

Writing Stick

This booklet was published on the occasion of a collaborative event between Franklin Street Works and Professor Pamela Brown's Creative Writing course at UConn, Stamford. The students were invited to read recent poems including those inspired by Franklin Street Works' exhibition, *Your Content Will Return Shortly*, which was on view January 24 - March 24, 2013.

Writing Stick Renga Marques Binion, Larissa Velasco, Danilo Machado, Alexandra Manna, Michael Socci, Rachel Shultz, Thomas Szivos, Cynthia Flores, Pam Brown

artwork monologue Marques Binion

pink skies Marques Binion

Life (a video by Jeff Ostergen) Jessica Castillo

The black buttoned eye Jessica Castillo

Monday Mornings in 3013 Cynthia Flores

Paper towel Cynthia Flores

Wow? What a Big Stick You Have Kaishon Holloway

I am Your Leader Kaishon Holloway

Slot Machine Danilo Machado

South by Deeper South Danilo Machado

First Rate, Second Hand Alexandra Manna

Black Cat Event Alexandra Manna

Across the Street from Where I Sit Rachel Shultz

Kentucky Fried Chicken Rachel Shultz

Flicker Lives Past Michael Socci

Darkness and Stone Michael Socci

Three Channels Thomas Szivos

Water Bottle Event Thomas Szivos

writing stick renga

(a collaborative poem)

1 private renga

*unseen an old
shoe swims on its back
under the mud*

*the worms hide
under the dirt*

*on the bed her uterus
is occupied*

*--not out of shyness
but out of privacy*

2 tea moon renga

*the distinguished man in the moon
is gray he watches
and covets the sun*

it shines on his face

and he wonders....

*Are you the blue mirror
that looks back at me?*

*Through a spy glass
you see my face*

*My nose is a little long,
spotted like the skirt of the waitress*

*She is lovely - but
where is my tea?*

*Earl Grey or chai?
It was never my decision*

*let the green leaf be
that decision to be made*

*what tree did the leaf fall from?
was it odd and ancient?*

*it was young
and ancient, the
leaf even younger*

*when will the sponge
stop dripping?*

3 *imperative renga*

*smooth page of sand
talk back to me*

*shells on the shore
sing a song
pick me up*

*they're all out of tune
-- spare my ears
pretend you're mute*

*Look very carefully
spare my eyes
this barren landscape
of nothingness*

*Breathe the
clouds deep
air blue
living sun*

*watch the
jellyfish
color of the night stars
and those summer clouds*

*a dark shell
glitters slightly
on white sands*

Speak more clearly

an old book

black as the ocean

nestled in a dead fox

let me hear you

the wavy airy sky

sandy money and a turtle

the color of seaweed

jump up into

the sea

artwork monologue

Marques Binion

I am waiting
I am waiting for someone to hear me
I am waiting for me to hear someone
I am waiting
I wait
I look
at you
creepy, I know
it's my job, you know
I am just waiting
we are both waiting
you are waiting for me to do something
I am waiting for something to do
so let's wait...

pink skies

Marques Binion

pink skies and green stars
beyond this galaxy
but not far far away

the moon is blue and the clouds are purple
and the rainbow is a rainbow
but only today

the water, it is yellow
shining
but it's not piss
I promise

Life (a video by Jeff Ostergen) Jessica Castillo

Tick Tock Tick Tock
Wait... what was that?
The room is getting so small
Clouds covering my thoughts
Just keep marching on
Spread your arms and legs
Keep on smiling
Splash splash goes the rain
Painting my world
 Muah!

The black buttoned eye Jessica Castillo

The black buttoned eye of the Robin bird
The desert patterned wood
The chain that is faded
The pink empty bottle
The tree branches that look like wings
The three black dots falling slowly
The white flowing veil
The invisible rectangle
The pale man dressed in black

Monday Mornings in 3013 Cynthia Flores

Newspaper! On the table!
Chair! Get over here!
Fruit! Into the bowl!
Shoe! Find your other pair!
Coffee! Into the mug!
Phone! Text my boss
Key! Oh, wrong one, sorry.
Mail! Open up!
Spoon! Get some sugar!
Coat! Come one! Let's go!
Lighter! Into my bag!
Stick! Why are you here?
Clock! STOP following me!
Doll! Stick with my daughter!
Jar! Out of the way!
Vacuum! Everything better be clean when I get home!

Paper towel Cynthia Flores

1. Throw the paper towel at an emo kid in a humid rainy day while singing the birthday song.
2. Tickle the emo kid with the paper towel on their throat and stack them up.
3. Wash the paper towel with 13 emo kids in a sink full of unicorns, rainbows, glitter and butterflies.
4. Look at the paper towel. It looks like Ke\$ha just wiped her butt with it.
5. Pet the paper towel. It feels like the fur of a chinchilla covered in lies.

Wow? What a Big Stick You Have
Kaishon Holloway

Big ol' stick
Tracing over and over
In the mundane sand of life
Drawing the landscape of your destiny
None of you is unique
You are essentially the same
I know all of your secrets
I created them
I crafted them myself in the sand
I am a magical wand of your wants and desires
I created it and I can break it
The sand is your broken hour glass spread everywhere
What I trace shall come true
There's nothing you can do

I Am Your Leader Kaishon Holloway

Take off your shirt
Get on your knees
Pants on the ground!
Get on your knees
Why are you still talking?
Get on your knees?
Don't look at me
Get on your knees
Oh! I like that
Get on your knees
Shower me in compliments
Get on your knees
Praise me, peasant
Get on your knees
Repent for all of your sins
Get on your knees
I am your master
Get on your knees

Slot Machine Danilo Machado

Those fruits look like you could eat them / They're so shiny / Look at them!
Laugh at the punch lines / (the laugh tracks will tell you when) / It's so
funny!

Try your luck / Pull the handle / Olives and cherries
Again / Two in a row / The cherries shine like plastic!
You can almost smell the smokers / the cigarettes / leaving stains on the
gaudy casino carpet

Look at their sitcom expressions / Look at them / They're so funny
The jokes are always funny / Look, the audience is laughing / I swear it's
not just the laugh track
Golden Girls / and yellow lemons / Look at them!

An orange / A cherry / An olive
A watermelon cut in half / Cut like the video clips / Spliced!
An orange / a cherry / a cherry
A lemon / a lemon / a lemon
You might have won something / Look at them / They're so shiny
An olive / a cherry / a lemon

A laugh track / The camera zooms in / Closer!
They're all nodding / They're all acting / Acting!
It's so believable / Organic! / Like the fruit on the screen
An olive / a watermelon / an orange
A lemon / a lemon / a lemon
Look at them / I've won! / Have I seen this before?

- I've seen them before / You've seen them, too / Olives and cherries
Look at them! / The actors are under lights, too / They're on display
Cleaned and made shiny / Made to shine! / So that they translate into
pixels
Pixels of light / Which flood onto glowing screens / Look at them!
Sitting in lonely living rooms / in lonely casinos / standing in lonely
galleries!

South by Deeper South Danilo Machado

There is emptiness in the rolling clouds
above the wheels that keep rolling.

There is emptiness in the abandoned playing cards,
in the abandoned novel laying on the bed.

There is emptiness in the bathroom for one,
in its singular mirror. in its dusty tile.

There is emptiness between the gears of the train,
between each of the tracks, each of the carts.

There is emptiness between the stops shouted by the conductor
- Richmond, Raleigh, Savannah, Jacksonville, Orlando.

There is emptiness in what seem to be islands,
in what seem to be bunches of trees around bunches of water.

There is emptiness in the changing, unstable view,
a view seen through two windows with two gray
curtains half-covering the sky.

Still, there is wholeness in composition, in a stable frame,
in dried paint - in an unmoving display
about movement South, deeper South.

First Rate, Second Hand Alexandra Manna

I am invisible to your eyes
Perhaps you think it's magic
It's much more complex than that
It's much more depressing
I move, unseen
Thought of as just a ghost
I am a man
Maybe even a woman I forget
I do such mundane things . . .
Though I am not content
Living this lie

Black Cat Event Alexandra Manna

1. Take a black cat, drape it around your neck and wear it as a scarf
2. Take four black cats, and use their hungry cries for food to wake you up in the morning
3. Take six black cats, and use them as a blanket to keep yourself warm at night
4. Take those same six black cats, and put them on your back, use their purrs as a personal massage
5. Look at the black cats, they look like many tiny people wearing thick fur coats and hats with pointed ears
6. Pet the black cats, they feel like a phone set on vibrate

Across the Street from Where I Sit Rachel Shultz

Originally, I planned this to be a walk poem.
I went on an extensive walk
through back roads
of my town.

Forty-five minutes of walking in darkness
on windy Connecticut roads.
On this walk I had deep thoughts
and deep plans for this poem
and what its contents would be.

But instead I found something
more interesting and obscure
when I sat down to actually write it.

I do my work at the Dunkin Donuts in
my town, right across from
a First Niagara Bank.

First a firework went off.
A loud, glittering, in the sky
Firework.
Right over the bank.

And now, in uneven increments,
the lights in the bank flash on and off
and instead of writing this poem,
I am staring at the lights
to find any rhyme, or more importantly,
reason to their shutting on
and shutting off.

I have found neither.

I could have written about the lights of cars

that passed,
the stars or the phase of the moon,
or the memories attached to the places I passed.
Or even the lunch I had
with my mother, the letter my
uncle wrote me and his politically incorrect-ness
that makes you question the health of society,
or the fact that today is the four year anniversary of
my own father's death; something that
has surely inspired many poems and great works.

Death.

But no, instead I chose to write about a single firework
and the lights in a bank
across the street from where I sit and write
a poem about
a firework.

Kentucky Fried Chicken Rachel Shultz

Who cares
what came first, the chicken or the egg,
as long as there's KFC on its way to your door?

Who cares
what came first,
alcoholism, or the strokes of writing genius
that made your name?

Who cares
as long as I can still read
The Raven and The Cask of Amontillado?

Clichés deserve to be punished and burned
for the torment and aggravation they've caused me,
turning people into clones and drones.

Girls with their daddy problems,
either pole dancing or cutting themselves.
Boys with their penis envy and sex-addicted thoughts.

True beauty is eternal.
All we need is love.
Time heals all wounds.
Beggars can't be choosers.
Don't judge a book by its cover.
When it rains it pours.

So dance down your pole,
keep texting,
keep masturbating to Japanese fetish porn,
keep eating your KFC
thinking it's made

from real chicken.

Flicker Lives Past Michael Socci

Flicker

One life

Flicker

Then Another

Flicker

Then Another

Flicker

And Another

Flicker

Another

Flicker

When do I stop?

Flicker

Another

Flicker

When will it end

Flicker

Another

Flicker

Who are we?

Flicker

Does it matter?

Flicker

Let it end

Flicker

And another

Flicker

Stop it

Flicker

I don't want to know

Flicker

Another

Flicker

I can't look away....

Flicker

Yet another
And another
and
Flicker, Flicker, Fuck...

Darkness and Stone Michael Socci

Here they come
Those pretentious bastards
The Cynical Deconstructionists
To Ransack, To Pillage
With their hipster glasses
And fuck-all's fucked up post-ironic smirks
Everything is fair game
Reduced from Beauty
To a Venomously Vilified, Righteously Reviled, Retroactively Repressive
Bulls eye for a shotgun shell spray
Of the bold lettered buzzwords
And Faux Indignation
The fashionable fuck-fest
Of festive tom-fuckery
Gone Full-Retard
In a desperate bid, an agonizing elegy
To Evacuate Eminence
And Elevance rendered
Emptiness and Invalidity
Impotence for the next Generation
Culture Buried by fear and anger
A sensation of suspicion
Like a Pervasive pall pissed onto the Persistence
Of Popular Particularity
I'm sick of it!
Let fly the missiles of reconstruction
To shatter amidst the whining whimsome
Of the bitching bunch of basket-cases

Whom can only destroy, and never create
Vindicate with Valor
The Simple Sanity of a Story Still
Free of the Surreptitious Sic em!
Of Sordid Logic lately employed
To Justify the Genocide
Of Cultural Milestone after Milestone
I won't tolerate it any more
Rip Down the Destroyers from their Ivory Towers
Painted Gray Because of Wicked Whites
Changed the Target
But not the tactics
Too Stupid to Change the Tactics
Expect Exotic Erotica
Like Imperialist Idiots
Professing to have respect
But distance themselves from others
Say you can't understand
Say you can't reprimand
Giving Only
The Patronizing "Everyone's Unique!" Speech
Given at the age of five
Like they're all there
And we're not
Anything Old
Is the enemy
Like some kind of monster
Patriarchy preying on our children
Racism rearing in the black and white
Of an old movie you didn't watch
Didn't Understand
The Culture
You Didn't Care About
Dismissed with a Dozen Defamations
Paid To No Other Culture
Because They Aren't Acceptable Targets
The Way Our Own History Is

But Hell, Even the Politically Corrects
Are Subject to Scrutiny
Now Fantasy Must be Reality
To be Acceptable to Them
Frivolity Considered the Enemy
Unrealism in Fantasy
Made Something to be Ashamed Of
As if Truth Deeper
Than Cynicism
Were only a fairy tale
I swear to god it burns...

Three Channels

Thomas Szivos

There's no news today
Let's have a staring contest

I blinked I lose

Channel 1 lost, eh?
Well, viewer demographics say
We should switch anchors constantly
Attract everyone to our network
Enjoy the news
You'll never hear
The same story for long

Quack!

Look at the morons on Channel 2
I'm all you need
Look at my handsome face

Yeah, you like that

Water Bottle Event Thomas Szivos

1. Take five hundred water bottles and tie them together to make a raft.
2. Invite the water bottle to your home and serve it filet mignon.
3. Wrap the water bottles in paper and give them to Santa as presents.
4. Glue the water bottle to a pelican's beak so it always has something to drink.
5. Look at the water bottle. It is the same shape as a kangaroo's nose.
6. Observe the similarities to an upside-down bush.
7. Note that it is clear like a sunny day.
8. Feel the water bottle. It feels like a giant squid's tentacles.
9. Touch it and be reminded of a magic eight ball.
10. Feel rich when you notice that it feels like diamonds.

artwork monologue Marques Binion
Inspired by Eric Gottesman's *Silence*, 2013.

Three Channels Thomas Szivos
Inspired by Ericc Gotteman's *Silence*, 2013.

Monday Mornings in 3013 Cynthia Flores
Inspired by Catherine Ross' *IFO*, 2006.

Life (a video by Jeff Ostergren) Jessica Castillo
Inspired by Jeff Ostergren's *Stimulus*, 2013.

Wow? what a Big Stick You Have Kaishon Holloway
Inspired by Siebren Versteeg's *Prop*, 2009.

Slot Machine Danilo Machado
Inspired by Jonathan Horowitz' *Slot Machine*, 1993.

First Rate, Second Hand, Alexandra Manna
Inspired by Carmelle Safdie and Sophy Naess' *First Rate Second Hand 2013*, 2012.

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