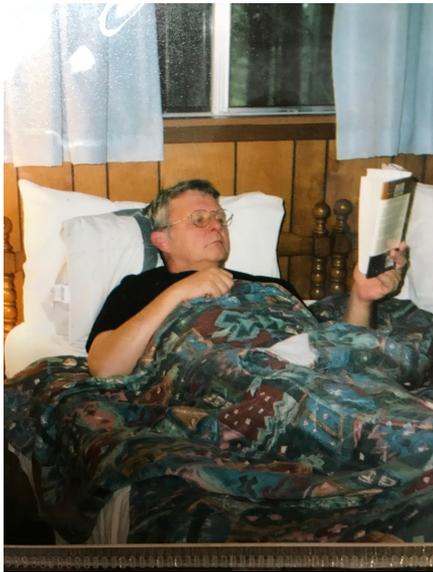


Read & Rite



Young Woman in Blue Reading a Book

Her mother said as a mother would
when I showed her the picture
"Vermeer" and I nodded as I should
though all I remembered of his paintings
was the light, and shadow and here
she sits not reading as did that one
"Enjoying a quiet, private moment, this
young woman is absorbed in reading
a letter in the morning light." So speaks
the catalog of the exhibit of paintings
done 400 years from this time, now
what speaks of this young woman surrounded
by people talking and books, hand made
books and hers in hand, what speaks of blue
overalls, what speaks but the gold head band
and the darkening shadow and the constant light



Holding a Book Holding a Man

A man extends his hand out and away
as you and I might say is much too close
to comfort us when we can suppose
covered and at rest in this repose
where a book is not a substitute is not
a refuge for another for a lived life
distanced from friends two sons a wife
or a myriad of possible multiples
but is just this pose into a position
where it seems as if as if there is not
another world a word world where
we are there with head resting on this
very same very white pillow and green
patterned bed spread that comforts
and contains this one verse this
universe where we are many and we one



One & a Very Similar One

It is said and never sad that one and one
make two and yet is it ever so lonely
as to make it so where these ones make
the world for it is said and never sad that
Diskouroi that some call forth the constellation
Gemini are never ever less than two these
who could be Castor who could be Pollux
who could be like Elvis forever lost listening
to Hank Williams' lonesome whistle blow
or it is said and always sad in his Heartbreak
Hotel where he was no longer two but it could be
you who could be two before you too were split
and delivered not in this white laundry basket nor
on the table before the window light
before the waiting to be served up with
books in hand for all of us to feast upon

Once Upon a Shelf Upon a Time

It's as his four year old brother says,
"That is crazy talk" but it is possible so says
his hero that time bends and with that we do not
break but bend to each other for these books are
there and we are here or where ever we might be
for this ten year old boy who sits now along with
Hawkins, Planck, and Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr,
and Louis de Broglie who asked not what does it
matter but that light can be both an immaterial
wave and a material particle and such crazy talk
does indeed matter, if you might be able to take
the light that has been given and turn it and watch
though it is much too fast for us to see so we
must we have no choice but to believe that this
light though bent is never gone propelled
beyond that grave thing we call love



Chuck Close, 2003

A Clam Shell is an Open Book

One woman in a painting speaks to us without talking and the other looks down into notes those black marks onto white paper and the voice awaits as if to pause for us to see this woman who is herself the messenger and the message dressed in black and white and upon the table of white rests a small black book and a black shadow cast by the table upon the floor which supports her and us and is the ground where she makes the dead letters of our lives come alive just as if she stepped out of that most famous painting by Botticelli of this woman with red hair waving as she walked the talk and how a masterful hand is of a type that beauty can live in these days in spite of the quiet time to come when we cannot touch



4 Kids 2 Books 1Shadow

A girl child sits apart and holds a book and she must have made her mother happy as she looks at her three brothers who sit with her before an open fireplace where the older boy holds the youngest and the boy in the middle holds an open book that is not but could possibly be a book of photographs that he will take and he looks left and away to a future where he might make a distant present of himself to them and time will stop and each place where they are not becomes a relative space that welcomes them in to this time where they are together and no shadows stand before them and light that might embrace them against the night where books do not protect them or us or anyone for long when light fades and the book remains



This Woman Walks About

A table of books and a woman
at the corner where she will turn to look at more and
more and will walk for this ever more but I will stop
because I know her and have a memory of her
daughter when she was a child who sent me a book
that on the cover was a large heart cut from red
paper and this heart was not broken nor would it
ever be for at that moment the search for the perfect
book ended and though the world did not stop in its
turn around the sun nor stop in the constant turning
that is nothing less than the embrace that holds us all
in to each other this woman knows that because a
book built with hand and heart is always more than
each part but has the very art of bringing us together
she keeps looking round this table



These Too

To be or not to be separated or joined by books has always been hesitant Hamlet's choice as it was for James Joyce's Mr. Finnegan and Mr. Lazarus who could begin again to speak that we might hear the hymn of praise for the book that was to come and bring forth from the grave doubt of what might be into the hands that are not visible where two sit one arms folded and one with arms down as if open trusting into the world the other opened into the unknown and joyous where there is a careful and constant resurrection from those dead marks sometimes now but only then black on white where Mallarmé tossed dice into the abyss that cannot exist between these two men who stare across the bridge of books hand sewn and bound



4 *More for All*

Once upon a time when time began
to bend as pages opened readers in to another
time and space I heard a story of a man it must
have been a fairly tall tale of building tools to build
books to show at a book fair and fair or not it must
be fare for thought (or not) when the story told is
how a book in hand keeps this man away from
friends gathered around a table top filled with
books except you who read this who might
possibly do that though it be few in deed who will
for some time separate yourself from a friend
perhaps even a loved one but only for a moment
you will be at one be at one for there is one who
can hold a book made by some one who can make
a book by one who can make the tools that can
make a handsome book such as these



Forever Young

A man in blue said once to me
that he loved Optima, his type of type
and then he said he read of books in ancient times
but not for him in Mexico

Only as painted images in your books
have we come to be alive in this place

and then he said as he held in his hand not some
thing about blue or the Blues or even that painting
which he knew of Vermeer's Woman in Blue Reading
a Letter by a window which is open to us all because
of him and his Mexican friends from centuries past
and centuries, if we be lucky, to come and we too
forever young even though when I type those words
I think of the song by that Nobel Prize plagiarist it is
words written by this man unread though not dead
or forgotten and the images that will last forever



For Eve(r)

Once again upon a time we drove
along corn fields just emerging from the ground
recently flooded by the river Ohio where she too
had most recently emerged from a gathering
where young people at what once was
The Western College for Women listened while
she read from a book called *The Girl* and it was
this one she held in hand and not open for it was
a time to speak and listen for another voice to
become a part of her story as it was when she
wrote her novel and that man, you remember,
dressed in blue and how could you forget even
though there was that shadow masking her face
the young woman in blue, that man celebrated
this writer who was at age 85 when I knew her
and she lived nine years more was forever young

Colophon

This little book began with a letter to book-artist Tracy Honn who helped curate the exhibit at the University of Wisconsin's Chazen Museum of Art on February 21, 2020 where the featured speaker was master printer Ruth Lingen:

Joseph Napora <jnapora17@gmail.com>.

Sun, Mar 22, 3:15 PM days ago

Tracy

Interesting that at exactly the moment your email was announced on my laptop, I finished this poem [of your granddaughter]. It's not really finished, but I think it may be getting there. I had talked to you, or perhaps Jennifer, about a book of poems that I had written, all based upon photos by Andre Kertesz' collection called *On Reading*. But since I would never get permission to use his photos, I have decided to do some based on my own (or others) of people reading. I have some from Jim Escalante that I might use. Perhaps that synchronicity is a sign that I'm on the right track.

Photo Credits : pages 14, 16, 18 : Jim Escalante; page 12, unknown though most likely Forest Schmidlapp; page 20 from Karl Young's website Light & Dust; all others JN