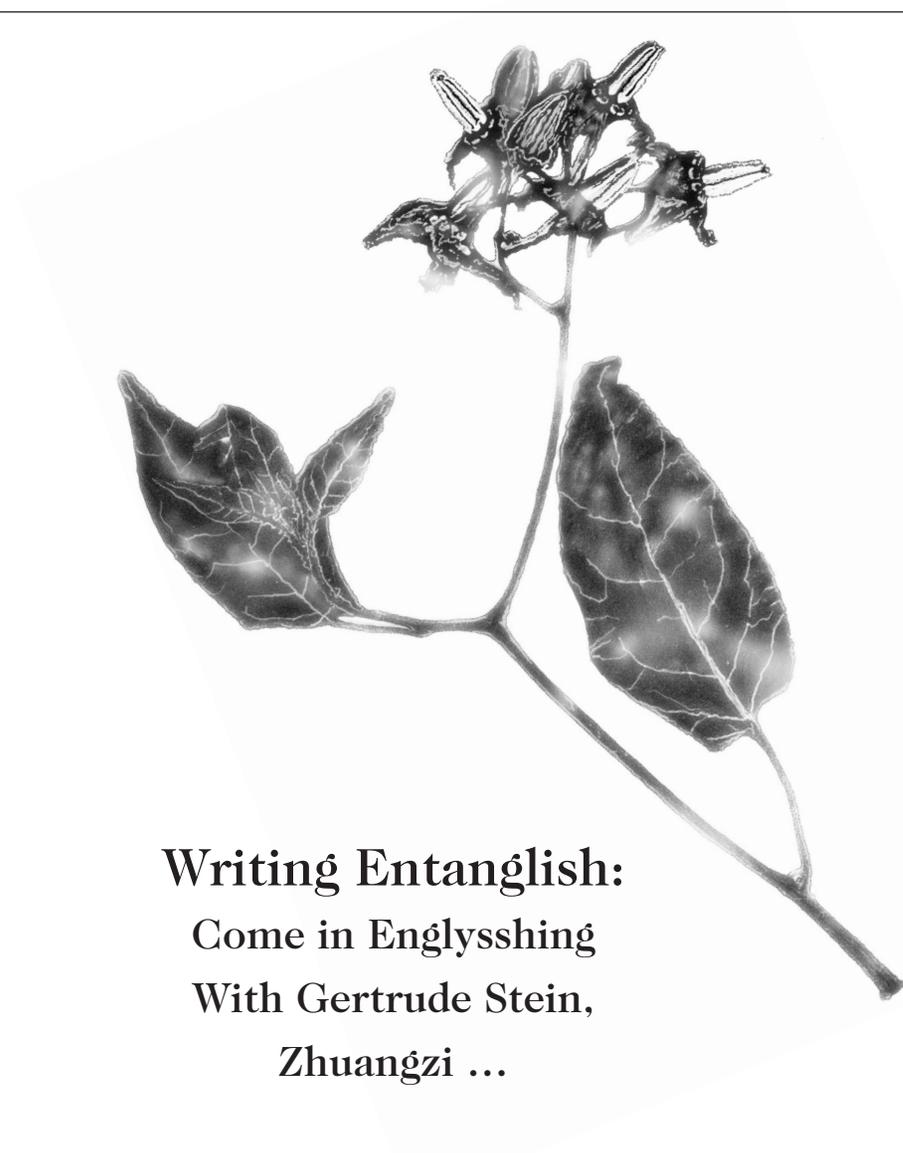


BELLADONNA* CHAPLET SERIES



Writing Entanglish:
Come in Englysshing
With Gertrude Stein,
Zhuangzi ...

by
Kyoo Lee



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*deadly nightshade, a cardiac and respiratory stimulant, having purplish-red flowers and black berries

I dedicate this first chaplet of mine to the lasting memory of Helen Tartar, who showed me the first copy of my first book.

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... January 15, 2015 ...

12 PMI READ: Writing English is as important as speaking the language. One does not have to become a veteran writer or an intellectual author, but basic English writing skills are required and preferred in almost every office job today. It is often seen that people learn to speak English very easily, but writing simple but grammatically correct English is an ordeal for many. Writing a simple, clear and error free piece in English needs constant practice. Here are some tips to help you with English composition ... 5. The above points can be condensed into one golden rule of writing: keep it simple. Good writing is not about complexity; it is about conveying your message to the reader ...

Writing in English tangled—writing entanglish—in a web of other languages requires one to keep one's feet on the ground ... sometimes away from the “foreign interference/idioms”. True, it's tricky, trippy. Try and walk or “leap” into English or any language for that matter. I teach that, and learn that, every day.

Literally, too, it is hard to jump about, if you keep both feet that way, firmly there ... unless it is some sort of Irish dancing we're talking. And of course, as Bella Lewitsky is quoted as saying, “to move free you must be deeply rooted.” I cannot quite locate the source of this intriguing remark I once came across, but one thing for quite sure, it sounds just right, and the phenomenological wisdom of this elastic contradiction, this paradox in action, must have originated in part from her lifelong practices and performances as an experimental dancer. Such a “root” finds its way through the world of bodies we are and are in the middle—muddle?—of becoming.

When Frank O'Hara writes, "Oh Lana, we love you get up," this line scribbled in transit, a grammatically incorrect but poetically self-justified frantic scream toward and around "you," lovingly anchoring & wrapping—tangling—the collapsing body of the Hollywood actress fainting at her 42nd birthday party partly due to "nervous exhaustion," is quite a breathtaking example of falling in running and vice versa. To mix a bit of Beckettian idioms here into this cocktail of "breathless urgency" and agency, we see how this scene shows a novel possibility of failing well, of avoiding falling by failing accurately. Thankfully, not just because of that-this mid-sentence run-on, Lana Turner survived her mid-life mini-crisis, living until 1995 and beyond.

Hard to prove what sort of econo-mimetic "subjective" ("a perpetual procedural loop" or "substantive eclipse" of subjectivity and objectivity) contribution the jammed line might have made then, but just imagine how uplifting that life-line must have been, still a line to remember—oddly lyrical, palpably coextensive, for instance, with Eileen Myle's Mobius strips of I-U as in "I thought/women are/a bunch of/idiots/but that's what *I/am are U/one/I don't count/on what/I am*"; or consider a less gluey, more meat-ballsy, if equally chopsticky version, "I bought a bigger/pinker dick/*for you/but then I/didn't/call./It seems necessary/you're tall/& I miss you all/the time*". Such an automobilized, endless "will to celebrate the density and richness of experience" in its sheer on-ness, vibrant one-ness, this poetic drive® per se will not disappear—at least for the time being—as long as time persists. As this, older avant-garde philopoet Zhuangzi notes in a similar vein, "a road is made by people walking on it." Walking, not noting: actually walking through, not just working around; note that.

Walk on by. Walk five hundred miles—or "Ten Thousand Li Along the Yangzi River" ... away from home. Walk in & out. Welcome. And walk away, Renee, if necessary. Renée? René? Renee who? Don't matter now ... as far as I'm concerned. Perhaps it comes down to a question of how to "walk the line" between whatever.

12. Shikago as “semiological icon” and “meddled-with” language both borrow from Caroline Bergvall in *Middling English* (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 2011).

13. The Vanessa Place and Craig Dworkin references come from http://www.constantcritic.com/vanessa_place/motes/, Vanessa Place, Review of Craig Dworkin, *Motes* (NY, NY: Root Books, 2011), May 12, 2012; <http://transatlantica.revues.org/5724>, *Vanessa Place: An Interview In Paris*, University of Paris 13, Sorbonne Paris Cité, June 7, 2012; Vanessa Place, Review of Craig Dworkin, *Motes*; Vanessa Place, *La Medusa* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press/Fiction Collective 2, 2008); and <http://www.drunkenboat.com/db10/06fic/place/gone.html>, Vanessa Place, “Gone with the Wind”.

14. Avital Ronell discusses “reading with your ears” in *The Telephone Book: Technology—Schizophrenia—Electric Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), A User’s Manual.

15. The 12 AM/PM READ passage is from Gertrude Stein, *Four in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947). The Stein quotes and passage that immediately follow are from “What Are Master-pieces and Why Are There So Few Of Them?,” Ed. Patricia Meyerowitz. *Look at Me Now and here I Am: Writings and Lectures, 1911-1945* (London; Chester Springs, PA: Peter Owen, 2004). Emphasis in the text is mine.

16. The Martin Heidegger references are from »Was heißt Denken?«, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1936–1953) (Tübingen, Neske Verlag, 1954), 122; Trans. Henk Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and Interesse: Towards an Ontology of the In-Between,” *Intermedialités* 1 (Spring 2003). The Gertrude Stein quote on governing-as-occupying is from “What Are Master-pieces and Why Are There So Few Of Them?” Remaining Stein references are from “Composition as Explanation,” Ed. Patricia Meyerowitz. *Look at Me Now and here I Am: Writings and Lectures, 1911-1945* (London; Chester Springs, PA: Peter Owen, 2004).

17. M. Nourbese Philip reference drawn from *Looking for Livingstone – an Odyssey of Silence* (Spring Valley, NY: The Mercury Press, 1991).

18. Fred Moten on mispronunciation(s) can be found at http://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/crossroads/new_american_poets/fred_moten/ Fred Moten, New American Poets.

12 AM READ: Most of our century’s radical explorations have been into spontaneity, the unconscious, drugs, automatic writing, whereas I think the “wildest form” is to walk the interface of conscious and unconscious, a line much too thin for our feet, whether metrical, metaphorical or physical. I suppose we’re here to find something like “disembodied feet,” which can walk in both realms at the same time.

Passing by Shikago in Chicago, I see something else pass by. It was a few years ago ... a restaurant now closed, I see. I remember being reminded of this not(at)ion, “comyn englysshe,” a term coined by William Caxton, the first English printer whose assiduous promotion of lay literacy accelerated the English Renaissance, a kind of all-in-one middle-man. Curiously enough, in the preface to his translation of Eneydos (*Aeneid*), this trend-setting trans-cultural knowledge worker specializing in printing and merchandizing as well as writing and translation, stresses how “comyn Englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a-nother.” Do you too hear the aspirations of a man half-astonished, half-annoyed? What I seem to have suddenly remembered then while spotting “Shikago” in the corner of my eye is some sensation of a futural *déjà-vu*, a feeling of inaugural, double fascination with what Caxton witnessed and what he wrote down, back then, both.

And there we go, comyn englysshe in Shikago or Shikago in comyn englysshe, an interlingual interference composed by and into an illusory symmetry: this interplay is neither strictly “hetero” nor simply “homo,” but rather, say, queer, queer-jammed, for this pair, while loosely homophonic, is not homographic as they are spelt differently; while heterographic, they are not entirely heteronymic as they refer in part to the same thing, namely, the windy city I was walking through. Those two radically different cases of homonym, one transcriptive, and the other, cognitive, got wired, braided, together into a private “visual marker ... a semiological icon,” and rerouted through this body, a portable site of temporary interface between Shikago and Chicago, where walk-in and walk-out overlap, walking and working together.

Such an uncannily contiguous, auto-ambiguating or divagating otherness of languages at crossroads, other than other—for being more of *another*, the Bakhtinian “heteroglossia” broadly conceived, or *this* or *that* other, the concretion of an occurrence—is also detectable at the heart of living English, the English language as a living matter or a matter of living. As “languages travel as seeded forms of themselves,” often “meddled” with, as Caroline Bergvall summates in *Middling English*, a take-home lesson I took from that interstitial resonance between those two signs coming apart together in a street of Chicago/Shikago is not Japolish but more precisely, Entanglish, an unlockable portmanteau in which one could also find Noah Webster struggling to fit comyn englysshe into the/a national language, reterritorializing it into *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).

I remember coming across “comyn englysshe” a long time ago in a history of English class. For a curious, long-distant lover of languages as I have always been since inhabiting Korean, my first, the code in “comyn englysshe” was not entirely archaic but strangely, allegorically, futural, almost fungal. What I smelt then was, sure, “common English,” and at once it obviously was not ... that—again, that uncanny.

No one else around seemed to care, though, as much as I, a little pupil a little distracted then—by a feeling of a pull/pool reminiscent of hearing a “bubble” passing through my ears when some lawmaker or newscaster on TV said something about a need to “observe/protect/respect the law” (*bub-ul jikija*, 법-을 지키자; law-the object marker-let us observe/protect/respect). Huh, bubble? Also, “comyn” sounded also like “commune” as in communism, associated with those “evil” North Koreans. But why should I care, methought con-fusingly, what do I have in “comyn” with some Saxon Caxton anyway, who wrote in this funny-looking “englysshe” which he said was impossible to find especially in the midst of “Frenshe” speakers. None the less, the phrase itself did seem to stick in my mind like some white stain.

NOTES:

1. The **12 PMI READ** passage is from EnglishLeap. <http://www.englishleap.com/other-resources/english-writing-practice>.
2. “Foreign interference/idioms” was taken from the Writing Center Referral Form at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York.
3. The Frank O’Hara line. “Oh Lana, we love you get up,” is from “Poem (Lana Turner has collapsed!),” 1962.
4. “Nervous exhaustion” was cited as a reason for Lana Turner’s fainting in “*Lana Faints; In Hospital*,” LANA TURNER “Tired out ...” *New York Post*, February 9, 1962.
5. The “breathless urgency” of Frank O’Hara’s poem is described by Mark Doty in “Frank O’Hara,” Eds. Jack Elliott Myers and David Wojahn. *A Profile of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (Carbondale, IL Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), as is the “will to celebrate the density and richness of experience,” later ascribed to Eileen Myles.
6. The idea of the “subjective” is from Robert Fitterman and Vanessa Place in *Notes on Conceptualisms* (NY, NY: Ugly Ducklings, 2009).
7. The Eileen Myles passages are from poems “Writing” and “Transformation,” both in *Snowflake: New Poems; Different Streets: Newer Poems* (St. Paul, MN: Wave Books, 2012). The emphases in the text are mine.
8. The Zhuangzi quote is from *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Trans. Burton Watson (NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).
9. *Ten Thousand Li Along the Yangzi River* is a Chinese handscroll from the mid-12th to early 13th century attributed to Juran.
10. The **12 AMI READ** passage is from a Rosmarie Waldrop lecture given at the Naropa Institute, Boulder, July 1995, published in RosmarieWaldrop, “Form and Discontent,” *Diacritics* 26.3-4 (1996): 54-62.
11. The William Caxton quote is from *English Prose and Poetry* (1137-1892) (Cambridge, MA: Ginn, 1916)

Unerasable and unnameable, yet “creating a kind of collapsible” or expandable “mirror effect” as Vanessa Place aptly—apped-ly?—put it, this kind of echo-poetic x-chamber, its autopoetic hinge pregnant and reconceived with “sculptural” potentials, becomes a mobile motherboard for translingual fugues and polyphonic fusions. For instance, *Motes* by Craig Dworkin—the title itself summarily double-framing (*les mots*, (the) word(s) in French—carries “Thirsty Thursday,” a nursery rhyme alliterative allure, and “A SHIVER/ winters itself,” a “*bilangue* pun” (“SHIVER” showing/sounding/ containing French winter, “*hiver*,” BIG TIME, with “se,” the reflexive pronoun attached to it, elided & muted). Shivery or Thursty? Come in Englysshing with us, I say, no matter who or where you are, even if you sound like a German or a Brit or even a “*mise-en-trope*,” for “whut you needs is a wife.”

Such is how “reading with your ears” take places and keeps you going and running across the board, as Avital Ronell calls it and calls for it, “it,” the un-heard-of, doubly (in)audible “a” of Derridian “*différance*” (*différance* becoming different from itself through reflexive auto-delay or relay). Yet, one must linger ... who is to say “my” ear, or who am I to say this ear or that era? Whose or who’s ear here? It is not the sort of riddle you could solve by keeping your ear to the ground; that much, I could detect.

12 AM/PMI READ: (A rose is a rose is a rose.) ... But I notice that you all know it: you make fun of it, but you know it. Now listen! I’m no fool. I know that in daily life we don’t go around saying ‘is a...is...is...’ Yes, I’m no fool; but I think that in that line the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years.

That much, I could hear—more clearly later with Gertrude Stein who showed, in passing, how a dead man in detective stories, “the shock the thrill the horror,” truly comes alive and why that is “interesting,” e.g., a dead man lying in the midst of a rose is a rose is a rose that lives on, producing a literary phenomenology of afterlife:

There is another very curious thing about detective stories. In real life people are interested in the crime more than they are in detection, it is the crime that is the thing the shock the thrill the horror but in the story *it is the detection that holds the interest* and that is natural enough because the necessity as far as action is concerned is the dead man ...

To read with one's ears, with another one kept closer to the ground, is to interface with that "inter-esse," almost to the point of interfering with it. What intrigue-tests me is such an impossible interchange or exchange, that "foreign," strange, often revolutionary interference, such a seemingly, maddeningly idiotic insistence in the autopoetic unfolding of a language, any given and evolving *logos* ... laws, language, logic, whatever you name it. That which lies-arises-falls between things, "being with and between the things, being in-between and enduring this (*causharren*)," part of what is "called thinking," according to Martin Heidegger, or what he is calling into being, will not stay still, however—not even "there," which is why, as Stein says, "governing is occupying but not interesting, governments are occupying but not interesting because master-pieces are exactly what they are not." In a gesture of mastering a piece, one will then have to go Gertrude on Martin right on, jazzily thereafter. That remains—is more—interesting in the overriding sense that, maybe, yes, "everything is the same except composition" as an arrangement in continuous action, time after (clock) time, "the time of and the time in the composition," just as "a rose is a rose is a rose" at each and every flowering of its auto-entanglement through time.

On to Memphis, TN, and LaGrange, GA: more than a decade ago and for several years, a period long enough for one to start feeling like a failed Southern Belle, I began to develop some on-site familiarity with another version of American English, "Southern," its vowels sticky and stretchy enough to make a listener feel silkily dragged somewhere swampy. Shortly after my move, Keijiro Suga, a poet friend, also a translator, told me about his lifelong fascination with "Tennessee," its spelling, and I remember feeling part of what he was seeing. What is spell-binding, what matters inextricably, in his semiotic interface with the double density of "Tennessee" as well as my on-going phono-typographical musings over "comyn englysshe," is that, here again, the content & the container are tangled up with each other, no way around it.

"By this I mean all this," as Stein says when on again about very few "outlaw," new compositions ("masterpieces") that exist tautologically as if in some indexical closet in plain sight, buoyed in mid-sentence like that O'Hara's "we" "loving you get up," whose porosity, and perpetuity, and even seeming posturing, some might find irritating but I don't, and I repeat: I rather seem to enjoy it, eating it, just taking it as it is, its recursive autosecretion at its face value ... why not? By that I mean that as long as one remembers one's restless question, one from and to which a rose could arise in the form of being a rose-being in the world of all the rosy arisings, one's language(s), transmitted through and diffused among nobody, surviving somewhere between dead men and unknown infants, would have an uncommon chance of living through historical contingencies and material mutations common to all beings.

What I learned from Stein & her transtemporal poetic company if anything—in sum, "I presume?," wonder I with Ms. Philip—is that one could exist at least as an "enjoyer" if not an employer, even if unemployed or summarily marginalized or even mistaken for a misunderstood genius. What my and all Is are looking for, for company, are self-styled communal gardeners of silent signals & communications including misspellings and "mispronunciation(s)," to which Fred Moten too turns with such a loving insight, surely (not) part of "comyn englysshe" ... for, I agree with Ann Lauterbach, "a rose, after all, is still only a rose, but it smells sweeter when there are three of them" and even more when there are more of them, when, for instance, Englysshed differentially, as we all are in all sorts of micro-macro ways.