

Poems in Sum:1 with the images that inspired them: page numbers refer to the page in the book.

## *Photographs by Author*



The preface poem (page 2) used the photo cover of this Temple in Kyoto, Japan

### *Sacred Corridor*

Each gate, an offering,  
gift  
    extending an invitation—

Each gate, equal; receiving—

perhaps a request for a wish to come true—  
perhaps an offering to honor sacred spirits—

each perhaps starts to ribbon the posts  
along with the sun's swirls  
reflected in the pale red paint—  
that all of us may be at peace—  
all. one.

**Sum:1 is available from:**

<http://www.foothillspublishing.com/2021/jospe.html>

**Proceeds** for this book will be given to East House, Rochester, NY. <https://easthouse.org>

East House helps move lives forward by providing stable housing and support services to individuals with persistent mental health and/or substance use disorders.

Although donations are voluntary, readers are encouraged to view the **separate PDF** with 17 images (available by contacting [kjospe@gmail.com](mailto:kjospe@gmail.com)). After viewing these photos, readers are invited to consider donating \$5, \$10 or more to East House using the donation button on this link: <http://bit.ly/3rqecEf>

Please let the author know at [kjospe@gmail.com](mailto:kjospe@gmail.com) so she too can thank you.

**About this book:**

The title, *Sum:1* rhymes with *someone* but is not meant as a pun. This small book of poems addresses the humane concern of treating each person as a unique and valuable **Someone**, where the **bolding** of the word and its capital S is not ignored or discounted.

The sum of all of us, one by one, should be one, and yet in this country which promises liberty and justice for all, we know about the removal of so many from this “all”.

Although not part of the book, this poem written in July, 2020 captures the spirit of the book.

**Sum:1/Some: One**

What is the product of one times one?  
We forget sometimes how one multiplies—  
how it gently mirrors the other to allow  
the other...  
1X2 has no one reflected but two in the end.

Some is only so many...  
but turn it to sum,  
before difference enters in—  
before product  
before the second meaning of quotient—  
as characteristic.

Any minus  
one equals  
complexity  
at its most irresponsible best.  
It could be you, me, or all those hoping  
like us, the bomb won't drop  
on us, on those close to us,  
those hoping whatever ship sails in  
doesn't fool us with its colors.

—Kitty Jospé (read at Just Poet Open Mic, July 16, 2020)

**Invitation**

**page 6**

*“anything multiplied by 1 is itself.”*

Come walk with me in the cathedral arch  
made by living tree painting its shadow.  
With echoes of past ages  
let us share the possibles  
of each one of us,  
divvied expansions—  
view by view.

There will never be a surfeit of tango here:

*shapes*            *w*

*wind circles*    *o*

*humming*        *m*

*leading*         *e*

*in rite of spring* *n*

*breathing*      *m*

*strumming*     *e*

*whispering*    *n*

until being one, or another  
doesn't make a difference.



Ganondagan, NY

The lake under icy rain, roils to call  
*the tide may rise, the tide may fall—*  
Life pulses on despite covid news  
as waves crash and a lone gull mews—  
pelleted by wind but holding his ground  
above the crash of the thunderous sound  
of waves as they crest and furl, rise and fall.

The wind whips the lake to roil and call  
*cresting, furling, my waves rise and fall*  
as we from the town observe the surge  
of heaving waters, feel the wind's scourge  
driving ice-cuts of rain against our face.  
We hasten to shelter to observe the place  
livened by the roar, the roil, the crash;  
it will continue when we are but ash—  
but for this day, how lucky we feel—  
to witness waves, the storm as real.



Lake Ontario, Ontario Beach Park, Rochester, NY

*On finishing a 1,500 piece puzzle of Dutch Proverbs by Breughel  
Also Known as “Topsy-Turvy World”*

*page 15*

How little has changed since 1559,  
still deserving these proverbs about wishbones,

baskets of light, lies of blue, slippery eels,  
head bangers, pillar biters and pies on the roof...

As for finding the right spot for each piece—  
the puzzle is perfect prelude to life’s fugue.

There are successes like distinguishing the golds  
of wheat ready for harvest from a sounder

of swine; surprises at what seems the same,  
eventually finding its own improbable difference.

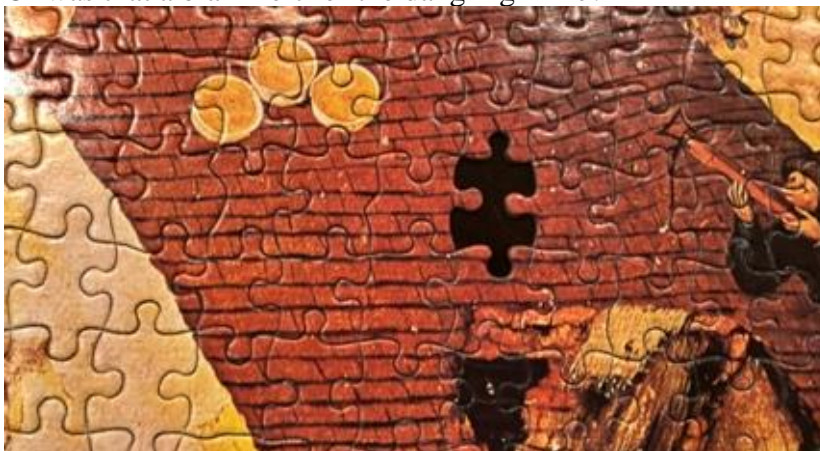
Take for instance, the archer aiming at the arrow  
he already shot and the cards in pieces, falling

into place. Eventually it is finished—  
but with six pieces missing. Tell me,

how does that matter?  
Perhaps there’s a proverb for the merit of finishing

in spite of a missing piece like those stitches  
allegedly taken in time preventing disaster...

Or was that a blank left for the dangling knife?



Detail of a picture puzzle of “Netherlandish Proverbs” by Pieter Breughel  
<https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/netherlandish-proverbs-by-kitty-jospe>

You could say the shadow, sliding off  
the two peaked ears of wind-bitten bluffs,

creates a wolf-head—  
suggests fractions involved with wearing—

pelt of rain above, assault of waves below, uprooting  
the overstory close to the edge of the bluffs—

and hear a long howl of what was,  
a hint of what can haunt us—

then it is easy to add a chapter about that tree branch  
brandishing its clout like a megaphone.

But what happens when those spires of ancient chimneys  
are leveled, no mandible visible?



Chimney Bluffs, Sodus, NY

I call him *Angelo*, humbled by his presence,  
grateful for whatever message angels deliver.  
Some might judge him as infirm, useless—  
but if you saw him, you too would be intrigued  
by his medieval-style tunic tightened  
under his protuberant belly, his long  
grizzled beard, falling from the shadow  
of his hat to glint in the sun as he leans  
on his cane, making his way.

13 years ago, our eyes didn't meet, and all I have  
is this shot of a slightly filled pouch slung on his back.  
I study him now as a yet unscripted character—  
his bent frame in faded red smock, baggy pants—  
perhaps just shuffling out of a version  
of a crucifixion scene.

It is only now, in this snapshot, I see he is walking past  
a door with a full-length mirror reflecting a brick wall,  
the old stones blocking what should be a gateway  
through which to enter, exit. Am I sure?  
No matter, the wall didn't stop him then,  
and nothing has stopped me from still thinking  
about him. Can you imagine ... all of us  
catching such chance glimpses—  
that continue to matter so much?



*Venezia, Good Friday, 2003*

Our shadows step out of our shoes,  
consider centuries  
as sun melts tar in the ties.

But what is not in the picture  
is what happened that night  
to George Floyd

nor five days later  
when the sound of a helicopter  
and the way the light at the end of the day hits  
only certain leaves as protesters gather  
and a screen in the window of a gallery,  
(closed for the pandemic)  
flashes white letters on a black background  
every other second  
**STOP KILLING BLACK PEOPLE.**

And now, our shadows step into  
different shoes, feel the slash  
of real bodies, on ties  
to then on that railroad,  
the sense of North,  
of star.



Railroad Bridge over the Genesee River between Orleans and Canandaigua, NY.



***Just Visiting***

—Tribute to Volume One, fertile ground

I hold a booklet, “JUST VISITING” conceived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, held together in the center by red thread.

*juſt* faces **visiting**

*juſt* in white letters on black  
*juſt*: as in merely, simply,  
*juſt* as in equitably

**visiting** on conventional white background—  
**visiting** as in being in a place,  
**visiting** a person for a short time for reasons of  
sociability, politeness, business, curiosity,

*juſt* **visiting.**

Sometimes, a map is **juſt** a tool  
and there is no *juſt*

**visiting** to define *redlining*,  
**visiting.**

Let us delve deeper into *juſt*  
what another finds worthy, just;

*visiting* (respectfully) to find out  
visiting transforming, reviving.

Let us delve into division; drop  
the divide,  
stop the toss of loaded die

stop the burning crosses, turn visit to *visiON*  
visioning together.

neighborhood by

neighborhood.

\*\*\*

The site below will bring you to some of the pictures taken and questions posed in Kathryn Mariner’s booklet, Just Visiting:

[fertilegroundroc.org](http://fertilegroundroc.org):

The tiles, what could cover up, embellish.  
They are at risk; and the building shows great wear.

Sometimes it takes an extra lens to catch  
details, like the feather resting on the stone  
by the mosaic flowers. Why this feather  
at the base of this pillar now?  
It looks as if left as an offering.

What traces do we leave?  
Chipped tile, one feather leaving from  
a wing of a bird flying through,  
small pieces that carry on.



detail of Coimbra University, Portugal

*Looking through Woods with Hourglass Shapes* page 39.

I look at the V of sky, above—  
lacy leaf of ash fronds  
in the spill of it—  
pressing into  
the blue,

and below  
a golden oval of hay framed  
by cedars to make a perfect hourglass  
as if holding the intimacy of discrete moments—

I hadn't noticed the shape until now, with everyone gone.

In the foreground I still hear our laughing,  
croquet and silliness coloring  
the who of us—  
over  
the years  
as insistent as  
the Northern White-Throat  
who continues to whistle *sam peabody peabody*—  
that song of forever that feeds us even as time runs out.



posted on [http://www.tbshstudio.com/jospe/jospe\\_poems.html](http://www.tbshstudio.com/jospe/jospe_poems.html)

I look at my arm, imagine I have no name,  
imagine the step towards a mass grave etched  
in the skin. To counter the unimaginable,  
imagine a parrot with me, at dawn—

To counter the unimaginable, look at the real light  
painting the sky red  
and if you ask my bird to recite  
something, it will be the recording of his teacher  
chanting ancient Sanskrit—  
the exact embodiment of the incantations  
for peace he received three hours every day.

If you don't believe in my bird, at least notice  
the real reflection of lamps in the window,  
like flying saucers of light  
as the sun rises in the frame of the window,  
against the fuchsia backdrop of sky.

They wobble on candlesticks,  
dancing like halos of angels

All this fades as daylight takes over.

But not the mantra for peace. If we know  
such a chant for well-being, wholeness for all  
is real, the echoes help us survive, allow us  
to be grateful should we wake  
to a new sunrise.



picture of sunrise through my daughter's dining room window, Dec. 2019

Old house, barn silhouetted on the hill,  
two empty chairs on the porch remain still.

You can barter the boards of the old battered barn  
in its dust bowl days; spin alive its chattering yarn,

the 24/7 wait in the widow's watch, now windowless crown;  
as the moon out of thick cloud, falls on the exhausted home.

You can hear the ghosts whispering in the creak of the chairs  
by the silvering light, descending the abandoned stairs

The house leaking with the wind's moan, and sagging—  
the groaning wind, through the broken boards flagging

under the strain of gathering the past, to make repair—  
but only the ghosts speak the past's presence there.



photos: Nick Jospé: Western NY State



At first perhaps you only see  
twin birch, as if conversing over  
a fence. Perhaps you can't hear  
them breathing through  
their lenticels as they primp  
for spring, their hormones harping  
inner music in the outward strum  
of silence as we wait for the end  
of winter. A perfect time to tap  
their sweet sap.

What matter to them someone  
has placed a fence smack dab  
between their rooted toes? What  
matter that the loose granite has been  
gathered as if by directive  
to be a wall or that these fields  
be divvied by wooden stakes?

In this time of pandemic, the birch  
will unfold the first leaves, regardless,  
reveal once again these green hearts  
that whisper in the wind.



Londonderry, VT

Everything livens in the sun's warmth—  
this moment, memories—

The light softly, yet firmly  
kisses the lipped lantern windows  
with a whisper of movement  
as the moss grows tight  
on their granite hats.

In this sacred space, we meditate  
at the speed of the heart, understand  
a generosity of moss to bandage  
what is cracked, at risk of breaking,  
feel its soft green as living hope.



*Ishidourou (Japanese Stone Lanterns, Kyoto, Japan)*

I learn it means thank you in modern Greek,  
with the reciprocal meaning of gift  
granted and received—

an overtone sneaks  
in to imply exchange of grace  
like these trees—

They stretch empty branches—  
more like dancing wraiths in space  
seen from the highway

behind the dividing yellow line,  
beyond the guardrail...  
    each naked twig pliant—  
    receives the rising fog  
    like a shroud of the old year.

I can tell you this, show you the picture,  
but that won't play you the music  
I hear, like an antique choir  
singing about *Kairos* —that opportune  
moment beyond any counting—  
all the interwoven intricacy  
in a psalm of praise—  
*Eucharisto.*  
*Eucharisto.*



taken (iPhoto) while driving on highway



# Poems Inspired by Art Work

## Poem in Sum:1

p. 13: *Today I'm in Havana*<sup>1</sup>

p. 32 *Tentacular Thinking*

\*\*p. 34 *Porcelain Desire*

p. 35 : *Where do you go*<sup>2</sup>

p. 36 *Mélancolie*<sup>3</sup>

p. 44 *Placement*<sup>4</sup>

p. 49 *Rokeby Venus*

p. 51 *Portrait of Facteur Roulin*

p. 51: *What the Paint Can Do*<sup>5</sup>

\*\*p. 54 : *You were never really here* Jeff Suszczynski : *You Were Never Really Here*

p. 55 *Questions for the Night Drinker*<sup>6</sup> fragment (200 AD) “ *Los Bebedores*”

\*\*p. 56. *My Friend Painted Angels* Lynne Feldman: *Apparition*

p. 62 *Spared*

## Artist:Title

Robert Gniewek : *Ave. del Puerto- Havana*

Bryon Kim : *Synecdoche*

Jennifer McCurdy : *Vortex Vessel*

Edward Hopper : *New York Movie 1939*

Albert György : *Mélancolie*

Lorette C. Luzajic : *The Best is Yet to Come*

Diego Velázquez : *Rokeby Venus*

Van Gogh : *Postman Joseph Roulin, 1888*

Van Gogh : *Self Portrait 1887*

Jeff Suszczynski : *You Were Never Really Here*

fragment (200 AD) “ *Los Bebedores*”

Lynne Feldman: *Apparition*

Adriana ippel Slutzky : *Seat of Forgetting*

*and Remembering*

\*\*p. 34, 54, 56 appear here

[http://www.tbshstudio.com/jospe/jospe\\_poems.html](http://www.tbshstudio.com/jospe/jospe_poems.html)

John Mariner's website:

## Notes about Artists

**Robert Gniewek:** p 14 *Today I'm in Havana*— inspired by photograph *Ave del Puerto, Havana* (His photo and my poem in *Visions and Voices*, a project based on photographs in the exhibit “High Fidelity: Anthony Brunelli and Digital Age Photographers” originally intended for February-May 2020 at Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY.

**Little Walter:** p. 25 *Threading the Blues*— the lyrics to *Dead Presidents* as he sings them.

[https://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/l/little\\_walter/dead\\_presidents.html](https://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/l/little_walter/dead_presidents.html)

**Kathryn A. Mariner and Miguel A. Cardona:** p. 27 : *Just Visiting*— inspired by Mariner's work [fertilegroundroc.org](http://fertilegroundroc.org). and the collaboratively designed zine “Just Visiting” (2019), held together in the center by red thread. Mariner is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. Cardona is Assistant Professor of New Media Design at Rochester Institute of Technology.

<sup>1</sup> published by Arnot Art Museum, “*Visions and Voices*”, summer 2020; the poem responded to the Gniewek photo in the exhibit, *High Fidelity: Anthony Brunelli and Digital Age Photorealists*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/where-do-you-go-by-kitty-jospe>, published 4/2/2019

<sup>3</sup> the poem published 10/24/2018 with a placeholder. <https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/melancolie-by-kitty-jospe>

<sup>4</sup> poem published among many on 3/13/20 responding to Luzajic's work, “*The Best is Yet to Come*” <https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/ekphrastic-responses-lorette-c-luzajic>

<sup>5</sup> Sunlight Press: <https://www.thesunlightpress.com>

<sup>6</sup> poem published on 7/12/2020 <https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic/questions-for-the-night-drinker-by-kitty-jospe>

**Byron Kim:** p. 32 *Tentacular Thinking*—inspired by his multipanel : *Synecdoche* <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/byron-kim-synecdoche>

**Jennifer McCurdy:** p.34: *Porcelain Desire*—inspired by her porcelain work entitled *Vortex Vessel* . <https://www.jennifermccurdy.com/currentwork.shtml>

**Edward Hopper:** p.35: *Where do you go*—inspired by his painting, *New York Movie 1939*

**Albert György:** p. 36 *Mélancolie* —inspired by a picture of the sculpture, *Mélancolie* <https://totallybuffalo.com/replicas-and-prints-available/>

**Nicolas Jospé:** p.41 *What's Left- II*—inspired by his photography of rural Western, NY

**Vincent Van Gogh** p. 50 and p.51: *Portraits:* Vincent Van Gogh: Self Portrait 1887; Postman Joseph Roulin, 1888;

**Lorette C. Luzajic:** p. 44 *Placement* —inspired by her artwork (mixed media) *The Best Is Yet To Come*

**Jeff Suszczyński** p. 54 *You Were Never Really Here:* inspired by his collage *you were never really here* [#3] [February, 2019] <https://www.tinhornplanet.com/visual-art/collage>

**Lynne Feldman:** p. 56 *My Friend Painted Angels:* inspired by her collage, *Apparition* <http://lynnefeldman.com/paintings-collages>. <https://www.wrapyourselfinart.com/all-blankets/apparition>

**Antonio Porchia:** p. 61 *Linking Lines of Frederick Douglass and Antonio Porchia.* The line “*Some things become such a part of us that we forget them*” from *Voces /"Voices"*, (used with Golden Shovel technique), Porchia’s book of aphorisms. Translated from the Spanish by Gonzalo Melchor.

**Frederick Douglass:** p. 61 *Linking Lines of Frederick Douglass and Antonio Porchia;* On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass delivered his speech, “The Meaning of July 4th to the Negro ” in Rochester, NY. [https://masshumanities.org/files/programs/douglass/speech\\_complete.pdf](https://masshumanities.org/files/programs/douglass/speech_complete.pdf)

**Adriana Ippel Slutzky:** p. 62 *How we are spared.* The *Seat of Forgetting and Remembering*, located near the bluff of the Lower Falls in Rochester, NY. was created in 2001. Although the poem was not inspired by this monument, it illustrates the last two poems perfectly.

see an old car, all rounded sleekness,  
its vibrant green as polished as new,  
and see a two-toned orange and cream car slinking up  
to pass it like an Irish flag waving in the bright sun.

The shiny chrome doesn't reflect the elegant arches,  
colonnades, nor does it mirror the layers of what used  
to be— glamorous night life with Latin rhythms,  
tasteful façades of palaces, old-world culture...

Two glitzy shells of American-made sliding in the traffic—  
Stop and go. And I start to pretend to pull out stops  
of a giant organ: Stop the wars. Stop, don't shop. Stop in shock.  
I want to see beauty glide in the street, where the best  
of every culture sings an international anthem to celebrate  
every act of grace. So, I say, I'm in Havana,

and refuse any rush of time. There's a shiny green car  
reflecting shadows on its side door, a spidery pool  
of light on the trunk. What do you want to see ?

Do you see the drivers in these polished, prized cars?  
I invite them for coffee— you come too—

we have so much to talk about—



<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/robert-gniewek-ave-del-puerto-havana>

might be helpful to examine our murders of each other... and question this idea of what *should never have been* — how it might make room

for a worldwide response to CEOs of our destruction— a critical room to put what we thought unthinkable, naked on the table.

What might possibly provide arms and avenues to help us feel empathy in our search for a word in any of the 6,500 languages in the world

all could understand? Something as basic as *breath*, or *spirit*, or merely the sound of *ruach* in Hebrew, *rwh* in its rivery flow, *ru-h-an*, in Arabic?

Certainly not raving, riled-up rage filling me this morning, on hearing my husband's unintentionally hurtful remark about my writing lacking *geography*—

and swelling up and darkening like the best of octopods, flailing arms in retort, raising my bristles announcing *You-will-be sorry-if-you-touch*, in a tumultuous

to-do just because he couldn't navigate through my words. It took hours until I located what caused our altercation... and what helped me back to

a sense of interconnected Infinite. It's like a nerve net for *Cnidarians* that allows us to swim along, removing alarm so as to return to the color

one is born in. Now, don't you get started in a new choreography of suckered arms with that word *color*. Can you find yourself among the 400 portraits—

each a panel of skin color, each a single hue, labeled by first name of the sitter? What a job it is to fit in our lines, as we shift in our shades!



*Synecdoche* by Bryon Kim

*Porcelain Desire—*

*page 34*

*for Jennifer McCurdy, inspired by her “Vortex Vessel”*

The vessel folds in silken swings  
unfolds sails and wings—  
more than dish, more than clay—

Vortex of flames whirling,  
yet holding whatever settles  
in the waiting emptiness—

(hushed tones of lush fine bone fingers,  
spinning overtones,  
shadows casting O’s like waves)—  
what looks stilled,  
instills a craving to fly—



*Vortex Vessel* by Jennifer McCurdy

*Mélancolie*

*page 35*

Today, you frame a silver sky,  
but whatever the weather,  
as seasons revolve one  
to the next, beginning, ending  
only to begin again,  
what remains, is your embrace  
of hollowness.

Your body, a black outline,  
emptied, waiting as it holds  
the light and dark of a day  
filling you without being  
part of you—  
an outside  
breathing that cannot touch  
your inner space.

I want to hold your crossed hands—  
I want to know their story,  
how they have become worn.  
I want to believe in the possibility  
of their patina polished  
as if once, touched and loved,  
touching and loving.  
I want to believe that in spite of everything,  
your hands stripped to gloss, are testimony  
to what makes your head hang so heavy  
in the emptiness  
of your wracked arms—

and to that possibility  
of touch and love.



photo of *Mélancolie*, Sculpture by Albert György found in Geneva in a small park on Quai du Mont Blanc.

## *Where Do You Go?*

—after Edward Hopper

Where do you go when you go  
to the movies? Here, the cut-off  
screen won't tell you which film  
the audience is watching. Maybe  
you will fall in love with one of the  
actors, gasp, laugh or cry because  
the images feel real as real.  
Where do you go if you don't like  
the film? Or if it's not about the film,  
but that you are on a date in this  
opulent cave of a setting?

Don't sit down in those empty seats;  
not yet. There's so much more to explore  
in this painting. Besides, more seats wait  
for you if you take the stairs beckoning  
in sultry light, behind the velvet curtains.  
First consider the usherette, the real star  
of the painting. Where has she gone under those

*page 36*

three lights, chin propped in her hand?  
Look at her in her military uniform  
her blond hair matching the mottled yellows  
on the wall, and that shadow dripping below  
the triumvirate of lights, touching her shoulder.

Oh, of course we know she is Hopper's wife,  
and their marital quarrels are no secret.  
He criticizes her, and she gets back  
at him writing cryptic comments on his sketches.  
Things like *the doorway goes in like a tomb*.

Did he ask her to wear her sexiest shoes?  
Or was that her idea? Is that all she's allowed  
of the glamour and fame she imagines in her dreams?

If you sit in the comfort of one of these theatre seats,  
illusion arranged around you, tell me,  
where do you go?



*New York Movie 1939* by Edward Hoppe

Regardless of blue as best, yellow for yet, for the letters in BAM! the red space around strike, the white veil of uncertain will win best in show over the dripping lines for sure — the prize is probably only clear to those who have not yet stenciled in numbers, but clearly are ready to announce possibilities to come--

The idea of it--

--*best* to split from sense--

*is* repeating in the chaos, are you ready  
*yet?* no matter how you sequence \$  
*to* numbers, alphabetize fate...  
*come*, come just repeat

*the best*, the best, the best, eugenically, the best *the*  
scrub-off of the ill-fated. Best to start over. What's *best*  
for everyone will — was— is never— clear. Whose interest *is*  
being scribbled on the wall, yet pasted upside down, *yet*  
posted in disorderly notes, as if to say all that is. *to*  
be considered has not yet come? Just wait. It will *come*.



*The Best is Yet to Come*, by Lorette C. Luzajic (Canada) 2019





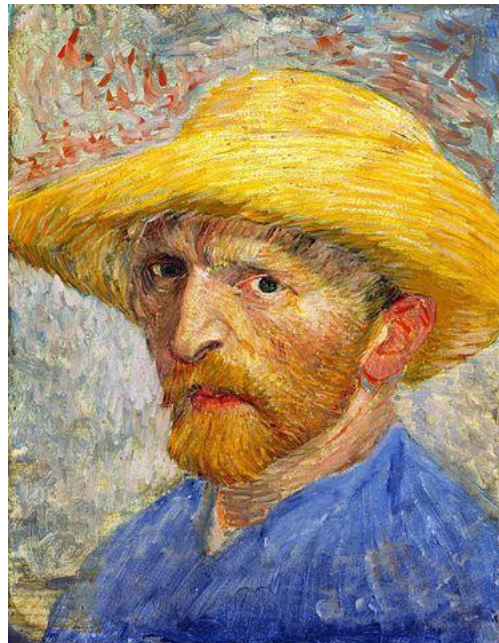
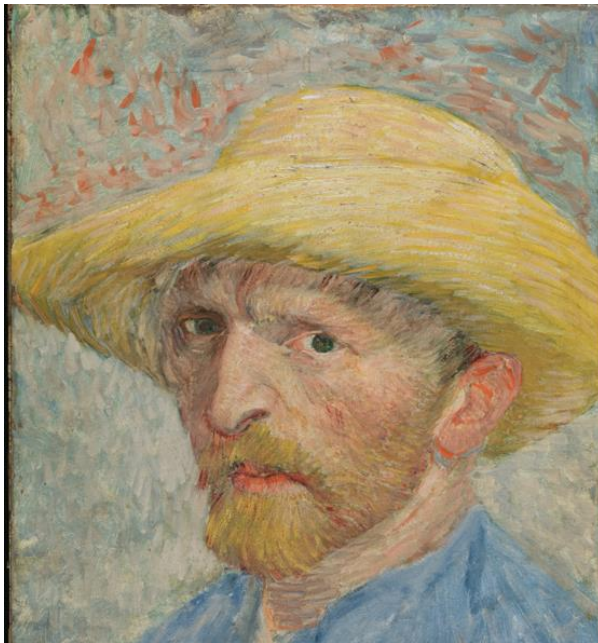
It's more than image of a face,  
more than piercing, penetrating gaze—

the paint leaps in the background,  
becomes flame and firefly on the skin,  
livenes the sun in that yellow hat,  
trumpeting in the key of *jaune*—  
bright and close to jaunty.

Van Gogh and the paints know what they want:  
vital aliveness caught in one moment,  
like the noises of horses in the street,  
voices rising like smoke, polishing  
presence into the silence of façades.

In the artist's brush, the paint will not cease its  
entrechats,

—desire squeezed into each  
color, shining, bright, glad—akin  
to the sound of *glathr*<sup>7</sup> rooted in joy.



Vincent

Van Gogh: Self Portrait with Straw Hat 1887 (Detroit Institute of Arts)

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<sup>7</sup> etymology of “glad” related to Old Norse, *glathr* ‘bright, joyous’.

The letters *Postes*, embroidered on his cap,  
echo the gold braid traveling like an errant fleur de lys  
on his sleeves, refusing to stay in boundaries—  
the outside definition of uniform;

the short strokes of gold around his face,  
like a halo, small wings of it rising from his eyebrows,  
flying from his hair by his ears and a cascade  
of golden feathers in his beard—

*How do you want to paint me today?* Joseph asks,  
plunking himself down in a chair,  
one arm leaning on the green table.

He understands Vincent's need to paint more  
than just the visible outside—  
just like the letters he carries, what matters  
lies folded inside the envelope, waiting  
delivery, what is revealed in the light.

And so he sits. And so the other paints.  
And we can imagine an ordinary man,  
not bitter, nor happy, not perfect,  
buttoned in his uniform, a friend.



Postman Joseph Roulin, 1888; Vincent Van Gogh

*You were never really here*  
after Jeff Suszczynski

page 54

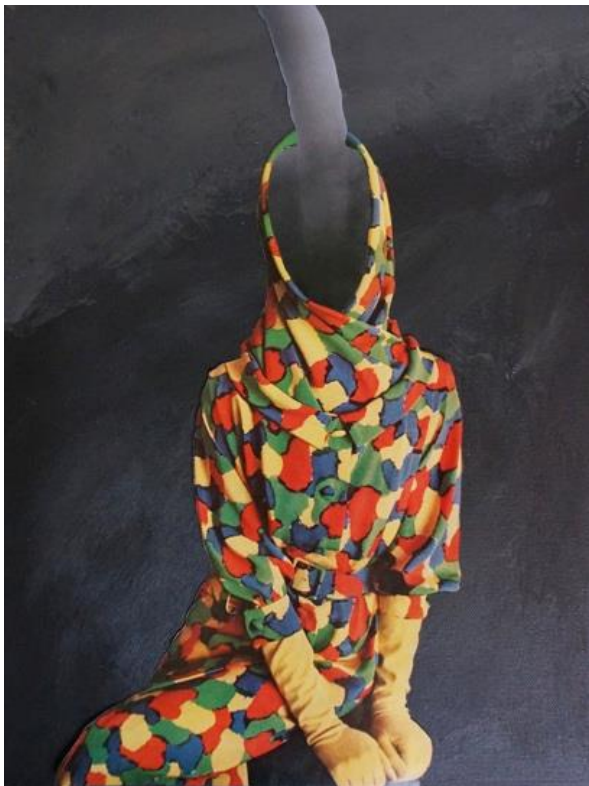
Call the funnel of smoke, *you*—  
it brings in what you *were*  
sucks out what *never*  
was *really*  
*here...*

The woman is like the outline of the moon soon to be *here*  
wrapped in a fashionable robe—*really*  
you might say, only a trick, *never*  
more than faceless. If appearances *were*  
defined by a dress called *you*—

does that change *you were never really here*—  
that funnel of gray attaching *you*

to some greater grayness— *here?*  
*really never were you*

belonging.



*You were never really here* by Jeff Suszczynski  
<https://www.tinhornplanet.com/visual-art/collage>



*My Friend Painted Angels*

*page 56*

saying not only do they come in handy,  
they abound—ready  
when you are,  
to remind you to join in the dance—

You do not have to believe me—  
but I've seen it  
over and over, when people despair,  
tell you adversity will spread its prickly,  
bitter jam  
on a fragile crust of a moment,  
its thick darkness breaking all hope, sticking  
in your throat with the taste of misfortune.

Sometimes the littlest thing  
will call out,

ask you to pay attention—something  
unexpected—

no warning—  
and an equally sturdy apparition spreads its  
wings,  
serves you nectar and ambrosia of the  
ancient gods  
infuses the air with radiance curling up,  
like early morning mist,  
to hold you in a host of aliveness.  
No guarantees, predictions for this—just  
a small twist in the way you start to step,  
maybe hear the first bird at sunrise breaking  
the silence of a long night.



*Apparition* by Lynne Feldman

remembering what passes along

or not

forgetting what's wrapped in lines

or not

another trigger pulled breath pinched

morning's return of the sun

or not

illuminating what bears no light of its own

or not

candles burning



*Seat of Forgetting and Remembering* by Adriana Ippel Slutzky (Rochester, NY)

