

**Mani RAO**

**1. POEMS FROM THE MANUSCRIPT GHOSTMASTERS**

***Airing at a sniff***

Easy in the envelope of your hands  
Rewinding to the memoir  
The glyph in your graze

Rrrrip  
Rrrrip  
Rrrrip

E a s y I said to the deaf habit of a jawdisc  
What's the hurry  
The season sprawls

My fiber was coarse  
All five: flavor color odor vibre texture

We ran amok dusting air unsettling  
And now bereft jumped on the moon  
Straycow  
Honeybell  
What else to do but ruminare

Come graze ghost bees  
About time

*.(Published in XCP 2007)*

**Lookout**

Hiding in a tree trunk  
Looking through the hollows  
Firs in new wedding gowns  
Fire budding Christmas trees

It was the trees jangling interior bangles  
Tigers striped past silently  
Rugs on the floor of salvation wood

The first time I saw ginseng I understood the body to be root  
Until a slice of what I could only call steakwood

The river swears it's blue  
Will carry you across

Soon as you leap in  
Fast moving coils  
Who said the python's dead

Where is the hatch  
Somewhere here but giant roots flowed over  
Is it sealed  
Bloody me  
Will we keep

Gone too far free out at sea why does the water wave as if pining for the ties of Shiva's  
braids  
The tangles at the fountainhead  
From here  
The view of the dance

*(First published in Fourth River, 2006)*

**Worker**

Pressed poet  
Having to thing poems  
The lights are off  
Speak in your own person

Anon – Nonym – Nymous  
Strong Weak Relative Nons  
Us Them Impersonyms  
Hate Like Ignoronymous

Many master words

Poet – pretender  
Light – thunder

Permit no ambit  
Even loser's glory

Humility:  
Prolog's cunning  
Epilog's arrogance

*Stay young fox don't learn panic*

That I think it is not to be feared does not mean I don't fear it. I used to be someone. I placed so much value on it I acted humble, prefacing the admission of my fortune with 'undeserved'. How low an opinion I had of myself that I became satisfied.

Art Artifice log away

*(First published in Tinfish, 2008)*

**Drought**

Fruit dump under the tree  
Smarting tender  
Under the sore why-me look  
A drool bedding noodle soup  
Worm hitch

Wriggling gone from the grass no winds frisk

Collecting dry rivers  
Seas

The sea was no slake  
Cracked continent's crustaceous parts drifted upcreek

Said salt of the earth  
Tastes like mud  
Looks like chocolate

Outgrown the fish juts  
Glacier not much more than a hat tipsy on a lite draught

Blood thirsty stalks faint streets

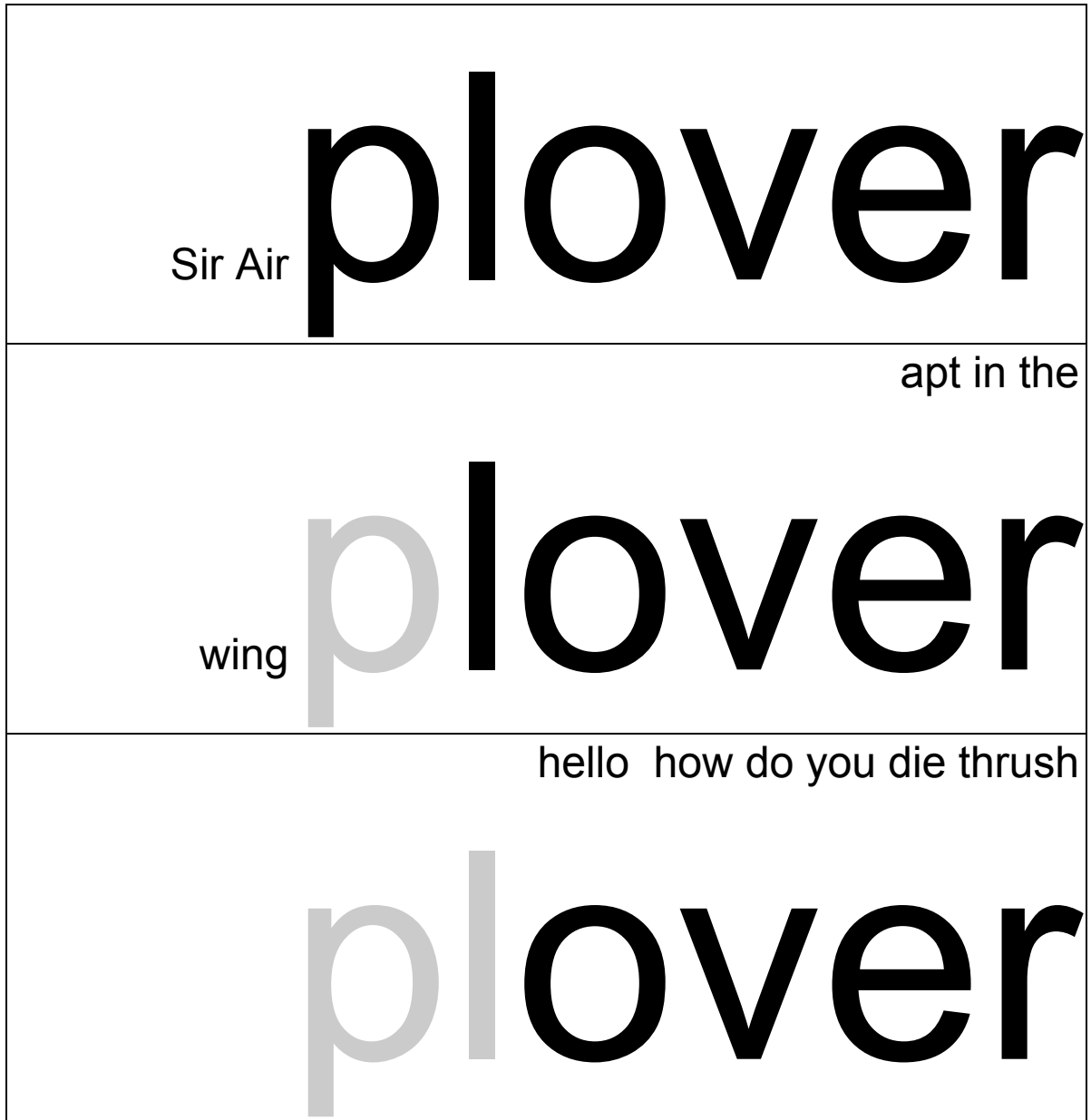
Air wavers at mouth  
Toothless the well caves in

Lips do not blossom even if they meet

The speed with which air avages the plump  
Yah Yah The eerious ways of god  
Hot baker's fleur de mal

*(First published in HOW2journal, 2006)*

**2. EXCERPT FROM *LORINE NIEDECKER CONDENS* - a poem made of Lorine Neidecker's words (to be published in *Interim*, 2010)**



(to be published in *Interim*, 2010)

**EXCERPT FROM A TRANSLATION OF THE POEM BHAGAVAD GITA**

- 1.1           dhrtrashtra to sanjaya:  
                  & when it came to that  
                  might right face-off  
                  what happened who  
                  did what
- 1.2           duryodhana took in the  
                  enemy line up & said  
                  to dronacharya:
- 1.3                           no thanks to you prof.  
                              trained by you dhrstadyumna  
                              chief of the other side  
                              has put it together
- 1.4-1.6                   a who's who  
                              of heroes

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