
Poetry
FROM
Instructions



Guy Bennett, *et al*

This sampling from *Poetry from Instructions** contains the following poems:

- Jacques Jouet, *Sans titre* (Instruction 72)
- Barry Schwabsky, *My Own Private Gray* (Instruction 7)
- Pascale Petit, *À la gomme* (Instruction 60)
- Jonas Pelzer, *Nlkpjoa* (Instruction 42)
- Abipone Lules, *Fairy Dogs Blues* (Instruction 19)
- Michèle Audin, *Sans titre* (Instruction 39)
- Krystle May Statler, *A Fifth Grader Cries Outside The Elementary School Around The Corner* (Instruction 51)
- Simon Smith, *Sea of Azov* (Instruction 95)
- Anne Savelli, *Nid* (Instruction 80)
- Lewis Carroll, *Facts* (Instruction 31)

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Queries? Compliments? Complaints? Address them to [Guy Bennett](#).

* *Poetry from Instructions* is a work of generative poetry inspired by the instruction-based music and art of the mid-20th century, in particular the *Wall Drawings* of Sol LeWitt. The instructions from which the present poems were written appear in red, between the title and the name of the author.

SANS TITRE

72 : *Un poème de vers superposés les uns sur les autres.*

 *Jacques Jouet*

là

e m p i l é s

morceaux

de

faite

est

qui

d'âme

pleine

machine

une

est

grue

La



MY OWN PRIVATE GRAY

7: A poem of lines both more and less than two inches in length.

◆ *Barry Schwabsky*

Life's honored guest / with no space for thirsty birds / dust as a substance
engulfing shadows / aim your poisoned art / a million years of cruelty
on earth / the real moon identical to the imaginary moon / fantastic
little invention / your memory of the water sisters / self-illuminated
or self-darkened as the case may be / all these roaring years / time
passes with flying colors: blue, cinnabar, orange / your body is the most
pressing argument for / what in me belongs to anyone else / an alphabet
not for us to learn / time burnt out on sound / between before and after

À LA GOMME

60 : Un poème que vous auriez pu écrire pour quelqu'un d'autre.

❖ *Pascale Petit*

Quelque chose a disparu dans la gomme
Pour que la gomme soit la gomme.
Ce qui s'est glissé dans la gomme
C'est tout ce qui n'est pas la gomme
Et qui fait que la gomme reste
après une lutte seule, le dernier geste
d'un essuie-glace : une gomme.
Ainsi la gomme est action
Née d'une concertation, d'un pensum.
Pour être la gomme, la gomme subit un mouvement
Qui laisse la gomme gomme dans la gomme.
Par l'exclu de ce qui n'est pas la gomme
La gomme est la gomme, elle tombe, file, efface
Et devient plus ou moins doucement la gomme.
La gomme imite infailliblement la gomme
Parce que tout disparaît en allant et se retirant d'elle,
Que tout l'affirme en s'accumulant
Autour d'elle
Par l'apparition-disparition de tout ce qui n'est pas la gomme
dans la gomme hors de la gomme
qui fait la gomme à la gomme.

NLKPJOA

42: A poem your father wouldn't care for.

◆ *Jonas Pelzer*

Khzz kplzlz Nlkpjoa
cvu hssgb cplslu Slzluclu
clyzahuklu dpyk
gdlpmsl pjo hu

FAIRY DOGS BLUES

19 : Un poème qui donne au lecteur un petit coup de blues.

◆ Abipone Lules

Sur un rythme de Paul Verlaine / *L'heure exquise*
& d'après un collage de Philippe Lemaire —

Halo de brume
sur le marais.
La muse brune
lévite auprès
de chiens solides.

Ô chrysalides !

L'étang étrange
fige un ballet
que l'onde étanche.
En quel reflet
le dogue lape...

Rien cette agape.


L'autre sans boire
marque un arrêt.
Quoi ? — La guitare
bientôt jouerait
Fairy Dogs Blues.

Heures élues.



SANS TITRE

27 : Un poème dans lequel aucun mot ne paraît deux fois.

 *Michèle Audin*

Une fois
deux fois
trois fois

*A FIFTH GRADER CRIES OUTSIDE THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AROUND THE CORNER*

51: A poem overheard.

 *Krystle May Statler*

I'm going to fucking kill him
he was talking about my mom
no one hits me and gets away with it!

NO ONE hits me and gets away with it
I'm going to fucking kill HIM!
He was talking about MY mom!

He was talking about MY MOM!
No one hits ME and gets away with IT!
I'm going to FUCKING. KILL. HIM!!!

THE SEA OF AZOV

95: A poem feeling ever more hopeless and enraged in the face of mendacious, cynical and criminally unaccountable local leaders and heads of state.

◆ Simon Smith

The offensive sub rosa, a shape shifter, a special operation is to sleep without dreams & populate with content, with what the secret police know, remove all trace, then plant false flags. Offence is offence. Surrounded & surrendered. Probably a war crime. Deny denial.

Lyric hammered into the earth. Done. Target liquidated. The precision & provision of neo-liberal management & laser-guided bomb systems, state-sponsored ideologies & a motley of conscripts. The democracy of atrocities on all sides blackened, then dark. Roiling the seas.

& through the yellow fog the orange flash & explosion of a Russian Alligator Class landing ship, the 'Orsk'. The blaze. Fuel oil floats on the water, the black smoke rolling skyward. A canary shrill & alone to the eco-desert – 'Close the skies! Close the skies! Close the skies!'

Is it that lyricism can't be learnt or taught? Is this an illness? What to call it? – 'THE LAST THING,' 'THE LAST ACT,' 'THE LAST CHANCE' – after Umberto Saba, after Denise Riley. The shattered branches & trunks, the pure torn whitenesses beneath. Is this it? It is this.

"Today is rain. The day's like evening, the spring's like autumn" – the poem's unfolding into the Real, pasted, collaged, wavering, waivering authorship. Disembowelled by fragments of shrapnel, while you hesitated – then rolled & buried in a piece of carpet. Neat. The FSB.

When day follows night as night I'm taking dictation from & from news websites when I crave something lyrical. A sapling bends & appears to surrender but stands instead. City of horse chestnuts & lindens where you can walk east to west in shadow. "But I want the sun".

When the child speaks the song sings, the sapling sampling the wars. The wars of centuries. Breathing air & stars & bombs & shrapnel & glass & masonry & flame – a chorus singing through. This the story represented at the end of this text in 160 characters. Or the decade.

RETROVILLE. 4.7 stars out of 5. Temporarily Closed. Disappeared. Piles of churned debris, the concrete, smashed glass, the steel girders shining out, at a slant & dust. Lyric broken off, yet real, really Real. Hardware empty, useless, pure white blossom or snow. It is Spring.

The only way to process Reality, the neat, manicured, managed outcomes, obsolete kit lined up & burnt out along the highways, turrets missing, hulls blown apart. On the road the people are dead. The A to Z of atrocity. The winter rain stings with the icy air of last chances.

Like a war melodious down an ear trumpet, distant & safe. Bandstands. Iron-greys, pinkie-whites, the body plates & helmets destined for the front, translated into paper streamers & the tail ends of kites, the messenger pigeons of other conflicts tortured for their secrets.

Neon draws us on into futures, boiling with waiting, roll chemicals around palates. You absorb background radiation into normality. Information/story, slash of the 'Z,' the trench & grave of the 'V,' daubed in haste on elite mobile units – we are 'on the brink of surviving.'

April 2022

❖ Anne Savelli

Ça me rassure.
Ça m'apaise.

Ça me calme.
Ça me détend.

Ça me soulage.

Ça me berce.

Ça me décontracte. Ça me console.
Ça me délasse. Ça me tranquillise.
Ça me rassérène. Ça me sécurise.

Ça m'endort.
Ça me repose.
Ça m'anesthésie.
Ça me relaxe.
Ça me cicatrice.
Ça m'allège.

Ça me libère.

C'est propre.
C'est simple.
C'est doux.
C'est douillet.
C'est sobre.
C'est calme.
C'est net.
C'est rangé.
C'est ouaté. C'est protecteur. C'est accueillant.

C'est chaleureux. C'est ramassé.
C'est soyeux. C'est aéré.
C'est cuivré. C'est pailleté. Moelleux.

C'est liquide ?

C'est en mouvement.
C'est en balance.
C'est en suspens.
À l'équilibre.

C'est à ma taille. C'est à mon goût.
C'est à l'endroit et c'est à l'heure.

FACTS (from Useful and Instructive Poetry)

31: A poem-telescope.

❖ *Lewis Carroll*

WERE I to take an iron gun,
And fire it off towards the sun;
I grant 'twould reach its mark at last,
But not till many years had passed.

But should that bullet change its force,
And to the planets take its course,
'Twould *never* reach the *nearest* star,
Because it is so *very* far.*

* This poem was written in anticipation of its instruction.
