

5/18/98

Dear Donna,

Thanks for “Fearless....”¹ They seem even more fragmented (in a good way) than I remember the other works like this, but they also seem unified in an interesting way as well. “Cancer of the Womb”² seems too heavy as a lead in especially in comparison to the others. Set the heaviness exist by itself -- there are alot of terrific shifts from “light” to “heavy” & that title feels a little burdensome (unlike “Develop an Artifical Womb” which is more mysterious). Why not do a whole book in this form, you seem to be doing this already, each one on a separate page, or what would turn out to be a much longer book everything running together as you have it. I think if you did 100 of them you’d develop a million new narrative strategies -- using repetition, your own life, & a lot of different source material (all of which, again, you’re akeady doing).

Hope to see you Friday night but if I don’t make it it’s not because I don’t want to but just trying to conserve energy -- I’m not teaching, for at least a few months, & trying to get involved in some new projects. So if not, be in touch, yes?

Love

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the name 'Lew' or 'Lewis', written in dark ink.

¹ “Fearless or Oblivious in This Coexistence” was one of the first collage pieces I’d written (Spring 2018). Lewis had given our group a collage poem assignment using the first page of *The New York Times*. We called ourselves The Grand Street Group, at first, because we were meeting at Dennis Moritz and Phyllis Wat’s apartment on Grand Street. We later moved to Be LaRoe’s loft on Park Avenue South. Be ran Chez LaRoe a performance venue for many years.

“Fearless..” appeared in my book *Black Mayonnaise* (Ten Pell Books, 2000) along with other like poems such as “Grand Street Homage,” which contained a quote from Lewis “*Can we do this? Can we...yes?*” The murderer was also *very* loosely inspired by Lewis.

² This unpublished poem was renamed “The Real Square is an Abstraction.”

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Aug 13

Dear Donna--

the poems are really good, getting better. lines like *Goethe frequented Bolt -- impossible."³ add a lot of depth. possibly use your various knowledges as a source more often, yes? im constantly asking myself what i know, what i don't know -- the latter side of the ledger seems endless. then i realize i do know something as well.

fun at lunch -- i heard the workshop went on forever. lilla⁴called & she's trying to arrange for feb. i dont know why i have such mixed feelings about that

place-⁵ hope you're well & be In touch & keep going with this sequence

love

Lewis

³ Line from the unpublished poem "Give and Take."

⁴ Poet Lilla Lyon, author of *Hello Mongolia* (Ten Pell Books, 2001), which won the Milt Kessler Poetry Book Award (2002).

⁵ Ten Pell, a Chinese restaurant named for its address in Chinatown, which has since closed. This became the name of our publishing collaborative because it symbolized our unity and friendship—starting a press was Lewis's idea. We began with Lewis in his Poetry Project workshop in October 1997 before migrating to Grand Street.