

## Designated Heartbeat

BRUCE ANDREWS takes up an uncompromising position at the most radical extreme of the literary avant-garde. A founding co-editor of the legendary journal *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, which helped catalyze the new experimental poetry movements emerging worldwide in the 1980s & 1990s, and emphasizing “a spectrum of writing that places its attention primarily on language and ways of making meaning, that takes for granted neither vocabulary, grammar, process, shape, syntax, program, or subject matter”—qualities that mark his over two dozen books of poetry, his innovative critical essays (collected in *Paradise & Method: Poetics & Praxis*), and his collaborative performance work (as Music Director) with Sally Silvers & Dancers, in New York City since the mid 1970s, with left-wing Political Science professor at Fordham University as his “day job.”

His entry in *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English* highlights this distinctive (and influential) choreography of language’s raw material to provoke socially open & politically-charged readings: he “comes as close as any American poet to fulfilling Whitman’s aim of allowing the ‘forbidden voices, voices of sexes and lusts’ to speak, a cacophony of urban self-presentational idioms, even when these are in violent opposition to one another.” Later sequences (*I Don’t Have Any Paper So Shut Up* and *Lip Service* (his reworking of Dante’s *Paradiso*) set the stage for *Designated Heartbeat*, the key collection of a decade of shorter poems, fresh explosive powder “to stir the beehive.”



# Designated Heartbeat

BRUCE ANDREWS



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## I Knew the Signs by Their Tents

Obligation for hire  
lexicon seduces  
personally notwithstanding  
add?  
consummate alarm—  
ulterior? Stain  
fling incarceration by rumor  
punctual beauty pink  
dissembling punctual crawlers only later  
said meaning was riding her  
covert inside capsuled  
rumor sweets can compare  
forgive slip  
withhold stunned show twice commensurate  
consummate frigid perceiveless  
*italic hesitation*  
that rosy 'System' is an owner  
atmosphere breaks—ransoms—heart  
little white dot  
name  
sharp  
alibi  
orbit  
bubble nothing is  
amiss price kiss implied  
*stop on spot*  
peculiar eye tint  
nor any menace  
logic  
fundamental signals  
dream not broken it  
absorb terse sums—  
Basis—teeth balked

unforeseen intimate  
scene a thing  
urgent gown  
rub esoteric shame jealous  
root is freely certified  
on view breeds to ratify  
bother and betrayed fit *at hand*—  
delicious negotiation collapsing feast  
I'm all suspended  
about the outside of myself  
surroundings inscrutable temperature expositor  
nothing proves the news  
experience consumes on plan  
hip incidents  
could this be you  
could this be you  
could this be you  
delusive fickle  
to be denied, never let me go  
unimpeachably disco  
spigot job, o.k.  
cuddle can punish prism =  
svelte disheveled affront  
realms to compromise's Ground Floor  
aggrandized prompter coming in  
contrite passive prompter legs  
out of a dream world licensed souvenir  
flesh tilts away  
suit me up to familiarities  
tumult elite  
edifice remote  
parsing is the manufacture vain  
would nice to falsify buccaneers

go to unobtained trouble enhances  
enables a guy with superstitious value  
text structure so yawn  
*que viva* secrets unsubstantial find it innocent  
license for proof  
& trappings the worthless function  
yes, rhetoric withdraws to be so sad  
hem is fair  
cease in retrospect  
but a little, we know  
nominate *these* cliff-hangers  
arithmetic of negligence  
enclose the neck in charms  
syllable economy  
where functions depose  
cut me in for a loss  
can any magistrate *afford*  
to *recognize* mock *heroics*?  
Hairbreadth's crescent  
tentacles the case  
chastened suck to paragraphs prompt & straight  
the apparatus of loss  
together pattern conquered hands redress  
sweet incarnation premature instead  
infinite suspect size dress only me  
trust adjourns  
convertible ordinary honey am dumb  
in process show me this and this  
inner forfeit exhaled distinction  
law tint  
bliss with a Delete—threat's  
presence had cool schemes  
sueted up their own gender

it must be no width concern  
repetition didn't subscribe  
fact foreclosed unsuspecting female  
orthography unburdening the drawers  
invalidates nobody  
slit we perfected sign surrounded tight excuse  
strategy entertains  
the limits—fond as fallible  
inform your signifying about your nails, sugar  
plush limitations curtseying intercourse  
off-limits with incendiary requisite  
glowing corners  
progressively hear figures depositing  
alarm to dazzle coming negatively homestead so near  
perpetual occasion for castration  
straighter to be carried up  
in lids suffer error now  
fear of moments the error  
barometer hers the sumptuous  
*in prime* mechanics of sleaze  
outside enchanted ground  
intimate creature  
circumstance statement fairies  
adulterous adulatory bees  
another hour on me  
lips without surprise  
cervically audacious satin  
mercy's library semen  
aim of Irony prefix at discount  
seam became wick ourselves  
adjoining loaded heat  
body drips censure  
a practice

doubt  
throat  
ecstatic curls  
and forget help  
to keep baffle  
corkless throat have tried  
low erect  
clue awful  
ring tightens blunder to regulate  
cocoon tease version of sweeps  
artisanal difference admission  
incubates income acquaintance  
wet trouble  
body warranted possibility through scant pricklier  
labor—privilege's interdict  
null heart marketeers esteemed  
censure  
small whim capsized  
subjugated toast  
circumference aghast

## Verbal Sallies

June 15-16	88
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June 23-24	88
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dear Sally—

love,

Bruce

1.

100° honey hush—diddent!—the sweat  
melts telegraph-boy hats lips barely  
close hoops to decide  
rallentandos swept loose.

Nobody seems to be breathing lickage

*libre*

periphery & even beyond blur cyclic *soirées*.

Lilliputian skinny-dip atom

poised in parallel material privacy

draw an imaginary bow grilles around

it fool's gold elevations.

2.

Skidding, ready, hone—  
dearer—  
spin—  
bouts light can carve  
one more species  
fervor cordage.  
Classics repent: I can't  
afford the tradition  
shouldn't wrap up  
I swear—pretends—predict  
lucks tucked underneath the much  
unforgettable flickers—referent burn-out  
stitched leisure headshots of standbys, dram  
lines  
looks arraign  
emotion on the skin.

3.

In mid-  
leap phasized  
singled in vascular clockwork amplify  
by wiring against a black drop  
shows you arms. Cross-  
word—maps decolonized—the entwining  
intermittences—in rhythm—  
upside  
hope scuttles  
that massing susceptibility or be  
stopped short  
vie yessum but bites  
treadle stroboscopic  
there's your stemwinder, animal elastic  
ventilating kiss could remind.

4.

Happy dictation. Stage-  
struck—as if—  
mammal less  
brief bluish glue  
lightening  
nape fwd insigniac  
vicarious fact box.  
Delusions of reproof recognizably dizzy  
at a faster or slower  
things vertigo  
intervening  
query as can be.  
Oh, I win the pool!  
Lank  
taper  
baste  
necklike pecking disorder—  
apertures mollified  
ornaments precipitately.

5.

If you stop standing on your head  
slices of pink rubbery sap  
plumed orchids backward  
= indirect answer. Fold comma  
number milk revamps  
given care zeal—  
metaphoric outdoors feint, yeah.  
Ultra ecto  
via rewires rescind  
lip ruffle floppy desk, torso blur  
anticipatory piranhas. Mute  
is king  
satin pre-op  
hex  
giveth red.

6.

Click  
solve it captive  
silked claue away—  
act the public,  
my thinking can sensate  
for itself. Stethoscopic  
nova questionnaires,  
marzipanic seersucker  
made by bloom en-  
genderable  
smudge list—do  
tell! Apostrophe  
bubble—turns page—  
unfence pinwheel casing  
open-air relents.  
Movies mahogany  
by tugs pretty polly  
suspend between  
ombudsperson  
lips that  
barnstorm fix.