

# Spectres Are Us

**Patrick James Dunagan**

**Abstract**

A poetic sequence annunciating the schism between the poet and the city. The fragile observation of looking out while cruising along the avenues of reading writing/writing reading.

SPECTRES ARE US

There is no Orpheus to whom we can look; only the name of Orpheus.

- Radcliffe G. Edmonds III

Hardy's empyrean prinked gloom 3,000 feet up

Catalina Island some 3,000 yards back

approaching So Cal pools and freeways

petrol blooms gathering round Ukrainian blues

*don't ever wanna go*

walking the beat of waking

streets of lines run overheard

connections of the disconnected  
who with spent slugs of ambition  
rile the pharmacies of night  
catch autumn glare from insides

to hold the vision of darkness  
against perspiring heavy sight  
propped up by manifold delivery  
of every other'd nature known

bent on deep in the cuppes churning  
out vineyards of absolution denied  
held over social grievances come on  
prickled up and gouged forms beautify

disfigured discards of previous eras  
unrepentant

city

the gorgeous inviting romance  
of the word alone itself emblematic of all

thrust upon it by youth hoping for much  
aged by the hours wasted searching

looking to fill eternal ache

robed role

of pessimistic angel

caught up on

that Language Game

Wittgenstein , for one ,

claims

gives possible information

probable possibility

has a hold on

any other

drunk 19th century French wine  
climbing suburban treetops  
limbs dangling down stars overhead  
breath raspy with delight

witness a car

rushing blur

of bustling traffic

visionary sort

to which committed

acts

what's then

it all come to?

Vatic from the getgo

whatsoever ongoing lasts even as seemingly it does not

first-steps into the act  
learning to map-out the daily routine  
of just doing your own thing  
tracing letters down the page  
from home to work and back  
waging spirit against desire

it matters until it no longer does  
"standing on a street-corner doing nothing  
is P O W E R" Corso spells  
easy secret of refusal

hand trembles push eye open takes in  
swallows whole seconds one lengthy whoosh  
returning body's facile touch mechanism  
lever by lever streets cascade cross sight  
blue forever 360 degrees round atop churning  
combustible bellows forge sharp introspect  
tagged back alley blurred to bits run cross  
address eternal curses spit back for kicks  
to dig it not easily  
is hard

top turn burn

split bliss

crowns recognition

take Baudelaire to the corner  
leave him there

don't ever let him know who asks

whatever's said builds honey fringed houses  
round slender soul'd visionaries

adrift in fragile bear haunted hinterlands of thought  
where the writing condenses to clear crystal offering

with a fist  
stomping pavement against police baton

put away thy fury  
lay aside your bodies

numbers no longer cut it  
loud voices lent only to slumber

lend instead measure  
strike down any facade placed before you

they done tear down the city to build the city  
(old story

don't mean it ain't true  
you  
do what you do

to be you

all this

goes nowhere

less we

make somewhere

there

not there

anybody care

"Whatever I might be a 1000 dingbats be."

(at the Library

"mind is soul Milton said

or didn't he? somewhere

mean it that way

his wife

might live in light greater

than his eyes

would bear?"

"Live-her" Olson sd, according Duncan  
so did

following histories  
discovered

skating corridors dusted over  
gaps cleared, ledges, curbs  
grinding up against  
the hours  
what distances  
amount to sky-scraping mountains  
close-up

following signs  
hardly recognized  
into identities

walked back hours into dawn

Hollo not "hollow"

a constant ignorance

eclipses every

/

any

stubborn assertion

"ignorance is bliss" (Roy Fisher speaking of Bunting

"Thoreau ain't very thorough" (Olson to Gerrit Lansing

"the word is not the thing" (the notebook has it sd

Jack Spicer passes by with Rimbaud rounding the corner before Baudelaire  
rides by on a cable car Gertrude Stein sits rounded in half-light of a fading  
streetlamp the public address system blares William Carlos Williams reading  
poems to Mina Loy who has collapsed before Niedecker and Zukofsky on a West  
coast visit in the daydream of George Oppen drifting off right up there off Polk  
from where now I write here some, what... forty years hence

patterns of telephone poles gone digital  
speech-centered on language  
scenarios evolve from out necessary use  
fiber-by-fiber shuddering messages along

how good it ever was

how it is

past present

nothing future bout it

still doing

nothing to it

bear bare bear bare

listen

bear bare bear bare

that jingling

song thing

every engine resisting eternity

recorded chassis status

*If you're a modern artist who's not some kind of cultural nationalist, you can understand that you can learn from anything and anybody, see that the whole of world culture is at your disposal, because no one person has created the monuments of art and culture in the world, it's been collective.*

- Amiri Baraka

one city one song one body  
walking it all along

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### **About the author**

Patrick James Dunagan lives in San Francisco and works at Gleeson Library for the University of San Francisco. His books include *GUSTONBOOK* (Post Apollo, 2011), *Das Gedichtete* (Ugly Duckling, 2013), *from Book of Kings* (Bird and Beckett Books, 2015), and *Drops of Rain / Drops of Wine* (forthcoming Spuyten Duyvil 2016). He edited and wrote the introduction for poet Owen Hill's *A Walk Among the Bogus* (Lavender Ink, 2014).