



# JULIAN

Julian Talamantez Brolaski

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## **a call full throaty thru the oaks**

a call came full throaty thru the woods  
a kid leaned against an oak  
eating a banana or a candy bar, I cdnt tell  
a food w/ flaps  
spider on my table I felt kindly toward it  
but wanted it off held out the package of cigarette papers  
it jumped obligingly on I was pleased it understood my meaning  
but felt a little jumpy myself a jumping  
spider's disconcerting giant ant wasp in ara's hair  
them too I sent away in a minute I'll turn to see if you're  
still writing if you  
still want to write or is it time to leave the wildwood find coffee  
go to the sea write some more I will let  
the sun come into my mind as pure and as pleasantly as a  
silver knife into hamburger

## **butterflies are stupid**

a butterfly is an example of an idiotic image  
not one to idolatrize  
they are former worms I guess, not-worms  
I was telling nick yesterday about the dangers of idolatry  
I gave the example of a butterfly like  
oh I saw a butterfly you saw a butterfly isnt it magical like  
making fun of myself  
then I gave another example to holi over coffee at the good earth  
he 'often' talks about tattoos people shouldn't get  
especially if they don't have any tattoos yet  
I said yeah like a butterfly on your neck  
he said oh weird you say so the lyft driver I had yesterday had a butterfly  
tattooed on his neck, here, he indicated the throte  
and no other tattoos at all at all  
then for some reason I was moved to tell you my own  
story about the butterfly landing on me  
again and again while I was in a patch of sun and outlifted my limbs  
I compared it to the rat-dove and its wing  
that literally swept over me touched my head tousled my hair  
like baudelaire's wind of the wing of madness  
the word he uses is 'l'imbécilitéé' it turns out  
the wind of the wing of imbecility or idiocy  
but a butterfly is an example of a thing not to idolatrize

—

(wrong [upward arrow emoji]  
but you can tell i kind of know it  
hypocrite like vernon telling of his vision  
flying above all the other little christians at the campfire  
just dying in retrospect in his own way to be proved wrong)

## **the bear and the salmon**

it lyked to eat salmon w/ its  
fingers like a bear  
and then use those fingers  
to clean its glasses

## amphibian enterprize

I told my therapist Deborah my only recurring dream as a child. A dream daemon down a dark well. Literally holding my breath in its claws. The well is narrow and made of a slippery, porous rock, a mixture between the smooth wet stones of the west coast and the sharp and porous lavarock of the islands. Moss and damp. I am down here, with this creature. It is holding the physical embodiment of my Breath. Its figure is bent and twisted, with limbs like an elongated golem. My own physical position is unclear, I am stuck somewhat below and clinging to the walls of the well, but no sensation. I can see light several feet up above. I am terrified, can't move or breathe or scream. There isn't any narrative movement to the dream, just this hellish state, entrapped in a well with a demon clutching my breath. I can't remember the exact analysis Deborah came up with, but it had something to do with me being gay. Gay and not gay. *À Bout du Souffle*, the Godard film, is usually translated *Breathless*, but it's literally 'at the end of breath,' 'out of breath,' figuratively 'on its last legs.' The word *nightmare*, from Germanic *nacht* and *mare*, a horse that runs through the night. Its first attested meaning in English is in 1300 as 'a spirit or monster supposed to settle on and produce a feeling of suffocation in a sleeping person or animal' (OED). The golem is my mother and not my mother. Everything is. 'You kids are all straight, and you're all gay' the security guard tells the girls of *Broad City*. For this life is not a horse, but a gate crashing through it.

**having an elk with you**

having an elk with you

having a smoke with you

having an artichoke with you

having a coke by myself

## julian

contented mal content  
a cat sez hellow to me  
sometime I write in a real bastage  
I don't know, tongue?  
penly I shd love first of all myself  
jewlyon julian the telegram which read 'julann darling in what  
saloons' love first and last it's shared  
it's showed it's shewed medieval julian  
of norwich praying for a sickness in every way like death  
with all pains bodily and ghostly  
with all the dreads and tempests of the fiends except  
for the 'outpassing' of the soul  
to give her a vision of the passion  
julian, ioulos, downy-bearded,  
young person with a fuzz on its face,  
adjective to describe a tyrant,  
the julianists held  
the body of xhrist to be incorruptible.  
I'm scenting my body w/ myrrh I will not  
leave me so unsatisfied  
daniel is listening to jazz hijo  
so many miles a needle  
dropped in my lap just now penna  
pens, wings maddie will go into my your house  
a clan of romans called the julians who claimed  
descent from julus, the mythic son of aeneas  
none of this is any nevermind  
for the sake of my hide  
julian the son of john lennon  
homophonous with jew and lion  
or jewel and ion  
julian, rhymes with cerulean and hooligan  
is it a star is it a planet it doesn't wink  
now tammy sez  
it will sound its owen horn  
king horn it is a holly day  
rodney ariana erica the air is sweet the chocolate  
alan says will be enuf for us both  
the mtn air is blue bluâtre the mountain air is come correct  
also a calendar, julian, the one we're living under

which guides the computations of astronomers  
julian the hospitalier pictured w/ a blue feather  
or was it a pen the one who killed all those animals in lust  
and whose spirits haunted him forever  
st. julian the same julian who carried a leper on his back  
across a river to a kind of hut and there he laid his body  
lip to lip chest to chest on top of him for warmth

**what ys love**

what ys love but  
a constellation of significances  
like-lyke magic

## **the bear and the salmon**

it lyked to eat salmon w/ its  
fingers like a bear  
and then use those fingers  
to clean its glasses  
it cried and it looked like a raccoon I believe  
it wanted to cultivate this look

## **fish**

I found a bit of fishing wire  
fishy is a word for s/t suspicious  
and also realness realness to be a woman to be like a woman  
it is a sexist term fish the stench of bad pussy  
exalted by drag queens n it shd be  
fish raised up to satellites  
fish most frolicsome along the cables at the bottom of the sea  
as they hum from our conversation  
I heard a faroff person singing plainly  
the fishingwire I twined around my fingers  
n it jumped away in the grasses  
where the clover sups the bee  
starlings n swallows and a single cormorant atop a buoy  
what am I a nature poet  
you are so like a man  
bragging about your giant cock  
I think the poem is ready  
to come into the pome again

**I am so filled w/ posy and plaisance**

I am so filled w/ posy and plaisance  
to endyte to so fair and tough a knight  
atop a mountain devoutly gazed on  
a lake where otterys are said to harbor  
what in aztec means bathing house temescal  
n the cattails last years ghosts not yet ripe  
the ducks that turne out to be decoys still  
napping together like you said we shd  
if we as tender wooden things alyve  
on blue water to willo the lotus  
dragonfly purpose not t'impede my progress  
bad algae chokes the reeds n rainbow trout  
bastard slave to my pome n I like it  
and now and now I lyke you best of all

**spoiler alert!**

at the end of paradiso  
dante's desire and his will  
velle  
come together  
rhymes w/ stelle  
all together in the  
stars in the wheel  
of Love

## **this sad little enclave of horses**

of all lines of all the subway cars in all of new york city  
we walk into the one with a corpse  
it just puts everything into prescription for us  
as jason stackhouse says

alabaster turning into crystale  
nantáa ndé telling me unsaddle yr horse  
means to take off your hat

I love it when people use words wrong  
like repetoire for rapport, like when  
brenda said she had a good repetoire with her students  
or cynthia saying she wouldn't spend an exuberant amount of time  
or when nick says anything anymore

the elk antlers are blood-brown  
if we can find them on this mountain  
edith says she has found  
skeletons of bucks who had died  
antlers entwined together

on the way to JFK you pass  
this sad little enclave of horses

there was no way to assess the land, or the landscape  
n/t was real about it  
perhaps by the sides of the railroads s/times,  
a hint of the old ways

the river could be...a source of tension  
a jackass painted like a zebra  
from the ghost's perspective it's not humid  
when bojack horseman vomits up all that cotton candy  
long forgotten poisons  
smallpox, ricin, the bacteria that causes  
the plague

the way that crows remember  
the faces of their adversaries

Louise Michell held sick horses in the street  
Nietzsche's last act  
was to embrace a horse

the taxi driver who hinted  
at his dark past in nyc  
wiped his hands together in the universal  
gesture of sloughing a thing off

## **when it rains it pours**

when it rains it pours  
the rain it raineth everyday  
pull up the reins, rayned in  
by reason, rule, and reverence  
if the aim is total abject embarrassment  
of shiny looking objects tenderly gathered for the pome's  
sunset quinciñera  
a star winked at me btwn the apricot and the cypress  
2 crows atop them like  
a punter on the mizzenmast  
u better step up your game, havelok  
by what means of studye and devocyou  
what is love but a constellation  
of significances  
it liked to eat salmon w its fingers like a bear  
and then use those  
fingers to clean its glasses  
it cries and it looks like a wolf I believe it wanted  
to cultivate this look

**metacomet**

if the light was...  
a shot to the heart for the horse  
illuminated by beetles  
heads subjugated to the décor

the descendent of a dueler, a wrestler  
whos aspect suddenly made manifest  
like dashing through gillyham

even the mere process of turning on the device  
caused me to forget my dream

who was it must be admitted a strange looking person  
despite or perhaps because of its equinity

could feel its waves interpenetrating  
the lights on the monitor prove you're alive

whofel just short of doing magics

## **younger and queerer**

dear Love, I am tired of endings  
let love be purposeful, extant, and merry  
let it revise its feelings, and yet still  
be w/out contradiction  
let it transcend deth  
let it not gnaw away  
at the flesh of lovers  
who are trying to love

misfortune—took me in an instant  
the big rain down can rain  
the big rain, ultimately down can rain  
the ships clock ran tru  
it had its owen logic  
despite, or perhaps because of  
the crooked line in the cuban stocking  
I put my hand over first my left,  
and then my right eye  
in order to try to see straight

## **all sorts of animals**

I never noticed that they greet me first  
manuelita the turtle of florencia  
made its way surprisingly quickly across  
the roof and placed its paw, its claw  
twice on my heel saying hello hello and yesterday  
as we came into breezy point  
a wrong turn at fort tilden, I saw some horses we pulled  
over, the brown one came straight to me and sort of  
nudged me, hello hello, we were all  
disturbed by the flies  
astrolabe the very mowing of the moon  
an obscure reference to 'Lowys my sone'  
& the name of the child of abelard  
and heloise what happened to him after  
they both went to church gaol and abelard was gelded?  
the mayan symbol for zero was a tattooed  
man in a necklace with his head thrown back  
among an array of other symbols  
faces, figures, half a flower, snail-shells  
other glyphs  
a year w/ 4 phantom days  
ppl did no work  
nor washed nor groomed themselves  
every 5 years the king  
spectacularly mutilated himself  
to keep time circular

## **I had already shuttered an aspect of my vision**

after a string of broken treaties  
each more humiliating than the last  
geronimo was finally exhibited at the world's fair  
alongside an african man  
who could escape the  
tightly wound chains  
but like geronimo was not his own person  
and whose keeper took him to the moving pictures  
fake images with real thunder  
and the pinheads and the other freaks.  
despite all that irreality I still clung  
to my vision  
a horse who could reckon land and water  
and dance like a crow among the embers  
never wondering why it didn't just fly off toward the sun  
undulating like an otter  
cracking shellfish on its chest and  
just floating on its back, face to the sun  
who never knew a saddle  
who never knew nothin but sunshine  
and this was a creature who could become other creatures  
an eagle when it was lofty  
a dog when it was lowly  
and when it began to dance  
it led with the left leg, or flipper, or whatever limb or digit  
it happened to embody  
which is why humans in imitation  
of this gesture start their dances  
with the left leg  
powow or twostep  
tango or conga  
they explain it to themselves  
that they're following the heart  
my vision told me I did not know what I was  
nor could I locate myself—when I spoke the subject was obfuscated  
so that I was even absent from grammar  
the very medium in which I toiled  
I said a certain person was doable  
but I did not say by whom.  
rocketed back to the place of my death,

I inhaled the stench of vomit, rotting fruit, exhaust  
I understood what percentage of persons  
were killed as they dove into the train  
I had shuttered an aspect of my vision  
in order to surf an already-ruined ocean  
no life now to live  
but an ever-retreating set of propositions  
each more implausible than the last  
a whale in the embrace of an octopus  
the lifevest giving life  
even as it moldered under the seat  
—just a hand—fluttering in the ocean—  
precipitated our rescue

**this machine kills rapists / julian was shown the entirety**

and they are at their old battle again  
the little ones who  
vie and vie for my attention  
perhaps I'd been phoning it in, or not  
really doing the thing I was meant to do  
I'd been all day  
at the library my place of worship I'd told myself  
they can't all be zingers I'd mostly  
failed to lucid dream I'd spent  
the money in my mind months before  
it arrived and when I drew  
the curtains back on my own attention to reveal  
surrounded by books it did not know what to do  
fullheaded and unfortunate of wit  
someone was practicing their scales on who knew what  
instrument perhaps horned perhaps keyed I gave  
up speculating I took half earnestly to tweet I made  
a sign that said 'this machine impeaches rapists'  
and cut the cardboard into the shape of a heart  
by my own prayers i wished to pray  
by my own prayer I wished to banish the murderous  
sentiment I harbored for the rapist my wish for him  
to combust the way his face suggests he might ara said  
she wanted to cut off his hands and force him to eat them  
it is a clever cruelty and apt. in a more direct allusion  
to woody guthrie I first imagined writing 'this machine  
kills rapists' but I thought it went against my prayer to not  
be seduced by hate but what do I do with this wish  
for another person to die until he is dead, more than dead  
julian of norwich was shown the entirety of the world  
in an orb the size of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of  
her hand it seemed to her, round as any ball,  
the world the blessed world as it might be termed  
'in a nutshell' and she fears that it might for littleness  
fall to naught but her god shows her  
it is all that is  
made in 'endlesshead' as it were a thing within a thing  
befallen to the gastly or the ghostly eye

## **the rain it raineth everyday**

when it rains it pours  
the rain it raineth evryday  
pull up the reins, rayned by reason, rule, and reverence

if the aim is total abject embarrassment  
of shiny-looking cupolas tenderly gathered for the pome's  
sunset quinciñera a star winked at me btwn  
the apricot & the cypress  
2 crows atop them like a punter on the mizzenmast

u better step up your game, havelok  
by what means of studye and devocyon  
what is love but a constellation  
of significances

it liked to eat salmon w/ its fingers like a bear  
then use those  
fingers to clean its glasses  
it cried and its eyes looked like a wolf  
like left eye lopez I believe  
it wanted to cultivate this look

it authorised every word of this text  
it (the muse) appeared to it as a many-headed gorgon  
tongo described it as  
faces or digits or hands or  
whole bodies or groups of bodies emerging as imprints thru a screen yes  
but where are you I said to both of  
them, where are you I said to  
conrad in my dream to cedar to bajo to  
dante and to the book of his mind  
just transcribing everybody answered

**abz**

who sucks in thir gut  
in anticipation of being punched  
yokels habituate the opposite  
trapped bees and  
overwrought racehorses  
I never believed  
took away the dagger and I seen  
the butter

## agape

I'm turning the moon on and off,  
it's an ideogram for love  
for where we stood  
agape at the fireworks  
    yes fireworks no fireworks  
shape of a heart in red thru david's window  
I don't want to see my fone ever again  
by the moon I didn't mean the real moon  
but the crescent on my fone the one that shuts it up  
says it's nighttime be quiet  
I am writing poetry again  
at and thru my fone I say I don't  
want to muddy the channel  
I meant agape in the english way  
to stand with your mouth open dumb  
but also agape in the greek way  
divine love  
voltaire (it was voltaire I looked it up)  
talks about how the pagans thot  
the xians a little nasty with their kissing  
supposedly chaste like this sibblingly kiss was allowed  
but they, the xians, took it too far w/ their kissing  
I don't know if our kiss was chaste, no  
I didn't mean it to be I wanted to kiss you for real but I have been  
chaste a long while  
there were many things, the book of micah  
mâshâl in hebrew, 'lament a lament of lamenting'  
joying in joy, in the lamentation of joy,  
in the joy of lament, in the mighty cable  
of scripture M a minor strand

## having an elk with you

having an elk w/ you  
having a smoke w/ you  
having a date w/ you, the fruits,  
cold, hot fed by your hand  
having an artichoke w/ you  
having a coke by myself  
having a non-soy jerky w/ you  
having a cow omigod little death  
holding our noses thru coalinga  
having a vision that was not a vision  
I came w/ the sun in my eye  
you aint no basic ratlike personage  
abta be disappeared  
but s/t extrahuman maybe abta be raptured  
yakuza vapor caves at the base of the rockies  
straight out of the annals of satan  
hotpot we never found

what is love but  
a constellation of  
significances  
like-lyke magic

## future nostalgia

when the pale horse / and his rider goes by  
—Hank Williams

just turned in my book for real this time  
do I feel flayed or unflayed I don't know  
whats my hyde  
there are things in there that feel so ancient & recursive  
the huts the rats the viol de gamba  
mei put all of her long hair over her face the other night she looked  
like cousin it  
'it' is not unmagical  
I don't not believe in it I guess  
if 'it' is an alchemical condensation of all these magics or medicines  
if it is a force against future nostalgia  
the nostalgia we're creating 'right now'  
nowcast slightly forward  
yesterday was a day for poetry  
rodney was a few minutes late to moe's  
where we were to meet in the poetry section on his suggestion  
and I texted him 'i am in poetry'  
(he gave me prynne as an idea of what to read I said I was tired of  
self-medicating, I just looked up prynne and this line: 'A waver of  
attention at the surface, shews the arch there and  
the purpose we really cut' I had already written 'peak of an  
arc / cut rubyes')  
we walked the cardinal points of berkeley on bloomsday I was like a  
guide dog  
from telegraph to northside to downtown  
finally to lounge in the grass at willard park where I took the  
picture I sent to you  
not even reading ulysses but the annotations to finnigans wake where  
it was revealed  
joyce actually cobbled a lot from the dutch  
and rodney said he was reading joyce's love letters and that his wife  
nora barnacle (!) sd to joyce I will suck you off and you can  
'roger me arseways'  
and he (rodney) lamented how we cdnt have 19th century desires anymore  
since everything is now available to us but I disagreed  
brezny said I have a secret name that will be revealed to me very soon

ari was a balm we had a grandpa tea  
rooibos with honey and shared my tobacco  
he has a pigeon tattooed on his arm he is greek he read me some greek  
poetry  
he is thinking about translating some greek poet that he thinks is  
probably lesbian (I guess in the 'real' not geographical sense like from  
Lesbos) where the  
addressee's gender is ambiguous altho  
this is really impossible in greek  
ari said I looked different. my face. he said it looked more open.  
in between rodney and ari I saw your face you told me about marronage  
to survive in the mountains  
when you were telling me how the loa mounts you like a horse it made  
me think of spenser, how white, how his descriptions of the mounts the  
riders ride in the faerie queene are very emblems of themselves, like  
Gluttony rides a pig, Lechery rides a goat, Wrath rides a  
lion, etc.,  
and the cowboy song I ride an old paint which has the lines  
'o when I die take my saddle from the wall  
lay it on my pony and lead him from the stall  
tie my bones to his back, turn our faces to the west  
and we'll ride the prairie we love the best'  
and bonny billy sings of the horse that waits for its riders death  
and hank williams condenses the horse and rider into one grammar  
'when the pale horse / and his rider goes by'  
but I said that already all of this is for later

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Julian Talamantez Brolaski is poet and country singer, the author of *Macho Chango* (forthcoming Wave Books 2018), *Of Mongrelitude* (Wave Books 2017), *Advice for Lovers* (City Lights 2012), *gowanus atropolis* (Ugly Duckling Presse 2011), and co-editor of *NO GENDER: Reflections on the Life & Work of kari edwards* (Litmus Press / Belladonna Books 2009). Julian is the lead singer and rhythm guitarist in the bands Juan & the Pines (NYC) and The Western Skyline (Oakland). It currently lives in Santa Barbara, researching and editing a book on the Mescalero Apache initiation ceremony with its grandmother, Inés Talamantez.

Cybele Lyle is a California-based artist whose installation, video and 2D work reconstructs the architecture and natural environment around her into an alternate vision of interior and exterior space. Cybele graduated from Oberlin College with a BA in Environmental Studies, then went on to get a BFA from California College of Arts and Crafts in Printmaking and an MFA in Painting/Combined Media from Hunter College in New York in 2007. She has held residencies at Ox-Bow, Project 387, Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and most recently at the Headlands Center for the Arts. Her works have been exhibited across the United States including at the 205 Hudson St Hunter Gallery, New York; Bemis Center, Omaha; Oakland Museum, San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Et al. gallery, San Francisco, and most recently in the California-Pacific Triennial at the Orange County Museum of Art. Cybele is a recipient of the Kala Fellowship, the Yozo Hamaguchi Printmaking award, and the Tony Smith Award. Cybele currently has a studio in Los Angeles and is represented by Et al. in San Francisco.

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