

Igor's Goriest Tune and selected text pieces

Elaine R. Barkin

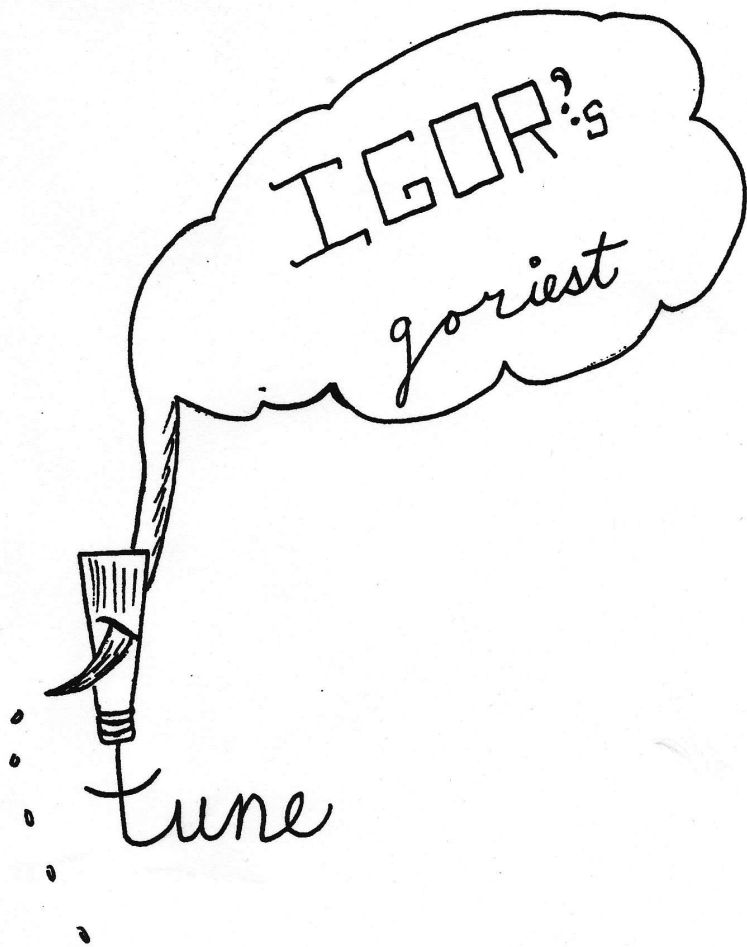
To observe my 50th birthday in 1982, I conceived *Igor's Goriest Tune* and sent it out to friends, colleagues and family members. In 1987 *IGT* became part of a limited edition of graphic-texts—*IMAGE: a collection* (with four pieces of mine and works by Jim Randall, Bob Paredes, Jane Coppock, Ben Boretz, and Catherine Schieve; the first publication of OPEN SPACE in 1989 was *IMAGE*). *IGT* also appeared in *e: an anthology*, a collection of my writings and graphics (1975–1995) published by OPEN SPACE. And so, to celebrate, to celebrate—echoes of Purcell flood in!—David Gutkin's invitation to participate in this issue of *Current Musicology*, here's Igor!

But first. *Igor's Goriest Tune* could/would never have been visualized or made without my twenty-two year connection with *Perspectives of New Music*, into which, in 1962, I was drafted by my dear friend Ben Boretz. Drafted but willingly for I had been out of touch with music and music-thought for several years as a stay-at-home mom. Thus then, with a mix of anxiety and eagerness, was my music-intellectual life reinvigorated. New languages and modes of writing/speaking about music were thrown before me, some of which I learned, others of which were never my thing, a bunch of which made their way into *IGT*. Ever since childhood, I've enjoyed drawing, comics, doodling, graphics, 'making' things and why not, I thought, find a way to integrate several "expressive languages," the more so with a 'tune' that had been one of my earliest New Music experiences.

Here and now though, I wish to dedicate *Igor's Goriest Tune* to the memory of my Queens College buddy Jane Taylor (1932–2012), bassoonist and co-founder of the Dorian Wind Quintet, whose wit is reflected in the penultimate page of *IGT*: for J. T.'s 'bass Oon'. Jane must have made hundreds of thousands of reeds for herself and her students during her long productive life and she loved and played every bassoon solo in the classical, contemporary, and Broadway-pit repertory.

Valley Village, CA

September 2012



Notation

12 Tempo I ♩. 50

Fig. 1

Sole

(come sopra)

transcription



broken record or memory loss



for the hoi polloi



Ursatz

The image shows a musical score for three parts. The top staff is labeled 'Ursatz' and contains a few notes with accents (^) and a '3' above the first note. The middle staff is labeled '1. Schicht' and contains a sequence of notes with various accents (^) and numbers (1, 2, 3) above them. The bottom staff is labeled '2. Schicht' and contains a more complex melodic line with many notes, some with accents (^) and numbers (1, 2, 3) above them. The notation includes treble clefs, stems, and beams.

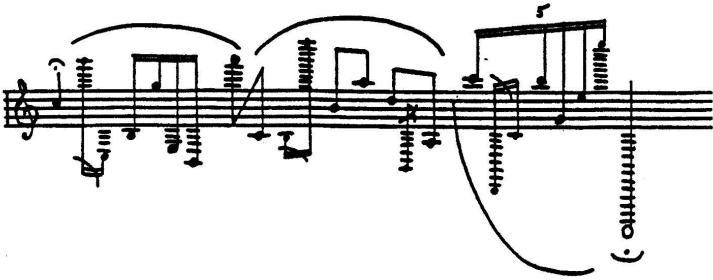
før H. S.

FULL SCORE

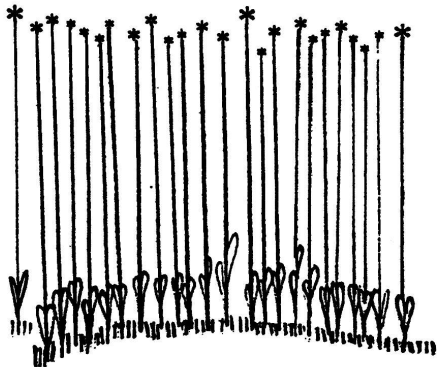
12. *Tempo I* ♩ = 50

Fl. pic.
Fl. gr.
Fl. alto
Ob.
C. ing.
Cl. pic. in Re
Cl. in La
Cl. in Sib
Cl. bas. in Sib
Fag. 1
Fag.
C. Fag.
1, 2
3, 4
Cor. in Fa
5, 6
7, 8
Tr. pic. in Re
Tr. in Do
Trbn.
Tbn.
12. *Tempo I* ♩ = 50
Timp.
G.C.
Vi. I
Vi. II
Vcl.
Vc.
Cb.

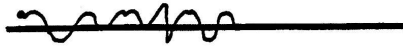
p* i n t i l i s t i c a l y



LONG STEMMED



doodly



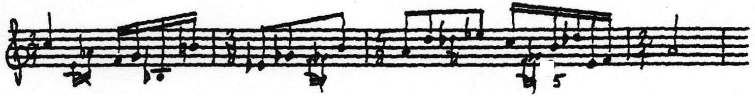
A
L
E
a

A musical score consisting of three staves. The notes are connected by a complex, overlapping geometric structure of lines, creating a 3D effect. The letters A, L, E, and a are written vertically to the left of the staves.

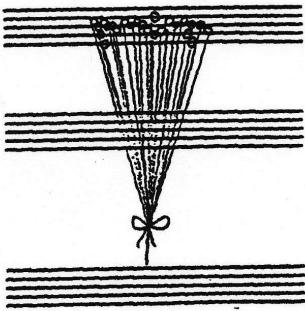
clustered



BOUND

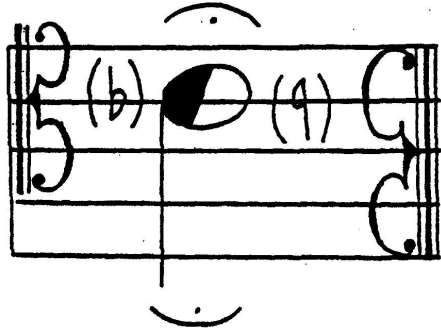


Dodecaphonically



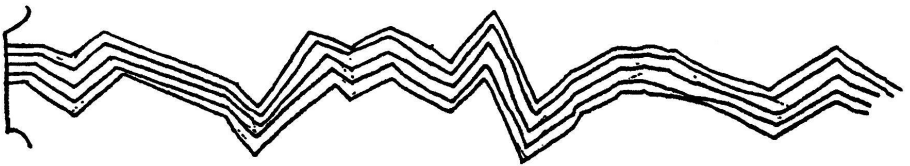
BALLOONED

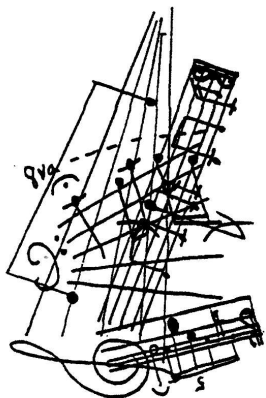
• *pus thu si!*



IN MY BEGINNING

Stylus SOLO





FOUR CLEFT

4 String Quartet

Handwritten musical notation for a string quartet, consisting of four staves:

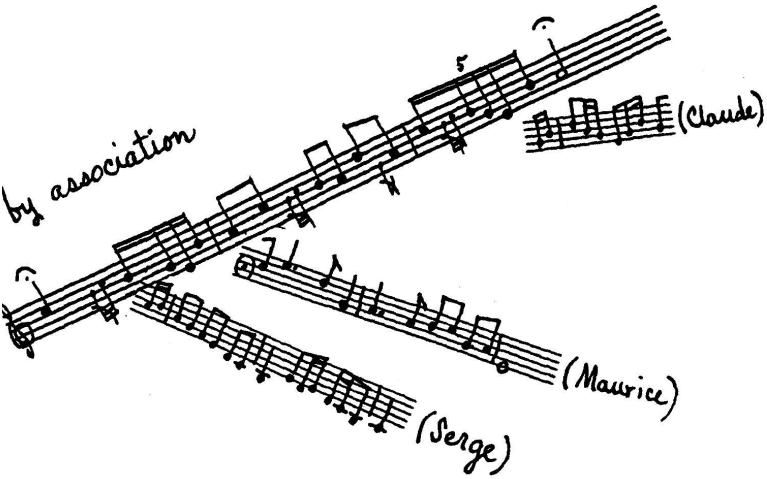
- Vl. I:** Violin I staff, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5.
- Vl. II:** Violin II staff, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of notes: E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5.
- Vla.:** Viola staff, starting with an alto clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Vc.:** Violoncello staff, starting with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a series of chords: C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4, C4-E4-G4.

MOD :

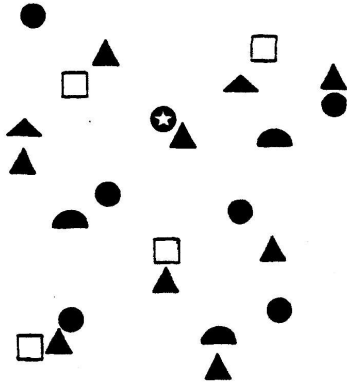
x 5



by association



G	A	B	C	D	E			
3	4	8	6	1	2			



SCOREBOARD

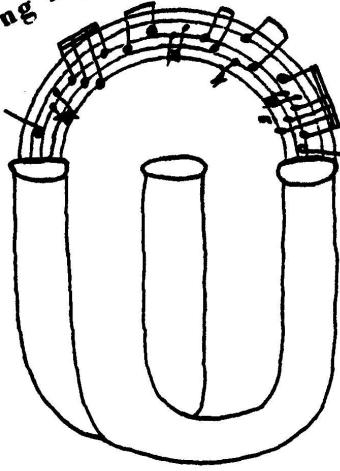
ARRESTED MOTION





hebraically

blowing my top



narcissistically

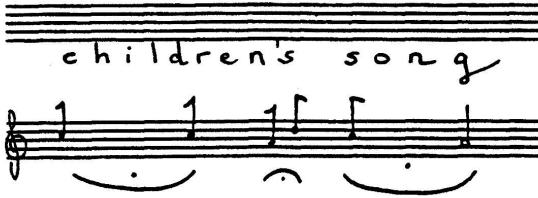
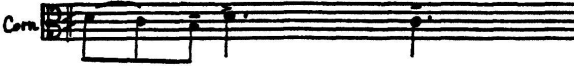


BOATMAN'S SONG



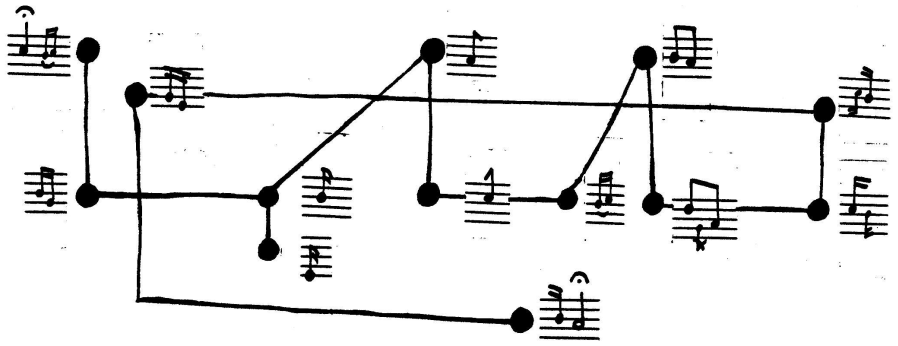
for PETE's sake

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza



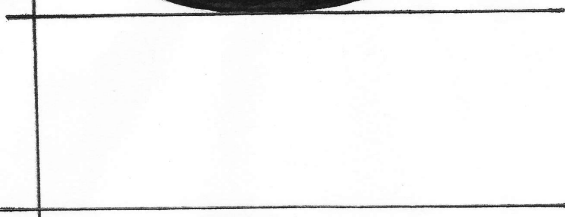
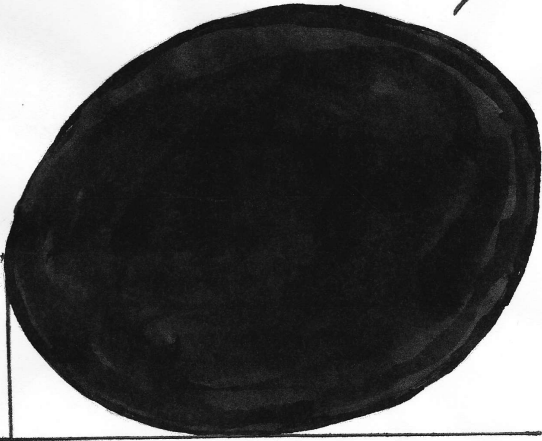
REDUCTIO
AD
ABSURDUM





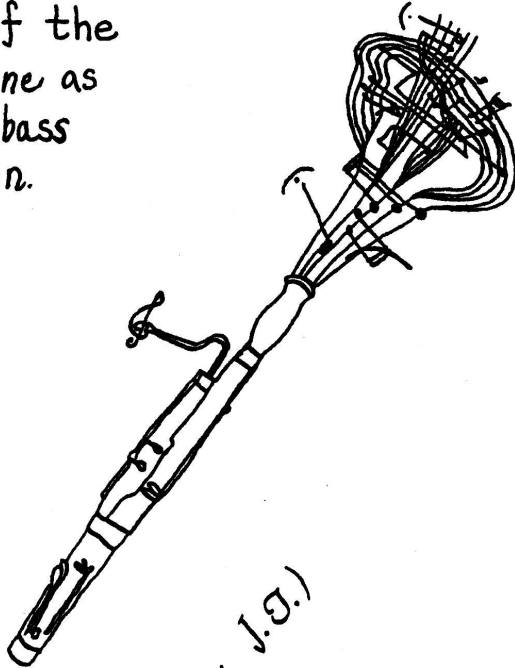
along the

P of **NM** trail

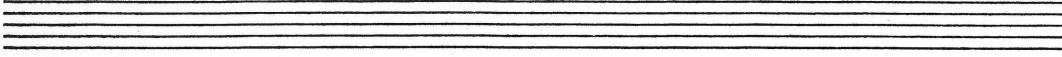
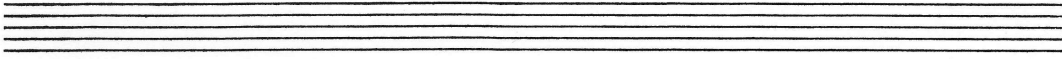
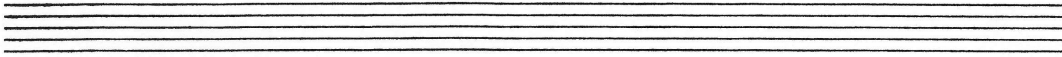
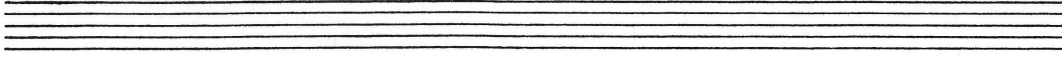
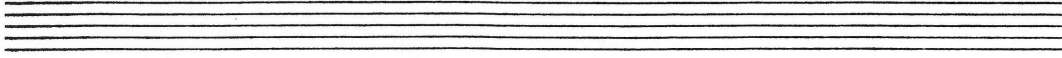
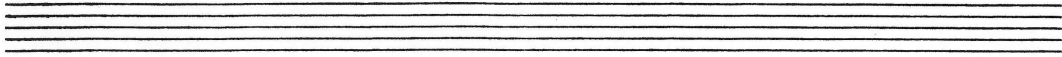
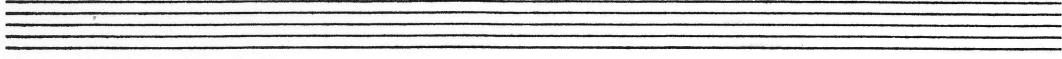
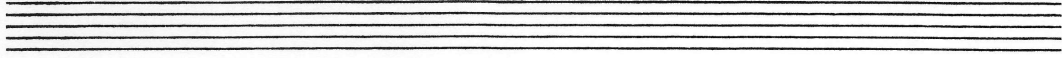
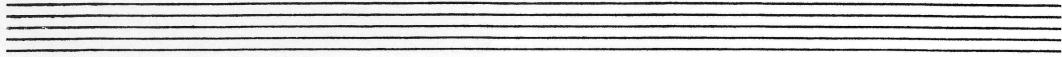


Handwritten text in a stylized, possibly Indic script, oriented vertically. The characters are dark and somewhat irregular, suggesting they were written by hand. The text is positioned to the right of the main graphic elements.

Portrait
of the
tune as
a bass
oon.



(for J.G.)



1982

*t*h*e e*n*d*

John Cage's String Quartet in Four Parts (1950)

Elaine R. Barkin

In the spring of 1983 I devoted a graduate seminar in 20th century music to string quartets. We began with Pierre Boulez's *Livre* (1948) and John Cage's String Quartet in Four Parts (1950), a startling pair. At the time I'd been writing free-flow texts about music and as I listened to Cage's work, I jotted down ideas and images, the first of which were what is now the middle of the text (first published in *news of music* 8, 1987). Over the years I added more eventually culminating in the present text, completed shortly after John Cage's death and within which, *pace* JC, there's a crooked mesostic of **CAGE**. This prose-poem was included in my in memoriam text, "The Cage Case: Existential Joker", written for *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 31 No. 2, Summer 1993, 128-31.

news of music 8 also contains a short 1983 response to Roger Sessions's String Quartet no. 2, 1951:

I am sitting in a darkly carpeted room.
Occasionally a breeze ruffles drawn draperies
enabling a slant of light to shimmer through.
An enveloping, resinous world assembles.

Composing music is serious business.

Valley Village, CA

September 2012

John Milton Cage Jr. (1912-1992)

STRING QUARTET IN FOUR PARTS (1950)

a slow music at whose outset we wait for (& expect?) some(any)thing to happen
a slow music whose eventually perceptible self-referentiality relieves (or tries
to relieve) us of the desire for expecti**C**ing some(any)thing to happen
a slow music in which little is made to sound cumulative, each unequivocally
calculated time heard in the time(s) of designated localities,
unsurprisingly unpredictable (so wh**A**t else is new?) ((as if a
(de)finite set of imprints are awaiting reification so as to
thwart impending ineluctable obsolescence))

a striptease artist pussyfootingly treadin**G** in a viscous sea of holes
strung and unstrung stuck and unstuck
her/his tread dummylike connected to his/her mouth
which opens and closes again and again
until s/he (and we) is **E**xhausted

no waves, no highlights, all unremittingly homogeneous, occasionally aberrant
palindromically patterned successions meticulously and mechanically composed,
at whose end (since there is, indeed, a beginning and an end) we hear animated
& hardworking, albethem folkishly traditional & mundane, tunesnatches

1983 / rev.1992

Writing About Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*

Elaine R. Barkin

The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt appeared in 2003 prompting me to take out and listen to Milton's music on the many LPs and CDs I own, a collection spanning over 35 years . Much of Milton's music sounded familiar even after decades of not having been heard, some of it as impenetrable as ever, some of it fresh and needing to be returned to including *Around the Horn* (solo French horn, 1993) and *Groupwise* (1983), both titles instances of punwise Milton. To commemorate the publication of Milton's essays and the appeal of *Groupwise*, I composed this short paragraph which now can be read in memory of Milton Byron Babbitt (1916–2011).

The Collected Essays of Milton Babbitt was published by the Princeton University Press, edited by Stephen Peles.

"Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*" first appeared in *The Open Space Magazine*, 7, 2005, 149.

Valley Village, CA

September 2012

Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*

Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise*, whose silken footsteps — like those left by feathered Aboriginal spirit men, unseen but discerned, intentions fathomed, effects experienced —, whose nubbed chiffon particles sough, especially when the volume is low, with, as Chuck Stein says of *Reflections*, “splinters shining now here, now there”, not nows and thens, although plenty of all-things, since I'm often not recalling in mind nor able to resummon what's just passed and then, with great trepidation, I think, maybe it — something — doesn't matter not to recall, not to have what's passed within me somewhere — the signature's always recognizable, each work of Milton's distinct from each other —, yet there's always plenty *there*, not thick but “cherce” as Spencer Tracy said (maybe that's what John Rahn means by “flat”) —, it always is what and where it is, within me being with it or keeping up with it before it leaves the stratosphere at non-stop warp speed and vaporizes (beams up) out of hearing, sounding so self-assured (as expressed by Benjamin Hudson [vln], Maureen Gallagher [vla], Fred Sherry [vlc], Aleck Karis [pno], Harvey Sollberger [fls], conducted by Daniel Shulman, Group for Contemporary Music All-Stars), their groovy Milton spinning out embrangled, connecting, disconnecting, situated, resituated, unsituated, filaments, each and every scintilla all-so profoundly necessary, and conscious, and certain.

After listening to Milton Babbitt's *Groupwise* (1983), CRI CD 521.

November 8, 2004

See Chuck Stein's “The Problematics of Closure” and John Rahn's “The Swerve and the Flow” in *The OPEN SPACE magazine*, 6, 2004, 27-33 and 234-44 resp.

ERB's text for BAB's O

[via Samuel Beckett & Gertrude Stein]

) (All tips engaged. Not ever known when, not ever known where, mid lows, mid ways, mid highs, way high, way low, way allover ways. Each weighs just so unknown then known. Weighted here weighted there, each known so always there or here. Soft hued rounded flesh touching 'up-against' hard *blanc et noir* bonewood. Each and all not ever brief, each and all long and longing. All so well placed, just so connected, just so tight and staying. Every known spread not always alone, not ever expectant. Each waiting one(s) waiting for some other one or ones. Each spread way there, way here, way open with opening and waiting, unknowing, eager, wanting. Every low soft weight all warmth just grabs so enveloping all then knows. Yet almost always never known when, even then, even where, even there. Almost all gathering knows not always ever known. Yet all almost always never quite fully unknowns. What gets done, what gets known, joins in not ever being undone or done in. All so long lingering, just so joined, just so sound. Ranging free, intraforming, trajecting, intimately aperturating, constellating. ()

Written on November 21, 2004 after listening to Benjamin A. Boretz's O for piano (2000), played by Michael Fowler on Open Space CD 18 and published in *The OPEN SPACE magazine*, 7, 2005, 148.

On the way to becoming we most of us try others on. Not whole bodies. Those parts whose fit might still enable pores to breathe. Ultra tight fits unintentionally wanted by some constrain, intentionally put upon also constrain. The longer the wear the less the bind feels. Wanting fitness at first is all. Itself gets used to. Until. The want to become again revives. We cast off second hands exposing our remaining rawness, selfness. Ourselves becoming again consolidated. Refit. Until. Awareness momentarily that superficialities may become our real thing. Fitness is no longer all. When unawareness of prosthetic appliance environs us we are not us. Then to divest to unbecome to become. And reinvest ourselves with discards of now our own former molting. Or refashion from some scratch never wholly unloosed of old fits. Or invent new starts. Or even as it were to unbecomingly flounder. And reimage ourselves barely unjointedly as we reimagine fitting ourselves all out. Conjoining our unbound first hands. Until.

October 1984

“on the way to becoming” was first published in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 23, No.1, Fall-Winter 1984, p. 107, as part of *Four Texts* (on the work of Pauline Oliveros). A 4-track tape-collage of this text can be heard on Open Space CD3.