

THE ORACULAR



SONNETS

Mark Young & Jukka-Pekka Kervinen

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MARK YOUNG & JUKKA-PEKKA KERVINEN

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Oracular sonnet #1

Roads seesaw towards
the oracle. No, not Delphi. It's
the one in Delphineum Drive
I'm talking about. The old man,
living alone with his
cats & coughing & codeine
who reads your fortune
in a greasy pack of Tarot cards
that I'm sure is also
not the full deck. Sees all, hears
just enough to have some
idea of what you want to
hear. Gives it to you. Not what
I want, a rhetorical oracle.

Nearly seized & beaten;
but escaped through
someone's lunchtime dream
pretending to be
a simulacrum
in a tuxedo. The
adrenaline rush
was all that mattered. He was
excited
by the
buzz
that reckless danger
coaxed
from him, the thrill of
callous treatment
if recaptured.
This was how
life should be lived,
risking the
cuneiform clues,
never knowing
what might be
needed from the
wardrobe of
custom-made disguises
he kept
in a locker
at the bus depot.
Today
he was lucky
crashlanding
in a de Chirico
landscape,
eroded pillars
ringing a piazza
where
naked
mannequins strolled &
bargained for his soul.
He surrendered
gladly.
Naturally no contracts
but always
a
caveat emptor
clause.

if it weren't
for the waves
verdigris would
stain the shore

*

cuprous oxide
keeps algae from
forming on
pool walls

*

instead
of pumice
paracelsus
used the
*lapide
philosporum*
when he
shrove himself

~~kup e ch ger n o i u n~~
~~wave p i ic s r~~
~~h ll u t be t f~~
~~s so eu ri ws t~~
~~i a h jo p o o a r~~
~~ll e sh s iv i er~~
~~p e e l h e s re ev~~
~~o t s ou ay ab~~

poets use
artificial media
to keep their
words natural

*

ella fitzgerald
singing gershwin

lyrics by
gay ira

music by
straight george

does the
same thing

much more
efficiently

tl I have c always in believed
that the iv cellular s degradation ay
of words
is caused k by macrophages e
w in e the bloodstream i getting popcorn
instead of potassium as they i
k enter p the se operating
b e p theatre ins to a e take partly r
inest y a hi microscopic ed pho t o d v
g u oppor t unity

Oracular sonnet #2

Presentation isn't everything.
Honeypots melt in a heatwave,
oracles grow to like
the sound of their own voice
far too much. I'm more interested
in the ones who have tuberculosis
or some other wasting disease.
They're miserly with their words,
get pissed off if you ask
too many questions. They're
the Joe Fridays of the psychic
force, Dreams' Dragnet. Just
the facts, Ma'am, that's all I'm
after. Just the fancied runners.

seeing is believing

s e b e t h i e n m

for the dreamer

is the basic doctrine

i a n u g l d n i s k

it is what is

of realists. Tasting

n x r r s o i n t n h a

beneath or behind

makes it more so

t n a e o a s s

that is important.

as do all those

w e e s n h a e a m

unseen, relying

tactile experiments

f v r b l e e v r l l i s t r y

solely on

they like to

r e t s t i

the imagination.

undertake under

t e n a p e s w m r o l t e

they do not

a variety of

p i g t n y i

deny the senses

strictly controlled &

i o i e s r e m b e e

but it is the

documented

l s i s r e i n u s u l p

mind that does

laboratory

u r e d i r s o s e s

the sensual stuff.

situations. all

n f o r c a t e x i

nor do they

of which

h r c e s i s h y

mind a

adds up to

n n s f a o

healthy &

an uncontrollable

t e t r e d e e c i n

& unmanageable

s d

manageable

dose of superreality.

dose of surreality.

But how do
they see the
stone
garden in
between them?

dichotomy	dichotomy
is the state	is the state
of being	of being
one thing	one thing
or the other	or the other
clearly	clearly
defined	defined
0	0
or 1	or 1
black	black
or	or
white	white
dead or	dead or
alive	alive
male	male
&	&
female	female
do not fit	do not fit
inside	inside
these	these
frames	frames

n e t e p k a g g a	s u s h e n
u e a i j s i i d p	m n e s e t p l
r e o s m e n v r a	a g i p l o t t s e t f
n r m e e s t n e t w k e	n a g c o u r d o s m
w s t a i p r d u	t t i h e s o r t e
t u m l l d e f i	d f n b a t s s o a v e
k o w v i a o n b a c w	l t e h c r l a e
e p i e e e i n	y b r d s o f i e
y b r d s o f i e	e p i e e e i n
l t e h c r l a	k o w v i a o n b a c w
d f n b a t s s o a v e	t u m l l d e f i
t t i h e s o r t e	w s t a i p r d u
n a g c o u r d o s m	n r m e e s t n e t w k e
a g i p l o t t s e t f	r e o s m e n v r a
m n e s e t p l	u e a i j s i i d p
s u s h e n	n e t e p k a g g a

Oracular sonnet #3

Parked the car just before the
entrance to the freeway. Walked
the rest of the way. Rapidly. Found
his cardboard box underneath
the overpass just as I'd been told.
Stopped at the beginning of a
path defined by corrugated
patterns in the oil & grease &
lit a cigarette from the packet
I'd brought for him. He was
supposed to be an oracle
with binocular vision, could coerce
two versions of his visions.
Context. Subtext. Signs & signed.

To concatenate is to link things together to form a chain. In calculus I learnt that the curve $y = a \cosh(x/a)$ is sometimes called a chain curve or catenary & the x -axis is the directrix of the catenary. Karl Marx' Communist Manifesto proclaimed that the workers of the world have nothing to lose but their chains & in the Mask Of Anarchy Shelley suggests that you shake your chains to earth like dew for ye are many, they are few. He must have been listening to Aretha Franklin who sang about the chain of fools & from whom I learnt how to feel like a natural woman. Looking out on the morning rain there is an amino acid chain which is with us from before birth but presumably has nothing to do with J-J Rousseau's claim that Man is born free & is everywhere in chains. Now Jukka has offered me cloves in the ears of rabbis & numbats with multiple sclerosis as further links. So what goes where on the x & y axes of my concatenation camp?

Oracular sonnet #4

sr d, ulc ne
swee int a
k ada ivte i sfol
dapl g k cl
e re sve to e beh n
to e t de d css
s al so a io
trs angi i
ik b s ls ; a
cs, oama ul d l
th h ket a l r a
ela tow e i s eg
h hus poo bl
cd nt re

The clatter, a
cluster of
noisy air
left over from
the night before
that didn't want
the sun
to find it there. Wherever
there was. Where
ever he/re was. He'd
spent the last week
flitting between the
centuries
looking in the ruins
of past relationships
for pieces unspoiled enough
to still get
purchase on. Not
sufficient to
even compensate
for the effort, only
so many times
you can go back
to the well. Had to find
something new; &
run wet-tissue ragged
as he was
he was running
out of options. The past
lay dead before him. The
future didn't even have
the evacuation procedures
found on most
motel walls.
His only chance lay
in that talisman of now-
diminished noise
that woke him. To
find it before the
sun did & hope
sufficient
entropy inside.

odd how few conveniences there truly are
set on fire by the recent rains
he thought abstractedly about the figurative
brute force fleshy resistance
relative youth
day after start the day after cast the yarrow stalks cast
the strings of cash halfway out of bed cast the past
aside the bedclothes back & tell me mother what do
the hexagrams say today
ItChing to understand
rabbits play gō on the mucous membranes of my mind
andante al dente not fasta pasta
lost in a lending library of stolen books
his pillow inflated by the leavenings of communion
wafers
woke dreaming & dreaming woke
thought he'd figured out the abstract anagrams
sat bract
wore address
fumbled dexterity but absorbed osmosis
eyes are purebred ears are hybrid impossible to hear
properly what you see here
pigeon-like he dragged his senses round the room as if
they were toys & he hoping to make sense of them
convenient how few true oddities there really are

*Aspergillus
flavus*

produces a
group of
secondary metabolites
called aflatoxins
which commonly grow
on stored crops
such as
peanuts. *Centropus
Phasianinus* is the
only Australian cuckoo
that doesn't
lay its eggs
in other birds'
nests. But until
someone
who has worked in
a peanut-butter factory
& now lives
on the Tropic
of Capricorn where
the birds are found
coincidentally comes
along to
provide a link
there is no
evidentiary chain
to bind them
together.

Oracular sonnet #5

wings beating still
her thighs carressed
caught in his bill
upon his breast
vague fingers push
her loosening thighs
that white rush
beating where it lies
engenders there
roof & tower
so caught up
blood of the air
with his power
let her drop

in a pause
in the pulse
of the
beating wings
of words

I
play
J.S.Bach
Air
on the
G String
it is
music of
great beauty

it is
music of
a
great beauty
who walks
towards you
in a
measured
but
elegant
way
until

she reaches
that
last step
when she
could
reach out
touch you
stop
your pulse
blur
your words
forever
instead
she
pauses
time
stops

meme

But it will shortly be clear that the sense of 'model' and 'pattern' that permits the appropriation is not quite the usual one in defining 'paradigm'

u d r e t f e u

; o m t v a s t g d

Now, morning, I face my lone shadow:
Suddenly my eyes are bleared with tears

mnemonic

memory

For the next week he slept during the mornings and spent the afternoons repairing the old Plymouth he had commandeered from a local garage

i g , k u r

a l d m i s e m

He knew I didn't like it, that it made me. . .uncomfortable.

momentary

anemone

He is too intelligent to plunge down that precipitous slope. . ."

f e t n o y m o k s i n x

p l i n e d ; b i e l m i

I twist my spine rapidly to one side and then the other—cracking the vertebrae in my back.

memento

hegemony

The name golden, sans noun, stuck.

s e c o n d , n a h

s o p i t e f g

I have tried to designate as 'foreign' only those words which were not in common English use.

tormentil

relentless

I am the eater of trees, the drinker of sense
and my name is the crown of a blue eye rising

o a m p , u r c t

o c e a r t t p a

He is moved to it by ambition, and also by some dark sense of loyalty.

entropy

menelaus

any point at which the direction of motion of a point moving round a closed curve is perpendicular to its radius vector

s h m p g a s e a i r

t m b e s e

Blackwell eased himself edgewise into a bright cave, where steam rose from cookers behind a counter of reconstituted granite.

manticore

meiomerous

"The rich queer's probably still sitting down there at Big Sur," Lee Mellon said.

r s, i n t i o a l

o i e

This was not even a bona fide breaker.

gubernatorial

morality

Another related worry was that the paradoxes of logic, such as the Epimenides paradox, might turn out to be internal to mathematics, and thereby cast in doubt all of mathematics.

f o d w e s s e l

o p o r t

A man strolls at about 10^2 cm/sec, drives a car at 3×10^3 cm/sec and rides in a jet plane at near the speed of sound, which is 3×10^4 cm/sec (about 700 miles per hour).

rdmsaklyvn

Tired of the sooths
that were being said
by the traditional
methods of
divination

he took

every thing that
was conveniently
at hand
& cast them
on the floor

How they fell —

d a i o t e e v
m z z l e m e n s h k r,
s w s —

was exactly
what he wanted
to hear.

Oracular sonnet #6

1 13 78 286 715 1287 1726 1726 1287 715 286 78 13 1
1 12 66 220 495 792 934 792 495 220 66 12 1
1 11 55 165 330 462 462 330 165 55 11 1
1 10 45 120 210 252 210 120 45 10 1
1 9 36 84 126 126 84 36 9 1
1 8 28 56 70 56 28 8 1
1 7 21 35 35 21 7 1
1 6 15 20 15 6 1
1 5 10 10 5 1
1 4 6 4 1
1 3 3 1
1 2 1
1 1
1

Afterwords

From Jukka:

Recently I have been interested of 'hidden' structures where parts of texts are not shown and the interpretation for missing bits are left to reader. I started to play with a thought that reader could be 'replaced' by a poet, and suggested to Mark if he would be interested of trying to collaborate with me. My part in our collaboration was to offer starting point for Mark to his working. The whole process is based on two simple computer programs which generates 'templates' for further elaboration's. The first program generates the whole word structure and the second makes things hidden with the main idea to 'maximize' the desire of filling the missing letters/syllables/words of this fragmented structure. Both programs generate letters and combination of letters using complex structures based on 'controlled indeterminacy'; highly controlled stochastic procedures and regular iterative patterns with emphasis to vertical and diagonal combinations. Also they generate (as a 'side effect') a two-dimensional sound collage with the idea of using both horizontal and vertical movement in imaginary time-axis.

I wish to thank both Mark and Eileen; Mark for his wonderful poems, I was so excited that couldn't sleep, just waited his replies to my 'templates', and Eileen for publishing this work, what a wonderful opportunity !

sufficient entropy inside

16/04/04

Jukka-Pekka Kervinen to Mark Young I read 'pelican dreaming' and found your poem ('hatred of soft...'). Beautiful piece (again Mark), and thanks, it is nice that you have found some line(s) from my works for more development ! By the way, if you're interested to try some collabs with me that would be great, I have some 'intentionally unfinished' poems (or I call them just 'templates') that I could send to you if you like. Just let me know.

M.Y. to J-K.P. I'd love to do some collaborations with you! Would absolutely love it.

17/04/04

J-K.P. to M.Y. I'm really glad you wanted to collaborate !

I have been interested of making something with these 'templates' as they seem to be important for me. First of all, I don't have to see the 'originals' (and don't want to see by the way). Secondly, they seem to have twofold relationship to 'receiver' (writer/reader), almost unconsciously they try to fill the 'holes' (at least I do) and I'm very interested to know how you feel with them.

Anyway, here are the first five 'templates', please do NOT handle them 'carefully', do anything you want with them (drop letters/words, combine them, add words/letters/punctuation, anything at all). If you are uncomfortable with them, just use your wastebasket and let's try something else !

M.Y. to J-K.P.

Is the "take" below on your first template within the parameters you imagine?

nearly seized & beaten;
but escaped through
someone's lunchtime dream
pretending to be
a simulacra
in a tuxedo. the adrenaline rush
was all that mattered. he was
excited
by the
buzz
that reckless danger
coaxed
from him, the possibility
of rough justice
if he were
caught again.
it was how
life should be lived.
today he was lucky. a
de chirico
landscape,
eroded pillars
ringing a piazza
in which
naked
mannequins strolled &
claimed his soul
which he surrendered
gladly.

J-K.P. to M.Y. This is PERFECT !! Exactly what I had in my mind !

Shall we do some more, if you need more 'templates', just let me know (I don't send them with exactly same strategy, I will do some modifications every time). We can think later what to do with these.

Thanks Mark, you made my day (we are starting here GMT +3.00). Hope you enjoy writing them !

M.Y. to J-K.P. My main email server is down. I can get in to read emails through an alternative entry but can't do anything with them.

Thanks for your note. Glad you liked it. Have been doing some more work which I'll send you when big pond is back on line. It's in a variety of formats, probably best treated as separate parts. When you've seen it & maybe been stimulated by it, then send me some more templates.

I'm loving this!

18/04/04

M.Y. to J-K.P. The attached - I hope - for your perusal.

I'm ready & eager for more.

J-K.P. to M.Y. Excellent beautiful stuff !!!! I love this pieces, and yes I send you more, immediately after this email.

19/04/04

M.Y. to J-K.P. Drum roll, Maestro.

What do you think?

M.Y. to Michele Leggott here's a little something that might make the crowns of your blue eyes rise.

20/04/04

J-K.P. to M.Y. So beautiful pieces, I'm very very happy of these Mark. I just love Oracular Sonnet's, the whole series as well as 'dichotomy is the state...' and your Marx (!!!, if you want more 'templates', I will use Communist Manifesto as source, Marx, what else is left anymore (!?)), Rousseau, Shelley references, Sonnet #6 symmetric series, everything !

What do you want to do with these ? As-Is or some zine/journal perhaps ? I have only one rule with xStream, I don't publish my own works there, they are Kervinen free zone (but of course it is possible to do exceptions). I am willing to 'make public' this collaboration, anxious to do so !

ps. I am listening Bach just now, (I love Bach, every single sound in every composition he wrote), Cantata 'Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit' (BWV 106) "Actus tragicus", bass Air (arie) "Bestelle dein Haus" over and over again !

M.Y. to J-K.P. Am glad you like them. I'm extremely pleased with how it's all turned out. & worn out from turning them out! I couldn't stop writing!!!

I see this as an entirety, a whole that shouldn't be broken up. But I'd also like to see it in a pdf format so the parts can be kept discrete. & I, too, am anxious to see it "out there".

Is it possible to bring it out, even though it would be in pdf format, as one of your xStream collaborative issues? That's what I had in mind until the format, the shape of it, how it ended up, meant that that might present difficulties. (& I feel also that it's a much more integrated collaboration that some of what you've got there; &, yes, I know your email said you didn't want to see "the originals" in there but they fit in so perfectly, are important - critical - to the piece as a whole.)

Is there anyone out there that you know who could/ would want to handle it? Are you bringing out

any ebooks this season? Is there a corner of xPressed.org it could go up on & we post the URL to As/Is? Or a pdf file in the next xStream - I for one feel it's good enough to be the exception to the rule.

Though I would like to see it as its own separate being somewhere.... "The Oracular Sonnets" of J-P. K. & M. Y.

All that aside, I want to do more collaborative pieces with you, single poems - or small groups of poems - that we send or post wherever/whatever. I thrive on this sort of stimulation because I don't find it here, partially because of my geographical isolation within Australia but mainly because the back & forth I need I only get from a very small group of people, & they're in Finland or the U.S. & one in N.Z.

I love working with these fragments. You're right when you say they're just waiting to be filled in, demanding it in fact. & then, when you've started doing that, whole road systems open up to be explored.

Bach is one of my main sources of joy. There is a small number of creators who I get quite the same emotional feeling from - in music it's everything that Bach or Miles Davis have ever done, plus pieces from singers like Aretha Franklin or Ray Charles or Salif Kieta, or jazz musicians such as the Modern Jazz Quartet or John Coltrane. I also get the same feeling from the words of W.C. Williams & Borges & Umberto Eco & Samuel Delany. They make up what I call my "jukebox of the soul".

Let me know what you think about the above. & please send me some more templates. Just so they're there....

M.L. to M.Y. but this is a great piece! still absorbing it and want to know how it's been generated. I can't read the scatterings, too hard on scattered vis field, but wonder if they have audient value if Jukka is (didn't you say?) a musician/composer?

M.Y. to M.L. Jukka started off sending me five, what he calls, templates. Computer generated pieces, each 16 or 17 lines long, with anywhere between 2 & 12 letters per line.

As he says, your mind starts to fill in the gaps, & as I said back to him, once you start filling in a few gaps then a whole road system suddenly opens up.

The first one I did was "Nearly seized & beaten", & that sort of set the tone of chance & determination. He liked what I'd done with that, was along what he had in mind for them, so I finished off the first set - if it weren't, photo opportunity, seeing is believing, dichotomy & concatenate. The last is probably the third or fourth I wrote, & the chain=links idea came from that.

The sonnets came from the second set. The first three of them all derive loosely from the one piece, & from that the concept of the others came. I did the Bach piece, wanted to cut-up or at least truncate a sonnet, looked & the only one I could find was Yeats' Leda & the swan, all about beating wings which fitted in perfectly with the Bach. Chance reinforced. Pascal's numeric triangle, all about binomial distribution, was something that felt right in here, & then I used fourteen lines of one of

Jukka's templates for the fourth one because I really wanted to integrate his work into what I was doing. (A lot of the collaborations he's done have been Jukka-collaborator-Jukka with no real interplay let alone integration to them). The bit about the pheasant coucal - C. Phasianinus - came from talking to you about it at the weekend & wanting to do a piece that linked two unlikely things.

The meme is using the game running about the blogs at present - & which I sent up on a recent As/Is post - where you take a book that's close at hand, open it to page 23, take the fifth sentence & "include that in your journal along with the instructions". (& since you didn't use fullstops in the book of yours I used I made an arbitrary determination on what was the fifth sentence) It happened to be fresh & was a good way of incorporating another Jukka template in. I wanted to keep as much of his stuff as I could. Five of the templates are woven in. (struck out, scattered, incorporated, standing alone)

Put it all together, gave it a sort of sequence, & voila. I like it - though it wore me out with the intensity of it - he likes it, & I'm pleased you like it. What we do with it now is still under discussion.

M.Y. to Jonathan Minton I realise it's rather late in the day, but I was wondering if you could have a look at the attached for consideration for the next issue of Word for /Word. It's part of a longer collaboration that Jukka & I have just finished, but it's a section I feel stands quite happily alone..... If it's too late for the next issue then let it slide. It's just a wistful thought I had....

22/04/04

J.M. to M.Y. Good to hear from you. The latest piece you sent from "The Oracular Sonnets" is amazing, really, and works especially well visually. I'm still assembling work for the next issue, so by all means I'd love to include it. I'll send you a preview of it (and your other piece) once I "translate" it into html. Also, I'll contact Jukka for an updated bio, but feel free to pass the word along to him. And I'd love to hear more of your thoughts on this work, i.e. in what sense it's oracular, your sense of its visual component, or the role of (Jukka's?) programming. A work this intriguing warrants this sort of thing, but, as always, this is up to the two of you.

M.Y. to J.M. Many, many thanks for the acceptance. I loved doing the entire piece & love the entirety - though it drained me in a way I haven't known before; all done at high speed, something like Kerouac writing "On the road"; couldn't stop!. I'm glad that my feelings seem to be shared.

26/04/04

M.Y. to Eileen Tabios I must be honest & admit that I hadn't thought of your Meritage Press as a publisher of ebooks until you mentioned it in the hay(na)ku anthology context. But now that you've sown the seed.....

.....was wondering if you would be interested in seeing the ms - 20 pages + cover - of a collaborative work, "The Oracular Sonnets", between Jukka & myself that's just been completed. It's structured in a way that doesn't make it a good candidate for the xStream collaborations & the way they'd print out. & before we sent it anywhere else I thought I might just drop you a line.