

**trenchart  
monographs  
hurry  
up  
please  
its  
time**

Edited by  
Teresa Carmody  
Vanessa Place



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## 05. Maneuvers

Harold Abramowitz / Vincent Dachy / Paul Hoover / Lily  
Hoang / Mathew Timmons / 2010

Recon

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## THIS IS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

**Teresa Carmody**

It was difficult to remember what she thought was happening between us, but sometimes if he hears a certain song, one does remember. Too, his mother said the world is governed by scientific laws and when she is angry, he should yell. Loudly. Or softly. Into. She started to believe something new. So did I. Neither of us could pin the point of it exactly, but after that, everything did change. Then it refused. The whole story changes. It is refused. In the future, it will be changed again, in the future anterior. Still, so much depends on what happens today. The way of order is as true as any formal memory.

This is *TrenchArt: Maneuvers*, a collection of texts written by each of the writers/artists whose work is forthcoming in the fifth TrenchArt series—*Maneuvers*—published by Les Figues Press. These texts are about the recombinant possibilities of art and literature; they are also a guide to the writers' individual works. As a series, *TrenchArt: Maneuvers* explores the possibilities of re-ordered time and content, understanding, of course, that one (he, she, I, you, too) cannot separate content from time, and that to shift the form, or the order, or the order of the form, is to shift the subjectivities of a text. This is the first book in a series of five. As you read, the point of this, like your quantum mechanical perspective, will change.

## SELECTED WRITINGS

### Harold Abramowitz

I found standards. The roughshod ambulance men at my door. There was a kind of hush. Holding over me then. You are foolish enough to answer my question. The evidence was in the bag. And then you hand it over to me and I take exception to the way it looks. The evidence in the bag. The whole way of looking at things. There is a finality to the way the ambulance stops. It puts its feet on the lounge. And you are a real character, you know. The sleeping speech. The hints of character. And then the whole world at your disposal. A kind of hush. Stalking the spirit wherever and whenever it may go. But betting on science. That kind of cadaver-like speech. The whole quality ripped from the headlines. Blood. Galoshes. A semblance of boots worn. Of tissues taken. We split our exceptions in half and take them to the store and rub them together and dream of better days. The mercy ebbs and flows. Fills volumes. You are getting high on rubberized steak, on grams and grams of fat returned to heaven in parts. And then you want to tell me to go and get fucked? Well, that's not even me you're talking to. Not even then. And not even in heaven. I have a voice, you know. And all the cantilevers, all the volumes in heaven will never fill up a suitcase until the voice says exactly what it's supposed to say. There is a kind of hush. And you explode. You ask for mercy. There is no cooking. At least not until tomorrow. Because that's when the truck rolls in and there are decisions to be made.

But there is a letter waiting by the door.

There are new ways of saying old things.

Final and violating the pin—  
The pin, and only the pin.

But it does not ring true.

A kind of hush. Hold your head up high. There is a last minute reserved for speech. For the real recitation of the moment you stuck your head out the window and waved. Reality is a vision of forgetting that you were born at the bottom of the book and there is no mercy for your character, that is, no mercy for one or anyone of your character. Your philosophy deserves to be dragged down. And it is dragged down and it is kicking and screaming and asking for mercy. Hazing. A new disaster. And you call that the annals of science. Mercy. Release. And you call that, or those, the annals of the world. But I am not angry. Not at all. A kind of hush. All over the world. And then release. So listen very carefully. The only sound you will hear. Each time relieving its mercy and honesty. And then you stay at the back of the bus, or car, or truck, or train. You believe in relief. The whole list of things that were done, then, at that time. This was then. And this was in the back of the bus, or truck, or train, or car. The tile was blue or green. There was a garden just outside the window. I could hear the alarm sound early in the morning. There was a chicken making sounds. A hen, I think. You are tinkering with dismay. The whole conversation collapses around a story. And you are taken hostage and instantly turned into nothing again.

But what is a fair opportunity?

Opinions regarding what is best for the making of a boy differ greatly. Some assert that a child born with a silver spoon in its mouth is not likely to breathe as deeply and develop as well as one that is born without any such hindrance to full respiration.

Kind parents, a good home training, a chance to go to school, influential friends, good health, and someone to stand between you and the hard knocks of the world all serve to make a boy's surroundings truly enviable. Under such conditions any boy ought to win. Yet some boys have won without these advantages.

Abraham Lincoln was born of very  
There is nothing

“BOY WANTED”

But dreams. They tell you stories and they tell you beautiful things to set your name in sparks. Resuscitate this motion, if you will. I saw you driving a train and you were a specialist in science, new medicine and all that. Or that special something that starts shining over every element, so to speak. A holistic way of looking at exactly what you want. But the space program ended years ago. And in the backroom, far from the alley. A view. This view has always dismayed me. I hear you speaking. There are gas and lights and every one of them knew what was around the corner. In the house behind the garden and there was something I could have used. I called you. But in the end, the conflict wears me out. I am in disgrace. I have no knife. I am angry because I cannot drive a car and still you show me no mercy. You have the best at your disposal. Arousal. Even then I live in debt and your mercy is a violation of the promises I kept when I came to your house to eat and you weren't home. You just weren't home. There is no one missing you. I use that word with increasing frequency. And the guests. And the getting. And the gusts of wind that blow. But the moment you want to let loose again, I am gone, and with good reason. But not interspersed with love or anything like that. Let us say very definitively that we will not be making that mistake again. We will not be making that supposition again. It is standard. This is the standard way I go about my business. The intent of which is the reason I am here in your hands in the first place. But that's not right. It is the product of a project. The product of a real imagination. The product of being brought forth for the third time. For the one thousandth time. You hold me, you hit me, you rub me the wrong way, and then you tell me to go away. I was a good boy though. I really thought I was.

“A GENIUS?”

And half-a-dozen other boys  
were starting with their pails  
to gather berries, Johnny's pa,  
in talking with him, said that  
he could tell him how to pick  
so he'd come out ahead.

“First find your bush,”  
said Johnny’s pa, “and then

stick to it till you’ve  
picked it clean. Let those go  
chasing all about who will  
in search of better bushes,  
but it’s picking tells, my son;

to look at fifty bushes doesn’t  
count like picking one.”

And Johnny did as he was told,

and, sure enough, he found  
by sticking to his bush while  
all the others chased around  
in search of better picking, it was  
as his father said;

for while the others looked,  
he worked,

and thus came out ahead.

And Johnny recollected this when  
he became a man, and first of all  
he laid him out a well-determined  
plan; so, while the brilliant triflers  
failed with all their

There is a kind of hush. And you call it a violation. The way I speak. I put my hands up and try to remember to stop. I stop you all the time and I try to remember to stop holding on so hard to that thing I remember. The whole world crushing me, my instinct. My behavior. And it is old science that is haunting me. I try the new stuff. I get interested in the new stuff. There is a kind of hush and you go on. A certain smile. Enough of this stuff of the heart you say. The knife and the bottle and the seams and the twists of yarn and the twists of fate and the circles of fate and the smoke in the sky. The bold one

that urges me on has come to this place to sit down and rest and tell me that there are many vacations that can be had if I put my head out the window and wave my hands and let myself be heard over the racket of the war and the other phenomenon that rages and holds my feet to the fire. I belong by the arms I've been given. I took my arms out but that was only to tell you. The whole time there was a feature. You are living in the fire. You are demanding that I tell you every secret in the book. And there is a black box. A new way of looking. And I tell you. I want very much to tell you where it lives. Where to find it. To take the time out of this. I want very much to tell you to take the time out of this and hold it in a box or hold it up to the light and hold it and hold it and never shake it and never let more than an ounce of it spill out of the opening on the top.

There were leaves, or red bushes.

There was something green  
Against the ground.

The scene was vivid.

It was emerging.

And each and every time I looked,  
I tasted it again.

A reason.

I have a reputation to uphold. Holding forth. The soup. The mushroom. The vacation. And there is a kind of hush. A void. Each and every circumstance that will take your name and refer to you as one of the important working wheels in the machine. A ruin. A running ruler. In your hand. And you were running. I was running. They played games all day. They played the way they were meant to play. With guns. Holding something in their hands. What they were playing with was sharp and mean and tiny. It was flat. There was something comfortable there. They were lounging around and telling mean lies and lining things up. The most distinct part of the circumstance was the motion of the moon. They knew every human being by name. There is a kind of hush all over the world, today. Today. And there is sleeping. Fire. Jesus.

Personal demons. Restraint. Haircuts. Animals. And zero is the number of events that can be remembered at any given time.

And you know that.

You really know that.

I know that you know that.

There is a kind of hush. You tell them not to look. It holds you down at the exact moment you want to get up. It is in your eyes. You were telling them and they were listening to you. A green chain. And then you know that the nature of the event is circular. The event I was speaking of. I was speaking of the event just now and you rolled your eyes. And, at that point, no decision had yet been made. There was a kind of hush. A kind of trying to be free. You lost that. You've lost that loving feeling. In the summertime. I was rolling a log and I was facing west and there was a hiding place and a pin and then the next time I saw you. I was holding forth. I call those my ankles. Which is to say that I call on my ankles all the time. And it is almost exactly true: this holding forth, this model of exceptional circumstance. The very putting it all together for the sake of a spine, for the sake of a pin, or, as usual, for the sake of someone or something else.

Los Angeles  
2009

## AESTHETIC STATEMENT

**Lily Hoang**

In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Peter Walsh follows a girl through London. When she disappears behind a door, he sighs, "Well, I've had my fun; I've had it, he thought, looking up at the swinging baskets of pale geraniums. And it was smashed to atoms—his fun, for it was half made up, as he knew very well; invented, this escapade with the girl; made up, as one makes up the better part of life, he thought—making oneself up; making her up; creating an exquisite amusement, and something more. But odd it was, and quite true; all this one could never share—it smashed to atoms."

-----cut here-----

It's true that I am not Peter Walsh, following a half make-believe girl through the streets of London, nor have I even been to London to pretend to follow this half make-believe girl around. But what Peter Walsh thinks here is undeniably real to any writer, artist, etc. etc. etc. We make ourselves up. Before we write. Before we think. Before all of it, we create ourselves. We make up these versions of self, and this is where it all begins: the creation of self, not an authentic or real self, but a virtual self, a safe self, a shelter.

-----cut here-----

This shelter of a self, this safe place, this writer: I am making myself up, making her up, and I am much more amusing this way than any other way. And because I am more amusing, so much more likable this way, unlike Peter Walsh, this is the version of self I share. This is not the version that is smashed to atoms. But perhaps it is because of this version of self that I myself become smashed to atoms, unable to regenerate whole.

The funny thing is: it would be so much easier to be smashed to atoms. It would make the division of self clearer, cleaner. I could say—this much of me is this and that much of me is that—and in doing so, I would have a definitive way of saying: this is how much of me is writer, and that is how much of me is not. It's something I'm constantly looking for, the ratio of writer : non-writer, as if a perfect formula could exist, and like Peter Walsh, it's what I'm looking for, something concrete.

-----cut here-----

It's something about being a writer, an artist, the romance of it, even if it isn't romantic. It's banal, really, being a writer. There's so much more excitement in life, and here I am, pining away at how much of me is writer and how much isn't. But perhaps it's the boredom that has taken me here. I live in a small town with several colleges and universities, but it's no college town. No, it's a bombed-out Midwestern town. Strongly blue-collar. Anti-university. Or maybe it's the university's fault. Those Catholics. But here, in this bombed-out Midwestern town, I've created myself as writer. I've created the myth of me. I've invented stories and stories, gotten confused and considered, if only briefly, that I was somewhere else. I've "made up, as one makes up the better part of life," even though it's not what I want.

-----cut here-----

Here I am again, back to that point of division. How to exist here and not here. How to do that if writing fiction necessitates you moving away from here while you struggle to stay here, present, now.

-----cut here-----

Fiction: what I write moves away from the real, consciously, purposefully. In *The Evolutionary Revolution* in particular, my characters are strange and surreal. They are also real and true. They move back and forth, without much regard for what reality is, because they don't care. In the way that the girl Peter Walsh made up doesn't care, my characters don't care. In the way that Peter Walsh is at once devastated and relieved, so am I.

-----cut here-----

But imagine, for just one moment, that you are Peter Walsh, walking through the streets of London. You see what Virginia Woolf wants you to see. You see this girl. She isn't real, and yet you see her. You follow her. You stalk her. How is this any different from my two-headed mermen, pulling their bodies apart, falling in love, waging wars? What is the ultimate difference between Woolf's realism and my irrealism, if they are both fictions? If they are both not real? If they both take you to the same point of obsession and desire?

-----cut here-----

What Woolf gives Peter Walsh is an opportunity to have fun in a world turned askew by war. Walsh has just been to India. He has missed the Great War, but he can still feel its effects. This is me having my fun in a world turned askew by war and years of shit. This is me having my fun, engaging in a dialogue, like Woolf did with Joyce, only I'm no Woolf and the dialogue is with an album, not a person, but a person, a series of people, a band. The obsession Peter Walsh feels for this woman he stalks, it's no different than the obsession I've had with Neutral Milk Hotel's *The Aeroplane Over the Sea*, which is how my book was written. Obsessively. Listening. I listened obsessively to the album. For months it was the only album I listened to. And still, now, I'm not sick of it. There's something new every time. It never gets old. Unlike Peter Walsh, who could not share his obsession before it was smashed to pieces, Neutral Milk Hotel could. And because of it, I wrote a book. Because of it, my book is nothing in comparison.

-----cut-----cut-----cut-----everywhere-----cut-----cut-----cut-----

Kingston  
2009

Material

Casements

Parapet

Tracer

Maneuvers

Recon

## **07. Surplus**

Michael du Plessis / Melissa Buzzeo / Kim Rosenfield  
/ Mark Rutkoski / Klaus Killisch / Matias Viegner /  
2012

Logistics

## AN ELEGY FOR PASSAGE: FOR WANT AND SOUND

**Melissa Buzzeo**

*Under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile, human body.*

– Walter Benjamin

Body weight (History):

In the 1980s and into the beginning of the next decade a series of ritual abuse cases were tried all over the country in the American suburbs. Preschool teachers, daycare workers often young often queer often poor always naked in some kind of marked cultural way were accused of ritualistic repeated assault. Sexual assault of the most fantastical kind of rings of children. Hidden doors, trap doors, costumes. Red lips and desire. Clowns and knives that left no trace. Another land. Elaborate patterns. Centuries entwined. Where was this other land, what was it made of. Of what languages or of what non-languages. At what place did desire meet erasure. Is this where the knife touched?

The children were asked: Is this where the knife touched? How does one ask this of text?

There was no trace. There were no marked physical tracings. All the convictions often ending in life sentences were made solely on the testimony of

children under hypnosis. Hypnosis: a pleasurable space a space of corrosion or healing. Trance. A rent screen, a room.

*Hélène Cixous: It is when one has been able to reach the moment of opening oneself completely to the other that the scene of the other, which is more specifically the scene of history, will be able to take place in a very vast way.*

All the languages that made testimony possible. In these children who were learning to speak. In these adults who had no recourse towards want.

There are records twenty years later that sometimes the police visited a single child's house eighty times and hypnotized them eighty times reading a script of another child's abuse before getting a testimony and giving the child relief and often a badge.

Language doesn't come from nothing.

Where did this come from?

Where did we come from? But nobody can ask this in speech. The ground will give way. The court will collapse. The language of the court the new language of this new country would then be severed from speech. In all these suburbs in all these immigrant households all these people would just have their bodies to contend with.

And the sound.

The Sound:

The body of water surrounding Long Island and separating it on one side from the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Once heavily populated by Native Americans, this peninsula culture formed by a glacial moraine was colonized early by the Dutch and then the British and infiltrated in the early- and mid-20th century by a surge of mostly second generation immigrants, desiring separation from the city.

In the 1980s the immigrant families who populated Long Island were the children of Levittown. Baby boomers from all over Europe. Broken languages erased and processed by row houses. Jewish Italian Armenian. The bombs were over. The camps were over. There were no more riots in the streets. The names had been processed changed turned over. As the asparagus farms had given way to square front yards. Shorn. The Native American town names subsumed in museums. A localness that pervaded hunger. The foreignness given to whom to what?

In the book it says to language.

And the shame?

And the grief?

And the bodies unadorned?

Who courted this?

(I opened my mouth, I rushed toward story.)

More and more I became interested in the bodies pressed into history supported and undone by narrative. What happens when “one stands mute”

*peine forte et dure* what crushing what pressing what clutching what erasures.  
What suffocations. What the stones stand to mark.

The narrative dissolving in text.

What seductions of text. What allowance for ethics entreaties.

Community:

The fanatical rage. The gestures forward. The categories. The boxes the separations. The real tears the real grief. What is real. An I that is understood? Finally we are given space to grieve to fear to want. To the bed that got larger and larger. The courthouses were packed. A shadow that obfuscated love. What can be saved. What can be protected. The men at the head of the household. The women at the center of the household. The chaste kisses written large. The insecurities dead in wars. The abuses handed over in caravans. The bodies becoming smaller and smaller dissolving into the shadow that moved suddenly with ferocious attachment. Subsuming stasis. Straddling charge.

Like wildfire it was said the spread. Through all the staked places.

Is this passion? Or a document of love.

Alphonso Lingis: *A community of decision, of initiative, of absolute initiality but also a threatened community in which the question has not yet found the language it has decided to seek is not yet sure of its own possibility within the community. A community of the question about the possibility of question.*

What reports were given.

What reports were taken.

What bodies were offered as sacrifice for language. As a scar to the collective body of language. For the privilege to speak something charged and choking. To invade the image. To escape the image. To be heard to be watched to be put away. What happens to generational trauma. What happens to erasure as it starts to build? As it becomes cities and houses and bodies and constructs. As the soil becomes depleted and the nation agrees to war.

Who doesn't want to be a writer?

All these voices of the court finally counting. And to be given a sentence for your body. For the unspeakable within your body. What communication can finally become. To say so loudly so fiercely—I want. In a language not your own. To be subsumed. To be taken. The one book held shut.

Broken Narratives and the Distribution of Weight:

Twenty years later many of these children have come forward and recounted with sorrow. Not surprisingly the feeling was not foreign to them only the words. Many years later it has been found that some of the “predators” gave false testimony. What of language does shame make. What shame does language carry. Almost all these cases have been overturned. A generation later with new scientific methods the court narrative has been found to have been physically impossible. To have happened. And yet the call to seduction still written there. Twenty years later the prison doors open and the prisoners long for the one book. The family that betrayed them. The culture that was contaminated. The one book held shut.

Twenty years later it is found that The Sound is contaminated and might be why breast cancer is rampant on Long Island affecting all classes all races all languages.

People still swim there.

My text is flooded in this contamination. (I want to say this compassion but cannot.) This default water. Some days I watched it seep. Spread.

Outside:

In the writing of *For Want and Sound* which spanned three years which saw the production of three other books categories collapsed. The boundarylessness in language which had been the content became the form. Every book had lines to give my book. Millions of books forgotten. Millions of books too open, too closed. The notebooks illegible, the longing gone on too long. The books did not want to give did not want to take. Everything subsumed in *Sound*. And for what—to open or close. I wanted to finish. The book which had become everything outside of language and so inside of me. With no door, no passage no promise of return. I was also afraid of utter loss, the license the completion of this book would create. I wanted to stay. In unloved relation to the one book. When longing had come to abbreviate. *That it was more than me and less than my love for it*. This sentence was more and more real. More and more the privatized prison of relinquish.

There would be no more other books. I knew this.

Outside: a book about particular aspects of American culture. A book informed by continental philosophy by experimental film by architecture and testimony writing. Cross-genre writing.

A book in mirror of itself.

The incest we held on our tongues.

Outside: The other book. *L'injure* by Nathalie Stephens. Written in another language. One that I could not read. From another culture, another country. From another person a person who had stepped across a border. I had this book about non escape in my house and did not read it.

Outside in the next century we sat in the park in the middle of my country. Far away from The Sound.

Outside we tried to collect being. I thought is that what a book is?

*L'injure* and the non reading around it gave me an outside a door on which to bang and close. An outside, an address.

Foreign irreducible. I could touch it but could not enter it. Is this what a book is? Its capacity, liminal for encounter.

I traced the weaving narratives about the book. In my own language. I heard how the writer could not finish a text that enacted itself and so constructed an outside. Took a door from elsewhere. Shook a form. Forced a door to the text. Made commentary possible. Limit freedoms erasing neither. In writing the impossibility I imagined the reading of a book that could not be read.

The non passage. The presence. The parlance finally into text.

From book to book from near book to near book we skip the sentence.

Wanting very much to find the absence buried in presence.

Maybe encounter with *L'injure* was also to me the unearthing of all the other languages, the non erasure. The Levinasian Face grafted to text. Not without pain. Not without sorrow.

Finally I read my unreadable book. Separate from me.

Slowly and then very rapidly the culture moves away from itself. The writer begins. The Sound left the text. The text found a form. The body broke off.

Before leaving.

The Two Books:

*For Want and Sound* became finally the uneasy cohesion between two books. Part One is simply called *Book* and is comprised of a series of testimony statements in and out of language.

Part Two *Breach, Recoil* is a space of commentary or the commentary of an outside made possible.

In this way an inside was finally constructed and named.

Shredded from leaves floorboards paint and partitions the book finally became itself taking its form from some makeshift scrapbook some baby book. Some document ledger buried in the ground to survive destruction.

When I unbury it I notice the dirt the crumble. The places where the pages won't detach. The parts that come with leaves.

Brooklyn  
2011

$$(p + r)^n$$