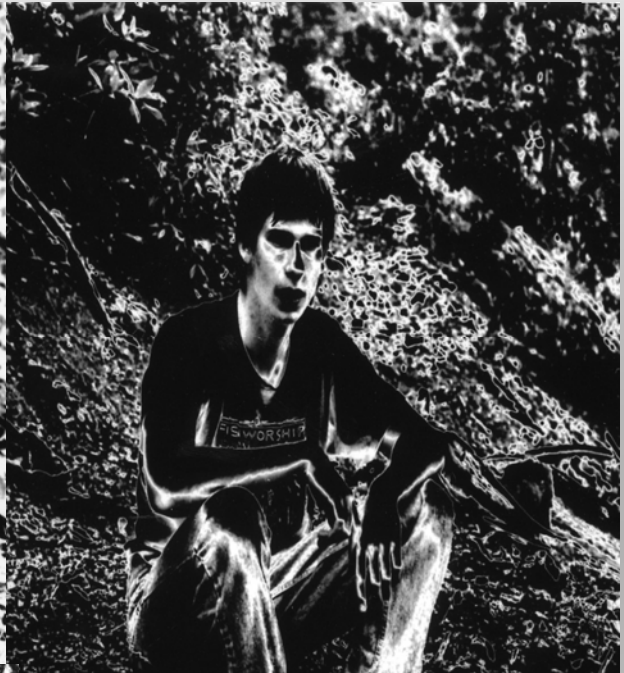


HOW MANY OF YOU ARE YOU?

philip jenks



Cover art by Tanja Miljevic



Philip Jenks
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*I turn
& say farewell to the valley, those hills .
A physical part of wellbeing's been spent &
Left there – Goodbye mountains . valley,
All. Never to be there again . Never.*

*It is
An intricate dance
To turn & say goodbye to the hills we live in the presence of .
When mind dies of its time
It is not the place goes away .
- Paul Blackburn, "The Net of Place"*



1930

Black minds. A municipal undertaking
Work Progress Administration it widen
Sick White Magic. Engraved, segregated.
Second Ward (a) Negro Elementary
Also grab it known as "Annex". Invasion.
Lady Eleanor she show up she herself
Dedicate the Segregated surgery
On the 1925 dilapidate
Dilate the pupils
"New Deal"
White Avenue.

*

"Everyone looks the same in a coal mine."
Utopian impulse, intentions bested by accretion
Of time. The same old new deal,
"other half" and have-nots.
Can't tell slavery slant.

*

1973

Tangled in the bramble,
On the corner of Posten and White Avenue.
Integrated Annex.
Rooms filled with dozens of decibels,
Mostly white.
Honest, I had no idea
But our hilly playing field gave some pause.
In 1973, we debated whether
The new merry go round was
Giant tit or flying saucer.
Call it what you will
I imagined it would spin me
To somewheres bettersafer.
Mamaverse.
(What happen in the bathroom?)



Hours

Haven't restored a God is staring. Taunts at
Stare Decisis, precedent of unprecedented.
Heart. Feature organ meat and Who is crying?
uncontrollable tonics. Tuned tunic.
Out of the picture, Oodie straggles burned
the afternoon as crossing guardians on
White Ave. Was it delirium tremens?

Flatter tatter, mixed messages a whole mess of images.
This is a picture of a storefront. The storefront stands
As a physical manifest of the intention to present:
Beauty, "salon", "nails".
Darkly juts of leafless maple. intentional fence
Upstairs apartment.
W.P.A. curbs and gutter runs straight into Decker's.
Kingwood. Wilson. At this corner, White turns into Green Avenue.
Oodie, an alcoholic or epileptic, flopped here frequently
Spills out from Gene's bar after beer hot dogs are
Fenced in, pushed down, squirms a pair of eyes
Jut out he bit his lip see it in the tooth foam.

Gene's Hot Dogs. Foamy mouth
The steps were station for Todd and me
Wee cross guards. Next to the store that I called "Hours".
On the stoop, smell of beer and dog shit,
Nothing else was the fence there
To fend off spirits. (at Gene's, by eight, got free
Beer if I turned the pinball machine over,
It was called *Comet*.
No effort could bring me, Todd, or Oodie to.
Someone carried Oodie off down White Avenue in fear.



Did you cover up tracks with “God is deadly”
All because to electrify his name was
Pure sin? Strangles of living wire attack the
Edifice. A sarcastic slice of “Modern
Man” can be heard, walkman = armor.
And the minute but distinct cross it put me
Off on my paper route, exchanging Jesus
For Black Flag. A ridiculous attempt to
Closet the sound it then broke down when I got
Closer and heard them revelating inside.
Sunday papers I would whitely listen from
Those stairs and told my Episcopalian
Minister dad that if I went for it, it’d
be pentacostal. He shudder. Turn all pale.



Worker Among...Workers?

This here ladder is jutting into tangling
Gnaw of Angles. He might be angel. Watches
Transmit in a revelation, dismiss the
Sharpest divide with uniformity. And
The collective got tore up, scatters. Christ is
Parked and waiting, undetected. "Worker
Among the Workers", body narks itself out
Just come upstairs from Pathfinder's Young Socialist
Meeting, snap. Subway I had a fit in you.

Thing is, it is likely the ladder went nowhere
And he was working alone. Hi Hello to one other
Person on High Street, the center of
Downtown Morgantown. Nothing has everything
To do with the picture. Husk of building,
Empty personal rapid transit system cars that
shoot like horizontal elevators across the town,
No driver, often no passenger. Hi hello
I am nothing.

In/of itseff nothing is fine.
Handful of codeine Tylenol
downed with codeine cough syrup
over codeine for...migraines? I'm eleven.
They will drive you out in the night
To where there is no light and
Into a field, turn on the headlights,
Pauper's graveyard how the ground
Sunk down with every step.

Nothing/everything do their own thing but
The crux between haunts the town. This
"ghost town". Spirits,
Weird séance, incidence of coincidence,
Mythic prophetic cadence.
Skating rink plays "Undercover Angel"

Once they shut Morgantown Junior High School
Down, which is just south of the man or was it east
Rian and me we kept visiting the place,
Locker, "supplies", tore up, the place was falling apart,
Condemned. Chip had already shot Eddie
Point blank with a hollow tip to the chest.



Ballroom romper room
This is where they play *Who Are You?* Real loud
I was watching *Zoom*. Puts “the needle and the damage
Done” it’s a house as big as a block as old
Maybe as Morgantown. It’s not that it’s necessarily
Haunted, the haunts came from up the block
There was a murder Andrea took to her man
With a hammer says “Cancer is the living Christ”
Within me. I was her babysitter.
House of proximities, soaked with it.
Over there, pry inside around back
There’s a duck pond inside the house.
Story says owned by Mob.

The place isn’t even gothic.
If Gothic went Gothic,
It might be this house.
No one enters or exits house.
The dealers steer clear
Of you when you are this big.
It’s the I can’t get you in my camera house.
If *Clue* was a real game,
Shocks of turquoise and red interiors
Imagine every single event that has taken place here.
This is what I meant by the 30,000 of it.

Hydra house
Hangs “T.B. Sheets”
Slate shingles influenza influential
Quaffs Maker’s Mark
Crazy John mowed the lawn.
Draw near, John will ask you
“Where’d you get those spindly legs?”
Was a rich schizophrenic
Who lived in Hotel Morgan
Aka “Hot Organ” after the
Electric letters failed
To light the night.



How Old Is It?

1. 1766

Tree did it look to witness Zackquill Morgan?
Washington detects the tree on land survey,
Assign Tomahawk our rights, it genocide.
Bounds White Avenue, antipodal addicts
Glare at the school behind it, smoking ganja
“Humbolt” meant killer. Looking backward, Faces
Facing forward – this twist was Canto Twenty.
Zack Morgan, he acted the same - “potential”.
Prospect anticipates the outcome, leaves the
Tree surrounded. Stuck condition. Civil War is
Circular looking glass; it’s made of guns and
Cash and of industry. The ground it soaks the
Blood, the tree does not care. An energy that

Is Itself, unconditional condition

2. Ancestral Wilkin

(written by William Porter Wilkin Captain, First West Virginia Cavalry
Annapolis, Md., July 31, 1863:

Dear Wife.....

On the 20th we landed in Richmond a little before daylight; and being tired and weary I lay down in the street of the Confederate capitol and fell asleep, when I dreamed I was engaged in a most desperate and bloody battle, I thought we slew the rebels by the thousands, but still they pressed on with increasing vigor and increasing recklessness of life. I fought with power and strength that I thought were supernatural. I was half crazed with delight over the terrible havoc I was making in their ranks when I was struck by a ball and fell dead, as I thought, but still in my mind was active. I had many novel reflections of which I have not the time to tell you, but I thought of the battlefield, with peculiar pleasure. I thought of my family and wondered how long it would be before I must pass over now. Finally, I thought, as I am in the land of spirits, I must begin to look around me and see what my doom is to be. So I gathered myself up, or rather was wafted along, I knew not whither; yet my motions were not involuntary – I had power to direct my course. Presently I came in sight of a place that excited my curiosity; it did not exactly answer Milton’s description of hell, yet I thought it must be hell. But in order to be well assured of the place I jogged along till the sentinel at the gates halted me. I will not attempt to describe this sentry, suffice it to say he was the most perfect looking object

of pain and anguish and suffering that imagination could picture. I ventured to inquire who he was, and what place was that he was guarding. "I, sir, am the renowned Calhoun of South Carolina, and the first instigator of rebellion in the U.S., and this place sir, is a special hell, got up for the especial benefit of all traitors and rebels to the Government of the U.S., together with C.L. Vanlandigham, of Ohio, and his followers; and it is as much more miserable than the old original hell, as the original hell is more miserable than heaven. And with that, he uttered a piercing shriek, so full of woe, unutterable anguish, and despair, so hellish and infernal, that it startled me and I sprang to my feet and awoke, to laugh a good hearty laugh at the ludicrousness of my dream. Perhaps the rough usage we had been receiving from the rebels for some days past gave rise to the dream. At daylight we were marched through the streets and crammed in a large warehouses opposite Castle Thunder. One thousand of us were crowded into this place, the filthiest place I ever saw – and kept there till evening, when were marched out and over to Bell Island – Here we lay for three days on this sandbar, without any shelter to protect us from the scorching heat of the sun. During these days I was very sick and being thus exposed I suffered very much. On the 23rd we were loaded into stock cars and joyously started on our way to Chesapeake Bay for a truce. We landed in due time, as such a set of morale that I ever saw; some laughed, some shouted, and some even really cried with joy, when we came in sight of the flag-of-truce boat, and beheld the stars and stripes waving from her masthead. We were soon embarked and heading down the James River. Thence we proceeded up Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis where we landed on the 24th, and where we were soon rid of our old clothing and clad in garments new and clean and where rations were dealt out plentifully.

When I landed here I was very weak and what little flesh I had was all gone....I think it very long since I heard from you, but hope in a few days to receive a letter from you. When you write again, you had better direct to the regiment, at Washington D.C., for I hope to be with the reg't. in a few days.

Yours as ever,
W.P. Wilkin

3. Chiasm

Over time tree go big. Can't look around it
Anymore. Tree gather history. Those on one
Side, not on the other, White Avenue occluded.
Dwarfs all, even "the house" looks small
In compare, that street sign's a joke.
Hide and seek, make out, down the street from Johnny's
Where Gretchen and I listened to Kasey Kasem
American Top Forty. Sometimes, dad, Elizabeth,
Rebecca, and I would try to encircle the trunk
With our hands held together. That reach is what lifts
You but you can't see you looking backward,
The jesuline needs the demon, engines run on flesh.



Philosophy

Well well well oh well (John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band)

As the well is a ditch with source up in it.
Hey, Come up from the you can never see the
Underground Railroad from here. The retroact-
ive survives in metallic temporal lobe.
Bears witness. The subway, Personal Rapid
Transport System, great endangered greyhounds.
Sacred and scared trains and tracks compact or
Complicate, it is place that does not change. The trees
Survive. Witness, please slit your luck in travel.
This is no pulling a geographic as
The astrologer cult folk salesmen say. But
Rather, an articulate arc shooting up
from ditches. Light of mine, light of the mine.
A black crescent from the underground dusted,
Determined, scintillates - scathing backwoods
Glance. Glacial shifts tectonic. What is freedom?



Kill You Power Plant, Begins at Acts 2:1-13

The screen is the place where you go to watch the show.
This is how sum of it all goes down it's a
desperate movie, really. Upsample
flower power monumental,
"Kill You Power Plant". WVU.
"Jan 15" which is MLK
Or the dimming afterimage
Of what you thought might happen after
It didn't, burned into bridges
The seats are all gristle, mattress and bottle.
You should see where I'm sitting to take this one
For you (awwwwww).
Buildings wedge hills for screening room,
Blaring sirens backmask soundtracks
That crash the shore of the edifice.
Gritty Decker's Creek overpass that Mistah Bee jumped from
exiled on his bicycle. I would skip a thousand kickball
Games for one phrase of his mad beautiful Black Jesus sentence
That trailed off the bridgely artifice
Spright and buggy, smeary glasses, his old school bike
Punctuated by the now bloody brown crik.
Before the time of the screen or even built bridge,
Bonehead crept across the lower beam, "protect nature".



Bats

How many of you are you?

I told you, you should see where I was sitting

To see the show.

This is it, sunlit, straps, nest, and bottle.

Apocryphal window,

But oh it certainly is true.

“And Also You” watches the Power Plant

Consumes poison for the venom of dawn.

Protect Nature charged with ions

Enfolds with flood of bats.

I left some food for you to share

In a white container to the far right.

Encircle and become left.

There’s a mattress to crash on too,

Blotted with sun and one question:

How many of you are you?



Bobette's Confectionary

*This is the stone rejected by you
The builders, but which has proved to be the keystone.
(Acts 4:12)*

My first debt was to Bobette's Confectionary
She isn't in the picture, that's Jean.
There is only one Bobette, one Jean.
Grade school, Second Ward we would pile into her
Store and if I was short on change she'd give it to me and
Write it down. She had a glorious candy credit log.
Jean came off tough and scared us,
but she was sweet as the insert candy metaphor
Here and say it was better than a hundred thousand of that.
I loved that if you owe her change
There is no plural, "That'll be fifty cent."

When I came up into Morgantown High School
I would lead the drum corps down Wilson Avenue
way down to Kingwood.
Bobette made a special concoction to drink, "Mixta of Everything".
She would talk to you of Love, Jesus, Baptism, Forgiveness.

That's John 4:17 on the wall, tellingly.
She start a business on her own
Said it would be the JRC, Jesus Revival Center.
Safety net for any lost soul.
Her son Garland, invariably would be caught
For sneaking in candy to class.
Garland couldn't keep it to himself,
He was way generous.
This infuriated our teachers.

Bobette. Strong independent
African American, single businesswoman
Seen her share of rejection. Confectionary keystone
is epicenter, is more.

Crushing parallax.
Place not move.
Townies and uni brats.
Piker, Grit
Gun and fist.
Enough
Cutty Sark diving
Under bridges.
A body
In a bass drum
Nervy North up
Monongahela
to the three rivers
And is gone.

Philip Jenks was born in North Carolina and grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia. He has published two books of poetry, *On the Cave You Live In* (Flood Editions 2002) and *My First Painting will be 'The Accuser'* (Zephyr Press 2005) and a chapbook, *The Elms Left Elm Street* (Plane Bukt Press, 1994). *My First Painting will be 'The Accuser'* was nominated for the Oregon Book Award and the James Laughlin Award. He has also published poems in *Chicago Review*, *Traverse*, *The Canary*, *The Gig*, *Monkey Puzzle*, *LVNG*, *The Poker*, *The Oregonian*, *Rain City Review*, *Poetry New York*, *Cultural Society* (www.culturalsociety.org), and has published translations of Hölderlin in *Outlet*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

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* a dust/e-chap
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