

Mesostic Exercise

the status of author as ego, and his use of appropriation and found materials have become defining characteristics of postmodern art in general.

His work in language includes *A Year from Monday* (1967), *M: Writings '67-72*, *Empty Words: Writings '73-'78*, and *X: Writings '79-'82*.

A frequent collaborator with choreographer Merce Cunningham, Cage lived in New York City.

1. John Cage, "Autobiography," in *Conversing with John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz, New York, 1988, p. 1. 2. The same, p. 6. 3. *Empty Words: Writings '73-'78*, Middletown, CT, 1979, p. 178.

25 Mesostics Re and Not Re Mark Tobey

it was iMpossible
to do Anything:
the dooR
was locKed.

i won The first game.
he wOn the second.
in Boston,
nExt
Year, he'll be teaching philosophy.

the house is a Mess:
pAintings
wheRever
you look.

she told Me
his wAy
of Reading
assumes that the booK he's reading is true.

why doesn'T
he stOp painting?
someBody
will havE
to spend Years cataloguing, etc.

The girl checking in the baggage
reduced Our overweight to zero
By counting it
on a first-class passEnger's ticket: the heaviest handbag
had been hidden unnecessarily

forTunately, we were with hanna,
antOinette,
and hanna's two Boys.
thE girl at the counter
gave one of the boYs a carry-on luggage tag as a souvenir.

My
strAtegy:
act as though you'Re home;
don't asK any questions.

instead of Music:
thunder, trAffic,
biRds, and high-speed military planes/producing sonic
booms;
and then a chicKen (pontpoint).

each Thing he saw
he asked us tO look at.

By
thE time we reached the japanese restaurant
our eYes were open.

the rooM
dAvid has in the attic
is veRy
good for his worK.

how much do The paintings
cOst?
they were Bought
on the installmEnt plan:
there was no money.

played dominoes and drank calvados unTil
fOur in the morning.
carpenters came aBout
sEven
thirtY to finish their work in his bedroom.

you can find ouT
what kind Of art is up to the minute
By visiting
thE head office
of a successful advertising companY.

It continues, but you get the idea. When there is a proper noun in the poem, he purposely makes the first letter lower case so as to not confuse the subject of the poem, the brilliant painter and Bahá'í member, Mark Tobey. Pick a friend, an artist you love (and go to over and over) or a family member, and write their name in ALL CAPS going down the page. Start the poem with a line that will include a word that has the letter in the subject's first name and go from there. You can make lines as long as you want and as long as will allow the form to hold. You can line up the starter words (subject) as you go, or tidy up after you write the poem and you'll see if the lines need to be tweaked to retain the form. Cage gave some of the versions of this form more restrictions, but this easier version can work for now. One example of mine which ignored the capital letter rule:

Morris Graves Mesostic

Consciousness assuming the foRm of a man
partial to sOlitude y ceanothus that side The Lake
under 800 y.o. Redwood gRandfathers stifle the machine age noise.
Consciousness assuming the foRm of a cup
chalice, snake, bIrd, moon, blooming flower or
lotus blossom breathing forth itS own birthing chamber.

Consciousness assuminG the form of an avalanche in which
no casualties, a foRest fire in which a single deer
mAy find safety in a mountain creek, in a
Vedanta Sutra, a Gurdjieff Hymn
playEd back by a
rapturouS vocalizer or a winter in Chartres or

Harlem. consciousness assumiNg the form of a
 purification rEtreat & banana slugs, pasta with meat
 sauce, goat cheeSe, puer and a stolen peppermint
 chocolate patty. ConsciOusness assuming the form of a
 snake bathing in the light of the Snow moon, a querent
 in retreaT from all the machine age
 noise. *Evil Is*
mechaniCal. No pretending this is no vigil.

8p - N.3.13
The Lake
Loleta, CA
Quote from D.H. Lawrence

organic
poetry

Paul E Nelson
8:22pm, 4.10.2021