

## from *Selfie: Poetry, Social Change & Ecological Connection*

The connections that comprise environmental borderlands go far beyond the one-dimensional property lines or two-dimensional tennis court net between people playing each other.

Environmental connections are as multidimensional as the vaulted interiors of minds. Here are some exemplary ways to look at them or as Ashbery says in the “Tennis Court Oath,” “here are a couple of ‘other’.” Crossing the border through indirection “have more of these / not stripes on the tunic—or the porch chairs / will teach you about men—what it means”

1. Connections across borderlands point to point like whispering a poem in your ear (material being moving air), distributed over several channels at once like social media (material being electrical energy across a wire), and broadcast like cellular technology (material being microwaves) and solar radiation (material being the radiation).
2. How amazing that text connects.  
I missed that scaled 与, that fish  
who escape the lure. Twice!  
Slipt in votes fer them,  
suppressing ballots of Browns.  
Yes and so one is  
writing in two directions at once.
3. The palpable, measurable border between my hand  
touching yours. Its heat, touch, run up the arm, focus the  
eyes, open the connecting capillaries, supporting  
connections to biology, law, sex, and signs.
4. A taste you suffer  
Where th flame ends  
Variations tho still one.  
Differences linkt thru assonance,  
rhyme, those different words, drowning

like Gerard Manley Hopkins' "six coiffed sisters" in setting, prosody, logic, and page.

5. The many layers of skin (three major, multiple minor), blood vessels, nerves, hair, fat, integument. I kiss your cheek covered with bacteria. My lips splash through layers of increasing temperature, denser pheromones, resistance by your mind even when you want that kiss on your cheek.
6. The Seine River where sunlight ends  
No, look, it sets here, too!
7. The border between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez changes thickness with changes in political administration. People, freight, and ideas (less, then more) continue to flow across the border. Poetic border crossing and overlapping ecological border counter the political border line reinforced by a new wave of white selfhood.
8. Oppression of the Other  
pushes strongly in one direction.  
Responses to oppression—  
connection in Black communities,  
assertion of southern lands,  
monolithic feminism and queerness,  
submission, questioning  
dialectic, acknowledging  
universal disability, asserted  
consciousness, multiplicity—  
contradict a singular view of self,  
society, and planet
9. The indirect connections of  
a reference made to a friend  
about what you did.  
To whom. The words were  
spoken and difficult

to retract since the words  
are material, remembered, archived

10. Between I. A. Richards' "tenor and vehicle," between George Lakoff's "source and target" connectors carry thrown light, black dogs, etherized patients, and world stages between sectors of the brain and words of the text
11. Characters in novels  
speaking to each  
other on lawns
12. The soil allows us to attach ourselves and our plants while the world, too much with us, provokes detachment. Attachments evaporate the illusion of a great being outside. Detachment helps us escape the delusion of borderline.<sup>13</sup>
13. "A dark green raincoat she ran into"<sup>14</sup> (Zhao Si)  
Pouring a glass of water overwhelms the lip.
14. Fruit flies dance out our door.  
I catch you saying that again,  
again you must be somewhere to mean it.  
A selfie shows what  
was behind you and around.
15. The intermittent but regular  
connections of taxmen reach,  
the toll taker receives,  
collection plate passes,  
the date waits for you  
to take or not to take a pill.  
Many to many
16. Connection breaches the personal/social  
boundary linking many to many
17. Is there any connection  
between a screen loading

and recall? Is there any?  
Shape to it!

18. The strong connections of motherhood,  
the weaker yet still material connections of fatherhood,  
the connections of love,  
clearly material and based on fluid  
exchange, chattel and use value, the different  
connections of friendship supported by various roles  
such as long relationships, jobs  
and interests, friendships:  
enjambment due to other friendships
19. Divine destination in your eyes  
Somewhere I, we, they: the heavenly host-  
ess cupcakes, hoping not to be toppled  
by twinkies.
20. The model links characters in theater, actors on political  
stages and ghosts that haunt our demonstrable things and  
those that exist most strongly in language and sensibility,  
the connections across lines of thought that science  
proves and those it doesn't validate.
21. How far do I have  
to go to get to  
where you are  
so we can be here?
22. The strong connections of a Black man to the daily pain  
and pride of his color. The characteristics of that  
connection—job performance, family stability, class  
connections—when pain bleeds into self-doubt, what is  
spoken about as color. The resilience against pain  
fashioned by community...
23. Driven by dread of distinction  
“However the image enters”<sup>15</sup> (Audre Lorde)  
“The perversity

of separation, isolation,”<sup>16</sup> (Amiri Baraka)  
“An intensely slanted approach...”<sup>17</sup> (Edward Bland)

24. We Jews learned our lesson. Shepherds, slaves, then millennia of separation from Christian societies where my ancestors lived. Trying to connect through borders in Europe, we joined the elite and the working classes. Separation reasserts itself in holocaust, six million dead and Jews flee to Palestine, the US, Argentina. Now Israel reproduces that ghetto wall against attacks from Palestinians whose name the land bears. The wall ignores citizenship, familial ties, human rights to protect individual, threatened, Jewish bodies, corporate productivity, and the corpse of the state. Reconnect despite the risks of threats to life and tribe.
25. A baby-boom generation protecting truth at all costs engenders a generation intent on no harm at all costs.
26. The connections of youth to age, anger to fear, power to privilege, sex to love that reiterate binary identity!
27. Beauty connected to arbitrary choices, & to patterns of calcium propagation, & to realms of mathematical possibility, & to economics by our willingness to write through activation and inhibition signals through air, through mind, with light, in random placement of color on her feathers, as in poetry we inhibit grammar through connectors to politics, deleting “the”, to metric apostrophes, to prosody adding through which readers awake their aware.
28. I wrote a personal poem through me  
a social poem through them

an eco-poem through us  
connecting through a fourth line.

29. Bi-directional connections of gender.  
A sport teems. How strongly  
class distinctions and daily  
activities determine and  
reestablish connections  
to build a social network,  
flexible borderlands.
30. Your self is not a unit of one;  
Multidirectional writing: that's the whole poem,  
because any word could appear next.  
It's just a fact of writing  
and if you object that a perfect wor(l)d  
should appear next or some synonym  
then you haven't been paying attention.
31. The intermittent connections to corporate identity  
reinforced by marketing, advertising, and public  
relations. Leaders seek to create connections between  
workers and management while severing connections  
between workers that strengthen their communities.  
Supply chains imitate family ties and forest ecology, as  
well as slave trade routes.<sup>18</sup> (Stefano Harney & Fred  
Moten)
32. Corporate identity links consumers and suppliers of  
product to the corporate body that acts like an organism,  
acts like a city, acts like a mind.<sup>19</sup> (Marsilius of Padua)  
But cities are harder to kill.
33. Connections are nouns  
made up of components  
an over populated dmz  
to make want disappear  
and create desire  
like all things connected

and simultaneously separate,  
a characteristic of language.

34. "I don't remember."<sup>20</sup> (Cure)  
Obsessive productivity  
recapitulates the self.
35. The connections across boundaries between one poem  
and another both of which I wrote. The connections and  
borderlands between poems I wrote and those you wrote.  
The connections and social borderlands between a poet  
and a group of poets, casual and formal, connections  
across social boundaries between poets and a group of  
non-poets, walls between poets and markets, connections  
and walls (borderlands) between poetry and society,  
connections made here between poetry and the  
biosphere, what I'm writing here and speaking now  
connecting to you!
36. Multiple uses of the same thing,  
pliers to open and close,  
tie otherwise diverse  
functions out there in the field  
and inside in the head together:  
enjambment as a mental connection
37. Links don't just exist at the edges of entities. Many  
begin from the core function of an individual's love,  
family, blood flow, property, and poetry.  
Interior-to-interior connections are *as* crucial to the  
organism *than* those beginning at the edges of entities  
because every organism is composed of many linked  
parts. More connections within the organism than  
between organisms help define its identity.
38. One more poem here!  
If you write it, then  
we're a thing, the  
enjambment of sex.

39. These are my personal boundaries  
Do not cross them...
40. Some things are connected and function together like a fork and spaghetti. Some appear to be connected by being in a related category, but the connection is not functional like a fork and a banana. Some things might be functionally related but are not usually used at the same time like a claw hammer and a sledge hammer. Some things are functionally unrelated and don't appear together like a kangaroo and a hammer. Some things are functionally unrelated but have other relations like a giraffe and a pencil: remember connections to the glass of water.
41. *Breaking and entering  
into the paradise of me,  
suffering in my domain,  
reminding the preacher that  
life is surplus energy  
that founds  
&&& causes warming.  
Why do I want to sustain  
that image, that paradise  
of glass that poetry*

Borderlands composed this way become porous and permeable, scary to the highly defended self. They are difficult to contemplate as a unit since they are composites of diverse connections, diverse characteristics. Yet they are a commonplace unnoticed.

*The poet sees this coming and protects their lyric.*