



# Endless, Beautiful, Exact

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### **Acknowledgements**

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This is the story of hissing and cleave  
a damp absolute, a thing unassailable.

**Endless, Beautiful, Exact**



## **Oscillations (i)**

There is first the attraction                    then the space between them,  
across that the urges—  
                  they collide, they recoil, they oscillate.

There is a change of form, of motion,  
but no real loss.

This is not heat, not force, but when they strike it is translation,  
conversion to vibration, which is heat,  
until their heat becomes radiant.



## **Oscillations (ii)**

All this at the instant of collision,

    this transference from body through liquid,

this luminous stream.

Attraction in one as indestructible as in the other,

we might burn, ever heated.



### **Oscillations (iv)**

This sense of feeling implies contact

with a body of some kind;

depends on movements of the air,

this vibratory motion,

implies a *we* exists, however distant.

## **Oscillations (v)**

Whenever one surface is moved in contact with another

there is a resistance called friction,

the moving loses its rate of motion,

and will be brought to rest.

It is implied in this that we do not occupy all available space,

that we may have varying degrees of closeness,

that we may be discontinuous.

**An Account From Which Skulls Were Taken (ii)**

I saw the implements of warfare,  
our hair and faces smeared with grease and wood ash,  
we would remain  
gashes resembling a sheared pelt—

the house burned down, and the place abandoned,  
our custom more honored in the breach  
than the observance.

## **Oscillations (vi)**

We speak of attraction or repulsion,  
possess a power of motion which would realize itself  
if all hindrances were removed.

We have had pulls and tensions,  
and might have had the force of heat  
but we are two utterly distinct things.

I have tried to steer clear of confusion,  
fixing the mind on things rather than on names,  
but names are essential.

It is actual then, and we agree to call it that.

## **Oscillations (vii)**

If we were raised to incandescence,  
passing through all stages of non-luminous  
our darkness might then be defined as aether at rest,  
our light as aether in motion.

Here waves issuing from uncounted centers cross,  
coincide, oppose, and pass through each other,  
without confusion or ultimate extinction.

The intolerable experienced, this incessant dissolution,  
we reduce ourselves to the acceptance of motion.

**An Account From Which Skulls Were Taken (iii)**

To preserve us this peril      a fire was kept  
and friends howled around it

to scare away demons—

better to have tied our bodies with rope,  
passed the latter around neck and under the knees,  
drawn up tight until we doubled  
with little ceremony or grief.



## Oscillations (viii)

The fight, the motion, the lifting of one's own body,  
the agent which tears atoms asunder—

    if at that instant we were annihilated,  
and our attraction annulled, weight would continue  
    funnels melted into ghost-like film,  
both perfection and decay these motions beautiful  
and grotesque.

This then is the principle, a hand ceases to break  
where breaking becomes a mechanical impossibility.

*from* **re: Whirlwinds**

Who?

We

who are about to—

What, exactly?

Whirlwinds.

We'll have to pass

warmly,

but we—

Do my eyes look dead?

Different

but not—

We should fuck

mark our—

Here my father took me

when I was a little girl.

Land mines.

Do they?

Different, like—

I feel as if I'm faking it.

—should we name him?

Cages.

It seems almost                      small.

Is it strange

these remnants?

Didn't it require  
ignition?

Dove right on it.

Have you ever woken to find—

That scar

was a feather pulled from it?

Counting

in months now.

Could I ever—

He almost                      ripped open

a guy's back.

Spinning                      spinning                      a shred of cloth.

Should we have named him,

implied                      permanence?



I am suspicious of *I*

or *we*

which descriptors then,

what way of naming?

Counting

in partners now.

That scar?

He's never bitten me

only goes after smaller things, still—

Regarding whirlwinds, I'm not sure,

but the next one will be different.

Pluralities.

*I*      *we*      *him*  
                                 *him*  
                                 *him*

Is it strange?      Could I      ever?

The next one—

It's not so much the body harness  
as the wrists.

Were you—

I wasn't      one way  
or the other.

Tie me again

for old times' sake.

Will it? Was he— and the other one,

behind.

It's not like that, at least  
there is purpose or function,

that is I know why I'm there.

Would you find me

if we got separated?

Maybe

it's better your way.

Coupling

in threes and fours now.

Should I pierce my lip

get another tattoo

cover dead patches of skin?

It was nice seeing you for a minute.

Lights, camera—

in a back booth?

I wanted the experience.

Is it on film?

It's about connection, sharing a moment,

you place your hand on the other's stomach, their breath—

never make eye contact?

It's so deliciously dark

I thought of you.

What now then?

Dispel, rid the system

of erroneous data.



It's where my father took me.

I am suspicious of wavelengths,

*Which one was for red?*

of fingernails dug in headboards,

of interior landscapes and prairie grass.

I could say the same about—

this, isn't it just as available?

Didn't you wear those for—

I want my own cup.

I want, I'm not sure,

maybe the arch of your foot.

I took a hammer to it.

It's still circular, but much thinner.

Shouldn't there have been

some ceremony to it,

some chewed tobacco spat,

some dribble of urine?

The first one sank to the bottom of a lake.

The next one?

Different but not dead,  
more like—

needing to be human.

I wanted the experience. Maybe your way  
is better.

Endless, Beautiful, Exact

Paradise is here        on a beach of bones a bell fracturing air.

    This is no document of barbarism  
          of clotted blood and glowing flesh  
    its shine too bright for too long.

It is seeking resonance, the broken things,  
falling sunflowers, the fractured pipe, strands of her hair  
          about to break into ash.

It is the air of atrocity,  
a kind of garden like a flat sea        cities burn behind us  
          thin with the need to escape. Maybe it was a mistake,  
I can taste the blood still.

### **Author's Notes**

The poem series *An Account From Which Skulls Were Taken* is collaged from “An introduction to the mortuary customs of the North American Indians,” by H. C. Yarrow.

The poem series *Oscillations* is collaged from numerous source texts including “Fragments of Science,” by John Tyndall, “The Mechanical Universe,” by A. E. Dolbear, “Matter, Ether, and Motion” by Amos Emerson Dolbear.

*Endless, Beautiful, Exact* was written for *CORDITE 33.1: THE REMIXES*. Work sampled: “*Simply by Sailing in a New Direction*,” “*Garden Piece*,” “*Doppelganger*,” “*The Walker*,” “*Inadequate Stovetop*,” “*Kerb Side Collection*,” “*Litany*,” “*Just Lexicons*,” “*Quietly Off-Key*.”

## **About the Author**

Poet, translator, and filmmaker Francesco Levato is the author of three books of poetry: *Elegy for Dead Languages*; *War Rug*, a book length documentary poem; and *Marginal State*. He has translated into English the books of Italian poets Tiziano Fratus, *Creasuring*, and Fabiano Alborghetti, *The Opposite Shore*. His work has been published internationally in journals and anthologies, both in print and online. He has collaborated and performed with various composers, including Philip Glass, and his cinépoetry has been exhibited in galleries and featured at film festivals in Berlin, Chicago, New York, and elsewhere. He holds an MFA in poetry from New England College.

