



OF SOUND MIND

WHILE

LISTENING

alain fermi

the operating system 2016





THE OPERATING SYSTEM PRINT//DOCUMENT

## WHILE LISTENING

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WHILE  
LISTENING

*alain fermi*







## WHILE LISTENING

For JB

*while listening to 'New Year's Eve'*

For PK

*while listening to 'Part IV Material in a Long Cadence'*

For RD

*while listening to 'Storm'*

For Myself

*while listening to 'Symphonia virginum: O dulcissime amator'*

For WB

*while listening to '3/4 Heart'*

To TF

*while listening to 'Waltz in B Minor, Op. 69, No. 2'*

For Myself

*while listening to 'Messa da Requiem Libera me: II Requiem'*

For You

*while listening to 'Giant Moth Perishes'*

Names

*while listening to 'Night, Exquisite'*

Quotes

*while listening to 'Part I Material in Eb'*





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These poems were composed  
while listening  
to songs  
played on repeat.



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FOR JB

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'NEW YEAR'S EVE'*

I was standing in a hallway having a terrible conversation with a man who asked me, 'I mean, really, what is the point of art anyway?' That question summons in me an hysteria. (What is the point?! The point is that I am not a human of numbers! I am a human of inquiry!)

Meanwhile, you sat in a leather chair, your back to us, peeling a clementine—holding it up like a bell to ring. You were wearing a pink shirt, your shoulders bouncing in a chuckle. I don't know if you were laughing at us or silently to yourself about something else entirely.

/// FOR JB :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'NEW YEAR'S EVE' | 9 ///





Then Eleni introduced me to you, 'You know my friends, Holly Coddington,' I said 'and Matt Rohrer!' Anne's house became a swarm of improvising musicians. Patricia Spears Jones mumbled though the hallway cursing, 'Stupid, stupid! Why do they have no singers?' You and I kept talking, picked up more clementines, then left.

Yes, Joshua Beckman you were the herald of the New Year on the F train in a pink shirt while peeling a clementine. We were coming home from Anne's New Year's Eve party. I was drunk and overly talkative and you were generous: 'Alaina, it is so nice to meet you. You are a composer? How do you usually write a song—all at once in a fit or slowly, contemplative?'

After a time longer than I care to admit, I asked you how you write and you said 'Every day!' and pulled out your journal from your brown leather satchel, showing me the poem you had been writing since morning—nearly finished—to CA Conrad for his birthday! We both leaned over the pages, struggling to decipher your jagged writing—together reading it aloud. It was 1am or so.

How intimate and trusting—to meet a stranger, ride the train with them, share work, and part ways. What a way to live. I thought, 'I'd like to live that way.' Funny, though, to think that—as if I am not living.

There was the woman across from us holding up a bag to her lover's mouth as he vomited. She looked at us and shrugged, affectionately patting the poor man's back. We smiled sympathetically and kept





reading. Her relinquishment of ego—that grace nestled up against the unpalatable. Meanwhile you like an old friend showed me work you’d yet to finish—joyful and patient. The train wheels screeching. The time to our own arrival diminishing. That disjunct, that triangulation—conflicting, but resilient—that too was beautiful.

/// FOR JB :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'NEW YEAR'S EVE' | 11 ///





## FOR PK

### *WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART IV MATERIAL IN A LONG CADENCE'*

WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART IV MATERIAL IN A LONG CADENCE' ||| 12 | FOR PK :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART IV MATERIAL IN A LONG CADENCE' |||

For you, I will write the lightest cantata!  
to pull you out of this dark landscape  
where our breath lies audible because we listen

like when a friend dies  
and you must pause to adjust  
to the new weight of yourself.

Is this the room where you wish to be?  
The room where you'll discover your greatest work  
has already happened

has proffered itself by human hand  
from our very own wastebasket!  
Sure, the words were not as you'd wished—

nuclear / unclear  
bitter / butter—  
but that's fine





you have your own subdivision of meaning  
and that, that is untouchable

like that luxurious hotel where we stayed  
but now remember as a sort of myth  
My love, if we're lucky, we'll have it both ways:

the quiet domestic world  
full of softness and rage  
'Why not then spiritualize one's midday food  
with a little liquor?'  
Living's some pleasure, some whole trip

/// FOR PK :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART IV MATERIAL IN A LONG CADENCE' | 13 ///





FOR RD

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'STORM'*

This scene like a children's book I once read about swamps  
in the northeast. The fish jumping out of the water—  
you can spot the streaks they draw against the wake. Lives  
that we tend to and care about, darting from thoughts of romance  
to thoughts of romance to death. My mother  
is beginning to tell the same story again.

You and I are sitting on the bench wearing my parents' coats. Everything is olive green—  
the moss on the boat, the shore,

all belonging Aquia Creek. The dogs barking, my mother yelling,  
slamming the patio door. A train, too, shrieking—no bereft—  
echoes over the hill. An eagle flies by,  
I hear starlings, cardinals, frogs.

The number one cause of death for ospreys is drowning.

They dive and grab a fish too big—their talons, barbed,  
unable to let go. The poles on the dock look like trees growing  
when the dock is really sinking. It's all perspective to wrap up,  
see? Yesterday, I told you that I fell asleep with a book  
and woke with my labrador, Gypsy, in its place.

'Ah!' you said, your gold-bangled wrists waving mystically,  
'Then you awoke realizing you were not you!'

What is my inner rage harbouring? Church bells now  
or are those wind chimes? The beauty of the scene frames,  
but does not silence. The smell of charcoal burning,  
a blue heron to my right sits with his legs collected.

What do I notice about the world? No gratitude,  
that time and scene are not a metaphor to use  
like a napkin at dinner, then toss out. It's too much.  
It's not enough.

||| 14 | FOR RD :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'STORM' |||





## FOR MYSELF

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'SYMPHONIA VIRGINUM: O DULCISSIME AMATOR'*

/// FOR MYSELF :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'SYMPHONIA VIRGINUM: O DULCISSIME AMATOR' | 15 ///

*'When an emotion communicates to the intellect  
the power to sap and upheave  
nature how great the perspective!'*

But it is not easy, not a craft that just alights,  
lands—a zephyr from the cloisters up  
to the blueish screen. No, it pounds

me—grit-ridden, knee-bent in sludge peeling dark  
from dark, whittling the parts of myself I believe  
from the parts of myself I know





I am not good. I am not good. I am good,  
dog-like; ‘I don’t want to become,  
I want to belong!’ to this body,

this little body—light but bloated.  
Look! I have severed myself  
into two battling parts:

Tries to hit you, but misses  
Tries to hit you, but misses

You try to hit, but riposte  
Have you become better?

You have become better  
You have become better:

The gear shifts,  
the elevator drops,  
the knife slips  
in where the volta comes—  
between strophes,  
reckless









I want to crawl on all fours into the cave system, fall  
into the stomach of the earth  
where boats and graves and air hang like a monument,  
beat like a drum, talk after they listen, with their heart forward  
child-like—with baguettes in their peacoat pockets  
shuffling down the alleyway; content their eyes closed;  
their pulse in check; their grief behind their words.

Hey, this isn't sea level. This is something we climbed  
like a redwood tree and somehow arrived at—together.  
We became poets. Therefore we are friends!  
I am shaking. I am wrathful. I am abandoning this axis.  
Your voice was clear. Your voice formed a shape  
that was a collision of the elements:  
a lava-like dawn; light like glitter running across the water  
on its spidery legs; like the East River barking at daybreak,  
like the East River barking at noon,  
barking at night. You jumped across the rooftops in a gold suit.  
Now, the doves peck at your words. Their bellies are big.  
Their bellies are full. What we had thought we lost, we find again  
in the gifts you left, which are now finding their way out  
like crocuses poking mischievous fingers at the dirt  
when spring begins its first aria.

Have you ever left a voicemail for a dead person?  
Yes. For you.

I get so mad at any hint that life is something inherently and irrefutably de-  
sired because, were that the case, would you not still be alive?





FOR TF

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'WALTZ IN B MINOR, OP. 69, NO. 2'*

I remember you once asking me 'Why poetry?  
Why say of the sunlight through the blinds

'the light / angled / geometric' or some other phrase like that?'  
but I thought you had answered yourself.

What is a poem if not an angle, a theater  
of complex imaginings:

each time you play the piano,  
the Cerulean Warbler cocks its head to the side

Was that some deep folklore?  
Or a call to the dusk?

/// FOR TF :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'WALTZ IN B MINOR, OP. 69, NO. 2' | 19 ///





Who knows. Who will ever know?  
But when the melody moves up an octave

I draw a deep, sudden breath—  
realizing that you've been playing for hours,

that the day has nearly finished again  
and we should begin to prepare dinner:

white fish caught from the dock





## FOR MYSELF

### *WHILE LISTENING TO 'MESSA DA REQUIEM LIBERA ME: II REQUIEM'*

It is Tuesday night on November 17th, 2015.  
I just got off a 90 minute phone call with Mia Rovegno.  
We were talking about plays and a secret music concert  
we're curating on Saturday at The Oracle Club.  
The club's owner, a writer named Julian, suspects his son  
is a prophet incarnate. He was not without evidence.  
Loren Berí might sing. Andrew Sheron, Brent Arnold,  
and Flako Jimenez will all perform. Marty Fowler is coming too!  
There is a green velvet sofa adorned in horns.  
Everyone sees it and says 'Shofar!'  
It is midnight. I am to be writing music for Mac Wellman.  
As Catherine Brookman put it 'barely enough time to sleep,  
but no time to shit!' I am still thinking about instrumentation:  
drums, synthesizer, zither, voices, Rhodes piano.  
I have to teach a new song on Thursday,  
a song I've yet written. But I am about to open up  
my Norton Anthology and read about Wagner  
for the first time in years on the account of Hitler loving him  
so ardently. Yes, it is good to think about order (For example:  
Wagner follows Verdi alphabetically, but both were born  
in 1813 [also how many people think of Wagner  
as a Richard? Richard...such a civil, obedient name,  
despite its history {See: Shakespeare; and Richard Cœur de Lion}]

/// FOR MYSELF :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'MESSA DA REQUIEM LIBERA ME: II REQUIEM' | 21 ///





I am listening to Verdi as I read about the avant-garde theater composer, Rafael Schächter, who, while imprisoned at Terezín, amassed a choir in secret, underground.

The Nazi's, upon discovering the musician's secret work, gave him clemency—it was a demonstration of the camp's cultural success.

Schächter taught his choir Verdi's Requiem to summon judgement upon his listeners.

And the vocalists did sing it. And the Nazis did listen.

And the singers dwindled, one by one, until Schächter himself died en route to Auschwitz.

Someday, if they even now exist, I hope to see his scores.)

An opera's structure, according to Rossini, must contain:

'a scena' in recitative accompanied by an orchestra;

'a tempa d'attacco'—the opening;

'cantabile'—something lyrical to express hope or sadness;

'a tempa di mezzo'—something which alters the situation (the 'Oh! What intrigue...' moment); 'cabalettas' which move things along; 'phrases' ringing with striking sonorities;

'rising chromatics' that (must) communicate

the native symbolization of longing; and, at last,

'a coda' which builds to a climax of deep despair.

Wagner began drafting Tristan and Isolde in 1857.

It was first staged in 1865.

Patience and diligence are things I've yet to learn.

I will not learn them from Wagner.

Meanwhile I get an email from Lynne DeSilva-Johnson.

She is asking about the manuscript I haven't started.

There are articles about how pressure ensures creativity, but this is a life-long rhythm of impossible tasks





to make sure I make something. Indecision sits  
with the privilege of time. Tonight I am going to read  
O'Hara's 'Lunch Poems'—start to finish—once. and. for. all.  
I will not treat them like little meatballs with a side of cheesecake.  
No. I will savor them as a five course meal, complete  
with that wizened Italian matriarch whom one fears  
will yell 'You are too skinny, mangia!'  
I will sublimate their material.  
Shall I use the silver sword or the steel sword?  
I will read about the art of parrying then grab my pen.  
I will go to the kitchen and, as all warriors do,  
drink a potion for fortitude—a corpse reviver.  
But first, first I will sit here.

/// FOR MYSELF :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'MESSA DA REQUIEM LIBERA ME: II REQUIEM' | 23 ///





## FOR YOU

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'GIANT MOTH PERISHES'*

||| 24 | FOR YOU :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'GIANT MOTH PERISHES' |||

Perhaps something surreal:  
A snow-cruled street waving its silvery fingers

'Come in! Come in!' It says, impatiently tapping  
a hymn to the blood

of the lower lip. I am thinking of desire,  
which precedes ideas. Feeling before knowing,

that daily struggle. We don't want to reduce mechanics  
to a straw man and we don't want to reduce living

to equations. I am ill, ill, ill. Talk to me  
about logarithms, laundry, anything!







My radio is falling to pieces.  
I am stuck in an unqualified grief,

a state of fixating on items, fabrics, wall color.  
I am both in love with what might be

and what might have been—  
a daily procrastination.

This is not the art of solitude.  
This is solitude

followed by the long, cold night.

/// FOR YOU :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'GIANT MOTH PERISHES' | 25 ///





## NAMES

### *WHILE LISTENING TO 'NIGHT, EXQUISITE'*

For JB (Joshua Beckman)  
while listening to 'New Year's Eve' by Elizabeth Cotten

For PK (Paul Ketchum)  
while listening to 'Part IV Material in a Long Cadence' by Nico Muhly

For WB (Wiley Birkhofer)  
while listening to '3/4 Heart' by Mark Pritchard's remix of Bahlil

For RQ (Raquel Dorman)  
while listening to 'Storm' by Godspeed You! Black Emperor

For Myself  
while listening to 'Symphonia virginum: O dulcissime amator' by Hildegard von Bingen performed by La Reverdie

For TF (My father)  
while listening to 'Waltz in B Minor, Op. 69, No. 2' by Frédéric Chopin  
played by Arthur Rubinstein

For Myself  
while listening to 'Messa da Requiem Libera me: II Requiem' by Giuseppe Verdi performed by The New York Philharmonic

For You  
while listening to 'Giant Moth Perishes' by Brent Arnold

Names  
while listening to 'Night, Exquisite' by Brent Arnold

Quotes  
while listening to 'Part I Material in Eb' by Nico Muhly





## QUOTES

*WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART I MATERIAL IN Eb' BY NICO MUHLY*

'When an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature how great the perspective!' is from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay, 'The Poet'.

'Why not then spiritualize one's midday food with a little liquor?' is from Ted Berrigan's poem, 'Easter Monday'.

Quotations elsewhere indicate that the text was found while listening to friends, poets at readings, people in the street.

/// QUOTES :: WHILE LISTENING TO 'PART I MATERIAL IN Eb' BY NICO MUHLY | 27 ///





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## /// NOTES AND COMMENTARY







**OF SOUND MIND ::  
PROCESS AND PRACTICE**

Alaina Ferris and Lynne DeSilva-Johnson in Conversation

*In 2016 The Operating System initiated the project of publishing print documents from musicians and composers, beginning with Mark Gurarie's full length debut, Everybody's Automat and this year's chapbook series, all of which fall under the OF SOUND MIND moniker, and all of which are written by creative practitioners who work in both poetry and music. I asked each of them a series of questions about the balance of these two disciplines in their practice, which I'll share with you here.*

- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson

\*\*\*\*\*

*Who are you?*

*Why are you a poet / why do you write?*

*When did you decide you were a poet (and/or: do you feel comfortable calling yourself a poet, what other titles or affiliations do you prefer/feel are more accurate)?*

I'm Alaina Ferris. I grew up in Las Vegas, a city that commodifies alternate realities. I grew up skeptical that the world around me was any more or less than the worlds of my own imagining. That invitation to fantasy, along with the city's pressure of hyper-sexualization, led me to become an introvert at a young age. I found myself writing poetry, playing the piano, and socializing through online text-based RPGs. Those forums are my ways of coping, understanding, and loving the world.

*What's a "poet", anyway?*

*What is the role of the poet today?*

*What do you see as your cultural and social role (in the poetry community and beyond)?*

An artist does not fulfill a role, but defines it for themselves. My role is certainly different





than many of my peers. I use poetry as a keyhole: the world is baffling and beautiful and language is an access point. Poetry, in addition to being my medium, is my coping mechanism. Meanwhile, there are many amazing poets who are using their art to speak out about issues, politics, and gender identify. Two peers whose work I respect greatly on that front are Christopher Soto and Chase Berggrun.

*Talk about the process or instinct to move these poems (or your work in general) as independent entities into a body of work. How and why did this happen? Have you had this intention for a while? What encouraged and/or confounded this (or a book, in general) coming together? Was it a struggle?*

The conceit of this book was unified from the start: write a poem start to finish while listening to a song on repeat. I actually wrote two of the first poems ('For P.K.' and 'For T.F.') as kickstarter rewards for the album of my first band, Small Dream Ada. At that time, I was having trouble writing, so I put on contemporary classical music to help give my hands a sense of motion. Music always opens up my writing because it gives me something to respond to. These poems are ekphrastic, contemplative, and participating with Frank O'Hara's movement, Personism.

*Did you envision this collection as a collection or understand your process as writing specifically around a theme while the poems themselves were being written? How or how not?*

Because of their shared technical approach, these poems have a sense of unity. Their sequence can create a narrative, as movements in a symphony, but they are also meant to be single poems.

*Speaking of monikers, what does your title represent? How was it generated? Talk about the way you titled the book, and how your process of naming (poems, sections, etc) influences you and/or colors your work specifically.*

My title is very simple: it represents the mode of the work itself. Instead, I'll talk about how I chose the songs that are the subtitles for each piece. Sometimes, I selected songs that matched the person for whom the poem was written: their personality, energy, or







perhaps a conversation we had about a particular band. For W.B., for Wiley Birkhofer, I found the song ‘3/4 Heart’ in my Spotify inbox a month after Wiley died. Other times, as was the case with ‘Storm’ for R.D., I picked a song which mirrored the energetic structure of the poem.

*What does this particular collection of poems represent to you  
...as indicative of your method/creative practice?  
...as indicative of your history?  
...as indicative of your mission/intentions/hopes/plans?*

These poems are dedicated to people, but they are ultimately rooted in the first person perspective — me dealing with the frenetic landscape of New York city as a piano teacher, performer, composer, and poet. My work darts from place to place. Frenzied activity is something I both fight and draw inspiration from.

*What formal structures or other constrictive practices (if any) do you use in the creation of your work? Have certain teachers or instructive environments, or readings/writings of other creative people (poets or others) informed the way you work/write?*

Because I sing and play piano, I am very much influenced by the lyric and the internal rhyme. I don’t always care to follow strict meter, but can easily slip into it. When writing, I am often speaking my work out loud. This allegiance to sonic quality is something I learned from working with Eleni Sikelianos and Anne Waldman, both incredible orators.

*Talk about the specific headspace of being a musician / composer / performer - when and how do you feel you enter a space of consciousness in which “sound” or “music” is the dominant sense?*

Being a musician and composer alters the way I write because the melody of a poem (this is Ezra Pound’s term: melopoeia) comes first. Image is next (phanopoeia), then logic (logopoeia). Sound by itself can evoke emotion, this is something I feel viscerally when listening to a choir in a boomy room. If a poem can summon emotion through sound alone, then it provides the opportunity for meaning and narrative.





*Do you feel that you are ever unaware of sound? (How) does your relationship to sound/music inform and/or affect and/or change other parts of your life / day / experience?*

I love it when the screech of two subway cars creates a harmony, just like I love it when my dog howls to match the pitch of a passing ambulance, or when the car wheels whirl enough that I can sing over their drone. Music impacts my life on both a financial level, because teaching music lessons is how I sustain myself in NYC, and impacts how I perceive sound as a pedestrian. I do think, like most musicians, I am very sensitive to frequencies.

*Do you consider yourself equally musician/composer/poet? Are there other equally important disciplines, influences, labels or other words you'd want to call our attention to that we might not know that you feel are important in understanding your creative practice? If we didn't get asked "what do you do" and force ourselves to fit into easily consumable disciplinary categories, what would you like your title to be, if anything?*

Maureen McLane, William Wordsworth, and video games have all instilled in me an irremovable desire to become a troubadour. I love Josquin Des Prez, the 15th century Franco Flemish composer. I especially adore his choral writing (which has very much influenced my own writing).

*Describe in more detail the relationship between music and language in your life and practice. How and when are these discrete influences / practices and how/when are they interconnected? How do they influence each other? Do they ever not?*

After teaching 4-5 hours of a piano and voice lessons on weekdays, in addition to my own composing and practicing in the morning, I often end the day by chopping a clove of garlic in silence.

*In terms of your written or text based work, do you "hear" it, speak it out, hear its rhythms, before you write or as you write and/or before you perform? Do you ever memorize your texts / treat them more like a score or sheet music?*

I do memorize my texts, especially those that have a more defined meter. I also occasionally set poems to music.





*Let's talk a little bit about the role of poetics and creative community in social activism, in particular in what I call "Civil Rights 2.0," which has remained immediately present all around us in the time leading up to this series' publication. I'd be curious to hear some thoughts on the challenges we face in speaking and publishing across lines of race, age, privilege, social/cultural background, and sexuality within the community, vs. the dangers of remaining and producing in isolated "silos."*

It is easy to fall into the safety of what one knows. I grew up reading white, male poets because those were the books put into my hand. And I loved and still love them. I spent hours and hours reading and memorizing. That said, I believe it is a social responsibility for any artist to look beyond themselves and challenge their own upbringing, wherever it is that they might be coming from, to understand what is giving momentum to other artists and why.





## ABOUT CHAPBOOK SERIES 4 :: OF SOUND MIND :: DESIGN \\\

In addition to gathering together the work of poets who are also musicians / composers, this year the OF SOUND MIND chapbook series continued our tradition of collaboration with an artist, using as our jumping off point for each cover the quilt drawings of Daphne Taylor, a consummate artist and educator (indeed, my art teacher for many years at Friends Seminary here in NYC ). As in past series I was interested in bringing in the proprioceptive qualities of craft and human making through the use of texture in the cover art, which the quilts were perfect for. The handwritten quality of the cover typography I designed as a nod to the DIY, underground labels, homemade recordings and accompanying zines circulating in the 80's and 90's -- a fitting, if tongue-in-cheek, allusion for this home grown series of musicians' books.

- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson



### From the Artist:

*In my Quilt Drawing series I honor my love of drawing and painting. Lines reminiscent of landscape and figure are embroidered, pieced and composed within frameworks ranging from wide open spaces to complex colored fields. The rich visual language of these lines and markings is influenced and restrained by the power of simplicity. Hand quilting is of great importance in my work because it is the equivalent to the act of drawing. While the placements of fabric are composed geometrically, the quilting on top is a loose, spontaneous act. My hand responds to the shapes in the cloth, creating a loose rhythm of shadow line that is simple, clear and meditative.*

- Daphne Taylor

Daphne Taylor was born into a Philadelphia Quaker family with historic roots reaching over two hundred years. As an undergraduate at Rhode Island School of Design, she studied ceramics and developed her love of craft traditions. While working on her MFA in painting at the University of Pennsylvania, she continued her life long discipline of drawing, which to this day, influences stitching patterns in her quilt work. Her close association with the Quaker traditions is a strong influence in her life and work. The curious and profound silence of a Quaker meeting can be felt in the patient, meditative lines of her quilts. Her compositions also frame challenging relationships of colors and other formal tensions, suggesting that there is never an easy or obvious blueprint to her quilts. Like the complex silence felt in a Quaker meeting, the world within Taylor's quilts is hardly a straightforward place. Taylor taught for over thirty years in New York City and now lives in rural Maine.





## /// ABOUT WHILE LISTENING

While Listening is a series of poems, each written while listening to a single song on repeat.  
How does sound influence text?  
How is language in conversation with the soundscapes we navigate in daily life?



Alaina Ferris is a poet, composer, and performer. She received a B.A. in Music and English from the University of Denver and an M.F.A. in Poetry from New York University. Alaina lives in Brooklyn where she teaches piano lessons. (photo: Matthew Korahais)





## THE OPERATING SYSTEM IS A QUESTION, NOT AN ANSWER.\\ \\ \\

*THIS is not a fixed entity.*

*The OS is an ongoing experiment in resilient creative practice which necessarily morphs as its conditions and collaborators change. It is not a magazine, a website, or a press, but rather an ongoing dialogue ABOUT the act of publishing on and offline: it is an exercise in the use and design of both of these things and their role in our shifting cultural landscape, explored THROUGH these things.*

*I see publication as documentation: an act of resistance, an essential community process, and a challenge to the official story / archive, and I founded the OS to exemplify my belief that people everywhere can train themselves to use self or community documentation as the lifeblood of a resilient, independent, successful creative practice.*

*The name “THE OPERATING SYSTEM” is meant to speak to an understanding of the self as a constantly evolving organism, which just like any other system needs to learn to adapt if it is to survive. Just like your computer, you need to be “updating your software” frequently, as your patterns and habits no longer serve you.*

*Our intentions above all are empowerment and unsilencing, encouraging creators of all ages and colors and genders and backgrounds and disciplines to reclaim the rights to cultural storytelling, and in so doing to the historical record of our times and lives.*

*Bob Holman once told me I was “scene agnostic” and I took this as the highest compliment: indeed, I seek work and seek to make and promote work that will endure and transcend tastes and trends, making important and asserting value rather than being told was has and has not.*

*The OS has evolved in quite a short time from an idea to a growing force for change and possibility: in a span of 5 years, from 2013-2017, we will have published more than 40 volumes from a hugely diverse group of contributors, and solicited and curated thousands of pieces online, collaborating with artists, composers, choreographers, scientists, futurists, and so many more. Online, you’ll also find partnerships with cultural organizations modelling the value of archival process documentation.*

*Beginning in 2016, our new series :: “Glossarium: Unsilenced Texts and Modern Translations”, will bring on Ariel Resnikoff, Stephen Ross, and Mona Kareem as contributing editors, and have as its first volume a dual language translation of Palestinian poet and artist Ashraf Fayadh’s “Instructions Within,” translated by Mona Kareem, which will be published later this year, with all proceeds going to support Fayadh’s ongoing case and imprisonment in Saudi Arabia.*

*There is ample room here for you to expand and grow your practice ...and your possibility. Join us.*

*- Lynne DeSilva-Johnson,  
Founder and Managing Editor*





## TITLES IN THE PRINT: DOCUMENT COLLECTION

In Corpore Sano : Creative Practice and the Challenged Body  
[Anthology, 2016] Lynne DeSilva-Johnson and Jay Besemer, co-editors

Instructions Within [2016] - Ashraf Fayadh  
Arabic-English dual language edition; Mona Kareem, translator

Let it Die Hungry [2016] - Caitis Meissner

Everything is Necessary [2016] - Keisha-Gaye Anderson

agon [2016] - Judith Goldman

Everybody's Automat [2016] - Mark Gurarie

How to Survive the Coming Collapse of Civilization [2016] - Sparrow

There Might Be Others [2016] - Rebecca Lazier and Dan Trueman

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2016: OF SOUND MIND

*\*featuring the quilt drawings of Daphne Taylor*

Improper Maps - Alex Crowley; While Listening - Alaina Ferris;  
Chords - Peter Longofono; Any Seam or Needlework - Stanford Cheung

TEN FOUR - Poems, Translations, Variations [2015]

Jerome Rothenberg, Ariel Resnikoff, Mikhl Likht

MARILYN [2015] - Amanda Ngoho Reavey

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2015: OF SYSTEMS OF

*\*featuring original cover art by Emma Steinkraus*

Cyclorama - Davy Knittle; The Sensitive Boy Slumber Party Manifesto -  
Joseph Cuillier; Neptune Court - Anton Yakovlev; Schema - Anurak Saelow

SAY/MIRROR [2015; 2nd edition 2016] - JP HOWARD

Moons Of Jupiter/Tales From The Schminke Tub [plays] - Steve Danziger

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2014: BY HAND

Pull, A Ballad - Maryam Parhizkar; Executive Producer Chris Carter -  
Peter Milne Grenier; Spooky Action at a Distance - Gregory Crosby;

Can You See that Sound - Jeff Musillo

CHAPBOOK SERIES 2013: WOODBLOCK

*\*featuring original prints from Kevin William Reed*

Strange Coherence - Bill Considine; The Sword of Things - Tony Hoffman;  
Talk About Man Proof - Lancelot Runge / John Kropa; An Admission as a

Warning Against the Value of Our Conclusions - Alexis Quinlan





# DOC U MENT

/däkyə mə nt/

First meant “instruction” or “evidence,” whether written or not.

*noun* - a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record  
*verb* - record (something) in written, photographic, or other form  
*synonyms* - paper - deed - record - writing - act - instrument

[Middle English, *precept*, from Old French, from Latin *documentum*, example, proof, from *docere*, to teach; see *dek-* in Indo-European roots.]

## Who is responsible for the manufacture of value?

Based on what supercilious ontology have we landed in a space where we vie against other creative people in vain pursuit of the fleeting credibilities of the scarcity economy, rather than freely collaborating and sharing openly with each other in ecstatic celebration of MAKING?

While we understand and acknowledge the economic pressures and fear-mongering that threatens to dominate and crush the creative impulse, we also believe that now more than ever we have the tools to relinquish agency via cooperative means, fueled by the fires of the Open Source Movement.

Looking out across the invisible vistas of that rhizomatic parallel country  
we can begin to see our community beyond constraints,  
in the place where intention meets resilient, proactive, collaborative organization.

Here is a document born of that belief, sown purely of imagination and will.  
When we document we assert. We print to make real, to reify our being there.

When we do so with mindful intention to address our process,  
to open our work to others, to create beauty in words in space, to respect and acknowledge the  
strength of the page we now hold physical, a thing in our hand...  
we remind ourselves that, like Dorothy: *we had the power all along, my dears.*

## the PRINT! DOCUMENT SERIES

*is a project of*

the trouble with bartleby

*in collaboration with*

the operating system

