A Catalogue of Light:

A Collection of Poems

BY

MATTHEW REED COREY
B. A., Florida State University, 2002
M. A., Florida State University, 2005

DISSERTATION

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Defense Committee:

Christina Pugh, Chair and Advisor
Jennifer Ashton
Mark Canuel
Christopher Grimes
Margaret Miner, French and Francophone Studies
For Kim and Kathleen Corey, George and Madeleine Macauley, Joseph and Eileen Corey, & Ephrem and Dorothy Messier—with love.
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Who are you in love with?
me?

Straight against the light I cross.

—Frank O’Hara, “Walking to Work”

We send the Wave to find the Wave—

—Emily Dickinson, [P1604]
The Migration of Light to the Horizon

Following his birth at Charity Hospital in 1929, Lieber M. Fish’s parents took him home to 24 Price Street, a two-story bungalow flanked by magnolia trees near the Savannah River. In boyhood, he would watch passersby from the living-room window, waiting for them to walk out of sight. Without any prospects for a local job out of high school, Fish took a Greyhound Lines bus to Eugene, Oregon. There, he gained temporary employment as a nighttime pump-house hand, and later fell into an apprenticeship as a logger. Fish walked away from his apprenticeship after six weeks, choosing in mid-August, 1947 to travel to San Francisco and enlist in the United States Army.

At the end of his second tour of duty, Fish returned home to Savannah, and found that his father was very ill, but rather than staying to help, he decided late one night to pack his duffle bag, and hitchhiked from one south Georgia town to the next. L. M. Fish spent the period between 1954 and 1956 as a migrant worker in the onion and cotton fields around Vidalia. Purchasing a bus ticket to New York City, Fish arrived at the Port Authority Bus Terminal on April 27th, 1956, and moved into the Niagara Hotel for Men, located at 241 Bowery.

He would remain jobless until November of 1956, when Lieber found steady employment as a vacuum-cleaner repairman at the AAA Vacuum Repair on the Lower East Side. When his father passed away on January 1st, 1960, L. M. came to believe that he would soon lose his mother; Fish returned home, for the first time in six years, to attend the funeral of his father. On a visit to the Museum of Modern Art in the fall of 1960, Fish met Janine Lesser, who woke him after he’d fallen asleep waiting for a call in one of the museum’s public telephone booths.
Were the Night-Sky as Silent as an Apron of Eyelets

L. M. Fish at the Port Authority Bus Terminal and in Times Square, Spring, 1956

The city I reveal, in séance with my reflexive breath,
is named Metropolis and levitates through the headlamps
fanned from a bus that began in Savannah—I’ve arrived

with the question, *Where does an unwelcome wind blow last?*,
and with the low-tide—please take half my heart, its time, its space.
The remainder is genesis. I’ll have what stillness loves

but concedes to the night-lit crosswalk at Forty-Second
and Ninth—within the middle of that quiet, find a white
marble dining-hall where a table will be set for me,

then unset as I toast a long life—and if I cannot hear
the hour at rest, then give me an alphabet wet with neon,
or dream that in my body lives the sound of descending

a spiral-staircase. The wind brushes my cheek and the marquee
for The Lyric movie palace. I know nothing is as colorless
as the curtain I’ve drawn to uncouple myself from becoming

too close with every person—so that shouldering my duffel bag,
I step over the rubber end of a blind woman’s white
cane, and I step down, divided, into the subway station.
Oh, I Hope He’ll Be Brave—

_In which he Imagines Old New York by Gaslight_

_The Crystal Palace is fast approaching to completion [sic]. Already the curved lines that indicate the dome are springing into the clear air. [Yet it] is wasting time to paint a magnificent Greek or Roman landscape, with temples and altars, and then put a Broadway store in the foreground._—_New York Daily Times_, May 7th, 1853

**ONE:** _PROLETARIAN_

I’m here and I am Pisces in triplicate, treading my way
down Surf Avenue,
one eye cocked to greet my fabricator, one eye on my afterthought, and another has shut—Herakles,
I feel as Herakles must’ve when he strangled those two vipers, as a boy not-yet-divine: unawares, my family would say.
I would correct them: un-aware.
But wary.

All the while, dear Brooklyn leans in, as if to say:
_O! Mister Fish, young bedlamite, young rascal spilled into New York Harbor holding nothing more than a pocket square. He is flophouse-bound, and it’s so pitiful, the way his trouser pants have lost their little hem. That he is one of many and that he fawns at the City is enough to send his darling mother to fits, and Fish will find no home ‘neath the skirts of Brooklyn._

Loose boot-nails and a beard nearly Hasidic, touring Old New York by what I imagine to be gaslight, a carbon-paper map of Brooklyn penciled over a map seeking to represent Manhattan: how Trinity Church is overwritten for the sake of noting the singular gentility of Prospect Park.
And I am,

it bears repeating, indistinct in a woolen suit, lost perhaps for a moment, near The Seven Seas Oyster Bar, Coney Island, my way lit by whale-fin oil—what a ridiculous thing to believe beneath the spin of electric lampposts, my bishops’ crooks
amid the distant downtown
repertoire.

While Fish crosses the East River, Manhattan bristles
at his ear, nestling Lieber
inside the F train: It is so good to see him, she remarks, and good that he sleeps
and forgets home. In my charge,
with his twin shadows pitched across the aisle, Fish is simpler,
and supple enough to think his recollection of Manhattan begins
in 1858, with the burning
of The Crystal Palace.
Oh, I Hope He’ll Be Brave—
In which he Imagines Old New York by Gaslight

TWO: HIS CHORUS BLATHERS, EACH SINGER PAID WITH A POCKETFUL OF SALTINES

You see, there was the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, but Fish was not there in 1853. No, not even his great-grandfather Selig had the chance to admire its steam elevator, and so Lieber was not yet born when its iron-and-glass Crystal Palace went up in a blaze. But that does not make a flyspeck of difference to L. M., late on a Sunday, reading a broadside exhibited in the Museum of the City of N-Y: A Mrs. Richardson of New York (who was one of the unfortunate persons burnt out by the fire that destroyed the Crystal Palace), by permission of the MAYOR OF NEW YORK, notes Mister Fish, obtained a number of curiosities very valuable for a cabinet, produced by the melting of the Building, and Fish thinks of the fire-escape outside his bedroom window, which could, in dim light and at a glance, be the remains of such a catastrophe. He could not have been there. Yet the frame of his bed seems to be, in the corner of this late hour, a beam recovered from the Palace’s absent dome.

We have come to understand, by the way he checks below the foot of this bed for ash, that he could imagine everything at once by what it suggests: the night-blue hesitance of a gaslight, as a prairie-fire no-one will ever see to extinguish, or as the luminous dome of a palace dedicated to the Industry of All Nations. Speaking from the curtain at his side, we suspect he will someday be irretrievable within his own outgoing tide. Now look: standing deep within the Museum of the City, he twists the bulb of a doorknob and is concerned whether it, too, was recovered from the blaze that felled the glass-and-iron arcades of the Palace and its rotunda that quoted the sky. Yes, all the same, the frame of his bed was taken from the Crystal Palace, just as every reliquary is filled with the milk-teeth of saints. Fish thinks, as he steps away from the poster promoting Misses Richardson’s ballyhoo, that there isn’t any reason his fire-escape was not once, in another time, reclaimed from an ash heap and melted down for the betterment of the working class. Which is one way of saying that L. M. takes a moment to grapple with this, and that stepping into a collection of feather fans, a rookery, he imagines the ruined Palace to have been re-distributed among the laborers as cast-iron pans and hammerheads; as a horseshoe, the blade of a hand-plane. Mister Fish peers into the habitat of feathers, the display taken from many colonies
of peafowl and ostrich, observing in their weightless color and false eyelets
the innermost panic that would startle a bird to flight. Fish looks just
too closely, and elbows a case of ivory fans belonging to Her Majesty Queen
Elizabeth I. We regret (one among us should say so) to mention
that he does not compensate his chorus sufficiently. On his way out
and past the Toy Collection, behind a sheet of glass, he sees a cast-iron
sleeping-car that he would take from the Museum, for Janine, if it were
not already part of some greater quarry, and of a grander exhibition.
An Appetite in Winter Thrums
L. M. Fish at the Niagara Hotel for Men, the Bowery—October 15th, 1956

Gratified
by the fragrance of rainsoaked cedar,
    I cultivate, I host, the unquiet

hum of waiting for
    more—the skins of my sweet-orange,

long since peeled, adjoin the hot-water
baseboards.
    I rest and I subsist—

underfloor,
the vapor barriers sibilate
    a coarse Ess. Hungry enough to sense

the radiator’s night-
crawling heat square the bedroom, I suckle

at my blushing cheeks—I’ve become so simple,
measured.
    One senses warmth by its degree—

emptiness
has no end in mind, and my living breath
    passes uncreated away.

Numbering the turns
    of my stomach, the hard-water pipes

knock and I hear moments inch by on stilts.
Now and then,
    my wait is endless—
Waiting for White Is the Same as Waiting for Grey
Mister L. M. Fish in Need of Anyone’s Company, Autumn, 1958

As if my sentence were hinged
on a minute, six o’clock
hesitates, and hesitates
to designate its ending
and the ways I should commence

conversation. Does a lemon dote
on its pith? Is October thirty lashes
with one pupil at the peephole? Whose
nautilus-shell has trapped its oceans?
I would rather say nothing

but that I hear rising the pine
forests of New York City,
and by the bristling loblolly
crosstalk, I listen as I
imagine them visible

and imagine telling someone
time is always short. Days level us,
the steps that convey us from sleeping
are numberless glass, and the rest shows
on us as parenthses

show us the way to what nests. As if,
as if—as if someone were awake
and this were a day, with the light
bill to trouble us, and Look
magazine steadying a foot

of my blanket-chest. What I think
of you, think also of me, marking
time where the clock’s black hands cross
and eclipse: if you mistake
its iris for mine, we’ve diminished.
Within the cavity of my chest is a little pith,
a cystic bundle woven airtight and tucked

under the base of my windpipe, nestling amid two
lobes of lung—
it seems to be a knot, a gradual aggregation

of worry and bother: the burl teased from a bolt of tweed
in my mother’s lap, its weft and warp disarranged.

Under the breastbone, benign, this curious innermost
heirloom—
a lump, a deep-sewn attaché that I will always carry

on my stroll from the free-lunch counters of Bleecker Street
up to Washington Square, just as I do

now. I take to my feet, which measure my tempo against
the city—
like two metronomes tolling my time-signature to all

of Greenwich Village and to its galleries of watchmakers
and clock-masters. From here, I can nearly see

the Village Gate and its understratum of busted-up
double reeds—
under its floorboards, I would imagine, there is stored a tone

of such intimate length and depth, almost like a bass trombone,
or like hearing your mother cough from one end

of the house to the other. I hadn’t the patience to listen
any longer—
but I recall that she snapped my rucksack shut, and I locked

my suitcases, packed for New York. She masked under her palm
the fatty knot lodged in her throat; I can remember

that as she paused, I felt for the underside of my fatigued
diaphragm—
she holds my hand, I hold my chest and we suffer.
Lines Written On the Brink of the Lower East Side

L. M. Fish at the Edge of a Thundershower, February, 1960

Gone is the cascading light of day
that echoed hours ago
from windowpane to windowpane

in the long downtown afternoon,
    displaced by the thunderhead angling

overhead, with its broad beclouded
crown—it encloses those of us
who lean from our brownstone

flats to meet 14th Street in honest
    leisure. I think to tap my meerschaum

pipe over the sidewalk below,
the street clock nodding off at half-past
five—then there is an arc of light

in the distant clarity at the storm’s edge,
    perhaps two hundred feet as the crow flies,

no more: I ought to photograph
the skyscrapers in these final moments
of June daylight, catching the farthest

margins of the fleeting sunshower
    in sepiatone. I am forever free

to stand at the window, as I please,
with my arms folded—the cityscape slight
and isolated at the brink of rainfall:

it is more near to me than my signed name.
    At the first mumbling of thunder,

I throw a leg over my window ledge
and edge slowly closer—far below, the City
darkens—and at street-level, an abbess

in dusky habit strolls past, as thunderstuck
    Manhattan bristles at my cheekbones.
You can feel it, the city, constant around you: my cufflinks have become skittery from more than a half-block of jackhammering. It must be said, I must say out of honesty, that while my initials are not immediately apparent on these fine monogrammed cufflinks—oh, Twenty-Eighth Street is crumbling—I have been solicited on linen writing-paper to join the Order of Carmelites. When out of anxiousness my fingertips follow the window on the vibrating envelope in my coat-pocket, I feel guilty—like being the one left holding a pistol after a fist-fight—guilty for half-a-mile’s walk from the bus to Our Lady of the Scapular. You can feel it, the Holy and Apostolic See, constant around you; and yet the Church seems preoccupied. Even in Midtown, they sometimes bow in prayer, Gloria Patri, where my finger-bones are half a tick behind the springs of a street-clock near the Congregation Adereth El. Someone must mention, in whispers, to the Reverend Father that I am at least half-Jewish—You can feel it, they might say after showing me out—and that is what I mean by guilt, never knowing how. Never feeling that I know enough to help, though kindness need be everywhere: the city, constant around you—hear me when I speak directly to you—in this parish of chantry-chapels. The breath of a young lily settles near the church-gate: Our Lady travels on the unforgotten air-current from rooftop to rooftop, blanketing the cityscape, knowing the way that pollen finds one’s lungs. You can feel it, I imagine the very poor would insist, but not at all like our city. The especially hungry should, instead, say that they can know God without the names and roses of his grace. I hope that it would be like smelling perfume—Shalimar, let’s say, or black pepper with tomato—while waiting alone in a bus-shelter at lunchtime. But I cannot know. I’m left standing at the church-door, my envelope folded in two, a pocket in my pocket: I commit to memory the shape of my embossed name and the grain of the letterhead, propping their invitation against the doorstep, remembering not the cloven hooves of the gargoyle that mounts the rainspout but what scarcity it takes to fill a dome.
Index of Precious Objects Locked within the Temple of the Sun  
*The End of an Afternoon at the Museum of Modern Art—Sunday, September 25th, 1960*

Here, Janine’s cheeks cross a pyramid of fallen window-light at the sentence-thin close of the day, and here atop an escalator she thinks of the gravity of repeating one’s first name. This bank of phone booths is occupied: in one, a man has fallen asleep waiting for his call, and for dark. In alchemy breathes gold-leaf.

*Tick, tick, tick, tick:* she clinks a scrimshaw button against the booth’s pane-door, while Lieber dreams a rhinoceros scratching its toenail into an ice-floe,

and while a docent notices Janine in profile leaning with her thighbone against the handle. A hall of Spanish paintings makes no sound but sailing.

We know a lamp by its lamplight, the piano by its bench, and that chance lies on its side. She’ll tell her mother that they met inside the compartment of a revolving door, and that the fourth time around, he asked her name again; in truth, before the close of every night, something round as a bell tolls twice.
The couple dated for a year before Fish proposed, and they were married in a Jewish ceremony on September 16th, 1962; Janine presumed she would never leave New York City. In late September of 1964, the young couple rented a Lower East Side apartment to which they would take their newborn baby, but the family’s fortune later changed when L. M. Fish lost his job at the Vacuum Repair Shop.

Throughout 1965, Fish rarely left the bedroom of their apartment above the Silver Monument Works at 125 Stanton Street, and would spend his time making a written record of the weather, or collaging, until Janine returned from work each evening. By December of that year, Lieber Fish found employment with the New York City Transit Authority, first working as a station attendant, then taking the Conductor’s Examination, taking instruction to be a train operator on the Brooklyn Mass Transit Brighton Line.
As Mister Fish tries on seersucker slacks, he notices that his feet resemble those of an alligator:

watching the nails curl over his toes, he doesn’t think
of his fiancée pacing a bridal
suite at the Hotel Cannonade, or of the radio’s

chimes that lend definition to the passing
of hours. Waiting, Janine dabs her thumb into a pot
of Rosebud salve, smearing it onto the patches

of psoriatic eruption that make a duotone map of her
hands. Janine hides her hands; L. M.,
with his hard stare launched at the tailor’s assistant, coos

in the girl’s ear as she measures the breadth
of his arms. He promises her satsuma tea and dancing
at the Five Spot, or Chateaubriand and Le Gourmet

for quiet and bourbon, and coaxes her with his Southland
drawl and overgenerous chinwag. As Janine
Lesser sits astride the windowsill, a small pile

of her gown wafting toward Brooklyn, she waits for him,
for L. M., Lieber Mahoney,

in his belatedly fitted duds. The suite’s transistor radio
dislodges president Kennedy’s address
from its germanium diodes: the exploration of space will go

ahead, whether we join in it or not, and her marriage,
she thinks, is just the same; the ceremony merely launches
them into parliament with a caboodle

of catholic innamorati, past loves, those entangled
in the orbit of each. Janine daydreams that she and Lieber
hover near the ceiling as Sputnik and Vostok, a pair

of steely globes circumnavigating the suite’s cracked plaster ceiling;
they thrust inch by inch
toward each other in concentric paths, nudging and pulsing as they pass. As Sputnik withdraws from orbit, Janine watches her fiancée pull himself up the front stoop and into the hotel, standing as to receive the groom in her wedding dress; its sunbursts of lace lilting across her chest. She’s unready for him.

For moments, Janine places the cuticle of her thumbnail to the peak of her bottom lip, realizing that she must now squint to see a crown of Canada geese; they’re migrating too soon.

In the hallway, Misses Lesser insists and insists again to Lieber that it’s dangerous to see the bride early, and is left no choice but to yank at the sleeve of his jacket.

The president asserts to the room: *well, space is there, and we’re going to climb it*, and the sound of the groom’s protest precedes his entry. Mister Fish is deployed into the gravitational pull of his wife’s freckled forearms, and as bride and bridegroom are sent aloft by the pull of one another, they splinter the roots that have held them terrestrial. Both notice the invasive aroma of satsuma stewing amidst lace and sugared velvet; that it tempts him isn’t significant—not now. Were they to ascend, ringlets of clouds would form below the couple, obscuring their view; above them would wait the operatic bellow of open space. The president rises: *as we set sail we ask God’s blessing*: kisses, kisses.
Timid, Becoming Breathless
Uneasy, Mister Fish Peeks Out from Under the Manhattan Bridge, March of 1964

Hope against all hope: my stupid, sweet tobacco smoke
loops the crook of my elbow

and loiters by the streetcorner—which, in seconds, will be a seam-
less, clean space for the harbor

breeze to recapture. I could pace the parking meters forever,
or longer, until the tulip

trees’ conical seed-pods mature; come September, they’ll drop
to the bluestone sidewalk and give

of themselves quite openly. I ask: Am I rare? Am I so rare
to wear their flower in my

hair? No, I’m afraid—the tide runs to sea and abandons its
shorebirds; no, I am afraid.
My Wife as One of Many Mammals
A Sketch of Missus Fish, Spring, 1964

Hush—the play of lights, of common
daylight and early evening
owl-light, is pitched onto
her knees,

against the palm of the Empire
sofa—our windows thrown open
to Stanton Street, bamboo shades
half-drawn

to dim the avenue and dull
its hustle-bustle—hush. Soundless,
Janine slumbers, her child snoozing
inside.

They should be fashioned in marble,
here: her chin still and cordially
stippled from stone, a keen bright
chisel
tunneling for unborn promise.
O! what a scene to study upon
waking every day, for months—but
hush—hush.

It seems too much: the quietness
demanded by pregnancy, waiting
for soft entrance—the twilight now
a dark
gown—mother-and-child at rest,
iced-over, unmoving, breathing
like two petite beasts—one within
one more.
Mercy Be

Fish in Contemplation of A Possible Crimewave, July 5th, 1964

Every field-of-vision is porous: the afterimage of mercury catches the corner of my eye, a Hudson Commodore, and there are gangsters in profile—each window makes a chrome frame for their overcoats.

I think these men edge the early afternoon street-scene and, flushed, our bankers snap shut their lock-boxes: a mustachioed financier mustn’t breathe until they’ve passed—he will stare into the clock-face, remembering what it is to leave the house each day, to walk with his eyes closed. A block ahead, one of the hoodlums mounts the running-boards while another takes the sidewalk, humming knife-wise.

I believe Manhattan’s peacock-plume would withdraw within seconds, and I tend to fret for New York at moments like this, when I cannot stand to be here at all—I am scared so still-of-foot.

There is room enough—within this island, unbreathing, and at this instant—to wait for the porcelain city that I could walk in a moment, my sight-line lapsing into its memories, were its dawns to coincide like lace. This is as comforting to me as it is for the teller to flick an alarm-switch in hope that someone listens—then and there, I watch the getaway driver jump the gun, alone, and pull the sedan away.
Transcription of an Anxious Season

Jobless Again, Fish Hides His Head—January 2nd, 1965

In the end, one has but oneself,
   listening to the snow banks shift
and for the dogs at the chain-link.

   How safe it is to lie in wait
for a day to pass—and then
   another—remembering what

it was to rise and walk to work.
   Should the sodium-vapor lamps
of the City switch on to flood

   the ribs of the frost-bearing cloud
cover, I wouldn’t know: there could be no
   outside world, and the skeleton

turns, and the skeleton turns and turns
   in bedclothes. I hold this quilt’s hem
to my hairline and think of Janine

   waiting in the subway—I suppose
that she will find me as colorless
   and soundless as a drop in atmospheric

pressure and, suspended, she will sit
   at the edge of our bed and turn her eyes
to meet the line of my staring. I foretell

   a sharp and sudden end to this year;
how shameful the thought. She will ask
   whether I’ve spoken a word all day.

A windowpane shudders in the hard winter
   headwinds, and in our empty home,
the door-hinges and wallboard grow

   colder—I picture the snowstorm
overhead as a papery shade
   under which I dream every passageway.
There is Now a Shiver Under the Syllable on His Tongue

L. M. Fish Thinks of What He Has Lost in Marriage, East NY, 1968

The ends of every echo meet
in open air—at cornice-edge;
to calcify the hammer, clack,
and anvil overheard in bones
so old and older still. If I adapt

my memories of you to match
a pitch, just as this sandstone stoop
refracts footfall, the hook and eye
that fastens shut what I’ve disclosed
would find me captured—or noon-like

in acoustic shock—not cast as a shade
tree that circles through my plea
for you to warm, but stolen away
in imitation of furnace smoke
blown over the mirroring riverbeds.
Ocular Poem in a Rainstorm with a Pickle

Mr. Fish Investigates the Boathouse at Prospect Park, Mid-May, 1969

Now the firm incurve of my blind-spot dovetails
with the far sandstone ridge that runs along
Prospect Park’s low meadowlark playing fields;
moments pass—and I blink the daylight at rest
among clover. Soon I’ll have hold of the railing
at Lullwater Bridge, sooner yet the serpentine
watercourse sheds its greens against the boathouse
windows’ elliptical arches—and then the corner
of my eye, through secret-keeping waterborne light,
captures a rower’s thrown elbows, her hair
pinned back with barrettes, coiled. This afternoon
has fallen. I bite a dill pickle from a brown
sack, I hear nothing but taxicabs honking in the rain now
on Flatbush, I close both eyes—and I’m to myself
the body weathered and unbelonging. I think my
blind-spot traces an opaline ring onto so many scenes
that escape me, just as one droplet of milk clouds
a fine Dutch lens. From within the downpour,
some pigeons coo to stir the fall of two thousand raindrops,
or a lone waterbug crisply clicks its mandibles
at the summer damp—and I listen as the rowboat’s
rowlock dips to dissever a family of water lilies,
and to the river’s startling splash, to its longways echo. I
cannot see her socks go under, but I’m shocked,
the pickle is shocked and the whole day now slides out
of grasp—there is a human yip, the storm-front divides
into arcades, and we have her two thin-lipped gasps
for dry air. Every blind-spot mocks its eyeball, and even
as the face of the lenticular moon emerges
prematurely in daytime, my peripheral sight
occludes its pearly shape—I disregard the moon
and look across the rain-spotted glade as if I could picture this landscape as it is, dim and unbroken.
If He Once Dreamt of Furniture and If Her Mouth Were Then a Voiceless Corner Cabinet

*Janine Fish Drops Her Husband’s Watch: the Lower East Side, April, 1970*

Every look is a footbridge to a kiln: Janine hedges Lieber’s glimpse when his watchband slips through her fingers and into a crock of cream.

She turns toward the discipline nested in his eye-sockets, facing him gently, just as gently as one turns to meet one’s company in the mirror.

A fly idle at his ear shades the consonants that root her apology to this accident, yet he hears only the vowel-sounds *O, I*

and *E*, excluding from *Forgive me* the pith of her given gift.

His dampish wristwatch drips from the needle of kept-time the half-and-half that dribbles across the gilding slight at the creampot’s lip.

She fiddles six, seven, eight seconds after her mistake, so long that he is sure its ruined balance-spring unwinds milkfat for the duration of their gazing. Janine will remember how her husband suggests the optics of an hour tied to the hour’s number, that he extends his hand into her hand, and for sparseness brushes her temple.
Poem Like an Instamatic Camera

Mr. Fish, 42nd Street & Lexington Avenue, 1972

He would never photograph himself outside their brownstone, but how about now, winding the spring of his pocket-camera
while curbside, sidling

through the lunchtime clamor
at The Chrysler Building:
what about here,
in all of this uncertainty?

How about, instead, walking the boulevards of the far-flung Boroughs for a picture
with the clocktower of Ozone Park, or with Staten
Island’s convincing

little roadside
    Revolutionary
War monuments?
    No, he clicks Shutter Release.

This is for Janine, he mumbles into the lens that snaps at arm’s length. This will begin
his living memory without his mistakes, and hers.
    He dims the glassy

plane of The Chrysler
    Building, and through
the sunlight refracted
    off his flashbulb, into his lens,

and then Lieber is elsewhere: here is his face with the sunken eyes and here
are his overcoat and loose jawbone, and his lips
read Hold the mayonnaise.

Steady, Fish looks
    at the rangefinder, and exposes
the film again
    to midday and to the path of the sun.
Oh, I Hope He’ll Be Brave—

_in which he Imagines Old New York by Gaslight_

**THREE: EMPLOYED BY PINKERTON, MISTER FISH FOLLOWS HOME AN ACOUSTICS EXPERT**

In gaslight, in the light of a Pullman car—inside parergonic light that medicates
the owners of lost envelopes—140th Street at dusk
  could be mistaken as a foggy
carriageway for Gilded Age luminaries and persons
of distinction and note.

But now—at nightfall, in monotone—I think that mid-century Harlem
looks a lot like Seoul, South Korea after
  the War; a block-and-a-half away,
a piano factory dismisses its only living
instrument tuner, for whom
the evening sky is bioacoustic. The dampers, if they could, would notice he has gone.
You see, this kind of scarcity is so common to my comings
  and goings—to the way the city suggests
itself day to day—its curio cabinet
open when we leave in the morning,
and closed as we return home. Between you and me, there cannot be anything
more to it than that. The piano tuner won’t return—he lollygags,
dragging his feet across the hibernal
span of the 145th Street bridge,
which once carried the domed ceiling
of our Crystal Palace—and he can feel this, in the way its trusses sound when struck
with his tuning-fork: there is a sudden brightness
  as the bridge sounds its shape and diocese.
From a city-block away, I listen for the piano
tuner’s trusted fork to resonate and fracture.
Oh, I Hope He’ll Be Brave—

In which he Imagines Old New York by Gaslight

FOUR: RARE AND PECULIAR

(CAST: JANINE LESSER FISH)

A New York City apartment.
A Davenport sofa, throw pillows.
   Afternoon, or later, September.

She lights a cigarette
   and wonders if Mister Fish
is ever at home in the world
   that has arrived alongside him.

Over a picnic lunch,
   my husband once told me
that he came to the city
   with the help and blessing
of his father, who tucked four
   hundred and five dollars
in his pocket square and made
   Lieber promise that he would
work, and that he’d come home
   once his mother asked after him.
When we met, in a bank
   of public telephone booths
at the Museum of Modern
   Art, Private First Class Fish
was sleeping. Just the same, I knocked
   and asked if he would be a dear
and please scoot over and hand
   me the receiver, which he didn’t
quite cotton to. I phoned my mother
   to tell her I’d just met someone.

Oh, and he was such
   a hillbilly in those days,
with his checkered Mackinaw
and boots. I could tell he was out
of sorts. What I didn’t know
at the time was that he’d always
wanted to be here with someone,
still, in an evening of the city.

To my rare and peculiar
husband, New York was the cat’s
meow; the year we married, one
night, I saw him from down the block,
on Thirty-third, watching them demolish
Penn Station. Remember, he isn’t
a man who would hold out for more time,
or for what will fall away homeward.
What Turns Inside a Lighted Knot

Following a twelve-year stint as a train operator in New York, L. M. interviewed with CSX Transportation, and was offered a position in Florida as a conductor with the Apalachicola Northern Railway. After moving to Florida in 1978, the family purchased a cinderblock home near the Gulf of Mexico, in a hamlet called Carrabelle. Lieber suffered a heart attack the next year and his recovery lasted months.

During the 1980s, in retirement, L. M. and Janine spent much of their time abroad. On a trip to China in 1992, Lieber found himself unable to remember names, faces, and his circumstances, something he’d previously experienced but had not mentioned to his wife; upon their return to the United States, Fish was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.
How Loquacious the Quiet Can Be, How Endless

LMF Sitting With His Daughter Clementine, April, 1978

Each year is endured
    at such a loss, is what I could respond,
but don’t—you’re telling me how most people
would like for the Cold War to be over,
but—I don’t know. We’ve suffered a loss,
too, you and me.

The kitchen faucet
    snarls while you wait for me to speak.
Under the sunshade of noiselessness that we’ve
hung here—in the middle of a day—our teatime
is interrupted in mid-sentence, at this table,
in mid-air.

I watch your jawbone
    come to rest. The curtains part
for the gulf-breeze, and we think of what people
will say in days to come, about the nearly
silent day we spent together—though I
don’t think long.
From the thought of palmetto fronds
fanning the mass and lacquer
of water-vapor, she wakes
to her husband as he clutches
the drawn bow of his shoulder,
and overhears in Lieber’s speech
the acute coronary that soon
would salt her sleep white and pale
its attic rafters with what now
lashes his breath to the question.

Perhaps what rises to Fish
as air-hunger, perhaps what refines
in him this unquiet mineral,
and perhaps what catches him, after
a time, is the concern she keeps
undersewn and in the confidence
of the encyclopedia
set. There was nothing before her
and him, and when Lieber stiffens
his spine to spite the grace and bridge
of fingers locked across this chest,
she catches sight of the chalk-line
dividing daybreak. Her answer frays
the knots of light at dawn, and is
his little months, hitching one to one.
Navigating by Echocardiogram

July 8th, 1979

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or are / The eastern riches?—John Donne,
“Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness”

L.M. Fish lies anaesthetized,
  the skin of his chest peeled
back to permit entry
  to the crestfallen monarchy
of his cardiac organ: stretched

across an operating table, and stiff
  as a saint’s finger-bone, his body
is bedeviled by the assembly
of surgeons that carve from his fractured
ribs a seascape of curling, red-tipped

whitecaps. This fleshy tide rises
  and falls with each kick
of his mule-legged heart, its outer
walls swabbed sinless, continents of fat
bathed with antiseptic; the muscular

Sergeant-at-Arms laid-out, guileless,
  simple, a waxing gibbous
moon. Roundabout, the operating
theater is unable to contain Mister Fish
in his most holy of holy forms:

gentleman caller to the Lunar
  Mansion, that colossal magnet. Fish
falls away from Her, hovering
fixed above the Pacific Basin,
its ground swells soaking

the machine-sewn hem of his surgical
  drape, the sea a mimeographed portrait
of Magellan. Blustery, L.M.
is ensnared by the algal bloom
of the circumnavigator’s whiskers,

and lowered, lowered until the value
of Her coin-like face passes
into an illegible interchange of light-beams.
The patient’s chest cavity fills
with brine and, immersed, floating mildly
toward Manila, farther westward
and into the path of our postwar
explanations, tumbling along the peaks
of seamounts. She, unable
to hesitate, draws a tidal current over him,
a submarine river that presses
his displacement, obliged by Her
magnetic thrust. Soon his heart
will be restarted, the sutures will keep
him whole, and Fish will be sewn
from east to west—Oriental
to Occidental—his lungs are aerated,
and blood is siphoned so that he may rise;
blood is rambling through the four
chambers of the heart—rambling when called.
Birdcall, I Hear Birdcall from the Fragrant Magnolias

Janine L. Fish Waits for Dawn in West Florida, August 27th, 1979

I can’t forget that once I crossed myself alone
    at the sign of first-light: I prayed
as the hard freeze withdrew inland, as two columns
    of daytime ran parallel to the hallway

floorboards, the paper-backed vanity mirror
    holding me upright. I waited in goosebumps.
Before sun-up, I prayed my holy cards to hear
    birdsong, to hear what the aimless

kingfisher had to say as he sashayed
    to wake his mate nesting in the sea-grass.
What else can the faithless do? I settle now
    for the clacking yelp of the herring gull

who pitterpats her clawed toes along the frosted
    gutter pipe; and, my hair dressed with a rosewood comb,
I think of dabbing the scar tissue of Lieber’s breastbone
    with lanolin, while the new morning enunciates

the scent that our magnolia blooms outlive
    and a winnowing of bluebirds’ wings.
I do believe that I once crossed myself
    alone and at the sign of first-light;

this says that I tried to take care of him, visiting
    his hospital bed, holding his temple at my chest.
This is to say I could only ever do so much,
    that I await his release, hoping for the day he might

return home and, conscious, remind me love is one
    alone and nothing but. Another dawn falls at my feet,
and I see that for seven weeks, I’ve left the screen door
    unhinged. Our sleeping-porch is cold, open.
An Opal Diffracting the Visible Spectrum of Dimness

L. M. and Janine at Shands Hospital, Gainesville, Florida—September 5th, 1979

You should not think of my disarmed glance
turning to the color of afternoon that declines
our staircarpet—this is the grasslands I have trespassed

on my own, in my grassy gown. No one must look with me
into that far room for the loss of half-heather
shadow to the shafts of light summerlong at the sill.
Complications Arise and the Transplanted Heart is Rejected

*In which Janine Fish Leaves Her Husband’s Side, October 11th, 1979*

The curtains of the Spanish moss turn over and over
  in the coastal nor’easter in full cry and without end.

This is how it is: I’ve fallen shy of Lieber and pass
  from his hospital room; and when he calls, I lower my face.

I cannot return to his bedside, and as I knot a kerchief
  at the soft tissue of my neck, the ceiling of his voice gives way.

This is how it soon will be: the aerial roots of the moss
  will lose their soft anchor, and I must likewise cut him loose.

In our home, the hallway carries the diatonic movement
  of the risen moon; its gauzy ray comes to rest on my pillow.

I do not think he will recover, and our bedside clock
  lingers through the vacant night, even as he gathers my name.
As the Fool

The Florida Panhandle, November 7th, 1985

Time that thunder washed the creek beds white, and time for the crosshatched sawgrass to crimp askance a staircase of lightning, were Fish to wake and make the mistake of telling time.

+ 

There was, withdrawing all else from yesterday, in earshot of the forest-edge the absence of a rattlesnake: from inside the lawn, Fish was aware, it wrenched his vision nearer.

By twilight, one could taste the downpour past the county-line, as one would clasp the afterlife in hand. Fish mishears the next year, in love with curtains of rain falling mutely into place.

+ 

He is foolish to think the honey of Sunday could not be spirited away in the bee-smoke of Monday: now in the middle of night, Fish looks into the fumigated hive hewn sky-deep.
Stretching his bird-thin limbs,
Fish thinks it a shame
that the pleasure of sleeping
is an unconscious joy:
    a dip of the eyebrows

beneath the nightlong sea-foam,
or like the momentary loss
of one’s words, what to call this
or that. He has propped each
    window open to receive

the westbound trade winds of autumn
that sweep over the cinderblock homes
at Carrabelle, and thinks of the heavens
above the earth as a star-burnt
cavity, of the abandoned

Mojave Desert; and that in dreaming
he could attend to the airy unstudied
spaces around his thoughts. Fish
recalls, shutting his eyelids,
    the peach-toned sea-glass shards

that his great-aunt collected in a jar
on a piano lid, remembers them
in her sun parlor, thinks of lamp light
falling across the raised letters that spell
    Amb-erg-ris or In-dian

_Ink or Tinct-ure_, their marks
of manufacture. In childhood, Lieber
looked through the vessel’s curving surface
and into the clouded fragments arranged
    at its heart, adoring the glass

column that could become his alphabet
or his lapidary. He must know
that every serif of those four
lost words was smoothed in time
    by a groundswell pressing
upon the seafloor, and that the dreamful heavens hung overtop the earth draw the tide: whispering the hours, one comes to depend on the other, ink-stained and wave-worn.
Entombed in the Company of Echoes

In which Mister Fish is Lauded By a Long-Buried Titan, Summer, 1992

[I]n the wide-pathed earth, [...] the Titan gods are hidden under misty gloom,
in a dank place where are the ends of the huge earth. And they
may not go out. — Hesiod, “Theogeny”

Their courtesy heliotropic, following the westward
dawdle of the sun, a gaggle of Chinese wildflowers
gesture to the mouth of a cave and to its unhealed gash.

An aperture that parts for the exiting fruit bats, it mumbles
its salaam in undertones of numbed air while they peel
from stalactites and flowstone. The thresh of their wings

overwhelms the warble of lulling applause for Mister
L. Mahoney Fish, who collapses drowsily against
a clotting notch of calcite, a column that hoists the ceiling

skyward. Hung with limestone draperies, the ribbed
vault redoubles his ovation, plus ultra, a wayward
Titan venerating the coarseness of his travel-wise feet

and the way Fish pitters his fingers against the carbonate
architecture with patience; he is like an anchorite
bricked-up in the walls of a priory. From within the cavern,

there erupts a magnetic handclapping for the hours atop hours
L. M. has pursed his lips, silently truth-swollen, or belch-swollen. The diagnosis: senile dementia, astray

from the tour group. His recollection is mislaid, a lonesome
mastodon tooth at the bottom of a subsurface pool, and elderly
Fish passes forth a soft-tongued burble, feeble, the unsteady
half-whispered yelp of a sleeping pup.
He Would Leave to Her a Closet Full of Suits and a Deer Staring from the Lawn

_Mister Fish Cradles His Wife’s Chin in the Crook of His Neck, Late in 1993_

When you sleep tonight, Janine—dreaming a field of monkshood and another tract, empty

but for a cowl of night-shade—stop to hold the pruning shears still in your hand. Instead of stems,

sever my end from us, and watch the sun descend to circle my collar. When you then think

of my passage, your key will not yet fit its lock, but the warmth of the doorknob will reach you.
What the Ebb-tide Says in Apology to the High-tide

The Saint Johns River, FL, 1994

Not until this channel of tannic blackwater fractures
the reflected crescent of the moon on its winter path,
no—and not until the puzzle of your speaking reveals

that you’ve summoned to your side the sackcloth and ashes
I have worn in matrimony—no, only once the snowy

egret nests cold of heart in a lily of my imagining
will I return home, to find that your cheek has turned against
a thistle that’s dried in my unkindness. My bride, you hitch

the wick to the candle’s flame—when held to wax-light, the egg
shell of an alligator will suggest the sawtoothed shadow

of a backbone, his nested threat—and my bride, sown cotton seed,
you conceal and I conceal the injury we wake with. Yet
if the braid of our current weren’t as sure as the candle

it hides, we would look within this brackish body to find the wick
just extinguished, and our silhouettes doused from the levee.
Eyelids shutting, well-met,
    I am dead-tired of marching
inward only to overlook
myself. Of late,
    at sixty-eight, I’m starved

for song: My dear, forget.

Janine, let me pass for jest,
    only as meshuggenah,
your idling bridegroom.
In my crooked
    waistcoat, I am maddened
to sing: My dear, forget.

Put me aside. In repose,
    I hum to fill the margins
of your prayerbook
with boughs of oak,
    to take my place, singing:

My dear, dear, forget me.
In the middle of a night in December, 1997, Janine Fish suffered a stroke and passed away at the age of sixty-one. That summer, Lieber’s daughter Clementine asked him to move from Carrabelle to live with her in Brooklyn, in an apartment between the Manhattan Bridge and Brooklyn Bridge. He lived in a back bedroom where, at the end of his life, Fish liked most of all to listen for the gulls during the day and to the sidewalk traffic at night. L. M. Fish died on October 21st, 2005, in a fifth-floor apartment on Water Street. By the new year, his daughter and her son would spread his ashes off the coast of the Sea Islands, in his native Georgia.
The Origins of Bellmaking in the First Hour of a Day

One white morning beam falls through a keyhole, ash blooms in chimney pots, and Fish prunes the afterfeathers from a memory of his wife’s careworn palm at rest atop his own, casting aside the truth that her slight metacarpus once was broken and rewoven. Often, she spoke of first-light as a bell ringing deep in the atmosphere, and her fingers would trace the bell-curve of his clavicle; he holds his breath.

Grieving closeness, she once said, I’ll be seeing you. At half-past six, Fish ignites the stove to simmer the tea that will steep until taken by the cold. Grieving closeness once, she said, I’ll be seeing you.
Half-Way Dismantled in the Wake of Thousands of Hours

A Sketch of Mr. Fish in Old Age

Without anyone sending
warning from the future, I’ve aged:
   the sleeve of my shirt
bounds the arm, hangs hunkered—low,
inviting one to pass her eyes
   from my forearm to wrist
to metacarpals: the five columns
   of my hand are its unsteady,
colorless beginning.

Over the hardwood of months
that makes a passageway of waking
   sleepless, and at a loss,
I’ve grown familiar with mornings,
with the gradual and routine
   accumulation—I gather
that everyone passes through,
   and expecting a cloud-bank,
stares right at the sun.
Lipping Chocolate Cigarettes, the Mathematician Shakes a Fist

*In which Archimedes Abandons Him*

Waking to a thunderclap un-tethered over the Ionian Sea, I button my snoring trousers, windstorms raising a caterwaul from the east—I am navigating the Earth’s equatorial cummerbund. Inside, my porthole depicts an ocean awash in Cinecolor: its greens dampened by the hurry-scurry of rainfall—and I, elephantine in my cabin, imagine myself seaside with Archimedes at Syracuse. Archimedes and I lay in the surf—gowned and noshing Walnettos, malted milk balls, and licorice pipes—we weigh upon the Sicilian coast like a pair of elderly Monk seals: he, drawing a triangle in the sand, and around that a curving parabola, an arch—and I, tracing within his, a scalene triangle of my own. Then he within mine, until sand and reeds seem no longer delicate enough—inadequate for inscribing even one granule with further figures and arcs; he, confounded by the divisibility of sand into atoms—and further, farther. Archimedes as a host for molecules, quarks, antiquarks and nucleons: he gives me the eye—more-or-less John Wayne at the corners of his mouth, snarling, the mathematician divides an envelope of Sen-Sen breath powder in-two and into fourths, and onward: his palm a boundless quarry, each finger a jointed crane. I watch his sleight-of-hand with care, Archimedes crafting dozens of hand-craddled piles from the confection—breaking each mint fleck into smidgens and smidgens into specks, specks into trifling jots of sweet starch—his hand thrown into routine as though sliding the beads of a school’s abacus, east to west. Only a fine dust remains, an indivisible hodge-podge: chuffed, Archimedes turns and strolls the beach to dry his gown, and that is the precise distance between ancient and modern—O!, rocket-ships, O!, vulcanized rubber.
Self-Portrait of L. M. Motioning for the Family Doctor

In Carrabelle One Morning

There is a secret: I have taken something from you, a penknife or a pot of ink, all of the cutlery—I cannot recall—

And there is Brooklyn, a little black licorice under the tongue, Avenue U in a thunderstorm, doing the Madison, the Frug—now let’s be serious,

even if I’ve danced my shoes to ribbons this evening—

L. M. Fish squints into a pair of eyeglasses, the joints of his thumbs tucked into his fists. In bed, he lies still: there isn’t time, anymore, for the news that a hurricane has broken over the sand dunes and flooded the light of dawn.

You are, now and then, a little orchestration of the folk, Borough Park, companion. All cinderblock and fly agarics: happy to be timeliest, a hot-jazz cabaret—I mean, myself: Everyman as a sheet of carbon paper, in triplicate—perhaps I’ve filched a can of Le Sueur peas from your cabinets, holy terror, a sharp indictment—

Within reach, there is a snippet of Lieber Fish, where on some hillside he would ask the names of your grandparents just as he asks for your company. The muscles of his legs cramp with the afterglow of so much day-to-day chitchat.

We could go and bet on the racing horses, on a trifecta at The Meadowlands; bring along your fine shoes and I’ll step out of bed one of these days, a Christmas miracle, clear the chiffonier and sideboard. This summer is a wet summer, you who are not who I said you are—a gliding of heartstrings: Where is Janine? In the bed next to me, having it made—

If Janine were downstairs on the telephone, she would arrange his plans on paper, and sketch the triform vesica piscis into their phonebook. Were she home, she would climb the stairs. The doctor turns the doorknob, and Mister Fish is on his own.
Into the Order of Sundowning

L. M. Fish in the Late Stage of Dementia

At nightfall: the foreshortened tongue of the ox; desiring to speak to you all,
he faces a city skyline, now unknowing how
to say the bone marrow inside seclusion starves
from its anemic host every final word. Behind
window-glass, the perfume of Lieber’s aphonic
panic comes and goes; his deer-musk, his honeycomb,
the current tense of his ammoniac nightclothes.

Past twilight: a post office full of sand; carried in the mandible of saying nothing,
he can see neither the doorframe nor the brass knob, nor
a latch, which his caretaker conceals on the other side
of this calico curtain. If the epilogue
is that dark finds him escapeless, then the knot drowned
in his throat chokes off the first syllable, the second
belongs to the horizon, and the final is still too soft.

Near dusk: deacon and deaconess elope across a muskmelon patch; for widowing,
he strikes a match on the nightstand, holding in mind the kink
of a person’s curls, and for his own end, a hurricane lamp
chugs toward lightness and wick-ash. There are footsteps inside
the next room, where his caretaker removes her coat, listening
at the wall for her father to stand and step closer.
She asks if he is there, then asks if he needs to wash.

By pitch-dark: a hand extended overreaches its name; God is good and fair,
he repeats, seeing within this sheath of fog and ice
the far end of a corridor. The flame burns to soot, and what
he once called a silhouette tapers to a point narrower
than moonbeams, resting in the wood-grain of a floorboard.
In the salt and smoke of eyesight, he almost has the color
of the coming day, almost watches its warning break below.

The small hours: how the shank of a hook terminates at its eye; even as evening thins,

he grips and shakes the doorknob, he digs at his waistband,
and from inside the stain of sleeplessness, strikes his palm against
and against a hinge. Forcing the neck of a swan,

he remembers; the table set for an absent
guest, he recalls; the brocade, he is certain, began
with the fiction of a moth’s eyespot and ended with a pinprick.
Epilogue: *Ex-libris Lieber Mahoney Fish*

1. “When I write to you, you answer me in fish.”
   —William Cowper in a letter to Mrs. Newton (June 2nd, 1780)

   At the intertidal zone between the seacoast firm and the guiding deep, Fish lays his eyes on the horizon-line that separates all the heavenly good from this susurrous oceanscape, cool and useless. In vain, one breaker spills onto its receding antecedent, yielding to the ceaseless charm of the unpurposed surf.

2. “Being a commission agent, it is all fish that comes to my net.”
   —James G. Bertram, *The Harvest of the Sea* (1873)

   Matthew knows that Lieber’s toes graze the coquina shells where Fish stands on the beach, waiting for the musket-black horizon to overtake the patch where Matthew once stood, also piscine by the murmuring sea at sundown. If only they could stand arm in arm, the running tide would carry their shadows such that Matthew begins Lieber; and Lieber, Matthew.

3. “The thing is utterly improbable and incredible, that a man [...] should have existed in the inside of a fish.”
   —Augustine on the story of Jonah, “Letter CII.30” (409)

   Deeper than the curvature of the faraway sea-line, my given shape
   [“Epilogue: *Ex-libris...*” stanza continues]

   bends amid this leeward breeze—I think to ask if I
were meant, at all, to be.
Inside your reply, I would adapt to the ocean currents so readily,
taking to the paltry, pretty sea—softly, a wave crests, and then another:
I have become letters.
Matthew Reed Corey

matthewreedcorey@gmail.com Department of English University of Illinois at Chicago
773-388-2404 (home) University Hall 1815 601 South Morgan Street
904-742-3390 (cell) M/C 162 Chicago, IL, 60607-7120

EDUCATION

**PhD | English**

Program for Writers, University of Illinois at Chicago [UIC] Expected

Committee: Professors Christina Pugh (Chair), Jennifer Ashton, Mark Canuel, Christopher Grimes, and Margaret Miner

**MA | English**

Creative Writing, Florida State University [FSU] December, 2005

Thesis: “Along a Shoreless Motorway”
Committee: Professors James Kimbrell (Chair), Erin Belieu, and David Kirby

**BA | English**

Creative Writing, Florida State University May, 2002

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

History and Theories of Lyric Poetry, 20th- and 21st-Century American Poetry, American and British Modernist Poetry, Urban Poetics: *Flânerie* and Specularity

PUBLICATIONS

**Journals & Magazines**


“If He Once Dreamt of Furniture and If Her Mouth Were Then a Voiceless Corner Cabinet,” *GRIST: the Journal for Writers* (forthcoming, 2013).


A selection of fourteen poems, *At Length* (June, 2009): “Seven Stanzas with the Weight of Water in Mind,” “Take Care, I Want You to Take Care,” “Lines Written On the Brink of the Lower East Side,” “Poem Like an
Instamatic Camera,” “To Persevere is to Draw Breath After Breath After Breath,” “My Wife as One of Many Mammals,” “Twenty-Eighth Street, Kindly Allow Me to Fish God & the Virgin from Your Depths,” “Lipping Chocolate Cigarettes, the Mathematician Shakes a Fist,” “Navigating by Echocardiogram, 1968,” “Birdcall, I First Hear Birdcall from the Fragrant Magnolias,” “Madsong Concerto for String Duet,” “How Loquacious the Quiet Can Be, How Endless,” and “Ars Poetica in Bottle Glass and Seawater.”

Reviews “Robert Creeley, If I Were Writing This,” The Southeast Review, 23.2 (2004).

Teaching & Academic Appointments

Graduate Instructor, University of Illinois at Chicago 2007-present
ENGL-490: Advanced Writing of Poetry
ENGL-210: Introduction to the Writing of Poetry
ENGL-201: Introduction to the Writing of Nonfiction Prose
ENGL-161: Academic Writing II: Writing for Inquiry and Research
ENGL-160: Academic Writing I: Writing in Academic and Public Contexts
ENGL-103: English and American Poetry

Ravenswood Community Poetry Tutorial, Chicago, IL 2011-2012
One-on-One Poetry Tutorial (with student Candace Crawford, MA in nonfiction, UIC), Chicago, IL 2010-present
Assistant Director, First-Year Writing Program, University of Illinois at Chicago 2008-2009

Graduate Instructor, Florida State University 2003-2006
ENC-1905: Improving Writing and Reading Skills
ENG-1142: Writing About Contemporary Poetry
ENC-1102: Writing a Research Paper
ENC-1101: Freshman Composition and Rhetoric

Selected Readings

UIC Program for Writers Reading Series, Chicago, IL: October, 2012.
Myopic Poetry Series, Chicago, IL: April, 2012.
Wit Rabbit Reading Series, Chicago, IL: March, 2012.
UIC Program for Writers Reading Series, Chicago, IL: October, 2011.
UIC-School of the Art Institute of Chicago Joint Reading Series, Chicago, IL: April, 2010.
Introducing First-Year Students to Poetry (for ENGL-103), Chicago, IL: April, 2009.
UIC Program for Writers Hull House Reading Series, Chicago, IL: September, 2008.
Introducing First-Year Students to Poetry (for ENGL-101), Chicago, IL: March, 2008.
UIC Writers at Work Reading Series, Chicago, IL: October, 2007.
FSU Creative Writing Warehouse Reading Series, Tallahassee, FL: July, 2005.
FSU Creative Writing Warehouse Reading Series, Tallahassee, FL: July, 2004.

**Lectures & Conference Presentations**

“One-on-One Reading with Reginald Gibbons,” English Department Colloquium. UIC, Chicago, IL. April, 2011


**Professional Service**

**Academic Service**

- Portfolio Review Leader, First-Year Writing Program, UIC 2012
- Portfolio Review Leader, First-Year Writing Program, UIC 2011
- Portfolio Review Leader, First-Year Writing Program, UIC 2010
- Assistant Director, First-Year Writing Program, UIC 2008-2009
- Head Coordinator, Second-Year Speakers’ Committee, English Department, UIC 2007-2008
- Special Activities Committee, Program for Writers, UIC 2007-2008
- Portfolio Review Leader, First-Year Writing Program, UIC 2007
- Writing Tutor, The Writing Center, UIC 2006
- Undergraduate Reading and Writing Tutor, The Reading and Writing Center, FSU 2004

**Grant-Writing**

Illinois Arts Council, Project Grant for *Packingtown Review*, funded: $500 2009

**Awards & Honors**

- Nomination, Best New Poets 2012, Program for Writers, UIC 2012
- Nomination, Best New Poets 2010, Program for Writers, UIC 2010
- AWP Intro Journals Project Award for “Lipping Chocolate Cigarettes, the Mathematician Shakes a Fist,” the Association of Writers and Writing Programs 2007
- Nomination, Best New Poets 2007, Program for Writers, UIC 2007
- Nomination, AWP Intro Journals Project Award, Creative Writing, FSU 2006

**Competitive Internship, Fiction Collective 2 [FC2], Line-Editor and Copywriter, Tallahassee, FL 2005-2006**

Lambda Iota Tau, English Honors Society, English Department, FSU 2001-2002

**Editorial & Related Experience**

- Art Director, *Packingtown Review*, U of Illinois P 2010-2011
Professional Affiliations
Association of Writers and Writing Programs
Modern Language Association
Poetry Society of America

REFERENCES

Dr. Christina Pugh (Chair)  
Associate Professor of English,  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
capugh@uic.edu  
University Hall 1914  
601 South Morgan  
Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
(312) 413-7400

Dr. Jennifer Ashton  
Associate Professor of English,  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
jashton@uic.edu  
University Hall 2015  
601 South Morgan  
Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
(312) 413-9568

Dr. Mark Canuel  
Professor of English,  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
mcanuel@uic.edu  
University Hall 2033  
601 South Morgan  
Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
(312) 413-2203

Dr. Christopher Grimes  
Assistant Professor of English,  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
cgrimes@uic.edu  
University Hall 1926  
601 South Morgan  
Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
(312) 413-0060

Dr. Margaret Miner  
Associate Professor of French  
and Francophone Studies  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
mminer@uic.edu  
University Hall 1617  
601 South Morgan  
Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
(312) 996-3229

TEACHING REFERENCES

Dr. Ann Merle Feldman  
feldman@uic.edu  
(312) 413-2249