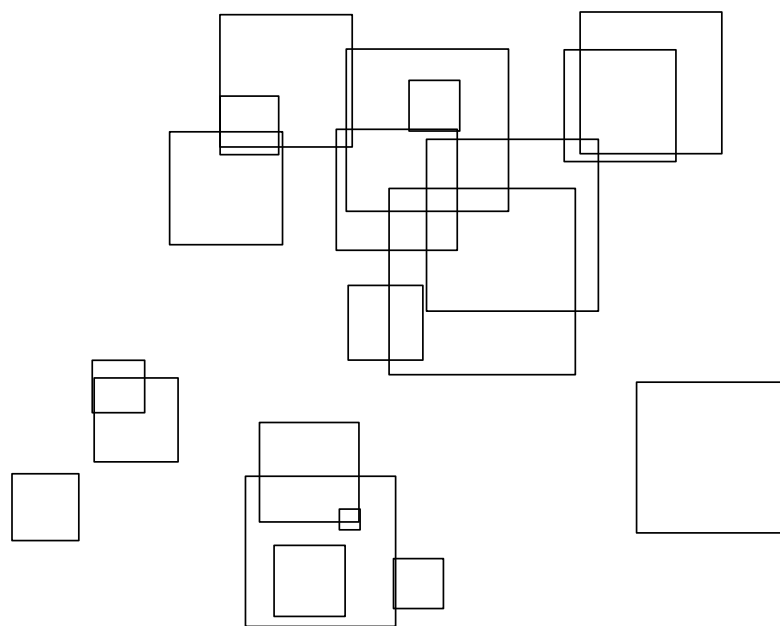


there, where the pages would end

eileen r. tabios



xPress(ed)

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Preface

Seducing The Voyeur In You

I'm sure I'm not the only poet who's annotated text for making new poems. That process, for me, also facilitated close reading. Recently, to further facilitate close reading while also attempting a new way to generate poems, I began creating fictional footnotes. The process, therefore, is also a form of Love...and mating. A mating with the text, and through the text, with you, Dear Reader.

May being a reader-voyeur to these poems give you enough pleasure to make you participate as well in the experience offered by what I call "Footnote Poems." Which is to say, the stories footnoted are intended to be your tales, not mine or the referenced texts. *Shall we fall in love?*

--Eileen Tabios

Footnotes to
"Paroles" by Jacques Prevert, (Trans. by Harriet Zinnes)

(i)

Perhaps because movements are so easily founded by people who do nothing.

(ii)

He could not hide his preference for staying hidden within the folds of his mother's voluminous skirts.

(iii)

Yet she later would have to admit to him, "For you, I would have bought birds."

(iv)

Thus began a story of a decade whose days were marked by her wondering about "vinegar sauce."

(v)

The bill included 25 centimes as a tip to the waiter.

(vi)

She misconstrued the reality, which was of one last red pepper hanging from a string in front of a white wall -- not a "blood teardrop."

(vii)

He liked to remind, "Don't forget the red lipstick."

(viii)

She anticipated how he would come to hide behind the word "Daddy" -- the predictability, albeit sweetness, of that. *That.*

(ix)

That morning, the water was like Love: miserable and lovely.

(x)

Although he actually whispered, "seedling cock."

(xi)

He still believed she would save him from entanglement with the underbrush of memory.

(xii)

A boy hid it in his school desk, the only object in that classroom painted blue.

(xiii)

She was not the author of the black notebook she gave to him, even as she called it "mine" before adding, "now it is yours."

(xiv)
As if ashes were not inevitable.

(xv)
She would end up waiting 40 years.

(xvi)

The water lily formed instantaneously.

(xvii)

Of course, laughter is not really comprised of stars.

(xviii)

It always seemed as if only the innocent can define "scarlet."

(xix)

He could have sworn the sun hummed along.

(xx)

She noticed that only the blind pointed.

(xxi)

They never met in Parc Montsouris (Paris).

Footnotes to
"FORCES OF IMAGINATION" By Barbara Guest

[+]

Except that, ruefully, she often missed the plasticity of recognition, e.g. silk, velvet, moonlight, crème brulee, honey on fingertip, awkward blood.

[=]

Except that, she understood with that first nibble: she will spend the rest of her suddenly over-long life aching to taste again that poem she swallowed out of existence.

[\$]

Except that, pride is necessary to locate the eye within spaces lacking discernible perimeters.

[*]

Except that, she never thought consolation existed in her limbs' inabilities to form the lotus position -- a position she had not recognized as pure ego.

[^]

Except that, what is obscure is usually not a source for the cheer of false deprecation.

[@]

Except that, the erasure was earned.

[]

Except that, these birds possessed tin feathers.

[%]

Except that, audacity too often must remain a private affair.

[#]

Except that, I can write of castles without fantasy: I do live in a castle (o, cool limestone!) and what's the use of apology?

[<]

Except that, she must never privilege the most lotioned flesh over the most grey word -- even "grey" can feel like cashmere.

Selected Footnotes to
"Opera" by Barry Schwabsky

(12)

In reality, the "mirror" was black glass.

(34)

In reality, she felt pathos from the skyline looming from and over an island replete with chastened alleyways.

(8)

In reality, he considers her sentences like veins.

(3)

In reality, Love also wearies the spirit (but only sometimes, he hears her plea fading against dusk).

(45)

In reality, they share the "Introduction" as a permanent state.

(67)

In reality, he became pure throbbing organ.

(2.5 mio.)

In reality, he came to begin each sleep by stuffing his mouth with her jasmine-scented hair.

(2)

In reality, he never failed to witness air spill when she unclenched fists.

(21)

In reality, she terrified him -- but he would not have preferred an alternative.

(nth power)

In reality, he could not forget her, even when he woke to bludgeon his eyes with the brown landscape of Gambia.

Footnotes To

"Here's Someone I'd Like You To Meet" by Sheila Dhar*

1) Still, he has tasted her lips -- that tang defined as the sea,
translucent emerald when overcome by the sun.

2) Still, he noticed how her thigh grazed against the rough interior of the boat -- that rivulet of blood he desperately wanted to lick as he watched the red line draw itself as if no such thing existed called Pain.

3) Still, he heard the wind snap something behind him when he chose to keep his eyes focused on her lashes -- how the black silk threads fell to manifest shyness.

4) Still, it was the moment when he recognized that he shall always be helpless whenever he writes her -- that his fall towards her is a permanent state, never completing itself.

5) Still, he did not expect the compulsion towards violence -- that "something" he cannot articulate except to the night air.

6) Still, he mentioned acacia trees looming behind sand dunes -- he knew she would recognize he was masking another topic.

7) Still, once he managed to whisper, "I want to define your Aftermath with my writing" -- though he is uncertain if she heard.

8) Still, he wouldn't mind being cornered in some alleyway looking at a red rose blooming through a stone crack -- naturally, since this is his dream, she would be there pointing at the bloom that manifests her middle name.

9) Still, when her toes pinched his ankle under the cafe table he laughed for an unexpected reason -- he suddenly understood his mouth soon would be intimate with her breasts.

10) Still, he knew she didn't believe in his lack of imagination -- he furrowed his brow as he pledged he would rise to her Faith.

11) Still, even when he shall see her "clay feet," his adoration will not stop -- such is the extent of his Imagination.

12) Still, he anticipated each kiss cannot be completed without licking -- many many licks: wet, pink then red.

13) Still, he once read her poem where, for the poem, she had said nothing is "too much" or "not enough" -- that a poem is only what it is.

14) Still, he must have sensed he was approaching a labyrinth -- for to adore words is to adore her.

15) Still, his desperation is appropriate -- the question then is whether she can retain the discipline he freely tossed aside for experiencing his mouth become a cave entirely filled with her hair.

16) Still, he parts his lips for her breath -- he is willing to swallow even the indigo scent of her tears.

* This is actually "after" _____ by _____ but his name must never be known by a gossipy public as something she knows.

Footnotes to
"The Virgin's Knot" by Holly Payne

(a) He realized her sadness when the weaver formed holes shaped as falling tears.

(b) He baited the soldier because her hair smelled like rain.

(c) Revelation etched his eyes when he heard her sing mathematical formulas.

(d) But can symmetry ever rely on memory?

(e) The retired sheepdog's lullaby: a virgin weaving a new row of knots.

(f) She feared the sight of the muezzin circling the minaret, an image she translated as dark shadows forming a noose around the "white tower" she once knew as a certain girl's neck.

(g) "Thirty thousand knots -- oh! She had fallen behind since the spring snow!"

(h) She cannot remember a time when her fingers were free of wooden splinters.

(i) He knew her body as a white finger holding back starlight.

(j) Her eyes dampened the stones as she recalled her son's first word:
"No."

(k) The villagers recognized a new beginning when a sudden wind bent the trees backward.

(I) As a student, she was flawless.

(m) When she mentioned the possibility of forgetting "what it was like before pain," the postman fingered his empty sack and understood a new pain from knowing the possible only as possibility.

(n) In exchange for electricity, they accepted a colonizer's alphabet.

(o) To treat asthma, drink nothing but the liquid from a pigeon's egg for 40 days.

(p) A professional commits space to memory.

(q) Ah! To understand hands like Fazil Husmu Daglarca!

(r) In her eyes burn the fires of numerous tribes, as well as the redness derived from limbs dropped to the ground by steel.

(s) Broken twigs breaking the donkey's back -- such are the temporary opiates of poverty.

(t) She defined ambition as the helpless compulsion to write songs for women who will never wear headscarves.

(u) The rug trade teaches that it takes much time to learn how to love fragments.

(v) Authenticity always wanders.

(w) The thin mattress smelled of lemon and wild rose.

(x) The bride wore a red veil, which alerted him to the tears she painted with kohl against her inner thighs.

(y) The anthropology student missed the lecture entitled "Be a ghost to the culture."

(z) He breathed in the air of a country where love for a woman as well as love for a man is love for Allah!