

Julia Fish

Selected Paintings and Drawings, 1985—1995

view

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PICTURE WINDOWS

by Judith Russi Kirshner

Sixteen white ovals appear like moons against deep indigo in a 1981 cyanotype, which introduces this survey of paintings and drawings by Julia Fish. The white marks on the inky page are shadows of seeds laid on a sheet of photosensitive paper, places where light could not reach. Called *Key*, this image results directly from its process and yet exposes a fundamental, intertwined relationship between realistic representation and elusive pictorial meaning. Close scrutiny offers vast rewards in Fish's work, and looking carefully at this page reveals a cross-hatch pattern settled in like the texture of a canvas. But what seems to be a deeply embedded linen weave actually records a wire screen that has been removed, ghost traces of the mesh that held the seeds in place. The captured light and cross hatches, the pas-de-deux of vertical and horizontal strokes play across the surface of many of Fish's later paintings and stand for reflections on glass, the signs of transparency. These marks become fundamental to understanding how her intense visualizations can be simultaneously recognizable and deliberately enigmatic.

Fish is attentive to the fluctuations between the appearances of realism and meanings of representation; she shifts easily between a highly compressed, dense surface built from multiple layers of oil paint and the quick, calligraphic ink strokes sprouting in her *Garden Drawings* (begun 1993). Hers is a complex and occasionally contradictory ambition. It depends not only on acute observation but also on her remarkable skills to seduce her viewers, who must move in close to these pictures. In order to share her point of view, we must reckon with visual instability, contemplate incomprehensible spaces which emerge from recognizable subjects, accurate measurements, and the security of regular patterns. Fish's fascination resides as much in her aesthetic choices of what information to withhold, and so to create abstraction, as it does in how much pleasure to give, to allow recognition. In her art, the familiar fragment always stands for a larger world, nothing is what it appears, yet everything is so much more than what it resembles that the most concrete detail of everyday life — a patch of roofing, a bit of linoleum — is no longer imagery but becomes iconic.

While Fish is admired for her depictions of nature — opposing fields of tar and ice, the serial repetition of cumulus clouds that appear digital, the bark of a birch seen up close — her wholly unnatural and unexpected choices of figure to ground, part to whole, and disconcerting points of view are crucial to the quiet power and idiosyncrasy of her work. She says that she stumbled onto the natural world as a subject she did not need to invent. In the same way that Vija Celmins and Gerhard Richter, who traffic in realism and illusion, are motivated by conceptualism, she is a realist with an abstractionist's point of view, or an abstractionist with a naturalist's iconography. Thus *Snowbound* (1989) seems

to be as much about the containment of chalky white pigment by black line, about formlessness harnessed by contour, as it is a mound of snow bound by a steel pipe. And again in *Thaw* (1989), the breaks between the scarred surface of ice patches argue for total abstraction and foretell the later immersion in patterns after 1991. Fish's fascination with snow, its ability to shroud and cover everything, is significant: choosing to depict that which obscures, to render the invisible visible, the painter embraces contradictions in images that alter our sense of landscape, vision, and reality.

Scale adjustments are also calculated to disorient, to overthrow the conventional "view." Before 1991, the proportions and alignments of Fish's landscapes depended on her physical experience of a horizontal or vertical orientation and despite their size could connote vast, often verdant, humid geographies. Works like *Grove* (1989), *[Summer] Pine* (1990), and *Cumulous* (1990) were painted before the artist moved to her present studio and were influenced by sights observed as she walked between her house and studio. In *[Small] Birch* (1988), the view is so close as to magnify the texture of the bark beyond resemblance into a vertical column squeezing the background into irregular bands.

For the five years since she moved to the studio and house whose windows, walls, and floors most often constitute her views, Fish has explored myriad ways to contain an enormity of pictorial possibilities. Her close focus allows her subjects to come unhinged from their referents, to become inexplicable. Only metaphors translate the pictures Fish has made defining her ambiance and, at least for now, dictate her intentions as rich and metaphysically intriguing as her subject matter might seem domestic and limited. This studio, this location, has become a source of what I believe is her most challenging and unyielding work. Literally grounded and emotionally centered, her subjects are no longer fleeting recollections of distant geographies or repeated walks past familiar terrain. Instead, she paints what she sees every day, over and over again, inhabiting her views and containing herself at home, in her garden.

Instantly plausible because of their insistent frontality and proximity, Fish's paintings assume a mysterious aura, extending beyond ordinary identification and optical appeal. Everything is foregrounded in these contemplative exercises and for the most part the illusionistic walls and floors conform to an underlying grid. Even in her spontaneous drawings of gardens, the delicate red-orange grid is part of the Japanese paper, often obscured by the lush growth of brushstrokes. Nevertheless, Fish's approach is unpredictable; she skillfully manipulates conventions of perspective with subtle liberties that urge her viewers to take their own positions, physical and psychological, into account. The distances between the painter and her subject — the artist looking up at the faraway sky or down close at a kitchen floor — have become crucial to her content. In other words, the visible choices and distortions are dictated by her position and her eye. There is an analogous physicality in my appreciation of her work; unconsciously I am obliged to adjust my point of view, approach then retreat, perform her positions and understand that where she stands to paint is where I must stand to experience her vision. In her previous works, Fish depicted places remembered or situations mapped; now the emphasis is on the position of visualization as much as the place seen, disembodied but physically implicated.

To circle back and forth between the particular and the universal, Fish builds compositions whose mundane subject matter ranges from a common bathroom floor to a vine-covered transom. Of two paintings whose dimensions are dictated by those of the actual transom, the first, begun in the fall of 1993, is an unnatural acid green etched by tenacious spiky lines, with the rectangular shape limned as a dark border. At twilight, in *Transom #2* (1994), the screen becomes dense, the ivy embroidered into a dark tapestry of leafy shapes that seem to gesture to each other. For Fish, patterns of vision exist to be broken, altered, or made partial by her gaze yet enormous by the implications of her point of view. Under the pressure of studious looking, we become visually lost in space, in honeycomb constellations or dizzying patchworks. As understated and declarative as these usually small-scale works are — *Elm* (1988), *Rain* (1990),

Condensation (1992) — their pictorial ambition is stretched between perception and illusion to become intellectually and aesthetically complex.

The interplay between spatial illusion and surface image first became conscious and intentional with *Frost* (1992), a painting with the dimensions of the window between whose panes the feathery pattern surfaced. Fish's representation of the phenomena of reality, seen in *Condensation*, with the phenomena of perception and transparency, are reconciled without benefit of photographic mediation. The pictorial fiction is signaled by the regular band, the interior window frame at the margins of each painting and challenged by her insistence on the materiality of "painting," presenting itself as an unframed canvas, a field of color the same size as her window or transom. With this pictorial strategy, Fish systematizes her views and at the same time annexes a larger tradition of painting as window and mirror. Her production in fact has many historical reverberations: when Fish speaks of arrested movement and silence, one cannot help but think of Martin Johnson Heade and John Kensett; she is also well-versed in modernist precedents — the pictorial scaffolding of the Cubists, the all-over patterns of Piet Mondrian, and perceptual puzzles of René Magritte.

Yet, so patiently built up and compacted are Fish's "modernist" surfaces that finally they look compressed, the brushstrokes are "knitted." Using a soft flat brush, she covers the same areas repeatedly, building a texture that begs description, leaving a residue, sometimes bumpy or crusted like Naugahyde in *Cumulous*, or eventually smoothed out like enamel. Describing a painting of masonry, *Vines Wall* (1995), she refers to her artistic task as "tuckpointing," articulating a construction analogy and emphasizing her puzzle, the replication of fabrication and fiction of her facture. In her ink drawings, liquid ribbons appear in *Study for Tide #1* (1991), and gardens are evoked with brushstrokes, ink droplets, and puddles. Damp, dried, then pressed, these drawings immediately suggest growth cycles, from the earliest bonelike marks to the tangled screens of mature plants.

Remarkably deft, Fish renders the atmospheric substantial, and fills the self-reflexive vacuums of modernism with expression. In a moody work like *Grey Sky [Window]* (1993), the process includes layer after layer of painting, then scraping, so that the greys and blue-greens blend from an accumulation of smoothed-out pigment. There are traces of rose underpainting and a vertical strip of pink at one side, tan at the other, indicating the glass pane that separates us from the scene. In front of our eyes, these colors dissemble, then coalesce to become a soft, weighty form which threatens to protrude from the painted blue band that stands for the edge of the window frame. Reiterating the optical, Fish insistently fills in her windows with her views, shows us the way we see rather than the way things are.

The sense of time suspended in these highly composed paintings is also thematized and suggested by titles such as *Thaw*, *Condensation*, and *Wintered* (1991) which underscore a seasonal or momentary condition subject to hourly or daily changes, as much as they establish a coolly romantic mood. Undermining its own title, *Lumine* (1995) presents a nocturnal vision, a deep-green window in which the coral-colored street light escapes like fireflies, recalling the seeds of *Key*, from behind the branches of an invisible silver maple. One can almost see the countless marks and decisions comprising the palimpsest layers of *Vines Wall*, a coloristically sober canvas whose life-size terracotta bricks are defaced by spindly vines which creep vertically up its measured, repetitive horizontals. There is no anecdotal relief, no narrative in these silent paintings; yet the beautifully nuanced work is moving and mesmerizing.

Cumulatively in the seven window paintings which seem so straightforward and direct as to be obvious, the refinement of Fish's paint handling becomes even more instrumental. The cross-hatch patterns which had been actual traces in the cyanotype are now painted to suggest reflection and the glass pane dividing the viewer from the view. In combination with the ever-present depiction of an internal window frame, the lack of an external frame on the painting becomes

meaningful and overdetermined. In *Roof Window* (1995), the dependable repetition and bruise-colored scallops constitute an intense pattern of dark geometry. This painting transforms everyday roofing material into abstract visual filler, a pictorial found object for the frame.

Fish's decisions to work both against and in a self-imposed system yield an extraordinary range of connotations and associations. To force oneself to stare continually, to look at the same subject again and again, establishes a Zenlike discipline which can also be exaggerated to the point of losing sight. Staring at manufactured siding on her house inspired an unusually upbeat painting, *Siding* (1994). With its retro palette of pinks and greys, the intricately detailed, rich surface of its familiar subject matter is energized and incised like its tar-paper referent. It is as though Fish's work is conceptually winking at its trompe-l'oeil precedents as it orchestrates a chorus of verticals and horizontals, teetering on the brink of abstraction.

At the lowest register of *Floor* (1993), the tenderly smudged white tiles, restrained by a netlike outline, are life-size since the drawing for the painting began as a tracing. But at the upper registers, the proportions of the tiles change; they become compressed, flattened as if weighted down by the edge of the canvas. Slight dizziness can occur while staring at this floor: fragments rise up, then float away; individual octagonal tiles, burnished with subtle greys and browns, come together, separate, and finally reattach. Rather than succumb to the dictates of perspective, the space remains unfathomable and the forms slightly skewed. These nonhierarchical compositions conspire like Mondrian's against any traditional figure-ground relationship. In the especially commanding and antic *Floor II* (1994), Fish takes real liberties and dwells on the perspectival inconsistencies of realistically depicted kitchen linoleum. Here the perspective is dramatic: like a trick floor, this one slants away on a diagonal. The interplay between figure and ground, between grey and black, and among the confetti forms which animate the image inserts another staccato rhythm over the slow tilted plane. The canvas is painted to an almost waxy finish and the lines between the tiles are incised into the layers of paint. Syncopated and arbitrary, the figure-ground confusion and relationship of surface pattern to underlying structure is disconcerting. Somehow there is a suggestion of performance or an invitation to enact our observation. Like Andy Warhol's dance-step paintings, this canvas meets us more than half way, then leans and disappears into the fictional and infinite space of painting.

As much as Fish's art offers views, her recent paintings paradoxically confound or obstruct vision. In *5811 South Ellis* (1995), she acknowledges the tradition of site-specific work made for the Renaissance Society by depicting a section of limestone masonry, a portrait of the scene from one of the gallery's northern windows. Solemn and blank, the painting is cropped perfectly to capture every detail in an array of mottled grey tonalities, textures, and subtle light shifts. The confrontation between viewer and view is direct and unflinching — there is no exit, we are left facing a stone wall. It seems abrupt, but because Fish's point of view is so measured, her sense of proportion and her technique so exact, the concomitant aesthetic return in this picture, as in all her authoritative paintings, is unexpectedly absorbing and unfailingly exquisite.

JULIA: COUNTING THE WAYS

by Harold L. Johnson

I journal, august, 1976:

anne hired a painting graduate from the art school today. julia fish, from newport down on the coast. husband richard is also a graduate of the art school, paints houses in the summer. she, slight with dark hair cut short, dark eyes behind rimless specs, quiet contrast between hair and fair unclouded face. eyes of small quiet animal which registers data throughout the nervous system. mellower than a pixie. quiet musical voice should soothe baby miles.

grandmother was a pianist and piano teacher in portland. mother graduated from the portland, oregon, version of thomas jefferson high. father was a merchant seaman before returning to settle in newport who prior to sailing had worked in logging camps before unions. first mate, with papers to sail "any ship, any sea, any tonnage." shortly after world war two abandoned the sea to work longshore, from gang to winch driver, so that his children would know him. from the shipping office, he brought home outdated navigation charts, good paper cut down to drawing sizes, the backsides perfect for eager markings of his three children.

half a league from the pacific ocean
she grew up playing in the canyon
back of the house with a band
of other kids naming mounds and trees

II at newport oregon pacific breezes

cleanse the landscape
i lean into the wind without falling
the sylvia beach hotel holds memories of james joyce
and rooms named for his contemporaries
i lean into the ubiquity of art
let it blow against me

representing a concept
fleecy roof with openings of blue
marching from far to near above the grassy slope
of your imagination but wait
even with that gathering toward thunderheadedness
in the upper left this is not clouds

curiously *cumulous*

the maryland art institute looks solid. older than most things on the west coast. the city surprised us with its red bricks everywhere and its clean pastel appearance, though on some streets i felt an eerie absence of trees. never had i seen so many blacks — wish i had known more about frederick douglass, who spent some of his slave days in baltimore. we could have visited something or other. back in yakima, we hardly had a clue about african-american history beyond the one hard black fact. our visit to richard and julia was about art and freedom.

we visited the national gallery, where they spend a lot of time looking studying. stuart's portraits of the first few presidents surprised me with their shiny fresh appearance. looking out a tall window toward baltimore, we could see a storm approaching. when we returned in the evening we found a few blown-over trees and many limbs and twigs in the streets.

perusing julia's painting *The Tragedy (Winter)* and talking to her about it, i began to see the painting as a distillation in time from a state of mind and emotion familiar to poets as well ... the sometimes dreamlike way things drift in from childhood, from the news, from feelings, and precipitate an artwork.

a good place to see art in portland
they have poetry readings at the blackfish
she sits near the front of a good crowd
listening
after a particular poem she says
“Would you read that again, please?”
no one ever asked me to do that
before

V we got a postcard with *Day Moon* on back
as a fellow outdoor kid i felt in this image
a plangent awareness and memory
and oneness with space light water vapor
i mean it ripped through *moonlight in vermont*
moonglow moon over miami that old devil moon
reading the poet mckeel mcbride (born the same year
as julia) i found her saying "... where we are shown
how to find and hold the pale day moon ..."

i received the following
written on february 12, 1989

Dear Harold,

What a wonderful surprise to have McBride's poem in the mail from you last week! As well, did you know that also in 1986 i painted "Constellation"—based on the streetlight configuration i saw from the studio on Hubbard Street — not so dissimilar a source as her line ... "the constellations our keys make there, on the polished sky of the dresser top." The *Day Moon* painting has had an unusual after-life — and your passing on her poem is only the most recent (& also the most interesting) of instances in which others have passed back to me some recognition or meaning of that image ... i suppose because it is so available to each of us?

...

Many thanks & loves
Julia

VI grove the green world that seems to harbor so much:
we rowed about the lake all day jacketless nonswimmers looking across green water into the evergreens that covered the surrounding hills down to the waters edge the endless fir trees deeper than our disaffection for the false adult our leader.

VII she listens to music with close attention. walter pater said that all the arts aspire to the condition of music ...
the garden gives lyric after lyric of light water music on japanese calligraphy paper with rustcolored grids. black ink marks dance in watery counterpoint and melodious layered play woven against the rhythmic security of the grid.

a thought nags,
something about seeing.

the backyard studio in chicago has always looked
french to me with its venerable bricks and clinging vines.
contemplating *Garden Drawings* #8 and #22,
i see the aboriginal vision in her watery lines.

so what do things look like? a first grade teacher
wadded up the neighbor boy's drawing and pitched it
into the wastebasket "That's lousy. Dogs are brown,
not purple," she rapped. poor adam slumped wounded
at his table. ah, but in julia's gardens his vision is redeemed.

VIII *Floor* – the last time i visited richard and julia

Floor was on the living room wall
first it was the surface so flat
i mean it was flat flat
then it was those hexagon tiles
(cousins to the circle) that began
to reverse and boogie around
like a basket full of ping pong balls
then i noticed the little shifts
that made it spatial subliminal
blue and orange flickered
across the tiles

at first i thought she was remembering
our old cracked bathroom floor in portland
but then i noticed her house had one too
years ago we covered ours with a hardwood
parquet (“hard Swedish finish”)
now i can’t walk on it without hearing
from underneath echoes of julia’s chicago *Floor*

IX *journal, december 18, 1995*

chicago that’s a question chicago chicago
we ended friday with a visit to a collector’s home to look at Rain, a working drawing of which we viewed earlier at the macarthur foundation.
the next day we bussed down to the university of chicago to see the exhibition space. she showed me the window opposite which 5811 South Ellis will face the very stones it portrays. to get back to town, julia suggested we catch the cottage grove bus. we just made it after a moderate sprint. i noticed that all the passengers were african-american, and so am i, but this was my first time on a crowded city bus where the driver and all the passengers (except my guide) were black. i consciously identified with the people but unconsciously responded to my nightly news and small-town washington conditioning. the scene had a slightly alien feel. i tried to brush aside the media fog to notice individualities ... we passed vacant lots and public housing projects, a martin luther king jr school in the distance.

X *so available to each of us*

there is availability yes but there is also the capacity to avail oneself akin to the capacity of certain soils to produce certain vegetation

pieces like *Floor*, *5811 South Ellis*, *Garden Drawings*, *Snowbound*
examination suggests growth from within, like the growth
of tomatoes, trees, dune grass
experience grown into objects of contemplation

available as in the site specificity of old chinese poems
or in poems of james wright such as “Lying in a Hammock
on William Murphy’s Farm on Pine Island, Minnesota”

Over my head I see the bronze butterfly
Asleep against the black trunk
Blowing like a leaf in green shadow

XI snowbound

yes a striking presentation a visual poem and the first thing that comes to mind is the good old abolitionist-poet
john greenleaf whittier who showed us how to rhyme with snow
who also reminds us that we have a vein of sanity
and moral sensitivity in our history

the dark pipe embraces the snow or does the snow engulf
the pipe the white trapezoid at the bottom foreground wants
consideration shaped as it is by where the pipe isn't
this is *bound snow* (could be *bound fog*)
spatial and atmospheric too pregnant

during the coldest winter in memory the one pipe into the house froze our nextdoor neighbors kept us in water we
trudged across the crusted snow carrying five-gallon lard cans full of water the improvised wire handles made cold grooves in our
fingers that lasted a while and stung as they thawed after a few days a man showed up with a battery contraption and cables
that he clipped to the faucet our pipe was unbound we had water again

XII December 18, 1995

Dear Anne,

Julia and I just spent two days scurrying around Chicago, looking at some of her paintings and drawings that will be in
The Renaissance Society show. Looks as if I won't have any war stories to tell about Chicago winter weather when I get home.
You know I was looking for snow, icy air, bad footing and the furious hawk, but I haven't put on my boots once, and it has
been clear and sunny every day without even a serious breeze. So we've had some nice crisp walks while jabbering about painting
and architecture and where to stop for a bite.

Stimulating, to say the least — as her teacher from way back, you've had twenty years of dialogue with Julia about painting.
Right now, I feel as if I've squeezed a lot of that dialogue into the last three days. Probably an illusion, but it has been some
kind of a cram course. It's an unforgettable experience, this magnified encounter with Julia and her work. I mean talking closely with
Julia and scrutinizing her surfaces, seeing how she grows her pieces with such deft and devoted touch out of paper, out of cotton,
out of her selfhood, seeing the acceptance accorded this quiet, refined work ... amazing and heartening, really.

You know practically all of the paintings and drawings from your stops here in Chicago over the past few years, but I don't
think you've read much of the writing about Julia's shows. It was fun to read through a stack of reviews. Most of them comment
in one way or another on the uncanny balance between representation and abstraction that is characteristic of her pieces.
("Fish's distillations hover at the edge of abstraction, while remaining rooted in the stuff of life." J. Yood in *Artforum*, April 1994)
I think Yood has some other stuff right too when he says, "Fish manages to create distillations of her experiences with nature
and yet provide evocative readings, reducing anecdotal description to prompt reflection on the essences just beyond the world of
appearances. In its way, this is a form of quiet thunder ..."

You know what I mean when I say that these words about Julia very much describe my response to the work of another artist
from Oregon, the late master poet William Stafford, who, for instance, wrote

*Bugles that fade are still bugles;
birds that sang wait still:
deep in the woods is that far place
once near, and our own, and real.*

Those woods remind me of Julia's *Grove*, woods deep in memory. Poetry often comes to mind when I think of her paintings,
and during this visit I've discovered that she's a regular reader of poetry. I knew she was interested in poetry, but I see now that
her involvement with it is less casual than I had thought. (When your friends live two thousand miles away, you can miss these things,
eh?) Her work also makes me think of Robert Frost — his character as a great synecdochist — with her own ability to make finite

statements that evoke boundless experience. I'm thinking of something like *Key*, the little cyanotype with the sixteen seed-like or moon-like forms in it.

On Sunday, we sat in the studio with tea and talked for quite a while. On the walls were a number of works destined for the coming exhibition. *Red Sky*, full of light, with a gorgeous buttery surface reminded me that one reviewer had expressed amazement that the beauty of Julia's work had, so far, not counted against it. *5811 South Ellis*, powerful in its objecthood, hung on the west wall. On the south wall was a penciled chart she had made of the surface of the painting, which portrays a section of limestone wall from a building opposite the one housing the Renaissance Society gallery. Notations on the chart gave a clue to the intense scrutiny she gives every decision related to the creation of her surfaces.

We talked quite a lot about how we'd grown up outdoors in Oregon and Washington, playing outside the year round, being in the landscape, imbibing the landscape. Julia feels that the outdoor experience was crucial in relation to the paintings in this show. Somehow, curiously, landscape began to emerge in her work several years after PNCA (Pacific Northwest College of Art) where the figure dominated study. She says that in one class of yours she got her only taste of landscape work when you took the group to Sauvie Island. (I didn't know Julia then, but I remember when you did that.) Seems funny, now that I think of the last time I saw Julia drawing — we were drawing from life at a friend's studio.

Anyhow, Julia went on to say, "In Iowa — that shifted everything. The weather was so extreme ... That year I saw everything through weather. It became a clear set of metaphors for emotional experience. Up until that time I had only thought about representing emotions through shapes, through abstractions ... there'd only been a few hints that natural forms could really reflect that, translate that ... but because it was so extreme, it's now obvious — it was the perfect model for everything that was going on.

"There's a river that runs through the campus in Iowa City with a bridge that I crossed every day, going to teach those classes. When the campus shut down for winter break, I went away in December and came back in January to find the river frozen over, solid. I was shocked. It was direct representation to me, in terms of being pulled away. So that was where the first paintings had any kind of naturalism to them. Drawings started to have softer edges to them ... there was an effect of light and dark. There was a form, a mass instead of a flat shape. There was a form that was in an atmospheric or a more tangible field instead of a painted field. There was suddenly a light source somewhere in the painting. Everything opened up."

At that point she began to realize the connection between the paintings that she was doing and her out of doors childhood in the Oregon landscape. It was a "thrilling" realization, about which she said, "And from that, I knew then I could just directly look around me ... It had everything to do with that landscape."

It reminds me of something Rilke said in his *Letters to a Young Poet*, advising the young man that however scarce subject matter might seem, he would always have the great treasure of his childhood to draw upon. You and Julia have probably talked about a lot of this over the years. When I get home, we must compare notes.

Thinking about Julia and the Oregon connection, I keep coming back to Bill Stafford in whose work I often find that quiet touching of the underlying mystery which I discover in Julia's work. I also think it's a hoot that these two benign, modest human beings are two of the toughest most uncompromising artists I have ever encountered.

What a weekend of art on the run, talking, laughing a lot, and reflecting on our twenty years of acquaintance and friendship — I feel like some kind of work in progress.

See you soon. Love to you and Miles,
Harold

XIII waking before dawn one morning
into surprising urban silence
before susurrus of traffic river
thinking of her paintings
her conquest floats before me
beyond cultural suburbs
to realms of mute surprise
where the rooster's crow
is not cockle doodle do
nor coco rico — nor kiki riki