

## Fig

CAROLINE BERGVALL (b. 1962) is a poet and text-based artist based in London, England. Previous books include *Eclat* (1996) and *Goan Atom, 1 (Doll)* (2001). Her work has appeared in many magazines and anthologies internationally. A selection has appeared in the *Oxford Anthology of Modern British and Irish Poetry* (2001). She has developed audiotexts as well as collaborative performances with artists. Most recently, the installation *Little Sugar* for TEXT Festival (Bury, 2005) and *Say: "Parsley"* at the Liverpool Biennial (2004). A CD, *VIA: poems 1994–2004*, is published by Optic Nerve. Her critical work is concerned with plurilingual poetry and mixed media forms of writing. She was the Director of Performance Writing, Dartington College of Arts (1994–2000). She is currently Research Fellow at Dartington and co-chair of Writing, Milton Avery School of the Arts, Bard College (NY).



# Fig

GOAN ATOM 2

CAROLINE BERGVALL



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*I admit not knowing very well what poetry is, but on the other hand quite well what is a fig*

Francis Ponge

*a fig fruit, a fruit of fig*



Contents

- 11 16 Flowers
- 19 Flèsh
- 31 About Face
- 49 Say: "Parsley"
- 63 Via
- 73 In Situ
- 83 More Pets
- 91 Dog
- 99 Reading Ginsberg
- 105 Reading Arendt
- 111 8 Figs
- 131 Gong



# 16 Flowers



The occasion was an invitation from poet John Cayley to collaborate on his permutational text *Nothr's* for a CD-Rom by the journal *Performance Research* (Summer 1999). Text sections referring to flower motifs in Marcel Proust and Jean Genet's works were excerpted to form the basis of his "transliterated morphs" between the French quotes and their English translations. As a contrast to the additive and randomly changing structure of John's chosen weave of quotes, a white text on black background, I suggested that I would develop a series of 16 one-liners. Each line would be programmed to appear once only (or less) per reading session. One at a time, a black text on white background, they would interrupt for a few seconds the seamless flow of the structure.

The 16 lines were linked to the piece's quotes and translations through the italicised nodal word at the core of the chosen quote. They were connected to one another through a logic of agglutination, of concatenation. "Heart us invisibly thyme time". *80 Flowers*. Five words a line. A doubling of eight, amorosa entwines dolorosa, lines of words worn like crowns of flesh, vulnerability redemptive, the surprise of love is its most rigorous demand. "Certain acts *dazzle* us and light up blurred surfaces as if our eyes are keen enough to see them in a flash, for the beauty of a living thing can be grasped only fleetingly" *The Miracle of the Rose*.





9. looseHung metal Folds *Heat*-be ds

10. heave-heavends Glissening *Hearts* be attitudes

11. soar Coeurs formidable *foam* liS-p

12. Offer inCuts alArm to her-*Throbbing*

13. Offer bloodFalls hearthRobed inner *t*Highs

14. OffHer *dazzle* bloodgush enrobe lovMeta

15. lovblong *faceg*Ush -er mettle ways

16. unCrowne D-ashes dazed-in tHer PInCK



Flèsh

