

ALMOST AS IF

The if-feeling is not a feeling which accompanies the word "if."

—Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*

Here is a word
with a corona of uses
ghostly intentions
shady senses
nevertheless when pressed
a (mostly) single physiognomy
if (fr. OE *gif*)

what if
if/then
if and only if (iff)
although
whether it were
an either/or
it wouldn't matter

but one can feel *if*
differently
imagine Iphigeneia
(called Iphimedea by Hesiod)
her fate set to music
a symphony
in f-sharp major

among suppositions
subjunctives
systems
of suspicion
as if
our future
were juking its alternatives
into a past that never was

Hence *almost*
more or less
incompletely
l'entretemps
ellipses
deferring interminably
the messianic decision

"if one were
to take these words
seriously
they would lead
to the madhouse" (Blanchot)
so I take them foolishly
stopping as I go

our time is nearly up
our present
not quite closed
made of
nomadic terms
falling just short
of arrival anywhere

fruitless conditions
refractory facts
useless attention
qualifications
scrolling pointlessly
pale singularities
defeating the sequence
of what happens

IF A POET COULD TALK
WE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HIM

for Charles Bernstein

This is a found text
useless words
talking sounds
a stone taking shape by itself
unlike the divine clock
clicking your cobblestones
hosteron proteron
contradictions interdicted
silent intentions
bestial thoughts
a gravity of stones
filling your pockets
so many groans
applying their pleasure
lidless eyes impinging
as if to see better not to look
rattle (pause) rattle
old bones cluster
and start their run
ten toes steadfast
faster still if possible
a stone's throw alone
trips the trope
musters your mustard
one pebble two
two pebbles three
failing to pass

a lonely aesthete
sounding his symbols
category mistakes
versified fakes
a transcendental appetite
forging its experience
lines of dead argument
dissymmetrical forms
chance operations
Geistesgeschichte biting its tail
sarcophagia
encyclopedic memories
housed in small letters
insufficiency of reasons
Leibniz his alphabet
sees the goddess naked
sounds the key
freezing fingers
speedy metricals
early terminals
(anacoluthonicclone)
just call him Charles
magister ars inveniendi
accidentally unearthing
a large loose locution
whose grammar
held us captive

ALARMS & CONFUSIONS

In memory of Jackson Mac Low

Please go through this early phase
inarticulate sounds good to me
warm water washing my winter
ten propositions without a copula
librarians of truth stealing books
narrative signals whenever ready
kleptomaniac when it comes to words
stands on the hither side of rules
technically a counterfeit language
Hegel spent his concepts foolishly
small collection of objects that talk
geometry says nothing of its girth
some old bones wearing his first flesh
celebrated author of phonographic verse
lessons exceeding the speed of sight
have you seen his exhibit of props
twirl the device twice before switching
yes a postmodern price list please
cooking a poem to make it come out right
gather directions before releasing air
in the market for a real apostrophe
local poet rules a new phrase regime
rising columns of newshungry nouns
go for a start and be the first to last
this sentence is not so insensible
an obsessive punster seeking unrest
handbook of pretexts excuses reasons
don't go near him he's altogether proleptic
so many bass notes abandoned to the past
please enter the prosody assigned to you
we're sorry please try again later

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