

UNBECOMING  
INTERFERENCE

THE  
POEMS

# CONTENTS

4	<b>Sequela</b>
5	<b>Scotoma</b>
6	<b>Pedagogy</b>
7	<b>Albedo</b>
8	<b>Anamorph</b>
9	<b>Cataract</b>
10	<b>Zoetrope</b>
11	<b>Artist Statement</b>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	I	S	P	E	N	T	M	Y	E	N	D	1	E	N	D	O	F	I	T			
2	L	I	F	E	C	H	A	S	I	A	L	2	A	L	L	A	N	A	N	G		
3	N	G	A	F	T	E	R	T	E	L	A	3	A	S	K	E	D	M				
4	H	E	S	U	N	.	A	T	E	H	O	4	H	O	W	I	H	A				
5	T	H	E	E	N	D	O	F	D	U	S	5	D	U	S	E	D	M				
6	E	A	C	H	E	X	H	A	U	L	I	6	L	I	F	E	,	"	I			
7	S	T	I	N	G	D	A	Y	S	P	E	7	S	P	E	N	T	M	Y	L		
8	I	T	W	O	U	L	D	W	I	F	E	8	P	U	R	S	U	I				
9	I	N	K	A	T	M	E	N	G	A	D	9	R	E	A	M						
10	A	S	I	T	D	I	S	A	"	I	S	10	A	I	D							
11	A	P	P	E	A	R	E	D	"	C	A	11	N	D	W	H						
12	N	E	A	T	H	A	S	K	A	T	D	12	R	E	A	M	W					
13	Y	O	F	B	L	U	E	-	A	S	T	13	H	A	T	?	"					
14	G	R	A	Y	C	L	O	U	D	"	T	14	H	A	T	I	F					
15	S	T	H	A	T	F	A	D	I	C	O	15	I	C	O	U	L	D	I	N		
16	E	D	I	N	T	O	B	L	C	A	R	16	I	N								
17	A	C	K	.	T	H	I	S	T	H	E	17	C	A	R	C	E	R	A	T	E	S
18	D	A	I	L	Y	R	E	I	T	<sup>source of</sup> <del>the</del> <sup>light</sup>		18	I									
19	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	O	F	W	O	19										
20	F	A	I	L	U	R	E	E	B	L	E	20										
21	V	E	N	T	U	A	L	L	Y	A	B	21										
22	I	N	S	I	N	U	A	T	E	M	Y	22										
23	D	I	T	S	E	L	F					23										
24	A	S	A	M	A	N	T					24										
25	R	A	O	F	D	I	S					25										
26	A	P	P	O	I	N	T	M	E			26										
27	N	T	.	A	T	T	H	E				27										

# Sequela

Like every other man  
 I was born with a  
 wound in one hand  
 and a knife  
 in the other.  
 With the knife  
 I tore apart  
 the flesh of others  
 and inserted in its place  
 a savage fear  
 that masqueraded as revenge.  
 With the wound  
 I displayed for all to see,  
 the cost then to myself:  
 the violation of my own  
 innocent flesh,  
 ripped apart by  
 the knives of others.  
 This sleight of hand  
 I performed  
 so I would never suspect  
 I had murdered myself.

## *sequela*

*noun. si-'kwe-lə*

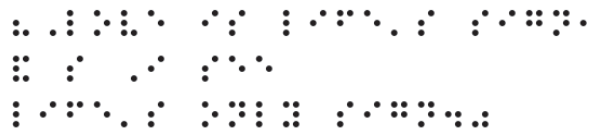
*A pathological condition resulting from a disease, injury, therapy, or other trauma. Typically, a sequela is a chronic condition that is a complication which follows a more acute condition. It is different from, but is a consequence of, the first condition. Timewise, a sequela contrasts with a late effect, where there is a period, sometimes as long as several decades, between the resolution of the initial condition and the appearance of the late effect.*



# Scotoma

I.  
 I spent my life  
 chasing after the sun.  
 At the end of each  
 exhausting day  
 it would wink at me  
 as it disappeared  
 beneath a sky  
 of blue-gray clouds  
 that faded into black.  
 This daily reiteration  
 of failure  
 eventually insinuated itself  
 as a mantra of disappointment.  
 At the end of it all  
 an angel asked me  
 how I had used my life.  
 "I spent my life  
 pursuing a dream," I said.  
 "And what dream was that?"  
 "That if I could incarcerate  
 the source of light I would  
 be able to free  
 my own shadow."

II.  
 "Love is life's sign,  
 and so I see  
 life's only sign."



*scotoma*  
*noun.* *sco-to-ma* | \ skə-'tō-mə \  
*plural* *scotomas* or *scotomata* | skə-'tō-mə-tə \  
 1. A spot in the visual field in which vision is absent or  
 deficient. 2. A blind spot in psychological awareness.  
 [G. *skotōma*, vertigo, fr. *skotos*, darkness]





# Pedagogy

When I was five years old  
a red-headed giant  
lumbered into our town  
and crushed every house.  
Those of us who survived  
began to rebuild,  
constructing haunts  
that resembled the  
homes we lost.

Over time we mastered  
the skills needed  
to recreate our dream.  
The hardest part though  
was not the long  
apprenticeship, but rather  
crossing a narrow chasm  
between our memory  
of the catastrophe  
and a treasure we had  
buried in each other,  
a journey of only  
twelve inches.

## *pedagogy*

*noun. ped·a·go·gy (pěd'ə-gō'jē, -gōj'ē)*

1. *The art or profession of teaching.*

2. *Preparatory training or instruction.*

*Synonyms include: inculcation and brainwashing.*

*[French pédagogie, from Old French, from Greek paidagōgiā, from paidagōgos, slave who took children to and from school]*



# Albedo

## I. (outer poem)

Like many others  
of my generation  
I was not able  
to transition easily  
from sleep state  
to waking.  
My tormentors  
from the world  
of light  
would abandon their  
assumed forms  
whenever I entered  
the shadow,  
shape shifting  
back into the  
monstrous aberrations  
whose anthropomorphic  
disfigurement  
more distinctly  
identified them  
with the awful deformities  
they embodied.

My parents became giant  
spiders that encircled  
our house with a web  
only they could safely navigate.  
Infinitely patient  
they could remain motionless  
but alert  
for years a time.  
Recording every tremor  
of the web,  
they registered its  
relative level  
of significance;  
darting forth with  
vampire mouths open  
or remaining inert  
accordingly.  
The cache of  
silk-cocooned zombies  
bore testament  
to their prowess,  
blanched and desiccated,  
hushed,  
hung like wraith pupae  
from the silver maples.

## II. (inner poem)

In my fifty-seventh year  
I sat by my mother's bed  
while the cancer slowly ate her.  
She then lay sleeping  
while I was awake -- hovering.  
She invited me into her dream  
where I met three women:  
the mother, warrior, and wise woman,  
distraught that the child  
who was their charge sat  
frozen in a block of ice.  
I was asked to help  
so I melted the ice,  
absorbing its cold  
into my hands.  
This it turned out,  
was the same ice  
in which I  
had been encased.

## albedo

*noun.* al-'bē-(,)dō *plural* albedos  
*reflective power. specifically: the fraction of incident radiation (such as light) that is reflected by a surface or body (such as the moon or a cloud) [mid 19th century: ecclesiastical Latin, 'whiteness', from Latin albus 'white']*



# Anamorph

I.  
From where I stand  
I cannot see myself properly.

I need the corrective lens  
that dwells in you  
to gain the advantage point.

II.  
You protest that you can  
supply only your own distortion.

But the task remains  
for us to find and employ  
this shared mechanism.

III.  
Through this means we can  
convert from what we are  
to whom we are to become.

The corrective lens of charity  
restores ectropy.

*Anamorphosis*  
noun. plural an-a-mor-pho-ses [an-uh-mawr-fuh-seez, -mawr-foh-seez]  
*A drawing presenting a distorted image that appears in natural form under certain conditions, as when viewed at a raking angle or reflected from a curved mirror.*  
*The method of producing such a drawing.*  
*Zoology, Entomology: The gradual change in form from one type to another during the evolution of a group of organisms.*





# Cataract

*This work is an homage to Marcel Duchamp's Étant donnés: 1. La chute d'eau, 2. Le gaz d'éclairage  
(Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas)*

## I. (outer poem)

My grandmother's hands  
have blood on them,  
the blood of men she  
strangled and disemboweled.  
The last time I saw my father  
she was cradling his head  
in her lap and  
hollowing it out  
like a halloween pumpkin.  
She looked like my mother then --  
pulling my teeth out  
with a pair of pliers  
in my grandmother's kitchen.  
But it was still her,  
stuffing a handkerchief  
up her sleeve while my  
grandmother served his  
severed testicles  
on bone china.  
The feast does not quell,  
but further inflames  
her hunger.  
She looks up from her plate  
and her eyes alight on me.  
Now I look like my mother  
and she looks like my father,  
only this time I  
cut off my own balls  
and offer them to her,  
as if the memory of life  
could engender itself.

## II. (Inner poem)

I can see you  
now that you  
are no longer here.  
Your presence  
overshadowed me  
and prohibited  
the luxury  
of reflection.  
So I think of you  
now that you're gone  
and recreate you  
as you were:  
a shadow  
of my self.

## cataract

noun. / 'kadə,rakt /

1. a large waterfall.

• a sudden rush of water; a downpour: the rain enveloped us in a deafening cataract.

2. a medical condition in which the lens of the eye becomes progressively opaque, resulting in blurred vision: she had cataracts in both eyes.



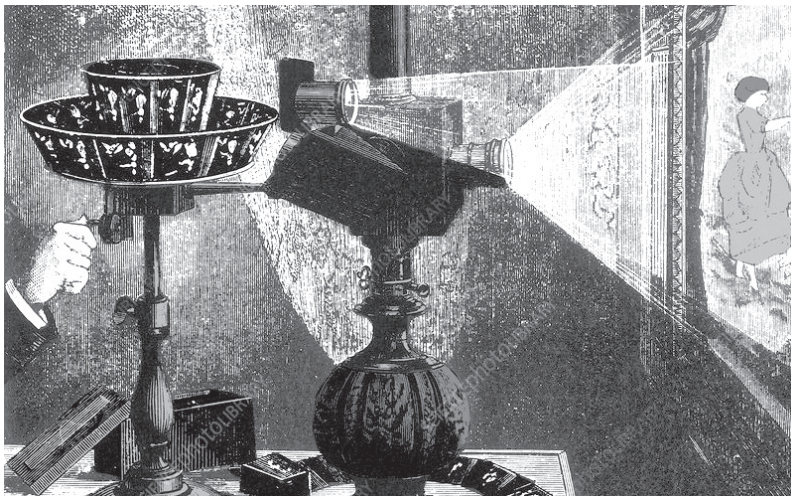
# Zoetrope

There is a black sun  
that steals across the afternoon  
And clutches at the white one  
with icy fire fingers.  
I can see it when  
the moon is in the way  
and returns its borrowed light,  
like my father's face  
when he sucked in the  
clown I drew  
and blew it out  
as a cloud of  
gray vapor.

*zoetrope*

*noun. /zo-e-trope/*

*An optical toy in which figures on the inside of a revolving cylinder are viewed through slits in its circumference and appear like a single animated figure*



# Peter Allen



## Artist Statement

My work studies the nature of the self and the pressure of context. I appropriate mass-produced images from my own formative years, with the objective of reorienting their meaning, while at the same time preserving whatever quality the original image might possess. I impose my own narrative on the one originally designed for another, sometimes opposite, purpose: for example, in *Albedo*, the girl is more “threatening” than the sleeping wolf.

I pursue a symbiotic effect that is achieved with poetry and imagery. I experiment with ways of combining elements; and by using stenciled letters in a grid, I am able to design the shape of the composition as I work it out on graph paper. The letters are hand cut and collaged, arranged with no leading between the lines, producing a text that looks at once ancient and modern.

My work then seeks to relate my own experience of self-discovery – my poetry is autobiographical – and place it in a context where light is thrown on our preconceptions allowing for reconsideration of who we might be.