

## ABSTRACT

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NEW CITY

Kim Calder, Master of Fine Arts, 2012

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This collection is arranged around various themes and instances of loss. In particular, these poems treat the dilemma of the vulnerability of both body and Being to violent forces. Whether the agent is a murderer who takes a human life, or capitalism, which takes life itself from life, the antagonist is confronted and considered with an eye to discovering action—within and outside of the poem—that contains the possibility of transformation. Under the duress of these violent forms, the speaker in these poems fights to discover what can and cannot be recovered.

NEW CITY

By

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## Table of Contents

AFTER ADORNO	5
ABANDONED BUILDINGS	6
<b>I</b>	
THE ETERNAL IMAGE OF THE PAST	11
HOUSE	12
THE WITNESS (PRELUDE)	13
THE SECRET INDEX OF THE PAST	16
MEMORIAL	22
VEHICLE	23
NIGHTINGALE	24
TUNNELING	25
NEW CITY	26
DEBORD IN THE HAUNTED BUILDING	31
MERCY	32
<b>II</b>	
AFTER RICHTER	35
OCCUPY EVERYTHING	36
ELEGY FOR ALEX (SONGS)	42
ELEGY FOR STEFANOS (DOGS)	43
DISPOSSESSION	45

## **After Adorno**

If there's no true life within the false

what we do

is our best,

this love silenced by

labor

—how do we get outside it

if we can't

and know we can't

—how do we make anything

at all?

## Abandoned Buildings

When the first person I loved was murdered, I was sixteen and she was fourteen. One day she did not come to school and then the next day she did not come to school, so we started looking. There are some things I remember about this. I remember the school van dropping me off at my aunt's apartment and sitting on my bedroom floor lacing up a pair of boots. After this I remembered very little. The day after Shevawn's body was found I woke up and started drinking. When my mother was murdered ten years later in a warehouse I needed to remember what I had done the first time, so I looked online:

*With the help of his daughter's friends, ~~Edward Geoghegan~~ had been searching desperately for his only child. Early Thursday morning, ~~Geoghegan~~ entered an abandoned mental health building, where ~~Shevawn~~ was said to hang out with squatters. In Room 13A, ~~Geoghegan~~ discovered at the foot of the cot a pair of Doc Marten boots with green soles. There was no question they were ~~Shevawn's~~. "I went to the central area and screamed her name." At around dusk, the officers had found something in the basement wrapped up tight. They could see the black hair. "I immediately knew it was my daughter. I just collapsed on the sidewalk. I just went down"*

*According to an investigator, ~~Shevawn~~ had been duct-taped to a chair and strangled with a sock and leather strap, perhaps a dog leash. Her body was then cut free, wrapped, and concealed beneath wooden pallets*

---

The articles helped me to remember:

we begged

the ambulance not to turn  
it turned

toward the abandoned mental hospital,

there,  
her father in the street  
watching us run

O father standing on the sidewalk  
outside the building  
while we were running down the street  
searching  
saw you, fell in the street,

fallen, we repeated her body back to you  
as an echo,

O father I found you  
the next day in the market  
we wanted to leave the earth  
we wanted to buy our way  
out of this beginning it was morning  
you held me there in the bright aisle, half-collapsed  
as though you were holding her body  
I held her very cold hand

\*

please please forgive me  
I never believed  
you saw  
yet I held vigil  
outside the empty place  
you'd suffered  
where your body lay  
I lay me down

by the fence blocking off  
the building's courtyard

stone arch gaping  
like a mouth

it swallowed you

we stayed there  
for a month  
wouldn't move or sleep  
we  
didn't understand  
we thought  
we were guarding something  
we thought  
something was left,

if we sacrificed our own bodies  
would you return  
or would  
the hounds come  
to harm you further

it's impossible to reach back  
into the darkness  
behind the building's façade  
or find  
the face  
of the beast who comes  
at night

---

I took some of Shevawn's ashes from her urn and put them in a small glass bottle around my neck. How did I sleep? I went on, anyway, in some way, but I did not move forward.

I slept in my hotel room the night my mother was missing after searching the city for her. I sat for hours in a casino and stared at the screens. I did not have a drink. I went upstairs to the bed and I slept. Once she is dead—not missing—again,  
  
again, missing and then dead.

I

*I cannot accept. And it is true that to be absolutely unable to accept something that happens, things that happen is to be destroyed. –George Oppen*

## **The Eternal Image of the Future**

A long time ago you lay your body  
on the sidewalk beside a wealth

of candles burnt down to the ground,  
concrete covered by dirty wax

and scattered with personal objects,  
a sacred trash-heap. Space filled

only by loss, your body another object  
for the altar in the street,

vigil for the body lugged out  
of the empty building. This time.

A woman you love. Cut from the world.  
That night someone comes, now,

the next time, now, the last time,  
something comes and it slits you down the middle,

shovels a body's worth of dark sand, and  
fills the part of you still lying there.

## House

The body is a house we've forgotten how to live in.  
*A nation that will keep people in slavery*

*for 244 years will  
"thingify" them.*

The body of my mother.  
The body  
of my mother  
chopped into pieces  
put in a box; loaded  
in the back of a van;  
dumped.

Her body, broken down on the earth,  
discovered. My mother's body

in boxes

put there by men  
moving somewhere.

*In my Father's house  
there are many mansions,*

*if it were not so, I would have told you.  
But labor uses up its material elements,*

*its objects and its instruments. It consumes  
them, and is therefore a process of consumption.*

When is nothing left? When almost  
nothing, nothing.

## The Witness (Prelude)

What moment to begin?  
    The end.    When?  
    Between the last full beat  
of her heart—(does it know?)

and when it stops.

the body's fall,  
unexpected fall.

This room, last movement,  
everything, unseen.

—

What you saw, her body on wide concrete  
    her death

you say you did not  
    expect this violence we imagine now  
real like a dream

happening

in front of you,

you speak of her dying, I record;

in recording  
the whole lie of remembering  
becomes seeing

I had a mother once,

    the word spoken new, unknown

the whole room everything  
    I did not have, again

    world into darkness—

body falling to the ground. *She cried out,  
crawled a little, then died.* This is narrative.  
This is necessary. This is what you have,

necessarily, not mine, not mine,  
these words, your words, witness,  
I write  
how  
you and the killer carried her from the room  
and brought her to the earth, left her to be found,  
more than a witness,  
accomplice.

But now there is a story  
what luck is this  
now I must bring her into the world  
so I can be brought into the world, again.

The murderer came at her  
with a great velocity, arm raised, holding  
the weapon you carefully purchased, not believing  
what it was for?

---

The whole moment only a moment:  
whole wide and small  
moment in which a woman who was  
my mother  
gets killed over a loan  
while you watch, while you  
tell me

as I repeat to myself  
what thou lovest well remains,

what thou lovest well  
remains,

what thou lovest

I repeat,

but what remains, what was left, what was it  
she left?

## The Secret Index of the Past

### 1

What you claim to know succumbs  
to the whore Once upon a time.

The materialist  
needs a present  
    in which time takes a stand,

comes to a standstill.  
In the stand and standstill

history is written  
in the present.  
    In this way the impossibility  
of remembering  
becomes an asset.

What's written  
A determined stand.

    In the fixed past  
only the victors speak.

I understood this early:

history is what  
the liars make.

The material happenings  
irrelevant.

    My body feeling the strain and bump of pushing  
the little metal bike  
over the dirt road to the library.  
Holes sunk into the ground.  
The road's unevenness.

I gripped hard

and let myself be shook until  
the place I'd left was gone.

Nothing left but the hurt  
of landing again,

the sound of metal clanging thinly—  
a skybridge of leaves overhead,  
my hard breath.

The material  
of why I needed this  
inadmissible.

I could not prove  
my reality  
to the ones  
    who had power

so I made  
a world of my own.

## 2

At the bottom  
of the house  
    on a hill, in the woods,

there's a huge  
hollowed-out log.

A little girl  
wedges  
a piece of wood  
    curved like a boomerang  
in a tight space, calls it a helm.

A ring of stone and cement  
holds invisible fire.

The leaves and berries  
    of the Manzanita are edible, you can put  
whole handfuls  
in your mouth,           nothing happens,  
tastes like  
grass, dandelions,  
    day-old bedside water.

At the helm of the ship in the moonlight,  
the animals speak.  
Escaping the victors' house  
when it becomes silent

is nothing. Easy to make a world  
disappear.

Flesh of my flesh,  
the mind, taken away, takes  
the heaviness of the body.

### 3

The wide sand of the desert  
is a landscape held together  
with pins,

all growing things  
far apart so  
there's space for anything

As a child my mother's sister  
taught me to give myself  
to earth,

to see the snake  
and pray  
for mercy

step back      step back

to feed the coyotes night by night  
until they become family

glide down  
from the low hills to visit

### 4

The moon coming up  
on the body,                      on the bodies.

The shadow of the ship  
on the water.

Snakes moving  
in shining tracks.

Not until the Mariner  
blesses those swimmers





comes into the courtroom  
his face  
heavy  
voice of lies

this room to determine

the truth of competing claims

seeing him, to see different histories—  
what moves inside isn't

even vengeance.

The world turned to granite.

## Memorial

In the evenings the opening door

brought night in  
tied to my mother's back—  
floated her across the tile entryway  
and down the carpeted stairs.  
Her door clicked shut.

She couldn't bear to open her mouth,  
her eyes, she  
moved like a dead thing  
through the air,

so her memorial had nothing to do  
with remembering but with

forgetting everything  
and forgiving by this error  
her spectral presence  
more real than her ash,  
could float—

not floating! but lowered  
into wet dirt with soldiers

the only thing these bodies  
have in common is violence,  
but we don't call  
what happened to the others  
murder

an ashen woman  
inside a hill—

## Vehicle

I'm in a vehicle with my mother. Sunset.  
Driving down the mountain towards home.  
We're on that road where we once saw deer  
and stopped. My mother is wild and driving.  
I admire her courage, the way she drives.  
The red she puts in her hair. It's not short yet.  
Maybe it's not red yet.  
The sky, beautiful. We come to the house  
in the woods, half on a hill,  
walk to the door suspended by wooden pilings.  
Sun falling behind the tall wooden house.  
Toward the sky—seems like it falls past and through the house—  
we are driving, not moving. Wheels hanging off the edge.  
We've gone halfway off, almost all the way.  
She'll get there first, all the way off. No one expects it.  
My father must be waiting. He must know my mother is wild,  
we must have been late. He comes out of the house  
and over the walk, fast, up the stairs,  
to her side of the car. Pulls her out by the waist,  
away from the drop, sets her down. I am being driven  
toward the sun by nothing now. This is not a dream.  
I can see the destination, it's closer.  
The sky is beautiful, it's wild.  
My father's hands on my waist, my feet on the ground.

## Nightingale

Dreamed I'd drunk a poison,  
was it possession, was it violence?

The moon now always out  
during the day, half-there,

*You're talking as though you might  
start weeping—*

In the dreams what's eating me  
rises to the surface of my skin

at the belly, starts to fight.  
Observers see the limbs of it moving within.

A great suffering, it meant no harm,  
only wanted to get out. I only wanted it out.

I shook. My hand beat hard  
on the floor, something entered a stone.

Bound in cloth, I threw it in the sea,  
but it still wasn't gone,

was carried by pallbearers in ill-filling suits!  
On that path I found my mother

lying on her back, her face covered.  
*Are you drunk*, she asked?

## **Tunneling**

The philosophical mind tunneled a network of passages  
in the deep snow, methodically, length by length.  
Digging all winter, the first large storm building up to my chest,  
then more, covered completely, the blind whiteness of everything,  
and then it never melted. Starting from the edge, we moved  
inward until we felt the other children walking above us.  
A layer of ice like cement, holding. Lying quiet in it, a long time,  
the dark, we went numb, our bodies. Someone asked—  
we didn't answer. Waited, needing this abstraction.  
We listened, not yet knowing our return.  
As an armadillo tunnels down, seeking more ground, grounds.

## New City

*Sunset: the quality of light when  
light is colored by its ending,  
or the forcing of this quality  
by other means,  
possibility of new sight.  
Fleeting, between full  
light or filtered (clouds)  
or varying shades of darkness, or*

the adamant  
nothing that the child hopes  
laboring a tune. From any window, the day  
flawless and without exterior  
without alternative.

On the exterior,  
looking in, a neon series of rooms.  
Skin still holds all the light, remembers.  
The windows looking into the exhibit  
from the main gallery manufactured  
so all the light inside disappears  
when you walk out, look back.  
Gone, watching from the outside. A lens  
that blocks out color,  
you see people walking within,  
they look dazzled by nothing, what was it  
you felt?  
In what are now  
colorless rooms, florescent bulbs blanking—

Are we to see our easy manipulation here?  
Blocked. By the lens through which  
I look. Intellect leaves something behind.  
Waiting in the room, wants you to come back.

I'm here for research. Reading Debord,  
wondering what the new city might look like,  
how we might change the physical world enough  
to change being itself, make lies visible.  
The change contained in the light,  
There's something  
I remember, but can't—

like falling into pitch black, no rails,  
a spectrum of light  
somewhere within the neon rooms  
I dragged the light from the last  
to the next,  
now I can't leave it behind, though I'm standing outside.

I've read about how this exhibit, *Cromosaturación*, works—  
each room filled completely with one color  
until you move to the next and they mix—  
sudden third, collision of space,  
sunset colors coming together behind the window  
in a room, child in the center,

she rises from—nowhere.  
This red and purple rise from nowhere.  
An ordinary sky isn't.  
I'm somehow *here*, my body's finally *here*  
come up from my bedroom  
to the top floor of the house;  
enough light has left the sky  
I know my mother cannot find me.

Sunset. Here in a quiet place. The house hangs  
on top of a hill, above the town that descends  
to the lake. Forced straight, it balances  
in the air, top half held by wooden braces.  
It stays, somehow. The bottom of it sinks  
straight into the ground.

Pine trees all around, small shrubs.  
The lake down there shimmering.  
The big window lets all the cold in the house,  
it lets all the sky in too. It says when I can't.  
Says goodbye and goodbye, seems to know.  
The town below: more wooden houses,  
outlines of people moving in other windows.

On the suspended porch at the back of the house—  
(it hangs in the air like a feeder)  
I give the birds old dry bread.  
I can do this whenever I like,  
they've told me, but I do not  
turn on a light. Wastes energy.  
I do not turn on the stove, the oven.  
This is dangerous. The birds

tear the bread into pieces,  
dive at the splintered feeder  
nailed to the railing. I go out front,  
away, out the large door and on  
to the long high walkway leading to stairs  
and the road. I stand in the snow.  
Where I hang the ice hangs heavy, the eaves, they shine—

this light—outside—in the cold—in rooms.

The unknowable woman in the room beneath,  
same light, same time of day, unknowable child—some other understanding  
and my thinking guarded mind—like a plaque by the exhibition:

*Dipsomania: crisis lasting  
from one day to two weeks consisting  
of rapid and huge ingestion  
of alcohol, whatever  
was available, these crises recurred  
at indeterminate intervals, separated by periods  
when the subject was generally sober.*

Generally sober. Artist's statement: *the immersion  
of a body  
in certain spaces can release  
the individual from his oppressive conditioning,  
giving him a new dimension which responds  
to his behavior. The rest will fall,  
since it was an instrument of domination.*

The point is to hallucinate.  
The point is to change space to change consciousness.  
I've come here for the second,  
re-entered the old escape.

Debord shot himself in the heart,  
used whatever was available to get out  
while in the city of his imagination  
shadow-life was banished,  
love constant.

Further in the gallery  
people dip shyly into a real rectangular pool  
dug straight into the museum ground—  
—disposable bathing suits available in the museum store—

and the walls around the water filled with projections.  
Lines of cocaine superimposed over pages of musical notations  
the colors  
I'm still dragging with me past all of this  
sold to Venezuela's political elite  
at the height of Cruz-Diez's popularity:  
apolitical; light after all just maybe,  
no thought, possible to escape  
escape?

Call it resistance in  
the house's top floor,  
but what's it called down below in the same color  
for the mother who's in it and changing too  
or the floating self somewhere  
between the child who knows how to feel

and the woman who won't,  
that self in-between stuck at the bottom a long time

the light in the rooms not full of promise but terrifying:  
summons what's lost, this other knowledge

painful to see clearly or differently—  
is it suffering without its word  
the child feels, does naming help,  
what the child knows somehow more—?  
    this too-grounded heaviness  
in the body, some real knowledge

a process of interior expansion,  
a dive into the self,

not looking for a way out, which is dangerous.  
The child in the center of the room.  
The light of a changed world—  
does it break apart or bring together?

The child pictures a ball  
of light in its stomach and imagines  
the light is growing outward  
to other light and making  
a shield around the body  
that is the whole room and all the light,  
such warmth in the cold quiet  
sunset in the small body

these colors felt  
past the evening's sad materials.

Beneath, O, beneath, the woman still suffers.  
It is the name of *her* suffering the child does not know.  
Fear, the child knows, cannot name.  
The light inside some balm for what happens:  
an illness, the girl shakes and shakes,  
trying to get me out of me, and when  
I am finally empty, I fill with that full feeling

*light.*

The child hopes, laboring a tune.

## **Debord in the Haunted Building**

Man's action: material ends,

    the end of material existence,  
end: body,  
    end of a lifeless life—

The belly of the building  
the man  
    in the belly of the building  
swallowed by material  
material swallowed by the man

(dark blood flowing in the fosse)  
here there is no light

abundance of our dispossession,

capital accumulated  
    to the point of image,

this debt we are given

## **Mercy**

The man who killed my mother.  
Did he pray before his sentencing?  
He might have

put his forehead  
to the cool floor and stretched  
his arms before him or  
refusing supplication, paced  
and talked in whispers.

But I don't know.  
I am waiting in the cold,  
my breath in the air. I'm hardly breathing.  
I do not move. Waiting  
to see what he will do. I want  
him to throw himself on the ground so I can  
have mercy. I want  
so badly

to have it on this place,  
it has made me  
a person without  
mercy, seeing it happen, happen again,  
seeing, the body hitting the floor.

## II

*“These things at the limits of reason,  
nothing at the limits of dream...”* – George Oppen

## After Richter

In his paintings of Meinhof hanged,  
a faint line on her neck, noose  
or noose-markings.  
In the first the body's chin strains upward  
as if the back of the head were glued down.  
The head trying desperately to lift.  
Her neck arches up, a cat's back.  
In the next, everything flattens.  
A final breath, taken after?  
Implicit in the series:  
the question of murder,  
what the state will do  
to preserve itself.  
In the final image of her body  
everything's blurred so the viewer  
can't tell anymore—a noose, a collar,  
is she sleeping? The markings no longer visible.

\*

The darkness in the face of a young girl—  
a child's face, sorrow and rage  
almost identical, and the white shape  
of the young Meinhof's hand against  
black that nearly subsumes her  
like a flattened dove,  
the outline of her hair hardly there,  
O, the whiteness of her face, the sunken eyes.  
She walks away  
from her twin children, and one  
finds her own rhetoric to heal what's broken;  
eternal face, mother and daughter.

\*

The largest canvas of the series,  
the blurred crowd stretches across  
the material entirety.  
I see their heads  
bobbing along together, the surge—  
a white coffin at the center of the world.

## Occupy Everything

### 1

Returning from prison  
I found the camp a frozen zone—

a metal perimeter heavy  
as a police shield,

a second warning,

these lines drawn  
in the rubble-covered dirt

discovered under the grass  
our presence destroyed—

without tending  
land returns  
to its natural state

lived upon, lay bare of artifice,  
minor gardens appearing  
at the edges.

Frozen zone: access prevention;  
state of exception made permanent:

*Attention: The City Hall Park is Closed  
Trespassers are Subject to Arrest.*

*Attention: Everyone Everywhere  
is Subject to Arrest.*

New York:  
a woman's body on the ground

seizing after the police beat her  
for a long time  
she shakes on the ground  
while the men  
who beat her  
stand  
and watch—

—her body flaps on the concrete

Los Angeles: Hazmat cops  
move over the land

collecting the remains  
of our miniature city.

**2**

“The emotions are engaged  
Entering the city  
As entering any city.”

The fear of being surrounded.  
Distrust of others.

Before I was kettled by the police

and couldn't move  
from my faint strip of dead grass  
without a clenched fist rising  
to meet me

I panicked  
when more and more  
settled in the city

no room to see faces anymore

walking between  
tents, hardly space—

I saw only  
the billowing of tarps, half-closed

faces shrouded  
in pain—it seemed

the dim hum of violence beginning  
or just having settled after having risen,

the sadness that follows it—  
a cloud or haze  
around everything,

I found the library broken in half;  
no books of mine left.

What took over?  
The smell of acrid smoke;  
a young girl nearly unclothed  
wandering barefoot, helpless.

What I had loved was invisible.  
The air here full of ghosts,  
too.

People fought, got sick on drugs,  
I heard rumors  
of attacks on women.

### 3

When dark came  
that first night

the mood changed,  
our crowd was small  
and fragile tents appeared like flowers  
from the sidewalk  
around the park.

In the morning the cars saw us,  
like they'd seen people sleeping in tents  
for years on Skid Row,  
just blocks away.

Because I couldn't imagine  
sleeping in the open

I stayed awake,  
watched over  
this moment I loved.

Out late in neighborhoods  
all over the city

stapling  
occupation announcements  
on telephone poles

blinded or recovered by hope.

4

Riot police at the edges  
of the perimeter,  
water close  
to splitting a dam,  
                    helicopter lights  
light up the street,  
the tall white building in the center of the camp,  
City Hall glows.

Impossible to leave.  
Two nights ago the police

danced in rows in the street,  
pretending to back down.

The papers printing their kindness.

We're watching the streets from all sides,  
            eyes on where they filed in from last time.  
Then, a crack from the center  
of the encampment, *inside* the park!

            An army of  
men bursts through the thrown-open doors  
of City Hall—I run, somehow,  
                    toward them.

The park is almost empty,  
only a few hundred  
have stayed.

            Here, somehow. In the interior of City Hall park,  
completely surrounded. A few hundred of us,  
            over a thousand of them.  
Two lines of armored police  
block me in,  
            cut me off from the others.

I let a cop see: I'm finally  
crying. He looks away.

I sink to the ground,

my back resting against a tree.

Close to my face, boots in a line.

Through the space  
between their frail calves,  
uncovered,  
are the occupiers at the center,  
arms locked in a circle  
around a mountain of tents.  
Familiar faces—Alex, others I know.

A Jeep drives through:

words blaring on a megaphone.  
You can almost hear—

*Risk injury?* I take the hand of a friend,  
we close our eyes.

One by one  
the police begin knocking people to the ground,  
forcing their hands  
behind their backs  
and kicking tents,  
they drag sleeping people out.

They bind us.  
I go peacefully  
so they won't kick me or twist  
my arm up. People in the trees.

Some still hold light in their hands.

5

*show me what a police state looks like      this is what a police state      looks like*

6

Time is impossible.

They transfer us from one jail  
to the next.  
The guards scream at us  
to move faster,

go this way, get back, don't do that.

My laceless shoes make me stumble;  
they hold the back of our arms,  
shove us forward.

**8**

Like a dream.  
I imagine crowds sweeping  
through the streets like the four winds,  
and there are more of us  
    than they can shoot down.

When will they start shooting?

At general assembly  
I scream at the police  
watching us.

What's done to a body  
    isn't everything.

Something  
    not of this world  
to be claimed.

How to demand the return  
    of what is taken—

not the dead, who  
may haunt me at will.

    The earth, life itself—  
a crowd traversing the newly cleared land,  
or something harder to see,  
    maybe nothing traveling nowhere.

## Elegy for Alex (Songs)

*Solidarity forever, solidarity  
forever, solidarity forever,*

*the movement  
makes us strong*

In the courtyard  
the crowd singing—  
thin white building encircled with brick.

Inside—  
    Alex's infant son.

His father  
in the film made hours  
before our camp was raided:  
explaining how to make  
it harder for the cops

to take us away—  
*link arms and go limp  
when they come for you*

and when they came  
he was one of the last to go,  
sitting with his hands tied  
in a line with other men  
still waiting to be booked

when I was being thrown  
into a van and transferred.

I tilted my head back to smile at him.  
He didn't seem to be dying,  
he was dying  
    all along, no one says it.

There's not enough space inside—  
we wait until  
we're out, gathered in a crowd and moving,  
then sing—

    —why can't I  
sing?

## Elegy for Stefanos (Dogs)

In a cathedral, voices of Greek dogs.  
You wrote an elegy for one—  
Kanellos, *Comrade*, dog who sniffed

out undercovers, barked and hounded (your joke)  
the special police units during protests.  
He died from old age. Arthritis in his legs.

The students—*March on forever, Kanellos!*  
The tape at your memorial  
plays family voices. A local friend

made the recording of these, who  
were your closest. They serenade a ghost.  
The other night in the rain,

driving late, a young cyclist  
without helmet or lights rode  
too close beside me, he swayed.

And there was your body in the air,  
falling, and you were beside me again  
up in the hospital's hopeless wing,

sign above your head: *Caution—  
no left skull plate*. Bodies in the city,  
moving fast. The man who hit you

says you didn't stop.  
Probably not. Fearless in the crowd.  
They say you didn't suffer.

Gone quickly, when you are there  
beside me now, my idea of your ghost,  
you say to stop hurting,

that it is purposeless, that there is  
work left to be done, that I must  
be done. Then there is this dream:

the woman you loved  
follows one of your dogs in the street,  
finds you standing in rags—still swollen  
so you're almost impossible to see,

and then you lead her into a large pool,  
submerge, then you are yourselves again.

But along the sides are bleachers,  
they start to fill up. When I am driving  
in the city the people look

fragile, although there are many of us.  
A densely packed violence in the streets,  
and some are fearless, some don't stop.

## **Dispossession**

At first, there's no fear, just the place we're in,  
the partitioned deserts loved  
and taken, now barren, more empty

and in a rented room,  
we are the heaviness of bodies. And what  
need keeps them there. We  
reap where we never sowed.

We usurp and pay. In splinters, along the road,  
are animals we'd wished to see alive. Sun moves through  
a man-made waterfall, making it glitter well.

In a riverboat casino and everywhere,  
we are impressed by a wall of money, fresh bills  
tacked and laminated. We have little of our own.

A man with two broken arms argues  
his way  
back into the buffet.  
The devastation, everywhere, is harder to see

than we'd imagined. If there's barely anything  
at first, it's hard to know what's missing.  
What we lose is returned to us, through kindness or luck,

sometimes. Sometimes, what we lose is really gone  
and the losing's what we have.  
The air's wet and hot. We drive over water.

Now it's all forest. We are in a city. We are in another city.

## Notes

“After Adorno” references Theodor Adorno’s statement in *Minima Moralia*: “There is no true life within the false.”

“The Eternal Image of the Past” is a phrase taken from Walter Benjamin’s essay “On the Concept of History.”

“Abandoned Building #1 (Fugue)” uses portions of news articles from the web.

“The Witness (Prelude)” contains phrases from Ezra Pound’s Canto LXXXI.

“The Secret Index of the Past” is another phrase from Benjamin, “On the Concept of History.”

“New City” borrows a phrase from George Oppen’s poem “Tourist Eye.” The “Artist’s Statement” in the poem is taken from Hélio Oiticica’s essay “Appearance of the Supra-Sensorial.”

“Debord in the Haunted Building” uses phrases from Guy Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* and Ezra Pound, Canto I.

The quote that begins section 2 of “Occupy Everything” is from George Oppen’s poem “Of Being Numerous.”