
CLAIRE DONATO

MANIFESTO LIGHTENS / LIGHTNESS

Dissolving the surface of the mind, holding its breath, I place my palm against the wall. I place my palm against the surface of the breath.

I move my palm away from the wall. I look beneath my palm and feel its breath.

I feel my body drift.

I fall in love, then the dead ox arrives in the form of a knot in my hip.

The body proceeds. The body begins.

The mind laughs, weeps, and turns once more — again — toward images of nonexistent particulars.

IN THE WAKE OF FREEZING
YOU TO DEATH

In this chapter, I develop five points, which
I make from a distance like a bitch.

The female pigeon need only see herself.

The dead tree, in the light, still has bark on it.

And my mind is allergic to gravity, gravity.

My eyes are crimson, deep-bodied, and thick.

MANIFESTO LINGUA I POPYRUS

'I' acquires the form of a thought, spreads out in one clean line across white paper.

'You' exists in one spurious thought, taking command of mind's sense.

In lieu of symbols, nouns, adverbs, and vowels, you invoke the half-horse, already forged, and the dead.

The half-horse can be thought, it is seen; but, alas, it cannot be said.

To invoke boundaries, 'I' constructs plain language out of clean white paper.

With regard to *construct*, 'I' means any of the following: an attempt to break down the grid; a version of the world that cannot be disclosed; an artificial gaze; your grave.

A wire pin rests at the base of your palm. It perforates the heart.

As the brain sculpts it, notice how its form smoothes out across the page.

Dead at the crown of the skull, language transforms into a halo of close-knit dots.

Therefore, on its descent into these words, 'I' claims romantic gridlock.

'I' destroys romantic memories.

'I' attempts to shatter the grid.

'I' copies no version of 'myself.'

'I' could have, would have, should have not, and did.

Does this sheet of paper bring you pleasure, 'I' asks, tracing its finger across the surface of your mind.

You're wasting language, you say, clobbering at form with your fist.

The mind consists of circles.

In this representation, form is represented by the image of your close-knit fist.

The past is inexpressible, moves through the mind in waves.

It is impossible to speak.

Yet speech exists.

O, body: speak but fail to express yourself in the form of a close-knit fist.

O, unadorned word: engrave the corners of the mind, then lift away bones from the center of the storm.

This text – ‘Manifesto Lingua / Papyrus’ – has been written to govern the dead.

Let the dead be governed.

In this sentence, you may perceive a written fiction in which you, the reader, and ‘I,’ the speaker, take place; in which ‘I’ is typing your name, repeating your name, decomposing your name in the form of a half-rotting clause on this half-living, half-rotten page.

Night falls.

One word is at rest on the page, which cannot stand.

Its prefix is a half-dead, dying thing.

Night falls.

Language, in the shape of a half-rotting form, brings you, dear Reader, pause.

So 'I' falls into the game of it; i.e., into form, which makes love to even the ugliest elements.
 Language circulates cool air around the heat, embodying 'myself.'
 'I' becomes embodied in your palm.
 'I' becomes 'myself.'
 Close your eyes. What does your mind see?
 Two objects colliding.
 Two objects combined.
 But, alas, the mind, when combined with objects, passes on.

Language, a temporary response to this chain of events, is at rest in your palm.
 A flat, nervous energy circulates through your veins.
 Captured in each vessel is an opening.
 A subtle ringing hisses through this version of the mind, carrying form into its luckless, present state.
 Here too all subjects fall grip to the shape of a palm.
 See, for example, a warm, bright light that insists upon bathing the mind in meter, thus reconfiguring the brain's topology, measuring language in the absence of breath.
 See, for example, this text, in which 'I' uses 'O' to invoke the shape of a mouth, as in: 'O,' 'O,' 'O.' Mouth.
 'O' emits breath, the letter mimicking the sound of its shape.
 Meanwhile, the half-horse spreads out among the dead whilst spilling language out in one clean line across white paper.
 And the half-horse is rash with its thoughts. It is, in its thoughts, a **form** of matter.
 And 'I' loves form in the widest sense; i.e., if it could, this line would spread out beyond the confines this smooth, blank, convex page, where the mind – a wire pin – is at rest inside.

POEM

Across the surface of the brain, extraordinary nothingness.

Against the surface the mind, one image remains.

Alone now, in the head, transcribing less.

Dear Sir, I confess I single out each word to make known
the ways in which my thinking is becoming.

Every image, frozen against the surface of the mind, remains.

Every word, pressed against the surface of the mind, remains.

How disruptive, to think, on the occasion one withdraws.
The image dissolves, despite the mind's wish.

Meaning, one thinks. Is meaning this?

Press your mind against the surface of the page, feeling
each page without wasting a page, you are wasting this page.

Only the body remains.

Your fingers tug on the mind by its mane.

Your fingers turn the page.

IN THE WAKE OF FREEZING
YOU TO DEATH

The gaslight broken by glass.

The prism of my mind, the one thing that exists.

The universe, a void, ripples into waves.

You toss a stone.

Cold, black, airless space.