

To Bridges To

Contents

Part 1	4
Part 2	6
Part 3	9
Part 4	14
Part 5	23
Part 4	39
Part 3	48
Part 2	53
Part 1	56

...moves the wave belly-lovely
Glass of the glass sea shadow of water
On the open water no other way
To come here the outer
Limit of the ego

George Oppen

1.

Cast.

2.

Sound structures

you. Enter

parabola wind

rescinded center.

Bridge me
it said.

O Brigitte
I did.

3.

From cypress-roost from
telephone-pole an egret
hears a hole.

To bridges to
a peninsula's hollow
waves I roll.

Anticipation builds blue
ocean-light and lines
coming into view.

Thesis antithesis synthesis
can't explain it.
With three words

in each line
3 swells in
every set curl

crack spit. You
exit the cave
of a wave.

Here I am
in a cage.
There you are

engaged. Hovering backlit
between love and
the idea of

coming apart is
a bridge burnt
before being built.

John sings *I*
am the walrus
coo-coo coo-choo. Rock

doves on guardrails
I cross Samoa
Bridge. Sea-lions plunge

thru waves too
large for this
board I'm afraid.

4.

Ink-blue waves break in
glassy sunlight. Across sandbars
they write and erase
themselves in one motion

an autumn ocean the
instrument they can't stop
playing an instrument longer
than the whole Samoa

peninsula longer than that
woman's legs her moons
her quasar. A celestial
body being surveilled fades

to a point. Particle-waves
curling glimmers the Pacific
an ink-well a California
gull dips a quill.

Have nothing to say
and say it no
one to talk to
and talk to it.

When it says something
back you're getting started.
Let the alien's red
second hand long black

minute hand and short
black hour hand unplan
the night. Not entirely
interested in your poem

or your civilization it's
insouciant and ecstatically open
with all the time
in all the words.

Samoa Bridge September 18th
2009 an 18-year-old woman
standing on a railing
holding light-pole 847 lets

go an officer grabs

her pulls her down.

October 8th 2014 a

frail old woman crashes

into a guardrail attempting

autocide and fails. Each

light-pole's bulb-housing's a perfect

perch for gull tern

cormorant egret mockingbird hawk.

On concrete beneath light-pole

847 lies a light-brown

action-figure alone and broken.

Before the Samoa Bridge
is built ferries go
back and forth. Charon
ferries newly-dead souls across

the rivers Acheron and
Styx. In 1600 a
Wiyot girl spots the
fairy Ariel plotting the

destruction of a Spanish
galleon. Today a thick
fog erasing the bridge
an old Wiyot woman

haggard and oddly beautiful
holds a cardboard sign
2 nicely-drawn blue feathers
cursive words PLEASE HELP.

Warped lines of waves
distort what the surfer
hears the wave function
collapses a particle appears.

An A-framed wave barrels
you vanish behind a
falling liquid curtain for
4 seconds reappear intact

still standing. Sandbars drag
shapely waves across their
slopes 4 bars of
cell-phone reception on Mars

a receiver that sensitive
your heart's alien beach.
Each future has a
form but no content.

Northern harrier stares from
atop light-pole 1490
the year *Tirant lo Blanch*
is published the white

tyrant saves Constantinople from
the Ottoman Turks the
Christians from the Muslims.
Actually it fell ending

the Byzantine Empire. By
1490 the Wiyot Yurok
Karuk Klamath Hupa had
still never seen a

white man. Heading south
the northern harrier glides
over Humboldt Bay its
white tail-bar still visible.

Minute concentric circles expand
and vanish a sudden
flock of Aleutian geese
tune their trumpets above

a glistening Humboldt Bay.
Listening lengthens the bridge
strengthens its reflection and
connects it to Pont-Neuf.

Here's the death-mask of
a young beautiful woman
who drowned in the
Seine circles expanding waves

of light and pain.
Her deceptive smile knows
you carry your death
inside like a seed.

1803 the Louisiana Purchase
doubles America's size from
the Mississippi River to
the Rocky Mountains. To

survive invasion occupation alienation
keepers of the sacred
fire double the size
of their interior life.

Osprey overhead I pass
light-pole 1803 the year
Emerson's born remember walking
wordless woods under oversoul

liquid evergreens themselves breathing.
I remember you falling
off the marble bridge
luminous water forever waiting.

5.

You haven't mentioned the water
rippling above me Harstine Bridge
is built in 1960 during
its construction no one dies
or the symmetry of other

words coming simultaneously into being
tide rimming over barnacled rocks
under which purple claws scuttle
sideways. Firs waver little furrows
on the Sound growing memories

of burning whiskey you savor.
Driving across Samoa Bridge to
my right the mill dominates
black smokestack above mounds of
stacked logs to my left

the sound is silver pelicans
cover a dilapidated wooden raft.
Between this bridge and that
the connection is my father's
gold watch on display in

the kingdom of the dead.
Seeing it shine hearing it
tick isn't a metaphor longing
for home structure itself a
bridge from nowhere to nowhere.

You call them naked ladies
I call them flamingo lilies
because they're tall pink and
stand on one leg. Remember
a flock of these flowers

in a patch of dirt
between a strip-mall on one
side of the bridge and
a cemetery on the other
made you feel alive. Someone

opens a circuit an ocean
you want to see from
my window the pane melted
warping the sea's soundless silver-blue
sheet-glass and you can hear

it break remember playing bridge
remember burning it. Dusky plumes
of mill-smoke a blue-purple glow
I've only ever seen pink
flamingos in a zoo remember

the opening to *Three's Company*
Chrissy's smiley one-legged imitation. They
call it a floating bridge
one day it loses its
footing and simply floats away.

An inflammation of the iris
causes the picture to vibrate
a purple iris in black
water the blackness getting thicker
an ocean in a drop

of liquor birds like letters
in the setting sun I
vanish in slow motion. You
count the words in each
line while it moves from

left to right. My favorite
color is blink a cross
between blue and pink a
red-tailed hawk on the purple
wing of a plane will

soon fly over the bridge.
Not waving but wobbling I
count the bottles you pull
away angered no more talk.
Hawk disappears faster than plane

at night the bridge is
where a red light and
a green light don't blink
we are a ghost where
a bridge used to be.

Twilight intensifies a human capacity
to perceive beauty the whole
landscape marinated in it it's
oozing out of the sand.
A boat's light at sea

is a candle Venus a
lurid lantern between them hot
pink swirls in a febrile
glow salmon and mango clouds
like molten rivers. At shore's

edge a dead surf scoter
the red orange and yellow
bill matching sunset's afterglow small
onyx eyes open vibrant borders
interjurisdictional how did you fall.

I've only ever seen surf
scoters in water try to
imagine one in flight but
see your shiny black wings
folded tight against the sand.

Halflight hovers a bridge between
night and day depths surfacing
so I take photographs and
think of you because I'm
so close and I'm alive.

In the morning the tops
of two spruces festooned with
fluorescent moss no less real
than trashcans or absence imperishable
the Samoa Bridge is being

invaded by fog. Anxiously I
can't see thru the words
seastack smokestack to you your
legs. One continues as other
as if my car isn't

moving the bridge is. Where
fog welds water and sky
to absolute separation the subject
is soldered bridge bolts the
subject is time. Humboldt Bay's

an orange mirror reflecting a
threshold deepening you and I
disappear but the pronouns are
still here and the thought
of Nell in a trashcan

saying *nothing is funnier than*
unhappiness but remember how deep
the water you were happy
you could see the bottom
so white and so clean.

Left to right back and
forth down forested mountain patched
with fog and ice this
road a frozen black snake
twists with the Trinity River

bridging it twice the same
thought distorting you a meadowlark's
yellow chest glowing in snow.
Only when it's flown are
you the lark I'm covered

in dead sedge a dormant
meadow. You move east cities
move west at the same
speed a frond flings its
spores a woman in Singapore

sings herself to sleep. There
are no more cars no
holly tree stuffed with waxwings
berry-high. The fog and ice
evanesce no romance where two

sparrows spar in a thicket
the stained escutcheon of a
breast the image I mean
shifts context faster than the
eye I mean bam gone.

From an airplane the Pacific
resembles parchment those white caps
are signs without codes cozy
as a god I could
blow them away the clouds

to see clearly the sea
named peace to keep pace
with forms of acknowledgment these
offerings cast invisible bridges appear.
Almost human again I land

and go back every day
up and down hills filled
with white the tracks my
car writes in the snow
signify what. I get out

at the airport and it
smells like smoked salmon. No
one else is here it
must've come off one of
those small yellow planes and

very recently the horizon is
salmon-tinged mirrored on the bay.
It's a good day without
you a good little time
and place to be alive.

Four mornings in a row
a wavering checkmark of geese
across my window the left
pane clear the right melted
the bridge between them a

jamb. Blackberry jam on my
toast tastes sweet the color
of my heart I wonder
when you were here what
colors the couple behind me

talk and laugh I begrudge
them their happiness. I'm in
the word *booth* part of
the second *o* I go
round and round myself facing

the hole in the center.
In the zero-point field nothing
is superfluous when you die
you will think immediately of
a bridge. I distinguish butter

from jam you get over
it without looking back but
honey magic is holding on
to the bridge even when
it only exists in pieces.

Driving Old Arcata Road thinking
of the old man on
a frosty beach tossing breadcrumbs
to crows this morning a
horse runs out in front

of my car. Big beautiful
horse chocolate-brown with a black
mane gallops down the middle
of the right lane cars
slow pull over and watch

her go. She's going west
toward a beach where sand
verbena blooms from a smooth
belly of dune beneath sky
silver-lavender and grey. The sea

is dark emerald but beauty
isn't enough and the voice
that comes to one in
the dark the dark-emerald voice
isn't enough. One could speak

for all eternity and say
so little you want so
much to escape before that
last red glow on the
horizon closes like a mouth.

Because of my compressed brachial
plexus I've been experiencing deferred
nerve pain in my latissimus
dorsi and my triceps for
a week. Ray Charles I've

been trying to remember his
name for a week and
don't know if there's a
correlation between pinching my nerve
and forgetting his name. That

ganglion cyst on the back
of my hand finally popped
yesterday January 4th the day
Earth reached perihelion only 47
million kilometers from the sun

the length of a bridge
between my face and my
memory of it as long
as the chain of deferred
meaning rattles. A dream's a

form of seeing in the
dark seeing what one is
otherwise blind to. Driving at
sunset Ray Charles on the
radio sings unchain my heart.

Left foreground a parking block
a shade bluer than the
sky the crow on top
of it looks left then
right into your eyes caw

caw caws then flies into
the light-blue background and's gone.
Then the frame itself goes
replaced immediately by another I'm
unable to define before it

changes again. Are there bridges
between the frames glasses have
bridges between the frames of
the lenses. A grey-haired man
looks thru his glasses at

his curly-blond wife they smile
at the taste of their
pancakes they smile at each
other. A grey whale calf
big gold barnacles on her

back surfaced beside me in
the surf an hour ago
wow now the couple's gone
I can't impress you anymore
your absence occupying the frame.

The city smells of petrochemicals
French-fries and fear but the
scent of ceanothus by the
ocean makes you forget for
a minute the asshole at

work the lump on your
friend's breast the growing debt.
The middle of the bridge
from the mainland to Treasure
Island has collapsed one wooden

railing still attached bridging the
bridge as it were. I'm
hanging from the railing swinging
left hand over right over
left like a monkey two

8-foot long sharks in the
clear water below when I
wake. Fear of madness is
more salient than fear of
death. A purple bobtail truck

with a yellow question mark
on the back like I'm
in a *Batman* movie swerves
the natives of Treasure Island
had no word for bridge.

The bridge of her nose
a commander standing on a
ship's bridge a mandolin in
her hand its bridge transmits
the strings' vibrations from tawny

body of instrument thru clear
blue air to your ear.
She's singing the bridge between
first and second verse *sailing*
home to Samoa my love's

in the loam. I'm here
standing on a sand-dune on
Samoa peninsula not the South
Pacific but the Northern California
coast. There's a beautiful blue

wave too small to ride
imagine being small enough the
size of the word *wave*
goodbye. You don't have to
picture it anymore June 22nd

2015 sunny hot Monday afternoon
Lucky Looks the surf spot
firing lefts love's origin a
glassy ocean whoever it shimmers
for whatever it's conscious of.

If asked by a panther

don't anther. 3 days after

Ogden Nash dies on May

22nd 1971 an earthquake lasting

20 seconds destroys most of

Bingöl Turkey more than 1,000

killed 10,000 made homeless Susan

Mahon and Timothy Mackey are

married at Saint Edmonds Roman

Catholic Church in Philadelphia PA.

Meanwhile Samoa Bridge in Eureka

California is completed the bronze

dedication plaque surrounded by seashells

embedded in a concrete sculpture

supposed to resemble a sail

but it resembles more the

dorsal of a great white.

Because I can't drink away

the memory of the shark

you move to Philadelphia and

marry a professor of Greek

philosophy. City of brotherly love

city of Ptolemy Philadelphus for

whom Earth's stationary our bridge

pulls itself apart like taffy.

Out of the 5 portals
into the 5 lenses every
word's a door floating on
an ocean whose blues resemble
yours. A glassy hollow wave's

a time-machine how to describe
a color that doesn't exist
yet to smile gracefully in
the face of death. Ember-orange
to flame-yellow cups clustered poppies

like naked candles in which
blissed insects twilight kissed by
pistils still she stands a
loaded gun. Who is she
Emily in California no she's

a celestial body with firearms
for sex-organs. Bite into a
too-soft apricot it squirts out
the other end onto a
window-pane I promised I wouldn't

think about sex or compare
it to barrel-riding it's too
late the mechanic can't see
luminous hole pinching the time-
machine breaking chandeliers closes out.

4.

You cross Samoa Bridge
and hold up a
poem hoping to hide
behind it but it's

a mirror attached to
a cabinet full of
pills. This mirror's a
bridge between my breath

and your death. No
medicine wheel no impression
able to transform itself
I will be written.

Attention dignity unattachment love
this medicine isn't something
you take it's something
you let go of.

A kite levitates above
light-pole 733 the year
Pope Gregory III supports
a revolt in Italy

against iconoclasm. The bridge
between manmade and acheiropoieta
word and flesh burns.
The conflation of creator

and creation was anathema.
Between symbolic and real
the bridge is imaginary
whether a kite refers

to pink plastic flapping
overhead pray for control
and submission or a
red-eyed bird of prey.

Call it gephyromania an
obsession with bridges I
pass light-pole 818 the
year Arab refugees arrive

in Fez. Today an
old Hupa woman returns
to the rez where
the suicide rate is

40 times the national
average the eternal return.
I think the black
and teal sign says

AMOR but it's AMOK.
818 is my childhood
area code first love
stuck flickering in Hollywood.

Pigeons line the guardrail
beneath light-pole 1660 the
year Samuel Pepys begins
his diary. He worries

wig-makers are using hair
from corpses my wife
spies me embracing a
girl con my hand

sub su coats ended
in her cunny. The
Great Fire isn't funny
threatening London Bridge. Poor

pigeons loth to leave
their houses hover about
balconies till their wings
burn and they fall.

Yesterday we ride glassy
gleaming caverns at dawn
golden bowls Chad says.
Today's gloomy the surf

mushier than a June
apple I drive home
skunked over Samoa Bridge
for the umtiumth time.

Tall leafless alder ornamented
with robins and waxwings
playing musical chairs one
yellow apple still hangs

from a late-February tree.
A golden-crowned sparrow is
tearing little shreds carving
a jagged gold bowl.

The first song John
Lennon learns is Fats
Domino's *Ain't That a
Shame* no bridge no

middle bit the chorus
just keeps repeating like
gunfire. December 8th 1980
I'm 8 playing T-ball

today Fats is 88
still singing playing piano.
A ghost tape-loops
ecstatically off and on

its message the same.
We need you now
more than ever John
ain't that a shame.

An essay on mystical
cosmology anticipating the Big
Bang universal expansion and
the Big Crunch *Eureka*

A Prose Poem is
Poe's final work. He
dies in 1849 aged
40 like John Lennon.

A concept by which
we measure our pain
God exists solely in
the diffused matter and

repulsion of the universe.
Memories of a destiny
will morph shadows in
a Baltimore alley nevermore.

Dedicated to von Humboldt
Poe's *Eureka's* published in
1848 the year gold's
discovered in the American

River. California becomes a
possession of the United
States after the Mexican
War. I'm born in

1972 in Eureka California
Humboldt County. A state
of collapse every atom
attracted to every other

Poe's universe contracts until
a singularity explodes expands
and contracts again ad
infinitum a divine heartbeat.

3.

My Eureka ends
with a gold
flash in water.

Remember the Matterhorn.
Poe's *Eureka* ends
with matter vanishing

a spirit aglow
an intuition coming
from somewhere blue.

I'm not showing
you my limits.
Harmonica for dissonance

Santa Monica for
disappointment there's tar
on my feet.

The car stereo
repeats Joni Mitchell's
Blue you smile.

Explore silver blue-green
marine caves hollow
waves. Call it

liquid spelunking. Say
pit cylinder barrel
tunnel tube pipe

but it's shaped
more like a
big vacant teardrop.

Edgar Allan Poe
Jack Spicer and
John Lennon die

at 40. At
40 my desperate
dizzying fantasy's over.

9 more sober
words my friends
the poem ends.

2.

Blend host
and guest

ghost. Hear
it glistening.

Softly I'm
you it

says. Who
are you.

1.

Don't.