

DOCUMENTS**Editing Silence: P.K. Page's
Brazilian Poetry****by Emily Ballantyne**

The poet who falls silent in Brazil and the one who finds her voice again in Mexico both created work of the highest order, but in vision and language the poetry of the earlier and of the later Page could hardly be more different. All readers of Page recognize this difference, but to explain its origin is a different matter. (Pollock, *Kaleidoscope* 9)¹

Deep in the archival fonds at Library and Archives Canada is a small body of unpublished poems that sheds new light on P.K. Page's silence and its causes. These poems will fundamentally impact scholarly understanding of a key time period in Page's career by closely attending to Page's emotional and intellectual responses to her experiences in Brazil. This small file—containing only twenty-seven manuscript and typescript poems, many of which exist in various states of completion and fragmentation—is filed in the fonds as primary material consulted by Page during her drafting of the *Brazilian Journal* in the mid 1980s. A careful interrogation of this file led to an exciting discovery: these poems fill in a poetic gap between Page's Governor General's Award-winning volume *The Metal and the Flower*, published in 1954, and her assertive re-entry into poetry with the publication of *Cry Ararat!* in 1967.² The poems, which can be dated to 1957 and early 1958, mark the beginning of her poetic silence, providing a poetic narration of her movement away from poetry and her fervent push toward visual art.

This archival material nuances and supports recent scholarship on what has been commonly referred to as Page's "middle silence" (Trehearne 41). Page spent two years in Brazil (1957-1959) in a diplomatic role as the wife to the Canadian ambassador Arthur Irwin; it was their second diplomatic posting after Australia (1953-1956) and before Mexico (1960-1964). The time period of Page's diplomacy, and in particular, her time in Brazil, has largely been understood as a gap in which Page did not write poetry. Page herself encouraged this narrative throughout her retrospective non-fiction on writing and travel. Though the period of silence extended far after her

time in Brazil, Page herself often points to Brazil to generalize about her writer's block. Scholars agree that Brazil has served as a recurrent narrative trope that Page returns to when she seeks to express aesthetic overwhelm and a bafflement of the senses.³ Hannah McGregor suggests that Page's construction of Brazil in retrospective non-fiction such as "Questions and Images" as an artistic trope, leads to the "fetishization and related depoliticization" of Brazil as a signifier (186). This essay, coupled with the *Brazilian Journal*, reduces and limits Brazil as an extension of Page, treating Brazil as a 'period' in Page's life that denies its agency and its politics. In the poetic fragments, Brazil has not yet been reduced to this trope, and Page attempts to engage with Brazil socially, politically and culturally.

Cynthia Messenger discovered some of the earliest poems that can be linked Brazil, which were published for the first time in her 1994 article comparing the Brazilian writing of Page and Bishop. These relatively complete poems appear to have been completed later, and focus on Page's response to Brazilian artist Candido Portinari and her own growing inability to write. While these poems provide some insight into this time period, they appear later in time than the fragments. Where the poems Messenger identifies already point toward Page's future as painter P.K. Irwin and confirm Page's silence, the poetry fragments have not yet come to these conclusions. The raw pain and trailing lines describing dislocation and the failure of language appear alongside descriptive attempts to make sense of, and respond to, the politics of the natural and built environment that Page moves through as an artist and diplomatic representative. It is for this reason that the poetic fragments serve the purpose of filling in this silence, and speak more directly to Page's preoccupations and life during this time. In general, the poetic fragments emphasize the artistic struggle that Page is going through, while contextualizing and describing the major shifts Page experiences with the movement to a country where she cannot speak the language and is not well versed in local customs and expectations. They mark 1957 as a hinge-point in Page's development, and reveal a growing fascination with colour and animal imagery. Unlike Page's imagistic verse of the 1940s, these fragments are intensely personal and emotional.

While these poems are of interest solely for their literary historical value, their failings and their frustrations also present an important challenge for an editor seeking to represent them: how does one maintain the integrity of the text as an unfinished site of revision and deletion? Since these poems create an important counter-narrative to the silence so heavily emphasized in *Brazilian Journal* and in Page's other non-fiction writing, their presentation in an editorial narrative needs to represent transition and

writer's block in ways that the limiting confines of a traditional critical edition in a codex form simply cannot accommodate. In order to illustrate the progression and failure of these short poems, the final edition needs to articulate Page's writing process over and above a finished, completed and polished poem. As a result, my methodological approach to these poems combines both a social-text approach and a genetic editing framework to provide the narrative structure I need to illustrate this counter-narrative. Simply stated, what this introduction seeks to articulate is how I edited Page's silence, using the narrative tools available to me to interpret these early Brazil poems and fragments.

Because the poems are incomplete and unpublished, there is no "best text" to rely on to determine Page's final intentions. Since no "best text" exists, I adopted a social-text approach. Social-text editing, an approach that was theorized by D.F. McKenzie and has been furthered by the work of Jerome McGann, attempts to "show the human presence in any recorded text" (McKenzie 20). As Peter Shillingsburg defines it, "This approach does not admit to any parts of the text or of the physical medium to be considered nonsignificant and therefore emendable...in short, all aspects of the physical object that is the book that bears clues to its origins and destinations and social and literary pretensions—are text to the bibliographic orientation" (23–4). This approach is particularly useful for archival material, as it allows a careful consideration of the material conditions of the archive, and acknowledges the role that various people played in the final arrangement and order of the documents as I received them. By situating myself within this tradition, I was able to deal with the unique textuality of the Brazilian poems as archival documents that bridge the gap between public and private. This model allows for these fragmentary poems to be socialized by the rest of Page's *oeuvre*, as well as with the large body of critical work discussing this time period in Page's development. Page may have intended some of the more complete poems for publication, but none was published in her lifetime. So, these suppressed documents must be read against existing narratives of the same time period, particularly because of the emphasis placed on Page's silence in both her own writing and in the scholarly community.

The Brazilian materials housed at the Library and Archives Canada establish that the "definitive" biographical narrative that Page shaped around Brazil was far more nuanced and complex than any of the biographical material in her non-fiction writing and interviews has allowed. Page has self-consciously constructed a particular reading of her time in Brazil, one that is clearly challenged by the presence of these poems. *Bra-*

zilian Journal, retrospective non-fiction and interviews, as well as her autobiographical long poem *Hand Luggage* emphasize the visual splendour and overwhelming experience of moving to a tropical country and living and working in a foreign language. Brazil is figured as the site of creative renewal, in which:

My vision was right for this rush of design
 correct for this colour – visual thirst
 quenched now by *that* column, *this* tree, a mosaic
 of black and white sidewalks, a delicate spire.
 Some deep correlation, unknown until then,
 responded with yes and with yes once again –
 a consummate bliss wheresoever my eye
 chanced to fall

(*Hand Luggage* 54)

This carefully wrought verse is retrospectively retooled. Page seems to be included in the scene, finally finding a place to which her creative self could respond positively. This account ignores any trace of alienation and seclusion, and does not represent the hardship of her poetic failings associated with this new environment. Her treatment in *Hand Luggage*, above, is in stark contrast with the 1957 poetic fragment in which Page laments:

There should be more to say but I become
 when confronted – dumb –
 like a bird in a cage, can't sing on request

Before Brazil becomes a space of creative renewal, it is first captured as a space of imprisonment and voicelessness. Because Page is unable to perform basic communication in Portuguese with any degree of confidence, she ultimately feels the effects of this block in her English poetry. Thus, she writes fragments in which she “can’t sing on request,” following up these lines with the realization that “It is not enough to describe it / who wants a list of fauna besides myself[?]” Page’s desire to move beyond description affects her ability to perform, inhibiting her creative process. The 1957 poetic fragments more accurately present Page’s struggle in Brazil, and attempt to make sense of Page’s combined culture shock and what Denise Adele Heaps has defined as “language shock,” in which Page “lost her access to the symbolic system of poetry, and gained access to what was for her a new and different semiotic utterance” (355).

By the time Page publishes *Hand Luggage* in 2006, she has had time to reconstruct and stabilize this period of increased fragmentation and dissolution. The publication of *Brazilian Journal* in 1987 occurred two full decades after her return to poetry. In *Brazilian Journal* it is her fascination with visual art that provides the primary narrative. The deep psychological turmoil, as well as the illness she suffers that results in infertility after surgery in 1957, play a peripheral, barely-hinted-at role in the text. Brief references, such as “What to do about writing? Is it all dead?” (34) or “And still I write nothing” (160) serve to intermittently remind the reader that this representation of her struggle with silence is based upon retrospective narrative choices being made behind the text.

The other major issue in editing these works comes from the heavy annotations and revisions Page made to some of the manuscript pages. Without a “best text”, it is not always clear what order the revisions took place in, so I would need a way to illustrate how I interpreted Page’s additions and deletions to come up with a final poem. Based on the number of typographical errors and revisions in the typescript pages, it is clear that none of these poems are “fair copies,” and thus, no textual variant can be privileged. All versions must therefore be considered equal, representing unfinished stages in the genesis of the text with no “best text.” Page is working through the writing process, not creating a final, authorized document. As such, the framework of genetic textual editing offers a way to organize variants without privileging a particular reading. Genetic editor Hans Walter Gabler describes his methodology for the critical and synoptic *Ulysses* as “edit[ing] text not so much to emphasize the author, but rather to render transparent the text in its material historicity” (4). Marking the various stages of the text, recording false starts and inevitable tangents, renders the text’s fluidity apparent on the page. This deprivileges an authorial reading of the text, in this case those provided in *Brazilian Journal* and *Hand Luggage*, by revealing an alternative counter narrative that is suppressed in the archive.

Because of these factors, in addition to socializing the text, my edition of the Brazilian poems uses a genetic framework in the Canadian editorial tradition established by Zailig Pollock. As the general editor of the *Collected Works of P.K. Page* project, as well as the poetry editor and correspondence co-editor for the project, he has adopted the practice from his previous print-based editions. For the *Collected Works of P.K. Page*, he is applying it to a multi-volume print and digital hybrid project, including print volumes and a digital apparatus for each, generally titled *The Digital Page*. This model attempts to show the presence of the editor in offering a

story or interpretation of the author's revisions. Zailig Pollock's landmark edition of A.M. Klein's *Complete Poems* was the first to adopt the genetic approach to a work of Canadian modernist poetry. His article "Editor as Storyteller" provides a clear summation of his genetic editorial practice using the metaphor of the storyteller to describe the editorial function:

If I conceive of myself as a storyteller the [editorial] problem disappears. Seen in this light, my textual notes do not act as a substitute for an absent manuscript, presenting the reader with a verbal equivalent of its physical appearance; they guide the reader through a manuscript which he or she has at hand, telling the story of the evolution of the work in question as I have been able to piece it together from my examination of all aspects of the manuscript that I recognize as relevant. (60)

Narrating one possible reading of the composition of a page of poetry is the primary goal of the genetic editor. As editor, I tell a story about the possible interpretation of variants following a logical progression, but without imposing a final meaning. This does not mean recording what the page looks like. In a traditional diplomatic transcription, the position of the poem on the page and the type of marks used to edit it (i.e. the strike outs and arrows as well as changes in pen and typescript) are faithfully recorded; in a genetic transcription, in contrast, provides a sequential reading of the changes. It privileges the perceived order in which the changes were made over the way those changes were physically represented on the page. It uses clues, like changes in ink, to help facilitate a logical order, but it does not reproduce them in the final edition. The document that I seek to create tells a story of revisions, and of artistic struggle, using Page's own words and the spaces between them. As an editor, I need to determine what was written when, and how the poem changed over time in order to "tell the story" of its composition process. I read the line strokes and additions as story arcs within the narrative of each poem's completion or abandonment. All textual variants are equal, and each needs to be represented in the final transcription. To some extent, I have to impose my particular reading on the composition of the page because its sequence and intention are not always clear from a heavily revised text that does not exist in a finished form. My transcription remains contestable, but it provides a possible reading that will be supplemented by the original manuscript pages for individual scrutinization once the *Digital Page* is fully realized.

As a concrete example of this process, I have chosen the first stanza of the first poem in the file to illustrate the genetic model the project has adopted. This is how the stanza appears in manuscript form:

a bridge across a chasm
~~from~~ like
 lariat thrown
 shining with deftness
 from hill to hill

If this poem were to be annotated using the traditional, print-based format that Pollock was still using in his Klein edition, the reading I will offer would be recorded like this:

1 ~ bridge] a bridge; 2 lariat thrown] *successively* (a) thrown like / lariat (b) like / lariat thrown (c) lariat thrown

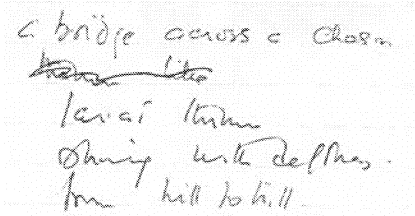
However, this edition attempts to visually represent the stages, illustrating the plot arcs of the revision. Unlike a traditional print edition constrained by the page, this text does not need to note variants with the greatest possible brevity, in relation to a copy-text, and instead allows each subsequent stage of the text to be presented fully and equally. Thus, I present the poem

1(1)	<>bridge across a chasm
1(2)	[a] bridge across a chasm
2(1)	<thrown> like
3(1)	lariat<>
2(2)	[]like
3(2)	lariat [thrown]
1/2(3)	[]
2(3)	lariat thrown
3	shining with deftness
4	from hill to hill

I have indicated all revisions using angled brackets <> and square brackets [].⁴ The angled brackets mark the part of the line that was altered *from* by addition, deletion or re-arrangement. The square brackets mark the part of the line it was altered *to*. Thus, <x> means that x was changed to something, whereas [y] means that something has been changed to y. The smallest unit marked off by the brackets is a single word or piece of punctuation, so changes in tense, etc., are marked off by word or phrase, instead of just by word ending. When you follow a transcription all the way through, all angled brackets will be replaced by square brackets.

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Here is my story of how this stanza was composed. Here is the manuscript version placed directly alongside the edited version:

	1(1) <>bridge across a chasm
	1(2) [a] bridge across a chasm
	2(1) <thrown> like
	3(1) lariat<>
	2(2) []like
	3(2) lariat [thrown]
	1/2(3) []
	2(3) lariat thrown
	3 shining with deftness
	4 from hill to hill

In the first version of the first line, 1(1), angle brackets with nothing inside them <> indicate that a word will be added in the next revision. In the second version of the first line, 1(2), the square bracket [a] indicates that the line now has added an indefinite article, “a”. The line numbered 1(2) is the final version of that line.

The second set of changes, to lines two and three, involve moving some text around, and then eventually eliminating a line altogether. The lines are grouped together, marking the first version of lines two and three, 2(1), 3(1), followed directly by the second version of lines two and three, 2(2), 3(2). Thus, “thrown like/ lariat” becomes “like/ lariat thrown.” Page deletes “thrown” from line two and adds it to line three, leaving only “like” in the line. In the final revision, Page decides to remove the first line altogether, thus 1/2(3) contains empty square brackets [] where the “like” has been deleted, and line 2(3), “lariat thrown”, is all that remains. In the final version of the poem, the line that used to be between what are now lines one and two (1/2) has been deleted. Page has worked out her revision to the line over two lines, which is why, in the final version, this is just rendered as a single line. The final version is shorter by one line than the previous versions because lines two and three on the paper are both different versions of the same poetic line. She prefers the ordering of “lariat thrown” over “thrown like lariat” and chooses to eliminate the “like,” which turns the line from a simile to a metaphor and also consolidates the image to the same line.

The final two lines, 3 and 4, are unaltered. Thus, “shining with deftness / from hill to hill” is consistent in all versions of this poem.

To get a sense of how the poem might appear in a clean text version, you simply delete all versions of a line or group of lines except for the last:

- 1 a bridge across a chasm
- 2 lariat thrown
- 3 shining with deftness
- 4 from hill to hill

The final version of this clean text is meant to establish the last set of changes to the poem to create a clear-reading text version that interprets Page's intentions into a coherent narrative. While the order in which these changes were made by Page is open to interpretation, the structure provided by this genetic system is meant to clearly reveal the editorial decision making that helped to translate this stanza from its rough manuscript version into a clean copy. The numbering of the changes of each line offers my story of the composition of this stanza, which allows for critical readers and textual scholars to assess both the poem on its own terms and the logic that has gone into editing it. Since all of the Brazil poems I edited only exist in manuscript forms, I chose to use a model for displaying these texts that self-consciously acknowledges the poems as unfinished and fragmentary.

As an editor, the story I want to tell about Page's Brazilian period is the story of artistic frustration and silence. To achieve this goal, I engage in a process that narrativizes the revision and emphasizes the incompleteness of these poems. Since they were not published, there is no final or "best text" to use, and instead, in my determination to provide a clean reading text, I need to also provide a justification for how I came to this decision by creating a reasonable interpretation of Page's revisions at the level of the line and stanza.

Because of the complex nature of this kind of genetic editing, the future of this kind of work is in a digital format. For this small body of poems, it is possible to fully account for each of the levels of changes in a print format for each poetic fragment. However, for a more lengthy study of Page's *oeuvre* as a poet, or comparatively across her work as a poet, visual artist, fiction and non-fiction writings, a digital medium offers the kind of space required to perform a genetic reading. In a digital space, like the one being developed as *The Digital Page*, scholars will be able to trace the revision history for all of the poems housed at Library and Archives Canada. This small print version is meant to illustrate the kind of readings that are possible using this new model. It also offers comparative versioning that would allow versions to appear beside and toggle against the original doc-

ument, providing major advances in making transparent the editorial interpretation and decision-making in contrast to the archival documents. As such, the online part of the Collected Works of P.K. Page project, the *Digital Page*, is the best forum for this kind of editorial practice. Online, we can offer an environment that allows for multiple readings simultaneously on one page. It will combine the best of print-based editing with the space and structural clarity unique to the digital environment.

“Editing Silence” negotiates the boundary between the incomplete manuscript and the clean text of a scholarly edition. By using an editorial orientation that is invested in socializing the text within its larger social and textual milieu, and selecting a method of editing that self-referentially acknowledges my own implication in narrativizing the text, I have provided a new way of understanding Page’s silence through the poetry itself. In the edition that follows, I present one story of how Page transitioned into silence after attempting to connect with and understand her new situation using English tools that ultimately failed her. The edition can be read in both a clean-text format and in the rougher, undecided script of revision and indecision.

Notes

- 1 This poetry edition would not have been possible without the support and guidance of Zailig Pollock. I would also like to thank Dean Irvine and the Editing Modernism in Canada project, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Killam Foundation for their contributions to my research.
- 2 Both Cynthia Messenger and Kevin McNeilly have discussed Page’s Brazilian poetry, though neither have provided an extended analysis of this particular collection. Messenger was the first to identify poems unique to the Brazilian period, providing a clean-text version of “Paintings of Portinari” (included here in a different version) and “Could I Write a Poem Now?” from a different file in the archive (3-17-2 and 3-17-3). See Cameron in this issue for more detailed analysis of Page’s Brazilian poems.
- 3 See especially Kevin McNeilly’s “Toward a Poetics of Dislocation”, Cynthia Messenger’s “But How do you Write a Chagall?” and Hannah McGregor “Troping the Foreign”.
- 4 See Ballantyne and Pollock, “*Respect des Fonds* and the Digital Page” p. 196 for an additional explanation of the methodology that informed this edition. In that chapter, I narrate the genetic sequence of revisions of the poem “Natural History Museum.”

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P.K. Page

Brazilian Poems (~1957)

A Parallel Text Edition of Fragmentary Extracts from the
P.K. Page Archival Fond

Edited by
Emily Ballantyne

I.

- 1(1) <>bridge across a chasm
1(2) [a] bridge across a chasm
2(1) <thrown> like
3(1) lariat<>
2(2) []<like>
3(2) lariat [thrown]
1/2(3) []
2(3) lariat thrown
3 shining with deftness
4 from hill to hill
- 5 How write a word
6 the fashions swings despite
7 [ILLEGIBLE] lava
8 mincing
9 And when he married
10 it was as if some milestone had moved /of its own accord.

II.

- 1(1) <I feel it in my>[incomplete]
1(2) <[In]>[incomplete]
1 (3) [There are the two things here: the giant leaves]
2 the 15 greens within a frame
3(1) green crowding green & being <other>[incomplete]
3(2) green crowding green & being [more than green,]
4(1) <until> green became
4(2) [til] green became
5 the total spectrum
6 in the prism see light split & break
7 one drums in this green sea
- 8 the other: the high cries of girls—
9 cries like the speech
10 of each green stalk.
11 The ones that end in feathers,
- 12 Who drums?
13 the girl in denim or the boy in tweeds

I.

A bridge across a chasm
lariat thrown
shining with deftness
from hill to hill

5 How write a word
the fashions swings despite
[ILLEGIBLE] lava
mincing

10 And when he married
it was as if some milestone had moved of its own accord.

II.

There are the two things here: the giant leaves
the 15 greens within a frame
green crowding green & being more than green,
til green became
5 the total spectrum
in the prism see light split & break
one drums in this green sea

the other: the high cries of girls—
cries like the speech
10 of each green stalk.
The ones that end in feathers,

Who drums?
the girl in denim or the boy in tweeds

I.7 [ILLEGIBLE] As per correspondence between P.K. Page and Zailig Pollock (07/30/09), transcription remains unclear, and the author cannot confirm a particular reading.

III.

1 This whole green world, crystal and spherical
 2 silent as a hole in a head, within
 3 which all those birds coloured beaks cheep cheep
 4 girls throats yell boy's brakes scream
 5 and Manuel's wheelbarrow crunches and scrapes
 6 its rusty iron rim

7(1) <How>[incomplete]
 7(2) [Hollow the other silence aches around it,]
 8(1) <its> a green hoop in three <dim>[incomplete]
 8(2) [is] a green hoop in three [dimensions, shaped]
 9(1) with <compaw>[incomplete]
 9(2) with [compass and theorem, a slow chrysoprase]
 10 fire to flare and gut the head

IV.

1 This whole green world, crystal and spherical
 2 silent as the hole in a head within
 3 which all those birds coloured beaks cheepcheep
 4 girls throats yell boys brakes scream
 5 and Manuels wheelbarrow crunches and scrapes
 6 its rusty iron rim.

7(1) <Th>[incomplete]
 7(2) [Paint it. The other silence aches around it]
 8(1) is a green bruise in <y>[incomplete]
 8(2) is a green bruise in [three deimensions shaped]
 9 with compasses and theorems, a slow
 10 chrysoprase fire to gut the head
 11(1) and leave among the charred curved <a>[incomplete]
 11(2) and leave among the charred curved [rafters,]
 12 elegant in carbon a global shell
 13(1) through which those thousand noises dart like
[incomplete]
 13(2) through which those thousand noises dart like [birds.]

III.

This whole green world, crystal and spherical
silent as a hole in a head, within
which all those birds coloured beaks cheep cheep
5 girls throats yell boy's brakes scream
and Manuel's wheelbarrow crunches and scrapes
its rusty iron rim

Hollow the other silence aches around it,
is a green hoop in three dimensions, shaped
10 with compass and theorem, a slow chrysoprase
fire to flare and gut the head

IV.

This whole green world, crystal and spherical
silent as the hole in a head within
which all those birds coloured beaks cheepcheep
5 girls throats yell boys brakes scream
and Manuel's wheelbarrow crunches and scrapes
its rusty iron rim.

Paint it. The other silence aches around it
is a green bruise in three dimensions shaped
10 with compasses and theorems, a slow
chrysoprase fire to gut the head
and leave among the charred curved rafters,
elegant in carbon a global shell
through which those thousand noises dart like birds.

III. 5 Manuel] Manuel is identified as the gardener's assistant for Page's Brazilian estate (*BJ* 26).

IV. This version of the poem was first published in *Kaleidoscope*, p. 103.

V.

1 These seas are emty
2 neither shell nor gull
3(1) <rides> on their <waves> or winds
3(2) [ride] on their [tides] or winds
4 one wet carnation from a sailing birds
5 going-away bouquet
6(1) <lies where it fell>
7(1) <
6(2) [was carried in]
7(2) [& lies like blood]
8(1) upon the <pale> ashy sands
8(2) upon the[] ashy sands

9 Riding the winds instead
10 a hundred kites on strings
11 & one a giant bird & one
12 a sweet heart candy pink
13 & where the large one led
14 so went the smaller one.

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V.

These seas are empty
neither shell nor gull
ride on their tides or winds
one wet carnation from a sailing birds
5 going-away bouquet
was carried in
& lies like blood
upon the ashy sands

10 Riding the winds instead
a hundred kites on strings
& one a giant bird & one
a sweet heart candy pink
& where the large one led
so went the smaller one.

VI.

Brazilian Conversation.

- 1(1) <Even the heroes are resting now>
1(2) []
- 1(3) The giant rests.
- 2(1) <indent/>the people on the beaches complain of the
3(1) <indent/>resting giant<space/>< & rest
2(2) <indent/>the people on the beaches complain of the
3(2) resting giant <space/>[complain] & rest
4 Even the heroes are resting now, he said
5 & I saw the leaders, all the famous /generals
6(1) <Explorers> resting upon their swords
6(2) <indent/>[]resting upon their swords
7(1) [Explorers] resting <on their>[] [incomplete]
7(2) Explorers resting [midway <across the /landscape>]
7(3) Explorers resting midway [on the map]
8(1) <the> statues resting on their pedestals.
8(2) [like] statues resting on their pedestals.
9 Standing they lean as in a balustrade
10 the angle of the elbow on a ledge—
11 hip in a bevel of stone
12 like lovers lean upon each other
13(1) women on window sills—< & diminishing
13(2) women on window sills—[in a] diminishing
14 scale of lighted squares
15 women with languor & longing resting /in their hearts

VI.

Brazilian Conversation

1 The giant rests.

 the people on the beaches complain of the
 resting giant complain & rest

5 Even the heroes are resting now, he said
 & I saw the leaders, all the famous generals
 resting upon their swords

Explorers resting midway on the map
like statues resting on their pedestals.

10 Standing they lean as in a balustrade
 the angle of the elbow on a ledge—
 hip in a bevel of stone
 like lovers lean upon each other

15 women on window sills—in a diminishing
 scale of lighted squares
 women with languor & longing resting in their hearts

VII.

- 1 My muteness induced by ignorance of the /tongue that is spoken here
- 2 The heat & weight of it
3 the warm wet water
4 through which I move
5 silently lumbering
6 through the green rooms
◇
[---]
- 7 & the green garden
8 where flowers like parrots
9 form their ocean floor
- 10(1) <arisen> slowly on a fleshy stalk
10(2) [ascended] slowly on a fleshy stalk
11(1) <float>[incomplete]
11(2) [move in a tiny current <a second>]
11(3) move in a tiny current [an instant]
- 12 float then more velvet silent than before
13 Motionless nwo that green warm water /dense
14 as a cube of green glass

VII.

My muteness induced by ignorance of the tongue that is spoken here

5 The heat & weight of it
 the warm wet water
 through which I move
 silently lumbering
 through the green rooms

10 & the green garden
 where flowers like parrots
 form their ocean floor
 ascended slowly on a fleshy stalk
 move in a tiny current an instant
 float then more velvet silent than before
 Motionless now that green warm water dense
 as a cube of green glass

3 warm wet water] In *BJ*, iHow could I have imagined so surrealist and
seductive a world? One does not *like* the heat, yet its constancy, its all-sur-
roundingness, is as fascinating as the smell of musk. Every moment is slow,
as if under warm greenish waterî (9).

VIII.

Negralinha.

- 1 The goat came with the cook
2 was black & cried
3 all night among the mangoes
4 then with one
5 heavenly tug broke free
6 the chain a thin
7 silvery serpent in the undergrowth
8 & raced now in the garden
9 among the pink
10 lilies of patent leather
11 shook the pale flowers of the frangi pani /from /the /tree
12(1) Cook in his high hat <raced>
12(2) Cook in his high hat [chased]
13 & dark José
14 flapping a duster
15 & the two & she
16 all nimble
- 17 caught at last in a cul-de-sac
18 outwitted she
19 walked like a mincing girl
20(1) <in black beside the>[incomplete]
20(2) [passing the pool]
21 she is no ordinary goat
22 she has
23 lived with a circus

VIII.

Negralinha

The goat came with the cook
 was black & cried
 all night among the mangoes
 then with one
 5 heavenly tug broke free
 the chain a thin
 silvery serpent in the undergrowth
 & raced now in the garden
 among the pink
 10 lilies of patent leather
 shook the pale flowers of the frangipani from the tree
 Cook in his high hat chased
 & dark José
 flapping a duster
 15 & the two & she
 all nimble

 caught at last in a cul-de-sac
 outwitted she
 walked like a mincing girl
 20 passing the pool
 she is no ordinary goat
 she has
 lived with a circus

Negralinha] “The Episode of the Goat” is detailed in full in the *Brazilian Journal*. The goat belonged to Morel, the cook, who brought it to the estate. She had frequent escapes, bleated regularly and ate parts of the garden during her brief stay. Called Negrinha, which contains the Portuguese for black, “negra” and the female suffix, “a” (BJ 66-71).

11 Frangipani] A fragrant ornamental shrub or tree of the genus *Plumeria* having large, fragrant, white, yellow, or purplish salver-shaped flowers in terminal cymes (OED).

13 José] Identified as “our *mulato* cleaner” (BJ 66).

IX.

1 write, & imagine a poem that list of trees
 2(1) if you will, if you want; <|>the list is still a list
 3(1) []
 2(2) if you will, if you want; [/]
 3(2) the list is still a list
 4(1) <>not dissimilar to the laundry slip
 4(2) [&] not dissimilar to the laundry slip
 5 what if those leaves are large as the ear
 6 of the Indian elephant?
 7 & those like a woven fan
 8 & those & those
 9 spiked, plumed, feathered
 10 hand-blocked, carved embossed—
 11 together though—en scene—entire

X.

1 There should be more to say but I become
 2 when confronted—dumb—
 3(1) like a bird in a cage, <won't> sing <won't sing at>[incomplete]
 3(2) like a bird in a cage, [can't] sing [on request]

4 Possible to like what one has got:
 5 The Rousseau painting at my back that string
 6 swinging a little is a monkeys tail
 7 & among the bright innocent flowers
 8 of the jungle

9 small lizards nude as chickens newly plucked
 10 run about with leaf insects in their mouths—
 11 look up alertly
 12 alerted by the twitching on their tongue
 13 not to relax

14 It is not enough to describe it
 15 who wants a list of fauna besides myself
 16 voracious

IX.

write, & imagine a poem that list of trees
if you will, if you want;
the list is still a list
& not dissimilar to the laundry slip
5 what if those leaves are large as the ear
of the Indian elephant?
& those like a woven fan
& those & those
spiked, plumed, feathered
10 hand-blocked, carved embossed—
together though—en scène—entier

X.

There should be more to say but I become
when confronted—dumb—
like a bird in a cage, can't sing on request

Possible to like what one has got:
5 The Rousseau painting at my back that string
swinging a little is a monkeys tail
& among the bright innocent flowers
of the jungle

small lizards nude as chickens newly plucked
10 run about with leaf insects in their mouths—
look up alertly
alerted by the twitching on their tongue
not to relax

It is not enough to describe it
15 who wants a list of fauna besides myself
voracious

XI.

To those who write of Italy.

1 One cannot be too literary about Rio—
2 employing rather
3 the vocabulary of a jeweller
4 the platinum skyscrapers that follow the curve /of
5(1) <the sapphire sea>
5(2) [ultramarine]

6 It is very much the vogue nowadays
7 to write of Italy & to show
8 the world you know all the references

9 the hills of carved jade
10 I saw, as a child,
11 the tiniest golden teaset in the world
12 made by a jeweller through the jeweller's /glass
13 screwed in his eye

XII.

1 Everyone writes of Italy but here in Rio
2(1) the <emperors> palace where <he> danced the night /before
2(2) the[] palace where [emperors] danced the night /before

3 his — exile
4 shimmers like an island out in the bay
5 & the conical bits just behind abstracted

6 On cannot be too literary about it
7 employing rather
8 the vocabulary of a jeweller
9 the platinum skyscrapers which ring the /beach

XI.

To those who write of Italy.

One cannot be too literary about Rio—
 employing rather
 the vocabulary of a jeweler
 the platinum skyscrapers that follow the curve of
 5 ultramarine

It is very much the vogue nowadays
 to write of Italy & to show
 the world you know all the references

10 the hills of carved jade
 I saw, as a child,
 the tiniest golden tea set in the world
 made by a jeweler through the jeweler's glass
 screwed in his eye

XII.

Everyone writes of Italy but here in Rio
 the palace where emperors danced the night before

his --- exile
 shimmers like an island out in the bay
 5 & the conical bits just behind abstracted

On cannot be too literary about it
 employing rather
 the vocabulary of a jeweller
 the platinum skyscrapers which ring the beach

XII.3 exile] Dom Pedro II (December 1825- December 1889), was Emperor of Brazil from 1841 to 1889. His regime was supported for 40 years due to his liberal attitudes. He was recognized widely for his leadership and compassion for the Brazilian people. The royal family went into exile in Portugal following a military coup d'état on November 15, 1889.

XII.9 the platinum... beach] Page describes Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro, "From our height in the platinum apartment block, we could see the whole beach with its flickering lights and white bodies moving against the dark rhythmic waves of the sea" (*BJ* 230).

XIII.

1 Our house is all openings
2 Everywhere you turn
3 doors or windows open onto
4 sheets of hot air
5 on those verandahs

6(1) & the two <parrots> from Matto Grosso
6(2) & the two [parroquets] from Matto Grosso
7 crack sunflower seeds the whole day long
8 & shriek

XIV.

Some Paintings by Portinari

1 With the first lot flat
2 it was as if he'd cut of my breasts
3 & levelled my nose
4 Like the side of a barn
5 <i>I walked
</i>& met them flat
6 flat—on & one
7 uptilted my chin

8(1) With the others lord all the colours <faded>
8(2) With the others lord all the colours [gone]
9 Strange but I wore
10 red when I came & green
11 & he made them grey
12 & painted the grey all over my skin
13 & the pain
14(1) pulled all<> muscles & <tendons>
14(2) pulled all [the] muscles & [cords]

15 And in Rio
16 the bomb of light exploded
17 the flash

XIII.

Our house is all openings
 Everywhere you turn
 doors or windows open onto
 sheets of hot air
 5 on those verandahs

& the two parakeets from Mato Grosso
 crack sunflower seeds the whole day long
 & shriek

XIV.

Some Paintings by Portinari

With the first lot flat
 it was as if he'd cut of my breasts
 & leveled my nose
 Like the side of a barn
 5 I walked
 & met them flat
 flat—on & one
 uptilted my chin

With the others lord all the colours gone
 Strange but I wore
 10 red when I came & green
 & he made them grey
 & painted the grey all over my skin
 & the pain
 pulled all the muscles & cords

15 And in Rio
 the bomb of light exploded
 the flash

XIII.6-9& the two parakeets] “Nearby, two green parrots, chained and aggressively bad-tempered, screamed at each other and everyone else” (*BJ* 77).

XIII.6 Mato Grosso] The third largest state in Brazil, located in the West. It translates into English as “Thick Woods,” but the birds Page references are in captivity.

XIV For an alternative version missing the final stanza, see *Messenger* p.113.

XIV. 11-14 he made them grey...] Page describes a roomful of Portinari paintings in Chateaubriand’s collection at the Museu de Arte as, “large, strangely grey paintings full of pain” (*BJ* 80).

XV.

- 1(1) The candles gutter in the <wrack> & smell
1(2) The candles gutter in the [rack] & smell
2 remove the body of the church
3 the wax
4 drips on the iron
5 in latin icycles
6(1) <the smoke lies about in> ostrich feathers<
6(2) [grey] ostrich feathers [curl above the /wicks]
7 walker among so many supplicants

XVI.

On looking out of My Bedroom Window

- 1 15 greens within a frame.

The tree

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XV.

The candles gutter in the rack & smell
remove the body of the church
the wax
drips on the iron
5 in Latin icicles
grey ostrich feathers curl above the wicks

walker among so many supplicants

XVI.

On looking out of My Bedroom Window

15 greens within a frame.

The tree

XVII.

- 1 She sat on the sill of the sunny morning
2 the jungle straining its leashes there
3(1) pulled <at> the perpendicular mountain
4(1) <>
3(2) pulled[] the perpendicular mountain
4(2) [nearer & nearer her]
- 5(1) Until<> another life beginning:
5(2) Until [with] another life beginning:
6 the green & ominous shade undid
7(1) the flowering trees & <the> whistlers
7(2) the flowering trees & [feathered] whistlers
8 within her blood
- 9 & she rose pale as platinum
10(1) & her love<> the very shape of grief
10(2) & her love [was] the very shape of grief
11 & high on the hill the wild wild plants
12(1) like <rockets of> fire<>[incomplete]
12(2) like[] fire [or the -- rocket of love]
- 13 fire

XVII.

She sat on the sill of the sunny morning
the jungle straining its leashes there
pulled the perpendicular mountain
nearer & nearer her

5 Until with another life beginning:
 the green & ominous shade undid
 the flowering trees & feathered whistlers
 within her blood

10 & she rose pale as platinum
 & her love was the very shape of grief
 & high on the hill the wild wild plants
 like fire or the -- rocket of love

fire

XVIII.

- 1 As a drowned body fills with water—
 2(1) swells, <|>blows up like a bladder floats
 2(2) swells, [/]
 3(2) blows up like a bladder floats
 4(1) on the heavy as mercury <water>
 4(2) on the heavy as mercury [lake]
 5(1) so <does> [incomplete]
 5(2) so <[is]> this woman swollen
 5(3) so[] this woman swollen
 6(1) with emptiness <&> slapping against
 6(2) with emptiness [is] slapping against
 7 the leaves of the calendar—
 8 I cannot get her out of my eye
 9 the scene is sparkling yet she
 10 obtrudes within the frame
 11(1) She is in pain <you can tell>
 11(2) She is in pain []
 12 the fearful swelling bloats her
 13 & the current of time carries her.
 14 It is macabre to see the smallest eddy /spin
 15(1) <her>[incomplete]
 15(2) [that great sac]
 16(1) <that> slow corolla
 16(2) [undo her] slow corolla

XIX.

- 1 At my feet as we walked
 2 the butterfly Navy-blue
 3 outstretched in death
 4 How beautiful I said & bent to touch
 5 But Homero's voice full of alarm & drama

XVIII.

As a drowned body fills with water—
swells,
blows up like a bladder floats
on the heavy as mercury lake
5 so this woman swollen
with emptiness is slapping against
the leaves of the calendar—
I cannot get her out of my eye
the scene is sparkling yet she
10 obtrudes within the frame
She is in pain
the fearful swelling bloats her
& the current of time carries her.
It is macabre to see the smallest eddy spin
15 that great sac
undo her slow corolla

XIX.

At my feet as we walked
the butterfly Navy-blue
outstretched in death
How beautiful I said & bent to touch
5 But Homero's voice full of alarm & drama

XIX.5 Homero] Identified as one of Page's cleaners. Page describes an episode in which Homero discovers a robber (*ladrão*), calls the police, and other servants lock the robber in a room, only to have him escape by jumping out a window (*BJ* 117-19).

XX.

1 Not your problem
2 yours will be different this
3 already seems old-fashioned to you &
4 hardly exciting
 yet I swear
5 young man, intelligent & fair as you
6 grew grey in its service, crusted

7 the same black night that priests have /suffered

8 your face is beautiful
9 as mine was once
10 simply by being young & arrogant
11 & knowing your cause is right
12 the world will change

XXI.

Natural History Museum.

1 The Sloths

2 have loofah fur
3 and faces by Henry Moore

4 Maursupials

5 To be a marsupial in Australai
6 in strange enough
7 But in Brazil its stranger still:
8(1) consider a <marsupial>[incomplete]
8(2) consider a [duck with a duclin in its pocket]
9 and a blonde rat with a brood of four

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XX.

Not your problem
yours will be different this
already seems old-fashioned to you &
hardly exciting

5 yet I swear
young man, intelligent & fair as you
grew grey in its service, crusted

the same black night that priests have suffered

10 your face is beautiful
as mine was once
simply by being young & arrogant
& knowing your cause is right
the world will change

XXI.

Natural History Museum

The Sloths

have loofah fur
and faces by Henry Moore

Marsupials

5 To be a marsupial in Australia
in strange enough
But in Brazil its stranger still:
consider a duck with a duclin in its pocket
and a blonde rat with a brood of four

XXII.

- 1 I saw a baleen in his bones
 2 long-fingered hands close to his ribs
 3 I saw him swim in the air like a stone
 4 I saw through the holes in his face
- 5(1) ◇
 6(1) astraddle a painted tree in the crook of its wood
 7(1a) the sloths ◇ in <their> loofah fur
 7(1b) the sloths <[cretinous faced> suited] in[] loofah fur
 7(1c) the sloths [union] suited in loofah fur
 8(1) the zebras long spine
 9(1) & the coral snake pretty in brine—
 10(1a) <in> a coffin of glass all the pretty singers
 10(1b) []a coffin of glass all the pretty singers
 11(1) <dead on sticks, heads cocked>
 5(2) [in a coffin of glass all the pretty singers]
 6(2) [dead on sticks, heads cocked]
 7(2) astraddle a painted tree in the crook of its wood
 8(2) the sloths union suited in loofah fur
 9(2) the zebras long spine
 10(2) & the coral snake pretty in brine—
 11(2) []
- 11 A gold spotted spider guards /his golden web—
- 12 the marmosets grow stamens out of their ears
 13 & their fingers feel like the stems of /violets
 14(1) yet a face the size of the top point of <inner> thumb
 14(2) yet a face the size of the top point of [your] thumb
 15 looks at you with frustration

XXII.

I saw a baleen in his bones
 long-fingered hands close to his ribs
 I saw him swim in the air like a stone
 I saw through the holes in his face

5 in a coffin of glass all the pretty singers
 dead on sticks, heads cocked
 astraddle a painted tree in the crook of its wood
 the sloths union suited in loofah fur
 the zebras long spine
 10 & the coral snake pretty in brine—

A gold splotched spider guards his golden web—

the marmosets grow stamens out of their ears
 & their fingers feel like the stems of violets
 yet a face the size of the top point of your thumb
 15 looks at you with frustration

XXII For a complete reading of the genetic sequence of this poem, see Bal-lantyne and Pollock, “*Respect des Fonds and the Digital Page*” p. 197-200. For an alternative reading text, see *Kaleidoscope* p. 102.

1 baleen in his bones...] “The Natural History Museum” appears in a narrative form in the *Brazilian Journal*. This discussion of the tufted ear marmoset, stuffed birds, and the Brazilian marsupial duck occur in the *Brazilian Journal*, dating the various versions of this poem to 1957 (*BJ* 80-81)

11 A gold splotched...] Page talks about the first time she sees a spider in a golden web in the *Brazilian Journal* (83). Spider and web imagery re-occurs in other poems, see “Fly: On Webs”; “The Flower Bed”; “Ah, by the Golden Lilies.” Page also wrote a poem in Portuguese on this subject “Teia de ouro” which she delivered to the Academia Brasileira de Letras in Rio de Janeiro on 12 May 1958.

XXIII.

- 1 I saw a baleen in his bones
2 long fingered hands close to his ribs—
3 I saw him swim in the air like a stone
4(1) through <all> the holes in his face
4(2) through[] the holes in his face
- 5(1) <In a painted tree> in a coffin of glass<>
6(1) <the sloths in their loofah fur>
7(1) <baby-faced cretins>
5(2) <[]in a coffin of glass [all the pretty singers]>
6(2a) [dead on <twigs>]
6(2b) <dead on [sticks]>
7(2) <[heads cocked in a final moult]>
5(3a) [Astraddle a painted tree in the crook<>]
5(3b) Astraddle a painted tree in the crook [of its wood]
6(3) [the sloths in their loofah fur]
7(3) [cretinous]
- 8 12,000 lying in rainbow
9 quiet in the pose of death
10 ankles together

XXIV.

- 1 The Sloths.
2 With their loofah fur
3 & faces by Moore
- 1 Marsupials.
2 To be a marsupial in Australia
3 is strange enough

XXIII.

I saw a baleen in his bones
long fingered hands close to his ribs—
I saw him swim in the air like a stone
through the holes in his face

5 Astraddle a painted tree in the crook of its wood
the sloths in their loofah fur
cretinous

10 12,000 lying in rainbow
quiet in the pose of death
ankles together

XXIV.

The Sloths

With their loofah fur
& faces by Moore

Marsupials

5 To be a marsupial in Australia
is strange enough

XXV.

1 In death as light:
2 straw-stuffed
3 laid out
4 12,000 birds
5 green yellow orange red blue violet

XXVI.

1 These tiny creatures have for face a space
2 no larger than the top joint of my thumb—
3 eyes blue pin heads—pupilled
4 & which look, register excitement
5 interest anger.
6 Stamens grow out of their ears
7 they are absurd
8(1) <double indent/>swing round a <vertical> log
8(2) <double indent/>swing round a [horizontal] log
9 as if to say look I'm playful
10 watch me—aren't I cute
11 come up again—3 on a raft.

12 I poke my fingers through the wire my ring
13 catches the light
14 their tiny hands attack
15 their fingers like the stalks of violets
16 move on my flesh
17 & their tiny eyes look into mine
18 as if they know the ring they cannot /move

XXV.

In death as light:
 straw-stuffed
 laid out
 12,000 birds
 5 green yellow orange red blue violet

XXVI.

These tiny creatures have for face a space
 no larger than the top joint of my thumb—
 eyes blue pin heads—pupilled
 & which look, register excitement
 5 interest anger.
 Stamens grow out of their ears
 they are absurd
 swing round a horizontal log
 as if to say look I'm playful
 10 watch me—aren't I cute
 come up again—3 on a raft.

I poke my fingers through the wire my ring
 catches the light
 their tiny hands attack
 15 their fingers like the stalks of violets
 move on my flesh
 & their tiny eyes look into mine
 as if they know the ring they cannot move

XXVI.1 These tiny creatures...] The marmoset is a particular fascination of Page during her time in Brazil. She mentions them from the beginning of her journal, and includes a parallel narrative encounter to this poem, "More interesting was an absurd trio of small monkeys in a cage—the ones with the tufted ears—their tiny fingers, trying to remove my rings, felt moist and limp as the stems of violets" (*BJ 77*).

EDITORIAL EMENDATIONS

The list of emendations features the edited text as it appears in this edition before the square bracket (]). The variant in the original archival text is noted after. Page and line numbers are given for each noted line and refer to the corresponding line of the poem printed in this edition. For further research and inquiry into these changes, the archival box, file and page number is noted in italics at the end of the emendation.

List of Editorial Emendations

- 118.1 A] a 27-5-1
124.5 Manuel's] Manuels 27-5-4
124.8 dimensions] deimensions 27-5-4
126.1 empty] emty 27-5-5
128.7 midway] middway 27-5-6
130.15 now] nwo 27-5-8
132.11 frangipani] frangi pani 27-5-9
134.11 scène] scene 27-5-10
138.3 jeweler] jeweller 27-5-14
138.11 tea set] teaset 27-5-14
138.12 jeweler] jeweller 27-5-14
138.12 jeweler's] jeweller's 27-5-14
140.8 jeweler] jeweller 27-5-17
142.6 parakeets] parrokeets 27-5-14
142.6 Mato Grosso] Matto Grosso 27-5-15
142.8 shriek] shrieak 27-5-15
144.3 leveled] levelled 27-5-18
146.5 Latin icicles] latin icycles 27-5-19
158.4 Marsupials] Maursupials 27-5-12
158.5 Australia] Australai 27-5-12