

From *Rules for the direction of*

Rule One

for DavEnd

is a question:

What is true
and sound

and mind

and what comes before it?

Epigenetic influences of recent relations
or the rips and stains in my hand-me-down
jeans

a blot of mustard cannot be the idea-sign of
the passions

so begin with blown out knee
tight blue frays to white
over whitish pink and dark stems rising

In a flat of mason jars
I muddle the sciences
with bodily aptitude
and practice

What is the “valley spirit”?
My neighbors turn their hands to farming,
harp playing
my neck succeeds at what other parts have
failed at

We are comrades, not judges,
left our decades at home
you can lean on something
and still hear applause
the clatter of the blinds
dry leaves scraping the asphalt

who would borrow the wind
put it in her accordion

I want us all to take a breath
and scratch my hairy foot
vagabonding or voguing
our way through this text.

I'm under water
over the moon
I put my hairy fingers
to the stops and keys

Why do these sound like
the words of a wounded psyche
“which at first glance seem of little use or
interest”

I want to topple the logic
that calls the
human
cost
soft.

Dream a beam of light
bent by water

We beach babes
backless with a view
to laughter
giving the ocean its chop

Rule Two

for Gina de Vries

I was traveling down a transect
working my gap
where only those objects
called food and drink,
our tongues, our spit pass

at what page did my
family stop reading
because I took the book back

circling around the facts
I'm a bird you show up for

What touches back
where bones have rubbed
together but the tongue
is left in place

in the early evening light
near solstice, Oakland
her friends danced
around each others'
fragile hyoid bones
inventing or discerning
or rediscovering better
to say practicing forms
of being towards each other

you deserve a moment
a forkful of origin
without having to be able
to distinguish what is
true from what is false

the root that presents itself
as something to cling to

take part of me
and nourish your
existence with it, I.

Rule Three

for Dominika Bednarska

Where are the final offices
where you can submit the final forms
to the last bureaucrat

and on your way
a hard-learned method
leave paper behind you

exit hands
exit voice
not through loss
but righteous hindsight

Helena Jans van der Strom
servant to the bookseller
mother to the dead
lover to reason's zombie body
if you left papers

where did you hide them
you still survived time
by hitching a ride
parasite in the margins of letters

and what do you say
to the PSAs aimed
at the young masters
women posited only in relation

no single stall
we can all fit in

the idea was to drain the marsh
and farm there
build a bar and mill and church
is this still a sound founding

concept if we amend it
a living documentation
now become the inquisitors
and if the door is open

I don't need your help
I can do it myself

after we have come together
to build a zone
where we may do it ourselves

Rule four
for Jos Truitt

This chamber is empty
a packed house but empty
space filled with laughter, tears,
applause, and emptinesses.
I begin my search

in the republic of letters
for the phrase *people of color*
in early modern europe.
A scientist dressed up like a
woman dressed up in an envelope
sealed in wax circulated by post
at the threshold of the creation
of academies of exclusion

the seal broken the contents unfolded
letters received from the dead by the living
in the age of a new network which seems to
stretch across all space fraught with
diversion a semblance of true

representation in allegory in painting
not enough not enough under glass
in the corner of the museum
richly adorned image offering images of
gifts to an image of the christ child

Rule Five
for Julia Serano

Anna Maria, called Virginia, long a member
of the community of letters
yet the *Muiderkring* not quite the spot
how balance devotion with humanist
erudition, this quarrel

ends at the roots of a labadie oak
where the states meet
as so many other quarrels
a lead balloon floats

over fillmore street
while we happy trans women
pass the mic to our cis lovers
how to put it

sweat mixes with scree and
green lions make sport
with sad sack golden gate buffalo
as divine androgynes ride by

unashamed of their helmets
and segways

Having spoken of my I
the world will hear Her Mes
beckoning my sweet liquor
sometimes getting picked warts' blood

this modest work I humbly undertake
though the brothers RC have given no
answer

Who needs them
when the heart which the brain wants mute
frankly bursts breaking ribs
which show no traces of remodeling

in silence's almost instant death

Opuscula

glee in advance of that day when the
questions which my dear
correspondent was unable to answer

embellished due to the book

scanner's automated workings
my royalty an unintentional anamorphosis
unwritten due to my low stature
to what ethos shall I answer

that the initial words of the right leaf and the
final words of the left appear to stretch as
they fall into the spine

if I say I am not a republican letters
and testimony that I began my
investigation nursed by my mother against
the custom of education plainly
visible plainly violating subordinate obscure
and complicated

in search of a science
suffused with the golden glow of a
Pentateuch a light from the ancients which
would explain all points how slender my
powers barely operational viz. when you ask
for an example of my method I can only
answer my adjective