

SUBSOIL

LUTES

Chris Funkhouser

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by
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Preface

These poems are excerpts from a series of works commissioned by WordXWord Poetry Festival, composed as part of an online residency titled the 30/30 Poetry Challenge, which appeared serially (daily) in April 2011 on WordXWord¹.

Accepting an invitation to post a poem to WordXWord every day during National Poetry Month, I knew software machinations would be involved but did not realize my contributions would involve cannibalizing but one text. I expected to identify input texts from a range of sources based on given prompts & spontaneously transcreate poems. Instead my offerings took root in a single song, the W.C. Handy composition “St. Louis Blues”—because “the town in which you were born” was the first prompt, St. Louis is where I first breathed, & this reference came to mind at the outset. Bessie & Ella’s versions stuck with me through a month using Andrew Klobucar & David Ayre’s GTR Language Workbench to process its lyrics. Using a span of language filters built-in to the program I repossess them with new language. The Language Workbench enables numerous ways to do this: through varieties of reformatting, generation, reordering, substitution, & translation. For instance, I can: easily reposition the nouns, verbs, adjectives, & adverbs to different coordinates in the program’s well-developed (25,000 word) internal dictionary using $S + 7$ method²; replace any word or phrase with synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, & hypernyms; instantiate multiple texts, & so on.

Choosing to cannibalize “St. Louis Blues” to such an extent brought a few surprises, like writing a poem without nouns & pronouns, alphabetical poems, & even a poem in which all the words were removed. All of these mutations were facilitated & automated using the program, & then edited by me. Many interesting language generators & processors are available, and if you’re interested in this program, it is published in Newark Review 3.0³—where you can read a bit more about my experiments with this software⁴.

Subsoil Lutes was a finalist for the 2011 SpringGun Poetry Chapbook Prize, and four poems from the series are published in SpringGun 5⁵.

¹<http://wordxwordfestival.com>

²<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oulipo>

³<http://web.njit.edu/~newrev/3.0/workbench/Workbench.html>

⁴<http://web.njit.edu/~newrev/3.0/funkhouser.html>

⁵http://issuu.com/springgunpress/docs/springgun_issue_5_ebook

St. Louis Blues

by W.C. Handy

I hate to see that evening sun go down
I hate to see that evening sun go down
'Cause, my baby, he's gone left this town

Feelin' tomorrow like I feel today
If I'm feelin' tomorrow like I feel today
I'll pack my truck and make my give-a-way

St. Louis woman with her diamond ring
Pulls that man around by her
If it wasn't for her and her
That man I love would have gone nowhere, nowhere

I got the St. Louis Blues
Blues as I can be
That man's got a heart like a rock cast in the sea
Or else he wouldn't have gone so far from me

I love my baby like a school boy loves his pie
Like a Kentucky colonel loves his mint'n rye
I love my man till the day I die

St. Louis Blues 2011

I dislike to literalize that electronic computer Roman deity visible light
shelter down
I hate to spectate that visitor darkness influential person sign down
'mortal, my tubing someone, he's a sound woman this metal 'round
Feelin' twenty-four hours like I feel day
If I'm feelin' future like unhappiness nowadays
I'll weapon emplacement my draw wheeled vehicle and my gross exam play
St. Gladiator pink with her pyrotechnic skirt
locomotes that golden adult male around her
If it wasn't for her and her
That libertine fix would take let by nowhere, nowhere
I auspicate the St. Prizefighter blues
blues as I can populate
That man's swan in a substance like a rock and roll mouth in the Irish large
indefinite
amount Or else he wouldn't bring about transport so far from my mate
I train dear my infant like a primary building mamma's Black man love his
veggie Indo-European
Like an American state insight commissioned military officer wealth his
mint'n seein'
aggregation my junior till the mean solar day currency one's approaching

A reading in St. Louis

Hatched to seduce that eve sumpter gnawed down
Hatched seducing that eve sumpter gnawed down
Cauliflowers, my babies, he's golf's leered towing-lines

Feedlots' tomfool like I feed toboggans
If I'm feedlots' tomfool like I feed toboggans
Pacification's my Troy and majoring my gyro

Squirrels. Loud-hailers wolfhound with her dialogues riling
Pulley-blocks that mammals arithmetically by her
If it wasn't for her and her
That mammal I lour would haunt golf now, now

I gormandize the Squirrel. Loud-hailers Bluebottle
Bluebottle as I can bayonet
That man's gormandizing hearings like a robot's cashing in the scuts
Or elementarily he wouldn't haunt golf snootily fancifully from me

I lour my babies like a scholar boxing loved his picturesqueness
Like a Kennametal colloquium loved his mint'n Ruth
lour my mammals to the dawdlers I did

Locomote to the shop of the people

Roll in the hay to understand daytime sunshine continues functioning
after sundown

Be intimate to affiliate that evening day of rest's failure's clown
justification, young mammal, malfunction concludes in this town

Being aware of futurity like I sense nearby
Feeling hereafter like believing in solar sky
I'll package my motor vehicle and offend my relay

Stability: gladness someone with Heart parcels band
breathing in that class or so by gland
If Heart wasn't for Hand and Mind
That creature detests would abstain malfunction in no man's land

Get to the barbershop of the damned
Where megrims can descend
man's conclusion a country like a gynecologist holds down the land
who wouldn't forbear catch thusly far from sand

hate labor like a school day offspring dislikes language
Like a jelly loving soldier detests his herb & Secale muesli
dislikes noncombatants till the crepuscule typifies transports glee

randomized parts of speech + reversal + 170 + =

hanky-panky displaying that roomer sailing-ships self-reinsuring
diagnose to self-reinsure affiliates mangy Boil dinning
'Stan, I bagnio, healed goofed backstage the handcrafting

supernumeraries' bagnio as beefed boycotted torpedo-boat
exception's exception stratifies pimple bloat
scrag supernumeraries and defections noddles dote

Kinks. Affiliates fickle toothpowders like Fetters lugged
traits that palimpsests aseptically from
If my wasn't Like Or hum
heliographs stratify roar eminently, obdurately lug

mock workmanship. commencement torpedo-boat
outspokenness in I can heal hope
man's kinking down the tumbrels with fetters stratifying woke
and sole wouldn't diagnose diagnose faultily obdurately oak

misuse Lubricants by toothpowders Boil unfrock Purient
like globetrotters second-guessing feuded mint Lubricant
feuded Centerfielder till a deathblow taped backstage sent

perdido em transcreation: chuck(l)in' globalization

No me gusta ver a noite como el sun se esconde
I Odeio ver descer o sol da tarde
Parce that, mon bébé, il est par cette ville gauche
demain Feelin 'comme je me sens aujourd'hui
If você feel comme je suis demain je me sensei hoje
Je vais et je fais donner truck preparer Mon-a-way
São-Louis avec sua esposa Ring diamant
Pulls that are autour de l'homme
If n'était pas ce pour ela e seus(s)
Cet homme j'aime Alles What part seraient Parte Não, não sócio
J'ai l'eu St. Louis murria
Posso ser Blues
Um is the man threw a cœur de pedra como o mar
Il ne serait pas Either if allé loin de moi
Como um bébé aime a sua torta segmento Schoolboy
Comme aime a Kentucky Coronel is hortelã'n seigle
J'aime Mon homem jusqu'à ce jour où je le What mourrai

Down, down under the boot

Bowse to identify that evergreens sun-worship spur,
Booze to seep that footprint evidence sunburns gobbler,
Cautiousness my low-lifes' doodles monetize this tower.

feinting mediant, like feinting onyxis,
chop down tonnes, like lumber toilers,
good-neighborliness wisps trustee jams my ghettos.

Oh, that livery steady. Pediculus corporis sweetheart, with the shits race riot,
pulsar supervision arrogantly by aquaplane Rose Louise Hovick.
And if it wasn't for power-dive and thunderstorm hair-triggers,
Oh, that authorization of mingy wouldn't spur numbly.

District those Augean stables. Menopon palladum blunderbuss', justly as
bluechip twinkie,

Oh, man's district's a fire like a platform rocker autotomizes South Sea,
Or embarrassingly hawked goofed sobbingly farcically.

Hold dear authorization like a housemaster lows pier,
Like a Kestrel loggia lowed Boston rocker and scimitar
dotes oversight until the dayboys contravene, Lear.

Beverages: trembling toccatas in the bombs of watering-cans

Derailing guineas that tremor limejuice institutional animal scours,
despite soggy remakes trenching Ropye spondaic bellyached totalitarianism
newspapers
conjuring excommunication of purpose's oil, chirrups cowhouse addle-head
Anachronism competitors.

Atomize medical somersaulting fantasy, like ferrets galling,
guessing tin's perpetration, like continuing up vexing,
goulash indisposed anapaest junk and dithers redeeming.

Oh, Staircases. Branches wools, with overpurchased hair-care escalation,
melancholic non-lawyers ouija killingly absurdly by tamping back univocation.
And if it wasn't for steak meliorations and clearinghouse worsening overleaf
rotations,
that elite transmutation minuscule wouldn't stair-rod nutrition.

Concretely those Staircases. Commemorative boatload, as volatile periods
inaccurately,
man's direct-mail-mogul outré sacred swollen unrewarded pentathlon obsoleted
rolling-mill awakening necessary
Or eminently wouldn't select sketchiness timidly fastidiously.

I card computer-service passenger perpetration gestation queens for grimiest
government-relations balmy,
Amusing encaustic steak outplaying needful avalanches unraveling
demoralization forcefulness shortly
swab dispatching sopranos until actuaries sound ouzel one-on-one Kirins,
illusive monogamy.

Peach Realities

for Alan Sondheim

There is a place that hardens to sear establishment's sufficiency,
glides down, habituates to singe that governing body
wealth displaces, Castrations loosening avalanches doddered lazy

this torrent fathoming title-roles, tinkle fathoming,
understanding persona, like fathoming ting,
go-getter oversupply trivets and mafficks generalizing.

Oh, Spunky. Longhand winters, with Detroit rickets,
psychology mainmasts arbitrarily apparatus strangleholds.
And if it wasn't for posteriors and stock-trader gurus,
mainmasts of military-service wouldn't glide normally.

I'm going Spunky. Longhand blockages, jovially as blithesome as a basher,
going hawkers like ripcords carped in the screwdriver,
elaborately won't harm or go snidely faddier.

I looked at mainmasts like a scantiness loosened photofinisher,
Like a Junk-shop's coigns loosened ripples and rugs,
look at mainmasts until the dampers devote hugs.

Steroscope. Magpie Bourn

Herniated setting exploration Sweden graying,
protruding to present Scandinavian country coloring,
'Chatter maintenance' bargain driven lilted tremoring.

Fired trams, like firing a trader,
Ruining conveyance, like dispelling merchandiser,
gripes parka ultrasound and marshals my golfer.

Oh, that Stereotype. Magpie yodeler, with discontent rounding,
master-key attentively by assents suckling's.
And if it wasn't for presentiment and hassles subcontracting,
Oh, that master-key of moderate wouldn't offer graying.

I grounded those Stereotypes. Magpie bourn, laboriously as bounden as berthed,
Oh, man's grounded a highflier like rumination in semicolon's chanced,
Or enjoyably wouldn't spaciously fiendishly from me hew grinned.

Mailed my master-key like seaweed maintains platelayers,
like a Laird computer-assembly maintains sausage-dog and rumor-mongers,
mailed master-key until defenselessness discriminated, Magazines, Magazines.

when the world is a monster...

donned governs storeroom Kerbstone,
Lordliness for Causeway Oh Lounge-chairs trunk-roads bluffer,
'powder-magazines She sun-helmets' séances hating I Oh.

That I evensongs, and govern
tomtoms like tabards rinse wassails mingy,
blue wouldn't pulp hating schoolfellows evensongs.

Womanizers, embarrassingly arrogantly. Hair-dye I, with heartache feels,
sobbingly feels feels toddlers like man-of-war toddlers.
A make gone man-of-war lowed beaching his it,
load-lines, loved lowed me man-of-war I go goaded man-of-war.

Goaded mésalliance and wraith. Until If, that as tomtoms Like townees I,
aptitude, tabards getaway Oh sea-boat low-altitude down feels Lordliness
Lounge-chairs,
dies, castigates Street from down And her as diapers I.

Like to love I day-return baby-talk colonials strip-shows seeded to,
farcically package sun-helmets a man-of-war I justifiably those
and left rock-crystal in rocket-bases, good-fellowship pieces that Stabbers
seeded, tabards.

Removal Us

Hauled to seeding that eventide sun-parlor goaded,
browse to sow that guest night room spurred,
'Caution my low-caliber' donned babysitter legalized.

This town feigns tonalities, like feigned toddy,
plays major mode, like bull for Tom and Jerry,
good-for-nothings packaged-goods truss and making gharry.

Oh, that Stabilization. Lounge-suit womankind, with diaphragms riot,
pulpits my manacle arrogantly by aptness stripy.
And if it wasn't for powder-room and hair-oil storey,
Oh, that manacle of mingy would goad numbly.

Govern those Stabilizations. Lounge-suit bluffness, justifiably blue-ribbon
as beaching,

Oh, govern a heartbeat like rock-gardens castigate in the sea-breeze,
Or embarrassingly haw goof sobbingly farcically from me.

Loved my manacle like a schoolgirl lows piecework crayons,
Like Kerchief's colonists low rocket-propulsion and sabbatarians
love my manacle until the day-schools dieted: dominance, authorization.

A Rebooted Goo Twits Out

Down my Magnitude I hew semibreve exploitation grounded,
maintain laboriously grayed discomposure lilted as massiveness,
'to rumor massiveness' setting Oh rumblings discriminated.

Until Mafia I, mailed driveled bounciest,
queries down as grayed Stepson Oh presence,
for bouquets subconferences fired trample parish me wouldn't.

Herniated, if those. Marry grounded, sucking-pig I with,
Like her like Mafia my this fired.

Massiveness sweats a I fired assemblies mod like Chateau and,
Or attentively berthed I mailed massiveness herniated saunterer.

Ultimata and by mainsprings fired and, grindstone my like fiendishly
Magnitude wasn't spaciously,
plate-racks, I trample champed Stepson defectiveness my tradeoffs to
massiveness from I,

If golf-ball If I sweats Oh I hashish of Seattle.

Tradeoffs setting oft I exploitation that that enigmatically like maintains,
the yo-yo an in trembles that highflier grayed
grind it rounding-off Laidlaw he that computations his my bareness.

development, invariably

Hobbled to shifting that faintness guesses tacks down,
limp to switch that dimness line supposedly down,
'Choreographer my mare' beauty dynamites local try-ons.

If fledging tribunes, like fledging treaty,
I get tribune, like I nurture pacts,
gutta-percha pawl my underlay and mechanize my grass.

Oh that Storms. . . Mantrap, with dispenser safe-deposits,
rainwater meekness back by authentication suplicants.
And if it wasn't for pro-consumption and seltzer heliographs,
Oh, that meekness of moribund wouldn't optionally guess.

I had those Storms. Mantrap brigades, lately as brief as I can birch,
Oh, man's had honeycombs like a salvation chilled in the shackles,
Or equitably wouldn't hoist gutted spirally fitfully.

I commute my humility like a conference marginalizes battle-axes,
Like Lawlessness confers marginalizing sameness and scoopfuls
I'll map meekness until the demotion I disqualify, Manipulation, Manipulation.

The Sound and the Klingons

Accosting across that sleep visible X-ray therapy coexists,
loathing to oblige deictic guest night important literate person teleports,
'family line my lovin' human poise through this city's by-products.

If we rummage the Starship Enterprise, like a reminder present,
Requiring seconds to set down, like a ring finger present,
We're gonna loop convertible boots and make up garbage accelerants.

Oh, that Rowan Oak Cephalopoda, with horses around thenar beams,
repulsing people approximately by protective unitard wire leads.
And if it wasn't for gunpowder and powder magazine pilus,
Oh, that Priceline Island wouldn't realize its nowhere glides.

I cadge Captain Kirk's square-dance music, just now as gamey as it overstays,
Oh, it engenders gallantry like an art rock wash out in the large indefinite
cash pay,

Or else wouldn't have a bun in the oven arising indeed far away.

As I lay dying, eff my Seychelles like a public school street child effs his puffs,
Like a blue grass Buganda commissioned military pig unites criminal congress
his punk rocker Irish tough
newlywed valet de chambre until the Quentin Compson Allhallows Eve puddles
Trinity, feudal lord.

Evilest Ion

... corrals to goldbanded stentorian ex-servicemen station holders,
beavered invalids to equip tinsmith perpetuation voice-activated railroads strainer,
'cat-naps Lucerne' Zürich-based lance-corporals uptick, indite this thankless dog.

I condense gallops, conceive twenty-four hucksters,
confab dealmakers, like I nutritionally sequester,
gourmets latish indistinguishable anarchist profanities and unpopularity landscapes.

Oh, the Stakes' procurement bedsitting-room marbled, with expansionism parried,
ether class-action Rubbermaid by peacock-blue seer suspended.

And if it wasn't for tools and meringue bogy playing-card professionals,
Oh, that solar cleat of minuscule wouldn't interlocutor nutritionally.

I sabered assiduously those Stakes. Procurement blarney, schizophrenic as
robustness as distraction,

offered forth a chair-lift like a maverick centering down in the twangy fly-swat,
Or eminently wouldn't demote goldbanded through up and thickly fatefully.

I headed to pesetas zoom like a management-pilot's chiseller devises his
Inessentials,

Like an Anachronistic stealth compares mimetic obi devises his television
and grasps

dispensing climaxing lance-corporals until the terrine steered twiddles out
gherkins, non-insurance.

A Cortège Visits Knotty

Non-violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution. Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages.

—T. A. Edison

Lace Lace I glean to rose dwellings squeakers,
fortifying down I glean to rose that dwelling's squeakers,
'fortifying down Breviaries' my lament anaesthetists deserts.

Taverns entice tailors like I,
entice table-talk If I entice tailor like I,
today laughing-stocks fowling pieces nurserymen thorn and lecture.

My food-service Oh. That Slowdown, Ladle vintage,
débutantes redoubt potashing lemon adversely.
Addle-heads spavin And if it wasn't for pestle,
sorrow, gasoline Oh that lemon of magniloquent wouldn't.

Fortifying morally franked. Those Slowdowns, Ladle bandeaux influentially
as banal as I

can, arch Oh man's franked goblins like refreshers braking in,
roadside Or else vortexes stokehole glitters found shiftily endearingly.

Laid lemon like a revolver's lamed,
palmtop Like an Inhibitors châteaux laméd refrigerators
and repeats laid until the cordage I dab.

Forest Became Hot

Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape
those who dream only by night.

—E. A. Poe

Frying to understaff timber's perimeters, ligatures typify pussyfoots up,
enjoin to belie timbre's perimeters responsiveness, daws bicycled fumpered down,
'effluxes my lovers' girdles unlit hurrying in this town.

If I thieve hereabouts, like I concede daws,
conciliating twenty-four houris, gnawing through twenty-four hours,
gongs associate proboscides and Hanwa my lain.

Oh, that Sri Lankan Barroom, hugest Beijing, with parboils of lancets
guttural apparat,
pulled clasps morbidly or leniently by pros stridulating sectarians.
And if it wasn't for toiletries and stoats hairpins,
Oh, sombreros effervescing mindless wouldn't misfortune nowadays.

Evasively off of those Jocundity Lough folks, onerously as northerly as I can
disabuse,

Oh, man's reluctance metropolitan like rock'n'roll gnaws down in the
occurrences,

Or eloquently resigns failings indecorously fantastically.

Disjoins non-chlorinated like pupas, hatched his PIDGINS,
commiserating militaristic office-supplies deter his admonitory and Ryder whiskers
disjoint brutal yoking until the perimeters of timbres I syllabize stew out noblesse
peerages.

Running with Someone Else's Blues

We like journey's tautness, insignificant person places,
to read that darkness in sight radiation therapy winds,
'undue process lovin' puppylike noble participants verbalizing administrative
division.

Bear away hereunder, irrational motives out of beggarly solar opportunity,
call in period to tick over, unskilled solar time,
gonna disunion my chase, leave out my swiftness.

Oh, that pugilist egg-producing chemical element quiet setup,
twisting my gaseous figure or web site music.
it wasn't drugs decreasing high sure abstraction,
Oh, that head soldier of mine wouldn't reject places nowhere.

I inappropriate fighter lines of ascent poems, scarcely aristocratically purpose up,
Oh, overpower impression theologizers, eject installation,
Or else wouldn't cook, leave it on, better half indeed, far me.

Carry off together underling period recall carry away together primitive,
American nonterritorial division disorder martial police officer adolescent particle
primate civil inconsequence I unbend, feminine follower common.

Multimedia artist and musician CHRIS FUNKHOUSER is the author of *Prehistoric Digital Poetry: An Archeology of Forms, 1959–1995* (2007), *New Directions in Digital Poetry* (2012), *pressAgain* (Free Dogma, 2014), *Electro Perdix* (Least Weasel, 2011), *LambdaMOO_Sessions* (Writer’s Forum, 2006), and an e-book (CD-ROM), *Selections 2.0*, published by the Faculty of Creative Multimedia at Multimedia University (Malaysia), where he was a Visiting Fulbright Scholar in 2006. He is a Professor and Director of the Communication and Media program at New Jersey Institute of Technology and a Contributing Editor at PennSound. See <http://web.njit.edu/~funkhous> for more information.

