A BODY

If a poem is a body
and desire is more than a

word, then I desire the body
of this poem, standing beyond these

words, naked, unwritten, teasing me by
addressing you, reader, judge and executioner

of my will, which I am
writing in public, counting to six

and watching lines pair, as I
want to experience this body of

writing word by word. If it
exhibits crime by writing learnedly ventilator,

it is to give you pleasure,
and an irrational return on your

reading investment, where eye- and back-
strain are real risks, not to

mention savage boredom at the evocation
of untoward echoes, a kitchen counter's

speckled formica unintentionally calling up flecks
of blood on prehistoric cave walls

or poorly washed floors in government
basements. A poem should offer steady

increases in meaning for the foreseeable
future; it could skyrocket like Impressionism

in the eighties. Poetry is a
pyramid scheme, an inverted one, whose

point flickers as I breathe, and
whose base is pinnacled, so to
speak, in the sky--technically, in
the intense inane: the concentrated vacuum

of linguistic openness. From that utopia,
along paths invisible to the present,

the roofless malls of a biomorphic
future earth will descend, offering test-sites

for syntax exhibitionists and narrative flashpoints
for weather fetishists--at least that's

what I was taught in school:
April is the cruelest month, breeding

lilacs out of the dead land,
mixing memory and desire. I remember

sitting in front of rectangular walls
and pages, occasionally identifying with the

revealed meanings but more often losing
myself in the distances. I learned

that there are two /s in
cruellest, neither one the same; two

e's; an r, a u, an
s, a ç and a t:

some of the more evocative letters
in our arsenal of weaned sound,

endlessly murmuring their second generation truths.
The same lives and difference kills

and names it, that's how history
continues pronouncing this. The woman still

has a penis, but this penis
is no longer the same penis.

Something else has, so to speak,
been appointed its successor. The rise

of the intellectual fits in here,
but nobody can say exactly where
without the exactitude being guaranteed institutionally, which then generates the problem of

an institution to report home to, be in bed with, however chastely,

and to rise above in dreams. In the focused but hypnotic specificity

of the self, the setting might involve the dark tents of innumerable

students surrounding an illuminated opera house, a nipple of light commanded by

the heights of the dream vantage. Inside, the audience's employment is sacrificed

on performance night for the salvation of the professionals. I celebrate myself,

and sing myself, and what I assume you shall assume: a world,

whose collective eyes, tuned to mutually provocative codes of pleasure, drop tears

as fast as the Arabian trees their med'cinable gum. Set you down

this, and don't forget to specify the funding lines to guarantee both

the kinks and the articulation of the culture rubdowns that will, as

you say, somehow or other generate those skyey malls I'm sure we're

all anxious to check out just as soon as they're up and

running. But now, when we squint upwards, bright bands of UV fall

from the air, irradiating the spectrum and making national colors glow fiercely.
Not like the old days when
Kuwait or Chile or Guatemala would

play strip-poker in the Smiths’ treehouse--
well into the darkness--with emergent

bodies, provocatively foreign, offering glimpses of
geopolitical omnipotence. The bluffing would grow
droll, like playing croquet with swan
eggs--the trajectories were amusing. What

rough beast, its hour come round
at last, slouches toward Jerusalem to

be born? Poetry has been moved
to aisle 12, between the get-well

cards and the pantyhose. Consumers are
understandably tentative. No entertainment epic without

its penumbra of bombs, potholes, belly-up
malls, the barely biographic world where

private poems struggle towards print, out
of a forgettable compost of dim

photographs of the Butler Art Gallery
anxiously snapped in the small rain

of childhood. Memory's verdict is not
guilty, not even there, but the

trial will reconvene tomorrow under blind,
bright sun. The aesthetic forecast calls

for site-specific landfills, while the headlines
define legibility, hurling the first and

biggest stone every morning, smashing glass
houses anew in a song cycle

of entranced voyeurism, clear as a
Senate hearing witnessed by Clark Kent's

x-ray vision. One among others, itself
an other, this body has for
its world the dissed unplanned indies
of the new world order, a

perfect climate and exploding market for
resentment, giving irony an endlessly second

chance to dart its forked tongue
over the sky, covering it with

an Art Deco card of ocher,
pyramidal clouds. Media ladles empty into

the slots every hour as crackdowns
leave deserts to dry in Milwaukee,

Baghdad, St. Petersburg. People starve, while
private lives hunger for significance. Preludes, Probes and Infinities, Patriots and Wild
Weasels form fast-moving walls of feedback

and commercial self-criticism in the republic
where self-evident bodies stand for nothing

not personally buyable. Art conspiracies wither
on vines as they dangle deep

in the economic understory, or they
fall into categories crude as ashtrays

brought home from clay class. Each
word here is a survivor of

the editorial glare of the biological
father typing letters in the light,

mutagenic present, hoping and fearing to
find absolute resemblance. This nest of

non-natural sounds is the mother of
its own expression, gilding its words

with the sprechstimme of reading, birdlike
pronunciation in the wreathed trellis of

a working brain on streets where
construction's hand is ever at its
bloodless lips, bidding adieu, adios, sayonara.
While I write, I can watch
this far, unrecognizable cry from direct
desire stand in these lines in
the edge of the paper ocean,
the swirl of infotainment and toxic
profit-taking foaming over its ankles and
sucking back. Then it plunges, objectified.

The Unruly Child

There is a company called Marathon Oil, mother,
Very far away and very big and, again, very
Desirable. Who isn’t? Back connecting pure dots,
Fleecy intelligence lapped in explanatory sound
The faces make difficult.

Learn the language.
That beautiful tongue-in-cheek hostage situation:
My mind, up close, in pjs, and I use it.
Wanting to fuck an abstraction nine times in a row,
Continuous melismata, don’t stop, don’t stop, no name, no picture.

There is a series of solids, mother,
Called people, who rise to the transparent obtainable
Solo windows, mornings, afternoons,
And there are military operations called
Operation Patio, Operation Menu.

It is the individuals who finally get the feel of the tenses.
So that it may snow, has to snow on the muddy corpse.
There is a boundary, mother, very far away and very
Continuous, broken, to interrogate civilians, the self,
The text, networks of viewers found wanting a new way
To cook chicken, why not?, to kill while falling asleep.
There is the one language not called money, and the other not called explosions.