Contemporary Poets, the Visual Arts, and Ekphrasis

Pak Hang Huen

PhD

University of York

English

September 2019

Abstract

This thesis is a historical, biographical and literary investigation into modern poets' diverse engagements with the visual arts and ekphrasis. The project situates contemporary poets in the context of the age of digital reproduction, which evolves from the Benjaminian age of mechanical reproduction, and re-frames ekphrastic poetry within an intricate network of relations between poets and the visual arts. Earlier studies of ekphrasis postulated a competitive relationship between poetry and the visual arts, but critics have now turned to recognise modern poets' readings of not only works of art but their representations of life subjects. In line with this critical paradigm shift, I argue for a current, ongoing moment of a kind of biographically-inflected ekphrasis in the lengthy history of modern ekphrasis and poetry. I suggest that modern poets return to exploring the complex relations between visual artworks, artists, and viewers. The main body of the thesis is made of the case studies of three contemporary poets Pascale Petit, George Szirtes, and Tamar Yoseloff, chosen for their lifelong commitment to the visual arts and ekphrasis. I call them 'ekphrasists' and suggest that they take their bearings from their poetic, artistic and critical predecessors and contemporaries. Drawing on psychoanalytic and life-writing theories, especially Christopher Bollas' 1987 notion of the transformational object, the case studies read their bio-ekphrastic oeuvres as three sustained life-writing projects about the transformational agency of art. This interdisciplinary project reveals new dimensions to modern poets' engagements with the visual arts and ekphrasis as extremely fertile grounds for their various autobiographical and biographical purposes.

List of Contents

List of Illustrations

(All figures are reproduced from websites, except where noted.)

Acknowledgements

I am the most grateful to my supervisor Hugh Haughton, and I owe him an enormous intellectual debt. Without him, the thesis would not have come into (or found) its shape and I would not have been in such a positive frame of mind for completing it. As I went through all the blood, sweat and tears, the level of his pastoral care was beyond measure. I owe many thanks to the psychoanalyst Adam Philips for the lectures, seminars and appointments he offered in the department every term. The short literary appointments with him were always rich in new psychoanalytical perspectives. I also want to thank the poets Pascale Petit, George Szirtes and Tamar Yoseloff for their generosity and for being open to me about their life and work; and the Thesis Advisory Panel member Matt Campbell and the Confirmation of Enrolment Panel chair Emilie Morin for their valuable second opinions on my research and writing.

At the beginning of my PhD, I benefited from a timely appointment with the Royal Literary Fund fellow Mary Colson, and throughout the four years, the university was very supportive of my research initiatives. The department's Graduate Research Support Fund and the FR Leavis Fund sponsored several research trips, including my attendance at two week-long writing courses at the National Writing Centre of Wales. The university's YGRS Fund provided grants which allowed me to speak at conferences in Birmingham, Aberystwyth and Oxford. The Humanities Research Centre was an important study and social space and I am thankful for their doctoral fellowship which recognises my potential as a researcher. The Writing Centre gave me the opportunity to evaluate other's writing and in turn, trained myself to evaluate mine. Special thanks go to the Writers-in-Residence Tabish Khair and Caitríona O'Reilly for their John Tilney workshops; Abigail Ardelle Zammit for reminding me of the work of Tamar Yoseloff; the staff of the University Library and the British Library's Boston Spa Reading Room; the editors, reviewers, and conference organisers who commented on earlier versions of the writing on the pages to follow.

Lastly, I thank those close to me: my friends at York for the camaraderie and intellectual stimulation, especially Jihee Kim, Kazuki Inoue, Chuensu Dhama, Yu-Hua Yen, Octavia Tam, Ashim Dutta, Yusuke Wakazawa, Madeline Potter, Daniel South, Sam Buchan-Watts, Francesca Arnavas, Daisy Johnson, Tarzann Bata, Maneerut Chatrangsan, Leah Hsiao, Ellen Koching Chao, Jiyi Ryu, Jacklyn Gong and Francesco Ramponi; Edsoulla Chung and Eddy Li at Cambridge for the distant, yet enduring friendship; Damian Fitzpatrick, Tracey

Costley and Stephanie Chua for their hospitality when I visited London; my former teachers Michael O'Sullivan, Eddie Tay, Li Ou, Luke Kennard, and Elsa Braekkan Payne, who introduced me to Pascale Petit's poetry; and my family and friends in Hong Kong. Most importantly, I am emotionally and financially indebted to my parents who always support me unconditionally. There is also myself back in the summer of 2015—I thank him for taking a big leap of faith in who I am now.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not been previously presented for the award of a degree at this or any other university. All of my sources are acknowledged in the references.

Some of the material in this thesis has appeared in journal articles and conference presentations by the author:

Journal articles:

1. 'Photographs, Photography, the Photography: A Conversation with George Szirtes.' *Wasafiri*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2019: pp. 59-63.
2. 'Tamar Yoseloff as Ekphrasist, and Her Hidden *Sweetheart*.' *Humanities*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2019, https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/8/2/77. Accessed 17 Jul. 2019.
3. '"my Eden": Review [A Review of Pascale Petit's *Mama Amazonica*, Sasha Dugdale's *Joy*, and Phoebe Power's *Shrines of Upper Austria*].' *The Compass Magazine,* no. 7, 2019, http://www.thecompassmagazine.co.uk/rah. Accessed 20 Jun. 2019.
4. 'Otherworldly Homes: An Interview with Pascale Petit.' *The Compass Magazine*, no. 6, 2018. http://www.thecompassmagazine.co.uk/ppint. Accessed 14 Jun. 2018.

Conference presentations:

1. 'Tamar Yoseloff's Hidden *Sweetheart*.' Oxford English Graduate Conference, University of Oxford, 1 Jun. 2018.
2. 'George Szirtes' Responses to John Berger.' Responding to John Berger, University of York, 5 Jan. 2018.
3. 'Displacements and Visual Artists in the Poetry of Pascale Petit and George Szirtes.' The Second Modernist Network Cymru Conference, National Library of Wales, 12 - 13 Sept. 2017.
4. 'Reinvention of Mother: Photography and Memory in George Szirtes' Poetry.' The British Association for Modernist Studies International Conference, University of Birmingham, 29 Jun. - 1 Jul. 2017.
5. 'Pascale Petit's Approach to Ekphrasis: A Poet Treading in a Painter's Footsteps.' Poetic Measures: A Variable Measure for the Fixed, University of York, 1 - 3 Jul. 2016.
6. 'Collaborations between Contemporary Poets and Visual Artists', York English Graduate Conference, University of York, 11 May 2016.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Fig. 1 Pablo Picasso, *The Old Guitarist* (1903/4)
The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection,
Art Institute of Chicago

In 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' (1937), which critics agree alludes to Pablo Picasso's painting *The Old Guitarist* (1903/4), Wallace Stevens offers a profound meditation on the creation and reception of art, understanding it as a truthful but paradoxically transformational agent of representation. The poem begins with the man with the blue guitar acknowledging the transformational nature of his music, saying 'Things as they are/ Are changed upon the blue guitar' (*Collected Poems* 165). However, it is insisted that he play music which is 'beyond us, yet ourselves' and represent 'things exactly as they are' (*Collected Poems* 165). The poem later returns to this ontological paradox about music, saying 'So that's life, then: things as they are?/ It picks its way on the blue guitar.// A million people on one string?' and asking if a 'picture of Picasso's' can similarly be 'a picture of ourselves' (173). The poem is about music and art but self-reflexively reflects on poetry which creates music through its sounds, as in the rhyme in 'are' and 'guitar'. In his 1951 essay 'The Relations between Poetry and Painting', Stevens is upfront about poetry and painting as 'sources of our present conception of reality' and 'supports of a kind of life', suggesting that the two are sister arts as regards their similar capacity to represent life and in turn sustain it (124).

A part of 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' was included in *Voices in the Gallery: Poems & Pictures Chosen by Dannie & Joan Abse* (1986), and Stevens' essay on the relations between modern poetry and painting was collected in J. D. McClatchy's *Poets on Painters: Essays on the Art of Painting by Twentieth-Century Poets* (1988). The two anthologies testify to a modern tradition of poets' investments in the visual arts, especially paintings. *Voices in the Gallery* can be seen as a kind of imaginary gallery, with poems like 'The Man with Blue Guitar', W. H. Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts', and Carol

Ann Duffy's 'Standing Female Nude' next to paintings referred to or evoked. McClatchy's critical anthology, meanwhile, also includes W. B. Yeats' essay 'Art and Ideas' (1913) and essays on individual painters by Elizabeth Bishop, Frank O'Hara, and Marianne Moore, to name but a few[1]. In the introduction to his anthology, McClatchy has gone so far as to describe modern poetry as 'invented by the painters' (xi).

The propensity for modern poets to write about the visual arts has been critically recognised to be rooted in the higher accessibility to reproductions of works of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, as Walter Benjamin puts it in his 1935 landmark essay, as well as the new culture of museums and art galleries, as postulated in Bernard Berenson's *Aesthetics and History* (1948) and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972) [2]. In fact, poets also write in the age of obsession with images. In *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (1994), W. J. T. Mitchell called our 'obsession with vision and visual representation' 'the pictorial turn' in history (11), but in *What Do Pictures Want?* (2005), suggests that such a historical turn is 'not unique to our time' (348).

Such a modern pictorial turn and the age of image proliferation have now been heavily shaped by the digital revolution and the social media boom since the 2000s. André Malraux defines his concept of *Museum without Walls* in his 1965 book of the same title, maintaining that there are 'far more great works available to refresh our memories than even the greatest of museums could bring together', and thus echoing Benjamin's argument about the mechanical reproduction of works of art (12). The imaginary museum Malraux conceived now takes a digital form, with websites like USEUM[3] functioning as digitalised museums and galleries. The digitalisation of art is also fostered by search engines and image-oriented social media sites like Pinterest and

---

[1] Robert D. Denham's *Poets on Paintings: A Bibliography* (2010) is by far the most ambitious of its kind, listing about 2500 poems dedicated to paintings and many secondary sources on this poetic practice. Denham also includes a list of the titles of paintings, telling us in the preface that Pieter Brueghel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, 'has been the subject of at least sixty-three poems', including a poem of the same name by William Carlos Williams and Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' (3). Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* is also noted to be the subject of 'more than thirty-seven poems' (3). Denham's selection, however, seems more governed by the fact that a poem addresses a painting than how it does so.

[2] See *Voices in the Gallery*, pp. 11; McClatchy's *Poets on Painters*, pp. xiii; Philip Fisher's *Making and Effacing Art* (1991), pp. 23-29; Catherine Paul's *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism* (2002); Barbara K. Fischer's *Museum Mediations: Reframing Ekphrasis in Contemporary American Poetry* (2006); Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux's *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts* (2008), pp. 3-4. For the new museum culture, see Berenson's *Aesthetics and History*, pp. 228; and Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, pp. 19-34.

[3] Using Malraux's idea as a theoretical basis, Foteini Valeonti created USEUM (https://useum.org), originally a doctoral project, and now a crowd-sourced platform showing images of visual artworks from all around the world.

Instagram. The age of mechanical reproduction has now given way to an age of digital reproduction. Poets today might want to access high-definition images from online and print materials, rather than visiting a municipal gallery to see their 'friends' portraits' (Yeats, *Selected Poems* 205), the Museum of Modern Art to see the 'father of our country' looking 'so alive' (O'Hara, *Collected Poems* 234), or 'the Louvre to behold himself' (Stevens, *Collected Poems* 194), as W. B. Yeats, Frank O'Hara, and Wallace Stevens did respectively. Poets today might as well read an electronic copy of the *National Geographic*, unlike Elizabeth Bishop who saw 'those awful hanging breasts' in a print copy of the magazine (Bishop, *Complete Poems* 161). Readers of ekphrastic poems can also easily access images of the visual artworks in question. It is a new network of relations between poets, readers, and the visual artworks.

In the age of digital reproduction, poets simultaneously write about the visual arts within an ekphrastic tradition. Ekphrasis now commonly refers to literary descriptions of visual artworks[4]. Since the twentieth century, ekphrasis, it seems, has become almost as much of an institution as art galleries themselves and the same can be said about the critical studies of ekphrasis. Beginning the introduction to *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (1993), James A. W. Heffernan argues that 'the study of the relation between literature and the visual arts has become a major intellectual industry' (1). Stephen Cheeke similarly describes his book *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (2008) as a 'symptom' of the 'practice of addressing works of art in poetry' being 'widely indulged in recent decades' (2).

As Cheeke suggests, ekphrasis continues to be a contentious practice. In D. J. Enright's *Poets of the 1950's: An Anthology of New English Verse*, Kingsley Amis affirms that 'nobody wants any more poems about […] paintings […] or art galleries' (17). In 1988, the critic Edna Longley quoted and responded to this in her paper 'No More Poems about Paintings?'. Longley went so far as to describe Wallace Stevens' 'addiction to the practice' of writing about paintings as 'a form of imaginative autoeroticism' (Kenneally, *Irish Literature* 90), saying that he 'notoriously bought new paintings when he ran out of inspiration' (91). The bitter controversy continues today. In *The Gazer's Spirit: Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art* (1995), John Hollander argues that since the nineteenth century, there has been an abundance of poems 'addressing a wide range of good and bad, great and obscure, unglossed or overinterpreted works of art' (4). Cheeke echoes Longely, suggesting in *Writing for Art* that there could be 'a laziness in contemporary

[4] The online *OED* defines ekphrasis as 'a literary device' where a work of visual art is 'described in detail'. According to the *Poetry Foundation* website, an 'ekphrastic poem is a vivid description of a scene or, more commonly, a work of art'. Likewise, the latest edition of *The Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012) defines ekphrasis as a '[d]etailed description of an image, primarily visual; in specialized form, limited to description of a work of visual art' (393).

poets to discover in art a subject ready-made' for them (2). The Irish poet and critic Justin Quinn specifically notes in his essay 'Glyn Maxwell's Decade' (2001) that 'photographic ekphrasis' has 'become a set-piece of most collections' (16).

Despite the present climate of critical opinions about ekphrastic poems, poets continue to be committed to the fertile relationship between poetry and the visual arts associated with the tradition of ekphrasis. This can be observed in today's literary journals. The online magazine *The Ekphrastic Review*, founded and edited by the Canadian artist Lorette C. Luzajic in July 2015, is dedicated to any writing inspired by the visual arts, from poems, short stories and nonfiction to writing about ekphrasis itself, and encourages submissions of previously published work. *The Ekphrastic Review* now also runs ekphrastic challenges on a regular basis, calling for submissions worldwide to respond to a specific visual artwork. This was preceded by the monthly ekphrastic challenge on the website of the American poetry magazine *Rattle*, which has begun since 2014. In *Rattle*'s case, both the editor and the artist of the visual artwork choose the best response to publish. The popularity of ekphrasis is the same in the UK. In the Autumn 2017 issue of the magazine *Poetry London*, the judge Liz Berry reports that in the annual competition of that year, there were 'very many ekphrastic poems and poems about artists' and asks if this was 'a sign of the times', echoing her critical and poetic contemporaries (24).

It is a phenomenon contested by poets themselves. Vahni Capidleo, the third Caribbean poet to win the Forward Prize for Best Poetry Collection in 2016, self-reflexively mocks the boom in ekphrastic poems with the sequence 'Shameless Acts of Ekphrasis' included in *Venus as a Bear* (2018). In the prose poem 'Saying Yes to Zeus', Capidleo addresses the supreme god, asking him for forgiveness as regards a bronze statue of him in Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and calling it a 'standard, static depiction', a 'bronze copy', which 'admirers should find problematic' (25). Capidleo's ekphrastic exercise is framed as that of an art connoisseur but as well describes the copy as one of Zeus' 'originals' (25). The poem goes on to say to Zeus, 'Through you/ we move. Through us, you move' (25). The poem suggests a problematic hierarchy of our relationship with a deity, foregrounding the fact that a god like Zeus is only seen in a 'depiction' or 'copy' of him. An act of ekphrasis characteristically becomes an act of meditation on art but also religion and ekphrasis itself.

In response to the current ekphrastic proliferation, which is partially brought by and goes parallel with the image proliferation, the main body of this thesis takes the form of case studies of three poets based in England—Pascale Petit (born 1953), George Szirtes (b. 1948), and Tamar Yoseloff (b. 1965), chosen for their lifelong commitment to

the visual arts and ekphrasis. For that I will call them 'ekphrasists', a term we can use to refer to poets with comparable commitment. The three ekphrasists persistently and even systematically explore the visual arts. I also want to suggest that like their poetic predecessors, the three continue to explore a critically overlooked theme in modern poetic ekphrasis—visual artworks as autobiographical and biographical representations. Adapting John Berger's idea of *The Moment of Cubism* in the book of the same title[5], I argue that the current ekphrastic industry creates a moment of a kind of biographically-inflected ekphrasis in the lengthy history of modern poetry and ekphrasis. For the purposes of my study, I will call this 'bio-ekphrasis'.

This biographical turn in the ekphrastic tradition is traceable to canonical ekphrastic poems. Digressing from Picasso's painting, Stevens' 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' declares that the 'shapes are wrong' but 'Franciscan don was never more/ Himself than in this fertile glass' (181). Stevens reads a clerical figure represented in the stained glass as an inaccurate, yet more mediated or idealised form of him, but throughout the poem, Stevens indicates no interest in the life of the clerical figure, Picasso, or his own. Unlike Stevens, the three ekphrasists characteristically read the subjects represented in art as identifiable with the artists and viewers, and thoroughly explore how the creation and reception of art brings about transformations of the subjects, artists, and viewers in what the anthropologist Alfred Gell vividly calls 'the vicinity of visual objects' (23)[6]. Capidleo does the same in the poem about a copy or an original of Zeus, but the three ekphrasists frequently draw on artists' biographies, and the life subjects are consistently identifiable with the poet's own.

The case studies will read their bio-ekphrastic oeuvres as three life-writing projects, looking at the agency of artworks in poems and what the ekphrasists use artists and artworks to do for them. This project into literary and cultural history also reframes the ekphrastic tradition within a broader historical background, charting the latest development of the tradition. Here in the introductory chapter, I give an overview of modern poets' diverse engagements with the visual arts including ekphrasis, critical views of the ekphrastic tradition, a model of what I have called bio-ekphrasis, and pertinent psychoanalytical and life-writing theories, which give historical, critical, and theoretical contexts for the three contemporary cases. This chapter also documents

---

[5] Berger argues against the understanding of Cubism as 'a stylistic category'; instead, he describes the 'six or seven years' of Cubism as a future-oriented 'moment', which was 'experienced by a certain number of people' (4, 5).

[6] According to Gell's *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (1998), this 'vicinity of visual objects' concerns *indexes* ('material entities'), *artists*, *recipients*, and *prototypes* (entities 'represented in the index') (27).

other art-related work of the three ekphrasists, and uses a poem by each of them to introduce the three bio-ekphrastic narratives, which I will unfold chronologically in the following chapters.

1.1 Modern poets and the visual arts

The modern tradition of poets' investments in the visual arts is traceable to Charles Baudelaire, whose essay 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1964) defines a modern concept of art, life and beauty. There were many poets in the last century following in the footsteps of the French poet and art critic. John Ashbery is a prime example, and his essay about the American painter and art critic Fairfield Porter is included in McClatchy's anthology *Poets on Painters*. In *Museum of Words*, one of the first critical books on ekphrasis, James A. W. Heffernan describes Ashbery as 'the premier combination of art critic and poet of our time, saying that he 'has probably written more about art—especially twentieth-century art—than any other American poet ever has' (169). Ashbery's poem about Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* is also one of the longest and most discursive bio-ekphrastic reflections on 'what the portrait says' (*Selected Poems* 189).

Frank O'Hara, another poet of the New York School, has similarly written about his artistic contemporaries, such as Larry Rivers, Grace Hartigan and Jackson Pollock. O'Hara is also known to have actively involved himself in the art scene of his day. In *Frank O'Hara: Poet among Painters*, Marjorie Perloff maintains that 'O'Hara's popularity among the leading artists of his day is by now legendary' (75). In his memoir *Digressions on Some Poems by Frank O'Hara* (2003), Joe LeSueur, who lived with O'Hara for a decade since 1955, also describes the fruitful exchanges between O'Hara and his painter-friends: 'He offered them encouragement, inspired them with his insights and his passion; they impinged upon and entered his poetry, which would not have been the same and probably not as good without them' (xviii). In contrast, LeSueur reports that O'Hara's six-month leave of absence from the Museum of Modern Art to work at the Poet's Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts was 'a sheer hell for him', saying that 'the museum set-up worked for him' instead (xvii). O'Hara's writing about art needs to be read as part of his multi-modal engagements with the visual arts. As Perloff tells us, O'Hara 'worked closely' with painters, 'organizing their exhibitions, visiting their studios, interviewing them, and writing about their work' (76).

O'Hara's first book *A City Winter and Other Poems* (1951) contains two drawings by Larry Rivers. The two subsequently developed a creative relationship as shown in O'Hara's poems and Rivers' paintings. It was a comparable one between Ted Hughes and

Leonard Baskin, and their private correspondence is now archived in the British Library. They published several books together, beginning with *Crow* (1970), which grew out of Baskin's invitation to Hughes to write in response to his crow drawings. In contrast, Douglas Dunn and the seascape printmaker Norman Ackroyd first collaborated in 1988 on *The Pictish Coast*, a limited edition of etchings and poems in a solander box, and they joined forces again twenty-one years later in 2009 on the hardback *A Line in the Water*. Like their first book, it features Ackyroyd's aquatints and Dunn's poems about them, which, as Dunn tells us, are 'not necessarily from specific pictures so much as from an affection for Norman's work garnered over many years' (9)[7]. The twentieth century, from the period of Gertrude Stein and Guillaume Apollinaire in pre-war Paris, the Surealists between the wars, W. S. Graham and the St. Ives painters and sculptors, to the New York School in the 1950s and after, was heavily marked by this cross-fertilising culture involving poets and visual artists.

Ted Hughes also worked with photographers, and *Remains of Elmet* (1979), a collaborative edition with Fay Godwin, paves the way for comparable ones. In the book, Hughes' poems about his birthplace and early childhood are paired with Fay Godwin's black-and-white photographs of the region[8]. In 1994, Hughes collaborated with another photographer Peter Keen on *River*. Two years later, Paul Muldoon co-published *Kerry Slides* with Bill Doyle. Muldoon puns on the title to refer to a country dance as well as Doyle's photos of the southwestern Irish county. A similar collaboration in recent years is *Alchemy of Water: Alcemi Dwr* (2013), with poems in English and Welsh by Tony Curtis and Grahame Davies, and photographs of the Welsh natural landscape by Mari Owen and Carl Ryan. These are quite different from the bio-ekphrastic moment I have proposed, epitomising the eco-poetics in the collaborative books of poets and photographers If we situate the current moment of bio-ekphrasis in the history of modern poetry and ekphrasis, there is now a comparable, overlapping moment of collaboration between poets and visual artists, especially photographers. The poems in these co-publications can be ekphrastic or bio-ekphrastic, but poets also explore an indirect, oblique relationship between the poems and photographs placed together. In *Kerry Slides*, Doyle's photograph of the Gallarus Oratory is next to Muldoon's poem about an ogham stone compared to a fridge: 'An ogham stone stands four-square as the fridge/ I open yet again to forage/ for a bottle of Smithwick's or Bass' (50-51). In his introduction to *Plan B* (2009), with photographs by Norman McBeath, Muldoon tells us he is a fan of McBeath's

[7] The first poem 'Working with Norman' is based on their trip to the Shetland Islands, comparing their artistic approaches to the 'islandscape': 'I rest my backside on a windowsill/ While Norman scouts – sketchbook, paintbox, pencil' (20).

[8] The book was republished as *Elmet* in 1994, with additional poems and photographs.

photographs and sees in his art a medium which 'does not impose a sense of meditation', but instead 'an invitation to *meditate*' (7). The dust jacket of the book goes so far as to call this 'a new genre – photoetry'. Muldoon characteristically responds to photographs as invitations 'to *meditate*', performing his bio-ekphrastic exercises by reinventing the narratives represented in the photographs[9]. Based on McBeath's photograph of a statue of a woman's torso on a table in a greenhouse, Muldoon in *Plan B* rewrites the life of James Joyce's wife Nora Barnacle after the death of her husband in January 1941. In Muldoon's account of 'Nora's first post-divorce Labor Day bash', someone is 'guessing she's had a neck-lift *and* lipo', while another person 'can't help but think of the *Wake*/ as the apogee' (*Plan B* 57).

Besides collaborating with a visual artist, many poets are visual artists themselves. John Ashbery engaged himself with collage, including a still life made in 2016 using an image of Parmigianino's self-portrait. There were also many artist-poets or poet-artists following in the footsteps of William Blake, including D. G. Rossetti, Picasso, Wyndham Lewis, Jean Arp, Giorgio de Chirico, E. E. Cummings, David Jones, and Ian Hamilton Finlay. However, whereas Rossetti wrote poems based on his own paintings, others did not quite engage with the ekphrastic tradition. Lawrence Ferlinghetti, now at the age of 100, has been a prolific poet and continued to put on exhibitions of his paintings across the US, and unlike his predecessors, has written many ekphrastic poems. His book *When I Look at Pictures* (1990) contains a selection from his previous collections and places them alongside images of the pictures. The book is his equivalent to *Voices in the Gallery*, being a personal curation of paintings, paving the way for comparable books such as those by R. S. Thomas and Eavan Boland[10]. Ferlinghetti also engages with the ekphrastic tradition by playing on Marianne Moore's title 'When I Buy Pictures' and including in his book an epigraph from the poem.

Voices in the Gallery was published by the Tate Gallery, and since the late twentieth century, it has been common for art galleries and museums to commission writing from poets. Paul Durcan was commissioned by the National Gallery of Ireland in

---

[9] *Photographs and Poems* (1998) by Jeannette Montogomery Barron and Jorie Graham similarly contrasts Graham's narratives in verse with Barron's symbolic or suggestive black-and-white photographs of common objects. Next to Barron's photograph of a door ajar, Graham's 'Two Days' begins with a sensual scene—'Full moon; lays his hand/ onto her throat, into his mouth/ takes her whole ear' (34).

[10] R. S. Thomas' *Too Brave to Dream: Encounters with Modern Art* was posthumously published in 2016 and includes his previously unknown poems based on reproductions of modern art in his copies of Herbert Read's *Art Now* and *Surrealism*. Thomas also published two ekphrastic collections in his lifetime—*Between Here and Now* (1981) and *Ingrowing Thoughts* (1985), with the images of visual artworks in monochrome. Eavan Boland's *A Poet's Dublin* (2014) is a very different case. The book is a selection of Boland's poems about her hometown, arranged in a topographical order and placed next to Boland's own photographs of the city.

1991 and the National Gallery of London in 1994 to write in response to their collections. The publications which followed— *Crazy about Women* and *Give Me Your Hand*—included many bio-ekphrastic poems which give imagined voices to the paintings' subjects, often with a humorous twist and modern remaking. For example, Giovanni di Paolo's *Saint John the Baptist Retiring to the Desert* is turned into a 'self-portrait' by 'the Bradford Baptist Saint David Hockney/ Retiring into the desert above Los Angeles' (*Give Me Your Hand* 20), as Durcan reinvents the biography of the English painter, who was born in Bradford and now splits his time between England and Los Angeles.

Durcan's commissioned work anticipates Grace Nichols' *Paint Me a Poem: New Poems Inspired by Art in the Tate* (2004). Nichols was the first writer-in-residence at Tate Britain, and *Paint Me a Poem* included both her ekphrastic poems and those by school children she taught. Her poem based on Picasso's *Weeping Woman* was subsequently developed into the title sequence of her 2009 collection *Picasso, I Want My Face Back*. As the book's preface tells us, the sequence gives 'a voice' to the photographer Dora Maar, who was portrayed by Picasso in terms of 'haggard fractured features and clash of colours' (8). In the poem 'Weeping Woman', Nichols draws on the biography of Picasso and recognises the importance of Maar as 'a battered muse' to Picasso (16). Both Durcan's work with two national galleries and Nichols' work with Tate demonstrate new ways contemporary poets interact with galleries and art viewers, including commissioned writing, poet's residency, and teaching. Anticipated by *Voices in the Gallery*, Durcan's and Nichols' poems published by the galleries also represent an institution-driven kind of bio-ekphrasis[11].

Nichols' 'Weeping Woman' is voiced by Dora Maar in a painting by Picasso, asking him for her face back and saying 'Picasso's art is Picasso's art./ Not one is Dora Maar' (19). The title poem of Sasha Dugdale's *Joy* (2016), likewise, is a dramatic monologue in the voice of William Blake's wife, who declares that 'I looked as white as one of his angels. But I was not his angel' (10). Both poems show female poets' recognition of the discrepancy between the male artists' representations of their lovers and the women themselves. Female poets are equally responsible for the current moment of bio-

[11] Similar projects include *Metamorphoses: Poems Inspired by Titan*, one of two creative projects by the National Gallery of London to celebrate the London Olympics in 2012, the other being a ballet production by the Royal Opera House; and *Thresholds*, a residency project curated by the poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy in 2013 for the University of Cambridge museums and collections. Nine poets were invited by Duffy to give poetry readings, engage in conversations in public events, and conduct writing workshops. They were also commissioned to write a poem based on a Cambridge collection. Daljit Nagra's poem based on the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology was subsequently included in his *British Museum* (2017), and the poem explores the archaeological exhibits in relation to colonial history: 'But was most impressed by the kava bowl and whale// teeth whose curves he stroked with gloveless hands/ before being won by a slice of the sweetest English apples…' (25).

ekphrasis as male poets, which I will explore further in my case studies of Pascale Petit and Tamar Yoseloff.

Meanwhile, there have been many poetry collections dedicated to a painter, recreating the trajectory of his or her life and career. Robert Fagles' *I, Vincent: Poems from the Pictures of Van Gogh* (1978) is probably the first example of this, containing many poems written in Van Gogh's voice, saying 'I've only one wish: to paint peasants', and 'Power of home, dark Holland, row me on' (16, 25). Fagles, however, remains more known for his translation work, and it has been in the twenty-first century when we see a good deal of similar single-artist bio-ekphrastic collections. The book-length poem in Derek Walcott's *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), for example, is in the voice of a follower of the life and artistic development of the painter Camille Pissarro as well as visitor of galleries in pursuit of a dog in a Renaissance painting. The journey begins as he travels to Pissarro's birthplace ('Young Camille Pissarro/ studies the schooners in their stagnant smells') (4), and ends on a doubling identification with the painter ('Pissarro in old age,/ as we stand doubled in each other's eyes') (159). Ernest Farrés' *Edward Hopper: Poems* (2006), translated from Catalan and a winner of the Robert Fagles Translation Prize, is similarly voiced by a combination of both the poet and Hopper. As the first poem 'Self-Portrait, 1925-1930' says, 'Hopper and I form one single person' (3)[12]. This kind of single-artist bio-ekphrasis is essential to today's moment of bio-ekphrasis, and it often declares or seems to be a project about the poet himself or herself at the same time.

Many bio-ekphrastic projects about a single painter are painting-by-painting responses, like Nichols' 'Weeping Woman', Farrés' *Edward Hopper*, most poems in Fagles' *I, Vincent*, and as its title suggests, Owen Lowery's *Rego Retold: Poems in Response to Works of Paula Rego* (2015). Lowery tells us in *Rego Retold* that the book is his response to 'the open invitation provided by the artist's interest in narrative' (117). Likewise, Adam Kirsch's *Emblems of the Passing World: Poems after Photographs by Adam Sander* (2015) is his attempt to fill the 'blank' in Sander's portraits 'with hypotheses or narratives' (xii). The two books framed as collections of ekphrastic responses and tributes are models of a poet's engagement with the oeuvre of a visual artist and his or her iconography.

In *The Stinking Rose* (1995), Sujata Bhatt includes a group of poems addressing Frida Kahlo as a model—'My parrots long for yours, Frida, and they long for you'(27). Since then, the Mexican painter has become a cult in today's bio-ekphrasis, especially

[12] For poetry collections dedicated to Edward Hopper, see also James Hoggard's *Triangles of Light: The Edward Hopper Poems* (2009) and the anthology *The Poetry of Solitude: A Tribute to Edward Hopper* (1995).

among female poets today[13]. We would note that poems about Kahlo's art are inherently bio-ekphrastic, with her pictorial oeuvre dominated by self-portraits. This is characteristic of today's bio-ekphrastic moment, made of poems framed as self-portraits and based on actual ones, traceable to Ashbery's long meditation on Parmigianino's *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*. Robert Fagles' 'Self-Portrait in Front of the Easel', for example, suggests that through art, Vincent Van Gogh reflects on his strong resemblance to his younger brother Theo, who always supported him emotionally and financially: 'Our bond is art,/ my brother, strong as the likeness/ growing on this canvas' (*I, Vincent* 30).

Recent collections put the frame of a self-portrait to different autobiographical uses and may not address an actual painting. The title poem of Colette Bryce's *Self-Portrait in the Dark* (2008), for instance, frames the life of 'someone, somewhere, smoking in the dark' (5). According to Heffernan's *Museum of Words*, these represent what he calls 'notional ekphrasis', which 'does not even presuppose the existence of the works of art it describes' (91). Notional self-portraits, I would argue, have become a poetic trope since the twenty-first century. The most dramatic example is Tim Liardet's *The World Before Snow* (2015), a collection of poems framed as self-portraits as things and people from different cultures, and in other words, his imaginary self-portrait gallery. This is suggested by the poems' titles, such as 'Self-Portrait as the Iago-Cajolement' and 'Self-Portrait as Hans Lipschis Addressing the Sarawak Bats'. Lipschis, an alleged prison guard at the Auschwitz concentration camp, was arrested in Germany in 2013, and in the second poem here, Liardet dreams up a time when a handcuffed Lipschis confesses to the Malaysian bats: 'The murdered thousands thread through me, like children, reach/ for my cuffs, and tug their accusations' (63)[14]. Apart from the life histories of artists, self-portraiture has been adapted as a poetic frame for exploring those of women and people involved in political and wartime histories.

---

[13] See Keith Garebian's *Frida: Paint Me as a Volcano* (2004), Linda Frank's *Kahlo: The World Split Open* (2008), Pascale Petit's *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010), and Jay Griffiths' *A Love Letter from a Stray Moon* (2011).

[14] Liardet anticipates Ocean Vuong's 'Self-Portrait as Exit Wounds' from his debut collection, a winner of the T. S. Eliot Prize in 2017. In the poem, Vuong rewrites the time when he was a child refugee before his family immigrated to the US: 'Yes—let me believe I was born/ to cock back this rifle' (26). The poem is also made of two sentences across the couplets on two pages, flowing like a bullet flying past.

See also 'Self-Portrait in a Gold Kimono' and 'Self-Portrait as the Red Princess' in Henri Cole's *Middle Earth* (2003), pp. 3-4, 40-41; 'Self-Portrait as a Garage Emcee' in Kayo Chingonyi's *Kumukanda* (2017), pp. 2-6.

All three poets of my case studies—Pascale Petit, George Szirtes and Tamar Yoseloff[15]—consistently involve themselves in much of what I have observed in the current culture of poets' investments in the visual arts. They have all explored the course of an artist's life, drawing on their oeuvres and biographies. Petit's *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010) is a milestone in the bio-ekphrastic cult of the Mexican painter. It was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize, and unlike other poems or collections about Kahlo, Petit's book is a kind of fictional autobiography exploring the interconnections between Kahlo's art and her life. Across his long career, Szirtes returns to drawing on the art and biography of his photojournalist mother. Yoseloff has recreated the art-making process of a group of twentieth and twenty-first century artists, including Picasso, Christopher Wood, Barbara Hepworth, Jackson Pollock,, Diane Arbus, Cy Twombly, and the contemporary printmaker Linda Karshan.

Whereas their poetic contemporaries might have made brief forays into the visual arts, the three ekphrasists show sustained engagement with art throughout their careers. Szirtes was professionally trained as a painter. One of his earliest poems 'Studio Piece' appears alongside one of his drawings in the pamphlet *A Mandeville Troika* (1977). The drawing depicts an artist drawing a picture of the statue of Leda and the Swan standing in front of him. Unlike W. B. Yeats, Szirtes does not recreate the Greek myth about the woman Leda encountering Zeus in the form of a swan. Instead, his poem creates the collective voice of a group of 'artisans': 'We are merely artisans in a draughty room', while 'Our patrons loom/ In dark corners' (3). It is also tersely said that 'They have their patience, we have work to do' (3). Art here is bitterly understood by the 'artisans' as 'work' and done for the 'patrons'. Unlike William Blake or Stevie Smith, Szirtes, however, has not gone on to publish his poems and visual artworks side by side.

While Szirtes had a brief career as a book illustrator, Petit was a sculptor in the 1980s before she became a poet. Yoseloff was not trained as an artist but studied art history as part of her first degree. Like Grace Nichols who took up a residential post at Tate Britain in 1999-2000, Petit was a poetry tutor at Tate Modern in 2006-15, and a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the Courtauld Institute of Art in 2011-12. Frank O'Hara wrote the first critical monograph of Jackson Pollock (1959), and likewise, Szirtes' *Exercise of Power: The Art of Ana Maria Pacheco* (2001) is an essential book on the Brazilian artist. The book led to *A Modern Bestiary* (2004), a limited edition with Szirtes' ekphrastic poems and Pacheco's screen prints of animals and humans. In 2012, Szirtes'

[15] The three have worked together on several occasions. Szirtes and Petit have co-taught residential poetry writing courses. While Petit was a poetry editor for *Poetry London* in 1988-2005, Yoseloff was a reviews editor for the magazine in 1995-7.

'Actaeon' was included in *Metamorphosis: Poems Inspired by Titan*[16], published by the National Gallery, London. Yoseloff was a writer-in-residence at Magdalene College of Cambridge in 2005, where she edited *A Room to Live in: A Kettle's Yard Anthology* (2007). The book celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the historic art gallery. Meanwhile, Yoseloff was the poetry editor for *Art World* magazine in 2007-9.

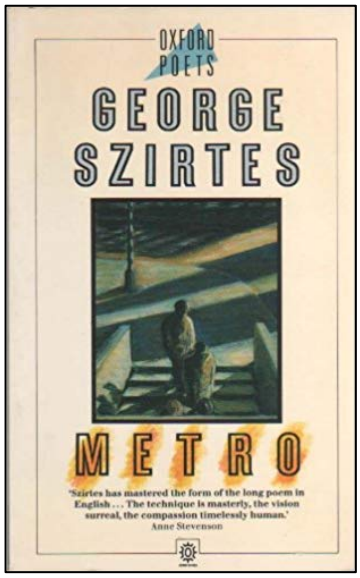


Fig. 2 George Szirtes, *Metro* (1988), with the cover art by Clarissa Upchurch

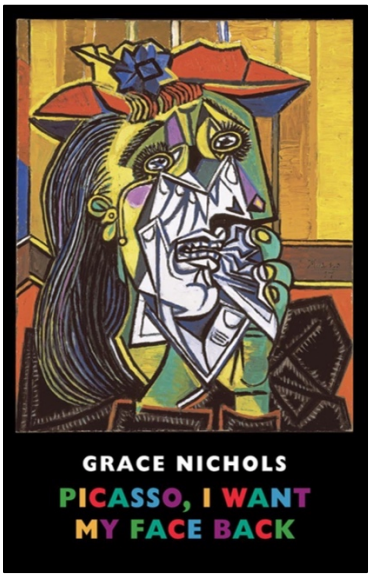


Fig. 3 Grace Nichols' *Picasso, I Want My Face Back* (2009)

The three ekphrasists have also collaborated with various visual artists: Petit with the Syrian artist Lawand on *Effigies* in 2013; Szirtes with his wife Clarissa Upchurch on several collaborative editions including *The Kissing Place* produced by their own Starwheel Press in 1982[17]; Yoseloff with artists and publishers on a group of book objects; and all three ekphrasists with the artist Tom de Freston on *The Charnel House* (2014), an anthology of poems in response to de Freston's paintings. In my case studies of Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff, I shall document these collaborative efforts and read the poems as part of the three bio-ekphrastic projects. Meanwhile, they have engaged in a kind of paratextual collaborations with visual artists through the cover artworks of their books. For example, the cover images of Petit's *What the Water Gave Me* (2010) and Yoseloff's *The City with Horns* (2011) are a painting by Frida Kahlo and Jackson Pollock respectively. In Szirtes' case, his wife Upchurch has provided the cover artworks for

[16] Szirtes' bio-ekphrastic poem reinvents Actaeon's encounter with the goddess Diana bathing naked, as portrayed in Titan's *Diana and Actaeon* (1556-9) and the Ovidian *Metamorphoses*. Adapting John Donne's Elegy 20, Szirtes' Actaeon addresses '*my America*' rather than Diana, whose naked flesh prompts him to reflect on his own—'My own body turns/ against me as I sense it grow/ contrary' (53).

[17] Like William Blake and his wife Catherine Blake, a painter and engraver, there are many artistic couples today, whose works are closely related: Szirtes and Upchurch, a painter; Tom de Freston and the poet Kiran Millwood Hargrave; the poet-photographer Martin Figura and the poet-artist Helen Ivory; and the poet Lance Larsen and the painter Jacqui Larsen.

most of his collections to date. These represent Upchurch's understanding of the poems or at least the book's titles, as in *Metro* (1988), with Upchurch's illustration of people walking down the stairs to a metro station. These cover images precede the poems and condition our reading of them. This is also a common practice in today's ekphrastic publications, from Robert Fagles' *I, Vincent* (1978) to Grace Nichols' *Picasso, I Want My Face Back* (2009) and Adam Kirsch's *Emblems of the Passing World* (2015)[18].

Fig. 4 Pascale Petit's *Treekeeper* (1986)
(fibreglass, epoxy resin, birds, skulls, thorns, and wood)

Petit's *The Treekeeper's Tale* (2008) is special for using a photograph of her sculpture *Treekeeper* (1986) as its cover image. We then read the opening poem, which is also the title poem, as a self-referential, bio-ekphrastic effort by basing on her resin cast of a 'tree-keeper': 'I lie staring at the stars/ until the growth rings enclose me in hoops' (9). This is an idiosyncratic case, connecting the first and second parts of Petit's life, from being a sculptor in early career and now a poet. Szirtes' *Blind Field* (1994) takes its title from Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1981), which opens with Daniel Boudinet's *Polaroïd* (1979)[19] and an account of it. Szirtes' *Blind Field* also uses Minor White's photograph *Windowsill Daydreaming* (1958) in its cover, and as White's photograph captures a strikingly similar scene and mood, Szirtes' book represents both a textual and paratextual tribute to Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, taking Barthes' ideas as a starting point and reminding us that Barthes' book opens with an extremely similar photograph.

[18] See also the cover artworks of Charles Simic's *Dime-Store Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell* (1992), Ernest Farrés' *Edward Hopper* (2006), Moniza Alvi's *Europa* (2008), Carol Rumens' *De Chirico's Threads* (2010), Helen Ivory's *Waiting for Bluebeard* (2013), Ocean Vuong's *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (2017), Tim Liardet's *The World Before Snow* (2015) and *Arcimboldo's Bulldog* (2018), and poetry anthologies published by art galleries.

[19] The photo was used in the cover of the Japanese (1985) and Korean (1997) editions of the book.

Fig. 5 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (1985), Japanese edition

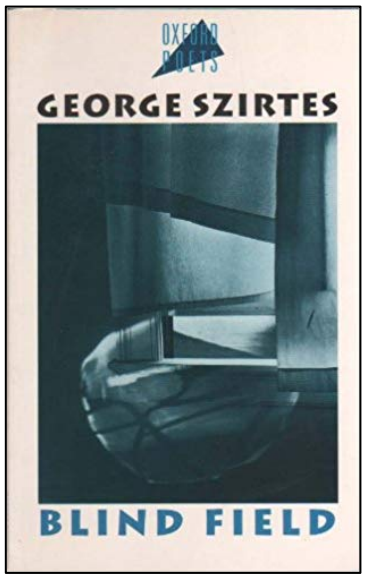


Fig. 6 George Szirtes, *Blind Field* (1994)

To sum up, Petit was a sculptor, and Szirtes and Yoseloff were trained as painter and art historian respectively. Petit and Yoseloff have the experience in taking up a teaching or residency post in an art gallery. All three have been commissioned by galleries and artists to write poems, and have collaborated with them in other ways. These are unique track records of three poets consistently associated with the visual arts. At the same time, they are keen users of the Internet and social media to digitally document their life with words and images, marking an unprecedented change in the ways modern poets engage themselves with the visual arts. All of them have their own online blogs, and Petit and Yoseoff also have their own websites. Meanwhile, all three poets have created their personal pages on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Academia, and Szirtes and his wife Clarissa Upchurch have created a digital family tree on MyHeritage, with photographs and some biographical facts of their parents. All three poets are all very committed to making full use of the Internet for their multi-modal life narratives[20].

Petit uses her blog for her written and photographic records of trips to rainforests, which are part of her research as a poet[21]. Szirtes' blog explores a wide range of topics, from family history to the visual arts and his poetry. All his web pages digitally collect his own family photographs and other visual artworks, with his accounts of

[20] In *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2010), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson distinguish life writing from what they call 'life narrative' which is a 'general term for acts of self-presentation of all kinds and in diverse media that take the producer's life as their subject, whether written, performative, visual, filmic or digital' (4).

[21] For her latest book *Mama Amazonica* (2016), Petit was sponsored by 'a generous grant' from Arts Council England to travel to the Peruvian Amazon (112).

them[22]. These image-based writings form the basis of his prose publications, including his memoir of his mother *The Photographer at Sixteen* (2019). Yoseloff's blog *Invective against Swans*, as its subtitle tells us, is a digital record of her '[r]eflections on the intersection between poetry and art'. Like her poetry about modern and contemporary art, Yoseloff's blog contains many written and photographic records of her gallery trips. Their Instagram pages are equally sustained life narratives. Petit's page is dedicated to photographs of nature. Szirtes has recently posted many family photographs and screenshots of new poems. Yoseloff's page is always a photographic curation of visual artworks, artefacts and architecture. Apart from Yoseloff, Petit and Szirtes also use their various web pages to reflect on the 'intersection between poetry and art'.

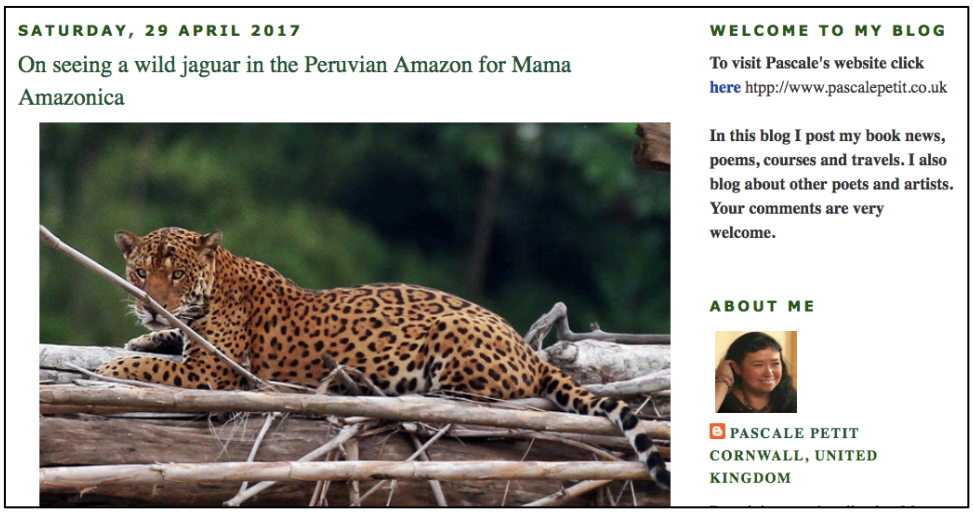


Fig. 7 A screenshot of Pascale Petit's blog (April 2017)

Fig. 8 A screenshot of an Instagram post by George Szirtes (January 2019)

[22] See these series of online blog posts: 'On Being a Good Mother [1-3]' (December 2010); 'On Milieu and Refuge [1-6]' (July 2012); 'From *Rewind* [1-3]' (July – September 2016]; 'The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs [1-9]' (January – February 2018).

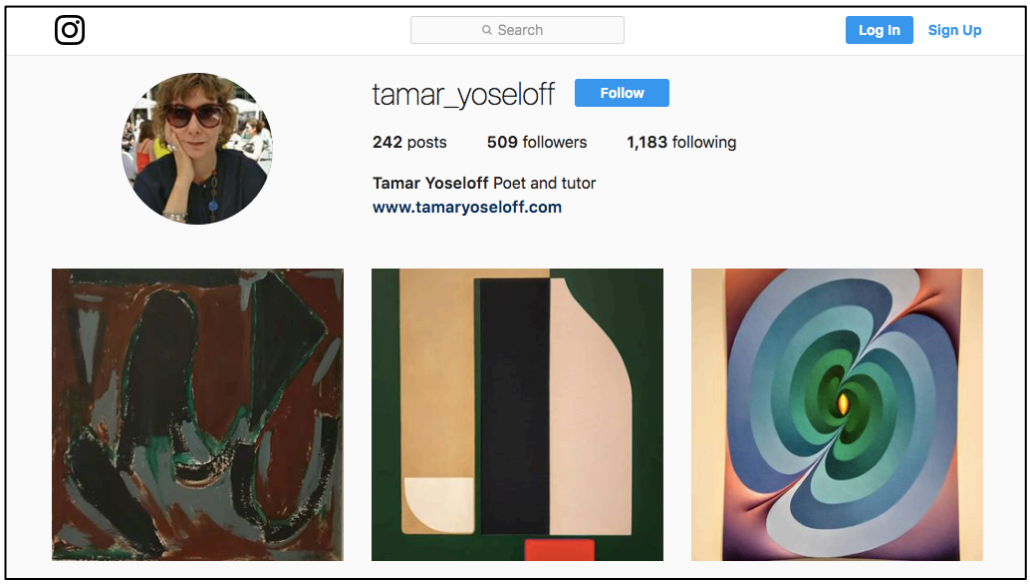


Fig. 9 A screenshot of Tamar Yoseloff's Instagram page (May 2018)

It is now a new cultural phenomenon where poets weave different, yet inextricably interwoven life narratives in different media, which must have been unanticipated by the poets, critics, and readers. The three poets also demonstrate another significant difference in modern poets' engagements with the visual arts: working as poetry tutors for art galleries and teaching writing in relation to art. Back in 1988, Allen Ginsberg and his photographer-friend Robert Frank developed the course 'Photographic Poetics' that they taught together later (Ginsberg, *Snapshot Poetics* 16). This new kind of collaborative initiative set a precedent for the writing courses taught by today's poets. Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff are now sought-after creative writing tutors, and all of them have continued to encourage uses of visual materials as stimuli for writing poems. As a poetry tutor at Tate Modern, Petit taught 'Poetry from Art: Shaping Poems' in 2012 and 'Poetry and Serious Play: Matisse, Words and Paper' in 2014. In the early 2000s, Szirtes designed and taught with Andrea Holland the MA in 'Writing the Visual' at the Norwich School of Art & Design. As he tells us in his blog post 'Farewell to Creative Writing at the Art College' (13 May 2010), the course involved studying 'actual production of visual art, the sheer physicality of it, as well as some appropriate theory', and writing 'creatively' in both verse and prose. Yoseloff has been teaching the course 'Poetry and Visual Art' at the Poetry School in London, of which Petit was a co-founding tutor. Yoseloff frequently bases each run of the course on an art exhibition in London or other parts of England.

To get a close view of the three poets' teaching practice, I have attended the following workshop and courses: (1) 'Painting Your Reality: Poetry into Art', a poetry workshop taught by Petit as part of her participation in the Spring Psychoanalytic Poetry Festival at the Freud Museum on 13th March 2016; (2) two residential courses at Tŷ

Newydd, the National Writing Centre of Wales, including 'Sky in the Eye: Developing Creativity Using Women Surrealists' Art as a Palette' taught by Petit and the artist and filmmaker Pamela Robertson-Pearce on 25th-30th July 2016, and 'Writing Poems' taught by Szirtes and Deryn Rees-Jones on 28th August – 2nd September 2017; (3) 'Poetry & Visual Art: Margate & London', a two-day course taught by Yoseloff at the Poetry School in London on 18th November 2017 and Turner Contemporary in Margate on 9th December.

In *Snapshot Poetics*, Ginsberg reports that he used William Carlos Williams' 'The Red Wheelbarrow' as an example in his course to trace 'the origins of the imagistic grounding of poetry' and 'its relation to the photographic practice' (16). I observed that both Petit and Yoseloff used others' ekphrastic poems as well as their own as examples during their teaching. Petit used a few of her poems based on Frida Kahlo's paintings, as well as many comparable ones by other poets, including Moniza Alvi's 2002 poem about Dorothea Tanning's painting *Eine Klein Nachtmusik* (1943), and Alvi's 'Mermaid' (2008), based on the painter Tabitha Vevers' *When We Talk about Rape* (1992). In doing so, Petit suggested the potential influence from other ekphrastic poems on her own. In Alvi's 'Mermaid', a man 'slit' the mermaid's tail into two legs, 'fell on her, sunk himself deep/ into the apex' and fled, leaving 'the sea in her head' crying '*Human love*' (*Europa* 21). Petit might be informed by Alvi when she wrote about Kahlo's near-fatal bus accident in 1925, as Petit's Kahlo 'tried not to think of the tram,/ the handrail piercing [her] like a first lover' (*What the Water Gave Me* 17). Unlike Petit who allowed us to compare her ekphrastic poems to others', our visit to Turner Contemporary as part of the course Yoseloff taught allowed us to see Turner's paintings first-hand and compare them to Yoseloff's poem 'Portrait of a Couple Looking at a Turner Landscape', of which she gave us a copy.

Like their social media pages, their courses explore the 'intersection between poetry and art'. Petit not only gave us copies of the ekphrastic poems, but included in the handouts images of the visual artworks referred to. As we wrote our own poems, Petit gave us different visual materials as prompts, from artwork postcards to illustrated pages from a book. In their course based around women surrealists' art, Petit and Pamela Robertson-Pearce stimulated our verbal and visual creativity in many ways. In the course, we wrote poems based on images, made collages from magazines, watched artist films, and did several group writing and drawing tasks. Teaching with Deryn Rees-Jones, Szirtes challenged us to write haikus and canzones and gave us examples of them, including 'Canzone: A Film in January' from his *The Burning of the Books and Other Poems* (2009). Dedicated to his wife Upchurch, Szirtes' poem is about January as a multi-layered

film—'a winter film', where 'traffic is a film', and 'Ghosts and film/ are of one substance' (84). Apart from this example of notional cinematic ekphrasis, Szirtes shared with us copies of some of his poems based on Upchurch's monoprints of clouds, now featured in their latest collaborative edition *Thirty Clouds* (2019). In Turner Contemporary, Yoseloff did many things to prepare us to write for the workshop part of the course. She introduced us to the exhibits and their related historical and artists' backgrounds, such as introducing Jean Arp as a poet-artist, gave us handouts with quotations from artists and poets, showed us copies of art books, and invited John Davies to talk about his sculptures displayed in the gallery.

I have shown that Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff have built three unique, all-encompassing profiles of poets consistently involving themselves in the visual arts. These are shaped by their personal life and professional backgrounds, but as well the digital age and the evolvement of the literary tradition of modern poets' investments in the visual arts. Adapting Alfred Gell's concept of 'the vicinity of visual objects', I postulate a kind of 'vicinity' of modern poets to the visual arts by situating the poet at the centre of a network of bilateral relations with visual artworks, artists, galleries and museums, and our ideas about the intersections between poetry and the visual arts. I have drawn a chart (see Appendix D, p. 194) to document these relations, establishing the agency of poets themselves in fostering and multiplying the close relations between poets, the visual arts, and ekphrasis.

1.2 Modern poetic ekphrasis and bio-ekphrasis

The vicinity of Pascale Petit, George Szirtes and Tamar Yoseloff to the visual arts involves their commitment to ekphrasis. I have called them ekphrasists and reported that they all have used their own ekphrastic poems or those by others as examples during their teaching as poetry writing tutors. Apart from attending their classes, I interviewed them via email to learn more about their views about the visual arts and ekphrasis, Petit in March 2016, Szirtes in May 2017, and Yoseloff in November - December 2017. The interviews are presented at the end of the thesis as Appendix A, B and C. As reported earlier, today's dictionaries and encyclopedias consistently define ekphrastic poems as descriptions of visual artworks. Szirtes wrote in the preface to his *New & Collected Poems* (2008) that 'I suspect most bad writing about visual art is ekphrastic' (19). He said something similar in interview, 'I have grown to dislike the term "ekphrasis". It is too limiting', adding that in the MA course he co-taught, they referred to work which was 'rarely of the kind that could generally be defined by ekphrastic. It was more about responses to secondary stimuli' (Appendix B, p. 187). Petit

and Yoseloff might not have the same disapproval of the term, but neither sets out to understand or describe particular works of art in themselves. They are more focused in their poems on establishing a personal or aesthetic connection or bridge with it. Petit told me, 'I can't just write about any artist. I have to feel a true connection' (Appendix A, p. 180), and Yoseloff said likewise, 'Often I am trying to grapple with what it is about a work that inspires or moves me […], and the poem works as a sounding board for those ideas' (Appendix C, p. 188). When it comes to addressing a visual artwork in a poem, all three poets are less concerned with recording its details than giving voice to ideas and emotions generated from a deep engagement with the artwork.

Szirtes' 'dislike' of the term ekphrasis and Petit's and Yoseloff's lack of identification with it can be understood in relation to the earliest and most influential studies of modern ekphrasis, which are often concerned with it as a competitive act. It can be argued that this understanding of ekphrasis is due to a misreading of the phrase 'ut pictura poesis' repeatedly used in Horace's *Ars Poetica*. As Murray Krieger argues in *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (1992), Horace's statement means 'As with a picture, so with poetry', but is often misread as suggesting that 'poetry is made in order to function like a picture' (79). Krieger was right that poets would need to create equivalents of pictures in the current climate of opinion. W. J. T. Mitchell postulates in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986) 'a protracted struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs' (43). Informed by Mitchell's ideas, Heffernan similarly understands ekphrasis as 'the struggle for power—the *paragone*—between the image and the word' (*Museum of Words* 6). In fact, the paragonal model of a 'struggle for power' between poetry and the visual arts remained a dominant one in studies of ekphrasis from the last century[23].

Since the late twentieth century, there is a shift in opinion on ekphrasis, from what could be misunderstanding of Horace's epithet to ancient meanings of the term, which inform my use of it in this thesis. As I have reported, Szirtes' MA course not only looked at visual artworks but also the production of them. His pedagogical focus can actually be seen as ekphrastic, if we go beyond the current use of the term and trace its original usage. In '*Ekphrasis* Ancient and Modern: The Invention of a Genre' (1999), Ruth Webb suggests that the classical notion of ancient ekphrasis 'may have as its subject-matter anything – an action, a person, a place, a battle, even a crocodile' (13). Webb refers to the Homeric Shield of Achilles, reading this part of the *Iliad* as 'a description not of an object but of a process' (11). In *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts*

[23] See Hollander's *The Gazer's Spirit* (1995), pp. 1-6; *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis* (1998), eds. Valerie Kay Robillard and Els Jongeneel.

(2008), Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux makes the same reference to Homer's poem, maintaining that modern poetic ekphrasis also describes 'the process and challenges of artistic creation' (13). This enlarged sense of mimetic engagement I adopt as the parameter for my selection of ekphrastic poems.

Another change in critical views about ekphrasis today is the recognition of a kind of personally-inflected ekphrasis, echoing Petit's and Yoseloff's insistence on a personal connection with a visual artwork, and illuminating Szirtes' advocacy of the uses of visual artworks as 'secondary stimulti'. In the chapter 'Picturing the Context' from *Literature in Context* (2007), Peter Barry made the first call for recognition of each poet's individual approach to ekphrasis, describing ekphrasis as a 'one-off, non-generalisable partnership' (155)[24]. In 'Notes on Ekphrasis' posted on *Poets.org* on 15th January 2008, a website created by the Academy of American poets, Alfred Corn offers a lesser-known account of contemporary poetic ekphrasis:

> Perhaps the most effective contemporary poems dealing with visual art are those where the authors include themselves in the poem […]. The center of attention in this kind of poem isn't solely the pre-existing work but instead is *dual*, sharing the autobiographical focus found in the majority of contemporary lyric poems written in English.

Corn also concludes that 'description of the original work remains partial', but poets add to the description of 'the facts, reflections, and feelings that arise at the confluence of a work of visual art and the life of the poet'. In *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (2012), David Kennedy similarly understands ekphrasis as not a paragonal struggle, but 'an attempt to bring art into the realm of our contingency' (6)[25]. In other words, these new critical thoughts make a case for bio-ekphrasis and my readings of the poems by Petit, Yoseloff and Szirtes as bio-ekphrastic. Ekphrasis in contemporary poems is as well a poetics of encounter with art.

Since the mid-2000s, there have been a range of studies which move away from the paradigm that the poet writes primarily in contest with the artist, while getting personally involved in contesting or re-framing representations of gender, sexuality, race, and identity. Barbara K. Fischer's *Museum Mediations: Reframing Ekphrasis in Contemporary American Poetry* (2006) investigates how a poet juggles between 'the pleasures of aesthetic experience and the skepticism of institutional critique', illuminating a key theme in canonical ekphrastic poems such as Yeats' 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited' and Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' (4). More recent studies highlight

---

[24] See also Loizeaux's *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts* (2008), pp. 16-17; Stephen Cheeke's *Writing for Art* (2008), pp. 5; David Kennedy's *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (2012), pp. 13-15.

[25] See also Emily Fragos' foreword to the anthology *Art and Artists: Poems* (2012), pp. 15-17.

a range of other crucial themes regarding the 'non-generalisable' reception of visual arts. Jane Hedley describes her co-edited volume *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler* (2008) as an exploration of the ekphrasis which grows out of female poets' 'own aesthetic, political, and/or psychological commitments' (15). In *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis: Lyrical Representations of Photographs from the 19th Century to the Present* (2015), Andrew D. Milner postulates that the 'narratives' in photographic ekphrasis frequently describe 'stories that occur between poetic speakers and the photographs they regard' (3). In *The Wallflower Avant-Garde: Modernism, Sexuality, and Queer Ekphrasis* (2016), Brian Glavey argues that since gay and lesbian writers tend to see themselves as 'failed copies of the ideals of masculinity and femininity', ekphrasis helps them 'transform' this relation (7).

Critics and the poets themselves have shown that poems about visual art address not only the object but a visual representation of a life subject or subjects, the process of creating it, and the poet's and/or the poetic speaker's identification with all these. As a result, I want to propose three interconnected dimensions of what I call bio-ekphrasis, namely: (1) 'object ekphrasis', for poems addressing a visual artwork through detailed description but as well commentary, reflection, reimagination, prosopopoeia, where a life subject in the artwork is given his/her/its voice, and many other ways; (2) 'process ekphrasis', for poems narrating different processes associated with visual art, mainly the creation and reception of a visual artwork; (3) 'subject ekphrasis', for poems drawing on the biography of the artist, the life subject(s) of the artwork, or anyone including the poet who identifies with the artwork and/or the person(s) it represents. The three can be simultaneously in play, and they often are, as in Robert Fagles' poem about Van Gogh's recognition of his resemblance with his brother in his self-portrait, and Sujata Bhatt's 'Parrots', which addresses Frida Kahlo and her parrots in a painting but simultaneously Kahlo herself.

To adapt Alfred Corn's idea about 'the confluence of a work of visual art and the life of the poet', I suggest a confluence of a visual artwork, and the life of the artist and viewer whom the artwork represents or is seen to represent. In other words, bio-ekphrasis goes beyond the poet's own engagement with a visual artwork. To facilitate this central postulate, I call such co-operation 'multi-directional bio-ekphrasis'. The idea of multi-directionality has been widely used to understand the layering in childhood, traumatic, and socio-cultural memory[26]. The relations between a visual artwork, its

[26] In his introduction to *The Uncanny*, a 2003 collection of Sigmund Freud's essays on art and artists, Hugh Haughton argues that Freud understands his first memory as 'fictional', yet rooted in 'childhood memories, and his notion of memory as a 'screen' is thus 'many-layered and multi-directional' (xix). Michael Rothberg might have taken this as a starting point in *Multidirectional Memory* (2009) arguing

creator, and the viewer, I argue, also go in multiple directions, since any viewer including the artist, a gallery-goer (or in today's age of digital reproduction, an Internet user), and if it is a portrait, the life subject or subjects, can identify themselves or somebody else with the artwork and or its representation. Apart from portrait, the artwork concerned can be an abstract piece being seen as a kind of autobiographical or biographical representation, and it can also be an imaginary or notional one. My proposition of the three kinds of bio-ekphrasis and the symbiosis of them is not to compartmentalise ekphrasis, but to lay out the various interrelations between the visual artist, artwork and viewer(s) in an ekphrastic poem, thereby creating a theoretical framework based on the biographical mechanisms in modern ekphrasis. The following map is a basic model for the possible multi-directional relations between a painter, a portrait, and the viewers, whom the portrait represents or is seen to represent:

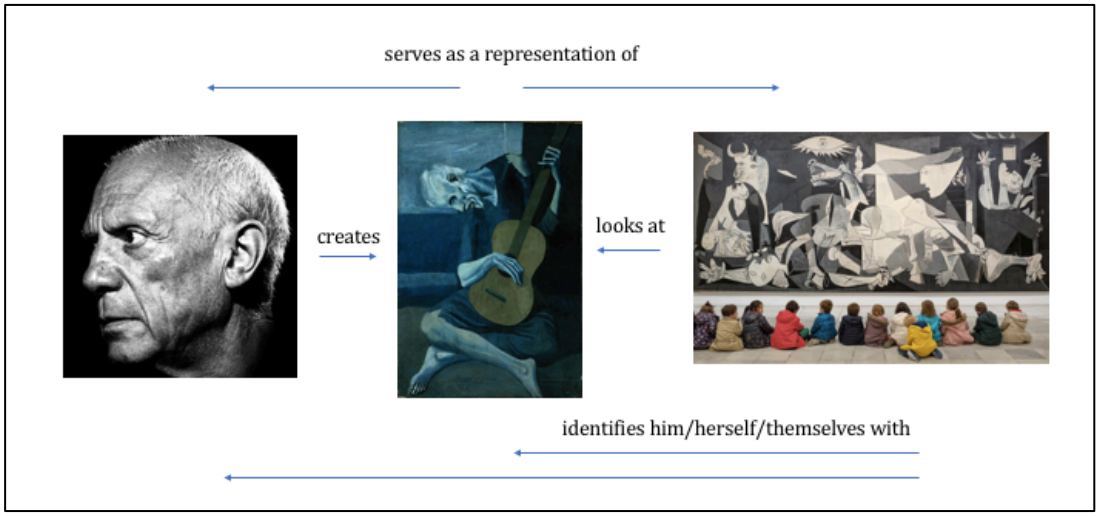


Fig. 10 Multidirectional bio-ekphrasis

Many poems used as examples in recent critical studies of ekphrasis can be examples of my notion of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis. Stevens' 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' (1937) addresses a painting by Picasso but as well reads it as a representation of ourselves. Marianne Moore begins 'When I Buy Pictures' (1921) by saying 'or what is closer to the truth/ when I look at that of which I may regard myself as the imaginary possessor', and insists that a picture 'must acknowledge the spiritual forces which have made it' (*Complete Poems* 48). Moore addresses both the buyer's and artist's personal connection with a picture—the buyer sees herself as an 'imaginary possessor' and a picture is seen as a representation of the artist's 'spiritual forces'.

A painting, for other modern poets, is a potentially political and historical representation. Yeats saw in a portrait 'John Synge himself' among his many Irish

---

for a socio-cultural memory of traumatic histories, such as the Holocaust, which comes into being through 'dialogical interactions' between individuals (5).

'friends' in 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited' (1938) as well as 'Ireland's history' (*Selected Poems* 205), and O'Hara similarly saw George Washington, whom he calls the American 'father', come 'alive' in 'On Seeing Larry Rivers' *Washington Crossing the Delaware* at the Museum of Modern Art' (1957) (*Collected Poems* 234). O'Hara responds to Rivers' iconoclastic take on Emanuel Leutze's painting with that title in the light of a different political view of US culture in the present. Both poems represent the poet's personal and historicised reading of a portrait in a gallery setting. In contrast, Elizabeth Bishop's 'In the Waiting Room' (1976) records a sceptical identification with the image of 'those awful hanging breasts' in a copy of *National Geographic*, asking if they 'held us all together/ or made us all just one' (*Complete Poems* 161). Bishop's poem is a cultural and political commentary on an image of women in a nationally framed magazine.

Yeats' 'Sailing to Byzantium' (1927) is one of the most multi-dimensional examples of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis in the last century. The poem expresses the want to take such a 'bodily form' as 'Grecian goldsmiths make/ Of hammered gold', singing 'upon a golden bough' of 'what is past, or passing, or to come' (*Selected Poems* 129). These lines clearly address the gold bird and the creation of it, but as well the man's imagination of himself transforming into the gold artefact and reporting back on the human life he has left behind in the form of a song. With its complex, musical ottava rima form, the poem captures an autobiographical urge towards transcendence of the self, reflects on historical change, and ponders the nature of art itself, with poet, poem, and artwork all identified in the artefact of the gold bird. The fusion of historical and biographical timezones in the poem is important to our understanding of the multi-directional nature of history, but as a forerunner of multidirectional bio-ekphrasis in today's poetry, the poem, is rarely used as an example in critical studies of ekphrasis, unlike his other poems, such as 'Lapis Lazuli', 'Leda and the Swan' and 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited'.

1.3 The ekphrastic projects of Pascale Petit, George Szirtes and Tamar Yoseloff

As a more multi-layered version of the multi-directional bio-ekphrasis performed by their poetic predecessors, the kind performed by Pascale Petit, George Szirtes and Tamar Yoseloff needs to be understood in relation to the visual artworks, artists, and viewers including the three ekphrasists themselves. If we redefine Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's notion of 'life narrative' as not limited to the life of its producer (*Reading Autobiography* 4), the three ekphrastic projects also represent three life narratives, frequently drawing on the biographies of artists, their own, and those of the life subjects represented in art. As a prelude to the sustained exploration of each ekphrasist in the

following chapters, I want to put forward my postulates about their particular ekphrastic projects and focus on a single poem by each as a point of reference, simultaneously suggesting my own approach.

Pascale Petit published her first pamphlet in 1994, and her poems about Frida Kahlo's paintings have received some attention in studies of contemporary ekphrasis, which I will return to, and is known by critics and readers as a former sculptor and now a poet closely associated with the visual arts. However, Petit also told me in interview, 'Because I've written a whole book after paintings by Kahlo, people think I have a knack for writing poems about art. I don't' (Appendix A, p. 180). In Chapter 2— 'Welcome to my studio': Sculptural and Pictorial Ekphrasis in Pascale Petit's Poetry, I suggest that Petit's ekphrasis is oriented by her familial psychodrama rather than art per se. I argue that Petit systematically builds an extremely sustained bio-ekphrastic enterprise based around childhood and traumatic memories, biographies, and art therapy. In doing so, Petit consistently adapts sculpture (her former art), and portraiture (the main medium) for Kahlo, as models for her poetry, and reads existing sculptures and paintings in psycho-biographical terms as part of her childhood- and trauma-centred life narrative.

All of Petit's collections today, beginning with the pamphlet *Icefall Climbing* (1994), are given a title with an image of nature. Her third book *The Zoo Father* (2001) is her first to be shortlisted for T. S. Eliot Prize in the same year, and marks the beginning of her investment in transmutation of trauma in poems framed as portraits and self-portraits, anticipating similar self-portrait poems by her poetic contemporaries like Tim Liardet and Colette Bryce and emerging poets like Ocean Vuong and Kayo Chingonyi. 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar' is a graphic, macabre account of an occult makeover performed on a daughter, which turns her into what she calls a 'were-jaguar' (the big-cat equivalent of were-wolves), before she confronts her father who once 'continued to rape' her mother (*The Zoo Father* 22). The poem characteristically narrates procedures of painting and assemblage performed on her body:

> You do not know that I am wearing this mask.
> Please answer my questions, though you are dying.
> The keeper gave me hairs from a jaguar's ears
> to place in my ears so I can hear your thoughts.
> I am wearing jaguar lashes around my eyes.
> so I can see into your heart.
> Black quatrefoils are painted on my skin.
> I have filed my incisors and canines.
> I have painted the corners of my mouth black
> to lengthen it into a maw.
> I am wearing a thorn necklace.
>
> (22)

She goes on to tell us that the 'thorns are infected with the worms of prey' (23). Petit plays upon the term 'bird of prey' and alludes to the 'invisible worm' in William Blake's 'The Sick Rose', bringing a phallic edge to the daughter's ritual. To complete her makeover, the daughter 'made a worm-paste from the maggots/ and smeared it on [her] arms to embrace [her father]' (23). While the preparation for her to morph into a 'were-jaguar' repeatedly involves painting, turning her body into a canvas, this is complemented by turning herself into an object of assemblage, for example by placing 'hairs from a jaguar's ears' in her ears (23), when they were only 'half-formed' in the past (22). Petit narrates the transformation of the daughter's body into a kind of mystical installation—a representative example of her lifelong grappling with private memory and trauma in terms of the zoomorphic and self-mythologising transformations in her poetry.

George Szirtes is a very prolific poet, translator and critic, and has written ekphrastic poetry across his career since the late 1970s. Although Szirtes was trained as a painter and now draws on the traditions of painting, music, literature and other arts, he is critically recognised for his consistent returns to photographs and photography in his poetry. In Chapter 3—'No one dies/ In photographs': Photographic and Cinematic Ekphrasis in George Szirtes' Poetry, I build on Michael Murphy's argument in *Poetry in Exile* (2004) that photographs and photography are the 'means and subject matter' of Szirtes' poetry, serving as 'an intermediary between history and memory' (144). Szirtes told me in interview that 'Murphy is essentially right regarding photography as an intermediary', but 'it's just that it is so to different degrees, in different ways, at different times' (Appendix B, p. 182). Like Murphy, I postulate that Szirtes continues using photographs and photography as models for his poetry and simultaneously explores the capacity and limits of photography as a life- and history-recording means, but I read his collection of family and documentary photographs and his exploration of photographers' biography and their professional practices as a sustained familial and socio-cultural narrative.

His fourth collection *The Photographer in Winter* (1986) is the first book of which the title uses an image associated with photography. The title poem, as its subtitle indicates, was written in memory of his mother, who committed suicide in 1975 and had spent time in a Nazi prison-camp as well as a career as photographer in Communist Hungary. It represents a significant effort in multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, based around photography, of which I shall offer a thorough analysis in Chapter 3. The poem is not based on any specific photographs of his mother (Appendix B, p. 184), but narrates the professional process of capturing a ghost of his mother in virtual photographs:

> Co-operate with me and turn your head,
> Smile vacantly as if you were not dead
> But walked through parallel worlds. Now look at me
> As though you really meant it. I think we could be
> Good for each other. Hold it right there. Freeze.
>
> (*New & Collected* 115)

In this world Szirtes creates in the poem, his dead mother is revived, travelling between this artificial world and that of the past, while he endeavours to turn her into the subject of his photographs. As Szirtes channels his photographer mother as a way of working through his response to her death, he also engages in a kind of imaginary poet-and-artist collaboration, like Ernest Farrés' poems about him and Edward Hopper becoming one person. This is simultaneously an imaginary mother-and-son collaboration, representing Szirtes' highly personal connection to photography as the profession of his mother. We are introduced earlier in the poem to a 'frozen river' (114), but here the injunction of the photographer in winter to 'Freeze' is doubly chilling, as he seeks for 'Camera angles, convincing details', treating his mother as a co-operative photographic subject, 'as if [she] were not dead'. Sontag argues in *On Photography* (1977) that photographs involve 'freezing' an isolated moment, testimony to 'time's relentless melt' (15). Sontag also argues that Diane Arbus' photographs hinge on 'the subject's cooperation', that is, to be 'friends' with them (38), but stresses that the essence of photographing people is 'not intervening in their lives, only visiting them' (42)[27]. Szirtes, however, dramatises in his poem the fact that his poetic mimicry of photography gestures towards 'intervening' in his dead mother's life, by figuratively bringing her back to life as a kind of 'as-if', or 'as-though' subject. Szirtes' photographic life-writing project, I will suggest, also consistently relates to the contemporary development of critical thoughts about photographs as capturing an as-if life.

Tamar Yoseloff is one of the keenest poets today in presenting herself as dedicated to the visual arts—in her recurring course 'Poetry and Visual Art' at the Poetry School in London, her Instagram page and online blog, and surely, her ekphrastic poetry. With her first pamphlet published in the same year as Petit's, and having published her first *New and Selected Poems* in 2015, Yoseloff, however, has received scant critical attention for her consistent and multifarious engagements with the visual arts. In Chapter 4—'I will roll out my new-found arts one by one': Curatorial Ekphrasis in Tamar Yoseloff's Poetry, I define a curatorial trajectory in her readings of a vast range of visual artworks and artefacts as autobiographical and biographical representations, suggesting

[27] In his essay about Paul Strand (1972), John Berger similarly recognises Strand's 'ability to invite the narrative', 'in such a way that the subject is willing to say: *I am as you see me*' (*Understanding a Photograph* 47).

that her curation begins with more classic works and gradually turns to modern and abstract art. As Yoseloff told me in interview, 'because I am most interested in abstract art, I've naturally been drawn to it as a subject' (Appendix C, p. 191). I argue that Yoseloff's oeuvre can be read in multiply-biographical terms, and her ekphrastic journey represents a narrative about her personal engagement with the visual arts, which is simultaneously an expansive, various and enigmatic exploration of love, desire, the unconscious, woman and other psychological and corporeal themes.

Fig. 11 Barbara Hepworth, *Spring* (1966)
(bronze with strings)
Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden

Unlike the notional or imaginary self-portrait and photographs in Petit's and Szirtes' poems, 'Spring' from *Fetch*, Yoseloff's fourth book, published in 2007, addresses a sculpture of the same name by Barbara Hepworth, but the poem goes beyond the common understanding of an ekphrastic poem as a descriptive account of a visual artwork. It describes Hepworth's sculpture on a plinth in her secluded garden, now part of a museum of her works, asking us to see it as a complicated representation of 'our lives' and simultaneously describing the creation of it:

> Look at the way we
> complicate our lives, shape
> smooth hard surfaces, frame something
> that gives, could collapse
> if we're not careful.
>
> We pull strings
> taut, construct ourselves, little puzzles,
> we have no end. But then the breeze rustles
> the copper beech, everything's in bloom—
> it could break our hearts.
> Careful.

(*Fetch* 9)

The poem addresses various relations in the multi-directional bio-ekphrastic model, recreating not only Hepworth's but a collective artistic look at sculpture and exploring the process and challenges of the sculptural creation, which Loizeaux has observed in twentieth-century ekphrasis. The understanding of Hepworth's sculpture as an abstract construction of 'ourselves' recalls Stevens' description of a painting by Picasso as 'a picture of ourselves', but Yoseloff speaks of the artist's point of view, emphasising that the sculpture is enigmatic and demands extra care. Yoseloff also characteristically explores what she calls the 'intersection between poetry and art', as the enjambed lines seem to 'have no end', and the short poem can be read as a 'taut' piece of work. The poem is representative of Yoseloff's fascination with the works of a female artist and/or representation of female subjects, her engagement with a kind of self-reflexive ekphrasis, and her consistent exploration of the dynamics of the relationship between the artist, artwork, and those looking at it.

Petit's self-portrait poem, Szirtes' virtual photographs, and Yoseloff's poetic equivalent of a sculpture draw on imagery from different cultures, including an occult ceremony which involves skin painting, a frozen landscape which alludes to a wintry Europe, and Hepworth's sculpture in her garden in St. Ives, England. These, by no means, represent the range of cultures the three ekphrasists have drawn on, but give a sense of the differences in the cultural dimensions of their projects. This is not a literary group like the Movement, the Beat poets, or the New York School of poets, as the three of them, based in Cornwall (Petit), Norfolk (Szirtes) and London (Yoseloff), develop their own distinctive ekphrastic iconographies and trajectories. They, instead, epitomise the multi-directional nature of the development of today's bio-ekphrastic poetry, which draws on the art, cultures and traditions of different origins. The new bio-ekphrastic moment is multi-directional in many ways.

They also do not share the same cultural background. According to Petit's biography on her website, she 'was born in Paris, grew up in France and Wales', and is 'of French/Welsh/Indian heritage'. The blurb on the back cover of Szirtes' *New & Collected Poems* begins by saying that he 'came to Britain as an eight-year-old refugee after the Hungarian uprising in 1956'. The article 'I Feel More British than American' in *East Anglian Daily Times* on 25th July 2007 quotes Yoseloff in its title and tells us that she 'grew up in New Jersey, on a horse farm that her father – a publisher of academic books – ran as a kind of hobby'. Their multi-cultural bio-ekphrastic projects, in turn, form part of their lifelong negotiation with different cultures. In the age of digital reproduction, images are shareable in different forms, and poets like Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff take advantage of the inherently non-linguistic and trans-cultural nature of images, using

images as triggers and bases for their poetry and as bridges which connect them with their readers and their own cultural origins.

1.4 Ekphrasis through Psychoanalytic and Life-Writing Theories

In the ekphrastic poems we have seen here, there are transformations of the life subjects in multifarious ways: a man's desire to be a gold bird made by Grecian goldsmiths; Franciscan don looking transfigured in the stained glass; Edward Hopper and a Catalan poet himself becoming one person; a photographic subject smiling 'as if [she] were not dead'; and the construction of a sculptural double of 'ourselves'. There are also 'self-portraits' as Sarawak bats and a self-proclaimed 'were-jaguar'. Both psychoanalysts and scholars of autobiography, biography and life writing have a lot to say about art as a transformational agent for the artist and those looking at an artwork, and here I want to draw on pertinent ideas to offer theoretical dimensions to my reading of the poems.

In the last of his five lectures delivered in 1909, translated and published in *Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis* (1962), Sigmund Freud argues that we all seek to turn 'wishful phantasies into reality', but a person with an '*artistic gift* (a thing that is still a psychological mystery to us)' can 'transform his phantasies into artistic creations' and thus 'escape the doom of neurosis' (81)[28]. Referring to art in general, Freud illuminates the artistic urge to give forms for phantasies (or fantasies)[29]. Freud also developed his ideas about art and childhood in other essays. In 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood' (1910), Freud draws on the Egyptian myth of a vulture-headed goddess to understand da Vinci's 'vulture fantasy' as a manifestation of his childhood memory of suckling and suggests that this subsequently transformed into his art (80). Freud's study of da Vinci's memory, phantasy and art sheds light on Petit's self-mythologising, zoomorphic reinventions of her parents and herself in her portrait-poems about childhood and trauma.

Freud has published essays on art and artists, but as Hugh Haughton tells us in his introduction to *The Uncanny,* a 2003 collected edition of these essays, Freud never 'attempted to put them into systematic form' (xiii). Freud's writing on art, however, has proved astonishingly fertile for his successors. Melanie Klein is one of the first to focus

---

[28] In 'On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry' (1931), translated and included in *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, the fifteenth volume of his collected works, Carl Gustav Jung also maintains that 'a work of art arises from much the same psychological conditions as a neurosis', although no one would 'mistake a pathological phenomenon for art' (67).

[29] According to the online *OED*, the modern usage of 'fantasy' and 'phantasy' differs, with the former referring to 'caprice, whim, fanciful invention' and the latter, 'imagination, visionary notion' respectively.

on biographical representations in art. Concluding her 1929 essay 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations', Melanie Klein argues that 'drawing and painting are used as means to restore people' (41). This is based on her observation that a daughter could 'endeavour to restore her mother and make her new through the portrait' (41). This can be extended to understand the 'new' parents in the poems framed as portraits by Petit, such as 'Portrait of My Mother as Xipe Totec' from *The Huntress* (2005) and 'Portrait of My Father as Saint-Julien le Pauvre' from *Fauverie* (2014), and the imaginary photographs Szirtes takes of his mother and the actual ones of his parents, as in *Portrait of my Father in an English Landscape* (1998). Their parents are made 'new' in the frame of actual or imaginary portraits for different autobiographical purposes, and I will study them within the two culturally-different groups of portrait-poems.

In 'Primitive Emotional Development' (1945), which explores the maturation of the infant's ego, D. W. Winnicott proposed that the 'tendency to integrate' is helped by 'the acute instinctual experiences which tend to gather the personality together from within' (*Collected Papers* 150)[30]. Subsequently, Marion Milner and Adrian Stokes, former analysands and students of Melanie Klein, understood art as integrative for the ego. Both psychoanalysts were avid painters themselves, and their own art fed into their psychoanalytic work. Milner's essays about art can be found in the collected edition *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men* (1987). In 'The Role of Illusion in Symbol of Formation' (1952), Milner develops her ideas in *On Not Being Able to Paint* (1950), a bio-ekphrastic text in prose with her accounts of her drawing and doodling. Drawing on Bernard Berenson's notion of the 'aesthetic moment'[31], Milner suggests that an aesthetic experience is 'a temporary giving up of the discriminating ego which stands apart and tries to see things objectively and rationally', and this is not restricted to the 'contemplation of works of art' but the creation of them (*The Suppressed Madness* 97, 98). Likewise, in *Painting and the Inner World* (1963), Stokes explores visual art as a 'transcendental' concretisation of the inner world (8), and turns to 'our identification' with art in *The Invitation in Art* (1965), maintaining that it is 'essential to the subsequent contemplation of the work of art as an image not only of an independent and completed object but of the ego's integration' (19). Both Milner and Stokes illuminate the artist's and our deep, personal identification with a work of art, and their ideas lay a theoretical

[30] See also Winnicott's 'Ego Integration in Child Development' (1962) in his *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, pp. 56-63.

[31] In *Aesthetics and History* (1948), Berenson suggests that during an 'aesthetic moment', a looker of 'the picture, or building, statue, landscape' 'ceases to be his ordinary self', and the observed object and he 'become one entity' (80).

basis for my multi-directional bio-ekphrastic model, where art is integrative for both the artist and viewers.

If art figuratively restores people, psychoanalysts also tell us it paradoxically makes them 'new' or transforms them. Building on Winnicott's idea of 'transitional object' which enables the child to establish a measure of independence as well as dependence on his or her mother[32], Christopher Bollas in *The Shadow of the Object* (1987) argued that a 'transformational object' is a 'medium that alters the self' (14), serving as 'deliverer' of this self-alteration (29). He goes on to explain how this can often be an aesthetic object, saying that the artist is 'in the unique position to create his own aesthetic moments' (37), but we all can have our own through 'deep subjective rapport with an object', citing paintings, poems, symphonies and natural landscapes as examples (16). In the following chapters, I adopt Bollas' idea of an aesthetic 'transformational object' to understand a visual artwork in relation to its creator, life subject(s) and viewers. I also adapt his idea to propose the use of the terms 'transformational process' to refer to the creation or reception of art as a self-transforming experience, and 'transformational subject' to explore a poet's use of a visual artist and the life subject(s) of a visual artwork, or an artist's use of his or her life subject(s). The three terms echo the classification of the three dimensions of bio-ekphrasis, and can also be used to understand a poem, the processes associated with it, and the poetic speaker and his or her addressee(s).

In 'Paintings and Symbols' included in the 1957 edition of *On Not Being Able to Paint*, Milner argues that through painting, the artist's inner life is 'transfigured into a timeless visual co-existence' (186). There is an ambiguity or overlap between 'transformation' and 'transfiguration' in psychoanalytic accounts of art. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud observed that we can '*repeat* the repressed matter as an experience in the present, instead of *remembering* it as something belonging to the past' (56), and his successors use a range of terms, like 'visual co-existence', to suggest that a work of art is also a result of repetition: Milner describes her free drawings as 'a concretisation of dreams, a permanent recording of the transfigurations' (*On Not Being Able to Paint* 140); Stokes suggests that painting 'mirror[s] an aspect of the inner world' (*Painting and the Inner World* 15); Bollas emphasises that a transformation of the self with the use of an object results in 're-enacted memories, not recreations' (*The Shadow of the Object* 17). However, as Wallace Stevens puts it memorably, the man with the blue guitar is asked to play 'A tune beyond us, yet ourselves'. Stevens anticipates Petit's 'self-

[32] See Chapter 1: 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' (1953) in Winnicott's *Playing and Reality*, pp. 1-34.

portrait' as a mystically-empowered daughter, Szirtes' imaginary photographs of his not-dead mother, and Yoseloff's representation of a collective voice as a 'copper beech'. Transformation or transfiguration, mirroring or recording, and recreation or reinvention, I will suggest further, are some of the key bio-ekphrastic mechanisms in their poetry.

Since the late 1970s, there have been many scholars of autobiography, biography and life writing who share psychoanalysts' views about art as objectification and transformation of life. In 'Autobiography as De-facement' (1979), Paul de Man suggests that autobiography gives 'shape' to and makes 'sense' of 'a world accessible only in the privative way of understanding' (930). In *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (1980), the editor James Olney foregrounds the life-reshaping nature of autobiography, defining it as 'transforming life, or *a* life, into a text' (6). Meanwhile, there has been a growing recognition of the kinds of changes involved in such a life-transformation. In his essay included in Olney's edited book, William L. Howarth argues that the life in autobiography is only 'resembling' the actual one, 'but actually composed and framed as an artful invention' (86). More recent studies of the autobiographical and related genres return to exploring this quality of 'invention' as integral to writing about 'life or *a life*'[33]. These illuminate my observation of the inventive impulses recreated and enacted in bio-ekphrastic poems. The most dramatic case we have seen is Szirtes' insistence that the subject of his imaginary photographs smile 'as if she [were] not dead' and look at him 'as though [she] really meant it'.

Life writing has been distinguished from autobiography and biography of well-known people to establish a literary genre which focuses on marginalised groups. In the co-edited volume *Theoretical Discussions of Biography* (2014), Hans Renders builds on Michael Holroyd's ideas about the new life-writing tradition[34] and suggests that life-writers focus on 'misunderstood individuals', which 'represent social groups such as women, coloured people, transvestites, victims of the Holocaust and others' (172)[35]. As

---

[33] See *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (2010), eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, pp. 13; *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing* (2014), eds. Hans Renders and Binne de Haan, pp. 2; *Experiments in Life-Writing: Intersections of Auto/Biography and Fiction* (2017), eds. Lucia Boldrini and Julia Novak, pp. 6.

[34] In 'Changing Fashions in Biography', published in *The Guardian* on 7th November 2009, Michael Holroyd argues that life writing gives 'retrospective justice' to 'people who belong to and represent categories or classes of people who have been victimized in the past'.

[35] In the same book, Binne de Hann suggests that life writing values narratives of 'mourning, illness, and addiction, as well as stories of disability and sexual orientation and of migration and exile' (183). In *Writing a Woman's Life* (1989), Carolyn G. Heilbrun made a call for recognition of the varying kinds of female life, maintaining that 'Only the female life of prime devotion to male destiny had been told before; for the young girl who wanted more from a female biography, there were, before 1970, few or no exemplars' (26).

the three UK-based ekphrasists of my case studies consistently write about women, Holocaust victims, trauma, and foreign cultures, and as their poetic contemporaries like Grace Nichols, Moniza Alvi, Sujata Bhatt and Tim Liardet have done the same, it is particularly useful to understand today's bio-ekphrastic moment in relation to the new conception of life writing. As the current bio-ekphrastic moment is made of representations of previously victimized and under-represented individuals, it is concurrently a moment of ekphrastic life writing and trauma narrative, driven by poets who are identifiable with the life subjects in their writing.

Before proceeding to detailed examination of Petit's, Szirtes' and Yoseloff's bio-ekphrastic life narratives, I want to recognise a social dimension to the contemporary bio-ekphrastic moment. Given their uses of social media and their engagement with teaching, poets today are much more aware of our responses to their work, and actively develop a kind of multi-directional relationship with readers, critics, publishers, visual artists, art institutions and others. Building on the Freudian term 'sublimation', which refers to the process of our impulse transformed into socially and culturally 'valuable' equivalents (Freud, *Two Short Accounts* 86), the art therapist Edith Kramer defines what she calls 'artistic sublimation' as the artist's creation of 'equivalents for his fantasies through visual images', which 'become true works of art only as the artist succeeds in making them meaningful to others' (*Collected Papers* 44)[36]. Howarth, in 'Some Principles of Autobiography', recognises the same need for autobiography to be 'meaningful' to us, suggesting that autobiographers 'carve public monuments out of their private lives' (92). Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff consistently represent visual art as transforming lives into shareable equivalents but also explore the limits of communicating through images. As Yoseloff insists, 'Look at the way we/ complicate our lives'. Their investments in bio-ekphrasis are some of the most sustained, layered and self-reflexive, representing and exploring the multi-directional relations between visual artists, artworks, viewers and the poets themselves as well as the bilateral relations between private and public lives, and poetry and the visual arts.

---

[36] In the chapter 'Creativity and Its Origins' from *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott also suggests that an architect 'is thinking in terms of material that can actually be used so that his creative impulse may take form and shape, and the world may witness' (93).

Jung similarly argues that the artist 'seizes on [the 'primordial image in the unconscious'], and in raising it from deepest unconsciousness he brings it into relation with conscious values, thereby transforming it until it can be accepted by the minds of his contemporaries according to their powers' (*The Spirit in Man* 83).

Chapter 2 - 'Welcome to my studio': Sculptural and Pictorial Ekphrasis in Pascale Petit's Poetry

Pascale Petit (b. 1953), among the three ekphrasists of my selection, has gained the most recognition in critical studies of ekphrasis and contemporary poetry, and this chapter reads all her poetry collections to date, including the collaborative edition *Effigies* (2013), as a sequence of self-mythologising, childhood-reinventing, and trauma-displacing projects, where a daughter and her fraught parents, women, and visual artists among other life subjects are ceaselessly transformed into ecological and zoological images and via sculptural and pictorial means, and projected onto existing sculptures and paintings.

Having given up sculpture in 1992, Pascale Petit has transformed into a critically-acclaimed poet. Her collections *The Zoo Father* (2001), *The Huntress* (2005), *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010), and *Fauverie* (2014) were all shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. Petit also served on the judging panel of the prize in 2015. In June 2018, she was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and given the Ondaatje Prize a month earlier for *Mama Amazonica* (2017). In 'Writing Poems from Rape and Abuse' published on *Women Writing Rape: The Blog* on 12 April 2017, Petit records that *The Zoo Father* began with her want to 'make art' and eventually, she made 'portraits' of her father and herself in terms of the animals she saw in Paris' Jardin des Plantes. As a poet, Petit maintains her sense of herself as an artist, and since *The Zoo Father*, her poetry is incorrigibly ekphrastic and pictorialising, with many poems framed as parent-portraits and self-portraits made from a reservoir of tropical, zoological, Latin American and continental European images[37].

These portrait-poems like 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar' also characteristically narrate the process of creating human assemblages, installations and statues, suggesting a strong continuity between Petit's poetry and her earlier sculptural practice, with her poetry acting as a kind of multi-purpose studio. In the essay 'Poetry as Installation, Object, Painting' included in *Poetry Wales* (Spring 2010), Petit gives an account of her transformation from a sculptor into a poet, understanding her writing in sculptural terms:

> I spent the first part of my life working as a sculptor. I was also writing poems, but in 1992 decided to stop being a visual artist to concentrate on poetry, I was finding metaphor more fruitful than manipulating materials but I hoped to continue making objects with words. Poems had to fill the vacuum left by three-dimensional work and writing them had to be as fulfilling as being in the studio. I

[37] In a detailed case study of Petit's poetry as part of her doctoral thesis about exile and ecology, Zoë Brigley Thompson reads these images as Petit's search for 'alternative models' in creating 'a dialogue with minor cultures made foreign by their proximity to an imperial power' (139-140).

> needed to enter the white page as I'd walked into my studio, and make my world as solid as physical materials.
>
> (51)

Petit goes on to say that even when her poems 'explore one subject in a series', each needs to be 'a distinct vessel, distinguishable from others', and she needs to 'edit them just as [she] used to shape sculptures' (53). A poetic image also needs to be as rigorously shaped as her sculptures: 'I like the images to have sharp contours' (53). Petit's figurative sense of her poems suggests an inherently ekphrastic sense of her verbal medium. In addition to producing textual portraits and self-portraits, Petit can as well be called a verbal sculptor, having evolved from being an actual one, unlike W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound who showed lifelong poetic and critical engagements with sculptures and sculptors[38].

'I sculpted my parents in ice/ but they kept melting': *Icefall Climbing* (1994) and *Heart of a Deer* (1998)

At the end of 'Poetry as Installation', Petit reports that she tried to keep her sculpture and poetry 'separate' when she was a sculptor, yet she 'treated poems as objects – assembling, casting or carving them' (56). Interestingly, Petit only retrospectively realises the 'many connections' between her sculptural and poetic works (56). These are traceable to her earliest poems. Petit compares the twofold structure of *Heart of a Deer*, which begins in the Amazon and the second half in arctic environments, to her glass assemblage *Ancestral Memory* (1984), suggesting that her figurative making of sculpture takes place in not only individual poems but also through the arrangement of them in a book (56). Petit's ancestral installation makes use of glass, thorns, birds, insects, clocks, and torn photos, and her collections make use of similar repertories of images, as well as drawing on the idea of memory.

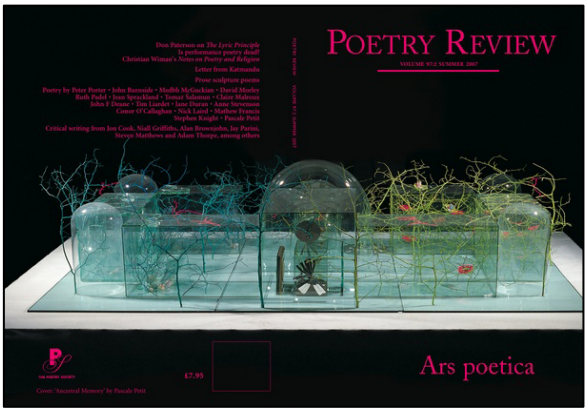


Fig. 12 Cover of *Poetry Review* (Summer 2007), with Graham Bush's photograph of Pascale Petit's *Ancestral Memory* (1984)

[38] See Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1970), Donald Davie's *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (1964), and Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux's *Yeats and the Visual Arts* (2003).

The poem 'Eisriesenwelt' from *Heart of a Deer* is a forerunner of Petit's sculptural ekphrasis. It offers a detailed account of an art student finding the right materials for her sculptures of parents:

> When I left home
> I sculpted my parents in ice
> but they kept melting.
> The tutors complained.
> They said water was formless.
> I needed a fridge large as Eisriesenwelt,
> 26 miles long, to store my art.
>
> So I tried glass.
> Sometimes I touch the ice
> and think it's fire –
> the white heat of the kiln
> where glass sculptures are cast.
> I tried to rebuild my grandmother's greenhouse.
> I made glass trees, glass rain, and a glass grandmother,
>
> but they annealed too fast. They cracked.

(*Heart of a Deer* 57, 58)

The poem describes the sculptor's process and challenges of recreating her parents in ice and her grandmother in glass, but also addresses her physical engagement with ice ('I touch the ice/ and think it's fire') and the tutors' complaint about such a choice of sculptural material. Although the tutors' identification with the ice-sculptures are not personal but pedagogical, the ekphrastic mechanisms in the poem are multi-directional in an educational context, addressing the ice and glass sculptures, the sculptor's creation of them as representations of her family members, and the tutors' practical concern about the formation and storage of the sculptures.

The sculptor goes on to declare her transformation into an artist in her own right:

> Welcome to my studio
> full of figures and towers.
> Some of the towers are people.
> Some of the people are towers.
>
> Don't blame the artist.
> I make what the ice-giants dictate.
> If they say *stay in the studio overnight*,
> I stay.
>
> *They* made me carve
> a stone dress for my mother.
> I am not to blame
> for its weight.
>
> I was the lacemaker
> who used frost

> instead of silk
> for her underclothes.
>
> (58)

The first line can be read as Petit's call for us to look at her poetry as a kind of 'studio', and her quasi-sculptural creations in poems as cross-referring to one another ('Some of the towers are people./ Some of the people are towers). The poem reads as an early artist's statement by Petit as a verbal sculptor, anticipating the range of imaginary and actual sculptures addressed in her more recent poems. Adrian Stokes' *Stones of Rimini* (1934) offers important psychoanalytic insights into the fundamental difference between carving and modelling. In Petit's poem, the ice-sculptor asks not to be blamed for her work, declaring that her art is dictated by the 'ice-giants', which figuratively demonstrates Stokes' understanding of carving as 'an articulation of something that already exists in the block' (*Stones of Rimini* 232). However, the sculptor's obedience to the 'ice-giants' strangely results in her decisions to carve for her ice-mother 'a stone dress' and to use 'frost/ instead of silk/ for [her mother's] underclothes'. These finishing touches to the mother-statue prefigure Petit's poems which speak to her fraught parents and represent them using similar sculptural images.

'Eisriesenwelt' invites our understanding of it in relation to Petit's first life as a sculptor, and of her poetry in terms of sculpture. It is also characteristically based on Petit's familial life, alluding to her distressing childhood. Petit's online biography published on ProQuest online in 2010 is by far the most detailed as regards Petit's personal life in the past:

> Pascale Petit (1953-), French-Welsh poet, was born in Paris, where her parents ran a brasserie and brewery business. Her mother suffered from a severe mental illness and was unable to look after her properly, although Petit didn't fully comprehend this at the time. As a result, at the age of five, Pascale was sent to a children's home for eighteen months, then to Germany to stay with family friends, before being brought up by her grandmother in mid-Wales. When Petit was thirteen she moved south to live with her mother in Caerffili and Llanbradach. Her father, from whom she suffered sexual abuse, vanished when she was eight.

The title of 'Eisriesenwelt', as a note preceding the poem tells us, refers to '*the largest ice-cave in the world*' (57), and according to its official website, the ice-cave in Werfen, Austria contains features known as ice-giants. Drawing on distinct images of this natural wonder, the sculptural process in 'Eisriesenwelt' is doubly-transformational for Petit, regarding her figurative continuation of her sculptural practice and her transmutation of her ambivalence about her mother. The sculpting of parents in ice, which 'kept melting', also contrasts with rebuilding 'my grandmother's greenhouse' in glass and making 'a glass grandmother'. Both glass and ice are brittle and transparent but a 'glass

grandmother' would not melt and would not need to be stored in a fridge. Petit's *Heart of a Deer*, in fact, was written in memory of her maternal grandmother (5), and the contrasting sculptural recreations of the mother and grandmother in 'Eisriesenwelt' served as familial transformational objects for Petit. 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar' from *The Zoo Father*, in contrast, turns Petit herself into a subject of her own art, narrating the process of her zoomorphic, sculptural transformation to confront a once-abusive father. Petit's poetry represents a range of these transformational artistic processes.

Fig. 13 Guillermo Kuitka, *Untitled* (1992), Tate

Heart of a Deer also includes two poems based on an installation and a painting by the Argentine artist Guillermo Kuitka. His untitled installation (1992) is constituted by twenty child-beds painted with road maps of Europe. In her poem, Petit describes a personal identification with the maps Kuitka painted: 'He painted sixty children's mattresses/ with maps of countries we recognised,/ warped by the topography of dreams'(16). The mattresses might well be reminiscent of her time in a 'children's home', but as part of 'Memories of a Marriage', these lines suggest that Kuitka's maps, which confuse the real world with 'the topography of dreams', trigger memories of a marriage. Petit characteristically describes the creation of a visual artwork which has both sculptural and pictorial elements, but reads a psychological 'topography' into an installation by a contemporary artist, making her first ekphrastic reference to an actual artwork. In 'Poetry as Installation', Petit said *Heart of a Deer* 'contains environments as well as objects', just as she created 'environments or installations' as a sculptor (51). Both 'Eisriensenwelt' (the ice-cave as the sculptor's studio) and 'Memories of a Marriage' (a gallery space or a larger version of Kuitka's studio for the 'sixty children's mattresses') contain 'environments as well as objects', and these environments for making art and looking at it can as well be called transformational environments, which condition the creation and reception of visual artworks as transformational objects.

'The Doll's House', which first appeared in *Icefall Climbing* and subsequently, *Heart of a Deer*, turns to a very different, yet equally constructed environment in a

miniature toy house, describing a daughter's use of it to project her urge to silence her father. The poem as the penultimate one in *Heart of a Deer* reads as a continuation of the daughter's sculpturally-ekphrastic narrative in 'Eisriensenwelt'. She is not dictated by the 'ice-giants' this time but becomes 'a giant' herself, filling the house with sand to 'drown' a miniature seen as a representation of her father: 'I sift a fine rain over my father, who's surprised/ to be drowning in a dry sea. At last, he's quiet' (94). This is revealed to be a vivid childhood memory, as the poem later says, 'He finds his daughter's doll's house, the roof// ripped off by siroccos. She's grown up now' (94). The reinvention of the children's toy or game can be understood in terms of Winnicott's argument that 'only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self' (*Playing and Reality* 73). In Petit's poem, the miniature house allows the daughter to be 'creative', as she turns it into an installation as much as she uses it as a stage for a fairy-tale-like theatrical play, where she figuratively shifts the balance of power from her loquacious father to herself. Whether dealing with the adult art of sculpture or a child's play in a doll's house, Petit's earliest ekphrastic poems turn on family narratives, childhood fantasy, and psychic pain. In this respect, they not only grow out of her work as a sculptor but anticipate the direction of her later work.

*

In an interview with Janet Philips in 2004, Petit said: '[Plath's] influence on me then was more as a role model – her boldness and originality something to aim for, when I wrote my first "book" of poems as part of my fine art degree' (qtd. in Rees-Jones, *Modern Women Poets* 314). Plath's influence on Petit is noticeably profound and I want to highlight the similarities between her poems in *Heart of a Deer* and Plath's ekphrastic poetry. Given the similarities in their uses of ekphrasis to address fraught parents, Plath proves to be an important 'role model' to Petit. In the title poem of Plath's *The Colossus*, which alludes to the Colossus of Rhodes, an ancient statue destroyed during an earthquake, the daughter declares that 'I shall never get you put together entirely' and compares her dead father to 'a ruin', saying 'Thirty years now I have laboured/ To dredge the silt from your throat' (20). In other words, Plath anticipates Petit's therapeutic combination of psycho-analytic memories of her parents with sculptural imagery, and in contrast to Plath's image of dredging 'silt', sand in Petit's 'The Doll's House' is used by the giant-daughter to quiet down her miniature-father[39].

[39] Petit's use of the doll's house as a paradigm of the child's ways of coping with family trauma also finds its counterpart in Plath's 'Poem for a Birthday'—'The mother of mouths didn't love me./ The old man shrank to a doll./ Oh I am too big to go backward' (*The Colossus* 82, 83).

Plath has a bio-ekphrastic poem which takes its title from Giorgio de Chirco's painting *The Disquieting Muses*, and it is a daughter's passage addressed to her domineering mother. In the poem, the statues and mannequins in de Chirco's painting are described as 'three ladies/ Nodding by night around my bed,/ Mouthless, eyeless, with stitched bald head', and the daughter wonders if her mother would 'rid' her of her 'dismal-headed/ Godmothers', who 'stand their vigil in gowns of stone' (*The Colossus* 58, 59). The portrayal of these statuesque and grotesque 'godmothers' may well have informed Petit's 'Auyan Tepuy', where the mother carves 'a stone uniform' for her daughter, and where the daughter in similar fashion tries to escape from her mother's 'stone school' (*Heart of a Deer* 88). 'Auyan Tepuy' was the last poem in *Icefall Climbing*, and being subsequently included in *Heart of a Deer*, the poem mirrors 'Eisriensenwelt', where the sculptor carves 'a stone dress' for her ice-mother. Informed by Plath's image of the 'gowns of stone', Petit creates a continuity in both the narrative and iconography in her sculptural ekphrasis.

The last line of Petit's 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar'—'I am your putrefaction' (*The Zoo Father* 23)—pays tribute to the last line of Plath's 'Daddy'— 'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through' (*Ariel* 50). Both poems take the form of a daughter's ferocious and double-edged address to her dying or dead father—an excellent example of how Petit can be seen as 'Sylvia Plath on acid' (Dent, 'Pascale Petit's *The Zoo Father*'). Recalling the sculptural ekphrasis in 'The Disquieting Muses' and 'The Colossus', Plath's 'Daddy' expresses a daughter's hatred of her father by describing his dead body as a disquieting statue—'Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,/ Ghastly statue with one grey toe/ Big as a Frisco seal' (*Ariel* 48). She subsequently makes 'a model' of him, to whom she says 'I do, I do' (50). Plath not only returns to comparing a parent to a statue, but also describes the use of a model as a parental surrogate created for a parent. The latter anticipates the creation of parent-statues in Petit's 'Eisriensenwelt'.

Petit reported in interview that 'I have influences, but not with that art approach' (Appendix A, p. 181). However, if Plath was a 'role model' for Petit, it was in part because her poems offered a paradigm for handling disturbing childhood fantasy, autobiographical crisis, and mental breakdown, but also because Plath invented a new kind of psychoanalytically-inflected ekphrasis.

'To visit you Father, I wear a mask of fire ants': *The Zoo Father* (2001)

In the online blog essay 'The Difficult Task of Telling My Story: Pascale Petit's Poetry' (11 April 2007), Zoë Brigley Thompson argues that Petit is 'frank in interview in discussing the pain and difficulty of her childhood'. In this respect, Petit follows in the

footsteps of Plath's poems like 'The Disquieting Muses' and 'Daddy'. Petit is equally 'frank' about her poetry as constantly involving transformation of the selves of her parents. In an interview by Valerie Mejer included in the Spanish-translated version of *The Zoo Father* (2004, out of print), Petit said:

> Transformation was essential for me to survive the two years this book spans: from the time my father reappeared (I hadn't seen him for 35 years since I was eight) until both he and my mother died two years later. I did not want to write realism, did not want to be stuck with his reality. […] I 'took' him to my favourite place, the Amazon, and filtered our story through that. […] I enjoyed the transforming aspect because it turned him into something positive and beautiful for me, into somewhere full of longing and magic.
>
> (qtd. in Thompson, 'Exile and Ecology' 347)

Petit reports that *The Zoo Father* was about transforming or filtering the story about her and her father, saying that she turned him into 'something' and 'somewhere', which we can understand as what I have called a 'transformational subject' and 'transformational environment'. Petit's understanding of the transformations in *The Zoo Father* thus goes beyond the Kleinian notion of a pictorial restoration of a parent, or Bollas' suggestion of 're-enacted memories, not recreations'.

Petit's filtering of her familial story in *The Zoo Father* is dramatised by a group of zoomorphic masks. As we have seen in 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar', the transformational subjects in *The Zoo Father* include the zoomorphically-transformed daughter herself. The mask she wears to become what she calls a 'were-jaguar', however, is a metaphorical one: 'You do not know that I am wearing this mask' (22). This 'mask' refers to a full-length transformation of her body, including wearing jaguar lashes and skin painting—not so different from her installations. In the interview with Valerie Mejer, Petit described the animals in her second collection as 'our masks, to make things bearable and fun' (qtd. in Thompson, 'Exile and Ecology' 346)[40]. Petit regularly adopts such masks as an imaginative resource or model, and we might view these masks as quasi-sculptural forms or elaborately constructed personae (from the Latin 'persona', meaning a mask).

Elsewhere in *The Zoo Father*, actual masks were used for the same purpose of making it 'bearable and fun' for Petit to confront a terrifying father. 'Self-Portrait with Fire Ants', anticipating 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar' in the same collection, begins by saying, 'To visit you Father, I wear a mask of fire ants' (9). Petit does not describe the creation of the mask, but its disintegration: 'they file in, their red bodies// massing around my eyes', and 'they attack my mouth' (9). The poem goes on with more

---

[40] In 'Confessing the Secrets of Others: Pascale Petit's Poetic Employment of Latin American Cultures and the Mexican Artist, Frida Kahlo' (2008), Zoë Brigley Thompson also calls Petit 'a consummate wearer of masks' (27).

disturbing details: 'an entire swarm stings my stomach,// while you must become a giant anteater,/ push your long sticky tongue down my throat' (9). She horridly becomes a work of human taxidermy, stuffed with 'an entire swarm' of ants. The passage is revealed to be a zoomorphic displacement of what the father did to his daughter: 'I can't remember what you did to me, but the ants know' (9). Petit continues with her quasi-sculptural, trauma-masking transformations, but the poem also self-reflexively notes that this is about projecting a traumatic memory onto the zoomorphic images. Petit multiplies the ekphrastic and masking mechanisms involved in the poem, narrating the use of the ant-mask and simultaneously masking the fact that the poem, framed as a self-portrait, serves a self- and trauma-masking purpose for Petit herself.

Petit told me in interview that the *me* in her poetry is 'fictional', which she hopes to be 'more *me* than the everyday one, a truer self' (Appendix A, p. 176). Petit's constant framing of a poem as a self-portrait dramatises the fact that the poetic 'I' is always a fictional making or invention. Petit's descriptions of the actual and metaphorical masks in *The Zoo Father* and her understanding of the fictional 'I' in her poetry evoke Yeats' conception of masking and creating a double of oneself. In *A Vision* (1925), Yeats defines a mask as 'the image of what we wish to become' (15). In his essay 'Anima Hominis' (1917), Yeats suggests that 'to assume the mask of some other life' is a kind of 're-birth as something not one's self, something created in a moment and perpetually renewed' (*Selected Criticism* 173). Yeats' suggestion of the 'perpetual renewal' of the self illuminates the range of zoomorphic masks in Petit's *The Zoo Father*, and as I will demonstrate, her Kahlo-mask.

In *The Death of Synge*, Yeats suggests that 'rebirth as something not oneself' creates 'an imaginative saturnalia where one forgets reality' (*Selected Criticism* 373). At the beginning of 'A General Introduction for My Work' (1937), Yeats also famously asserts that 'A poet writes always of his personal life' and 'he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phantasmagoria' (*Selected Criticism* 255). Yeats' term 'phantasmagoria', like his poetics of the mask, provides a useful model to describe Petit's poetry, which is always informed by this understanding of poetry as a phantasmagoria driven by the poet's need to 'remake' his life. This is in some sense ekphrastic, as the term, according to the online *OED*, refers to an 'exhibition of optical illusions' using light. A phantasmagoria might be useful as an imaginary pictorial exhibition or installation.

In his short essay 'Screen Memories' (1899), Freud presented the case of a man who was believed to be projecting 'two phantasies on to one another and turned them into a childhood memory' (14). Freud calls this a 'screen memory' since the original

content is recalled by its 'symbolic' equivalent (15), a kind of '*flowery* disguise' (16). He concludes that 'It is perhaps altogether questionable whether we have any conscious memories *from* childhood: perhaps we have only memories *of* childhood' (21)[41]. The group of masks in Petit's poetry serve as actual, mystical screens through which memories, as in 'Self-Portrait with Fire Ants', are seen in symbolic forms as modulated by the masks. The daughter with a mask of fire ants, however, only recalls in literal terms what her father one did to her 'baby brother,/ French-kissing him while he pretended to sleep' (*The Zoo Father* 9), and based on what she witnessed, conjures up a graphic, phantastical scene, where ants swarm into her stomach and her anteater-father is obliged to use his 'long sticky tongue' to lick them up. This is a vivid example of a 'phantasmagoria' of a traumatic kind.

In the introduction to her edited book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), Cathy Caruth proposes that the traumatic event is 'not experienced as it occurs', but is 'fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time' (8). She goes on to argue that trauma carries the 'impossibility of knowing out of the empirical event' (10). Petit's portrayal of herself with fire ants and her father as an anteater might not have made completely 'evident' the trauma she experienced, but it epitomises what Caruth calls the 'traumatic reexperiencing of the event' (10). Asked by Mejer to define memory, Petit gave an account similar to Caruth's:

> Memory for me in poetry is the act of remaking the world. […] I'm appreciating it as if I'm seeing it for the first time, but the advantages of hindsight makes me objective enough to see it outside my self. […] The imagination tells all kinds of truths about memory that no one might have witnessed. The facts may be remembered as fictions – I might make stories up that feel truer and realer than what seemed to happen, but the poem must feel right. If the feeling is right, then it's true. […] Remaking the world through art is our way of fully and freshly re-experiencing the world. It's also a wonderful creative cure for distress.
>
> (qtd. in Thompson, 'Exile and Ecology' 352)

Petit's understanding of memory echoes Caruth's Freudian conception that traumatic recall is not so much about the event as the memory of it. Petit's traumatic phantasy involves an ekphrastic exercise which makes possible her 'full and fresh re-experiencing' of a traumatic past.

In her poems framed as self-portraits, Petit has portrayed herself as a 'were-jaguar' and her father as a 'giant anteater' in disguise. Petit's use of masks in this and many other 'self-portraits' demonstrates her continuous moulding of new selves from her otherwise unwitnessed past. In 'Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle'

---

[41] In his account of Freud and other modernist writers about childhood memory, 'Screening Childhood: Hide-and-Seek among the Moderns' (2014), Hugh Haughton suggests that, 'We are revealed, it seems, by what we screen, and construct ourselves as we reconstruct our memories' (48).

included in Caruth's book, Dori Laub explores the different ways individuals witness the Holocaust, arguing that 'survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories; they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive' (63). Responding to her own question 'Why Read Poetry?' posted in the digital magazine *Aeon* (June 2015), Petit similarly said, 'For me, poetry was lifesaving'. Petit's pithy comment on her pictorialising poetry recalls Stevens' idea that both poetry and painting are 'supports of a kind of life'. Petit and survivors of the Holocaust need to retell their survival in order to survive. Petit's self- and trauma-screening transformations are driven by her constant urge to create new, figurative selves, which, like Yeats' poetic phantasmagoria, are 'more *me* than the everyday one' or more *him* and *her* than the everyday ones. With the groups of 'self-portraits' and animalistic disguises, *The Zoo Father* is both an imaginary zoo and art gallery, representing a transformational environment or space for Petit's and her father's range of zoomorphic forms.

'she needed to flay my skin': *The Huntress* (2005)

According to the blurb on the back cover of *The Huntress*, the collection is a 'follow-up' to *The Zoo Father*, and represents 'a daughter' who 'is haunted by her mentally ill mother, and a painful childhood is re-imagined through a series of remarkable and passionate transformations'. Once again, it turns specifically on transformations of 'a painful childhood' and memories of her parents. As the title suggests, *The Huntress* represents the 'mentally ill mother' as a daughter-hunting figure, and the book characteristically transforms both of them into tropical animals in poems functioning as sequential, textual portraits, such as 'The Rattlesnake Mother', followed by 'Her Mouse Daughter'.

Recalling the making of an ice-mother in 'Eisrensenwelt', Petit also identifies 'the stalagmite Madonna' in the Grotte des Demoiselles in France as her mother and 'that baby [her mother is] not holding' as herself (35). The 'stalagmite Madonna' in Petit's poem, unlike the many church statues of Madonna and Child, is a kind of statue made by nature, onto which Petit projects an image of her mother 'not holding' her as a baby. This recalls Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna and Child with St Anne*, which Freud believes to be a concealed representation of da Vinci's childhood, with his natural mother and stepmother (Freud, *The Uncanny* 88). In Petit's poetry, an ice-cave and a limestone cave, or zoological spaces all turn into studio-like transformational environments for her creation and reception of parent-sculptures.

Petit devotes entire poetry collections to a parent, not only in these early collections *The Zoo Father* and *The Huntress*, but later in the 2010s, from *Fauverie*

(devoted to a dying father for a second time) to *Mama Amazonica* (written in memory of her mother, and once more built around Amazonian transformations). This represents an idiosyncratic, career-long poetic life writing enterprise built around transformations of memories of her childhood and troubled relationship with both parents. This is much more upfront and extensive than the pairing of 'Daddy' and 'Medusa' in Plath's *Ariel*[42], but can be said to be modelled on it nonetheless.

In an interview published as 'Your Definition of a Desperado Poet Suits Me' (2006), Petit talked to Lidia Vianu about the poems in *The Zoo Father* as being 'a substitute', as her father did not tell her much about his life. Petit also told Vianu that writing poems began as a way to create 'substitute' worlds: 'From teenage onwards, I knew my life was about creating alternative worlds […] I started doing this when I lived with my mother, to escape from her'. In an interview with Oana-Teodora Ionescu posted on Petit's blog on 21 June 2009, Petit gave a detailed account of writing as an 'escape' from her mother, and of poetry as the space for creating an 'alternative' one:

> I started writing to escape from her into my own world. One of the things poetry may be for me is a way to face her on my territory rather than in her home or in hospital where I felt in her power. When I bring her into my created world I can change her into images I can control.

Since *Icefall Climbing*, Petit has continued to transform both parents into 'images [she] can control', and poetry has taken the place of sculpture as her transformational 'territory'. Nonetheless, her transformational poetry continues to borrows its forms from the sculptural and pictorial world, and an overwhelmingly visual repertoire of images.

Such a use of poetry as a figurative estrangement from reality and her parents has been explicitly recognised by Petit in many places. In her essay 'Poetry as Exorcism' published in *Mslexia* (2015, Issue 65), Petit describes *The Huntress* as a collection about how she was 'tormented' by her mother and cites 'Portrait of My Mother as Xipe Totec' as an example of how her mother 'dominated' her (14). The poem is followed by 'Portrait of My Mother as Coatlicue' in the same collection. These are 'portraits' of a woman, as in Ezra Pound's 'Portrait d'une Femme' and T. S. Eliot's 'Portrait of a Lady', but Petit reinvents the portrait-trope in modernist poetry for exorcism of the legacy of her mother. In doing so, Petit not only alludes to Aztec mythology, but draws on the range of visual images made of the deities. On Google Images and Wikipedia, there are many images of Xipe Totec and Coatlicue in the forms of statues as well as illustrations in

---

[42] In 'Medusa', the title of which puns on the name of her mother Aurelia ('Aurelia' is the Latin name for a medusa), Plath compares her mother to both a medusa or jellyfish ('Off, off, eely tentacle!'), as well as the gorgon Medusa who can turn anyone looking at her to stone ('Off that landspit of stony mouth-plugs') (*Ariel* 39, 38). Within *Ariel* (1965), 'Medusa' forms a pair with 'Daddy', comparing the father to a stone statue and the mother to a mythical figure who turns people into stone respectively.

religious manuscripts. Petit's understanding of the deities may have been informed by these digitally reproduced images, as well of course as items seen in museums and books.

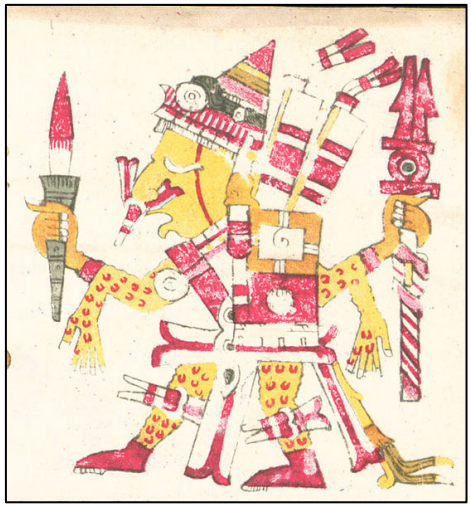


Fig. 14 Xipe Totec as portrayed in the Codex Borgia, a Mesoamerican religious manuscript

Fig. 15 A photograph of a stone statue of Coatlicue (c. 1500) The National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City

In 'Portrait of My Mother as Xipe Totec', the mother not only dominates her daughter ('she possessed me'), but wears her daughter's skin ('she needed to flay my skin/ and dance in it in the sunshine') (*The Huntress* 11). This alludes to the Aztec god being dressed in the flayed skin of a human during human sacrifice, and Petit returns to representing the tortured body as a sacrifice to a parent, from being invaded by fire ants to being skinned, and drawing on images of clothing made of unexpected material for her mother-daughter psychodrama, from stone and frost to human skin. 'Portrait of My Mother as Coatlicue', in contrast, adapts the Aztec myth that Coatlicue is a goddess whose daughter Coyolxauhqui attempts to decapitate. In doing so, Petit expresses mixed feelings about her mother: 'she was my mother,/ as much a victim as a devourer' (*The Huntress* 19). This second Aztec-themed 'portrait' also alludes to statues of the Aztec goddess: 'she showed me/ scenes from her previous life/ carved into the soles of her feet', and 'I never touched her basalt breast' (19). The Aztec mythology allows Petit to continue making human assemblages in her verbal studio, and once more, her mother is connected with carving, and imagined as sculptural.

These 'alternative' mothers might actually be inspired by hallucinations Petit's mother experienced. Petit's essay 'Poetry as Exorcism' begins with a conversation between Petit and her first boyfriend: 'I said I knew [angels] existed because my mother had seen one. I told him what it looked like' (14). He replied: 'That's a hallucination; your mother's mad', and subsequently, Petit's mother was 'committed to psychiatric hospitals'

on a regular basis (11). 'Portrait of My Mother as Xipe Totec' indeed begins by recalling her mother calling herself the Aztec god: 'When she said she was Xipe Totec,/ Aztec god of springtime, I believed her' (*The Huntress* 11). It is also significant that Petit represents her mother as both an Aztec god (Xipe Totec) and goddess (Coatlicue). Besides drawing on exotic nature and exotic cultures, Petit's figurative transformations of the parent transgress the boundary between genders (see also 'Motherfather' from *The Zoo Father*).

Petit also alludes to the fact that the Aztec deities are zoomorphic. The Coatlicue-mother is described as 'monstrous', 'divine', and with 'serpent lips' (19). Petit's myriads of zoomorphic transformations in her poetry can be understood in relation to Carl Jung's *Symbols of Transformation* (1956). Jung argues that since 'children cannot distinguish their own instincts from the influence and will of their parents', it is 'possible for the animals which represent the instincts to appear at the same time as *attributes* of the parents, and for the parents to appear in animal form' (181). He goes on to suggest that this can 'go beyond the phase of childhood' and 'archetypal images' can eventually 'appear, no longer connected with the individual's memories, but belonging to the stock of inherited *possibilities of representation* that are born anew in every individual' (181). These 'inherited *possibilities*', according to Jung, then become 'images of "divine" beings, part animal, part human' (181)[43]. If Petit's poetic phantasmagoria began as being powered by her memories, this is now replaced by or overlaps with her ekphrastic exploitation of her 'stock of inherited *possibilities of representation*' to reimagine her parents and even herself as 'divine' or mythological, and 'part animal, part human' characters.

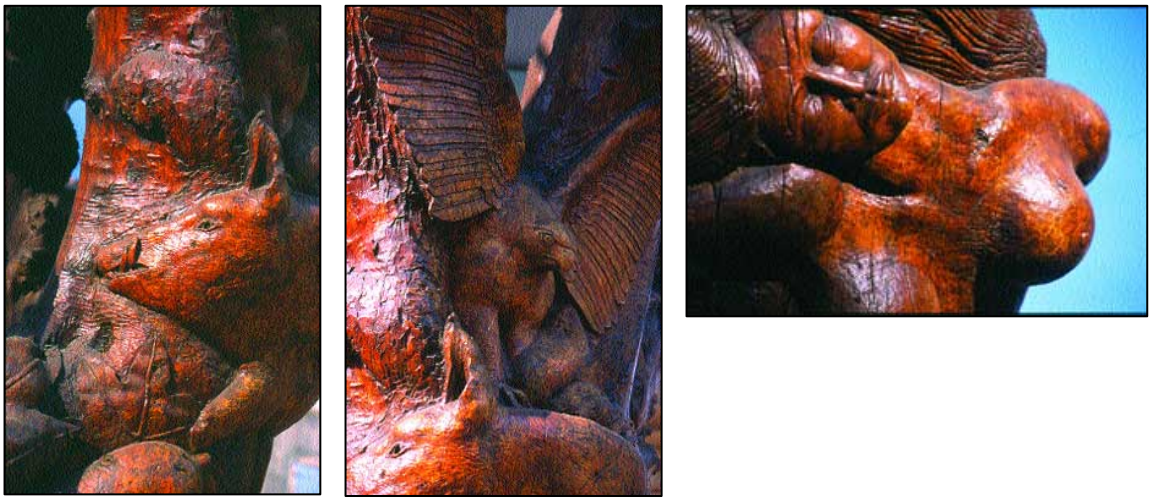


Fig. 16-18 Michel Chevray's photographs of a boar, a bird of prey and a naked woman he carved on a dead elm in Caylar

[43] See also Jung's analysis of the case of an American woman Frank Miller (*Symbols of Transformation* 182-186). Jung observed an aspect of Miller's mother in her vision of the Sphinx, and an aspect of her father in her vision of the Aztec. Petit's representations of her mother, in contrast, are based on male and female Aztec deities, but she also describes the mythologised mother with attributes of the Sphinx, being 'as much a victim as a devourer'.

In her poetry, Petit untiringly renews her ways of portraying her family members in different forms. This happens alongside new uses of recurring images. In 'Carving the Dead Elm of Le Caylar', the art of carving is similarly presented as a way, as Adrian Stokes says, to 'articulate' what is inherent in the carved material:

> My carved creatures talk with root tongues.
> They tell me their story solitudes,
> and I try to be true to them, I who have not spent my life at the
> heart of this huge plateau,
>
> but who can draw from the well of my soul, as from tree rings,
> the concentric solitudes.
>
> (*The Huntress* 57)

The poem is voiced by a carver based on the artist Michel Chevray, who made his first sculpted tree from a dead elm in Caylar, a small village in the Larzac region of France. It describes the 'carved creatures' as telling 'their story solitudes' but also represents carving as a manifestation of the carver's 'soul'. With the lines 'I summon the bison beetle, the wild boar, the royal eagle./ They pass through the conduits of my arms and out through my/ fingers' (57), Petit alludes to the animals Chevray carved on the dead tree and vividly portrays a Stokesian carver. As the carver also says, 'it's as if the Larzac is working through me' (58). It is also as if art is working through the artist: 'These are the forms I can name. Others my chisel shapes when/ I'm tired' (58). The poem explores a very multi-directional, figuratively symbiotic relationship between the artist, and his art.

The carver who has not lived in 'this huge plateau' may well be another transformational subject for Petit, who was born in Paris, spent most of her early childhood there, and lived in London for most of her adult life. The poem is a rare example of Petit's returns to her French roots and her first life as a sculptor without framing them as part of a parent-centred narrative. The poem, nonetheless, ends on a characteristically violent and man-sacrificing image: 'and carve a pilot hanging naked, his feet caught by snakes, his/ arms raised' (*The Huntress* 58). Carving 'a pilot hanging naked', which contrasts with the naked woman Chevray carved on the elm, might be thought of as the poet-carver's revenge. The poem is also constituted by irregular lines and line breaks, which can be regarded as an expression of Petit's sense of poetry as carving:

> If I'm lucky the body of a poem will arrive intact. Or I'll have another go so I have a few starts to shape. Then come weeks or months of grinding away at the seams of the poem, getting the form right, the images crystallised. This might involve removing a leg and recasting it in a different position, moving stanzas and lines about, inserting new ones until the poem reveals its true intention and shape.
>
> ('Poetry as Installation' 53)

The poem is a vivid example of Petit's figurative carving, mimicking the sculptor's art, even as the 'true intention and shape' of the poem is articulated, which express both the life of the 'carved creatures' and the artist herself. Michel Chevray, his art, and his sculpted elm have all been adapted by Petit for her multi-transformational purposes.

'The ultrasonic syrinx,/ drawn from my violin-brush': *The Treekeeper's Tale* (2008)

Fig. 19 David Hurn's *Fantasy in Abertillery* (1974)

In her fourth collection *The Treekeeper's Tale* (2008), Petit included poems which can be read as follow-ups of 'Carving the Dead Elm of Le Caylar'. 'My Larzac Childhood', for example, represents parents as natural objects or forces: 'I was raised in the Larzac, by a mistral-mother and a thistle-father' (39). *The Treekeeper's Tale* contained the highest number of commissioned works among Petit's collections, at least until *Mama Amazonica*. 'Exiled Elm' was commissioned by Jilly Sutton for her exhibition of sculptures made of uprooted elm trees, and the poem is spoken by a personified elm 'searching for new worlds' (11). 'The Bee Mother', in contrast, was a collaboration with the Welsh photographer David Hurn, commissioned by *New Welsh Review*. It first appeared in the Summer 2006 issue of the magazine. Based on Hurn's photograph of a little girl in Abertillery, Wales, Petit's poem charts the fantasy of becoming 'that girl who married her mother': 'I want to go into that humming hive awake,/ wearing the net curtain you called my veil' (*The Treekeeper's Tale* 38). However, the 'girl' also antithetically wants to be 'that daughter whose mother has stung her// because she's a rival' (38). As in so much of her ekphrastic work, the poem transforms the photograph into a site of family fantasy, a kind of primal scene, but uniquely represents an imaginary collaboration with a photographer sharing her Welsh heritage.

Like Plath's surreally-inspired 'The Disquieting Muses', the poem based on the surrealist painter René Magritte's *The Reckless Sleeper* (1928), once again, is given a pyscho-biographical reading and forms part of Petit's group of exclamatory poems

addressed to her father: 'You sleep on,// Papa, but the dream never changes' (*The Treekeeper's Tale* 42). *The Treekeeper's Tale* also includes two ekphrastic sequences, and the first one is based on the works of another surrealist painter Remedios Varo, representing Petit's exploration of female artists and nature. 'Creation of the Himalayas', as the last poem of the 'Creation' series after Varo, is based on *Embroidering Earth's Mantle* (1961) and portrays the female embroiderers in the painting—themselves artists—as a quietly defiant team:

> They say we are just embroiderers
> but when we are working well, our tower turns
> into burnished fire and the mantle flows
> from our fingers, tumbling through the air
> in loops of delight. There are always men
> trapped in our weave. The sky calls their names
> and they climb, trying to reach back
> through the clouds to our blue fingers.
>
> (44)

The embroiderers describe mantle as flowing from their fingers, just as the sculptor says in 'Carving the Dead Elm of Le Caylar'—'They pass through the conduits of my arms and out through my/ fingers'. In both poems, the artist declares a symbiotic relationship with nature. *The Treekeeper's Tale*, recalling the poem about a sculpted elm from *The Huntress*, frames Petit's familial myth as part of her exploration of nature and art. The book represents an ecological kind of curatorial ekphrasis, recreating a wide range of visual representations of nature by artists.

Fig. 20 Remedios Varo, *Embroidering the Earth's Mantle* (1961)
Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco

Although the women 'have no voice' (*The Treekeeper's Tale* 44), the poem is notionally spoken by an inner voice, who defend as more than 'just embroiderers'. Instead, they are in the transformation business in defiance of the 'men', and the active verbs—'turns', 'flows', and 'tumbling'—give their work dynamic agency. Petit understands Varo's painting as a representation of women empowering themselves against men (the men, indeed, are 'trapped in our weave'). In this respect, Petit is also

part of a larger history. Critics like Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Joanne F. Diehl have recognised modern women poets' uses of ekphrasis to explore the male gaze complex (*Twentieth-Century Poetry* 109; 'Towards a Theory of Ekphrasis' 43)[44]. Aligning herself with her female predecessors and contemporaries, Petit creates a collective, united voice for Varo's embroiderers working under men's supervision. Petit's art itself involves perpetual lyrical as well as narrative 'embroidery' in many senses.

In this female tradition, we might compare Petit's 'Creation of the Himalayas' with Adrienne Rich's 'Mathilde in Normandy' (1951), an account of a tapestry woven by women as a record of war history: 'From the archaic ships the green and red/ Invaders woven in their colored hosts/ Descend to conquer' (Rich, *A Change of World* 27). The 'flight/ Of sudden arrows' is said to be 'traced by slower shuttles' (27). It is ironic that 'slower shuttles' trace the flight of 'sudden arrows', and as the poem goes on to say, tapestry outlasts the 'little lives sketched on the teeming loom' (27). As Petit describes the 'delight' represented by the women's stitching work, so Rich reports that women 'sat at home/ To the pleasing minor airs of lute and hautbois' as they created the war-documenting tapestry (27). Both poems remind us of the common origin of the words *text* and *textile*, as well as valorising the creativity of women and what is often regarded as a feminine craft.

In 'Do Women Poets Write Differently to Men' published in *Poetry Review* (Winter 2012), Petit recalls her involvement in 'the feminist movement in the visual arts', defending female artists against the label of 'genderless people who only had the option of copying what men had done' (67). However, although Petit declares there that 'women poets write differently to men', she believes that 'gender is not relevant' to the craft of many women poets, and 'welcome[s] the plurality of approaches' (74). In the other two poems from the 'Creation' series after Remedios Varo, Petit is indeed concerned less with the unheard female voice than their transformational work as artists. 'Creation of the Birds' is based on Varo's painting with the same title, and describes the 'creation' of birdsong through painting:

> The ultrasonic syrinx,
>
> drawn from my violin-brush,
> starts to hum when I'm lonely
>
> I release them while still wet, their songs
> liquid and light, not meant for base ears.

(*The Treekeeper's Tale* 12)

[44] In 'Verbal and Visual Art in Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry' (2011), William May argues that poets like Eavan Boland (in 'From the Painting *Back from Market* by Chardin') and Carol Ann Duffy (in 'Mrs Icarus') use ekphrasis to 'question male representations of women' (58).

Such a juxtaposition of painting with music precedes the image of 'burnished fire' in 'Creation of the Himalayas', which juxtaposes embroidery with sculpture. Petit's transformational poems characteristically involve transgressions of boundaries, between genders, cultures, artistic media, and other things, like that 'violin-brush'. While the 'Himalayas' is visually represented as one column-like stanza on the page, the 'hum' from the metamorphic Ovidian 'syrinx' is represented by the lengthening of each couplet. The alliteration in 'liquid and light' also makes the hum visually and sonically vivid. These show a higher complexity in Petit's engagement with a poem as an object and as an image printed on the page.

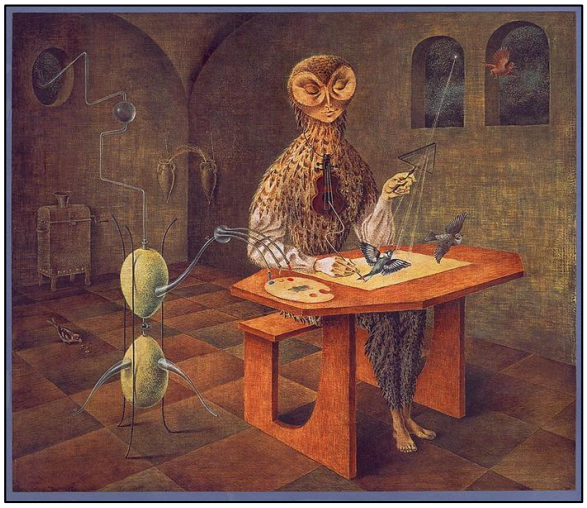


Fig. 21 Remedios Varo, *Creation of the Birds* (1958)
Private Collection

Whereas 'Creation of the Birds' describes a painter's creation of music, 'Creation of the Trees' represents the opposite. It is through music that the artist creates trees: 'I longed for harmonies to grow the trees' (21). At the time *Icefall Climbing* was published, Petit, according to her biography in the pamphlet, worked 'part time as an environmental artist-in-schools' (2). *The Treekeeper's Tale* represents Petit's transformation of herself into a poetic equivalent of an environmental artist, using images, words and poetic form to figuratively weave the Himalayas, compose birdsong, and grow trees.

The other ekphrastic sequence, entitled *War Horse*, responds to the life and work of the expressionist painter Franz Marc. The sequence was anticipated by Petit's use of Marc's *Fairy Animals* (1913) as the cover artwork of *The Huntress*. Another zoomorphic ekphrastic sequence in *The Treekeeper's Tale*, *War Horse* draws on Marc's biography and alludes to his service in the German Army during the First World War. 'Dispatch Rider' from the sequence is based on Marc's *The Tower of Blue Horses* (1913), and recreates the fact of his being enlisted as a cavalryman: 'I ride a tower of blue horses/ like a stained-

glass window,/ our haunches hard as lead crystal' (54)[45]. Marc was killed by shrapnel in his head during the Battle of Verdun in 1916, and 'The Doves of Verdun', alluding to Marc's *Birds* (1914), describes doves as weapons ('their feathers bayonets', carrying 'grenade pins/ instead of twigs') and might surreally enact Marc's traumatic recall: 'One has laid its egg in my temple./ It hatches, just under the eaves of my fringe' (56).

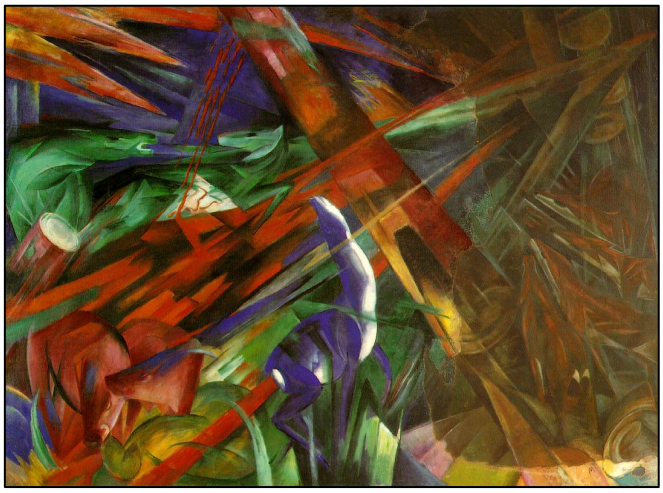


Fig. 22 Franz Marc, *Fate of the Animals* (1913)
Kunstmuseum, Basel

In the last *War Horse* poem, 'The Trees Show Their Rings, the Animals Their Veins', which was the original title of Marc's *Fate of the Animals*, Petit creates a voice no less different from her tree sculptor in *The Huntress*: 'The animals offered their veins as violin strings./ The trees unwound their rings// for dressings to staunch the deepest wounds' (58). Many paintings and photographs reveal the horrific destruction of trees in war-time conditions, and characteristically, Petit's imagined painter transforms war-time traumatic wounding into zoomorphic and arboreal forms. As the poem also begins by saying, 'That clear night, I saw a new kind of painting/ on a great black canvas' (58). Petit's portrayal of Marc's painting as a transformational process for displacing wartime trauma anticipates her book of poems about Frida Kahlo's comparable transformation of private trauma into painting. The book about Kahlo also represents a book-length kind of curatorial ekphrasis, but dedicated to one single painter.

'I escaped into this canvas, where I look back at you': *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010)

While Sylvia Plath is a possible 'role model' for Petit in terms of the psycho-autobiographical uses of ekphrasis in poetry, Frida Kahlo can be seen as another 'role model' for Petit as a visual artist, who created an oeuvre out of phantasmagoric self-

[45] Petit simultaneously alludes to *The Blue Rider* (1903) by the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky, the title of which is the name of an artist group formed by Kandinsky, Marc and others in the 1910s.

representations. In her essay 'Poetry as Installation', Petit tells us that many titles in *The Zoo Father* and *The Huntress* 'borrow Frida Kahlo's titling system' and these poems are similarly framed as 'portraits or self-portraits with, or in the persona of, various animals or ritual objects' (54). In fact, Petit's collections from *The Zoo Father* (2001) to *Fauverie* (2014) all contain poems framed as portraits and self-portraits. As Fiona Sampson notes in *Beyond the Lyric: A Map of Contemporary British Poetry* (2012), Petit's books until *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010) 'reveal a deep imaginative consistency' (218). The influence of Kahlo on Petit across her collections is a clear marker of the transformational, ekphrastic and 'imaginative consistency' in Petit's poetry.

In her article 'Confessing the Amazon and Frida Kahlo', published in the sixth issue of *The Poetry Paper* (2009), Petit reports that finishing *The Zoo Father* prompted her to 'embark on a new project, writing about sex and trauma in [Kahlo's] voice and through her paintings' (15). *The Wounded Deer: Fourteen Poems after Frida Kahlo* was published in April 2005, a month after *The Huntress*, acting as the first instalment of her Kahlo-project. The blurb of the pamphlet contains a short biography of Kahlo:

> The Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) led a wild and troubled life. She had polio as a child, and aged eighteen suffered a serious accident which caused her constant pain. She was married to the muralist Diego Rivera and their relationship was stormy but loving. Her fierce and vibrant paintings include many self-portraits.
>
> (25)

It is suggested that Kahlo's 'fierce and vibrant paintings' are based on her 'wild and troubled life'. Including all fourteen poems from the pamphlet, *What the Water Gave Me*, published five years later in 2010, contains fifty-two poems altogether, based on an impressive range of paintings from Kahlo's oeuvre. Petit's author's note describes the book as 'not a comprehensive verse biography', but rather, an attempt to explore how Kahlo 'used art to withstand and transform pain' (7). As the epigraph from Kahlo goes, '*I lost three children and a series of other things that could have fulfilled my horrible life. My painting took the place of all this – I think work is best*' (8). As Petit started her Kahlo project in 2001, *The Wounded Deer* and subsequently, *What the Water Gave Me* represent Petit's ten-year, dedicated investigation into Kahlo's use of painting as a transformational object for her pain and '*horrible life*', and as a substitute for her loss.

It is significant that *What the Water Gave Me* is framed as 'not a comprehensive verse biography'. Petit has written six poems based on the title painting, and the book opens and ends with two of them. The second and the penultimate poems of the book are 'My Birth' and 'Self-Portrait with Dog and Sun', which are the opening and ending poems of *The Wounded Deer*. As the latter poem says, 'This is the last self-portrait' (*What the*

Water Gave Me 61). However, none of these were the first or the last ones by Kahlo. In around 1954, Kahlo painted two politically-charged self-portraits—*Marxism Will Give Health to the Sick* and *Self-Portrait with Stalin*, both of which might have been the 'last self-portraits' of Kahlo. With poetic licence, Petit focuses on exploring how Kahlo transformed her '*horrible life*' into art rather than her attitudes to revolutionary Marxism. In *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms* (2013), Marsha Meskimmon begins her comparison of life writing to the visual arts by noting that the suffix *graph*, as in *autobiography* and *biography*, 'can mean both writing and drawing – as in to write and draw the life' (916). Petit's book is also a double reminder of the capacities of both poetry and painting to weave together life narratives.

Fig. 23 Pascale Petit, *What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo* (2010), with an image of Frida Kahlo's *What the Water Gave Me* (1938)

Fig. 24 Frida Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932) Collection Dolores Olmedo, Mexico City

The first poem based on Kahlo's *What the Water Gave Me* is representative of Petit's reading of Kahlo's oeuvre as a pictorial, life- and trauma-transforming narrative. The poem, entitled 'What the Water Gave Me (I)', begins by saying, 'I am what the water gave me' (9). Alluding to the amniotic fluid surrounding a foetus, the image understands Kahlo's painting, which we see on the book cover, as portraying her as figuratively recreated by her art. The poem goes on to address the disparate things and life subjects surreally floating in the bathtub water in the painting, where a naked woman, for example, is seen strangled with a rope, with her belly constricted by it. The image of the woman clearly informs Petit's image of the 'mouth a bubble/ of not-yet-breath' (9), which alludes to the '*three children*' Kahlo is said to have lost. Opening the book with this

poem, Petit presents Kahlo's *What the Water Gave Me* as a phantasmagoric pictorial summary of the different parts of Kahlo's '*horrible life*'.

Kahlo's *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932) is a graphic portrayal of her miscarriage, and the naked woman in the painting looks like a mirrored version of the woman being constricted by a rope in *What the Water Gave Me*. Petit recreates Kahlo's *What the Water Gave Me* through a cross-referencing kind of bio-ekphrasis, associating the strangled woman in the painting with Kahlo herself and her earlier portrayal of herself experiencing a miscarriage. The ending of the poem further complicates the multi-directional bio-ekphrasis in play:

> my budding body sheathed in pearl
> as I learn,
>
> even before birth,
> to doodle in the dark.
>
> (*WTWGM* 9)

According to the online *OED*, 'sheath' is the Latin word for vagina. The pun on this word evokes the suggestive image of the flower between the thighs in Kahlo's painting. The poem reproduces the implicitly first-person viewpoint of the painting in autobiographical terms, understanding both the woman in the bathtub and the woman-miniature between her thighs in the painting as representations of Kahlo.

With the image of Kahlo's doodling, Petit alludes to the journal Kahlo kept between 1944-45, which was posthumously published as *The Diary of Frida Kahlo* (1995). The book also includes critical essays and commentaries by Carlos Fuentes and Sarah M. Lowe. Petit's image of learning 'to doodle in the dark' alludes to Lowe's assertion that the journal gives Kahlo 'the freedom to doodle' (28). However, Lowe also suggests that Kahlo 'put (at least part of) her rational mind to work' and turned the 'biomorphic forms' into 'faces, body parts, animals, and landscapes' (28). Kahlo's drawings in her journal, indeed, are far from doodles. The journal contains self-portraits and portraits, which are comparable to those she painted on canvas. Combining words and images, the journal is a hybrid life narrative as well as being a painter's bio-ekphrastic work in prose. Petit's poem uses Kahlo's *What the Water Gave Me* as a springboard for exploring the painter's different engagements with art.

As it happens, contemporary psychoanalysis in the wake of D. W. Winicott's development of the squiggle game was also deeply invested in the therapeutic and diagnostic uses of doodling. In the note to the second edition of *On Not Being Able to Paint*, Marion Milner reflected that 'the method of doodling, and making running comments while I doodled, had apparently made possible the free symbolic expression

of unconscious ideas, yet they were not free in form' (xxi-xxii)[46]. Jane Sayers also begins her new introduction to Milner's book by asking: 'Who would have thought doodling could be so transforming?' (xxiii). Doodling, as Milner understands and demonstrates, can be a paradoxical method to freely transform ideas into a certain form, and to engage with long-standing psychological pre-occupations. The poem's doodling in the dark might be in the womb, but that the womb is a safe maternal image of the unconscious, enabling creative doodling of the kind practised by Winnicott and Milner.

The portrayal of Kahlo as a doodler also recalls the surrealist label attached to Kahlo. In the acknowledgements of the collection, Petit quotes many publications she is 'indebted to', including Hayden Herrera's *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (1989) (64). In the chapter 'What the Water Gave Me', Herrera quotes Kahlo saying that 'I never knew I was a Surrealist' until 'André Breton came to Mexico and told me I was. The only thing I know is that I paint because I need to, and I paint always whatever passes through my head, without any other consideration' (254). What Kahlo said playfully recalls Breton's definition of surrealism in 'Manifesto of Surrealism' as 'psychic automatism in its pure state' and free from 'any control exercised by reason' (Breton, *Manifestoes* 26). However, Kahlo's self-portraits and portraits, such as *What the Water Gave Me*, are beyond manifestations of 'psychic automatism in its pure state'. In her biography of Kahlo, Herrera argues that there can be 'some cunning' in Kahlo's statement (254). It might be this 'cunning' which is expressed by Petit's Kahlo, who does not present herself in this poem or elsewhere as a trained painter. It is not entirely true to describe Petit's book as being 'content' to 'take Kahlo at her own words', as David Kennedy argues (Kennedy, 'Ekphrasis and Trauma' 109), but it does grapple viscerally with the art of Kahlo's carefully staged self-portraits.

*

In his review of Petit's collection in *Magma* (11 November 2010), David Morley concludes that Petit's book is 'a triumph of creativity and criticism, of persona and impersonation, of personality and impersonality'. Petit's book, indeed, is entirely spoken in the voice of her version of Kahlo, making it a fictional autobiography and thus engaging simultaneously with both the traditions of autobiography and biography. The book also explores the creation of personae or personas in Kahlo's paintings. The most obvious example is the poem based on *The Two Fridas* (described as 'a double self-portrait'), where one of the 'Fridas' reports that 'Her palette is my heart sliced in half',

[46] In Chapter 10: 'She Makes Contact by Doodle Drawings' of *The Hands of the Living God* (1969), Milner refers to her accounts of her own drawings in *On Not Being Able to Paint*, reiterating that 'the drawings were very poor as works of art, yet I had experienced enough to convince me that there was such a thing as an unconscious sense of form' (82).

and 'Strange how it keeps beating,/ turning blood to paint' (42, 43). In 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), T. S. Eliot calls for poets' deep engagement with the poetic tradition ahead of them, as well as their 'continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality' (*The Sacred Wood* 53). In contrast to Eliot's strong emphasis on 'self-sacrifice' and 'impersonality', Petit recreates a dynamic interplay between Kahlo's own self and the imaginary doubles in her protean self-portraits. Kahlo's doubles in her paintings, as Petit's poems show, represent a self-referential kind of transformational subjects.

The creation of a self-referential transformational subject might be an inherent quality of self-portraits. In the essay 'Looking at the Self-Portrait' (1986), included in *On Autobiography* (1989), Philippe Lejeune argues that the painter in the self-portrait is 'doubly present: as character presented, and by the painting itself' (117). In *Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary* (2005), Anthony Bond similarly asserts that with self-portraits, 'it is virtually impossible not to self-consciously construct your own image' (39). It is characteristic of Kahlo to dramatise the capacity of self-portraits to create transformational 'characters' based on herself, something at the heart of Petit's appropriation of them in her poems. Unlike 'The Two Fridas', which is 'a double self-portrait', 'The Wounded Deer' recreates Kahlo's zoomorphic portrayal of herself as a stag punctured by arrows: 'I have a woman's face/ but I'm a little stag' (*What the Water Gave Me* 26). The zoomorphic and androgynous impulses are among the driving forces behind Petit's poetry, but the poem also dramatises the effect of being 'doubly present', giving a voice to the androgynous stag and describing it as looking back at the painter:

> Small and dainty as I am
> I escaped into this canvas,
> where I look back at you
> in your steel corset, painting
> the last splash on my hoof.
>
> (*What the Water Gave Me* 26)

According to Andrea Kettenmann's *Frida Kahlo*, the painting is alternatively titled *The Little Deer* and its dimensions are 22.4 x 30cm (95). The poem alludes to the 'small' size of the painted stag. It also recreates how Kahlo painted her self-portraits by first looking at herself in the mirror, as Hayden Herrera's *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* (1989) notes:

> The long hours spent scrutinizing her reflection in the mirror and reproducing that reflection must have accentuated Frida's sense of having two identities: the observer and the observed, the self as it is felt from within and the self as it appears from without.
>
> (279)

Herrera goes on to describe Kahlo as 'both active artist and passive model' (279). Petit's Kahlo has also tellingly 'escaped' into the canvas. The poem performs a strange kind of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis by portraying the stag-woman in the painting as looking back at the painter. As a later poem 'The Little Deer' is voiced by the painter herself, the book creates a multi-directional bio-ekphrastic complex based around the same painting. It is as if the book were made of parallel universes, where the painted deer and the painter could address each other as what Herrera calls 'the observer and the observed'.

Fig. 25 Frida Kahlo, *The Wounded Deer* (1946)
Private collection

But Petit's selves are mirrored too. 'At the Gate of Secrets' from *The Huntress* similarly describes the daughter's transformation into a 'girl-stag' with '*a stag's sight*' and '*a stag's nose*' to confront her mother (47). The poem gives a detailed account of her transformation from female to male: '*My virgin womb closed./ My budding breasts shrank./ My balls swing like purses*' (45, 46). This transformation is attributed to the long wait to hear the 'secrets' and for the mother's '*embrace*' (45). This is the daughter's figurative transformation into a kind of 'were-stag' to confront his (or her) mother, anticipating the 'little stag' with 'a woman's face' described in 'The Wounded Deer'. In 'At the Gate of Secrets', Petit may have already adapted Kahlo's portrayal of herself as a woman-stag, and this 'girl-stag' is one of the many 'were-animals' in Petit's poetry, whose transformations into Jungian part animal, part human beings are recorded across her books. In this way, Kahlo prefigures and provides a paradigm for the poet's many zoomorphic portraits and self-portraits.

The book has actually been recognised as Petit's appropriation of the Kahlo-double as a stand-on, mask or persona for herself. In the essay 'Writing Poems from Rape and Abuse', Petit reflects on the making of *The Wounded Deer*: 'I was free from the difficulties of writing autobiography', and 'However raw or graphic the details of physical or mental distress, they are here under the guise of an icon who has already

transmuted her suffering into art'[47]. The same is true of *What the Water Gave Me*. Since the 1980s, studies of biography and life writing have suggested that a biography can be read in relation to the biographer. In his co-edited *Theoretical Discussions of Biography* (2014), Binne de Haan argues that it is now common to read every biography as 'a concealed *auto*biography' (182)[48]. Like many speakers in Petit's poems, Kahlo 'under the guise of an icon' is used as a transformational subject for Petit, and her books narrated by her version of Kahlo can be read as both fictional autobiographies and Petit's own 'concealed autobiographies'. It is a multi-layered, multi-directional bio-ekphrastic project, where the selves of Kahlo, her pictorial doubles, and Petit mirror one another.

'Give me a sheet of paper/ and I will draw a soul': *Effigies* (2013)

Petit has worked with many visual artists on various projects. *Effigies* (2013), however, is the first and only collaborative edition Petit has published with a contemporary visual artist. The pamphlet was commissioned by The Mosaic Rooms, an art gallery in London committed to promoting contemporary Arab culture. According to the foreword of the book, it was a brief project between Petit and the Syrian artist Lawand, who 'had never met nor previously known anything about each other's work', and Petit was invited to choose the drawings that 'most moved or interested her' and write a poem based on each of her choices (5). Lawand had already collaborated with the great Arabic poet Adonis, and Lawand was born in Aleppo but moved to France when he was ten, having an Asian-European background like Petit, who grew up in France and Wales and has French, Welsh and Indian origins. However, Petit told me that she found Lawand's sketches 'too bare', containing 'no foliage or animals' and suggests that *Effigies* demonstrates the limited connections she felt to Lawand (Appendix A, p. 180).

The painters Petit has written about include Michel Chevray, Franz Marc, Remedios Varo, and Frida Kahlo, whose art is rich in images of plants and animals. Lawand's drawings, in stark contrast, are austere pencil sketches set against white backgrounds. Nevertheless, Petit still explores a personal connection with Lawand's sketches and characteristically describes the creation of his sketches of human figures in first-person terms. The first poem of *Effigies*, which shares the book's title, can be voiced by Lawand himself: 'Give me a sheet of paper/ and I will draw a soul—/ a swarm of

[47] In her co-edited volume *Feminism, Literature and Rape Narratives* (2010), Zoë Brigley Thompson similarly argues that 'Through the mask of Kahlo, Petit is able to avoid the confessional voice' (213). However, Thompson also stresses that 'Petit is certainly not saying that she and Kahlo are one and the same, but what does emerge from *The Wounded Deer* is the suggestion that similar scripts of power regarding gender and violence reoccur in a variety of cultural and gendered settings' (213).

[48] See also Leon Edel's *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica* (1984), pp. 17; and Julia Novak's introduction to the co-edited *Experiments in Life-Writing* (2017), pp. 12.

marks/ that might sting you/ if you come too close' (7). The song-like quality of the poem prompts a multi-directional identification, as we identify ourselves as the ambiguous 'you' and understand Lawand's drawings as the 'souls' ready to 'sting' us. If we read the 'swarm of marks' as the poem itself, it also performs a kind of self-referential bio-ekphrasis. Although Petit feels limited connection to Lawand, her poems in *Effigies*, as its title suggests, represent new dimensions to her investment in pictorial and sculptural bio-ekphrasis, and explore drawing as a transformational process for the 'soul' and violent impulses.

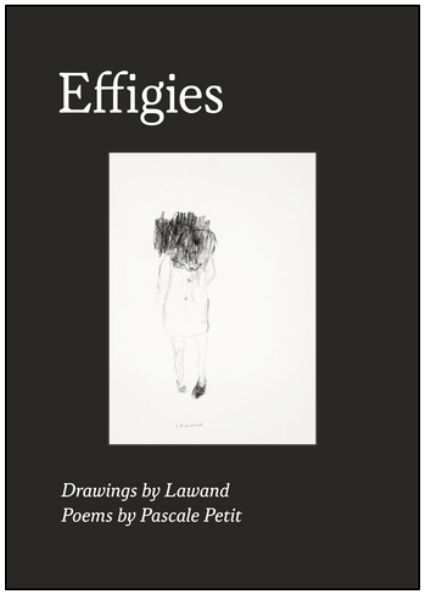


Fig. 26 Lawand and Pascale Petit, *Effigies* (2013)

The book also includes two portrait-poems— 'Portrait of Woman with a Black Cloud over Her Face' and 'Portrait of Woman as Night Mist'. The first 'portrait' is based on the drawing used as the cover artwork of the book. Both women are portrayed in terms of images of atmospheric objects ('black cloud' and 'night mist') and in ornithomorphic forms: the first woman with a 'black swan's wing in front of [her] eyes', and the second woman's 'thoughts' are 'trapped birds' (29, 35). Petit taps into her reservoir of natural images to create more portrait-poems based on Lawand's bare sketches. As the second woman is portrayed as 'flayed', 'her blood/ invisible ink' (35), she can also be a reinvention of the flayed daughter in in 'Portrait of My Mother as Xipe Totec' and one of the two 'Fridas', who describes the other's heart as 'turning blood to paint'. All these are signs of Lawand's work being drawn into the larger iconography of Petit's poetry. Though Lawand claims not to be a directly political artist, Petit has said that 'In the background' of his work, 'there is the shadow of the terrible situation in Lawand's homeland, Syria' (Devi, 'Syrian Kurdish Artist Lawand'). Recalling her exploration of wartime trauma in the poems about Franz Marc, Petit also creates new 'souls' and 'portraits' in the face of the 'terrible situation' of Lawand's Syria.

'This man is my father': *Fauverie* (2014)

According to Petit, the poems in *Effigies* were written 'very fast', since she was finishing *Fauverie* to a deadline at the same time (Appendix A, p. 180). The collaboration with Lawand may have informed the poem 'Effigy' included in *Fauverie*. The poem is a vengeful daughter's account of her making a father-effigy out of his corpse:

> I waited fifteen years
> until your skull was clean
>
> before I pressed clay over your face
> and painted it with tongo dye.
>
> Because you would not say sorry
> I placed your effigy in the men's house.
>
> […]
>
> Your bark belt and treefern torso
> bear your penis-sheath proudly
>
> here, in the Musée du quai Branly,
> where you stand in a glass case.
>
> This man is my father,
> he speaks with the tenderness of flowers.

(*Fauverie* 56, 57)

The Musée du quai Branly in Paris specialises in indigenous art and cultures. Alluding to the carved figures of indigenous people in the museum, the poem describes the sculptural ('I pressed clay over your face') and pictorial ('and painted it with tongo dye') processes of transforming the dead father's body into a tribesman-like installation, which is then put on display in the museum. The line 'bear your penis-sheath proudly' directly addresses the sexual role of the father figure, a counter-part to Petit's Kahlo talking of 'my budding body sheathed in pearl'. With the declaration 'This man is my father', Petit again pays tribute to Plath's 'Daddy', where the daughter similarly says 'I do, I do' to a model of her father[49]. From 'you' to 'he', Petit's poem, however, turns to address us as viewers of the father-effigy. This is an exotic, multi-directional species of the museum-based bio-ekphrasis identifiable in canonical poems by Yeats and O'Hara, and again, Petit's museological poem characteristically turns into an exhibit in her own psycho-biographical museum.

---

[49] Plath's 'Daddy' figured in her collection entitled *Ariel*, and in an interview included in the sixth issue of *The Poetry Paper* (2009), Petit names Ariel's song from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as 'the first poem that made an impression' on her, and suggests that Ariel's portrayal of the father resonates with the disappearance of her own father and evokes 'the idea that he might have transformed' (10). Petit's 'Effigy' may subliminally allude to Ariel's haunting lyric, which begins by saying, '*Full fathom five thy father lies./ Of his bones are coral made*' (*Tmp.* 1. 2. 456-7).

According to Petit's acknowledgements in the book, the poems are informed by her visits to the Fauverie, the big-cat house in the Ménagerie du Jardin des Plantes in Paris. The title of the book simultaneously evokes fauves (or 'wild beasts') and Fauvism, the early twentieth-century style of painting associated with early Matisse and Derain, featured in a number of controversial exhibitions in Paris between 1905 and 1908. The title of *Fauverie* aptly suggests Petit's consistent uses of poetry as a verbal museum-cum-menagerie for her 'portraits' of selves in animal disguise, including 'Portrait of My Father as a North China Leopard'[50]. It confirms Petit as a latter-day poetic Fauvist herself.

Fauverie, unlike *The Zoo Father* and *The Huntress*, also represents Petit's recognition of the difference between her parents and the artificial or substitute ones, as in the lines 'This man is my father' and from 'Portrait of My Father as a Bird Fancier'—'that's/ the father I choose, not the man/ who thrusts red-hot prongs in [the birds'] eyes' (9). Petit has now become self-conscious about the transformations of the life subjects in her art. This applies to the zoomorphic transformations in her poetry too. In 'Lion Man', which alludes to the film *The Elephant Man* (1980), the father is dug up and pieced together to form a 'half beast half father' (42). The description of him is no less different from Jung's conception of the 'part animal, part human' beings.

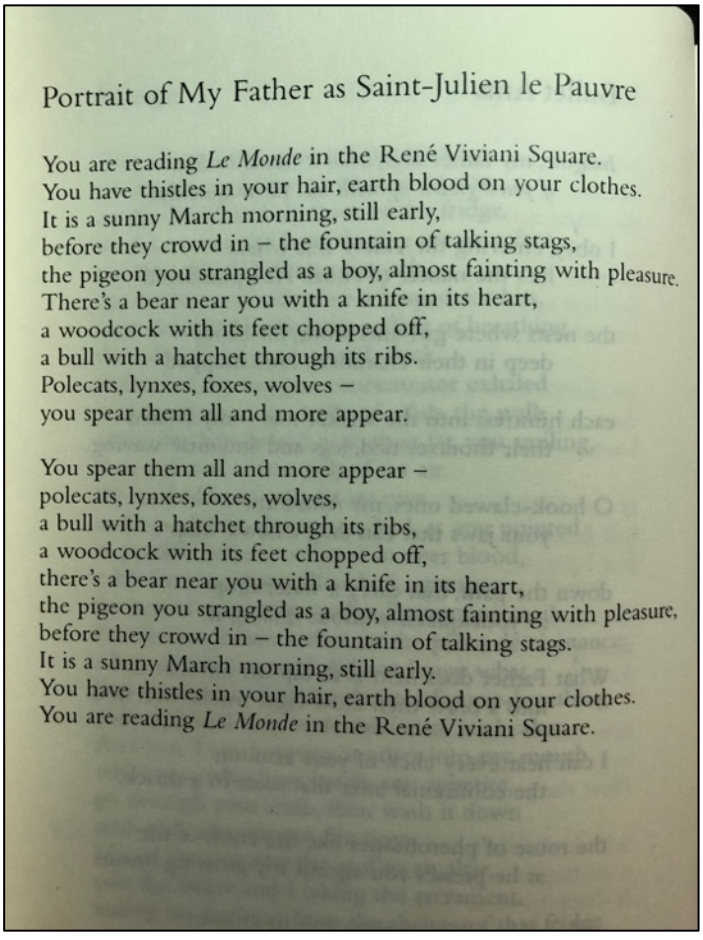
'Portrait of My Father as Saint-Julien le Pauvre' (French for 'Saint Julian the Poor'), among all the 'father-portraits', stands out as a paternal counterpart to the two 'portraits of my mother' as Aztec deities in *The Huntress*. 'Saint-Julien le Pauvre' refers to the Christian saint, but it is also the shortened name of Église Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, the Melkite Catholic church next to the René Viviani Square in Paris. Petit adapts images of the Parisian square and the legend of the saint to describe her father as a hunter, following her portrayal of the mother as a huntress. He is described as having 'earth blood' on his clothes and having killed different kinds of animals including 'a bear near you with a knife in its heart,/ a woodcock with its feet chopped off' (*Fauverie* 18). With Petit's signature sense of remorseless familial violence, the speaker says, 'you spear them all and more appear' (18). This is the last line of the first stanza of the poem, and the second stanza is the first stanza repeated in reverse. The palindrome poem framed as a portrait functions like a diptych portraying two opposite versions of the father's animal-slaughter.

The change to the narrative occurs with the line 'before they crowd in – the fountain of talking stags', which puns on 'fountain' to allude to the stag-heads carved in the fountain at the centre of the René Viviani Square (18). The fountain was made basing

[50] The poem might be informed by Rilke's famous 1902 poem 'The Panther' (subtitled: *In Jardin des Plantes, Paris*) and Ted Hughes' 'The Jaguar', but in contrast, describes 'this father' as a struggling Chinese leopard kept in the Fauverie: 'Up he springs from his sickbed, this father' (*Fauverie* 50).

on the legend of Saint Julian the Poor or Saint Julian the Hospitaller, where a stag told Julian that he would kill his parents. Petit adapts this religious image as represented by the fountain to describe a 'crowd' of talking stags. In Petit's poem, they are said to 'crowd in', but when the same line appears in the second stanza, the meaning changes: the stags 'crowd in' to interrupt the slaughter of the animals. The image of a stag is reinvented by Petit to represent a religious zoomorphic force against the father recreated as a vicious version of Saint Julian. Once again, Petit harnesses multiple sources to engage with the fall-out of her own childhood psycho-dramas—not so unlike Plath's attempt to exorcise the legacy of her father in 'Daddy'.

The stanza break and the space created by the lines of different length also strikingly create the shapes of the head of a 'woodcock' (or hummingbird) with its long bill, or the head of a stag with its antlers (the page rotated to the left). The suggestive images created on the page make the poem itself a reversible figure, which superimposes the images of the bird's bill and the stag's head. The poem uniquely juxtaposes verbal and visual images and can be read and seen as a verbal-visual portrait of the father as a hunter with the animals he has killed and the interrupting 'talking stags'.



Portrait of My Father as Saint-Julien le Pauvre

You are reading *Le Monde* in the René Viviani Square.
You have thistles in your hair, earth blood on your clothes.
It is a sunny March morning, still early,
before they crowd in – the fountain of talking stags,
the pigeon you strangled as a boy, almost fainting with pleasure.
There's a bear near you with a knife in its heart,
a woodcock with its feet chopped off,
a bull with a hatchet through its ribs.
Polecats, lynxes, foxes, wolves –
you spear them all and more appear.

You spear them all and more appear –
polecats, lynxes, foxes, wolves,
a bull with a hatchet through its ribs,
a woodcock with its feet chopped off,
there's a bear near you with a knife in its heart,
the pigeon you strangled as a boy, almost fainting with pleasure,
before they crowd in – the fountain of talking stags.
It is a sunny March morning, still early.
You have thistles in your hair, earth blood on your clothes.
You are reading *Le Monde* in the René Viviani Square.

Fig. 27 A photograph of 'Portrait of My Father as Saint-Julien le Pauvre' from Petit's *Fauverie*

*

To Petit, 'Le Sang des Bêtes' from *Fauverie*, written for the visual artist Tom de Freston, was a more meaningful collaboration than *Effigies*. The poem is the first one actually dedicated to a visual artist. It was commissioned by de Freston, an Oxford-based artist but its significance for Petit went beyond it being a piece of commissioned work: 'Thanks to Tom I knew what went on in that scene' ('Pascale Petit on Writing a Poem for *The Charnel House*'). In the short article posted on de Freston's online blog on 1 August 2014, Petit suggests that it was de Freston's painting *Hung* (2013), which allowed her to completely 'see into' her parents' apartment in the Boulevard de Grenelle. It also records that she lived there as a child, but before seeing de Freston's painting, had struggled to write about it. The painting, indeed, effectively serves as the storyboard enabling Petit to 'see into' her childhood home and view a shocking encounter between both her parents:

> Did my father hang there
> like a horse, headfirst,
> back legs strung from a beam?
>
> Did my mother freeze at the door,
> her whinny
> shattering the lightbulb?

(*Fauverie* 24)

The images of the horse-like father being hung from a beam and the zoomorphic mother looking paralysed with shock at the door are closely adapted from de Freston's butcher-shop style interior in *Hung*[51]. The scene of the hanging father reads like a reinvention of a comparable scene in *The Zoo Father*. 'My Father's Body' from that book describes 'hot sand' being used to fill the father's body until he had 'shrunk enough' to be a doll (32). The violent treatment of the father's body in that poem is presented as a revenge fantasy of the poet: 'I'd hang you from a hook/ and stare at my naked Papa –/ your miniature penis/ that couldn't hurt a mouse' (32). 'Le Sang des Bêtes' returns to this primal revenge scenario, suggesting that the father once actually hung from a beam in the apartment, and that her shocked mother witnessed this. Once again, Petit has ekphrastically appropriated a painter's image to return to childhood trauma, focused violently on her father's and mother's bodies, now morphed into horrific animal forms.

[51] The painting alludes to Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* (1655), which has inspired many artists, including his immediate followers, and more recently Soutine and Francis Bacon. According to de Freston's foreword in the anthology *The Charnel House* (Sept 2014), the heads of his horse-head characters are 'directly quoting Picasso's *Guernica*' (1937). In fact, the 'lightbulb' in the foreground of *Hung* also alludes to its counterpart in Picasso's *Guernica*, which surreally recreates the mayhem after the German air-raid during the Spanish Civil War.

Fig. 28 Tom de Freston, *Hung* (2013)

Petit herself as witness, however, is absent in this scene. In Cathy Caruth's essay collection on trauma, Bessel A. Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart define dissociation as a strategy of traumatic recall, through which survivors are 'removed from the scene; they look at it from a distance or disappear altogether' (168). It is reported that it is not uncommon for an incest survivor to say this: 'I moved up to the ceiling from where I saw this little girl being molested and I felt very sorry for her' (168). In 'Screen Memories', Freud also observes this kind of dissociation in our recollections of childhood, where 'the subject sees himself in the recollection as a child' and where he understands this 'as an observer from outside the scene' (20). In 'Le Sang des Bêtes', with its striking replay of 'My Father's Body', the daughter is absent in the scene about the hanging father. We might see this as a case where Petit 'disappears altogether' in this scene of family violence she projects onto the painting.

According to Petit's article on De Freston's online blog, she often 'looked out' for the apartment in the Boulevard de Grenelle, whenever the metro she travelled on stopped at the nearby station ('Pascale Petit on Writing a Poem for *The Charnel House*'). The poem describes this experience and compares it to the process of traumatic recall, and the transformational or dissociated status of post-traumatic memories:

> My carriage moves on, past the dangerous
> work of the mind
>
> as it sorts through memories –
> those that must
> and must not be remembered

except as flashes from the train-tracks
of history,

or only confronted in animal form.

My parents in their horseheads
as if dressed for a masque.

(*Fauverie* 24)

Petit can be said to simultaneously 'dissociate' herself from the operation of her memory, which she has never so thoroughly discussed in a poem. As each verse contains one, two, or three lines, the fragmented shape of the poem can be seen as mirroring the 'dangerous/ work of the mind' and the process of memory-sorting. The poem plays on 'flashes' to describe intermittent flashes of 'memories' but also figures memories as either ephemeral 'flashes' of light or 'confronted in animal form'. The image of the 'masque' also suggests that in the phantasmagoric memories of the parents, they are dramatically transformed and simultaneously masked.

To complicate things further, 'Le Sang des Bêtes' ('Blood of the Beasts') is the title of the 1949 French documentary film about a slaughterhouse in Paris, and Petit alludes to the film's portrayal of slaughter, 'train-tracks' and 'carriages', and with the images of 'flashes' and 'lightbulb', evokes the contrast between light and dark in the black-and-white film. In Petit's poem, the documentary film with the same title, and de Freston's painting and horse-head characters were all turned into Petit's transformational objects and subjects for her familial psycho-drama, but de Freston also made Petit 'see into' the interconnected types of trauma-recalling strategies she has been adopting to weave together her drama of domestic violence. Since *What the Water Gave Me*, Petit's bio-ekphrastic poems embody an act of double or multifold painting, as Petit's texts self-consciously turn images into autobiographical exhibits. De freston's *Hung* is effectively re-hung in Petit's own psychic-image-gallery and simultaneously, the French film *Le Sang des Bêtes* is remade as part of Petit's poetic phantasmagoria.

'Picture my mother as a baby': *Mama Amazonica* (2017)

In contrast to poems like 'The Sea Father' from *The Zoo Father* and 'The Bee Mother' from *The Treekeeper's Tale*, Petit's latest collection *Mama Amazonica* (rather than *The Amazon Mother*) offers a different juxtaposition between parents and nature. The book, unlike Petit's previous collections, also includes no poems which are framed as self-portraits or portraits. When the book was selected by the Poetry Book Society (PBS) as their Autumn Choice, Petit wrote in the PBS Bulletin (Autumn 2017) that *Mama Amazonica* was her attempt to compare her mother's 'plight' to the Amazon's and explained that the title represents 'the central metaphor of a woman in a forest-asylum

reversed into a portrait of the rainforest as a patient in a psychiatric hospital' (5). *Mama Amazonica* is presented by Petit as a kind of double portrait of her mother and the Amazon rainforest, interweaving her narrative about her mother, as in *The Huntress*, with her ecological narrative, as in *The Treekeeper's Tale*, within a typical pictorial frame.

Mama Amazonica opens with its title poem, which asks that the mother be 'pictured' as a baby on the leaf of a Victoria amazonica, the world's largest waterlily:

> Picture my mother as a baby, afloat
> on a waterlily leaf,
>
> a nametag round her wrist –
> *Victoria amazonica*.
>
> There are rapids ahead
> the doctors call 'mania'.

(*Mama Amazonica* 11)

This opening of the book suggests that the project involves a kind of pictorial ekphrasis inherent in making a mental 'picture' of someone. Since this 'picture' of the mother portrays her as a baby with a nametag, she also characteristically looks like a work of sculpture on display. Although Petit does not continue to present her poetry as portraiture, the metamorphic representations of her mother demonstrate her continuing commitment to 'making objects with words' and using a pictorial repertoire as a form of life-writing. The title poem can still be read as another 'portrait' of her mother, but reinventing her image of Kahlo's rebirth based on the painter's *What the Water Gave Me*, Petit offers a mental portrait of her mother not as a vicious deity or a stinging bee, but as 'a baby, afloat/ on a waterlily leaf'. The image of the baby 'on a waterlily leaf' seems to have been inspired by the many photographs of babies and children afloat on a Victoria amazonica or Victoria cruziana, a smaller kind of the *Victoria* genus.

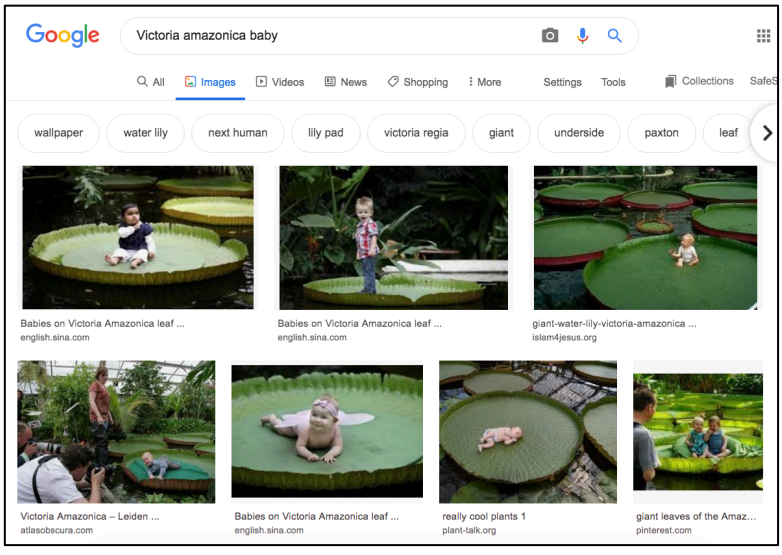


Fig. 29 A screenshot of the search results of 'Victoria amazonica baby' on Google Image (August 2019)

According to the PBS article, Petit's *Mama Amazonica* explores her mother's 'tragic story': 'she said she was date raped by my father and forced to marry him, which eventually made her psychotic' (5). The poem 'Love Charm' is a surreal recreation of this account of a forced marriage. It declares that the 'man who surprises her with a marriage permit' also offers her 'a hummingbird necklace' (*Mama Amazonica* 21). The necklace was given by the man to 'charm' the woman into loving him and signifies the marriage forced upon her. This 'hummingbird necklace' is inter-textually tied to one of Petit's poems based on Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940). The painting is one of Petit's favourites, and in fact, the working title of her *What the Water Gave Me* was *The Thorn Necklace* (Appendix A, p. 179). In Petit's first poem based on Kahlo's painting, the hummingbird-pendant is described as a trauma-releasing charm—'its wings/ were flying me back to the day of the accident', followed by a graphic recollection of the bus-crash which almost killed Kahlo (*What the Water Gave Me* 17). Petit's new poem also recalls the 'thorn necklace' in 'Self-Portrait as a Were-Jaguar' from *The Zoo Father*, which is part of the daughter's mystical makeover to confront her father. All these show the inter-connectedness of Petit's tropical phantasmagoria across her work.

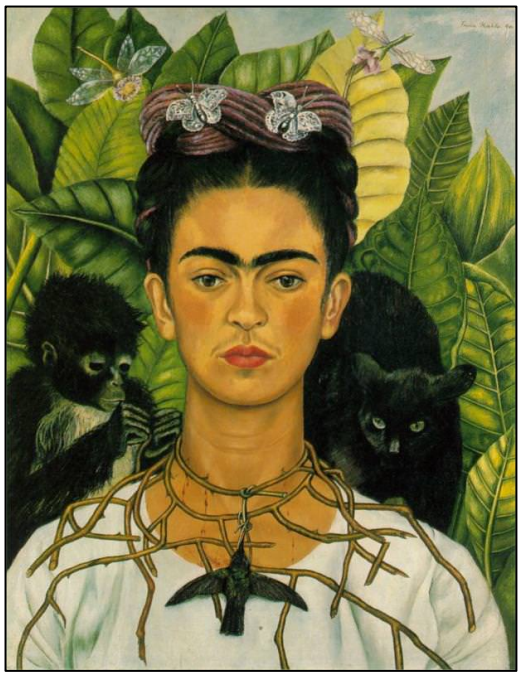


Fig. 30 Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940)
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center Art Collection, The University of Texas

In her acknowledgements in the book, Petit tells us that eight poems in it are written in response to the works of contemporary visual artists. This is the widest range Petit has responded to in a collection, encompassing works of painting, drawing, collage, photography, sculpture and a site-specific installation. 'Buck', for example, was 'inspired'

by the collage *Cervus Armatus* (2016) by the artist Daniel Horowitz (*Mama Amazonica* 111). It narrates a surreal family drama: an unnamed 'she' gives birth to a male fawn but 'His father whisks him away/ to a wet nurse' (37). We are told that this seizure is the reason why 'instead of antlers, he begins to sprout/ rifles' and eventually, he is referred to as 'Her buck', of which 'the buds shed velvet/ to reveal pistols' (37). The poem functions as a verbal collage by describing a fawn which has rifle-antlers and pistol-buds and can be understood as recreating the fact that Petit's father vanished when she was eight. Petit characteristically turns Horowitz collage into a fable of familial aggression, not so unlike her use of De freston's *Hung*.

Fig. 31 A screenshot of an Instagram post by Daniel Horowitz (April 2016)

In 'Jaguar Mama', the face of 'the giant jaguar of my prehistory' is described as 'fissioned into a Bosch triptych' (*Mama Amazonica* 69); and in 'In the Giraffe House', the head of 'my giraffe mother' is compared to 'a map of *terra incognita*' (96). Apart from Petit's characteristically zoomorphic and ekphrastic reinventions of a parent or herself (as a 'were-jaguar'), *Mama Amazonica* appropriates the phantasmagoric Bosch triptych and Renaissance map to represent the unknowable, or unmapped psychological world of her mother in pictorial terms recognisable to both the reader and herself. In an interview with the Poetry School (November 2018), Petit describes a poetry collection as 'a jewellery box full of colour and music that can be closed and kept secret'. With images of a nametag that writes '*Victoria amazonica*', a 'hummingbird necklace', rifle-antlers, pistol-buds, 'a Bosch triptych' and 'a map of *terra incognita*', *Mama Amazonica* might also be seen as an ekphrastic 'jewellery box' or treasure trove.

The book's covers, in fact, are also rich in images which anticipate the new poems and recall Petit's earlier works. The front cover is a collage-portrait of a hummingbird-head woman, reminiscent of the horse-head figures in Tom de Freston's painting, and

the bandaged deer recalls Kahlo's *The Wounded Deer* and anticipate the new poems 'Buck' and 'Bandaged Bambi', demonstrating the interwoven nature of Petit's iconography or 'jewellery box'[52]. The author photograph on the back cover, which has a similar foliage background and where Petit wears a necklace with flower studs, also tellingly invites comparison to the front cover and Kahlo's self-portraits, and clarifies all the necklaces in Petit's poems. Since *Effigies*, Petit has been noticeably multiplying her poetic engagements with the visual arts, not only through ekphrasis, but references, collaborations, and using the poem as an image and the book as an object.

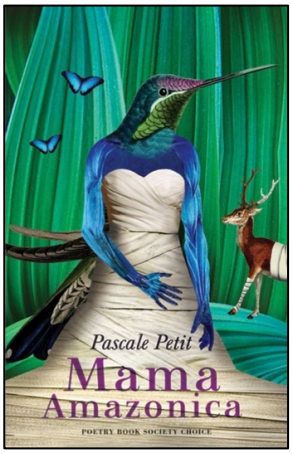


Fig. 32 Pascale Petit, *Mama Amazonica* (2017)

Fig. 33 Pascale Petit, *Zoo Otac* (2012) Translated by Milan Dobricic

If *Mama Amazonica* is a 'jewellery box', representative of Petit's poetic iconography, 'Musica Mundana' from the book suggests the same by being a 'jewellery box' of its own. Reinventing the sculptural studio in 'Eisriesenwelt', Petit's new poem introduces us to a painter's atelier and narrates the process of making a mixed-media piece:

> Later, when I became a painter of tropical
> flowers, the canvases grew vast.
> I named one: 'The Language of Flowers
> And Mute Things'. Angel's trumpets
> Dripped down the cloth and mingled with oil.
> If a moth flew in it got trapped.
>
> (*Mama Amazonica* 51)

As the book's acknowledgements tell us, the poem refers to Anselm Kiefer's *Le Langage des Fleurs et des Choses Muettes* (1995-2015). The Romanian poet Paul Celan was Kiefer's main inspiration, but the painting is based on Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and its title comes from the last line of 'Élévation', a poem about a man's transcendental experience

[52] The cover artwork was produced by the Serbian graphic designer Dragana Nikolic, who has produced the comparable covers of *Fauverie* and the Serbian edition of *The Zoo Father* (with Nikolic's illustrations). The three editions represent Petit's multiple collaborations with the same designer, like George Szirtes with his wife Clarissa Upchurch, who produces most of his book cover artworks to date.

in projecting his soul onto a soaring bird. Petit's poem, in turn, is a bio-ekphrastic response to a painting, which is based on a poem and by a painter heavily influenced by poetry. The poem represents her consistent engagements with both the pictorial and poetic traditions, but Petit remodels the images in Kiefer's painting and Baudelaire's poem for describing a characteristically tropical, carnivorous canvas. Alluding to the 'vast' size of Kiefer's works, the image of the canvases growing vast reinvents Petit's version of Franz Marc, who sees the sky as his canvas. Petit's Kiefer, in contrast, creates a painting which traps 'a moth' and spiders which are 'dragging their legs/ through impasto', alluding to the thick paint and found objects in Kiefer's work (51).

The poem goes on to suggest that the mixed-media piece is a memento of the painter's mother ('I trailed a lock of my mother's hair/ and the strands drifted across'), but as well a life substitute for her ('But it was/ only when I added my mother's ashes that the painting seemed to come/ alive') (51). Petit narrates the uses of 'mother's hair' and 'mother's ashes'—typical images in her verbal studio—as transformational agents, and the two images allude to Kiefer's *Dein aschenes Haar Sulamith* (1981) and *Sulamith* (1983), both of which draw on Celan's 'Todesfuge' ('Death Fugue')—'Your ashen hair Shulamite' (*Second World War Poems* 48). 'Death Fugue' is a major poem about war and the Holocaust, and Petit's allusions to Kiefer and Celan dramatise her portrayal of the dead mother as a sacrificial figure for art. As the title of her poem refers to the music of the cosmos, which Boethius describes in *De Institutione Musica*, Petit has created a poetic fugue, exploring the artistic and transformational agency of her mother's remains in relation to the highest level of music, Celan's fugue of death, and Kiefer's representation of an inaudible language of flowers and 'mute things'.

The poem represents Petit's deep engagement with Kiefer's painting and his art, and her appropriation of them for a new understanding of her mother. Kiefer becomes a transformational subject for Petit to become 'a painter of tropical/ flowers', who, in the opening poem, has already created a picture of her mother as a baby on a waterlily leaf. The painter also says, 'I paced back and forth,/ rocked myself into the frame of mind/ to hear what paint has to say' (51). As in the pictorial creation of birdsong in the poem based on Remedios Varo's painting, paint, again, is interlinked with music or speech, and so is the pictorial frame with the 'frame of mind', recalling the book's opening with a mental picture of the mother. The image of the frame echoes Marion Milner's association of 'the frame of a picture' with 'one's own inner frame' and the spatial and temporal frames of a psycho-analytic session (*The Hands of the Living God* 250)[53]. Exploring the

[53] *The Hands of the Living God* (1969) is a book-length account of her treatment of a schizophrenic patient called Susan, based around art therapy.

pictorial frame as a psycho-analytic frame, Petit narrates the creation of a mixed-media portrait made of the remains of her mother, insects and other things, and simultaneously revisits many of the bio-ekphrastic mechanisms in her poetry.

*

In *Consorting with Angels: Essays on Modern Women Poets* (2005), Deryn Rees-Jones argues that the 'surrealist practices' in Sylvia Plath's poetry could 'emerge organically from an interest in dreams and psychoanalysis', but Plath 'also has an abiding interest in the work of the surrealists themselves' (97). This is also true of Petit, who has written about Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varos, Picasso in *The Zoo Father*, René Magritte in *The Treekeeper's Tale*, and Tom de Freston who is clearly influenced by them, but Petit has also drawn on the expressionists, fauvists and contemporary artists, reminding us that her ekphrastic work is driven by her uses of existing, usually fantastic visual images. Like Plath, Annex Sexton, Allen Ginsberg and Robert Lowell, Petit 'had the help of a few therapists' and they 'used to discuss the imagery and happenings' in her poems (Appendix A, p. 177). To some degree, her poetry is also aligned with the work of American confessional poets such as Plath, or those who practiced what Helen Vendler calls 'The Freudian lyric' (*The Given and the Made* 31), using pyscho-analytic tools to negotiate personal crises and mental illness.

Petit's exposure to psychoanalysis, in turn, might have offered her a psycho-analytic perspective on her own poems, but *Mama Amazonica* marks the first time Petit explores the art therapy her mother received and bases an ekphrastic poem on her mother's drawings. Petit said her mother created 'hundreds of paintings, especially when she was manic, hundreds of poems and a whole scribbled autobiography', all of which were left for Petit after her mother's death (Appendix A, p. 177). Art therapy, as David Edwards' text with the same name (2004) tells us, has a long tradition dated to the late 1940s, and has evolved basing on the ideas of 'art as therapy and art psychotherapy', the latter of which emphasises 'the importance of the therapeutic relationship established between the art therapist, the client and the artwork' (1-2). Petit's 'Serpentairum' seems to adopt the therapist's viewpoint in this 'triangular relationship' (Edwards, *Art Therapy* 2) by narrating the process of her mother's drawing: 'She can fit a thirty-foot giant/ into one sheet of A4,/ pack pythons/ into her sketchbook' (*Mama Amazonica* 31).

But rather than recreating an interaction between the therapist and the client, Petit's poem goes on to focus on the trauma-displacing agency of her mother's drawing:

> She thinks if she can draw
>
> enough snakes she'll get
> used to it, stop her eyes blinking

> when he shoves the hose
> down her throat, makes the room tilt,
> water poured into her stomach,
> her jaws unhinged […]
>
> (*Mama Amazonica* 31)

In *The Hands of the Living God*, Marion Milner suggests that drawings can be 'the most primitive way of symbolizing those inner movements that we call feelings', and these 'symbols' can, 'if given time, expand and be transformed' (94), and regarding sexual symbols, Jung asserts that while 'many dream-images have a sexual aspect or express erotic conflicts', 'the danger may be represented by wild animals', including 'snakes in endless variety' (*Symbols of Transformation*, 8). As the assonance between 'hose' and 'throat', and between 'water', 'poured' and 'jaws' makes vivid the water-cure scene, Petit reports that her mother would draw 'enough snakes' to displace horrible 'feelings' about the phallic 'hose', and if this hose is a screen memory or picture, Petit's poem also explores the multiplied zoomorphic transformations of a traumatic memory in mental and actual pictures.

Clarifying the role of her mother's therapeutic drawing, the poem records that 'Years ago/ they sewed up/ her mouth', but now a male 'nurse comes to unstitch her' (*Mama Amazonica* 31). The psychiatric restraint is shown as reproducing the traumatic rape, making it hard to separate the two acts and two actors. The nurses also 'strap her arms to her chest', which contrasts with how 'she thrashes against the memory':

> always the same memory
>
> of the reptile she met that day
> on the Petit Pont,
>
> who insisted they go dancing,
> then escorted her to the hotel
>
> and seized her in his coils,
> who thrust his hemipenis
>
> into every orifice,
> murmuring how snake sex
>
> can take a whole night.
>
> (32)

The 'Petit Pont' in Paris immediately evokes Petit's surname, as well as the site of her mother's encounter with her rapist father, viewed now as a 'reptile', and therefore a source of the visual 'serpentarium' reproduced in her sketchbook. The poem might also be informed by the therapeutic cult of Aesculapius at Epidayros in Greece, where snakes were associated with the God and used in healing of patients. Petit's mother in the poem can be seen as following in the footsteps of the ancient cult by dreaming up the hyper-

graphic, invasively penetrative 'snake sex' as part of her therapeutic process. There is a profound affinity between the multi-ekphrastic therapeutic work of Petit's mother and her own poetry where her elaborately invented *Mama Amazonica* can be read as an equivalent of her mother's 'Serpentarium', an attempt to exorcise haunting memories from the past by appropriating tropical and mythological images.

The poem also represents a conflation of Petit's zoomoprhic phantasmagoria with her mother's. Her mother becomes another transformational subject as someone who has experienced art as therapy, and like her Kahlo, a mask or persona for her own psycho-drama. As Petit describes her mother's struggle with the 'same memory', which takes place in zoomorphic forms, she simultaneously gives accounts of a variety of transformational processes, which are typically phantasmagorical, pictorial and sculptural ('they sewed up/ her mouth'). These processes can also be seen in 'Jaguar Girl, where the poet, having conjured up her mother's psychiatric experience of lithium and 'the electric eels' of ECT, says 'I'm trying to sew her/ back together,/ to make a patchwork/ of gold dust/ and ghost vines' (15), and in 'Waterlily Jaguar', where the speaker says, 'In the therapy room I draw twenty self-portraits before lunch' (74). As in the poems after Kahlo, portraiture and self-portraiture are as hard to distinguish as ekphrasis and autobiography.

In contrast to the Kahlo-mask, Petit has not openly discussed the mother-mask in essays and interview, but the final poems in the collection foreground the therapeutic journey undertaken in the poems. In 'Musician-Wren', she tells her mother, 'Let me be a musician wren/ and nest in your pocket' (102), while in 'King Vultures', the poet tries to reverse the direction of both her own and her mother's traumatic history, saying 'I have gone back as far as I can. You must do the work now/ my pregnant mother' (105). At the end, we are left with an image of her 'baby self' and the 'boat of my skin rocking/ its hallelujahs,/ as it navigated the passage/ through and away from Mama' (107-8). Nowhere is Petit more explicit about the role of her own mythopoeic art—her collection itself—as a transformational object, which enables her to move beyond sheer repetition of traumatic imagery to a kind of psychic rebirth. This might be a case of 'complete recovery', as laid out in one of the essays in Cathy Caruth's anthology *Trauma*:

> In the case of complete recovery, the person does not suffer anymore from the reappearance of traumatic memories in the form of flashbacks, behavioral reenactments, and so on. Instead the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality.
>
> (Der Volk and Der Hart, 'The Intrusive Past' 176)

Petit, since her earlier poems like 'Eisriesenwelt' and 'Self-Portrait with Fire-Ants', has been systematically weaving together the myths of a group of alternative or substitute lives by appropriating pictorial and sculptural practices and existing visual images. As she presses on with this multi-directional bio-ekphrastic project, Petit also, as in poems like 'The Wounded Deer', 'Le Sang des Bêtes' and 'Serpentarium', reflects on the life-mythologising and trauma-displacing processes in art. She is now 'looking back at what happened' in phantasmagoric and zoomorphic forms, as well as unpacking these transformational processes.

Petit's perpetual creation of her parental surrogates began in her books published in the 1990s—*Icefall Climbing* (1994) and *Heart of a Deer* (1998), where the father is projected onto a doll-house miniature and the mother carves a stone-uniform for her daughter. These are the earliest examples of the influence of the ekphrasis and psycho-dramatic poetry of Sylvia Plath, whom Petit regarded as a poetic role model. Petit systemically frames her poems as portraits or self-portraits, and having given up sculpture, she has been using poetry as a substitute transformational space, where her parents and Petit herself are represented in zoomorphic forms, serving as alternatives to or substitutes for the actual subjects. These are vividly suggested by the titles of the following collections—*The Zoo Father* (2001), *The Huntress* (2005), *Fauverie* (2014) and *Mama Amazonica* (2017). The critically-acclaimed *What the Water Gave Me* (2010) is a multi-directional bio-ekphrastic project based on Frida Kahlo's pictorial oeuvre, where the selves of Petit, Kahlo, and those in Kahlo's self-portraits mirror one another. *The Treekeeper's Tale* (2008), drawing on Remedios Varo's and Franz Marc's paintings, explores an artist's close relations to nature, and *Effigies* (2013) was a one-off collaboration with the Syrian artist Lawand, but the poems from these two books, like those in *What the Water Gave Me*, are iconographically and thematically consistent with the rest of Petit's poetic and ekphrastic oeuvre. If Petit's poetry is one phantasmagoric, ecological universe, each of her books is a parallel world populated by 'effigies', animals, and half-animal, half-human figures. It is a self-hybridising bio-ekphrastic enterprise, where existing visual artworks are drawn into Petit's poetic iconography, and sculpture and painting, like poetry, are explored as psycho-dramatic tools.

Chapter 3: 'No one dies/ In photographs': Photographic and Cinematic Ekphrasis in George Szirtes' Poetry

George Szirtes began his career as a poet in the late 1970s, and photography and cinema are two twin arts he consistently explores. However, his poems are rarely used as examples in critical studies of ekphrasis. This chapter reads across Szirtes' entire poetic oeuvre, identifying seven eras in his lengthy familial and socio-cultural narrative, which is oriented by his collection of photographs of his family and since the late 1980s, documentary photographs, and driven by his extensive uses of professional photography as a model for poetry. His photo-centric narrative, I also argue, develops concurrently with the critical rethinking about photography.

Born in Budapest in 1948, George Szirtes underwent a number of significant transformations in his life before becoming a poet. As mentioned before, he was a child refugee who came to Britain during the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. In fact, the blurb of his *New & Collected Poems* (2008) goes on to say that Szirtes was educated in England, 'trained as a painter, and has always written in English'. Szirtes married a fellow painter Clarissa Upchurch when they were both twenty-one. In his earliest autobiographical essay 'A Dual Heritage' published in *Poetry Review* (February 1986), Szirtes records that he began to write poems in the sixth form but, since he lacked the qualifications to study English, chose painting in college (9). However, Szirtes gave up painting for a literary career in 1984. Translation work, according to the preface to his tenth book *The Budapest File* (2000), began to take up the time he once devoted to painting (13). Thereafter, Szirtes has become one of today's most prolific poets and translators, with a vast output of poetic, translation, biographical, and critical work which has won him recognition in England, Hungary, and beyond[54].

Most of the poems from Szirtes' first eleven books[55], including those in in his first publication in book form, *Poetry Introduction* (1978), were collected in *New & Collected* (2008). In his review published in *The Antioch Review* (Fall 2009), John Taylor suggests that Szirtes' collected edition is 'very much of a monument' (794). Anne Stevenson, in a

[54] His collection *Reel* won the T.S. Eliot Poetry Prize in 2004, and his subsequent collections *The Burning of the Books and Other Poems* (2009) and *Bad Machine* (2013) were both shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. His latest collection *Mapping the Delta* (2016) was the Poetry Book Society Winter Choice. He has also translated *The Melancholy of Resistance* by László Krasznahorkai, and earlier on in his career, gained the Déry Prize for Translation in 1990 for the play *The Tragedy of Man* by Imre Madách and the European Poetry Translation Prize in 1995 for *New Life* by Zsuzsa Rakovszky. All these confirm Szirtes as one of the most productive and influential poets and translators of the twentieth and twenty-first century.

[55] These include *Selected Poems: 1976-1996* (1996), his first selected edition, and *The Budapest File* (2000), a selection of his older poems in a new order as well as two new poems.

comment printed on the back of Szirtes' *New & Collected* (2008), also describes Szirtes' work as: 'A major contribution to post-war literature…Using a painter-like collage of images to retrieve lost times, lives, cities and betrayed hopes, Szirtes weaves his personal and historical themes into work of profound psychological complexity.' Stevenson identifies the pictorial, personal and historical dimensions of Szirtes's poetry, which I want to focus on here. Nevertheless, building on Michael Murphy's argument about photography as a 'means and subject matter' of Szirtes' poetry (*Poetry in Exile* 144), I want to suggest that, though Szirtes studied painting early on, it is photography as much as painting which offers the crucial model of visual culture across Szirtes' career. Szirtes' collected edition, in other words, is also a monument to an unparalleled commitment to exploring the relationship between photographs, photography and poetry.

The first poem of Szirtes' *New & Collected* is 'In Memoriam Busby Berkeley', dedicated to the spectacular musical choreographer. Since then, Szirtes has written many poems dedicated to the works of a vast range of poetic and artistic predecessors and contemporaries, including the Spanish painter Francisco Goya and the antiquarian John Aubrey (in *Short Wave*, 1984); the photographers André Kertész and Diane Arbus (in *Blind Field*, 1994); W. G. Sebald and the Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado (in *Reel*, 2004); Arthur Rimbaud, Anselm Kiefer and the American photographer Francesca Woodman (in *Mapping the Delta*, 2016). 'Fish Music' from *Bad Machine* (2013), as its subtitle tells us, was written '*for Pascale Petit*', another poet whose work feeds off pictorial art. In the poem, Szirtes emphasises the visual aspect of the poem ('After the skin, the fish scales. One must glitter') and pays homage to Petit's quasi-sculptural ekphrasis ('He struggles into his borrowed human skin', 'with the sewn-in dinner jacket and polished patent feet') (*Bad Machine* 47-8). All of Szirtes' collections to date are testament to his deep and extensive engagements with the long traditions of different arts. As he observed in the preface to *New & Collected*, 'Paintings, photographs and films have haunted not only my poems but the poems of most of my contemporaries' (19).

Szirtes has said in interview that he sees painting 'primarily as construction' and photography 'primarily as recording' (Appendix B, p. 183). His poetry, however, suggests that the boundary between painting and photography is not a clear-cut one. 'Village Politicians' from *Poetry Introduction* recreates David Wilkie's painting with the same title. The poem describes the villagers' 'endless argument' and concludes that 'Time fixes them like glue' (*New & Collected* 24). The oil painting is described as similar to a film still, embodying an alternative time which 'fixes' the villagers, yet paradoxically renders their argument 'endless'. 'Salon des Indépendants', the following poem in *New & Collected*,

alludes to the artists' association in Paris established in 1884: 'Within canvases. A million artists wait/ Suspended between fame, death and depression' (*New & Collected* 24). With the enjambment, the poem suggests that the 'canvases' can keep the artists 'suspended', while their 'wait' is similarly held 'endless'. Szirtes records a crucial moment in the history of the exhibition and reception of post-impressionist painting, artists and the public, involving painters like Seurat and Signac. It seems telling that the young poet opens his poetic account with such a poem about the problematic reception of painters, waiting to the see the outcome of their show.

Apart from recognising the contemporary ekphrastic boom, Szirtes argues in his preface to *New & Collected* that 'The good text or picture or photograph or film remains itself but the blind field is felt hovering around the rooms of its language' (19). The term 'blind field' was used by André Bazin and Roland Barthes to understand the cinematic and photographic images, but Szirtes uses it as a paradigm for poetry, his own in particular. Here, he appeals to Barthes' notion of the blind field in *Camera Lucida* (1981) as a way of pointing out the similarities between a 'good photograph' and a 'good poem' in terms of their reference to the world beyond the frame:

> Roland Barthes coined the term, *blind field*, for that part of the world that goes on living and dying outside the photograph. It is brought into play by a point or detail that he calls the *punctum*. […] The photo still exists in its rectangular frame but its surface has suddenly dissolved and dropped us in the world of meanings and significances under and beyond it.
>
> In the same way the world outside the good poem acts as the pressure against its skin of language and form.
>
> (*New & Collected* 19)

Szirtes understands poems in relation to photographs, as suggested here. A poem is said to function like a photograph, where a whole lot of 'meanings and significances' are 'under and beyond' the 'surface' created by 'language and form'. In *Reading George Szirtes* (2008), a critical companion to Szirtes' *New & Collected*, John Sears begins by postulating that 'Szirtes' poetry is formed by the act of reading' (9). This is plausible, given Szirtes' poetry proves that he is an avid reader, actively responding to other writers in his work. However, his poetry can also be understood as shaped by a notion of art as creating surfaces, like what he calls 'the skin of language and form', and the notion of understanding art as seeing through these surfaces into 'the world of meanings' beyond them. As Szirtes claims, 'the look, the punctum and the blind field seem to have driven much of my work' (*New & Collected* 20).

The titles of four out of his sixteen collections published from 1979 to 2016 also suggest his ongoing, consistent engagement with photography: *The Photographer in Winter* (1986), *Blind Field* (1994), *Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape* (1998),

and *Reel* (2004). The title poem of the 1998 collection tells us that the 'portrait' is the 'classic shot of my father' (*New & Collected* 293), and the word 'portrait' suggests Szirtes' constant understanding of photography in relation to painting. We have also learnt that the title poem of *The Photographer in Winter* is dedicated to his mother, placing her in the Communist Budapest of her past. Szirtes' poetry, in other words, is a sustained enterprise of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, built around photography. Many poets, as Szirtes recognises, have written poems about photographs, from Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes to Adam Kirsch in *Emblems of the Passing World* (2015). These make up one wing of the museum of ekphrastic poetry. However, Szirtes' photograph-packed oeuvre simultaneously constitutes a familial and socio-cultural narrative, based on real and imagined photographs, and driven by his uses of photographs and photography as models for poetry, memory and history. Photographs and photography, I argue, are his means to frame his life subjects and then read each photographic image as a kind of visual life narrative. This process of 'dissolving' the photographic surfaces, as Szirtes puts it, negotiates the quandary between what he calls 'recording' and 'construction', as he explores the life associated with a photographed subject. It is the conflict and interplay between them he consistently explores.

Szirtes' work, in this respect, runs thematically and conceptually parallel with the contemporary development of the critical views about photography associated with the work of André Bazin, John Berger, Susan Sontag, and others. Szirtes' writing about photographs and photography began in the late 1970s, a time when the art of photography began to be critically rethought. In Sartre's *The Psychology of Imagination* of 1948, the subject in the portrait is understood as 'a quasi-person, with a quasi-face, etc' (22); in other words, the 'object is posited as absent, but the impression is present' (24). Such absence-presence dynamics have been recognised since then as the essence of the photograph in a series of theoretical texts[56]. In *On Photography* (1977), Susan Sontag, for example, defines the photograph as 'both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence' (16). Such discussions led to a new self-consciousness about both the epistemology and poetics of photography itself. Like his critical contemporaries, Szirtes is not a professional specialist in photography but he too has been involved in a sustained investigation into the image of 'quasi people, with quasi-faces'. Autobiography, biography and life writing, as discussed before, also began to be developed into a literary tradition in the same period, with the critical works by Philippe Lejeune, Paul de Man,

[56] André Bazin (in 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', 1967), followed by John Berger (in 'Understanding a Photograph', 1974), Susan Sontag (with *On Photography*, 1977), and Roland Barthes (in 'Rhetoric of the Image', 1977), all discussed the photograph as embodying both the absence and presence of life.

James Olney and others. Both the theories about photography and life writing are implicated in Szirtes' bio-ekphrastic love-affair with photography.

'United for an instant': *The Slant Door* (1979), *November and May* (1981), and *Short Wave* (1984)

Szirtes has recorded in interview and essays that his mother Magdalena Szirtes survived the Ravensbrück concentration camp, in which she was interned, but that, many years later on 7 August 1975, she died on the way to the hospital after she attempted suicide by taking an overdose. His mother, according to his essay 'A Dual Heritage' (1986), had suffered 'a long deterioration of her heart condition', 'joined the Euthanasia Society, attempted suicide several times, and became even more desperate' (9). Since then Szirtes has clearly been haunted by his grief and his mother's traumatic experience during and after the Holocaust. Szirtes had a deep relationship with his mother, which has become a driving force in his poetry, not least in *The Photographer in Winter*, which is built around her life as a photographer in Soviet Hungary. In December 2010, Szirtes posted three articles with the title 'On Being a Good Mother' on his online blog, with a number of photographs of her at different times. In the third article, he concludes that his mother is 'in my bones even now' and 'I would not be a writer, and certainly not a poet, if it wasn't for her'.

In an interview with *The Oxonian Review* posted online on 31 October 2011, Szirtes records that in his poetry, photographs and photography are 'tied in with memories of mirrors' and that his poem 'At the Dressing Table Mirror' is about the death of his mother. He read the poem at the Rotterdam International Poetry Festival in 2009 and in the online blog post afterwards (14 August 2009), described the poem as his 'earliest properly formed poem of 1976'. As his first 'properly formed' poem, 'At the Dressing Table Mirror' was written in memory of his mother, and marked the beginning of his uses of poetry to record images of her, and indeed to mirror her. The dressing table mirror in the poem is described as a kind of camera capturing an intimate mother-and-son moment in a reflected image:

> And the reflection that showed her now shows the boy also
>
> And what he does beside her in that mirror, in the room
> They both occupy… United for an instant
>
> In that glance, surprised by the net in which they find
> Themselves doing what their image shows them doing,
>
> They break on the very edge of laughter, clearer for
> A second in that marriage […]
>
> (*New & Collected* 23)

The description of the mirror as a 'net' suggests that it functions like a camera capturing images of people, and the union between them is said to last 'for an instant', just as a photograph only attests to the very moment it captures. With the enjambments ('United for an instant/ In that glance', and 'clearer for/ A second'), the 'earliest properly formed poem' also formally represents the ephemeral quality of this union, or 'marriage'. The mirrored image is an estranged embodiment of the metaphoric 'marriage' of reality and reflection but also the intimacy of mother and son. Szirtes says in interview that 'the earliest evidence I have of her life, as of mine, consists of the photographs she saved' (Appendix B, p. 182). Szirtes' 'earliest properly formed poem' is also the 'earliest evidence' of his describing the reflected, mental, and quasi-photographic images of him as a small 'boy', as of his mother.

Winnicott's 'Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development' (1967) included in *Playing and Reality* (1971) helps us understand Szirtes' poetic record that 'the reflection that showed her now shows the boy also'. Informed by Jacques Lacan's 'Le Stade du Miroir', Winnicott has observed that when the baby 'looks at the mother's face', 'ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself' (151). But if 'a mother could not respond', that is, if what she looks like is not '*related to*' what she sees in her baby's face, one of the consequences is that 'perception takes the place of apperception', and 'what is seen is the mother's face' instead (151). It might be the case that Szirtes' 'mother could not respond' when he was a child, so the dressing table mirror 'showed her' only. In this respect, the poem is a precursor of his long struggle with understanding her in relation to photographs and photography. Winnicott also suggests that 'the actual mirror has significance mainly in its figurative sense' (151). Now that Szirtes sees in the reflected image both his mother 'and the boy also', he, indeed, uses the mirror as a metaphor for his memory of the intimate moments with his mother—a transformational object in the form of a metaphor. However, the current image where 'They break on the very edge of laughter' alludes to her life cut short by her last suicidal attempt, and suggests that a reflected moment of their laughter, equivalent to one represented in a photograph, and a vivid recollection of it, lasts only a 'second'.

Szirtes' earliest poems understand the visual image, whether it be pictorial, quasi-photographic, or mental, as suspending a moment in life, but also preserving it as the mirror cannot. Szirtes also highlights the difference in the life captured by the visual image. 'Children' in *The Slant Door* (1979) describes family portraiture as staged and deceptive:

> Others clutch pigeons or wield little whips
> In the outdated frippery of a photographer's studio:
> Their gestures arrest the flow of families,

> But solemn and dignified, faces eyed remorseless
> In their frames. The child spins in an orgy of happiness
>
> (*The Slant Door* 21)

The description of the photographer's studio as decorated with 'outdated frippery' suggests strong ambivalence about studio photography of this kind as an act of constructed memorial in action. It is ironic that the children 'clutch' attention from their photographed parents and 'wield' command over them. The children's 'orgy of happiness' also starkly contrasts with the 'solemn and dignified' expressions on their parents' faces. In *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (1997), which builds on Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, Marianne Hirsch argues that 'photographs locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life' (8). Hirsch's argument illuminates Szirtes' poem, which dramatically demonstrates family portraiture as engaged in an ideological construction, imposed on the uncontrollable children. This recalls Susan Sontag's definition of the photograph in *On Photography* (1977) as 'a neat slice of time, not a flow' (17). Against the ephemeral image of the child and mother in the mirror, the studio portrait preserves the image of the 'children' but as a kind of engineered mirage. Szirtes returns to exploring an artificial image of a family in 'The Claude Glass' from *Short Wave* (1984), but in relation to the romantic painting instrument: 'Through the window of a rented farmhouse/ I see my wife and children moving dumbly/ through a history made picturesque.' (*New & Collected* 104).

In 'The Icy Neighbour' from *November and May* (1981), Szirtes recalls his 'memories of mirrors' again, but this time, portraying the mirror as a 'recording' agent:

> It is as if you had never died, and the mirror
> with all its distortions goes on recording
> the image of your permanent chamber
> with your fingerprints, the quick apparatus.
>
> (*New & Collected 56*)

The rhyme of 'mirror' and 'chamber' is telling, while 'the quick apparatus' suggestively represents the camera. The mirror is described as a kind of rolling camera which 'goes on recording'. According to the online *OED*, the Latin etymons of chamber are *camera* and *camara*, as in Barthes' meditation on photography, entitled *La Chambre Claire* in French but *Camera Lucida* in English. The poem puns on 'chamber' to refer to both the room and the camera, and alludes to the optical instruments *camera lucida* and *camera obscura*—Latin for light chamber and dark chamber, as in Barthes'. As Winnicott emphasises our figurative uses of the mirror, Szirtes characteristically harnesses the metaphoric and documentary repertoire of photographic language to describe the mirror in relation to photography, cinematography, memory and grief. Recalling 'the

reflection that showed her' in 'At the Dressing Table Mirror', the images of the subject, however, are distorted this time. These 'distortions' might be Freudian distortions, referring to the reconfigured memory of the dead figure (presumably, once again, Szirtes' mother, the photographer). If the assumption is that it is the mirror-image in the camera, this poem marks the beginning of his examination of photographic, reflected and mental images of his mother, through which he meditates on the life of his mother and her death.

'The Icy Neighbour' combines mourning with a fixation on the past. In 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), Freud argues that the completion of 'the work of mourning' means bringing up and 'hypercathecting' all the 'memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object' (245). Nevertheless, he subsequently suggests in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) that 'erecting the object within the ego', which 'occurs in melancholia', can be 'the one and only condition under which the id will give up its objects' (120). Turning photographic terms into metaphors for memory, Szirtes' poem encapsulates the enigma of mourning observed by Freud: (1) it suggests a continuing identification with the dead subject as a kind in conditional form ('as if you had never died') and an ongoing imaginative 'recording' of the 'permanent' past; (2) it also opens by saying that 'Through you I enter the permanent chamber' (*New & Collected* 56), suggesting that the grief work and the recall of the past operate through the figurative uses of the 'quick apparatus' belonging to the dead (again here, presumably, the poet's mother').

'Dear woman, train your photographic eye/ On me': *The Photographer in Winter* (1986)

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes describes photographs as haikus (49). Szirtes similarly argues in interview that photography is 'a particularly apt analogy for poetry', since photographs represent 'single but complex states of affairs' (Appendix B, p. 183). Throughout his career, Szirtes has constantly drawn analogies between photography and poetry. 'The Photographer in Winter', written in memory of his mother: '*i.m. M. S. 1924-1975*' (*New & Collected* 114) represents Szirtes' most sustained investigation of the relation of photography to poetry, and vice versa, being the longest example of his photographic process ekphrasis.

The poem includes a direct address to the photographer, enlisting her trained eye, as he attempts to represent both her and her art: but does not address her as his mother: 'Dear woman, train your photographic eye/ On me' (*New & Collected* 116). Early on, the poem sets the scene with the image of his mother's camera 'waiting in its case', and recalls his earlier poems which associate mirror reflection with memory: 'The white

face in the mirror mists and moves/ Obscure as ever' (114). Saying that 'You are in control/ Of one illusion as you close your eyes', Szirtes turns a spirit of his dead mother into his photographic subject, but with a sense of surveillance—'Where are you going? To work? I'm watching you/ You cannot get away' (115). Szirtes' poetic mimicry of photography is done with the recognition that photography is a kind of futile redemption for the time lost—'As if, by stopping time, we made amends/ For all that time destroyed outside the frame' (118), and that it does not do full justice to the subject—'I'm angling for position,/ Betraying you with your own camera' (119).

The poem was written after Szirtes' first return to Hungary as an adult in 1984 on a grant awarded by the Arts Council of England. In the first of the three articles with the title '*from* Rewind', posted on his online blog between July and September 2016, Szirtes records that his first post-exile journey to Hungary in 1984 was driven by his 'desire to visit Budapest' as well as 'to return to her, to Magda': 'I needed to write the city and I needed to write her. Perhaps writing the one would be writing the other'. 'The Photographer in Winter' figuratively represents his 'return' to Budapest and the world of his mother, and functions like a cinematic montage or a camera capturing snapshots of a city in winter and his mother at a young age. It homes in on the world of his mother in the most immediate close-up, using the second-person:

> You touch your skin. Still young. The wind blows waves
> Of silence down the street. The traffic grows
> A hood of piled snow. The city glows.
> The bridges march across a frozen river
> Which seems to have been stuck like that for ever.
> The elderly keep slipping into graves.
>
> Your camera is waiting in its case.
>
> (*New & Collected* 114)

The tensions between frozenness and mobility, vitality and death, in the wintry scene are played out in the tension between the tight rhymes of the stanza and the fluid sentences. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes poses a rhetorical question about the Hungarian photographer André Kertész: 'how could Kertész have "separated" the dirt road from the violinist walking on it?' and asserts that Kertész 'could not *not* photograph the partial object at the same time as the total object' (47). Szirtes turns the still-young photographer and the city into 'the total object' of his poem functioning as a biographical and socio-cultural recording of them. The photographer and the city can be said to form one transformational object for Szirtes, who thinks that 'writing the one would be writing the other'. The photographer, nevertheless, presents herself as a transformational subject with potential agency for leaving her camera 'waiting in its case'. The image of her being 'still young', which contrasts with the elderly 'slipping into

graves', might also suggest that Szirtes' mother died 'young' at the age of fifty-one, recreating her as a spirit of herself—'still young'—as others die of old age.

In the poem, the city in winter is portrayed like the totalitarian world in George Orwell's *1984*, from which the poem takes its epigraph, or the desolate modern city represented in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). As John Sears suggests in *Reading George Szirtes*, the poem can be read as 'a reworked postmodern *Waste Land*' (73). The marching bridges seem metaphoric, suggesting the military dictatorship his mother lived under, and the painfully laughable depiction of the elderly ('The elderly keep slipping into graves') also recalls the satirical scene of Charlie Chaplin working on a product assembly line in his film *Modern Times* (1936). The city in winter is described in a montage-like sequence of images, and the internal and end rhymes, like 'blows', 'glows', 'snow' and 'frozen', brings about an antithetical dynamic of sounds against the images of the 'waves/ Of silence' and 'frozen river'. This makes a case of cinematic ekphrasis, which has developed naturally from Szirtes' investment in photographic ekphrasis. All these suggest Szirtes' attempt to imagine the actual historical Soviet-era city of his mother's past, as the image of the 'marching bridges' suggests a state under military domination. Alongside the 'reworked' mother, such a 'reworked' city forms the other part of Szirtes' total transformational object for his bipartite project about his mother and his native city.

We are ironically told that 'This winter is not metaphorical' (*New & Collected* 117), but this is followed by a metaphorical description of the ice melting in the sun releasing 'more light': 'A square of film must seek/ To capture intact this wild and wholesale slaughter' (117). The poem, indeed, portrays the photographer in a wintry setting, but 'this winter' simultaneously represents the brutally frozen political state in which he situates his mother, and the metaphorical state of frozenness in the photographic images. It is also ironic to demand the 'wholesale slaughter' be captured 'intact' by a 'square of film'. In 'The Authentic Image (1979-80)' included in *Representation and Photography* (2001), John Berger argues that each photograph only serves as a 'trace of an event', which is 'isolated from all other events' (166). This critical understanding of photographs as 'traces' or 'isolated' fragments but also framed is formally represented in Szirtes' poem, which mostly follows a close *abbcca* rhyme scheme. The *a* rhyme of the first and last line sonically functions as a frame, making the stanza an audible 'square of film'. Szirtes' fictive photography simultaneously engages him in a close investigation of the plastic art, agreeing with his critical contemporaries on photography as multiplied acts of freezing, fragmenting, and framing, and associating the photographic frame with the poetic frame.

Szirtes' representation of the glowing city is consistently dark in tone-colour, corresponding to his subjective reconstruction of his mother's life as a former concentration camp prisoner and working photographer in Communist post-war Hungary. The post-exile, post-traumatic vision of the city, nevertheless, also represents Szirtes' own vision of Budapest. On the online blog of the UK's Refugee Council (July 2016), Szirtes reports that his younger brother was 'deeply traumatised' by the forced exile and could not speak for three months after they arrived in the UK. Szirtes also says that his academic results were hindered by his own 'unaddressed trauma'. The photographer in the poem serves not only as a transformational subject due to her profession, but for her knowledge and experience of a traumatic past which Szirtes could not make sense of as a child refugee[57]. This represents Szirtes' complex Freudian 'setting up' of his mother into his ego, and an over-layered instance of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, as Szirtes identifies with his mother for various reasons through repurposing her art. To complicate this further, the poem goes on to put the poet uncomfortably in a place akin to that of the guards watching his mother, or an official photographer: 'They will expect/ Immaculate appearances, discreet/ Camera angles', and 'I shoot whole rolls of film as they shoot me' (*New & Collected* 115, 118).

Szirtes' image of being 'shot' echoes the earlier violent image of the 'wholesale slaughter', another instance of the multiplying of metaphorical meanings in the poem, where photography is confused with the wintry environment and the brutality of Nazi rule. Szirtes also reveals in interview that he clearly remembers his mother as an 'improver' of photographs rather than as a photographer 'with a camera' (Appendix B, p. 184). This is suggested in the poem which includes a direct account of Szirtes' memory of his mother hand-colouring photographs:

> Hand colouring. It was a form of art,
> And when you bent over your work I saw
> How art could not obey a natural law,
> That faces flowered and that teeth shone pale
> As distant neon: memory would fail
> To keep the living and the dead apart.
>
> (*New & Collected* 117)

With the figurative use of 'flowered', and the comparison of the pale shining of the teeth to the 'distant neon', the poem suggests that poetry too is 'a form of art' which cannot 'obey a natural law'. Szirtes also directly compares hand-colouring to memory, which is said to always bring together 'the living and the dead', characteristically bringing

[57] The images of the glowing city and the marching bridges might also be metaphors or screen memories of the experience of being prepared to lie to soliders on patrol and seeing their patrolling lights: 'Soldiers patrolled occasionally and my parents gave us a story in case we were asked anything', and 'Occasionally we could see the lights of patrol and hearing shooting, and at one point I fell into a shallow trench' ('A Dual Heritage' 6).

together poetry, hand-colouring and memory in his re-imagination of his mother in poetic form. As Szirtes also tells us that he saw 'the smoothed-out features' in photographs (*New & Collected* 117), the opening line 'You touch your skin' might pun on 'touch' to refer to retouching, which gives another meaning to the image of his mother looking 'still young'. From being his mother's 'work', in the figurative sense, which she 'bent over' (as her child and as the subject of her art)[58], Szirtes has turned to internalise her photograph-improving work, in addition to her photographic work with a camera, to create a comparably artificial or composite photographic model for his memory of her and Budapest[59].

If we situate his poetry within the various kinds of arts he practises, there is also a thin line between his use of his mother's retouching art and his own translation work as a model for his poetry. In *The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914* (1993), Heinz K. Henisch and Bridget A. Henisch maintain that there was 'justification' for the uses of 'retouching and overpainting' and quotes the editorial of *The Philadelphia Photographer* (1867) saying that photographers should not 'falsify and distort the work of the Creator', while 'it is the job of the *translator* to secure the true meaning of the scriptural text' (103). Szirtes, as mentioned before, is also an award-winning translator of Hungarian poetry and prose. It can be argued that in 'The Photographer in Winter', he performs a poetic kind of retouching or translation to the recorded images of the city and his mother, so that the city 'glows' and bridges 'march', and she touches her skin, looking 'still young'. In October 2011, Szirtes told the *Guardian* that 'Translation is a form of transfusion', and it is 'fresh blood, fresh air, good for the heart' ('Wrestling with Englishness'). In his poetry, Szirtes employs multiple types of art as the transformational objects for his frequently interlinked recreation of his mother and his native city, suggesting a cross-fertilisation between the arts he practices.

In the end, the poem says, 'The situation offers me no choice –/ The shutter's open. Now the shutter's closed' (*New & Collected* 119). The 'situation' refers to the incessant conjuring up of the mother in different forms of her, as in a cinematic montage or a series of photographs: 'You up, first as a girl with wavy hair,/ And then a prisoner, a skeleton/ Just gathering new flesh', as 'The layers go on/ So fast' (119). According to A.

---

[58] Szirtes' online blog article 'My Mother Would Have Been 90 Today' (2 February 2014) records that his mother hand-coloured photographs of him and his brother, and probably improved photographs of herself, like the one posted in the article.

[59] According to the first version of the poem, '*No-one can touch you now or ever again/ It's snowing in the crematorium*' ('A Dual Heritage' 13; *The Photographer in Winter* 1), but this is omitted in the *New & Collected* version of the poem, which opens by saying that 'You touch your skin. Still young'. In this instance, the poem is also textually retouched or smoothed out. Rather than saying '*No-one can touch you now*', Szirtes gives the ghost of his mother agency by portraying her as touching her skin.

H. S. Craeybeckx's *Gevaert Manual of Photography* (1962), the 'simple guillotine or drop shutter' works 'by its own weight' (39). The camera shutter is suggested in Szirtes' poem to be working by its own weight, implying that the image of the mother is so many-layered and fast-changing that the fictive camera struggles to keep pace with her transformations. Like Petit's parents, Szirtes' mother is a protean figure in his imaginary photographs, but, likes his understanding of photographic surfaces, his mother goes on 'gathering new flesh' because of the different stages of her life Szirtes wants to record.

While John Sears calls Szirtes' poem a 'metropolitan elegy' (*Reading George Szirtes* 73), we can also read it as a multiplied, imaginary version of what Andrew D. Milner calls a 'snapshot elegy', which 'involves an inherent conflict: examining and describing a photograph of a dead person, a poetic speaker finds him or herself confronted with the death that the image expresses' (*Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis* 71). Maybe Szirtes' poem is following the earlier Freudian model of mourning by hyper-cathecting all memories or images of his mother, but the poem also suggests Freud's subsequent suggestion that the end of mourning entails the setting up of the object within the ego, which is what I have observed in 'The Icy Neighbour', by conjuring up images of his mother as conditionally alive and appropriating her art to record images of her.

I am also reminded of Jahan Ramazani's *The Poetry of Mourning* (1994), which remodels Freud's concept of melancholia to postulate that the twentieth-century elegy is 'anti-elegiac' and 'melancholic', that is, 'mourning that is unresolved, violent, and ambivalent' (4). Ramazani argues that 'modern elegist refuses to transcend or find redemption in loss and then move on to new objects of devotion' (4). Szirtes' 'The Photographer in Winter' is 'anti-elegiac' by figuratively resurrecting his mother as the subject of his fictive photography. However, the poem also says, 'Smile vacantly as if you were not dead' and 'As if, by stopping time, we made amends/ For all that time destroyed outside the frame' (*New & Collected* 115, 118). The 'as-if' construction represents Szirtes' acknowledgement of the conditionality or artifice in the resurrection of a lost life and redemption of the lost time. Rather than refusing to make amends for the lost objects, Szirtes' poem presents itself as a self-reflexive homage to his dead mother and her art. The conditions—'as if you were not dead' and 'as if we made amends'—suggest that the poem is as much anti-elegiac or immersing in loss as restoring the dead subject as a subject with transformational agency, or a 'woman' with her 'photographic eye'.

'Her likenesses are caught on film': *Metro* (1988) and *Bridge Passages* (1991)

In the subsequent collections, beginning with *Metro* (1988), Szirtes begun to collect actual family and documentary photographs in his poetry and understand them in relation to the complexity of personal and socio-cultural memory. As documented earlier, Szirtes wrote in the *New & Collected* preface that the Barthesian '*blind field*' refers to the world 'living and dying outside the photograph', which is 'brought into play by a point or detail that he calls the *punctum*'. In fact, in *Metro* the poet already shows his understanding of the photograph in terms of what is beyond its representation through 'a point or detail'. The contents page of *Metro* is preceded by the short poem 'For My Father at Seventy (*a photograph aet. 35, early one summer*)':

> Who would have thought that the slim dark man
> with the short moustache, playing cards
> with friends in a country garden would be
> living at seventy on a foreign pension?
> No one then. The summer is dutifully
> Photogenic. He wears the trace of a tan
> and only his eyes betray the faintest hint of tension
> as if they could look both backwards and forwards.
>
> (*Metro* 5)

I have reproduced the entire poem here, since it is not included in Szirtes' *New & Collected* and thus relatively unknown. The poem suggests that the photo raises questions about the relationship of the same image of his thirty-five-year-old father and his biography as a whole. The personified portrayal of summer as 'dutifully/ Photogenic' might be compared to Szirtes' previous description of the winter as 'not metaphorical', showing his consciousness of the relationship between the 'literal' and the symbolic in every apparently documentary detail. The poem, nevertheless, ends with a focus on his father's eyes in the photograph, recalling Rilke's 'Youthful Portrait of My Father' from *New Poems* (1908)—'In the eyes, dream. The forehead seems to sense/ some far-off thing' (105). In Szirtes' poem, the term 'as if', this time, is used to suggest that the eyes make a symbol of the father's ability to 'look both backwards and forwards' in time, as the poet is doing. Szirtes continues to demonstrate the changing, and fluid status of the fixed images of his parents in his poetry.

The prefatory poem to his father prepares the way for the complex engagement with photographs of his mother in the long title poem 'Metro'. The poetic sequence characteristically begins with an epigraph: '*What should they do there but desire*'—from Derek Mahon's poem 'A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford' (1975). Mahon suggests it is the 'Lost people of Treblinka and Pompeii', who 'seem to say': 'Let the god not abandon us' and 'You with your light meter and relaxed itinerary,/ Let not our naïve labours have been in vain' (*Collected Poems* 89). Mahon's poem also turns on a photograph, punning

on the 'light meter' to refer to both poetic meter and the light-measuring device used in photography. In Szirtes' *Fortinbras at the Fishhouses* (2010), a collection of his lectures, he adopts the role of the 'You' in Mahon's poem and argues that 'we have the power to save them but not to be their god' (45). Mahon's reference to poetic memory in relation to 'Treblinka and Pompeii' provides a context for Szirtes' return to the fate of Jews like his mother in the poem.

Szirtes' subject in 'Metro' is not a single person as in 'The Photographer in Winter', but the Jewish people of Budapest, including his mother, a former Ravensbrück prisoner:

> Our fate is to be the dramatis personae
> Of geographers who place us more precisely
> Than we can ourselves. I place a woman
> On a train and pack her off to Ravensbruck:
> I send out a troop of soldiers to summon
> The Jews of this fair city.
>
> (*New & Collected* 153)

These lines capture the ironic kinship between the poet trying to recapture the moment the Hungarian Jews were rounded up and the original soldiers deputed to capture them and send them to Ravensbrück. This recalls his portrayal of himself as a photographic spy, but rather than confusing photography with military supervision, 'Metro' explores the fatefulness of geography, which had such a bearing on the fate of Jews, who happened to be alive in places like Budapest during the Nazi period. As Elizabeth Bishop asks in 'The Map' from *North & South* (1946), 'Are they assigned, or can the countries pick their colours?' (*Complete Poems* 3). Both Bishop and Szirtes explore the detachment of geographers, regardless of the political and socio-cultural significance of the maps they make. Following on from his use of photography as a model for personal memory in 'The Photographer in Winter', 'Metro' suggests Szirtes' association of his project of both familial and socio-cultural memory, or 'multi-directional memory'—what Michael Rothberg calls in the text of the same name (2009)—with geography and the dramatic arts ('Our fate is to be the dramatis personae/ Of geographers').

In 'Fables of Home', a long essay about his family history, Szirtes records that his father survived 'his last labour camp' by 'escaping on the route march to an extermination camp' (113). Szirtes' father is one of the 'Jews of this fair city', but when the poem says, 'Lead me, psychopompos, through my found/ City down into the Underground' (*New & Collected* 153), it is to 'a woman'—clearly based on his mother—who, again, serves as Szirtes' transformational subject, but in the form of a guide through the underworld of the dead, or his own repressed or unconscious memory.

'Metro' goes on to be a time-travel journey in the imagined company of his 'dramatis personae', associated with the rumble of the metro under the streets of modern Budapest. These characters are brought to life on the basis of photographs and memories of them. Early on, imagining his parents, he speaks of 'a picture in a frame' and presents himself as a child as 'one who wears both belt and braces/ In photographs, an infant contradiction,/ A narrator' (*New & Collected* 155, 156). Reflecting on his mother, he notes that 'Her likenesses are caught on film', and says 'He'll keep her face and others in the drawer,/ With her own photographs, her frozen youth,/ Her unsent letters, his unwritten reply' (157). Later, addressing a portrait of her brother in 'a studio piece/ Of circa '29', he reports that 'Photography, her trade,/ Is this security, this collateral' and that his 'fiction turns to sepia in its presence' (158). At some level, then, the book is an attempt to confront these different forms of photographic 'collateral', as he takes the historical photographs out of the drawer, and returns them to the light of day.

In the section named after them called '*Portraits*', Szirtes describes a photograph of Joseph Stalin put on the wall of his family's house in Budapest which establishes the political context: 'The early fifties: Uncle Joe's broad grin/ Extends benevolently across the wall' (*New & Collected* 157). Stalin's moustache in the portrait is said to 'shelter' the mother and son, who 'work' under the same roof: 'She works and he works. She checks his work for him/ And terrifies him into excellence' (157)[60]. According to *Gevaert Manual of Photography* (1962), we are drawn in the photograph to the subject by a 'recall', 'echo', or 'foil' (129). Stalin, portrayed as 'Uncle Joe' in the poem, reads as a foil for Szirtes' mother, who is in ironic contrast, terrifying in terms of her expectations of her son. The photographic portrait of Stalin, in other words, serves as a trigger and foil or counterpoint for a portrait of Szirtes as a 'peculiar, little old man of a boy' with his mother (*New & Collected* 156). These portraits foreground Szirtes' consistent exploration of the connection between a photographic and poetic or mental image.

As his 'psychopompos', or guide to the land of the dead, the 'woman' appears in most of the photographs described in the poem. In the first photograph, she is viewed on her way to see his father:

> [She] is whisked off to meet my father in
> A flat in Rózsa Street. His heavy-lidded
> Eye remembers, re-encounters. The street
> Of the rose. The rest is not my business,
> But a picture in a frame. Under the skin
> She wears another skin, another dress.
>
> (*New & Collected* 155)

[60] In 'Fables of Home', Szirtes reports his 'strong personal memory' of the day 'the end of the Stalin cult' was announced, when his mother held him up to 'the photograph of Stalin' on the wall and asked her son to 'continue to admire the genial-looking man in the picture' (110).

The father's vividly evoked 'heavy-lidded' eye, again, is a symbol for his ability to remember. The puncta in the photographic image of his parents also continue to be his eyes and her skin. With the enjambment, she is portrayed as 'a picture in a frame', like a photograph. After using photography as a poetic model in 'The Photograph in Winter', Szirtes uses 'a picture' as a metaphor for his consistent representation of his mother as a many-layered figure. We are also told that in her photographic 'likenesses', her 'flared' hair 'hides her face' (*New & Collected* 157):

> […] The middle-class
> Jews of Kolozsvar are the lost history
> Of which she hardly spoke. Mother's bob
> Is a fashionable frame for her neat face,
> Which the edges of the photograph reframe.
>
> (158)

Adapting Mahon's image of the 'lost people' of Treblinka and Pomepii, Szirtes refers to the 'lost history' of the 'middle-class/ Jews of Kolozsvar' but reports that he 'hardly' heard of her family's Romanian past from his mother. Szirtes, again, borrows the photographic language to describe his mother's 'bob' as a 'fashionable frame', which represents her interest in her fashionable appearance as a young woman photographer, and metaphorically, her reticence about her true 'face', and perhaps, her attempt to hide her Jewish ancestry and past. As he reports in 'Fables in Home', to protect her children from 'the horrors she and her family had gone through', 'she chose to cut herself off from her Jewish past' and 'maintained the fiction that she came from a Lutheran background' (113). In Szirtes' parallel understanding of his mother and photography, she is as many-surfaced as a photograph.

Fig. 34 A photograph of László Szirtes

Fig. 35 A photograph of Magdalena Szirtes

Modelling after Mahon's 'A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford', Szirtes' 'Metro' is the opposite of a tourist's creation with his 'light meter and relaxed itinerary'. Szirtes' poem

functions like a textual photograph album of Szirtes and his family. It is significantly not composed within a single, governing 'meter', but instead, a large-scale, yet erratic poetic structure. The poem is made of ten sections of six thirteen-line near-sonnets. Unlike 'The Photographer in Winter', which follows a consistent, close rhyme scheme throughout, each sonnet in 'Metro' follows a different rhyme scheme, separated by an asterisk. Each sonnet-stanza of 'Metro' creates a unique poetic frame, representing a collection of textual portraits of the 'lost history' reframed in the poem.

The poem goes on to say that the photographic frames 'hold names', and 'We can work them into fictions', suggesting that the relationship between documentation and fiction is inherent in photography (*New & Collected* 158). The rhyme of 'names' and 'frame' draws attention to the framing of identity in the photograph, and these 'names' refer to both parents. According to Szirtes' profile on the online genealogy site MyHeritage, his father was Schwartz and his mother was Nussbacher, but as he records in 'Fables of Home', 'Returning after the war, my parents, like most Jews, were radicalized' and 'My father became Szirtes, a name taken from a popular cinema actor' (113). The 'names' in his poem can be understood as linguistic frames for his parents' multiple cultural identities, suggesting the layers of framing with which Szirtes grapples in the poem.

The poem says earlier, 'voices are not heard but seen' (155), and actually much of it is in the form of ventriloquized soliloquy by his dead mother, describing her illness ('*The cold developed into rheumatic fever'*), separation from her brother ('*I tried to find him later but in vain'*), detention and imprisonment ('*At the hour/ When the Germans entered Budapest we were/ sitting in the Astoria*') (156, 158, 159); in other words, the unspoken history behind the 'likenesses'. The working of photographs and names 'into fictions' is brought to the forefront in the section '*In Her Voice*', where she also says, '*I last saw my brother/ Of whom I carry about this sepia/ (I seem to be my brother's only keeper)*' (165). The suggestion that she is her brother's keeper plays on the biblical notion, but here she plays the opposite role of Cain (a preserver rather than a destroyer). This foregrounds the multi-directional bio-ekphrasis at work in the poem, based around a group of family photographs, as the poem continues to suggest that Szirtes has become the '*keeper*' of his family's photographs and history.

The poem, as John Sears puts it in *Reading George Szirtes*, is a 'significant postmemorial text' (83, 84). Marianne Hirsch defines the term 'postmemory' as the memory of the second generation created by looking at photographs of the first generation (23). This is the explicit subject and form of Szirtes' poem. 'Metro', however, moves from individual postmemory to something more general, using photographs to

trace both his childhood and the history of Hungarian (and Romanian) Jews, including his family. If 'Metro' is a sustained undertaking in family archiving and postmemory, addressing a collection of actual photographs, 'The Photographer in Winter' can also be read as driven by a kind of fictive postmemory, capturing imaginary photographs of a ghost of his dead mother in a wintry city analogous to the miltiarised one she once lived in. This multiplies the artificiality already inherent in Hirsch's idea of postmemory.

'*Stopping Train*', the eighth of the ten sections of the poem, brings an end to the photograph-driven memory-journey. The memory-train reaches Ravensbrück: 'Here's Ravensbruck. I stop dead at the gate,/ Aware I cannot reach you through the wire', and 'I cannot send you poems or messages' (*New & Collected* 166). The Jewish-French writer Henri Raczymow, born in 1948, the same year as Szirtes, argues in his essay 'Memory Shot through the Holes' (1994) that many Jewish descendants feel obliged to trace their 'prehistory, along with the Holocaust' (103). Raczymow suggests that although they 'did not live through those times', they 'tread every day upon ground where trains rolled towards Auschwitz' and 'deep down', they have the feeling of 'having missed a train' (105). The image of the '*train*' in Szirtes' 'Metro' is based on the train to Ravensbrück, in which his mother was placed. In contrast to the train-carriage in Pascale Petit's 'Les Sang des Bêtes', this is Szirtes' memory-vehicle to re-enter his politically-shaped 'prehistory' in Jewish Budapest. However, the 'gate' in his poem, like a frame, represents Szirtes' inability to write 'poems or messages' to her about his mother's untold and unphotographed experiences of the prison camp. This is a poem intensely conscious of frames, limits, and obstacles to memory.

The portrayal of Ravensbrück as unreachable in imagination may also be partly due to the lack of historical studies of it until in 2015, when Sarah Helm published *If This Is a Woman: Inside Ravensbrück: Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women*. Saying that 'just as Auschwitz was the capital of the crime against Jews, so Ravensbrück was the capital of the crime against women', Heim argues that treating this 'crime against women' as 'marginal' is 'a further crime against the Ravensbrück women, and against the female sex' (718). The unreachable Ravensbrück in Szirtes' poem not only reinforces the idea that his mother reframed her life in front of her children to conceal her experiences but also the fact that the Holocaust-narrative has long been framed around suffering masculinity, as in Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* (1979), and there were limited historical documents or photographs of the Ravensbrück women.

'Metro' ends by renewing the central frame-metaphor: 'The crowd skirts round the edges/ Of the frame, spreads out into the city' (*New & Collected* 171). In *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* (2004), Eva Hoffman

suggests that the second generation 'now comprise a defined, if hybrid, collectivity' (xii). Szirtes' portrayal of the Hungarian Jews as a sprawling 'crowd' going beyond 'the frame' metaphorically represents the hybridity of the Hungarian-Jewish history and reiterates the limits of Szirtes' photograph-based multi-directional memorial project. Szirtes is implicitly, like his mother, a keeper of the different faces seen in photographs, but the multiple 'frames' represented in the poem reinforce his understanding of what the photographs do not record and cannot say.

*

Besides the poem about a photograph of his father at the age of 35, *Metro* includes a poem written about a single documentary photograph. 'A Soldier', as its subtitle indicates, was written in response to an image by the Hungarian photographer Károly Escher, *Soldier Entering the Re-Annexed Territories* (1940). In January 2018, Szirtes wrote on his online blog[61] that he saw Escher's photograph in the exhibition catalogue *The Hungarian Connection: The Roots of Photojournalism* (1987). The photograph, according to Szirtes, was mistakenly captioned *Soldier Going to the Front* and dated 1947, and when he wrote the poem, he 'believed the caption' and 'discounted the date as an aberration'.

Fig. 36 Károly Escher, *Soldier Entering the Re-Annexed Territories* (1940)

The poem, indeed, departs from the actual historical background of the photograph, treating the photograph of a soldier during the Second World War as an image of a soldier glimpsed when Szirtes' family was about to flee Hungary ('He is the country I am leaving'):

As we depart I am tempted to shout

[61] On 23 January 2018, Szirtes gave the talk 'The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs' on Hungarian photography, organised by the Royal Photographic Society. The talk in London was followed by nine articles on his online blog, with the same title, numbered in order.

> To attract his attention. I can only guess
> The occasion of his death, his tenderness.
>
> (*New & Collected* 176)

In *Understanding a Photograph*, Berger offers an account of André Kertesz's photograph of 'A Red Hussar Leaving, June 1919, Budapest', noting that 'everything in it is historical' but that the photo also 'concerns a resistance to the history', since 'the significance of the instant photographed is already claiming minutes, weeks, years' (75). Szirtes dramatises a comparable photograph's 'resistance to the history', using Escher's photograph of a soldier, with the wrong caption and date, to recreate his experience as a child refugee. Once again, a photograph is used as a screen onto which to project biography. Re-casting himself on the point of exile with the soldier going to the front, Szirtes uses Escher's image as a transformational object to create a phantasmal autobiographical narrative. This recalls Petit's use of David Hurn's photograph of a girl wearing a net curtain for part of her ongoing phantasmagoric tale; in contrast, Szirtes uses Escher's photograph to recreate a scene from his politicised childhood.

In 'A Soldier', he is also described earlier as 'prepared for sacrifice' and we are told that 'Death has half closed his eyes' (*New & Collected* 176). The 'eyes' prove to be a common punctum in Szirtes' accounts of photographs, but this time, they represent the imminent danger of death facing the soldier. Escher's photograph is simultaneously read as a precursor of 'his death', recalling Ted Hughes' 'Six Young Men' from *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), a poem about a photograph of six young soldiers— 'Six months after this picture they were all dead' (54). Sontag asserts in *On Photography* that 'All photographs are *memento mori*' (15), but Berger alternatively suggests in 'Uses of Photography (for Susan Sontag)' (1978) that 'The photograph is a memento from a life being lived' (*Understanding a Photograph* 53). Sharing both critical views about the photograph, Szirtes understands Escher's photograph as a representation of the 'life being lived' by the soldier but simultaneously, a visual prefiguration of his death, and his own exile ('He is the country I am leaving').

In the chapter 'A Horse, a Circus and a Small Case of Photographs' included in *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century* (2011), an exhibition edition published by London's Royal Academy of Arts, Szirtes suggests that his mother, despite her illness, 'must have been very determined' to 'work as an assistant or apprentice to the well-known photographer Károly Escher (34). From figuratively adopting his mother's 'photographic eye' to studying photographs of her and recreating her voice based on them, and to studying the work of Escher to whom she was apprenticed, Szirtes has been consistently developing his extensive Freudian integration of his mother into his filial ego. This went alongside the development of his own

'photographic eye' as a poet and his complex understanding of any photograph as both a memento vitae (life) and a memento mori (death).

*

Fig. 37 A photograph of Magdalena and László Szirtes

'A Picture of My Parents with Their First Television' from *Bridge Passages* (1991), as its title suggests, is a more direct reading of a photograph of Szirtes' parents in relation to family and socio-cultural history. Szirtes makes a strong cultural statement about the role and status of television in the post-war period:

> They fought their way to this, to Lady Barnett
> to Bernard Braden and John Freeman, Kathie Kay
> and Alan Breeze, to all those names of power
> that solved nothing but could somehow fill
> the hours before they slipped away
> to private lives that grew more private still,
> past old reliable faces by which they set
> their clocks precisely to the latest hour.
>
> (*New & Collected* 205)

The list of British household names in the 50s and 60s, which includes a television personality, comedian, politician-broadcaster, and two singers, suggests the parents' assimilation into the post-war British culture. The poem ironically observes, however, that 'Slowly they become/ the stillness by which they are both possessed' (205). The photograph of the parents also characteristically serves as a memento mori, with the photographic 'stillness' as a typical metaphor for the parents' inevitable death, as well as a sign of the contrast with the moving image of the novel television set.

'We don't finish smaller and clearer as the years go by': *Blind Field* (1994)

The poems in Szirtes' seventh collection *Blind Field* (1994) are preceded by an epigraph from Barthes' *Camera Lucida* introducing and explaining the photographic terms 'punctum' and 'blind field'. The book marks Szirtes' explicit appeal to current critical understanding of photography, and his growing interest in documentary

photographs, and the life and work of established photographers. In the book, Szirtes expands his collection of documentary photographs in two poetic sequences dedicated to photographers: 'FOR ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ' and 'FOR DIANE ARBUS'. Szirtes continues to show his interest in the work of Hungarian photographers as records of his country's history, and we might see this as a complement of the interest he has shown in Hungarian writers through his translations.

'The Accordionist' describes the figure in Kertész's photograph with the same title as 'a blind intellectual/ carrying an enormous typewriter' (*New & Collected* 226). Here Szirtes identifies himself with the Hungarian musician, by strangely seeing the figure as 'a blind intellectual' and humorously replacing the accordion with 'an enormous typewriter'. He goes on to frame the image in a larger history, declaring that 'My century is a sad one of collapses' (226). Born in 1948, Szirtes uses the accordionist in Kertész's photograph as his transformational equivalent to dramatise the fact that unlike Kertész and the accordionist, he was not himself an eyewitness of the first half of the 'century'—the times of war destruction and 'collapses'—but that he is made aware of it through such photographs. The poem ends on a self-reflexive note: 'Beware the sentiments concealed/ in this short rhyme' (226). Szirtes invites us to understand the poem—a 'short-rhyme'—as an Eliotian objective correlative for the 'sentiments'[62]. In his chapter in the exhibition edition *Eyewitness*, Szirtes proposes that 'The greater the photographer, the more music there is' (36). In other words, he adapts the 'music' we imagine when looking at Kertész's photograph into his 'short rhyme' and reframes the 'music' portrayed by Kertész as 'concealed' representation of political 'sentiments', exploring the transformational capacity of photography, music and poetry at the same time.

Fig. 38 André Kertész, *Accordionist, Esztergom, 1916.* Estate of André Kertész

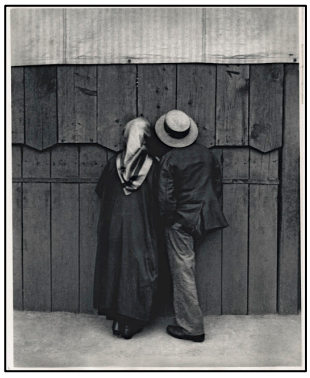


Fig. 39 André Kertész, *The Circus, Budapest, 1920*, Estate of André Kertész

[62] In 'Hamlet and His Problems' (1919), T. S. Eliot describes his notion of 'objective correlative' as 'the formula' for art to evoke a particular emotion, suggesting the importance for emotion represented in art to be objectively justified (*The Sacred Wood* 100). Eliot understands Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as less 'successful' than *Macbeth* on the grounds that it does not provide enough 'facts' to explain Hamlet's 'disgust occasioned by his mother' (100, 101).

'The Voyeurs', in contrast, explores the act of looking. Based on Kertész's photograph *The Circus, Budapest, 1920*, the poem begins by asking 'What are they staring at? Haven't they seen enough?/ Perhaps it's natural to stare at backs' (*New & Collected* 227). The poem continues with Szirtes' photograph-based exploration of the cultural history of post-war Budapest, but this time, basing on a documentary photograph of people staring at an unseen spectacle. Szirtes identifies the concealed 'stare' through the slat as the punctum of the photograph, sharing his critical contemporaries' ideas about the act of looking being a key motif in Kertész's work. In his analysis of Kertész's *A Red Hussar Leaving, June 1919, Budapest*, Berger argues that as the woman and the red hussar are 'looking at each other', 'the image of what *is* now shall remain for them' (*Understanding a Photograph* 76)[63]. Aligning himself with critics like Berger, Szirtes directs our attention to what 'remain' for the people in Kertész's photograph. We are also invited to be conscious about own 'staring' as viewers of such photographs and ponder our 'natural' tendency to do so. Based on two photographs by Kertész, 'The Accordionist' and 'The Voyeurs' explore what is 'concealed' in the photograph and by implication in the poem itself, foregrounding the limit to looking as virtual witness, and the 'blind field' in the poem, photograph and our vision.

*

The poem 'On a Young Lady's Photograph Album', the second in the sequence 'FOR DIANE ARBUS', represents Szirtes' engagement with a poetic predecessor's understanding of photographs. The poem, as its title suggests, pays tribute to Philip Larkin's poem 'Lines on a Young Lady's Photograph Album' from *The Less Deceived* (1953), one of the forerunners of today's photographic ekphrasis in poetry. The poem was written in the early 1950s, so way before Berger, Barthes and Sontag turned to photography. It ends by saying, 'you lie/ Univariably lovely there,/ Smaller and clearer as the years go by' (14). Punning on 'lie' and using the archaic word 'Univariably', Larkin ironically suggests that the photographs of the lady looking invariably lovely could represent a 'lie' to us. Likewise, the suggestion that the image of the lady becomes 'Smaller and clearer' is ironical, since the image would not be clear anymore if it became extremely small, like an atom. Larkin seems to anticipate Sontag's understanding of the camera as rendering reality 'atomic, manageable, and opaque' (*On Photography* 23).

Szirtes' inter-textual poetic response to Larkin suggests his new understanding of the photograph as a 'blurrier' image 'as the years go by': 'We don't finish smaller and clearer as the years go by/ but blurrier, vaster, ever more unfocused, full of grains' (*New*

[63] In his account of Kertész's *The Puppy. Paris 1928*, Barthes similarly argues that the boy looking at the camera with a puppy in his hands '*retains* within himself his love and his fear: that is the Look' (*Camera Lucida* 113).

& Collected 230). The poem goes on to assume that 'what remains/ is perhaps a voice saying (for instance) 'mother'' (230). Szirtes characteristically uses photographic terms ('blurrier'; 'unfocused, full of grains') to describe the fading memory of the subject portrayed in the photograph. Contrary to the long recreation of his mother's 'voice' within the poem 'Metro', Szirtes suggests that 'what remains' in the photograph album is an identity-proving 'voice'. Such understanding of the photograph as testimony to the lady's identity as 'mother' recalls Barthes' similar declaration in *Camera Lucida* that many photographs of his mother provoke 'only her identity, not her truth' (71). Taking Larkin at his word, Szirtes actually aligns himself with Larkin by maintaining that 'We don't finish smaller and clearer as the years go by'.

After the title poem of *The Photographer in Winter*, 'Bichonnade' is another biographical study of a female photographer. The poem, however, takes its title from Jacques Henri Lartigue's cousin as well as Lartigue's photograph of her leaping down the stairs. It says that 'It takes courage to destroy the ledge you stand on', 'or to fly down the stairs like Lartigue's Bichonnade' (*New & Collected* 232). As Arbus is known for photographing marginalised subjects, including transgender people and carnival performers, the image of the 'ledge' can also represent the boundaries of photography Arbus consistently pushed back in her career, recalling the different 'frames' and the gate in 'Metro'. As Szirtes ends the poem by saying, 'there is nothing to land on/ but the flying itself, the flying perfect and new' (*New & Collected* 232). The implication, surely, is that her photographic career itself was a form of 'flying perfect and new'.

Fig. 40 Jacques-Henri Lartigue, *Bichonnade* (ca. 1904)
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The 'ledge' also needs to be understood in relation to biographical accounts of Arbus herself. In *Diane Arbus: A Biography* (1984), Patricia Bosworth begins by reporting that Arbus, as a teenager, 'used to stand on the window ledge of her parents' apartment', 'for as long as she could' (3). Bosworth believes that Arbus would subsequently say, 'I wanted to see if I could do it', alluding to her suicide (3). After long struggles with depression, Arbus took her own life in 1971 by taking an overdose and cutting her

wrists. In the poem, Szirtes also goes so far to turn the image of the young Arbus' standing on the ledge as a metaphor for her suicide but describes it as courageous and compares it to Bichonnade's flying-like jump. What Szirtes does not tell us in the poem is that Arbus is a transformational subject—an onstage character playing his own mother, another photographer who committed suicide. According to his preface to *The Budapest File* (2000), the poems in *Blind Field* explore how he 'identified some aspects' of his photographer-mother with 'the photographer of the extreme, Diane Arbus' (14). The poem thus brings together three women from different cultural backgrounds in a biographical frame: Bichonnade in Lartigue's photograph, and the two photographers Diane Arbus and Magdalena Szirtes.

'The classic shot of my father. That's the one': *Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape* (1998)

If 'On a Young Lady's Photograph Album' responds critically to Larkin, 'Golden Bream' from *Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape* (1998), symmetrically enough, is an ostensibly negative response to John Berger's ideas about oil painting. The poem ends with an ekphrastic account of Francisco Goya's *Still Life with Golden Bream* (1808-1812) but proposes earlier that 'despite what Berger says. It's probably better/ than owning the genuine things' (*New & Collected* 256). Marianne Moore describes in 'When I Buy Pictures' the experience of being 'the imaginary possessor' of paintings and other visual images. Likewise, John Berger argues in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) that 'To have a thing painted and put on a canvas is not unlike buying it and putting it in your house' (83). Berger's understanding of a still life as 'not unlike' the depicted thing ironically reminds us that the two, in reality, are profoundly different. In comparable ironic vein, Szirtes suggests that a still life is only 'probably better' than what it portrays. Szirtes' poetic responses to Larkin and Berger demonstrate his continuous engagement, since *Blind Field*, with his ekphrastic predecessors' and critical contemporaries' understanding of the thin line between the 'genuine things' and those portrayed in photographs and paintings.

The title poem of the book, meanwhile, like *Metro*, returns to a single photograph of his father. As a sequence of fifteen sonnets, it returns to what Szirtes calls at the opening the 'classic shot' of his father, 'the one/ in which he carries my brother in his arms/ with me striding beside him, holding on/ to his trousers' (*New & Collected* 293). Taking off from this photo, the sequence weaves between anecdotes and images of his father: returning later once again, after reflecting on the relationship between 'presences', 'ghosts' and 'photographs' (296), to the 'classic shot of my father. That's the

one' (297). The cover of the book, in contrast, uses a pictorial image of a man in a rural landscape, complicating the relationship between the two genres of portraiture and landscape (as in Berger's discussion of Gainsborough[64]), between the single person and multiple places evoked in the poem.

The eyes of the father in this later 'classic shot' are characteristically seen as the photographic punctum:

> […] He makes that worried gesture
> with his hands which moves me. His eyes
> are a warm cave swimming in faint moisture,
> now turned inward, now open in surprise.
> They hang there when the anecdotes are done.
> The classic shot of my father. That's the one.
>
> (*New & Collected* 297)

The extended, multi-angled account of the 'classic shot' contrasts with the many images of his mother in Szirtes' earlier poems: (1) the 'anecdotes' of Szirtes' father starkly contrasts with the 'lost history' in 'Metro', which his mother rarely talked about; (2) whereas 'The Photographer in Winter' is set in the wintry cityscape and compares her 'photographic eye' to freezing, the eyes in the 'classic shot' are compared to 'a warm cave', recalling the photograph of him at the age of thirty-five, taken in a 'country garden' in the 'photogenic' summer. In *Metro*, it was 'as if [the father's eyes] could look both backwards and forwards' (*Metro* 5). Here, his fathers' eyes are shown to turn inward and open in surprise. The new image of his father's eyes intimately portrays them as windows to his soul. Barthes describes in *Camera Lucida* the 'Winter Garden Photograph' as 'essential' by provoking his mother's 'truth' (71). Unlike Barthes, Szirtes continues putting together a fuller picture of his mother as a very complex figure, but has found the comparable 'classic shot' of his father, which recalls the 'Summer Garden Photograph' of his father, described in *Metro*.

'Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape', as John Sears has observed, follows the structure of the Hungarian sonnet sequence, where the last sonnet is constituted by the adaptations of the first line of each previous sonnet (*Reading George Szirtes* 147). Such a circular structure allows Szirtes to begin and end the poem with the 'classic shot' and simultaneously represents a conflicting force within the English urban structure described in the poem. While the father is described as 'Old solitary. Dry bone', the poem goes on to say that 'The high street is full of loners. Dry bones/ in shop doorways', who carry 'their essences/ under their layers of skin and flesh' (*New & Collected* 297). In the Book of Ezekiel in the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites in exile are dry bones to be revived and brought to the Land of Israel. Szirtes recreates the Jewish

---

[64] See Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, p. 106-8.

biblical tale ('God's scattered text') (294), portraying the father as a dry bone, and all the Jewish dry bones in the urban English landscape as retaining 'their essences' and perhaps awaiting to be covered in their original 'skin and flesh'.

The tension between the English landscape described in the poem and the Hungarian landscape created by the poetic form corresponds to the tension between the 'essences' and the 'layers of skin and fresh' covering the loners, or dry bones. The poem speaks of 'A presence, like the ghost in a photograph' (298), and in his poetry, Szirtes figuratively places his mother, father, and other Jewish people in the Hungarian and English landscapes, using photographs as the bases for understanding them as living 'under their layers of skin and fresh'.

'We replay/ them like old movies': *The Budapest File* (2000), *An English Apocalypse* (2001), and *Reel* (2004)

Szirtes entitled his selected poems *The Budapest File* (2000) and inscribed it to the memory of his mother and to his father. It is a testament to Szirtes' memory-journey to Budapest, while also drawing on *Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape*, which, like the following collection *An English Apocalypse* (2001), constitutes part of Szirtes' imagined journey to the English Landscape. 'Nostalgia' from the 2001 collection is spoken by a united voice—'We lost shape' while 'Russia showed us a clenched fist'—asking when 'Mills and Boon', a romance imprint founded in 1908, had given way to 'Black Lace', a pop band formed in the 1970s (364). This suggests a changing trajectory in Szirtes' exploration of his cultural identity, from identifying with the Jewish people living in Hungary and Britain to recreating the voice of the British people. The poem goes on to address itself as a nostalgic account by drawing on cinematic imagery and language: 'Some decades age faster than others. We replay/ them like old movies' (*New & Collected* 364). Anticipating this moment of cinematic ekphrasis, 'Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape' briefly conjured 'a ridiculous epic of cinematic dust' (*New & Collected* 295), and a new poem in *The Budapest File* used characters in a film noir as transformational subjects or reference points: 'The clothes hung on the door congealed to one/ fat figure, somewhat like Sidney Greenstreet/ in *The Maltese Falcon*', while 'I was like Peter Lorre/ but tinier still and much more vulnerable' (306). If *Blind Field* represents Szirtes' deepest engagement with photography, his subsequent works complicate this by consistently including cinema and film, among other kinds of art.

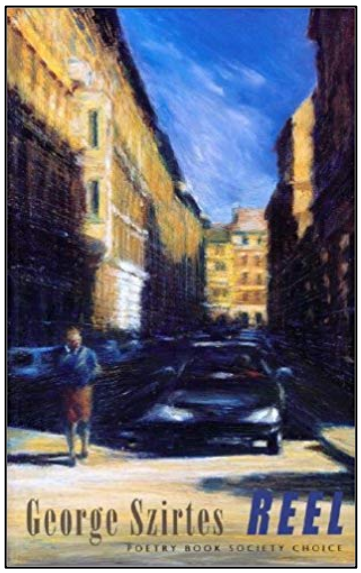


Fig. 41 George Szirtes, *Reel* (2004), with Clarissa Upchurch's painting with the same title (2004) as the cover image

Fig. 42 George Szirtes, *New & Collected Poems* (2008), with Clarissa Upchurch's *Orange* (2000) as the cover image

With *Reel* (2004), Szirtes returned to Budapest. The title poem 'Reel' is also part of their joint book *Budapest: Image, Poem, Film* (2006), which includes Upchurch's series of paintings of Budapest, Szirtes' poem, and his tribute essay to Upchurch, which describes the poem as 'to some degree a love poem addressed to her vision' of Budapest (58). Once again, in other words, his poetry frames Budapest, his home-city, through images created by another family member, his wife now rather than his mother. Written in terza rima used by Dante Alighieri, 'Reel' alludes to Alighieri's vision of the afterlife:

> legions of saloon cars purring by.
> It is as if they drove some narrative
> Whose visual sub-plot struck your painter's eye
>
> (*New & Collected* 378)

The saloon cars described as groups of ancient Roman soldiers correspond to the 'marching bridges' in 'The Photographer in Winter', written in memory of his mother. 'Reel' also suggests the conflated post-exile, post-traumatic visions of Upchurch and Szirtes. Upchurch was born in China, and according to the interview in *Network Norwich and Norfolk* (December 2015), her father was 'a Baptist missionary in China and Malaya, persecuted under the Cultural Revolution'. Szirtes' poem later suggests that the painter spent part of her childhood in China and Malaysia:

> you, born in the Far East, in a bowl
> Of China dust, carried in armoured trucks
> Along Malaysian roads
>
> (*New & Collected* 379)

The poem represents Upchurch's projection of her memory of the 'armoured trucks/Along Malaysian roads' onto the 'legions of saloon cars' seen in Budapest. Szirtes' poetic recreation of his home-city is systematically based on and runs parallel to his exploration of the art and biography of his mother and now, his wife, from repurposing

his mother's 'photographic eye' to recreating his wife's comparable 'painter's eye', and from framing 'Metro' as a memory-train which stops at Ravensbrück, the concentration camp which once imprisoned his mother to suggesting that his wife saw the car-'legions' as a driving force of 'some narrative', and Szirtes characteristically uses the Danteseque tercets to frame each stanza as a reciprocal dedication to Upchurch's Apocalyptic series of paintings of Budapest.

'Reel' is also caught up in a kind of cinematic ekphrasis, marking Szirtes' deeper engagement therewith since the late 1990s. While the 'visual sub-plot struck [the] painter's eye', the poem itself develops its own 'sub-plot': 'Film crews/ Shoot Budapest for Berlin/ The city rhymes/ With its imperial neighbour' (377). The image of shooting Budapest for 'its imperial neighbour' renews the metaphor of photographic shooting and alludes to Hungary being occupied by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. While Budapest is said to 'rhyme' with Berlin, Szirtes comparably adapts the Italian poetic structure for his textual 'reel' about Budapest. The poem represents the recreations of Budapest in the poetic, pictorial, and filmic media and draws a parallel between the 'sub-plot' about the director's artistic licence in shooting Budapest for Berlin and the main plot about the painter's projection of her childhood memory in China and Malaya onto Budapest. Szirtes simultaneously explores the transformational uses of poetry, painting, and cinematography for recording substitute post-war memory.

Elsewhere in *Reel*, Szirtes also returned to tracing his early family history including his mother's work as a photographer. 'FLESH: AN EARLY FAMILY HISTORY' is one of his longest poetic sequences, including five sections of six poems and again, written in terza rima. The fourth section 'Her Adult Occupations', like the poem 'The Photographer in Winter', describes Szirtes' vivid memory of his mother at work: 'The light in the box dazzles. No one dies/ In photographs. Then she bends down once more' (*New & Collected* 407). Here Szirtes returns to his consistent view that the photograph contains a time-less, repetitive reality, where the subject never 'dies', but in a poignantly ironic tone. Written in the present tense, the poem simultaneously equates memory to 'photographs', and this photograph-like memory is equivalent to a filmic recording of the moment she 'bends', being played on repeat. In Szirtes' poetry, cinematic ekphrasis consistently overlaps with photographic ekphrasis and together serve as a twin model for his memory of his mother.

Reel covers many ekphrastic grounds we have seen in Szirtes' earlier collections. 'Three Poems for Sebastião Salgado' in *Reel*, like the poems for Kertész and Arbus in *Blind Field*, address a contemporary Brazilian photographer, but critiques his social documentary work. The first of the three poems—'*Preface to an Exhibition*'—begins with

the shocking statement 'How beautiful suffering is', repeated across the poem (*New & Collected* 457). W. H. Auden begins 'Musée des Beaux Arts' by maintaining that 'About suffering they were never wrong,/ The Old Masters' (*Selected Poems* 79). Szirtes, in contrast, seems to celebrate Salgado for his aestheticisation of suffering, recalling Sontag's views on the problematic nature of looking at photographs of 'suffering'. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, published in 2013, a year before Szirtes' *Reel*, Sontag highlights Georges Bataille's ability to 'imagine extreme suffering' 'as a kind of transfiguration' when he contemplates his 'legendary' photograph of the execution of a Chinese prisoner (87, 88).

Szirtes, nevertheless, dramatically compares the 'click of a button' to 'a tender joke' and continues by ironically describing Salgado's exploration of the 'beautiful suffering as a theme': 'the eye shuts like a shutter/ On blood in a gutter' (*New & Collected* 457). The rhyme of 'shutter' and 'gutter' is horribly mechanical, reinforcing the skepticism about Salgado's turning human suffering into a spectacle in his series of photographs. Taken from a high vantage point, Salgado's famous photograph *Gold Mine* (1986), for example, turns the multitude of mine workers into indiscernible details. Rather than understanding 'suffering' in the photograph as beautiful, however, Szirtes seems to align himself with Berger proposing in 'Uses of Photography' (1978) that photographs need to be 'addressed to those suffering what they depict' (*Understanding a Photograph* 58). In his new poetic tributes to a modern photographer, Szirtes offers less a biographical reading of the photographs than an exploration of the aesthetics and ethics in documentary photography, which, again, corresponds to the views of his critical contemporaries.

Fig. 43 Sebastião Salgado, *Gold Mine* (1986), Tate

'breathless/ as they are, as we will be': *The Burning of the Books and Other Poems* (2009), *Bad Machine* (2013), and *Mapping the Delta* (2016)

At the end of his preface to *New & Collected* (2008), Szirtes records that the 'longer work – sequences, experiments, more sustained voyages in that or that leaky craft – is saved for the collection to appear after this one, *The Burning of the Books and Other Poems* (2009)' (20). These include 'IN THE FACE OF HISTORY: IN TIME OF WAR', the longest among Szirtes' sequences based on the work of modern photographers. The sequence driven by curatorial and photographic ekphrasis includes twelve poems after ten European and Jewish photographers and with its title, pays tribute to Auden's 'IN TIME OF WAR', which sets prose narrative as well as poems against photographs in his *Journey to a War* (1939), co-written with Christopher Isherwood. Szirtes' ekphrastic sequence was commissioned by the Barbican Gallery in London, and functions like a textual photographic exhibition by following the same titling system, namely, with the photographer's name and the title of his or her photograph. Here, the poet really does take on the role of gallery curator.

Fig. 44 André Kertész, *Soldiers on the Latrine, Poland, 1915*
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

'Kertész: Latrine' responds to Kertész's *Soldiers on the Latrine, Poland, 1915*: 'Four *poilus* in a wood austerely shitting/ Death watches them, laughing' (*The Burning of the Books* 43). The poem ends with an ironic plea: 'Let them dump and move on into the dark plate/ Of the unexposed future' (43). Szirtes characteristically uses a photographic metaphor ('the dark plate') to gesture towards the 'future' beyond the photographic frame. Like 'A Soldier' and Ted Hughes' 'Six Young Men', the new poem suggests the danger of death facing the four soldiers, referred to as '*poilus*'[65]. Sizrtes, however, also

[65] According to the online *OED*, *poilus* was a military slang term for a French soldier fighting in the First World War, and *poilu* means 'hairy, virile' in French. Using words of the French origin including '*poilus*' and 'latrine', Szirtes dramatises our distance from the time of war portrayed in Kertész's atypical image of the soldiers.

eerily puts the photographer and us, the viewers, in the same position as 'Death' and provokes thoughts about the sense of incongruous amusement derived from looking at the soldiers 'shitting'. As Sontag argues in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 'satisfaction' from learning of 'faraway suffering' from photographs may depend on the fact that 'This is not happening to *me*' (89). In line with the development of critical theories about photographs, Szirtes has commented on photographs of 'faraway suffering' during and after the war and the 'satisfaction' from looking at them.

'Snapshots from a Riot' from *Bad Machine* (2013) is one of the examples where Szirtes writes about unsourced photographs with his equivalent of a photojournalist's eye. The poem is made up of nine numbered short sections functioning like documentary snapshots themselves. The last 'snapshot' suggests the capacity of photography to capture an ironic aesthetic moment during a violent protest:

> A boy holds up a pair of jeans appraisingly,
> It goes with the hood and the mask.
> It is an aesthetic matter.
>
> (37)

The irony lies in the rioting boy's aesthetic appraisal of the jeans. Based on their journey to the Sino-Japanese War, Auden's and Isherwood's *Journey to a War* comparably includes a photograph of child refugees in a camp, with a few smiling to the camera[66]. The XVI sonnet in the joint book also gives an odd portrayal of a boy in the war zone: 'Flags on a map assert that troops were sent;/ A boy brings milk in bowls' (274). In contrast, framing the poem as nine snapshots from a riot, Szirtes goes so far as to ironically understand a boy's total look during the riot as 'an aesthetic matter'. The 'boy' has appeared in Szirtes' poetry in different times, including the one united with his mother in the mirror in 'At the Dressing Table Mirror', the one terrified by his mother but feeling sheltered by 'Uncle Joe' in the '*Portraits*' section in 'Metro', and now, the boy in a riot whose dress sense is seen as 'an aesthetic matter'. The boys in in the reflected image, portrait, and snapshot are frequently scrutinised in the third-person – as when seen in a photograph.

If the rioting boy in a snapshot is another transformational screen for Szirtes himself, the boy also makes a counterpoint to Szirtes at the age of sixty-five in 2013. Szirtes was the subject of his mother's photographs, and now, photographs continue to perform the mirroring effect Winnicott has observed in a child's looking at his or her mother's face. I want to return to *Reel*, where the poem 'Meeting Austerlitz' includes what could be Szirtes' comparison of his current self to his young self in a photograph:

> […] I stared

---

[66] Likewise, the photograph captioned 'La Condition Humaine', alluding to André Malraux's novel of the same name (French for *Man's Fate*), portrays two boys as child labours, but again, smiling to *us*.

> at the panoramic photograph of my old school
> seeking my younger face, darker and thicker haired
> lost cousin among all the faces trapped
> in the moment.
>
> (*New & Collected* 385)

The poem, as its sub-title reports, was written in memory of his colleague at the University of East Anglia, the German writer W. G. Sebald, whose final novel *Austerlitz* embodies a significant bio-ekphrastic dialogue between prose and reproduced photographs, in the context of the violent history of the mid-twentieth century. Szirtes' poem is spoken by the man whose 'half-century had passed' (383). Strangely, the 'panoramic photograph' of the school is studied within the frame of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis—'seeking' the 'younger face' 'among all the faces'—and the uncanniness is dramatised as this 'younger face' is represented as a family resemblance (a 'lost cousin'). John Berger frequently addresses photography in terms of their record of a moment, and the photograph shows Szirtes and his school friends 'trapped/ in the moment', but exposed to his and other later scrutiny.

In his latest collection *Mapping the Delta* (2016), Szirtes returns to the range of art he has written about, describing maps as 'a start/ in gathering up strands of a notional heart', the mind as a cinema lobby ('I was standing in the lobby of my mind/ on the tiled floor beneath the colonnade'), an abstract landscape painted by Anselm Kiefer as having multiple puncta ('here is colour: hands, eyes and lips,/ magnified as if for real, then vanishing/ into the sinkholes that punctuate/ the landscape'), and the body in Francesca Woodman's photographs as a frame of its own ('Body as stop-frame/ animation. So the frame/ stops. So body stops) (14, 15, 45, 59). In 'After a Line of W. H. Auden', Szirtes also presents a radical take on the first line of Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts', saying 'About suffering the old bastards/ were very seldom wrong,/ turning our flesh to dust so we might turn/ that dust to song' (27). Szirtes still draws heavily on arts of different kinds and the works of other artists and poets, but now uses art as a metaphor for the body and the visceral and recognises art as a body-transforming object, which magnifies parts of the body and frames as well as transforms our body.

In *Mapping the Delta*, Szirtes also includes two short poems which treat the photograph itself as a subject. In 'A Note on Photographs', photographs are personified and associated with us. They are said to 'stare/ at time, constantly surprised by how still it is/ as we are surprised by how fast it moves, then stops' (*Mapping the Delta* 154). The photographic 'stillness' is contrasted with our time, which 'moves, then stops'. These descriptions all come from the single run-on line, making up the rest of the poem until the full-stop. The poem as a note printed on the page represents its 'stillness', while its seamless form mimics the fast movement of life and its sudden stop. The poem

represents the 'breathless/ as they are, as we will be' (154), establishing the bond already discussed between the photograph as memento vitae and memento mori. Szirtes turns photographs into a 'breathless' life subject and equates the photographic 'stillness' to our becoming 'breathless', or according to the online *OED*, *exanimatus* in Latin. This might be inspired by Szirtes' experience of 'a quadruple bypass early in 2016', which, as he told *Interlitq* in interview, gave him 'a glance down into' death—'a place that is never quite out of view'. Ageing and the imminence of death, apart from ethics and aesthetics, have become important themes in Szirtes' latest exploration of photography.

In the second poem 'A Photograph', the first and final lines in the iambic pentameter make an unrhymed frame for the six-line textual photograph:

> Should someone ask me what life is, I'd say
> *this is*, knowing it is only you, but reading
> your face, the light enveloping it, into all faces,
> for what a face might mean when it is loved
> and stares into the dark room of the world
> as though that too were life, the light as kind.
>
> (*Mapping the Delta* 173)

Photo-graph, according to the online *OED*, means writing by light. As the poem, framed as a photograph, opens by saying '*this is*' life, it self-reflexively suggests that photo-graph as light-writing is a kind of life-writing. Recalling Shakespeare's eighteenth sonnet which ends by saying 'So long lives this, and this gives life to thee', Szirtes's poem, however, reports that '*this is*' life, 'knowing it its only you'. The paradox carries on through the poem, reading 'your face' into 'all faces', echoing John Berger's opening poem of *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (1984), which begins by saying 'When I open my wallet', 'I look at your face', and ends with the title of the book (5). Szirtes' brief poem encapsulates his complex understanding of the photograph as a visual dichotomy, between 'life' and 'you', 'your face' and 'all faces', 'light' and 'dark', and '*this is*' and 'as though'.

Addressing itself as 'life', 'A Photograph' represents both poetry and photography as transformational objects through which life is framed for 'reading'. This last poem in Szirtes' latest collection serves as an envoi to his uses of photographs, photography and cinematography as poetic models for forty years, since 'At the Dressing-Table Mirror', his 'earliest properly formed poem of 1976'. It also marks a new page in his multi-directional bio-ekphrastic oeuvre functioning as a photo-album, from reframing the faces and lives of his parents or other people back to framing his own. As Szirtes told *Interlitq*, 'One would have to write out of ['mortality'], not about it'. His poetry to date is a sustained life narrative which began as driven by memory of his mother who committed suicide in 1975, but as Freud understands mourning as object-internalising, Szirtes'

poetry has also transformed into a consistent reinvention of his mother's life and her art for a broader investigation into familial and socio-cultural memory, our mortality, and photography.

Szirtes' photo-centric narrative began in the 1970s, when there were emerging interests among critics in rethinking photographs. Szirtes' collections published in the late 1970s and early 1980s were haunted by his childhood memories, where his mother is conjured up in connection with a dressing-room mirror and her camera. These were followed by long sequences in his following books. *The Photographer in Winter* (1986) represents Szirtes' most sustained effort in staging a multi-directional bio-ekphrastic complex, based around his mother's professional photography, and with a ghost of his dead mother in the wintry totalitarian world as the subject of his fictive life-restoring photography. *Metro* (1988), by contrast, sets out to be a post-memorial and archival project based on actual photographs. Szirtes, meanwhile, continues to explore the limit of photography as recording and of photograph as life-memento. *Blind Field* (1994) marks the beginning of his explicit use of his critical contemporaries' ideas about photographs, and of his extensive curation of documentary photographs. Whereas Szirtes in *Metro* studies his mother's 'likeness' 'caught on film', he dwells on one 'classic shot' of his father a decade later in *Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape* (1998). Since 2000, he has also explicitly used cinema as metaphor and employed the cinematic language. The most vivid case is *Reel* (2004), where he looks to his wife Clarissa Upchurch for her painter's vision of Budapest, and simultaneously narrates the shooting of a film of the city. His collections in the last decade contain his longest sequence based on wartime photographs and his direct enquiries into photograph itself. Szirtes' poetry has long been his family and socio-cultural photo exhibition, where he also expresses his informed and evolving thoughts about the subjects framed in photographs.

Chapter 4: 'I will roll out my new-found arts one by one': Curatorial Ekphrasis in Tamar Yoseloff's Poetry

The poetry of Tamar Yoseloff (b. 1965), the youngest poet in my selection, is not governed by a central line of familial narrative. Her ekphrastic project, I argue, represents the vision and ambition of an art curator and art historian, addressing visual artworks and artefacts from different historical periods, genres and cultures, and drawing on the history of the artworks and the biography of the artists. As Yoseoff has steered her project to modern and contemporary art since 2007, she also frequently experiments with the visual and material dimensions of a poem and book. Yoseloff published her first pamphlet (*Fun House*, 1994) and first full-length collection (*Sweetheart*, 1998) in the same years as Petit did, but Yoseloff has received considerably less critical recognition. This chapter aims to give a due comprehensive survey of her ekphrastic and collaborative achievements.

'Stragola' from Yoseloff's *Sweetheart* is voiced by the spirit of a dead person haunting his or her lover, declaring that 'I will roll out my new-found arts one by one' (49). The title, as the book tells us, is a Transylvania word referring to '*an unfulfilled soul*' (49), but the term 'new-found arts' also evokes the art of Newfoundland and Labrador, known to be distinctive from its counterparts of other parts of Canada. We can also read the declaration about 'my new-found arts' as marking the beginning of Yoseloff's expansive ekphrastic project. Since the beginning of her career, Yoseloff has been rolling out her 'new-found arts one by one': personal photographs, Jan van Eyck's painting *The Arnolfini Portrait*, the cover of *Yesterday and Today* by The Beatles, and Henry Moore's sculpture *King and Queen* (in *Sweetheart*); a daguerreotype, church paintings, and studies for a portrait of a young woman in Delft (in *Barnard's Star*, 2004); illuminated manuscripts, a portrait of a couple looking at a landscape painting by J. M. W. Turner, and as mentioned in Chapter 1, Barbara Hepworth's sculpture *Spring* (in *Fetch*, 2007); paintings by Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, Cy Twombly, and Howard Hodgkin (in *The City with Horns*, 2011); a range of visual artworks by her artistic contemporaries (in the collaborative editions *Marks* and *Desire Paths,* 2012; *Formerly,* 2012; *Nowheres,* 2015; and A *Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems*, 2015). Yoseloff has always been a curatorial bio-ekphrasist, with her autobiographical and biographical readings of visual artworks

Yoseloff's curation of pictorial works, in particular, follows the historical timeline, from early Netherlandish paintings to the works of the Romanticists, Abstract Expressionists and contemporary artists. 'Cryptographer' from *The City with Horns*, based on a painting by Cy Twombly, begins by recreating the painter's vision of his

scribbly work: 'I string together little fables/ in a language no one understands' (*The City with Horns* 5). Alluding to the traditions of cryptography, 'fables' and even embroidery, as in 'string', the poem uses arts of different kinds to describe Twombly's work. As the image of strings has been used to describe Barbara Hepworth's sculpture in *Fetch*, Yoseloff continues to multiply the types of art represented in a poem. The cryptographer in the poem also identifies with both Twombly who is seen to 'string together little fables' and as the word 'language' shows, the poet herself, making a case of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis. The poem foregrounds the intersections between visual and verbal languages, exploring art as an agent of both communication and encryption. Rather than being driven by a familial narrative like that of Petit and Szirtes, Yoseloff's poetry, I want to argue, represents a multi-directional bio-ekphrastic narrative by an art curator and biographer who consistently investigates personal memory, fantasy, secrecy, love, desire, religious faith, womanhood, biography, and the unconscious in her readings of paintings and a wide range of other plastic arts.

Yoseloff was trained as a writer and art historian. In 1987, she graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in New York with a BA in English, Creative Writing, and Art History. *East Anglian Times* reported on 25 July 2017 that Yoseloff did not find much success in breaking into 'the arts scene in New York', but since finishing 'a short course in art history' and 'a residency in an art gallery' in the UK, Yoseloff had now settled in a country that was new to her. She went on to study for advanced degrees in creative writing in Wales. In 2001, three years after she published *Sweetheart*, Yoseloff started her MPhil (2001-2003) at the University of South Wales. In 2005, a year after she published *Barnard's Star*, she moved on to do a PhD (2005-2010) at Aberystwyth University. *Fetch* and *Marks* were projects Yoseloff finished during her PhD studies. Yoseloff, however, has always wished to become a painter. Frank O'Hara's poem 'Why I Am Not a Painter' begins by saying, 'I am not a painter, I am a poet' and 'I think I would rather be a painter, but I am not' (*Collected Poems* 261). Yoseloff had a blog post of the same name of O'Hara's poem (15 December 2010), where she says, 'although I have always wished I could be'. Yoseloff also reports in interview that 'Like Jorie Graham ['s mother], my mother trained as a sculptor, and much of my visual response to the world has come from her' (Appendix C, p. 191)[67]. Yoseloff, however, has not followed the ekphrastic trajectory of Szirtes by adapting her mother's art as a poetic model, but has turned herself into a kind of curatorial ekphrasist with a particular interest in paintings and other pictorial works.

[67] In an online interview with *This Woman's Work* (2014), a project about women's role in art, Yoseloff reports that her mother 'trained as an artist, but didn't continue with her practice once she started working (a common story among women of her generation)'.

Yoseloff also demonstrates an acute sense of the book as visual object, as in *Formerly*, which opens and closes with the same photograph of a brick wall, and this consciousness of the book as objet d'art was nurtured by her father. In her obituary for him in *The Guardian* (13 February 2008), Yoseloff records that in 1959, her father Thomas Yoseloff, 'born to Russian Jewish parents', bought the Golden Cockerel Press, a fine limited edition press in London, and published two titles through the imprint. As noted in a *New York Times* article which announces her marriage (30 April 1995), Yoseloff's mother Lauretta also worked in New York as a book designer. Yoseloff must surely have developed her interest in book publishing and design from both of her parents. The same article in *New York Times* tells us that Yoseloff's husband Andrew Lindesay 'owns and directs Cygnus Arts, a publisher in London', and like Yoseloff, has an academic background in art, having 'received a postgraduate diploma in art gallery and museum studies from Manchester University'[68]. Lindesay has subsequently become a freelance book and typographic designer, working with Hercules Editions (Yoseloff's own press) and other publishers. Yoseloff's book and typographic designs might as well be informed by her husband. Their work very likely cross-fertilises each other, like that of other artistic couples including Szirtes and Upchurch.

'We watch the boys flash/ between tombs': poems from *Of Eros and of Dust* (1992), and *Fun House* (1994)

Yoseloff's earliest poems include the four poems from Stephen Anthony's anthology *Of Eros and of Dust: Poems from the City* (1992), which takes its title from W. H. Auden's 'September 1st, 1939'. 'Brompton Cemetery' is part of Yoseloff's ongoing series of poems named after actual places, recording a visit to the unused cemetery in London, now a cruising ground for the gay community[69]. The poem charts an identification with two boys exposing themselves, and flashing their genitals at each other: 'We watch the boys flash/ between tombs, check each other out' (*Of Eros and of Dust* 72). The poem is a precursor of Yoseloff's multidirectional bio-ekphrasis, describing two kinds of looking—the boys checking each other out and the 'We' watching them. If we see the two boys as living statues putting themselves on display in an abandoned cemetery, they are part of a range of sculptures represented in Yoseloff's poetry, playing perversely on transgressive relationships between the living and the dead. Another poem from the anthology, 'Arden

[68] The couple also follow each other on Instagram, and Lindesay's page, like Yoseloff's, is full of images of visual artworks.

[69] According to a report on the conservation of Brompton Cemetery (February 2015), the place was closed for burials but has become 'a focus for gay cruising activity', 'through to the early 1990s' and remains so today (32).

Street' comparably describes a sculptural transformation of a murdered husband: 'This summer's scandal:/ the wife and her lover cut the husband up/ cast him in cement' (20).

'Brompton Cemetery' goes on to suggest that the boys 'have a secret code, a sign/ language so intricate we have still to learn/ the essential phrases' (72). Earlier, the ambiguous 'we' report that there are 'words we'd never say' (72). The poem celebrates gay, erotic desire and explores the potential for the naked bodies to use an alternative 'sign/ language', anticipating 'Cryptographer', which represents Twombly's scribbly art as composed 'in a language no one understands'. Although 'Brompton Cemetery' does not refer to an actual visual artwork, it recalls the book cover—a photograph of a man kissing the Eros statue in Piccadilly Circus, London. The poem, in contrast, depicts a homoerotic scene with two gay boys in a derelict part of London popular with the gay community. 'Queer ekphrastic texts', as Brian Glavey argues in *The Wallflower Avant-Garde* (2016), are used to 'transform' the 'homophobic association' of gay men and lesbians as 'failed copies of the ideals of masculinity and femininity' (7). If we read 'Brompton Cemetery' as a queer ekphrastic poem, it does celebrate the boys' transgression of the bounds of languages with an alternative, 'secret code, a sign/ language' and charts the onlookers' understanding of it as an ideal system of encryption and private communication.

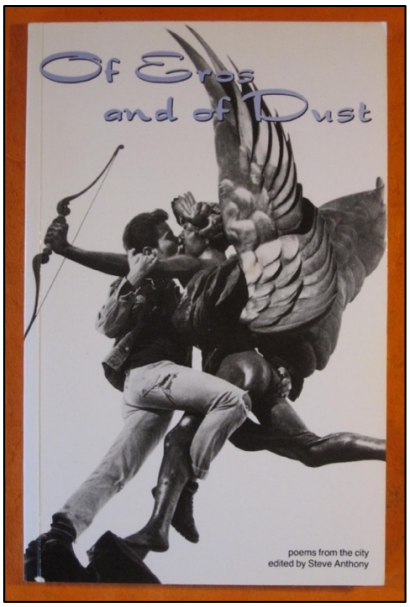


Fig. 45 Steve Anthony (editor), *Of Eros and of Dust* (1992),
with a photograph by Paul Mattson (1990)

'Arden Street' was subsequently included in Yoseloff's pamphlet *Fun House* (1994), where the evocation of a place is enacted through images of actual visual artworks. 'Crouch End', the name of another area in London, for example, is described in terms of Henry Moore's sketches: 'Even the name sounds hopeless, makes me remember Moore's/ charcoal sketches of underground shelters during the war,/ those huddled

masses, they hardly look human any more' (*Fun House* 27). 'Amsterdam' similarly addresses visual artworks related to the Second World War, documenting the poet's feeling of empathy with Anne Frank's 'picture on the wall' in her family's house during Nazi occupation of the Netherlands: 'I had never cried for a stranger before' (8). The house now called Anne Frank House has been turned into a biographical and Holocaust museum. 'Amsterdam' thus contains Yoseloff's first museum-based ekphrasis, presumably addressing a photograph of Anne Frank. Such a 'picture', as in many bio-ekphrastic poems we have seen, is presented as a vivid substitute for the subject, and the poem represents Yoseloff's second-generation identification with Frank as one of the most widely-known Jewish victims of the Holocaust. This is very different to Yeats' identification with his friends in the portraits of them during his revisit to the municipal gallery of Dublin, but also hinges on the relationship between the person represented and an entire historical epoch.

The Anne Frank House is contrasted with the nearby red-light district of Amsterdam, through an analogy with the many 'pieces' of fruit depicted in Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*: 'In every window there were dildos that could/ split a man in two, novelty condoms/ like juicy pieces of Bosch's fruit' (*Fun House* 8). Yoseloff amusingly adapts the symbolic fruit in Bosch's art to describe 'novelty condoms', invoking the close association of fruit with the erotic pleasure in Bosch's triptych. 'Amsterdam', like 'Crouch End', draws on a painter's iconography to make us picture a scene in the city. Both poems, like 'Brompton Cemetery', 'Arden Street' and many others, also form part of a personal psychogeographical map Yoseloff draws through framing individual poems with the names of places she might have visited. According to her biographical account on her website, her 'main research interests are in poetry and the visual arts, and urban psychogeography'. In 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography' (1955), Guy Debord describes psychogeography as 'the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals' (23). Building on Debord's definition, Merlin Coverley argues in his 2006 text on psychogeography that it is characteristically experienced through walking and in doing so, we explore 'those marginal and forgotten areas often overlooked by the city's inhabitants' (12). Yoseloff's poetry recreates routes through many places including 'marginal and forgotten areas' and records individuals' different engagements with specific places, from a cemetery to a museum, and from a street to a city. If such poems are psychogeographical, however, they also characteristically work through ekphrasis and evocation of artists' iconographies, as in the references to Moore's sketches and 'Bosch's fruit'.

Yoseloff, like Szirtes, offers personal accounts of photographs, as in 'Amsterdam', and explores photography from the perspectives of both the photographer and her subjects. The first half of 'Diane's Camera' is in the voice of Diane Arbus, who trusts the 'eye' of a camera much more than her own, asserting that 'it simply records' (*Fun House* 10). The second half of the poem, in contrast, is voiced by one of her subjects, who, like the marginalised subjects in Arbus' works, 'had one [eye] missing' (10). The poem ends with him saying, 'she'd left rolls undeveloped,/ her subjects waiting to be freed' (10). These subjects refer to 'the bearded lady, [and] the Siamese twins' (10). The poem is one of the first instances of Yoseloff's engagement with multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, exploring Arbus' understanding of her camera as a more reliable recording agent than her eyes and a subject's understanding of Arbus' development of a roll of film as life-liberating. This contrasts with photography as a life-reconstructing agent in Szirtes' poetry and portraiture and sculpture as life-mythologising agents in Petit's poetry. Yoseloff also asks in another poem, 'What's at the heart of my heart?', saying that ' No hand of man or science/ can touch''the camera/ obscura', 'the dream I had last/ night' and 'the love too painful to put/ into words or on the shelf' (7). Yoseloff has described a camera with its own 'eye' in 'Diane's Camera', and in reverse, the human heart as analogous to 'the camera obscura', suggesting a fuzzy boundary between life and art. Yoseloff's poems in *Of Eros and of Dust* and *Fun House* anticipate her more extensive exploration of art asbiography and a metaphor for life.

Fun House lives up to its title, with 'huddled masses' who 'hardly look human any more', 'novelty condoms/ like juicy pieces of Bosch's fruit', and a heart comparable to 'the camera obscura', representing a fun house with scary or amusing images in the form of a book, and prefiguring Yoseloff's future collections which function like her personal art galleries.

'Like Van Eyck's couple, so secure': *Sweetheart* (1998)

Sweetheart (1998), Yoseloff's first full-length collection, curates numerous visual artworks, covering the genres of painting, illustration, photograph, sculpture andarchitecture, as well as cultural artefacts. It also contributes to her group of psycho-geographical poems. Telling us that 'It was the only holiday my mother and I/ ever spent together', 'The Jewish Ghetto in Venice' recreates Yoseloff's visit to a synagogue in Venice with her mother (*Sweetheart* 35). Female prayers are imagined to be in the 'gallery' of the synagogue, 'where the women/ would have gathered', with 'daylight' 'patterning the floor/ with latticework like old lace' (35). The gallery is portrayed as a fine work of architecture, with its floor covered with 'latticework' made of light. The female prayers

also look dressed in 'old lace', although lace is not associated with Jewish religious apparel, which covers most parts of the body. With such imaginary ekphrasis, addressing the synagogue gallery as a kind of art gallery and the group of prayers as models, the poem ends on reflecting autobiographically that Judaism is 'a religion alien to both of us, my father's religion' (36). As Yoseloff has described Anne Frank in a picture as 'a stranger', the poet continues suggesting her distance from her Jewish roots in her identification with a work of visual art.

Photographs in *Sweetheart*, as its title suggests, are used as personal mementoes of a romantic or married relationship. 'King and Queen' compares Henry Moore's sculpture of the same name ('faces complicated, hands not quite touching') with a photograph of Yoseloff's parents ('my mother offers her profile, gazes somewhere/ out of frame, my father leans forward'), using a sculptural representation as a reference point for what lies 'out of frame', or what Roland Barthes calls the 'blind field' —'What connects them/ cannot be seen' (29). In contrast, 'The Butcher Cover', which refers to the controversial cover of The Beatles' *Yesterday and Today*, is seen as beyond a biographical representation of the rock band, where they are 'in their stained doctors' coats' (14). According to Jordan Runtagh's article in the online edition of *Rolling Stones* (20 June 2016), the recording company soon replaced the cover with a new, 'inoffensive' one, by pasting the new covers over the old ones. In Yoseloff's poem, the young boyfriend 'Stu Rosenberg' 'could see the image underneath', trying to 'uncover the real thing', whereas the speaker's copy does not have anything 'underneath'—'My copy of *Yesterday and Today*/ is torn where I tried to peel off the cover,/ just board beneath' (*Sweetheart* 14). The name of the album is used as a metaphor for her ambivalence about her 'yesterday and today', and she goes on to say, 'I don't listen to it anymore' (14). This is one of the first examples where Yoseloff draws on the history of a visual artwork, alluding to the controversy surrounding the *Yesterday and Today* cover (or the Butcher cover), and describing it as a trigger for memory of a past romantic relationship.

The photograph in 'Coin', in contrast, is a past image of the speaker and his or her past lover: 'the only photograph of us together' cannot be divided, but 'Neither of us wanted a reminder' (*Sweetheart* 22). In the poem, a coin with 'the face of a long-dead king' is also a painful reminder of the start of the relationship: 'I kept it in my pocket/ for luck. Soon the little details/ that had drawn us together/ began to irritate' (22). The poem ends in 'regret' that the coin, being dropped into the river, will make 'a rare find' 'in a hundred years' and someone will 'hustle it to a museum' (22). If we see *Sweetheart* as a kind of 'museum', the poem is ironically preserved as a 'reminder' of the coin it describes and the memory of the 'little details' it triggers. The poem, however, is not

included in *New and Selected* (2015), and talking about her selection for the book, Yoseloff has said in interview, 'I simply chose the poems I still liked, that still had relevance for me' (Appendix C, p. 193). As *Sweetheart* is now out of print, the poem 'Coin', like 'The Jewish Ghetto in Venice', has also become a 'rare find', being left out of *New and Selected* as a new 'museum' or exhibition.

In *Sweetheart*, images of the human subject in a painting are turned into poetic images for more accounts of private memory and fantasy. 'Deer' confuses the reality about a deer-watcher with the biblical image famously recreated in Pisanello's painting *The Vision of Saint Eustace* (c. 1438-72):

> You come here often, just to watch them
> work the frozen earth
> for what grass is left, heads bowed.
>
> Here in the dark trees
> almost anything is possible:
> St. Eustace came upon a stag at bay
> bearing the image of Christ on the cross
> right between his antlers.

(*Sweetheart* 24)

Upon having a vision of the stag , St. Eustace, originally a Roman general, converts to Christianity. The poem, like Pisanello's painting, portrays someone with the vision of St. Eustace, but with a title sounding the same as 'dear' as an endearment, the religious vision is in a context of love. The poem eventually declares the desire to be transfigured by love itself: 'I must learn patience, must wait for love/ to transfigure me' (24). Alluding to the stag and other deer in Pisanello's painting, the poem radically adapts a biblical transfiguration to describe a possible transfiguration by 'love'.

The 'image of Christ' suggests that this is an image within an image, as in a vision. The poem multiplies the transforming or transfiguring mechanisms it represents, with St. Eustace as a transformational subject, and Pisanello's painting, the stag in the poem, and 'the image of Christ' as transformational objects. As Pisanello's painting is displayed in the National Gallery, London, 'Deer' can also be read as one of Yoseloff's many bio-ekphrastic exercises based on a visit to an art gallery, with the painting as a transformational object for her private memory and fantasy. In Yoseloff's poetry, there is frequently confusion in the recreation of visual representations, private memories and fantasies, and visits to museums and galleries. If artists, as Freud argues, transforms phantasies into art, ekphrasis is Yoseloff's means to transform her curator's and private visions into poetic creations.

Fig. 46 Pisanello, *The Vision of Saint Eustace* (c. 1438-72)
The National Gallery, London

Fig. 47 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Blessed Damozel* (1875-79)
Lady Lever Art Gallery

Yoseloff complicates her use of a painting in 'Rossetti's Zoo', drawing on D. G. Rossetti's poem 'The Blessed Damozel' (1850), his painting of the same name (1875-9), and the poet-painter's biography. In 1862, his wife Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal died of an overdose of laudanum, and Rossetti put into her coffin a volume of his love poems for her, but seven years later, ordered it to be dug up. Yoseloff's poem is voiced by a 'confidante and friend' of Rossetti (called 'Gabriel' in the poem), who assists in this 'ghastly business':

> I told him later that as the workmen prised
> her coffin open, I was stuck [sic] by her beauty,
> unimpaired even in death. By lantern light
> her rich red hair glowed bright, enveloping her
> in a shawl of flames. Calmed by the news,
> Gabriel returned home and wrote these lines:
> *The blessed damozel leans out*
> *From the gold bar of Heaven*.
>
> And I was never the same.

(*Sweetheart* 48)

Yoseloff transgresses the historical record by describing the two lines from Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damozel' as based on a female confidant's report of Siddal's 'beauty, unimpaired even in death'. The image of Siddal's hair ('her rich red hair glowed bright') alludes to Rossetti's painting. His poem, in contrast, describes the woman's hair as 'yellow like ripe corn' (Rossetti, *Collected Poetry* 3). The image of the 'lantern light' in Yoseloff's poem can explain the difference in the hair colour, with the light shining over

the 'rich red hair'[70]. Recording the moment of a kind of aesthetic awakening ('And I was never the same'), Yoseloff's poem initiates a kind of cross-referencing ekphrasis by addressing the woman's 'beauty' and in particular, her hair, which is represented differently in Rossetti's poem and his painting based on it. 'Rossetti's Zoo' simultaneously suggests Yoseloff's uses of a poem and painting by Rossetti as transformational objects, and characteristically represents the dead woman as a transformational subject for the confidante through an unusual identification with the corpse.

'The Arnolfini Marriage', in contrast, represent Yoseloff's thorough use of a pictorial representation as a story-board for the poem, as well as her use of prosopopoeia based on a portrait or self-portrait, which we now recognise as a common ekphrastic practice. The second half of 'The Arnolfini Marriage' is voiced by the woman in Jan van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434), but in the first half, the poem recalls the sculpture and photograph in 'King and Queen', understanding 'van Eyck's couple' as a model for keeping a married relationship private—'Like Van Eyck's couple, so secure,/ their backs to the mirror', and 'We can only believe/ they were happy' (*Sweetheart* 30). Yoseloff characteristically explores the invisible part of a marriage which a visual representation cannot capture, and has gone so far as to call this a kind of 'Arnolfini Marriage'. The mirror in van Eyck's painting, in contrast, represents a counter-agent which might compromise the couple's security, as they now stand with 'their backs to the mirror'. The poem first appeared in *Fun House* and gives the pamphlet its title: 'The artist himself/ bears witness-[sic]his invention', 'more fun house than honest' (*Sweetheart* 30). The poem about 'van Eyck's couple, so secure', in turn, understands the truth represented in art as exclusive to the artist and his subjects, prefiguring Yoseloff's exploration of art as a transformational agent as regards our understanding of and identification with the subjects. Here, we are told that van Eyck manoeuvres us into believing that the couple 'were happy'.

[70] This recalls John Ashbery's 'Poor Boy: Portrait of a Painting' (1982), based on Henry Wallis' 1899 painting *Chatterton* and included in *Voices in the Gallery: Poems & Pictures Chosen by Dannie & Joan Abse*. In his poem, Ashbery describes 'the light' as 'art', 'arranged' over the 'pale dead boy,/ his astonishing red hair' (86).

Fig. 48 Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434)
The National Gallery, London

The second half of the poem continues with exploring art as 'invention' and 'more fun house than honest', and as in 'Rossetti's Zoo', the central subject in question is a woman, who says, 'I wore the green velvet,/ high-waisted, to hide my shame' and describes the process of being instructed to do so:

> The best artist in town,
> hired to paint me in my gown,
> took one look at me, grabbed a fold of my dress,
> *hold this up, like so … no one will ever guess*.
>
> (*Sweetheart* 30)

According to the website of the National Gallery (2019), the way the woman holds up her dress was actually fashionable at the time, but has often been mistaken as an indication of her pregnancy. Yoseloff characteristically appropriates the controversy surrounding the painting, suggesting that the painter is the 'best artist' for helping the woman 'hide' her 'shame' in the portrait. Saying that '*no one will ever guess*', the poem, however, ironically solicits our guess of what is hidden beneath the 'dress'. It also visually represents the folds of the dress with the poetic lines increasing in length, and the penultimate line representing that 'fold of my dress'. Compared to 'Diane's Camera' from *Fun House*, 'The Arnolfini Marriage', which was subsequently included in *Sweetheart*, is a more layered example of Yoseloff's multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, representing the voice of van Eyck, his female subject, and someone with knowledge of the 'Van Eyck's couple'.

Paul Durcan in *Give Me Your Hand* (1994), commissioned by the National Gallery has an ekphrastic poem based on the same painting. The couple in his poem say that 'Do not think you may invade/Our privacy because you may not' but describe the portrait of

them as 'the most erotic portrait ever made' (11). The impenetrability of 'privacy', again, is seen as a motif in van Eyck's painting. Yoseloff, like Duracan, understands painting as a screen for the subjects' private feelings, which include the couple's happiness and the wife's shame, exploring the power dynamics between the artist, his or her subject or subjects, and viewers, as well as between the poet, the poetic speaker, and readers. 'The Arnolfini Marriage' is recognised by Yoseloff as an important poem from her oeuvre, being included in *Fun House*, *Sweetheart*, and *New and Selected*. The poem not only prefigures her investment in multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, but also in visual representations of women, the 'intersection' between poetry and visual art, and art as a life-screening agent.

Fig. 49 Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas* (1939)
Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City

Like 'The Arnolfini Marriage', 'The Two Fridas' is voiced by a married woman in a painting, exploring Frida Kahlo's relationship with Diego Rivera from her perspective. Petit's *What the Water Gave Me* (2010), as mentioned earlier, includes a poem based on the same painting *The Two Fridas*, reading it as a 'double self-portrait' of 'a bride with a strong girl/ from the matriarchal Zapotec tribe' and describing Kahlo's 'blood' as her 'paint' (42, 43). In contrast, Yoseloff does not allude to the dual cultures Kahlo foregrounds in her 'double self-portrait' but understands the painting as a surreal manifestation of Kahlo's psychological conflict, from opening up to Rivera ('I used to wear my heart on my sleeve/ so he could see it beating, panting') to becoming the opposite of that ('he was bored, so I churned out/ a second girl', 'all laced-up/ and haughty') (*Sweetheart* 51). The image of being 'all laced-up' evokes the lace on Kahlo's dresses in the painting, contrasting with the use of it to describe shoes fastened with laces. Yoseloff characteristically makes the speaker herself as 'laced-up' as the 'second girl' she claims to have 'churned out'. Although Yoseloff reported in interview that she is

not 'working within a particular tradition of ekphrastic response' (Appendix C, p. 188), she contributes to an evolving bio-ekphrastic tradition, reinventing the work of her predecessors (as in 'Rossetti's Zoo') as well as mirroring and anticipating the work of her contemporaries (as in 'The Arnolfini Marriage' and 'The Two Fridas').

'Peter Martyr, writing *Credo*/ in his last drop of blood': *Barnard's Star* (2004)

'The London Necropolis Railway' from *Barnard's Star* (2004) refers to the railway which had carried corpses and mourners between London and Brookwood Cemetery for almost ninety years since the mid 1850s. The poem offers a historical context for our reading of her earlier poems about two boys in a cemetery, the corpse of a woman based on Rossetti's works, and the crowds in wartime shelters in Henry Moore's sketches looking like corpses. The new poem describes nineteenth-century visual artists, such as Rossetti, as recreating death in their work and Decadent poets as living a morbidly death-like-life themselves:

> Artists chose delicate models and painted them
> swooning in their deathbeds, or if still alive, in mourning.
>
> Poets drank absinthe in bars that looked like coffins
> and kept a vial of laudanum under the bed.

(*Barnard's Star* 22)

The image of the poets drinking absinthe recalls poets like Oscar Wilde, Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud, who lived in London in the early 1870s. Yoseloff associates the absinthe-drinking poets with visual artists engaged in painting the corpses and mourners. For her, as for the nineteenth-century culture she describes, poets and painters are natural bed-fellows. In 'The Nolans in Japan', Yoseloff also returns to Rossetti's fanatical dedication to icons of female beauty, with the Nolans, an Irish girl group who had particular success in Japan in the 80s, portrayed as having 'wild red hair streaming,/ Rossetti beauties/ in tiny Valentino heels' (55). The poem, like 'The Butcher Cover', simultaneously represents Yoseloff's continuous engagement with earlier pop music, something that surfaces again in 'Radio Luxembourg'. Yoseloff engages with the visual arts and other kinds of art not only through ekphrasis, but also constant references to pictorial iconographies (like 'Bosch's fruit' in *Fun House*), and 'The Nolans in Japan' is one of her accounts of the close association between modern artists and poets.

Fun House includes a poem voiced by Diane Arbus and her subject, and *Sweetheart* manifests Yoseloff's fascination with photographs, including personal and family photographs, as well as the Butcher cover and 'a publicity shot' of 'a young Steinbeck' (44). In 'Daguerreotype' from *Barnard's Star*, Yoseloff turns to one of the

earliest photographic processes, invented by Daguerre in 1839. The ekphrastic poem describes what is within and beyond the frame in a photographic studio, while focusing yet again upon a female portrait: 'Beyond the frame, a husband, daughter./ She does not have to hold the pose,/ the pose becomes her' (17). Once again, Yoseloff is attentive to what pictorial images conceal as well as reveal, and the relationship between the viewer and subject. The poem opens by observing that 'She would have worn her Sunday best,/ her cameo and Belgian lace,/ but it's the eyes that strike you first;/ the way she stares through you, the viewer' (17). Yoseloff's signature 'lace' returns, but also the vivid sense of the independent biographical life of the subject, who here is seen as staring 'through you, the viewer'. As in 'The Arnolfini Marriage', however, what is captured in a photograph is characteristically not a complete picture of the family and the wife herself. Yoseloff, like Szirtes, explores the apparent exactness[71] of a photographic representation but also the discrepancy between what is within and beyond the photographic frame.

Elsewhere in *Barnard's Star*, Yoseloff addresses a group of visual artworks in churches, recording visitors' identification with the representations of dead figures and saints. 'Small Change', like 'Coin' from *Sweetheart*, begins by understanding a coin as a memento of a person ('A tiny shrine,/ a trace of you') and moves on to record a visit to a church where a pound is donated and two tomb effigies are identified with 'us':

> We give a pound to a box marked
> *donations*, read the inscriptions
> at our feet. Against the nave wall, the tomb
>
> of a nobleman, his lady: we can see his skull
> behind the armour, the holes that held
> her eyes, the line of her brow stripped
>
> of finery, even skin, down to her bared teeth,
> her lips gone. Strange that the sculptor
> should carve her such an opulent dress,
>
> lace as intricate as her naked fingers,
> its folds never revealing what is left
> of her delicate body. *As I am now*,
>
> *so will you be*. We leave by the side door,
> squinting, as the light finds us,
> brightens our faces to flesh again.
>
> (*Barnard's Star* 59, 60)

The poem intertwines actual lives with the artificial ones created in sculpture, referring to the effigy of the nobleman's lady as a 'her', and the visitor-speaker identifies with the tomb effigies, saying when 'We leave', light 'brightens our faces to flesh again'. Yoseloff,

---

[71] According to the online *OED*, the word 'daguerreotype' was figuratively used to mean an 'exact representation or description'.

who refers in 'Astrakhan' to 'Pucci paisley' and dresses from 'Lord and Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue, Marshall Field', is hyper-conscious of women's clothes (16), and obsessively associates her female subjects with lace as an 'intricate' agent of concealment. It is also ironic, given the force of the words 'stripped', 'bared' and 'naked', the 'delicate body' of the nobleman's lady is concealed under the 'folds' of her dress, making her a dead equivalent of the woman in 'The Arnolfini Marriage'. The poem might be informed by Philip Larkin's 'An Arundel Tomb' (1964): 'Side by side, their faces blurred,/ The earl and countess lie in stone,/ Their proper habits vaguely shown' (*The Whitsun Weddings* 45). Yoseloff addresses a pair of tomb effigies in a church, but characteristically records a transformational identification with them, focusing on the lady's 'blurred' facial features and her body 'vaguely shown' under her dress, and reinventing the English ekphrastic tradition, as she has done in 'Rossetti's Zoo'.

The image of 'her delicate body' evokes the 'delicate models' in 'The London Necropolis Railway', suggesting that Yoseloff is curating her 'delicate' subjects, whether dead or alive. Compared to the representation of tomb effigies as transformational objects or subjects for the church visitors, 'The Saints' dwells on paintings of the suffering of Christian martyrs, again focusing on the fate of the body:

> They suffer beautifully – Lawrence,
> roasted, Ignatius, devoured whole,
> Ursula, massacred with her virgins,
> Peter Martyr, writing *Credo*
>
> in his last drop of blood. Vermilion,
> cardinal, crimson, it sputters on the canvas,
> the holy ghost fluttering above –
> but their eyes are fixed on you,
>
> the future, you can barely hold their gaze.
>
> (*Barnard's Star* 24)

As the first line above suggests, Yoseloff evokes another canonical ekphrastic poem—Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts': 'About suffering they were never wrong,/ The Old Masters: how well they understood/ Its human position; how it takes place' (*Selected Poems* 79). Yoseloff adapts the first line of Auden's poem, turning the attention to the beauty of suffering represented in art. Treating the saints as the central subject of poem, Yoseloff recognises that art beautifies their deaths, in a way very unlike Auden's recognition of Pieter Bruegel's depiction of 'the dreadful martyrdom' 'in a corner' (79). The martyrdom of Saint Peter Martyr was recreated in multiple medieval and Renaissance paintings, including Giovanni Battista's *Martirio di San Pietro da Verona*, which depicts the martyr using his blood to write 'CREDO' (Latin for *I believe*) in block letters on the ground. Yoseloff's poem italicises the Latin word instead. Donald S. Lopez,

Jr. tells us in *Critical Terms for Religious Terms* (1998) that 'Peter did not simply write *Credo*, "I believe," but *Credo in deum*, "I believe in God."' (24). With the image of 'Peter Martyr, writing *Credo*/ in his last drop of blood', rather than '*Credo in deum*', Yoseloff recreates the martyr as expressing a possibly more ambiguous faith, reinventing the biblical scene as represented in various paintings, and insisting on the materiality of paint ('Vermillion, cardinal, crimson' on 'canvas').

The poem celebrates the beauty of suffering rather than religious devoutness, giving a graphic account of the death of each saint. Saying that 'their eyes are fixed on you', the poem also reverses the object-viewer relationship. It makes us picture ourselves struggling to 'hold their gaze'—like the spectator of the woman in 'Daguerreotype' who 'stares through you' but also mirroring a tradition of viewing religious paintings that goes back to the fifteenth-century theologian Nicholas of Cusa's *De Vision Dei*, which talks of how the 'gaze of the icon goes continuously' with the viewer of it, as David Freedberg shows in *The Power of Images* (52). Both 'Daguerreotype' and 'The Saints' represent an unusual type of transformational identification with the subjects represented in visual art, suggesting that they 'stare through us' or 'their eyes are fixed on us'.

Religious painting surfaces again in 'Lekaki', which recreates a deep, physical connection with a saint depicted in a Doom painting in a small church in Greece but also the fragile materiality of the image: 'Your hand skimmed a crack that severed a saint,/ veered straight through the Last Judgement' (*Barnard's Star* 36). The sonnet 'San Michele' evokes the famous Venetian 'island' with its 'city of graves', referring on the one hand to 'monks/ who charted maps of a world they'd never see' and on the other nineteenth-century 'English girls', 'unused to foreign towns', whose photographs are 'bleached/ by weather' on the gravestones, and who 'laid out their Baedekers and gowns' before being buried there (40). Together all these poems create a morality-haunted ekphrastic-travel narrative covering different European and religious spots, a small non-liner counterpart to Derek Walcott's *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), where he speaks of how 'On my first trip to the Modern I turned a corner,/ rooted before the ridged linen of a Cézanne' (7).

Fig. 50 Pieter de Hooch, *The Courtyard of a House in Delft* (1658)
The National Gallery, London

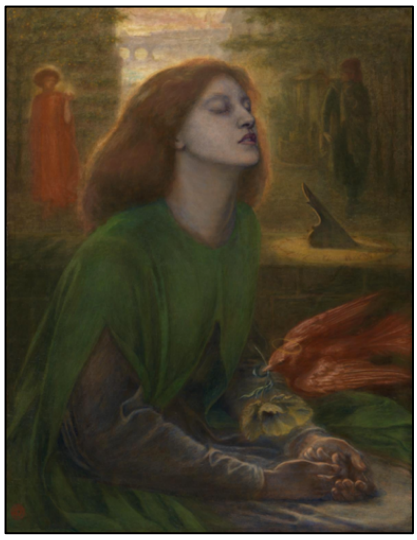


Fig. 51 D. G. Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix* (c. 1864-70)
Tate

Yoseloff has studied different visual representations of married women, including Jan van Eyck's portrait, Frida Kahlo's self-portrait, and a daguerreotype, and Yoseloff's interest in classic representations of young woman, including Rossetti's paintings of his models, is foregrounded in 'Studies for a Portrait of a Young Woman, Delft', which mimics preliminary graphic sketches for a seventeenth-century portrait of a woman. In a sense, it is just one of many studies for portraits of young women in Yoseloff's work. Drawing on multi-sensory images, the poem portrays the young woman with a sense of fear towards the church ('She tiptoes into church,/ afraid her heels fall too hard') and the pastor ('She shields her eyes/ against his glare') (*Barnard's Star* 26). The religious woman is also a knitter ('Her needle is swift') and characteristically wears a gown of lace, being ogled by a group of men 'in the parlour':

> She knows how their eyes
> trace the lines of her gown,
> follow the rise of lace
> at the bodice. Their voices fall
>
> when she passes to the courtyard,
> takes up her willow broom. It whispers
> its small song against the brick.
> She raises her face to the sun.

(*Barnard's Star* 26, 27).

Female cleaning duties figure in Derek Mahon's very different 'Courtyards in Delft', which must lie somewhere behind Yoseloff's text. Mahon's poem is an ironic response to Pieter de Hooch's series of Courtyard paintings, casting 'oblique light on the trite', and evoking a virgin' who 'Listens to her seducer, mars the chaste' (*Collected Poems* 105). Yoseloff's poem, by contrast, focuses on a single woman as well as what she calls the 'small song' of the 'willow broom'. The young woman is portrayed in the face of a

complex of gazes—including the pastor's 'glare', the men's 'eyes' fixated on her, and our attempts to see her in these 'studies—'shields her eyes' and in the end, 'raises her face to the sun'. This last image recalls Rossetti's *Beata Beatrix* (c. 1864-70), which the poet-painter in a letter to his patron William Graham calls a representation of 'an ideal of the subject, symbolized by a trance or sudden spiritual transfiguration' (*The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Volume VI* 89). With her fear of church, however, the young woman in Yoseloff's poem remains an enigma as an 'ideal' with her face raised to the sun.

In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), the painter Basil Hallward asserts that 'every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist' (9), and Yoseloff's poems recall theories about the close relationship between the biographer, portraitist and his or her subject. Yoseloff's 'Studies for a Portrait of a Young Woman, Delft' empathises with its female subject caught up in the puritanical culture of her native city, saying that 'She knows that she was born/ from the descent to Hell' (*Barnard's Star* 26) and 'She knows how their eyes/ trace the lines of her gown'. As the poetic equivalent of a portraitist, Yoseloff repeatedly insists on what her subject 'knows'. She generates a sense of uncanny physical proximity to the young woman by a whisper of 's' sounds passing through 'bodice', 'passes', 'whispers' and 'raises', giving the poem itself the effect of a 'small song'. The pictorial conventions of self-portraits and portraits are appropriated by Petit and Yoseloff for different autobiographical and biographical purposes. Petit visualises a phantasmagoric post-Freudian psycho-drama; for Yoseloff, 'an artist', as 'The Loved Ones' from *Fun House* and *Sweetheart* says, 'must see the things that are invisible' (*Sweetheart* 33), but she nonetheless leaves many of these 'things' enigmatically 'invisible' to us.

'It reflects back what we have/ not been able to understand': *Fetch*, *Marks*, and *A Room to Live in: A Kettle's Yard Anthology* (2007)

Yoseloff continues conjuring the lives of Dutch women in classic paintings, with 'Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals' from *Fetch* (2007), which is based on Emanuel de Witte's painting of the same name. Introducing the painting on her online blog in the post 'Virginal, But No Virgin' (3 February 2012), Yoseloff notes of such classic domestic paintings: 'Never in the history of painting has there been a genre so invested with secrets and intrigue'. She also said in interview that 'I studied early Italian Renaissance art as part of my undergraduate degree, and I have always been fascinated by the signs and symbols embedded in those paintings' (Appendix C, p. 188). Yoseloff's investment in the secret 'signs and symbols' of earlier art is brought to the foreground

again with her poem based on de Witte's painting, which reads a narrative about a married woman's affair. As she told us on her blog: 'I wanted to write a poem which provided a narrative, or at least gave voice to the clues de Witte has already given us', and 'this is in the voice of the woman at the virginal, but slightly later, after the man in the bedchamber has departed, and she is finally alone' ('Virginal, But No Virgin' 2012).

Fig. 52 Emanuel de Witte, *Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals* (c. 1660)
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Yoseloff does not mention that she reads these as specifically erotic 'clues' in the domestic painting, but the imagined speaker evokes a fantasy of transgressive music and female lyric and erotic freedom:

> I played all morning, my fingers
> light on the keys like birds. I wanted him
> to love the full song I offered:
> my husband was in the low countries
> on business, this would never happen again,
> I told myself, to have him so.
>
> (*Fetch* 13)

The poem is a dramatic monologue which gives voice to the woman at the keyboard in the painting, and imagines her playing a love song to her boyfriend when her husband is away, making explicit the a narrative implicitly represented in de Witte's painting of a woman playing the virginals in the presence of a man in bed behind the curtains. The 'low countries' might remind us of Hamlet's question to Ophelia, 'Do you think I meant *country matters*?, with its stress on the first syllable of *country*, which he glosses as 'That's a fair thought, to lie between maid's legs' (*Ham.* 3.2. 123-126). In Yoseloff's poem, the line-break after 'countries' implies another dimension to the husband's business. The assonance between 'low', 'told', and 'so' characteristically reminds us that a poem is a song, musically representing 'the full song' offered to her lover. Yoseloff's poem recreates de Witte's pun on 'virginals', ironically exploring the married woman's stolen private pleasure in a moment of happy adultery in the luxurious domestic space of her Dutch home lovingly recreated by the painter.

The poem, however, ends with a mixture of pleasure and regret:

> But a man like that is hard to hold, a bird
> in the hand, so I let him go. He tipped his hat,
> strolled into the afternoon. Now I am alone—
> My chamber is as I'd left it,
> the pitcher on the table full of daylight,
> the mirror empty of a face,
> and through the door,
> the mop and pail wait patiently
> to absolve the remnants of my folly.
>
> (*Fetch* 13)

If Yoseloff provides a narrative for de Witte's painting, she goes beyond what the painting represents, as she recognises on her online blog, imagining what happens later when the woman is left 'alone' after her lover's departure (the man behind the curtain is barely visible in the dark as it is). The word 'folly' might recall its use in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, echoing Oliver Goldsmith's song —'When lovely woman stoops to folly' (*The Waste Land* 44). Recalling Eliot's poem and Goldsmith's novel, Yoseloff's poem suggests that the woman recognises her 'folly' but projects it onto the mop and pail. The personified implements remind us that, as Witold Rybczynski reports in *Home*, in the seventeenth century, 'Dutch married women irrespective of their wealth or social position did most of their own household chores' (72). The poem offers a historical commentary on the images of the woman and the domestic household in de Witte's painting, confirming Derek Walcott's remark in *Tiepolo's Hound* that 'Over every Dutch interior there hovers/ the hallucination of a narrative' (58).

In de Witte's painting, the mirror barely reflects the woman's face, as in the questions asked by Witold Rybczynski which Yoseloff quotes on her blog:

> Is the woman properly penitent? If so, why is she playing and not weeping? She has her back turned, as if in shame, but in the mirror hanging on the wall over the virginals, her face is tantalizingly not quite reflected. Maybe she is smiling; we will never know.
>
> (qtd. in 'Virginal, But No Virgin')

Calling 'the mirror empty of a face', the poem appropriates the detail to suggest the woman does not look at herself in the mirror when she is 'alone'. This 'mirror empty of a face' recalls 'Van Eyck's couple' with 'their backs to the mirror', while the mop and pail which 'wait patiently' are personified like the 'willow broom' which 'whispers/ its small song' in a courtyard in Delft. 'The Arnolfini Marriage', 'Studies for a Portrait of a Young Woman, Delft' and 'Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals' constitute a distinct group of domestic ekphrastic portraits. The three poems from three consecutive collections weave a collective narrative about three Dutch women in the past, focusing on their domestic complexities, like the married woman in the first poem, who says, 'Mother married me off to a merchant I'd never laid/ eyes on until the day', and 'His

Dutch was poor; I have no Italian' (*Sweetheart* 30). In these poems, the woman is hiding her shame or pleasure, but to quote Rybczynski, 'we will never know'. Yoseloff consistently provides equivocal narratives of enigmatic subjects in her poetry, reading signs, symbols and clues in paintings as mirrors of the lives of other anonymous women.

Fig. 53 A Venetian mirror (18th century)
Kettle's Yard

'The Venetian Mirror' is another mirror poem, referring to the one in Kettle's Yard, the house and Art Gallery which the collector Jim Ede donated to the University of Cambridge, displaying his collection of modern and contemporary art. Once again, Yoseloff explores the mirror as an image of truth about the subject or subjects:

> Silver has its day, recedes
> to reveal the surface beneath
>
> gone black—
> its own Dorian moment.
>
> It reflects back what we have
> not been able to understand,
>
> an abundance lost, just hinted
> in the etched leaves, tendrils lacing
>
> the frame. What's inside is
> rust, a pox on a lovely face,
>
> still we trade its dimensions
> for our own: dumbstruck, vain.

(*Fetch* 32)

Divided into three sections, each with one stanza less (from six to five, and then four), the poem visually represents the receding. Yoseloff's reference to the 'Dorian moment' uses Wilde's Dorian Gray as a metonym for the revelation of the 'black' underneath the

silver, as Gray's portrait reveals the darker self of Oscar Wilde's protagonist under his youthful face. Addressing two contrasting colours and alluding to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Yoseloff explores a visual artwork as many-layered, as in 'The Butcher Cover' from *Sweetheart*, and the 'surface' of an object as a kind of face, experiencing 'its own Dorian moment'. We first read 'It reflects back what we have' as a straightforward proposition, but what the mirror 'reflects back' is actually 'what we have/ not been able to understand'. The enjambment creates an ambiguity about what the Venetian mirror 'reflects back'. The poem first represents the mirror as a transformational force of its own, as silver recedes in order that the mirror 'reflects' an obscure image, and then explores our identification with it, associating the decay of the mirror ('rust') with our own ('a pox on a lovely face') and asserting that 'still we trade its dimensions/ for our own'.

In Yoseloff's poetry, a household object is always a transformational object onto which we project our selves, and a mirror in an art gallery provides a particularly loaded image of mimesis. 'The Venetian Mirror' was subsequently included in Yoseloff's anthology *A Room to Live in: A Kettle's Yard Anthology* published in the same year as *Fetch* (2017), where Jim Ede is quoted asking: 'For how many of us is our room the expression of ourselves […]?' (v). In the other two sections of the poem, Yoseloff explores the 'Venetian' dimension of the mirror, with references to the 'basilica', 'palazzo', 'ballroom', 'campana' (*Fetch* 32, 33). With the figurative 'trade' in the poem, the mirror serves as a springboard for a psycho-geographical engagement with Venice itself, a place inseparably associated with decadent reflection: 'The ghost hulk of the palazzo/ leans into the canal. Narcissus crazed', and 'the campana strikes,/ mourns itself in echo' (33). Yoseloff continues exploring our personal identification with not only paintings and photographs, but houses and architecture, as well as works of plastic art in the narrower sense, from modern sculptures to a group of ornate mirrors, an ancient coin in *Sweetheart*, and later, the Foundling Hospital tokens in *The City with Horns*, which include 'a miniature cameo', 'a padlock' and 'a key' (61).

Barnard's Star includes poems about visual artworks in church, recreating Yoseloff's engagements with church as a kind of art gallery, and *Fetch* is a clear successor to *Sweetheart*, further expanding Yoseloff's curation of visual artworks. Mirroring *Barnard's Star* (namely, 'Daguerreotype', and 'San Michele', with the image of monks' making maps), *Fetch* describes a Polaroid photograph as 'the Technicolor/ version of my life' and monks' illumination of manuscripts as making words 'sacred' (3, 5). *Fetch* also includes sculptures. As quoted in the introductory chapter, the poem based on a bronze cast by Barbara Hepworth calls us to look at 'the way/ we complicate our lives, shape/

smooth hard surfaces', confusing sculptors with viewers in a complex of multi-directional looks and identification (9). 'The Firing', in contrast, was 'inspired' by some 'funerary pieces' by the English potter Julian Stair, and the poem conveys a visceral sense of mortality, evoking the memory of Buddhist monks who set fire to themselves—'the clumsy arsonist,/ the heroic father, the monk/ in saffron robes', asserting that 'in the end' they are 'reduced to this: a ribcage/ forged in flame' (17). Building on her curation of paintings of religious martyrdom, Yoseloff returns to using sculptural processes—casting and firing in pottery—as metaphors for life and death respectively.

Fig. 54 Thomas Ruth, *National Gallery I, London 1989*, Tate

With 'Portrait of a Couple Looking at a Turner Landscape', Yoseloff returns to framing a poem as a pictorial work—this time, a 'portrait' itself. The new poem recalls John Ashbery's 'Poor Boy: Portrait of a Painting' (1982), as both titles use the pictorial term 'portrait' to represent the poem as a portrait of another image, in Ashbery's case, a painting by Henry Wallis. Yoseloff's poem, in contrast, multiplies the acts of looking, mirroring the approach of many contemporary photographers, such as Andrea Gursky and Thomas Ruth, who capture in photographs visitors looking at exhibits in galleries and museums. The doubly-ekphrastic title ('Portrait' and 'Turner Landscape') turns a pair of gallery-goers into the poem's ekphrastic subjects:

> They stand, not quite touching,
> before a world after storm.
>
> There are drops of moisture in her hair,
> in his scarf
> the colour of a gentler sea, his eyes,
>
> while trains depart every minute, steaming
> into the future, where the hills
>
> unroll themselves,

vast plains of emerald and gold

(she undressed for him, slowly,
her skin like cloud under dark layers)

after rooms of Rubens and Fragonard, flesh dead
against old brocade
(their flesh alive in the white sheets).

(*Fetch* 40)

The word 'before' (used with 'after' in the same line) carries a temporal but as well spatial meaning. The couple can 'stand, not quite touching' before a world is battered by a storm, which they see in a painting by Turner, or they stand in front of Turner's representation of 'a world after storm'. We do not know where the frame is. The framing of a poem as portrait is used as a tactic to create a sense of connection but also distance between the portraitist and the subject, and this time, distancing the reactions of the couple upon seeing 'a Turner Landscape'. We do not know whether the couple are the observers or the observed or observers being observed. The poem characteristically portrays a romantic relationship as enigmatic, but focuses on a couple looking at a painting, rather than those represented by one.

The poem uniquely complicates the network of relations in the model of multi-directional bio-ekphrasis, recording the identification of the portraitist (or a gallery-visitor, but with the vision of a portraitist) with a couple looking at a painting. The couple and Turner's painting serve as transformational subjects and object for the portraitist's erotic fantasy, as shown by the images of what precedes and ensues from sex ('their flesh alive in the white sheets'), which are added in parentheses. The colour of the scarf is described as 'the colour of a gentler sea', confusing landscape and human portrait, with the enjambment suggesting that this 'colour' is also the colour of 'his eyes'. The image—'the hills/ unroll themselves'—anticipates how the woman 'undressed for him, slowly', which the assonance between 'unroll' and 'slowly' highlights. The reference to 'her skin like cloud under dark layers', again, confuses portrait and landscape. With its shifting boundaries, the floating syntax, and its parentheses and connective style, the poem also mirrors the fluid boundaries between paintings and between spectators and frames.

The poem, with the image of steam trains, clearly draws on Turner's *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (1844), which, alongside other paintings by Turner, are in Room 34 in the National Gallery, London, and the 'rooms of Rubens and Fragonard' refer to Rooms 18 and 33 in the gallery. As the images of the woman in Yoseloff's poem recall a number of erotically-charged paintings by Rubens and Fragonard, including Rubens' *Portrait of Susanna Lunden*, the poetic speaker also uses a

group of classic portraits of women as transformational objects and those women as transformational subjects. As one of the most multiply-ekphrastic in Yoseloff's oeuvre, the poem represents a gallery visit as a multiply-transformational process in terms of the associative links made between the paintings and the couple looking at them. Here Yoseloff might well be taking her bearings from Paul Durcan's risqué ekphrastic poems about the Gallery in *Give Me Your Hand*, where 'Portrait of a Man with Susanna Lunden' amusingly recreates Parmigianino, based on his *Portrait of a Collector* (c. 1523), as a 'senior warder in the National Gallery', announcing that he 'fell in love with Susanna Lunden/ In Room 22' (*Give Me Your Hand* 49, 51).

Fig. 55 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Judgement of Paris* (c. 1632-5)
The National Gallery, London

Fig. 56 Jean-Honoré Fragonard, The *Shirt Withdrawn* (1770), Louvre

In her poem, Yoseloff recreates a route through the National Gallery, London, representing an eroticised take on museum-based ekphrasis, and her own multiply-transformational identification with a group of classic paintings. As she wrote on her online blog about the poem on 18 February 2011, saying that 'I have stood in front of this painting many times and felt moved' and calling this a 'transformation' which the poem explores. Yoseloff also mentioned the poem during a 'Poetry and Visual Art' workshop hosted by the Turner Contemporary in Margate on 18th November 2017 which I attended. She took us to see Tracey Emin's controversial installation *My Bed* (1998) alongside a group of landscape paintings by Turner. She quoted Emin saying, 'I don't wear small pale blue knickers that look like one of Turner's clouds' and 'we all know Turner was a really raunchy man, he was full of a lot of fecundity and action, and so am I, or used to be' (qtd. in 'Worksheet 3'). In her poem Yoseloff likewise projects an erotic narrative into a Turner landscape, aligning herself with Emin's views of Turner's landscapes as 'full of fecundity and action', and reminding us that Turner was also responsible for many erotica in his sketchbooks.

Not unlike the Turner poem, 'Tiger' and 'The Angle of Terror' both represent the erotic body in terms of the influence of art, in this case Cubist art: 'We recreate ourselves/ as Cubists, intersect tongues and limbs' (*Fetch* 25); 'Your face Picassos – I can no longer picture you whole' and 'my head slanted to catch your mouth/ your hand sphering my wrist' (34). Both poems explore the representation of eroticised bodies in fantasy, memory and art, highlighting the hyper-visual nature of all three, and documenting the way that modern art, like Rubens or Fragonard, helps shape our romantic lives. The acknowledgements tell us the epigraph of 'The Angle of Terror' is a quotation from the assemblage artist Tim Lewis, and Yoseloff appropriates his words, '*a more complex geometry*', to anticipate her account of recalling someone's face as 'Picassos' (34). The '*complex*', irregular shape of the poem visually evokes cubism, as the isolated body parts recreate Lewis' frequent uses of mechanical body parts in his assemblage work.

Fig. 57 Tim Lewis, *Pony* (2008)
(mixed-media assemblage)
Flowers Gallery, London/New York

*

As one of the last poems in *Fetch*, 'Marks' is unique in terms of Yoseloff's engagement with a contemporary artist. In 2007, the poem was also published as *Marks*, a limited edition artist book with dry points by Linda Karshan. Yoseloff actually wanted one of Karshan's woodblock prints as the cover of *Fetch*, but eventually used a group of these woodblocks as what she has called 'chapter headings' for the title poem, which 'appears in intervals throughout the book' (Appendix C, p. 189). Yoseloff's engagement with Karshan's art, however, is more evident in their actual collaboration on *Marks*. Within *Fetch*, the poem 'Marks', like many other poems in the collection, represents Yoseloff's growing engagements with modern and contemporary visual arts, but also marks the beginning of her commitment to collaborating with her artistic contemporaries. Yoseloff once said, 'In all of my collaborative books, the work has been

generated as my response to the work in question (the artwork already existed)' (Appendix C, p. 189). 'Marks', nonetheless, differs from her other ekphrastic poems, basing on her observation of Karshan working in studio. In an interview with the online blog *Words Unlimited,* posted on 17 June 2011, Yoseloff described this collaboration with Karshan as 'the first time I had responded not just to a picture but to an artist's process, both physical and mental'.

In her online blog post 'Time Being' (8 October 2010), Yoseloff describes the way Karshan's drawing 'process' influenced the poem:

> Then Linda starts to draw, and I watch her make the line down the centre of the paper, in her rubber gloves, like a surgeon halving the body with a scalpel. The precision of it. I know that this image will go into the poem, that moment of beginning, of entry.

The 'image' refers to the moment in the poem where she says: 'A finger blades a line/ straight from throat to womb' (*Fetch* 51). The poem probes into 'myself in my skin' (52), confusing a woman's internal organs with her inner 'self', recreating Karshan's process as simultaneously 'physical and mental'. Prompted by her observation of Karshan's drawing of lines, Yoseloff ponders the marks made on the page ('My mark on the page') as well as the unmarked space ('the white space'), and brings the space a poem occupies with that of 'skin' which 'carries every cut' and '*all that inner space one never sees/ the brain and heart*' (57, 48, 52). On her website, Karshan calls her 'spare, monochromatic, abstract prints' her 'inner choreography', seeing them a mental equivalent of a dance sequence. Yoseloff, in contrast, describes Karshan's lines as surgical cuts, but in the poem associates them with 'the white space' on a page but also physical and mental '*inner space*'. Yoseloff's unpunctuated lines create a floating abstract choreographic pattern of their own, reflecting on the ways Karshan's bars' become a 'window', a frame for both looking out of and in through (52).

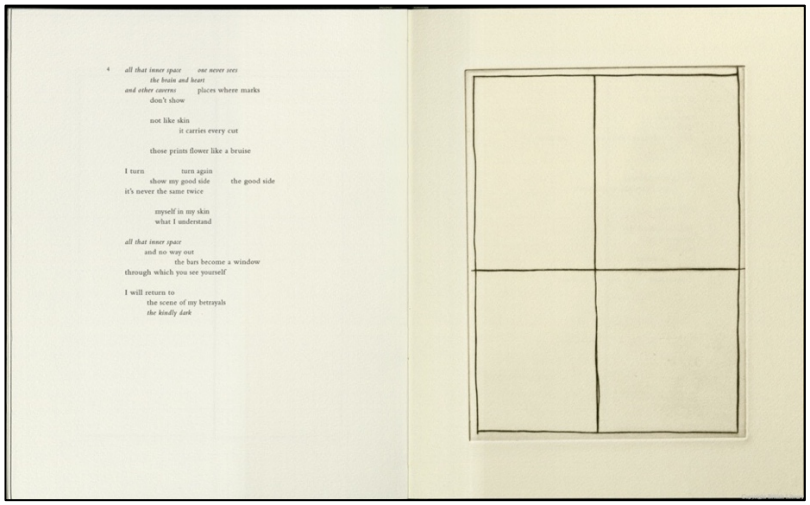


Fig. 58 A scan of a page in *Marks* (2007)
A British Library copy

In 'Topologies of the Self: Space and Life-Writing' (2003), Frédéric Regard proposes that 'self-writing' is less about 'who am I? than 'where am I', which he calls the 'poetic spacing of the self' (90). Yoseloff's 'Marks' self-reflexively explores its own 'spacing' of the physical and mental self. We can perhaps understand the 'mark on the page' and its mapping of '*inner space*' in relation to Marion Milner's work on art therapy. In *The Hands of the Living God* (1969), Milner suggests that 'a state in which one holds a kind of inner space' is 'essential in all mental productivity, whether creating ideas or works of art' (250). Milner observed in her treatment of a schizophrenic patient, based around drawing, that 'the first action of making a mark on the paper stimulat[ed] a thought which then stimulated another action, in a continual feed-back process' (403). 'Marks' begins by saying 'I have marked' (*Fetch* 48), and Yoseloff's recreation of Karshan's drawing process recalls Milner's notion of art as driven by our 'inner space' and her recognition that drawing begins as 'a mark on the paper', but feeds back into our 'mental productivity'. In *Fetch*, which includes 'Marks', Yoseloff explores the space of the poem and page and its close associations with our inner space more self-consciously than in her earlier collections, suggesting that both drawing and poetry can be transformational media, in particular, for female artists and writers.

*

Apart from 'The Venetian Mirror', Yoseloff's anthology *A Room to Live in: A Kettle's Yard Anthology* (2007) includes 'The Artist', which, as its subtitle suggests, was written in memory of the short-lived painter Christopher Wood, a close friend of Jim Ede, who collected many of his works[72]. Yoseloff's account of Wood as 'The Artist' recreates images in his *Self-Portrait* (1927) and draws on works by some of Wood's poetic and artistic contemporaries to situate him in many senses. If he is 'The Artist' invested in exploring and representing the truth, he is caught at work: 'your pipe (which *is* a pipe)/ unlit/ until the picture's finished', while elsewhere in Paris 'Cocteau drowns/ in absinthe. *Vert./ Verité*' (28, 29). The image of the pipe describes the one in the foreground of Wood's 1927 Kettle's Yard *Self-Portrait*. The two nearly anagrammatic French words '*Vert*' and '*Verité*' suggest that the poet-artist Jean Cocteau puns on *Vert* (a reference to the green of 'absinthe') to evoke *Verité*' (truth), but the line-break simultaneously suggests a boundary between the two. The assertion that it '*is* a pipe' similarly plays on René Magritte famous Surrealist painting 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' (French for *this is not a pipe*) included in *The Treachery of Images* (1928-29). The image of Cocteau as an absinthe addict echoes the depiction of Verlaine and other poets

[72] Kettle's Yard, as its biography of the painter tells us (2013), now 'holds the largest public collection of works by the British artist' (7).

drinking absinthe in *Barnard's Star*, suggesting Yoseloff's continuing interest in relatively sexually dissident and Bohemian poets and artists—from Rossetti through Verlaine and Cocteau to Woods. The poem also says, 'Across town/ Picasso takes Marie-Therese/ to pieces', confusing art with reality (28). Yoseloff makes us aware of competing models of the truth of paintings like competing models of painting, and situates Wood biographically as an English artist in that French post-war milieu.

'The work was nothing much—sub Picasso': *The City with Horns* (2011)

As the blurb of *The City with Horns* (2011) tells us that the 'life and vision of the American artist Jackson Pollock provides the storyline for the main sequence' in the book, Yoseloff follows in the footsteps of Pascale Petit, whose 2010 collection recreates Frida Kahlo's life in terms of the painter's work. Yoseloff's *The City with Horns* also represents an imaginary form of collaboration with Pollock, recreating his life and artistic vision. This, again, represents a new form of collaboration with a visual artist, unlike 'Fetch' which uses Karshan's prints as what Yoseloff calls 'chapter headings', and their co-creation of the limited-edition *Marks*.

If Petit's *What the Water Gave Me* is a fictional autobiography based around Kahlo, in the painter's voice and with poems framed as her self-portraits and portraits, Yoseloff's *The City with Horns* is a multi-directional biography about Pollock, recreating his life through different voices including Pollock himself, and framed around his paintings, biography, legacy and beyond[73]. In the title, opening poem, Pollock is 'hugging the bar at the Cedar' and he 'trumpets down the Bowery' (23). The 'Cedar' refers to Cedar Tavern, a bar in Manhattan, frequented by painters like Pollock, Mark Rothko, William de Kooning, whose paintings of two women singing are recreated in another poem 'Singing Woman', and writers like Frank O'Hara, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. The Bowery was a street and area with drunks and homeless people, also in lower Manhattan. With images of Pollock's drunk behavior, 'The City with Horns' recreates Pollock's psycho-geographical engagement with downtown New York. As Yoseloff completed her first degree in New York, the route through New York City, from the Cedar to the Bowery, might be seen as using Pollock as a transformational subject, through which she returns to New York, but in the 50s and in the persona of Pollock.

The poem refers to him as 'hugging the bar at the Cedar,/ like a bull, great bulk of the Minotaur,/ naked and erect, Europa bowing at his feet' (23). This mythologisation of Pollock alludes to his earlier, more figurative painting *Pasiphaë* (1943). In *Jackson*

[73] As Yoseloff told the online blog *Words Unlimited* in interview, *The City with Horns* explores Pollock's 'life and work through various voices'.

Pollock (1959), a book from *The Great American Artists Series*, Frank O'Hara addresses Pollock's 1943 painting, asserting that 'it is not a god in the form of a bull who seduces Pasiphaë. It is the bull' (19). Unlike O'Hara's reading of Pollock's painting as a representation of 'the bull' itself, Yoseloff represents Pollock as 'like a bull' and draws on the myth of Pasiphaë and the bull, as represented in visual artworks. In Greek mythology, Pasiphaë is cursed by Poseidon to commit adultery with a bull and eventually, bears the Minotaur. The image of the 'great bulk of the Minotaur' evokes many visual representations of the half-man, half-bull character, including those by Picasso and Michael Ayrton. The image of the bull-like Pollock as 'naked and erect' might adapt the titles of Picasso's *Minotaur and Naked (Rape)* (1933), as well as Aryton's drawing *Minotaur Erect* (1974) and sculpture of the same name (1975). The image also recalls Picasso's 1945-6 lithographic series about a Minotaur-like bull, which also seems to show erection.

Fig. 59 Jackson Pollock, *Pasiphaë* (1943)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 60 Picasso, *Minotaur and Naked (Rape)* (1933)

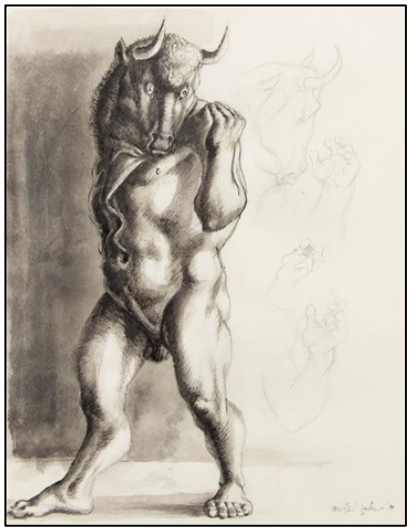


Fig. 61 Michael Ayrton, *Minotaur Erect* (1974)

In another Greek myth Zeus transforms into a bull and abducts the Phoenician princess Europa, a story retold in ancient vase paintings and figurines, and which

continued to fascinate classic and modern painters from Titan, Rubens, Rembrandt and Goya to Picasso. Taking off from this, Yoseloff represents Europa as 'bowing at his feet'. As the poem associates the 'city with horns' with a bull-like Pollock, the reinvented image of Europa 'bowing at his feet' metaphorically represents Pollock's importance in New York's taking over from Europe as what Herschel B. Chipp, in *Theories of Modern Art*, calls 'a new world center of art' (519). In the title sequence of *Europa* (2008), Moniza Alvi highlights the fact that Europe derives its name from Europa, and recreates Europa as subject to Zeus' abduction: '*and you, Europa, a continent/ full of undiscovered countries*' (34). Yoseloff, in contrast, reinvents the Greek myth to offer a dramatic recreation of Pollock. Her poem is multi-ekphrastic, evoking many modern visual artworks, especially paintings by Pollock, Picasso and others, and characteristically situating Pollock among his artistic predecessors and contemporaries like Michael Ayrton. The series of ekphrastic moments in the poem, although implicit, suggest Yoseloff's obsession with Picasso's iconography, and in Yoseloff's poetry, the body of a man, as subject or artist, is always more visible, in stark contrast to the women who wear dresses and gowns, often with lace.

In 'Bat Samba' from *Barnard's Star*, Yoseloff, like Petit, speaks of an ambiguous you who dreams of bats and eventually transforms into one—'They have entered your dreams'; 'you wake to find/ your teeth have sharpened to fangs' (29). 'The City with Horns' can similarly be read as a biographical study of Pollock and his self-mythologising art. As Carl Jung reports in *Symbols of Transformation* (1956), 'theriomorphic representations of the libido' are 'well known to the doctor from the dreams and fantasies of his patients, where instinct is often represented as a bull, horse, dog, etc.' (179). In the poem, the image of Pollock as 'like a bull' seems to be based on a biographical reading of the bull in *Pasiphaë* in which Pollock himself is a deity in theriomorphic form. Such a transformation recalls Petit's recreations of her mother as Aztec deities in poems framed as portraits, but here Yoseloff's Pollock is a hyper-sexualised figure. Later in the poem, he is represented as 'horny again, no broad brave enough to fuck him' (*The City with Horns* 23). Yoseloff's Pollock is 'like a bull', and his violent sexual impulses are theriomorphically transformed.

*

The bio-ekphrastic narrative about Pollock is just as much about the two women closely associated with him and goes beyond giving voices to women represented in art. Pollock was married to Lee Krasner, another key figure of Abstract Expressionism, and at the time of his death, he was having an affair with Ruth Kilgman, who survived the car crash in which he died. The poem 'Cedar Nights' recreates a series of images of writers

and artists showing wild drunken behavior in the Cedar Tavern: 'Kerouac baptized the ashtray with his piss,/ Rothko gazed into his glass, lost' (32). The poem ends with 'Jack' 'painting up a storm/ (when he was sober)' and a woman who 'breezed into the Cedar, all ass' (32). We know she is Kilgman, who reports later in 'Death Car Girl', 'I walk into the Cedar where their stares/ cling to me like flies' (34). The poem is actually dedicated to Kilgman, as suggested by an opening note: '*The nickname given to Pollock's lover, Ruth Kilgman, who survived the car crash that killed him*' (34).

Elsewhere, there are more poems about Krasner, engaging with her significant influence on Pollock. 'Springs' refers to the couple's house, and evokes Krasner's painting *The Springs* (1964), created in the house after Pollock's death in 1956. The poem is a retrospective account of their living and working together, from Krasner cooking 'dinners' for Pollock to their constant violent fights ('Neighbours could hear them fighting a mile away') and the period when Pollock needed Krasner's recognition ('*A miracle*, he said, and raced/ to show her'; '*Jack, that's a goddamn masterpiece*') (26). 'Portrait of the Artist as a Depressed Bastard', as its title suggests, can be read as another textual portrait by Yoseloff, this time of Pollock, but also as a portrait of him by her Krasner, who exclaims in 'Springs', '*Jack, that's a goddamn masterpiece*'. We certainly see Pollock's work from Krasner's perspective in 'Lee Visits the Studio', which recreates her visit to Pollock's studio and her first impression of his art: 'The work was nothing much—sub-Picasso' (24). All these biographical details are well-documented in *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (1989), a text which Yoseloff acknowledges as essential to her research (62). Yoseloff's bio-ekphrastic narrative about Pollock making use of the voices of Krasner and Kilgman represents something very different to the group of ekphrastic poems dedicated to Pollock, such as Jorie Graham's 'Pollock and Canvas' (1987), Mark Doty's 'To Jackson Pollock' (Apr 2015), and Caitriona O'Reilly's 'Blue Poles' (May 2015), which responds to Pollock's 1952 painting of the same name. Each poet creates a Pollock of their own, but Yoseloff's is a fully-fledged biographical drama.

Fig. 62 Lee Krasner, *Night Creatures* (1965)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

In Yoseloff's account, there is violence everywhere. In 'Lee Visits the Studio', Yoseloff's Krasner says, 'He'll wrestle me to the floor/ until I'm black and blue' (25). The image of Krasner turning 'black and blue' can be literal but simultaneously, as metaphorical representation of her in terms of the two dark colours. Yoseloff characteristically suggests that physical violence inflicted on women is a driving force behind the painter's abstract art. The image of 'black and blue', nevertheless, alludes not only to potential bruises but to the palettes of both Pollock and Krasner, evoking Pollock's *Composition (White, Black, Blue and Red on White)* (1948) and Krasner's *Blue and Black* (1951-53). In the poem, we could read this as Krasner's projection of herself being wrestled to the floor onto her canvas of 'black and blue'. Yoseloff's Krasner is not only a subject of art and a viewer of Pollock's art, but an artist of her own right, as we can see in 'Night Journey' and 'Gothic Landscape', which take their titles from Krasner's work. Krasner lived for nearly thirty years after her husband's death, and we are told in 'Night Journey' that,

> Night was always his time.
> Now he's gone, she claims it:
> everything in black and white,
> like newsprint.
> She can't deal with colours:
> Yellow sun, too bright. Red knocks her out.
> Blue, like death.
>
> (35)

Here the poem recreates Krasner's dark palette in the *Night Journeys* series and her varying uses of the same colours before and after Pollock's death, from figuratively turning 'black and blue' to using 'black and white' to signify her claim on the night and affirming 'Blue, like death'.

Yoseloff reads autobiographical and biographical meanings into Krasner's palette, and simultaneously gives due recognition of the female painter, whose career slowed down during her marriage to Pollock but flourished after his death. As Krasner told the art critic Cindy Nemser, 'I couldn't run out and do a one-woman job on the sexist aspects of the art world, continue my painting, and stay in the role I was in as Mrs. Pollock' (*Art Talk* 367). The framing of Krasner and her art within a bio-ekphrastic narrative about Pollock dramatises the fact that Krasner as a painter had been overshadowed by Pollock. Yoseloff consistently aligns herself with her female poetic contemporaries like Moniza Alvi (with *Europa*), Deryn-Rees Jones (on Paula Rego), and Sujata Bhatt and Pascale Petit (on Frida Kahlo), who write not only about visual representations of women, but those by female artists of themselves and other women. We need to see Yoseloff and Petit as among the key figures in a new poetic bio-ekphrastic moment about female artists and contributed to by female poets. George

Szirtes might be an exceptional case, having photographer-mother as a central subject in his poetry and the photographer Diane Arbus as a transformational equivalent of his mother. In fact, Yoseloff's poems about Krasner anticipate more recent curatorial and critical work on the painter, including Gail Levin's 2012 biography of Krasner and the exhibition *Lee Krasner: Living Colour* (2019) in the Barbican Art Gallery, London.

*

The voices recreated in *The City with Horns* include Pollock himself, Ruth Kilgman, Lee Krasner, and Frank O'Hara. 'Short Voyages' reads Pollock's painting in the wake of Frank O'Hara. The poem, as its subtitle tells us, is '*for Jackson and Frank*'. Calling the two by their first names, Yoseloff figuratively establishes an intimate relationship with them. The title of 'Short Voyages' comes from a line in O'Hara's 'Digression on *Number 1, 1948*': 'his perfect hand/ and the many short voyages' (*Collected Poems* 260). O'Hara's poem begins by saying 'I'm ill today' but moves on to address a range of modern visual artworks, ending with Pollock's *Number 1A, 1948*. By contrast, Yoseloff's poem opens by defining digression:

> To digress
> is to be alive and know a mind
> at work, a body in motion,
> the blare of the city, in all its
> movements.
> No accidents,
> only *cause* and *effect*, the future
> which is not so dark but which
> we cannot stop, speeding forward,
> destiny at the wheel.
>
> (*The City with Horns* 29)

The image of 'a body in motion' alludes to Pollock's work being called action painting by Harold Rosenberg but the emphasis on both the mind and body is informed by O'Hara. Regarding 'Action Painting', O'Hara calls it 'the physical reality of the artist and his activity of expressing it, united to the spiritual reality of the artist in a oneness' (*Jackson Pollock* 29). Unlike O'Hara, Yoseloff puts 'mind' before 'body', and the importance of knowing a mind is highlighted by the assonance between 'alive' and 'mind' and the iambic pulse of the phrase 'alive and know a mind'.

The poem goes on to adapt Pollock's account of his own art. In the film *Jackson Pollock 51*, Pollock declares that 'there is no accident, just as there is no beginning and no end' (*Theories of Modern Art* 548). Yoseloff adapts Pollock's words to suggest that there are 'No accidents,/ only *cause and effect*'. Whereas Pollock understands his art as a spontaneous act rather than a narrative, Yoseloff defines its digressive form as driven by causality. Like the title of the poem, the image of 'the future/ which is not so dark' comes from O'Hara's 'Digression on *Number 1*' poem, and Yoseloff's poem maintains this sense

of hope, saying later that in 'this age of flags and fear', 'art might have a place' (*The City with Horns* 29). Such a belief in art as a counteragent against the 'age of flags and fear' derives from O'Hara's book about Pollock. Reflecting on action painting, O'Hara asserts that 'faced with universal destruction', 'our art should at least speak with unimpeded force and unveiled honesty to a future which well may be non-existent, in a last effort of recognition which is the justification of being' (*Jackson Pollock* 22). Yoseloff's poem pays tribute to Pollock and O'Hara by adapting their ideas and self-reflexively performs its own digression from art, its main subject, which the poem in its serpentine form eventually reveals.

As poet and curator, Frank O'Hara, Yoseloff reiterates in interview, is one of her 'important role models' (Appendix C, p. 190). If Pollock's life provides the thematic backbone of *The City with Horns*, O'Hara provides titular frames for the poems. The book is divided into three parts, namely *City Winter*, *The City with Horns* and *Indian Summer*, and probably began as a tribute to O'Hara's first book *A City Winter and Other Poems* (1951). While O'Hara's chapbook contains thirteen poems as well as two drawings by Larry Rivers, marking O'Hara's first collaboration with Rivers, the title section of Yoseloff's *The City with Horns* similarly has thirteen poems and features a series of poems based on abstract paintings by Pollock, Krasner and others. The book, once again, reflects Yoseloff's curation of paintings, but puts them into three thematic sections, creating a kind of curatorial narrative which, though it begins in a City Winter, ends with *Indian Summer*. While 'Cryptographer' from *City Winter* is based on Cy Twombly's *Quattro Stagioni: Inverno* (Italian for *Four Seasons: Winter*), 'Mud' from *Indian Summer* reads the frame made of green paint in a painting by Howard Hodgkin as 'the green warmth, someone to hold' (*The City with Horns* 49).

Fig. 63 Cy Twombly, *Quattro Stagioni: Estate* (1993-5), Tate

Fig. 64 Cy Twombly, *Quattro Stagioni: Inverno* (1993-5), Tate

I started the chapter using 'Cryptographer' as a vivid example of the multi-directional bio-ekphrasis in Yoseloff's poetry. The poem also manifests other essential practices in Yoseloff's use of ekphrasis. As one of the monthly featured poems on the Tate's website in May 2009, 'Cryptographer' recreates the famously self-erasing Twombly's voice: 'I write it down, cross it out' (*The City with Horns* 5). Yoseloff characteristically adapts Twombly's words, as quoted in Mary Jacobus' *Reading Cy Twombly* (2016): 'I use paint as an eraser. If I don't like something, I just paint it out' (qtd. in Jacobus 3). Just as she is interested in classic paintings full of secrets and clues, Yoseloff highlights in 'Cryptographer' her reading of abstract art as cryptographic as regards its autobiographical and biographical purposes, and self-reflexively establishes herself as an ekphrastic and poetic cryptographer, who would solve codes in paintings and perhaps 'write it down, cross it out'. The poem ends by saying, 'Winter obliterates us, dizzy light,/ *our white youth*' (*The City with Horns* 5). According to Jacobus, Twombly's *Estate*, the summer piece in his seasonal series, includes 'lines transcribed and cannibalized' from the poetry of George Seferis, C. P. Cavafy, and others (Jacobus 46). Indeed, Yoseloff's image of '*our white youth*' comes from Cavafy's 'Our Dearest White Youth'. If Twombly uses a canvas as the space for a collage of lines from poems, Yoseloff creates her ekphrastic equivalent by addressing *Inverno* while appropriating the line 'our white youth' from *Estate*. *The City with Horns* memorably represents the various ekphrastic roles Yoseloff plays, as art curator, biographer, cryptographer, and a kind of word-collagist.

'we stretch ourselves into a thousand/ suffering shapes': *Desire Paths* & *Formerly* (2012); *Nowheres* & *A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems* (2015)

Many of the ekphrastic poems used as examples in this chapter were later published in *A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems* (October 2015), including the entire title sequence of *The City with Horns*. With a good range of poems based on autobiographical and biographical representations in visual art, the collected volume establishes Yoseloff as, what I have called her, a curatorial bio-ekphrasist. The book also includes poems from four collaborative limited editions: *Marks*, with Linda Karshan; *Desire Paths* (Feb 2012), with Karshan and Galerie Hein Elferink; *Formerly* (May 2012), with Vici MacDonald; and *Nowheres* (May 2015), with David Harker, now known as Charlotte Harker. The poems in these collaborative artist's books are similarly informed by empty spaces in abstract and figurative drawings, and photographs. As Yoseloff has said in interview, 'I've always been attracted to abandoned, ruined or empty spaces, and I suppose what then occurs is that I populate them in some way' (Appendix C, p. 189).

Like *Marks*, *Desire Paths* plays on itself as a poetic equivalent of Karshan's prints. As Figure 65 shows, the poem is made of five parts printed on separate sheets, intersected by Karshan's woodcuts in grid shape. In an online blog post with the same title (29 February 2012), Yoseloff introduces *Desire Paths* by describing her poem as 'carved in stone': 'It is a beautiful production; the sheets emerging from an earth-coloured box, Linda's woodcuts on delicate tissue-thin Japanese paper, but dark, grained, serious. My poem like an inscription carved in stone or on a tomb'. Yoseloff creates her versions of 'woodcuts' with each part of the poem shaped as a block or some blocks of words and self-reflexively suggests that they are 'carved in stone': 'our words are carved in stone/ my words, stuck in my throat' (no page number).

Fig. 65 A screenshot of a preview of all pages in *Desire Paths* (2012)

Desire Paths is precisely not a book. It is a rare edition of ten, a 49 x 32 cm, hand-made and cloth-covered box set of 'delicate tissue-thin Japanese paper'. In such a presentation format, the poem and prints can be read in chronological order, but also in other ways. The version of *Desire Paths* in Yoseloff's collected volume presents one way of reading the text or texts. It begins with the third woodcut, a kind of window filled with black except for the frame, followed by two sections of the poem which have a similar shape. We can see each of the two sections as an aerial view of four buildings separated by two streets forming a cross between them. This, again, is suggested by the poem itself: 'I have the capacity/ to cut through concrete & glass/ to undo the fragile construction' (*New and Selected* 131). The image of 'concrete and glass' also markedly contrasts with the 'delicate tissue-thin Japanese paper', but is equally materialistic.

Moreover, the title *Desire Paths* refers to the psycho-geographical concept of the same name. As Donald Norman tells us in *Living with Complexity* (2011), 'desire lines' are 'human-made-trails', which 'reflect desired paths even though the formal layout of

streets and sidewalks do no accommodate them' (126). Yoseloff's *Desire Paths* describes words as 'carved in stone', but suggests the possibility that we could 'cut through concrete & glass', visually representing the cuts with the kind of desired paths seen on the sheets. *Desire Paths* brings together Yoseloff's constant explorations of desire and urban psychogeography, and as a tripartite production, sets up a new model for a poet-artist-publisher collaboration. The production might have been informed by Anne Carson's *Nox* (2010), a box containing a scroll of letters, photographs, collages and sketches, created in memory of Carson's dead brother. *Desire Paths* similarly redefines our concept of a book, but unlike Carson's box and scroll, this is a box of individual sheets, which can be read in different orders, and represents a co-creation by Yoseloff, Linda Karshan and the printer-publisher.

*

Formerly (2012) follows the usual format of a collaborative book, pairing a poem by Yoseloff with a photograph by her friend, Vici MacDonald, a graphic designer, and like *Marks* and *Desire Paths*, began with the artist's work. MacDonald has two online blogs, namely *Burglar Alarm Britain* and *Shopfront Elegy*, and *Formerly* grew out of the latter, which is dedicated to her photographs of industrial and commercial façades dated to 1981. *Formerly* was also preceded by MacDonald and Yoseloff's editorial work on an art magazine. Yoseloff, as mentioned in Chapter 1, had been a poetry editor of *Art World* for two years. In fact, MacDonald was the founding editor of the magazine, published in 2007-9. Years later, the two joined forces to found Hercules Editions and self-publish *Formerly*, which was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award. Ian Duhig as the blurb quotes described the book as the 'best collaboration between these arts that I have seen since Fay Godwin and Ted Hughes' *Remains of Elmet*'.

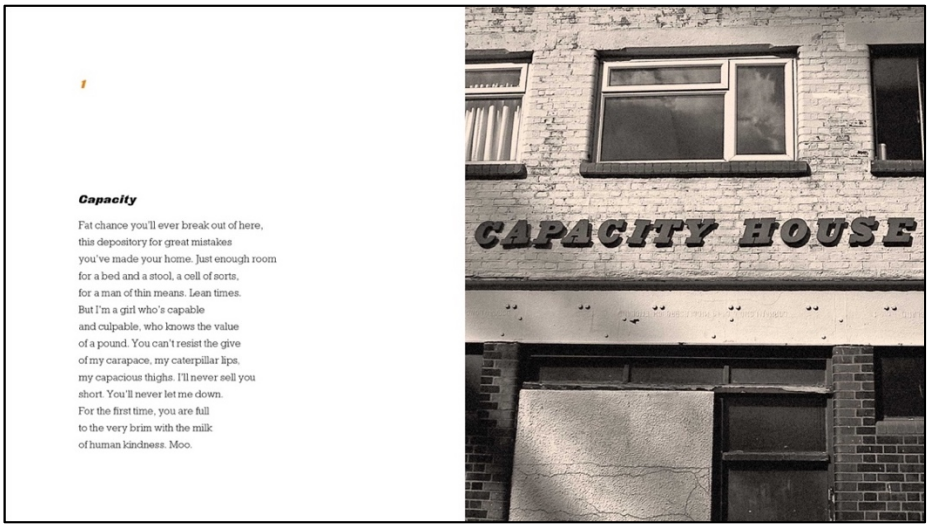


Fig. 66 An image of the first pair of poem and photograph in *Formerly* (2012)

Not unlike Godwin and Hughes' 'noir' version of Yorkshire, Yoseloff's poems in *Formerly* read as exercises in 'noir' East London realism, mimicking the black-and-white photographic idiom, unlike her other poetry of this period. As its first verso says, the book is 'a collaboration' between Yoseloff and MacDonald, 'who share a desire to commemorate forgotten corners of a London now fast disappearing'. Yoseloff plays on words captured in the photographs, as in the opening poem 'Capacity', which borrows its title from a house sign. The poem explores the capacity or capability of a prostitute who says, 'But I'm a girl who's capable/ and culpable, who knows the value/ of a pound' (*New and Selected* 135). Like 'Capacity', many poems are sexual in a joking, chatty way. 'Quickie Heel Bar' bears the name of a bar now replaced by a store, and reinvents the image of a man as a bull—'I'll make you *ring a ding ding*, no bull./ Ladies, get your coats, you've pulled' (142). Like 'Brompton Cemetry', one of Yoseloff's earliest poems, 'Limehouse Cut' is an account of being haunted by homoerotic memories—'I haunt abandoned lots, urinal stalls,/ anywhere that bears your mark (the flick/ of the switch and then the dark, the quickie fuck' (143). A sign that reads *Formerly* actually gave Yoseloff the pun on formally. While all poems are in an irregular sonnet form, 'Formerly' as the last poem of the sonnet corona is made of fragments from all previous ones, suggesting that the poems are woven into a kind of found, montage-like narrative about London.

Formerly recrates the voices of a group of tarty women and dodgy men, and their tawdry memories, and almost reads like a parody of the photograph-based memory of George Szirtes and Philip Larkin. In 'Appearances', John Berger argues that 'as soon as photographs are used with words, they produce together an effect of certainty, even of dogmatic assertion', and 'the words […] are given specific authenticity by the irrefutability of the photograph' (*Understanding a Photograph* 66). The photographs in *Formerly* give 'specific authenticity' to the poems, but since these are photographs of abandoned places, their authenticity represents of a kind of imagined or pseudo history, reminiscent of W. G. Sebald's novels such as *Austerlitz*, which would not be achieved if the poems were based on drawings or paintings. The patently fantastic nature of the past recreated in Yoseloff's photographic ekphrasis takes a different form in 'Whitechapel', which gives a voice to a female mannequin behind a shop window—'The bars caress my face, a grid of days' (*New and Selected* 149).

A location guide called 'Off the Map' was published to accompany an exhibition based on *Formerly*, held in Southbank Centre, London between December 2012 and

February 2013[74]. All off-the-map places in MacDonald's photographs are marked on the maps in the guide, which also includes the collaborators' descriptions of each photograph and poem. As the second edition of *Formerly* comes with the guide, the book now foregrounds the fact that it addresses actual, accessible places we might have overlooked or forgotten. The poems, in turn, recreate voices which would once have haunted these 'abandoned lots' and seedy bars.

*

Fig. 67 David (now Charlotte) Harker, *AL 151* (2015)

Nowheres (2015) with Charlotte Harker is another collaborative book initiated by a visual artist fascinated by derelict, uninhabited places. Yoseloff's more recent collaborations, from *Desire Paths* to *Nowheres*, represent something rather different from the bio-ekphrastic model, which looks at autobiographical or biographical understanding of a visual representation. As the acknowledgements in *New and Selected* tell us, Harker invited Yoseloff to 'write a sequence informed by [her] exhibition *Species of Trees and Other Landscapes* at the Islington Arts Factory in 2014' (187). It seems that Yoseloff has established a reputation for writing poetic sequences based on modern and contemporary art, but unlike the poems in *Formerly*, the poems in *Nowhere* portray the deserted places in their current state and explore personal identification with them. In 'Other Landscapes', the narrator describes a historic place, which the protagonist is looking at through a tour bus window: 'Ruined temples dot the landscape, columns spiking the horizon. Just a pile of stones, his father would have said, so what?' (*New and Selected* 167). 'Ruin' seems to be voiced by the same narrator, speaking of 'our' understanding of a place of ruin. It begins by saying, 'The guidebook talks of famine and war;/ the field is peaceful enough: a few cows/ stare and chew and stare', and ends on an

[74] Yoseloff's YouTube channel includes a video of a tour of the exhibition and videos of her performance with the musician Douglas Benford. During the performance, Yoseloff read all poems from *Formerly* with sound effects improvised by Benford.

image of granite which still 'stands' 'to remind us of our failure,/ where we went wrong' (168). 'AL 151' similarly describes a deserted place, as represented in Harker's drawing of the same name—'A low building lies/ deserted, a place of industry/ failed' (171). The poem calls the land the 'definition/ of nowhere' and ends by saying that 'so we must keep going,/ dead set' (171). Whereas the *Formerly* poems are more a parody than tribute to the collaborative model set by Ted Hughes and Fay Godwin, the *Nowheres* poems might be informed by Hughes' lyrical approach to fields and ancient remains in *Remains of Elmet*, unlike Derek Mahon's mycological-turned-archeological perspective on a disused shed in County Wexford.

The prose poem 'Other Landscapes' is made of paragraphs beginning with 'He' (*New and Selected* 165-7), recalling the blocks of words in *Desire Paths* which begin with 'We entered the city in autumn' (131, 132). The increasing range of poetic forms Yoseloff uses goes alongside the expansion of her urban psycho-geographical map, with poems now given the names of places, specific and otherwise. These places range from cemeteries and museums to cities and landscapes, such as 'a Turner Landscape' in *Fetch*; 'Gothic Landscape' in *The City with Horns*, which addresses a painting by Lee Krasner; and 'Other Landscapes'. Yoseloff can be seen as figuratively creating her 'desire paths' or landscapes in modern poetry, by consistently writing about forgotten or overlooked places, as in *Formerly* and *Nowheres*, and using more and more idiosyncratic forms in her poems, as in *Marks* and *Desire Paths*. Unlike Pascale Petit's one-off project with Lawand, Yoseloff's responses to visual artworks in her collaborative books with artists are essential to her oeuvre and form a complex bio-ekphrastic narrative, with her diverse explorations of geographical and inner space, complementing her explorations of the space created in art and poetry.

*

Besides poems from *Nowheres*, *A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems* (2015) includes those commissioned by a poetry magazine, an art festival, art exhibitions, and two other visual artists, Alison Gill and Tom de Freston. The new poems in the collected edition show an impressive range of collaborative work, demonstrating Yoseloff's continuing involvement in the current poetic and arts scenes. In addition to these collaborations of different kinds, the poem 'Pictures of Spring' explores a range of Japanese art, including shunga (erotic art), pornographic manga, origami, and ukiyo-e (the art of the floating world). The title is actually a literal translation of the Japanese term *shunga*, a euphemism for sex. The poem is framed as four 'pictures' and is a small curatorial and psycho-geographical project, as suggested by the second 'picture' '*Tokyo Metro/Ginza Line*', which I will quote in full:

> The businessman next to me
> balances a briefcase on his knees,
> opens his *manga*:
>
> two doe-eyed girls in gym slips,
> hair in bunches, are ripped apart
> by tigers.
>
> The artist has taken pride
> in the tearing of limbs,
> the beauty of the tiger.

(178)

Yoseloff characteristically (1) gives this ekphrastic 'picture' a psycho-geographical frame, with the name of a metro line in Tokyo; (2) focuses on the girls' clothes and hair in a visual image; (3) highlights the 'beauty' of physical violence represented in art; (4) reinvents her framing of a poem as portrait, with the pseudo-haikus functioning as 'pictures' of the businessman. . As often, Yoseloff is curiously fascinated by visual images of the female subjects being 'ripped apart' in literal and figurative ways, and while William Blake asks in 'The Tyger', 'What immortal hand or eye,/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?', Yoseloff self-consciously reflects on the capacity of an 'artist', who can refer to both the manga-artist and Yoseloff herself.

Yoseloff also has two new poems speaking to an artist and a poet respectively about their works as models for her writing. 'Yarn', as its subtitle tells us, was written in memory of the New-York-based sculptor Fred Sandback, known for his sculptures of acrylic yarn. While the title can refer to thread or a rambling story, the poem is a self-conscious reflection on writing as an art of knitting—'The tales I spin are wearing thin—unlace this noose, un-/ loose the mass of solid constructs', and addresses Sandback as a model of creating yarns—'You leave a tangled web; we interweave, then untie/ the knot' (*New and Selected* 175). 'A Letter to WS Graham' addresses a poet in personal terms, just as 'Short Voyages' is '*for Jackson and Frank*'. It says 'Sydney – if I may call you Sydney – because I feel/ you have been speaking to me all the time' (184). As Yoseloff told me in interview, both 'Graham and O'Hara have been important role models' for her as poets in close dialogue with visual art and artists (Appendix C, 190). The poem is framed as a personal letter and is clearly modelled after those (such as 'Seven Letters') by Graham, and in it Yoseloff recognises Graham's investment in love as a common denominator in the work of painters and poets:

> […] The job is love, you said,
> that's why we stretch ourselves into a thousand
> suffering shapes, like Hilton's nudes or Lanyon's thermals.
> You made words of their colours, made words
> for the sea that fancies itself a metaphor, too pretty
> and brutal for simple truth.

Tell me
now that your words are done, how to keep going on.

(184)

Yoseloff quotes from Graham's 'The Thermal Stair' saying 'The poet or painter steers his life to maim/ Himself somehow for the job. His job is Love' and refers to the two painters closest to Graham, Peter Lanyon and Roger Hilton (*New Collected Poems* 164). Graham goes on to say 'Love/ Imagined into words or paint/ An object that will stand and will not move' (164), and Yoseloff similarly sees love as the reason for figuratively transforming our bodies 'into a thousand suffering shapes'. Graham was actually writing to Lanyon—'Give me your hand, Peter,/ to steady me on the word' (165), so Yoseloff's 'letter' to Graham is interestingly a poetic response to an ekphrastic response. Both are heartfelt elegies to a friend, pleading with his spirit to remain a beacon of hope and a spiritual guide but in Yoseloff's case, it is an imaginary friend or purely textual friend. Yoseloff directly positions herself within the poetic bio-ekphrastic tradition but self-consciously declares visual art, especially painting and sculpture, and modern and abstract, to be an essential model for her poetry, as regards its representation of the body, suffering, love and truth.

Yoseloff's *Sweetheart* (1998) is her first personal art gallery, encompassing all kinds of visual arts. With the book, Yoseloff launched a group of interlinked bio-ekphrastic projects: basing her poems on visits to art galleries and museums; using a visual artwork as a storyboard and/or a central point for a narrative about love, religious faith, marriage, womanhood, and secrecy, and creating a psycho-geographical map with poems named after and about often-forgotten places. These projects take different forms in her following collections. In *Barnard's Star* (2004), Yoseloff dwells on a group of paintings and sculptures in churches, and continues to give voices to the female subjects in classic paintings. In 2007, she multiplied her engagements with art, publishing *Marks* with the printmaker Linda Karshan, an edited anthology with Kettle's Yard, and *Fetch*, where Yoseloff explores the physical and visceral in terms of classic and modern art; and creates her most multi-directional complex of gazes in 'Portrait of a Couple Looking at a Turner Landscape'. *The City with Horns* (2011) contains a multi-voiced biography of Jackson Pollock, recreating various impulses and forms in his art, and framing Lee Krasner's art within a narrative about her husband. In 2012, Yoseloff branched out into more collaborative work, including *Desire Paths*, a boxset co-created with Karshan and the publisher, which takes its name from a psycho-geographical concept, and explores the materiality of art, poetry and the body. Yoseloff's *New and Selected Poems* (2015) is a milestone in her poetic, ekphrastic and collaborative career. The new poems include 'Pictures of Shunga' and 'A Letter to WS Graham', a poet close to the St. Ives painters.

Yoseloff is keen to look at visual artworks the ways an art curator, art historian and artist's biographer do, and look to her predecessors who shared her vision of the intersections between poetry, visual arts and biography.

Chapter 5: Coda

I will conclude this thesis with a coda that reiterates my argument about a new and ongoing moment of poetic bio-ekphrasis in the age of digital reproduction. This is a research project into literary history and contemporary poetics, which seeks to understand modern poets' investments in the visual arts as a backdrop for their ekphrastic work, and investigate such dynamics in the poetry and professional profiles of three contemporary figures based in the UK. I have observed an ekphrastic boom in contemporary poetry, which can be attributed to the establishment of a modern tradition of poets' collaborations with visual artists and art institutions and of poetic ekphrasis itself, and to the much higher accessibility to images than before the Internet age. The digital revolution has broken the spatial, geographical and cultural boundaries for images of works of visual art, cultural artefacts and even personal photographs to become shareable, making it unprecedentedly easy for today's poets to draw on a kind of global iconography for their ekphrastic pursuit.

I have argued for the need to recognise a new moment of biographically-inflected ekphrasis, which I have called 'bio-ekphrasis'. This moment was anticipated by ekphrastic poems from the early twentieth century, as poets like Marianne Moore (describing the buyer of pictures as an 'imaginary possessor'), W. B. Yeats (seeing 'John Synge himself' in a portrait) and Wallace Stevens (asking if a 'picture of Picasso's' is also 'a picture of ourselves') wrote about the multi-directional relations between visual artworks, artists, and the viewers. I have called this network of relations 'multi-directional bio-ekphrasis'. In my case studies of the three contemporary poets Pascale Petit, George Szirtes, and Tamar Yoseloff, I have tried to throw light on their sustained multi-directional bio-ekphrastic projects and show the ways they take their bearings from their poetic predecessors, but in contrast, frequently draw on the biography of the artists and life subjects. I have also tried to show that their poems invite or benefit from readings in relation to theories of terms of life writing and psychoanalysis, particularly treating works of art as what Christopher Bollas calls 'transformational objects'.

Fig. 68 Henri Rousseau, *Surprised! (Tiger in a Tropical Storm*)
The National Gallery, London

To remap the trajectories of each of these three poets, I want to end with a brief account of their latest ekphrastic works and read these as extensions of their unique bio-ekphrastic narratives. In her eighth collection *Tiger Girl*, to be published in June 2020, Pascale Petit returns to reflect on her grandmother's life, as in her first collection *Heart of a Deer*. 'Tiger Girl (Surprised!)' was featured in the *Royal Academy of Arts Magazine* (Spring 2018), and the title plays on the name of Henri Rousseau's 1891 painting *Surprised! (Tiger in a Tropical Storm*). Drawing on Rousseau's narrative about something or someone being surprised by a tiger, Petit recreates the voice of her grandmother as a child in a cot confronting a tigress—'My hand is a brave monkey/ reaching up to touch her fangs' (53). The poem characteristically functions like a self-portrait of the subject seeing herself as within a zoomorphic installation, and Petit reworks her reading of the monkeys in Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Monkeys* as metaphorical substitutes for Kahlo's limbs—'The four monkeys/ are my twenty limbs' (*What the Water Gave Me* 30). As in *The Zoo Father*, in Petit's latest poems, Kahlo continues to be a major influence on the poet's iconography. The 'Tiger Girl' eventually gets marked by a tiger as if she had become one: 'she brands me with her stripes' (53). Petit told the Royal Society of Literature (RSL) in an interview published online (December 2018) that '*Tiger Girl* explores foreignness, how it feels to be foreign in Brexit Britain'. Like Frida Kahlo, the characters based on her mother and grandmother can be autobiographical screens or hidden transformational subjects for Petit herself. It is through seeing her grandmother being branded by a tigress that Petit reflects on being a foreigner in the current political climate of the UK. Her myth-like familial histories are always reconstructed in terms of pictorial and sculptural works, but also practices. Once again, the poem is consistently framed as a portrait or self-portrait, and Petit returns to adapting sculpture, her former art, as a model for the zoomorphic transformations of her poetic subjects.

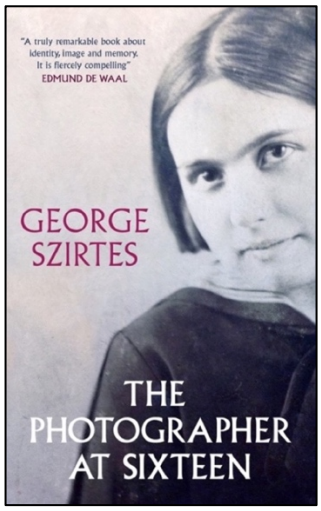


Fig. 69 George Szirtes, *The Photographer at Sixteen: The Death and Life of a Fighter* (2019), with a photograph of his mother at the age of probably sixteen

In his memoir *The Photographer at Sixteen* (Mar 2019), George Szirtes reconstructs the life of his mother in reverse-chronological order, situating her in the turbulent history of Europe up to 31st July 1975, the day she died on the way to hospital. The book includes reproductions of his personal and family photographs, and excerpts from letters from his mother and his own poems. Szirtes' memoir of his mother simultaneously embodies a retrospective look at the trajectory of his photographic ekphrasis, as poems like 'Metro' and 'A Picture of My Parents with Their First Television' are read in familial and historical contexts. Quoting his comments on her hand-colouring of photographs in 'The Photographer in Winter', Szirtes adds that, it 'was as skilled an art as embalming, everything life-like yet more perfect', and observes that his mother was in constant search for 'the alternative model of self as display' (43). We have seen how Szirtes aligns himself with critics of photography like Roland Barthes, John Berger and Susan Sontag, with his poems reflecting on the photographic representations of the subjects as 'life-like' but also unlike life. The memoir with readings of his poems reminds us that photographs and photography are his key subjects, but also his chosen models and metaphors for poetry, from creating a ghost of his mother as a subject in his poetic homage to her art to calling the last poem in *Mapping the Delta* 'A Photograph'. The memoir recalls Allen Ginsberg's *Snapshot Poetics: A Photographic Memoir of the Beat Era* (1994), which documents the life of his fellow Beat writers through snapshots and detailed captions. It is also Szirtes' version of Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. Like Barthes, Szirtes uses his mother as a central figure in his reflection on photographs and photography. The hybrid memoir is a watershed in his multi-modal, photo-centric narrative about family and socio-cultural history.

Fig. 70 Georgia O'Keefe, *The Black Place* (1943)
The Art Institute of Chicago

Since *Fetch* and in particular, *Marks*, Yoseloff's poems about abstract art are always self-reflexive, drawing analogies between poetry and the visual arts. Following her landmark *New and Selected*, her sixth, forthcoming collection *The Black Place* will be published in October 2019, and its title poem has already appeared in *English: Journal of*

the English Association (Autumn 2018). The poem directly addresses Georgia O'Keefe's painting of the same name, narrating an imaginary psycho-geographical journey into the black place, what she calls 'that line', or the hidden part in the painting:

> […] She called it 'The Black Place',
> perhaps that's why I want to find
> that line, to clarify her phrase;
>
> she was in the desert, high noon,
> not a trace of cloud. She pulls my eye
> to a darker passage, a depression,
> maybe a cave, shadowed in broad light.
>
> (233)

In the poem, Yoseloff seeks to 'find/ that line, to clarify her phrase', characteristically exploring the relations between the painting and its title and punning on 'depression' to mean both a hollow and a dark emotional state. She looks to O'Keefe for a poetic equivalent to 'that line' in the painting. In her latest poems, Yoseloff also returns to exploring the female self and body, as in those published in *PN Review* (January–February 2019). 'Climacteric' recreates a menopausal woman's attempt to 'reinvent' herself 'from scraps and songs/ while poised on a balcony,/ a distant marble goddess' (39), and the following poem returns to this image of a goddess figurine, speaking of 'our' identification with it—'Her hair is waved like the sea. In her glass case we see our reflection' (40). The works of female visual artists, visual representations of women, personal and cultural artefacts, and objects such as a case, cover, box, and coffin continue to be common transformational objects in Yoseloff's sustained bio-ekphrastic investigation into womanhood, the body and the visceral, as well as poetry and the visual arts. Unlike Petit's and Szirtes' phantasmagoric and historicised life narratives, Yoseloff's oeuvre involves a continuous curation of narratives she reads into or out of visual images, from classic paintings, personal photographs and artefacts to abstract paintings and sculptures by her artistic contemporaries.

The three case studies in this research project set out to establish the three ekphrasists as important figures in the development of the current paradigm of bio-ekphrasis. We can see this as part of a much larger history or map of ekphrastic writing by contemporary poets and as leading to a more broadly-based study, involving a new anthology on the model of Dannie and Joan Abse's *Voices in the Gallery* (1986), perhaps in both print and digital forms. The new moment of bio-ekphrasis in the history of modern literature and ekphrasis, however, is particularly rich, as contemporary ekphrasists like Petit, Szirtes and Yoseloff create unique bio-transformational moments, where visual artworks are used as transformational objects, and artists and their life subjects, as transformational subjects.

The three poets return to recreating existing sculptural, pictorial and photographical representations of life subjects, and adapting sculpture, painting and photography as models for poetry. Petit, from a sculptor to poet, set out to 'continue making objects with words' and systematically frames poems as zoomorphic, self-mythologising self-portraits and portraits for her self and her parental subjects, while Szirtes, from a painter to poet, turns poems or sequences of them into photographs or photo albums, and reinvents photography (the art of his dead mother) as a model for his familial and socio-cultural memory. In contrast, Yoseloff, trained as an art historian and wanting to become a painter, plays the role of art curator in her poetry, giving biographical readings of a vast range of visual artworks (from classical to contemporary) and artefacts, and self-consciously turning her poems and books themselves into objets d'art. On the strength of their latest publications this year, the three poets show no signs of letting up in their investments in biographically-oriented ekphrasis, or the continuing dialogue in their work, as among contemporary poets more generally, between poems and visual artworks, and between poets and visual artists.

Appendix A: Interview with Pascale Petit

This interview was conducted via email between 22nd and 27th March 2016, for use in my research and prior to the publication of *Mama Amazonica* (2017).

(1) Zoë Brigley Thompson has found your writing by 2007 a kind of 'estrangement and exile'. How did you find such reading of your work? Are you conscious of this act of *exile*? How would you compare, as material for your writing, the nature and culture of South America/visual arts to the everyday life?

> **Petit:** Zoë Brigley Thompson is very perceptive. I am aware that there is estrangement in my writing. It reminds me that when I started making sculptures and installations when I was at art school that they were for me all about alienation. I felt alienated then, when I was young, an outsider. Perhaps it was because I was moved from home to home, from school to school and from parent to guardian, when I was a child. Perhaps it was because I was in a world of my own. I was very withdrawn, hid myself in my imagination. I became obsessed with South America after a trip to see Angel Falls, highest waterfall in the world, twenty years ago. I went again, climbed Mount Roraima, and was canoed to the base of the falls deep in a canyon of Auyantepuy, a vast tabletop mountain. That landscape was otherworldly, and although it was hostile (biting insects etc), I felt at home there, as if it was home. I had sensations of déjà vu. While writing *Mama Amazonica* I plan to return, this time to the Peruvian Amazon, which I will visit twice, so that's four journeys so far.
>
> I came to poetry via the visual arts, trained and practised as a sculptor. In the studio I could create my own world, my own environment, which was essential for me. Now that I am no longer a sculptor I still have to create those environments in poems. The 'me' in my poems is a fictional one, not the everyday me, who likes comfort and food and company. But I hope that this fictional person is more *me* than the everyday one, a truer self.

(2) You often write about your past relationship with your parents. Would there be other subjects or themes you plan to explore in your future poetry?

> **Petit:** I suppose a poet ought to be an all-rounder and be able to write about anything, but that's not how I work. I write about what I *have* to write about, not what I *ought* to write about. As for future plans, I am fully immersed in the

current book, and can't see beyond it. However, I do hope that my parental themes broach more universal themes, such as: themes of violence and gender issues, and our precarious relationship with the natural world, the exploitation of nature, women, children. I hope one day to write powerfully about the natural world for its own sake, though I have tried. Maybe I'll write about the nature in my new locale, Cornwall, as I get to know it in some depth, who knows?

(3) As you reimagine your parents, it seems you invariably write from your perspective. Would you foresee that there will be the chance for you to write as your parents?

Petit: My current manuscript *Mama Amazonica* is indeed an attempt to write from the perspective of my mentally ill mother, rather than from the perspective of the damage she caused me. This is my aim in the book. Some poems are even spoken in her voice, but even the ones that are in the daughter's voice, I'm imagining her predicament from her viewpoint. The book tells her story of how she met my father and the devastating effect that had on her life and mental health. In my last book *Fauverie* (2014), all about my father, there are a few poems that are spoken by him too. Mainly though, the book is an attempt to comprehend his cruelty. There is so much cruelty in the world that I think this is a worthwhile theme: why do people do bad things and what can we do about it?

(4) As a writer who constantly draws on childhood trauma, are you aware of any psychoanalytic reading of trauma writing or art as therapy? If so, how would you see your work as material for psychoanalysis?

Petit: I tend not to psychoanalyse my poems. I fear that would reduce them to the clichés of psychoanalytic jargon, and I want my poems to be fresh and to find their own truth. I'm aware of art therapy, as my mother used to do it in the psychiatric hospital. She produced hundreds of paintings, especially when she was manic, hundreds of poems and a whole scribbled autobiography, which she left for me to read after her death.

I'm happy for my work to be studied by psychoanalysts. I've had the help of a few therapists, and we certainly used to discuss the imagery and happenings in my poems.

(5) During the Spring Psychoanalytic Poetry Festival held at the Freud Museum on 12 Mar 2016, you said that you have got poor memories. Is writing about your trauma an act of remembering? If so, would it be more painful than not writing about it?

> **Petit:** I write for pleasure, so I wouldn't write anything that caused me pain. If it's an act of remembering, the remembering is done through images, the images show but hopefully don't tell. The images are pleasurable to me, even if what they show is painful. There is a process of transformation. I would not be interested in writing if poems did not transform the material into something more bearable, even beautiful or lovable. I try to make my parents lovable in poems, even if they are being cruel.

(6) As you write about Kahlo transmuting pain through art, would you consider your poetry after her doing the same for you, in your case, transmuting pain through poetry?

> **Petit:** Absolutely, that's what it's all about for me. See my answer above, to Question 5.

(7) It seems *What the Water Gave Me* (2010) took much longer time to be completed than your other books. How was the experience approaching Frida Kahlo from the beginning to the release of the 2010 collection? Did you have the ambition to show how Kahlo transmuted pain at the time you wrote *The Wounded Deer*, the pamphlet?

> **Petit:** Yes, from the beginning I was interested in how Frida Kahlo transmuted her pain into paint. I wrote in her voice to celebrate that in her, and to help me transmute pain through poems. I don't know why it took me so long to write the book, perhaps because it was an act of translation, and I wanted to do her, and myself, justice. Also, my process was one of looking, looking at her paintings, or reproductions of them, until I felt a trance that felt true and fresh.

(8) In *What the Water Gave Me*, there are paintings that you have responded to more than three times, including *What the Water Gave Me* (1938), *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940), and *Memory* (1937). How did these paintings, in particular the titular one as you came up with six versions of it, inspire you more than other paintings by Kahlo? How was the process of choosing to and not to write about

Kahlo's paintings? And was it true that the book originally took the title of the hummingbird painting instead?

> **Petit:** In fact the titular painting 'What the Water Gave Me' was the hardest to write about. I couldn't do it for years, but I kept looking at it and eventually it became crucial to the collection, so much so that it became apparent that I had to call it that, and not *The Thorn Necklace* which was its working title, after one of my favourite paintings 'Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird'. I wrote about the paintings that I could write about freshly, with lines that surprised me, that I could translate into my own versions, and they had to feel true and real to her and to me. Perhaps that's why it took so long to finish the book, because of my search for honesty, to two people, not just myself.

(9) You have said that writing in the voice of Frida Kahlo helped you write about what you could not have in your own voice. Does it imply that the sequence is just as 'autobiographical' as your other books? While 'The Little Deer' draws on your own convalescence, are there other poems from *What the Water Gave Me* which are just as 'autobiographical'?

> **Petit:** Yes, this is what I discovered, that I could write about intimate subjects, with less embarrassment, because I was pretending to be her. I'd say most of the poems in *What the Water Gave Me* are semi-autobiographical. But they are also an escape from my personality. I could take on her charismatic personality and appearance, which was great fun! I wrote more about myself as an adult in this book than in my other books where I am exploring childhood.

(10) In your article 'Poetry as Installation, Object, Painting', published in *Poetry Wales* (Spring 2010), you admit that you weren't aware of the connections between your art work and your poetry until you wrote the article. Aside from the parallels between your resin woman figure and your poems about the bath tub of Frida Kahlo, are there other comparisons you can draw between your sculpture and poetry?

> **Petit:** There are many connections. I've used painted thorns in my sculptures, hawthorns that I used to pick in woods and paint, and there are the thorns in Frida Kahlo's work. There are many thorns in my poems, there are even thorn necklaces in *Mama Amazonica*. I've used taxidermy birds, morpho butterflies, dragonflies. Many were gifts from the Natural History Museum in London. I also

had special permission to go to Kew Gardens and cut any leaves and branches I wanted to use in sculptures and drawings. I did a commission for London Underground, a poster for Kew Gardens, so I think it was after that. When I was at the Royal College of Art we MA students had permission to raid the rubbish tips at Kew too, for branches, roots and anything we found interesting to use. I use the same materials in my poems – a jungle of branches! In my poems I'm trying to make sculptures with words, an object I can keep as a memento.

(11) The project you undertook for the Syrian artist Lawand, commissioned by The Mosaic Rooms, is just as interesting. How was the process of choosing and responding to Lawand's sketches? Is the book, *Effigies* (2016), a follow-up to your sequence after Kahlo?

Petit: I did the pamphlet of poems inspired by the Syrian artist Lawand's sketches as a commission by a gallery. I wrote those very fast, as there wasn't much time, and I was also trying to finish *Fauverie* to deadline. I don't think I felt as much connection to Lawand, and the poems show that. I wanted to do this commission but I'm not happy with them, so I don't see them as a follow-up. It may be that his sketches were too bare for me – no foliage or animals.

(12) In general, each time you find interesting a piece of art, how does that moment of interest result in your poetic responses? Are you conscious of how you approach a piece of art as a poet?

Petit: Because I've written a whole book after paintings by Kahlo, people think I have a knack for writing poems about art. I don't. I can't just write about any artist. I have to feel a true connection. However, having said that, I'm currently writing a lot of very short poems in *Mama Amazonica* that are inspired by contemporary taxidermy art, and there is a poem influenced by a painting by Anselm Kiefer. I taught poetry writing courses at Tate Modern for nine years and worked with some wonderful art, in the galleries, but I didn't write many poems about them myself, the students did. I think I may have been concentrating on how to get them to write responses to the art. But there is a poem in *Fauverie* that I wrote in one of my classes: 'My Father's Mirror', directly inspired by a video sequence we were working with.

(13) As your poetry shows great influence from your visual art training, are you aware of any predecessors or contemporaries doing the same? If so, are you influenced by their work as you write about visual arts?

Petit: That's an interesting question. At the moment I can't think of anyone who writes about visual art who has influenced me to do the same. I have influences, but not with that art approach. It was natural for me to write about visual art because of my training and practice as a sculptor.

Thanks for your interest in my work, for dreaming up these questions, and good luck with your thesis.

Appendix B: Interview with George Szirtes

This interview was conducted via email between 3rd May and 20th June 2017, for use in my research and prior to the publication of *The Photographer at Sixteen* (2019).

(1) In his book *Poetry in Exile* (2004), Michael Murphy argues that photographs and photography serve as 'an intermediary between history and memory', offering both 'the means and subject matter' in your poetry. Does this seem right, and, if so, has this always been the case, or is it something you became aware of at a particular moment? How important are photographs and photography to you as a poet?

> **Szirtes:** I have read and written a good deal on photography. My mother (who took her own life in 1975) was in fact a photographer and the earliest evidence I have of her life, as of mine, consists of the photographs she saved. In that respect she is both agent and subject, a potent personal mixture. I call those photographs evidence but it is never quite clear what a photograph is evidence of except of mortality in that it is the record of one moment of light that happened just once and hasn't happened since. I should add that my first book, *The Slant Door*, in 1979 contained many poems about paintings and only a few about photographs. It was not till the 1994 book, *Blind Field* (a term directly from Barthes's *Camera Lucida*) that photographs became the dominant term of visual reference. I have written fewer poems about specific photographs in recent years but I have completed a prose memoir of my mother that is very closely based on photographs, including the earliest ones I mentioned at the start. Michael Murphy is essentially right regarding photography as an intermediary it's just that it is so to different degrees, in different ways, at different times.

(2) Did you learn about photography when you studied art? How do you see yourself as a painter-turned-poet? How would you compare your paintings and poems? Do paintings matter as much for you as photographs as visual stimuli or analogies for poetry?

> **Szirtes:** I had only minimal formal instruction in photography. I knew how a conventional photograph is produced both in the dark room and at the light box having seen my mother retouch and hand colour photographs in my childhood, so was aware of the process. I was in fact a poet before I studied art and the two activities were rarely connected in any direct way. They remained distinct

activities. I never illustrated my own poems or wrote about any of my art. The two seemed to me different languages requiring different faculties. Painting and photographs appeal to me equally but differently. I think of painting primarily as construction, of photography primarily as recording. I am as likely to write through contact with one as with the other.

(3) In one of your early essays, 'A Dual Heritage' (1986), you wrote that you had 'an instinctive fascination with the caught and frozen moment', and aspired to 'move out of this petrified world and beyond the limitations of diffidence.' More recently you told the British Council that, 'I must have imagined the world opening out from some complex stillness[…] I write now because I hope such openings are still possible'. Could you say more about what such openings and unfolding mean for you?

Szirtes: It's hard to get back into something I wrote thirty years ago with anything like certainty, but the second quotation serves as the basis for the first. I have argued since that stories are products of the world in movement while poems are the world in stillness, that if stories are rivers, poems are lakes. That simplifies matters rather too much because even in a short lyric poem something is obliged to change but that change in a poem amplifies a state of affairs rather than, as in a story, the results of change. A poem is 'what is this'? A story is 'what happens next'? By talking of the world 'opening out from some complex stillness' I probably meant that I understand myself to be a poet by nature not a story-teller, and that since photographs present themselves as single but complex states of affairs photography offers a particularly apt analogy for poetry. As to why I should prefer stillness that is a psychological question that is hard for me to answer. Maybe stillness allows a certain detachment and a better way of engaging with one's own complex state of affairs.

(4) I have been wondering if you were aware of Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* when you wrote your poems about your mother. Do you think Barthes's study has a bearing on 'The Photographer in Winter'? Are there specific photographs of your mother or taken by her behind this or other poems?

Szirtes: I don't think I had read *Camera Lucida* in the mid-eighties. It was probably the early nineties when I first engaged with it, but when I did it both confirmed some feelings I had already had and written about and also offered a

set of terms to articulate those feelings. The images in 'The Photographer in Winter' (the poem) had no specific photographs in mind, but were based on half-forgotten memories and imagination. 'The Courtyards' was based on my first intense experience of the buildings of Budapest in 1984 and 85 as well as with real people who lived in them.

(5) You have posted quite a few photographs of your mother on your online blog. Are they from the 'small case' you carried across the border which you wrote about in *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century* (2011)? Could we say your blog posts, by including photographs, complement your poems?

Szirtes: Yes, the photographs are from the 'small case' (a toy-typewriter case without the typewriter) that I still have under my desk, but the best photos are in albums now. Everyone's activities complement each other in some way, by necessity, but I haven't engaged in a systematic effort to relate the blog to the poems or the photographs. There were moments when they coincided and seemed worth talking about.

(6) In 'The Photographer in Winter', you wrote, 'Dear woman, train your photographic eye/ on me'. Did your mother ever teach you how to take photographs? How aware were you of her work when you were young? Did her work as photographer consciously influence you?

Szirtes: I was more aware of my mother's laboratory or light box work, chiefly the light box because I saw her working on it as a small child in Budapest. I saw her take out the razors and the small box of photo oils that she would mix in a saucer and apply with a fine brush. In that respect her work as the 'improver' of photographs was clearer to me than her photographic practice with a camera. Parts 4 and 6 (particularly 6) of the poem 'The Photographer in Winter' refer to her hand colouring as does the poem '*When she leaned over the light box'* in Part 4 of 'Flesh-An Early Family History' in *Reel* (2004).

(7) Could you tell us more about your forthcoming biography of your mother? Will it include any photographs of her and taken by her? Does it grow out of the same material as the poems? Or is it a completely different kind of project?

Szirtes: The biography – not exactly a biography but a kind of memoir – tells history backwards, beginning with her death. There is reference to photographs throughout and the last part is a meditation on five specific photographs of her early childhood, from age 2 to 16. An agent is dealing with it and I am not sure yet whether to include the photographs referred to, though I tend to be in favour of it. It draws on elements in the poems and actually quotes some of the poems but is a rather different sort of work from a poem in that it actually tells – or reverses - a story.

(8) In your interview with *Ambit* (April 2016), you said, 'I write fast because my imagination needs momentum and faith.' Do you think this speed of writing has a connection with the instantaneous nature of photography?

Szirtes: I don't know the answer to that. I know I need to surf a wave of invention in order to generate the right energy. Writing in form, often with rhyming, is a way of giving that rush some sort of governance and resistance. My poems tend to be very different from photographs is that there is in general a strong metamorphic drive to them: they twist and turn.

(9) You collaborated with your wife Clarissa Upchurch on several publications. Could you tell us more how you two worked towards each collection, such as *The Kissing Place* (1982) and *Image, Poem, Film* (2006) which includes the title poem of *Reel* (2004)? In the poem 'Reel', what kind of 'lost movies' did you see in Upchurch's paintings? How did you use them as your 'storyboard'?

Szirtes: We have very recently completed another collaboration so there are three altogether. All three collaborations were different. In *The Kissing Place* I set out to write a series of poems about a generalised house based on memories and half-remembered sensations then handed the poems to Clarissa and she made a series of etchings based not so much on the poems themselves as on the subject of the poems: a porch, an attic, a staircase and so forth. Our own Starwheel Press produced it in a hard-bound edition of 30 but the poems from it went into my own third book, *Short Wave* (1984).

Image, Poem, Film was essentially a book about Clarissa's art dealing with Budapest. It was a beautiful bilingual commercial production by Corvina, a major Hungarian press. Clarissa had had a retrospective show at the History Museum in

Budapest with some of the material and this collected together the paintings and drawing. 'Reel', the poem, had already been written. It was about her vision of Budapest as a haunted film-set complete with moments from unwritten scripts. The book also included an essay I wrote about her work in which I talked of it in terms of film directors' story-boards. In other words she had already done the work and I was writing about the sense and meaning of it, sharing a vision in the poem and offering a context in the essay.

The most recent book, *Thirty Clouds*, is different again in that Clarissa produced thirty cloud images in monoprint and I wrote about each of them in turn, the text in each case comprised of a cinquain and a short prose piece. The set is going on display in a local art gallery in September. A publication will follow in due course.

(10) Upchurch provided the cover arts for most of your collections. Did you talk to her about how you wanted the illustrations to be? Could you tell us more about the covers of *The Photographer in Winter* (1986) and *Blind Field* (1994) which uses Minor White's photograph?

Szirtes: I don't express any preference to Clarissa regarding the cover art. She knows my work as I know hers so she shows me a few possibilities then we present our choice to the publisher, Secker and Warburg in the case of *The Photographer in Winter* and OUP for *Blind Field*. A lot of poems in the latter were about the nature of photography as such so a photograph seemed the best choice for cover, while the other was as much about a person and a place as an idea.

(11) As you bring together your native and European history and your personal and familial memory, would you consider yourself a post-Holocaust, or second-generation writer? As a poet, how important are the shadows of the Holocaust and Hungarian history to you?

Szirtes: Strictly speaking I am second generation. It's not a matter of consciously thinking 'the Holocaust is important' or 'Hungarian history is important'. These things are resident in me. They shape my instincts, intuitions and apprehensions. My expectations of the world are, no doubt, coloured by them. Not defined, but coloured. My interpretation of history is similarly coloured by them. They are not history in themselves: they are the present as feeling and thought, a condition. I

don't dwell on the specific history of the Holocaust or of Hungary. I don't constantly think about them. I have written about the subjects when I needed to write but never in lurid detail, never – in poetry - as an argument. I don't want to keep returning to them. I don't want to be defined by them. I was very careful in the book about my mother not to present them as defining her, despite her imprisonment in two concentration camps. I just know that history can behave like that, can comprehend such things.

(12) You once said on your blog (July 2016), 'I needed to write the city and I needed to write her. Perhaps writing the one would be writing the other.' Much earlier, in 'Being Remade as an English Poet' (1989), you wrote that, 'I think of bodies flung out, in a pattern dictated by the magnet of history'. While you felt obliged to write about both your city and mother, and saw 'history' as a 'magnet', do you think your mother is also a 'magnet' in your poetry who brings together 'history and memory' for you?

Szirtes: Yes, but so has my father been. He is at the centre of three long crowns of sonnets in *Portrait of my Father in an English Landscape* (1998) and of a lot of more recent writing. Conflating my mother with my city of birth was a natural thing to do since I saw more of her then than I did of my father. The city is also what she was removed from in 1944. Writing 'Metro' was a way of putting her back and letting the two interfuse and interpret each other.

(13) Do you see your work generally in terms of what people speak of as poetic 'ekphrasis'? Do poetry and the visual arts seem naturally aligned for you? Or is this just one subject matter among many others that you address in your own medium?

Szirtes: I have grown to dislike the term 'ekphrasis'. It is too limiting. I did devise and teach an MA course titled Writing the Visual some fifteen years ago but the work we referred to was rarely of the kind that could generally be defined by ekphrastic. It was more about responses to secondary stimuli, to a visual reality once removed, the effect of one imagination upon another. I have been as interested in the way literature banks on literature. 'The Burning of the Books' sequence in the book of the same name (2009) was precisely that, an annotation and fantasia on Elias Canetti's *Auto da Fe.*

Appendix C: Interview with Tamar Yoseloff

This interview was conducted via email between 21st November and 6th December 2017, for use in my research and prior to the publication of *The Black Place* (2019).

(1) On your website, you describe yourself as a poet who is 'particularly interested in the relationship between poetry and visual art, specifically contemporary art'. Do you think you are working within a particular poetic or ekphrastic tradition? What fascinates you about visual art as a poet? Why specifically modern and contemporary art? What formal challenges does it pose to you as a poet?

Yoseloff: I don't think I'm working within a particular tradition of ekphrastic response. But there are poets who routinely write about art who are very important to me, such as John Burnside, Jorie Graham, WS Graham and Frank O'Hara.

I have always been interested in art – my first degree at university was in English and Art History. On the most basic level, my ekphrastic writing comes from my equal interest in both art and poetry; but on a more complex level, the engagement with art gives me the ability to respond to something outside of my own concerns, and to create metaphors from my experience of an artwork. Often I am trying to grapple with what it is about a work that inspires or moves me (my poem 'Alchemy' is a good example of that kind of discourse), and the poem works as a sounding board for those ideas.

I am particularly interested in post-war abstraction. Two of my favourite painters are Joan Mitchell and Cy Twombly (I have written poems about both of them) and I wrote a sequence of poems based on the life and work of Jackson Pollock. I suppose writing about later 20th century and contemporary work is a way of thinking about how art has functioned in my lifetime. I do occasionally write about earlier art and artists ('Saints', 'Portrait of a Couple Looking at a Turner Landscape', 'The Arnolfini Marriage' and 'Studies for a Portrait of a Young Woman, Delft' are all examples). I studied early Italian Renaissance art as part of my undergraduate degree, and I have always been fascinated by the signs and symbols embedded in those paintings.

Formal challenges come about more through collaborations, especially in my work with Linda Karshan (see question 2). But as with all of my poems, I usually find an appropriate form through the redrafting process.

(2) Talking of contemporary art, you have collaborated with many visual artists, and co-published books which feature their art and your poems. How did this come about? Was it your initiative or that of the artists? Were the collaborations different? How did you work with each of them (*Marks*, 2007; *Desire Paths*, Feb 2012; *Formerly*, May 2012; *Nowheres*, 2015)? How would you describe the 'relationship' between the verbal and visual texts in these publications? Is it the same or comparable to your other poems about visual art such as the title sequence of *The City with Horns* (2011)?

> **Yoseloff:** My collaborations have always happened organically, usually through casual discussions with artists whose work I've liked. Each collaboration has been very different, in that the artists I've worked with (mainly Linda Karshan, Charlotte Harker and Alison Gill) are all very different in style and approach. In all of my collaborative books, the work has been generated as my response to the work in question (the artwork already existed), and I've made formal decisions (sonnets for *Formerly*, a more broken / fragmented form for *Marks*, prose poetry for *Nowheres*) based on either narrative intention on my part, or formal techniques on the part of the artist. *Desire Paths* was a different experience, in that I worked with the artist and the printer / publisher Hein Elferink to create a poem that would suit certain spacial and typographic requirements which were already in place.

(3) In *Fetch* (2007), you have included illustrations alongside each part of the title poem. Is this collaboration work as well? Do you consider the illustrations in *Fetch* as having the same purpose as the plates in your co-publications?

> **Yoseloff:** I had originally wanted one of Linda Karshan's woodblocks on the cover, but my publisher at the time vetoed it as being too abstract (which is ironic, as the image we went for, the close-up photograph of thorns, is quite abstract as well), so he suggested having the woodblocks reproduced inside. As 'Fetch' is a 5-part poem that appears in intervals throughout the book, I thought the woodblocks would work well as chapter headings – a way of flagging to the reader that another chapter of the 'Fetch' narrative was about to occur.

(4) As you told The Poetry School (2016) in interview, there are 'never any people' in David Harker's drawings, and there are 'few' in your poems about them. Indeed, in all the four collaborations you did, the art portrays abstract or actual spaces without people,

while your poetic responses have people in them. Are you aware of this? How was the process like writing about these 'empty' spaces?

> **Yoseloff:** I've always been attracted to abandoned, ruined or empty spaces, and I suppose what then occurs is that I populate them in some way, or imagine what they were like when populated. I like art which leaves some room for the viewer to bring his / her own interpretation, and I think all the artists I've worked with leave that space for me to approach in my own way.

(5) In your poems, you have responded to a diverse range of visual art, both in medium and the time they were created. In the case of the Twombly and Pollock poems, you are apparently as interested in the artist's biographies as their works? Is it the visual art itself that drew you or the 'cryptography' in the work? How are you drawn to a work of art as you write? What makes a piece 'conducive' to your writing? Is your own biography in play?

> **Yoseloff:** I am interested in other people's lives, especially those who create, and how that process works for them, especially if the journey has been difficult in some way.
>
> As I'm writing about a work of art, I'm drawn into it differently – it's no longer just a process of looking. To verbalise what's happening in a piece, especially something abstract, is often difficult. You have to reach inside to come out again – and that's where autobiography comes in. My own life and experience is behind everything I write in some way.

(6) You have written poems responding to or invoking D. G. Rossetti, Frank O'Hara and W.S. Graham, all poets who have written about and with a deep investment in visual art. Do you consider these forerunners as your models as you write about art? How do you compare your work to theirs?

> **Yoseloff:** I don't really make a comparison to those poets, but Graham and O'Hara have been important role models for me. Both of them had close friendships and collaborations with artists. 'The Thermal Stair', Graham's poem about his friend, the late painter Peter Lanyon (who is also a favourite painter of mine) is one of my desert island poems. To me it's a perfect poem in the way it captures the spirit and vision of an artist.

(7) Have you ever received training in visual art? How do you describe your 'relationship' with visual arts, whether painting, photography or installations?

> **Yoseloff:** Like Jorie Graham, my mother trained as a sculptor, and much of my visual response to the world has come from her. As I mentioned, I have BA degree in art history, but I have never studied visual art.

(8) Since *Fetch*, you have written more about abstract art. Has abstract art become a growing interest of yours? How do you like abstract art as opposed to more figurative kinds? Does this relate to your sense of a necessary abstraction or formal opacity in poetry?

> **Yoseloff:** I have been writing more about art in general in the last ten years, and because I am most interested in abstract art, I've naturally been drawn to it as a subject. I do think my more recent poems are more fractured and less narrative, partly to do with other poets I've been reading and admiring. But I wouldn't say any of this is conscious – it's developed organically.

(9) Regarding *The City with Horns*, what was particularly interesting about Pollock and American abstract expressionism? How do you compare him to other abstract artists you have written about in the collection?

> **Yoseloff:** Pollock was an attractive subject, because his life was so vibrant and messy, and you can see the turbulence of his mind in his paintings. He lived in an interesting time as well, with all those New York artists and poets intermingling and drinking and arguing. I would have liked to have been there then (although I suspect Pollock would not have been an easy man to know). He's not my favourite artist, but he was so influential. I've just been to the Basquiat show at the Barbican, and you can see traces of Pollock's work in what Basquiat was doing (Twombly as well).

(10) In *Fun House* (1994) and *Sweetheart* (1998), you have written a lot about photographs and photography, and more recently, there is the collaborative effort, *Formerly*. What do photographs and photography mean to you? How do you compare photography to painting and sculpture both of which you also return to writing about?

Yoseloff: I suppose I was more attracted to photographs earlier on in my career as a poet, as the work was far more narrative then. I don't have a particular interest in photography as an art form, although my favourite photographer is Diane Arbus. She is a shadow figure running through some of the work in *Fun House* and *Sweetheart*, as is (more directly) the American photographer Joel Sternfeld, whose work inspired two poems in Sweetheart ('Hart Island' and 'Jumbo').

(11) According to the back cover of *Sweetheart*, you '[lay] bare the erotic anatomy of love and memory against a background that ranges from the American of her childhood to a mythic yet contemporary Britain'. This is a very specific description of your first full-length collection, and based on this, how did you begin as a poet writing about eroticism, love and memory? How important are your dual cultural backgrounds to you as a writer? Do you see yourself as an American or British artist, an émigré or displaced person, or simply someone who has moved from one place to another?

Yoseloff: I started writing seriously at university, when I was eighteen or nineteen. My first poetic role models were Plath and Sexton, and later, O'Hara.

I see myself as both British and American, and both poetic traditions have inspired me. But I also see myself as displaced, as this is not where I was born, and I now feel very distanced from my homeland for a number of reasons.

I have always found this quote from Nathaniel Hawthorne very moving:

The years, after all, have a kind of emptiness when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore. We defer the reality of life, in such cases, until a future moment when we shall again breathe our native air; but, by and by there are no future moments; or, if we do return, we find that the native air has lost its invigorating quality, and that life has shifted its reality to the spot where we have deemed ourselves only temporary residents. Thus, between two countries we have none at all, or only that little space of either in which we finally lay down our discontented bones.

(12) On the back cover of your *New and Selected Poems* (2015), you include a comment from Annie Freud who says, the 'true subject matter' of your poems is 'the pursuit of knowledge of self and other, a coming face-to-face with the stark truth of human duality – desire and revulsion hand in hand'. How far does this apply to your poetry published to

date? What fascinates you about this 'subject matter'? How far is the 'self' in your poems yourself?

Yoseloff: Never that far!

(13) Many of your earlier collections are now out of print, so could you talk about the process of selection for your *New and Selected Poems*? How do you see this publication at this stage of your career? Does it mark a watershed or landmark in your work?

Yoseloff: I simply chose the poems I still liked, that still had relevance for me. It was interesting to revisit work I hadn't read in many years – some poems felt as if they had been written by another person! And yes, a *Selected* is always a landmark. It was hard for me to start writing again afterwards, as it felt so definitive.

(14) What would be the most interesting question I could ask you about the relationship between word and image in your work?

Yoseloff: Perhaps 'where do you see it going?' Not sure I know the answer yet.

Appendix D: The Vicinity of Modern Poets to the Visual Arts

Bibliography

(List of works consulted)

This bibliography lists all primary and secondary materials consulted in the preparation of the thesis.

Part A chronologically lists the published works by Pascale Petit, George Szirtes, and Tamar Yoseloff:

1. poetry collections, pamphlets, edited anthologies, individual poems
2. collaborative works
3. essays, interviews, and other publications
4. personal blog articles, websites, and social media accounts

Part B alphabetically lists the primary sources consulted in the thesis, except for works by the same author.

Part C alphabetically lists the secondary sources consulted in the thesis, except for works by the same author.

Part D chronologically lists the art exhibitions and other events attended by the author of this thesis.

*

(A) Published Works by Pascale Petit, George Szirtes, and Tamar Yoseloff

(in chronological order)

Pascale Petit

1. poetry collections, pamphlets, and individual poems

Icefall Climbing. Smith/Doorstop Books, 1994.

Heart of a Deer. Enitharmon Press, 1998.

The Zoo Father. Seren, 2001.

The Wounded Deer. Smith/Doorstop Books, Apr 2005.

The Huntress. Seren, May 2005.

The Treekeeper's Tale. Seren, 2008.

What the Water Gave Me: Poems after Frida Kahlo. Seren, 2010.

Fauverie. Seren, 2014.

Mama Amazonica. Bloodaxe Books, 2017.

'Tiger Girl (Surprised!).' *Royal Academy of Art Magazine*, Spring 2018, pp. 53.

'Tiger Gran.' *Poetry London*, n.d., http://poetrylondon.co.uk/tiger-gran-by-pascale-petit. Accessed 23 Jul. 2019.

2. collaborative works

Hurn, David and Pascale Petit. 'Fantasy in Abertillery/The Bee Mother.' *New Welsh Review*, no. 72, Summer 2006: pp. 2.

Petit, Pascale and Lawand. *Effigies: Drawings by Lawand; Poems by Pascale Petit*. The Mosaic Rooms, 2013.

3. essays, interviews, and other publications

'The Vineyard.' *Poetry Wales*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2001: pp. 23-27.

'Seven Letters to My Mother in Dyffryn Lane.' *Poetry Wales*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2001: pp. 38-41.

'Mount Roraima.' *Poetry Wales*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2001: pp. 56-59.

'In the Ruins of the Temple Mayor.' *Poetry Wales*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2001: pp. 21-24.

'Your Definition of a Desperado Poet Suits Me: Interview with Pascale Petit.' By Lidia Vianu. *Desperado Poetry Website*, 1 Jan. 2003, http://www.escoala.ro/lidiavianu/poets_pascale_petit.html. Accessed 30 Nov. 2015.

'Private and Public Wars.' *New Welsh Review,* no. 72, 2006: pp. 8-14.

'Writing Poems from Rape and Abuse.' *Women Writing Rape: The Blog*, 12 Apr. 2007, http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/women-writing-rape/entry/pascale_petit_writing. Accessed 2 Sept. 2016.

'Interview by Oana-Teodora Ionescu.' *Pascale Petit's Blog*, 21 Jun. 2009, http://pascalepetit.blogspot.com/2009/06/interview-by-oana-teodora-ionescu.html. Accessed 4 Sept. 2018.

'From Cradle to Grave [Interview with Cahal Dallat, Maureen Duffy, David Morley, Pascale Petit, and Roger Robinson].' *The Poetry Paper*, no. 6, 2009/10: pp. 10-11.

'Confessing the Amazon and Frida Kahlo.' *The Poetry Paper*, no. 6, 2009/10: pp. 15.

'Poetry as Installation, Object, Painting.' *Poetry Wales*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2010: pp. 51-56.

'Judyth Piazza Chats with Pascale Petit.' *The Student Operated Press*, 5 May 2011, http://thesop.org/story/20110505/judyth-piazza-chats-with-pascale-petit-author-of-what-the-water-gave-me.html. Accessed 9 Feb. 2016.

'Do Women Poets Write Differently to Men?' *Poetry Review*, vol. 102, no. 4, 2012. *Poetry Society*, http://poetrysociety.org.uk.gridhosted.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/12/1024PetitWomenPoets.pdf. Accessed 30 Nov. 2015.

'The Glasshouse.' *In Their Own Words: Contemporary Poets on Their Poetry*, edited by Helen Ivory and George Szirtes. Salt Publishing, 2012. pp. 142-145.

'Interview: Pascale Petit.' *Devolved Voices*, 11 Jul. 2013, http://www.aber.ac.uk/devolvedvoices/?page_id=859. Accessed 30 Nov. 2015.

'Pascale Petit on Writing a Poem for *The Charnel House*.' *Tom de Freston*, 1 Aug. 2014, http://www.tomdefreston.co.uk/artist/5337/pascale-petit-on-writing-a-poem-for-the-charnel-house. 6 Mar. 2017.

'Omphalos.' *Poetry Review*, vol. 105, no. 1, 2015. *Poetry Society*, http://poetrysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/1051-Petit-Omphalos.pdf. Accessed 1 Dec. 2015.

'Poetry as Exorcism.' *Mslexia*, no. 65, pp. 14-15.

'Why Read Poetry?' *Aeon,* 23 Jun. 2015, https://aeon.co/conversations/why-read-poetry#response_2828. Accessed 30 Nov. 2015.

Personal Interview. 22 – 27 Mar. 2016. (See Appendix A)

'Pascale Petit.' *Poetry Spotlight*, 21 May 2016, http://poetryspotlight.com/pascale-petit. Accessed 29 May 2016.

'Featured Interview: *Interlitq* Asks Pascale Petit Nine Questions.' *Interlitq*. n.d., http://www.interlitq.org/Interviews/pascale-petit/job.php. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

'Pascale Petit.' *The Poetry Archive*, n.d., http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/pascale-petit. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

'Pascale Petit ['While writing this book I twice visited the Peruvian Amazon'].' *PBS Bulletin*, no. 254, 2017: pp. 5.

'Danne Jobin Interviews Pascale Petit.' *The Poetry School*, 4 Nov. 2018, https://poetryschool.com/poetry-in-aldeburgh/danne-jobin-interviews-pascale-petit. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

'Interview with Pascale Petit.' *The Literature Matters Hub*, The Royal Society of Literature, 5 Dec. 2018, https://rsliterature.org/lm-hub-post/interview-with-pascale-petit. Accessed 20 Jul. 2019.

4. personal blog articles, website, and social media accounts

'Review of *What the Water Gave Me* and an Essay.' *Pascale Petit's Blog*, 16 Dec. 2010, http://pascalepetit.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/review-of-what-water-gave-me-

and-essay.html. Accessed 8 Feb. 2016.

Academia, https://independent.academia.edu/PascalePetit1. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/pascalepetit. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/pascalepetitpoet. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/in/pascalepetit. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Pascale Petit, http://www.pascalepetit.co.uk. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Pascale Petit's Blog, http://pascalepetit.blogspot.com. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Twitter, https://twitter.com/pascalepoet. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

George Szirtes

1. poetry collections

The Slant Door. Martin Secker & Warburg*, 1979.*

November and May. Martin Secker & Warburg, 1981.

Short Wave. Martin Secker & Warburg, 1983.

The Photographer in Winter. Secker & Warburg, 1986.

Metro. Oxford UP, 1988.

Bridge Passages. Oxford UP, 1991.

Blind Field. Oxford UP, 1994.

Selected Poems (1976-1996). Oxford UP, 1996.

The Red All over Riddle Book. Faber & Faber, 1997.

Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape. Oxford UP, 1998.

The Budapest File. Bloodaxe Books, 2000.

An English Apocalypse. Bloodaxe Books, 2001.

Reel. Bloodaxe Books, 2004.

New & Collected Poems. Bloodaxe Books, 2008.

The Burning of the Books and Other Poems. Bloodaxe Books, 2010.

Bad Machine. Bloodaxe Books, 2013.

Mapping the Delta. Bloodaxe Books, 2016.

Like a Black Bird. The Chinese UP, 2017.

Thirty Poets Go to the Gym. Candlestick Press, Feb. 2018.

2. collaborative works

Szirtes, George, Neil Powell, and Peter Scupham. *A Mandeville Troika*. The Mandeville Press, 1977.

Szirtes, Geroge, illustrator. *Keepsake Poem 35: On the Set*. By John Mole. The Keepsake Press, 1978.

Szirtes, Geroge. *Keepsake Poem 37: At the Sink*. Illustrated by Clarissa Upchurch. The Keepsake Press, 1979.

Szirtes, Geroge, illustrator (frontispiece). *Years: Sixteen Poems*. By Bernard Bergonzi. The Mandeville Press, 1979.

Szirtes, Geroge, illustrator. *The January Divan*. By John Fuller. The Mandeville Press, 1980.

Szirtes, Geroge, illustrator. *The Coast of Bohemia*. By John Gohorry. The Mandeville Press, 1981.

Szirtes, Geroge, illustrator. *The Return*. By Christopher Levenson. The Mandeville Press, 1986.

Upchurch, Clarissa, and George Szirtes. *The Kissing Place*. The Starwheel Press, 1982.

Pacheco, Anna M., and George Szirtes. *A Modern Bestiary*. Pratt Contemporary Art, 2004.

Upchurch, Clarissa, and George Szirtes. *Budapest: Image, Poem, Film*. Corvina Books, 2006.

Baki, Péter, Colin Ford, and George Szirtes. *Eyewitness: Hungarian Photography in the Twentieth Century: Brassaï, Capa, Kertész, Moholy-Nagy, Munkácsi*. Royal Academy of Arts, 2011.

Ivory, Helen, and George Szirtes, editors. *In Their Own Words: Contemporary Poets on Their Poetry*. Salt Publishing, 2012.

Szirtes, George, and Carol Watts. *56: A Poem Sequence*. Arc Publications, 2016.

Szirtes, George, and Clarissa Upchurch. *Thirty Clouds*. Knives, Forks and Spoons, 2019.

3. essays, interviews, and other publications

'A Dual Heritage.' *Poetry Review*, vol. 75, no. 4, 1986: pp. 4-14.

'Being Remade as an English Poet.' *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 113, 1989: pp. 149-159.

'George Szirtes Interviewed by Isabelle Cartwright.' *The Poetry Ireland Review*, no. 35, 1992: pp. 8-11. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25577328. Accessed 11 Mar. 2018.

'Fables of Home.' *The Dublin* Review, no. 5, 2001: pp. 107-122.

'Wrestling with Englishness: Interview with Poet and Translator George Szirtes.' By James Hopkin. *The Guardian*, 21 Oct. 2001, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/oct/27/poetry.features. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

Exercise of Power: The Art of Ana Maria Pacheco. Lund Humphries Publishers, 2001.

'The Sweetest Sound of All.' *The Guardian*, 21 Nov. 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/nov/21/1. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

‘George Szirtes in Conversation with Elizabeth MacDonald.’ *The Poetry Ireland Review*, no. 84, 2005: pp. 101-108. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25580644.pdf. Accessed 11 Mar. 2018.

‘Missing Dates/Sleeve Notes.’ *Poetry*, vol. 191, no. 1, Oct. 2007: pp. 35-43, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=68936. Accessed 11 Mar. 2018.

Foreword. *I Spy Pinhole Eye*. Cinnamon Press, 2009.

Fortinbras at the Fishhouses: Responsibility, the Iron Curtain and the Sense of History as Knowledge. Bloodaxe Books, Jun. 2010.

‘George Szirtes Interview.’ *Writewords*, 25 Oct. 2010, http://www.writewords.org.uk/interviews/george_szirtes.asp. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

‘An Interview with George Szirtes.’ By Paul Sweeten. *The Oxonian Review*, vol. 17, no. 2, 31 Oct. 2011, https://www.oxonianreview.org/wp/an-interview-with-george-szirtes. Accessed 22 Aug. 2016.

‘Maintenant #96 - George Szirtes.’ By SJ Fowler. *3: AM Magazine*, 7 May 2013, https://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/maintenant-96-george-szirtes. Accessed 22 Aug. 2016.

‘Illuminating the Translator’s Art: An Interview with George Szirtes.’ By Bethany W. Pope. *The Quarterly Conversation*, no. 30, 3 Dec. 2012, http://quarterlyconversation.com/illuminating-the-translators-art-an-interview-with-george-szirtes. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

‘Proust Questionnaire: 17 Questions with George Szirtes.’ By Yong Shu Hoong. *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2014, http://www.qlrs.com/interview.asp?id=1088. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

‘An Interview with George Szirtes.’ By George Jackson. *Ambit*, 3 Aug. 2015, http://ambitmagazine.co.uk/interviews/an-interview-with-george-szirtes. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

‘George Szirtes’ T. S. Eliot Lecture 2005: Thin Ice and The Midnight Skaters.’ *The Poetry Library*, 23 Nov. 2015, http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/news/poetryscene/?id=168. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

‘Artistic Norfolk Couple Have Spiritual Energy [Interview with Clarissa Upchurch and George Szirtes].’ By John Myhill. *Network Norfolk*, 9 Dec. 2015, https://www.networknorwich.co.uk/Articles/455660/Network_Norwich_and_Norfolk/People/Artistic_Norfolk_couple_have_spiritual_energy.aspx. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

'I Fled to the UK in 1956. This Is Not the Welcome I Remember.' *Refugee Council*, 28 Jul. 2016, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/4711_i_fled_to_the_uk_in_1956_this_is_not_the_welcome_i_remember. Accessed 11 Apr. 2018.

'George Szirtes: Author Statement.' *Writers Directory*. British Council, n.d., https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/george-szirtes. Accessed 12 Aug. 2016.

'Interview with poet George Szirtes.' *Writers & Artists: The Insider Guide to the Media*, n.d., https://www.writersandartists.co.uk/writers/advice/38/a-writers-toolkit/interviews-with-authors/interview-with-george-szirtes. Accessed 4 Nov. 2016.

'Featured Interview: *Interlitq* interviews George Szirtes.' *The International Literary Quarterly*, 2016, http://www.interlitq.org/Interviews/george-szirtes/job.php. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

'George Szirtes ['My last book, *Bad Machine*, took language and the body as its theme'].' *PBS Bulletin*, no. 251, 2016: pp. 5.

'Interview: George Szirtes.' By James Byrne. *The Wolf*. n.d., http://www.wolfmagazine.co.uk/9_interview_gs.php. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

'George Szirtes'. *The Poetry Archive*, n.d., http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/george-szirtes. Accessed 26 Jan. 2017.

Personal Interview. 3 May – 20 Jun. 2017. (See Appendix B)

'War Games.' *PN Review*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2018: pp. 62-64.

The Photographer at Sixteen: The Death and Life of a Fighter. MacLehose Press, 2019.

4. personal blog articles, and social media accounts

'New Book Plus: Rotterdam Interviews & Links, Mark Sarvas.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 14 Aug. 2009. http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2009/08/new-book-plus-rotterdam-interviews.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

'Farewell to Creative Writing at the Art College 7b: the MA in Writing the Visual.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 13 May 2010, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2010/05/farewell-to-creative-writing-at-art_13.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Being a Good Mother 1.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 28 Dec. 2010, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/on-being-good-mother-1.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Being a Good Mother 2.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 29 Dec. 2010, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/on-being-good-mother-2.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Being a Good Mother 3 (And Last).' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 30 Dec. 2010, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2010/12/on-being-good-mother-3.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 1.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 23 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-1.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 2.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 24 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-2.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 3.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 25 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-3.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 4.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 26 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-4.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 5.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 27 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-5.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'On Milieu and Refuge: A Sketch 6.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 28 Jul. 2012, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/on-milieu-and-refuge-sketch-6.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'My Mother Would Have Been 90 Today.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 2 Feb. 2014, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2014/02/my-mother-would-have-been-90-today.html. Accessed 2 Oct. 2017.

'Excerpt from *Rewind*: Psychopomp.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 25 Jul. 2016, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/excerpt-from-rewind.html Accessed 8 Aug. 2016.

'From *Rewind*: A Life Spooled Backwards.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 2 Aug. 2016, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/from-rewind-life-spooled-backwards.html. Accessed 10. Oct. 2016.

'From *Rewind*: A Reinvention of My Mother.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 4 Sept. 2016, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.co.uk/2016/09/from-rewind-reinvention-of-my-mother.html. Accessed 10 Oct. 2016.

'The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 1.' *George Szirtes' Blog*, 24. Jan. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-1.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 2.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 24. Jan. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 3.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 24. Jan. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-3.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 4.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 26. Jan. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-4.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 5.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 29. Jan. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/01/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-5.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 6.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 1 Feb. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 7.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 2. Feb. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-7.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs 8.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 5. Feb. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs-8.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

‘The Blind Musician and the Voyeurs.’ *George Szirtes’ Blog*, 6. Feb. 2018, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-blind-musician-and-voyeurs_6.html. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Academia, https://independent.academia.edu/GeorgeSzirtes. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/Nussbach3rM. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/georgeszirtes. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

George Szirtes’ Blog, http://georgeszirtes.blogspot.com. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

LinkedIn, https://www.linkedin.com/in/george-szirtes-7996291a. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

MyHeritage, https://www.myheritage.com/site-family-tree-53696302/szirtes-upchurch-family-tree?familyTreeID=1. Accessed 28 Aug. 2019.

Twitter, https://twitter.com/george_szirtes. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Tamar Yoseloff

1. poetry collections, pamphlet, edited anthology, and individual poems

'The Murderer.' *Of Eros and of Dust: Poems from the City*, edited by Steve Anthony. The Oscars Press, 1992. 37.

'Brompton Cemetery.' *Of Eros and of Dust: Poems from the City*, edited by Steve Anthony. The Oscars Press, 1992. 72.

Funhouse. Slow Dancer Press, 1994.

Sweetheart. Slow Dancer Press, 1999.

Barnard's Star. Enitharmon Press, 2005.

Fetch. Salt Publishing, Apr. 2007.

A Room to Live in: A Kettle's Yard Anthology. Salt Publishing, Nov. 2007.

The City with Horns. Salt Publishing, 2011.

A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems. Seren, 2016.

'The Black Place.' *English*, vol. 67, no. 258, 2018, pp. 233-4. *Oxford Academic*, https://doi.org/10.1093/204nglish/efy040. Accessed 16 Feb. 2019.

'Darklight.' *English*, vol. 67, no. 258, 2018, pp. 231-2. *Oxford Academic*, https://doi.org/10.1093/204nglish/efy037. Accessed 16 Feb. 2019.

'Climacteric.' *PN Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2019, pp. 39-40.

'The Treasury of Alonis.' *PN Review*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2019, pp. 40.

2. collaborative works

Karshan, Linda, and Tamar Yoseloff. *Marks*. Pratt Contemporary Art, 2007.

--. *Desire Paths*. Hein Elferink Gallery, 2012.

Yoseloff, Tamar and Vici MacDonald. *Formerly*. Hercules Editions, 2012.

Harker, David, and Tamar Yoseloff. *Nowheres*. 2015.

3. essays, interviews, and other publications

'London Grip Poetry Review – Yoseloff.' *London Grip: The International Online Cultural Magazine*, Jan. 2006, https://londongrip.co.uk/2016/01/london-grip-poetry-review-yoseloff. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'Obituary: Thomas Yoseloff.' *The Guardian*, 13 Feb. 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2008/feb/13/2. Accessed 20 Feb. 2019.

'Tamar Yoseloff - Words Unlimited.' *Words Unlimited*, 17 Jun. 2011, https://wordsunlimited.typepad.com/words_unlimited/2011/06/tamar-yoseloff.html. Accessed 16 Feb. 2019.

''Formerly', a collaboration between Tamar Yoseloff and Vici MacDonald.' *Peony Moon: A Contemporary Poetry Blog*, 2 Sept. 2012, https://peonymoon.wordpress.com/2012/09/02/formerly-a-collaboration-between-tamar-yoseloff-and-vici-macdonald. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'Formerly Exhibition.' *YouTube*, uploaded by Tamar Yoseloff, 1 Feb. 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dldQ44WlkNc. Accessed 1 Jul. 2019.

'Plate Spinners [Interview with Farah Ahamed, Geraldine Cornwall, Jacqueline Smith, Jessica Voorsanger, Mary MacMaster, Michelle Dow, Nancy Honey, Rachelle Allen Sherwood, Ruth Corney, Sinta Tantra, and Tamar Yoseloff].' *This Woman's Work*, 2014, http://thiswomanswork2014.tumblr.com/platespinners. Accessed 21 Apr. 2019.

'Taking a Poem for a Walk.' *The Poetry School*, 2014, https://poetryschool.com/essays/taking-a-poem-for-a-walk. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'The Value of Poetry, with Kate Fox and Tamar Yoseloff.' *The Society of Authors*, 2015, https://www.societyofauthors.org/News/Interviews/2015/Poetry. Accessed 5 Nov 2017.

'In Praise of Joan Mitchell.' *Anthony Wilson: The year of Living Deeply*, 28 Feb. 2016, https://anthonywilsonpoetry.com/2016/02/28/guest-blog-post-in-praise-of-joan-mitchell-by-tamar-yoseloff. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'Poetry in Aldeburgh Countdown – An Interview with Tamar Yoseloff.' By Ben Rogers. *The Poetry School*, 2016, https://poetryschool.com/interviews/poetry-aldeburgh-countdown-interview-tamar-yoseloff. Accessed 7 May 2017.

'The New Publisher: Hercules Editions.' *The Writing Platform*, 20 May 2015, http://thewritingplatform.com/2015/05/the-new-publisher-hercules-editions. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'Poetry and Visual Art/ Turner Contemporary, Margate, Sat 18th November * Worksheet 1: John Davies.' Handout. The Poetry School. 2017.

'Poetry and Visual Art/ Turner Contemporary, Margate, Sat 18th November * Worksheet 2: Jean Arp.' Handout. The Poetry School. 2017.

'Poetry and Visual Art/ Turner Contemporary, Margate, Sat 18th November * Worksheet 3: Emin Turner.' Handout. The Poetry School. 2017.

Personal Interview. 21 Nov. – 6 Dec. 2017. (See Appendix C)

<u>4. personal blog articles, website, and social media accounts</u>

'In Praise of Crows.' *Invective against Swans*, 1 Sept., 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/in-praise-of-crows. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

'Prunella Clough, The Poet's Painter?' *Invective against Swans*, 3 Sept., 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/prunella-clough-the-poets-painter. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Jackson Pollock, Part 1.' *Invective against Swans*, 19 Oct. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/jackson-pollock-part-1. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Constructed Space.' *Invective against Swans*, 5 Oct. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-constructed-space. Accessed 22 Sept. 2019.

'Time Being.' *Invective against Swans*, 8 Oct. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/time-being. Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

'The Listening Sea.' *Invective against Swans*, 26 Nov. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-listening-sea. Accessed 22 Sept. 2019.

'Cedar Nights.' *Invective against Swans*, 7 Dec. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/cedar-nights. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Why I Am Not a Painter…' *Invective against Swans*, 15 Dec. 2010, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/why-i-am-not-a-painter. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Alchemy.' *Invective against Swans*, 7 Jan. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/tag/Alchemy. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Poet's Process.' *Invective against Swans*, 14 Jan. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-poets-process. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Word as Image.' *Invective against Swans*, 25 Jan. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/word-as-image. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

'Short Voyages.' *Invective against Swans*, 8 Feb. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/short-voyages. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Rain, Steam and Speed.' *Invective against Swans*, 18 Feb. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/rain-steam-and-speed. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'What Is Left.' *Invective against Swans*, 4 Mar. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/what-is-left. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Blank Page.' *Invective against Swans*, 18 Mar. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-blank-page. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'He Blew His Mind Out in a Car.' *Invective against Swans*, 24 Mar. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/he-blew-his-mind-out-in-a-car. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Slow Burn.' *Invective against Swans*, 8 Apr. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-slow-burn. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Wilder Shores of Love.' *Invective against Swans*, 6 Jul. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/wilder-shores-of-love. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Painter and His Wife (a Study in Metaphor).' *Invective against Swans*, 19 Aug. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-painter-and-his-wife-a-study-in-metaphor. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'The Red Hill.' *Invective against Swans*, 10 Nov. 2011, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-red-hill. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Young Woman Seated at a Virginal.' *Invective against Swans*, 11 Jan. 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/young-woman-seated-at-a-virginal. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Formerly.' *Invective against Swans*, 27 Jan. 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/formerly. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Virginal, But No Virgin.' *Invective against Swans*, 3 Feb. 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/virginal-but-no-virgin. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019.

'Desire Paths.' *Invective against Swans*, 29 Feb. 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/desire-paths. Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

'The Other Side of Language.' *Invective against Swans*, 22 Mar. 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-other-side-of-language. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

'The Seafarer.' *Invective against Swans*, 16 May 2012, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/the-seafarer. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

'Seeing the Light.' *Invective against Swans*, 5 Mar. 2013, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/seeing-the-light. Accessed 21 Apr. 2019.

'You Can't Go Home Again (?).' *Invective against Swans*, 24 Sept. 2013, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/you-cant-go-home-again. Accessed 22 Sept. 2017.

'Invective against Invective.' *Invective against Swans*, 13 Dec. 2013, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog/invective-against-invective. Accessed 4 Jul. 2018.

Academia, https://independent.academia.edu/TamarYoseloff. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/tamar.yoseloff. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/tamar_yoseloff/. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Invective against Swans, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/blog. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Linkedin, https://www.linkedin.com/in/tamar-yoseloff-504784132. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Tamar Yoseloff, https://www.tamaryoseloff.com/. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Twitter, https://twitter.com/tamaryoseloff. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP6XsQQ4Yj3kKve1gPvyAFg. Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

(B) Primary Sources

(in alphabetical order, except for works by the same author)

Abse, Dannie, and Joan Abse, editors. *Voices in the Gallery: Poems & Pictures Chosen by Dannie & Joan Abse*. The Tate Gallery, 1986.

Alvi, Moniza. *Europa*. Bloodaxe Books, 2008.

--. *Split World: Poems 1990-2005*. Bloodaxe Books, 2008.

Ackroyd, Norman, and Douglas Dunn. 'A Line in the Water: Sea Changes.' *Royal Academy of Arts Magazine*, Spring 2009, pp. 56-57.

--. *A Line in the Water*. Royal Academy of Arts, 2009.

Ashbery, John. *Selected Poems*. Carcanet Press, 1998.

--. *Notes from the Air: Selected Later Poems*. Ecco, 2007.

Auden, W. H. *Selected Poems*. Vintage Books, 1979.

Auden, W. H., and Christopher Isherwood. *Journey to a War*. Paragon House, 1990.

Berger, John. *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*. 1984. Granta Books, 1992.

Bhatt, Sujata. *The Stinking Rose*. Carcanet Press, 1995.

--. 'Five Poems in Response to Paula Modersohn-Becker.' *PN Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2001.

Bishop, Elizabeth. *Complete Poems*. 1983. Chatto & Windus, 1991.

Boland, Eavan. *A Poet's Dublin*. Edited by Paula Meehan, and Jody Allen Randolph. Carcanet Press, 2014.

Browning, Robert. 'My Last Duchess.' *Poetry Foundation*, 2019, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43768/my-last-duchess. Accessed 27 Jul 2019.

Bryce, Colette. *Self-Portrait in the Dark*. Picador Poetry, 2008.

Burnside, John. *Selected Poems*. Cape Poetry, 2006.

Capidleo, Vahni. *Venus as a Bear*. Carcanet Press, 2018.

Carson, Anne. *Nox*. New Directions Publishing, 2010.

Celan, Paul. 'Death Fugue.' Translated by John Felstiner. *Second World War Poems*, edited by Hugh Haughton. Faber and Faber, 2004, pp. 48-9.

Chingonyi, Kayo. *Kumukanda*. Chatto & Windus, 2017.

Curtis, Tony, Grahame Davies, Mari Owen, and Carl Ryan. *Alchemy of Water: Alcemi Dwr*. Gomer Press, 2013.

Cole, Henri. *Middle Earth*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

Dickinson, Emily. *The Complete Poems*. Faber and Faber, 1975.

Dooley, Marura. *The Silvering*. Bloodaxe Books, 2016.

Doty, Mark. *Deep Lane*. Jonathan Cape, 2015.

Duffy, Carol A. *Standing Female Nude*. 1985. Anvil Press Poetry, 1993.

Dugdale, Sasha. *The Notebook*. Carcanet Press, 2003.

--. *Red House*. Carcanet Press, 2011.

--. *Joy*. Carcanet Press, 2017.

Durcan, Paul. *Crazy about Women*. The National Gallery of Ireland. 1991.

--. *Give Me Your Hand: Poems Inspired by Paintings in the National Gallery, London*. Macmillan London, and National Gallery Publications, London. 1994.

Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. Edited by Helen Vendler. Signet Classic, 1998.

Farrés, Ernest. *Edward Hopper*. Translated by Lawrence Venuti. Graywolf Press, 2009.

Fagles, Robert. *I, Vincent: Poems from the Pictures of Van Gogh*. Princeton UP, 1978.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. *When I Look at Pictures*. Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1990.

Ford, Mark, editor. *The New York Poets: An Anthology*. Carcanet Press, 2004.

Fragos, Emily, editor. *Art and Artists: Poems*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Frank, Linda. *Kahlo: The World Split Open*. BuschekBooks, 2008.

Freston, Tom de., editor. *The Charnel House*. Bridgedoor Press, 2014.

Garebian, Keith. *Frida: Paint Me as a Volcano*. BuschekBooks, 2004.

Ginsberg, Allen. *Snapshot Poetics: A Photographic Memoir of the Beat Era*. Chronicle Books, 1994.

Graham, Jorie. *The End of Beauty*. Ecco, 1987.

Graham, Jorie, and Jeannette Montgomery Barron. *Photographs & Poems*. Scalo, 1998.

Graham, W. S. *New Collected Poems*. Faber and Faber, 2005.

Griffiths, Jay. *A Love Letter from a Stray Moon*. The Text Publishing Company, 2011.

Gunn, Thom. *Touch*. Faber & Faber, 1967.

Haughton, Hugh, editor. *Second World War Poems*. Faber and Faber, 2004.

Hoggard, James. *Triangles of Light: The Edward Hopper Poems.* Wings Press, 2009.

Hughes, Ted. *The Hawk in the Rain*. Faber and Faber, 1957.

--. *Crow: from the Life and Songs of the Crow*. Faber and Faber, 1970.

--. *Cave Birds*. Faber and Faber, 1975.

--. *Under the North Star*. Faber and Faber, 1981.

--. *Birthday Letters*. Faber & Faber, 1998.

Hughes, Ted, and Fay Godwin. *Remains of Elmet: A Pennine Sequence*. Faber and Faber, 1979.

Hughes, Ted, and Peter Keen. *River*. London: Faber and Faber, 1983.

Ivory, Helen. *The Double Life of Clocks*. Bloodaxe Books, 2003.

--. *The Dog in the Sky*. Bloodaxe Books, 2006.

--. *The Breakfast Machine*. Bloodaxe Books, 2010.

--. *Waiting for Bluebeard.* Bloodaxe Books, 2013.

--. *Hear What the Moon Told Me*. The Knives Forks and Spoons Press, 2016.

Kahlo, Frida. *The Letters of Frida Kahlo: Cartas Apasionadas*. Edited and translated by Martha Zamora. Chronicle Books, 1995.

--. *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait.* Edited by Phyllis Freeman, and translated by Barbara Crow de Toledo and Ricardo Pohlenz. Abrams, 2011.

Kirsch, Adam. *Emblems of the Passing World: Poems after Photographs by August Sander*. Other Press, 2015.

Larkin, Philip. *The Less Deceived*. 1955. The Marvell Press, 1977.

--. *The Whitsun Weddings*. Faber and Faber, 1964.

Le Sang des Bêtes. Directed by Georges Franju, Forces et Voix de la France, 1949.

Levin, Gail, editor. *The Poetry of Solitude: A Tribute to Edward Hopper*. Universe Publishing, 1995.

Liardet, Tim. *The Storm House*. Carcanet Press, 2011.

--. *The World before Snow*. Carcanet Press, 2015.

--. *Arcimboldo's Bulldog: New and Selected Poems*. Carcanet Press, 2018.

Lowery, Owen. *Rego Retold: Poems in Response to Works by Paula Rego*. Carcanet Press, 2005.

Mahon, Derek. *Collected Poems*. Edited by Peter Fallon. The Gallery Press, 1999.

Maso, Carole. *Beauty Is Convulsive: The Passion of Frida Kahlo*. Counterpoint, 2002.

Modern Times. Directed by Charlie Chaplin, Charles Chaplin Productions, 1936.

Moore, Marianne. *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*. Faber and Faber, 1968.

Muldoon, Paul, and Bill Doyle. *Kerry Slides*. 1996. Gallery Books, 1998.

--. *Plan B*. Enitharmoon Press, 2009.

Murray, Les. *Poems the Size of Photographs*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.

Nagra, Daljit. *British Museum*. Faber and Faber, 2017.

Nichols, Grace. *Lazy Thoughts of a Lazy Woman and Other Poems*. Virago Press, 1989.

--. *Paint Me a Poem: New Poems Inspired by Art in the Tate*. A & C Black Publishers, 2004.

--. *Picasso, I Want My Face Back.* Bloodaxe Books, 2009.

O'Brien, Dan. *War Reporter*. CB Editions, 2013.

O'Hara, Frank. *A City Winter and Other Poems*. Tibor de Nagy Gallery, 1951.

--. *The Collected Poems of Frank O'Hara*. Edited by Donald Allen, U of California P, 1995.

Olds, Sharon. *The Father*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.

O'Reilly, Caitríona. *The Sea Cabinet*. Bloodaxe Books, 2006.

--. *Geis*. Bloodaxe Books, 2015.

Orwell, George. *1984*. 1950. Penguin Books, 2009.

Padel, Ruth. *The Soho Leopard*. Chatto and Windus, 2004.

Penny, Nicholas, editor. *Metamorphosis: Poems Inspired by Titan*. National Gallery Company, London, 2012.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Colossus*. 1960. Faber and Faber, 1967.

--. *Ariel*. 1965. Faber and Faber, 2010.

--. *The Collected Poems: Sylvia Plath*. Edited by Ted Hughes, Harper Perennial, 1992.

Pound, Ezra. *Poems Selected by Thom Gunn*. Faber and Faber, 2000.

Power, Phoebe. *Shrines of Upper Austria*. Carcanet Press, 2018.

Rees-Jones, Deryn. *What It's Like to Be Alive: Selected Poems*. Seren, 2016.

Rees-Jones, Deryn, and Charlotte Hodes. *And You, Helen*. Seren, 2014.

Rich, Adrienne. *A Change of World: Poems*. 1951. W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.

Rilke, Rainer M. *New Poems*. 1908. Translated by Len Krisak. Camden House, 2015.

Rossetti, D. G. *Collected Poetry and Prose*. Edited by Jerome Mccgann, Yale UP, 2003.

Rumens, Carol. *De Chirico's Threads*. Seren, 2010.

Schneider, Myra, and Dilys Wood, editors. *Images of Women: An Anthology of Contemporary Women's Poetry*. Arrowhead Press, 2006.

Sebald, W. G. *Austerlitz*. Translated by Anthea Bell. Hamish Hamilton, 2001.

Sexton, Anne. *Selected Poems of Anne Sexton*. Edited by Diane Wood Middlebrook and Diana Hume George. Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat, and Paul Werstine. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2003.

--. *The Tempest*. Edited by Barbara A. Mowat, and Paul Werstine. Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2015.

Simic, Charles. *Dime-Store Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell.* New York Review Book, 1992.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale I – My Father Bleeds History*. Penguin Books, 1987.

--. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale II – And Here My Trouble Began*. Penguin Books, 1992.

Stevens, Wallace. *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. Faber and Faber, 1966.

Thomas, R. S. *Too Brave to Dream: Encounters with Modern Art*. Edited by Tony Brown and Jason Davies, Bloodaxe Books, 2016.

Vuong, Ocean. *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*. Cape Poetry, 2017.

Walcott, Derek. *Tiepolo's Hound*. Faber & Faber, 2000.

Whitman, Walt. 'The Untold Want [1891].' *Poets.org*., Academy of American Poets, https://poets.org/poem/untold-want. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. 1891. Penguin Classics, 2003.

Williams, William Carlos. *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems: Collected Poems, 1950-1962*. New Directions, 1962.

Yeats, W. B. *Selected Poems*. Edited by Timothy Webb, 1991. Penguin Books, 2000.

Zammit, Abigail A. *Portrait of a Woman with Sea Urchin*. SPM Publications, 2015.

(C) Secondary Sources

(in alphabetical order, except for works by the same author)

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1988.

Amis, Kingsley. 'Kingsley Amis.' *Poets of the 1950's: An Anthology of New English Verse*, edited by D. J. Enright. Kenkyusha, 1955. 17-18.

Ankori, Gannit. *Imaging Her Selves: Frida Kahlo's Poetics of Identity and Fragmentation*. Greenwood Press, 2002.

Barry, Peter. 'Contemporary Poetry and Ekphrasis.' *The Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2002, pp. 155-65. *Oxford Academic*, http://camqtly.oxfordjournals.org/content/31/2/155.full.pdf. Accessed 31 Aug. 2014.

--. *Literature in Contexts*. Manchester UP, 2007.

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. The Noonday Press, 1972.

--. *Roland Barthes*. Translated by Richard Howard. Basingstoke & Macmillan Press, 1977.

--. 'The Photographic Message.' *Image – Music – Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heath. Fontana Press, 1977.

--. 'Rhetoric of the Image.' *Image – Music – Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heath. Fontana Press, 1977.

--. *Camera Lucida*. Translated by Richard Howard. 1981. Vintage Books, 2000.

--. *The Rustle of Language*. Translated by Richard Howard. Basil Blackwell, 1986.

--. *Mourning Diary*. Translated by Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, 2010.

--. *Incidents*. Translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Seagull Books, 2010.

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Edited and translated by Jonathan Mayne. Phaidon Press, 1964.

Bazin, André. 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image.' Translated by Hugh Gray. *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg. Leete's Island Books, 1980.

Batchen, Geoffrey. 'Judging a Book by Its Cover.' *Cabinet Magazine*, no. 36, 2009-2010, http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/36/batchen.php. Accessed 7 Jul. 2018.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Edited by Hannah Arendt, and translated by Harry Zohn. Cape, 1970.

--. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. 1935. Translated by J. A. Underwood. Penguin Books, 2008.

Berenson, Bernard. *Aesthetics and History*. Constable Publishers, 1948.

Berger, John. *The Moment of Cubism and Other Essays*. Pantheon Books, 1969.

--. *Ways of Seeing*. 1972. Penguin Books, 2008.

--. *About Looking*. 1980. Bloomsbury, 2009.

--. *Berger on Drawing*. Edited by Jim Savage. 2005. Occasional Press, 2007.

--. *Understanding a Photograph*. Edited by Geoff Dyer. Penguin Books, 2013.

--. *Portraits: John Berger on Artists*. Edited by Tom Overton. 2015. Verso, 2017.

Berger, John, and Jean Mohr. 'The Authentic Image (1979-1980).' *Representation and Photography: A Screen Education Reader*, edited by Alvarado, Manuel, Edward Buscombe, and Richard Collins. Palgrave, 2001.

Berry, Liz. 'Judge's Report.' *Poetry London*, no. 88, Autumn 2017, pp. 24.

Bersani, Leo, and Ulysse Dutoit. *Caravaggio's Secrets*. The MIT Press, 1998.

Bollas, Christopher. *The Shadow of the Object*. Free Association Books, 1987.

Bond, Anthony, and Joanna Woodall. *Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary*. National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2005.

Bosworth, Patricia. *Diane Arbus: A Biography*. Vintage, 2005.

Botton, Alain de. *On Seeing and Nothing.* Penguin Books, 2005.

Botton, Alain de. and John Armstrong. *Art as Therapy*. Phaidon Press, 2013.

'breathless, adj.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/22981. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Breton, André. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. U of Michigan P, 1977.

Briggs, Asa, and Archie Miles. *A Victorian Portrait: Victorian Life and Values As Seen Through the Work of Studio Photographers*. HarperCollins, 1989.

'Brompton Cemetery Conservation Plan – Section 1: Written Report.' LDA Design Consulting LLP, Feb. 2015, https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/idoxWAM/doc/Other-1538993.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=1538993&location=VOLUME2&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Brown, Carl R. V. 'Contemporary Poetry about Painting.' *The English Journal*, vol. 81, no. 1, 1992. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/818337. Accessed 7 Mar. 2017.

Brunet, François. *Photography and Literature*. Reaktion Books, 2009.

Button, Virginia. *Christopher Wood*. Tate Publishing, 2003.

Campany, David. *Photography and Cinema*. Reaktion Books, 2010.

Caruth, Cathy, editor. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. The John Hopkins UP, 1995.

--. Introduction. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth. The John Hopkins UP, 1995. 3-12.

'chamber, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/30330. Accessed 30 Aug. 2019.

Cheeke, Stephen. *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*. Manchester UP, 2008.

Chipp, Herschel B., editor. *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*. U of California P, 1968.

--. 'Introduction: The Americans.' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. University of California Press, 1968. 501-519.

Clüver, Claus. 'Quotation, Enargeia, and the Functions of Ekphrasis.' *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, edited by Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel. Vanderbilt UP, 1998. 35-52.

Colpitt, Frances. *Abstract Art in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge UP, 2002.

Cooke, Rachel. 'Reframing Lee Krasner, The Artist Formerly Known as Mrs Pollock.' *The Guardian,* 12 May 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/may/12/lee-krasner-artist-formerly-known-as-mrs-jackson-pollock-barbican-exhibition. Accessed 2 Jun. 2019.

Costello, Bonnie. 'Elizabeth Bishop and the Art of Still Life.' *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler*, edited by Jane Hedley, Nick Halpern and Willard Spiegelman. U of Delaware P, 2009. 15-42.

Corn, Alfred. 'Notes on Ekphrasis.' *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, 2008, https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/notes-ekphrasis. Accessed 6 Jul. 2018.

Cotton, Charlotte. *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*. 2004. Thames & Hudson, 2014.

Coverley, Merlin. *Psychogeography*. Pocket Essentials, 2006.

Craeybeckx, A. H. S. *Gevaert Manual of Photography : A Practical Guide for Professionals and Advanced Amateurs*. Translated by C. J. Duncan. Fountain Press, 1962.

'daguerreotype, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/46899. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

'Dante Gabriel Rossetti.' *Walker Art Gallery*, 2019, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/rossetti. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Davie, Donald. *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor*. Oxford UP, 1964.

Debord, Guy. 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography.' 1955. Translated by Ken Knabb. *Critical Geographies: A Collection of Readings*, edited by Harald Bauder and Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro. Praxis (e)Press, 2008.

Denham, Robert D. *Poets on Paintings: A Bibliography*. McFarland & Co., 2010.

Dent, R. J. 'Pascale Petit's *The Zoo Father*.' *R J Dent*, 27 Sept. 2008, https://rjdent.wordpress.com/2008/09/27/the-zoo-father. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.

Devi, Sharmila. 'Syrian Kurdish Artist Lawand: "I Am Not a Painter of Loneliness".' *Rudaw*, 7 Nov. 2013, https://www.rudaw.net/NewsDetails.aspx?pageid=25478. Accessed 23 Aug. 2019.

Diehl, Joanne F. 'Toward a Theory of Ekphrasis: The Female Tradition.' *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler*, edited by Jane Hedley, Nick Halpern and Willard Spiegelman. Newark, U of Delaware P, 2009. 43-54.

Drabble, Margaret, et al. 'Journeys into the Past: Behind the Curtain.' *Tate Etc.*, no. 18, 2010, https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-18-spring-2010/journeys-past. Accessed 16 Feb. 2019.

Duffy, Carol A., editor. *Thresholds: Poets in Residence at the University of Cambridge Museums and Collections*, n.d., http://www.thresholds.org.uk. Accessed 6 Jul. 2018.

Edel, Leon. *Writing Lives: Principia Biographica*. W. W. Norton & Co., 1987.

Edwards, David. *Art Therapy*. SAGE Publications, 2004.

Edwards, Jason. *Joseph Cornell: Opening the Box*. Peter Lang, 2007.

Eisriesenwelt Werfen, 2019, https://www.eisriesenwelt.at/en. Accessed 17 Aug. 2019.

'ekphrasis, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/59412. Accessed 13 Jun. 2018.

'Ekphrasis.' *Poetry Foundation*, 2019, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/ekphrasis. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Eliot, T. S. *The Sacred Wood*. 1920. Methuen & Co., 1932.

Elkins, James. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. Simon & Schuster, 1996.

--. *What Photography Is*. Routledge, 2011.

Ellis, Havelock. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Volume I: The Evolution of Modesty, The Phenomena of Sexual Periodicity, Auto-Eroticism.* 1900. F. A. Davis Company, 1918.

--. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Volume II: Sexual Inversion*. 1901. F. A. Davis Company, 1918.

--. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Volume V: Erotic Symbolism, The Mechanism of Detumescence, The Psychic State in Pregnancy*. 1906. F. A. Davis Company, 1923.

Enright, D. J., editor. *Poets of the 1950's: An Anthology of the New English Verse*. Kenyusha, 1955.

'fantasy | phantasy, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/68119. Accessed 31 Jul. 2018.

Farley, Paul. 'A World of Memory: Review of *Reel*'. *The Guardian*, 5 Feb. 2005, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/feb/05/poetry.tseliotprizeforpoetry2004. Accessed 15 Aug. 2016.

Ferber, Herbert. 'On Sculpture [1954].' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. U of California P, 1968. 554-555.

Fischer, Barbara K. *Museum Mediations: Reframing Ekphrasis in Contemporary American Poetry*. Routledge, 2006.

Fischer, Philip. *Making and Effacing Art*. Oxford UP, 1991.

Fisher, Elizabeth. Exhibition guide. *Christopher Wood*. 6 Jul. – 1 Sept. 2013. Kettle's Yard, Cambridge.

Ford, Colin. Introduction. *André Kertész: An Exhibition of Photographs from the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.* Arts Council of Great Britain, 1979.

Fragos, Emily. Foreword. *Art and Artists: Poems*, edited by Emily Fragos. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Freedberg, David. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. U of Chicago P, 1989.

Freud, Sigmund. 'Screen Memories [1899].' *The Uncanny*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003. 1-22.

--. 'The Creative Writer and Daydreaming [1908].' *The Uncanny*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003. 25-33.

--. 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood [1910].' *The Uncanny*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003. 43-120.

--. 'The Moses of Michelangelo [1914].' Translated by Alix Strachey. *Writings on Art and Literature*, edited by Werner Hamacher, and David E. Wellbery. Stanford UP, 1997. 122-150.

--. 'Mourning and Melancholia [1915 (1917)].' *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XIV (1914-1916)*, translated and edited by James Strachey. The Hogarth Press, 1955. 237-258.

--. 'The Uncanny [1919].' *The Uncanny*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003. 121-162.

--. 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle [1920].' *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by John Reddick. Penguin Classics, 2003. 43-102.

--. 'The Ego and the Id [1923]'. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by John Reddick. Penguin Classics, 2003. 104-149.

--. *Two Short Accounts of Psycho-Analysis*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. 1962. Penguin Books, 1984.

--. *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*. Translated by James Strachey, and edited by Angela Richards. Penguin Books, 1977.

Fried, Michael. 'Jackson Pollock [1965].' *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, edited by Ellen G. Landau. Yale UP, 2005. 256-263.

Fuentes, Carlos. Introduction. *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait*, edited by Phyllis Freeman. Abrams, 1995. 25-29.

Geist, Sidney. 'The Private Myth [1961].' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. U of California P, 1968. 581.

Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford UP, 1998.

Glavey, Brian. *The Wallflower Avant-Garde: Modernism, Sexuality, and Queer Ekphrasis*. Oxford UP, 2016.

Goody, Alex. 'Contemporary British Poetry.' *The Cambridge Companion to Modern British Culture*, edited by Michael Higgins, Clarissa Smith and John Storey. Cambridge UP, 2010. 137-153.

Gosso, Sandra. 'Introduction: From Reparation to the Aesthetic Conflict.' *Psychoanalysis and Art: Kleinian Perspectives*, edited by Sandra Gosso. Karnac Books, 2004. 1-29.

Green, Timothy, editor. 'Ekphrastic Challenge.' *Rattle*, http://www.rattle.com/ekphrastic/. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.

Greenberg, Clement. '"American-Type" Painting [1955].' *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, edited by Ellen G. Landau. Yale U P, 2005. 198-214.

Grimberg, Salomón. *Frida Kahlo: Song of Herself*. Merrell Publishers, 2008.

Gusdorf, Georges. 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography.' *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney. Princeton UP, 1980. 28-48.

Haan, Binne de. 'The Eclipse of Biography in Life Writing.' *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, edited by Hans Renders, and Binne de Haan. Brill, 2014. 177-194.

Halter, Peter. *The Revolution in the Visual Arts and the Poetry of William Carlos Williams*. Cambridge UP, 2009.

Harris, Judith. *Signifying Pain: Constructing and Healing the Self through Writing*. State University of New York Press, 2003.

Haughton, Hugh. Introduction. *The Uncanny*, edited by Adam Philips, and translated by David McLintock. Penguin Classics, 2003. vii-lx.

--. *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*. Oxford UP, 2010.

--. 'Screening Childhood: Hide-and-Seek among the Moderns.' *Raritan*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2014, pp. 22-48.

--. 'Seeing and Nothingness: John Berger's Moment.' *Raritan*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2018, pp. 1-26.

Hedley, Jane. 'Sylvia Plath's Ekphrastic Poetry.' *Raritan: A Quarterly Review*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2001. 37-73.

--. Introduction. *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler*, edited by Jane Hedley, U of Delaware P, 2009. 15-40.

Heffernan, James A. W. *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. U of Chicago P, 1993.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G. *Writing a Woman's Life*. The Women's Press, 1988.

Hellier, Chris. 'The Carved Elm of Caylar Archive.' *Wood Carving*, 28 Aug. 2008, http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com/wood-carving/features/places/europe/the-carved-elm-of-caylar/. Accessed 7 Mar. 2017.

Helm, Sarah. *If This Is a Woman: Inside Ravensbruck: Hitler's Concentration Camp for Women*. Abacus, 2015.

Henisch, Heinz K., and Bridget A. Henisch. *The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914: Images and Attitudes*. Pennsylvania State UP, 1994.

Herrera, Hayden. *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*. 1989. Bloomsbury, 2003.

--. *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings.* Bloomsbury, 1991.

Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. 1997. Harvard UP, 2012.

--. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. Columbia UP, 2012.

Hoffman, Eva. *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust*. PublicAffairs, 2004.

Hogan, Susan. *Healing Arts: The History of Art Therapy (Arts Therapies)*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001.

Hollander, John. *The Gazer's Spirit: Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art*. U of Chicago P, 1995.

Holroyd, Michael. *Lytton Strachey: The New Biography*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.

--. 'Changing Fashions in Biography.' *The Guardian*, 7 Nov. 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/nov/07/author-michael-holroyd-review. Accessed 13 Jun. 2018.

Howarth, William L. 'Some Principles of Autobiography.' *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney. Princeton UP, 1980. 84-114.

Hughes, Ted. *Poetry in the Making*. 1967. Faber and Faber, 2008.

Ingleby, Richard. *Christopher Wood: An English Painter*. Alison & Busby, 1995.

'I Feel More British Than American.' *East Anglian Times*, 25 Jul. 2007, https://www.eadt.co.uk/ea-life/i-feel-more-british-than-american-1-84774. Accessed 7 May 2017.

Ivory, Helen. 'Festival Blog: Helen Ivory on Writing the Visual.' *Stanza: Scotland's International Poetry Festival*. 16. Mar 2012, http://stanzapoetry.org/blog/festival-blog-helen-ivory-writing-visual. Accessed 12 Aug. 2016.

Ivory, Helen, editor. 'Words & Images.' *Ink, Sweat and Tears*, http://www.inksweatandtears.co.uk/pages/?cat=9. Accessed 23 Jul. 2018.

Jacobus, Mary. *Reading Cy Twombly*. Princeton UP, 2016.

'Jan van Eyck | The Arnolfini Portrait | NG186.' *The National Gallery*, 2019, https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jan-van-eyck-the-arnolfini-portrait. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Jolly, Margaretta, editor. *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*. Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001.

Jung, Carl G. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung: Volume 5: Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia*. Edited by Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, and translated by R. F. C. Hull. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.

--. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung: Volume 15: The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*. Edited by Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, and translated by R. F. C. Hull. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

Kadar, Marlene, editor. *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*. U of Toronto P, 1992.

Karshan, Linda. Biography. *Linda Karshan*, n.d., https://lindakarshanstudio.com/new-page-1. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Kennedy, David. *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere*. Ashgate, 2012.

--. '"How Art Works on the Pain Spectrum": Ekphrasis and Trauma in Recent Poetry by Pascale Petit and Carol Rumens.' *Journal of Literature and Trauma Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2012, pp. 95-116, doi: 10.1353/jlt.2012.0015. Accessed 2 Feb. 2016.

Kettenmann, Andrea. *Frida Kahlo*. Taschen, 2013.

Kilian, Eveline, and Hope Wolf. 'Introduction: The Spatial Dimensions of Life Writing.' *Life Writing and Space*, edited by Eveline Kilian, and Hope Wolf. Ashgate, 2016. 1-24.

Klein, Melanie. 'Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse.' *Psychoanalysis and Art: Kleinian Perspectives*, edited by Sandra Gosso. Karnac Books, 2004. 33-41.

Kolk, Bessel A. Van Der, and Onno Van Der Hart. 'The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma.' *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth. The John Hopkins UP, 1995. 158-182.

Kracauer, Siegfried. 'Photography.' Translated by Thomas Y. Levin. *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1993: pp. 421-436. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343959auer. Accessed 28 Sept. 2009.

Kramer, Edith. 'Art Therapy and Sublimation.' *Art as Therapy: Collected Papers*, edited by Lani Alaine Gerity. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000. 39-46.

--. *Art as Therapy: Collected Papers*. Edited by Lani Alaine Gerity. Jessica Kinglsey Publishers, 2000.

Krieger, Murray. *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign*. John Hopkin UP, 1992.

Landau, Ellen G. 'Introduction – Abstract Expressionism: Changing Methodologies for Interpreting Meaning.' *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, edited by Ellen G. Landau. Yale UP, 2005. 1-121.

Landsberg, Alison. *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*. Columbia UP, 2004.

Laub, Dori. 'Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle.' *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth. The John Hopkins UP, 1995. 61-75.

Lejeune, Philippe. 'Looking at the Self-Portrait [1986].' *On Autobiography*, edited by Paul John Eakin, and translated by Katherine Leary. U of Minnesota P, 1989.

LeSueur, Joe. *Digressions on Some Poems by Frank O'Hara*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

'Level 2 | Floorplans.' *The National Gallery*, 2019, https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/visiting/floorplans/level-2?fromLocation=47. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Levi, Primo. *If This Is a Man and The Truce*. Translated by Stuart Woolf. 1979. Abacus, 2004.

Levin, Gail. *Lee Krasner: A Biography*. William Morrow, 2011.

Loizeaux, Elizabeth B. *Yeats and the Visual Arts*. Syracuse, Syracuse UP, 2003.

--. *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts*. Cambridge UP, 2008.

--. 'Women Looking: The Feminist Ekphrasis of Marianne Moore and Adrienne Rich.' *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler*, edited by Jane Hedley, Nick Halpern and Willard Spiegelman. U of Delaware Press, 2009. 15-42.

Longley, Edna. 'No More Poems about Paintings?' *Irish Literature and Culture*, edited by Michael Kenneally. Barnes & Noble Books, 1992. 90-111.

Lopez Jr., Donald S. 'Belief.' *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, edited by Mark C. Taylor. U of Chicago P, 1998. 21-35.

Luckett, Helen. Exhibition guide. *Light Show*. 30 Jan. – 28 Apr. 2013, Hayward Gallery, London. https://jennifermensah1317238year2.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/light-exhibition-guide-130306.pdf. Accessed 21 Apr. 2019.

Lury, Celia. *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity*. Routledge, 1998.

Luzajic, Lorette C., editor. 'About.' *The Ekphrastic Review*, n.d., http://www.ekphrastic.net. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.

'Magda's Boy: How George Szirtes Invented His Mother.' *YouTube*, created by Anthony Wilks, and uploaded by London Review Bookshop, 22 Jul. 2019, https://youtu.be/q_IwmwUH570. Accessed 25 Jul. 2019.

Mahon, Alyce. *Eroticism & Art*. 2005. Oxford UP, 2007.

Malraux, André. *Museum without Walls*. Translated by Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price. Secker & Warburg. 1967.

Man, Paul de. 'Autobiography as De-Facement.' *Comparative Literature*, vol. 94, no. 5, 1979, pp. 919-930. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2906560. Accessed 12 Apr. 2018.

Mansoor, Asma. 'Ekphrastic Practices in Catalysing Creative Writing in Undergraduate ESL Classrooms.' *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2014, pp. 208-227. *Taylor & Francis Online*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2014.904887. Accessed 3 Jun. 2015.

Mavor, Carol. *Reading Boyishly: Roland Barthes, J.M. Barrie, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Marcel Proust, and D.W. Winnicott*. Duke UP, 2007.

May, William. 'Verbal and Visual Art in Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry.' *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century British and Irish Women's Poetry*, edited by Jane Dowson. Cambridge UP, 2011. 42-61.

McClatchy, J. D, editor. *Poets on Painters: Essays on the Art of Painting by Twentieth-Century Poets*. U of California P, 1988.

Mendelsohn, Meredith. 'The Emotionally Charged Paintings Lee Krasner Created after Pollock's Death.' *Artsy*, 13 Nov. 2017, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-emotionally-charged-paintings-lee-krasner-created-pollocks-death. Accessed 5 Jun. 2019.

Mercier, Anita. *Guilhermina Suggia, Cellist*. Ashgate, 2008.

Meskimmon, Marsha. 'Visual Arts and Life Writing.' *Encyclopedia of Life Writing: Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*, edited by Margaretta Jolly. Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001. 917-919.

Milner, Andrew D. *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis: Lyrical Representations of Photographs from the 19th Century to the Present*. Liverpool UP, 2015.

Milner, Marion [Field, Joanna]. *A Life of One's Own*. 1934. Routledge, 2011.

Milner, Marion. 'Some Aspects of Phantasy in Relation to General Psychology [1945].' *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*, edited by David Tuckett. Tavistock Publications, 1987. 39-62.

--. 'The Role of Illusion in Symbol Formation [1952].' *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*, edited by David Tuckett. Tavistock Publications, 1987. 83-113.

--. 'The Ordering of Chaos [1957].' *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*, edited by David Tuckett. Tavistock Publications, 1987. 216-233.

--. *On Not Being Able to Paint*. 1957. Routledge, 2010.

--. *The Hands of the Living God*. International Universities Press, Inc. 1969.

--. *Eternity's Sunrise: A Way of Keeping a Diary*. 1987. Routledge, 2011.

--. *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*. Edited by David Tuckett. Tavistock Publications, 1987.

Mitchell, W. J. T. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. U of Chicago P, 1986.

--. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. U of Chicago P, 1994.

--. *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*. U of Chicago P, 2005.

The MLA Handbook: Eighth Edition. The Modern Language Association of America 2016.

Moore, Henry. 'The Sculptor Speaks [1937].' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. University of California Press, 1968. 593-597.

Moorman, Honor. 'Backing into Ekphrasis: Reading and Writing Poetry about Visual Arts.' *National Council of Teachers of English*, vol. 96, no. 1, 2006. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046662. Accessed 28 Jul. 2014.

Mullenneaux, Lisa, editor. *Painters and Poets*, http://www.paintersandpoets.com/. Accessed 20 Dec. 2017.

Morley, David. 'How Art Works on the Pain Spectrum.' *David Morley*, 11 Jan. 2011, https://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/morleyd/entry/how_art_works/. Accessed 9 Dec. 2015.

Murphy, Michael. *Poetry in Exile: A Study of the Poetry of W. H. Auden, Joseph Brodsky & George Szirtes*. Greenwich Exchange, 2004.

Naifeth, Steven, and Gregory White Smith. *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga.* Woodward/White, 1998.

Nairne, Andrew. Exhibition guide. *Kettle's Yard: House Guide* [2018 edition]. Kettle's Yard, Cambridge.

Nalbantian, Suzanne. *Memory in Literature: From Rousseau to Neuroscience*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Nemser, Cindy. *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists*. Scribner, 1975.

Norman, Donald A. *Living with Complexity*. The MIT Press, 2011.

Novak, Julia. 'Experiments in Life-Writing: Introduction.' *Experiments in Life-Writing: Intersections of Auto/Biography and Fiction*, edited by Lucia Boldrini, and Julia Novak. Palgrave McMillian, 2017. 1-35.

O' Brien, Sean. 'One Who Lies Alone [Review of George Szirtes' *New & Collected Poems*]'. *The Guardian*, 21 Feb. 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/feb/21/george-szirtes-poetry-review. Accessed 22 Oct. 2016.

--. 'George Szirtes: Critical Perspective.' *Writers Directory*. British Council, n.d., https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/george-szirtes. Accessed 12 Aug. 2016.

O'Hara, Frank. *Jackson Pollock*. George Braziller, 1959.

--. *Robert Motherwell: With Selections from the Artist's Writings*. Museum of Modern Art, 1965.

--. *Art Chronicles: 1954-1966*. George Braziller, 1975.

Olney, James. 'Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction.' *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, edited by James Olney. Princeton UP, 1980. 3-27.

Padel, Ruth. 'What the Water Gave Me by Pascale Petit.' *The Guardian*, 12 Jun. 2010, http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jun/12/what-water-gave-me-petit. Accessed 3 Nov. 2015

Paul, Catherine. *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism*. U of Michigan P, 2002.

Perloff, Marjorie. *Frank O'Hara: Poet among Painters*. U of Chicago P, 1998.

'phantasmagoria, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/142184. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.

'photograph, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/142818. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

'The Photographs of Allen Ginsberg.' *Poets.org*., Academy of American Poets, 2005, https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/photographs-allen-ginsberg. Accessed 6 Jul. 2018.

Picasso, Pablo. 'Statement, 1923 ['Picasso Speaks'].' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. U of California P, 1968. 263-266.

'poilu, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/146599. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Pollock, Jackson. 'The Three Statements, 1944-1951 [1944; 1947/8; 1951].' *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, edited by Herschel B. Chipp. U of California P, 1968. 546-548.

Pound, Ezra. *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*. New Directions, 1970.

Pringle, Michael. 'How Notorious Killer Bible John Got away with It 50 Years after Gruesome Murders.' *Daily Record*, 24 Feb. 2018. https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/how-notorious-killer-bible-john-12078716. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Proctor, Michael, Peter Yeo and Andrew Lack. *The Natural History of Pollination*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1996.

'psychogeography, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/238050. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Quinn, Justin. 'Glyn Maxwell's Decade.' *Poetry Review*, vol. 91, no. 1, 2001: pp. 13-16.

Rabb, Jane. *Literature and Photography: Interactions, 1840-1990, A Critical Anthology*. U of New Mexico P, 1995.

Raczymow, Henri. 'Memory Shot through with Holes.' Translated by Alan Astro. *Yale French Studies*, no. 85, 1994: pp. 98-105. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2930067. Accessed 26 May 2017.

Ramazani, Jahan. *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*. U of Chicago P, 1994.

Read, Herbert. *Art Now: An Introduction to the Theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture*. Faber and Faber, 1948.

Regard, Frédéric. 'Topologies of the Self: Space and Life-Writing.' *Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003: pp. 89-102. *Project Muse*, https://doi.org/10.1353/pan.0.0072. Accessed 27 Oct. 2017.

'René Magritte: *The Reckless Sleeper* (1928).' *Tate*, Dec. 2005, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/magritte-the-reckless-sleeper-t01122. Accessed 26 Jul. 2019.

Rees-Jones, Deryn. *Consorting with Angels: Essays on Modern Women Poets*. Bloodaxe Books, 2005.

--. *Modern Women Poets*. Bloodaxe Books, 2005.

Renders, Hans. 'Biography in Academia and the Critical Frontier in Life Writing: Where Biography Shifts into Life Writing.' *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, edited by Hans Renders, and Binne de Haan. Brill, 2014. 169-176.

Renders, Hans, and Binne de Haan. 'Introduction: The Challenges of Biography Studies.' *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, edited by Hans Renders, and Binne de Haan. Brill, 2014. 1-8.

Robillard, Valerie K., and Els Jongeneel, editors. *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*. VU UP, 1998.

Rosenberg, Harold. 'The American Action Painters [1952].' *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, edited by Ellen G. Landau. Yale UP, 2005.

Rosenzweig, Denise, and Rosenzweig, Magdalena, editors. *Self-Portrait in a Velvet Dress*. Chronicle Books, 2008.

Rossetti, D. G. *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Volume VI (1973-1874)*. Edited by William E. Fredeman. D. S. Brewer, and The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2006.

Rothberg, Michael. 'Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transitional age.' *Multidirectional Memory*, edited by Michael Rothberg. Stanford UP, 2009. 1-29.

Runtagh, Jordan. 'Inside Beatles' Bloody, Banned "Butcher" Cover.' *Rolling Stones*, 20 Jun. 2016, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/inside-beatles-bloody-banned-butcher-cover-42504. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Rusk, Lauren. *The Life Writing of Otherness: Woolf, Baldwin, Kingston and Winterson*. Routledge, 2002.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Home: A Short History of an Idea*. Pocket Books, 1986.

Sampson, Fiona. *Beyond the Lyric: A Map of Contemporary British Poetry*. Chatto & Windus, 2012.

Satre, Jean-Paul. *The Psychology of Imagination*. Translation, Philosophical Library, 1948. Methuen & Co, 1972.

Sears, John. 'George Szirtes (1948-).' *The Literary Dictionary Company*, 23 Jun. 2006, http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=5716. Accessed 26 Oct. 2016.

--. *Reading George Szirtes*. Bloodaxe Books, 2008.

Sedgwick, Eve. Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. 1990. U of California P, 2008.

Selby, Nick. 'Open Ground: American Mythologies and Jorie Graham's "Pollock and Canvas'." *Word & Image*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2006: pp. 128-145.

'sheath, n.1.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2019, www.oed.com/view/Entry/177715. Accessed 22 Aug. 2019.

Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. 2001. U of Minnesota P, 2010.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. 1977. Anchor Books, 1990.

--. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Penguin Books, 2003.

Spiegelman, Nadja. 'James Joyce's Love Letters to His "Dirty Little Fuckbird".' *The Paris Review*, 2 Feb, 2018, https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/02/02/james-joyces-love-letters-dirty-little-fuckbird. Accessed 4 Aug. 2019.

Starr, G. G. 'Ekphrasis.' *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, edited by Roland Greene, et al. Princeton UP, 2012. 393-394.

Stein, Leo. *Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose*. U of Nebraska P, 1996.

Stevens, Wallace. 'The Relations between Poetry and Painting'. *Poets on Painters: Essays on the Art of Painting by Twentieth-Century Poets*, edited by J. D. McClatchy. U of California P, 1988. 109-124.

Stokes, Adrian. *Painting and the Inner World*. Tavistock Publications, 1963.

--. *The Invitation in Art*. Tavistock Publications, 1965.

--. *Stones of Rimini*. Schocken Books, 1969.

--. *The Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes: Volume I (1930-1937)*. Latimer Trend & Company, 1978.

Stuart, Christopher, and Stephanie Todd. *New Essays on Life Writing and the Body*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.

Swillens, P. T. A. *Johannes Vermeer: Painter of Delft 1632-1675*. Translated by C. M. Breuning-Williamson. Het Spectrum, 1950.

'Tamar Yoseloff, Andrew Lindesay.' *The New York Times*, 30 Apr. 1995, https://www.nytimes.com/1995/04/30/style/tamar-yoseloff-andrew-lindesay.html. Accessed 20 Feb. 2019.

Taylor, John. 'The Desire to Affirm: The Poetry of George Szirtes.' *The Antioch Review*, vol. 67, no. 4, 2009: pp. 792-797. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40607252. Accessed 11 Mar. 2018.

Thatcher, Adrian, editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*. Oxford UP, 2014.

Thompson, Zoë B. 'The Difficult Task of Telling My Story: Pascale Petit's Poetry.' *Women Writing Rape: The Blog*, 11 Apr. 2007, http://blogs.warwick.ac.uk/women-writing-rape/entry/the_difficult_task. Accessed 2 Sept. 2016.

--. 'Exile and Ecology: Poetic Practice of Gwyneth Lewis, Pascale Petit and Deryn Rees-Jones.' Dissertation. University of Warwick, 2007.

--. 'Confessing the Secrets of Others: Pascale Petit's Poetic Employment of Latin American Cultures and the Mexican Artist, Frida Kahlo.' *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2008: pp. 20-28. *Bridgewater State University*, http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol9/iss2/3. Accessed 17 Aug. 2014.

--. 'The Wound and the Mask: Rape, Recovery and Poetry in Pascale Petit's *The Wounded Deer: Fourteen Poems after Frida Kahlo*.' *Feminism, Literature and Rape Narratives*, edited by Sorcha Gunne and Zoë Brigley Thompson. Routledge, 2010. 200-216.

'Tim Lewis.' *Flowers Gallery*, 2019, https://www.flowersgallery.com/artists/view/tim-lewis. Accessed 27 Jul. 2019.

Trachtenberg, Alan, editor. *Classic Essays on Photography*. Leete's Island Books, 1980.

'transfigure, v.' *OED Online*, Oxford UP, Jun. 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/204719. Accessed 13 Jun. 2018.

Trotter, David. *Cinema and Modernism*. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Ulmer, Spring. *The Age of Virtual Reproduction*. Essay Press, 2009.

'Unknown Soldier'. *Peepal Tree Press*, 2019, https://www.peepaltreepress.com/books/unknown-soldier. Accessed 11 Aug. 2019.

Valeonti, Foteini, Dimitra Valeonti, Georgios Triots, and Eftychios Valeontis. *USEUM*, https://useum.org. Accessed 14 Jun. 2018.

Varnedoe, Kirk. *Pictures of Nothing: Abstract Art Since Pollock*. Princeton UP, 2006.

Varnedoe, Kirk and Pepe Karmel, editors. *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches*. New York City, Museum of Modern Art, 1999.

Vendler, Helen. *The Given and the Made: Strategies of Poetic Redefinition*. Harvard UP, 1995.

Waugh, Evelyn. *Rossetti: His Life and Works*. 1928. Gerald Duckworth, 1975.

Walker, Nice. 'Petit, Pascale 1953-.' *Literature Online Biography,* 2010, http://gateway.proquest.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:ref:BIO003784:0&rft.accountid=15181. Accessed 24 Jul. 2019.

Webb, Ruth. '*Ekphrasis* Ancient and Modern: The Invention of a Genre.' *Word & Image*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1999, pp. 7-18. *Taylor & Francis Online*, https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.1999.10443970. Accessed 27 Feb. 2018.

Whitehead, Anne. *Memory*. Routledge, 2009.

Winnicott, D. W. *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*. Hogarth Press, 1965. Karnac Books, 2007.

--. *Playing and Reality*. 1971. Routledge, 2005.

--. *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis: Collected Papers*. Brunner-Routledge, 1992.

Routledge, 2014.Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G. E. M. Anscombe. 1953.

Basil Blackwell, 1958.

Yacobi, Tamar. 'The Ekphrastic Model: Forms and Functions.' *Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis*, edited by Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel. Vanderbilt UP, 1998. 21-34.

Yeats, W. B. *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats: Volume XIII: A Vision*. 1925 (1937). Scribner, 2008.

--. *Selected Criticism and Prose*. Pan McMillian, 1980.

Zivley, Sherry L. 'Sylvia Plath's Transformations of Modernist Paintings.' *College Literature*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2002. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25112657. Accessed 3 Feb. 2016.

(D) Art exhibitions and other events attended by the author of this thesis

(in chronological order)

1. art exhibitions

‘Flesh.’ 23 Sept. 2016 – 19 Mar. 2017, York Art Gallery, York.

‘Tony Cragg: A Rare Category of Objects.’ 4 Mar. – 3 Sept. 2017. Yorkshire Sculpture Park, York.

‘From Selfie to Self-Expression.’ 31 May – 6 Sept. 2017, Saatchi Gallery, London.

‘More Real Than Life: 19th Century Portrait Photography.’ 9 Jun. – 24 Sept. 2017, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham.

‘Tracey Emin, “My Bed”/JMW Turner.’ 13 Oct. 2017 – 14 Jan. 2018, Turner Contemporary, Margate.

‘Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up.’ 16 Jun. 2018 – 18 Nov. 2018, The Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

*Other galleries visited include (in alphabetical order): Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; Getty Images Gallery, London; The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield; Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge; Leeds Art Gallery; The National Gallery, London; The Photographers’ Gallery, London; Tate Modern, London.

2. other events

‘Pascale Petit’s Session at the Spring Psychoanalytic Poetry Festival: Word & Image.’ Freud Museum London, and The Poetry Society, London. 12 Mar. 2016. Lecture.

Petit, Pascale. ‘Painting Your Reality: Poetry into Art.’ Freud Museum London, and The Poetry Society, London. 13 Mar. 2016. Workshop.

Petit, Pascale, and Pamela Robertson-Pearce. ‘Sky in the Eye: Developing Creativity Using Women Surrealists’ Art as a Palette.’ Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre. 25 – 30 Jul. 2016. Course.

Rees-Jones, Deryn, and George Szirtes. ‘Writing Poems.’ Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre. 28 Aug. – 2 Sept. 2017. Course.

Yoseloff, Tamar. ‘Poetry & Visual Art: Margate & London with Tamar Yoseloff.’ The Poetry School, London. 18 Nov. & 9 Dec. 2017. Course.