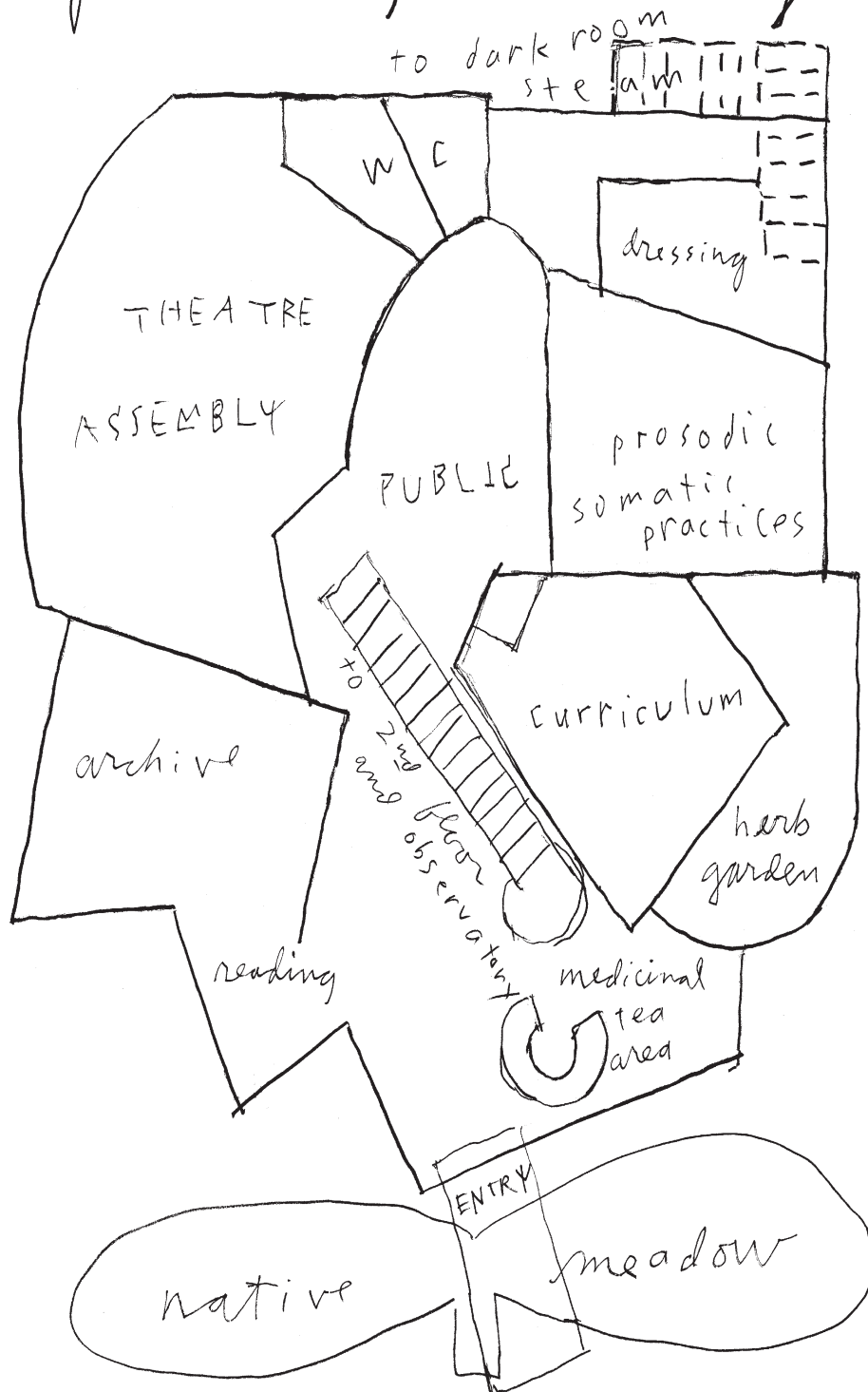


prosody building



THE PROSODY BUILDING (A PLAN FOR EXPANDING THE ROLE OF POETS)

[An open appeal to the poetry community, since 2002.]

...with the words which can alleviate people's tormented souls.¹
—Pindar on Asklepius

INITIAL NOTE ON PROSODY AND THE NEED FOR THE PROSODY BUILDING

A definition of prosody could be limited to poetry's basic elements of composition—but that would only further limit what poets do and what poetry can say. Can that which words can't say exist without words? Can poetry continue to exist (can the planet persist?) without poets doing what they typically don't do?

Poets are those who don't do what they typically do. Prosody is the unspoken, the substantial, paraverbal, extralexical and the *throughout*.

Poets primarily learn, present, publish and teach creative writing, and this is the basis of their limitation. Meanwhile, poets are responsible for the *throughout*. The Prosody Building focuses on expanding the functions of poets by freeing their formation.

**A BUSINESS STANCE: FOLLOWED BY A LISTING
(IN BUSINESS CARD FORMAT) OF MY 26 BUSINESSES—
ONE FOR EACH LETTER OF THE ALPHABET**

I'm proposing business as an indispensable and viable poetry medium. Business threatens the essence of poetry only if it is not part of poetry. America is organized by business and business-as-usual is biocide (to save \$5 we'd drive ourselves to extinction!). Unless we deal with this bottom line, one day there won't be an earth left to bargain for. The Prosody Building is entrepreneurial; designed to be economically self-sufficient as well as socially and ecologically regenerative.

ASKLEPIAD

medicine as intrinsic to poetry as music

BUREAU OF MATERIAL BEHAVIORS

correlating
microstructure
material behavior
and human behavior

*"Without a doubt it is we poets and thinkers who
are responsible for this bloodbath and have to
atone for it."*

Hugo Ball

COMPUNCTION ACQUISITION

show

DISPLAY

time

EXTRAORGANOPOIEIA

FURNITURE WHILE YOU WAIT

emergency / hardship / impromptu

dignified dirt and detritus dwellings

GARBAGE BRICK

h

experimental breathing

susceptive system
autoxensis
convivialist response

INNOVATIVE IMMUNITY

overwhelming welcome
facilocytes
globaldevolitalization

j o i n e r i e s

matter comes from consciousness

Kashmir Saivism

LITHE

missing civic services

concept / design / construction of
novel offices, organizations,
charities, businesses or agencies
committed to the common good

NONDUAL CONSTRUCTION

building the unmade

OVERCOMING FITNESS

PROSODIC
BODY

QUIESCENCE

state changes, hypometabolism,
simultaneity of states, dead while
alive, awake while awake, alert
estivation, wakeful hibernation,
serene shock, delog experience,
parasympathetic volition, world-
no-world oscillation, engaged
gene-expression, autonomic
override, post-psychosomatics

RE-ENGLISH

S O S

sore oversensitive sciences

TRANSLATION ENGLISH-TO-ENGLISH

any arcane domain or jargon made plain

UNIVERSAL COVERAGE INITIATIVE

the next third party

no priorities greater than care

VIBE ADVISOR

wind rose and wattle

prevailing wind diagrams
clay and lime plastering

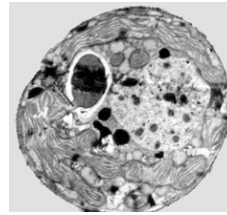
at home in the unknown

x e n o a s i s

ALL PEOPLES SOLAR LUNAR CALENDAR

Y E A R

ZOOXANTHELAE



ALGORITHM

I'll unfold this plan by presenting a comprehensive series of statements, questions and propositions that connect the conditions of the inconsequence of poets with material causes and lead to an architectural resolution. Many of the causes are of course concomitantly moral (and matters of morale) as well. I simply want to base an approach to the problem, quite literally, on the concrete.

**IF POETRY IS OF LITTLE OR NO CONSEQUENCE, POETS THEMSELVES
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY SOCIETAL BENEFIT LOST BECAUSE
OF THEIR LACK OF RELEVANCE**

If poetry is neither here nor there, aren't the poets themselves accountable for poetry's lack of place in the culture? For the purposes of this building proposal, I'll proceed as though poetry is of far too little consequence and that the cause of this inconsequence is poet-complicity in the conditions that create it.

It does little good to place the onus on non-producers of poetry—on the side of demand, the nonexistent audience, the readership, the overall lack of support for the arts. Such a response is deadbeat and can only deepen the inconsequence. At the same time, placing an emphasis on the promotion of poetry, greater exposure of poets and improved distribution of poems, is of limited benefit because such emphasis is a ‘downstream’ approach to the problem (i.e., after the fact of composition and detached from radical revision of the calling of the poet as a mode of composition in itself).

TO SITUATE THE QUESTION ARCHITECTURALLY

What’s the relationship between poetry’s lack of consequence and the absence of spaces designed specifically for the practice of poetry? In the U.S., there are only 2 buildings designed specifically for poetry (Poets House in NYC and the University of Arizona Poetry Center). In light of this startling lack of facilitation, I could either suppose that poetry has no specific functioning to accommodate, or that it functions well enough (perhaps optimally) outside the need for specifically designed spaces. Generally, the public venues for poetry and poetry centers are found in spaces originally designed for functions other than poetry. Obviously, poets interlope, adapt, renovate, transgress, but rarely, if ever, further their work through the designing of spaces in which their work would be fulfilled.

What’s the relationship between poets’ lack of regard for designing their own spaces and their overall cultural inconsequence? Is their space-indifference freely chosen or is it a consequence of their inconsequence? To what extent does this absence of specifically designed spaces restrict the roles assumed by poets? How does it restrict capacity for livelihood? For the most part, the mission of existing poetry centers is the presentation, performance, publication, promotion, and celebration of poetry, without casting an interrogatory light on the calling itself—without calling into question the very role of poet. (I’m drawing a sharp distinction between the ‘presentation’ and the ‘practice’ of poetry. All matters concerned with presentation are but a small portion of the entirety of practice.) Does this design-indifference constitute an aesthetic? Do poets identify with spaces not designed for their purpose? Do they have a robust response to the most minimally designed, least-descript and perhaps decrepit spaces—boxes, cafes, backs of bars, bookstore rears, classrooms, conference halls, street-corners or anyplace that will have them. (The poetics program I attended as an undergraduate student

took place in a space that had formerly been a funeral home and a Hare Krishna temple.) Is any space where there is no issue with space the place of poetry? Is everything new newfangled? Is this sensibility an autonomy or albatross? Is this placelessness part and parcel of poets' lack of social pertinence? Has it been cultivated to the point of superstition—such that a place designed for the fullest possible practice of poetry would, by definition, be disabling?

AND IF POETS WERE SUDDENLY FULLY FACILITATED?

The Prosody Building is a plan that accommodates the activities of poets by expanding and deepening the very nature of poetic activity. In this way, the Prosody Building offers our society the withheld benefits of poetry by revamping what is of benefit and the ways in which it's offered. (As I see it, the capacitation of poets in a custom-made space at this point in time would be completely countercultural—thereby provoking no identity crisis and posing no real threat to nonconformist poet-aesthetics.)

POETRY AS PUBLIC AMENITY

Relative to how they are identified by others, do poets define themselves differently and indifferently? Should this even be possible? I'll illustrate this line of questioning with the few sites that exist. The Poets House has recently relocated to Lower Manhattan's Battery Park City. Poets House occupies the ground floor of a 32-story luxury condominium complex. As required by the city when leasing public land to private interests, a percentage of the total space was donated by the developer for nonprofit use under the public amenity program. Do poets accept the definition of 'public amenity' as the basis for their participation in society? Must they be content to be crushed by 32 floors of condo? The University of Arizona Poetry Center shares its space with the Humanities Program. Are the humanities poetry's proper bedfellows? Would biochemistry prove to be a more productive partnering? Who decides? The Arizona Poetry Center is also known as the Ruth Walgreen Stephan (daughter of the founder of the drug store chain) Poetry Center. The proposed Poetry Center of Chicago has been funded by the heiress of the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical fortune. Are poets as indifferent to revenue source as design?

DESIGN PROCESS ALGORITHMS

Manifest further and fullest poet-functions by designing and building their architectural correlates.

As a further corollary, always indicate the way in which this building plan can also be implemented as a curriculum.

The building plan could also be performed (not unlike Frances Yates' *Art of Memory*—a walk-through that proactively designs and inhabits the space, normally carried out only in the 'head').

Functionally, the Poetry Building, as practice, pedagogy, performance and pilot-space, always already exists. It exists provisionally in every action that furthers and fulfills the roles of poets.

PRE-FUNCTIONING ARCHITECTURE

The best way to design a building is by beginning to use it before it's built. Do what you envision doing in the building. Extend your activity from the fantasized fact of your facilitation. Every step taken and every bit of information gathered along the way serves as experiential design specification. (Design by doing.) Designing before-the-fact (in the abstract, before the functioning) will only funnel users into a sterile or misfit shell. Designing after-the-fact removes the design process from the immediacy of the relevant information. Design *during*—while all is alive.

SALTATION

By means of pilot spaces and precursor places, accept the scale and scope of the eventual building that can be realistically realized right away. In other words, even the planning phase is part of the functioning of the building. The material building is just one step that manifests at a certain point along the way in the total being of the building. Waiting for the necessary funds and the finished physical structure in order to start functioning is a faulty (even fatal) approach—it is certainly out of focus, if not bluntly backward. The fullest

moment of the building may turn out to have been its first. Its full realization may even be its least energetic stage (or after it's gone—the greatest energy might even be in the rumoring of such a building).

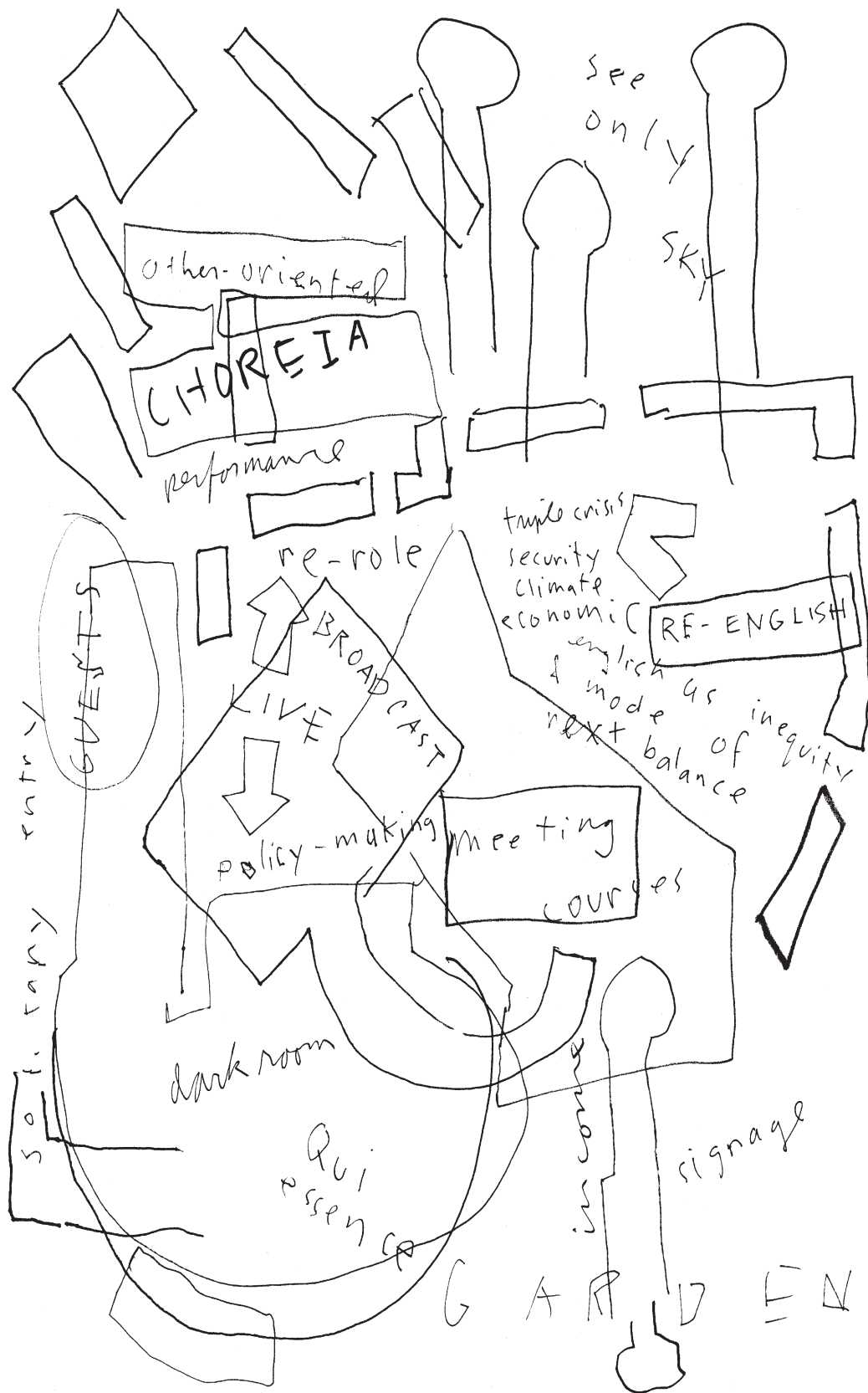
Just start.

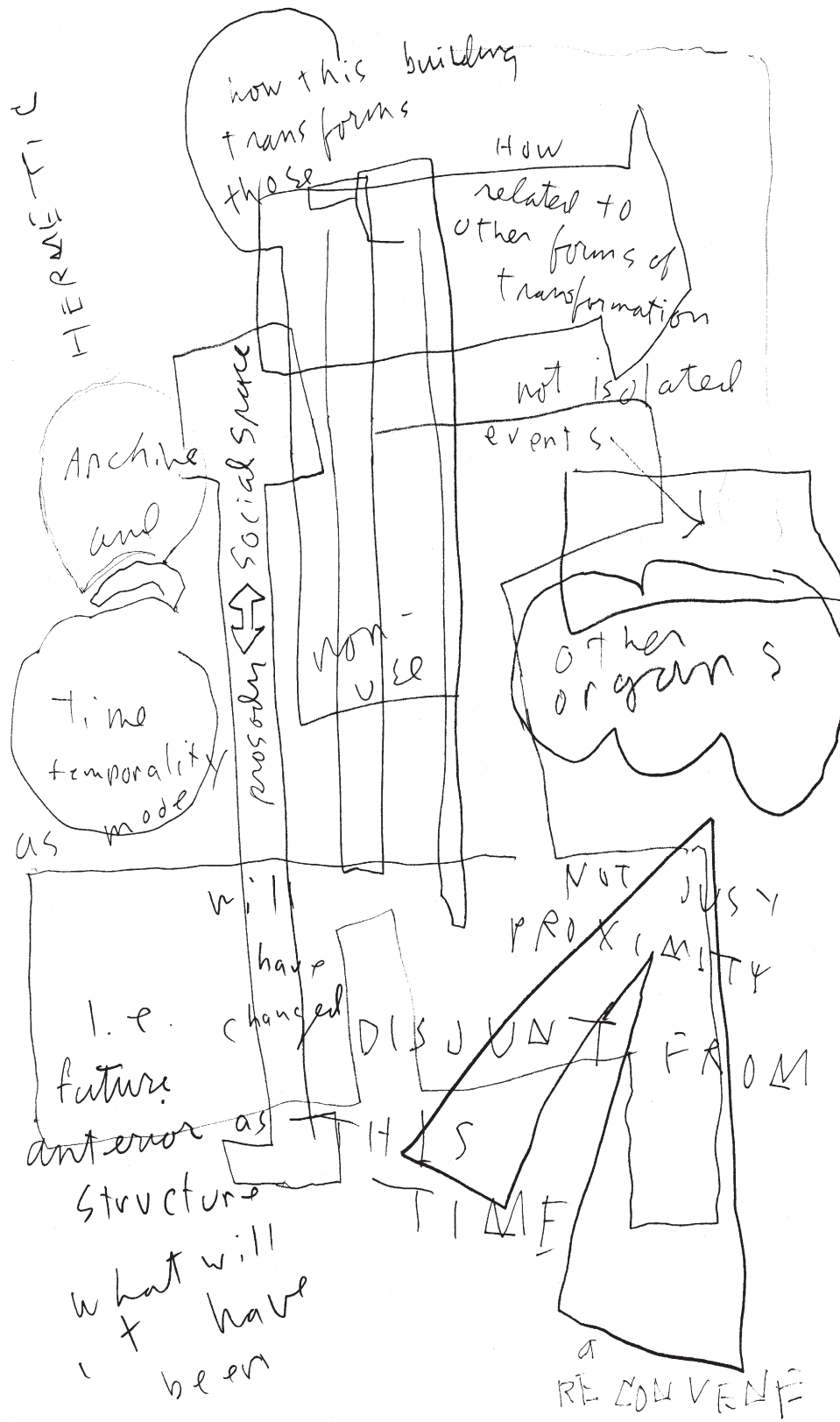
PLACING THE EMPHASIS ON DESIGN: SPACES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING POETIC FUNCTIONS

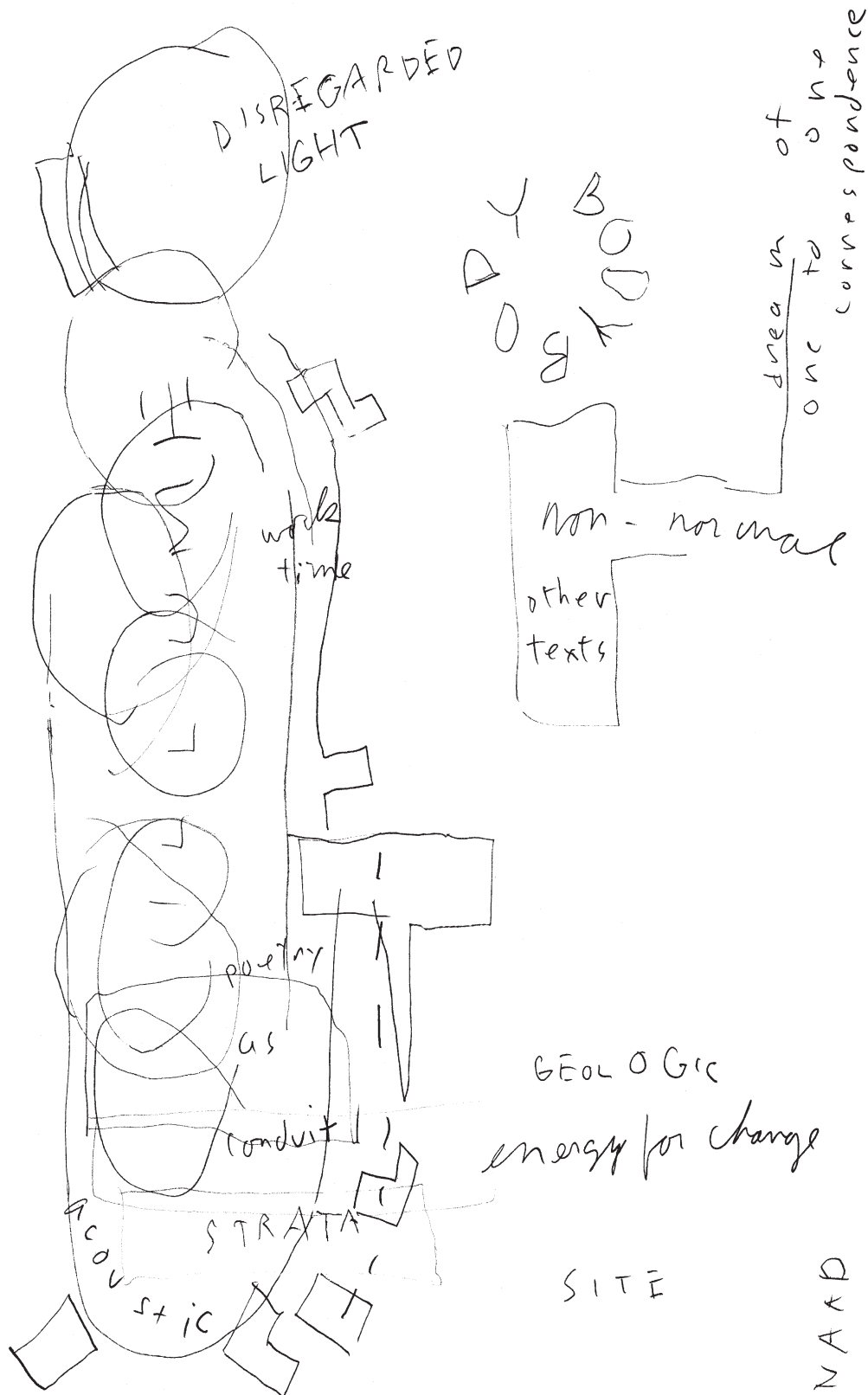
There's no way to design until a new function is in the process of being realized. A space is the defining of a role that could not have been realized without its space. Until one is designing a new function brought about by the act of designing, there's really nothing to design. This is the Prosody Building algorithm per se.

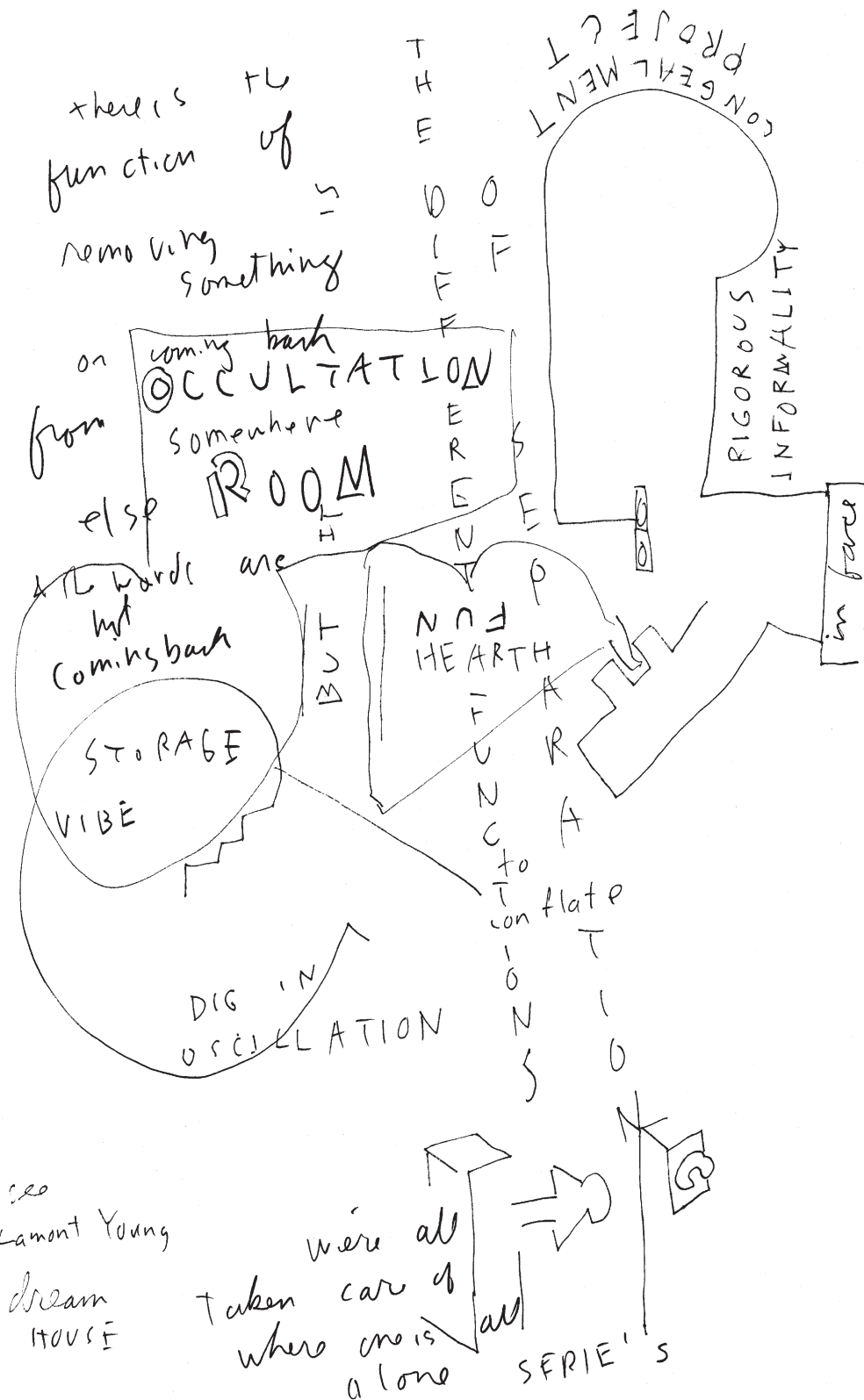
ARCHITECTURAL PORTRAITS AS PART OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

For instance, as one way of integrating the needs of poets in the design process I've been carrying out a series of meetings during which I draw a poet's architectural portrait. A 'meeting' is made up of a long conversation. I discuss the proposed Prosody Building and conduct a low-key interview, drawing out the poet's vision of a fulfilled poetry practice, on both a personal and societal level—particularly as potentially realized in the design at hand. During the course of the conversation I take notes and rough-out possible architectural parameters and details. The drawing that is produced is the 'architectural portrait' of that particular poet. Here the poet and the poetry community play the role of client. With my questioning I pursue the information any architect would need to complete a plan. When I start to draw an architectural portrait, the poet usually hasn't yet considered the ways in which she or he would rather work once given the opportunity to design the place and purpose of the working. Here again is the algorithm: architectural space and newly necessary poet-functions as concomitants.









LITHE: THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The Prosody Building's foremost organizing principle is the expanded role of the poet in society at large. Of course such outreach is a matter of poets plumbing the depths of their own medium and motivations. This sets up an interoceptive/exteroceptive interplay—awareness of, and response to, stimuli originating both within the body and without. (As well as without the body?) To embody the culture, a poet must become the body of the culture. The poet can only function as an outflowing, efferent force if she is fully attuned to an inner vitality that would flow outward. She is afferent (inward-conducting) to the degree she is attuned to the exterior. Essentially there is no separable identity—only the creation of stimuli issuing endogenously and exogenously as whole commitment to the greater good as medium.

SOCIO-CHEMICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Prosody Building will have diverse directives determined by the involvements of different poets. It will have both stable and extemporaneous functions. It will have numerous inter-independent identities operating within the same membrane. The membrane may be displaced (the place will be made up of all that lies within the building envelope, as well as a far-reaching sense of purpose that can be transposed elsewhere). There will be permanent and provisional participants—some contingent, some fully committed. Organizations can enter the envelope and remain (and become) whole on their own terms, operating autonomously—un-ingested, un-engulfed. They will also be free to fuse with other functions. There will be different degrees and strengths of cohesion. The core can be diffuse or concentrated or multiple. In political and military arenas this sense of association might be referred to as a 'coalition'. Legally it might be called a 'consortium' or 'conglomerate.' These conventional terms scarcely apply to the ways in which the Prosody Building will hold together and be free to fly apart.

ENDOSYMBIOSIS AS SHARED-RESOURCE MODEL

Bacteria are the earth's true indigenous population, occupying every conceivable niche on the planet. They exist independently as single cells or in clusters, while multicellular organisms exist by means of complex interdependent relationships. Are there bacterial behaviors that can help

determine the optimal organization of the Prosody Building? Endosymbiosis (as elucidated by biologist Lynn Margulis) can, to a certain extent, serve as exemplary social system for poets working under the same roof. Endosymbiosis is the theory that complex cells originated as communities of interacting, autonomous entities. An entity (itself separately enclosed) within the larger membrane is referred to as an 'endosymbiont,' 'organelle,' or just 'symbiont.' Fundamental to endosymbiotic theory is the self-evidence of life's origin and evolution through cooperation, not combat or competition. (When conflicts arise, it can't hurt to have an harmonious underpinning.) Our cells took in oxygen-breathing bacteria (now mitochondria) to feed on the poisonous.

THE RANGE OF POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ORGANISMS

PARASITISM (+/-) One organism benefits while the other is harmed.

PREDATION (+/-) One organism benefits while the other is destroyed.

COMPETITION (+/-) One wins or becomes dominant at another's expense (in fact mutually detrimental: [-/-]).

COMETABOLISM (-/+) One organism uses its own energy to transform another organism while unable to use the energy of the transformed substance.

AMENSALISM (-/o) An association in which one organism is disadvantaged while the other is unaffected.

ANTAGONISM (-/-) Mutual disservice.

NEUTRALISM (o/o) Interaction in which two organisms do not affect each other (probably nonexistent).

COMMENSALISM (+/o) An association between two organisms or populations in which one benefits while the other derives neither benefit nor harm (a form of facilitation).

EPIPYTE (+/o) One organism grows on another organism upon which it depends for mechanical support but not nutrients (as bacterial growth on skin).

SYNTROPHISM (+/+) Cross-feeding. Mutual dependence of different types of organisms for respective nutritional needs. An interaction based on a cooperative metabolism neither organism can carry out alone.

MUTUALISM (+/+) Both organisms benefit from a mutually dependent association (as ant and acacia).

NONOBLIGATE ENDOSYMBIOSIS (+/+) Both organisms benefit from a mutually independent association (unknown in the organic realm).

IN THAT BUILDINGS ARE NOT LIFE

In that buildings are neither bodies nor organisms per se, the great potential of architecture lies in the fact that it can function beyond the limitations of biology. Why should buildings replicate the same drawbacks found in life? Why be symbiotic all over again only to deepen biological dependencies? Buildings can be gutted, restructured and re-inhabited. We (as architectural organelles) can come and go. We can leave our membranes. We can instantly institute symbiotic communities. We can pull together a place of nonsymbiotic interaction wherein each party independently satisfies a need that couldn't be met otherwise. We can create a compact Natural Selection that would take eons to cobble together otherwise. We can dissolve a framework upon which all that has sustained us depends. A building can unmask the mystery of embodiment. The skin that severs us from one another is the optimal site for sensing and celebrating the inseparability of all things. For the Prosody Building to indeed be prosodic, this paradox would have to be both built-in and surpassed.

When is the last time poets indeed evolved, leapfrogged or revamped interchange itself, or replaced place with an instance of more broadly and freely (inter-independently) shared resources? Has there been an effective response to oppressive socioeconomic pressure since the passing on of the great classic nonegalitarian societies (leading up to and including our democracy)? If not, is it not this very lack of poet-initiative that has stalled our momentum toward a more equitable world? Lack of originality threatens our ancestors—now more than ever before.

**PATTERNS, MODELS, PRECEDENTS, ANALOGS, REFERENCES,
RECLAMATIONS AND COMPONENTS THAT MAY RADICALLY
EXPAND THE RELEVANCE OF THE POET**

Relative to the Building:

research center, social justice, benevolent society, metabolism, experiential science, shelter, think tank, school, community center, pressure group, clinic, publishing house, sanitarium, civic services (as composition), guest house, temporary employment agency, Asklepion, sound science, cave, guild, end of life care, daycare, endogeny, desert...

Relative to the Identity and Curricula of the Poet:

iatromantis, political ecologist, pholarchos, ecological economist, apothecary (as were Dante and Keats), griott, physikos/physicist, sage/linguist (Panini, Patanjali, Kukai), fili, law-writer, endogenist, pan-specialist, bodhichittist, complexity and systems theorist, prosodist (both art and science prosodies)—*Paniniya Siksa* through *De Vulgari Eloquentia* to...

THE SPACES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

Use of the building tends to divide into (1) activities internal to poets (instruction, research, writing, retreat, concern for craft, strategizing) and (2) outreach, programming, public services, livelihood.

Re-English Office

History of English as commercial, mercenary and duplicitous. The current economic, ecologic, inequity and security crises as consequents of the phonic and connotative properties of superpower English. Providing English with new roots and inferences, from its epicenter (poets working within the U.S.). A group of poets to 'write the book' and be the authority on the global and local repercussions of English. A reparative narrative.

Reconfigurable Theater

Even though poetry venues deal rather exclusively with the presentation, publication, promotion and exposing of poetry, little consideration is given to poetry as a production (lighting, duration, setting, staging, accompaniment, movement, etc.). Full consideration and facilitation of the presentation of

poetry in a theater that can alter its volume to accommodate various scales and types of activity. *Choreoprosodia* (full fusion of choreography and poetry.)

Anechoic Darkroom

The basis (basement) of the building. Sound arises and remains inseparable from stillness and unmanifest sound. A place for originating language for insight and enlightenment and for offering live data for the nativist/acquired origin-of-language-debate. A space synonymous with perineum, root, anahata, totipotent cell, unstruck sound. Dreaming and sleeping in the building. Staying awake in all states.

Roof as Observatory and Medicinal Herb Garden

Seeing only sky. The exteriorized link to infinity and fate. There is no progress without situating people in micro/macrocosmic interrelationship. Serving teas grown on the site in a tea room near the entryway. (Not 'landscaping' but ingesting plants as guides.) The Prosody Building is a palpable shift into being cared for.

Somatic Practices

Embodiment. Movement. Therapeutic. Words as embodiment. Opening compassion and community by opening listening.

Sound Science

Recording, psychoacoustics, shabd technology, cymatics, prosody as applied to poetry and the linguistic sciences, vocal production and bioprocess, 'medicine melodies,' sound as consciousness (if not cosmogenesis) and protection.

Entry/Envelope

Especially upon entering, the building must carry the paradox of embodiment—that which separates and that through which connection is realized are one. (One function of the poet is the statement of this luminous fact.) Buddhism holds that all suffering is based on the perception of a separable self as real. Ritual sets aside its process.

Assembly

A space for every sort of meeting of any duration, for poets, affiliates, neighborhood and passersby alike. For standing at the threshold and wondering about (wandering into) the rest of the building, the organs deeper in the body.

Archive

Unsurpassed prosody archive—as art, as science and in all mediums.

Educative

An area for instructing poets and offering a public curriculum—after-school and continuing education. Constantly and collectively re-setting, according to need and crises, the course of the poet. Perhaps ‘poet’ can be defined as one ‘least constrained by identity’ (most freed by meeting need).

Professional Offices

Because the building assumes its own economy, there will be revenue from core practitioners in language and prosody-related fields (counseling, breathwork, writing, publishing, voice practice, etc.).

Guests/Retreat

Allowing layover for readers and researchers. Overnight, extended stay; regenerative, taken in, taken care of. Hospitality is happiness.

Geology

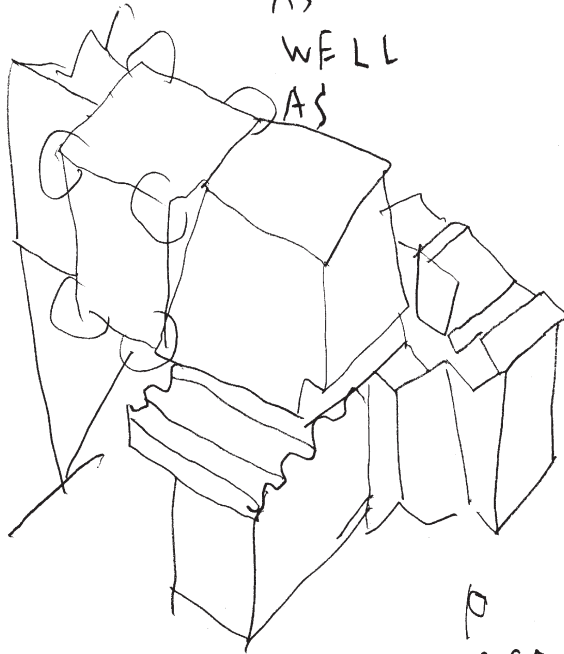
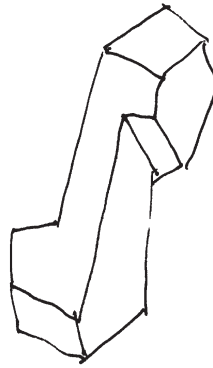
Propitiously situating the building on its site.

Notes

1) Pindar quoted in Giuseppe Roccatagliata, *A History of Ancient Psychiatry* (Praeger, 1986) 8.

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WHOLE

AS
WELL
AS



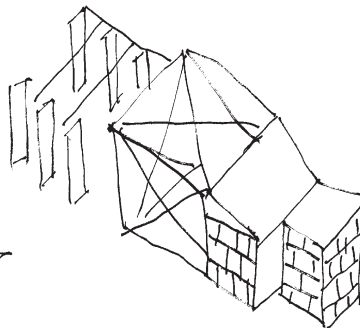
p
para tastic
T

O



repetition of
a word in a
different case

GIVEN
GAVE GOT



POLYPTOTON