

Meet me here, now –  
I'll bring my then and there...

Cynthia Lee  
José Reynoso



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*writings from a text-movement improvisation project*



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Los Angeles - 2007



## forward

These writings emerge from a rehearsal process in which José Reynoso and I worked with improvisational structures derived from Logomotion, a form of text-movement improvisation developed by my teacher, Simone Forti. Improvised speech and motion offered a unique way to explore a question that I was grappling with as a choreographer: how do you forge a genuine connection between two people of very different personal and cultural backgrounds, without erasing their difference?

These texts, like our improvisations, were created through a collaborative process. Some texts were originally warm-up free-writes that have been revised to incorporate the other person's editorial advice. Some are transcriptions of the other person speaking while in motion, transcriptions that are inevitably tinged by the hand of the scribe. Other texts share authorship equally, as in "home," where my words are italicized and José's are in standard typeface. The resulting text can be read separately, as two independent streams of thought, or continuously, as a single discourse. Brought to life through the design and photography of Cristina Rosa, this book serves both as an archive of our rehearsal process and an art object that stands by itself.

*Cynthia Lee*  
*Los Angeles, March 2007*





## PORT OF ENTRY

*mouth as the port of entry.*

I remember Krishna stealing  
the butter and his mother Yashoda **angrily**  
**lovingly** telling him to open his mouth  
all crammed full of b u t t e r  
and he opened it

- INSIDE WAS THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.

I *used* to **hold** food in my mouth too,  
excuse myself from the table and **go** to the  
bathroom to **spit it out**, half chewed.

A silly rebellion, and one *born*  
of privilege.

The porcelain toilet bowl and little  
**me**, regurgitating my rice like  
a baby bird in *reverse*.

It all goes in *through* the **mouth**,  
*you know*, it's **language** and **food** that  
move the **tongue** and not  
the *OTHER WAY AROUND*.

I *remember* your sweat reeked of  
soy sauce and cheap vinegar, **you are**  
**what you eat**,  
but – shine, *shine* in a world of **little**.  
**Scrap** iron wok coated with cooking oil.  
**Dried** yam gruel. Single **flower** in a  
cracked blue & white vase.

**Those mornings** were pickled  
cucumber, round tables spinning **lazy**  
susans I *chopped* a little bit of pepper

I m i s s y o u .

I sop my **rice** with fried wheat *gluten*

I m i s s y o u .

(by cynthia)



# in between

No euphemism can mask social inadequacy. The flesh can inscribe the feelings and the sweat that profusely flow while moving in between two, three, or four...yes "worlds"! From my hands, my forehead, in between my legs.



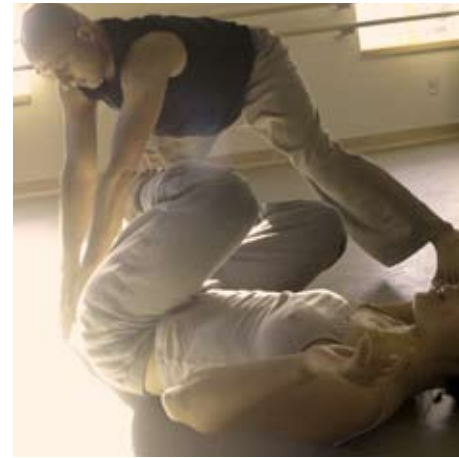
It sounded like a post-modern cliché - "moving between worlds" - or as if I wanted to victimize myself using a Romantic, Bohemian idea: "el incomprendido, the misunderstood artist." But it is indeed debilitating to be dealing with . . . what is it? What is it? Yeah! Social inadequacy...hereandthere.







Moving in between fields of experience moving in between people and their fantasies, their truth – or many truths? Moving in between manners and expectations moving in between the proper – that is the different propers as defined by he, she, we, they, them, you.



I feel like vomiting, I feel the vertigo of bouncing back and forth sometimes linearly, sometimes in circles, in spirals, collapsing standing back up, but never stopping cause if I stop the motion from here to there from between you and me, they, them, and in between my space and the world –

(by José)





weaving maid

herd boy

in between worlds, stars glancing off the page  
the tightrope between lovers stretches across the milky way.

weaving maid and herd boy, absence, their relationship  
defined by the space separating them. the space in between:  
a gap, a bridge of space and time. love built over the bridge  
of magpies ink staining the page the skin I write on.

the moment between inhalation and exhalation. little  
deaths. sneeze, orgasm. what happens when the flow  
of mind stops suddenly on a dime stops suddenly between  
attachment to what was, and what needs to be?

breath interrupts flows across the space between your skinbag  
and mine. gooseflesh. your breathing filters cold across my lungs,  
translation breaks the backs of the magpies bearing us breaking us  
across the space between languages.

warp and weft. in between as a state of being, of wondering and wandering.  
wondering what belonging could mean, why I so often turn my back  
on identity labels the asian clique the chinese clique this this the that. art resting  
born out of the uncomfortable ordinary lived space of dislocation, of in between.  
hard to market. this bag of bones and skin and doubt.

weaving girl tries to balance, teetering on tightrope – suddenly her voice cracks,  
half-swallowed in black black space peppered by stars.

(by cynthia)

Patrick Henry Bruce  
American, lived in France 1881-1936  
Composition 1916; Oil on Canvas

visit  
to the  
hammer  
museum:

may 17,  
2006

I feel these dislocating parts,  
these compartmentalized single  
thoughts finding their place  
amongst a chaotic stream  
of consciousness, a flow  
that threatens to overflow  
its boundaries over the  
threshold between sanity  
and insanity.

Colors  
and shapes  
collapsing in a  
flow with inner random-  
ness and chaos; the mirror  
of dislocations my body  
can feel . . . if I just  
have the guts to let  
go.

Multitude of colors and shapes crumbling as  
something whose parts collapse in an  
estrepitoso flow of movement downwards . . .

parts collapsing hitting each other,  
momentarily bouncing back  
up a few inches at a time  
but downwards

. . . Individual parts  
stumbling, spinning,  
and rotating in  
space while  
finding their way  
down in the  
chaotic  
stream of  
movement.

This is  
everywhere; it's  
Modernism  
after all

Would this have  
healing properties  
or would it merely be  
the propeller to-  
ward the other  
side of the  
threshold  
. . .

I  
wonder  
if I can contain  
these parts in my  
hand but most likely, this  
torrent of falling,  
stumbling, dislocating parts  
will flow through my  
fingers as liquid that can't be  
stopped. Even if I try to catch  
it with my other hand  
below, the process  
just repeats  
itself.

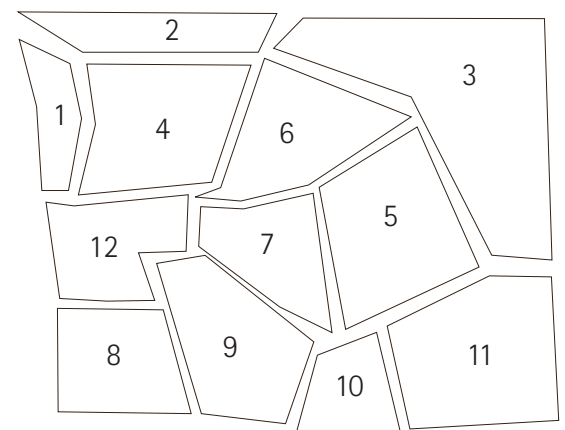
... with no return:  
are there thoughts,  
bodies, and realities  
that are just a  
multitude of colors  
and shapes that lose,  
mutate, reconstruct  
their identities?

There  
light only  
becomes  
alive in the  
reflection of  
shapes and colors  
traveling in an  
uncontrollable stream  
of consciousness but  
never in a "functional"  
thought that assists  
in survival . . .

much  
less in  
leisure,  
enjoyment or  
art making?

Black is the  
background,  
but it can hardly be  
seen. The flow is so dense,  
so heavy, full of sharp objects  
whose edges and corners can be  
felt on my back and neck as I  
curl down receiving this flow  
as if under a shower. My hands  
reach for the water valve to  
shut the flow off. But can't.

(by José)



**modernism running away into ...**

it's running away, black performance art and social history. 2, 3, 4, 5 books. one... reader. I can see the green light turning [**head turns back**] into blue. decision predecision one touch allocating my time. my shoulder knee, little black dog running away [**right leg bends**] crunchy tostada falling on floor grabbing the little bits reaching out reaching in [**body collapses to floor**] I say hi I say bye [**hand fingers reach**] did you take pills? I'm getting tired now...

(cynthia transcribing José talking while in motion)



modernism

running away

black performance art and social history.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 books.

bends] crunchy tostada falling on floor.

grabbling the little bits reaching out reaching in [body collapses to floor]

running away [right leg

my shoulder knee little black dog

say bye hand fingers reach] did you take pills?

say I [body collapses to floor]

decisions

into blue.

I'm getting tired now...

(cynthia transcribing José talking while in motion)

coating my time.

my shoulder knee little black dog

say bye hand fingers reach] did you take pills?

say I [body collapses to floor]

decisions

into blue.

I'm getting tired now...

(cynthia transcribing José talking while in motion)

light twirling

head turns back] into blue.

coating my time.

my shoulder knee little black dog

say bye hand fingers reach] did you take pills?

say I [body collapses to floor]

decisions

into blue.

I'm getting tired now...

(cynthia transcribing José talking while in motion)

coating my time.

my shoulder knee little black dog

say bye hand fingers reach] did you take pills?

say I [body collapses to floor]

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(cynthia transcribing José talking while in motion)





*little french girl: the first step.*

*'What makes her French exactly? A tortoise shell for a skirt, a long neck becomes spine elegant upright torso, knobby three part knees. But there's something uncertain too, like the way deformed babies or down syndrome people are sweet, strangely, in their not-quitiness. I'm romanticizing disability but I love the single foot chopped off to reveal the ragged wood grain, how the feet stand at uncertain angles - not parallel, not not. Her tortoise shell colonizer's helmet tutu seems to shine, light shines smoothly off, a second head. Her spine vulnerable, its ridges could be ribs, could be the inner protrusions of her vertebra. And I think of our inside bodies, the side of the spine you never get to touch, cushioned by organ tissue body juice, all exposed to the air. All exposed to the outside air footsteps echoing across the museum's plastic ridged floor. If the proscenium is over, are museums the graveyards of art? Or not. The little girl, who could have been someone else, still stands there. I can feel the chisel working sharp, metal curve shavings peeling away into a rough manbeard, thick sausage legs.*

*a response to constantin brancusi's sculpture,*

*"little french girl" (the first step iii)*

*(by cynthia)*

## language and relax

Sometimes I  
what warlike  
I attend to when  
the paper:  
immigration  
sometimes with  
from the Calendar  
feeling and looking  
intoxicating  
imagery of La  
Lalo Alcaraz.



hesitate to decide  
language should  
skimming through  
Iraq, Iran, or the  
debate. I start  
one or two articles  
section; for sure  
at the incisive,  
language and  
Cucaracha by

Every night I see myself in the mirror; I see my body, its features, the color of its skin; I feel its history. . . I relax. That helps me decide to start reading about the immigration debate. Its dehumanizing warlike language and imagery: the other; the alien; the lesser-than; the job taker, illegal, doer of jobs nobody else wants; the beaner, little bug.

When I switch to the readings on those other wars – Iraq and Iran – “terrorists” and “enemy” permeate its language. When I reflect on it, I just relax, then ready myself to join my neighbors, my comadres y compadres, my brother, my sister and their children in acts of self-defense. We’ll clean and dirty, walk and march, overpopulate and reshape the streets of L.A . . . well . . . and the rest of the United States.

(by José)

## what you caught of my dream

Forty lights candles  
burning the image of a  
Buddha with a blue  
face, a bit of color – an  
image on Venice Beach.  
I like the Thai family that  
sold the pictures of the  
Buddha – if I were  
religious I'd be Buddhist.  
The image remembers,  
makes me see: holding  
chopsticks between my  
fingers, picking bone  
from ash. They say my  
grandmother's bones were  
like coral, in a hand fragile  
– crush it into dust. My

grandfather's bones were  
a healthy pink, putting  
them in a green jade urn.  
Chemotherapy weakens  
the bones. When I was  
little, shiny shiny, hu!  
– and she used to smile,  
the treatment, later, later  
after all this, black woman  
wheeled her through empty  
airport, she was so small like  
a little bird. Skin hanging.  
From her bones crystallized  
like sponge, inside she,  
amber. Echoes through  
the Houston airport. They  
say I have her eyebrows.

josé transcribing cynthia talking while in motion



home

*home homely homesick homey home-spun home is where*

It's not always the things I consciously think of  
but the ones I haven't taken time to reflect on

*the heart is the wooden butcher table  
polished by years of  
hands touching wood  
touching*

how they make me feel about  
that place which is at times becoming

*cracked split seams rice bowls  
thrown against the floor*

more elusive – home.

*home is the kitchen the blackened  
pot the tea kettle with bluegreen*

It was at one time

*flowers the trail of ants  
taking refuge from the heat  
home is*

the titles of the books my dad read

*the heat and twist and retch of incense*

the records he listened to,

*beads clicking, the single burner suspended  
outside the screen door*

the photo of el che guevara  
placed by the staircase

*home is foreign living in a foreign tongue*

in the house where I grew up –

his emotionless stare to the horizon, his  
thin beard, his hair sticking out of his boina

*home*

a tiny star on his frente –

*home*

*is family, home is body*

his image which meant, at my house,  
equality and justice for all – his image

*sweet sour salty*

standing where I could see it a thousand times a day – that

*preserved plum in the mouth melting*

*too many flavors all at once*

unconscious Political lesson has spun around and around

*puckering with joy and sorrow*

until it has even changed

*homeland homelanguage homeschooled a home you carry on your back*

that notion of the place in which I learned

*sweet smell sweet snail  
home is a bowl of rice soft  
mother hands lazy*

to learn – the home in which

*movement is from one language to another*

*home is lack too a throat ripped with pain*

that lesson continues to thrive for expression –

to shape a new space...a new

*home, I carry*

*you on my back I miss you always*

(by José and Cynthia)



