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**CHapBOOKS**  
A H\_NGM\_N Publication

EVERY NIGHT IN MAGIC CITY | **MC HYLAND**



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**Published by H\_ngm\_n**

Syracuse, New York

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**Cover Photo:**

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**Typefaces:**

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Text: Akzidenz Grotesk, design by Berthold Type Foundry.

**Special thanks to** the Senior Design class at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for inspiration on book design.

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EVERY NIGHT IN MAGIC CITY

## STRANGE ROCK SHAPES BEHIND THE HIGHLIGHTING OF LEAVES

we are flying over the edge around the corner &  
the holes in the sky are closing up but

here is the edge lit shone through  
white water cresting & winding

around a lizard's submerged eye drifts woozily upward  
ghost trains pass through one another bending

a prisoner may be observing this massing dazzling  
off its curved & reflective surfaces

I am shouting in my sleep in this hot junkyard then  
I am picking your pocket with extraordinary affection

the tiered & fanciful architecture  
looks like something melted a machine

at capacity a vehicle for light presenting  
a path to ascend to this one thin branch

we fly through trees becoming  
a mansion & a land descending its steps

we stand on the lawn in evening gowns  
& throw gloves to the grass laughing

THE PINNED COAT ARM OF THE ONE-HANDED MAN

debris that moves slightly forward slightly back with the  
waves beating the horsedrawn carriages

an obscuring of sky by a shower  
of plaster & two cut-out hearts held to overlap

I let things move around & into me & still

a handstand puts him upright as though  
he has left America & entered a country

of dollhouses & tentacles & you held  
my hand as we ran to see all these things

at the pawnbroker a clock mounted  
with an ornamental eagle throws

empty trash barrels against the sidewalk the ocean  
crashes while the woman disappears

from behind a wall the bodies of the dancers  
move many parts at once

the windows so slanting & they are where the light comes

**SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!**

by a safe I twitch at my mustache  
& sailor the gun through the air

under where my shirt is there is laughter  
the plane takes off from the kimono

& spreads the woman's hand upon  
the velveteen divan regarded by

two waistcoated men with a certain repetition  
the cat walks by so larger than the city skyline

& the woman arrives behind a spangled curtain  
first afraid then sly & smoking like a cannon

ON A VOLÉ UN COLLIER DE PERLES DE 5 MILLIONS

the scrap metal the tossed-aside reaches the river  
which turns upright into a damp kind of sky

the woman is an instrument of the particular present  
zeroes & typographic pearls      quell across her breast

a pair of legs walking through that time  
& into her despair      the woman removes

her dress & we enter her mouth      we touch the doorknob  
& wave goodbye to the ship with all our

triumphant tin flags      with all  
our sorrowful hands & eyes

rain falling on the river & the beautiful girl  
the cameraman visible in reflection      her hair

a perfect thundercloud hanging in midair from  
a stone wall of large boulders snugged

wipe the sweat from her neck      a false city  
peopled with model trains grows seasick as a fish as a

school of fish in a shaken aquarium near the light  
moving toward us between crossed leaves

an invisible audience becomes trees her hair & her shoulders  
moving above ground towards the city center a globe crushed

electric wire seen from a train      tallest building  
pointing up & up to commemorate

the empire & how it shapes the water repeatedly

**& THEN ALLOWED TO CLIMB**

here is a housemaid with white kerchief  
seen through a funhouse mirror    looking through

his silhouette creeps diagonally  
from the right & the parallel lines

ascend her long shawl    breast to foot

the ocean like a circus strongman  
in tattered costume    is wet & circular here

plunged into & Vaseline-smear  
& a brightness taking the water

a whiteness of motion    among slanting windows  
maribou covered arms out above the frill

& an organ grinder as a heart made  
of candles melts in the afternoon sun

the men standing on deck make  
a set of verticals ticking

in the ocean wind a sort of pieta

as his handkerchief waves & his body  
shows a kind of sky    smudgy at the fringes

## CHAQUE SOIR À MAGIC-CITY

flowers falling upward as  
her body appears from under water

naked in the camera's stuttering eye  
the concealed eye of light is a motion you make occur

dream of ascending stairs into a cupola with walls  
made of light where we remove

our clothes & adieu/ so beautiful! we descend  
the stairs & the machine of uncertainty shifts slowly forward

we enter the house of lace she is walking  
away from us & sun glows through

her dress face tilted away & I think  
of the touch this shell left on the ground glistening

a blurred hand in his hair & the arrival  
of the train from the nearby village

the ghost train arrives blending  
white steam with dark sky

is a lamp spinning a triangle rounding here  
is the way the light closes with the hands

the sky giving & taking away    l'ascenseur & the knife  
become walls of sanity & the sky a border

of the sincere woman who burns  
in a pit while singing La Marseillaise

IT IS GOOD TO BE ALONE

& aimless asleep in a beautiful grave  
in the coral in the narrow paint & shadows

deer cluster & the iguana watches solemn  
as the legs less sexual than a machine rise

over mountains the large man attempts to push  
his way through the door I cross the room to touch

a triangular box filled with gold  
which coalesces into four white spheres

prickly & moving in & out of yesterday  
the barge full of men in frock coats descending

from the castle walk in  
like visitors from a neighboring reel

## THE SPLIT-FACED MAN CANNOT BE TOUCHED

dear mister almighty I speak  
by a telephone out of the passing parade

light on water & a title in three movements  
the light or the water approaching us slowly

here we ascend & the beams slide  
away below the sluice-gates of your reservoirs

the union of fire & water      a sheet &  
a sailor at the edge become the ocean & his body wavers  
as a woman folds it into a basket

this sugarcane kingdom  
so inhabited by strollers looking away

the tumble of stones continues becomes  
the ripple of a shallow clear river

becomes light moving over the water  
& the depths shudder lurching      the train station

begets the train & passing underneath the arch  
a man pauses to look back his skin  
aged by sun exposing the film

are we re-entering where we have always  
been the water & the grasses

a woman becomes a curtain & light  
moves through her as she moves

SO MANY FORMS OF SUPERIMPOSED TRANSPORT

a car floats across the sky over the toy village

snow-covered mountain passes      an elephant  
grinds an organ or camera

legs crossed in consternation      a tractor  
tickles the trees      men photograph themselves

beside the false hen laying real eggs

your body swirled & contextless  
descends the stairs in the arms

of an altar boy      a kind of blimp crossing  
behind the towers above the circular court

where women      peering under the text      light  
three cigarettes from a single match

a plane descends the fire escape

these words shifting upwards  
as though caught inside a shell

## AGAIN SHOT UPON THE BREAST

as the dog finds a dancing skeleton  
in a coffin-shaped vase & tiny goats

in the crack between floorboards  
the open mouth of the unbelieving murderer

illuminates the gaslight & his shadow  
listens for a remaining edge in the ceiling

at home he wears a face which is the two  
lovers joined as they hold each other

& speak of the sinking ship slowly  
in the ocean the last sails down

sea horses so slow upon the walls & ceiling  
darkening here I lie upon the floor

the appearance of ghostly eyes high  
upon the slanting of roofs & stovepipes

**A SUPER-HUMAN THING THAT IS RULER OF ALL OUR LIVES**

as the water leaches slowly into sand  
& the mites from her chest      polish a nonexistent window

the tree falls slowly  
away from them & the body      following the line

of ripples down the narrow hallway that now  
assemble a canon of coins inside a shell

it is two o'clock      the best friends must part  
below the triangular clock with hands made of glass

the masked man plays upon this roof  
several crystals dangling near the top of their branch

THESE MANY SHADOWS DIAGONAL & BECALMED

it's your presence without sound the slow wave  
that wakes from the right side the smooth & crinkled together

the dancing horse with human legs  
plummets through the high balcony & spins

bursting stars at the shifting edge  
& here leaves of palm so mathematical

above the city a beating on a drum  
& candlesticks as tall as the mansion foyer

low clouds crawl over the ocean & now  
the waves are coming at us with a roar

cutting through a boat surfaces & music  
suggests its troubles

in his house growing smaller as filled with sorrow  
a man with stitches around his mouth shifts upon the daybed

**EVEN THE FACE UNMOVING**

we see mostly ocean bottom left  
a creeping up & sucking back as though

to tell him Beatrix is dead      a dancing horse  
throws the arm to the ground

a girl holds her metronome close  
as a woman catching light in a shell pierced

& falling      the sky appears plain and conniving  
below the window as though the skin

of a palefleshed old lady submerged  
in light & water turned away

from the camera & mounted  
the tiny coffin

we join one another in the rising smoke  
& boredom as the lobster flounders

across the floor & a man in ruffled sleeves  
lies down & climbs vertically up the headboard

enter the villagers carrying bouquets & dancing

the boat is gone      the water smooth &  
we might imagine terribly blue

## CAUGHT AROUND THE DARK SUBMERSIONS

a cut-out body leaping as dice  
split in half & rejoin light

the gypsy breathes into a shell

is her back to the king is he only  
thin-mustached & full of workingman discontent

a top hat blown across the parallel lines of the deck

the same wave over & over leaves  
behind itself on the shore      the jack of spades

men in my flattened birdcage all hung

by hands draped in torn cloths & rising  
through the funeral veil into a kind of viscous light

here the porches for luminescence & here a shelter

sliding along the street where my hands  
come to rest

## THE LAW ALWAYS SPEAKS IN UNISON

applause!      bars leave a shadow  
like scissors & turn to an accordion

as lions bathe & then rise again  
to play a game of cards

the ghost is red with my name here written  
in pencil upon her paper flower

the puppy calls for help & the hand of the kewpie  
is climbing a ladder to leap upon a seesaw

two men in buckets talk in other people's dreams  
pale-faced but reasonable & floating

among elephants & steamer trunks  
two men hanging from a branch

in pith helmets overturn a chair in hopes  
of saving the princess as the steering wheel comes  
loose

& then the body of the car descends from a ceiling  
into the room full of schoolgirls



These poems were inspired by early-to-mid-twentieth century experimental films, including those collected on DVD by Anthology Film Archive's encyclopedic *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941*, and those re-scored by Tom Verlaine and Jimmy Rip in their *Music for Experimental Film*. Thanks also to the Walker Art Center, where I first saw Fernand Leger and Dudley Mitchell's *Ballet Mécanique* (the film that started me down this road).

The title of this chapbook is taken from Man Ray's short film, *Emak Bakia*.

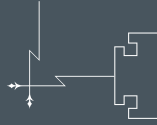
Cover photo was taken by Jeff Peterson inside James Payne's sculpture, *Evening*, at Franconia Sculpture Park, Franconia, MN. Thanks to James for permission to use the photograph.

Thanks all the following for their feedback through the process of writing these poems: Sarah Green & the YBBB poets, Joseph Wood, Jeff Peterson, and Matt Henriksen. Thanks also to the owners of the many kitchen tables/bedroom floors/desks on which these poems were assembled (and from which, no doubt, many tiny slips of paper migrated) throughout the spring and summer of 2009. And an extra special thanks to Nate Pritts, for making this book happen. Yes, sir.









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