

# TRIP WIRE 18

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TRIPWIRE  
a journal of poetics

editor: David Buuck  
assistant editor, design & layout: Kate Robinson Beckwith  
editorial assistant: Lara Durback & Coco Fittermam  
minister of information: Zoe Tuck  
co-founding editor: Yedda Morrison

Cover image:

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*Notes on Cover Image:*

## NOA/H FIELDS

### E

*E* is a homophonic series which mishears Louis Zukofsky's epic "*A*", an autobiographical objectivist fugue in a 24 book cycle that is canonized as a cornerstone of 20th century American formal / experimental poetry. I found a used and trashed copy in the dollar bin outside Space Oddities bookstore in my neighborhood, Humboldt Park (Chicago). I love how musical it is. When pages started falling out of the spine, I found ways to reuse them for my own material—crossing out words, writing associative poems in the margins. Eventually I settled into a rhythm of creating homophonic translations, transmogrifying each line in a cascade of homophones, like a game of Telephone gone haywire. For instance, Zukofsky's "German lady" became "jolie laide." Zukofsky himself was a proponent of homophonic translation and published a sequence based on Catullus's poems. My own interest in homophonic translation, as a poet who depends on hearing aids, is in its formal play on mishearing. A queercrip aesthetic informs my process: my erring ears and the ambiguous uncertainties they disentangle are crucial to my ways of unknowing and rehearing the world.

I also think there is something trans about the recycling of sounds, about homophonic translation's labored reworking of vowels and arching consonants. Transposed up a fifth, *E* sings "*A*" in a new key—of estrogen, ecstasy, entanglement, encounter, epicene, etc. My formal intervention is intended to queer the original work, to expand its sonic lexicon to transcribe a glamorous but monstrous femininity (mine). Which is fitting because these poems are in a way also an archive documenting my earliest months of hormone transition amidst quarantine during the COVID-19 global pandemic, offering a surreal snapshot of my mind and emotional state. Quick to jump in: dreams of raving, memories of sexual encounters and other impossibly public episodes.

E-1 (Estrogen)

*After "A"-12*

The mind, trans to the body,  
Is excess:  
A mode that occasions  
Isotopes & mothers ill.  
Dare, then,  
Our sinking bodies'  
Mucked up mutiny.  
(E moves into short  
Circuitry)

Noah,  
Shore's far?  
Know  
What yr body  
Can't do,  
Succumb to  
Waterbody  
Canto.  
Orcas make  
Rituals  
Of gestures  
& disappear.

E-2 (Ecstasy)

*After "A"-1*

Jolie laide hearsay  
Art torn debris  
"I, too, was born in archives."

Delights swim in the brain. Wade the flesh  
Dance. Halting pickup lines  
Form under sweat,  
Ghosts in darkrooms.  
Naughty excess  
Ecstasy: the surprise come up,  
Melding into the unrestrained dance floor,  
Every foot step meeting shame's fever.  
Shudder: not that ex...

Devil's wish —  
Blunted diviner grifts with new desire  
Buttsniffed hearts lace foolish vices  
Desire lunging for putrefaction.

E-3 (Errors / Ear Harmonics)

*After "A"-12*

Blessed infinitive strings,  
Sodomy, switches,  
Confused masturbation,  
Screwed up weekends!  
To errors!  
Nostrums,  
Ear harmonics,  
Dialectics!  
Mend to manic  
To save this plenteous  
World I make anomalies,  
Prosthetic fortunes,  
Modest occasions of immortality.

Whore Death hears  
All: stained pasts,  
Fractious words  
Tongued apace.

Wired clef:  
Say what now  
Disasters,  
Without strain—

Risk lessons:  
Will you understand  
My all but fatal  
Half-said "I love—"?



E-4 (Earasure)

*After "A"-9*

Nascent erasure  
Ear creases  
Its nestled nature  
Error creatures

Blood, ash, bone  
Deface the will  
Abated obsequies  
Aired exes' pains

Left torn in two versions  
Copious sighing  
Sick abject conjoined titclaws  
Cis passing

Sink the sutures or gnaw at horror  
Burned "A"  
Pest, incest, worms  
Effaced book gone      crying

Disease isn't self, is  
Sadist sedition  
Disapproval at last is stringed  
With lust apparitions

E-5 (Evolution)

*After "A"-2*

—Clairvoyance—

Nonchalant, your namesake "A."  
Prophecy is not made up, sexless  
Musing. Each, according to its wants,  
Snatches at the guts of Louis Zukofsky,  
So quiet attraction takes over.

"A" into *E*—

There's risk when you surrogate its ballast,  
Impair with elisions. Weight gain, nausea,  
Headaches, and/or mammary swelling...  
Odd relations opposed.  
When grief, querying after lease, derives porous

concert

Through apocalypse, holed up, holding on,  
words climb out.

E-6 (Expletives)

*After "A"-3*

How many times was I  
Besieged?

Lines heard by droves  
"Pansy" overheard, then "*dick girl.*"

"Ho."

*"Bag his corpse."*

*"Ugly."*

Vicious chorus  
Which I, half-seen, brought on...

Aberrant scansion  
Biased gestalt  
Dissent rushes in

Here lies yours truly,  
Knocked out

Dying myths  
(Cemented rumors)

In other words—  
We will not matter.