

PERFECTING THE WISDOM

—strange the strangeness of light—a strangeness there in the light—  
among the narrows halfwild what musk monad  
hail there  
there flutes all down wireman O man with full fists  
stretched there  
that stretched man there full of teeth the filled man  
bleating  
for the dick he's full of there there in his poor O  
the lifeshine there  
all calico on the  
shared side of  
flesh lack what  
geist spoor  
banking there  
a whole man blooms a whole man  
in milk woe  
a whole man blooms—smears unguent around varnished lack  
all agape “soldered with air—”  
gluttonman limbful-light  
swerve vanish  
minnow-wise in dandling broodslant murk  
man light map-  
pings of lack the marrow life hailing there among the wild halfnarrow  
—a lightness there in the strange—light the lightness of the strange—

## A LATTICE

*"In the morning they were still singing, and I was still walking."*

*—Mike Good*

The piece below can be read by multiple voices. The leading voice starts anywhere in the piece and can travel up or down the lines. When the first voice reaches its third line or thereabouts, the second voice enters anywhere and reads. Other voices enter and leave alike.

—and let alone a month let a year alone—the day tonight still the day of the morning's  
day, let alone breath—this this measured on a pane or in a frame, or a measure—a thought  
same, the same as hung above the lines on day—so the day's thought the day of or in a thought—  
a thought's thought of the molt of the day years of thought—if a year's thought a year then a fathom's  
thought a fathom—but a thought neither both or—anyway this morning's ergodic day—or  
this this's morning's day or in the day of yesternight arose yester's next, blue night—now  
morning's day's day but again not either but nor nought—still this—left—this net of let-alones—  
of same states *it's-time's* netted no-net, a rain-net—alone—its thought of nets of the nets of  
days and rains alone—lets—a verse-ish-ness a thought of nets—a month or a year or a breath  
toiling rain—ponchos skippets debts—debts debts debts of course debts—debts of day, dayslong debts of breath—  
river of debts fruitless river, river of bells, beads, gauze river o river of coins  
toiling sapphire, ashen-elbowed river, o river of merit which cannot step twice

in yourself, step once, step not at all—of which tether, which water—sun-colored glass dustless  
sentential deep water of which grammar, baring which river grammar—what grammar—of what  
baring if nothing hid, what waters, what river and, then, now, what river in or by what  
water—o what river of which water waters what gates—what gates in which pearls and toads, days  
leaping fathoms, of what state, what gate in which something, some, some o four-gated bard river  
o going of jeweled mirrors, serac river, what something, which nothing, or none, none at all—  
not unremembered, below was invisible, all-involved, at the highest of the high  
drawn and bowed and emptied—the tidal voices blooming in themselves, apart, private, furtive—  
lit in ornate radium—black array, frog-fat cherries, deep transparent watermelons  
experienced of trees dense, dark trees, fluvial, mastering—and the silty viola—  
pungent from faraway—jewel sewn to the heart of the blue day—stronger than memory  
o Blue Neck all the boles of the dark affluent in trees—on high marrows, the drawn mountain  
meandering meanings—and below sealed—and opaque *I cannot experience his voice—*

— *for Catherine Gammon*

## THE AGE OF WATERS

For G.C. Waldrep

### WATER-MUSIC

The grouped stanzas below are a fugue, and are to be read simultaneously by three voices. The first voice reads only the first line of each stanza and proceeds to the first line of the next; the other two voices do likewise for the second and third lines, respectively. “•” indicates silence.

{.  
In the Age of Waters in TUALATIN, OREGON,

{.  
standing water looks out of itself — then, moving

{.  
water. Water heavy, indefatigable,

{.  
During the Ages of Waters in Oregon,  
looks out from the pit of its ice near Missoula,

(5) {.  
water pulled to light, water with breasts of glaciers,  
moves, creeps towards the crumble of the holding

{.  
skin of silts — water dispersing “contracting into a span” —  
continent, carving valleys, making sleeves for the rivers —

{  
Back in the Age of Waters, the Age of Wet  
dragged towards the core — seeping, dripping, roaring  
but now barred by walls, tarries inland, now —

{  
and Waters, water was dragged and kept in stone pits,  
into, on through the stone of the Ages of Waters, nets  
now deepening — now, now deepening, deepening, now

{  
but soon burst out — “meandering sluggishly across  
of water, mouths of water, scrolls, blots of water, smirches  
bursts through WALLULA, UMATILLA, spans from WALLA WALLA

(10) { valley in braided channels, oxbows, sloughs, sandbars,  
 of water smirching water —  
 to CROWN POINT, drowns CROWN POINT, builds ALAMEDA,  
 riffles,” moving water, nets of water, wounds of water,  
 wreathes of water, leaves of water —  
 carries MONTANA, PALOUSE, down, down, down into itself —  
 churches of water, now blown on by the wind  
 water condensed — then —  
 along the COLUMBIANA, mothering lakes,  
 of the Age of Water —  
 an exhalation —  
 lakes, and lakes, scattering argillite, uranic  
 .  
 kenosis of water beneath the wind in the wilds,  
 granite, unites, combines itself, to the water,

(15) { .  
 the wild mindlessnesses of the Ages of Waters  
 and the water of the ocean of the Age of Waters —  
 .  
 in Tualatin, Oregon — in the Ages of Waters  
 .  
 blown-on,  
 in Tualatin, Oregon, wind or, or — breathing,  
 .  
 now, now grown-on, grown-on waters of the Age of Wet  
 in the waters, now, a breathing-in, of the water,  
 .

{ and Waters, on whose smear the tip of the fern blossoming long  
now in the now of the water of the Ages of Waters,  
.

(20) { slurs draws a wavering V—aquatic water, amphibian water,  
during the waters of the Age of Waters, in Columbiana—  
.

{ “part of it crawling, part of it about to crawl,” wraiths, wraiths of water  
.

{ in the frills of gills, and breathed-in water—breathed-on water—  
.

{ breathed in, froth of the bond of the broth of the breaths  
.  
In the Age of Waters, in TUALATIN, OREGON,

{ and the breaths of the Age of Waters in TUALATIN, OREGON—  
Flowing out of the cave of an age of the Ages  
silent water—

(25) { .  
of Waters, the Ages of Stone stirred to the softness  
.

{ .  
of an ear, of a lupin, of water, or of daffodil,  
During the Age of Waters in Tualatin, Oregon,

{ .  
talc daffodils, talc faces thronging the waters  
unheard water looked out of itself—

{  
·  
in the Ages of Waters, water of green — rivers  
·

{  
“Green River,” WILLAMETTE, river without sides,  
of green, green rivers, green river, WILLAMETTE, river  
·

(30) {  
moving water moved and moving out of the Age  
of green, flowing, dark green —  
·

{  
of Stone, Age of Wet and Water, Age of Ice, Age  
Green rivers, gold laden —  
·

{  
of Spore, Age of Gills and Bellows, Bellowing Water —  
rivers of riches — the milks of the salts from the silts  
Green rivers, gold-laden, rivers of riches —

{  
·  
from the Ages of Water —  
the silts and the ashes and the salts from the breasts

{  
·  
— in the Age of Waters in  
of the Age of Waters — WALL-LAMT, WILARMET, WALLAMETTE,

(35) {  
the COLUMBIANA, standing water looks out —  
·  
WILLAMETTE, river greened, spilling, gold-laden, where

{  
of itself then — moving water, gold-laden, where seals  
During the Ages of Water in TUALATIN  
“water ripples and runs fast,” green river, gold-laden,



{ swim under the steeps, the “high walls of basalt with sudden  
OREGON — standing water looked of itself —  
river of beavers, lampreys, salmon, slaves, seals, canoes

{ cracks in them” — and the buoyant Siren whose snout made  
.   
hollowed in thick fire, rivers of tongues, tongues of rivers,

{ the snorting of tame horses in the water, whose fat  
.   
CHINOOK, KALAPUYA, TUALATIN, YONCALLA; rivers

(40) { competed with the “best Holland butter” and reeked  
.   
of riches, rivers of teeth, rivers of beads, meats,

{ and reeked of fresh fresh almonds; “placid, loyal,  
.   
abalone brought up from the GREAT BASIN, down

{ loving, and delicious,” snuffling right up to the boat’s  
.   
from WALLA WALLA, UMATILLA; rivers of frogs,

{ wallowing gunwales, “first one foot, then the other, as cattle  
During the Ages of Waters in TUALATIN —  
rivers of Frog Women, Coyote; free, undammed waters —

{ do, sheep do, when they graze, and thus with a gentle motion  
OREGON — standing water looked out of itself — then, moving  
In the age of the green river, gold-laden green rivers,

(45) { half-swim, half-walk” half in the shining, soiling, clanging,  
waters, green, gold-paved, commodious commodity  
winding through fires, rivers of sextants, of schooners,

{ diaphene — half on a dogged blade  
of waters pawing and pawing the waterwheels,  
of gunpowder, of beavers and otters bashed with boulders

{ too blunt for blubber — and the otters, “stupid, sluggish,  
green rivers, gold-laden, aboriginal green scooped, drunk,  
and bartered with the RUSSIANS, the SPANIARDS, the BRITISH

{ surly, sleepy, forever sleepy, capturable  
tippling musical through the windows, plucked waters,  
stumbling upon and naming CAPE FOULWEATHER, PERPETUA —

{ without any painstaking, any ingenuity,”  
slurs of water bowed out the cave of the age of the Ages  
rivers of riches, rivers of Good-and-Bounty, rivers

(50) { frantic, strangling in the nets knotting around loose  
of Water in TUALATIN, OREGON, when standing  
of commerce and plenty and schooners filled with otter skins,

{ eyes, chewing off their own forepaws —  
water looked out of itself, moving, water  
beaver skins, bound for MACAU, the PEARL RIVER,

{ 800 otters in the holds of tiny ST. PETER —  
indefatigable, mothering itself,  
WHAMPOA — pelts of creatures from and of the waters

{ and the mush, those sea-cows at last obstinate,  
its own great- great- grandkin —  
from the Age of Waters, sold for tea, silks,

{ sticking to barrels, to wood teeth; 800 otter pelts  
green rivers, gold-laden, waters of slurs and insects,  
cinnamon, desks, and cups and saucers splashed with arabesques

(55) { sewn onto coats in CHINA with sandalwood buttons —  
diseased water, heavy, dropsical with breath and disease  
of blue cranes, blue water, blue forests — rivers of riches,

{ WILLAMETTE, green river, gold-laden, “river of sickness” —  
rivers of argosies returning from the faraways,

{ malarial river, variolal river of the settler’s headcold —  
bustling like Batavia and bearing “alter-pieces

{ WILLAMETTE of treaties and disease; WILLAMETTE,  
reworked in Asia with gold and silver” given by LIMA,

{ SALMON, LITTLE and BIG NESTUCCA, stocked with fish, rivers  
POTOSI, NUEVA GRANADA — abundance, abundance —

(60) { of game and hunt, rivers of abundance, of giving,  
abounding waters, generous, waters

{ rivers of giving, given rivers of giving, rivers  
of generosity, generous waters of the ROGUE,

{ of taken-away waters, rivers of taking, gold-laden,  
the DESCHUTES, the TILLAMOOK, MACKENZIE, taking, o gladly

{ green, WILLAMETTE, SALMON, YAMHILL halving the given land,  
taking tattered leather, a broken bayonet, tipsy

{.  
land made under the waters of the Ages of Waters,  
kettles, two chipped bronze USA buttons; yielding coats,

(65) {.  
land of horses, land of tangled tongues — UPPER UMPQUAS,  
hats, gloves, tapestries, curtains; always returning, accruing,

{.  
TAKLEMA, KALAPUYA, CHINOOK WAWA,  
green rivers, green abundance, abundance of green,

{.  
YONCALLA, ENGLISH; given land of the “language-houses,” horses,  
ASTORIA, CHAMPOEG, FORT WILLIAM gleaming green in the green

{  
In the Age of Wet and Water in TUALATIN, OREGON,  
horse races, treaties-then-assurances to the 400 left —  
waters of the GREAT RIVER OF THE WEST, fertile seal-bearing

{  
standing water looked out of itself — then, moving water —  
400 left to the ceded waters made  
beaver-breeding otter-giving waters, waters up which,

(70) {.  
in the Ages of Water in Tualatin, Oregon, when standing  
into a hundred, a thousand, a million ripples of havocs

{.  
water looked: moving waters —  
of greens, a breathless otter stumbles, chokes, pursued by stones,

{.  
pursued by nets, by bayonets, a faulty bayonet —