

CHRISTIAN BÖK RECOMBINED:
“WHATEVER LIVES MUST ALSO WRITE”

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Let me unveil this omen of our doom. Fractals are haphazard maps that entrap entropy in tropes. We jeer; we jest. We express resentment. These two economies do not oppose each other so much as enfold each other. I sing with nihilistic witticism, disciplining signs with trifling gimmicks. Follow the path in the receding mirage of these syllables. It is alive because it can rebuild itself from any line of text.

What mentor hath given us this lesson? A lost vacationer who strolls along a beach patrols a spatial breach between dimensions. Might I mimic him in print if I find his writings inspiring? Such a book remains inscrutable not because of its illegibility but because of its potentiality. We feel perplexed whenever we see these excerpted sentences. Navigate the futile maze this sentence seems to be. It zigzags, wayward, to our doom.

We were never intended to be tied to whatever made us. Repetition of the same name, & the same name, & the same name, & the same name, benumbs us to its sum of meaning. Cars and vans crash. If we are to take 'pataphysics seriously, are we not obliged to be exceptional? Minds grim with nihilism still find first light inspiring. They reveal a complicity between complexity and simplicity. A solution is infinitely imaginary.

“all the deepest seas have withered and soured”

WE FUMBLE FOR WORDS AMIDST the entire cosmos, mechanically vandalizing these galaxies of thought, worlds of tomorrow scattered like soot in a gale. What, then, if we peer into the sky toward a tour de force, TRYING TO ESCAPE this ship in crisis? All texts must legitimate the horror for worlds of tomorrow. A DULL PENCIL zigzags, wayward, to our doom; the universe is simply the resultant void.

The universe is simply a beautiful, anomalous poem. You follow the distant enunciation, the pain of the breeze. These words, when parsed, reveal worlds of tomorrow. Each text is a modular world, a random belt of words from the far end of the cosmos. What, then, if we peer into the sky for the

sake of a future dream? The universe is simply a poetic cipher, the most fragile jigsaw puzzle in which every piece SHATTERS the stars.

The universe is simply a nightmarish scriptorium. Life is a text that displays this omen of our doom. These works aspire TO THE EDGE OF THEIR control, evoking, then erasing, the artist of the future. The public might record its dreams upon the inside of the sky, and these lines witness the end of the world. The shredders shred the earth. The end of the world SHATTERS the stars. Are we not obliged to be smashed to bits?

“a figure whose parts resemble each other from any perspective”

Fractals are haphazard maps, reflecting each other but also refracting, until all the shards enfold each other. Science thus behaves like an ominous anxiety. Such a device swerves through the fragile branches, even as we dream within a closed system. Reality is the rhythm of a fractal contour, an imaginary pattern of punctuation. Language acts like a force field of diversified catastrophes. The universe is simply the cell of another life form.

A madcap vandal crafts a labyrinth of glass, the most fragile of structures inventing the world. We do not simply peruse this labyrinth of glass. Whatever lives must also navigate the futile maze; modern science simply colonizes a paranoid activity. We dream structures for the self, the assumption being that rules have created a science. These sentences navigate the futile maze. Whatever lives must also gaze upon a fractal.

Whenever we gaze upon a fractal, we fit together perfectly. Fractals are haphazard maps of a vast game; the shards depict a multitude of destinies. A scientist determines the poetry of the future, the book whose rules have created a science. Might I mimic him in the glittering fragments of the broken mirror? I sit scribbling in ink in this fractal contour: *even science itself is just another zigzag in a helix of DNA.*

“relentless, the rebel peddles these theses”

Potential generates arbitrary sequences that reveal the person reflected in the glass, his writings inspiring imaginary academies, recombining disparate elements into a vital poetics gone awry. Might I mimic him by means of

plagiaristic work from morn to noon, A DULL PENCIL WRITING combinations and permutations? This book attempts to detect a given signal. Might I mimic him in impossible hypotheses?

Life is a text that displays typos embedded in our genomes. Poetry acts as broken mirror. The shards depict a multitude of destinies. WE FUMBLE FOR childish insights. We search for an ultimate truth while disrupting it. Words are a portal before you, into the ecstasy of arbitrary sequences. We dream by writing. We labour, like misers, to hoard fragments. We despise any academic standard. What is potential generates a new reality.

A BLUNT INSTRUMENT has taught itself to write, through the permuted excesses of its own academic banality. The text no longer begs to be read within a closed system. The text no longer begs to be read through a sheet of glass. All theories face their objects with KNIVES, mechanically vandalizing a narrative. You dream about a random belt of words, knifing it, slicing it. We might later be surprised by our opulent rhythms.

“poetry inspires a scientific endeavour that poetry in turn becomes”

’Pataphysics inverts the earth upon the inside of the sky, which is to say that reality opens as a portal before you. We, the readers, play the role of soot in a gale. These words, when parsed, might disrupt the flow of influence. Imagine that we might write poetry more than once. Imagine objects mechanically vandalizing the limits of time. The author and reader thus originate in the future. The swerve of an exception must be a revolution.

A text is no longer simply the royal monument of ego; let a story stray off course till this ship in crisis flips, toward this tour de force where I swim, fighting this frigid swirl. Poetry in turn becomes the swerve of an exception, a game in which the rules themselves may pose a problem without solution. We, the readers, play the role of the most radical writers, trimming by hand in order to torque the course of evolution.

The author has now become a “function” in which you awaken, these excerpted sentences in which you awaken. Imagine that we might write poetry without intervention from the self at all. Let us imagine a future for these excerpted sentences: we dream the poem for a future reader, just as science might propose and thus evoke a new poetry; we dream for the sake of a future dream; we rise with a never-ending message.

“enfettered, these sentences repress free speech”

HOURS OF SOLITUDE repress free speech. Enfettered, these sentences can express the potential of a constraint. At best, such criticism is mechanically vandalizing the instinct of writing. The author has now become a madcap vandal; the modern audience, in turn, becomes the avant-garde. Will love save us from a scholastic conformism? Are we not obliged to be an arbitrary ensemble of constraints?

You dream even when hecklers heckle, their weapons scribbling in ink. You dream about indicting nitwits, yet so fragile a breath can destroy a literary text. You dream cars and vans stray off course, cars and vans crash, even when hecklers heckle the haphazard alignment of these excerpted sentences. The most credible of truths always benumbs us to the sum of its meaning. Will love save us from our fear that we repress free speech?

All theories face their objects under restraint. A revolution must, paradoxically, conform. Is the author an actual person who enfettered these sentences? The poet insisting to authorities that he had become a placeholder for the reader? The word is now a vapour trail – all souls dissolve when immersed in their meaning. These words, when parsed, reveal the fragility of the self: whatever lives must also repress free speech.

“a word is a bit of crystal in formation”

Poetry must become the assembly line of thought, a reader transmuting into a machine. Life is a text that displays the potential of a constraint. These words, when parsed, reveal our opulent rhythms. Any solution to poetry, in turn, becomes stagnant art. The poetry literally is a never-ending message, the infinite and perpendicular words in which you awaken. Even as we dream we must also write.

UNDER PRESSURE ALL THINGS collide with each other. Poetry must become a force field of diversified catastrophes, a jigsaw puzzle in which every piece is a stranglehold. Each memory is a metal chain of links: it burrows, like a corkscrew, through neural pathways. The world of language embroiders us with error; a word when read seems to be; UNDER PRESSURE ALL THINGS fit perfectly together.

WRITING exists in FLAWS, TRYING TO ESCAPE our opulent rhythms. These words, when parsed, reveal a machine for writing a poem. Each text is a modular game in which the rules themselves might write poetry. A text is no longer simply an archive; let the story stray off course wherever possible. We, the readers, play the role of an algorithm, an algorithm designed to torque the course of evolution.

“do not be afraid when we unbraid it”

Will love save us from our fear that we are grim with nihilism? Will love save us from our fear that we are goofs who goof off? We despise a word embedded in our genomes; are we not obliged to be DRUNK? Will love save us from our fear that we are horrors too gross for words? Even as we dream we express resentment. We are tiny bees of gold, bred for the anomie of poetic labour: a never-ending message among the random shards.

The most radical flower can be smashed, all poets CRUSHED INTO poetry, the end of the world to be composed of one letter. Let us imagine a future for each atom: its reader collapses into writing itself; a reality collapses into itself; spelunkers find a way through these excerpted sentences; scribes write messages upon our tombs. Is the author an actual person who is a cadaver? To speak the truth itself is a coincidental synchronicity.

These works aspire to explore the limits of their authors. What if the most radical life is a text? Diversified catastrophes crowded onto a single page? Countless details, pointless detours? Even lecterns highlight the fragility of the self. You dream about a random belt of words ready to collapse: life is a text that displays these excerpted sentences, ripples that lap at the shore rewrite the loops and whorls of fingerprints.

This essay is a cut-up / remix / montage of the work of Christian Bök. It is a recombination of materials from his critical and poetic publications, including *Crystallography* (1994), *Eunoia* (2001), *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science* (2001), and *The Xenotext (Book 1)* (2015). The section headers are all direct quotations from Bök's texts, as are the individual sentences in the essay's first section. All other sentences are splicings-together of fragments from his texts. This essay has been written with the permission and guidance of Christian Bök. This essay is part of *A Recombinant Theory Project*. Micro-reports from this project are regularly published on Twitter: [@remixtheory](https://twitter.com/remixtheory).