

I'M NOT
WRITING
PURE
WAR
THIS IS A
GROCERY LIST

Catherine Meng

made from
100% upcycled materials
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Hive Press
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The invention of the boat was the invention of shipwrecks.
- Paul Virilio

now you're
just being goofy don't be goofy

be forever an aside

a river not far from here
a clear cutting
this box of tissues
a gentle absorber
for your chapped snout & horror

available balance as of today: \$16.43

I can't even buy a best seller
or admission to a rock
the wind has eroded into
a monument
I can't even be
the harpy

breaking

or trolling a mystery
a method of fishing
phonetically confused with trawling
a method

that destroys fisheries
a method
designed to

obtain & destroy at the same time
sounds like pure war
left ajar
how half-rhymes

make derangement
a quiet place
to lie down

ocean after ocean

reams of it
acerbic
in shallows
the mind glory

old as this snow
underfoot & up up up
among clouds

other lapses
I call to & call
forth
to wander separate
from sound

to feel "at home"
with elixir as backstop

to change this
that you may
change

all of us
mouths full of gases
as blood
from some opening vein -

salt crusting the skin
as a second skin
crusting & loosening off

warmly side-winding
how a road soars
down
into a valley

where someone left the door
open & the barkeep
was all, *this isn't a barn*

see that I would be
tidal
& my pocket square
a rococo
resistance
a dormer window
that conjures
invocation

where the pane
divides
into four panes
of glass

not a glass eye for an eye
but I and I
and I and I

mystic as slant rhyme
can't be plotted
& yet the plot
there's no escaping

Available balance as of today: \$25.97
I'm just saying

*

the company name
a shore
a shoe a shoehorn
an octopus
exterior filtered through our liver
our lungs
our hung dog faces
our rag rugs
our place mats
our places

rot where each peg fits

stargazed & worthy
a cart worth
of folly I pull
the tender webbing loose

as a snake would from the inside
I make this
this that I exhume

& in someone else's writhing
stunted
as a landmark
I find the lake's surface
a stop-gap
the eye snags & splits on
how the shine

stands apart
feigning abstraction
except to rust out
& pad back
revised

*

the edges bifurcate

yes but also
mindful of what
the center works to adjust
in the slippage
shadows co-
exist with the run-off

of halving it
out of habit
out of dividing it
defining it
divining it
dousing it
having it

both ways
ad nauseam
how that shirt makes you eyes
not a city in France
but a smell
in the museum
I need to breathe
I need to breathe
in reverse I
need to breathe more
the door is a joor
I need to breathe with an e

to peer in on
the clockworks
smarting to find the theory
behind
is more smarts
& I stop breathing
this time with feeling!
to find none

averting
one's fainting spells
& tumors

I can't help myself
I go under
to visit the trees there
where their limbs
are broken
where their limbs are cut off
they grow over
where their bark is punctured
peeled & gouged
they grow over
they grow up

I'm reading
A Guide To Ruining Other People's Lives
& they're
just

trying to get some sun,
man

*

Available balance as of today: \$650.97
scouting a new location
bombed out on Sudefed
cleaved by
exterior motive
the unfurling
of aluminum ladders
not mine
not to be tampered with
misspoke wildly
in long curves

he put the whole world
in his mouth
not long after
poetry left the page
where it was to begin
not either/or
but and/and
I put the whole world
in my mouth &
coughitbackup

the frame flutters

because the course
had yet
to be treaded
worn down
or repeated
it had yet to
return
& collapse
like a lung

*

gaaaaaa -

dreaming on repeat among
rambling shock woods
where streams blubber
trout secrets
to dead men of tweed

truncated recipes
lost for a decade
among sunspots
& math

I have left
to make all is right in the world
to make all is alright
to make it alright
to compound it
to write it
to misconduct it
so it
can no longer divide

because this is a solo project

when I conduit I
I stop breathing
when not conduit
when conduit to nothing
I audit the thought
I smite it
tarting it up
for the sake
of the scribe

*

so sorry

tomorrow will be
a boat or a fire
alive in a
clearing where tree cover
opens
to reveal a voluminous roaring

in other words
the shining seven
in one word sky

How is this fun?
Or, how is this? Or that?
Or what bind ties

the joke
to the feedback
or a bird feeder
the squirrels ransack
all of this an un-checked
off-track
disease of the mind

*

assert yourself

your self
that is younger & slightly askew

dulled to arrest
a thrashing
held clever
or heaven sent
like the long arm
of the law
like the many voices
that make up a boy choir
or a flight of stairs
drawn on a sidewalk
the clank

architecture defined
by the rounds
where the chalk
gets ground
apart by the grain

a skull poking out
from the sewage
the rubble
the rubble
a skull of a former sun

a more common equation

all knife dark
& clumped up

in sonic resemblance
the studied gargle
the steady snore

I try to
light

the tip of
as if the sound
is justified
beyond these statements
this disregard of evidence
how eloquent
these columns crumble
with a gavel's thud
beating out the available balance
as of today: \$760.49

tic that is fantastic
in its mumble mumble
multi-whorl
sucked from the cave
busking sea shanties

in lieu of
change & bank notes
my guitar case
houses a cross-bow & frito crumbs
& browsing above

our seafaring forefather
a posse of gulls

*

Available balance as of today: \$681.11
this is just getting good
to whom it may concern

that simple
I was only going to
oogle & then I was caught in
the crystallized snap
retort to retort
all the stalactites
as speech

mollified by fireflies
and other genteel remainders
hosanna caught /
in the grooves
with a mission's insistence
motoring across water
we say the surface is glass

or a brain pan
that's an experience and it smells cold
without drama
bearably not barely
audible not audibly
we say the surface
conveys an expanse
I was only going to oogle
& then I was within
the frame

so I stepped back

*

Available balance as of today: \$836.66
should I truncate
allow me to rig your ink blot

with overlapping
crow

for this fancy part
is a star

the risk
is all in the wrist
as in the breath
in the lungs

& tho no horses live here no more
we still register
distances
in terms of gallops

& when we reference "the city walls"
the gaze
falls squarely
beyond & between
two dripping eaves

& finds me
among updos saying
I don't know in French
saying *toreador*
saying
laziness!
saying *I am*
the long & the short of it!

browsing full
tilt
among grasshalms
something I confuse
never saying for

holla wisely gods of jabber
the door is a
flabby side-winding

listlessness
that be your tongue, buddy
that be your instrument, partner
that you may be a panther
that you may
not even know it
but you in a cage
& those stalactites are profits
& those profits

do I have to say

How fun is this? is a nice way of saying
you mis-heard it
ding dong
the world revolves around a lump sum
not
a fucking hot star

*

skimming the frizz

from radio jets
I wrote tectonics
by rote I did
vapor trails
morphed my avatar
with a signature
of a hook

clocked upside the head

hollow as a lisp
in the low parts
that's ribbon grass
sound the flugelhorn
the door
is a joor

as sudden
as ocher is
triumphantly retrieved from telepathy

to the actual
autumn
before the laws
we rake leaves
into piles
& burn them

*

& we haven't even left

the preamble
delighting in the niceties
we still trying on the shells
of the wrong
shellacking the moves
for the caved-in heads
of all the soldiers

to come & you still crying
you still looking for heroes & idols
& giants

you still chewing
thinking your breath
smells sweeter
thinking your breath is
fresher
fresher than breath
that don't breathe at all

*

removing myself from the frame
as if it is

into our lives
witness
to the glad-handling
& stilted fish
espoused
as stars wander
sliding
out of ear- shot
at a diagonal
mistook for how
& where
Rachmaninoff diluted
what we knew
to be table
what we knew to be
a table and chairs

the grains beginning
what we know

to be surface
was a solid collide

an expression of angles
willed sick as a dog yes
but willed as a dog
with his stick
tossed again
beyond
the will

itself
which I
bound after

to reappear triumphant
in the mouth

naw, that's just my neck
& the weather around it
smells like static
you can't get
a hold of

slag to the squelch
you know me, son
you know my dog breath
my watermark
my double-blind
pie chart

you know
my mis-diagnosis comes correct
with experimental drugs
joints

that side
effect
in small print & lobbyists
& white pants
in the Hamptons
& bubbles

coming
up
through the sand
where clams
must be
somewhere below

*

I will hear nothing now
on this anniversary
of our nothingness
I hear nothing
other than

