

**Line in Lissa Wolsak's *Squeezed Light***

Maxine Gadd

Squeezed light coming to a dead-line, the black hole a concentrated mass in the center of the galaxy crushing it into the clearly verged singularity. But no, this particular light has a severe gravity that resists the pull of mass, swerves out on its own into a physical universe and remembers what has happened to it. A legend, a saga, a dance with masks, meditations and cartouches, a musical masterpiece.

“I speak as one silenced” *An Heuristic Prolusion*.

In the shattered fields of poetic deconstruction the reader is expected to take the utmost responsibility for the poem. Of course one does try to track the tiger and in the process one can become entranced. Latin, a very powerful language has been traditionally used through many centuries for magical treatises, which scholarship, I acknowledge, is almost silenced by the discoveries of astronomers both present day and past, of an infinite measurability.

Nevertheless, each woman who has been able to hear or read a Christian Holy bible has felt obliterated by some verses in Corinthians 1:14, supposedly by St. Paul:

*34 As in all churches of the holy ones, women should keep silence in the churches for they are not allowed to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. But if they want to learn anything, they should ask their husbands at home. For it is improper for a woman to speak in the church.*

My latest version of the Holy Bible a Catholic one, *The New American Bible*, and has a gloss suggesting that, as the same saint earlier on acknowledges, women did pray aloud and prophesize, and that these verses are placed at the end of chapter in some of their sources and may have been added later by “the disciplines of other churches.” 21/02/11 22:29:00

but it is too late

And so it goes, one minute of anger or fraud producing hundreds of years of war between the sexes. The burning of the witches and heretics. The four hundred plus years small children were hanged for stealing a lace hanky or a letter.

So we are stuck in our history with only our own rage to get us out; the girl in the handbill for *An Heuristic Prolusion* shown trying to run up the side of a brick wall. Boxed in by Canon Law taught to us by teachers.

*“I know this because I have told.”*

In tune with the hermeneutics of suspicion when I first read *The Garcia Family Co-Mercy* I wanted to ask, “What is this family?” “Where do they come from?” “What do they do that

requires Co-mercy?" Surely Mercy is granted by the strong to the weak. The dominant to the dominated. From caste to caste. The reader finds on page twenty of *Squeezed Light*:

Maimonides..            foist

the dipping lug

what I sip

                                 assembled

                                 saloon,

                                 beaded boat..

                                 the Garcia family

                                 co-mercy

                                 the lip

                                 upper            Y-clept

                                 glasso            Y-shaped

                                 contrivance

                                 bismuth

                                 imparted fruit or

                                 resin of the rose

                                 the Tusacn armadillo

                                 forwards his neck

stop following people

in stretchers

At the opening verse of *The Garcia Family Co-Mercy*, the first almost invisible contradictions are stated very simply:

Girl with vase of odors  
cradle one's own head..  
squinces, pendentives, oculi, groin  
cri imaginaire pity  
the river myth

was there ever

a father field

proprio motu

fess

a hum..

snide, pestered

flower of the pistachio

Levinas and the elephant slipcase

sum him

bird- woman

the bed will murmur

“proprio motu,” yes this describes the girl getting moving, finding her own power. The subversive power advocated by Kristeva and Cicioux...Levinas playing the senex, the old man who leads one out of danger.



dances.

In *An Heuristic Prolusion* we have stimulating but Classical prose. A field of ideas that are inevitably, given the brief time women have been allowed to write, more than two-thirds male...

Except what Wolsak questions and demands that which the reader must examine:

“What lies beneath my copy of eternity?  
What coils up...in spoken space”

And Wolsak gets some useful concessions or casuistries from them. Lacan: “Re’el: world of unmarked space and time that cannot be mediated by language or signs.” Heidegger: “Humanity remains incapable of thinking as long as that which can be thought about withdraws.” Once we are drawn into the withdrawal, we are, somewhat like migratory birds – caught in the pull of what draws – all the while attracted by its withdrawal. And once we, being so attracted, draw towards what draws us, our essential being already bears the stamp of that ‘pull.’

After *An Heuristic Prolusion*, “Figmental” is centered with spaced words.

We are... as doves blunted  
the tenacity of the links  
laid down to grass  
sex and the sacred  
tusked ground  
there was not  
some one  
from eternity

In *A Defense of Being, First Ana*, the page-centered words are spaced back to the default.

Everything after that except, “To My Brother Marat,” is hurled through with the speed of a new machine that does not require so much contemplation of every word. It is highly effective in the domination of the mind and has, for thousands of years, been credited with the production of excellence. Driven by the NEED FOR SPEED this poem becomes its own kinetic monument, totally and mechanically centered in a vertical axis that hand from the top of the page, forming subliminal images and vortices, gods and bombs, the deadly power of centering and the machine taking over and swelling the poet into her new axis. The poet struggles and carves exquisite jewels like the cartouches: pages one hundred ninety eight through two hundred and fifteen in *A*

*Defense of Being, Second Ana.*

But this speedy new form tends to drive (more than sentence-like) like an awl into a series of finalities that undoes the multi-tendrilled therapy open to exploration. All further lines, except “My Brother Marat,” are generated like this to the end of the work. There seems to be a sinister unity like a gigantic patriarchal monastery – the “unfather field.” Or is it simply the need to have a very good wood / metal / concrete drill. An efficient Cadillac. All require the hangar from an architecture in the factory. And we don’t love a gilded temple with an aisle down the axis to find a shining symbol to bend to.

After many bitter rages against “...malefic democracy broke open with...”

“apish ditsi chichi gauzy glib tacky puerile profundities”

The poet become a martyr.

*In the stumbling that speaks for me*

*I say death to vanity,*

*solipsism’s potency*

*let the pyrrhic*

*burning thorn*

*in deeper*

*Mercy above Justice*

Fortuity has to stop/here/now

“There will be silence in this house. Silence I say.”

And see/eye/cut the small pool in moonlight brighter than klieg lights or the making of mercury for the Chinese emperor. First poets sang what they “remembered” but then they forgot and when they were overrun by scholastics, started to make uncontainable neologisms for which they were punished as heretics. Some were hanged in the streets on lampposts or moved indoors into prisons.

At what time in history did we rediscover the free and open field of language? When many a goat or lamb had to be slaughtered to make parchments? No. When we were using cheap paper and typewriters, that’s when. The machine would not start on its own, one had to gently pound it. It would stop at weird places but it had a mechanical space bar. It was like a ride in the

summer fifty years ago in a big smooth too-old Buick that stopped at weird places open to the night sky.

Get out of car.

The reek of pulp and paper mills.

And further out, the nightscent of leaves breathing.

Find a horizon.

Writing is an act of prayer. Typing is an act of prayer, a path out of comprehension. A response to a calling that gives us considerable liberation.

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