Talking Through the Glosa: An Examination of the Conversational Networks Implicit to the Glosa Form

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15 August 2013

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Examining the potential for conversation between poets within the glosa, this work responds to the lack of critical treatment of the poetic form by opening up new avenues for consideration. In order to understand the role of conversation within a poem, this thesis parallels the glosa with the concept collaboration, the dramatic monologue, the pas de deux, the elegy and the dedication collection in contemporary Canadian writing. Through comparative analysis with these other forms, this thesis develops new understandings of the way in which lyric subjectivity can be conditioned by poly-vocal poetry. The study culminates in a collection of poems entitled, *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*, which further questions the relationships between poets and their social context, their readers and their peers and predecessors.

RÉSUMÉ

En recherchant les possibilités qu'offre l'étude de la conversation entre poètes dans le «glosa», cet ouvrage répond à l'absence de traitement scolaire de la forme poétique en ouvrant de nouvelles avenues théoriques. Afin de comprendre le rôle de la conversation dans un poème, ce mémoire met en parallèle le glosa avec «la collection collaborative», le monologue dramatique, le «pas de deux», l'élégie et la collection de dévouement dans la littérature canadienne contemporaine. Grâce à une analyse comparative avec ces autres formes, ce mémoire développe une nouvelle perspective quant à la manière dont la subjectivité lyrique peut être influencée par la poésie poly-vocale. L'étude aboutit à un recueil de poèmes intitulé «Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir» qui approfondit l'examen des relations entre les poètes et leur contexte social, leurs lecteurs, leurs contemporains et leurs prédécesseurs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the extensive guidance and assistance of my thesis advisor, Prof. Nathalie Cooke. Without her support, encouragement, and boundless patience, this project would never have seen the light of day (or rather, sung the song of night). I would also like to thank my parents, Peggy and John Clinton for offering every kind of support imaginable during this process. Thanks to Marlene Jones for being an ever-enduring source of inspiration and to Sally Clinton for her unabashed enthusiasm and encouragement. As well, poet, Brittany Bates, is due an abundance of gratitude for her help with drafting my poems. Tremendous thanks to Courtney Clinton for her collaboration on “Little Echo” as well as her help in developing the ideas of community that undergird the body of this work. Un grand merci à Aude Lanthier pour son aide avec les traductions. Thanks as well to Michael Clinton. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the help, heart and frequent salvation provided by Jessica Bahar, Diane Belzil and Matthew Mackenzie – three bohemian gentlemen whose voices are implicit to the conversation of this study.

Chapter I: Introduction to the Glosa's Social Networks

In 1994, upon the publication of P.K. Page's collection of glosas, *Hologram*, Allan Brown opened his review for the *Antigonish Review* with the flat pronunciation, "From time to time Canadian poets will introduce a new form - rather, an old one - into our national literature. Some of these transplants take hold, some don't" (29). In fact, the glosa seems to continue to hold a place in our national literature as many Canadian poets have continued to work in the form and to evolve the form. Page's "watershed" (Brown 29) introduction of the form – which involves a working of four 'borrowed' lines of poetry (known as *the cabeza*[1]) into four original stanzas – inspired a flurry of responding glosas 'borrowing' lines from Page herself (including glosas by Patrick Lane, Barbara Colebrook Peace, Catherine Graham, Kristeen MacLeod, Joanne Page, and Samuel Peralta amongst others). Page's death in 2010 fuelled the trend as poets writing for *The Malahat Review'*s second tribute to Page flocked to write glosas with her lines *(Malahat "*P.K. Page Tribute" 2011*). Patricia Young in an interview with Sandra Djwa said *Hologram* began a "glosa revolution … Everywhere you go, every magazine you pick up… She's the queen of glosas. Nobody can touch her" (*Journey With No Maps* 278).[2] However, what is it that "secur[es] a firm place" for this form in Canadian poetry? Why return to a traditional form in our contemporary poetic context and why *this* form?

In their collection of Canadian form poetry, Kate Braid and Sandy Shreve describe the glosa as "a delightful way for poets to exchange or build upon one another's ideas in a structured

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[1] Robert Stacey uses the term "cabeza" in his article, "Looking at 'The Gold Sun' or, The Glosa's Glasses." Robin Skelton, in his note on Marilyn Bowering's glosa, "Letter from Portugal," in *The Malahat Review*, uses the term "texte" for the borrowed passage (Skelton 43), and Rosemary Sullivan uses the term "head" and "cabeza" in her review of *Hologram* (Sullivan 123). Because the form, until recently, was quite uncommon in English language literature, either term seems to be acceptable. For the remainder of this study I will use the term cabeza.

[2] Of the seven glosas presented in *In Fine Form*, one is written by Page, and three take their cabeza from her poems (Braid and Shreve 90-102).

poetic form" (*In Fine Form* 88). The glosa is a particular form because it implicitly enables a call and response between two poets. The writer of the glosa writes four ten-line stanzas, the tenth line of each stanza is taken from the cabeza. In the most formally-strict modern incarnations of the glosa, the sixth and the ninth lines of each stanza rhyme with the borrowed tenth.[3] Beginning in Spanish courts in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century and as Braid and Shreve explain, the glosa "picks up on the concept of glossing – that is, elaborating or commenting on a text (alternate names for the glosa are gloss or glose)" (88). Robin Skelton uses the name "Glose" when referring to the form and suggests "it is based on the notion that an existing passage of verse by someone else requires elucidation and expansion. This is to say it needs a gloss!" (Skelton 43). There is no set metre for the lines of the glosa and many poets who work with the form have varied the rhyme scheme, the stanza lengths and in some cases, the length of the cabeza. For example, in Page's second collection of glosas *Coal and Roses*, the collection ends on a "triple-glosa" in which Page triples the cabeza and the number of stanzas (*Coal and Roses* 84-89). Other poets have carried out similar experimentations with the form, such as Anne Compton's "Blue: A half-glosa for Charles Wright" in which Compton reduces the form to two ten-line stanzas working with a two-line cabeza from Wright (*Fiddlehead* Summer 2010), and Glenn Kletke's "O Grandfather Dust," which takes two quatrains from Thomas McGrath's "Letter to an Imaginary Friend" and uses the lines of the first quatrain to begin each of his four ten-line stanzas and the lines of the second quatrain to end the stanzas (*In Fine Form* 93-5).

My aim in this study is to examine the nature of the "delightful exchange" hosted by the glosa form. More specifically, I am interested in what it means for a poetic voice to expressing

[3] It is common practice for poets to employ either slant rhyme or to forego the rhyme scheme entirely.

itself *with* another voice present in the poem. Page 'explains'[4] her turn to the form in her forward to *Hologram* saying, “it occurred to me that now, towards the end of my life, it would be appropriate to use this form as a way of paying homage to those poets whose work I fell in love with in my formative years” (*Hologram* 9-10). In his article, “Looking at 'The Gold Sun'; or, The Glosa's Glasses” Robert D. Stacey reiterates this formal gesture of retrospection in his reading of Page's “The Gold Sun” as an “exploitation of the formal properties of the glosa ... as a means of summing up her own poetic career” (2). Similarly, Sara Jamieson, in her article “'Our hearts both leapt / in love with metaphor': P.K. Page's Professional Elegies,” treats the glosas from *Hologram* as “professional elegies,” arguing that the glosa is a form that facilitates “*some consideration* of how language is passed from poet to poet” and that Page’s use of the form allowed her to assert her place in the literary patriarchy (275).

Such reasoning for Page's attraction to the glosa form seems plausible, but what of the other poets picking up the form? Surely Stephen Heighten, Jay Ruzesky, and Marilyn Bowering (to name a few who also published glosas in 1994) were not far enough removed from their “formative years” for such a retrospective gesture. What and who constitutes an “exchange”? Does the suggestion that one poet simply “build[s] upon” the work of another not suggest that contemporary glosas are continuing along some linear and accumulative progression of poetic thought that would limit our understanding of developments in contemporary poetry? These questions underscore this Masters thesis, which combines creative with analytical exploration.

Page also offers the “delight” that can be found in writing within the constraints of form as a factor that drove her “obsession” with the glosa:

[4] Admittedly, to treat any poet's introduction to their own work as an “explanation” of the poetry is to mistake the petals for the plant, but certainly a consideration of Page's own thoughts on her discovery of the form can illuminate some of the discussion that will follow.

> I enjoyed the idea of constructing a poem backwards – the final line of each stanza is, in effect, the starting line. You work towards a known. I liked being controlled by these reining rhymes – or do I mean reigning? – and gently influenced by the rhythms of the original … A curious marriage – two sensibilities intermingling. (*Hologram* 9)

While the challenge and pleasure of writing within a form certainly accounts for part of the glosa's allure, it strikes me that it is this "curious marriage" at the heart of the glosa form that responds to a particular poetic gesture: the recognition of a community within the space of the poem – what I call, the *socializing of the poem*. By hosting multiple voices within a single poem, the poem establishes itself as a social context – a community – not governed by what Page calls "the tyranny of subjectivity" ("Questions and Images" 191), but defined by the interactions it houses. These interactions are themselves shaped by the interlocutors and by the modes of locution practiced by the interlocutors – whereas sometimes two voices may indeed participate in an "exchange," at other times, they may be "hand in hand." Therefore, in order to engage in a discussion of the particular poly-vocality in the glosa, we must first examine these paradigms of interlocution pertinent to the composition and reading of a poem.

Sandra Djwa's *Journey with No Maps* further illuminates Page's introduction to the glosa form: "it was Robin Skelton who provided P.K. with the poetic form, the glosa, for which she became known in the nineties" (273). Djwa explains that Skelton encouraged Marilyn Bowering to write a glosa in January of 1992. When Bowering read her finished glosa, "Letter from Portugal" (the cabeza of this glosa hails from Egyptian poet, Cavafy), at a reading in Victoria, Page was "almost visibly gasping. As though she couldn't get home fast enough to write a glosa" (Patricia Young qtd. in Djwa 274). Page came to the glosa with a community of poets already in

tow. As Djwa explains, Page's introduction to the form is attributed to Skelton, yet, it is through a poetry reading of Bowering's work that Page first hears the form. In this way, Page's first encounter with the glosa was an inherently social experience; from the onset, the voices of Skelton, Bowering and Cavafy were all present in Page's introduction to the form and Page's first foray into the dialogues of the glosa was responding to this diverse collection of voices.

Djwa explains that Page "found the exercise of writing these [glosa] poems demanding, a good thing for an older poet whose life experiences were now diminishing and less vivid" (275). As in the Stacey article, emphasis is placed on the pertinence of Page's age to the composition of the glosas in *Hologram*. Djwa's suggestion that Page was at a point in her life and career where her writing needed a certain non-empirical stimulus implies that the glosa marked a shift in Page's creative process from writing as a witness and participant in life experiences to writing as a listener and responder to other poetic voices. Exchanges in her poems were no longer reflections on interactions she had experienced, but the poems *were* the interactions.

Most remarkable about the glosa is the way in which the form fundamentally ties the voice of the cabeza to that of the glosa's poet. The glosa is not easily self-contained in that the opening cabeza functions on some level as the coordinates for the 'universe' in which this dialogue exists. One way of thinking about reading a glosa is as overhearing someone's telephone conversation on speaker-phone; the reader can hear both ends of the line, but is rooted in the location of one of the interlocutors. A contemporary poet can commune with poets otherwise out of reach because of time, geography, and even language. As we see in Stacey's reading of "The Gold Sun," Page is able to speak across time with Wallace Stevens as though the two poets were coming to the end of their careers and lives simultaneously. Or, as in the case of "In Memoriam," (*Hologram* 34-5) Page can join W.H. Auden in the act of elegizing as though

the loss of W.B. Yeats and F.R. Scott were paralleled experiences (*Journey with No Maps* 371). Rather than marking the metaphorical distances between the two poetic voices present in Page's glosas, the form illuminates "a new intertwined sense of the universe" (Djwa 275). Marlene Cookshaw's review of *Hologram* also responds to he "intertwined sense of the universe": "It is hard to believe there are only fourteen poems in *Hologram*. The writing evokes a world so hugely conceived, so exuberantly encountered that I felt I'd read a much larger work" (Cookshaw 116). Cookshaw's comments aptly reflect the experience of reading *Hologram* and also reiterate the spatial metaphors employed by writers referring to Page's collection; *Hologram* is a "universe" of many "encounters," and many voices.

What is so special about *Hologram* as a collection is the way in which the poems in the book are equally "intertwined." As Jan Zwicky commented, the collection is organized in a way that enables "lovely echoes and throws, poem to poem, and threadings through the whole manuscript. The intertwining themes – love, the planet, loss – is so completely achieved" (Zwicky qtd. in Djwa 274). Because each poem presents Page alongside another poet, *Hologram* creates a poetic "universe" or community in which the words and voices of George Seferis, Leonard Cohen, Sappho and Pablo Neruda are all coexisting and interacting with that of Page. Likewise, this study brings together the voices of a number of poets connected to Page and *Hologram*.

As Djwa claims, through the development of a broad and diverse poetic community and the "intertwined sense of the universe," Page was able to "unearth[] deep personal emotion" (275). A plurality of voices enabling and facilitating expression of personal, emotional experience is one of the most compelling aspects of the glosa form. "Writing in response to another poet's poem allowed P.K. to express her own emotions more freely" (*Journey with No*

Maps 275), Djwa elaborates, drawing attention to the way in which writing within a community of voices liberates the kind of personal expression often relegated to confessional or sentimental poetry. The poet of a glosa implicates a listener in the cabeza and allows that listener a voice to situate the new poem within the volatile conditions of conversation. In writing a glosa, the poet does not claim authority over a theme or subject, but recognizes the way in which his or her own utterance is a *contribution* to a vital discussion that joins other poets and poems. Poly-vocality as a poetic technique that allows poets to mediate otherwise subjective, emotional, and sentimental is a concept that recurs frequently through the body of this critical work. In particular, the question of the emotional experience of a poem nicely compels us to draw more attention to one of the 'voices' most commonly overlooked in critical reception of the glosa: the voice of the reader.

Throughout this study, I examine six forms of poetry that explore the possibilities of conversation within a poem. Beginning with the paradigm of two independent authorial voices speaking together and concluding with one authorial voice controlling two voices, I examine the way in which a conversation can be hosted within a poem, the way in which that conversation can be created and what impact the conversation has on the lyric expression. Two independent voices working together are explored in chapter one, "The Concept Collaboration Collection"; chapter two examines the interaction of two imagined voices written by a single poet in "Dramatic Monologue and Pas de Deux Poems." Chapter three presents an analysis of one poetic voice working with the voice of another poet in approaching "The Elegiac Mode and the Dedication Collection." In the final chapter, I present readings of some glosas that are evolving the form by re-evaluating its constraints. Each chapter focuses on two collections and occasionally some representative individual poems with the aim of providing close readings of

the conversational paradigms at play in each form. Threaded throughout the study are readings of glosas informed by the conversational paradigms elicited from the analyses presented in each chapter. At the conclusion of the critical analysis is my own collection of glosas, *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*, which joins in the glosa conversation and enacts informed experimentation with the form inspired by a new, deeper understanding of the glosa's capacity for poetic conversation.

In order to speak about the socializing of the poem as a trend, there is a certain focus on poems and poets published in *The Malahat Review* in the five years surrounding the publication of *Hologram.* Because the *Malahat* was the first journal to publish both Marilyn Bowering and P.K. Page's first glosas, the publication presents itself as an obvious proponent of the trend I am tracking.[5] As well, it is important to note that although P.K. Page receives a great deal of attention in the body of this study, she is by no means the sole focus of the study. *Hologram* is the first collection of glosas published in Canadian literature and Page is the only Canadian poet to date to have published not one, but two collections of glosas and because of this, her work inevitably dominates any discussion of the glosa in Canada. Additionally, because Page is the only Canadian poet to so fully pursue the glosa, the very little criticism available on the form specifically and singularly addresses her work. As a result, Page's name "refrains" throughout this study like the lines of a cabeza, but by no means does this study seek to present a comprehensive reading of her poetics.

The idea of multiple presences within a poem has roots in the discussion of poetic

[5] As well, *The Malahat Review* is a journal that tends to publish poetry that falls into the broad categories of narrative, imagist, and lyric poetry. Contemporary Canadian poetry, like American poetry, includes a variety of forms, trends and 'schools,' but the trends I am tracking are less pertinent to publications favouring sound poetry, spoken word, 'experimental poetry,' and concrete poetry. Significantly, most of the poetry collections that I discuss in my close readings were published a good deal before or after the period in the nineties represented by *The Malahat Review* poems. In this way, the other collections serve to demonstrate the way in which these trends developed before Page's glosas and continue to develop in the present.

composition. In Canadian poetry, Phyllis Webb, a contemporary of Page, provides two particularly interesting ways of thinking about the presence of multiple voices within a poem as implicit: first, the poem as a "listening room" ("On the Line" 21), and second, the poet's relationship to the traditional "Muse Figure" ("The Muse Figure" 3) – a concept that leads inevitably to a discussion of Harold Bloom's "Anxiety of Influence" and T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

Webb's essay "On the Line," opens with the question, "To whom am I talking?" (20) – a curious question given that the essay is published alongside the letter from Gary Geddes that prompted Webb's response. "Am I talking?" Webb continues, "No. My mouth is shut. Gary's letter arrives; I feel oppressed. It's Gary who wants the answers, though I put him up to it. Why did I start this dialogue which I now rebel against? … Let me discover the reasons for that as I try to find out to whom I am talking" (20). In this internal debate, Webb enacts the confusion that surrounds the poetic voice – is the poetic voice always responding to someone and if so to whom? What instigates the situation of response, the one who "wants the answers" or the poet who "put [the inquisitor] up to it" in the first place? Is the poet responding to the world or creating a world? Webb concludes her meditation on the lengths and rhythms available to the poetic line with a return to this complicated question of response, now somewhat clarified, "I talk like this only to myself with my mouth shut. Laying it on the line" (24). This conclusion (which, arguably, is more of an evasion of a conclusion) establishes that, for Webb, the poetic voice is one that is distinct from her oral voice. Although Webb's poetry is especially musically and phonetically oriented, I think the distinction between the oral voice and the written voice here serves to illuminate the particularity of the circumstance in which the poetic voice operates – a circumstance that, for Webb, is a cycle of responses.

Recent criticism of lyric poetry suggests that much of contemporary lyric poetry challenges the Romantic notion of the lyric, defined by John Stuart Mill as "feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude" (Mill 56). Jason Camlot, in his study of David Antin's "Talk Poetry," says Romantic poetic discourse presumes the poet "is the original listener in the lyric situation" (276). Although Webb claims that she talks "only to [her]self with [her] mouth shut," this lyric situation of self-address in solitude is not the one she describes in other essays on her poetic process. I venture that rather than suggesting she is *addressing* herself in her poetry, she is highlighting the particularity of utterance composed when the 'mouth is shut.' As Alison Calder puts it in her examination of the contemporary Canadian poetic collaborators, Pain Not Bread[6], "All literary writing is in some sense collaborative; unless writers live in isolation, reading nothing, putting their writing into the material form of a book or other publication entirely by themselves, and perhaps being the only reader of their works, they are going to be involved with others in the course of their work's production" ("Collaboration and Convention in the Poetry of Pain Not Bread" 96-7). In this passage, Calder asks us to look beyond the voices of the literary ancestors and "listening room" that Webb cites as present in poetic composition and draws our attention to the multiple discourses in which any given literary composition is inherently engaged before, during and after composition: 1) the poet in his or her social setting, 2) the poet and his or her poetic influences (other poets he or she has read), 3) the poet and editors/publishers, and 4) the poet and the reader.

The Poet in a Social Setting

Webb uses the analogy made available to her by her time working as a broadcaster and

[6] Pain Not Bread consists of Roo Borson, Kim Maltman, and Andy Patton.

producer at the CBC to describe “the poem as listening room” (“On the Line” 21). Her listening room analogy suggests that the act of writing begins as an act of listening, then recording, then listening and editing: “Cut twenty seconds. Hear how they sound! ... Cut it with big authorial scissors” (21). Here, the poet's primary function is arranging the poem, framing and directing the voice through the lines. In her essay, “Message Machine,” Webb tries to understand why certain words “arrive unbidden” and “lead [her] into poems” and examines her own method of “listening as a conscious process” of poetic composition (136). Wrestling with the possibility of this process being “too passive,” Webb looks to past compositions in which phrases from the news, from other poets and authors, and from dreams have found their ways into her poems via this process of listening. “The hooking together of 'passive' and 'resistance' with such a neat paradoxical click made a supremely useful political slogan that's had a long life. It tells me again that some kinds of passive behaviour are productive of real change, social and otherwise” (139); paralleling her own 'passive process' to the social-political concept of 'passive resistance,' Webb surmises “that the strategies of the unconscious are very subtle and certainly not random if you watch the test patterns long enough” (139). Page articulates a similar belief in the significance of the unconscious contributions to poetic composition in “Questions and Images” when she makes explicit her antagonistic relationship with subjectivity: “My subconscious evidently knew something about the tyranny of subjectivity years ago when it desired to go 'through the area behind the eyes / where silent, unrefractive whiteness lies'. I didn't understand the image then, but it arrived complete” (191). Therefore, unconscious and inevitable listening is the first site of voices interacting inherent to poetic composition. To engage the political language of Webb with that of Page, listening is perhaps the “passive” route to “resisting” the “tyranny of subjectivity.”

Thinking more specifically about the contemporary social context for Canadian poets –

and arguably, North American poets, generally – the cultural, linguistic and social diversity as well as the physical and informational mobility that characterizes our present moment provides a wide variety of voices for poets to 'hear.' In contemporary critical studies of American poetry, the fact of the abundance of influences has drawn a certain amount of attention. As Mark Wallace explains in his description of the rise of the term "Hybrid" in the 1990s, "it was increasingly unlikely that poets would know only, or work only within, one literary tradition" (123).[7] "Hybridity" ties together the categories of the poet and his or her social setting and voices of influence because of the way in which the diverse community necessarily involves vast array of literary influences.

Although Wallace addresses American poetry in particular, the discussion of "Hybrid" poetry is especially relevant to the Canadian glosa for two primary reasons. First, the glosa is a concrete poetic form, which would suggest it fits cleanly into the category of "traditional" practice; yet, the glosa can house any number of poetic voices within its frame – that is to say, the cabeza can bring the voice of an "experimental" or otherwise unconventional poet into the formal frame. Because the glosa has no thematic or metric constraints, the form allows for a great deal of flexibility – not to mention the various 'deviations' of the form such as Anne Compton's "Blue: A half-glosa for Charles Wright" (*Fiddlehead* Summer 2010) and Samuel Peralta's "The Dream" (*Malahat Online Tribute to P.K. Page*) and Catherine Graham's

[7] Arielle Greenberg, Craig Santos Perez, Michael Theune, Megan Volpert and Mark Wallace participated in panel discussion at the 2010 Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Denver, Colorado, titled, "Hybrid Aesthetics and Its Discontents" (*The Monkey and the Wrench* 119). Speakers were all responding to the recent flurry of anthologies of American poetry sailing under the flag of "Hybrid Poetry." Panelists at the 2010 conference discussed the way in which the term "Hybrid" emerged as a generic placeholder with the intention of subverting the common binary conception of contemporary (American) poetry that divides poets into two "camps": "avant-garde experimentalism and more traditional, or at least mainstream lyric practice" (Greenberg 117). The resounding response of this panel to "Hybridity" was that the term did not alleviate any of the divisiveness of the two former categories. Rather, "Hybrid" simply created a third category that lacked any "pure" or "unifying" character (Mark Wallace 121).

"amended" glosas (*The Malahat Review* Spring 2012)[8] – and therefore, arguably the form could be understood as so-called "hybrid" poetry.

Second, the composer of the glosa reveals in his or her selection of cabezas the vast array of poetic voices to which they are exposed. In *Hologram* alone, Page shows her own "awareness of multiple and global poetic traditions" (Mark Wallace 123), and reveals that contemporary Canadian poetry is informed by poetry from a number of different nations, languages, 'schools' and styles. Arielle Greenberg suggests that "hybrid work is the best match for our early-twenty-first century moment, for our current understanding of time and communication, for the blurred borders that offer the most promise and best reflect our complex reality" (134). Given the rise in online publishing, the availability of translations (and translation software), and the facility of travel, it seems nearly impossible that any poet could be aligned solely with one school of poetry. For example, Page, by the mid-1990s, late in her career, was drawing upon her own experiences with Brazilian culture, Mexican art, and her English heritage while writing from Vancouver Island (Djwa 268-274). Not only was Page's work inspired by a variety of cultures, regions and languages, but given that she began publishing poetry in the 1930s (Djwa 37), she was witness and participant to decades of poetic innovation. I propose, that rather than simply enabling Page to "reflect" on her own experiences with poetry, the glosa allowed her to be a part of the necessary "Hybridity" of the 1990s by way of bringing poetic voices and influences across time and space and into the present. "Poems that try simply to reflect poetry's past," Mark Wallace explains, "or to see in it a bedrock source of value, will never be sufficient to deal with the always changing present" (128). Page's glosas, then, do not "try simply to reflect" but invigorate the voices of the past by demonstrating their *presence* within the *present*.

[8] In the penultimate chapter, I further examine Catherine Graham's glosas.

The Poet and Voices of Influence

Webb and Page, in their essays on poetics, not only converge on the point of unconscious listening as a fundamental source of poetic creation, but both articulate an experience of consciously listening to an unnameable voice as central to their composition. A voice that they both situate somewhere between an abstract muse figure and memory – an interesting entanglement of the divine and the empirical. In "Traveller, Conjuror, Journeyman," Page claims poetry can be an act of transposition:

> At times I seem to be attempting to copy exactly something which exists in a dimension where worldly senses are inadequate. As if a thing only felt had to be extracted from invisibility into a seen thing, a heard thing … Great winds have blown away my past ... my pre-histroy. No wonder I want to remember, to follow a thread back... To listen – not to but for. (35-6)

Whereas Page's absent magical-memory Muse figure is specifically un-personified and begins in another "dimension" from which it must be 'transposed' into poetry, into human senses, Webb begins her discussion with the idea of the mythologized Muse, "Mnemosyne – memory" (3) and transposes this figure into "the pool of the heart" (5): "For me, the Muse figure has never figured as a potent imaginative presence, but the best advice I ever heard her give was to … Sir Philip Sidney, when in a fit of bad temper, she said to him (I think with some distain), 'Fool! ... look in thy heart, and write'" (3). Webb's rejection of the Muse is largely founded on the gendered depictions of the Muse that render the figure an unlikely source of inspiration for non-male, non-hetero-normative poets. However, like Page, she is equally taken by this idea of memory as a significant source of creative production; "Memory *is* life – we need it not only for the recall and

perpetuation of our own lives, but for the celebrations, lamentations and history of the tribe, the nation and the world" (5 original emphasis). As in the case of Page, in Webb's conception, memory is conceived of as personal and social (as suggested by "pre-history") and is fraught with the ineffable, and the magical: "Well, I have looked in my heart and written, and yet why do I so often feel that something or someone else is writing the poem?" (4). By the end of her essay, Webb unites the advice of Sidney's Muse with this idea of memory, suggesting, "we must look there in the pool of the heart, for I think this so-called 'heart' has something to do with the individual consciousness and the individual talent. I think it feeds on memory, hears the bicameral voices of the old brain, and it speaks back, speaks a very special kind of memory, ancient and modern, male and female" (5).

Webb's allusive use of "the individual talent" moves us nicely into another pertinent vocal 'presence' of poetry that is articulated in T.S Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Eliot's claim that "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (37) is another way of conceiving of the multiple voices present in the composition of a poem. However, Eliot's treatment of one's relationship to the "dead poets" must be much more active than the listening practices outlined by Webb; for Eliot, "tradition ... cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour" (38). Despite my emphasis on the receptive poetics proposed by both Page and Webb, I do not suggest that their practices were void of this "great labour." Interestingly, and rather pertinently, Page's glosa in which she borrows lines from Eliot is titled, "Presences" (*Hologram* 38-39). Eliot's lines, from his late-career "Burnt Norton",[9] when excised for the glosa, seem to speak directly to this idea of the presence of the "dead poets" *in the poem*:

[9] The first section of what would eventually be published as "The Four Quartets."

There they were our guests, accepted and accepting.

So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,

Along the empty alley, into the box circle,

To look down into the drained pool. (*Hologram* 38)

"Extraordinary presences," Page opens her poem, and then continues to imagine the "presences" as "amphoras with flames inside them" with "shadows / like chlorophyl [sic], like leaves, like water" (38). Images of "shadows," "single birds / gathering for migration form a flock," and "some new incandescence in our heads" all point to a possible reading of these "presences" as the "dead poets" Eliot describes. In this reading, the first person plural speaker of the poem negotiates a collaborative relationship with the presences – a negotiation further emphasized by the first person plural perspective of the poem.

In the line, "Only our golden selves went forth to greet them," which opens the second stanza, Page provides the "golden selves" as a bridge between this poem and "The Gold Sun" glosa that borrows Stevens' lines. In his reading of "The Gold Sun," Stacey argues "the glosa could be seen as an almost literal embodiment of what [Harold] Bloom calls 'the anxiety of influence,' a possibility Page herself raises when she prefaces her collection remarking, 'reading again the giants of my youth, I could not help wondering what their effect on me had been. Had I been influenced by any of them? And if so how?' (12)" (3). In his summary of Bloom, Stacey picks up the language of call-and-response which drives my reading of the glosa as a conversation site: "the belated poet necessarily misconstrues or misreads his poetic antecedents ... in order to create a situation in which his own contribution is *called for* as a correction of completion of, or substitute for the work of the precursor" (3 my emphasis). However, Stacey quickly sidesteps this conceit to reading the glosa as Bloom's theory "embodied," saying, "In

reality, *Hologram* reveals a poet far more interested in summation than confrontation; the collection is rather too nostalgic to be agonistic" (3). While I agree with Stacey's necessary summoning of "the anxiety of influence" into a discussion of a poetic form that invites the voices of "influence" into the space of the poem, I too have trouble reading the "curious marriages" Page commits as agonistic. Yet, I am still unsatisfied by the treatment of Page's turn to the glosa as a "summation" of her career. Surely the subsequent publication of her second collection of glosas, *Coal and Roses,* which includes a photograph and biography of each poet engaged in the glosas, indicates that *Hologram* was more than an act of self-eulogizing and that there was something more than summation and tribute to be found in the glosa form.

The Poet and the Publishing Industry

In "The Discursive Situation of Poetry," Robert Archambeau examines various contemporary theories that try to explain the current decline of readers of poetry. His examination of Joseph Epstein's 1988, "Who Killed Poetry?" summarizes that for Epstein the rise in graduate level creative writing programs is the "principle culprit in the sidelining of poetry" (Archambeau 7). Archambeau suggests that as a result of this circumstance, "The poet, instead of responding to the audience-driven world of the book market, responds only to his peers, with the effect that the audience simply melts away" (7). I draw our attention to this argument in order to illustrate the way in which the publisher or publishing company becomes conflated with the "audience-driven world of the book market." When Alison Calder outlines the various "collaborators" involved in any given literary work, her understanding of the publisher is coloured with the same publisher-as-capitalist implication. Understanding the publisher's hand in the composition of a poem (either by way of editing or selection) is especially central to my later

examination of *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family* (di Michele/Wallace), but is also important in considering the voices present in a poem. To what extent can poetry truly ignore "the book market" and what role does this preliminary capital-driven audience play in the creation of poetry? "I truly think I do not write or draw for you or you or you," says Page, "whatever you may argue to the contrary. Attention excludes you" ("Traveller, Conjuror, Journeyman" 184). I think the "you" Page here antagonizes is not the individual reader, but rather the collective audience that might comprise a market. Page makes her claim in ambiguous terms and defines her direction by negation – she tells us for whom she is not writing, but does not propose (even if it is herself) for whom she writes.

I am interested in looking at the publisher not as capitalist enforcer of the status quo, but rather as another voice that speaks with the joint knowledge of what is being read and what is being written. A nuanced conception of the publisher/editor is also relevant to my treatment of the collaborative tribute collection, *take this waltz* in which the editors provide the point of orientation around which the works of various poets constellate and uses this as a way of establishing a conversation between the poets in the collection and between those poets and their subject, Leonard Cohen.

The Poet and the Reader

Calder ends her list of the modes of collaboration in the experience of the poem with the reader's interaction with the poem because, sequentially, the reader's voice is the last to join the conversation. Notably, Page's second collection of glosas is dedicated to her readers: "To you, my readers, whoever you may be" (*Coal and Roses* i) – a gesture that reminds us of the presence of the reader in the glosa's conversations. Marta Dvořák in her examination, "Rejoinders in

Planetary Dialogue," expresses the way in which contemporary fiction writers, such as Michael Ondaatje, "notably extends the reflection on reading practices. He effectively guides his readers through the interpretive process and proposes an objective correlative as the foundation for a reading praxis" (114). Looking to examples of authors writing in post-colonial contexts, Dvořák illuminates the way in which the use of "meta-textual" "disjunctions" can provide authors with a way of forcing their readers into a (re)consideration of their reading practices (114-5). Desire on the part of the poet to direct the reading practices of the reader is most evident in a Page's poem "Alone," which borrows its cabeza from Sappho. Within the body of her own third stanza, Page asks us to read Sappho's repetition of "time passes" as she does:

> Passes. 'To Pass.'
> What is this verb
> that means 'to move
> go on, progress'?
> This is not a movement
> this is stasis.
> Something has broken
> turned to stone.
> Meaning reverses.
> '*Time passes*'
>
> means 'does not pass'. (51)

In this way, Page ensures that her reader has the training to read a poem as she would like it to be read. Poets guiding reading is especially relevant to my treatment of Bronwen Wallace's *Keep*

That Candle Burning Bright and the elegies discussed in the dedication and elegy chapter.

As I develop my arguments about the nuances and advantages of these conversational paradigms, I begin to enact my own poetic participation in this dialogue. At the conclusion of this critical work, I present my own series of glosas that reflect (and experiment with) not only the nature of the conversational aesthetic implicit to the glosa form, but also the way a knowledge of the other modes of formally-induced conversation can interact with and alter the glosa form.

Chapter I – The Concept Collaboration

In this section, I examine *No Longer Two People* (Crozier (as Uher)/ Lane 1981) and *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family* (di Michele/Wallace 1980) – two collaborative projects that explore the way in which subjective, intimate, private experience can operate within a poem to invite a public or collective discourse. In the di Michele/Wallace collection, I find two poets speaking together of familial heritage, memory and experience in order in order to offer up a "relational conception of the human" to each other and to the reader (Carr Vellino 302). As I will demonstrate, the collection orchestrates a sequential sharing of personal histories that presents readers with an opening in the conversation for their own voice. In the Crozier/Lane collection[10], the lyrics dive into the intimate, erotic and often violent space of the couple's romantic partnership. In this case, the implicitly intimate relationship between the poets that stages the collection establishes the theme and tone of the private and intimate space of a relationship. Interestingly, the two speakers avoid any kind of confessional or biographical narrative and instead communicate in a language of archetypal and symbolic representations of male and female voices.

Whereas the di Michele/Wallace collection orchestrates the poetic relationship through a mirroring effect of placing the two series in sequence, the Crozier/Lane collection alternates between the two voices in imitation of a conversational back and forth. Thus, ironically, the di Michele/Wallace collection invokes conversational language and tone without the back-and-forth structure typical to oral discussion, and the Crozier/Lane collection employs symbolic and more typically lyric language within the conversational frame. One collection creates a sense of

[10] Though *No Longer Two People* was published under the names Patrick Lane and Lorna Uher, throughout my discussion I refer to the latter poet by her maiden name (Crozier) under which she currently publishes.

intimacy and personal connection by way of personal confession, whereas the other begins with an external context of intimacy that steps outside characterized or narrative voices in order to interrogate the intimate connection. I consciously invoke the loaded term “confessional” here, but nuance it with a mediation of the aesthetic as articulated by Wallace in regard to di Michele's poetry. For Wallace, di Michele's poetry is “'confessional' poetry with an important political and aesthetic difference in that the poet writes, not from a sense of her 'peculiarity' or her isolation, but from her sense of collectivity and connectedness with other women” (Wallace qtd. in Cooke “Mary Di Michele: on the Integrity of Speech and Silence” 7).

It is no coincidence that the works of Wallace, di Michele and Crozier each appear in two of the chapters of this project. All three expressed great interest in the feminist pursuit of establishing, resurfacing and un-silencing female voices within their poetry, though all three treat such a project quite differently. Talking and listening are at the core of Wallace's creative process and define the experience of her poems. Wallace was associated with early feminist movements in the 1980s, and for Wallace, poetry was a way of bringing the previously “excluded” female voice to the page (“One More Woman Talking” Wallace 170). “The continuing dialectic between these two elements – the public and the private, the unique and the common – is what I enjoy most about living in these times,” explains Wallace in her essay, “One More Woman Talking,” “[i]t is also the basis of my poems” (168). Brenda Carr Vellino reads Wallace's specifically conversational and narrative lyric style, what she calls the “talking lyric,” as an ethical aesthetic founded on a principle of social “interdependence” (302). “At the heart of Bronwen Wallace's poetics,” explains Carr Vellino, “is a profound sense of the way our lives take shape in narrative relation to other people's stories and their reciprocal responses to ours” (302) and this relating of

personal narratives is exactly reflected in the content and structure of Wallace's collaboration with di Michele in *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family*.

Mary di Michele, like Wallace, is known for a lyric voice inherently informed by speech and the feminist call for female voices; as Nathalie Cooke frames it, "speaking" for di Michele, "constitutes an act of rebellion" ("Mary Di Michele: on the Integrity of Speech and Silence" 3). Like Wallace, di Michele's poems become the site for the exercise of her own voice, but also that of the voices often marginalized in literature and in Canadian culture (Cooke 4). In Cooke's examination of di Michele's treatment of photographer Diane Arbus, she says "both Arbus and di Michele, as artists and women, share a responsibility to their subject" (5). Because Wallace also wrote about Arbus, this particular observation offers up a pertinent (and convenient) parallel in the way both poets write with an acute awareness of this responsibility.[11] As Carr Vellino claims, "[b]y invoking a range of intertexts and forms from celebrated photographs of the contemporary grotesque by Diane Arbus to short stories by American writer Flannery O'Connor ...Wallace shows the co-implication of cultural representations and popular media with literary and social discourses" (303-4). Of di Michele's poetry, "Wallace suggests that di Michele speaks not only to integrate herself into a community ... but because she already feels that she is integrated into a community" ("On the Integrity of Speech" 7). Here Cooke's analysis returns us to Phyllis Webb's concept of "the poem as listening room" ("On the Line" 21), which unites Cooke and Carr Vellino's claims about the kind of listening that characterizes the poetry of di Michele and Wallace.

Lorna Crozier's presence in this analysis of conversation within the space of the poem is

[11] Significantly, Wallace's poem, "Thinking With the Heart," which opens with an epigraph by Diane Arbus, is published with the dedication, "For Mary di Michele" in her 1985 collection *Common Magic* (59).

in stark contrast to the conversational and "talking" *tones* evoked in the work of Wallace and di Michele. The broad category of "feminist poetics" ("Lorna Crozier," Cooke 92) could cast a net large enough to encompass the three female poets, but would dangerously overlook the particular poetics of Crozier. More commonly aligned with Margaret Atwood by critics such as Ronald Hatch for her "flat Atwood line which sets the described object in opposition to the speaker" (Hatch 38), Crozier's feminist project most often seeks connectivity through myth and "remythification" ("Lorna Crozier" Cooke 92). Cooke's entry on Lorna Crozier in *Contemporary Canadian Writers and their Works* argues that *No Longer Two People* appears at a turning point in Crozier's career in which she moves from "explor[ing] the power struggle in male-female relationships" towards this "project of remythification" ("Lorna Crozier" 92). In this reading, *No Longer Two People* showcases Crozier's examination of the "'emblematic' female voice" (Cooke 92) as it begins to turn towards an exposition of "the inadequacies of the originary narratives of Western patriarchy, and offering in their stead not a single sacred feminized vision, but rather a plurality of possible ways of understanding human beginnings" (Susan Gingell 67). I would argue however that, although *No Longer Two People* is still very much rooted in the negotiation of male-female (power) relations, it is approaching this discussion through a "*plurality*" of voice.

What draws me to these texts is the way in which both seem to have fallen through the cracks in the critical reception of these four poets.[12] Crozier, Lane, Di Michele and Wallace have all left (and in some cases continue to leave) significant marks on the body of Canadian poetry, but these collaborations seem to have fallen by the wayside as one-off, early-career experiments

[12] I recognize that my selection of these two texts may seem bizarre as there have been more recent collaborations (such as P.K. Page's epistolary collaboration with Philip Stratford *And Once More Saw the Stars*, and the collective Pain Not Bread's 2000 collection *Introduction to the Introduction of Wang Wei* – a collection evoked in my discussion of Alison Calder's helpful article, "Collaboration and Convention in the Poetry of Pain Not Bread").

or exceptions to otherwise strong poetic careers. I am drawn to these texts, in part, for this act of resurfacing – an act inherent to the form of the glosa. As well, I am interested in the way these texts are achieving much of the inter-vocal play, now common to critical discourse of the lyric, prior to the matured development of this kind of critical discourse. Because these collections precede *Hologram* and the glosa's first apparition in contemporary Canadian literature, they represent early development of the socializing of the poem.

"Poems as Public Space"[13] for Intimacy

"*Bread and Chocolate*, a series of poems published in a volume along with Bronwen Wallace's *Marrying Into the Family*, came out in 1980. Originally, Wallace's poems were to have appeared independently, along with some graphics. When the illustrations did not work out, Oberon decided to publish di Michele and Wallace together," explains Morgan Holmes in her essay on di Michele (163). The story of this collection that I am calling a collaboration is hardly one of two minds meeting and conceiving of their grand creative project together. In terms of composition, we cannot discuss the two poets as writing this collection together or even to one another, however, there is a connection between the texts, that, to a reader unaware that these projects were not written together, seems all too strong to be random – as Webb puts it, "the strategies of the unconscious are very subtle and certainly not random if you watch the test patterns long enough" (139). Of course, in this case, "the unconscious" must be figured more closely to the Jungian *collective* unconscious – a subject raised as a possible source of poetic inspiration by both Webb and Page ("The Muse Figure" [4]; "Questions and Images" [191]).

[13] Quoted from Carr Vellino's "'A Network of Relations' : Interdependence in Bronwen Wallace's Talking Lyric" (304).

Certainly, Oberon could not have published these two texts together *only* because they were both lined up to go to print; I argue that the publishers saw the way in which these two *texts* were speaking to each other (perhaps, unwittingly) and that in binding them together in the same book the publishers highlighted a conversation that was happening in Canadian poetry perhaps unbeknownst to the interlocutors.[14] Happy accident or not, the result of this joint publication is a collection in which two voices speak to one another and speak together to personal and familial histories.[15]

It is helpful here to return to the notion of unconscious listening raised in the essays of Webb and Page in conjunction with the principles of Wallace's "talking lyric." Unlike the "talk poetry" of David Antin (based on Antin's performance of speech), Wallace's creative process is founded on *listening* to women's speech, conversations and narratives and transposing them into poem:

> I begin with what I am given: women's stories, women's conversations. Since most of these come to me in pretty straightforward, conversational language, that's what I use in the poem. But as I begin to recreate that conversation on the page, I begin to listen to the voice that tells these stories … And it becomes the voice I have heard in so many women's conversations, a voice that explores *both* the

[14] The two poets, as a result of reading tours of the publication, did end up establishing a long-term friendship both within and outside of their poetry (Holmes 163).

[15] Another example of editors imposing (or perhaps, proposing) collaboration on the texts of two poets is found in the 1994 winter issue of *The Malahat Review.* The journal printed Anne M. Kelly's poem, "Picnic" (100), and Alan R. Wilson's, "Columba the Dove" (101) side by side in the issue, thereby putting the two representations of doves into conversation. Kelly's poem opens with the epigraph: "The soul, in the form of a dove, leaves / the mouths of saints at death" (100). The epigraph is attributed to *Knowing the Saints*, and the body of the poem recalls the death of the speaker's mother as characterized by "The dove rising in her throat" (100). Wilson's "Columba the Dove" is part of a series of poems named for different constellations of stars. Because the poem is printed immediately facing "Picnic," the epigraph from Kelly's poem still resonates in the minds of readers.

> events in the story itself, *and* something else that lies within those events. ("One More Woman Talking" 169)

Wallace's awareness of the presence of other voices in her own composition suggests that her poetry is always, to some extent, engaged in the acts of talking and listening. Because she "recreate[s] ... conversation on the page," Wallace's poetry exists within a conversational matrix that will inevitably *speak* and *listen* to other (particularly female) voices in its surroundings. Wallace is editor/interpreter of voices that "begin, always with the power of the personal, the private, the unique in each of us, which resists, survives, and can change the power that our culture has over us" (171). The changes that interest Wallace are "disrupting or changing history" (a pursuit entirely pertinent to both sections of *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family*) and "chang[ing] language"; "I believe that when we speak and write of our lives this way, we also change language, if only because we say things that have never been said before" ("One More Woman Talking" 171) – things that have never been said because these voices were "excluded" (170). Because Wallace's poems are actively participating in conversation, when they are juxtaposed with di Michele's collection, they inevitably take up conversation with the voice of di Michele's speaker. Oberon (the publishers) recognized the "connectedness" of di Michele and Wallace's respective texts and, in their own act of listening, created a collaboration between *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family*.[16]

Constructing family histories is the most apparent point of connection between the two texts in *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family*. The most notable difference between the two narratives is that di Michele's is one of immigration and cultural and geographic

[16] Remember as well Calder's claim that any text going through publishers is already implicated in a process of collaboration (96-7).

dislocation and Wallace's is one of construction in light of missing pieces (Holmes 173). However, the important difference does not serve to place the narratives in opposition, but rather enables them to participate in what Carr Vellino calls, “a renegotiation between poem and world” (306); because of the joint publication, neither series is allowed its own “world” and therefore interdependence is forced upon them and then extended to the reader. Significantly, for both speakers, the act of building a history is organized around photographs. The title poem of di Michele's collection opens her section with a speaker's third person account of a photo being taken:

> A golden child sits on the lawn,
> her legs stiffly apart like a doll's,
> one arm impulsively thrusting forward a rose
> to the watching eye of the camera (7)

The first four poems in di Michele's section are structured by this frame of a speaker guiding the reader's observation of certain photographs – the first of the child being photographed with a flower by her father, the second of an image of the speaker's parents in “A mining town near the German border of Belgium” (8), the third of the speaker's paternal grandmother, and the fourth of a class picture of the speaker in a primary level Catholic school. According to Holmes, The speaker in the opening poem, “establishes for the collection a concern with *eliciting the subtext* of a recollected image or episode” (my emphasis 185).

Wallace's contribution to the collaboration, *Marrying Into the Family,* opens with the poem, “Marriages,” in which a third person speaker describes the shared settings of family marriages: “After the wedding in the parlour / where her sisters were married / and her father's

sisters before them / she comes with her new husband" (47). This opening introduces the titular theme of familial bonds constituted by marital connections – in particular, the bonds between women who "perform this marriage / of things touched and shared / woman to woman" (48). Like di Michele's opening in which the speaker maintains the third person voice for a number of poems, Wallace's speaker begins in the third person and by the second poem moves into the first person voice. Di Michele's first poem introduces the father-daughter relationship that is crucial to her series (as the speaker explains in her opening poem, "her father is the god / of bread and chocolate" [7]), however, Wallace's first poem introduces the "woman to woman" relationships that are central to her own series. The "concern with eliciting the subtext" that Holmes names in di Michele's treatment of photographs and "episodes" (185) is here turned on the "shared" settings and objects passed between the women of the family. The woman being married "in the parlour / where her sisters were married" is adding a layer to the text of this parlour just as the history of marriages encapsulated in that parlour writes its own text upon her marriage.

The second poem in *Marrying Into the Family* makes explicit the thematic link between the two series that I am outlining. Entitled "Old Photographs," Wallace's second poem, like "Bread and Chocolate," introduces the theme of family photographs by calling our attention to the act of making of a photograph: "was it the slow closing of the shutter / that held them / staring beyond the camera" (49). Photographs in Wallace's half of the collection are tools for building a family history, tools for reconstituting a memory that precedes the speaker. Wallace's speaker builds her family story through borrowed and collected memories settings, artifacts, and photographs. The fragmented construction of this history is paralleled to the making of a poem in "Connecting":

It gets handed down

along with the china fruit bowl

and it's a good story about

my great-grandmother

getting so angry with her husband's drinking that

she went right into the bar

……

That's about it.

Not enough for a poem really (51)

This self-reflexive moment of acknowledging that the history being pieced together here is also a series of poems being composed returns readers to di Michele's "The Disgrace" in which the speaker experiences her "initiation into the confessional of the kitchen" (39), while "the men":

They think they are creating life in the living-room

……

men of trades: barber, plumber, electrician,

who make the real world because they lay

bricks for it, do not write their own histories.

They tell similar stories as the women

but with authority, with the weight of the fist

and the cry of the accordion. (40)

Like Wallace's speaker, di Michele's speaker here forces the reader to recognize the (re)constructive act of history-making – particularly, history-*writing* – in which the speaker-

writer is engaged.[17] In terms of the conversation between the two series in the collection, di Michele's speaker seems to propose a rebellious assuming of the "power" that Cooke suggests is implicit to 'framing of the spectacle' (4), while Wallace's speaker responds with an acknowledgement of the danger of fully assuming that power. That is to say, Wallace's speaker assumes the role of creator (because though she claims to not have "enough for a poem," a poem is none-the-less produced), but cannot (or will not) do so as di Michele's men do "with authority, with the weight of the fist"; instead she must recognize her own process of construction and the impossibility of producing an 'authoritative' (that is to say, definitive) history. Analyzing Wallace's typical "speaking subjects," Carr Vellino groups together Wallace's speakers as ones who "come[] to being in webbed communities – fragile, contingent, and interdependent" (302). In this case, the speaker is not demonstrating the way in which her own self is "contingent" and "interdependent," but the way in which her poetic (historical) creation/narrative embodies that 'frailty.'

Most important here is the way in which Wallace's speaker's self-reflexivity responds to that of di Michele' speaker. Again, because of the improvised co-publication, it cannot be argued that these two poets have staged their poems to be in conversation with one another, but what interests me is the fact that the two poetic voices, inescapably, *are* in conversation with one another. The shared binding means shared readers. All that stands between *Bread and Chocolate* and *Marrying Into the Family* is an unadorned cover page for the latter series. Because of this physical fact of the book, not only do the actions of the two voices respond to and affect one

[17] It is helpful here to consider the particular feminist critical frame I have established for both poets in that it is clear in both of these self-reflexive gestures that the poets are recognizing themselves "as artists and women" with a "responsibility to their subjects" ("On the Integrity of Speech" Cooke 5) - a responsibility assumed by way of recognizing the hand that writes and the voice that speaks (in these instances aligned) as "the one who frames the spectacle" ("On the Integrity of Speech" 4).

another, but also their language becomes part of their relational definition. How can one possibly read of Wallace's speaker's “Great Aunt” “and the bread she baked at threshing time / twenty loaves easy in the morning” (“Great Aunt” 50), without remembering di Michele's speaker's “god / of bread and chocolate”? The near-industrial production of bread in “Great Aunt” suddenly reveals to readers that perhaps there is an essential distinction between 'bread-winner' and 'bread-maker' – a consideration that, I argue, mutually enriches both texts and contributes to the reader's own construction of history. What I mean here is that, just as di Michele and Wallace's respective speakers construct their own histories, so too are we the readers in the process of building our own history/ies. Wallace's series becomes a different approach to the same task of constructing a familial story, and because it is both different and overlapping with di Michele's construction, the two together function on one level as a demonstration – a sort of how-to-guide or exemplar – for the construction of more family stories. The two speakers recount their own stories in a way that suggests that 1) neither story comes to a terminal ending and 2) the conversation is not closed once the second voice has spoken. Di Michele's series implies a circularity of narrative by 'ending' on a return – the speaker returns to Italy as an adult and revisits the settings of her early childhood. Significantly, this final poem is called “Benvenuto” (a word that is repeated in the last line of the poem [44]) which simultaneously indicates that the speaker is ‘welcomed’ by her own past (and, in a sense, is welcomed as a new presence to a place where she has already been), and welcomes the narrative of Wallace's speaker to the conversation of familial history. Whereas the last poem in di Michele's series invites Wallace's participation, the last poem in Wallace's series, “The House of Our Dreams” (84-5), invites the participation of the reader because it shifts into the mode of dreams/imagination. The “Our” of the first person plural steps outside of the speaker

and her husband and into a broader community and the political nature of this history building is revealed by the lines: “In the house of our dreams / it is a standing joke / that our children will turn out to be / bank managers” (85). When we consider that the series began with the arrival in the “parlour” of generations of marriages, this ending in a fictive “dream” space in which the speaker and her unnamed co-owner laugh away typical expectations of a Western capitalist ideal gestures towards the idea that this act of creating a history is not a means of finding a closed self-definition, but rather an act of opening one's understanding of self to both its implicit interdependencies and its imaginative capacities to self-construct. As Wallace far more eloquently puts it, the ideal which she seeks in the poem is to “live unhaunted” though all the while “among other people's ghosts”; one can never build the 'house of one's dreams' in a vacuum free of “other people's ghosts,” but in naming and interacting with those ghosts, one can build a 'house' that is their own (di Michele/Wallace 85).

Glosa “as Public Space”[18] for Intimacy

The kind of collaboration I describe in regard to *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family*, is particularly helpful in examining the glosa, because the glosa, like the di Michele Wallace collection does not require the planned participation of two poets. The poet writing the glosa does not need the consent of their cabeza to engage the latter in creating a glosa – a fact evidenced by the large number of long-dead poets that are involved in contemporary glosas. That said, not all glosa-poet cabeza-poet relationships are “collaborative.” A number of glosas, like P.K. Page's “Planet Earth,” do not share a central *concept* with the poem from which they take

[18] Quoted from Carr Vellino's “'A Network of Relations' : Interdependence in Bronwen Wallace's Talking Lyric” (304).

their cabeza. Looking first to the way in which the glosa resists collaboration helps to illuminate the circumstances in which the two voices of a glosa *are* interacting collaboratively. “Planet Earth” borrows the cabeza quatrain from Pablo Neruda's “In Praise of Ironing” (*Hologram* 42), a poem about poetry. Neruda begins with the subject “poetry” and uses the metaphor of ironing to address poetic composition. As Rosemary Sullivan explains, “Page takes seriously Neruda's casual domestic metaphor, ironing the planet, and insists that we return the earth its sacred status” (Sullivan “Hologram” 125). Therefore, Page's poem steps away from the concept that governs Neruda's composition making a concept collaboration impossible. Although I am arguing the thematic shift in Page's poem significantly changes the meaning of Neruda's lines and foregoes a thematic collaboration, reflected in the language of “Planet Earth” is the contention that poetry is an essential part of “return[ing] the earth its sacred status.” The eighth line of the first stanza proposes, “[the planet] has to be celebrated” and the ninth line demonstrates this kind of 'celebration' with the vocative: “O this great beloved world and all the creatures in it” (*Hologram* 42), thereby enacting the role of poetry within the regime Page outlines for caring for the planet. Thematically, the two poems are still distinct, but it is important to acknowledge that Page does not abandon any awareness of the cabeza's origins in her glosa. Instead of collaborating with Neruda to further develop the subject he presented, Page glosses one of his metaphors to reveal that implicit to his use of the metaphor was a common appreciation of the planet. Neruda compares poetry to a planet in the course of “celebrating the power of the poetic imagination to transform the world” (Sullivan “Hologram” 127); Page compares the planet to “linens” and “fine muslin” (*Hologram* 42) in a “poem about the love and care we must return to the planet” (Sullivan “Hologram” 127).

Some of the glosas that *do* stage a relationship similar to the concept collaboration of di Michele and Wallace are the glosas where the cabeza is taken from another glosa. Formally, the gesture of borrowing lines from a poem that is already structured around borrowed lines suggests a desire to enter into a larger discussion. A good example of this kind of glosa is "The Garden Temple" by Patrick Lane. Lane takes his cabeza from Page's "The Answer," one of the last poems in *Hologram*. "The Answer" takes its cabeza from "The Vow," by Robert Graves (*Hologram* 62). Lane is not the only one to write this kind of glosa, nor is he the only to write a glosa using a cabeza from one of Page's glosas,[19] however, his glosa is especially interesting because it contributes to the same discussion. The quatrain Page borrows from Graves introduces a question that guides both his poem and that of Page:

> *For whom do you live? Can it be yourself?*
> *For whom then? Not this unlovely world,*
> *Not for the rotting waters of mischance,*
> *Nor for the tall, eventual catafalque.* (*Hologram* 62)

Graves follows his own question with an answer:

> You live for her who alone loves you,
> Whose royal prerogative can be denied
> by non observant of the awakening gasps
> That greet her progress down whatever hall.
>
> Your vow is to truth, not practicality:

[19] In the elegy chapter, I will discuss John Barton's glosa, "The Living Room," which takes its cabeza from Page's "In Memoriam."

To honour, not to the dead world's esteem; (Graves 228)

Page, in response to the questions posed by Graves, ironically, begins "The Answer," with a series of her own questions:

Tell me every detail of your day -

when do you wake and sleep, what eat and drink?

How spend the interval from dawn to dark -

what do you work at, read, what do you think? (*Hologram* 62)

This series of questions, in turn, becomes the cabeza for Lane's poem, "The Temple Garden." All three poets, broadly speaking, are addressing the question "for whom do you live?" Graves, in his response, suggests that the "you" of the poem lives for "her alone who loves you" and for "truth." Because the poem is titled, "The Vow," the "her" figure can be read as a spouse and the "truth" an ineffable love. However, the lines: "Your vow is to truth, not practicality: / To honour, not to the dead world's esteem;" could equally be read as a statement of poetics, and in this reading, the "her" could be poetry.

Page, in responding to the question with more questions seems to be gesturing towards that which Graves has not considered. Her questions, beginning with the quotidian and concrete and develop towards the abstract: "Whom do you love and how much?" However, Page's speaker seems to refuse the grand abstract style of Graves' poem, and seems to push the addressee to find concrete answers for even the most abstract questions. She follows the question, "Whom do you love and how much?" with "Measure it / and answer me, or leastwise, answer half" (*Hologram* 62). For Page's speaker, the abstract questions can only be answered by way of the concrete: "These are not idle questions, they provide / the spindle around which new-

spinning wool / winds as it dreams its future warp and woof" (62).

In the Graves poem, the second person address seems more self-reflexive than outwardly directed – largely because of the way in which the first-person voice is able to answer the questions for the second person. However, the Page poem places quotation marks around the second two stanzas of "The Answer," which implies that the second person responds to the first. Despite the implications of the quotation marks, the voices of the 'two' present in the poem are indiscernible and neither is characterized as a specific figure. One possible way of reading the two voices is to understand the first voice as Page's pseudo-Graves voice, elaborating on the cabeza and the second as the voice of Page's own speaker.

Lane's poem, "The Garden Temple," departs from the ambiguous second person address by providing physical details of the addressee: "Now more than ever I miss your hands, / your small feet, the slight swell of flesh in the dark, / the breath you hold before crying out" (*In Fine Form* 92). Lane's poem, at first glance, seems to bear little resemblance to the other two. His opening stanza does not explicitly signal any awareness of the question at hand:

> No one comes to this garden. The dawn
> moves through the bamboo beside the bridge.
> It's quiet here and I'm alone. The small nun
> who led me has drifted behind the screen (92)

Lane's speaker, unlike the other two, grounds himself first in a physical reality, a specific garden, and indicates there is an intimate relationship between the addressee and the speaker. However, as the poem develops and the speaker describes living with the distance between himself and the addressee, it becomes evident that this speaker, like those of Graves and Page respectively, lives

for the love of another. “Solitude is presence,” the speaker claims, “It is the absence / I live in now.” The speaker goes on to describe the lack of vitality in his living without the other figure near, “There are nights I go for long walks / in the narrow, twisting streets and stare / at the bare lights in windows as they flare, / then I come back to my room in the dark / and I sit in the dark for long hours,” suggesting that the speaker demonstrates through his managing of this absence his *living for* the other figure. The darkness motif is tied to the speaker of the poem while the addressee is repeatedly associated with “a yellow curtain” and “a room of light” (*In Fine Form* 92). The light and dark motif takes on greater significance when this poem is considered alongside “The Answer.” Page's final stanza ties her conception of love to images of light:

> 'but love, only for love, the love that is
> so focussed on its object that I die
> utterly, a candle in the sun,
> ……
> … the beam of love which clothes us in
> ephemeral garment's coronation cloth (*Hologram* 63)

Throughout the poem, Page's speakers associate 'living for oneself' with darkness and this more universal representation of love with light. As Sandra Djwa aptly claims, “The Answer” “raises the discussion of love to a wider, more encompassing Sufi plane” (*Journey with No Maps* 276). Unlike “The Vow” and “The Garden Temple,” “The Answer” does not figure love as an experience between two people, but rather as a metaphoric space “where discreteness dissolves and the many are one” (Page qtd. in Djwa 302). Djwa explains in her biography of Page that the “drop of water in the sea” reflects the Sufi concept of love which is characterized by the

individual's recognition that a single "drop can be merged with an ocean, and still remain meaningful" (Idries Shah 123) – just as the "candle in the sun."

Although Lane's images of dark and light do not seem to be in the service of Sufism, they do reflect a similar desire to be assimilated into the same space as the addressee: "How far away. Here there is water and leaves / and I think of your hands and feet, a yellow curtain, / a room of light, or is it dark there now?" These last lines seem to hint at the speaker's desire to be part of the same environment as the addressee; previously he "stare[d] / at the bare lights in windows as they flare," figuring himself in the dark and his interest in the light. The speaker questioning his image of the addressee in "a room of light" perhaps suggests that for the speaker neither light nor dark has a negative valence, but it is the dichotomy of the two that causes him to register "absence."

What is so remarkable about these three poems considered adjacently is the way in which each engages in the same discussion, but each changes the scope of that discussion significantly. Graves begins with the individual pairing of one person *living for* another and broadens the scope to the abstract – one person making a vow to "truth," a concept. Page presents one person asking another to describe "the details" that comprise a life, and elevates the discussion to an all-encompassing experience of love – love that is not restricted to two individuals. Lane embraces Page's claim that the "detail[s]" are "not idle" and characterizes his conception of love as a relationship between two people founded on the sharing of the mundane, and the shared presence.

Poems *In* Intimate Space

Despite the fact that critics like Nathalie Cooke have recognized the significance of *No Longer People* to Crozier's career, George Woodcock's entry on Lane in *Canadian Writers and their Works* makes minimal reference to the collection and treats it more as an event in Lane's personal life than as a significant part of his body of publication (136). What I think is so interesting about this collection is the fact that it is a relational exploration of gender in which *two* gendered voices are implicated. [20]

Although much biographical information about the love union of Patrick Lane and Lorna Crozier is readily available to us at this point, [21] the great pleasure of *No Longer Two People* lies in the deliberate avoidance of a love story narrative. The language of the collection is muscular, aggressive, painful and beautiful – and nothing like the love poems of, say, Pablo Neruda's collection of sonnets for his love, Matilde.[22] The easy distinction between a collection like Nerdua's and *No Longer Two People* is the presence of a second poet in the latter, but what is most significant is that Neruda defines his experience of love by way of describing his lover, whereas Crozier and Lane *create* an experience of love by way of throwing the reader in between the voices of two lovers. Neither voice bears the responsibility of defining the relationship for the definition lies in the active interaction of the voices. Rather than historicizing or narrating a particular experience of intimate connection[23], the collection embodies one. Certainly, I do not contend that this collection presents a universal experience of love, but rather a "relational

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[20] Significantly, later in his career, Lane published a series of elegies for poets he had known before their death and in his elegies for Bronwen Wallace, Elizabeth Smart, Pat Lowther, and Gwendolyn MacEwen, Lane seems to be continuing this project of understanding his voice's own masculinity in relation to these female voices. In the elegy chapter, I further discuss the poems of this series.

[21] In the spring of 2010, *The Malahat Review* published an issue dedicated to the "Aesthetic Kinship" of the two poets titled, "Lorna Crozier, Patrick Lane, and Aesthetic Kinship. No. 170.

[22] Neruda, Pablo. *100 Love Sonnets.* Holstein, ON: Exile Editions Ltd., 2007. (Originally published 1959).

[23] I qualify the relationship as an 'intimate connection' rather than a 'personal' one, because of the biographical resistance I read in the collection.

subjectivity" politically similar to yet formally distinct from that which Carr Vellino tracks in the work of Wallace.

Central to my discussion of the particular dialogue occurring in *No Longer Two People* is Alison Calder's article on the collaboration of the contemporary collective, Pain Not Bread. Calder takes a cue from Marjorie Stone and Judith Thompson's anthology of *Literary Couplings* in which she reads the suggestion "that we are at a point in literary history where the romantic model of composition in isolation is gradually being replaced by a model of composition as inherently collaborative" (Calder 96).

No Longer Two People falls into the category of literary collaboration that Calder calls, "extraordinary literary collaboration, that is to say the deliberate working together of authors to produce a single text" (96-7). Calder explains that existing critical work on collaborative collections is limited by the rhetoric of "literary collaboration as a 'marriage' of ideas that produces a 'child'" (97). In the context of *No Longer Two People*, a collaboration written by a heterosexual couple, this rhetoric of literary coupling as heterosexual union is what caused early critics to "miss[] all the other levels" of the text and focus exclusively "on the personal" (Crozier "The Real Truth" 11-12). With the exception of Fred Wah, who hailed the collection as "One of the most powerful books of lyric poetry to be published by Saskatchewan poets" ("Contemporary Saskatchewan" 201), most reviews of the collection did not respond well to the couple's composition (Cooke 91-2). However, it is the "emblematic, de-personified" use of the lyric "I" that Wah notes that returns me to this collection for new consideration.

As I argued in the case of the di Michele/Wallace collection, the structuring of the order of locution within these collaborative collections speaks volumes to the nature of the

collaboration. In this case, an epigraph by Pablo Picasso opens the collection and establishes itself as a sort of primary call in the call-and-response dynamic of discussion. “Though these two people once existed for me, they exist no longer. The 'vision' of them gave me a preliminary emotion; then little by little their actual presence became blurred; they developed into a fiction and then disappeared altogether” (9), the epigraph begins.

The notion of the epigraph itself is particularly pertinent to a discussion of the glosa because of its similarity to the cabeza. The word epigraph comes from the Greek for “inscription,” and is defined in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* as: “Any formal statement inscribed in stone; also, the brief formulation on the book's title page, or quotation at the beginning of a poem, introducing the work's theme in the most compressed form possible” (A15). Here, the epigraph takes the title page position and does seem to “introduc[e] the work's theme.” I suggest that treating an epigraph is simply ‘introductory’ implies a stasis that limits our understanding of its role, but it is important recognize the way in which the epigraph is situated as the first utterance in a conversational exchange.

Returning to *No Longer Two People*, because the collection opens on the language of neither Lane nor Crozier, it is established from the onset that the two voices are responding to this proposed situation of two people transforming into “the idea of two people” in some kind of artistic, mutual transcendence (*No Longer* 9). Picasso’s epigraph works to establish the question at the heart of our reading of the text as well. It begs of the reader, can these two voices blend into “forms and colours” and do they? As the invocation of symbolic, specifically gender-representative language and images builds throughout the opening poems of the collection, the epigraph's proposal becomes further complicated by the problem of gender. Can a male and a

female voice get beyond their “actual presences”?

The poems in the collection seem to be constantly pushing and pulling for and against this possibility of “blurring” the division between them. Not only do images and language get passed back and forth between the two voices – constantly engaged in acts of redefining language within their own use and, by proxy, that of the other – but the name of the poet is never indicated on the page of the poems. That is to say, the poets are attributed their respective writing credits in the table of contents at the beginning of the collection, but the contents group all of Crozier's poems into one list and Lane's into another. This grouping does not reflect the back-and-forth structure so integral to the confrontation and possible assimilation of these voices. Instead, it seems to encourage the “blurring” effect by forcing readers to come to the question of identifying the voice at the beginning of each new poem. Questioning the voice is integral to the refashioning of the lyric subject that Calder finds in the Pain Not Bread poems. Calder explains the contemporary critical tendency to treat unidentified speakers with the gender pronoun that one would attribute to the poet of the poem and offers up Jonathon Culler's reasoning against this tendency: “rather than providing a more nuanced understanding of poetic voice [this reading] instead simplifies it by retaining reliance on the belief in an individual voice as a dominant structuring force” (Calder 98). Small gestures, such as opening the series of poems with a poem by Crozier in two parts, encourages the confusion of whose voice is speaking each lyric – is this poem written by one voice or two? We are forced to face this question time and time again which ultimately leads us, as readers, to question what kind of indicators signal gender in voice.

In the second part of the opening poem, the voice presents us with a scene:

I pour your coffee

down the drain

Violence, you push me

to violence, you say

Why do you want

the animal in me?

I burn your poems

scatter the ashes over your toast (17)

Here dialogue is being pulled through the same net of confusion that the speaking voices of each poem enable. Who is accusing whom of "violence"? The placement of "you say" between "Violence, you push me / to violence" and "Why do you want / the animal in me?" creates the syntactic possibilities that 1) the "I" tells the "you" they are 'pushed to violence' and the "you" responds "Why do you want / the animal in me," or 2) the dialogues could be reversed with the "you" telling the "I" that "You push me to violence," or 3) that the "you" says both of these things. The confusion is amplified by the violence of the scene: is there not a kind of violence to "I burn your poems" and a tone of sadism implicit to "scatter[ing] the ashes over your toast"? Even that sadism is immediately destabilized by the subsequent line "wait for you to split me" (17). For all we know of the two voices at this point in the collection, this second part of the first poem could be a second voice responding to the violent tone of "With my fist / I stroke you" (16). This first poem in the collection establishes within itself the problem of naming voices that dominates a reading of this collection.

The second poem of the collection, "The space between my ribs,"[24] as the first line indicates, revisits the ribs that have been named in the first poem. Here, the biblical heritage of these ribs is made more explicit as the "space" is now figured as a "loss" and "the stolen life" (19). In a rather overt gesture towards gendered symbolic representations, the poem inclines the reader to the possibility of naming this voice. Certainly, when we get to the image that ends this particular poem, "where I swim milk-white / among the clustered eggs," it seems we are now confidently in the presence of a male speaker – or at least in the presence of a male vocabulary of symbols. I argue that what is important here is the way in which this suddenly male-seeming voice is mediated by the confusion that preceded our awareness of 'him.'

Calder explains polyphonic poetry saying it "is usually one writer producing a piece that is scored for different voices to perform aloud before an audience ... polyphonic works often emphasize the difference between specific perspectives or emphasize the power relations between competing narratives, discourses or languages" (99). Obviously the primary distinction in the case of this polyphonic work is that it is written by multiple poets, but Calder's definition of polyphony is helpful in that it illuminates the importance of both segregation and competition implicit to the relationship of voices in many polyphonic texts.[25] In the fourth poem, "I could have told you long ago," where we start to get a deictic naming of gender ("Now you have returned, old and tired / upon my doorstep. A winter man" [21]) – a naming that is doubly mirrored in the subsequent "You have always driven into silence" in which we get both "The man I am" and "You go this way, woman" – momentarily emphasize the difference implied by polyphony. In the sharing of the language we see the competition as "bones," "pain," "birds,"

[24] The poems of the collection are not titled, but are listed by their first lines in the table of contents; I am using these first line title-stand-ins when I name the poems.

[25] However, this is not the case she makes in terms of the Pain Not Bread collection.

"wound," "silence," "stone" and "hunter" are written and rewritten throughout the two voices and throughout the collection. Renaming, in the earlier poems, has a corrective tone to it (as we see with the ribs first touched with "knuckles" then counting "loss") but by the end of the collection, the voices seem to be much closer to sharing language with the near anaphoric opening lines: "Now is the still / and rotting time" (49) and "Now is the time / for patience" (51) the rotting tomatoes seem to be passed from one poem into the next and though the degeneration of autumn sets an ominous tone, it is the act of two speakers sharing this language and consciously passing between them the image that suggests an arrival at some kind of symbiotic relationship between the voices. The importance of these oscillations between differentiation, "blurring" and harmonizing that the voices of *No Longer Two People* enact is that "the lyric itself is challenged" because of this "new context" in which "the speaker, often taken for granted, becomes suddenly visible and problematic as ideas of originality and subjectivity are called into question" (Calder 100). In *No Longer Two People*, there is less emphasis on "ideas of originality," and more on this meditation on (gendered) subjectivity. Indeed, the problem of the way in which a voice is gendered, on the part of the reader and writer respectively, is not resolved by this text, but significant questions are raised about the public questions of gender and voice within the intimate space the reader navigates between these two intimate "de-personified" voices (Wah 201).

The Glosa *In* Intimate Space

I discuss Samuel Peralta's glosa, "The Dream," in relation to the collaboration collections because of the way in which it enacts both styles of conversation between poets outlined in the Crozier/Lane and di Michele/Wallace collections. The syntactic relationship between the cabeza and the title as well as the cabeza and the first stanza creates the impression of two voices discussing together the same dream. Because it is recognized in the poem itself that the addressee has died, a true "extraordinary literary collaboration" is not possible (Calder 96). The voices of Page and Peralta's respective speakers blend and share language in a manner that is especially reminiscent of the interacting subjectivities of *No Longer Two People*.

In Peralta's glosa for P.K. Page[26], "The Dream," Peralta takes the following cabeza from Page's poem, "This Heavy Craft":

> where a bird
>
> night after starry night
>
> while I'm asleep
>
> unfolds its phantom wings (*Kaleidoscope* 178)

The four lines are taken from the middle part of a sentence extended across eight short lines. Whereas the speaker in "This Heavy Craft" identifies themselves as Icarus, Peralta figures the voice of the cabeza as Page herself. "The Dream" was written in the wake of Page's death and published in the *Malahat Review*'s second tribute to Page; the speaker of Peralta's poem refers to the death of his addressee, designates her as a poet and alludes to the titles of Page's two collections of glosas *Hologram* and *Coal and Roses* – further implicating Page as the addressee.

[26] I refer to this glosa as "*for* P.K. Page" because it was published in the *Malahat Review*'s "Tribute to P.K. Page." The poem's addressee, within the tribute context, is presumed to *be* Page.

Because the cabeza Peralta selects is syntactically incomplete, the quatrain adopts the poem's title as the missing noun that allows us to read the cabeza as follows: “The Dream / where a bird / night after starry night / while I'm asleep / unfolds its phantom wings.” Peralta's own verse opens with the same nominal lack:

> is perhaps
>
> a dream of you.
>
> And the bird your
>
> last unfinished verse
>
> before you fell to earth.

Peralta's opening lines, like the cabeza, can be fulfilled by the title: “The Dream / is perhaps / a dream of you.” Alternately, it can syntactically follow directly from the cabeza “The Dream / where a bird / night after starry night / while I'm asleep / unfolds its phantom wings / is perhaps / a dream of you.” The integration of the initial presentation of the cabeza into the body of Peralta's own text complicates the call and response nature of the glosa and creates a sense of immediacy to the conversation. Page's words subsumed into the voice of Peralta give the impression that these words have been spoken *to* Peralta and that he is merely repeating the call within his response. Whereas in most of Page's glosas the cabeza stands at the head of the poem more as an epigraph that is invigorated throughout the glosa as the lines are repeated, here, the cabeza *as a quatrain* is integrated into the verse of the glosa poet. Two poets speak to a common subject – the dream – and Peralta creates the impression that the two are “deliberately” entering into a collaboration in the way of Crozier and Lane (Calder 96). Peralta's syntactic incorporation of the cabeza blurs the frame to negate a sort of sequential sharing as seen in the di

Michele/Wallace collection. One reading of the poem made available by this particular framing is that the voice of Page describes a dream and the voice of Peralta's poem responds with his interpretation of the dream. The speaker figures the dream as a premonition of the addressed poet's death before moving into a discussion of his own dreams in the final stanza. In a moment of hyper-self-reflexivity, the lines “your verses thread / into my dream,” acknowledge the speaker's many allusions to the poems and collections of Page in the previous stanzas. As well, the speaker gestures towards “thread[ing]” of two voices enabled by the glosa: because “The Dream” is Peralta's poem, Page's lines are woven “into [his] dream.” These lines also mark the formal shift that occurs in this stanza. Uncommon to the glosa form, Peralta repeats the second and third lines of the cabeza in the seventh and eight lines of his final stanza. The repetition serves to demonstrate the way in which the speaker seems unable to escape Page's words that “migr[ate] across the pages” (*Malahat Online Tribute*).

Chapter III – The Dramatic Monologue and the Pas de Deux

While the last chapter looked to poetry written by independent poetic voices in collaboration, this chapter explores what happens to the nature of the poly-vocal lyric when one poet creates the multitude of voices. Forms discussed in this chapter are defined by the *imagining* of multiple voices. Unlike the glosa, the contemporary dramatic monologue does not have any formal constraints, nor does it necessarily engage with the "real" voice (as text) of another poet or person. Rather, the dramatic monologue and the pas de deux allow the composing poet full autonomy over the voice of another. Often narrative poems – particularly the dramatic monologues – the poems I look to here demonstrate the way in which poets reveal their desire for multiple voices within a poem by *creating* multiple voices. From the spring of 1991 to the winter of 1995, the *Malahat Review* published twenty-six dramatic monologue poems and sequences revealing the popularity of this trend and the desire amongst Canadian poets to step away from the ambiguous or autobiographical voice of the lyric speaker by imagining other voices.[27] I couple the dramatic monologue with Rachel Rose's 'pas de deux' form, because it is very closely tied to dramatic monologue sequences. The sequences often present multiple voices speaking to a common subject – as is the case in Mary di Michele's "Mimosa." The pas de deux poems similarly present two voices speaking to a common subject, though, in the pas de deux poems, the voices are sometimes representative of a group of people or of a particular perspective personified. Because the pas de deux poems do often take on un-characterizable 'speakers,' they are often much less effective at presenting a true impression of polyphony and therefore, receive less attention in this study.

[27] The dramatic monologue *sequences* are here counted as one poem. The sequences on some occasions presented a series of monologues from the same voice and in other instances presented a series of different voices speaking to the same circumstance or theme. The twenty-six dramatic monologues appear in issues 94, 96-104, 107-112.

In looking to the dramatic monologues in “Mimosa” by Mary di Michele and the pas de deux poems of Rachel Rose’s *Song & Spectacle*, I explore the way in which independent poets create an experience of polyphony. Like the polyphony of the collaborations, I argue that these two formal gestures, the dramatic monologue and the pas de deux poems, contribute to what Carr Vellino suggests is a contemporary “revitalization of lyric,” which she calls “a fundamentally social form that invokes a community of listener-participants” (306). In these two forms, the “community of listener-participants” is fostered by the poet's creation of a community within the poem. Because the poem houses multiple voices, it is already a community unto itself, a community that has decided to welcome the reader.

Interdependent Selves in the Dramatic Monologue

The dramatic monologue sequences that juxtapose multiple imagined voices are more pertinent to my discussion of the glosa than independent dramatic monologues because of the relationships between voices enabled by the sequence. For example, in Rennie McQuilkin’s four part sequence, “Whistler: Arrangements in Blue and Gold” (*Malahat* 128-130), McQuilkin presents the voices of painter James Whistler, his patron, decorator, and assistant. The four voices speak of working on Whistler's “Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room” and of the mental break the decorator, Tom Jeckyll, experienced as a result of working with Whistler. No one voice provides all of the information about the circumstance, but all four work together by way of sequential sharing to reveal the conditions of creating “Harmony in Blue and Gold.” I focus on di Michele's “Mimosa,” because it precedes these other publications and in many ways informs the subsequent popularity of dramatic monologues.

Throughout the articles in *Mary di Michele: Essays on Her Works* (Pivato), the themes of dislocated migrant voices and feminist voices come up time and time again. As we saw in the earlier chapter on collaborations, polyphony and plural subjectivities have been recurring themes in feminist and postcolonial writing in Canada. I have paired my examination of di Michele's dramatic monologues with an examination of Rachel Rose's more recent pas de deux poems to try and see if polyphony created by a single authorial voice can function in ways that are not limited to these sometimes overly-broad critical frames.

In an interview with Joseph Pivato, di Michele says of her poetry's interest in the personal and private experience, "I am working in reaction to the abstract language the bureaucrat's [sic] use, or the meaningless language that advertising uses" ("Interview" 197). Here di Michele adds a political overtone to the quality of her poetry, which is often read as confessional (Cooke, Godard, Golini [2007]). Whether her poetry is reclaiming language from capitalism, patriarchy, or legal systems, di Michele believes that rebellion and the reclamation of language are rooted in the representation of personal and intimate experience.[28]

"Mimosa" is written in a contemporary iteration of the dramatic monologue form. The traditional definition of the dramatic monologue is: "a poem in which the voice of a historical or fictional character speaks, unmediated by any narrator, to an implied though silent audience" (*Norton* A14). The most notable advantage of the dramatic monologue genre is its immediacy. Unlike the conventional lyric, the dramatic monologue situates the poetic voice in a vital environment: a moment in the life of a character. However, the specific moment is exactly what is absent from "Mimosa." Written in three parts, the sequence only directly indicates one specifically situated moment and that is in the first section. Yet, the first section is written in the

[28] However, the personal experience described in the poems need not be autobiographical.

third-person and therefore, on its own, does not qualify as a dramatic monologue.[29]

Dramatic monologue is not an entirely appropriate angle of approach to "Mimosa" given the inclusion of a section written in the third-person, and the lack of dramatic moment. Rather than aligning di Michele's monologues with the Romantic predecessors of the form (typified by Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess"), I consequently return to Bronwen Wallace's reading of di Michele's confessional poetry – confession that stems "from her sense of collectivity and connectedness with other women" (qtd. in Cooke "Mary Di Michele: on the Integrity of Speech and Silence" 7). In "Mimosa," the connection to confession is apparent because the speakers of the sequence treat the story of an Italian family that has migrated to Canada – a story that shares many significant connections to di Michele's own biography.

"Mimosa" centres on an Italian immigrant to Canada, Vito, and his two daughters, Marta and Lucia. Because the series deals with narratives of dislocation common to the work of di Michele and because the Lucia character is a poet, the series makes available a biographical and confessional reading. While some critics, such as Rosemary Sullivan, saluted di Michele's "facility in entering into the lives and thoughts of others" (Holmes 174), Gordon Coggins felt that despite "the variety of speakers ... one feels that there is really one consciousness expressing itself throughout" (112). For Barbara Godard, the series invokes a number of mythological and epic allusions in what she sees as the speakers reflecting di Michele's quest for a "myth to 'wear'" only to reveal that the poet (and the speakers) must write their own myths, their own histories, their own stories ("Refiguring Alterity" 99). "The search for a myth to 'wear' is tentatively answered in 'Mimosa,'" Godard claims, "in a destabilizing of identity when the slippage between

[29] Although divided into three sections and three voices, the sequence is traditionally treated as a long poem rather than as a sequence of poems. I refer to the poem as a sequence in order to facilitate my discussion of the multiple voices and characters.

persona or mask (Lucia) and poet (di Michele), aspects of whose life may be read in the representation of the rebel poet" (99).

However, Godard's reading does not pay due attention to the "slippage" that occurs between the voices of the different speakers within the series. Indeed, the comparison between di Michele and the "rebel poet" is most readily available because of the shared vocation, yet, it is important to consider the collective treatment of the voices in the poem. As I will demonstrate, in "Mimosa," no one voice ever stands alone.

The third-person omniscient introduction functions like an establishing shot in a film, it presents the cast of characters and the circumstance that enables the two subsequent monologues. What I am calling 'the circumstance' of the monologues is interesting in that it is seemingly anti-theatrical – there is no event or action, no sense of the precise present moment in which the speakers find themselves, and there is no evident indication of who the diegetic "silent audience" may be.

The poem threatens to provide these markers of a dramatic moment by opening with Vito (the father figure) sitting "in the backyard / of the house he's earned / under the sky he's created" listening to the song "Mimosa," but the first section is dominated by memory that carries our readerly eyes from the basement, to the "small shack" in the garden, to the "stone quarry just outside / Toronto" (2), and to his father's last words before returning us to the backyard where "Vito listens and holds back tears" (3). Of the three central figures in the poem, Vito is the only one we see in a fixed location, but he is also the only one who does not get his own *monologue*. Vito becomes the setting and circumstance of the poem as the only body bound to a time and a place; the other voices are orchestrated around his being. The omniscient speaker of the first

section introduces the major themes that will be interrogated in the two monologues: the relationships of each family member to one another, the immigrant's relationship to the traditions and the culture of the country left behind, and the personal understanding(s) of love and what it means to be a woman.

In this opening section, di Michele opens the mythological references Godard notes with the reference to Lucia as Lucifer, the fallen angel (Godard 97). The Biblical and Miltonic frame provided by this allusion serves more to define the speakers than to instigate action. There is no grand battle or convening of opposing councils; there is Vito and his two daughters, "his favourite," Lucia, who "makes herself scarce" and Marta, who "looks like her mother" (3). What is particular about this section is the way it focuses on Vito and his internal experience of "ginger nostalgia" (1) without endowing him with his own voice. Not until Lucia's monologue, the final of the three sections, do we hear Vito's voice. Returning to Coggins' critique of "Mimosa," that "there is really one consciousness expressing itself throughout" (112), I propose that di Michele embraces the impossibility of expressing other consciousnesses than her own, but she negotiates this impossibility by inviting other voices into the world of her consciousness.

Di Michele's inclusion of the other voices reflects two things. First, it demonstrates the relational subjectivity of any voice by revealing the composite nature of any individual. Second, the interweaving of the voices creates interdependence between them. No one monologue in the poem defines one character; our understanding of each character accrues throughout the poem. Only at the end of Lucia's monologue have we heard the separate voices of all three characters, and only then do we realize that no one voice could sufficiently represent itself or another. Therefore, in "Mimosa," polyphony does not serve to give readers an experience of "entering

into the lives and thoughts of others" (Holmes 174), but rather it accumulates voices in order to demonstrate their inescapable interdependence. Instead of isolating a voice to express or confess experience, di Michele *incorporates* voices rendering them mutually complicit in the poetic expression and construction.

To better illustrate this incorporative form of expression, let's look to one of the major themes of "Mimosa": personal understandings of love. In the first section, the first reference to love relates Vito's feelings for his children; "He keeps his love for them like old clothes, in a trunk, / he no longer wears in public. He never wanted the girls to / grow up" (2). Vito's relationship with the next presumed object of his love, his wife, is anything but sentimental: "His good wife, he didn't have to think about, / she worked hard and cooked well" (2). Although these references to love are not terribly revealing of Vito's subjective experience of love, they do establish the terrain for the more explicit discussions of love that follow in the monologues of the two daughters.

Marta's monologue opens with the end-stopped line, "All my life I've tried to please my father" which establishes familial love as Marta's first priority and principal experience of love. "I know enough to risk nothing, / … / to love those who love me, my parents" (4), she explains. Because all we have heard about Marta before this point is that she is not Vito's favoured daughter and that she resembles her mother (3), this expression of love as familial duty is doubly emphasized.

> At every family gathering
>
> I pull out the accordion.
>
> I play …

the music he loves,

the music I've learned by heart

as an act of love. (5)

The double meaning of "learned by heart" entangles Marta's conception of paternal love with implications of duty and inheritance. Marta loves her father because he is one of "those who love [her]" and because "loving [him] is an act of faith, / a way of choosing to live / or to die" (5) – it is a lifestyle. Marta's expression of her conception of familial love is presented in statements of logical reasoning that eventually become almost syllogistic: "You can't really love unless you realize / that a mortal life isn't time enough to love anyone, / not time enough to know yourself, / so I love my father, who is from the beginning" (6).

Ironically, the more Marta rationalizes her love for her father, the less the relationship she describes sounds like one founded on love. When Marta abruptly shifts to describing Lucia's "notions about love" (6), it sounds as though she too has recognized that her description of her love for her father is somehow insufficient. In order to better express her own ideas, Marta does as di Michele does and invokes another voice: "Lucia says that love is a labyrinth: /... / you are searching for the one you think you love / through passageways that lead nowhere / but back into the self" (7). Although these words come from Lucia, they reflect Marta's earlier comment that connected "time enough to know yourself" to "time enough to love anyone." The structure of this section of the poem self-reflexively acknowledges that these words may hold some truth for Marta because "lead nowhere / but back into the self" is followed by Marta returning to her "self," and her own voice with the lines "What I really think about love is all mixed up / in my head with what I remember being taught as a child / in religious class at school" (7). The

enjambing of the line after “mixed up” indicates that what Marta thinks about love is entangled with more than just the lessons from “religious class at school.”

Although Lucia is presented as the rebellious daughter who physically isolates herself from the family, her monologue is largely composed by the voices of the other characters in the poem. In fact, before we ever hear Lucia's own utterances about love, we have 'heard' her voice as relayed by Marta, first in the above paraphrasing of the labyrinth metaphor and again at the end of Marta's monologue. In fact, the second time Marta refers to Lucia's ideas about love, she provides a direct quotation; “I remember how [Lucia] used to say / … / 'I love you, no matter who you are, / that's not logical, but the axiom / on which logic depends'” (12). Therefore, when we finally get to hear Lucia's monologue, it is already inflected with what we have heard *about* Lucia through the other two voices.

The opening lines of Lucia's monologue, “So much of my life has been wasted feeling guilty / about disappointing my father and my mother” (13), echo with near-anaphoric resonances of Marta's opening, “All my life I've tried to please my father.” Because of this echo, we the readers understand Lucia's comment to be implicated in the ongoing discussion of familial love. Unlike Marta's labours of love performed for Vito, Lucia states flatly, “Most of the time I can't even talk to my father” (13). When Lucia claims, “I have stopped looking for my father in other men” (13), she not only reveals something of her own experience of romantic love, but illuminates by proxy that whereas she has pursued the figure of her father in her quests for romantic love, Marta has perhaps replaced her pursuit of romantic love with seeking out the love of her father. In this way, even the voice that seems to be expressing some kind of personal confession is implicated in the construction of the representations of the experiences of the other

speakers in the communal space of the poem.

Further, Lucia's monologue begins to fill in the missing voice of Vito when she says, “I learned more about love from watching my mother / wait on my father hand and foot / than from scorching novels on the best sellers lists” (14). These lines tie us back to the first section in which the omniscient speaker told us about Vito's “good wife, he didn't have to think about” (2), and cast new light on the lines that did not seem to express any particular reference to love. Also, at this point in the poem, it becomes clear that any time one of the voices tries to define their understanding of love, they are propelled into questioning their own self-knowledge. Just as Marta's evocation of love involved a negotiation of self-knowledge, Lucia's claim of what she learned of love is closely followed by a recognition of her “lack of self knowledge” (14). In the next stanza, Lucia returns to reflections on love and makes explicit the troubled nature of her relationship with her father: “I have to settle things with my father before the year is / dead. / It's about time we tried talking / person to person” (14). Mirroring the way the language of Marta's evocation of Lucia's labyrinth metaphor pushed Marta back into her own voice, Lucia's recognition of her own “lack of self knowledge” inclines her to evoke the voice of another. Lucia provides us with the first occasion of Vito's voice: “'If I had language like you,' he says to me, / 'I would write poems too about what I think'” (15). Therefore, di Michele creates the impression that no voice can independently describe itself nor its relationship to another. The voices are all co-dependent. Vito's extended speech ends, “'You got to tell the truth when you write, / like the bible [sic]. I'm your father, Lucia, / remember, I know you'” (15). “The truth,” as represented in “Mimosa,” like the Bible, is written by multiple voices.

Splitting Voice in the *Pas de Deux*

The pas de deux is a form particular to Rachel Rose. In her collection, *Song & Spectacle*, Rose describes the form at the end of the book:

> The *pas de deux* is a poetic form I created in 2004. This form consists of a pair of poems that analyze and debate a subject. It allows for opposing and contradictory points of view, and supports a multiplicity of voices. In art, this form would be a collage; in science, a symposium; in tragedy, a Greek chorus; in philosophy, a dialectic, and in dance, a *pas de deux*. (111)

As Rose indicates, the form is founded on the concept of a plurality of perspectives and voices. Like the dramatic monologues of di Michele, the interlocutors are all created by a single poet (Rose) and therefore there is a certain unity to the voices. Of the twelve pairs of pas de deux poems in the collection, most of them are written in the first-person plural – a move that further complicates the question of polyphony. The pas de deux poems are all written in pairs and therefore are already presenting at least two voices speaking to each subject, but the use of the first-person plural refuses a particular and personal subjective voice and proposes a voice that speaks for a certain point of view – one that in these cases seems to be shared by more than one person. In order to speak as many, the first-person plural operates in the imparticular – a far cry from the confessional tone of di Michele's dramatic monologues. Whereas di Michele presented the two sisters speaking to the same patriarchal family circumstance in "Mimosa," Rose presents a particular circumstance or subject by way of multiple voices explaining their relation to the subject. The distinction I am trying to make here is that di Michele's characterized speakers define their subjective selves through implicit interdependence, while Rose's speakers are foils

that define the topic through their relation to it as well as to one another. The focus of the poems is not personal subjectivity or an uncovering of the self/selves, rather it is the subjects or topics of the poems that are defined by an interacting of "opposing and contradictory points of view."

The theme of binaries is emphasized by the couplet form Rose uses in the pas de deux poems. Her couplets often bring together contrasting end-stopped lines or break a line in the middle in order to allow the second half to redefine or subvert the expectations created in the first. Both techniques are best exemplified in the first two couplets of the playful poem, "What We Heard About the Americans / What We Heard About the Canadians":

> We heard there was much to admire about the Americans.
> Historically.
>
> Their cuisine is buffet, all you can
> overeat. (46)

When we look to the topics that Rose takes on, it is clear that her interest is not in personal or intimate voices, but rather in the way in which polyphony may present a new way of treating difficult subject matter. Some examples of the topics Rose takes on are: the heart ("What We Heard About the Heart / Heartsong"), orphans ("What We Heard About the Orphans / Orphan Song"), abortion ("What We Heard About Abortionists / Inside"), trans-North American relations ("What We Heard About the Americans / What We Heard About the Canadians"), male-female representations of gendered genitalia ("Cock Song / Rose Song"), evolution and epistemology (" What We Heard About the Universe / What the Universe Perhaps Heard"), and the sea ("What We Heard About the Sea / What the Sea Perhaps Heard").

Most of the titles involve “What We Heard About” or “Song” of the thing that has been described from an outside perspective. In terms of conversational structure, this pairing of what has been heard *about* something with the voice of that something's song suggests that the voices are not speaking to one another, but rather to a third party listener – like the silent audience of the dramatic monologue – who pairs the hearsay with the song. The third party listener, I argue, is both Rose and the reader. Rose as poet takes on the role of uniting the *us* and the *them*, so to speak, and we the readers experience neither what has been heard nor the independent song or expression, we experience the interaction of both – the all-inclusive “collage.” In theory, the gesture of presenting two sides of a “debate” within a poem allows readers extra flexibility in their responses. Unlike a conventional lyric in which one speaker presents their experience and to some extent, their opinions, the pas de deux seeks to disable the reader's ability to discern the point of view of the poet. The abundance of voices created by the first-person-plural and the two parts to each poem discourages the reader from trying to find the perspective of the poet or speakers, and forces us to find our own ground in the debate.

In a further resistance of a subjective or characterized voice, many of the poems titles include qualifiers that remind us that these voices are not authentic representations of any particular people; for example, Rose does not take on the voice of “the Universe,” but proposes what it “perhaps heard,” thereby recognizing her inability to authoritatively speak *for* these bodies larger than herself. In the “What We Heard About the Suicide / What the Suicide Can't Hear” poem, we see that plurality of perspectives more so than plurality of voices is at the heart of this form. In the section, “What We Heard About the Suicide,” a first-person plural speaker presents the details of finding out about a suicide. The definite article in the title “*the* Suicide”

suggests that one occasion of suicide is being described, but the details presented resist pointing to a particular person or event:

> We heard it wasn't our fault.
>
> We heard you left a note,
>
> …….
>
> You were alone. You borrowed a gun.
>
> We heard you didn't mean to swerve. (87)

The second-person speaker of the first poem ostensibly addresses a person/a collection of people who has/have committed suicide. In the poem's second section, it seems we have the same voice returning to speak in the place where the person who committed suicide cannot. The address remains the same, but the tense shifts from past to present: “The window's shut, the phone chord cut. / The world outside is muzzled. You are in your bedroom” (88). Here Rose's speaker achieves “double voicing” through what Dvořák calls “an enunciative split ... generated by a retrospective mode in which an older narrating 'I' stages the fractured perceptions and distorted space-times of a younger, more naive narrated self” (“Rejoinders” 115). Dvořák argues that the enunciative split as a narrative technique goes as far back as Charles Dickens, but that the “postmodern variant (easily exemplified once again by [Margaret] Atwood's *Moral Disorder*) fractures the enunciative present/narrative past binary and their respective flashbacks and flash forwards” (116). Rose presents us with a poetic version of this enunciative split in which the voices of the poem's two sections are not distinguished by separate characterization, but by their temporal relationship to their subject. The voice of the first section speaks in the past tense relaying what has been “heard” after the fact and the voice of the second section speaks in the

imagined/hypothetical present tense (conditional mood). The enunciative split disables Rose's claim of "contradictory points of view" clashing with one another because the voices do not *contradict* one another, they present their different viewpoints *in collaboration*. As in "Mimosa," no one part/voice of the poem represents what we the readers "hear" for our understanding is a composite of the two.

Rose's invention of the pas de deux form is not the only representation of this kind of poetic innovation that we find in the early 1990s in Canada. Again, looking to *The Malahat Review*, there are a number of poems that seek to create a similar call and response to the pas de deux poems. The best example of this kind of poem is Kate Braid's sequence "Blue Tattoo" (*Malahat* fall 1994, 114-7). The poem is written in four parts: "1. The Miner," "2. The Wife," "3. The Daughter," and "4. The Son." In each of the parts, the named family member responds to questions regarding the miner's work being posed by an unnamed, italicized voice. For example, the first part, "The Miner," opens:

Tell me what it's like in the mine?

It's like a long dark dream.

How does it smell?

Still. (114)

The second instalment, "The Wife," follows similarly:

Do you mind it when he goes down the mine?

I am a woman invisible.

He goes like the blind man, pulled

by the ancient Sirens. (115)

Through each of these sections, each voice reveals something of their own character while simultaneously contributing to the composite representation of the miner. “Blue Tattoo” replaces the dramatic moment of the conventional dramatic monologue with the circumstance of an interview. Instead of responding to live action, the characters respond to questions. The voice of the interviewer instigates each character's utterances.

Similar to a dramatic monologue sequence, the poem presents four voices speaking sequentially to the same theme. However, the presence of the interviewer's voice within each poem distinguishes it from other forms. Because the miner and his family are nameless figures, and because each part of the poem harbours two imagined voices, the poem also relates closely to the pas de deux poems. Like the pas de deux poems, the form of “Blue Tattoo” reflects a desire for multiple perspectives within the poem. The figure of the miner is not characterized by his own voice alone, but by his relation to the mine and his family's relation to him.

I call attention to this 'between-category' form because it is indicative of the rising interest in multi-vocal poetry.[30] The Braid poem is a perfect example of the way in which contemporary poets are interested in using the poem as the site of conversation. “Blue Tattoo” presents four voices speaking together (five, including the interviewer) sequentially while simultaneously situating each voice within a specific question-answer style conversation between the inquisitor and each voice.

[30] Significantly, Kate Braid is a poet who equally represents a resurgence of interest in poetic form, as demonstrated by her role as an editor of the collection, *In Fine Form: The Canadian book of form poetry*.

Imagined Voices in the Glosa

Recalling the critical work of Robert Stacey as well as Page's own explanation of the glosa as a "curious marriage" (*Hologram* 9), my inclusion of the dramatic monologue sequence and the pas de deux poems in this study allows us to see the ways a glosa can move beyond the poet speaking *to* her "predecessors" (Stacey 3). As we saw in Page's "Planet Earth," the glosa poet can erase the characterization of the cabeza poet by way of redirecting the cabeza's language to a new context, thereby assimilating it into the language of the glosa poet. In Peralta's "The Dream," it was revealed that even when the glosa implicitly acknowledges the presence of two voices, the distinction between the voice of the cabeza poet and that of the glosa poet is not always straightforward.

In order to examine the way in which the speaker of a glosa *can* explicitly address the cabeza poet as a second presence, I look to Page's poem, "Love's Pavilion" in which the invited voice of Dylan Thomas' "And Death Shall Have No Dominion" is engaged in dialogue with Page's speaker. According to Djwa, this poem is one of many in *Hologram* that explores the "larger Sufi concept of Love as the final stage of a journey, or quest" (*Journey with No Maps* 276). "Love's Pavillion" is unique in that it is the only glosa in the collection in which the responding lines of the cabeza poet are physically isolated from Page's own stanzas. Take for example the first stanza:

> Tell me the truth. How does it end?
>
> Who will untangle their matted hair?
>
> Shine in the dark whole of their sleep?
>
> ……

What is the price they pay for pain?

Though they go mad they shall be sane. (*Hologram* 46)

In the first three stanzas of the poem, Page's voice asks a series of questions that are 'answered' by the voice of Thomas' poem. Indeed, Thomas' lines are written by another real poetic voice and not an imagined voice as in the dramatic monologue or pas de deux, but Page's formal isolation of his lines figure him as an imagined respondent. He is an *imagined* respondent because Page is, in fact, the one responding to his words. She uses the glosa form to enable an imagined discussion between two voices and Thomas' voice takes on a character other than the original because they have been placed in the context of a conversation. The final stanza maintains the physical separation between Page's voice and that of Thomas but there is a significant shift in the interaction. Cued by the third line of the cabeza "Though lovers be lost love shall not," Page, in the fourth stanza, moves from interrogation into affirmation: "Love shall not. O, love shall not. / Engrave it in stone. Carve it in rock" (47). Repetition and rhyme here evidences the way in which Page's speaker is actively listening to the second voice in the poem calling attention to "an act of reading that precedes and enables a subsequent act of writing" (Stacey 3). Stacey suggests that this acknowledgement of reading is implicit to the glosa form, which is "at once [a process of] poetic consumption and personal quest" (Stacey 3). Page does not speak for the "silence" left by Thomas, she engages with the voice that still remains and speaks first *to* and then *with* the voice. Page joins Thomas' voice in the examination of poetry's capacity to transcend death. The first person singular voice that opens "Love's Pavillion," "Tell me the truth. How does it end?" (*Hologram* 46), no longer speaks alone in the final stanza. The first person singular becomes the

first person plural: “With the Lord of the Dance we shall form a ring / and there in love's pavilion / hand in hand we shall say Amen” (*Hologram* 47). Shifting to a first-person plural voice indicates that the voice of Thomas has not been 'laid to rest' or replaced with that of Page, but has been joined.

In accordance with Page's readings of Sufism, her speaker's “final stage” involves recognizing herself as part of a greater, unified whole. Page came to Sufism through her reading of Idries Shah, who explains that the final of the “seven stages of Sufi development” is characterized by the individual's recognition that a single “drop can be merged with an ocean, and still remain meaningful” (Shah 123). Reading the final stanza of “Love's Pavilion” through a Sufi lens, we can understand Page's speaker to be “merged” with the speaker of “And Death Shall Have No Dominion.” Both voices are united in “Love,” yet distinctly “meaningful.” The revelation is marked when the speaker of the poem accepts “*Though lovers be lost love shall not*” as “the subtext of all art” (*Hologram* 47). As in “The Answer,” “Love's Pavilion” stages a kind of debate between the two poetic voices. Unlike the pas de deux, these glosas do not simply parallel two “opposing” voices, they present two voices in a *true* debate – meaning, the voices seem to be able to *hear one another* and respond.

In this way, the collection as a whole communicates the *welcomed* continual presence of poetic voices. The “personal quest” of the reader/poet Stacey describes is not a journey in solitude because the poet is ever-encountering and ever-surrounded by multiple voices.

Chapter IV: The Elegy and The Dedication Collection

In this chapter, I look to two significant ways in which a poet can pay homage: the elegy and the dedication sequence. Of the little criticism available on the glosa in Canadian letters, the most common reading of the form presents it as an enabler of homage to predecessors. Certainly, the cabeza's resemblance to an epigraph formally places the borrowed language in an elevated position both literally and metaphorically and this raises the possibility of a hierarchic relationship between the two poets of a glosa. Recall Page's own words from the introduction to *Hologram*: "it occurred to me that now, towards the end of my life, it would be appropriate to use this form as a way of paying homage to those poets whose work I fell in love with in my formative years" (*Hologram* 9-10)

Sara Jamieson, in her article, "'Our hearts both leapt / in love with metaphor': P.K. Page's Professional Elegies," argues that Page's glosas are a formal fulfilment of the classical elegy:

> In *Hologram*, Page devotes the bulk of an entire collection to commemorating the favourite poets of her youth. Blending the words of dead and living poets, the glosas of *Hologram* "generate voice out of the silence left by a predecessor," thus fulfilling "the very purpose of the classical elegy." (Celeste M Schenck qtd. in Jamieson 275)

While this reading illuminates the tone and mode of some of the glosas in the collection, Jamieson's treatment of the entire collection of glosas as elegies overlooks many of the other poetic interactions staged by Page's glosa – as I examine throughout this study. Notably, Jamieson does not present a close reading of *any* of the poems in *Hologram*. Her argument rests on general treatment of the formal constraints and citations from Page's introduction. Her attempt to harness all of the glosas in the collection under this broad category of "professional elegy"

overlooks the way in which many of the poems in *Hologram* do not engage *directly* with the poet – or at times, the poem – from whom the cabeza is taken (recall my reading of "Planet Earth").

Jamieson defines the "subgenre of the professional elegy" saying the form "traditionally foregrounds an ambivalent relationship between poet and predecessor" (276). She roots much of her claim about the glosas in Robert Stacey's reading of "The Gold Sun" – not surprising, given that Stacey is the only other critic to analyze Page's use of the glosa. That said, Jamieson neglects to mention that Stacey's arguments are exclusively addressing "The Gold Sun" – one of the only poems in the collection that truly adheres to her reading of the glosa as a "professional elegy." In "The Gold Sun," as she and Stacey argue, Page "declar[es] affinities between herself and her forebears ... to envision unabashedly her own initiation into a select group of her 'master' poets" (Jamieson 280). One obvious problem with generalizing this statement is that not all of the poets enlisted in the cabezas are Page's forebears (Leonard Cohen, George Woodcock and Mark Strand are the exceptions in *Hologram*). Most significantly, however, Jamieson, like Stacey (drawing on Bloom and Eliot), focuses exclusively on the professional relationship between the poets without considering the way in which the kind of conversation between the poets modifies that relationship.

Jamieson's primary concern is with broadening the discussion of modernist elegies by female poets so as neither to constrain them to "the elegy's negative associations with the sentimentality of a feminized literary past," nor acquiesce to the masculine-oriented reading of the professional elegy as an occasion for the "elegist's praise" that "masks a fierce competitiveness" (Jamieson 276). Her study groups *Hologram* together with Page's elegies "Ours," for Patrick Anderson, and "But We Rhyme in Heaven" for Dorothy Livesay. The elegies Jamieson treats (glosas included) "were written after the modernist period came to an end, and

they are direct and straightforward in expressing the sadness of loss" – a claim specifically targeted at the suggestion that female elegists in the modernist period were unable to *directly* address "sadness and loss" because of the anxiety of being associated with sentimentality (Jamieson 276).

Jamieson ignores the fact that none of the poems in the collection are written on the occasion of a loss – none of the poems were written in the immediate or even recent wake of the death of one of the poets with whom they engage.[31] Jamieson attempts to sidestep this issue with her comment: "These poems may or may not be occasioned by the sudden absence of a specific person from the poet's life, but they all involve some consideration of how language is passed from poet to poet and carried into the future" (257). However, to reduce elegy to "*some consideration* of how language is passed from poet to poet" eliminates the definitive particularity of the elegy form – a form defined, as she elsewhere acknowledges, by the desire to "generate voice out of the silence left by a predecessor" and an expression of "the sadness of loss" (275, 276). While the final three glosas in *Hologram,* "Exile," "The Answer," and "The End" (as well as "Love's Pavillion" earlier in the collection)[32] explicitly deal with the prospect of death, their interest is in looking forward towards death rather than responding to the "loss" of a particular person. In all four poems, the speakers alternate between inquiring and positing about what it might mean to face death. The speakers do not acknowledge the death of the cabeza poets and in

[31] As mentioned earlier, Sandra Djwa claims that "In Memoriam" was written for F.R. Scott in the wake of his death, which may well be the case, but the distinction I am making here is that the glosa was not written with a cabeza by F.R. Scott. Therefore, Jamieson's claim that the glosas are elegiac in their ability to "generate voice" from the silence "left by a predecessor" is complicated by the fact that the "generat[ed] voice" is neither that of 'the predecessor' nor Page, but of another poet altogether. As I will address in my reading of "In Memoriam," not all readers find Scott in the poem as Djwa does – Sullivan reads it as a "poem *to* Yeats" (my emphasis "Hologram"127) in which case my point remains: even if she is elegizing Yeats, she is working with the voice of Auden and not Yeats.

[32] The cabeza for "Exile" comes from George Woodcock' poem "Imagine the South"; that of "The Answer" comes from "The Vow" by Robert Graves; "The End" borrows a quatrain from a poem of the same title by Mark Strand. The cabeza in "Love's Pavilion" comes from Dylan Thomas' poem, "And Death Shall Have No Dominion."

fact, they treat the voices of the quoted poets as animate voices in dialogue.[33]

Much of Jamieson's own study is in response to Celeste Marguerite Schenck's *Mourning and Panegyric: The Poetics of Pastoral Ceremony,* in which she treats the elegy as a "lyric ceremonial mode"; for Schenck, "Behind the ritual reenactment of significant poetic ceremonies is a consistent 'refusal of mortality'" (*Mourning and Panegyric* 1). Schenck proposes two principal ways in which poets "protest against silence, stasis, and that ultimate guarantee of the two, death": first, with "Poetic utterance" and second, by "incorporating structures of transcendence and rebirth in their works" (1). Schenck borrows from T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" in order to argue that "'every [lyric] poem' is an 'epitaph' when it marks an initiatory moment, pronounces elegy upon a past artistic self, and announces rebirth of the artist as a poet" (1). In shifting the focus from the mourned subject to the mourner, Schenck provides a reading of lyric elegies as wholly egocentric. The poet is ever speaking to his or her own poetic status. Imagining the poem as an "epitaph" provides some interesting avenues of consideration for the glosa, but does not help to understand the kind of interaction between the living glosa poet and the dead poets of some of the cabezas.

Returning to the glosa's relationship to elegy, Rosemary Sullivan, reviewing *Hologram*, presents some more considerate claims about the way in which Page negotiates "conversations with the loved dead" in her glosas:

> Page resuscitates the four lines of the other poet so that the conversation can continue, bringing those lines to life as two voices begin again, address each other, and end somewhere entirely new … Each poem is true to two voices; uncannily

[33] As we saw in Samuel Peralta's glosa, "The Dream," it is possible for a glosa to function as an elegy; my contention here is that this is only one way in which a glosa can function and it is not especially the case in *Hologram*.

> Page recaptures the voice of each poet with whom she speaks, occasionally repeating, as though she were occupied by a ghostly presence, the other's cadences; uncannily she asserts, in the metaphors and themes, her own voice. ("Hologram" 124)

Sullivan's claims call attention to the way in which the voices of the cabezas can be animate in the glosa. As well, unlike Jamieson's broad and un-evidenced claim that all the glosas in *Hologram* are elegies, Sullivan takes the time to identify the few examples that she feels are written in the elegiac mode: "In Memoriam" and "Presences"[34] (127). Again, in Sullivan's article, the terms of "address" are not specifically qualified to represent the variety of ways in which Page engages with the voices in the cabezas. Returning to Alison Calder's list of the different conversational paradigms implicit to poetry,[35] I think it is significant that each of these critics overlooks the role of the reader in the glosa's 'conversation.' Sullivan aptly calls attention to the way in which speaking *with* another poet requires that Page's own voice be modulated by that of the cabeza poet when she refers to the "ghostly presence," but she still treats each glosa as though it were 'addressed to' the cabeza poet. Again, I argue that this may sometimes be the case, but there are other glosas in which the address seems more introverted (ie. Page speaking to Page) or turned outwards towards the reader.

In this section, I explore two contemporary uses of forms of homage that illuminate the possibilities of conversation available to the homage modes. The first is the elegy and in order to suss out the particular kind of engagements with a second voice the contemporary Canadian elegy can capacitate, I look to Patrick Lane's beautiful sequence of prose poem elegies from his

[34] The cabeza for "Presences" comes from T.S. Eliot's poem, "Burnt Norton," of "The Four Quartets" (*Hologram* 38).

[35] The poet and his or her social context, the poet and his or her influences, the poet and the publisher, and the poet and the reader.

2007 collection, *Last Water Song*; Susan Musgrave's "Thirty-Two Uses for Al Purdy's Ashes" from her most recent collection, *Origami Dove* (2011); and Philip Kevin Paul's "Gabriel Bartleman" from *Taking the Names Down from the Hill* (2003). The second form is the dedication sequence, as examined through two collections dedicated to Leonard Cohen: *take this waltz: A Celebration of Leonard Cohen* and *Leonard Cohen You're Our Man: poets reflect on the poetry of Leonard Cohen,* as well as Bronwen Wallace's wonderful, *Keep that Candle Burning Bright* sequence for Emmylou Harris. The major distinction between the elegy and the dedication is that the elegy is created in light of a loss, and as I will demonstrate with these contemporary versions, seeks to construct a memorial to a dead person out of that which remains (namely, language and memory), whereas the dedication collection is not an act founded on posterity, but on comparison, parallel and cooperation. I qualify both forms as governed by the principle of homage because both are interested in negotiating praise with experience.

In both cases my focus will be on the modes of address and the engagement of the reader in the process of commemorating the subject of the elegy or dedication.

The Elegy

The three examples of elegy I have chosen each demonstrate a different type of elegiac engagement with a dead figure. The Lane poems are specifically addressed to Canadian poets with whom he interacted personally and professionally, the Paul poem elegizes a lost family member and the Musgrave poem elegizes Purdy, her friend and poetic influence, in anticipation of his death.

In her essay, "Grief and the Poet," Catherine Wilson explains:

> In the elegy, the poet, a real person, expresses grief at the death or departure of a

> real, historical individual, typically a child, a lover, or a friend. Either we respond with genuine sympathy for the poet's misery and are sad with him, or, since we are responding to literature, we must be experiencing quasi-sympathy and quasi-sadness. (80)

Wilson emphasizes "real person" and "quasi-sympathy" because much of her essay is interested in the way in which *readers* emotionally engage with specifically literary expressions of grief and examining the way in which readers respond with "real" emotions to "fictional circumstances" of grief. Wilson recognizes the emotional experience integral to the elegy genre eschewed by both Schenck and Jamieson. Although a poet may come to a discussion of his or her own poetics through the elegiac mode, the genre itself relies upon the emotional experience of the poet in relation to the subject and the reader in response to the elegy. As Wilson suggests, the reader's emotional response may be predicated upon "sympathy" for the poet's suffering. However, looking to W.H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," we can see that the elegy may also examine the possibility of a public loss. [36] If we accept that the elegy is a site for a poet's reflection on a literary death and subsequent rebirth, how can a reader engage with such a poem? Wilson provides a frame for how emotional responses can be elicited in readers:

> For an emotion to arise in me …. All that is required is that something real—whether a situation, a depiction, someone's utterance, or a mental image—present itself to my awareness in the form of what might be called a 'situation report'. While the propositional contents of such reports may implicate unreal entities such as gods or imaginary beings, the sources of emotional experience are invariably real entities—historical events, sentences on a page, human utterances,

[36] Later in this chapter I will look to Page's glosa, "In Memoriam," which is written with a cabeza from "In Memory of W.B. Yeats." As well, Auden's poem will be discussed in relation to Musgrave's elegy.

> or memory and fantasy images, all of which possess the causal powers sufficient to generate real emotions. (83)

The elegy can, on some level, function as a "situation report" in which a poet provides the reader with the "utterance" or "sentences on a page" in order to evoke an emotional response. This is not say that the poet writes an elegy for the sake of emotional manipulation, but that part of the experience of an elegy is communal participation in a moment of grief. This is particularly true in the case of the contemporary elegies of Lane.

Last Water Song is divided into two sections. The first is entirely comprised of sixteen prose poem elegies each titled "For" the poet they address ("For Red Lane," "For Bronwen Wallace," etc.). Although each of the poems is addressed to a poet, these poems complicate the "professional elegy" Jamieson describes in that there is something inherently un-professional about many of the poems. Lane has been a prominent figure in the community of Canadian poets for over thirty years and as a result, he has had the occasion to interact personally with all of the poets he elegizes. Lane incorporates his personal experiences with each poet with allusions to their works and their reputations as poets.

In considering the different elements Lane weaves in his construction of the elegy, it is helpful to return to Wilson's understanding of the "situation report":

> emotional experience can be generated from three sources, from events and situations occurring in the external world immediately adjacent to the subject and aurally and optically (and perhaps kinaesthetically, saporifically, or tactually) perceived by him; from pictures, descriptions, and other second-hand representations of the world, and from the internal sources of memory and imagination. (80)

Lane involves his perception of the events of the deaths, often figured as his learning the news of someone's death. The "second-hand representations" in his poems on occasion take the form of photographs, but more commonly the poetry of the poets he elegizes. He combines "memory" and "imagination" by recalling anecdotes and occasionally considering different actions he may have taken or things he may have said in those memories. As Wilson indicates elsewhere, the "truth" or "fiction" of the "situation report" is not immediately significant to our response to the report. She gives the example of hearing a news report of a plane crash in which she is told a family member is killed. If she later discovers that the report was untrue, her prior emotional response to the report was still a "real" experience of emotions (83-4).

The poem, "For Al Purdy," opens with an explicit recognition of the multiple characterizations of Purdy available to Lane, "It wasn't the brawling man who wrote of *dangerous women with whiskey-coloured eyes*, it was the other man I knew in '62, the awkward one you hid inside the Contact book, the one who spoke of lines that never end. That's what I heard first and that's the man I knew" (*Last Water Song* 16). From the first line Lane engages with direct quotation from Purdy's famous poem, "The Cariboo Horses."[37] As is the case with Page's italicization of the cabeza lines in her glosas, Lane's italicized quote serves to incorporate and distinguish Purdy's own poetic voice within the elegy. Next he makes reference to Purdy's literary biography with the play on words "Contact book," which suggests both the impersonality of a name in an address book and likely refers to Purdy's 1962 collection, *Poems for all the Annettes*, published by Contact Press. Thirdly, Lane incorporates his own history by framing the opening with the chronology of his encounters with these various aspects of Purdy. With his repeated qualifying of his representation of Purdy with "the man *I* knew" (my emphasis), Lane

[37] Purdy, Al. *The Cariboo Horses*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965. The collection won Purdy the Governor General's Award in 1965.

seems to purchase his right to a subjective representation of the dead poet. Lane continually weaves anecdotes of shared drinking-nights with quotes from conversations with Purdy and from Purdy's poems. “Poems go round and round,” he says self-reflexively towards the end of the poem, “this one too, never quite getting there” (17). Indeed, the poem does seem to “go round and round” Al Purdy the man, the poet, the persona, the mentor, the memory. Lane's claim that it is “never quite getting there” reflects his desire to (re)create and construct an image of or version of Purdy in this poem – a task he acknowledges is impossible. Lane uses the remnants of Purdy's life available to him to create a collage of the poet that is well-'rounded' (forgive the pun), but cannot be complete.

Clearly, Lane's elegies forego the “ambivalence” that Jamieson suggests characterizes the professional elegy for a more confessional mode (276). However, his inclusion of his own poetic struggle in the elegies does validate some of Jamieson and Schenck's ideas about the way in which the elegy can serve as an occasion for the elegist to reflect on their own writing. Unlike Auden and Page, Lane is not able to separate the poets from the poetry and he pushes readers to engage emotionally with the loss of a human, not the sudden stasis of a pen.

He uses the prose poem form in order to allow himself a stream-of-consciousness style meditation on each of the poets he features. The personal nature of the voice and the prose form creates poems that straddle a line between elegy and eulogy. The prose poem form in particular seems to prevent the poetic “competitiveness” Jamieson noted to be particular to modern male elegies (276) – because Lane is not writing in his usual enjambed lyric form(s), he disables any easy (formal) comparison between his lines and those of the poets he memorializes.

In fact, the elegies Lane creates have much more in common with the “*vidas*” of the troubadour poets than with the professional elegy. “Vidas” are found in the manuscripts that

appeared towards the end of the troubadour period (c. late thirteenth century). A vida was included as an introduction to the poems of a particular troubadour and while many of them were short biographies, there were a number of exceptions that were "an extensive composition in which the poet's best-known songs are 'explained' in swift-moving anecdotes enlivened with dialogue, very suitable for recitation" ("Troubadours" Valency 89).[38] I draw the parallel here with the vidas because they were specifically written by poets and about poets (troubadours) and served to provide some kind of introduction to both the poet and the poetry. As well, a consideration of the vidas allows us to look at the elegies as more than simply evocative of emotional experience. While Lane's elegies clearly enable emotional response, they also direct us, the readers, to the work of the poets being elegized. Like Page's active discussion with the animate voice of Dylan Thomas, Lane addresses the dead poets as though they could respond and by employing the lines of their poetry, he implicitly treats the poetic *voices* as living.

Etymologically speaking, "vida" provides a nice counterpoint to the theme of death. Vidas celebrate and recreate *lives* of troubadours. The possibility of immortal voices not only returns us to Schenck's contention that ceremonial poetry is interested in rejecting mortality (1), but also, the lyric tradition of "immortaliz[ing] [an] addressee in writing" (Wong 275). Lisa Lai-ming Wong examines the nature of the lyric address in her essay, "A Promise (Over)Heard in Lyric," and proposes that the traditional lyric address presupposes another listener beyond the addressee. Poems like Shakespeare's "Sonnet XVIII" that seek to "immortalize the addressee in writing" are dependent upon readers for such immortality to be realized (Wong 275-6). In this way, despite Lane's concessions to personal memories and experiences, and despite the fact that readers may sympathize with Lane's experience without having the same emotional engagement,

[38] Notably, the vidas were written in prose form (Valency 89).

the “validity” of Lane's projects of commemoration “will need to be kept by the unknown reader” (Wong 276).

Susan Musgrave's “Thirty-Two Uses for Al Purdy's Ashes,” like Lane's elegies, integrates Musgrave's personal relationship with Purdy with allusions to his poems and to his life. Unlike Lane's prose elegies, Musgrave's poem employs short stanzas and long lines that roll through her frequent enjambment and stanzaic breaks. Musgrave's poetic voice – particularly in her later collections – is very directly influenced by Purdy's conversational language, violent imagery, ironic tone and use of expletives. The ironic tone in particular staves off any explicit expression of mourning in the poem. Perhaps in part because the poem was composed prior to Purdy's death, Musgrave's elegy is not primarily concerned with emotionally engaging the reader in Purdy's death. The titular theme of what to do with the cremated body of the poet presents an inversion of sorts of W.H. Auden's “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” – Auden pursued what would become of the poems with the new absence of the poet's physical self, whereas Musgrave wonders at what could become of the physical body. Of course, this list of “uses” for the “ashes” is highly metaphoric and enables Musgrave to 'scatter' bits of Purdy's poetry in her mock discussion of his funeral rites. In fact, the relation to Auden's poem (which seems implicit when Auden himself is named in the third to last stanza [*Origami Dove* 80]) is bizarre because “Thirty-Two Uses” was written prior to Purdy's death in 2000.[39] In Purdy's obituary written for *The Globe and Mail*, Musgrave is listed as one of three poets whose poetry is greatly influenced by Purdy alongside Margaret Atwood and George Salt. As well, the obituary reveals some of the

[39] Although the poem was written prior to Purdy's death, this fact is not immediately evident given that it was not published until *Origami Dove*'s 2011 release. Within *Origami Dove*, Musgrave prints some poems with their dates of composition, however this is not the case with “Thirty-two Uses for Al Purdy's Ashes.” Because Musgrave chooses not to print the date of composition with the poem, this act of omission allows her readers to understand this poem as a post-mortem tribute.

back-story of this bizarre poem: “Often ornery, he told his friend and neighbour Susan Musgrave shortly before his death that all the best lines in her tribute poem to him, '32 Uses for Al Purdy's Ashes,' were his, and he demanded half her royalties” (Valerie Gregory, 2000).

To call it a “tribute poem” is *somewhat* representative of the nature of the poem given that it was written before Purdy's death and it catalogues and pays homage to much of Purdy's poetry. However, the connection to Auden's poem as well as the decision to pay “tribute” to Purdy by staging the poem as a consideration of him after his death places this poem somewhere between a tribute and an elegy – what I call a mock-elegiac tribute poem.[40]

Unlike Lane who foregrounds his poetic persona as an identifiable first-person speaker, Musgrave formally excludes a recognition of her self from the poem. She writes in the imperative mood giving directions to an “unknown reader” (Wong 275) for what to do with Purdy's ashes:

> Smuggle them to Paris and fling them
> into the Seine. P.S. He was wrong
> when he wrote, “To Paris Never Again”
>
> Put them in an egg-timer – that way
> he can go on being useful, at least
> for three minutes at a time
> (pulverize him first, in a blender). (77)

From these first two stanzas it is evident that Musgrave's mock-elegy is written much more in the vein of Auden's consideration of the life of the poetry rather than the poet than Lane's elegies.

[40] “Mock-elegiac tribute poem” is not the most concise of titles for a kind of poem, but the modes of “mock,” “elegy” and “tribute” are curiously and inseparably intertwined in this poem.

Explicit reference to Purdy's last collection, *To Paris Never Again*, as well as the allusion to Purdy's long time poetic subject – the utility of poets and poetry – suggests that her interest is primarily in Purdy's poetic persona and not in Purdy her neighbour and friend. However, as the poem continues, references to her personal relationship with Purdy start to surface. In the poem's final stanza, the ashes have become a remedy for various ailments and social crises and couched in this, the longest stanza of the poem, is Musgrave's slight allusion to her time as Purdy's neighbour "in North Saanich" (81). Hardly a sentimental revelation, this reference becomes part of a litany that bounces between direct allusion to works by Purdy (for example, "The Country North of Belleville") and allusions to Purdy's life (Purdy was known for boxcar hopping and he lived in Ameliasburgh with his wife, Eurithe). Musgrave's mock-elegiac tribute guides us through a rather thorough survey of Purdy's work and focuses in on his poetic persona. Her voice blends seamlessly with Purdy's creating an elegy that makes a singular voice out of polyphony. Musgrave does not always explicitly indicate when she is using Purdy's language. Musgrave does not fully assimilate the two voices, but does rely on the unknown reader's knowledge of Purdy to distinguish the two voices that are simultaneously present.

By contrast, Philip Kevin Paul's elegy for his unlce, "Gabriel Bartleman," returns us to an explicit mode of polyphony. Paul's collection, *Taking the Names Down from the Hill*, "fus[es] the traditional with the contemporary" and reflects on his cultural memory of Saanich (Vancouver Island) as a member of the Sencoten (Saanich) First Nations community (Tara Carmen *Nightwood Editions*). Tara Carman explains that the project began "as a project to travel across the Saanich territory, fusing the traditional with the contemporary through poetry. Paul says he drew inspiration from ancestral names of places throughout Saanich " (Carman). The interest in interlinguistic creation and memory is suffused throughout the collection and creates an integral

polyphony within the poems; cultures and histories meet in the young poet's poems. After "an intense series of personal losses," the direction of the collection changed significantly. Paul tells Carman, "it started to become a book of mourning, an elegy for these people... But really, when I looked back on the poems I'd already written, it was an elegy for Saanich. For the old names, the old places, the old ideals." Paul's simultaneous mourning of specific people from his life and of a loss of cultural "places" and "ideals" implicates the collection in personal and communal expression. Paul uses his personal experiences and memories to contribute to his memorial for his cultural heritage. Just as the land he describes houses multiple communities, languages, and histories, so too do his poems.

In "Gabriel Bartleman," Paul mediates his own expression of the loss of his uncle with the voices of his family members. As did Page and Auden, Paul begins his elegy with a look at the environment that has been left by the mourned figure for evidence of the loss: "Saanich is really here / and really here even now" (50). Paul then moves to describing the moment he found out "Uncle Gabe" had passed away – placing this poem in the mode of the "situation report." That is to say, the speaker gives the readers enough information about the "event" to engage us emotionally in the poem (Wilson 83). Like Lane, Paul describes personal anecdotes involving his uncle in whatever fragments his memory allows. As Lane's attempts at constructing an image of his elegized poets led him to reflection on his own process of elegizing, Paul's memories lead him back around to his opening lines,

> Saanich really *is* here
> and really here even now.
> At these pages

where I've come to seek perspective

on someone who was old all my life,

small and round without ever seeming so. (51)

Just as Saanich is “here” on the page, Paul tries to bring Gabriel to the page. In the next four stanzas, Paul asks his brothers and his uncle what one word “comes to mind upon / hearing Uncle Gabe's name” (52). Paul presents these words and tries to understand why each person has chosen each word, respectively (52). In calling on other people connected to the mourned figure to participate in his elegy, Paul acknowledges his inability to sufficiently depict the dead man independently. As did Lane, Paul italicizes the words provided by the other voices to recognize their distinction from his own. The mourned figure was not his own, but was part of a familial network and therefore must be mourned within that network. Significantly, Paul does not provide his own word for the uncle until the penultimate stanza. Paul does not allow his word to be the 'last word' on the subject of his uncle, instead, he ends the poem on an italicized quotation from Gabe: “*It is this kind of work / done in this way that I fear / you will never witness in your time*” (53). Paul's decision to allow the mourned figure the final words in the poem suggests that no other voice could be definitive of Gabe other than his own. Therefore, in his elegy, Paul explicitly recognizes that the possibility of immortalizing or commemorating his uncle cannot be accomplished by his voice alone: it is within the familial community and within a multiplicity of voices that the mourned figure achieves a life beyond his body. In speaking *with* Gabe, Paul mediates a desire to “generate voice out of the silence left by a predecessor” (Jamieson 275), with a recognition that he cannot generate *a* voice that will speak *for* Gabe.

The Dedication Poem

Unlike the ostensible treatment of absence performed by the elegy, the dedication is founded very much on interacting with presences. The dedication can take many forms, but fundamentally, it is a form that involves invoking a figure who inspires the poet composing the dedication. The composer, throughout the dedication, operates in terms of comparison, praise and relativity. Consider the two dedication collections for Leonard Cohen: *take this waltz: A Celebration of Leonard Cohen* (1994) and *Leonard Cohen You're Our Man: poets reflect on the poetry of Leonard Cohen* (2009). In both collections, poets and other writers present creative reflections on their relation to or reception of Leonard Cohen as a man, poet and musician. While the latter collection focuses specifically on Cohen's poetry as received by poets, the former presents a wide range of writers, musicians and poets writing about their personal experiences with the man as well as the art. The former was published on the occasion of Cohen's 60th birthday, and the latter on his 75th. Michael Fournier and Ken Norris, editors of *take this waltz*, introduce the collection with an emphasis on endurance: "This book marks the man's durability, his wit, his music and his words, celebrating his sixtieth birthday by offering some odd index of what people think of him, want of him, know of him" (9). The editors emphasize that "life" is here understood as interrelations. Cohen here is treated in past, present and future tenses; he is created by multiple subjectivities, voices and styles. Fournier and Norris defend against reading this collection as a pre-emptive elegy sequence with the statement, "By no means is this book intended to mark a closure of any kind – its just that sixty is such a nice round number" (9).

Jack Locke, editor of *Leonard Cohen You're Our Man,* opens the collection with an editor's note explaining, "this book marks the first time that 75 poets from all over the world have come together to express their voices in diverse reflections to the poetry of the man" (5).

“My personal goal” he continues, “is that this book will provide hope, enjoyment, and additional appreciation of poetry” (5). For Locke, the act of paying tribute to a poet goes beyond the celebration of an individual and encourages a celebration of poetry more generally – the poetry that inspired and the poetry that responds. In this way, the dedication can be seen as a form that celebrates poetry as an indivisible community – similar to Jamieson's contention that the traditional elegy can function “as production of a culture” and a “site wherein a patriarchal literary history is constituted” (276). However, the poems in these contemporary dedication collections engage male and female, Canadian and international voices to create a “culture” defined by the central figure, not by gender or nationality. The poems in this collection ask us not only to return to and celebrate a renowned poet, but also to be introduced to new poets from around the world – to appreciate the way in which truly great poetry can reach beyond its own national and social context in order to build a new context for an artistic community.

You're Our Man depends on Cohen's already well-established reputation in order to present new voices that share an interest in 'the man.' Cohen is an excellent example of Mark Wallace’s comments regarding the way in which a diverse community makes it “increasingly unlikely that poets would know only, or work only within, one literary tradition” (Greenberg et al. 123), because of the way in which his work and therefore his influence, extends far beyond the Anglo-Canadian literary scene. The majority of the poems in the collection respond directly to one of Cohen's poems (the exceptions respond to his songs). Each poet indicates at the top of his or her poem the name of each Cohen poem to which they respond. A dedication of this kind, like the glosa, presents the reader with two readings: the responding poem they encounter within the collection, and the Cohen poem to which the dedications respond. As such, *Leonard Cohen You're Our Man*, creates a “culture” carefully defined by “communal affinity” (Jamieson 276).

In *Leonard Cohen You're Our Man* and *take this waltz*, the praise, overview, recognition of influences and anecdotes of poetic encounters are written into poems. Neither of the Cohen collections contains any complete works by Cohen himself. He is evoked as a composite of the voices that speak to his persona and his work.

While the two Cohen dedication collections create a community by way of enlisting multiple voices to constellate around the figure of the tribute, other dedication collections composed by a single poet create a community between the single poet, the figure of dedication and the reader. In Bronwen Wallace's sequence, *Keep that Candle Burning Bright*, Wallace invites the readers, into her relationship with country music singer, Emmylou Harris.

Keep that Candle Burning Bright is the sequence of prose poems that comprises the first section of Wallace's final collection, *Keep that Candle Burning Bright and Other Poems*, published in 1991, two years after Wallace's death. The sequence presents a first person speaker engaging directly with the music and the life of Harris – a relationship founded on Harris as a public figure. Wallace had never met Harris, yet the experiences she had with Harris' music are largely situated in the realm of the private and intimate space. Wallace negotiates a private relationship with a public figure by way of relaying private encounters with art.

Stephen Scobie provides an interesting reading of the sequence as a "short long poem," suggesting that the ten-poem sequence shares a number of thematic and structural concerns with the Canadian long poem (151). Whereas the two Cohen dedication collections are governed by symbiotic and comparative relationships, Scobie argues *Keep that Candle Burning Bright* "is structured by a series of displacements, deferrals, relays, or substitutions" (152). "Such displacements," Scobie suggests, "are characteristic of the Canadian long poem, its structural and thematic preoccupations with questions of documentary and identity" (152). For Scobie,

Wallace's voice negotiates the presentation/construction of identity by way of "sidesteps": "One thing is substituted for another – prose for poetry, poetry for music, America for Canada – and ultimately, the figure of the living singer, Emmylou Harris, for the figures of both a dead singer, Gram Parson, and a dead poet,[41] Bronwen Wallace" (152). Brenda Carr Vellino's discussion of "ethical subjectivity" in Wallace's "talking lyric" is similarly interested in the way the sequence creates a particularly subjective voice, but is less concerned with psychological questions of identity and more concerned with the political implications of Wallace's lyric mode. Carr Vellino focuses on Wallace's incorporation of a figure of popular culture as a way of broadening the possibilities of the lyric mode: "Wallace invokes the popular idiom of country music at the juncture of lyric to further democratize the form" (304). Carr Vellino argues that for Wallace, "the revitalization of poetry depends on a renegotiation between poem and world; her talking lyric enacts a deliberate re-placing of the poem in the public sphere" (306).

Although Scobie and Carr Vellino's readings are not in direct opposition to one another, the central distinction is in Scobie's metaphor of the "sidestep" – for Scobie, Wallace speaks of one voice by describing another, whereas for Carr Vellino, Wallace speaks in concert with other voices. Scobie's focus is on the "distance between the poet and the singer" – a distance he feels Wallace works to "close" throughout the sequence (154). Carr Vellino, on the other hand, proposes "Wallace also reminds us that narrative itself is a relational mode that depends, at least in part, on what is held in common," a proposition that shifts the emphasis from 'closing the distance,' to recognizing implicit relativity (318). While I am interested in Scobie's mapping out of the points of relation and difference between the composer and the figure of the dedication, I

[41] Scobie explains that Wallace "learned of her diagnosis after the sequence was begun but before it was completed" and though the text does not explicitly address her terminal cancer, Scobie asserts that "the knowledge of her death is an inescapable part of our response now, as readers of a published text that is copyrighted to 'The Estate of Bronwen Wallace.' Her death is both present and absent in these poems" (151-2).

tend to find more merit in Carr Vellino's reading in that it better reflects Wallace's interest in weaving voices together, rather than placing them in delineated apposition.

Wallace opens the sequence with a poem titled, “Dedication” (9-11). In this opening poem, Wallace reveals that her dedication project is no simple gift economy of from one to this other, but is tangled in the communities that envelop both the poet and the singer, inclusively and respectively: “These poems are for Emmylou Harris, sparked by a song called 'Burn That Candle' which Winfield Scott wrote and she sings on an album called *Quarter Moon in A Ten Cent Town*” (9). Her immediate recognition of the song's writer indicates that her dedication to Harris recognizes that Harris is integrated within a creative community and cannot be treated as a solitary figure, singing in a void. In the next stanza, Wallace recognizes herself to be likewise inextricable from her social contexts:

> A song that reminds me of the kid who wanted to be a singer, who was me. Who couldn't believe it when the choir teacher said (the Sunday School choir, where they had to take everybody), when she said, *How be you just mouth the words, dear,* and put me in the back row as if it were no big deal. (9)

Here Wallace sees herself in Harris, and herself in a choir, herself in her personal history, herself in a Christian community. “These poems are for then and now, too,” Wallace continues, indicating the collection is as much about Wallace as it is about Harris and that the relationship of the two figures is not restrained by any particular temporal context – it is a sequence interested in the continuity of relativity.

The theme of singing recurs throughout the collection. Most often, Wallace's interest is in collective singing: “she uses the choir as a central image for relational selfhood or a notion of the individual embedded in a community in which everybody plays or sings a part” (Carr Vellino

318).[42] The metaphoric understanding of collective singing, as Carr Vellino notes, is most explicitly laid out in the opening passage from "Songbirds and Hurtin' Songs":

> Of course, when I'm listening to Emmylou Harris, I'm listening to a whole lot of other people at the same time, like Gram Parsons … Dolly Parton, and at least two busloads of church choirs. All that proves is nobody sings alone … all lives weave that way, in and out, between all that we share and all that we don't, manners and mystery, History and the moment I get called on, as you do, to be nobody but me. (17)

Throughout the collection, Wallace reasserts and re-demonstrates the truth of her statement, "nobody sings alone" as she "sings" her lyric in chorus with Harris, Parsons, and multiple voices from her own personal history. As Carr Vellino points out, much of the sequence is written in the narrative mode – which she calls "a relational mode" (318). Carr Vellino salutes Wallace for her ability to use the narrative mode while avoiding the "conventional humanist universal that masks and denies difference and particularity" (317). She quotes from Wallace's collection of essays, *Arguments with the World*, to demonstrate the way that Wallace "nuance[s] a working definition of commonality":

> the voice of the narrative poem ... is somewhat collective. I say *somewhat* collective, because I recognize that it is also private, specific to a particular person in a particular place at a particular time ... I say *collective* because I want to convey that it is emphatically not "universal" ... but we do have a collective experience – collective as in a choir or political movement – in which the whole grows from, but does not transcend, its separate parts. (*Arguments* 177-8)

[42] The choir metaphor invoked by Carr Vellino nicely echoes the Idries Shah quotation Djwa tied to Page: "[a] drop can be merged with an ocean, and still remain meaningful" (Shah 123).

"Commonality" and distinction intrinsic to this conception of the collective is most apparent in the poem, "Driving." Wallace opens the poem with a story about a friend who "insists that Emmylou Harris saved her life the year that she left her husband"; Wallace explains that whenever she hears the album, *Pieces of the Sky*, she imagines her friend, "driving, at night, the tape deck blaring, driving on and on" (19). Cued by this image, Wallace weaves distinct narratives together through the single motif of driving on the highway late at night: "Sometimes it seems that everyone I know has a story that happens on a highway" (19). The stories range from car troubles, to transporting drugs, to driving all night to get to someone and driving all night to leave someone else behind. Each narrative is afforded its own stanza and its own tone, but all are brought together in this meditation called, "Driving." Here, the subject of the dedication becomes the inspiration for "commonality" that is mediated through the dual points of relation embodied by the poet writing the dedication and the subject of the dedication. No one narrative is the direct descendent of another, together they "grow" a "whole" without "transcend[ing]" the "separate parts." Wallace mitigates third party narratives within the paradigm she creates between herself and her figure of dedication.

Not only does Wallace engage multiple voices in her poems, but also she often ends her poems with a gesture that opens the conversation to the reader. "Driving" ends with the lines, "Always, I am amazed at what we tell, how much faith we put in it. Never really knowing who is listening, how they're going to take it, where" (21). Wallace uses the first-person plural to recognize herself as a simultaneous listener and speaker. The poem is one of the 'places' where the things "we tell" may end up. It is a fundamentally social site "that invokes a community of listener-participants" (Carr Vellino 306). The first-person plural makes the inclusive gesture of implicating readers within the community of listeners (we listen to the poems, we listen to the

music) and potential speakers. The poem invites us to imagine our own highway stories.

As well, as I noted earlier with the *Leonard Cohen: You're Our Man*, the overt references to song titles and albums serves to direct us to later reading – or in this case listening. Wallace, in response to her contemporary context, reaches beyond the community of poetry and into the world of song to create an intertextual playlist for the reader. As I suggest in my other discussions of Wallace's poetics, Wallace seems to present her own subjective relationships with other people as models for our social relationships to poetry.

Dedication and Elegy in the Glosa

Particularly pertinent to the question of the lifespan of a poetic voice is the glosa, "In Memoriam." Page takes her cabeza from W.H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats":

> *The provinces of his body revolted,*
>
> *The squares of his mind were empty,*
>
> *Silence invaded the suburbs,*
>
> *The current of his feelings had failed: he became his admirers.* (*Hologram* 34)

Page joins Auden in his reflections on the endurance of poetry after the death of a poet. Auden, in his poem, meditates on the pathetic fallacy often invoked in the elegiac mode. His poem internalizes a debate between the mourning of the mortal loss of Yeats and the legacy and life of Yeats' poetry.

Much of the diction in Page's poem subtly directs us back to Yeats – "gypsies," "his perfectly tended parks," "His lakes were frozen over," and "Even his birds migrated." Page similarly alludes to Auden's poem throughout "In Memoriam," redirecting the focus from Yeats and Auden to "Memoriam" and poetic memory. Like that of Auden, Page's poem is thematically

more interested in what becomes of the poetry when the body of the poet dies. Unlike Auden who mediates his lament of the loss of Yeats' body "emptied of its poetry" with "The words of a dead man" that "Are modified in the guts of the living" (Auden 406), Page's poem seems to have abandoned any identifiable corpse. Auden explicitly names Yeats throughout his poem, but Page resists naming any particular poet. Page seems to be involving both Yeats and Auden in her own reflection on Memoriam, but her interest in discussing the poet's relation to their work is revealed most clearly in the final stanza of her glosa:

> Only his nouns remained
>
> and one by one they vanished.
>
> ……
>
> His answering service broke down
>
> and his state-of-the-art computers
>
> *the current of his feeling failed: he became his admirers.* (35)

The poem that opened in the ambiguous temporal setting provided by the first line, "Rebel troops overran his palace" (34), takes a decided turn for the contemporary with the introduction of the "answering service" and "state-of-the-art computers." Paradoxically, Page conflates the idea of a living poet's ability to respond (to readers, critics, poets) with mechanized machines in the line "His answering service broke down." The conflation of response-ability and automated technology suggests that for Page, the death of the poet is not pertinent to our reception of the poetry. As well, this conclusion casts a decidedly ironic tone on earlier lines of the poem. "When his crown fell and his sceptre / and he was no longer consulted / *the provinces of his body revolted*" seems to mock the poem's male subject with monarchic language and to critique his need to be "consulted" (34). To an extent, Page's engagement with the two prominent male poets

does perhaps serve to situate herself in relation to them, but it certainly is not "direct and straightforward in expressing the sadness of loss," as Jamieson claims the elegy should be (276).

Jamieson's contention that "the professional elegy traditionally foregrounds an ambivalent relationship between poet and predecessor" (276), is accommodating to a poem like, "In Memoriam," however, as I have indicated, the locus of the poem is neither Auden nor Yeats, but rather, the life of a poem and the act of memorializing a poet. Because Page does not here perform an elegy *for* Auden (or Yeats, for that matter), she disables the treatment of either poet as mourned figures and facilitates a discussion between poetries instead of poets. Rather than foregoing a "hierarchical relationship between a poet and her masters" for "a more lateral relationship" (Jamieson 276), Page *subverts* the poet/master relationship almost entirely by staging an encounter between poems, not poets. Writing a glosa with a cabeza from a poem that is already explicitly in discussion with another poet highlights a chronological relationship between these poets rather than a hierarchical or lateral relationship. Page's "In Memoriam," as the undirected title allows,[43] presents itself as an inevitable antecedent that seems to celebrate the life of poetry rather than mourn the death of a poet.

Contradictory to my claim that "In Memoriam" resists elegizing one poet in particular, is Sandra Djwa's conviction that the poem was in fact written for F.R. Scott (*Journey with No Maps* 371). "The poem speaks of his 'radically altered syntax / the total absence of verbs,' which Page had experienced on her last visit to Montreal before F.R. Scott's death," explains Djwa in a note (371). However, Djwa also notes that Page originally had titled the poem "R.I.P." after a poem

[43] Jamieson's misrepresentation of Page's use of the glosa is implicit in the language she uses to describe the form. Jamieson claims Page "writes glosas *to* both male and female poets" (my emphasis 280) implying that each glosa is addressed to the poet of the cabeza. As I demonstrate in my close readings of some of the glosas in *Hologram*, it is rare that the poems are addressed to the cabeza poets – or even speakers – in any explicit way. The most notable exceptions being the aforementioned "Love's Pavilion," as well as, "The Answer" in which Page's speaker speaks directly to Robert Grave's speaker in a series of questions and answers.

by Scott, only to change the title before final publication – a decision that reveals a resistance to limiting the reader's consideration of the poem to Scott. The personal and professional relationship between Page and Scott during her years in Montreal is in no way explicit in the poem (Djwa 90). If we are to read "In Memoriam" as an elegy for Scott, Page's choice of joining Auden in a shared act of elegizing returns us to Brenda Carr Vellino's "relationally constituted self" that she noted in the work of Wallace (309). Rather than delving into her own experiences of Scott and revealing an intimate encounter with a great personal loss, Page shares the experience of mourning with Auden. Because Auden's elegy is more interested in the way on which a public responds to the death of a poet than in his own (or his speaker's) response to the death, Page's elegy is established on the terms of mourning in "collectivity and connectedness" (Wallace qtd. in Cooke "Integrity of Silence" 7).

To further challenge the claim that the glosa is implicitly elegiac, we can look to John Barton's glosa, "The Living Room," a poem that takes its cabeza from "In Memoriam." Distinct from Lane's treatment of a cabeza coming from another glosa, Barton's poem, like "Planet Earth" redirects the original meaning of the cabeza by changing its conversational context. Barton, draws his quatrain from the final four lines of Page's second stanza, and therefore includes one of the lines from Auden's poem in the borrowed cabeza:

> Their rubbish alone was left.
>
> He was a vacant lot,
>
> he had become an exemption.
>
> *The squares of his mind were empty.* (*Malahat* Winter 1996, 64)

Surprisingly, this gesture does not draw his own text closer to the professional elegies staged by Page and Auden. Barton takes the lines of the cabeza to describe a man he sees at an HIV "drop-

in centre" (64):

> Even as I drive away, a man buttons
> wash-worn cotton about his body
> as it vanishes, ribs rising through
> jaundiced skin like stains as he breathes
> haltingly, or so I think, driving away
> with my fears intact, overwrought
> about whatever might or might not be
> deadly in my own blood, haunted
> by my one parting thought:
> *He was a vacant lot.* (64)

Barton takes the language of poets mourning poets to investigate the feeling of relativity that strikes his speaker upon seeing this "vacant lot" of a man. What is so remarkable about this glosa is how seamlessly the language of the cabeza translates into this new circumstance. Barton's poem finds a new "collectivity and connectedness" by using shared the language of mourning and loss to describe a figure who is not yet dead and who is entirely anonymous. Throughout the poem, Barton's speaker finds himself transcending his own body and "slip[ping] inside / [the other man's] flesh" (65). "His world opens up," relays the speaker, "his death is my death, / his love my love, the men he kissed / and held are men like us who've passed / through the ordinary arms of several others" (65). The line taken from the Auden cabeza in Page's poem, "The squares of his mind were empty," follows a line referring to the sexual encounter that led to the man's contraction of disease, "One foolhardy night he fleetingly felt free," thereby endowing the line with entirely new meaning. Despite the completely distinct new context this poem provides for

the lines of Page and Auden, the connection with the two other poems serves to destabilize any perceived difference between the mourning of a public figure and an unknown individual. By implicating the speaker's consideration of the anonymous man in the tradition of the professional elegy, Barton's poem asks readers to recognize the “connectedness” of loss more generally.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Introduction to Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir

At the beginning of 2012, the glosa was still receiving the attention of *The Malahat Review*; on the cover of their spring issue, underneath the intriguing caption "Shane Rhodes Redacts the Indian Act," read: "Catherine Graham Amends the Glosa." Three things about this tag-line are particularly interesting: first, now eighteen years after the publication of *Hologram*, the glosa no longer needed the explanatory footnote from Bowering's first publication; second, the glosa was being used to appeal to readers – surely having its place on the cover is indicative of popularity; and thirdly, the form is evolving. I'm particularly curious about the term "amend" here used.

The idea of amending a form, particularly one coming to English from another language, was most significantly championed (and documented) by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Hopkins developed the ten-and-a-half-line "curtal sonnet" that employed accentual metre instead of syllabic and a different rhyme scheme. His inspiration for changing the sonnet form came from his understanding of the phonetic differences between English and Italian (Mason and Nims 314-5).

Unlike the sonnet, the glosa has no metric constraints and the demands of the rhyme scheme are comparatively limited and so it seems unlikely that one seeking to "amend" the glosa would be targeting the relationship between the language and the form. Rather, an amendment to the glosa should more likely revise the relationship between the content and the form – the content here figured as the conversation. Catherine Graham, in the three glosas published in the Spring 2012 issue of *The Malahat Review*, does just that. Unlike other poets briefly mentioned earlier in this study, Graham does not simply renegotiate the cabeza lines to stanza lines ratio; instead, Graham tests the way in which these two types of lines relate. Graham's central

amendments to the form are reflected in her stanzaic breaks – or lack thereof. Unlike Page and a number of other glosa writers, Graham does not italicize or visually isolate the repeated lines of the cabeza in any way. The lines are embedded within her own stanzas and visually unmarked.

Of the three glosas in this series, "Between His Finger & His Thumb" most closely resembles the standard glosas of *Hologram*. The four lines of the cabeza from Dorothy Molloy's "How the Sea Works" are medium length lines that, despite not being end-stopped, all have a certain coherence independently. There are forty lines in the body of the poem and every tenth line is taken from the cabeza. The most evident distinction is that there are no stanzaic breaks at any point in this poem, couching the cabeza lines within the long block of text.[44] Without stanzaic breaks, the cabeza lines do not close the stanzas. In other glosas, the end-of-stanza situation of the cabeza lines establishes these lines as somewhat summative and creates the interesting conversational dynamic of allowing the 'last word' of each stanza and of the poem, to be awarded to the voice that contributes the fewest lines. Eliminating the stanzas allows the cabeza lines a certain flexibility. For example, the first line from the cabeza, "He gave me full instructions re weather" follows an end-stopped ninth line: "a geyser of light / that rams the sea and breaks all / meaning into knuckling diamonds. / He gave me full instructions *re* weather / once he knew what I needed" (46). Rather than summarizing, responding, or relating to or reflecting on what has been said in the first nine lines of the poem, the cabeza line moves the narrative forward into the next sentence and next thought. Molloy's lines are fully subsumed into the voice of Graham's speaker. Both the voices of Molloy and Graham are engaged in the title representing the complete blending of voices; the last two lines of the cabeza are "The sun at an angle like this (he showed me / his finger and his thumb) and the sky just like that" (*Malahat* 46).

[44] Also, like many other contemporary glosas, there are no rhyming sixth or ninth lines.

Interestingly, the final two lines of the poem also repeat the title – as though to seal the union of voices in one of the "rounds" or "ring" images that repeat throughout the poem (46-47). The particular blending of the voices enabled within this glosa likens it to the use of voice in a dramatic monologue. Graham represents neither her voice nor that of Molloy with the speaker, but this new voice created by both and as a result, can navigate a discussion of an intimate relationship through the imagined voice of this character.

"Gold Carp" (50-51), the final of the three poems, is radically different, in terms of form, from the other glosas I have so far examined. As in the other two glosas by Graham, the cabeza comes from Dorothy Molloy. Consisting of twenty-three lines, "Gold Carp" is broken into stanzas of one to four lines – following no particular pattern. Cabeza lines appear in the seventh, eleventh, sixteenth and twenty-third line, once again, revealing no particular pattern of distribution. In fact, the only formal commonalities between "Gold Carp" and the more conventional glosas are the presence of a four-line cabeza and the repetition of those lines in the body of the poem. Seemingly lacking structure, the poem presents in an even deeper entanglement of the language of the two poets. "Gold Carp" seems to thwart any possible conversation within the poem because it hides almost all traces of another speaker and all traces of form. I end my examination of the glosa on this iteration of the form because it least resembles the 'pure' form and is most indicative of the continuing life of the glosa in Canadian letters and its enduring vitality.

As well, concluding my discussion of the glosa as a conversation site with Catherine Graham brings us to the glosa in the contemporary moment. Like Graham's series, the collection of glosas I present here, *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*, is interested in testing the

flexibility of the form. The collection includes twelve glosas divided into four sections.[45] United by the themes of song, public expressions of love and the roles of voice, the poems of the collection are grouped into four categories to represent some of the broad terms of experimentation that revisit and renegotiate the different understandings of conversation within the poem that have been explored in this critical work. Although I divide the collection into these seemingly independent sections, it is important to recognize the way in which the glosas are informed by a number of the various forms I have examined.

As the composer of these glosas, it would be prescriptive for me to provide close readings of the poems in the collection. Instead, this introduction reveals general conversational paradigms that inform the poems in the collection as means of revealing the way in which the critical study produced the creative component. *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir* picks up where this study leaves off in the sense that it continues the investigation of the glosa form by way of working with the form. The analytical component parsed out much of the conversational potential present within the glosa form and my collection of glosas tests, exploits and expands upon that potential.

Introducing *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*

Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir's four sections are: "Folk Songs," "Duets & Trios," "Songs of Tribute," and "Sheet Music." Drawing on the language of musical performance, these section titles reflect the way in which voices interact and also highlight the role of oral voice in poetic communication.

I begin the collection with the section, "Folk Songs," because these three poems most

[45] I call these glosas a collection rather than a sequence or series because the breadth of formal experimentation negates the consistency typical to a sequence of poems.

closely resemble the traditional glosa form.[46] As the title suggests, poems in this section are interested in the poem as a social space speaking with and to a large community. In other words, these glosas are grouped together for their demonstration of community seeking communal expression. As a theme, folk music recurs in the poems of the final section of the collection because folk music provides an interesting parallel with glosas. Folk songs are, in effect, poems that survive their composers. Consider a song like "The House of the Rising Sun," made famous in the 1960s by English rockers, The Animals. Treated as an American folk song, the song's origins are highly debated. In fact, Ted Anthony dedicates an entire book to researching the origins of the song. Regardless of the 'true' origins, the song was passed from generation to generation, sung by male and female, English and American musicians alike – though the melody and time signature changed and continues to change with each new incarnation, the figure of the "House" endures. I call upon this example in order to consider the way in which folk music is a genre defined by narratives that outlast narrators and by shared narratives. Edith Fowke in her introduction to *The Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs* considers a Canadian folk song to be "any song which has been taken up by the folk and sung traditionally over a considerable period of time" (12) and herein lies the relevance of folk song to my discussion of the glosa. The folk song achieves its "folk" status because of the "folk" – the audience. Remembering Robert Stacey's claim that the glosa recognizes an act of reading that precedes the act of writing (3), the folk song makes explicit an act of listening that precedes the act of singing. Each performer of the folk song changes the song to best reflect his or her own expression – these changes can be made to the melody, rhythm, style and lyrics. For example, "The House of the Rising Sun" was first recorded in 1933 by Clarence "Tom" Ashley and the singer is figured

[46] The later poem, "Imagine Me, Matilde," strictly follows the restraints of the form, but appears in another section in order to highlight the particular relationship between the cabeza and the speaker.

as a "gambling man" (Anthony 22). However, it became known as a folk song in 1937 when folklorist Alan Lomax recorded an *a cappella* version by sixteen-year-old Georgia Turner. Her version told the story of a young woman who "let a gambler lead [her] astray" (Anthony 6). Turner resituates the conversation of a gambler out of his luck by taking up the perspective of the gambler's female partner. In subsequent versions of the song, musicians like Nina Simone and The Animals have continued both sides of the songs conversation, changing the lyrics (and adding lyrics), arrangement, rhythm melody, etc.

By adding verses and changing lines, each performer's version resembles the glosa in that it takes a conversation the singer sees as enduring and provides another voice. Because the focus of this study is on written poetry, I use the folk song as a point of external comparison. Clearly the formal structure of the glosa asks for more linguistic creation on the part of the poet, whereas the folk singer's creativity is more directly expressed in the musical phrasing and arrangement of the song. However, I think it is a pertinent point of comparison because of the emphasis on "the folk." Throughout this study I have called attention to the ways in which critics have ignored the pertinence of the reader's situation in relation to the glosa, but in the case of the folk song, the role of the listener/audience cannot be ignored. Without the audience's continued interest in the conversation of the song, a song is not a folk song. Just as the singer of the folk song is doubly implicated as a listener who has revisited the song and become singer, the composer of the glosa is a reader who revisits a poetic utterance and becomes poet. *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir* investigates the relationship between song and poem, between listener and speaker, "the folk" and the artist.

The connection between song and poetic voice is no idle one. Leonard Cohen, who appears throughout this study and in *Hologram* as well as *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir,*

made his move to music in the late 1960s. But as Michael Ondaatje notes in his reading of Cohen's work up to *Songs of Leonard Cohen*, "even his earliest poetry contained the basic structures and the qualities of song" (Ondaatje 4). His musical career has demonstrated the way in which song can facilitate the sharing of poetry. Homer Hogan in his collection of Canadian Songs and poems, *Listen! Songs and Poems of Canada*, explains that typically, "Song poetry is … simpler than spoken poetry and so provides a natural beginning point for those who want to follow the magic ways of words" (Hogan ix). Cohen's songs have long lines and images directly informed by his collections of poetry that preceded his musical career, and in this way, his music challenged the distinction between the song lyric and the poetic lyric. As we saw in the Cohen dedication collections, the move to music allowed his poetry to reach audiences around the world in a way that a collection of written poetry would likely be unable to do. Cohen expressed his affinity for the "folk song renaissance" saying it allowed poets to "bring the word back to the jukebox which is really where you have to have it, or at least where I like to have it" (qtd. in Ondaatje 5). Ondaatje reflects the way in which Cohen's move to music was not a change in genre, but a change in delivery of his poems: "poetry audiences gradually began to hear him sing with guitar rather than to hear poems being read" (5).

I engage the song lyric at this point in the study because throughout this critical work I have traced particularities of written lyric expression. The glosa, along with the other forms I examined, enable particular lyric expression wherein subjectivity is mediated by plurality of voice. In particular, the folk song lyric, because of its proclivity for evolution achieves a special status in that, like the glosa, it is a form defined by accumulation and endurance. Each new singer changes the original lyric or melody or rhythm of a folk song, but with each new incarnation the song carries with it the voices of the past (accumulation) and an expression that

endures (be it the melody, lyrics, etc.). *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir* draws on the forms examined throughout this study – concept collaboration collection, dramatic monologue, pas de deux, elegy and the dedication collection – and extends the possibilities of the glosa by engaging the qualities of song. The first three sections of the collection are poems for the page, in the sense that they are lyric poetry that engages song thematically and the final section, "Sheet Music," presents three musical songs with accompanying recordings. "Sheet Music" reflects the farthest extreme of this departure into song by engaging some of the formal elements of the glosa in the construction of songs.

If the final section is the most extreme departure from the conventional Canadian glosa, then the first section, "Folk Songs," presents glosas that most closely adhere to the form. "So the end did not come," the first poem, draws its cabeza from Leonard Cohen's song, "A Singer Must Die," from his album *New Skin for the Old Ceremony*. Slant rhyme is used in the sixth and ninth line of each stanza and plurality of voice is marked visually with italicization. Also, each of the cabeza lines is attributed to a voice (or voices) other than that of the speaker. Rather than figuring the 'other voice(s)' as the voice of Cohen, the cabeza lines are attributed to a community. Endowing the song lyrics to voices of the unnamed community examines the way in which song lyrics can come to 'belong' to the audience. As well, the original lines in the glosa interact with the quasi-dystopic imagery and tone of "A Singer Must Die." Cohen's title raises the theme of the responsibility of utterance and the lyrics of the song maintain the limited characterization of the central figure as reflected by the generic article in "A Singer." "So the end did not come" responds to the circumstance of the one persecuted by creating a community that may surround such an individual.

"Epistle in the trees," the second poem in this section, meditates on expressions of love in

song and in letters. Like "So the end did not come," "Epistle in the trees" follows the 9:1 pattern of the conventional glosa and each repetition of the cabeza lines is situated at the end of the stanzas, though in this instance, the cabeza lines are not italicized and the ten-line stanzas are broken into stanzas of three and seven lines. Similar to Catherine Graham's "amended" glosas, "Epistle in the trees" allows the energy of the poem to establish the stanza lengths, rather than the directives of the form. The cabeza comes from John Glassco's "The Death of Don Quixote" and reflects a sort of existentialist reckoning with the chaos of the human life. "Epistle in the trees" speaks to the metaphor of chaos justified by music and to the celebratory tone of the cabeza. A good point of comparison for this glosa is my reading of Page's "Planet Earth." "Epistles" excises Glassco's lines from the Quixotic context and carries the conversation of "the endless waltz" into a conversation about writing. Recalling Orlando's poems to Rosalind in the trees of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, "Epistle in the trees" meditates on the (declining) role of love letters within a community.

Conversation between cabeza and glosa poets in "Tell me the colour of street song" functions similarly to "Epistle in the trees" in that it takes Philip Kevin Paul's lines out of their context and changes their direction. "Silver Lake, July," the poem of the cabeza, is written as a second-person address to a distant lover. Whereas in "Silver Lake, July," the act of singing is part of a memory of an expression of love between two lovers, "Tell me the colours of street song" takes singing-as-an-act-of-love out of the intimate space of a romantic relationship and into public space: "a song, begun as yours, now ours." In this way, the conversation between the speaker and Paul is one like in Peralta's "The Dream": the voice of the cabeza poet is subsumed into that of the speaker, yet recognized as overheard by the use of the second-person address.

"Duet and Trios," is the next section of *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*, and as the

title suggests, it presents glosas in which distinct voices work together in the creation of the poems. "Little Echo" draws specifically on the ideas examined in the concept collaboration poem section. This poem is particularly different from other glosas in that it is the product of "extraordinary literary collaboration" (Calder 96). Courtney Clinton was given the prompt to write four lines on the subject of "echo." "Little Echo" was written in direct response to these four lines and examines the relationship between two sisters and each sister's relationship to living as a linguistic minority in a foreign community. This kind of glosa is somewhat similar to the recently popular "renku" form.[47] A "Japanese form of collaborative linked verse," the renku has recently garnered attention in Canadian letters because of the 2013 publication of *Whisk* by the collective, Yoko's Dogs (Abbey Paige).[48] Collaboration in the renku is defined by the fact that the poet writing the first utterance does not have control over the lines that will subsequently be put into collaboration with his or her words. "Little Echo" is most significantly informed by the concept collaboration and draws on elements of "extraordinary literary collaboration" as well as elements of sequential sharing as examined in *Bread and Chocolate & Marrying Into the Family* (Calder 96). The two voices speak independently throughout the first three stanzas as is reflected by the italicization and isolation of the cabeza lines. In the final stanza, the speaker of the poem takes on the voice of the cabeza speaker in a recognition of the way in which the two voices are united in their conversation of their imagined difference.

"Songs in night sharp" and "As the mist begins to bruise" present a kind of collaboration imposed by the speaker. Both poems take cabezas from two different poets and put them into conversation. I call these poems "Trios" because the two voices of the cabeza are joined by the

[47] The renku has a number of rules in terms of the kind of language that may be used and the way in which the poem is to progress, but the connection to this glosa is that the renku asks one poet to write the opening tercet and then one by one three other poets adds his or her own stanza to the piece.

[48] Yoko's Dogs is a collective comprised of Mary di Michele, Susan Gillis, Jan Conn and Jane Munro.

voice of the speaker. The cabeza poets are put into a conversation instigated and mediated by the speaker. Like the dramatic monologue poems these two poems use imagined interlocutors. Drawing on John Barton's use of a cabeza that borrowed lines from both Page and Auden, these poems examine what happens when the glosa plays host to three independent poetic voices.

"Songs in night sharp" forces two different 'night songs' into conversation to test the limits of poetic memory. Jan Zwicky's "Night Song" comes from her collection *Thirty-seven Small Songs & Thirteen Silences* in which she works the song poem form through classical music and philosophy. Langston Hughes' poem, "Songs," looks to the way in which song communicates something beyond lyrical content. In his poem, Hughes uses images of dark and light – images that ripple across the vast body of his work in the context of racial representation and confrontation. By placing Hughes' "Songs" in conversation with Zwicky's "Night Song," the respective "darks" of the two poets are put into conversation. The glosa's imagined voices are that of the unnamed speaker and the unnamed "her" figure. These voices do not particularly stand in for Hughes and Zwicky, but engage in a moment born of the encounter of these two poetic utterances.

Stanzas one and three of "Songs in night sharp" open with the lines of Hughes and end with a line from Zwicky. In this way, the lines of each poet are formally placed in the positions of call and response. The speaker uses Hughes' and Zwicky's lines to create the circumstance of the songs' interaction – the night time setting of the poem is a composite construct of the two cabezas. Situated in this dually constructed moment, the speaker tries to understand how his or her experience of the song he or she performs relates to the listener's experience of the song. Notably, this glosa deviates from the traditional form because of the presence of two cabezas. The penultimate stanza responds to the absence of Hughes' voice from the second stanza by

refraining the line "I sat there singing her" and does not include any of Zwicky's lines. Altering the pattern of utterance reflects the patterns of oral conversation in which speakers are not restrained to a strict and measured back-and-forth pattern. Recall *No Longer Two People*, which opens with a Crozier poem in two parts that is followed by a short poem by Lane. Aesthetically representing the imbalance of natural and oral conversation calls attention to the way in which the relationship between the glosa's interlocutors need not be predetermined, but may be developed *by* the two voices *as they interact*. The poem ends on a tercet comprised of one line composed by each poet of the poem.

"As the mist begins to bruise" further develops the possibility of imagined voices interacting in the glosa by explicitly placing the imagined voices of two poets into a call and response dialogue. The first and third stanzas end in lines from Leonard Cohen's "As the Mist Leaves No Scar" and the second and fourth end in lines from Phyllis Webb's "The Bruise" – in this way, the poem stages a call and response between an imagined Cohen voice and an imagined Webb voice. More so than the other glosas so far examined in *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir*, "As the mist begins to bruise" engages specifically with the poets from whose poems the cabezas are taken. The poem picks up on the subject of male and female language that recurs throughout this study and examines Webb's career-spanning struggle with gendered implications of long and short lines. Webb's contention that the long line was traditionally considered masculine ("On the Line" 21-22) is placed into a kind of pas de deux context. I vary the pas de deux's formal representation of a debate by allowing each voice to respond to the other. Whereas the pas de deux allows each voice one utterance, this glosa implicates the two voices as both speakers and listeners. Cohen, who worked extensively in long lines and who often used those long lines in the service of describing female figures, is juxtaposed with Webb who was

celebrated for the short lines of *Naked Poems* and never completed the long-line project she set out to write (Butling 97). "As the mist begins to bruise" operates like a dramatic monologue sequence disguised as a conscious collaboration – a trio performing a duet.

"Songs of Tribute," as the title suggests, are glosas that revisit the possibility of homage in the glosa. "Susan Musgrave gave a workshop on the appropriate facial expressions for a good lay" plays with the influence of the cabeza poet on the glosa poet. The long title echoes the long and comical titles of many of Musgrave's later poems and evokes her stream-of-consciousness style. In the style of a tribute, the speaker of the poem mitigates personal experiences with Musgrave with personal experiences with Musgrave's poetry. The speaker identifies as a female poet and tries to situate her own work in relation to that of Musgrave by way of allusion and imitation. In this way, Musgrave becomes the *subject* of the conversation as well as a participant in the conversation. Recalling Marta Dvořák's "enunciative split," the speaker constructs a representation of self-as-lover as created by her own past and present subjectivities and by her narrative and poetic relation to the figure of Musgrave.

"Imagine me, Matilde" is tonally and stylistically distinct from the rest of the poems in *Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir* because of the extent to which the speaker's voice concedes to that of the cabeza poet. The poem looks to the way in which homage in conjunction with features of the dramatic monologue can modulate the glosa. Formally, "Imagine me, Matilde," strictly follows the conventional glosa form. Stylistically, the voice draws heavily on the voice of Pablo Neruda's love sonnets. Continuing the collection's theme of expressions of love, the poem investigates the way in which the figure of praise (in this case, Matilde) of a lyric expression is 'given' to the community of readers. Neruda's *100 Love Sonnets* creates Matilde, the subject of his private and intimate relationship, as a public subject of praise. Matilde becomes

the lover of readers in their reading of Neruda's words. Matilde, as a poetic figure, lives in the voice of Neruda and here is created as a construct of Neruda's voice and a reader's experience of Neruda's poetry.

The final section, "Sheet Music," is comprised of three oral songs and one written poem, "Montreal Flamenco." The songs deviate significantly from the standard glosa form in order to accommodate their oral performance. As well, they draw upon the structural advantages of song's refrain and tendency towards repetition. Repetition is the most prominent technique in the songs because it allows for consideration of the way in which the voice can characterize language and reflects the glosa's concern with the endurance of language. As I mentioned earlier in my earlier discussion of folk music, the songs each take their cabezas from musical traditions in which the compositions outlast the composers. "Just Another Day," for example, is a traditional gospel song that was later made popular by Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers, but the original composer of the lyrics is now unknown. This first song shares its melody with the original song but alters the lyrics. The lyrics of the cabeza are reformulated to take the gospel song a step away from its traditional specifically religious context and the supplementary lines. Because the melody is maintained but the lyrics are changed, this song demonstrates the extra flexibility endowed to the glosa form when translated into musical song. The melody is part of the cabeza – a consideration reflected by the shortened cabeza form.

The second poem, "Montreal Flamenco" introduces the intervention of instrumentation in the performance of song lyrics. The glosa questions the relationship between traditional music and the context of a performance. Notably, Federico Garcia Lorca, a Spanish poet, is the cabeza poet in a glosa where the speaker is situated in a Canadian context, writing in the English language of a performance of Spanish language music. The speaker investigates his or her own

experience of traditional music when it is transposed into a foreign context. Celebration of the experience of a musical performance as represented by Lorca's lines is in conversation with the speaker's awareness of his or her own circumstance. "Montreal Flamenco" appears at this point in the collection in order to mark the shift from "Just another day," a glosa song in which the melody is part of the cabeza to the final two songs, which deal explicitly with enduring lyrics instead of enduring melodies.

"Hard song, good work" borrows cabeza lines from the Eastern Canadian folk song, "Oh, The Jones Boys." The glosa song draws on the popularity of working songs in folk music, despite the economic and industrial evolutions of Western society. The glosa plays with the anonymity of the common surname "Jones" and looks to the way in which the folk songs foreground more generic narratives in order to facilitate the expression of interrelatedness and a common emotional experience.

Similarly, "Singers in the deep" works within another folk tradition, the Andalusian "deep song." Lorca wrote and presented extensively on this type of song, particularly in relation to his theory of "duende," the ineffable "power" and muse figure that he sees as driving this kind of vocal performance (*In Search of Duende* 49). Lorca's lecture, "Deep Song," was written for the 1992 Festival of Cante Jondo in Granada, Spain. He calls deep song "the musical soul of the [Andalusian] people" and goes on to explain that the genre was formed by an intermingling of Indian, European, Oriental and "Gypsy" influences (*In Search of Duende* 2-3). Because deep song is a kind of music founded on the convergence of different cultural and linguistic influences, it suits the diversity of our contemporary North American context. For Lorca, deep song is "truly deep, deeper than all the wells and seas in the world, much deeper than the present heart that creates it or the voice that sings it, because it is almost infinite" (10). In this way,

"depth" is the metaphor he uses to describe a kind of emotional expression that transcends subjectivity without feigning objectivity. Deep song, seen in this light, is like a dramatic monologue of the theatre in that traditionally the singer does not refashion the lyrics to suit his or her own voice as we saw with the folk song, but rather the singer takes up the role of the ancient voice of the song and becomes a transmitter of song that "crosses the graveyard of the years and the fronds of parched winds" (*In Search of Duende* 10). The lyrics of deep songs are short and precise presenting "the finest degrees of Sorrow and Pain, in the service of the purest, most exact expression," "condens[ing] all the highest emotional moments in human life into a three- or four-line stanza" (*In Search of Duende* 11).

"Singers in the deep" takes its cabeza from one of Lorca's transcriptions of deep song. As was the case in "Hard song, good work," the borrowed lines are mostly kept together in the new song – again, playing on song's use of refrain. As in "Just another day," the lines are slightly altered in their repetitions to afford the lines a new context – this time, the third-person is substituted for the first-person voice. Rather than separating the lines of the deep song, this glosa song surrounds the refraining cabeza with new lines that direct listeners to the voice, "to the sounds." The performance of this particular song is stylistically informed by Lorca's description of deep song in performance: "one of the most remarkable characteristics of the deep song poems is their almost complete lack of a restrained, middle tone … An Andalusian either shouts at the stars or kisses the red dust of the road. The middle tone does not exist for him" (12). Lorca's comment refers to both the lyrical content of the deep song poem and the style of the vocal performance. "Singers in the deep" builds towards a long section of vocal improvisation in order to foreground the oral quality of this type of song.

I end my collection with this poem because of the way in which it draws together many

of the various elements and figures in this study. Ending with Lorca serves to bring the collection full circle back to the beginning because of his prominent influence on Cohen. As well, Langston Hughes had a significant literary relationship with Lorca (Isabel Soto 102), and like Hughes, experienced the gospel, soul and jazz of the "Harlem Renaissance" (*In Search of Duende* vii). "Singers in the deep" asks listeners to consider what characterizes an individual voice – be it oral or written – and to investigate the role of the voice in emotional expression. "The true poems of deep song belong to no one – they float in the wind like golden thistledown, and each generation dresses them in a different color [sic] and passes them on to the next," explains Lorca (15). Deep song, like the glosa, is ever in dialogue with the past and present. Emotional expression is at once reflective of individual experience and a desire to create relationships. By sharing language, the poet is able to create a subjective lyric that recognizes itself as one in a community of related experience. In this way, the glosa reflects "the way in which language is passed from poet to poet" (Jamieson 275) but more significantly the glosa enables the poet to recognize themselves as part of a community of voices and that their own voice is defined equally by acts of listening, speaking and being heard. Individuals in glosas are represented as "relational selves" founded on networks of interdependence. Through listening the glosa finds a "passive" route to "resisting" the "tyranny of subjectivity" (Webb, "Message Machine" 139; Page, "Questions and Images" 191). In affecting explicit conversation within a poem, the glosa allows poets to recognize and mediate the speaking and listening implicit to poetry.

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Songs of the Involuntary Night Choir

by Lauren Clinton

The Folk Songs

1. So the end did not come

2. Epistles in the trees

3. Tell me the colours of street song

Duet and Trios

4. Little Echo

5. Songs in night sharp

6. As the mist begins to bruise

Songs of Tribute

7. Susan Musgrave gave a workshop on the appropriate facial expressions for a good lay

8. Imagine me, Matilde

Sheet Music

9. Just another day

10. Montreal Flamenco

11. Hard song, good work

12. Singers in the deep

So the end did not come

I thank you, I thank you for doing your duty,
You keepers of truth, and you guardians of beauty.
Your vision is right, my vision is wrong,
I'm sorry for smudging the air with my song.
-- "A Singer Must Die," Leonard Cohen

You don't have to stock up for the end of the world;
it's a BYOB affair.
You've done all you could to track the 'heavenly bodies'
and all the signs are under the same science, now.
The calendar has outlived the monks, the monarchs and the caesars
who made it, why shouldn't it have ended presently and acutely?
Rail the speed to whip through the tarot – read only the major arcana,
the minors are the first gone.
We are the ones to witness the end – or so we thought. All night we waited patiently:
"I thank you, I thank you for doing your duty."

But what voice did we expect? We were ready to chaperone the great confrontation
of the boldest final chapters in the various books of fear.
Now for the writers' retreat to write the end into someone else's future.
Notre Dame will propose, in all her grace, a weekly meeting to anticipate the close.
In the old ports where our favourite churches and banks meet in a parade
of our best rocks and glass,
where we once whispered because we thought Notre Dame was sleeping,
there you'll stand on the onyx steps of Banque National and I'll yell over
from Bank of Montreal: "What's fresh today?" The sleepless Dame cooing:
You keepers of truth, you guardians of beauty,

You hadn't planned on getting rid of the empties,
and she's right. For our end-of-all-nights night we assembled
no clean-up crew. Did we assume it would all burn?
Or was it just
that our bodies would be of and amongst the mess
and refuse? I imagined a deeper night that deepened in good dark
hung-struck through the day. Us, hung-struck through the day's song.
Now to find some other light in the hangover of our planned last-soiree.
Now to agree on the formula for the aftermaths and to exchange confessions:
your vision is right and my vision is wrong.

You'll later consider: the earthquakes have shifted our streets from beneath
our feet that today step on new land. The ending bash become opening party
before the vernissage. Our murals on the move and our artists off-duty
from prophet-eering. Yet, it is they who will make of this night

something. The only event we did not record. The only
test of our new memories. You remember your certainty
that your death had been foretold – all our deaths on the same stationary.
You remember the singer who found all of our voices and gave them back,
the singer who now busks on the black steps, singing,
I'm sorry for smudging the air with my song.

Epistles in the trees

The image of an endless waltz being
So close to my heart I was always asking
Why should we not dance so for ever, be always
Trees tossed against the sky?
-John Glassco "The Death of Don Quixote"

It is a difficult season to fall
in love, when autumn has started her night groan
and all the summer babies have learned duck calls and pigeon patterns.

And yet, almost every day
I want to write love letters, make sheets
with wet lines of praise that will be stuffed
under pillows and worn-read until language falls
off the words and letters close into the round wholes
of the known world. This is the autumn lovesonging:
the image of an endless waltz being

footed out in deciduous cadences
across the deeper ravine of Sundays.
Sunrises lift only to be wrestled down

in the gold and red company of Maple and Ash
and I am seduced by the violence of this dance
that disguises itself in shuffle rustle,
shuffle rustle. Leaves between our feet
refrain the song of the trees and that rhythm
is all that slows our chaos to choreography. Rhythm
so close to my heart I was always asking,

who? Who told me to stop sending
love in letters? Who reduced music to spelling
and the waltz to one season?

Dear John, Dear Orlando, deer between snow drifts,
You are exiled in the October
park near the bridge where the body hid
for four days in private death. And your voice has the strength
of horror cries and your music hand has the wild
motion of the boneless. But you might read
my letter generously. I write, you read. We read.
Why should we not dance so for ever, be always

instrumental and in tune? And this lovesong is the early
coming of dusk's fallen features. And I address
the care the day has taken not to shave.

> *The Canadian Shield is brittle as this season, as pages*
> *we stopped printing. But it holds together the colours*
> *these months before big snow's great erase.*
> *We forget to watch the trees grow in winter*
> *as we hold together our darknesses like burnt*
> *newsprint, let the headlines speak amongst themselves.*
> *We open each other's envelopes and make love like*
> *trees tossed against the sky.*

Tell me the colours of street song

> ...after working it together,
> the song you were singing
> when you sang faultlessly
> and without restraint
> -- *"Silver Lake, July" Philip Kevin Paul*

I know we'll learn to love again,
first, I'll break it down and then we'll learn the sounds.
We've been old so long
we forget the good graffiti
of young. The shared patent of tags. Do you know my son,
my son, the one the blues song raised, over-
raised and passed along. Oh
you forgot to pass hands again like harmonica across gums;
accordion night song, beer sweet and braced teeth. Got a drum, we can make this better
after working it together.

My friends dream of zombies these nights
– the true apocalypse in sleep –
of peopled bodies with bludgeoned voices, word-free
movements and teeth for meat, faces
just glitches in the street – was it you
that uncurled these dreams to me? Saying
the truth of the day has no place in public sleep,
or was it the shape the benches took
from city trees when you filled the square turned scene, turned relief from waiting
by the song you were singing.

Shoes and shoes passing shoes all hiding all buffering
dancers' feet. Keeping rhythm without choice
but you, you stopped the beat –
then built and over there and there,
this whole damn square was undressing gait
the old couple in matching purple windbreakers helplessly
tried to cover up with smile. But beautifully,
it was too late, the zombies started bleeding
taking up speech as a found hobby
and a peace broke out and it was messy
when you sang faultlessly.

The next day there will be
the dancers we at first had not seen
they hadn't seen the dancefloor in concrete space. The openings.

And you become *lover*, mine and ours and theirs
your *love* making waves in air – waves the neighbours had only shivered
in closed beds. Now, sex a community. Explained
by each limb finding new home in a song, begun as yours, now ours:
the gift of more givers to kiss without favour, to reopen to memory and lost language
like starling and lover and remember and resistance paint
and without restraint.

Little Echo

I moved abroad and lost my voice.
My only mode of communication was to echo the words around me.
I got better at mimicking and soon I could pass for local;
had I ever been more than an echo?
-- Courtney Clinton

It was the measure of a man or a grown
girl in our family currency:
our lexical departures
to shores made of fatter rocks, made
and shorn from the maps of our primary school.
And there, big sister, re-clothing the old
stories. As kids she told me, *You look older*,
and only then could I see it too –
the looks of my limbs, my skin that followed skeleton's advice.

I moved abroad and lost my voice.

So sure it could be found, so sure this loss was good, was age, I turned
through the haunts we'd half known
half together, turned
to flight past the blank in our flag
this country never bothered to fill in.
She had found, it seemed, the astounding.
The place where our voices became us.
Became sand-solid.
Awake to a new dream in a colonial land across the sea,

my only mode of communication was to echo the words around me.

That first hangover in windowless space,
trapped in the language of foreign smokers
where I couldn't understand the food
that stained the kitchen walls, that brought mice
the landlord claimed he couldn't see. Meanwhile, sister
sliced onions for flavour, drank good cheap
wine on columned streets. She called across
to tell of these publics *using* space.
Imagine our surprise at community *in* the stones...

I got better and better at mimicking and soon I could pass for local.

When would I *pass* too?

M. Pharmacist, I have 'the dying'
or do I mean 'the strike'? The symptoms lost to consonants.
Lost to the mouth's best guess at the ear. *can you hear me?*
Each day an underground phone booth at time change's
cracked hour for calls. But by then the coffee she made was
so good I was sure her lover wouldn't let go
of her body long enough for it to look back at mine
Can you hear me? Bella? Ma belle.
Her return to the family a week before my coming home:
had I ever been more than an echo?

Songs in night sharp

I sat there singing her
Songs in the dark.
…
I said,
There are
No words.
-Langston Hughes “Songs”

The sky turns its dark head
and the breezes fold themselves among the leaves.
Who is left?
The last thrush-song has soaked into the earth.
-Jan Zwicky “Night Song”

I sat there singing her
songs in the dark.
Sang her face and the shape
it takes between hands.
Sang her mother and father
into the sweat of her becoming.
Sang her the ocean’s
smallest-celled
fire bug that shares her name. Sang until
the sky turned its dark head.

And I quietly
reminded her of the boughs
of southern trees where she used
to swing in fun. But she heard
Strange Fruit and so I jazzed
my melody, never wanting
this night to learn history. We sat there
and the breezes folded themselves among the leaves.

I said
there are
no words
in songs, just lyrics:
poems freed in music.
And she said she was free
to ignore the notes and I
knew she hadn’t understood.
I sang her dark skin had washed up on this shore.
I sang her light skin had washed up on this shore.
Who is left?

she asked.
We are.
I sat there singing her

songs in the dark.
We sat there.
She was loveliest in night song
but sat well in day tune.
But the singing
was changing
her and could not keep
up with her becoming.

I sat there singing her
until
the last thrush-sung had soaked into the earth.

As the mist begins to bruise

As the mist leaves no scar
on the dark green hill,
so my body leaves no scar
on you, nor ever will.
-- "As the Mist Leaves No Scar," Leonard Cohen

Again you have left
your mark.
Or we
have.
-- "The Bruise" Phyllis Webb

I always
win the telephone game.
The trick is hanging up first.
Retract long fingernails,
a line or two for varnish, colour-dark
and your naked name: *Lips.*
Lips strung up
like leaves with no traces
of the tree that grew them so. As the mist
leaves no scar
on the dark green hill.

What was in the first fistful,
was it *lover, lover, lover, lover*?
Just can't come back, can't recognize lover's name, these days.
I will name you with coloured clothing piles
and spaces that could fit your body –
perhaps just here: your body. You don't like to see the pane through
your clean sills. Could you hold still still holding me or allow just one
question to mark the stencil of me you press page to page? Yes, once
again you have left
your mark
or we
have.

As you are not. As you are not;
as you are, once
we are.
How could the stove have lit
your smoke without me
there to stage the snow.
I bring the sky's flakes inside by window –
as you become window, lover,
my body leaves no scar
on you, nor ever will.

Evers and wills and evers and wills, but it is the tracing that cannot be unhanged.

I am not in the business of going or backing – though
I've seen good bows run that line across cellos left-rightly.
A lover knows when something grows fruit and knows how
hard it is to share mist among roots. Knows that I came in through
the window by my own fire escape. Knows that I *fucked a saint*, but not because you told
me to – knows the saint wasn't you. Again you have left your mark, but you never thought to
hear it. How many of us in the basement of your song
did it take to screw in the light? You have loaned out your bruises,
but I have *given* mine,
or we
have.

Susan Musgrave gave a workshop on the appropriate facial expressions for a good lay

Last night you dreamed I drove off
with a philosophical taxi-driver;
this time you knew I was leaving you
for good. In your dreams I betray you
-- "Ice-Age Lingerie" Musgrave

Musgrave only teaches islanders in summer.
I'd wake you up to wake me up then drive me to her class in the propane-
van with holes in the floor and a half metre between the only seats.

I would take you back tomorrow if I thought there was a back for me to take.
If Musgrave hadn't taken all of the smirks out
of the poems I wrote to put your body in.

If I knew your eyes were *fucky brown*
like the ones she wrote – where in my margins

did she note I was a bad dream, too? Every morning your arms said
last night you dreamed I drove off.

There's no way to talk about your body without putting it up
for sale, unnaming someone else's and breaking both to linen bags of bone shards.
My poem about *death and sex* was the one she liked best – *they're what poems are about.*

It was earth and abdomen and hot head in sleep, in dead
bodies fucking soil (or were they making love?) You wanted to translate
it and only now has it become the picture of us: when bed was my only furniture

and we never noticed cameras. Our clothes dressed
as loose blankets and I was coughing and you were eying the lighter

on my lap. I left you notes at all the bus stops along my route and went home
with a philosophical taxi-driver.

You and I never knew track lines outside of vinyls,
not like Musgrave. She sees corpses as smell,
and bible pages as rolling papers for prison joints.

I see the things an airplane does to constellations
and I do them to you. You dream I am that moving point,
the mechanized light that moves too quickly to fake stardom.

Musgrave interrupts her own poems at readings
in the name of Al Purdy. Even in death he is her ceiling-spider: symbiotic.

But you were afraid of too many legs and this time I wouldn’t kill
for you. This time you knew I was leaving you.

Prison pen pal turned lover: this is how a poet dips her ink in the company
laundry. You understood that reading was and was not sex, always,
and that's why we learned to do it out loud and to mark up our books.

He dreams she runs off, then he gets himself locked away – the little dipper
cannot convince the damned airplane to stay. (I might tell you: *they were never*
that close anyway). On Haida Gwaii, Musgrave got a call that there were enough owls

on her property to start a conversation. Unfortunately the police overheard.
You were too busy listening to the different cadences of leaves
to know I'd given you to her on paper,
for good. *In your dreams I betray you.*

Imagine me, Matilde

Matilde, name of plant or stone or wine,
of what is born of earth and lasts,
word, which in growing, dawns,
in whose summer the light of lemons bursts.
-- "Sonnet I" *cien sonetos de amor* Pablo Neruda (Trans. Gustavo Escobedo)

At this hour, only the man who walks the tracks
is awake. And I,
but only for the breath of
your sleep took me from mine.
To you: my every morning.
That much is ours. Mine,
is the last star to wake –
a reminder that any sun
written close enough to your time
is warm. Matilde, name of plant or stone or wine,

you are before fiberglass
canoes, your skin, a cured bark under my borrowed hands.
When, like today, I wake before you,
I hear your name all along the first gunwales
to curve the day's water-cast
and I carry pebbles to imagine
I hold the weight of your dreams
in the same hands I share with you.
These same hands that ask
of what is born of earth and lasts

to stay palm-sized, to stay heavy, Matilde,
as your leaden breath, this morning –
the lifting of which is your first work of day
and my first sunrise. The sea is waiting,
Matilde, for your wave,
for your broken yawns
and clotted-eyelashes
still holding the ground-stones of sleep.
The morning song of birds dons
word, which in growing, dawns

your peace into day.
It is not that the planet is dormant
until you wake it. It is that *our* planet
crouches until we spread it with our seasons,

season it with our hands.
We pleat the sea first,
to hear the rhythm of land;
repeat it with your hands, as I do, when I return to our bed
full of you. My Matilde, my thirst,
in whose summer the light of lemons burst.

Just another day

Just another day that my Lord has kept me here.
Just another day that I've been in my saviour's care.
-- "Just Another Day" Traditional Gospel Song
(based on version by Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers)

♩
Just another day
that I woke up with belief.
Just another day
I know I'll earn my sleep.
Just another day
that my soul is in company.

Just another day
there are mountains I can't reach.
Just another day,
those lines I can't beat.
Just another day,
but I'm not afraid,
you could bury me now
right beneath my feet. It's just another day.

Just another day that my world has kept me here
Just another day that I've been in someone's care
Just another day, just another day

Just another day that I woke up with belief.
Just another day, oh, I'll earn my sleep.

It's just another day.

Just another day there are mountains I can't reach
Just another day there are lines I can't beat

Just another day,
but I won't be afraid
Just another day
that I didn't face my grave.
It's just another day.
It's just another day that my world has kept me here.
It's just another day.

Montreal Flamenco

Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Se rompen las copas
de la madrugada.
Empieza el llanto
de la guitarra.
Es inútil
callarla.

Begins the weeping
of the guitar.
Bursts open the wine-glasses
of before-dawn.
Begins the weeping
Of the guitar.
It is useless
to quiet her.

-Federico Garcia Lorca
"The Guitar" (Transl. mine)

She plays the bass string as its own
guitar. And the people answer
their phones. The tender has to be asked
to turn off the bar screens – they are on
more often than the stage. The act of listening –
can it be slowed
to reading's pace?
One of her wrists has more hands than the other –
look! – one string
begins the weeping
of the guitar.

Before feet, hips or even
knees, the dancer applies her voice
then hands.
She is in a courtship, she is in a history
of song. Go! *Olé*! Oh,
later on
will reveal she's teaching the audience to participate:
Some of them cannot see her feet or the guitarist's
hands, but they can hear each. And the song
bursts open the wine-glasses
of before-dawn.

Bursts open the next song.
The drummer relinquishes
the beat to chunked heels
(yes, he is here too)
and the dancer looks up, away from her instrument
and the guitarist looks deep into the mouth of her soft machine

and both move faster than the sound they create
and create and shatter.
Before its own ending,
        begins the weeping
        of the guitar.

And the audience continues
to drink the wrong beer, to cheer
in the wrong times (they choose the pauses).
But the musicians are reciting
their old catechisms of rhythm and stress
the notes their own bodies wrote.
And when the stage clears,
and the crowd is peopled again,
for those who heard it, the guitar weeps no less.
        It is useless
        to quiet her.

Hard song, good work

Oh the Jones Boys
Built a mill on the side of the hill
They worked all night
And they worked all day
But they couldn't make the gosh-darned sawmill pay.
-- Traditional Eastern Canadian Folk Song "Oh The Jones Boys"

♩
Change the industry
You can change the land
You can change the occupation
But the song still stands.

Oh the Jones Boys
built a mill
on the side of the hill…

People work for everything
They work for nothing too
They look for love in between
They look for love through the screen.

Oh they worked all night
And they worked all day
But they couldn't make the damned sawmill pay.

So sing in the field
So sing to your big or small machine
Sing on your chain gang
Just sing all the same, man.

Sing to get out of there
When your feet can't move
So sing for your lost friend
And the love you can't prove.

Oh the Jones boys built a mill
on the side of the hill.
Aren't we the Jones boys.
Oh those Jones boys
They worked all day, all day and night,
They couldn't make it pay.

Singers in the deep

Out in the sea
was a stone.
My girl sat down
and told it her pains.

- Traditional 'Deep Song' Poem as Recited by Federico Garcia Lorca and Translated by Christopher Maurer

♩
No one can hear the soul
it doesn't use words
but lives in song.

And I am a siren, not to kill,
but to signal, those souls,
just to call on other souls.

Out in the sea
was a stone
I sit down and tell it my pain
I sat down to tell it my pains.

Out in the sea
there was a stone
I sit down to tell it my pain
I sat down to tell it my pains.

Listen here, between the words
to the sounds, the trace of hurt,
to the sounds, the trace of love.

(Now, you improvise)

Out in the sea
there was a stone
I sat down to tell it my pains
I sat down and told it my pain
I sat down.

That's the way of the siren,
of the sea, of the soul,
and you and me, and my stone.