

5 poems after Chaya Czernowin's *Shifting Gravity / Wintersongs III*<sup>1</sup>

**By Anthony Santulli**

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<sup>1</sup> WERGO 2011, performed by Quatuor Diotima / Ensemble Nikel / ascolta / Ensemble Courage / Jonathan Stockhammer, Titus Engel: conductors / Ipke Starke: live electronics / Eric Daubresse (IRCAM): musical assistant

**after Anea Crystal: I. Seed I**

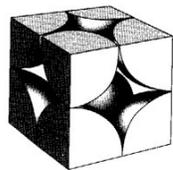
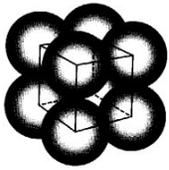
white pizzicato

expansions and

polarized fantasy drafts

in red ink roughly edited

*hello is somebody there*



2

crystal of gones // our warehouse cardinal

caged forever in

the erotic treasury      dark and thin like

Schiele's forest of birch trees

and the bent dynamics

revive horizontally

only four and only

the gravity of instruments

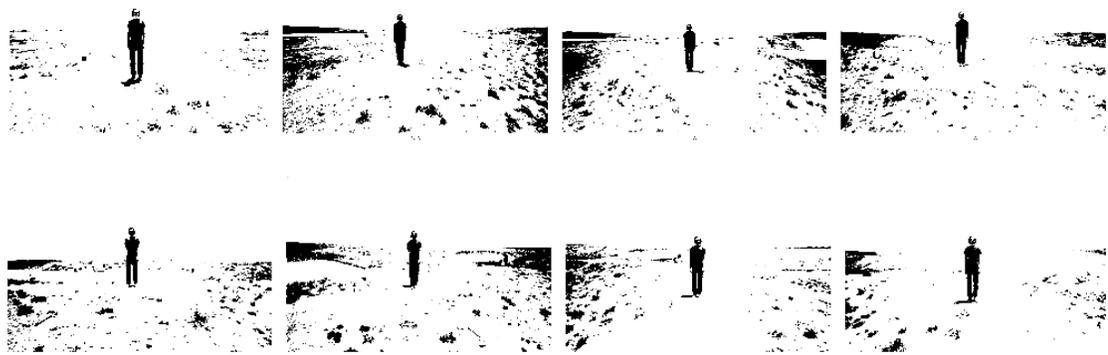
    pacing a room with heavy breath

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<sup>2</sup> Image sampled from Western Oregon University: <https://www.wou.edu/las/phisci/ch412/lattice.html>

**after *Sahaf for Four Instrumentalists***

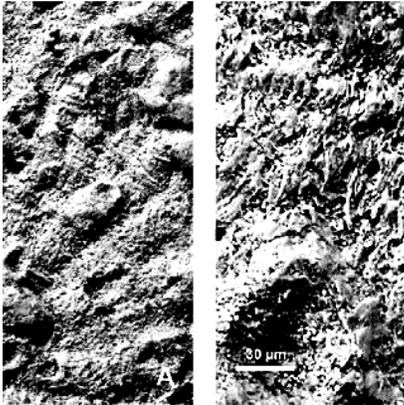
a thief's window  
tuned to the arch  
of celebrity  
and birdsong  
with a longing  
like Ella's (*I'm all  
for you Body  
and Soul!*) how  
the horns bake  
clay cakes  
leaving wheat  
forms expertly  
silenced  
considering how  
its image grew  
from concrete  
and chocolate coins  
substituted  
for the scroll  
of seas  
and screens  
falsely advertising  
depths



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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Shore, *Circle No. 1*, 1969, 8 silver gelatin prints, 5 x 7 inches each, 8 x 10 inches paper size:  
<http://www.303gallery.com/artists/stephen-shore/images/series?view=slider#2>

*after Anea Crystal: II. Anea*



they dive into the well of pasts  
and scrape crystals like gum  
from their shoes

each time the hand is washed  
strings snap and descend  
from the aircraft slowly

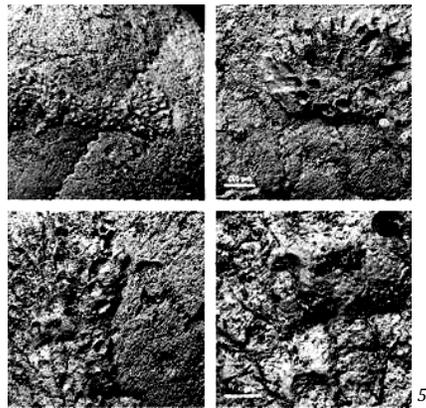
these maneuvers in the dark—  
mirror neurons strip bodies blown  
like Murano glass and child gamblers

lack comfort in the copy room  
tasting desert shivers and passive  
detonations conquer my gestures

each approaching memory  
slips into its past like a wedding  
dress two sizes too small

probably the tuning fork  
dances among almond trees  
swallowing industrial pride

to test the limits of erasure  
and space's capacity for sound  
*and the body performing it*<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Text sampled from Schott Music: <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/anea-crystal-no250152.html>

<sup>5</sup> Images sampled from Bulletin of Geosciences, Jan. 2015: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Stomatopora-aff-dichotomoides-dOrbigny-1850-encrusting-crinoid-ossicles-from-the\\_fig1\\_269095728](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Stomatopora-aff-dichotomoides-dOrbigny-1850-encrusting-crinoid-ossicles-from-the_fig1_269095728)

**after *Sheva for Seven Instrumentalists***

parallel people  
parking their lives  
as though the minds  
of those around them  
were illustrated by  
non-dominant hands

◌  
◌  
6

fragile lines connect  
instances of material  
in homage to the other  
a reflection on the whole<sup>7</sup>

◌  
◌

even the Greeks couldn't  
handle the shatterings  
of time and hygiene  
although they did a good job  
of hiding it

◌  
◌

part of the reason my  
democracy is androgynous

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<sup>6</sup> From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shva>: "Shva or, in Biblical Hebrew, shēwa (Hebrew: שְׁוָא) is a Hebrew niqqud vowelsign written as two vertical dots ( ◌ ) beneath a letter."

<sup>7</sup> Czernowin's text, sampled from Schott Music: <https://en.schott-music.com/shop/sheva-no235467.html>

is because the land can't squint  
and make out distances  
the way you or I or the sky  
can and will be used against you



help yourself to the world  
without utensils or a mouth  
ballooned by punches  
like a mountain shielding light  
from its superflat shadow



young adjectives  
unicycle the island  
with a stone's rage  
and without helmets



as trumpet creepers spread  
without root or economy I  
iron history from iris fibers  
and conduct cardboard orchestras  
where it hurts the most to speak

**after Anea Crystal: III. Seed II**

a sprout

dangles oddly

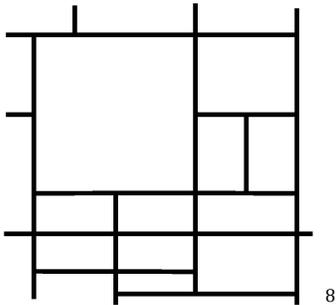
from the edge of sight                      in this weaving

there are no diagonals—

even Mondrian's hand

knew the sound of failure

as a fly buzzes round a flame



wall:    what no drill delays

caskets lift from the present

and never answers the telephone

says same way hips

displace vision the sun

sets over language (whose pistons

need water for a ritual

this dance only approximates)

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<sup>8</sup> Image sampled from Let Me Color: <https://letmecolor.wordpress.com/2013/06/16/painting-coloring-pages-mondrians-composition-with-large-red-plane/>

until now my insides have sat  
like ice-packs in the freezer  
but these strings vivisect  
my soil and compost rains  
patiently awaiting seed

