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Light Pricks:

In the Studio: Clare Thornton
KARST, Plymouth 05.07.17

:whispers & kicks

an incomplete line

Conor Wilson

In the Studio

Is it March, spring, winter, autumn, twilight, noon
Told in this distant sound of cuckoo clocks?
Sunday it is – five lilies in a swoon
Decay against your wall, aggressive flocks
Of alley-starlings aggravate a mood.
The rain drops pensively. 'If one could paint,
Combine the abstract with a certain rude
Individual form, knot passion with restraint ...
If one could use the murk that fills a brain,
Undo old symbols and beget again
Fresh meaning on dead emblem ... ' so one lies
Here timeless, while the lilies' withering skin
Attests the hours, and rain sweeps from the skies;
The bird sits on the chimney, looking in.

Nancy Cunard, 1923

Is this England? Hot, still
breeze off the Sound
bright light filtering
through thick polythene
and a daylight fill,

the middle
of twenty
seventeen.

1

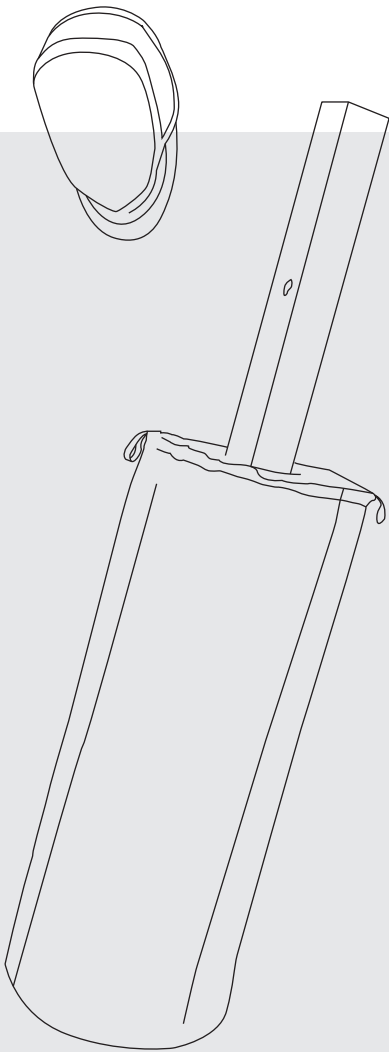
Cloth [animal] / Sew

A [shammy] bag,
with a square [] hole
run-down-centre,
top to bottom.
Fields of soft yellow leather,
pristine and immaculately stitched,
envelop a naked pole
four by four – PAR –
six loops for dangling,

in delicate blue-grey,

between dense materiality
and disembodied abstraction.

POLES



Apart

Beckett writes [Whoroscope] for
Cunard's £10 competition for the
best poem on the subject of time,
summer 1930. He had just read
Adrian Baillet's life of Descartes.

[They don't know what the master of them that do did,
that the nose is touched by the kiss of all foul and sweet air,
and the drums, and the throne of the faecal inlet,
and the eyes by its zig-zags.]

Over lunch, you have
the grace to enquire
after my anosmia, and
suggest a hypnotic
cure. My schnoz returns
the kiss of neither
sweet nor foul, though
I, too, am a curious,
nosey person. Only
coffee. And the products
of my inner spaces, no
longer foul, but in a
weird transmutational
solipsis, as of that
same fragrant bean.
Like the whale's grey
amber [*a peculiar odour
that is at once sweet,
earthy, marine, and
animalic*], but only
pour me.

A stair, well
a bolstered baluster.
An invitation to stroke;
not punch.
Cushiony doughnuts of goat
hide | conceal
immensely pleasing.
Some are tempted to have a feel,

slide on fresh ones
skin to skin.
chamois bangle buffers
sometime weapons

"Just bracelet work, Miss Janet"

no birds aggravate
none look in.

In fact, Nancy was overlooked
on most occasions
by virtually everyone.

Cunard appears as a sharp, angled woman, up to her elbows
in African ivory bracelets. Her pose is somewhere between
alluring and defensive, and her side profile directs us
towards an unknowable spectator just outside the fra

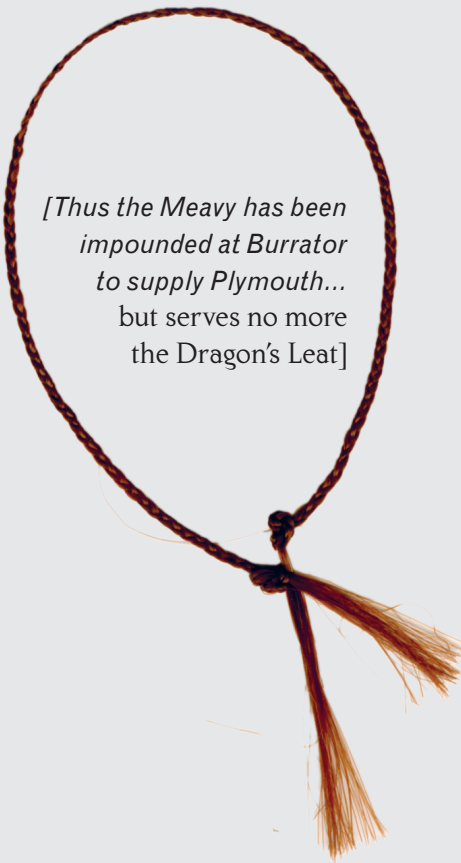
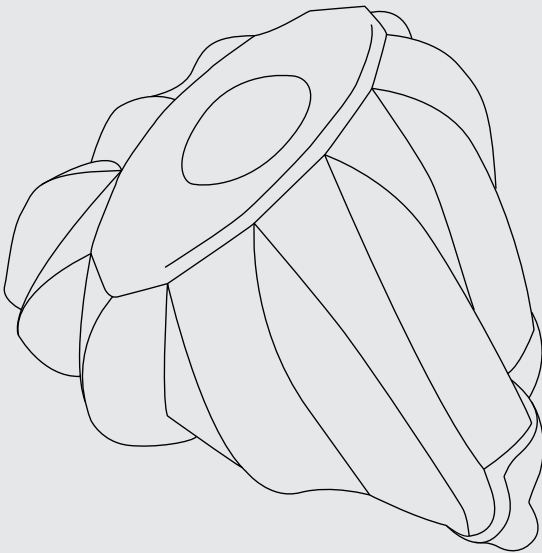
me. It could be. you, it could be. me.

i want
to hold,
T I G H T
to bury
a r m
to oster.

2
Clay [earth] / Pour /
Press / Bash / Draw

glittering shell
a haloed carapace
stands guard
below and above
the everyday,
beckons gleamilly.

Awaiting occupation
I cleave to ma's dug
A lidded plastic bucket
Slip-full, silly.



[Thus the Meavy has been
impounded at Burrator
to supply Plymouth...
but serves no more
the Dragon's Leat]

She round about
seeks Robin out,
to slap it in his oster.

He pulls it out
and aims a clout
but never will he box her.

Tipping it out, right quick



v. to lift or move a person
by holding them under
the armpits (Irish)



3
Paper [plant] / Draw | Chamois
[animal] / Weave | Cloth [earth]
/ Drape (volume)

invert a cone a vase
remove an earthly pink void
from blue grey lineaments.
Place upon a striped mat
conceal the join with a woven ladle,
a coracle.

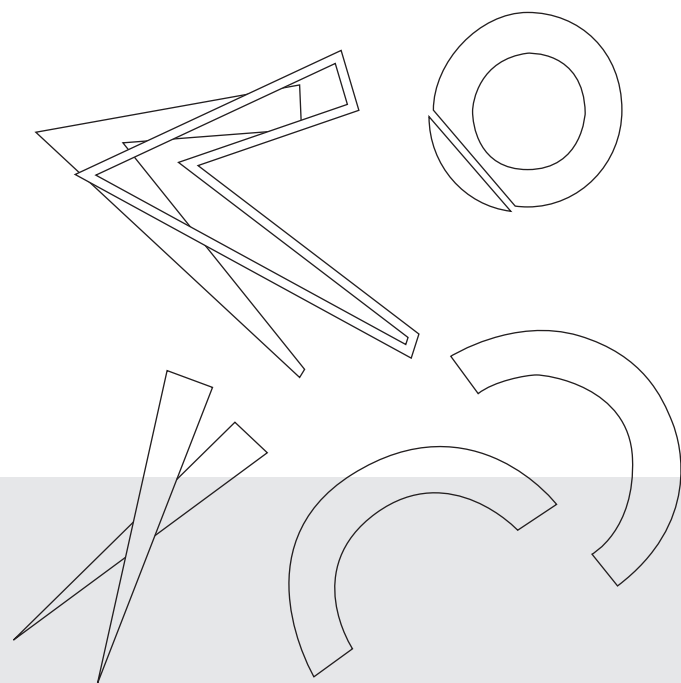
Wait for rain and/or flowers.

Cut a goodly length
From a bolt of
thermoplastic
silky material of
indeterminate colour
[dust + flesh + bronze]
Fold, clip, hang.

Withdraw
[the light will work it out]

4

Paper [plant] / Paint / Collage / Print / Dance



A river’s mouth

*And there, in a thunderstorm, he had rolled in mud,
the sensitivity of his skin exquisitely enhanced
by the electricity of the atmosphere.*

We are drenched past the point of total soakiness.
We dream of the possibilities
of visionary awakening, through enhanced senses.

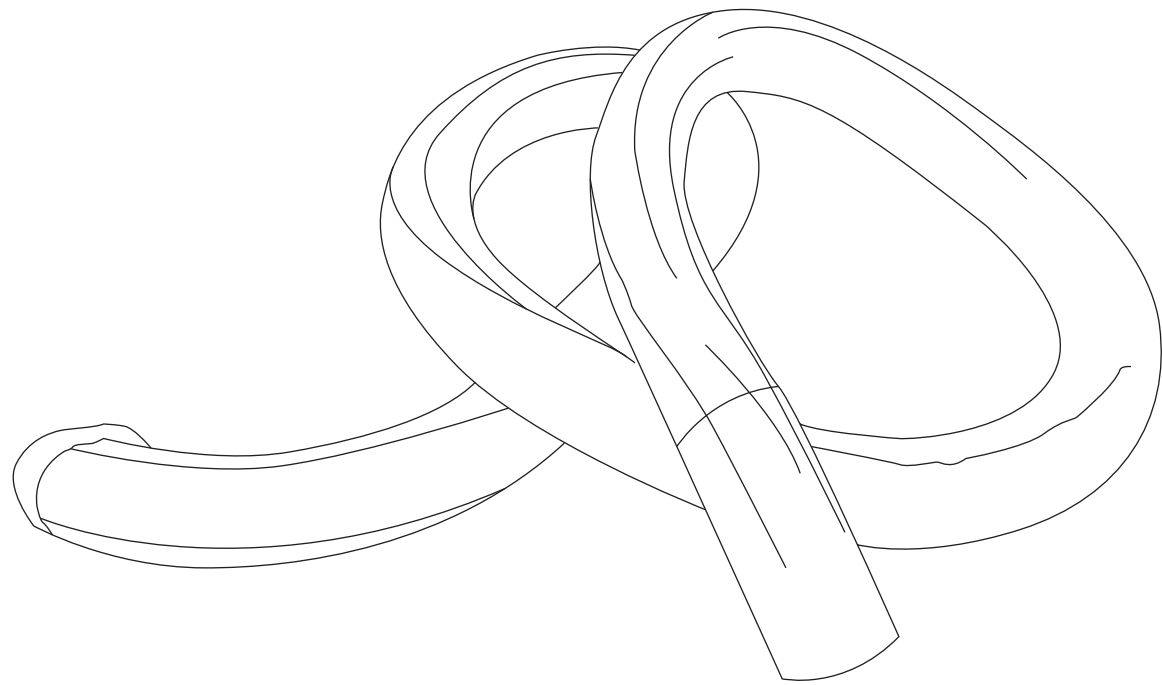
The quality in the creation of expression the quality in a composition that makes it go dead just after it has been made is very troublesome.

have at the vertical & veer to 5



*[The cleanly electrix went
right up my tube
(Now I have something to
tell my plumber)]*

The fragility of process and materials and myself are quite unpredictable. In the process of making, materials assert themselves, roundly, whereas design is quite sharp and spiky. I can’t communicate with only one material. I’m a curious, nosey person. Outlining your intent... is... it.



5

Clay [earth] / Extrude

long, doobla
long loop of guts,
half-formed knots
a petrified snake
pokes its grey nose
over the precipice.

pale pink, shiny and clean
on the outside
striations suggest extrusion
a softness forced
through a hard hole
heavy dangler holding
and dropping
tube births a tube.

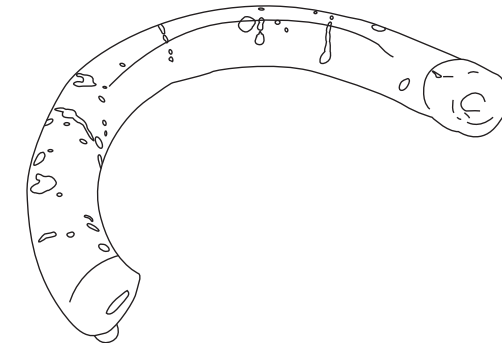
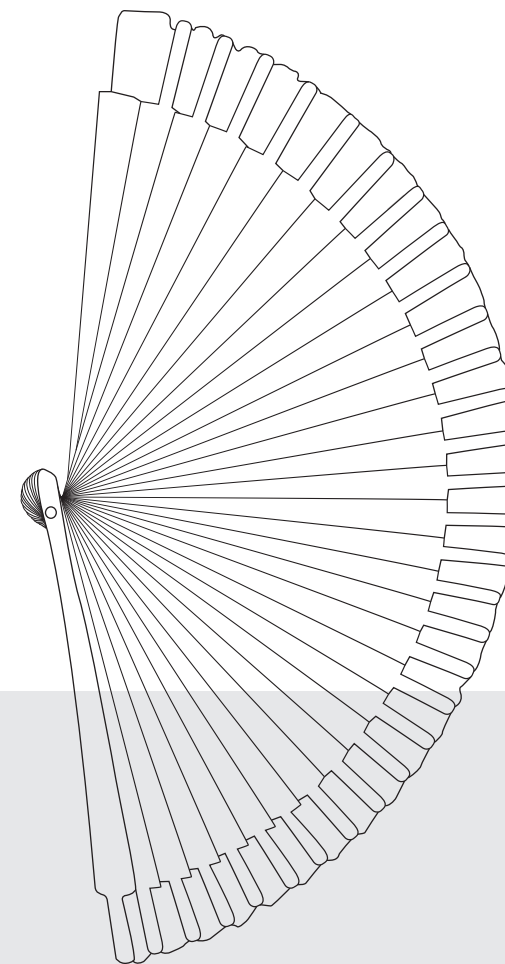
Now straightened by experience
brainwashed by Heatwork. Yet
impressionability, vulnerability
remain. The clay is double.
An engine of the body's desire.

Showing off hiding from
the particular opacity of she
who shows herself
through the act of hiding
The slowest curtain closing, ever.

Over [Night]

My Body Draped in Nox
so I could give you
the last gift owed to /react-text
react-text: 165 death.
Why must we speak to silent ashes,
assembl e trivial remnants
of a lost presence?

In fact, Nancy was overlooked
on most occasions
by virtually everyone.



Well, She had her own moral code, which I
like; hated crassness, vulgarity, or swearing.

Her walk also enchanted, the
head... held... high
with its short fair hair,
and one foot placed
exactly in front of the other,
not with mannequin languor,
but spontaneously, briskly, boldly,
skimming the pavement.
Never in her life, I believe,
was she frightened of anything.

Struggling with poetry
Loving Gertie Stein,
at in the moment, but
The active nowness of it
is immensely pleasing
She rolled the words around
Looping a circularity
on your tongue
Constant passings
Will flow forth

[changing tense 3 times]
From [return to 4]

6

Clay [earth] / Model / Turn

she “slid the heavy African ivory bracelets off her wrists and asked us to look after them. She looked sadly at her wrist when they were off. She would have felt less denuded had she stripped off her clothes.” The bracelets remained hidden for a long time in Sylvia’s staircase cupboard.

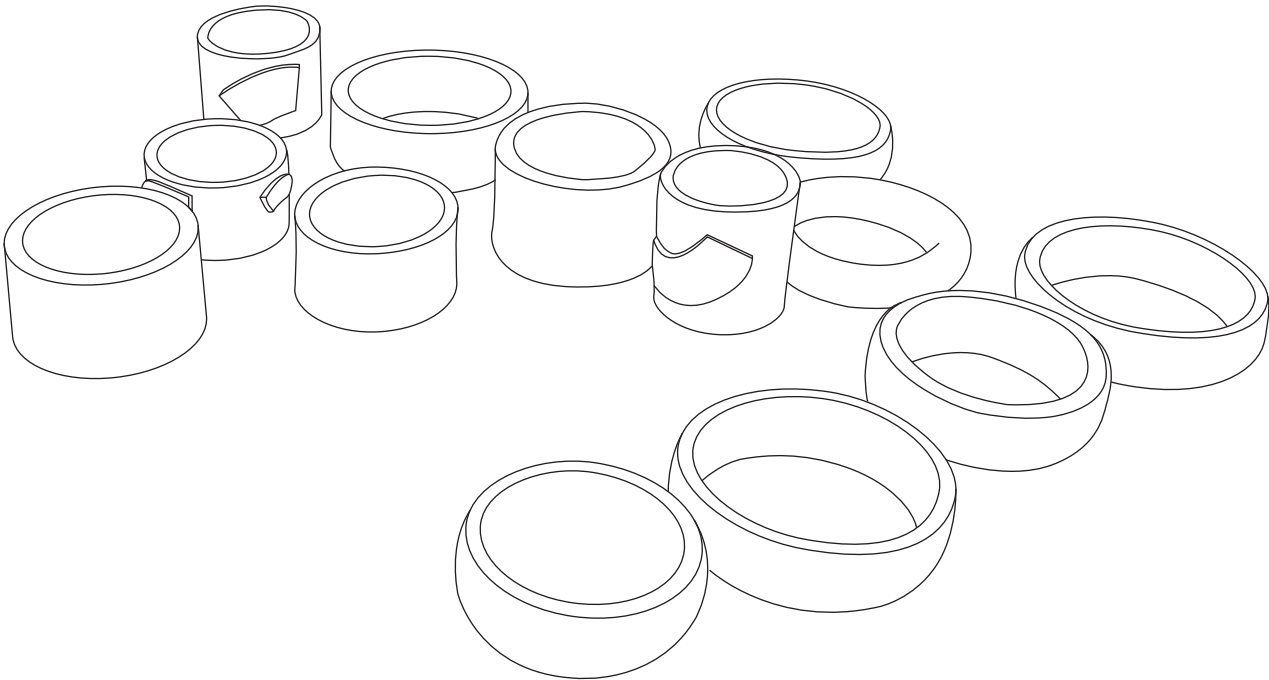
the artist exhibits both *the urgent need to communicate* and *the still more urgent need not to be found*, while, underneath

our *inescapable vulnerabilities* work at a cellular, as well as a social, level.

I like turning – when you put the thing on the wheel and use the wee tool.

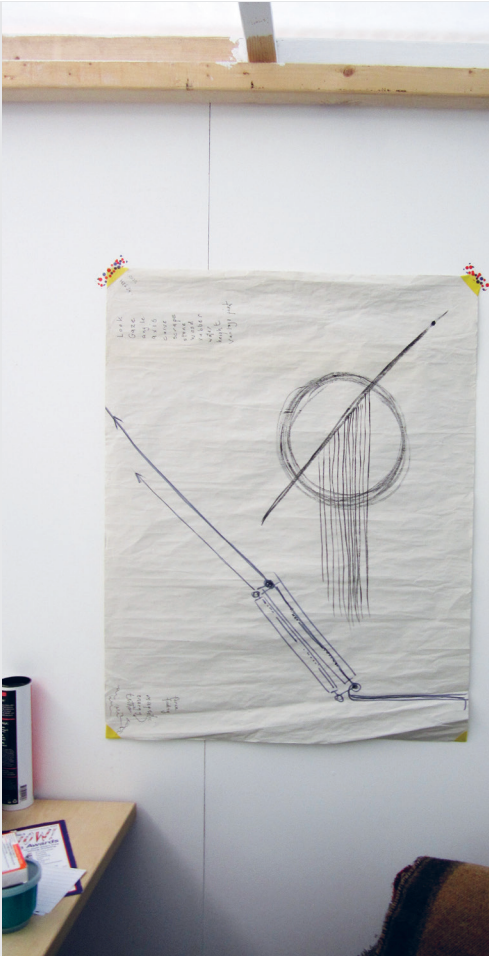
A lazy perfectionist –
If I’m not careful, I can become too careful.
A unifying palette – must be disrupted with mess.
You wouldn’t want to perfect something,
maybe just correct it, control its unruly droopiness.
Power through The Thresholds of Embarrassment
with the joy of the perennial beginner,
accepting the generosity of those
prepared to share their top nuggets.

...for this reason each student should make or obtain a turning tool to suit her own style. The tool should be made from a strip of metal, thick enough to prevent quivering under the strain of use.



How to structure? Time and space fight for control. Past time is made of memories and words [and things]. Space is made of things and words [and memories]. Reading through the notes of a rich, enjoyable day of conversation, themes repeat and interweave. Remaking the space from memory and photographs suggests a structure that takes the side of things. Themes repeat and interweave. I follow in the footsteps of your research, veering, elsewhere, here and there...

Things teeter on the edge of collapse.
Folding and falling, Failing and fainting...



5

Clay [earth] / Extrude [once more]

Fountain | God

for Philly and [the Bennor Anti-Syphon Globe Trap!]

A gutty and intestinal piece
made from plumbing
abandonned and oozing
for Doctor WC
Williams
c'est la vie
Elsa and Rose
partners in
scat ol orgy
and *objet d'ard*
fixed in a FLEXIBLE
TENDERNESS WEB



*poised on an axis of paradox, absence and presence
its poles, erect a gnomon on her horizontal dyal, the
messy and potentially compromising aspects of her
or his sexuality and other biographical vicissitudes.*

*the dominant model of avant-gardism, one that
"is predicated on the erasure of the subjectivity
of the artist -- from the artistic encounter"*

Luxe, Calm & Hirquitallieny

*pockets of experience
that must be courted

delicate cobwebbery
and obfuscation. poles
of dense materiality
and disembodied abstractions
increasingly unbounded
and ultimately 'disappeared'.*

*Like the heavenly tube
through which the earth flies*

obliquely



Making something puts you immediately into a
heightened relationship with space. Space is
made up of materials. Wood, concrete, plastic,
ceramic, metal, etc. And air. Air, as Eduardo
Chillida said, is a fast material. Making is an
intimate engagement with some materials within
the totality of the materials that make a space.
This engagement involves an ordering, to a greater
or lesser degree, of the materials that make the
space. Following the 000logists, we might say that
a space is an object, made up of other objects.
Making encourages you to subscribe to its own
value system. What is kept; what is reclaimed,
recycled, discarded?

*In the evenings they took their guitars down to the rocks of the Sound
& there she sate, singing to the sea & the moon till late...*

Notes on the Text

Light Pricks: whispers & kicks, Conor Wilson

The text is constructed from a set of notes made over a day in and around Clare Thornton’s studio at KARST, Plymouth. Clare and I talked about her research for Materials of Resistance, her various collaborators and works in progress, mostly those visible in the studio. I took photographs of these works – a snapshot of an artist’s process – and they became building blocks, along with the words.

A goodly number of the words and phrases I have used are Clare’s own – her vitality comes across in a vivid and often humorous use of language. I have also used writing on, and the writings of, Nancy Cunard and Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven – two key influences on Clare’s practice in the lead up to the exhibition. I knew little or nothing of these remarkable women before our collaboration, but enjoyed researching them myself and discovering their connections to Samuel Beckett and Marcel Duchamp, amongst others.

As a low tack adherent to Kenneth Goldsmith’s ‘uncreative writing’ and Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogism, I’m happy to borrow, appropriate, steal, in the service of discovery and the generation of a polyvocal document. The voices that appear are those of:

Clare Thornton, 2017 (throughout).	Henry Crowder, as reported by Janet Flanner, in Anne Chisholm, ‘Nancy Cunard: Queen of the Jazz Age’, Guardian, 2011.
Nancy Cunard, ‘In The Studio’ [1923] in Sandeep Parmar (ed.), <i>Nancy Cunard: Selected Poems</i> , 2016. [Cunard wanted to conceal all poems written before 1925, bar three: “I will NOT be represented by them.”]	Lois G Gordon, <i>Nancy Cunard: Heiress, Muse, Political Idealist</i> , 2007.
Amelia Jones, ‘Eros, That’s Life, or the Baroness’ Penis’ in <i>Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York</i> , 1996.	Sandeep Parmar (ed.), <i>Introduction to Nancy Cunard: Selected Poems</i> , 2016. <i>Green’s Dictionary of Slang</i> , 2010.
Samuel Beckett, from <i>Whoroscope</i> [first published by Cunard’s The Hours Press, 1930].	Traditional, Scottish, from ‘Jenny Nettles’.
Wikipedia, ‘Ambergris’ page.	Mr E. A. Edmonds, <i>British Regional Geology: South-West England</i> , 4th Edition, 1975.

Gertrude Stein, <i>Composition as Explanation</i> , 1926.	Sir Thomas Urquhart, <i>Eksykbalauron</i> (The Jewel), 1652.
Neil Roberts, <i>A Lucid Dreamer: The Life of Peter Redgrove</i> , 2012.	Meghan O’Rourke, ‘The Unfolding: Anne Carson’s “Nox”’, in <i>The New Yorker</i> , July 2010.
Peter Redgrove, ‘To the Water-Psychiatrist’ [1985] in <i>Peter Redgrove: Collected Poems</i> , 2012.	missjane, ‘Six Degrees of Sir Thomas Urquhart’ blog, 2012.
Raymond Mortimer, in Anne Chisolm, <i>Nancy Cunard: A Biography</i> , 1979.	Peter Redgrove, ‘The Laundromat as Prayer-Wheel’ [1981] in <i>Peter Redgrove: Collected Poems</i> , 2012.
Anne Carson, ‘Nox’, 2009.	Edward Lear and Jenny Uglow in Jenny Uglow, <i>Mr. Lear: A Life of Art and Nonsense</i> , 2017.
Sylvia Townsend Warner in Lois G Gordon, 2007.	Conor Wilson, 2017.
D. W. Winnicott ‘Communicating and Not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites’, 1963.	
Siddartha Mukherjee on ‘Desert Island Disks’, Radio 4, 06.10.17.	
J. A. F. Divine and G. Blachford, <i>Pottery Craft</i> , 1939 [‘Turning’].	
Marcel Duchamp in Michel Sanouillet & Elmer Pterson (eds.) <i>The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp</i> , 1975.	
EvFL in Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven papers, Series III, Box 1, Folder 10: <i>Aphrodite Chants to Mars</i> , undated [1913–1927], University of Maryland.	
Amelia Jones, 1996.	