



# THE RIOTOUS OUTSIDE

*David Buuck*

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EDITIONS

# THE RIOTOUS OUTSIDE

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IT WAS NOT EXACTLY LIKE THAT, THOUGH  
AFTERWARDS THEY TALKED ABOUT IT AS IF IT HAD BEEN.

—CARLOS MARTÍNEZ MORENO, *EL INFIERNO*

# *BEFORE OR AFTER THAT*



Or we talked  
about it before,  
as if it were  
to have been,

accounting for  
everything  
that would after-  
wards have made it  
not what we talked  
about, exactly,

exactly like that  
but in poems

which were exactly  
not enough.

•

So might there be a moment in which enough have simply had enough, it would look like what then.

What would constitute *enough*, by what or whose accounting.

Would there be a shared purpose beyond having-had-enough, beyond enough, before or after, or only through deeds and activation.

Would there be unity, after that, in deeds and reaction.

Would there be self-appointed leaders and institutional logics and bureaucratic tendencies that would fuck most everything up, of course there would be.

Would there be narcs, sellouts, adventurists, racists, misogynists, homo and transphobes, and so many more of the like, that would fuck most everything up, of course there would be.

Would there be would-be wanna-be intellectuals and aesthetes who would rush in, unable — at least at first — to drop our intellectual or aesthetic frames, damn right there would be.

Would there be, despite this, manifold others who, having had enough, would also have no time for such bullshit or hand-wringing or finger-pointing and simply get to it, lit, yes, can I get a whoop whoop.

Would there be more than could be counted or properly regaled that will have done years of work, will have listened, organized, will have helped set the ground for, the ground by which, will have collected the tinder, yes there will have been.

Would there be more than could be counted or properly regaled — mostly women, let's face it — who would have provided care and labor, to have helped set the ground for, the ground by which, to have

nourished and provided for, and in so doing often will have remained comparatively invisible or unacknowledged in the accounts, the talking about it, the poems, yes as always there probably would be.

Would there be more than could be counted or properly regaled — mostly people of color, or undocumented, or differently abled, or traumatized, or on probation, or or or — who because of the greater burdens and risks will often have remained comparatively invisible or erased from the accounts, the talking about it, the poems, yes as always there probably would be.

•

Might there be some who make poetic accountings from the outside (there's no outside), whose poems might be said to be better than some who make poetic accountings from the inside (there's no inside).

But what is *better*, in this account.

*Who* accounts, inside or outside of *what*.

Do I *want* a better poem, and what is *said to be*, in such accounts.

Might what makes for better poems be made up for grabs, as a result of, or in response to, what might happen outside the poems, *despite* them, and not from afterthought or in language only.

Might there be a moment in which, having had enough, enough people will have had enough of poems, or of poeticity per se, can I get a *whoop whoop*.

Wanting better poems, driven by what happens outside the poem, and not from people or in language only.



More than could be counted or properly regaled, remaining comparatively invisible or unacknowledged, as if *in* poems.

What is *as if*, before, when it's just preparing for.

Interposing additional time, to speculate or act, leaving evidence, regaling that.

Forces, inside and outside poetry at once.

Time inside and outside the poem, what's occurring there, it's not enough.

Poems put in a bag, for later or only before what happens, until the poems are afterthoughts.

•

Could there be an *I* here — amidst this — or somewhere — that is neither *me* nor some universal *I*.

Could there be an *I* here that is not an other as much as everyone, but not universal — an *I generalized*.

Do I have grounds to claim this *I* is not *me*, per se.

Forces, in and through an *I*, grounding and giving grounds, even if only would-be.

More than could be counted or properly regaled, who will have helped set the ground for, will have collected the tinder.

Can I get a whoop whoop, if I isn't me or *this*, whatever time it *is*.

Should I shut up about it, whether or not this I is *me*.

I in a poem, or outside it, before or after shutting up.

I as tinder for negation, its poems making tinder.

•

Is there a point at which I might cease being concerned about the *poeticity* of the writing, and what would that mean, for the account or the writing itself.

Is there a point at which my desire for poeticity betrays the account, what would that mean, for the account or the writing itself.

What is *betrayal*, when if not only later.

Thinking some poems are better, are some of us nonetheless — “at the end of the day” — *aesthetes*, accounting for that, *before*.

When or where is the *end of the day*, or what, exactly.

Is there a point at which the account — inside or outside of its poeticity — overtakes, or outstrips, or bursts beyond, the poem’s capacity to make such an accounting.

Is accounting the point, or is poetry.

•

Walking from here to the riotous outside, to look around, *activate*.

Searching for the updates, as if to be *on call*.

A bagful of supplies, outside the poem.

Waiting there, or here, as if to be on call, or accounted for, *in poetry*.

What is *capacity*, in this account, or in poems, even if only before.

What are the ends of poems, ending wanting them being useful.

Or only if having been *used*, as if from supply to activation requires an accounting.

So poems that can't yet be written, as if in a bag, as if on call.

•

If you order pizza for jail support, what is the address.

I'm at home with a credit card, it's a *gesture*.

Of gestures in poetry, or on stage, to "make gestures quotable."

An account of that, who's in the audience.

What is the when of a poem, how does the accountant credit it, *after*.

A culinary experience, or disinterested accounting, of pizza or poetry.

As if seeing it there, the cops inside, gesturing.

At the end of the day, jail support, *generalized*, both inside and outside.

Who's the audience, who reads such poems, what's quotable.

Going out to get a whoop whoop, but not for this, not regaling.

How to address it, to account for it, addressing a *you*, generalized.

If you are even there, here.

•

Or *I* am an audience, reading this, gesturing inside (there's no inside) or outside (there's no outside) the poem.

Do I have grounds to generalize, if it is *poetic* enough.

Like people in the riotous outside, or having been taken away from there.

If they're gone who is the audience, for them, for this.

What is *enough*, it's never enough, even if later.

Forces, inside and outside the frames.

Poems without poeticity — though impossible — in a cell, a bag, waiting to be read.

Cell phones for ordering pizza, texting for jail support, being prepared for that.

Can you be *prepared*, for the poem when its time is accounted for.

So poems that can't yet be written, as if on call.

A set of gestures inside the poem, appropriate to the account.

What — “at the end of the day” — is *appropriate*, even if only knowing that later.

Quotable gestures, of those taken away, not here but there.

*Forces*, inside and outside gestures at once.

Not to repeat them, but to *account* for, to generalize an audience, a riotous outside.

More than could be counted or properly regaled, who because of the greater burdens and risks.

Not culinary, not disinterested, but both here and there.

When is the *end of the day*, accounting for everything, but not exactly that.

A poem that is here *and* there, accounting for that, before *and* after.

•

With or without poeticity, more than could be accounted for.

Seeing that negation as that which can't be translated.

Having had enough, of poems or plazas, of being prepared.

Could properly regaling *count*, in or out of a poem.

How does one count, or several, or poems?

There's no audience *at* the riotous outside, only each other *in* it, inside a whoop whoop.

Each other more than could be counted or properly regaled.

Being *inside* it, regaled or not, even if later.

But — “at the end of the day” — some doing the work, with or without accounting, or regaling in poems.

Forces, inside and outside accounting, with poeticity being *reflection*.

Narcs, sellouts, adventurists, being forces, audiences.

Seeing oneself reflected *back*, from there to here, preparing to be unprepared for that.

A cell-phone photo, or a mugshot outside the cell, your things in a bag.

As if seeing yourself then, generalized but also from a cop's I.

Or you seeing some other *I*, not quotable, not translatable.

But also having been *there*, reflected back, a kind of accounting, forces in what frames.

A set of generalized I's, you being *one*, more than once.

Not regaled, or in a poem, does it matter, is it the end of the day.

•

What would constitute enough, enough negation.

What would be enough, enough pizza for each other, here, *whoop whoop*.

What would constitute enough poeticity for having *been there*.

Would-be wanna-be intellectuals and aesthetes, being forces, audiences.

What is the time of *yet*, it's being before, preparing for an after, already accounting for it.

Going home, as a poet, at "the end of the day," or going home in negation, a way of shutting up.

Outside the poem, time happening and actions *in* and *outside* that time, scaled up and outward, can poems do that.

I'm at home with a cell phone, a credit card, ordering *poems*.

Searching for the updates, as if to be *on call*.

Ordering *in* the poem, one kind of accounting, for scaling or reflection.

A set of perhaps appropriate poems, updates from the audience.

Putting some whoop whoops in it, in the poem, though they're not exactly that.

*Looking around*, more than once, a set of reflections, though the poem doesn't look back.

Self-appointed leaders, institutional logics, bureaucratic tendencies, literary histories being forces.

Should it be shut down now, whether or not it is each other.

Til the poems are taken away, not counted, not regaled.

Or only if having been *used*, as if from reflection to poeticity matters.

Til there is no unity, in poems, their ordering or accounting.

Til at the end of the day the poets go home.

•

What would constitute enough poets having gone home.

Would there be a shared purpose beyond having-had-enough, or poeticity not being enough.

Spacing the gestures, on stage or in the plaza, as accountants space type, or as poets do.

How time charts that space from there to here, now, “upon reflection.”

Forces, in and *through* the riotous outside, more than could be counted or properly regaled.

Coming back, later, outside, riotous, now as not poets, what’s in the bag.

Gestures with force enough to regale, if only in the time of the poem.

Til the sentences are laid “upon the scales.”

Til this I, accounting for this, is taken from here, by the poem or other forces, or just going home.

Til each other is each other’s audience, *interested*, hungry, hungry for what.

Til the forces outside are inside the poem, *its* time.



Its time being *this*, but also before and after what will have to be accounted for.

Til being prepared is not enough, but for regaling those that might be enough, in time, before or after, outside the poem.

Til the forces inside are outside the poem, its accounting, and not in language only.

Til the poem can shut up, leave the whoop whoop outside it, even in the time of such forces.

Til such forces are generalized, never enough, but outside *this*, scaled up and *out*.

•

would look like what then  
that would constitute enough

through deeds and activation  
self-appointed tendencies

so many more of the like  
be would-be despite this

manifold others who  
get to it, lit, more than

could be counted  
or properly regaled

will have collected the tinder  
invisible or unacknowledged

THE RIOTOUS OUTSIDE

more than could be  
counted or properly

the accounts, the talking  
about it, the poems, yes

as if it were to have been,  
accounting for everything

that would afterwards,  
regaled, have made it

exactly like that  
but in poems

which were exactly  
not enough

in the riotous outside  
before or after

the time of the poem  
far outside of *this*

more than could be  
accounted for



WHO KNEW YOU COULD SUSTAIN A  
BATTLE AS LONG AS A CELEBRATION?  
— KAREN TEI YAMASHITA, *I-HOTEL*

# *BLOC BY BLOC*



We move out again.

Two news trucks, parked next to the plaza, motors running.

Three motorcycle cops shadowing, one block to the west.

It is asked whose streets these are, and the overwhelming response is that they are our streets.

Heading south on Broadway for the fourth time tonight.

Antennas reach to the sky.

Five bicycle scouts circle, holding traffic at bay, as the mobile sound system kicks out The Coup.

How the snake march might refuse the logic of the symbolic.

But what's in the bag?

Six trash containers in the street will do.

“Hold the intersection, hold the intersection!”

Blinkered on cred, debt-baited into action.

Someone says, “the revolution is the world’s longest epic poem,” leading to extensive eye-rolling amongst those nearby.

But *was* I hogging the bullhorn?

No fixed route, no demands.

Undercover cops don’t get irony so that’s one way you can out them.

Heading out again, motors running.

Bent limbic, heart over fist, near barking.

Turning east onto 10th, as a line of riot cops spreads out across the street.

Chanting the names of the dead.

Time passing, in a poem, but being present *then*.

But *is* it true they can lift fingerprints from the inside of a glove?

Seven friends clustered, discussing the uses of history in an era of no future.

When all is done and said...

Look, I'm trying to, what, map — no, that's not the word — the, what, situation as it *feels*?

"Tighten up, tighten up!"

From the TV helicopter newsfeed, you can text your friends to let 'em know where the cops are staging.

Several people commented loudly that they smelled bacon and they smelled pork, and it was collectively decided that we should loudly warn the cops to run, little piggies, we got fork.

No fixed content, no fixed form.

Then the secondary psychological effects.

Later, at the bar, I'm going to try to remember to drink two glasses of water for every whiskey.



As the motorcycle cops rev their engines, some black bloc improvise  
some roadblocks.

“Light up a loosey for Eric G!”

Stop patting yourself on the back, poet.

Questions about representation fade, only to return later in the arrest  
photos.

A hairspray canister and a lighter will do.

“Run, techie, run!”

But “collectivity cannot constitute an actant in the narrative sense.”

Chanting the ways of the unsaid.

The plate glass goes smash, bloc by bloc, as we march uptown once  
again.

But *does* the multitude have a grammar?

Affectively beclowned, blunting out.

THE RIOTOUS OUTSIDE

In this city there is a here *here*.

But how much *would* it take to burn down a construction site?

Undercover cops' clothes are clean so that's one way you can spot 'em.

Stopping at an intersection where a trans sex-worker was killed, say their name, say their name.

Gracing inside a space, *hinging*.

What time is it, here, now, *in* this.

But *was* I indulging in some good ol' fashioned white guilt handwringing?

Would-be collectivists, against selfie-poetry, and yet some I writing this.

Descending down the entrance ramp, I find myself whistling the melody of my morning cell phone alarm.

It was asked, what do we do when Oakland queers are under attack, and the consensus was that they stand up, bash back.

Look, I'm trying to, what, diagnose — no, that's not the word — the, what, affective mapping at work, motors running?

What surging, what grammar?

A concentrated beam of light might do.

But is it *art* yet?

Multiple chants cross-fading into one another, polyrhythms pulsing.

Someone complaining about the sudden rise of epiphanies in American poetry — “even in the avant-garde, what the fuck” — as in the distance we hear the brass marching band entering into the general din.

Jogging within a moving kettle, my hand reflexively reaching into my jacket pocket to grip my phone.

“Smash this town for Raheim Brown!”

Later, in the morning, I’ll feel it in my thighs and back.

But *was* I simply indulging in some “period style”?

The clocktower clock, stuck at half-past now.

Dissonance over purity?

“Don’t dox me, bro.”

The streetlights go dark, block by block, as we march towards the courthouse.

Wait, *we’re* doing this?

An arc welder and a helmet might do.

Onto the freeway, off of the freeway.

“Medic! Medic!”

We learned that their settlement from the class action suit against the OPD would pay off 8% of their student debt.

“Oh shit, c’mon dudes, not that way, that’s gonna be a shit-show.”

The chant changing from No Justice, No Peace to No Vengeance, No Peace.

But *could* you sustain a battle as long as a celebration?

Some Maalox and some Gatorade might do.

Kneecap as a verb.

Kettle logos.

But what *would* it take to burn down a bank?

When all is undone and unsaid...

“Here they come, stay calm, stay calm!”

On the police scanner, you can listen in and tweet to the troops.

There is a *hear* here, in this city.

But what differences make a *difference*?

As the cops begin to surround us, I reach into my bag for my kit and quickly take my contact lenses out.

“Who’s your plus-one?”

But *was* I being an asshole?

“Um, dudes, no, that’s just a fucking photo-op.”

Later, in the bath, I'm gonna turn off all my devices.

Look, I'm trying to, what, capture — no, that's not the word — the, what, movement from the street's point of view?

Acts of material negation, not yet calcified into dogma.

Fucking hell, we shoulda gone east.

“Cribbing together a kit”?

But is it *poetry* yet?

Fireworks outside the jail will do.

Then the tertiary psychological effects.

Kettled affects.

Grey bloc cos-play.

Whose streets, whose point of view?

“Run, yuppie, run!”

In response to a chant coming from the crowd descending from the freeway, someone in the intersection saying, “but I believe in the value form.”

Some titters amongst the nearby friends.

Nuance is for professors!

Some Marxists, *concatenated*, fetishizing 1973.

Someone shouts, “let’s go, this is a march, not a stroll!”

We head out again.

Not being an extra in a head-count, a travelling circus where we’re the animals.

Smashy as noun, verb, or adjective.

Wait, we’re doing *this*?

We learned that their pro-domme name was Louise Michel.

“Rage til dawn for Trayvon!”

Charting the forms of the dread.

The insurrectionary's double rainbow: a bear-maced cop on 6th & Harrison.

Kill the "yuppie in yr tongue," poet.

But *were* my so-called jokes all that funny?

Swiping the phones in the soft-kettle.

We learned that they had been informed of their arrest and charges by mail, weeks after the action.

"Here they come, don't panic, don't panic!"

Some black fabric and a wooden stick will do.

We looked up at the neo-brutalist jail to see the lights being flicked off and on in various windows, windows too narrow and glazed to allow for faces to be seen.

*There* is a here, hear?

"We'll be back, we'll be back!"



Some titters amongst the nearby friends.

Some might call this a celebration.

Some running into the alleyway to de-bloc, stuffing their clothes into their black backpacks.

Moving at the speed of *narration*, here, now.

The snake march as entrance ramp to what?

Propagandists against avant-garde verse.

Christ, fucking bullhorn's got us heading to the docks again.

Someone hands me a glitter bandana.

What time is it, now, here, in *this*.

We head out again.

To those peeling off, "Hydrate!"

If the medium is the message, then perhaps these broken windows are one medium.

But is it *social practice* yet?

Some titters amongst the nearby friends.

Later, in the parking garage, I'll no doubt piss in the stairwell.

Look, I'm trying to, what, punctuate — no, that's not the word — what, “representation with formulation” — ?

Exit ramp to what?

All hail the bicycle scouts.

Say their names, say their names.

We stood outside the kettle and watched as the cops put eight of ours up against the wall.

Blast radius loyalty belt.

A dumpster on fire might do.

Naming the chants of the undead.

Flash, bang.

We learned that they missed their dissertation defense because there were in jail for trying to unarrest someone during the riot.

A bolt-cutter and a hammer might do.

But how many people *would* it take to fuck up the city records office?

Not not being not nonviolent.

Flag, bat.

“Run, piggy, run!”

Wait, *we’re* doing *what*?

The music was drowned out by the howling of alarms and the sound of broken glass.

“Jesus, we don’t need to follow the fucking banners!”

But what makes conditions “ripe”?

Kettle ethics.

It’s not just the geometry but the cops that enforce it.

To those peeling off, “Don’t get snatched!”

*Here*, in this here city, hear?

Palpably resisting jazz metaphors, yet counting fours.

Avant-gardists against pamphletary verse!

Haphazardly giddy, unmasked laughter in the street-lit air.

But: narrative comes — *after* —?

“Here they come, watch out for each other, watch out!”

Fucking hell, we shoulda gone west.

But *could* you sustain a celebration as long as a battle?

Then the quaternary psychological effects.

“Take a stand for Sandra Bland!”

Is that tear gas or a smoke bomb?

Practicing some area denial in tactical retreat, ball bearings flung  
beneath the onrushing boots.

Ripe for *what*, exactly?

Run, whitey, run!

Look, I'm trying to, what, co-ordinate — no, that's not the word — some,  
what, form to replicate the parataxis of the snake march?

“No, no, dudes, that's a total kettle corridor!”

A bag of jackrocks might do.

On the livestream, you can watch the pixelated batons and pound the  
comment fields.

Ending the night on “our own terms”.

Accounting for that, later, here, in this trying to.

Someone shouts, “Fuck the die-in, get up!”

Waiting outside the jail for folks to be released, they asked, so, are you  
one of the poets?

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Some titters amongst the nearby friends.

Some boredom in the midst of pitched chaos, disarticulated temporalities.

Fireworks mark the battle as much as the celebration.

Hear the *here* there.

But our ears aren't yet attuned to the sounds of the future.

“Shields to the front!”

Uncredentialed rage!

Whose terms, whose terminology?

A nail gun and some nails will do.

But how many locusts *would* you need to leave in the bathroom to start a swarm inside City Hall?

Look, I'm trying to, what, articulate — no, that's not the word— the, what, ways in which that which was?

Through the mall, pulling items off the racks, say their names.

But *does* the spray leave a chemical trace?

Goddamn, we shoulda totally done it differently.

My phone buzzes with a text from the Oakland Poets Brigade: “get the fuck out. now.”

I’m not even in but I get the fuck out.

We move out again.

*Additional time could be interposed if one were to speculate about what happens outside the poem.*

— Alastair Fowler, annotations to *Paradise Lost*

## NOTES

These works were composed in Oakland in 2016-17. Thanks to Cassandra Troyan and Juliana Spahr for comments.

Verity Spott and Bertolt Brecht are quoted in the poems.

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*Someone complaining about the sudden rise of  
epiphanies in American poetry—“even in  
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