

THE ARCADIA PROJECT: CONSTELLATIONS & CORRESPONDENCES, JUXTAPOSITIONS, & SAMPLE WRITING PROMPTS

(Notes towards a Teacher's Guide, Part II)

As we sifted through thousands of poems and hundreds of books by North American authors published since 1995, we delighted in the connections—expected and unexpected—we began to draw between work that seemed to press at both the boundaries and the core of our organizing conceit. What follows are a few additional connections—constellations and correspondences—that seem pedagogically useful to us. They are meant to be suggestive and illustrative, rather than definitive or exhaustive.

We hope to update this document periodically as we explore the anthology in the context of the classroom. We also welcome ideas, recommendations, and additions from our readers. If you've come up with a pedagogical constellation, juxtaposition, or exercise that intrigues or delights you, please share it! We can be reached at postmodernpastoral@gmail.com.

Contents:

- A. Constellations & Correspondences
- B. Juxtapositions
- C. Sample Writing Prompts

version of 8/15/12

CONSTELLATIONS & CORRESPONDENCES

I. Apprehensions (*sensual, intellectual, and otherwise*)

A. Seeing

- John Taggart, “Slash”
- Sally Keith, “The Action of a Man”
- Forrest Gander, “Escaped Trees of Lynchburg”
- Sarah Gridley, “from ‘Shadows of the World Appear’”
- Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, “Glitter”
- Marcella Durand, “Remote Sensing”
- Arthur Sze, “The Gingko Light”
- Ann Lauterbach, “Still *No Still*”
- Jasmine Dreame Wagner, “Champion Mill”
- Stephen Ratcliffe, “from CLOUD/RIDGE” & “from *Temporality*”
- Christopher Dewdney, “from *Signal Fires*”
- J. Michael Martinez, “Water Poppies Open as the Mouth”

B. Hearing

- Brenda Hillman, “The Vowels Pass by in English”
- Merrill Gilfillan, “from ‘Ten Carbonated Warblers’”
- Oni Buchanan, “No Blue Morpho”
- Alessandra Lynch, “What the Meadow Said Afterwards”
- Lyn Hejinian & Jack Collom, “The Woods”
- Arthur Sze, “The Gingko Light”
- Kamau Brathwaite, “fflute(s)”

C. Thinking

- Brent Cunningham, “from *Bird & Forest*”
- Brenda Hillman, “Cascadia”
- Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, “Glitter”
- Elizabeth Robinson, “Crossing”
- Brian Teare, “Transcendental Grammar Crown”
- Timothy Donnelly, “In His Tree”
- Peter O’Leary, “The Phosphorescence of Thought”
- Patrick Pritchett, “Forms of Disappearance” & “21st Century Ecology”
- C. S. Giscombe, “from ‘Inland’”
- Laura Mullen, “The White Box of Mirror...” & “Orographic”

D. Scale

- John Taggart, “Slash”
- Bin Ramke, “A Measured Narrowness”
- Eleni Sikelianos, “The Most Beautiful Theorems of the Theory of Animals, Numbers”

- T. Zachary Cotler, “Ångström Zion”
- Marcella Durand, “Remote Sensing”
- C. S. Giscombe, “from ‘Inland’”

E. Allusion

- Joshua Harmon, “Inscape” (cf. Hopkins)
- Tony Tost, “Kept” (cf. Shelley & Milton)
- Dan Beachy-Quick, “from *This Nest, Swift Passerine*” (cf. Wordsworth)
- Emily Abendroth, “Evitative Spool” (cf. Hopkins)
- John Beer, “from *Lucinda: A Revision*” (cf. Keats)
- Ann Lauterbach, “Still *No Still*” (cf. Thoreau)
- Evelyn Reilly, “Daffodil. Gondola. Polystyrene” (cf. Wordsworth)
- K. Silem Mohammad, “from *The Sonnagrams*” (cf. Shakespeare)

F. Bewilderment

- *passim*

G. Self (& Its Discontents)

- Gustaf Sobin, “Pastoral”
- Forest Gander, “Edge-Lit Scene”
- Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, “Glitter”
- Karla Kelsey, “Vantage of Landscape & Soft Motion”
- Nathan Hauke, “A Surface. A Shore or Semi-transparency of Glass”
- Richard Greenfield, “The Laws”
- Jennifer Moxley, “The Sense Record”
- Karen Rigby, “Autobiography as Panamanian Botanical Index”
- Amy King, “A Geography of Pleasure”

H. The Social/The Political

- Brenda Hillman, “The Vowels Pass by in English” & “Cascadia”
- Eleni Sikelianos, “ODE: To My Peopery, Little Trees”
- Timothy Donnelly, “In His Tree”
- Peter Gizzi, “Some Values of Landscape and Weather”
- Marcella Durand, “HPOME 1 & 2”
- Brenda Iijima, “Panthering”
- Lisa Robertson, “from *The Weather*”
- Leslie Scalapino, “from *The Dihedrons Gazelle—Dihedrals Zoom*”
- Arthur Sze, “The Ginkgo Light”
- Ed Roberson, “City Eclogue: Words for It”
- Evelyn Reilly, “Bear. Mea(et). Polystyrene”
- Juliana Spahr, “Gentle Now, Don’t Add to the Heartache”
- Michael Dumanis, “The Woods Are Burning”
- Jane Sprague, “Politics of the Unread” & “White Footed Mouse”
- Stephen Collis, “Blackberries”

II. For(u)ms

A. Film (the filmic gaze)

- Sally Keith, “The Action of a Man”
- Ann Lauterbach, “Still *No Still*”
- Susan Briante, “A Photograph from Nature”
- Johannes Göransson, “Nature Is Forbidden”
- Cathy Wagner, “from *Mercury Vectors: A Romance*”
- Michael Dumanis, “The Woods Are Burning”

B. Translation

- Brenda Hillman, “The Vowels Pass by in English”
- Erin Moure, “Memory Penitence/Contamination Église”
- Craig Santos Perez, “from ‘ta(la)ya’”
- Jody Gladding, “Bark Beetle”

C. Daybook/Journal/Travelogue

- Merrill Gilfillan, “from ‘Ten Carbonated Warblers’”
- Laura Moriarty, “Plumas”
- Brian Teare, “Transcendental Grammar Crown”
- Lisa Robertson, “from *The Weather*”
- Arthur Sze, “The Ginkgo Light”
- Stephen Ratcliffe, “from CLOUD/RIDGE” & “from *Temporality*”
- C. D. Wright, “from *Deepstep Come Shining*”
- Maryrose Larkin, “from ‘Late Winter 30’”
- Rusty Morrison, “Field Notes: 1-6,” “Making Space,” & “Field Notes: 13-16”
- Erika Howsare & Kate Schapira, “from *The Waste Project*”

D. Song

- John Taggart, “Slash”
- Joshua Harmon, “Inscape”
- Forest Gander, “Edge-Lit Scene”
- Camille Dungy, “Her mother sings warning of the new world”
- Aaron McCullough, “[log—a mild version]”
- Brian Teare, “Transcendental Grammar Crown”
- Tony Tost, “Kept”
- Dan Beachy-Quick, “Fess-Charm” & “Said-Charm”
- Matt Reeck, “ode to /a/” & “ode to /l/”
- Sherwin Bitsui, “from *Flood Song*”
- Juliana Spahr, “Gentle Now, Don’t Add to the Heartache”

E. Metapoeisis

- Brenda Hillman, “Cascadia”

- Laura Moriarty, “Plumas”

F. Prescriptive Form (see: Ghost of)

- Jane Wong, “from *Sea of Trees*”
- Tony Tost, “Kept”
- Emily Abendroth, “evitative spool”
- Nicole Mauro, “Three Pangrams”
- John Beer, “from *Lucinda: A Revision*”
- Stephen Ratcliffe, “from CLOUD/RIDGE” & “from *Temporality*”
- Christopher Dewdney, “Grid Erectile”
- Karen Rigby, “Autobiography as Panamanian Botanical Index”
- K. Silem Mohammad, “from *The Sonnagrams*”
- Rob Fitterman, “LULU (Locally Unwanted Land Use)” & “Zoomburb”

III. Images, Archetypes, and Motions

A. Trees

- Brent Cunningham, “from *Bird & Forest*”
- Gustaf Sobin, “Under the Bright Orchards”
- Forest Gander, “Escaped Trees of Lynchburg”
- Eleni Sikelianos, “ODE: To My Peopery, Little Trees”
- T. Zachary Cotler, “Ångström Zion”
- Jane Wong, “from *Sea of Trees*”
- Melissa Kwasny, “Talk to the Golden Birches”
- Tony Tost, “Kept”
- Eric Baus, “Tuned Doves,” “Who King Tree Is,” “How King Tree Sleeps”
- Erin Moure, “Fourteen Descriptions of Trees”
- Lyn Hejinian & Jack Collom, “The Woods”
- Nathan Hauke, “Deerfield”
- Kevin Holden, “Fir”
- e. tracy Grinnell, “36 / a tower is evident”
- Heather Christle, “Acorn Duly Crushed”
- Patrick Pritchett, “21st Century Ecology”
- Ed Roberson, “City Eclogue: Words for It” & “*Sequoia sempervirens*”
- Michael Dumanis, “The Woods Are Burning”

B. Birds

- Brent Cunningham, “from *Bird & Forest*”
- Brenda Hillman, “The Vowels Pass by in English”
- Merrill Gilfillan, “from ‘Ten Carbonated Warblers’”
- Eric Baus, “The Song of Stunted Hawks”
- Will Alexander, “Of Scorpions & Swallows”
- e. tracy Grinnell, “45 / a lark, a wish refrain (II)”
- Peter O’Leary, “The Phosphorescence of Thought”

- Eric Linsker, “The Bird Goes Behind You” & “Operative Spring”
- Sylvia Legris, “Almost Migration...”
- Jack Collom, “Ruddy Duck,” “Bittern,” & “Red-Shouldered Hawks”

C. Mammals (non-human)

- John Taggart, “Slash”
- Bin Ramke, “A Measured Narrowness”
- Sarah Gridley, “Anatomy”
- Brenda Iijima, “Panthering”
- Mary Hickman, “Totem”
- Evelyn Reilly, “Bear. Mea(et). Polystyrene”
- Jane Sprague, “White Footed Mouse”

D. Insects

- Oni Buchanan, “No Blue Morpho”
- Aaron McCullough, “[log—a mild version]”
- Melissa Kwasny, “The Butterfly Conservatory”
- Will Alexander, “Of Scorpions & Swallows”
- Melanie Noel, “The Lion Ant”
- Jody Gladding, “Bark Beetle”

E. Water(ways)

- Sarah Gridley, “from *Shadows of the World Appear*”
- Gabriel Gudding, “ILLINOVR-NEVERIVERNOIS—Ivne—MMX”
- Marthe Reed, “Chandeleur Sound”
- Standard Schaefer, “The L.A. River”
- Jane Sprague, “Politics of the Unread”

F. Earth & Stone

- Brenda Hillman, “Cascadia”
- Sally Keith, “The Action of a Man” (ref. Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty*)

G. Flowers

- Sarah Gridley, “from ‘Half Sick of Shadows’”
- Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, “Glitter”
- Richard Greenfield, “Eris”
- Karen Rigby, “Autobiography as Panamanian Botanical Index”
- Elizabeth Willis, “The Similitude of This Great Flower” & “The Oldest Part of the Earth”
- Evelyn Reilly, “Daffodil. Gondola. Polystyrene”

H. Genetics

- Karen An-hwei Lee, “Museum of Zona Radiata”
- Kathryn Nuernberger, “U.S. EPA Reg. No 524-474”

- Jane Sprague, “White Footed Mouse”

I. Capitalism

- Camille Dungy, “Her mother sings warning of the new world”
- Rae Armantrout, “Long Green”
- Leslie Scalapino, “from *The Dihedrons Gazelle—Dihedrals Zoom*”
- Evelyn Reilly, “Bear. Mea(et). Polystyrene” & “Daffodil. Gondola. Polystyrene”
- Susan Briante, “The End of Another Creature”
- Kathryn Nuernberger, “U.S. EPA Reg. No 524-474”
- Cathy Wagner, “from *Mercury Vectors: A Romance*”
- Marthe Reed, “Chandeleur Sound”
- Rob Fitterman, “LULU (Locally Unwanted Land Use)” & “Zoomburb”

J. Love

- Forest Gander, “Edge-Lit Scene”
- Camille Dungy, “Her mother sings warning of the new world”
- Aaron McCullough, “[log—a mild version]”
- Laura Moriarty, “Plumas”
- Jennifer Moxley, “The Sense Record”
- Cathy Wagner, “from *Mercury Vectors: A Romance*”
- Amy King, “A Geography of Pleasure”

JUXTAPOSITIONS (a sampling)

- William Wordsworth's "Daffodils" with Evelyn Reilly's "Daffodil. Gondola. Polystyrene" and/or Ed Roberson's "City Eclogue: Words for It"
- William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" with Gabriel Gudding's "[congratulations on being here]" or Karla Kelsey's "Vantage of Landscape & Soft Motion"
- Robinson Jeffers's "The Deer Lay Down Their Bones" with Evelyn Reilly's "Bear. Mea(et). Polystyrene"
- Robinson Jeffers's "Carmel Point" with Brenda Hillman's "The Vowels Go by in English" and/or Susan Briante's "The End of Another Creature"
- William Stafford's "Traveling through the Dark" with Mary Hickman's "Totem"
- W. H. Auden's "In Praise of Limestone" with Brenda Hillman's "Cascadia"
- Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To a Skylark" and/or Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush" with e. tracy grinnell's "45 / a lark, a wish refrain (II)"
- Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To a Skylark" with Oni Buchanan's "No Blue Morpho"
- Walt Whitman's "I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing" with Ed Roberson's "*Sequoia sempervirens*," Forrest Gander's "Escaped Trees of Lynchburg," and/or Erin Moure's "14 Descriptions of Trees"
- Emily Dickinson's 214 ("I taste a liquor never brewed—" with Eleni Sikelianos's "The Most Beautiful Theorems of the Theory of Animals, Numbers"
- Gerard Manley Hopkins's "God's Grandeur" with Joshua Harmon's "Inscape"
- Gerard Manley Hopkins's "The Windhover" with e. tracy grinnell's "36 / a tower is evident" & "45 / a lark, a wish-refrain (II)" and/or Eric Linsker's "The Bird Goes Behind You"
- Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Binsey Poplars" with Forest Gander's "Escaped Trees of Lynchburg" and/or Ed Roberson's "City Eclogue: Words for It"
- William Butler Yeats's "The Wild Swans at Coole" with Jack Collom's three bird poems
- Robert Frost's "After Apple-Picking" with Gustaf Sobin's "Under the Bright Orchards"
- Robert Frost's "Birches" with Lyn Hejinian & Jack Collom's "The Woods" and/or Ed Roberson's "City Eclogue: Words for It"
- Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" with Heather Christle's "Acorn Duly Crushed"
- Wallace Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" with Merrill Gilfillan's "from 'Ten Carbonated Warblers'"
- Wallace Stevens's "The Idea of Order at Key West" with Gabriel Gudding's "ILLINOVOOR-NEVERIVERNOIS—Ivne—MMX" and/or Jane Sprague's "Politics of the Unread"
- Wallace Stevens's "A Rabbit as King of the Ghost" and Philip Larkin's "Myxomatosis" with Bin Ramke's "A Measured Narrowness"
- D. H. Lawrence's "Sicilian Cyclamens" and/or "Bavarian Gentians" with Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge's "Glitter" and/or Karen Rigby's "Autobiography as Panamanian Botanical Index"
- D. H. Lawrence's "Whales Weep Not!" with Evelyn Reilly's "Bear. Mea(et). Polystyrene" and/or Jane Sprague's "White Footed Mouse"

- A. R. Ammons's "Corsons Inlet" with Stephen Collis's "Blackberries" and/or Sherwin Bitsui's "from *Flood Song*"
- Galway Kinnell's "Flower Herding on Mount Monadnock" with Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge's "Glitter"
- George Oppen's "Route" with Juliana Spahr's "Gentle Now, Don't Add to the Heartache"
- Robert Hass's "Meditation at Lagunitas" with Stephen Collis's "Blackberries"
- *creatures*: Emily Dickinson's 986 ("A narrow Fellow in the Grass"), Marianne Moore's "The Fish" & "The Pangolin," et al. with John Taggart's "Slash," Merrill Gilfillan's "from 'Ten Carbonated Warblers,'" Melanie Noel's "The Lion Ant," and Will Alexander's "Of Scorpions and Swallows"
- *spring*: Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Spring," William Carlos Williams's "Spring & All," James Wright's "Snowfall: A Poem about Spring," and/or Louise Glück's "Wild Iris" with Dana Levin's "Spring" & Alessandra Lynch's "What the Meadow Said Afterwards"

SAMPLE WRITING PROMPTS (a few)

- 1) Thoreau Collage: Take a few (photocopied) pages from Thoreau: *Walden* or *The Maine Woods* or the *Journals*, whatever you like. Combine with a few additional source texts; I would recommend:
 - A scientific journal;
 - A trashy celebrity magazine;
 - Additional literary sources (Gertrude Stein meshes up nicely with Thoreau, I find: it helps to choose sources from centuries other than the nineteenth, or from other countries)Using only these materials construct a poem. Give the poem a place name for a title so that the elements of the collage concatenate and coruscate around that place.
- 2) The Percipient as Object: Write a landscape poem in which the “I” is placed on the same level as any of the other objects in the poem, which may be concrete and specific (a row of ferns, an Atlantic mackerel, James Brown) or abstract and scalar (Roman history, tectonic plates, fleeting happiness). The “I” in the poem functions as investigator and point of perception; the poem is not “about” the I but the landscape or thoughtscape in which the “I” discovers itself.
- 3) Documentary Poetics: Research a particular place, event, or environmental issue thoroughly and amass a stockpile of primary documents (legal documents, land deeds, photographs, oral testimony, love letters, etc.). Use some of these documents in the construction of a poem that investigates some aspect of the place, event, or issue. Let the documents speak for themselves as much as possible, and let your own point of view (you should have one!) emerge primarily through the selections and juxtapositions that you present to the reader.
- 4) Psychogeography: Alone or in a small group, practice the art of *dérive* (<http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm>) in an urban, suburban, or rural area (it’s possible to *dérive* in a car, but feet, skateboard, or a bicycle is preferable). Take copious notes, paying particularly close attention to those places or moments in which different qualities of space rub up against each other (the transitions between neighborhoods, forms of terrain, or animal habitats). Take photographs if you like. If you have questions about a particular feature of the landscape or about the history of a building, write those questions down and answer them later. Then use the database you’ve constructed as source material for a poem.