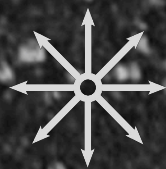




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Against All Odds
Abolishing Gender ~ Abolishing Poetry

Against All Odds

Abolishing Gender - Abolishing Poetry

—ave

*The removal of our work
from the institutions of poetry
is the way to complete poetic autonomy.
We must not build our own institutions
but decimate institution altogether.*

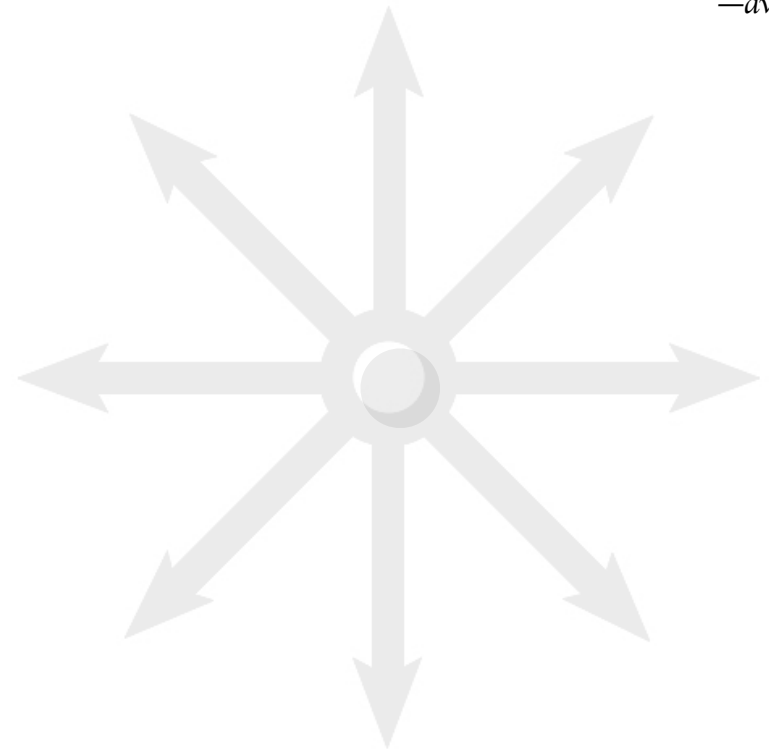
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each piece. I don't want Kenyon breathing down my neck when I'm writing a manifesto about latex and air conditioners. Why is Kenyon there? Who invited Kenyon?

I believe that to be boundless...we should be mindful of what we think is binding...we must be violent with ourselves to dig out whatever latent piece of civilization is in there...kicking at the end of our lines. Blunting them. Pride™ / Poetics™.

Until suddenly, serenity, in our own—beautiful—selfishness.

—ave



~ Genre and Gender ~

Genre is our enemy. It is our enemy because it exists to further compartmentalize writing; genre exists to compress writing into something much more tame. Genre rips writing from ideology and allows it to become a relational point among and against other pieces of writing.

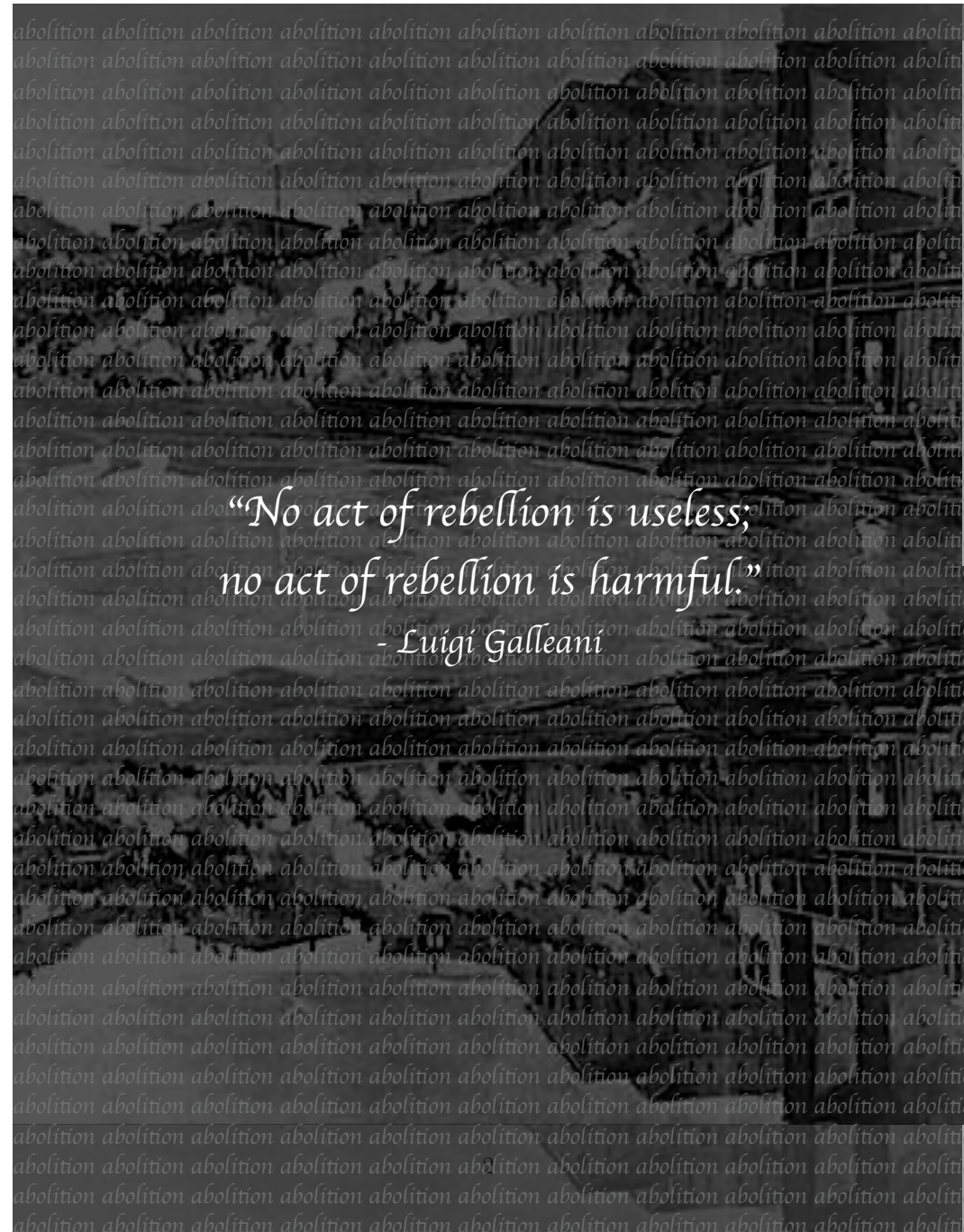
“This is a poem because it acts like other poems.”

“This is a queer person because they act like other queer people.”

Within genre we find another system of categorization and simplification, it is a way of recognizing and taming. Poets have an unfortunate habit of not recognizing and deescalating our initiation into academics. I’d argue for a more fluid understanding of poetry not as a relational pursuit of writing but as an interpersonal conversation about place and witness. About convention and contention. All poems are about poetry. All queer people are about queerness.

Recently, I’ve been worried about relation. I’ve been thinking so much about how I *relate* to this world. How does my writing relate to other writing? Talk to a poet for long enough and you’ll realize that we don’t say much of anything at all; we are experts at relating this to that. X = Y. Stein is to Pound as a fresh orange is to a literal piece of shit.

I’m uncomfortable in this literary tradition of relational aesthetics. I’m uncomfortable on this trash fire of bourgeoisie writing and H&M sweaters. I’m trying to distance myself from what is local but also from the poets who distance themselves from distancing. The *distanceers*. They make me anxious. They like to question and recognize...I don’t want to do much of anything. If we are being honest...poetry is my greatest excuse to violate my sacred secrets...to out-queer myself with



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The poets themselves misplace poetry. We insist on assimilation into a literary society that flatly discards and disregards our work. Why? Because we believe that the best way to remain relevant is to persist through a tokenizing and domesticated milieu of writers. Lord knows, I do not wish for relevancy...so much anxiety in the poetic world is the anxiety of being the *unknown*. The outcast, the disaffected and the naysayer. Why is this so terrible? I am interested in poetic autonomy...I am interested in being lazy and ending this gross *professional poetic development*. Wing tips be damned! Burn your cardigans! FUCK Ezra Pound.

The removal of our work from the institutions of poetry is the way to complete poetic autonomy. We must not build our own institutions

project of poetics is failing because its emphasis is on (P)poetry, not poems.

Language is a system of categorization. It wraps around everything and allows us to apply ourselves to the world—poets often believe they are interacting with language. No. Language interacts with us. A friend once wrote “power does not care how you interact with it...” yes. Yes. It is a never ending system of relation...great poems exploit the failure of this relational existence. The break down and make concise...poets are guilty of trying to compartmentalize individuality and consume culture as a kind of intellectual delicacy. In poetry we find categorization into its most distilled form. This is what makes poetry amazing. It is the concision of beauty. It is the concision of the individual. Do not mistake the poem for the individual. The poem is a poem. Not much else. Poetry being labeled as inaccessible to the uninitiated is a product of the colonization of the art form. The death of poetry began with the decline of the art form as an oral tradition...it became a commodity, a product...not a state of being. Very few people *do poetry* nowadays. Poetry is the common tongue, it is the peoples voice. This is why academia rejects “spoken word” so vehemently but loves their gross caricatures of queer people. They are easy to consume and barbleless. The poets I know are vicious and loud spoken. The poets I know are animalistic and untamed in their pursuit of the art. They are queer. They are angry. Against the current state of things means to reject both our ideas of being untamed and our ideas of tameness. Create a poetics that is pure insurrection and strictly against novelty. MANY TIMES POETS WILL WRITE THAT IDENTITY IS CRUCIAL TO BEING KNOWN TO THE WORLD. I do not wish to be known to the world or for the world to know me. Queer without qualifications. Queer without adjectives. Gender and genre nihilism now...I do not wish to be a queer poet but simply to write poetry that is around queerness.

DOES NOT HELP QUEER PEOPLE IT ACTIVELY PERSECUTES THEM™. Poets are so obsessed with building portfolios that we forgot to be the disaffected along the way. I don't feel welcome in the world of poetics because of the same mechanizations that exclude and bind queer folk from existing both in queer spaces and in society at large. These mechanisms operate in the poetry world as well...it is the MFA program that "welcomes" queer folk but expressions of queerness are frowned upon (WHERE ARE ALL THE POEMS ABOUT LATEX??). It is the university that has an LGBTQ center but doesn't fill it with, well, much of anything. It is gatekeeping and gatekeeping the gatekeeping. Want not for isolationism but for inexpensive books, or the abolition of currency altogether. Why not.

If poets are to succeed at poetry, at producing poems, we must recognize our unsuccessful succession. We have failed to carry the principles of radical literature into radical poetics, we have caved to a bland, liberal poetics; which allows for a vertical success of literature instead of the horizontal success of poets. BUT SUCCESS IS ALSO PART OF THE PROBLEM. Or maybe, what is around *successful*. Maybe when we are within a *safe* and inoffensive poetics we are playing a little too close to the center...

Abolishing the dual body of the individual to propel the poem is my chief concern. I do not want a public presentation, a professional presentation, a personal presentation, a queer presentation, a poetic presentation...our modern obsession with the author as the object of literature ignores the reality of how poems are produced; they are translations of the world. The world is beautiful only because we translate it so. SOMETIMES IT ISN'T ALL THAT BEAUTIFUL. This projection of the mundane is lost is the superficial nuances of civilization. Our search of a queer poetics must chiefly recognize that the project of poetry, just as the project of civilization, is failing. The

but decimate institution altogether. Institution locks us in that attic and keeps the beautiful garden outside all to itself. Enough...

Because of our misplaced desire to find ourselves within societies society, poets become absurdly competitive. Invoking abstract concepts of authenticity to either validate or invalidate writing. There is no valid or authentic poetics because the individual levies themselves against the poem every time a new poem is written or read. Everything is relational...stemming from the individual as the original point of relation. It is through individuality that poetry must be practiced, not through institution. But we also must recognize that our understanding of ourselves is produced within the context of a complicated network of power relations. To properly read we should reject self and poetry as simply "too relational." My queerness does not make queer poems or queer readers. My identity does not create poems. I create poems. Quite plainly put, the attempt to compartmentalize the author into a palatable and packable product, which the institutions of poetry can sell, does a disservice to the understanding of self and of poetry. Self in *relation* to poetry. Self *about* poetry.

For decades—at least since the early 20th century—poets have been questioning what material tools they use to produce poems. What medium do we work with? We work with no mediums. Poets should stand against the physical to flourish in the emotional and spiritual. What is tactile is facile. To write poetry is to actively practice and participate in futility, why not recognize that poetry ought to die? Recognize that poetry is dead. Good. Goodbye. We had fun while you were still around...why are we so interested in assimilating into the greater literary world? Our key distinction—from other writers—is our inability to produce, as it should be. Millions of pages of writing will always fail to sell as a novel does, because novels and poems are not

the same. The poem is not a novel. It is not a vignette or a short story. It is a poem. But who cares what it is? We must be resolute in our productions, while also rejecting them as commodity. The only thing that holds poetry together is a shoddily amassed group of relational writings—poetry *is* this, poetry *isn't* that. No. poetry is not. Poetry should not. We are incomplete and hard to commodify. Good. Our work as poets already stands at odds with capital. We must force the issue further. Abolish writerlyness to begin writing.

All too often I see poets falling into terrible lines of questioning about their work and how it fits into civilization. Questioning what poetry can *do* in such political and social turmoil. It can do nothing. Poetry should not be leveraged to win recognition in this neo-liberal hellscape.

Poetry should stand at odds with the fail(ed)ing project of civilization. In today's world it is fashionable to question how writing works within our society. How do poets write in political turmoil? What can poets do to change society? Plainly, we can reject. We must not write but reject. Our issue is within our desire to *fit in*. Our issue is within our willingness to settle for less when there is no more to be had. True sadness is discussing professional development with a group of poets. We are at the fringe of the literary world and should work within our reality, not within our wishes. I don't want a world to operate within. As our queerness should not be questioned so too should our poetry be. Every year there is a new aesthetic obsession...every year, a new commodity to be celebrated as unique. I am sick of the cycles. They're exhausting. The sheen of a new book of poems, exhausting. The lectures about rejecting punctuation, exhausting. It is overwhelming; honesty is our best policy, I honestly don't want to wear eyeliner to be seen as queer. I want my relation to queerness to change every second and I want poetry to change with it.

poetics. No convictions! Why? A centrist poetics is one that is smooth and makes no determinations about what it is. What do your poems do? Why do they do that?

A friend has an obsession with “dead hot queer boys” I think poets should too. Bring back the bolo tie and primitivism. Maybe our own absurd world will make us better writers and abolitionists. I like our world, except when I don't. I don't like our world when it is based on assumptions. Whose assumptions? Mine, usually.

Another friend says making poems is like making kids—we obsess over our own deaths so we produce little bits and pieces to leave behind. I like my bits and pieces. My bits and pieces are not children. They are poems. Being afraid of dying is something I haven't noticed in the queer community; we are all afraid of living. Living simply, as queer. I am afraid to do so...

Has anyone ever questioned why there are so many queer poets? Maybe because poetry is fantastically anti-social. As is being queer. Being queer is an affront to society, so too is being pithy and loving yourself. Poets love themselves. Poets should love themselves, grotesquely.

IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE SOCIAL GROUPS THAT RECEED FROM SOCIAL OPERATIONS ARE ALWAYS PERCEIVED AS A THREAT—MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE WE ARE A THREAT—MAYBE THAT'S A GOOD THING. Be threatening. Have threatening poems.

Let's make a decision to be realistic; the only way for us to be marketable again is to sell poems in gas stations and go on Fox and Friends to talk about our books. I hate the smell of gas stations and I hate Fox News. Let's build anti-books. Let's make them angry and strictly against civilization. LET'S RECOGNIZE THAT CAPITALISM

~ *Against the Current State* ~

“...poetry is dead. Let it be dead; let us write as if we are already dead.
If poetry is dying, then let’s write a poetry pronounced D.O.A.”

—From *Deadism* by Kevin Young



Poets do not question why they write poetry. What I mean to say is that our genre selection is the only key distinction between poets and, well, other writers. All too often I see, or hear, poets distancing themselves from the hard work of poetry by not discussing their decision to produce poems. How to we reintroduce ourselves to the world of writing?

Quite simply, by recognizing that that world is silly and that we really don’t want to have much to do with it. Genre selection is important because it is where we build *our* garden. Poets lodge themselves, shoddily, in a confusing amalgamation of doubt and anti-

Makeup is expensive, anyway.

Shockingly, recognizing the change of the everyday is less isolating than existing in academia.



~ *Doubtful and Dauntless* ~

In the skin of society we will find no warm welcome. Poets bend over backward to perform for the literary world. Why? Capitalism compels us to lodge ourselves in a niche which works against our interests. The interest of authenticity. I'll start by rejecting: there is no authentic writing—I don't care to even question what that is. We should talk about why everyone wants that authenticity, though. The larger literary world will always try to authenticate a poet based on their poems rather than their presentations. Authenticity is in the individual not the poem. The poems which appear in most poetry journals make up a modicum of the works produced. Remove the edifice of amelioration presented by academy and their journals. In this edifice we find our enemy: validation. This is where doubt flourishes and poems die. The literary world does not celebrate us; poets celebrate poetry as an act of survival. All too often do I find myself needing a space in which to express poems, not because I care about my poetry, but because I need the space to flourish; simply as human. Simply as queer. The literary seeks to domesticate us and package queerness, to make a spectacle of identity within a poem. Around a poem. Identity does not exist within poems but within people, and so we cannot be contained within our art but within ourselves. Bound, not by the capacity of the page, but by the representation of *voice*.

Doubt is built into poets by the bourgeois notion of correct writing; there are no correct ways to write, to society, but to the individual there are a myriad of tactics for approaching the page. THERE AREN'T CORRECT WAYS TO WRITE BUT THERE ARE CORRECT WAYS. FUCK. Doubt is built into us by continual assertions from perceived authority figures. Our professors and community leaders

have no bearing on our writing, only if you choose to allow their words in relation to your aesthetic...how many people influence your writing? What are their names? Why are they there...the assertion of the individual poet is the most powerful tool for navigating the world of poetry as it is a construction of voice, voice is where we will distinguish ourselves from society. Voice should be unconstrained and unafraid. Voice is the implication of the individual on the page. Silence too.

Unrepentant and directionless, the poems of insurrection will be ridiculous and beyond prediction. Not because of their form but because of the way in which they were produced: earnestly and without consideration for the abolition of social structures hanging about somewhere on the page...the *reader* is within this social structure. The *reader* should not dictate what is written before it is written. The *reader* has constructed the idea of the Poet. The Poet allows society to compartmentalize writing and take our collective work and place the onus on the celebrity...the popular become poetics...an awful representation...the uncelebrated celebrity of the writing world. The Poet will always be on the margin because poetry, at its core, represents a collective of radical ideas and writings. These radical works are largely ignored. Because we cannot SEE them. The Poet is celebrated because they often represent a more tame version of an intense identity expressed in the underbelly of poetry. A palatable packaged version of the radical union of individuals. Instead we should express and overwhelm. Thousands of us exist and so thousands should stand against production. All too often poets believe their greatest potential lies with producing poetry, no. Our greatest ability, time and time again, is our ability to organize community through and around art.

Poetic forms are rarely insurrectionary. People are insurrectionary.