



Openned Issue

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Frances Kruk is one of the ‘younger British poets’ mentioned in Keith Tuma’s Spring 2007 **Chicago Review** essay¹. Therein, Tuma considers Kruk’s Yt Communication chapbook **Clobber**, and concludes ‘These poems suggest a promising future, I think’. As far as I am aware, besides her contributions of individual poems and groups of poems to various publications, Kruk has produced just two chapbooks: the aforementioned **Clobber** and **A Discourse on Vegetation and Motion** (Critical Documents). It’s only the second of those that I’ve had the opportunity to read so far; and it’ll be a consideration of that, plus the sets of poems which appear in issue 5 of **Onedit**² and the Spring / Summer 2006 issue of **How2**³ which will constitute the body of this short review.

The format **Vegetation and Motion** appears initially to take is that of a traditional diary; each page (the dimensions of which are only slightly larger than a book of stamps) begins with the word ‘today’. A mood or feeling experienced, or an activity engaged in, is then described. At the end of the book, though, the reader finds two pages under the title ‘labels’ – leading to the thought that perhaps we were supposed to read the book as a paper adaptation of a Blog.

My suspicion is that the Blog interpretation is the most likely given that Kruk is a Blogger herself (she’s the woman behind the excellent, if infrequently updated **Dark Mucus**⁴) and that alluding to the Blogosphere would give **Vegetation and Motion** an additional layer of contemporary meaning which would be lost by, instead, an allusion to the habit of pen and paper journal keeping.

What is most striking after a first read through of **Vegetation and Motion** is the number of references in the book to insect-life; amongst others, we find: ‘aphids’, ‘larval thing’, ‘mites’, ‘grub’, ‘cluster of beetles’, ‘worms’ and ‘ladybirds’. That ‘tendency towards the undergrowth’ is confirmed by a look at Kruk’s own Blogger user profile where she lists some of her interests as ‘microbes’ and ‘caterpillars’. All of which leads us to the literal understanding of the book’s title: Kruk is investigating what lives and moves in plant-life. Of course, though, she is doing more than that; as is indicated by what could be said to be the other preoccupation of the book; the secretions of the human body. The reader is given an image of ‘oily hands’. ‘Blood’, ‘dandruff’, a ‘hangnail’, a ‘ganglion’ are all mentioned; as is ‘mucus’, a ‘lesion’ and ‘scabs’. A parallel between insect-life and human life seems to be what is being attempted. Kruk seems to be saying that humans are just as likely to be found amongst the metaphorical undergrowth of life as insects are to be found amongst the literal undergrowth.

Once at that point the reader can begin to look for alternate interpretations of the title; the one I’m most drawn to is the one which has it that Kruk is saying: whilst a person could be considered to be vegetating, a form of motion is still underway – the motion of decay.

Despite this reading of the title showing how ‘Vegetation’ and ‘Motion’ could possibly be related, we more usually view the two terms as antithetical to each other; and another relationship of thesis and antithesis to be found in the book is that between ‘Sex’ and ‘War’. What I take to be oblique references to the first, and more overt references to the second can be found throughout the book.

¹ http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/review/531_tuma.pdf

² <http://www.onedit.net/issue5/francesk/francesk.html>

³ http://www.asu.edu/pipercenter/how2journal/archive/online_archive/v2_4_2006/current/london/kruk_index.html

⁴ <http://darkmucus.blogspot.com/>

Ultimately, **A Discourse on Vegetation and Motion** is to be recommended because of its linguistic verve. The structure Kruk has chosen to work with isn't particularly innovative, but her phrasing (e.g.: 'the town is so stained with vacancy' and 'a Brain/Body Battle set / in Claws & Fur of pretty Flat' – being just two of my favourite examples) and her humour demonstrate that Kruk has moved considerably nearer to the 'promising future' that Tuma cautiously predicted would be hers.

The funniest section of the book, for me, is:

'today I'm Swedish & wish
to kill Myself – Utopia
curdled, Shiny
Happy People
blind & bored
in Social Pleasantry'.

Much more interesting, as far as structure goes, are the pieces Kruk contributed to the Spring / Summer 2006 issue of **How 2**: a set of visual poems going under the collective title of 'crumbs!'. There are 8 pieces in total; all written by type-writer, some are effectively 'word-collages' (texts seems to have been torn from their original sources and photo-copied onto blank pages, for other words to be type-written round), some feature ink smears, one leaves in words scribbled-out by Kruk. 'Something to hold on to' and 'spillage number 2' suggest to the reader an explosion in a bookshop. A real energy comes from the anarchy and chaos of these pieces.

Kruk has clearly got her hands dirty in the process of making the pieces – 'spillage number 3' features what seems to be an actual hand-print; then there are the ink smears already referred to. The reader is put in mind of work by Pollock in as much as Kruk, like Pollock, manages to objectify certain feelings – Kruk, though, here, has reserved her focus, solely, for nihilism. We see, in these pieces, anger, frustration and suggestions of violence.

One of Kruk's additional intentions with the **How 2** pieces, as she tells us herself in her brief introduction to them, is to challenge what she considers to be the dominance of poems exhibiting a formally accepted structure. She succeeds brilliantly. It's only possible to feel inspired by Kruk's **How 2** set – to want to pick the baton up from her and to want to try and take it even further.

In **Vegetation and Motion** Kruk is interested in the physical things which originate from humans (blood, mucus and oil) in these pieces she is interested in the metaphysical things - feelings.

The visual sensibility of Kruk is again in evidence in the **Onedit** poems: 3 type-written concrete poems, 1 free-verse poem, and 1 influenced by the British linguistically innovative poets of the 1980's.

Here, the visual poems are, again, very much concerned with motion (annoyingly I can't find the date of publication for this set – I don't know whether they preceded or came after **Vegetation and Motion**. It obviously doesn't matter, but it'd be interesting in assisting the process of tracing Kruk's development). Their titles are 'flux', 'hurricane' and 'throb'. 'Flux' has evolutionary concerns, whilst 'throb' takes the pulse of an alienated consumer alone in the city.

In 'flux' 'motion' is visually represented by a middle-section full of the letters of the word 'movement' fallen from the top section; in 'hurricane' and 'throb' a curved ridge runs down the centre of the page of each of the poems, pulling each of the letters on it out of shape. Each poem achieves a brilliant marriage of form and content.

The 3 visual poems here are a lot 'tidier' than the **How 2** set. That isn't to say they're better or worse – just different. For energy and feeling I take the **How 2** poems; for aesthetically very appealing pieces it has to be the **Onedit** poems.

Finally, I must mention the fact – as it seems to be a recurrent feature of parts of Kruks writing – that the **Onedit** free-verse poem – 'plissure, plaisir' – is pretty sexy indeed. I shan't quote from it though. Instead, I'll encourage people to check it out for themselves.

*

Robert Sheppard said each of Iain Sinclair's books works as an intra-textual footnote to the book which preceded it. What Sheppard meant was that Sinclair has his obsessions and is mining them relentlessly. Kruk also has her obsessions and - in the pieces which have been looked at here – can be seen to be mining them just as relentlessly as Sinclair mines his own; and I, personally, think that that...monomania...is often the sign of a tremendous talent.

Kruk is only at the beginning of her career: to consider the work she might go on to produce is very exciting indeed.

THE ANNOTATED GUIDE TO MAKING A MAP OF AMERICA, FIRST EDITION

FOR CATIE O'KEEFE, KYLE ALLISON AND JOY PARTRIDGE

(October 23, 2008.)

PREFACE

*It is for a love of your country
That I confer this poem upon you.
Just as staring at a Jasper Johns
for too long will turn you cross-
eyed.*

*

1.

Vermont is Strange and French;
full of Paris-talk

high up and squashed
in the North-Eastern corner with

2.

New Hampshire, where the towns and cities are
exactly the same as English towns and cities. and

3.

Maine, a good fishing-port where the fishermen
hunt lipstick-color lobster lip-smacking, so
I've heard,
penetrates
Canada.

4.

In
Massachusetts I dream I make a dream
in my head I dream I'm living a dream in the future
I dream in the future the dream
I sleep to dream I sleep the future and dream

*

the tears that I
held in my hand.

If I die in the Boston metropolitan area, so be it.
My beautiful wife and I flew into Boston several months ago;
the mouth of America.

There were many Irish Red Sox "Scattered"

I bought a hat
at the airport

a Sox hat,

before we
before we
before we flew
Walk 350 miles south
you're in

5.

Connecticut (because they can “AFFORD” to) isn't spelled
like it's pronounced.

Connettycut.

Them rich folks is eatin' their caviar with diamond-plated sporks,
an' drivin' \$1000 Segways round the grounds o' luxury mansions!

6.

Rhode Island

After Ancient Greece.

(like a ship)
is very small

– an obvious statement to make,
but one that's to be expected. Ho-hum. The houses stacked
up along the coast.

A wind-
breaker.

Things are peaceful in

7.

New York State – plaid in hunting season/coattails in NYC. You're so sweet.

Look at all the New Yorkers in Seventh Avenue!
(There are more streets here than just 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th Street
and Seventh Avenue.)

I was once in NYC,
outside the New York Public Library,
and it rained

and it rained

8.

Michigan, the Mitten State, snowy owl,

my best friend when that was
let's go ice-skating and talk about Ann Arbor (Kyle, you always
because that's what O'Hara did in the 50s! make me smile)

your checked shirt; (ghost of Henry Ford in the
your winter sweater. Zamboni-making factory,
You're a Michigander, thru and thru. watching
will be. always will be.

9.

New Jersey, I'm told,
has a cesspool for a heart; a
gambling chest; the
Las Vegas of The East!
Atlantic City!
Come One! Come All! Trump Taj Mahal: rusting !

10.

Pennsylvania first happened to me
on a spring morning of this year,
when
some glimmering impulse, (something
tempting maybe it was trees
and oxygen.
Beautiful Penn. Brilliant Penn.
Penn of enigmatic sighs and redolence;
my eyes open up like fire.
You are everything a man
could ever want,
and more!

joy: Joy Partridge was born
August 15, 1984, Pittsburgh, PA.

They celebrated all night long
they celebrated and she slept ;

11.

Ohio, I know nothing much about
except a movie called *The OH in Ohio*,
(a comedy set in Ohio about some Ohio woman's
Ohio orgasms)

but

12.

Illinois. I saw sweet
a TV special once about
Chicago. There was a storm.
and my Mother-In-Law

was born there.
(an important titbit.) Wake up and smile; the
sun is still shining! and
This is America: classic

13.

Delaware is perpendicular but has a g a p
and
sounds like sterilised Tupperware when
you say it out-loud.

14.
Maryland, a brand of cookie, and
lookee here, ditsy Mary, (That's "Meralind"! Whatever.)
200-year old threesome!

()
Washington DC:
dirty old man! seat of the eagle.
I speak of the Seawolf, and of the Eagle, and of the Woodworm.
And I shake the President by the hand,
glass-eyed.

15. Then there's
Virginia, and that completes the wheelbarrow position.
Virginia with her cunt spread wide. So many
CIA. (Cadillac.)

16.
West Virginia was late and made statehood
after "THAT" war. Makes statehood after every war,
like milk.

And floats down the
Potomac.

17.
North Carolina and

18.
South Carolina have only a name in common.
a name. But what's in a name?
One is North, the other South.
Neither are in trouble today. 17:03:35.

19.
Georgia skies piss Cola when no-one's
looking up;
open your mouth. Drink deeply of
God's urinal bounty.

20.

Florida. Sunshine. Mousse. Mouse.
Yesssssssss!

That's America ; And a hot-dog that cost \$6
to eat.
A redoubtable blend of meat.
And that was Florida,
seven years ago.

21. Regarding
Alabama,

many famous runners
ran there
and I know none of them
personally.

22.
Tennessee is heavy with sounds of Bluegrass and mockingbirds.
"The Volunteer State"

Some People From 10 You May Know:

Al Gore, John Crowe Ransom, James Agee, Cormac McCarthy
Cybill Shepherd, Kathy Bates, Sammy Jackson, Morgan Freeman, Brad Refro,
Reese Witherspoon, Justin Timberlake, Q. Tarantino, and

23. oh!
Kentucky,
I am
unhappy
w/ a lack of
poems
about thee.

Tho' you are naught but wheat-fields
and raisins baking i' the sun. and ev'rything is fried!
(**COLONEL SANDERS FOR GOVERNOR**)

24. When America has her eyes closed,
Indiana is cheating at cards.
"That's how the west was won",
someone said back in '63;
An Indianapolis academic,
drunk to the nines. and

25.
Wisconsin. At 7.15am. (Morning rose dawn) the temperature
rounds off to impressive 61° F below.

SO impressed! like a school girl at prom.
take me dancing. fuck me!

26.

Missouri Heart of America Smack in the Center Beating Still
Beating in the chests of all the great writers, poets, actors,
rag-time jazzers
for a thousand years hence. MO NATIVE
Birthplace of Joseph Pulitzer and Harry S. Truman,
The Great Constellations of William Burroughs and Laura Ingalls Wilder,
The Outer Moons of Langston Hughes, T.S. Eliot and Tennessee Williams,
The Stardust Illuminations of Jean Harlow, Ginger Rogers
and Robert Altman. My God!
(On the other hand,)

27.

Arkansas is just

28.

Kansas with an “Ar” prefix. Lazy?
Perhaps. Bill Clinton was the governor
of Arkansas.
I know not
of famous Kansans, save,
of course, Dorothy.

29.

Louisiana where The Blues is currency
and “Mardi Gras” (Green/Purple/Gold/Vomit) is a sport

Now we know why our heads are soggy!
New Orleans wakes up early, but

(No-one names their daughters Katrina no more.)

Oh, wait: *Did I forget*

30.

*(forget to mention)*⁵

Texas is home to
The horseshoe.
Stargazer, “A Homecoming”, the fat ass cowboy,
“the *Ultimate* fuck!”
where everyone has shares in Real Estate! and Construction!
and plays the Rodeo!

I wipe my mouth.

5 From *Cities*. Written by David Byrne.

There's sand dust on my blue jeans
from walking the John Wayne way.

(Believe me
THAT! IS!! TEXAS!!!

THAT

THAT!

sonorous Texas drawl;
To see that **Humvee Behemoth**
of America!

31. Is this the second, or third quatrain?
Mississippi gives it's name to the snaking river that
splits this country, like a
halved zucchini, in twain (a tautology?)

Probably Huck Finn said as much to Miss Watson's slave nigger Jim.

I have a friend called Mark, and he is a writer.
True story.

32. 8,000 feet above looking down on
Nebraska, the first of the gabardine squares of the great picnic blanket
of America,
in an airplane. in an airplane
with earphones, looking down
on the great picnic blanket of America. Also, in

33.
Iowa: four-letters, three-syllables.
James T. Kirk state. Trillion rows corn.

FACT #341:
No-one in Iowa cares about anything BUT corn!

– written on the back of a corn-
flakes box, June '06.

34.
Minnesota is probably definitely beautiful;
full of sun fish and flat fish and cat fish to catch
through the holes in the ice on the skyways
in the sky.
“Deep-Freeze Fishing”
and the Twin Cities Siamese

the land of the ten thousand (10,000) lakes.

35.

North Dakota and

36.

South Dakota have only a name in common.

a name.

But what's in a name?

One is North, the other South.

And I heard only just last week (thru the grapevine)

that Mount Rushmore is due a

face lift.

Somewhere South or North of the border someone MAY be in trouble!

It's unclear, 19:06:16.

37.

Oklahoma was where the infamous Oklahoma City Bombing happened, '95.

There's a pulse in Tulsa,

where Berrigan becomes a Bachelor,

and probably a lot more.

There's a song and dance in Claremont,

where

Where Curly McLain

At the Box Social

Square Dance Shall

Win Laurey's Heart.

(again)

38.

Wyoming by now

we're flying over American Siberia. That's what I said first time we flew over Wyoming, after the others; another checkered square on the checker board; on the great picnic blanket of America. A perfect square where *things*, to quote David Byrne, *get a little spread out*; where *people got no idea where in the world they are*.⁶ He was talking about Wyoming. And he is still is whenever he sings that song and for the sake of clarity that song is called "Cities" and he's actually referring to El Paso, TX, so really I'm wrong but oh, who cares! my point is still valid and Wyoming's still a huge worsted ☐!

39. in

Montana "A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT" ; Brad Pitt and Chris Cooper,
Both Missourians.

6 From *Cities*. Written by David Byrne.

40.

Idaho is a state I hear a lot about on account of the
“Udaho” phenomenon. Tho' it IS hilarious!

41.

Utah, the chameleon: rocks, snow, mountains, desert
the rocks are salamander red
and the folk in Utah are 58% Mormon per individual body.
Nothing happens anywhere except in Salt Lake City,
and close by

42.

Colorado rises into space like a ziggurat through the clouds,
and towards the sun like a sunflower.
Ah! Sunflower, Colorado.

My Father-In-Law
And Step Mother-In-Law
Live In Colorado,

in a wooden house, powered
by solar panels, on a high
mountain, in the wilderness.

My wife lived in Colorado. Now she lives in London.
She is a Coloradan. She is also an Oregonian.
But now she lives in London.

43.

New Mexico sits on his throne, King of the West, and
Cochise and Geronimo flew
in that hazy, shimmering heat. and left lies

44.

Arizona, cactus terribilis;
where the old come to suntan, and die.
There are
several thousand variant species of the saguaro cactus
in Arizona. Stars of the old Western! (Sunbathe,

(Smiling,

(You are in

America,

Mister!)

45.

Nevada I slip into trance a trance
some kind of magical magical,

I've seen the photographs
I have to EXPLAIN to the people HERE
who don't KNOW that Vegas is THERE,
it's NOT in California!! California, California,

46.
California,

you are loooooooooooooooooooooonnnng!
and James Dean
crashed into you,
and died.

LA beats your hymn of nail clippers,
electric shavers
and vibrators, television stations,
would-be explosions
and movie stars, records, cash, greed, green
eyes of calumny and bouncing belly.

In other news,
mail from

Oceanside, CA:

a nice kind of
remedy;
a new point of
interest;

SOMETHING NOT LA!

*(Lakers, Sunset, Rodeo Drive –
Blah, Blah, Blah)*

47.
Oregon home to my beautiful wife, '00 thru '06;
daughter of my Mother-In-Law.

I went there and it was full of green trees, like I half-expected, and beautiful for it, like my wife.	And the big-bosomed Pacific, she cradles your head in her hands. She pulls you to her breast for a Pop Quiz and seafood supper. It's roomy and it's roommate is
--	---

48.
Washington State; walking all over Seattle, we finally stopped
at a coffee house, and rested our feet.
and we sat and talked by the Puget Sound,
and I took some photos.

months later I read a Brautigan novel,
and understood nothing.

49.

Alaska, I bet, is one season all the year round.

Snow Angels in Summer.

Of the Midnight Sun.

*“Greetings from Fairbanks! This is the last you shall hear
from me”*⁷

50.

Hawaii –

Ua Mau ke Ee o ka Aina i ka Pono.⁸

and yet I still don't believe
you really exist!

(Righteousness, or
Hawaii??)

Good Question!

*

EPITAPH TO THE ANNOTATED GUIDE TO MAKING
A MAP OF AMERICA, FIRST EDITION

*These above lines were composed in
a fit of Absolutely Terrifying, Pill-*

Driven

*Rhapsody October 23 – October 24, 2008
upon a bed I like.*

Completed Oct 24, 2008

7 Chris McCandless, April '92. Written on the back of a postcard.

8 Literally, “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.”

culture wars

two fairies waving wands furiously
at the river at the seaside
making frogs

argument out the window

the sirens blare in the street quite openly
that is the basis of all legislation
agriculture and jurisprudence
three Roman words for it

the walls have loudspeakers
the streets have eyes

strength for the union

parsing the sarsaparilla
we live under the edict
all the rage's

Things to practically consider . Ryan Ormonde.

contents:

	performance			
writing	1	writing		
craft	2	3	craft	
digital	4	5	6	digital
object	7	8	9	10

1. performance writing

- a word play
- declamatory verse
- a rhyming play
- opened
- see Becky Cremin⁹

other considerations:

a) comedy b) film c) “character” = level of preparation

2. performance craft

e.g. you will need: 30 black bin liners
parcel tape
a blanket
black tights

assemble to make a raisin costume

line: “I just wanted to do something currant.”

very long pause. Exit.

3. craft writing

using pre-written material

craft writing is impossible

7. The performing object, there is a thing, a toy, a caged parakeet, a clockwork tiger
eating a tin soldier, eating, eating, eating, eating, eating, a tamagotchi.

4. digital performance

large screen (centre stage): a

amp (stage left): ah

person, person, person, person, person (etc.) sitting on stool, holding page:

⁹ <http://myrevelationnation.blogspot.com/>

camera operator roaming
mic. roaming
page: a person: ah

6. digital craft

S making [scanner making]
K making [camera making]
I making [film camera making]
L making [flash making]
L making [photoshop making]
S making [dreamweaver making]

8. writing object

BOOK

5. digital writing

e.g. <http://poeticpracticejournal.blogspot.com/>

9. craft object

- gift as gift
 - greeting card
 - advent calendar
 - balloon
 - firework
 - strip-o-gram
- gift to use
 - in the hand
 - in the handbag
 - in the pocket
 - on the shelf

10. digital object

store everything you want to say to someone as text messages, images, voicemails, photos, movies,
to do lists
in your phone

Do something incredible: hand it over.



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