THE APOSTROPHE OF ULYSSES TO A SCHOLAR OF CRITICAL THEORY

Kon Tiki mon amour! The difficult body-bearing
lean towards the wind, the stuttered rigging,
the Mercury capsule free-fall simulacrum.

On the plasma display in the basement bar
three blocks from the library
the news is up: next year you'll

works entirely metonymy, after the theft of
famous work by the African-American scholar
a residue of fired palimpsests.

It is hard being an all-American hero: humming
All My Children through the churning waters
you get are not about you. Turn on the radio

and all you hear are broadcasts from the dead
reflected back by nebulae:
I believe I am correct in describing myself

as the only convincing love story of the 20th
century, a point of contention with the back room
boys in Houston in our final teleconference:

I now exist twice. In the circumstantial evidence
on the desk of the increasingly perceptive private dick,
and on the deck as vines tangle

the stripped boards and ropes of human hair.
I hate my self more than the lanky girl
of the suburbs: I see mirrors
in the overhead wiring. At home: days watching
my island on the Travel channel.
Now you’re really living, says the service,

and it plays like Fellini.
The last man to be soaked
by situation, I move, a ghost

through accountancy, lay spectral
hands on the keys of a revisionist Odyssey
as an equally touchless daughter plays, reinvented

for an audience of pre-teens.
What have we not seen? The long blank table
in the Shakespearian reproduction waiting

for the assistant to take a reading,
Kate Winslet’s hairdresser scissoring the air,
the rouge portraits of the extras stocking the ground.

I love you! Donna of the word, interpreter
of the uninterpreted student,
stand and watch the show which must go on,

the operatic glossolalia.
THE APOSTROPHE OF ROBERT OPPENHEIMER TO
ARAKI YASUSADA

Penny is Faust, Twiggy is Faust, on the trains
is Faust with a stopwatch he governs. I am Faust?

Small heaps of desert glass is Faust (in talkative shards
like your speech never-was), dying birds on the Trinity

site is Faust, the animated natural—is playful,
seldom-created, easy, like terrible writing, to understand,

being nature. In those last days we could have known
the Gadget would blow: machines must come, like girls, to dust

& what can be created can never be destroyed—we call you,
on the bomb-map, survived-impossible, the articulated speaker's

hiss, the static that can't be cut, the wandering terrified-toy Japan
that sounds like a child on the carpet.

Nobody thinks. So you and I must do our thinking for us,
put our heads together, throw up some chalk signs, you

the destroyer, I the destroyed or was it another way around?
The things that could have been! Patient witness

to our calculus delight, child of our slide-rule callings
in New Mexican chill: you would not-be and be unmade

by all our elocution, but play the long-art game
and I would fade, like black, to grey and stand with you
on shelves of moral white. What became instead shuffled,
madden to an ingenuous core and built above

the city you nor I have never seen a separate Sun
that harrows at a distance

like the telephone. At last, I think, you were created for me
by some daemon lovingkind, creature for my life-in-death,

companion, citation, clever Noh protagonist
as I am Time grown old and wanting to unmake the world.
desmond kon zhicheng-mingde
jacqueline waters
arielle greenberg
rae armantrout
marjorie welish
stuart krimko
simon dedeo
josh fox
lydia davis
jacob wren
john kinsella
michael klein
lee etheredge iv
harmony holiday
k. silem mohammed