permanence.





diorama 25

It takes a fraction of a second for the frame to encroach the spirit. Something gets cut off at each edge—a hand, a leg, the light. Is nostalgia contagious? There were many names for Smell-O-Vision, all synonyms for failure. But with the right attitude we can make more money, change lives, revive our personal brands. We can be more like steam when it learns a little patience. We write rules to liberate ourselves, work best with design constraints. I'll learn to take the shape of my container.

/// DIORAMA 25 | 33 ///





diorama 22

The world unfurls itself away from beaten paths. We can't help but ruminate on every little village as an egg. Soft-boiled & cracked, we catch glimpses in glass as doors sweep open on the platform in forced morning custom. Consult the proper maps. On occasion untaken, others spoken for. An exercise to pass time. We swore we knew the difference between process & habit, wonder & torment, shades of nervosa we've gleaned from white boxes.





diorama 61

Driving high in your hills, we take peeks at your homes from above & askance, exhibits we become by simply living. We try patience in impatient cities; it takes decades to recognize. Seize the reins, the saying goes, decant your wine in time for any guests that may arrive. Dérive. We need etymology, better reasons to look back. Self-interest meant self-love, a sin collectively forgotten. What do I owe? Let it be everything.

/// DIORAMA 61 | 35 ///





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/// NOTES AND COMMENTARY





OF SOUND MIND :: PROCESS AND PRACTICE

Alex Crowley 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 OFSOUNDMIND 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

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 don't really identify as a "poet" or label myself that. it feels limiting or misleading in some sense. it's only a part of who I am and writing poems is one particular thing that I do. for some people it seems like it's a large part of their identity and life-focus, and that's great, but I've never felt that way. poems happen to be something I was drawn to and am continually learning how to make.

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

Observer? Commenter? Occasional participant? General interloper? My actual day job—book reviews editor—puts me in somewhat of a gatekeeper role that I have some difficulty reconciling with my politics, and I'm constantly trying to figure out how to be a good citizen and a responsible member of the various, shifting communities I exist in / belong to. If I can get people who weren't previously interested in POETRY to get into it with whatever intensity, that's amazing. I was one of those people, so it's not like some far-fetched abstraction. Also, if I can promote books that I think are worth people's attention, cool! I take these responsibilities seriously even though I tend to have a hard time taking things seriously.





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?

This was always a unified work, so in the end the struggle was mostly about order.

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?

I do a lot of serialized writing and the drive there is often to exhaust a form or conceit or concept and see what happens. Once I got on a roll with these dioramas, I ended up with 60-something of them and these ones in the book were the experiments that worked. If you have a form that works for you, you should be able to throw anything that's in your head into them without losing anything. These are fairly straightforward prose poems, though I had rules I was working with to produce them. At this point I don't really remember what the rules were, but I did have them. (I always have rules and end up breaking them one way or another.) Some time after I finished the bulk of these I tried to write more, but they weren't the same; I wasn't thinking the same way as I had been, or I guess about the same phenomena that ended up becoming themes in this book. I wrote prose poems before these and I will continue to write them, but none of these other poems will be "dioramas."

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.

The title comes from the line "Consult the proper maps." in Diorama 22. These dioramas are all maps to something—a mindstate, a feeling, a meditation—without being so in the most obvious way visually. Maps are a major element autobiographically, or in my own self-mythology. I've always been into geography, I love maps as art, and I've always had atlases and things like that around (I also waste an ungodly amount of time dicking around on Google maps). A good deal of these were also written while on a cross-country road trip with Keara Driscoll (my girlfriend/partner/accomplice), so altogether these bear some resemblance to an "improper" map and record of an actual journey.





*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?*

In hindsight, these poems are clearly an attempt to work out elements of my own story, the creation of my “self.” They’re also a record of me processing my environment at the time of writing. I am both in the diorama and observing the diorama. That’s the history side, as far as I understand it myself. Practice-wise, these poems are an excellent example of how I work. I rarely write one-off poems, instead doing a lot of serialized work. There was never a concrete checklist for what elements a diorama poem had to contain, but I could feel the ones that just didn’t fit, that were lacking something significant or weren’t risking anything. The ones that never made it this far were just existing, not living. And in terms of living, I think the potential musicality of the prose poem gets overlooked a lot; I wanted these poems to have some measure of that and I think I achieved it.

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?

I got turned on to Lisa Robertson and David Markson at the New School and reading them just flipped how I understood what poetry could be, what writing could be in general. My academic background is in the social sciences, not really in literature, so engaging with writers who were transforming how history, sociology, visual art, even science could be conveyed made an immediate impact. The writings of the Situationist International have been an inspiration for even longer, from back when I was an undergrad. It was theory, critique, and—to some extent—praxis delivered in a way that was wholly unfamiliar and radical when compared with the academic/scholarly (which tends to be a shorthand for dry, lifeless writing) nature of so much else I was reading at that impressionable age. I think a lot of what I do is still some sort of movement in that direction (of making a radical impression and forging some kind of radical praxis, so that I’m not just writing into the void), something I’m always thinking about and working through.

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 not sure I ever leave that headspace; it seems to be primary, if not primal. I think sonic patterns in the broader, more abstract sense precede any specific patterns of language. At the same time that all people have this sense, not all have this capability, even if it's nurtured or cultivated. For example, I love paintings and other visual art, but I'm dreadful at drawing, I can't do it for shit (and I even took drawing classes when I was in high school and whatnot). Many people aren't musically inclined and a lot of them write poems! That said, when I encounter new poetry, new writing, if there's no music, or if I don't like the music that a piece possesses or exudes, that's like a first strike against it. That piece has to do a lot more now to win me over. And by "music" I mean a lot of different things, not just does it have a recognizable meter or something (in a lot of cases, that kind of overly formal approach is a major turn-off). Music is life, so a poem has to have its music.

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?

I rarely feel like I'm unaware of sound, which also raises questions about what it means to be "aware" in the first place. That's a hard word to define, in the same way that consciousness is something we have extreme difficulty defining (I've been reading a lot of stuff on AI lately). On a less philosophical level I simply enjoy listening as a form of observation. I used to always walk around with headphones on, but I very rarely do that anymore, especially outdoors. I tend to get freaked when there's a lack of sound. I grew up near major roads and the hospital in my hometown, so I'm accustomed to the white noise of urban spaces: cars, sirens, the occasional helicopter in the middle of the night. To me, the absence of sound is a danger warning, like there's a predator in the woods and all the other creatures have gone silent.

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?

Labels and titles make me really wary, though it's also obvious why they're useful and necessary. This gets into another inside-or-outside the diorama type discussion—how labels and titles are employed to include and exclude, how they narrow or broaden the parameters of a debate. I don't believe in any kind of ideal Platonic conception of what a





poet or artist or musician might be. To be one of those things do you have to be highly technically trained? What about autodidacts (or “outsider” artists)? Do you have to make a thing that abides by specific rules or forms? I have to be willing to keep these categories broad and open, in a democratic sense, whether or not I like what a particular artist does or makes. Let’s talk about the art and see where it leads us, especially if it makes us really uncomfortable. I’m not always particularly comfortable with doing this (I can be a dreadful music snob), but I see no alternative and I need to be challenged. Otherwise, why are we doing any of this?

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?

All my answers are starting to feel like they’re saying the same thing and one is getting lost in the other. This brings me back to the exhaustive quality of serial writing—is each diorama a slightly different way of saying the same thing, like Cubism is the closest we can get to understanding an entity that could see in 4 spatial dimensions.

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?

My poems tend to come together after I get a line (or two) and start feeling things out, finding how the line flows and what its rhythms are. Each one is different and unfolds in its own way, though I do get certain rhythms or meters stuck in my head and I’ll write to those somewhat un- or sub-consciously before going through and tinkering with this or that. Tone and texture of course are also really important to the language I use, but that tends to come as I start to tinker with lines. Like, if I’m playing guitar, I’ll fiddle with a riff and then as it comes together I’ll mess with levels of distortion or some other effect (delay, phase shift, whatever) and let it all start feeding back on itself, let it grow a bit, tighten up the structure. Should this be a chord here or single notes? How does one or another work rhythmically, where’s the ebb and flow? Is this song going to follow some kind of pop structure or is there something else going on? This all feels weirdly obvious as I write it down, but I really don’t know if this is how other people think or not. I’m sure a lot of artists are much more precise about certain particularities than I am.





Talk specifically about how your musicianship/relationship to sound informed and/or influenced this manuscript in particular, whether overtly or less directly.

I wonder about this constantly and really don't have a good answer. When I write a poem I need the poem's language music to set the atmosphere/mood, to mark points of emphasis, to direct the action whether it's an obvious narrative or not. A song, particularly one that doesn't have lyrics, or intelligible lyrics if that's your jam, needs to convey some kind of "emotional meaning" (and I'm leaving that open to be defined broadly, and maybe defining that meaning is what every artist is doing to some extent? if anything has to be about anything). The biggest difference between writing music and writing poems is that for me the former is collaborative as a band and the latter is collaborative in later stages closer to the edit, after the bulk of the germinating work has been done. And depending on where you want to draw these lines, any distinction ends up being rather slight.

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."

The "we" is a loaded term in this question, because given my privileges and position I don't—and can't—come at this from the same angle as a lot of my peers and acquaintances in the poetry and publishing worlds. The mainstream publishing industry has severe demographic problems, though there are signs that the fringes are relatively healthy, even thriving. For those of us with various measures of privilege, we simply have to stop and listen. It's not really any different than what's going on in American (and Western) society in general. People with privilege and power want to retain it and exclude others from sharing and participating. So to be radical means acting in ways that don't reinforce and reproduce these severe power and privilege imbalances. There aren't really prescribed ways of doing this, it's all an ongoing social experiment. But if I fail in some regard, I have to show some humility and acknowledge it and learn from what I did. I'm sure even this statement I'm making right now exposes blind spots I have, but things'll be worked out eventually once the socialist reeducation camps are fully functioning.





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 IMPROPER MAPS

In his debut chapbook, Alex Crowley plays the odd rhythms of the prose poem as he explores the blurry boundaries of dioramic form. It's a meandering journey through (auto)biography as well as an attempt to articulate what passes for a stable self under the clashing lights of spectacular culture. He asks readers to briefly imagine what Capital desires of them, then take a breath to keep from hyperventilating.

These melodies are woven from road trip journals, ekphrastic exercises, street scenes real and imagined, sociological meditations, and the confounding joy and terror of life online. These are the barely perceptible phenomena that sneak their way past your vigilant attention and find a way to the front of the memory queue. It's easy to lie autobiographically; we're supposed to fudge the details and let the cash flow in. Hasn't that always been the case? How can I want what I want when you want as well?

And what of the diorama? Is it merely a scale representation of a scene? A 3-dimensional still complete with actual air? Can it move? Does it move? More importantly, does it move you? The more clearly we see the barriers, the harder it becomes to determine what's on the other side.



Alex Crowley is a reviews editor at Publishers Weekly and a cofounder of Brooklyn's MENTAL MARGINALIA Reading Series. He was the recipient of the first annual Paul Violi Award from the New School. Poems and reviews have appeared in Phantom Limb, TLR, Forklift Ohio, BORT Quarterly, DIAGRAM, Handsome, HARIBO, and elsewhere. Find him on Twitter @a_p_crowley





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

