

*DEFINITIONS OF  
OBSCURITY*

Vernon Frazer &  
Michelle Greenblatt

**Unlikely Books**  
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*Definitions of Obscurity*

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*Vernon Frazer, Argotist E-Books, and Unlikely Books would like to  
dedicate this volume to the memory of Michelle Greenblatt  
Co-author, editor, and friend*



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**A Long-Held Supposition**

Through the curved roads

of the iced empire

the thawed assassin flowed

off-

topic

and into

as

its

blood that jutted from his breastbone

in tiny blackened

breaths

a

darkened clavicle

straining for deeper bubbles

sequence

frothing the greasy pendulum

I have come back from

the shearing, where cenotaphs and rhododendrons are buried

in a

poem

whose clearing tongues writhe,

their hurried gasps lurid

on each other's cheeks where nearly everyone had left

- that burnt star, ochre smelling and tasting of melt,

as the core of a lost appendage,

vaguely remembering wool or a floe

that drifts along in sodden waters. The picturesque summit stood on

*Vernon Frazer and Michelle Greenblatt*

later fire, pursued by steaming hostages from hated forums

dismembering a grated glyph

with our thoughts alight, we were still breathless

to it.

Moving in the moment frozen in the frieze

on- time turned on its praxis,

topic a long-held supposition, replete with asterisks.

**Abrasion's peal**

A man passes through a closed gate,

a woman swan dives onto concrete because the gate  
was Heaven's. And then what?

we

know one valence can turn

on the others

& devour them, one O at a time

regardless

of the prophecies spoken

through their gaseous loins

or

flaming mouths. Precious

metals fly off your tongue

when you speak,

leaving me scrambling on the ground, trying to pick

up what I can. It's not enough that

your medallions reject collection, my hand forever

an empty grip.

Your internal chemistry

F L A R E S

D E M O N O R A N G E

against the celestial grating

or any other overturned figurine

A scheduled disruption

of molecular particles

dances on vandal hooves.

A bird falls. A clock stops. I open my hands

to receive

(as supplicant)

the night

in selflessly-absorbed moment of bliss that pins

down

the blurring edges creeping into a scream at the  
bottom

edge  
turn more harrowing with each deep breath of the  
blackening

I attempt spinning away from me into the vortex

of my ecstatic asphyxiation. During

my dervish dance, I miss

winter chewing away at the  
devilish darkness which sucks softly at autumn's leftover lunch of leaves.

Grasped already, the lid to the missing bitterness is black-beaten  
and deadened by doorways

leading down hall of empty mirrors

reflecting each other

looking for the self among them.

The terror of your refractions

simmers its slow burn,

of

a singe that scalpels my skin,

burning  
at the core of my whirling

ecstasy

where too much is too little and too little is always enough, I'll look out  
onto a land of untouched snows and sail over ice, certain in my confusion  
that I am not dreaming

of concrete below

the vertical iron grating

of time,  
like sheet  
metal banging sheet metal  
clanging repeatedly

over my clamorous plea

for entry,

drowning

my entreaty

and breath's frightening imbalance

turning rose into stone and stone into dust. Mold green color creeps  
up my arms and covers

my face. A word comes through the  
trees and it says to me

listen.

The meaning in the tongues

of leaves whispering wind

hovers above the scent of your remonstrance.

Abrasion's peal

recedes from the bell's stricken clamor

**Among All Objects**

Rip at the wingtips and turn at the very round

place, she said. A faceless man

burned red in the grip,

churning

a slow pace, its sound deadened

only throbbed darker as she counted how many pieces of herself

became aware of this condition. the principal aspect of

her wary footsteps, the same as

positioning, amounted to a cautious

respect

whereas his

history of the shadow pointed towards

recollection, when autumn came over him, something unlike being

tilted toward the rim of his last lost undertaking

A dip into recitations of past somnolence assuaged her, seeing that

many others,

vacating their seats to blindness,

left a deft persuasion hacking at subtlety between

the eyebrows and a binary decision not to go imminently into the solid

rain,

not to tense

herself against

its pelting whirl, or slowly shift an optical elision

away from its fiery mother,

her dusty doors, slanted-closed windows,

Among all objects

may she give this one

a name

**Ante-Climactic Clash**

The torrents breath their sacral hush, a tidal sigh

before

R U S H I N G

epistolary fragments.

New  
iotas  
scream

quota transfers among

the thickets

brushed with thorns thick  
with syrupy sound

and when the circle widens I will  
be there

a whistle a wave a windowpane a grin  
of

anticipation

waiting

to

welcome your return  
from hiding in the land of dead legends, ease your pain again

but the truth—the “legality”—the “constitutionality” makes

need of a mighty secret  
which now charms the public  
and even if I—suddenly—found myself in a not a very big

room

would smash through the walls and crash through the doors so I could  
inherently hear

the real voices

dealing

from their deck

of smoking jokers:

an amendment to feel gay about

smirking ruthlessly outside my cell. The shattered walls,

the shattered

voices  
distant

as my slashing shiv

encroaches on inviolate scoundrels

and my big blue verse without  
words

slip-slides towards a final

CLIMAX.

**Cold Truths**

Random shifters drift

a measured rubric

easing phantoms for

alcoves dank with mold

a rubric dried in snow

precious, precious, where it may

drop, an angel's hand to

hold it. Stagnant though those

leaves may be, the crystals

swollen in their palms

shatter, to bleed new ice

in the cold.

A frontage road heaves

under the frost's natal torment

where I stand, thunderstruck,

at the thought of your distance,

at the thought of your going. And

when I reach my hands out,

they smash through a smoky

window, they grasp at dry

ice that paves shadows with

cold

crystals of complexity,

each nuance unrepeatably,

snow  
flaking a different mind,  
I anticipate a memory

of each  
pang  
as  
distinctly  
calibrated  
so  
felt

close as bones to my skin.





delaying  
the touch of the torch to unadulterated skin, or spoiled eggs in heaps of sulphurated madness.  
these light grasses growing over the graves of masses  
these stones of darkness quiver along the stop  
gap-faultline. I hang myself with a handful of hair.

Below

the voices laugh,  
ghostly cicadas trilling  
scratches across my bare feet

making madness out of sensation, masking machination  
with black, pensive pupils and demoniac stare when one turns  
their head away from that evanescent happiness, lips lewd as  
the thin leak of saliva that gathers where their corners crease.  
Our torture brings them vicarious release, our shrieks light their glares  
within the mirrors of their obsidian reflections. They leer, then laugh

at

our

strain,

our pain  
their pleasure

BURST

to drip-point

after a good stir by

a tongue of rain today in an

invisible

world  
where  
black  
is lighter than any dark

we know

**Definitions of Obscurity**

The shred of a tarnished illusion

breathes / at our third well

where I lower the bucket

and come up with air

all insistence falls at the dew drop

where longing posts its empty vigil

and the distance purples with age,

where at the river's edge there is singing.

The cubist pyramids ringing through the void

mirror off the mountains

behind the empty bank

which falls like water only to be indented

by the singing at the sand's dry

edge.

A vision

of sound

rises from the dew-glittered grit, frail

syllables fall off the tongue, upward

and back,

the golden confetti

of shortened breath

spiraling

in the minds' twisting winds

impedes the perceived call to arms

that drizzles the liquidtop.

Perhaps the metronome grew tired of counting when the numbers stopped adding  
up and the melody stayed the same,

a chant of time crossed

by plastic wolves and faerie tales of cities made

of gold. Traveling across the tear

in the continuum

its ragged fabric whistles in sequential winds  
where clocks,

lost to chronology, seek vapor trails

where music

used to ring synesthetic overtones

lost at the dry trickle of meaning's edge

where dust pours over  
definitions  
of  
obscurity

the filters, shortening  
breath  
& sight

**Lightly as the Darkness Fits**

inlet on the mountain submarine timidity as lightly as the darkness

fits into a shelf in my brain, so is the shelved

clangorous dust that makes

its way into the cracks in my eyes a wavering

dusk bold as the splintered platform, a husk

of its former cognition

bleeding wheat

the color of sky.

Autonomic sunsets weave beige lagoon reflections,

an arid frigidity numbing the cleaving portico hedge

as it leaves

pasteurized colors in the mix

of slaving admirers, gone

the way of the stratagem index. A tentacle pursued, its rubber pace

a danger

to all fully automatic weapons. I dive

into deafness as the subatomic harmonies break

up heaven into little chinks of starlight. Perfect propriety, a cracked bell,

shuddering of sleep releases the bride from the corpse.

A marriage, once removed, can whisk away

conundrum's bottled ashes, a weeping urn

containing dust

of cartilage turned

separation anxiety

in the shade of a sweltering hammock, sweat beads galore

## Liquid Couplets

your

liquid

couplets

best make

a recipe

for doublets

mooning

throughout

a cascade

of lost suns

& on the faster train I wave a glorious goodbye  
to the facade

that has been

us,

a fading  
shine, its distance

re-

determined,

of answers a quantum heap  
to question  
of embryonic snow.

Its zygote the main sleigh  
of phantoms  
dragging across the tracks,  
I dream  
a  
mirrored sun  
set upon  
an  
opened  
wound,  
of impudent blue empty of  
anvils, covered nudity  
with ash  
tendrils beckoning, the fury of deadened limbs  
recycling  
their  
entropic  
post-mortem haze  
of honeygold hanged men, when traffic relaxes  
back to still life  
into the mortuary  
the extension of my liability  
littered across the  
streets like road salt.  
Today you are as brittle as ceramic  
and the houses wheel by.  
Nothing seems out  
of  
place  
except the restless ocean  
at my door

crewing

and requesting  
at my double entry  
(subtle entreaty)  
toeline shore  
to take over more  
granules  
than one

can steal

or shred

time slabbed on the counter like meat; I fear harm from the page which confuses the child whom I cannot control. I teeter on the razor's edge of

adulterous thought  
i live | |  
in | surging | its power |  
the margins |  
| overwhelming |  
of | |  
diffusion | as the greater  
& loss / gain & risk of  
temptations brought  
to  
flesh

**Mysteries of the Present**

Transient bottle acclamations

eliminate the vast accrual  
of quasi

solid

space

where we pick up water

& Baudelaire's black tulip,

lost and found

again

a flavor

prescient

as

synthetic ennui

a

dandy's

gift

from

the

present

to the future

tense—

so you would like to know why my oracular

tenses

promise not a future. I will prophecy

& prophecy,

if only to diagnose the present,

in obscure

tongues of past

& future

in the clarity Cassandra  
melded, rumors

grow

wings

fly around  
the stage

as bitterness fades to half-view in the vat of her throat, bubbling  
dark wisdom through the ancient froth, lips worth licking to those who

knew

the things

she meant

**New Tales of Definition**

The belly up sun floated on the tide and breathed

the taste

of the salty water.

Nothing could allay

the sensation of jellyfish protruding

cautionary tales

of the tongueless

large river  
pebbles

where all the necessary  
explanations accorded the whole

of the unfolding

alongside

a coral reef

of their secret,  
living among

the root to

the water's whirls, the waves of its breathing

those who stand

in the waves

and let

the flood

of sunlight criss  
the fatty afternoon  
sloughing snakeskin

cross

and white

netting

into their wake, a new identity unpeeled, revealed as

a silence/ a pause/ a silence

finally we advance to skin of the matter, coiling  
fresh among the flashing rays,

taking in new tales

of definition

in order to decide  
what tiny mouth

to swallow with

we stood for hours

with the irreconcilable

letting ourselves slip

again

and again

into aimless dipping,

a pause / a silence / a pause

the inverted refrain

a

tongue swallowing

the point-of-view, how he must have wondered

saying I

know you from somewhere  
(now the cypress trees are swaying)

now the blood reaches the shoreline.

A crest of red foam breeches the sunlight  
lasers seeking to find the unfamiliar, shed

protocols, boiling the sand,

the festering

ruins left by those who

shift the root to naming

scarred secrets,

ambulatory

**Segue to Baghdad**

The gathering serpentine haze

shatters sunset's fragile last shimmer

a blaze long past razing.

Any glimmer brings memory

to a standstill among jonquil condoms

dispensed with alacrity

and a coin machine

which does not return change

as expected, but forces

change upon the crashing warnings of

illumination

wavering

electrostatic

along the fault line's pensive crease,

filling enigmatic drudgeries with clashing tints

sharing

\

a course that enrages

/

a nation in flight

from one another who both

turns to the lilting left and resting

right northwards as needed southwards

as sought after—as a glyph that tells itself

over /

over until the thick coils

of darkness recede

westward \

training wagons

fading in the sun

set upon tables

oiled yet scrapped

in need of iron(ing)

while the artillery smoke hangs

/

over the exploded body parts

and

I can see / my insides

on the sand;

during all the glory, the stars

stripes and parades, nonsense

is offered freely by the government who takes

just enough care to show shadows

to membrane thickets, the mottled minds,

the mangled bodies

/ all on course

stayed

steadfast & true

to the body bags they lie

in (courtesy of car bombs

& Halliburton) state, lies

as bullets \ strayed

through undue perforations

in the slither-flattened dust

**Sweet Chill**

Trees twist in the soft-baked wind that winds around the garden.

How cold it is

out here, the searing chill

burning my face cold.

Even the warm whispers of breeze harden to spirals listing

mute among the palms

which sway back and forth in the warm wind.

The heat is its own contradiction.

A sweltering iceberg, secret as its melting surface,

closes

in

from the bay, a blatant progression

of music

seeping

through

the cracks

of time.

Backwards is the way to homeland shelter

beneath the star-lit palms of your progression

from silhouette to heartland sun, a slow balm

calming the sweltering regression handed

to us by our mothers and our mothers before them.

Hand to hand touching has always been the same as face

to

fist

for me,

the gift

of repression

as seen through the steam swelling a blackened eye

or others that have been given to me in surround

-sound while I wept

flames of declarative sentences

fastened around the audio's sweet chill

**Threadbare Anomalies**

Courier transits reckon the bellow  
of a colon seeking pain as retribution  
for substitute

alliances deformed  
in nights of ritual castigation.

Threadbare anomalies  
surface under watered gin, translucent  
fixtures

amortized by  
the lighting fixtures which  
d  
a  
n  
g  
l  
e  
from the old tired bird who gathers her mountains  
of torment into a nest and is still patient  
with movement, as far as it goes.

The t  
u  
a r r o w  
n  
i g  
n l  
g e

misses its feathered mark

by an a  
r  
c

slipping past the mo-

me(a)nt of

destructuring

mortalities as yet unhatched.

**Transient Variations**

A trail of transient variations

allows the key that opens the drawer (walking further

in the country)

a rural semblance unlocked

with a slow, trembling turn

Imprisoned in a warrior metal skin

am i killed? am I

dead as the forest's storied silence

or merely bleeding new tears

of grassmass that january crops wrinkle

as my silver ribs

thaw like raw meat

a spectacle basting  
under the heat of sulfur skies,  
an aftertaste

of rust turning bitter

water (churning) undercover; it will find me

unprepared

(naked or not)

for the trees' whispered rumors

of my unbecoming

or the wait

of this midnight moment's precise point  
a cry steamed into the air, the cries all wrung their hands and sang  
an undersong    bombs into words                    and his own bleeding  
of subtonal        whispering soft                    desires to breathe  
refrains                                    explosions, new                    streams  
leading to

life leading him to crossroads in the darkness, to crossroads of light

while dying stars cast their mist over screaming vision—our talk was  
of too little, of too  
much. Of gold across  
blood. Your eyes looked at

the hour, looked

away. A team of horses stood by you asked, Am I killed or just forgotten?

And the answer came, vague as past dust, whispering

its song  
of death as memory

and memory

the nearest life

of absence  
in a present form

But the moon must say  
and stay as well  
summer

this secret

knotted a theorem

into a terrific battle

scorched in two  
under the heat

between the heart and the hypotenuse  
angling their way

toward

a remembered

presence

if conjoining proves possible

from the head to the heart, what inscribed itself on the inside of your lip  
deepens your death.

(That we once read...there is no end

of space / time / matter)

We're still

just that.

**Whisper over the World**

The dust of the strayed

world

filtered through elliptic fragments,

its staid whirl

a cautious stratagem against

dawn to dark, the breath trying

to come out while all clocks agree, ashes do not

return to the biomass

afflicted with the storied aches of plantain marbles

cast against the sky silent

day by silent night

singing by the fires of cinder pendulums

sweeping slowly under strained attempts

to whisper

over the world, a blazing star.

**Winging Through the Deadly Night**

Hostage perimeter central vexation

gutters the pits of ancient remorse

where shredders

LOOM

insensate.

Temporal shadows hijack

hazel light

of

simmering inundation fetters

snatching homilies from plural

vestiges

FLAUNTING

bivalve cuspidors

which swell like city blocks in summer heat

& energy density departs

simile, blackbirds

as                   winging through the deadly night,

they               long for metaphorical exhortation

run               from grinning extortion batteries  
idly              storing a horticultural surcharge—

Water breaks over the  
blackness—

where, whetting the flavor of

my own body

mercilessly,

yearns an italic for a taste of your mercy,

its metallic sweat an ionized comfort begging  
through pangs of reciprocity, wet

tongue on dry knife

sliding

between the creamy

passion

blades of her uninterrupted legs—slathering

slime of ancient bitumen pits across voluptuous pituitary submissions,  
gathering grandly, yet urgently

as you ride

astride my anthracite cries

in penitence

and joy and sometimes wake

hard

between my thighs

past my thermonuclear

threnody

(the choir  
for a formless blue self,

the remains of the passion

to salvage  
straining)

mercurial vapors

rising

toward renascent nomenclature,

a slow tide, and

the breaking brackets of

a terrible

sweetness

—since every minute falls faster as enumerated shadows move into a lit  
corner of

gossamer ambiguities, its gravity  
reveals overtures,

a low aside

aches and

crackles above unbearable needs,

a

cackle in the dark chases a racing clock

past time  
's deathly dimensions

flavor

the

of sickly syrup

indents another inward sun

towards a flood of lightning bolts

clawing at

their replete measure

beneath the hitch of a sub gum harness, a treasure deleted among dolts  
frightening for their dim forbearance, a pawing disruption no word can  
savor,

except for the juice

leaking its disruption

as their

pleasure's

blood, black and brilliant, cindery to

the touch, a diminutive saffron, a deliberate cerise,

the familiar spirit of the place rests upon stooped shoulders  
and rankled reproduction of

fantasian replicas, cranky

as

wet tinder lacking

testy

its

ruddy batons to feed them

toward

intuitive graces,

motion

leaving

charged

their detestable bandits

**Wings of Plastic**

Wings of plastic,

(as the earth was a vortex and opened into) suicidal dreams,

the streaming whirl of screaming minds

tunneling toward the comforting blanket of darkness

or the next flight out,

might return to oneself in a higher order. Pyramid

of trees I climb through, carting away the blood and leaves,

a controlled  
disaster,

- gaping at the apex ruins weaving through the lattice spaces

to view the history

scattered

among scars of sky

in which vortices of light

flutter across the trembling of water

in hands cupped heavenward

to grasp the glistening

or the drops

that the tree catches while being flayed by lightning

in the middle

of a storm

**Vernon Frazer's** most recent books of poetry include *Selected IMPROVISATIONS*, *T(exto)-V(isual) Poetry* and *Unsettled Music*. Enigmatic Ink has published *Field Reporting*, Frazer's most recent novel. His web site is [VernonFrazer.net](http://VernonFrazer.net). *Bellicose Warbling*, the blog that updates his web page, can be read at [BellicoseWarbling.blogspot.com](http://BellicoseWarbling.blogspot.com). Frazer's work, including the longpoem *IMPROVISATIONS*, may also be viewed at [www.Scribd.com](http://www.Scribd.com). In addition to writing poetry and fiction, Frazer also performs his poetry, incorporating text and recitation with animation and musical accompaniment, on YouTube. Frazer is married.

**Michelle Greenblatt** (August 21, 1982 - October 19, 2015) was the Poetry and Music Editor for *Unlikely Stories: Episode IV* and previously served as Co-Editor of Poetry for the now-defunct *AND PER SE AND*. A two-time Pushcart Prize nominee, she was published in literary journals such as *Poetry Magazine*, *Sugar Mule*, *Free Verse*, *Altered Scale*, *Sawbuck*, *Hamilton Stone Review*, *Moria*, *Shampoo*, *Coconut Poetry*, *BlazeVOX*, *X-stream*, *Counterexample Poetics*, *Word for/ Word*, and *Otoliths*. Her first solo book, *brain:storm*, was published by Anabasis Press, and her second, *ASHES AND SEEDS*, was published by Unlikely Books in 2014. Other collaborative works include *Ghazals* with Sheila E. Murphy (Cricket Press, 2007). She lived in South Florida with her beloved, Kyle.